

VALUES EXERCISE

Values are principles or qualities that are intrinsically desirable. They may be rooted within the culture of an organisation, community, or society. They can also be unique to an individual. Examples might be: beauty, equality, friendship, fame, wisdom. Values form the basis of how we approach our lives. What we value, and the extent to which we value those things will affect our attitudes and beliefs, the choices we make and the ways in which we behave.

Here is Nelson Mandela, speaking from the dock during the Rivonia trial:

“During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

He clearly names four values he holds: **Democracy Freedom Harmony Equality**

He links them together into an ‘ideal’ – and states absolutely that he is prepared to give up everything, even his life, for the struggle to see it achieved.

VALUES EXERCISE – PART 1

Look at the following groups of words and pick the ten that resonate most closely with you or for you. You are looking for *values*, not wants, wishes, fantasies or ‘nice-to-haves’. To do this you will have to be honest with yourself about what you really love to do with your time, or what you have a yearning passion to be more like – and this may be the first time you have ever realised how important this thing is to you.

Some words you may say “That’s it” to immediately, some may require some soul searching. Some may be hidden on a first look. Do consider all the words carefully, don’t dismiss anything at a glance. Hidden values often start to show up with a feeling of embarrassment, a physical reaction such as a feeling of nervousness or excitement, or a thought such as:

- “I couldn’t have that as a value – it would be too much fun!”
- “That’s a silly value, I should have something more serious.”
- “I want to pick that, but I wouldn’t want to admit it to anyone.” (You won’t have to.)
- “If I pick that I’ll have to change my life a lot!”

When you have a list of ten go through them carefully and ask:

- “If I had this, or was this, would I feel energised?”
- “Would I feel at peace?”
- “Would life seem purposeful and without struggle?”

If you can answer these questions “Yes” then your value stands up. If not, try to work out what is wrong. It may be that you want to go back to the list and choose something similar but with a slightly different connotation. Or you may want to add your own word to the list.

When you are happy with the ten – and that these ten are the most important for you – narrow the list down to four!

To do this you will probably have to compare and ask yourself:

- “Do I really feel more about this one or that one?”
- “Which of these intrigues me more, and which less?”
- “Which ones, if I were truly living them out, would make the others less important, less exciting, less inspiring?”
- “If I had a life in which I truly lived this value out every day, which of the others would I no longer need?”

VALUES LIST

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|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| Adventure Risk The unknown Danger Thrill Speculation Dare Endeavour Quest Experiment Exhilaration Venture Explore Challenge | Creativity Design Invent Brainstorm Synthesise Solve Imagination Ingenuity Originality Conceive Plan Build Perfect Assemble Inspire Entrepreneur | Catalyse Impact Move forward Touch Coach Enthuse Stimulate Energise Alter Integrate Recognise | Contribute Service Help Equality Humanity Improve Augment Endow Strengthen Facilitate Minister to Grant Provide Foster Altruism Egalitarianism | Discover Learn Detect Perceive Locate Realise Uncover Discern Distinguish Observe Rationality Logic Objectivity | Feel Emote Experience Sense Passion Radiate Feel good Be with Energy In touch with Sensations Affiliation | Beauty Nature Grace Refinement Elegance Attractiveness Loveliness Radiance Magnificence Gloriousness Taste Style Culture Artistry Craftsmanship | Pleasure Fun Hedonism Sex Sensuality Bliss Amused Entertained Play Sports Humour |
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| Lead Guide Inspire Empower Influence Cause Enrol Reign Govern Rule Persuade Encourage | Teach Educate Instruct Enlighten Inform Prepare Uplift Explain Model | Relate to Connected Community Unite Nurture Linked Bonded Integrated Family Friendship Equality Wholeness Efficacy | Mastery Specialisation Expertise Adept Superiority Primacy Power Greatest Best Standard setting Excellence Fame Wisdom | Sensitivity Tenderness Touch Perceive Be present Empathise Support Compassion Respond Understanding Protect | Winning Prevail Accomplish Attain Acquire Score Win over Triumph Predominate Attract Autonomy Freedom Compete Advance | Security Stability Balance Tenure Assurance Loyalty Accountability Tradition | Spirituality Awareness Accepting Awake Devoting Honouring Holiness Religious Enlightened Worship Faith |
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VALUES EXERCISE

VALUES EXERCISE – PART 2

For each of your four values ask yourself: “Why is this important enough to me to be a true value?”

1.

2.

3.

4.

Ask yourself: “Who am I when I live out this value? How do I behave? What do I do? What do I think about? What is motivating me? How do I feel?” **Write down three specific examples.**

VALUES EXERCISE

Ask yourself: “Who am I when I do not live out this value? How do I behave then? How do I feel about myself? About others? About life?” **Write down three specific examples.**

Keep your four values firmly in mind throughout the day, every day. Continue to strive to demonstrate them consistently, and see how much it impacts your life and your sense of well-being.