

Values Clarification Exercise

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Our deeply held values, ones that honor God and bring forth the best in us, are powerful catalysts for positively shaping our lives. The more we can live in ways that reflect those values, we enjoy greater purpose and greater “aliveness” during our brief time here. Further, when we are hit with inevitable hard times, being more attuned to our deeply held values can help us live with greater integrity through those times, and enjoy greater peace of mind. And, as you grow in embodying these values, they become virtues that you live out in more powerful ways.

The first step then is to get in touch with those values. This exercise is designed to see which words (listed below) capture your heart, and thus pull out your key values.

On the next page are listed a number of words that people are inclined to resonate with as a core value. Please read through the list initially and circle words that your heart resonates with on a deeper level; words that perhaps inspire you or that you really connect with. To be clear, this is not about choosing words you think you should value, or how you think you should be, it is about words that authentically matter to you. If there are deeply held values you hold that are not listed, feel free to add them to your list. You may even want to change the word from a verb to a noun, or visa versa (e.g., inspiring to inspire, or leadership to leading); it is really what captures you that matters.

When you have read through the entire list, go back over the words you’ve circled (and/or written down), and write them down on a separate piece of paper. Work to get this list down to roughly 8 to 12 words; if you have less than that it is okay too. (Feel free to do this in pencil or on your computer; you will probably rearrange this a few times before you get it just right for you.) As you then look at the words, look for themes or groupings, and consider stringing them together perhaps in groups of two or three, in a way that speaks to you. Arrange the words in the way that energizes your heart the most. Samples could be:

Authenticity/Connectedness/Unity or Wholeness/Play/Happiness
Teaching/Inspiring/Building or Leadership/Modeling/Contribute

The words in the string need to have a meaningful relationship for you, and need to “hang together” for them to have the most impact for you. Again, you will probably revisit this a few times over the next few months. There is no real “right way”, it is more about what moves or impacts you the most.

After you have put together your strings of value words, I encourage to go over your list with your coach in a future session, or if you’re not in coaching, perhaps with a close friend or family member, and talk about what the different values strings mean to you. You can also pray over them regularly, and place them in key places that you will be able to see often, so that you will be reminded of what matters to you, and be more likely to draw upon them more often. Enjoy the process!

Core Values Checklist

Achievement	Adventure	Authenticity	Balance	Beauty
Building	Caring	Collaboration	Commitment	Community
Compassion	Connectedness	Contribution	Courage	Creativity
Discipline	Directness	Empathy	Empowerment	Energize
Excellence	Fairness	Faith	Family	Focus
Freedom	Friendship	Generosity	Growth	Happiness
Help Others	Help Society	Honesty	Humor	Independence
Inspiring	Integrity	Joy	Knowledge	Leadership
Leisure	Love	Loyalty	Mastery	Modeling
Nurturing	Obedience	Orderliness	Partnership	Peace
Perseverance	Play	Purity	Respect for others	Responsibility
Risk	Romance	Sacrifice	Security	Self-care
Service	Spirituality	Stability	Strengthening	Teach
Trust	Unity	Vitality	Wholeness	Wisdom

*Portions of this exercise are drawn from The Portable Coach, by T. Leonard, The Power of Full Engagement, by J. Loehr and T. Schwartz, Co-Active Coaching, by Whitworth et. al., and from Personal and Executive Coaching, by J. Auerbach.