

Discover Your Core Values

A Guided Workbook



Discover what truly matters to you and
build a career aligned with your values.

Mindful Career
Career & Confidence Coaching

Introduction

What are core values?

Imagine you have to make an important decision. There isn't an obvious right choice, and after carefully weighing all the pros and cons, each option seems equally viable. How do you decide?

It's in moments like these that we are often guided by something we can't quite grasp. Some people call it a *gut feeling*, others *intuition*. But what is often at work beneath the surface are our core values.

Your core values are your fundamental beliefs. They reflect what is important to you, what you stand for, and the kind of person you want to be. Unlike morals or ethics, which are often shaped by society, culture, or religion, your core values are deeply personal.



Think of your core values as your inner navigation system. They don't tell you exactly which path to take, but they guide your decisions, actions and behavior.

Why core values matter

When you know what truly matters to you, you're more likely to experience:

- ☐ Greater clarity when making important life and career decisions.
- ☐ A stronger sense of purpose.
- ☐ More confidence to make choices that feel right for you.
- ☐ Authentic relationships by acting in ways that reflect who you are.
- ☐ Greater fulfillment by aligning your daily actions with your values.

How to get the most out of this exercise

- ☐ **Approach things with an open mind.** We're often quick to presume we know the answers before we even start. As a result, we miss the opportunity to embark on a creative self-discovery process. Try to adopt a beginner's mind: let go of any expectations about what will happen and see if you can get into a state of curiosity, wanting to understand yourself more deeply.
- ☐ **There are not "right" or "wrong" answers.** It's like your taste in ice cream. If you prefer chocolate but someone else prefers vanilla, that doesn't mean their taste is right and yours is wrong.
- ☐ **Values are not goals.** A goal is something you want to achieve in the future (e.g. "get a new job" or "find a partner"). Your values determine how you want to act as you pursue your goals. Values are like a compass that keeps you headed in a desired direction.
- ☐ **Examples of values.** On the last pages of this workbook, you'll find a list of the most common values. These are not the "right" or "best" values, they're just to give you some ideas. Feel free to add your own values to the list.

In order to do this exercise, all you need is a few pieces of paper, a pen and an undisturbed place. When you're ready, turn the page and follow the instructions.

MODULE 01

Three different perspectives to help you discover the values that guide your life.

What you love to do

Reflecting on your hobbies, interests and things you love to do is a great starting point to discover your core values.

Step 1

What you love to do today. What are your interests and hobbies? How do you spend your free time? Think about anything that you regularly do or things you've done in the last few months that gave you a sense of fulfillment or that made you feel connected with something.

Complete the statement "I love to..." as often as you can.

- » I love to read crime stories
- » I love to spend time with my children
- » I love to travel to new places

What you loved to do in the past. Think back to things you loved to do when you were younger, a child or a teenager. In the same manner, complete the statement "When I was younger, I loved to..." as often as possible.

Step 2

Reflect about why you enjoy these things. This is a crucial element of the exercise. Two people can have the same interest, for example playing tennis, but their WHYs can be very different. One person might enjoy the competition - for them it's about winning and seeing who's the better player. The other person might play tennis to get some exercise and keep in shape - for them it's part of a healthy lifestyle.



What you love to do

Step 3

Assign values. Now go back to your list and try to determine what values lie behind each of the things you enjoy. In some cases the values already became evident when you thought about your motivations.

Important: to find values, think about what **qualities** you bring to each of these moments. The person who likes to play tennis in order to win is likely driven by values like *Challenge* (challenging herself to improve and become better) and *Skillfulness* (using and improving her skills to do something well). The other person might live out the values of *Fun* and *Engagement* when playing tennis.

Refer to the last pages for a list of the most common values. The list is by no means exhaustive, so don't restrict yourself to those values only.

Examples

I love to...	Why	Values
Read sci-fi novels	I enjoy escaping into different worlds, thinking about what the future might look like and how humanity will evolve.	Curiosity Adventure
In the past, I loved to...	Why	Values
Take pictures with my single-lens camera	I enjoyed being outside all day, being on my own, exploring my surroundings, discovering new things, working with the images in creative ways.	Adventure Creativity Independence

Meaningful experiences

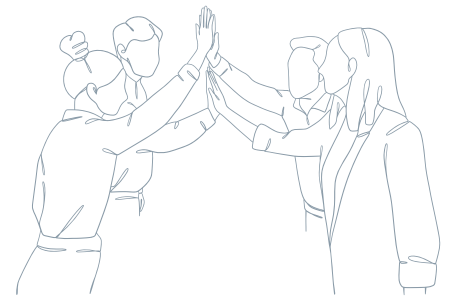
Our values often become most visible during meaningful moments.

Sometimes these are positive experiences in which we felt alive, connected, or deeply engaged. At other times, they are difficult experiences that left us feeling frustrated or disappointed. Both types of experiences can reveal what matters most to us.

Step 1

Peak experiences. Think back to some moments in your life when you felt particularly alive, fulfilled, proud, or deeply engaged. These can be related to work, relationships, personal achievements, or everyday moments.

Write down 3–5 experiences that stand out.



