

What Really Matters To You?



A Guidebook For Exploring Your Values

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Exercise For Determining Your Core Values

Step 1: Without overthinking it, highlight or circle each value that resonates with you personally.

Accountability	Efficiency	Intuition	Risk-taking
Achievement	Equality	Job security	Safety
Adaptability	Ethics	Joy	Security
Adventure	Excellence	Justice	Self-discipline
Altruism	Fairness	Kindness	Self-expression
Ambition	Faith	Knowledge	Self-respect
Authenticity	Family	Leadership	Serenity
Balance	Financial stability	Learning	Service
Beauty	Forgiveness	Legacy	Simplicity
Being the best	Freedom	Leisure	Spirituality
Belonging	Friendship	Love	Sportsmanship
Career	Fun	Loyalty	Stewardship
Caring	Future generations	Making a difference	Success
Collaboration	Generosity	Nature	Teamwork
Commitment	Giving back	Openness	Thrift
Community	Grace	Optimism	Time
Compassion	Gratitude	Order	Tradition
Competence	Growth	Parenting	Travel
Confidence	Harmony	Patience	Trust
Connection	Health	Peace	Truth
Contentment	Home	Perseverance	Understanding
Contribution	Honesty	Personal fulfillment	Uniqueness
Cooperation	Hope	Power	Usefulness
Courage	Humility	Pride	Vision
Creativity	Humor	Recognition	Vulnerability
Curiosity	Inclusion	Reliability	Wealth
Dignity	Independence	Resourcefulness	Well-being
Diversity	Initiative	Respect	Wholeheartedness
Environment	Integrity	Responsibility	Wisdom

If there are others that are important to you, add them here:

Step 2: What do the values you highlighted in step 1 have in common?
Group similar values below in a way that makes the most sense to you.

Try to limit this to no more than five different groups.

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Group 4

Group 5

Step 3: Take a few moments to look at your lists from step 2. Choose one word from each list that best defines or describes that group. These are your core values. Write them on the first line in each section below.

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Group 4

Group 5

Step 4: Now turn that value into an action phrase by adding a verb. Write your phrases in the remaining open space in each section above.

Example: if making a difference was on your list, you might turn that into "seek out opportunities to make a difference."

Step 5: Some people like ranking their statements from step 4 in order of importance. If that is something you'd like to do, feel free to prioritize them below if that interests you.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Take a few minutes to celebrate completing this exercise! You've just invested in yourself by taking the time to deepen your awareness of your values—something that consciously and unconsciously helps influence our choices. Having a clear understanding of what is important to you can make it easier to evaluate whether past choices, present decisions, and future plans are in alignment with what matters most to you.

When we (and the people around us) say and do things that aren't in alignment with our values, it can be hard to feel happy or fulfilled. It can also cause us to feel anxious, embarrassed, critical of ourselves or others, and procrastinate or avoid people/tasks. If you notice this showing up for you, consider getting curious about why. What is the cause of this reaction? Is something happening that isn't aligned with your values? What do you need? What is this message trying to tell you?

If you're feeling clear about your values and would like to stop here, great!

If you want to dig deeper, I've got you! You can continue exploring this with the activities and prompts on the next page. You might find it helpful to journal your responses to these, mentally reflect, or talk through them with a trusted person.

More Ways To Explore

Each of the following have been given their own page and are listed in the same order below as they appear in the coming pages. No exercise is inherently better or more valuable than another, and you can do as many or few of them as you find helpful. Take what serves you, and leave what doesn't.

80th Birthday Exercise
Visualization and reflection

Life Map
Creative processing

Who Am I Exercise
Sentence completion

Prompts for writing and/or reflection
Open prompts

Values vs Beliefs
Information and reflection



80th Birthday Exercise

Try to imagine a future version of you showing up to your birthday party. You've just turned 80 years old, and the people who love and care about you have come together to celebrate this milestone. Take your time and try to visualize this moment with as much detail as possible.

Imagine what you will look like at 80. Imagine who will be surrounding you at the party-both who you think would be there and who you'd want to see the most. It could be anyone, regardless of age, whether you know them already or not, or where you/they live. No limits.

