

Discover Your Personal Core Values

Step 1 - Pray

God knows you best, after all, He created you. Begin your values discovery process by asking God to reveal the uniqueness He created you to have.

Step 2 - Values Candidates

Values are not chosen or declared, they are discovered. You already are living out your values, the purpose of this activity is to be able to succinctly articulate what you are already living out.

To begin to uncover your personal core values, try these four processes:

1) Inner Reactions

Listed at the end of this document are 300 ideas for core values. As you go through the list, start by underlining every word that speaks to you. Don't give the list too much thought at first, simply underline every word where you pause and think – "Yes, this is something important to me." You may underline 25 words or more.

2) Peak Experiences

Consider a meaningful moment—a peak experience that stands out.

What was happening to you?

What was going on?

What values were you honoring at this time?

3) Suppressed Values

Now, go in the opposite direction; consider a time when you got angry, frustrated, or upset.

What was going on? What were you feeling? Now flip those feelings around.

What value is being suppressed?

4) Code of Conduct

What's most important in your life? Beyond your basic human needs, what must you have in your life to experience fulfillment?

Creative self-expression? A strong level of health and vitality? A sense of excitement and adventure? Surrounded by beauty? Always learning?

What are the personal values you must honor or a part of you withers?

Step 3 - Grouping

By now you may have 25-40 total values candidates. That's too many to be actionable for self-leadership. The next step is to look over your list of values candidates and identify themes that may emerge. Values like connection, belonging, and intimacy are related. Group them together. Values like learning, growth, and development are related. Group them together.

Step 4 - Identify Themes

Look at each group of values you have created. What word best represents that group? It might be a word in the group. It might be a different word. Use the words in the grouping to drive your consideration and help you discover. The important part is not to get it right, but to select words that mean the most to you to describe each grouping.

Step 5 - Determine The Top of the List

Prevailing wisdom says we will identify 3-6 Personal Core Values. At this point, you may still have a longer list than that. Write down the words that you selected in Step 4. Consider each of these words in light of these questions:

- What is your reaction to the word when you write it down? Does your heart beat with excitement?
- Which values are essential to your life?
- Which are resoundingly YOU?
- Which values describe your primary way of being?

It will likely help to do this step over a couple days, approaching your list afresh to see which values stand out consistently.

Step 6 - Descriptions

Now that you have uncovered your Personal Core Values, it's time to write a brief sentence that contextualizes them further, making them your own. Any of the values you uncovered may mean a little something different to all of us. This is your chance to clearly state what these values mean to you and you alone. It's your opportunity to make the values emotional and memorable. Here are a few tips and guidelines for crafting your values statements:

- Use inspiring words and vocabulary. Our brains are quick to delete or ignore the mundane and commonplace.
- Mine for words that evoke and trigger emotional responses. They will be more meaningful and memorable.
- Play to your strengths in crafting your values.
- Make your value statements rich and meaningful to you so they inspire you to uphold them.
- You could use other words from the groupings you made in step 3 in your description.

Here are a few samples:

- Stewardship: Intentionally maximizing resources towards what matters most.
- Genuine: What you see on the outside is consistent with what is true on the inside.
- Efficiency: Removing unnecessary red tape that simplifies the path to achieving purpose.
- Responsibility: Taking full ownership for what is entrusted to me.

Step 7 - Final Test

Once you've completed your list of core values, walk away from them and revisit them the next day after a good night's sleep. Review your list:

- How do they make you feel?
- Do you feel they are consistent with who you are?
- Are they personal to you?
- Do you see any values that feel inconsistent with your identity (as if they belong to someone else, like an authority figure or society) and not you?

Nothing is final. Make any tweaks and changes as necessary.

Values Candidates

Abundance	Assertiveness	Cleverness
Acceptance	Attentiveness	Comfort
Accomplishment	Attractiveness	Commitment
Accountability	Authenticity	Community
Accuracy	Availability	Compassion
Achievement	Awareness	Competence
Acknowledgement	Balance	Competition
Adaptability	Beauty	Confidence
Adoration	Belonging	Conformity
Advancement	Boldness	Congruency
Adventure	Bravery	Connection
Affection	Brilliance	Consistency
Aggressiveness	Calmness	Contentment
Alertness	Camaraderie	Contribution
Altruism	Candor	Control
Amazement	Care	Conviction
Ambition	Challenge	Cooperation
Amusement	Change	Correctness
Appreciation	Cheerfulness	Courage
Approachability	Clarity	Creativity
Approval	Cleanliness	Credibility

Cunning	Experience	Imagination
Curiosity	Expertise	Impact
Daring	Exploration	Independence
Decisiveness	Extravagance	Individuality
Delight	Fairness	Influence
Dependability	Faith	Inquisitiveness
Depth	Fame	Inspiration
Desire	Family	Integrity
Determination	Fashion	Intellect
Devotion	Fearlessness	Intelligence
Dignity	Financial independence	Intimacy
Direction	Firmness	Intuition
Directness	Fitness	Inventiveness
Discipline	Flexibility	Joy
Discovery	Flow	Justice
Discretion	Focus	Kindness
Diversity	Frankness	Knowledge
Dreaming	Freedom	Leadership
Drive	Friendship	Learning
Duty	Frugality	Liberty
Eagerness	Fun	Logic
Ease	Generosity	Love
Education	Giving	Loyalty
Effectiveness	Grace	Making a difference
Efficiency	Gratitude	Marriage
Elation	Growth	Mastery
Elegance	Guidance	Maturity
Empathy	Happiness	Meaning
Encouragement	Harmony	Mindfulness
Endurance	Health	Modesty
Energy	Heart	Motivation
Enjoyment	Heroism	Nature
Entertainment	Holiness	Neatness
Enthusiasm	Honesty	Nonconformity
Ethics	Honor	Obedience
Euphoria	Hospitality	Open-minded
Excellence	Humility	Optimism
Excitement	Humor	Order
Exhilaration	Hygiene	Organization

Originality	Responsibility	Surprise
Partnership	Rest	Sympathy
Patience	Restraint	Synergy
Passion	Reverence	Teaching
Peace	Richness	Teamwork
Perceptiveness	Rigor	Thankfulness
Perfection	Sacrifice	Thoroughness
Perseverance	Satisfaction	Thoughtfulness
Persuasiveness	Security	Tidiness
Philanthropy	Self-control	Traditionalism
Playfulness	Selflessness	Tranquility
Pleasure	Self-reliance	Transcendence
Poise	Self-respect	Trust
Popularity	Sensitivity	Trustworthiness
Power	Sensuality	Truth
Pragmatism	Serenity	Understanding
Precision	Service	Unflappability
Preparedness	Sexuality	Uniqueness
Presence	Sharing	Unity
Pride	Shrewdness	Usefulness
Privacy	Significance	Utility
Proactivity	Silence	Valor
Professionalism	Silliness	Variety
Prosperity	Simplicity	Victory
Punctuality	Sincerity	Vigor
Purity	Skillfulness	Virtue
Rationality	Solitude	Vision
Reasonableness	Sophistication	Vitality
Recognition	Speed	Volunteering
Recreation	Spirituality	Warmth
Relaxation	Spontaneity	Watchfulness
Reliability	Spunk	Wealth
Religion	Stability	Willingness
Reputation	Status	Winning
Resilience	Stillness	Wisdom
Resolution	Strength	Wittiness
Resolve	Structure	Wonder
Resourcefulness	Success	Worthiness
Respect	Support	