



Identifying & Prioritizing Your Values

Step 1: Identify times when you are happiest

Find examples from both your career and personal life. This will ensure balance in your answers.

- What were you doing?
- Were you with other people? Who?
- What other factors contributed to your happiness?
- What is about that you value? i.e. What does it give you?

Hint: If it is a **thing** or an **activity**, keep drilling deeper by asking yourself, "What does that thing or activity give me?" Because a thing is not a value, it is a means to an end to achieve the value. For example, your family is a thing, not a value. What does your family provide that you value? e.g. Love and Connection?

Step 2: Identify the times when you were most proud

Use examples from your career and personal life.

- Why were you proud?
- What other factors contributed to your feelings of pride?
- Again, what is about that you value? What does it give you?

If it is a **thing** or an **activity**, go deeper: "What does that thing or activity give me?" e.g. Accomplishment? Contribution?

Step 3: Identify the times when you were most fulfilled and satisfied

Again, use both work and personal examples.

- What need or desire was fulfilled?
- How and why did the experience give your life meaning?
- What other factors contributed to your feelings of fulfillment?

Step 4: Determine your top values, based on your experiences of happiness, pride, and fulfillment

Use the following list of common personal values to help you get started – and aim for about 10 top values. (As you work through, you may find that some of these naturally combine. For instance, if you value philanthropy, community, and generosity, you might say that service to others is one of your top values.)

Accountability	Excellence	Perfection
Accuracy	Excitement	Piety
Achievement	Expertise	Positivity
Adventurousness	Exploration	Practicality
Altruism	Expressiveness	Preparedness
Ambition	Fairness	Professionalism
Assertiveness	Faith	Prudence
Balance	Fidelity	Quality-orientation
Being the best	Fitness	Reliability
Belonging	Fluency	Resourcefulness
Boldness	Focus	Restraint
Calmness	Freedom	Results-oriented
Carefulness	Fun	Rigor
Challenge	Generosity	Security
Cheerfulness	Goodness	Self-actualization
Clear-mindedness	Grace	Self-control
Commitment	Growth	Selflessness
Community	Happiness	Self-reliance
Compassion	Hard Work	Sensitivity
Competitiveness	Health	Serenity
Consistency	Helping Society	Service
Contentment	Holiness	Shrewdness
Continuous Improvement	Honesty	Simplicity
Contribution	Honor	Soundness
Control	Humility	Speed
Cooperation	Independence	Spontaneity
Correctness	Ingenuity	Stability
Courtesy	Inner Harmony	Strategic
Creativity	Inquisitiveness	Strength
Curiosity	Insightfulness	Structure
Decisiveness	Intelligence	Success
Democraticness	Intellectual Status	Support
Dependability	Intuition	Teamwork
Determination	Joy	Temperance
Devoutness	Justice	Thankfulness
Diligence	Leadership	Thoroughness
Discipline	Legacy	Thoughtfulness
Discretion	Love/Connection	Timeliness
Diversity	Loyalty	Tolerance
Dynamism	Making a difference	Traditionalism
Economy	Mastery	Trustworthiness
Effectiveness	Merit	Truth-seeking

Efficiency	Obedience	Understanding
Elegance	Openness	Uniqueness
Empathy	Order	Unity
Enjoyment	Originality	Usefulness
Enthusiasm	Patriotism	Vision
Equality		Vitality

Step 5: Prioritize your top values

This step is probably the most difficult, because you'll have to look deep inside yourself. It's also the most important step, because, when making a decision, you'll have to choose between solutions that may satisfy different values. This is when you must know which value is more important to you.

- Write down your top values, not in any particular order.
- Look at the first two values and ask yourself, "If I could satisfy only one of these, which would I choose?" For example, "If I could have all the accomplishment I wanted, but no freedom, or all the freedom I wanted, but no accomplishment, which would I choose?"
- It might help to visualize an actual situation in which you would have to make that choice. For example, if you compare the values of service and stability, imagine that you must decide whether to sell your house and move to another country to do valuable foreign aid work, or keep your house and volunteer to do charity work closer to home.
- Keep working through the list, by comparing each value with each other value, until your list is in the correct order.

Step 6: Reaffirm your values

Check your top-priority values, and make sure 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?

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!