

Find Your Values

Definitions

Your purpose, vision, and values are guiding stars. What's the difference?

Values = the core beliefs and ways of being that are most important to you. They are your natural inclinations and beliefs you have been drawn toward your whole life, from childhood to today. They summarize who you are and shape how you choose to live. They are your BEING.

For example, my core values are community and inquiry. I also have some secondary values that support and clarify my core values and purpose: growth, adventure, and leadership.

Purpose = your mission or calling in life. It's what you were born into this world to do. It's the work that is most meaningful to you. It's how your values express themselves through your actions. It's what Simon Sinek calls your WHY. Your purpose is the DOING of your BEING.

For example, my mission is to encourage the light in others to shine brighter so that together we can make the world a better place.

Note: your mission may not be what you do for your paid work. Some people's mission is to build community and they do that through volunteering. Some people's mission is artistic expression and they have a job they like well enough to give them the freedom to create art outside of work.

Vision = your dream of a better future. It's Martin Luther King's saying, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Your vision is an inspiring and compelling portrait of a better future that is idealistic, for the greater good, and ultimately will outlive you.

For example, my vision is a future in which every person will be seen, known, and valued for the contributions they make and the human being they are.

Name Your Values

“Our values should be so crystallized in our minds, so infallible, so precise and clear and unassailable, that they don’t feel like a choice -- they are simply a definition of who we are in our lives.

In those hard moments, we know that we are going to pick what’s right, right now, over what’s easy. Because that’s integrity -- choosing courage over comfort; it’s choosing what’s right over what’s fun, fast, or easy; and it’s practicing your values, not just professing them.”

~ Brene Brown, Dare to Lead, p. 189

If you haven’t already done so, do the hard work and name your values. Follow these steps to identify your values:

1. Look at the list of possible values and circle any words that attract and naturally appeal to you. You’ll probably end up with 15-20 things circled.
2. Prune your list.
 - Beware of anything this is a “should” (e.g. you “should” be a leader); your values are not dictated by others.
 - Beware of anything that only shows up in one context (like work) but is absent in others (like home); that a role you are playing, not a value.
 - Beware of anything you need to be happy; that’s a need, not a value.
3. Fine tune your list to no more than five. Better yet, shoot for two. Perhaps, like me, you have tiers of values — core values that are most important and secondary ones that play a supporting role.
 - If there are related words, group them.
 - If anything core to who you are seems missing, add it.
 - If it defines who you were as a child, it’s probably a value.
 - If it’s who you are at your best as an adult, it’s probably a value.
 - If it’s a filter you use to make really hard, life-changing decisions, it’s probably a value.
 - If the word brings up a feeling of deep self-identification and resonance, it’s definitely a value.



List of Possible Values

Acceptance	Equality	Job security	Self-expression
Accountability	Ethics	Joy	Self-respect
Achievement	Excellence	Justice	Serenity
Adaptability	Fairness	Kindness	Service
Adventure	Faith	Knowledge	Simplicity
Altruism	Family	Leadership	Spirituality
Ambition	Financial stability	Learning	Sportsmanship
Artistry	Forgiveness	Legacy	Stability
Assertiveness	Freedom	Leisure	Status
Authenticity	Friendship	Love	Stewardship
Authority	Fulfillment	Loyalty	Success
Balance	Fun	Making a difference	Teamwork
Beauty	Future	Meaning	Thrift
Belonging	Generosity	Nature	Time
Boldness	Giving back	Openness	Tradition
Bravery	Grace	Optimism	Travel
Calm	Gratitude	Order	Trust
Career	Growth	Parenting	Truth
Caring	Happiness	Patience	Understanding
Challenge	Hard work	Patriotism	Uniqueness
Citizenship	Harmony	Peace	Usefulness
Collaboration	Health	Perseverance	Vision
Commitment	Home	Pleasure	Vulnerability
Community	Honesty	Popularity	Wealth
Compassion	Hope	Power	Well-being
Confidence	Humility	Pride	Wisdom
Connection	Humor	Recognition	Wonder
Contentment	Imagination	Reliability	
Contribution	Inclusion	Religion	
Cooperation	Independence	Reputation	
Courage	Individuality	Respect	
Creativity	Influence	Responsibility	
Curiosity	Initiative	Risk taking	
Determination	Inner peace	Safety	
Dignity	Innovation	Security	
Diversity	Integrity	Self-discipline	
Environment	Intuition		

Add your own:

*** Thank you to Brene Brown and James Clear for many of these value options. ***

Lean into Your Values

My Values: _____

My Purpose: _____

Tell your loved ones and friends about your values and purpose. See what they think because they will most likely have some insight on how to fine-tune them to make them ring even truer.

Here's a list of eight areas that are important in many of our lives. How do your values show up in each area? Are any of your values absent? What might that mean, if anything?

Friends & family:

Intimacy & romance:

Career & purpose:

Health:

Money:

Environment (the places and things you are surrounded by each day):

Fun and Recreation:

Spirituality:

What could you do to bring your values, in some way large or small, into *every* area of your life? What might you do to lean into your values a little more each day? Why might that be meaningful to you?

“I know I’m in my values when a decision is somewhere between tough and really tough. I wish doing the right thing was the easy thing, but it rarely is.” (Brene Brown, Dare to Lead p. 197). What could you do to help you remember to lean into your values when faced with uncertainty?

What did you learn about yourself as you did this exercise?