

Values Refresher

What is a Values Refresher?

Values are a key driver of *fulfillment* in life and work. These exercises help you clarify your core values.

The Value of a Values Refresher

It's very useful to know what your values are, because it can help you make decisions about the commitments that you make in your life.

If you commit time and energy to something that violates or even neglects one of your core values, you will start to feel resentful and frustrated. If you are not honoring your values in your choices of activities and relationships, you will likely feel that nagging feeling that something is missing in your life.

On the other hand, if you make choices that honor your values, you feel fulfilled, happy, and satisfied.

As you create your vision for life and work, you want to be sure that you are aligning with your values every step of the way. To do that effectively, you need to be very clear about your values.

How To Do It

We will be using values to mean what qualities *define* you, at the core of your being. Without these things, you would not be you.

These exercises will help you identify and clarify your values.

Some of these exercises will probably yield more results than others, but you might want to try all of them, because each of them gives you a different perspective on your values.

It's probably best to move through these as quickly as possible and to honor your "first thoughts." First thoughts often come straight from your heart and feel more engaging than the thoughts that we think about a long time to get the words "just right."

Exercise 1: Peak Experiences

Think about those times in your life when everything was “flowing.” There may have been challenges, but you were being your “best self.” These experiences may have been a few hours to a few weeks. Pick one and think about it.

- What was important about what was happening?
- What values were you honoring during that time?
- What was really passionate about that experience for you?
- What was it about the experience that made it just flow for you?
- What about it held your interest, commitment and enthusiasm?
- Who were you being in that experience?

Pick at least two other peak experiences and go through the same thought processes.

Write down some words or phrases that represent the values that might be showing up in those peak experiences.

Exercise 2: What makes you angry and frustrated?

Often when you are in a situation that makes you unusually angry or frustrated, there is something about the situation or what the people in the situation are doing that violates one of your values. Think about one of those situations.

- What is really at the core of your feelings?
- What is it, at the bottom of everything, that is being violated for you?
- What's being "stepped on"?
- What is it that you can't "live with" and still be true to yourself?

Now, pick at least two other instances and go through the same thought processes.

Write down some words or phrases that represent the values that might be showing up in these experiences.

Exercise 3: “Invisible” Values

What is so completely “who you are” that you take it for granted (but others may notice it about you and use it as a characteristic to describe you)?

You may need to enlist your friends for help with this. Ask your friends what characteristics or qualities about you most reflect your true essence.

- What is consistently true about you?
- What do they depend on you for?
- What do they notice that you stand for?

Ask a number of your friends for feedback, and write down some values here.

Exercise 4: What *has* to be there?

- What has to be a part of the way you live your life for you to be who you are?
- In what way do you *have* to live your life, regardless of what anyone else says or does?
- What is sacred to you?
- What can't be violated?

Write down the first words or phrases that come to your mind when you think about what has to be there for you.

Exercise 5: Themes and Truths

Now, review your lists and identify the following:

1. Themes: What words or phrases show up across categories? These values belong on your summary list.
2. Truths: What values are so clearly a part of who you are that they have to be on your summary list?

Enter these values, words or phrases, on your summary list on the next page.

My Summary List of Key Values

