

Values Clarification

Values are our heart's deepest desires and what gives us purpose, our values play a direct role in what we do and what we don't do however, it's important to recognise they are different from ethics. When we don't know our core values, the decisions we make can at times feel overwhelmingly heavy. These exercises encourage you to connect with your values so you can start to truly own and live the life you dreamt of.

There are literally hundreds of different values, and each of us will have our very own collection with a core group at the centre which if stepped on can send us spiralling into disarray.

Look forward & backward with "Kindsight":

Keep in mind there are no such things as 'right values' or 'wrong values', don't judge yourself in completing these exercises, simply go with your gut instinct. Think of it a bit like our taste in food, if you prefer something I don't, it just means we have different tastes. Similarly, we may have different values.

In turn, it's important to note that our values can shift in terms of importance in response to changing life conditions and so if something appears off kilter and your values don't feel aligned, have another go at these exercises.

Exercise 1:

This is a 4 - step activity, all of which need to be completed to understand your value system and where it derives from.

Step 1:

Read through the list below and write a letter next to each value:

V = Very important,
Q = Quite important,
N = Not so important

Note: One suggestion would be to read through the list a couple of times without writing anything down and perhaps only on the 3rd or 4th attempt start to mark the values that resonate with you the most.

Values List

<p>Acceptance: to be open to and accepting of myself, others, life etc</p>	<p>Contribution: to contribute, help, assist, or make a positive difference to myself or others</p>	<p>Friendliness: to be friendly, companionable, or agreeable towards others</p>	<p>Kindness: to be kind, compassionate, considerate, nurturing or caring towards myself or others</p>	<p>Responsibility: to be responsible and accountable for my actions</p>
<p>Adventure: to be adventurous; to actively seek, create, or explore novel or stimulating experiences</p>	<p>Conformity: to be respectful and obedient of rules and obligations</p>	<p>Forgiveness: to be forgiving towards myself or others</p>	<p>Love: to act lovingly or affectionately towards myself or others</p>	<p>Safety: to secure, protect, or ensure safety of myself or others</p>
<p>Assertiveness: to respectfully stand up for my rights and request what I want Authenticity: to be authentic, genuine, real; to be true to myself</p>	<p>Cooperation: to be cooperative and collaborative with others</p>	<p>Fun: to be fun-loving; to seek, create, and engage in fun-filled activities</p>	<p>Mindfulness: to be conscious of, open to, and curious about my here-and-now experience</p>	<p>Self-awareness: to be aware of my own thoughts, feelings and actions</p>
<p>Authenticity: to be authentic, genuine, real; to be true to myself</p>	<p>Courage: to be courageous or brave; to persist in the face of fear, threat, or difficulty</p>	<p>Generosity: to be generous, sharing and giving, to myself or others</p>	<p>Order: to be orderly and organised</p>	<p>Self-care: to look after my health and wellbeing, and get my needs met</p>
<p>Beauty: to appreciate, create, nurture or cultivate beauty in myself, others, the environment etc</p>	<p>Encouragement: to encourage and reward behaviour that I value in myself or others</p>	<p>Gratitude: to be grateful for and appreciative of the positive aspects of myself, others and life</p>	<p>Open-mindedness: to think things through, see things from other's points of view, and weigh evidence fairly.</p>	<p>Self-development: to keep growing, advancing or improving in knowledge, skills, character, or life experience.</p>
<p>Caring: to be caring towards myself, others, the environment etc</p>	<p>Equality: to treat others as equal to myself, and vice-versa</p>	<p>Honesty: to be honest, truthful, and sincere with myself and others</p>	<p>Patience: to wait calmly for what I want</p>	<p>Self-control: to act in accordance with my own ideals</p>
<p>Challenge: to keep challenging myself to grow, learn, improve</p>	<p>Excitement: to seek, create and engage in activities that are exciting, stimulating or thrilling</p>	<p>Humour: to see and appreciate the humorous side of life</p>	<p>Persistence: to continue resolutely, despite problems or difficulties.</p>	<p>Spirituality: to connect with things bigger than myself</p>

