



Defining your Values – exercise

What are values?

Values identify what is important to you, and how you express yourself. Values are who you 'are' – they're not who you 'want' to be or 'should' be. Even if you aren't living into your values right now, they are still within you. They represent your individual essence, and how you relate to others.

Our values serve as a compass for pointing out what it means to be true to yourself. You'll find that when you honour your values on a regular and consistent basis life is fulfilling.

Why are Values important?

Identifying values is one of the initial exercises I do with all my Clients. Values are integral to coaching work, as they act as an anchor for all the choices we make. They are an expression of how you currently behave, how to pinpoint changes you want to make, and they're a good measure for when you are on track with the goals, and acting with integrity. They assist with knowing yourself better, and how to channel your energy into what benefits you. Initially, it can be tricky to identify or find the right words to describe values, or recognise when they are or aren't being acted on. It is more important to connect with the emotional meaning for you, than the dictionary meaning of the word.

What is important is being 'aware' of them, and understanding there is no 'perfect' definition or way of being. Everyone's definition is individual and can only have meaning to you. It's more about how they're applied or expressed. For example, if you find yourself feeling angry, upset or frustrated with someone when you're backed into a corner or have lack of choice, you may find that freedom is a value that's important.

Values do change over time, and with circumstances, from being single to being in a relationship, from no kids to raising a family, making different career choices or living in another country. Don't feel like you're locked into them forever.

As you work through this exercise look at scenarios in your 'life' (not what you wish it was your 'head'), practical examples and how you can apply these, or how you want to apply them.

What you'll need:

- Blank paper or cardboard
- Pens/ pencils/ markers/ paint/ craft supplies
- Images or words cut and collected from magazines, cards you've received or items collected

Centering exercise:

Before you start, center yourself by closing your eyes and take 10 deep breaths through the nose down into your belly. Focus as you breathe in and out on using this time to focus on *'what's important to me right now'*.

Step 1: Your 'intuitive' values

Respond to the following questions (either through words, pictures, symbols):

- What motivates you?
- What do you need regular doses of?
- What do you need from friendships, relationships, family, work and others?
- When do you feel most content, what is the feeling you get?
- What forms the basis of your personal principles?

Intuitively you'll get some words easier than others, and some will take a bit more thought. Pay special attention to what feels right for you now.

It's also important that the words and phrases aren't what you 'should' feel, think and do – and they aren't based on 'expectations' from others. They are what matters to you right now, and what you really want. It often helps to close your eyes and take some deep breaths as you make a connection with these words and phrases. Don't judge what comes up, just allow yourself the freedom to write.

Helpers: Once you have completed your 'intuitive' values list, have a look at the values list below, and add to your list anything that appeals to you.

The aim is to have a piece of paper/ board full of words, pictures or symbols that describe what's important to you.

Step 2: Your 'core' values

Take a few minutes to identify 5-10 words/ phrases on the post-its that are 'non- negotiable' values - that you can't be fulfilled in life without.

- Circle the core values.
- You may need to combine some of the values together, or maybe one word, picture, symbol represents that value better than the other
- For example, 'Integrity' covers off truth, honesty, sincerity and character
- Think why they are important to you, and how they make you feel if they are missing from your life.

Select one value from your core values and consider:

- What is your definition of this value?
- Why is it important to you?

Step 3: Does your life reflect your values?

So how can we actually apply our values to our life? There are several ways, we can look at how we are at work, in relationships, with our friends, perhaps we're an 'expert' at living our values in one area and can use that in others that don't feel as genuine.

Look over your list of core values ask yourself the following questions:

- How does my life need to change in order to express these values?
- What thoughts/ feelings/ behaviours can I 'add' to my life to reflect my Values?
- What thoughts/ feelings/ behaviours can I 'remove' from my life to reflect my Values?
- If you could make some small changes in your life to live out your values, what could or can you do or what would be different?

Values List – some thought starters

Abundance	Accomplish	Acquire	Adventure	Alert	Alter
Articulate	Artistic	Assemble	Assist	Attain	Attentive
Arouse	Attract	Augment	Awe	Be accepting	Be amused
Be awake	Be aware	Be bonded	Be connected	Be integrated	Be joyful
Be linked	Be passionate	Be present	Be sensitive	Be spiritual	Beauty
Bliss	Bravery	Build	Calm	Capable	Cause
Coach	Comfort	Community	Compassionate	Complete	Conceive
Congruent	Connection	Contentment	Control	Courage	Danger
Dare	Dedication	Delight	Dependable	Design	Detect
Devotion	Direct	Discern	Distinguish	Drama	Dream
Educate	Elegance	Emphasise	Encourage	Endeavour	Endow
Energise	Energy	Energy flow	Enjoy	Enlighten	Enrol
Entertain	Excellence	Exhilaration	Experiment	Expert	Explain
Facilitate	Family	Foster	Freedom	Fun	Gamble
Glamour	Govern	Grace	Grant	Gratitude	Greatest
Guide	Have fun	Health	Holy	Honest	Honouring
Humour	Imagination	Impact	Improve	In touch with	Influence
Inform	Ingenuity	Inquisitive	Inspire	Instruct	Integrate
Integrity	Invent	Laugh	Learn	Love	Magnificence
Mastery	Minister	Model	Move forward	Observe	Open-minded
Orchestrate	Originality	Out do	Patient	Peaceful	People
Perceive	Perfect	Persevere	Persuade	Plan	Play games
Playful	Pleasure	Prepare	Prevail	Provide	Quest
Radiance	Realise	Refine	Reign	Relate to God	Religious
Respond	Responsible	Risk	Romance	Rule	Satisfied
Score	Security	See	Seek	Sensation	Sense
Sensual	Serenity	Serve	Set standards	Sex	Sincere
Space	Spark	Speculate	Spirit	Spontaneous	Sport
Stimulate	Strengthen	Superiority	Support	Synthesise	Taste
Tenderness	The unknown	Thoughtful	Thrill	To catalyse	To contribute
To create	To discover	To experience	To feel	To feel good	To glow
To lead	To nurture	To relate	To teach	To unite	To win
Touch	Transform	Triumph	Trustworthy	Truth	Turn
Uncover	Understand	Unique	Uplift	Unstick others	Venture
Vulnerable	Wealth	Win over	Participation	Performance	Partnership
Collaborate	Productive	Personal Power	Contribute	Freedom to Choose	Free Spirit
Acknowledge	Focus	Comradeship	Lightness	Recognition	Harmony
Empower	Self-Expression	Orderliness	Forward the Action	Creativity	Independence
Success	Nurture	Accurate	Authentic	Zest	Tradition
To Be Known	Elegance	Growth	Vitality	Aesthetics	