

Values Worksheet

What Are Values?

Values are deeply held principles and beliefs about what matters to us in our work and life. They represent what is most important to us in a career and life well-lived.

Sometimes called “needs,” values are the things in life that we simply can’t do without. As a professional, some of your values might include:

- **Learning:** Continually acquiring new knowledge and skills.
- **Contribution:** Working to benefit a person or group outside of yourself.
- **Integrity:** Upholding honesty and strong moral principles.
- **Empathy:** Understanding and sharing the feelings of others.
- **Innovation:** Seeking out new and creative ways to improve learning and development.
- **Growth:** Committing to continuous personal and professional development.
- **Collaboration:** Valuing teamwork and collective success.
- **Respect:** Treating others with consideration and honoring their contributions.

These are just some examples of potential values. Each and every person has their own set of “core” values that they tend to prioritize over others based on their unique genes, temperaments, upbringings, goals, etc.

Unlike goals, which are specific, measurable outcomes we aim to achieve, values are enduring beliefs about what matters that shape our attitudes and actions. You can never “obtain” a value—but you do honor it in the types of goals you pursue and the actions you take to achieve them along the way.

Why Do Values Matter?

Values matter because they guide our behaviors, actions, and decisions. Each time we say or do something, we are behaving in alignment with one or more values/needs. In a way, everything we say or do is a statement to others (and ourselves) about what we care about, who we are, and what we stand for.

Therefore, it’s quite important to get clear on *what* we value most to make sure that we aren’t hypocrites—that what we say or do reflects what we claim we care about the most. It’s one thing to say that you value “rest,” but if you continue to stay up late scrolling through social media on your phone, do you really value it? Seems like you value “novelty,” “fun,” “connection,” or maybe “stimulation” a bit more, no?

How To Use Values

Identifying your core values and utilizing them in your daily work can have a profound impact on your career and life. Getting clear on what *actually* matters to you most—not what matters to others, what you think you “should” value, etc.—and regularly reminding yourself of what you value can lead to more consistent and authentic behavior, improved decision-making, and increased satisfaction in your career and personal life. Furthermore, prioritizing your values can help you to more intentionally navigate decisions, challenges, and transitions.

Part I - Identify Your Values

To leverage your values, you first need to determine what they are. Here is a quick and easy exercise to help you do that.

Step 1: Reflect on Your Values

Think about times when you felt the most fulfilled and content. Where were you? Who was there? What were you doing? What values or needs of yours were being honored?

Consider times of frustration or conflict. What values were being suppressed or ignored? What was missing or lacking?

Step 2: Identify Core Values

Based on your reflections from Step 1, list 20 values that are most important to you in a career and life well-lived:

You might explore these comprehensive lists of values for examples and inspiration:

- [Brené Brown's List of Values](#)
- [James Clear's List of Core Values](#)
- [Scott Jeffrey's Core Values List](#)

Step 3: Seek Feedback from Trusted Sources

Ask family members, friends, colleagues, and significant others what they think matters to you. Record what they have to say too:

Step 4: Prioritize Your Values

Review the 20 or so values you identified in Steps 2 and 3. Then, pick out your top 10 values. These should be things in life that matter to you the most—the kinds of things that, if you didn't have, would result in a pretty sucky career or life

Step 5: Create a Values Statement

Develop a clear and concise values statement describing what you value, why, and how you currently honor it. Put it somewhere where you can see it to remind yourself of what you want your career or life to stand for.

Part II - Harness Your Values

It's one thing to have a values statement. It's another to actually *use* it. Here are some ways you might harness your newly discovered values

Activity 1: Values Assessment

On a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely), rate how well you are currently honoring each of your core values. (Warning: If your current goals and actions are NOT aligned with your values, this exercise may be pretty sobering).

For values you are honoring, congratulate yourself for living with integrity! For values you aren't honoring so much and want to honor more, think about what's getting in the way. What is preventing you from living out this value? How can overcome these barriers and honor this value more?

Activity 2: Set Values-Based Goals

Pick one core value you'd like to honor more. Set a goal for doing that in the next year, quarter, month, or week. Make sure the goal is:

- *Specific* - it's clear what you will do
- *Measurable* - you can assess the extent to which you succeeded
- *Actionable* - it's clear how to move forward with it
- *Realistic* - you have a high likelihood of success given your current time and resources

- *Time-bound* - there's a deadline

For example, if you value “growth” and want to challenge yourself more, you might set a goal to “Complete one 10-week online course in programming by the end of this quarter.”

Set a values-based goal below:

Activity 3: Create a Plan and Align Your Daily Actions

Choose a goal you have that aligns with one of your values. Then, develop an action plan describing *how* you will achieve it. What will you do? When? Where? How much or how frequently?

For example, if you set a “growth” goal to complete a 10-week programming course by the end of this quarter, you might sketch out what activities will be required, how often you will study, when and where you will allocate time in your schedule, and so on. You might use a planner and calendar to

Activity 4: Make Values-Based Decisions

If you need to make an important decision, you can also use your core values to assess potential options. For the options you’re considering, rate how well you think they align with each of your values on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely).

Option 1:

Option 2:

Option 3:

Activity 5: Conduct a Values Inventory

Values can change over time. So, it's important to reflect regularly on your core values to determine how relevant they still are.

For each of your core values, consider how important it is to you at this stage of your career or life. You might still value it, but not as much as earlier.

Ask yourself, is it still worthy of being a core value? Or has it fallen off? Are there other values would you like to honor now?
