

MODULE 3 ACTIVITY

Life Values Inventory

As we have mentioned, values are things that are meaningful and important in life and bring you a sense of vitality or purpose. Values are aplenty, and the specific combination of values that guide us differ per person. In addition, values might grow or lessen in importance depending on your current path in life.

It is important to take time to pause and explore your current values. Some of these values may already be apparent to you because you engage in them consistently. You might engage with others but not be aware of them, thus their ability to give you purpose is lost or underutilized. Other values may have declined in importance to you, and this may be okay with you or you may want to re-emphasize them. You can only know for sure by identifying your values as they are now.

One thing to remember is that it is really common to mistake values for wishes or goals. We will focus on goals in a moment. When trying to identify values, try to think of actions and not outcomes. That may help you clarify your values from goals (e.g., reading for enjoyment vs. reading a specific number of books in a year).

The following exercise is an in-depth exercise for those who really like digging into their values. If you want a shorter version, try the True North exercise, which has a similar structure. We also encourage you to try the other exercises, as they may help in unique ways.



Below are some of the common areas in life that people value with some common reflective questions. They serve as the guiding compass when navigating the many hills, paths, and unexpected journeys in life. Review them and take a moment to ask yourself some of these questions.

Physical Well-Being

What values do you have regarding your physical well-being? How do you want to look at yourself?

Family Relationships

What kind of relationships do you want with your family? What kind of mother/father/brother/sister/uncle/aunt do you want to be? What is important to you about a good family?

Intimate Relationships

What kind of partner do you want to be? What quality of relationship do you want to be part of? How do you want to spend time together?

Citizenship/Community

What kind of environment do you want to be a part of? How do you want to contribute to your community?

Mental/Emotional Health

What helps you maintain sound mental health? Why is this important to you? What issues would you like to address?

Spirituality

What kind of relationship do you want with God/nature/the Earth/mankind? What does having a spiritual life mean to you? How can you exercise this?



Friends/Social Relationships

What sort of friend do you want to be? How would you like to act toward your friends? How can these relationships be improved?

Hobbies/Recreation

How would you like to enjoy yourself? What relaxes you? When are you most playful? Are there any special interests you would like to pursue?

Education/Training/Personal Growth

How would you like to grow? What kind of skills would you like to develop? What would you like to know more about?

Employment/Career

What kind of work is valuable to you? What qualities do you want to bring as an employee? What kind of work relationships would you like to build?

On this page are common values within each domain. Notice how each value listed is an action. This means these are ongoing pursuits. Some of them may be things you have never attempted or valued yourself. Read through them and find a mixture of existing and new values.

Family Relations

- Work on current relationships
- Spend time with family
- Take an active role in raising my children
- Maintain consistent, healthy communication

Marriage/Couples/Intimate Relationships

- Establish a sense of safety and trust
- Give and receive affection
- Spend quality time with my partner
- Show my partner how much I appreciate them

Friendships/Social Relationships

- End destructive relationships
- Reach out for new relationships
- Feel a sense of belonging
- Have and keep close friends
- Spend time with friends
- Have people to spend time with

Mental/Emotional Health

- Seek activities and experiences that give me pleasure
- Have free time
- Be independent and take care of myself
- Challenge my negative thinking
- Make my own decisions
- Engage in therapy
- Take my medications
- Stay active

Physical Well-Being

- Live in secure and safe surroundings
- Engage in regular exercise
- Have a steady income to meet physical needs
- Eat foods that are nourishing to my body
- Maintain a balance between rest and activity
- Get enough sleep

Citizenship/Community

- Contribute to the larger community
- Help people in need
- Improve society
- Be committed to a cause or group that has a larger purpose
- Make sacrifices for others

Spirituality

- Follow traditions and customs
- Live according to spiritual principles
- Practice my religion or faith

- Grow in understanding myself, my personal calling, and life's purpose
- Find meaning in life
- Develop a personal philosophy of life
- Spend time in nature
- Focus on the greater good

Education/Training/Personal Growth

- Be involved in undertakings I believe personally are significant
- Try new and different things in life
- Learn new things
- Be daring and seek adventure
- Have an exciting life
- Learn to do challenging things that help me grow as a person

Employment

- Be powerful and able to influence others, have authority
- Make important decisions that affect the organization
- Be a leader
- Make a great deal of money
- Be respected by others
- Be seen by others as successful, be ambitious
- Become well-known, obtain recognition and status
- Be productive, work hard
- Achieve significant goals
- Enjoy the work I do

On this last page, replace the guiding questions with your chosen values from the list above, or others that you identified on your own. Try to have a mixture of current values and new values, and “try on” those new values by finding specific actions that fulfill them. For example, if you selected “Spend time in nature,” you may choose a micro-change by including a walk into your weekly routine, or you can go big by hiking in a new park, or even bigger by camping for a weekend without technology. Give this inventory a try.

