

Self-Help Tools: The Values Audit

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Source: Concept widely used in coaching; no single traceable author

Most people have a rough sense of what they value. But rough is not useful. This tool helps you get specific about what actually matters to you, and check honestly whether your current life reflects it.

Step 1: Pick your values

From this list, circle every word that feels important: Autonomy, Security, Creativity, Achievement, Connection, Recognition, Adventure, Stability, Contribution, Leadership, Learning, Integrity, Wealth, Family, Freedom, Impact, Craft, Community, Honesty, Balance, Ambition, Simplicity. Add any that are missing.

Step 2: Narrow to your top 5

This is the hard part. Everything feels important until you have to choose. Force the ranking.

Step 3: Score your current situation

For each of your top 5, score how much your current work and life actually honors it. 1 = completely absent, 10 = fully present.

Step 4: Trace the gaps

For each low-scoring value: is this missing because of a choice I made or a circumstance I am in? What would need to change for this to score two points higher?

Someone going through a career transition finds that Autonomy and Craft score a 2 and a 3. They have spent seven years in a large corporate environment where decisions are made by committee and the work is mostly coordination. They originally joined for Security, which scores a 9. The audit does not tell them to quit. It tells them they have been optimizing for one value at the expense of two others that matter just as much.