

VALUES EXERCISE

Blurb and Goal of this Exercise:

Your values are the things that you believe are important in the way you live and work. In an ideal world, they should align with and determine your priorities, and they can even be used as a scorecard to test your behavior against - am I behaving / acting in line with my values? Am I honoring my values?

When the things that you do and the way you behave are in line with your values, life is usually good - you're satisfied and content. But when your behaviors, actions, job, family you have chosen (or feel stuck with!) don't match your personal values, that's when things feel off. This can be a real source of discontentment and stress.

This is why making a conscious effort to identify your values is very important and is usually the first step in identifying areas of stress before moving along an agenda of change! This exercise can be especially helpful when you are facing a major decision or about to make a change in your life in that it provides useful insight when making decisions and choices.

Instructions:

Brainstorm a list of values (e.g. top 5 or 10)

- Jot them down
- Rank them in priority order.
- Score your sense of satisfaction—the degree to which you are honoring each value—using a scale of 0 to 10.
- In the following session(s), we will go through the list and see where you feel corrective action is desired.

Value	Rank (1-5) (How important is this value for you)	Score (1-5) (How well are you honoring this value at present)
E.g. Fun / Self-enjoyment	E.g. 1 (<i>it is the most important value for me</i>)	E.g. 5 (<i>i have no fun at my job right now</i>)

Recommended Methodology:

It's not recommended that you 'shop for' (pick and choose) your values from a 'shopping list' (*that's cheating and also not as organic somehow*) and rather think about:

- I felt very frustrated/irritated when... *e.g. when I felt my boss favored person X over person Y... and then think... hmm what does that mean for my value system? I must hold 'justice' and/or 'fairness' as a core value.*
- I was over the moon when.... *e.g. all those sleepless nights and the sweat and tears got the product over the line... and then think... hmm what does that mean for my value system? I must hold 'hard work' as a core value.*

To help you think through and identify your values, you can play with the following thought-starters:

- **A Peak Moment:** Identify special, peak moments when life was especially rewarding or poignant. What was happening? Who was present and what was going on? What were the values that were being honored in that moment?
- **Suppressed Values:** Another way to isolate values is to go to the opposite extreme, looking at times when you felt angry, frustrated, or upset. This will often lead to identification of a value that was being suppressed. First, name the feelings and

circumstances around the upset (e.g. undervalued, trapped etc.) then flip it over and look for the opposite of those feelings (e.g. appreciated, free etc) What was missing? What value was being overlooked / suppressed?

Optional Additional Activity: (if you could just not get enough!)

Reaffirm your values:

Check your top-priority values, and make sure that they fit with your life and your vision for yourself.

- Do these values make you feel good about yourself?
- Are you proud of your top three values?
- Would you be comfortable and proud to tell your values to people you respect and admire?
- Do these values represent things you would support, even if your choice isn't popular, and it puts you in the minority?
- How will the scoring be different when you do make that decision / when you do make that change?
- How do you want things to be different (from a past situation, e.g. time at previous company) to align better with your top values and what steps can you take to ensure that?
- Choose a person close to you (someone who knows you well) and talk to them about your list of top values - any surprises? Discuss (and get perspective!)

When you consider your values in decision making, you can be sure to keep your sense of integrity and what you know is right, and approach decisions with confidence and clarity. You'll also know that what you're doing is best for your current and future happiness and satisfaction.

Making value-based choices may not always be easy. However, making a choice that you know is right is a lot less difficult in the long run.

Feel free to get in touch at leadrisecoaching@gmail.com if you would like to ask any questions or share comments / thoughts, feedback or expressions of pure enthusiasm!