

Introduction

Values. This word is used so much that sometimes its meaning gets muddy. We hear about family values, value in terms of customer service, and monetary value. In fact, if you look up the word in the dictionary, there are 13 definitions. Here's what the following exercise is after, in terms of "values":

- What is in your heart
- Something you love, honor, or desire in your life
- Qualities of life to which you gravitate naturally
- What you care about
- What you know to be true for you
- What is most important to you in life
- What brings you joy and peace

Mostly, it's **the WHY** behind things. So, for example, someone might say, "I value money." However, people value money for different reasons (e.g., because they equate money with having more security, adventure, freedom, or power). It is the ultimate meaning that is most important to identify.

The "value" or the "why" behind this exercise is so that you will experience more harmony and contentment in life. When your actions and goals are in alignment with your values, you feel this. When they are not, you feel disconnected, that you lack purpose, are out of balance, that something is missing, or that you are not being true to yourself. When you actually pay attention, make room for, and spend your time doing what's most important to you, you experience more peace, joy, and contentment. In other words, values are **the big SO WHAT** in everything you do.

Identifying what is most meaningful to you will enable you to understand what drives you, recognize what brings you joy, and choose a life that is harmonious with these dynamics.

Getting clear on your values is also a powerful step toward consciously attracting more of what you want in your life. It helps you recognize opportunities to invite these qualities into your life and to see what is present in your life for which you can be grateful, cherish, and nurture. The practical application of this exercise is to use values as your own motivating force and as an aid in making daily decisions.

Values: Your Personal Treasure

Values are:

The WHY behind your goals

The key to OWNING your time (not just managing it)

The COMPASS of your heart

Your own navigating instrument

What makes you YOU

Where your TREASURE is

Step One: Discover Your Values

Explore the questions below. They are a warm-up to the exercise that follows:

- It's your 80th birthday party. Your guests are spontaneously getting up and toasting you. What would you like them to say about you? Write it down, exactly as you would hear it, in the voice of the person toasting you.
- What are you usually doing during moments of feeling peaceful? What types of activities absorb you so much that you lose track of time?
- Think of a few people whom you admire. Name some of the qualities or reasons you admire them.

Step Two: Identify Your Values

Develop your own list of values by looking at what you wrote in response to Step One. You can also choose some words from the following list and feel free to make up your own.

Once you have several values circled, look for themes/groupings/similarities. Now come up with your top 5-8 values. How do you feel about them? Discuss them with a friend. Share them with your coach. What do they mean to you? Proceed to Step Three.

Freedom	Love	Spiritual Wholeness
Fun	Self-Expression	Adventure
Accomplishment	Security	Service
Creativity	Harmony	Power
Joy	Humor	Beauty
Growth	Excitement	Connection
Balance	Success	Passion
Comfort	Intimacy	Style
Wisdom	Health	Knowledge
Contribution	Happiness	Autonomy
Orderliness	Exploration	Recognition
Tradition	Prestige	Prosperity
Mastery	Abundance	Challenge
Leadership	Independence	Excellence
Hope	Integrity	Honor
Respect	Wealth	Humility
Potential	Justice	Opportunity
Simplicity	Compassion	Truth
Possibility	Faith	Understanding
Risk	Discovery	Community
Winning	Pleasure	Influence

Step Three: Make Your Values Come Alive

You are complete with identifying your values when you are able to see, hear, taste, smell, and feel them - when they are 3-D! How do you make your values come alive?

Here are some suggestions:

- For each value, write a sentence or two that defines that value (or a paragraph or two -- no length rules here). "Color in" or describe what the value means to you. Write in the present tense.
- Create a visual symbol for each (e.g., a certain sculpture, a photograph, a painting, some visual reminder around the house or in your office). This part may very well just come to you over the next few weeks. The idea is to actually integrate reminders of your values into your environment.
- Create a collage that reflects your values by cutting out various words and images you find in magazines.
- Select one value to focus on for the next 3 months. Create a goal around it. Enlarge its presence in your life.

Remember you can edit these any time. They are *living values* and while the core may remain, different nuances may develop as life continues to unfold.