**WHAT ARE YOUR CORE VALUES?**

**How would you define your values?**

In order to answer this question, we first need a clear understanding of what values are. Our values are the things that we believe are important in relation to how we live our lives.

Our values should (ideally) determine our priorities in life, and they are generally the measures we use to determine if life is heading in the direction, we want it to. Life is usually going pretty well, and we feel content and satisfied when the decisions we make and the way in which we act match our values.

However, when these don't align with our values, that's when we start feeling like something's 'wrong' and this can lead to unhappiness and frustration. To avoid this, we must make a real effort to identify our values.

**How understanding values will help you:**

**Whether we recognise them or not - values exist! We can make life much easier for ourselves by acknowledging our values and by making plans and decisions that honour them.**

If you value family, but your job requires you to work a 60-hour week, will this cause you conflict and stress? Or perhaps you work in a competitive sales environment, but you don’t value competition, are you likely to have high job satisfaction?

It's in situations like these that understanding our values can really help. When we have a good understanding of our values, we can use them to make important life decisions and answer questions.

Taking time to understand the real priorities in our lives will enable us to determine the best direction to take and help us work towards achieving our life goals.

**WHAT ARE YOUR CORE VALUES?**

**Defining Your Values**

Defining your personal values will help you to discover what's truly important to you. The best way to start doing this is to reflect on your life and identify times when you felt really positive and confident that you were making good choices.

**Step 1: Identify times in your life when you were at your happiest, giving examples from your personal life and your career (this will ensure some balance in your answers).**

1. What were you doing?

2. Were you with other people? Who?

3. What other factors contributed to your happiness?

NOTES

**WHAT ARE YOUR CORE VALUES?**

**Step 2: Identify times in your life when you were most proud, giving examples from your personal life and your career.**

1. Why were you proud?

2. Did other people share your pride? Who?

3. What other factors contributed to this feeling of pride?

NOTES

**WHAT ARE YOUR CORE VALUES?**

**Step 3: Identify times in your life when you felt most fulfilled and satisfied. Again, use both personal and work examples.**

1. What need, or desire was fulfilled?

2. How did this experience give your life meaning?

3. What other factors contributed to this fulfilment?

NOTES

**WHAT ARE YOUR CORE VALUES?**

**Step 4: Determine your most important values, based on your experiences of inner peace. Consider why each experience is so memorable and important?**

Use the list of common personal values on the next page to help you get started – aim for approximately 10 top values.

(As you work through this exercise, you may find that some of these values naturally combine. For example, if you value generosity, philanthropy, and community, you could say that serving others is one of your top values.)

NOTES

 **DEFINING YOUR PERSONAL VALUES**

Authenticity Accountability Accuracy Achievement Adventurousness Authenticity Ambition Assertiveness Balance Belonging Boldness Calmness Carefulness Certainty Challenge Change

Clear-Mindedness Commitment Community Compassion Connection Consistency Contentment Contribution Creativity Decisiveness Dependability Determination Devoutness Diligence Discipline Discretion

Diversity

Effectiveness Efficiency Empathy Enthusiasm Equality Excellence Excitement Exploration Expressiveness Fairness

Faith Freedom Fulfilment Generosity Giving Goodness Growth Hard Work Honesty Hope Humility

Independence Ingenuity Identity Increase Justice Leadership Legacy

Love Loyalty Obedience Openness

Peace

Practicality Purpose Professionalism Progress Reliability Resourcefulness Relationships Risk

Security

Self Actualisation

Self-control Self Improvement Sharing Significance Selflessness

Self-Worth Spontaneity Stability Teamwork Temperance Thoroughness Timeliness Tolerance Traditionalism Trustworthiness Truth Uncertainty Understanding Uniqueness Unity

Variety

Vision

Vitality

**Note:** Although this list of potential values is thorough, it is not necessarily complete. Please feel free to add to the list if required.

**WHAT ARE YOUR CORE VALUES?**

**STEP 5: Prioritise your ‘top’ values**

This step is usually the most challenging as you'll have to look deep within yourself. However, it's also the most important step, because, when you're faced with a decision, you may have to choose between solutions that will satisfy different values.

This is when it's crucial to know which value is more important to you. Without worrying about the order, make a list of your top 10 values.

Look at the first two values on the list and ask yourself, 'If I could only satisfy one of these, which one would I choose?'

Work your way through the list, comparing each value with each of the other values until you've got your list in the correct order for you.

NOTES

**WHAT ARE YOUR CORE VALUES?**

**STEP 6: Reaffirm your values - Check your top-priority values, and make sure they fit with your life and your vision for yourself.**

1. Do these values you've chosen make you feel good about yourself

2. Are you proud of your top three values?

3. Would you be comfortable to tell people you respect about your values?

4. Do these values represent things you would support, even if your choice weren’t popular, and it puts you in the minority?

When you take into consideration your values in decision making, you can be certain to keep a sense of integrity and what you know is right, while being able to approach decisions with confidence and clarity.

You'll also know that what you're currently doing is motivated by the progress that you want to make in life. It's not always easy to make value-based choices, but it will more than likely make life much easier in the long run.

NOTES

**WHAT ARE YOUR CORE VALUES?**

**KEY POINTS:**

Identifying and taking the time to understand your values is an important and challenging exercise. Your personal values are central to who you are – and who you want to become.

By becoming more aware of these important factors in your life, you can use them as a guide to make the best choice in any situation. Some of life's decisions are really about determining what you value most.

When many options seem reasonable, as a leader it can be comforting and helpful to rely on your core values, using them as a strong guiding force to point you in the right direction.

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