

Values Clarification Exercises

Excerpted from the workbook,
Is Your Ladder Leaning Against the Wrong Wall?



Available at www.balancedliving.com/lifepurpose.html

Values Clarification Exercises

1. In clarifying your values, use the list of “Sample Values” included as a guideline, and add any others that may apply to your life.
2. Start by identifying your Inherit Values. Use the form by the same name and list the top values of your:
 - a) mom
 - b) dad (or the people who raised you),
 - c) culture (predominant environments in which you were raised, i.e., rural south, strict Irish Catholic, inner city, etc.) and
 - d) the mentor or boss who has had the biggest impact on your life.

You will need to guess as to what each of these peoples’ values were. Base it on the way they lived their lives and the things they said during a time when you were around them a lot and most impressionable.

 - After listing out the top values for each of these significant roles in your life, circle those that you believe are running your life and your decisions today. Cross out those that are not working for you. Try not to place any judgment on yourself, or the roles other’s have played in your life. Recognize that it is all a part of the journey.
3. Next, take a look at the current reality of your life. Based on the way you live your life today, and the way you have lived over the past few months, what are your current life priorities? Note again, that this has nothing to do with

shoulds. Forget about the way you think you *should* be living your life or the way others think you *should* be living. The goal here is to capture the current reality of the situation so that you will have a place to start in creating your future.

- You may find narrowing these down to five difficult. Note that this does not exclude other values that are important to you. For this exercise, you want to select the top five. They will be those values upon which you spend the most amount of time, energy, and thought. After you have listed the top five, re-list them in order of priority as they show up in your life currently (not as you think they *should* show up).



4. The next step in this values-clarification process is to think about your ideal life. Listen to the guided visualization tape on Envisioning Your Ideal Values. It is the first selection on tape 2. If you do not have the tape, close your eyes and picture how your ideal life would look. Project out to age 55 - 65. What will be important to you then? Where are you living? Who is in your life? What are you doing? How much of that would you like to have in your life now? Envision not only how your life looks but who you are *being* in life. When you have this picture firmly in your mind, list the values that are represented. Then narrow it down to the top five and list them in order of priority. What would be the number-one priority in your ideal life?
5. Immediately after listening to the tape, take out some crayons or markers and draw whatever picture comes to mind. Play some relaxing music while you draw or paint.

I recommend that you do not skip this exercise. While it may seem trivial -- drawing or painting accesses the intuitive side of your brain and often provides big insights for people. It is also fun! Don't worry about your perception of your of artistic ability. Artistic talent has nothing to do with this exercise.



- After drawing/painting, notice what objects, people, colors , emotions showed up in your picture. Have some friends look at it and tell you what they see. Take a few minutes to journal your thoughts after this exercise and insert them in your notebook. Refer back to your picture often.
6. To close the gap to your ideal life, notice the differences between your current values and your ideal values. The lists may be the same but in a different order, or they may be totally different lists. Which of those things on your ideal list would you like to be different in your life now? How can you start to make that happen? Write some action steps that will move you forward in the direction of your ideal life.

Sample Values

Aspired Values

(what you aspire to have)

_____ Achievement
_____ Adventure
_____ Balance
_____ Beauty
_____ Community
_____ Contribution
_____ Family
_____ Freedom
_____ Friendship
_____ Fun
_____ Health
_____ Justice
_____ Love
_____ Nature/Environment
_____ Partnership
_____ Peace
_____ Power
_____ Recognition
_____ Self-Worth
_____ Spirituality
_____ Stability
_____ Wealth
_____ Wisdom

Functional Values

(how you attain aspired values)

_____ Accountability /Responsibility
_____ Affection
_____ Autonomy
_____ Communication
_____ Competency
_____ Courtesy
_____ Courage
_____ Creativity
_____ Discipline
_____ Drive
_____ Fairness
_____ Flexibility
_____ Forgiveness
_____ Giving
_____ Honesty
_____ Humor
_____ Knowledge
_____ Loyalty
_____ Organization
_____ Reason
_____ Safety
_____ Team
_____ Tolerance

Inherit Values

Mom's values

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Dad's values

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

My cultural values

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Mentor/boss'

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- a) Circle those values which are running your life now - consciously or subconsciously?
- b) Cross-out those that are not working for you or that you would like to weigh less heavily in your life.

My current values:

List the top-five values that have consistently been present in your life over the past three months

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

List your current values in order of priority:

Prioritize based on which values have taken up the most time or thought in your life over the past three months. While this may seem difficult, it is important that you consciously choose an order based upon how things have really been occurring in your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My ideal values:

Complete this form after listening to the guided visualization tape. Then list your top-five ideal values based on what you imagine your ideal life to be.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

List your ideal values in order of priority. It is important that you prioritize your ideal values so that you will have consciousness about what is important to you. It is okay to change the order at a later date.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Where is the Gap?

Current Values

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Ideal Values

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Note that even things that appear to be small differences, such as a difference in Priority 1 & 2 , can make a big difference in your life.

For example, if John Smith decides he ideally he wants Friendship to come before Achievement in his life, he will have to make some significant changes in his behavior to make this happen.

On the next page, list those ideal values you would like to move up on the priority list in your current life, and action steps to make it happen.

Close the Gap to Your Ideal Values

Ideal Values

Action Steps

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____
