



An exercise to help you identify your core Values

“Core values are traits or qualities that represent deeply held beliefs. They reflect what is important to us, and what motivates us.”

It’s easy to assume that we all value the same sort of things, honesty, fairness, kindness, respect and so on. But, when you dip under the surface, we all value different things, different things are important to each one of us. Our values show up over time, through the way that we behave in the world, through what gives us happiness, what frustrates us and what energises us.

The little differences in our individual core values, and how we define our values are important.

Writing your values in your own words, no matter how clumsy they may sound, or different they might appear is a great place to start. It can take some time to come up with a list of values that seems ‘right’.

When starting to write your values, it’s important to focus on your values being about what’s important to you now at this point in your life. Don’t get sidetracked by thinking “I should have kindness as a value”, or “I’d like to be more like Jo who really values achievement”, or perhaps, “I shouldn’t value recognition”. There are no right or wrong values.

Be who you are... fully.

Tips to working out your own values here are based on the work of Alison Whybrow and her colleague Laura Whitworth who is internationally recognised for her pioneering work as a coach and in the development of coaching as a professional activity.

Get a large blank sheet of paper, write in pencil --- keep an eraser to hand.

Group similar ideas/words together and don’t worry if no one else would put those words together – this is entirely yours.

Peak Moment: think about *peak moments* times when you have been really energised and motivated, you felt you had endless resources to apply to whatever it was you were engaged in – who was present, what was going on, what values were being ‘honoured’ at that time.

Low Moments: think about those moments when you were angry, upset, frustrated. Perhaps frustrated about how someone else was treated. We might not recognise our values until something or someone gets in the way.

Must Haves: What is that you ‘must have’ in your life to be fulfilled. E.g. creative self-- expression? excitement?



Critical Decision Moments: at times when you've had to make a decision that you found particularly difficult to make, what was it finally that persuaded you in one direction?

As you become aware of each instance, what was it that led to the 'peak moment', to the 'frustration', to the 'must have' to the final decision? What does this say to you about what's important to you and what you value?

If starting with a blank sheet isn't going to work for you (everyone is different), below is a list of more than 100 'Values' below to get you started. Feel free to add your own words.

You can also complete a Values Questionnaire if you would find this helpful. Here is one well-respected example [Take the PVA — BVC \(valuescentre.com\)](http://valuescentre.com) which used to be free but now, unfortunately, needs to be paid for. If you take this survey or any of the others available, use the results to guide your thinking rather than THE answer.

Aim for a list of 5 values. Don't worry that they are not perhaps perfect, or that you are not 100% sure that they are the values that are really CORE to you (yet), this is not a 'one time only opportunity to state who you are'. Whilst our core values are probably quite stable, it can take some time to become really aware of what's critical to us.

Can you distil this list of values down to just five? When you have done this, develop a short descriptor for what the value word means (to you). The meaning of the word is more important than the word itself and might be quite different for you than for another person.

Accountability	Creativity	Family--orientedness
Accuracy	Curiosity	Fidelity
Achievement	Decisiveness	Fitness
Adventurousness	Democraticness	Fluency
Altruism	Dependability	Focus
Ambition	Determination	Freedom
Assertiveness	Devoutness	Fun
Balance	Diligence	Generosity
Being the best	Discipline	Goodness
Belonging	Discretion	Grace
Boldness	Diversity	Growth
Calmness	Dynamism	Happiness
Carefulness	Economy	Hard Work
Challenge	Effectiveness	Health
Cheerfulness	Efficiency	Helping Society
Clear--mindedness	Elegance	Holiness
Commitment	Empathy	Honesty
Community	Enjoyment	Honor
Compassion	Enthusiasm	Humility
Competitiveness	Equality	Independence
Consistency	Excellence	Ingenuity
Contentment	Excitement	Inner Harmony
Continuous Improvement	Expertise	Inquisitiveness
Contributionontrol	Exploration	Insightfulness
Cooperation	Expressiveness	Intelligence
Correctness	Fairness	Intellectual Status
Courtesy	Faith	Intuition

Joy	Security	Trustworthiness
Justice	Self-actualization	Truth-seeking
Leadership	Self-control	Understanding
Legacy	Selflessness	Uniqueness
Love	Self-reliance	Unity
Loyalty	Sensitivity	Usefulness
Making a difference	Serenity	Vision
Mastery	Service	Vitality
Merit	Shrewdness	
Obedience	Simplicity	
Openness	Soundness	
Order	Speed	
Originality	Spontaneity	
Patriotism	Stability	
Perfection	Strategic	
Piety	Strength	
Positivity	Structure	
Practicality	Success	
Preparedness	Support	
Professionalism	Teamwork	
Prudence	Temperance	
Quality-orientation	Thankfulness	
Reliability	Thoroughness	
Resourcefulness	Thoughtfulness	
Restraint	Timeliness	
Results-oriented	Tolerance	
Rigor	Traditionalism	