

Identifying Your Core Values

Clarify and Lead from Your Core Values

As a leader, you navigate a wide range of situations, decisions, and conflicts, in addition to prioritizing what matters most.

The act of clarifying, articulating, and following your values is key in your leadership role. Your values act as a compass, your own personal "True North" and help to keep you on track.



"A crucial first step towards becoming an effective leader is to understand one's personal values and beliefs. It's essential to know what matters most at your core in order to discover your own "voice" in order to be authentic as a leader. A clear set of values provides a powerful set of principles to guide your decisions and actions in the wide array of situations you'll face.

- Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*

What Exactly are Values?

Definition: Any personal belief about how to live and how to deal with a situation; beliefs of a person or social group in which they have an emotional investment for or against something.

Benefits of Living in Alignment with Your Values

Strong leaders live in alignment with their core values, but not just at work. This alignment creates a life of greater integrity, authenticity, and focus. When you have clarity around your core values, it simplifies your choices and decision-making – both for life and leadership. Knowing and living your values consistently creates more confidence in those you lead, causing them to trust you more fully.

Exercise: Being out of Alignment

Think of a time when you felt 'out of alignment' with yourself because of an action you took or a decision you made.

1. Was there an important value(s) you were either unclear about or didn't acknowledge in the situation that caused this conflict inside you?
2. Knowing what you know now, how would you take action in alignment with your core values?

Exercise: Identify Your Values

It's important to remember that all of the following values are worthwhile and everyone has different values.

Directions Step 1: Identify Your Top 20

Put a check mark next to your top 20 values on the list on this page and the next. If you have values that are not listed, you may add them at the bottom of the list.

	ACHIEVEMENT (sense of accomplishment by means of skills, practice, perseverance, or exertion)
	ADVANCEMENT (moving forward in your career through promotions)
	ADVENTURE (work which frequently involve risk-taking)
	AESTHETICS (involved in studying or appreciating the beauty of ideas, things, etc.)
	AUTONOMY (working independently, determining the nature of your work without significant direction from others)
	CARING (expressing and receiving love, affection)
	CHALLENGE (stimulating the full use of your potential)
	CHANGE & VARIETY (frequently changing responsibilities and activities in a variety of settings)
	COMPETITION (placing your abilities against others where there are clear win/lose outcomes)
	COOPERATION (working as a team toward common goals)
	CREATIVITY (being imaginative, innovative)
	ECONOMIC SECURITY (having enough money)
	ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP (caring for the earth and its creatures)
	EXCELLENCE (achieving the highest standard of performance possible in all endeavors)
	EXCITEMENT (experiencing a high degree of exhilaration in your life and work)
	FAMILY HAPPINESS (being able to spend quality time and develop relationships with family)
	FRIENDSHIP (developing close personal relationships)
	FUN (approaching daily living in a playful manner)
	HEALTH (physical and psychological well-being)
	HELP OTHERS (helping people in a direct way, individually or in a group)

LEAD FROM YOUR VALUES WORKSHEET

	HELP SOCIETY (do something to contribute to the betterment of the world)
	INNER HARMONY (being at peace with oneself)
	INTEGRITY & HONESTY (telling oneself the truth and speaking that truth to others)
	INTELLECTUAL STATUS (being regarded as an expert in your field)
	KNOWLEDGE (understanding gained through study and experience)
	LEADERSHIP (influence with and through others)
	LEGACY (having lasting impact in the lives of others)
	LEISURE (having time for hobbies, sports, activities and interests)
	LOCATION (a place conducive to your lifestyle allowing you to do the things you enjoy most)
	LOYALTY (faithfulness and allegiance to a cause, person or community)
	PLEASURE (a feeling of happy satisfaction or enjoyment)
	POWER (control or influence over other people or organizations)
	PRECISION (enjoying situations where accuracy and exactness is important)
	RECOGNITION (being acknowledged for your contribution)
	RESPONSIBILITY (being accountable for results)
	SIMPLICITY (delighting in the absence of complexities or unnecessary detail)
	SPIRITUALITY (devotion to spirit or soul, often expressed through religious practice)
	STABILITY (largely predictable routine and duties, not likely to change over a long period of time)
	TIME MANAGEMENT (work according to your own time schedule, no specific work hours required)
	WEALTH (profit, gain, generating a significant amount of money)
	WISDOM (the accumulation of knowledge and experience which creates significant insight)
	Other:
	Other:

Directions Step 2: Identify Your Top 10

Now that you've identified your top 20 values, review your selections and narrow your list down to your top 10 values. This may be difficult, and can take time and extra thought. Don't give up if you're frustrated! This is a very challenging activity.

When you get the list to 10, look at each and ask yourself, "What does this value mean to me?"

Example: INNER HARMONY - *physical and spiritual well-being that makes me feel peaceful*

Write your top 10 values and their specific meanings to you below.

Value 1

Value 2

Value 3

Value 4

Value 5

Value 6

Value 7

Value 8

Value 9

Value 10

Directions Step 3: Define Your Top 5 Core Values

Finally, select your top 5 core values and write them below

To help ensure you've selected the values most important to you, ask yourself:

- At the end of my life, will I look back and be satisfied with choosing these particular values, or am I missing what's most precious to me?
- Are these the values I want to be known for as a person and a leader?

Value 1

Value 2

Value 3

Value 4

Value 5

Directions Step 4: Share Your Values

Use this exercise to practice listening deeply.

Find a partner in your table group and take turns sharing your top 5 core values, discussing:

- Why these values are especially meaningful to you
- How you actually try to live your values
- How you can use your values to connect with others whose values are different from your own

You have 20 minutes total – approximately 10 minutes each.

Connecting Your Values to the Organization's Values

Clarifying your highest priority values is clearly important in your role as a leader. In addition to knowing and acting consistently with your values, you also have the responsibility, as a leader, to represent the organization's values.

What are our organization's values?

Notes

Exercise: Connecting Your Values

Discuss these questions at your table:

- Where do you see correlations between your personal values and the organization's values?
- Where might there be a potential disconnect or a conflict between your personal values and the organization's values? How will you manage this in your day-to-day work life?
- Where do your values strongly align with the organization's values? How can you leverage this in your day-to-day leadership role?

Notes
