

Exercise: Values Clarification

There are many approaches to clarifying your core values. Here is a Values Clarification Exercise that is a good place to start:

All of the following values are worthwhile. Add any values that come to mind that are not on this list. Please take 7 minutes to select your top 10 (check), and then your top 5 values (two checks).

- ACHIEVEMENT (sense of accomplishment by means of skills, practice, perseverance, or exertion)
- ADVANCEMENT (Moving forward in your career through promotions)
- ADVENTURE (work which frequently involves risk taking)
- AESTHETICS (involved in studying or appreciating the beauty of ideas, things, etc.)
- AUTONOMY (working independently, determine the nature of your work without significant direction from others)
- CARING (love, affection)
- CHALLENGE (stimulates full use of your potential)
- CHANGE & VARIETY (varied, frequently changing work responsibilities and/or work settings)
- COMPETITION (Pit your abilities against others where there is clear win/lose outcomes)
- COOPERATION (opportunity to work as a team toward common goals)
- CREATIVITY (being imaginative, innovative)
- ECONOMIC SECURITY (having enough money)
- EXCITEMENT (experience a high degree of, or frequent excitement in your work)
- FAMILY HAPPINESS (being able to spend quality time and develop relationships with family of origin, or family by marriage)
- FRIENDSHIP (develop close personal relationships)
- HEALTH (Physical and psychological wellbeing)
- HELP OTHERS (be involved in helping people in a direct way, individually or in a group.)
- HELP SOCIETY (do something to contribute to the betterment of the world)
- INNER HARMONY (being at peace with oneself)
- INTEGRITY (sincerity and honesty)
- INTELLECTUAL STATUS (Be regarded as an expert in your field)
- KNOWLEDGE (understanding gained through study and experience)
- LEADERSHIP (influence over others)
- LEISURE (have time for hobbies, sports, activities and interests)
- LOCATION (place conducive to your lifestyle and allows you to do the things you enjoy most)
- LOYALTY (steadfastness and allegiance)
- PLEASURE (enjoyment)
- POWER (authority)
- PRECISION (work in situations where there is little tolerance for error)
- RESPONSIBILITY (being accountable for results)
- RECOGNITION (getting acknowledged for your contribution)
- STABILITY (Work routine and duties that are largely predictable, not likely to change over a long period of time)
- SPIRITUALITY
- TIME FREEDOM (Work according to your own time schedule, no specific work hours required)
- WEALTH (Profit, gain, making a lot of money)
- WISDOM (understanding based on accumulation of knowledge)

Courtesy of the MIT Careers Office - <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/>

Here's another way to do it: you can develop a comprehensive list of all your possible values. Now rank each one as "A" (high importance), "B" (medium importance), "C" (low importance). Review the A and B values. Are there any that are essentially the same value or one that is an obvious subset of the other? If so, bring them together and rename, if necessary. Rank order the remaining list from highest through to lowest priority. You should now have your top five core values.

Focusing on your core values:

- Ask yourself whether these are your true, internal "bone deep" beliefs or if any external "should" values. We often don't recognize a lifetime of conditioning that has left us with other people's belief systems. You need to replace any "should" values with your own.
- Examine each core value to ensure that it is your end value and not a means to some other end. For example, wealth is seldom a value in itself. It's usually the means to status, power, security, recognition, freedom, accomplishment, pleasure, helping others, or some other end value.