

Your Core Values

According to the Oxford Dictionary, values are “principles or standards of behavior; one’s judgment of what is important in life.” Values provide a strong foundation for the way we live our lives. When our actions are aligned with our values, we feel content and satisfied. We rarely think about our values, yet they deserve our attention. “Stay true to yourself” is an expression that touches on honoring our values with conviction. Your values are unique to you, and they may be very different from the values of your friends, family members, or coworkers. Values can also evolve and change over time.

To find which values are most important to you, complete the following Top 20 Core Values exercise. There are two lines to the left of each value. Using the line immediately to the left of each word, go through the list, marking every value that is important to you. Do this quickly, and check as many as you wish. If you’re unsure about some of the words on the list, use the following phrase in front of each word: “I value _____.” It might also help to remember that some people refer to the words listed as character strengths, virtues, or personality traits.

After completing the first run-through, go back through the list of values you checked. Using the remaining line, place a checkmark next to the 20 values that you feel most strongly about. These are your core values.

The list is not all-inclusive. If you have a value that is not represented, write it down at the end of the list. Feel free to cross out values if you change your mind. There is no right or wrong way to identify your values. If you end up with only 10, that is fine. If you identify 25 values, that’s OK too.

Your core values help define you as a person and make you unique. After completing the exercise, I recommend that you refer to the list of your 20 core values as you read through the book. The small changes you decide to make later in Chapter Twelve will likely pertain to honoring your core values.

Top 20 Core Values

- Achievement
- Adventure
- Affection
- Ambition
- Appreciation of culture
- Artistic expression
- Autonomy
- Beauty
- Challenge
- Charitable giving
- Close relationships
- Commitment
- Communication
- Community
- Compassion
- Competition
- Confidence
- Contentment
- Cooperation
- Courage
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Decisiveness
- Determination
- Discipline
- Diversity
- Education
- Empathy
- Enthusiasm
- Environmental responsibility
- Equality
- Ethics
- Excellence
- Fairness
- Faith
- Family
- Flexibility
- Financial security
- Forgiveness
- Freedom
- Friendship
- Generosity
- Giving back
- Gratitude
- Hard work
- Harmony
- Having goals
- Health
- Honesty
- Hope
- Humility
- Idealism
- Inclusiveness
- Independence
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Intelligence
- Job satisfaction
- Kindness
- Knowledge
- Laughter
- Leadership
- Listening
- Love
- Love of country
- Love of learning
- Loyalty
- Meaningful work
- Mentoring
- Motivation
- Nature
- Nonviolence
- Open-mindedness
- Opportunity
- Optimism
- Organization
- Passion
- Patience
- Perseverance
- Physical challenge
- Pleasure
- Positive attitude
- Power and authority
- Practicality
- Preparation
- Privacy
- Public service
- Purpose
- Quality relationships
- Quiet
- Recognition
- Resiliency
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Sacrifice
- Safety
- Security
- Self-respect
- Sensitivity
- Serenity
- Sharing
- Simplicity
- Sincerity
- Social responsibility
- Solitude
- Spirituality
- Sportsmanship
- Stability
- Status
- Strength
- Strategic thinking
- Structure
- Supervising others
- Teaching by example
- Teamwork
- Time alone
- Tolerance
- Trust
- Truth
- Unity
- Variety
- Vision
- Volunteering
- Wealth
- Wisdom
- Working alone
- Working with others