

Why are Values important?

The decisions we take every day are guided by our personal beliefs or values (whether we are conscious of them or not). Although ideally our choices would be made based on firm values, often we are not clear about what they are. A sense of purpose and direction is essential in any plan for success. Like businesses we want to maximise our success. To do this, we need to think about our own versions of our mission, goals, and values.

So, we need to ask ourselves some important questions:

- **What do I want out of life?**
- **Who am I and what values do I want to demonstrate in life?**
- **How do I want to be remembered? (What would I like others to say about me?)**
- **What is my definition of success?**

Having a clear sense of your personal values can result in more confidence, a stronger sense of your own identity and greater decisiveness. Once we know what our values are and have worked out their relative importance, it is easier to make major decisions because we are clear about our personal principles in life.

People who have jobs they really like tend to perform better than those who dislike their jobs – so if job satisfaction is linked to effectiveness, it has to be better to be in a job that satisfies more of your own personal values. Being true to ourselves is an important part of success in life.

Values Exercises

There are 2 options to choose from, followed by some reflection questions to help you apply your insights.

Option 1: stimulates you to find your own words (which in my experience are often more powerful).

Option 2: offers you some words to choose from.

Exploring and crystallizing your values may be new to you. It's almost certainly something you don't do every day. In my experience it can take some time to 'brew' and allow your thoughts to develop. Before you start, consider this question:

What would work for you and allow sufficient time for your thinking to develop?

(E.g. spreading this over several evenings or a weekend)

“How can you get very far,
If you don't know Who You Are?
How can you do what you ought,
If you don't know What You've Got?
And if you don't know Which To Do
Of all the things in front of you,
Then what you'll have when you are
through

Is just a mess without a clue
Of all the best that can come true
If you know What and Which and
Who”

Benjamin Hoff – The Tao of Pooh

Articulating your values – Exercise 1

On the next page you will see a table to complete. Your task is firstly to answer the question by filling in the middle column and then to ask yourself what is the *quality* in that answer that you value, admire or respect and put your answer in the third column. (Note that for some questions you can skip the middle column).

Here is a worked example...

The question	Write the name/answer	Write the quality – one word
A political leader	Nelson Mandela	Compassion
What do you love and what does that say about your values?	The table my grandfather made	Endurance
What is your favourite production (film, arts, play) and what does that say about your values?	Film - Kick the Bucket. Shows you need to grasp life, experiment, have adventure	Zest
Who is your role model – what do you like about them?	My sister-in-law – she can turn her hand to anything, always excels.	Accomplished
What quality would you like others to praise you for?		Generosity

The Question	The Answer	The Quality
A political leader – what do you like about them?		
Someone in authority		
A boss		
A friend		
Another friend		
A family member		
Another family member		
A role model		
Someone whose advice you take		
What do you like to do in your leisure time?		
What is your favourite production (film/ arts/ play)?		
What is your favourite book?		
What makes you feel good?		
What do you really enjoy?		

The Question	The Answer	The Quality
What do you love and what does that say about your values?		
For what would you like to be remembered?		
What do you want others to respond to in you?		
What motto would you use to title your life story?		
What gives you joy?		
What does the world need more of do you think?		
What gives you energy?		
What makes you feel alive?		
What annoys you?		
What would you like to be good at?		
At your 80 th Birthday, what do you want people to say about you?		
When do you feel inspired?		
What do you want to give to the world?		

Part Two of the Exercise

1. Write clearly in capitals, your values – one each on a post-it. Put them on a sheet, name it
2. Cluster your values and name the cluster
3. Put them in order with the most important at the top (if you struggle between 2, ask yourself, which is more important to me x or y value?)
4. Now hide/cover all but five
5. How does that feel?
6. Do you want to re-name or re-enter any?
7. You must be left with at least 3 and 5 max.

Part 3: Reflection (with a partner/ your coach)

Discuss your choice of values and change the words if necessary. Ask the following questions and note down your partner's answers.

1. Which values are most important to you? Why?
2. Which one will people recognise most easily?
3. Which if any, will people find it hard to recognise?
4. What happens if someone does or says something that goes against one of these values? (What are your triggers)?

When you have finished, give this piece of paper to them.

Exercise 2: Clarifying your personal values

Working out your Values

The exercise on the next page is intended to help you identify your personal values and work out those that are most important to you.

Step 1: Review the list of values and amend them to suit you (it is your list and your interpretation that counts!).

Step 2: In the column headed put tick those, which you think are more important to you than others. If you can, try and select your top 5.

Steps 3 & 4: Once you have done this, rate the values as follows:

In the column headed ☹, answer the question “How would I feel if my present satisfaction of this value was greatly reduced?”

Rate it on a scale of 1 – 5

1 = it would not matter

5 = devastated!

In the column headed ☺, answer the question “How would I feel if my present level of satisfaction with this value was greatly increased?”

Again, rate it on a scale of 1 – 5

1 = it would not matter

5 = fantastic, on top of the world!

Step 5

In the = column add the total of the two ratings and then circle your highest scores.

Personal Values	☑	☹	☺	=
Achievement (reaching goals & sense of accomplishment)				
Advancement (promotion, progress)				
Adventure (risk, new & challenging experiences)				
Affection (love, caring)				
Competitiveness (need to win, be the best)				
Cooperation (teamwork, collaboration)				
Creativity (being imaginative, original)				
Economic security (enough income to cover your expenses)				
Fame (renown, public recognition)				
Family Happiness (close relationships with family)				
Freedom (autonomy, liberty)				
Friendship (close relationships with others)				
Health (physical/mental)				
Helpfulness (helping others, contribution to society)				
Inner Harmony (being at peace with self & others)				
Integrity (honesty, standing up for your beliefs)				
Involvement (belonging, including others)				
Loyalty (commitment, dedication)				
Order (organised, structured)				
Personal Development (learning, achieving your potential)				
Pleasure (fun, enjoyment)				
Power (influence, authority)				
Recognition (acknowledgement & respect from others)				
Responsibility (accountability/ reliability)				
Self- respect (self-esteem, belief in your own abilities)				
Wealth (being/ getting rich)				
Wisdom (insight, gaining knowledge)				
<i>Any others that occur to you?</i>				

Personal Notes & questions for reflection:

- Why are these values important to me? (you may want to consider each in turn)
- What does it mean to me? How would I define it in terms of day-to-day actions?
- Do I really live, behave and act in a manner consistent with this value? (on a scale of 1-10)
- How can I live them more fully/ be more congruent with my values?
- What gets in the way of me living my values?
- How well do my values connect with those of the organization I work in?
- How well is my career fitting my values?
- What are your thoughts about your next step? What 1 or 2 things do you want to start/ stop or change?

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