

The categories of value

[Economics](#), [Money](#)



It's easy to assign Importance factors or risk categories to inanimate objects such as buildings, bridges, airplanes, dams, cars, and buses. It is agreeable to say that the structural integrity of a hospital is more important than that of a singlefamilyresidence; especially, in the case of an emergency. When assigning importance or value to individual lives, we are confronted by an overwhelming social dilemma: How does society assign value to someone's life?

The essence of life or simply living and given the opportunity to become a contributing member of society is priceless and has an unsurmountable monetary value; however, within the constraints of the society we live in, we are forced to assign a monetary value to an individual life. If we strip away what makes us human - our souls— we can assign value and categorize human life by the sum of their contributions to society and the impact their absence would make. Those that commit horrible crimes and contribute negatively to society belong to the first category.

Those who contribute very little or haven't had the chance to contribute to society belong to the second category. Those contributors whose sudden absences affect a small amount of people belong to the third category. Those whose sudden absence affects many people belong to the fourth. Finally, those whose sudden absence can affect an entire society for generations to come belong to the fifth category. Murderers and individuals who wish harm on innocent people belong in the first category. They are in the first category due to their lack of contribution and harm to our society.

Truly without them there would be less damage and fear in today's world. You can easily distinguish the difference between the first and second category in the perspective of comparing them to someone in the second category, such as children and individuals whose lives were cut short, and sadly unable to even begin to contribute to society; the ones in the first category are the ones who usually end up in prisons for violent crimes or serious violations, while the ones in the second category generally contains young people who haven't had a chance to make a difference in society.

Individuals in the third category would be the ones whose deaths would affect a small amount of people such as a blue collar worker who supports their family with their salary. The sudden loss of this person would be saddening but only the immediate family will typically need monetary compensation to cover any expenses left behind. In comparison, the ones in the fourth category whose deaths would affect a much larger amount of people such as, owners of important businesses whose death may result in the layoff of many employees.

The individuals in the fifth category are the ones who have a huge contribution to our society, such as individuals who find cures to devastating diseases, physicist on the verge of making a great breakthrough, world leaders, and important policy makers. Without them our society let alone the whole world, would not be the same, they are the ones who make a difference in people's lives. In the article, " What Is the Value of a Human Life? " by Kenneth Feinberg, he explores the moral problem with assigning different values to different members of society.

The author finds it troubling that the compensation for someone's death be related to that person's financial situation. For example, someone in the fourth category mentioned above will most likely be a wealthy business owner while the person in the third category may be a modest middle class individual and would receive compensation accordingly. At the end of the article he states that in the future, he will provide equal compensation regardless of the person's financial circumstances or status in society.

I believe that monetary compensation should only cover funeral expenses and enough income to allow their immediate families time to adjust to the loss and become self-sustaining. It is okay for a society that is based on capitalism to compensate and assign a monetary value to individuals. It is our souls and humanity that will always be in conflict with manmade laws and forged societies. That is why this debate will never end. The day that currency becomes obsolete will be the day that society will truly discover that the only thing worth valuing is life itself, not money.