



## Try this:

Get in touch with what you value with this simple exercise:

1. **Clear your mind** – take a deep breath and try to empty your mind of any preconceived ideas of what values you might hold
2. **List your core values** – you can find lots of lists of values online to choose from but you may like to try asking yourself these questions first:
  - Think about a key positive experience in your life. What was happening to you? What was going on? What sorts of values were you honouring at the time?
  - Now do the opposite with a time when you felt frustrated or angry. What was going on? What were you feeling? What values were being suppressed or ignored?
  - What's important to you? Beyond basic human needs what is vital for you to feel fulfilled? A sense of excitement and adventure? Health and vitality? Creative self-expression?
3. **If you combine** all of the values from Step 2 you will have a master list of personal values – there may be 20 – 30 values on your list now. Your next step is to group these values under related themes.
  - Values like accountability, responsibility, and timeliness are all related.
  - Values like learning, growth, and development relate to each other.
  - Connection, belonging, and intimacy are related too. Group them together.

#### 4. **Highlight the central theme** of each value group:

If you have a group of values that include honesty, transparency, integrity, candour, directness, and truth, select a word that best represents the group.

You can keep the other words in the group in brackets to give your primary value more context. You'll use them again in step 6.

#### 5. **Determine your top** personal core values

After completing step 4, you still may have a sizable list of values. Here are a few questions to help you whittle your list down:

- What values are *essential* to your life?
- What values represent your *primary way of being*?
- What values are essential to supporting your inner self?

As a unique individual, you possess certain [strengths](#) and weaknesses. Your values matter most to *you*.

How many core values should you end up with? Too few and you won't capture all the unique dimensions of YOU. Too many and you'll forget them or won't take advantage of them.

While the number of core values differs for each person, the magic range seems to be between 5 and 10.

**Rank them in the order of importance.** This is often the most challenging part.

You may need to do this step in multiple sittings. After doing one round of ranking put it aside and "sleep on it." Revisit your ranking the next day and see how it sits with you. Then, go through the process again.

#### 6. **Get creative**

Highlighting values into memorable phrases or sentences helps you articulate the meaning behind each value which then helps you work out how to ensure you are living this value in your day-to-day life.

It gives you the opportunity to make the value more emotional and memorable.

- **Use inspiring words and vocabulary.** Our brains are quick to delete or ignore the mundane and commonplace.

- **Look for words that evoke and trigger *emotional responses*.** They will be more meaningful and memorable.
- **Play to your strengths** in crafting your values.
- **Make your value statements rich and meaningful** to you so they inspire you to uphold them.

You could use other words from the groupings you made in step 3 in your description. For example, let's say you've identified a core value of health to represent other values, like energy and vitality. Your values statement might be: "Health: to live with full vitality and energy every day."

## **7. Tweak**

Once you've completed your list of core values, walk away from them and revisit them the next day. Review your list:

- How do they make you feel?
- Do you feel they are consistent with who you are?
- Are they personal to you?
- Do you see any values that feel inconsistent with your identity (as if they belong to someone else, like an authority figure or society) and not you?
- Check your priority ranking. Do you feel like your values are in the proper order of importance?

Nothing is final. Make any tweaks and changes as necessary.

**Once you have a list of 5 – 10 top values you can start identifying to what extent they are present in your life and how your actions and decisions can increase them.**