

Exploring Personal Values Exercise

BACKGROUND

This activity allows staff to reflect on their personal values, and to prioritize the values that hold the highest meaning for them. Individuals can find more fulfillment in life when they live more of life from values instead of needs.

When individuals feel unhappy, overwhelmed, or otherwise unsettled, a typical reaction can be to set a goal and achieve something that they think will make them happy. But, this often does not solve the underlying issue. Unhappiness, and expectations about feeling fulfilled, are actually rooted in values. Dissatisfaction is often caused by a misalignment or incongruence between core values and what is happening in an individual's life and work at the moment.

If doing this activity in a workshop or meeting, after staff have completed the activity below, you could allow for the following discussion:

1. Discuss what the experience of selecting values felt like for you.
 - a. What feelings or emotions were brought up?
 - b. Did you have any "Aha!" moments? Or wonderings?
 - c. Were there values missing from the list you wished were there?
 - d. Do you agree with the results?

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ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

1. Circle ten values from the list below that resonate with you most.
2. List them here:

3. Start with any on the list. Compare that value to the others, one by one. Put a tally mark next to the value that you would place as more important to you than the other. Move through your list comparing each value to all the others, adding a tally to the value that is more important to you.

Example: Respect vs empathy, I value respect more than empathy, so respect gets one point. Respect vs authenticity. I value authenticity higher, so that gets one point.

4. The values with the most tally marks at the end are your top values. Choose five to prioritize.
5. Consider what this means for how you live your life. “For values or guiding principles to be truly effective they have to be verbs. It’s not “integrity,” it’s “always do the right thing.” It’s not “innovation,” it’s “look at the problem from a different angle.” Articulating our values as verbs gives us a clear idea – we have a clear idea of how to act in any situation.” (Simon Sinek. 2011. *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*. London: Penguin Books.)
6. Review resources like this example, ["What Are Your Personal Values?" article](#) for additional ideas related to finding your values and planning with them in mind.

Accountability	Discipline	Humor	Respect
Accuracy	Discretion	Humility	Restraint
Achievement	Diversity	Independence	Results-oriented
Adventure	Dynamism	Ingenuity	Rigor

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Altruism	Economy	Inner Harmony	Romance
Appearance	Effectiveness	Inquisitiveness	Security
Ambition	Efficiency	Insightfulness	Self-actualization
Autonomy	Elegance	Integrity	Self-control
Assertiveness	Empathy	Intelligence	Self-expression
Balance	Enjoyment	Intimacy	Selflessness
Beauty	Enthusiasm	Intuition	Self-reliance
Being the best	Environment	Joy	Sensitivity
Belonging	Equality	Justice	Serenity
Boldness	Excellence	Leadership	Service
Calmness	Excitement	Legacy	Shrewdness
Carefulness	Expertise	Love	Simplicity
Challenge	Exploration	Loyalty	Soundness
Cheerfulness	Expressiveness	Making a difference	Speed
Clarity	Fairness	Mastery	Spirituality
Commitment	Faith	Merit	Spontaneity
Community	Family	Nature	Stability
Communication	Flexibility	Obedience	Status
Compassion	Fidelity	Openness	Strategic

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Competitiveness	Fitness	Order	Strength
Connectivity	Fluency	Originality	Structure
Consistency	Focus	Partnership	Success
Contentment	Freedom	Patriotism	Support
Continuous Improvement	Friendship	Perfection	Teamwork
Contribution	Fulfillment	Personal growth	Thankfulness
Control	Fun	Piety	Thoroughness
Cooperation	Generosity	Positivity	Thoughtfulness
Correctness	Goodness	Power	Timeliness
Courtesy	Grace	Practicality	Tolerance
Creativity	Growth	Privacy	Tradition
Curiosity	Happiness	Preparedness	Trustworthiness
Decisiveness	Hard Work	Professionalism	Truth
Democraticness	Health	Prudence	Understanding
Dependability	Helping Society	Quality-orientation	Uniqueness
Determination	Holiness	Recognition	Unity
Devoutness	Honesty	Reliability	Usefulness
Diligence	Honor	Resourcefulness	Vitality

(The Right Questions. 2019. "What Are Your Personal Values?"
[https://therightquestions.co/what-are-your-personal-values/.](https://therightquestions.co/what-are-your-personal-values/))