Compassion: to act with kindness towards those who are suffering	Fairness: to be fair to myself or others	Humility: to be humble or modest; to let my achievements speak for themselves	Pleasure: to create and give pleasure to myself or others	Skilfulness: to continually practice and improve my skills, and apply myself fully when using them
Connection: to engage fully in whatever I am doing, and be fully present with others	Fitness: to maintain or improve my fitness; to look after my physical and mental health and wellbeing	Industry: to be industrious, hard-working, dedicated	Power: to strongly influence or wield authority over others, e.g. taking charge, leading, organising	Supportiveness: to be supportive, helpful, encouraging, and available to myself or others
Creativity: to be creative or innovative	Flexibility: to adjust and adapt readily to changing circumstances	Independence: to be self-supportive, and choose my own way of doing things	Reciprocity: to build relationships in which there is a fair balance of giving and taking	Trust: to be trustworthy; to be loyal, faithful, sincere, and reliable
Curiosity: to be curious, open-minded and interested; to explore and discover	Freedom: to live freely; to choose how I live and behave, or help others do likewise	Justice: to uphold justice and fairness	Respect: to be respectful towards myself or others; to be polite, considerate and show positive regard	Vulnerability: to open up, reveal, and share myself emotionally in my close personal relationships

Step 2:

Great, now you've identified some values, the next step is to start identifying which are your core values. Once you've marked each value as V, Q, N (Very, Quite, or Not so important), go through all the Vs, and select out the top six that you could not be without. Mark each one with a 6, to show it's in your top six.

Step 3:

Now that you have identified your core values, pick a value and systematically ask yourself the following questions. Do this for each of the 6 top values. The idea here is to confirm 100% if this is a value that has a rightful place in your top 6. *If it helps get some colour coded post-it notes to write your responses on and arrange on the floor or on a wall.

This exercise requires you to be vulnerable and descriptive. If you really struggle with this, why not book onto a one-off Values Clarification session where we deep dive into your values.

Scroll down for the questions

Six Questions for your TOP 6 Values

1. What does this value mean to you?
2. Is it a means or an end? Some values we have can be present simply to accomplish another e.g. If you want financial security is it because it you strongly feel it leads to freedom, then *check-in* with yourself if freedom is the one you value most. To check which is your **end** value, simply take the 2 connecting values and ask yourself which could you not be without.
3. When and how were you taught the importance of this value? This could be a direct lesson, or a sense of importance you picked up by watching other people's behaviour.
4. What feelings/emotional associations come up for me when I think about this value?
5. Do I embody this value in my life now? If so, how? And if not, why not? Can you identify this value translating into actions and behaviours? Give examples. If not "what do you think is preventing you from embodying this value in your life (this could be an internal or external force or situation). Write down whatever springs to mind.
6. Is this value really yours? One way to answer this question is to evaluate whether it's something you think you 'should' embody. If so, that's a sign that it might be a core belief or self-concept rather than an authentic value.

Exercise 2:

Imagine you have 1000 (£/€) to spend on the following items. You need to spend all the money and cannot spend less than £1.00 on any single item. Naturally you will want to spend more money on some things than others. Simply decide how much you will allocate to each item then once complete, rank in the order of lowest to highest.

1. A chance to rid the world of prejudice.
2. A chance to serve the sick and needy.
3. A chance to become a famous person
4. A year of daily massages and the world's greatest food.
5. A chance to know the meaning of life.
6. A vaccine to make the world and all persons incapable of lying.
7. The perfect love relationship.
8. The presidency of the United States.
9. A house overlooking the most beautiful view in the world in which you kept the world's greatest works of art.
10. A chance to be the world's most - attractive person.
11. A chance to live past 100 with no illnesses.
12. Free psychoanalysis with a genius analyst.
13. A meeting with the leader of your religion.
14. A chance to rid the world of unfairness.
15. A chance to donate \$1 million dollars to charity.
16. A chance to set your own working conditions.
17. A chance to do nothing, with all your needs met for an entire year.
18. A chance to be so wise as to make only the right decisions for a year.
19. A chance to be truly holy in the sight of a higher being

Now that you allocated your money, look back at each item and ask yourself the following questions, journal your responses:

1. What is the value you are honouring by spending your money here?

Once you have your list you can repeat the 6 questions ***in Step 3 of Exercise 1***

Other Internet recourses that can help illicit your values:

<http://msb.franklincovey.com>

<http://www.thegoodproject.org/toolkits-curricula/the-goodwork-toolkit/value-sort-activity/>