



YOUR VALUES = YOUR PRIORITIES

Values are the things you believe in deeply and what's really important in the way you live and work. They (should) determine your **priorities**, and are often the measures to tell if your life is turning out the way you want.

When how you live and feel matches your values, life is good – you're satisfied and content. But when it doesn't align, that's when things feel... off or wrong. This can be a real source of unhappiness. This is why making a conscious effort to identify your values is so important.

How Your Values Help

Values exist, whether you recognize them or not. Life can be much easier when you acknowledge your values – and when you make plans and decisions that honor them.

If you value **family**, but you work 70-hour weeks in your job or business, you may feel internal stress and conflict. If you **don't value competition**, and you work in a highly competitive sales environment, you are highly unlikely to be satisfied with your job. As we've learned about overall well-being, when you are engaged in your career you are **twice as likely** to be living better overall.

When you know your values, you can use them to make decisions about how to best live your life.

Values are usually stable, yet they don't have strict limits or boundaries. As you move through life, your values may change. For example, when you start your career, success – measured by money and status – might be a top priority. But after you have a family, work-life balance may be what you value more.

As your definition of success changes, so do your personal values. This is why keeping in touch with your values is a lifelong exercise. You should continuously revisit this, especially if you start to feel unbalanced... and you can't quite figure out why.

As you go through the exercise below, bear in mind values that were important in the past may not be relevant now.





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Defining Your Values

When you define values, you discover what's truly important to you. A good way of starting to do this is to look back on your life – to identify when you felt really good, and really confident you were making good choices. Find examples from both your career and personal life. (if you are the happiest now, that's okay too)

Grab a notebook or journal (or use the back of this sheet).

Step 1: Identify the times when you were happiest

- What were you doing?
- Were you with other people? Who?
- What other factors contributed to your happiness?

Step 2: Identify the times when you were most proud

- Why were you proud?
- Did other people share your pride? Who?
- What other factors contributed to your feelings of pride?

Step 3: Identify the times when you were most fulfilled and satisfied

- What need or desire was fulfilled?
- How and why did the experience give your life meaning?
- What other factors contributed to your feelings of fulfillment?

Step 4: Determine your top values, based on your experiences of happiness, pride, and fulfillment

- Why is each experience truly important and memorable?

Use the following list of common personal values to help you get started. Narrow this list to 10-12 top values. (As you work through, you may find that some of these naturally combine. For instance, if you value philanthropy, community, and generosity, you might say that **service to others** is one of your top values.





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Abundance	Democraticness	Generosity	Merit	Serenity
Accountability	Dependability	Goodness	Obedience	Service
Accuracy	Determination	Grace	Openness	Shrewdness
Achievement	Devoutness	Growth	Order	Simplicity
Adventurousness	Diligence	Happiness	Originality	Soundness
Altruism	Discipline	Hard	Patience	Speed
Ambition	Discretion	Work	Patriotism	Spontaneity
Assertiveness	Diversity	Health	Perfection	Stability
Balance	Ease with uncertainty	Helping	Perseverance	Strategic
Being the best	Economy	Society	Personal	Strength
Belonging	Effectiveness	Holiness	Fulfillment	Structure
Boldness	Efficiency	Honesty	Piety	Success
Calmness	Elegance	Honor	Positivity	Support
Caring	Empathy	Humility	Power	Teamwork
Challenge	Enjoyment	Humor	Practicality	Temperance
Cheerfulness	Enthusiasm	Independence	Preparedness	Thankfulness
Clear-mindedness	Ethics	Ingenuity	Professionalism	Thoroughness
Commitment	Equality	Initiative	Prudence	Thoughtfulness
Communication	Excellence	Integrity	Quality	Timeliness
Community	Excitement	Inner	Recognition	Tolerance
Compassion	Expertise	Harmony	Reliability	Traditionalism
Competitiveness	Exploration	Inquisitiveness	Resourcefulness	Trust
Consistency	Expressiveness	Insightfulness	Respect	Truth
Contentment	Fairness	Intelligence	Responsibility	Understanding
Continuous	Faith	Intellectual Status	Restraint	Uniqueness
Improvement	Family	Intuition	Results-oriented	Unity
Contribution	Fidelity	Joy	Rigor	Usefulness
Control	Financial stability	Justice	Risk taking	Vision
Cooperation	Fitness	Leadership	Safety	Vitality
Correctness	Fluency	Legacy	Security	Wealth
Courage	Focus	Love	Self-actualization	Wisdom
Courtesy	Forgiveness	Loyalty	Self-control	Well-Being
Creativity	Freedom	Making a	Selflessness	
Curiosity	Friendship	difference	Self-reliance	
Decisiveness	Fun	Mastery	Sensitivity	





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Step 5: Prioritize your top values

This step is probably the most difficult, because you'll have to look deep inside yourself. It's also the most important step, because, when making a decision, you'll have to choose between solutions that may satisfy different values. This is when you must know which value is more important to you.

You can start by assigning each value on the list above a 1 - 10 rating. 10 being the most important. Then, take all of your 9 and 10 values and do the following:

- Write down your top 10-12 values, not in any particular order.
- Look at the first two values and ask yourself, "If I could satisfy only one of these, which would I choose?" It might help to visualize a situation in which you would have to make that choice. For example, if you compare the values of service and stability, imagine that you must decide whether to sell your house and move to another country to do valuable foreign aid work, or keep your house and volunteer to do charity work closer to home.
- Keep working through the list, by comparing each value with each other value, until your list is in the correct order.
- Ideally, you want to end with a list of your top 3-5 values by priority.

NOTE: Some values will overlap. For example, your top value may be Integrity which is the umbrella for

Honesty, Truth, Trust, and Respect. It's okay to have a "parent" value which then includes some "children" values underneath.

Step 6: Reaffirm your values

Check your top-priority values, and make sure they fit with your Vision Statement.

- Do these values feel good in your heart?
- Are you proud of them?
- If you weigh any current decision in your life against your values, does the decision become more clear?

When you consider your values in decision making, you can be sure to keep your sense of integrity and what you know is right, and approach decisions with confidence and clarity. You'll also know that what you're doing is best for your current and future happiness and satisfaction.

Making value-based choices may not always be easy. However, making a choice that you know is right is a lot less difficult in the long run.