The guests are about to start giving speeches about you. They are sharing what you have meant to them, what you stood for, and the impact you have had in your life. No limits here either-think about what they're likely to say along with what you want them to say.

Now imagine the first person standing to speak is someone who is really important to you. What would you want them to say about you? Try to really hear that. Now imagine another person doing the same. Thank your mind for the opportunity to have this experience before moving on to the reflection.

Questions to ask yourself:

What came up for you?

Who did you imagine speaking?

What did you most want them to say about you?

How is that different or similar to what you thought they would say?

Did you hear your core values represented in what people said?

What other thoughts/feelings did you notice?

Life Map

A life map is just what it sounds like—a map of your life. It outlines key moments, starting with the day you were born up through the present day. Many people find completing this exercise leaves them with a powerful, visual reminder of how far they've come, the things they've accomplished, and how it all felt along the way.

Some people like to make the highs and lows stand out from one another. For higher moments, you may have a line going up to that event or make it a different color than lower moments. Other people prefer to make a straight line to list events. Some people only use text and others like adding images. This is just for you, and there are no rules, so get creative!



Birth

Present Day

Who Am I?

This is a sentence completion exercise. Simply fill in the blank for each line. Write as much or little as you feel like you need to.

I like _____

I don't like _____

I am responsible for _____

I am most confident when _____

I often wish for _____

I never will/want to _____

I am most thankful for _____

I don't give myself enough credit for _____

I want to learn more about _____

It bothers me when my friends/family/etc _____

My family is _____

I admire _____

My favorite memory is _____

I am happiest when _____

I am proud of myself because _____

My dream is to _____

My strengths are _____

I'd like to be better at _____

Asking for help makes me feel _____

I need help with _____

Something I could talk about all day is _____

If I could do anything for a day it would be _____

The best complement I have received is _____

I have overcome _____

I have helped others by _____

Prompts for writing and reflection

If I continue doing the same things that I am currently doing, would I be proud of myself and what I've done in ten years?

Am I living in a way that is aligned with my core values?

What kind of person am I?

Is that who I want to be?

What does a life well lived look like to me?

How do I feel about myself? What is my self-worth like?

Note: Self-esteem is what we think and feel and believe about ourselves. Self-worth is recognizing "I am greater than all of those things." Meaning, I am good enough and worthy of love just as I am.

What do I notice draining my energy or changing my mood?

What gives me energy and lifts my mood?

What goals do I have?

What thoughts do I have that are holding me back?

Where do those unhelpful thoughts come from?

What can I replace those thoughts with that is more helpful and true?

Important note:

You are human. No human is perfect and exemplifies their values at all times. This exercise is not an opportunity to invite shame into the work you are doing right now. This is a time for reflection, observation, and discovery. We aren't able to notice as many things or think clearly when we approach ourselves with a harshly critical lens. Breathe, notice, and use this exercise as a way to see what may need to be removed from your mind and life. This is an opportunity for growth necessary to build a more fulfilling future. Try to embrace what you find without judging yourself for it.

Values Vs Beliefs

Values and beliefs can seem like the same thing, and in many ways they do tend to influence one another. There are some key differences though, and knowing them can help you determine whether an unhelpful thought or uncomfortable experience is a message saying a value has been compromised or a belief has been called into question.

Values

- Can be personal, cultural, and societal
- Cultural/societal values influence what is deemed good or bad, beautiful or ugly, desired or shamed, etc.
- Suggest how we should behave in an ideal situation (ie: productive)
- Tend to reflect character traits
- Usually related to everyday life for people and society

Beliefs

- Something an individual holds to be true
- Cultural/societal values can influence personal beliefs and the choices we make in order to be good, beautiful, desired, etc.
- How we label our/others actual behaviors (ie: lazy if not productive)
- Tend to reflect moral judgements
- Usually influenced by religion or spirituality

Questions to ask yourself:

How have societal values influenced my personal beliefs and values?

What do I believe to be true about myself?

How many of those beliefs are influenced by societal values?

What else has influenced my beliefs?

How have my beliefs and values changed over time?

Do I have any beliefs about myself that are not helpful or true?

**QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?
WANT TO KNOW MORE?
I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Email me at:

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