

Our Values: Values Exercise

Our values are our emotional compass. They are the things that you believe are important in the way you live and work.

When the things that you do and the way you behave match your values, life is usually good – you're satisfied. But when these don't align with your personal values, that's when things feel... wrong. This can be a real source of unbalance, discomfort, or unhappiness.

Values – Core Values

This is why making a conscious effort to identify your values, in particular, your core values, is so important. Some of these values may come from your childhood. They could be cultural or learned through growing up and sharing your family experiences.

Your core values connect to your true self because they are what matters most to you when it comes to your personal and professional life. It is that little voice in your head that tells you whether or not to care about something.

How Values Help You

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 align with them

If you value punctuality, but you are often late to meetings, you will feel internal stress and conflict.

When you know your own values, you can use them to make decisions about how to live your life, and you can answer questions like these:

- Should I compromise, or be firm with my position?
- Should I follow the routine, or travel down a new path?

Values can include:

Accomplishment	Connection	Growth	Joy	Punctuality
Accountability	Contribution	Health	Love	Perseverance
Authenticity	Fairness	Honesty	Kindness	Resilience
Compassion	Gratitude	Integrity	Mindfulness	Respect

Identify Your Values

Go Ahead and List Your Core Values – aim for 5

Your Value	Why is this important to you?	What behaviours support this value?

Confirm/ Reaffirm your values – Rate their Priority

Check your values, and make sure that they fit with your life and your vision for yourself.

- Do these values make you feel good about yourself?
- Would you be comfortable to tell your values to other people?
- Do these values represent things you would support, even if your choice isn't popular, and it puts you in the minority?

When Values Conflict?

But what happens when your values conflict with others?

It could be in the workplace. Do you know the values of your workplace? Do all employees know and understand these values?

It could be in your personal life, your relationships.

Do you feel that you may need to make a decision or act in a way that causes you to sacrifice your values? How does it make you feel?

When this happens, you will likely experience a values conflict.

Healthy Conflict vs. Unhealthy Conflict: A Values Trade-Off

Almost every decision often involves contrasting two or more things that are important to us, and deciding which one is most important, which helps us to refine our values or the priority that we give them.

Imagine that your top values are Excellence and Accountability, in that order. When you're demonstrating support for a top value (i.e. Excellence), it may feel acceptable to sacrifice a secondary value (i.e. Accountability). But what happens if your top Value is Accountability, and the above example occurs – you are unable to meet a committed deadline. How does that make you feel? How do you respond?

By prioritising your values and confirming your top values, it can help you make better decisions. It can also help in the workplace, but as long as it is done in a healthy way. Be

willing for you and others to disagree. But ensure, you focus on the problem and not the person.

Resolving a Conflict of Values

There are a number of ways you can resolve conflict including a values conflict:

1. **Ignore it.** Sometimes a conflict is so small, it's almost irrelevant. Any attempt to address it is like making a mountain out of a molehill. In such cases, the best solution is to just ignore it.
2. **Address it.** Having a meaningful and respectful discussion with others impacted may be the simplest way to resolve it. For example: sincerely apologising for missing a deadline, explaining the steps taken to fix the situation, and the plan to prevent it from happening again.
3. **Negotiate around it.** Sometimes a conflict is more complicated than we initially thought or involves more parties than originally considered. Focus on healthy conflict – on the problem not the person, – talk it out, listen to what others are saying and try to find a new solution. List all the pros and cons. Be Creative.
4. **Mediate through it.** There are times a conflict turns out to be quite serious and requires more drastic action. Resolving such conflict may require a mediator: to listen well, ask thoughtful questions, be able to influence others to compromise, and find the best solution that works for everyone. For example, poor quality output, missed deadlines, low morale, and unhappy customers are a clear indication there are bigger issues at stake. Someone external may need to be brought in to identify the real issues and push for real change.

Reflection and Compassion

Values contribute to your happiness and success. Living your values means placing greater emphasis on and making a greater commitment to activities, experiences, and people that express those values.

There is no perfect set of values and they are not set in stone. Experiences, generally big changes in your life, may change completely what we value most.

While values are very important, the thing to remember, is that they are ideas, not behaviours.

Once you have identified your most important values, it is helpful to then engage in behaviours that move you towards those values.