



CORE VALUES

BY STEVEN LEVENSON



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



CORE VALUES
Copyright © 2013, Steven Levenson

All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that performance of CORE VALUES is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission for which must be secured from the Author's agent in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for CORE VALUES are controlled exclusively by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., and paying the requisite fee.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, LLC, 1325 Avenue of the Americas, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10019. Attn: John Buzzetti.

SPECIAL NOTE

Anyone receiving permission to produce CORE VALUES is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Author. The following acknowledgments must appear on the title page in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play:

Commissioned and Developed by Ars Nova
Jason Eagan, Artistic Director; Jeremy Blocker, Managing Director

World Premiere produced by Ars Nova
511 West 54th Street, New York
www.arsnova.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed to the development of this play, but I owe a special debt of gratitude to Jason Eagan, Jeremy Blocker, Jes Levine, and everyone else at Ars Nova. Thank you, in particular, to Emily Shooltz, who shepherded this play from the first inkling of an idea through innumerable drafts and whose support and friendship have been invaluable to me and to so many other emerging writers. I would also like to thank Sash Bischoff, Adrienne Campbell-Holt, David Caparelliotis, Christina Lowe, and Lauren Port, as well as the actors who lent their time and talent to readings and workshops. I will be forever grateful to the cast and crew at Ars Nova who brought every piece of themselves to the process and who shaped the play indelibly with their openness, their intelligence, and their humor. Thanks especially to Carolyn Cantor for bringing it to life with such artistry and care. Finally, thank you to Whitney, for everything else.

CORE VALUES was presented by Ars Nova (Jason Eagan, Artistic Director; Jeremy Blocker, Managing Director) in New York City, opening on May 6, 2013. It was directed by Carolyn Cantor; the set design was by Lauren Helpert; the costume design was by Emily Rebholz; the lighting design was by Traci Klainer Polimeni; the sound design was by M. L. Dogg; and the production stage manager was Christina Lowe. The cast was as follows:

ELIOT Erin Wilhelmi
TODD Paul Thureen
RICHARD Reed Birney
NANCY Susan Kelechi Watson

CHARACTERS

ELIOT, 22

TODD, 31

RICHARD, 47

NANCY, 36

SETTING

A conference room in an anonymous office building located on a sad and filthy street in Manhattan, replete with wholesale plastic jewelry stores, long-term parking lots, and badly lit storefront massage parlors with once-colorful and now long-faded anatomical diagrams of human feet hung in the windows.

TIME

Winter.

NB: Though the play is divided into two sections, it should be performed without an intermission.

CORE VALUES

I. SATURDAY

One

Darkness.

In the dark, the sound of waves cresting and crashing, lapping the shoreline of some distant white sandy beach somewhere else.

After some time, it cuts out completely and we are here: a conference room without windows.

Silent and dark and shabbily carpeted.

The color palette is puke: puke grays, puke greens, a gentle soothing puke brown conference table.

Unused binders, obsolete promotional materials, and boxes of dead files have been stowed away in the dusty corners.

On the wall, a poster, a cheeseball aerial portrait of an unblemished jewel-toned seascape: "Sandals!"

The door opens and Eliot enters, holding two plastic shopping bags and a small paper cup of tea, which she sets down on the table.

She wears a puffy winter coat and a long scarf.

She flips on the fluorescent lights.

She stands there for a second, looking around, trying to catch her breath from the cold outside.

She rifles through the shopping bags and pulls out far too many miniature water bottles.

She carefully, methodically lays them on the table.

We think she's done but then she reaches into her purse and takes out several more.

She takes a moment and counts the bottles.

She tries to arrange them all into some kind of pyramid-type shape.

She fails.

She fixes it, sort of.

She sees the dry-erase board, which someone has hastily erased, leaving a small, nearly indistinct doodle in the corner.

She looks for an eraser.

She can't find one.

She uses the heel of her hand to rub away the doodle.

She looks at her hand, frowns.

She slowly brings her hand up to her face.

She smells her hand.

She frowns.

She reaches into her coat and pulls out another bottle. An afterthought.

CORE VALUES

by Steven Levenson

2M, 2W

With the world around him changing at a dizzying pace, the owner of a small, struggling travel agency clings to the values he holds most dear: teamwork, loyalty and the incalculable importance of a good trust fall. It takes a weekend staff retreat, however, for him to realize that his team-building exercises won't stave off the realities of a rapidly evolving marketplace. In a graying conference room, CEO Richard and three of his employees — Nancy, an ambitious salesperson with an ailing young son; Todd, the tech guy with poor phone skills; and Eliot, the new girl — are expected to review sales reports, perform trust exercises and set long-term goals for an increasingly uncertain future. Divorced single dad Richard, meanwhile, is just looking to keep his business — and himself — together.

"Sing, Muse of the Great Recession: a dramatic landscape in which striving for greatness has been replaced by grasping at straws. Steven Levenson's laugh-out-loud funny, sigh-out-loud sad new play captures the spirit of the age; and it will feel all too familiar to anyone who's ever found themselves caught in the hamster wheel of a dying industry."

—**Time Out New York**

"Anyone who has done time in a corporate environment will recognize the soul-killing atmosphere conjured all too precisely in CORE VALUES."

—**The New York Times**

"... an entertaining piece, with many genuinely funny, laugh-out-loud moments."

—**TheaterMania.com**

"Steven Levenson's astute new play is a comedy, though a dark one ... a well-observed study of a dysfunctional workplace, with hilarious one-liners and sight gags ... But it becomes progressively bleaker in its depiction of the characters' inability to connect."

—**The New York Post**

Also by Steven Levenson

THE LANGUAGE OF TREES

THE UNAVOIDABLE DISAPPEARANCE

OF TOM DURNIN

ISBN 978-0-8222-2974-2



DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.

9 780822 229742