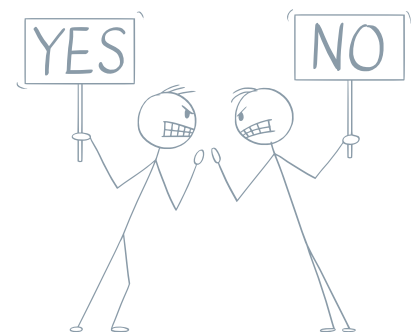
Step 2

Reflect. Ask yourself: “What happened?” “Why was this experience meaningful?” Then assign the underlying values.

Step 3

Negative experiences. Think back to some recent situations in which you were frustrated, upset or sad. In the same manner, reflect on why the situation affected you so strongly and what felt wrong about it.

For each experience, ask yourself: “What values were being violated, ignored, or suppressed?”



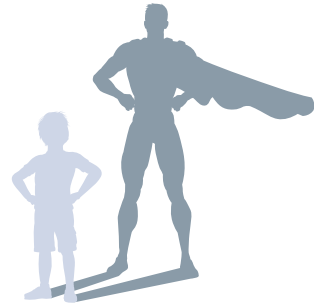
Refer to the last pages for a list of the most common values. The list is by no means exhaustive, so don't restrict yourself to those values only.

Role models

Another way to discover your values is by reflecting on people you admire and respect. Role models can help us identify qualities and ways of being that we aspire to embody ourselves.

Step 1

Choose one or two role models. Think of one or two people you admire, respect, or look up to. These can be people you know personally or indirectly, or even historical figures. Write down their names.



Step 2

Identify the underlying values. For each person, ask yourself: “What do I admire about them?”, “What qualities do they embody?” and “What do they stand for?” Look beneath those qualities and identify the values they represent.

Examples

My role models	Why	Values
My grandfather	He always spoke his mind. He never said anything he didn't mean just to please someone or avoid an uncomfortable situation.	Honesty Authenticity

Refer to the last pages for a list of the most common values. The list is by no means exhaustive, so don't restrict yourself to those values only.

MODULE 02

By now, you have explored your interests, meaningful experiences, and role models. You may have discovered dozens of values that resonate with you. In this module, you'll organize, refine, and prioritize those values into the ones that are most important to you to who you are.

Group & Define

Step 1 - Group similar values

By now, you might have a long list of personal values. Maybe there are 10, 20 or even 50 values on your list. The first step is to group similar values under related themes.

For example, compassion, empathy, and understanding are similar. Or independence, freedom and individuality are related. Group them together.

Step 2 - Find common themes

Look at each group and select a word that best represents the whole group. It can be one of the values within the group or a new word.

For example, you might choose “Self-Reliance” as the word that best describes your values of independence, freedom and individuality.

Prioritize & Rank

Step 3 - Determine top values

After completing the previous step, you may still have a considerable list of values. Now comes the time to determine which values are most important to you. You want to end up somewhere between 5 and 10 values.

If you have too many, you won't be able to remember them all or use them effectively, for example when making difficult decisions. Picking just a few forces you to get to the root of who you really are and what you stand for.

Ask yourself: What values are essential to your life? What values represent your primary way of being?

Step 4 - Rank your values

The final step is to rank your core values in order of importance. This is usually the most challenging part, but also a crucial one; you may have core values that are in conflict with each other, for example, growth and stability. Or there might be situations where not all your values can be met. So it's important to know which of your values are non-negotiable.

In order to do this, write down your core values in no particular order. Then look at the first two values and ask yourself, "If I could satisfy only one of these, which would I choose?" Go through the whole list and compare all values with each other until your list is in the right order.

Review & Live by them

Step 5 - Review & adjust

Congratulations! You've completed the exercise. It's time to take a break and clear your mind. I'd recommend sleeping on it and coming back to your list the next day. With a fresh mind, look at your core values and answer the following questions:

- ☐ Do these values "feel right"? Do they resonate with you?
- ☐ Do these values represent things you would support, even if your choice wasn't popular?
- ☐ Would you be comfortable and proud to tell your values to your friends and family?

Don't hesitate to make changes to your list - nothing is written in stone.

Step 6 - Observe

Over the coming days, be mindful of the choices you make and keep reviewing your list regularly. Whenever you make a decision, consciously put a label on the values behind it.

Are the values on your list reflected in your daily life? If not, are there other values that you are living by as you go through your day?

Keep working on your list (removing/replacing values, changing the order, finding a better word to describe a specific value, etc.) until you are satisfied with it.

Final notes

Knowing your core values is only one step on the path to an authentic life. Learning to live by them every day can become an important source of fulfillment and meaningful success.

The key is to keep your values top of mind. Put them where you can always see them - for example on sticky notes in your bathroom, or on your screensaver or desktop background.

As you go through your days, identify behaviors and actions that satisfy your core values. Try to bring more of those into your life - and get rid of the ones that are in conflict with your values. Whenever you set a goal or evaluate an opportunity, make sure you take your core values into account.

By actively and consciously living your values, you will experience - and enjoy - personal growth.

“Knowing your values does not mean you’ll always live in perfect accordance with them, but as a map, they will help guide you on your journey through life.”

—

AMY BLACKLOCK

Thinking about a career change?

If you'd like to explore your next steps further, my free Career Change Starter Kit includes additional exercises and practical strategies to help you gain clarity and navigate change with confidence.

→ [Get the free Career Change Starter Kit](#)

