

A short guide on Understanding your Values to gain clarity

In order to gain clarity and become clearer on the direction we want to travel in, we need to understand what our values are.

What is important to us.

It makes sense really, it's in the name - values are valuable. There are different types of values – core values, work values, relationship values, health values. They are yours so you get to choose them!

The best thing about values is that there is no right or wrong, and there is nothing virtuous in having a particular value. What is important, and to be admired, is how fully a person can live by their values.

You are not necessarily going to have the same values as your partner, your children, your friends, or your colleagues, although we do tend to be drawn to people who have the same values as us.

Values can be thought of as fingerprints, something that is unique to you, and we leave them on everything that we do as they show up in our behaviour.

So if one of our values is honesty, you will be very open, honest, and upfront in your behaviour and the things that you say and do.



Values can motivate us.

You might be quite a shy and reserved person however will find the confidence and courage to do something if it is going to meet one of your values.

If you value honesty and see something unjust happening, your value will motivate you to stand up for justice.

We also use values to work out what is right and what is wrong. So if you are feeling anger as an emotion to something happening, it could be that one of your values is being ignored or betrayed.

If we understand what's important to us, we feel more confident, things just feel right and we are able to make better decisions. Making an important decision based on our values will give us more clarity, fulfillment, and happiness.

When there is this gap, between your values and what you are doing, it can become a space where negativity and discomfort can creep in. So instead of that happening, use the space wisely to move towards more valued based decisions/actions.



Values trigger a reaction

I am sure all of you will have felt it when your values might have been triggered for whatever reason.

I sometimes felt that when I worked in HR. I would be holding onto confidential information for whatever reason and perhaps someone asked me something and I couldn't be totally honest with my answer, as I was not able to divulge the confidential information. I used to get this feeling, this knot inside, and to me, it was a signal that my values of openness and honesty were out of sync.

This is when that gap comes in. So it can be helpful to ask yourself a couple of questions. Such as, how can I do this more in line with my values? How can I move closer to them? If I were making this decision from a values point of view, what would that look like?

When we are doing things in line with our values, we do our best work. We are being truly ourselves.

And we are far more likely to enjoy what we are doing and succeed at it.



So how do you know what your values are?

I often describe values as things that don't sit in a wheelbarrow!
They aren't solid or tangible, we can't see them,
they're not something we do or have.

Start by asking yourself what's important to you?

Here's a couple of examples to give you an idea.

Example 1: I really value a regular income. Can I fit this in a wheelbarrow?

Well, it's usually BACSd straight into our banks and disappears before we can get our hands on it but it's money at the end of the day, and yes, if I wanted to, I could fill my wheelbarrow with it.

So to find out why it's important to me, I would ask, what does my regular income, this money give me? Now here I might answer security, and stability.

Now, these are the values, the intangible things I don't necessarily do or have.



Example 2: I value my team, the people I work with. Can I fit them in a wheelbarrow?

Well, I don't actually 'do' or 'have' them, but they're tangible, they can fit in a wheelbarrow, depending on how big your team or wheelbarrow is for that matter!!

So again, to find out why my team is important to me, I ask myself, what is it that my team gives me? Perhaps it's support or belonging. These are the values.



Security,
stability



Support,
belonging

If you are struggling to identify them, think back to a time in your life, your work, your relationship when you were really happy, motivated, and satisfied.

And as you remember that time, ask yourself again, what was important to me about that?

You might get a great big, long list or just a couple of values.

Either way, that's fine.

As you know, they are unique to you and the important thing is knowing them and living in line with them.

If you would like to go one step further, you can list them in order of importance.

There are likely to be at least a couple that you just won't want to compromise on.

Once you have your own set of unique values, then when making your next decision, just check with yourself if this will bring you closer to your value or further away.

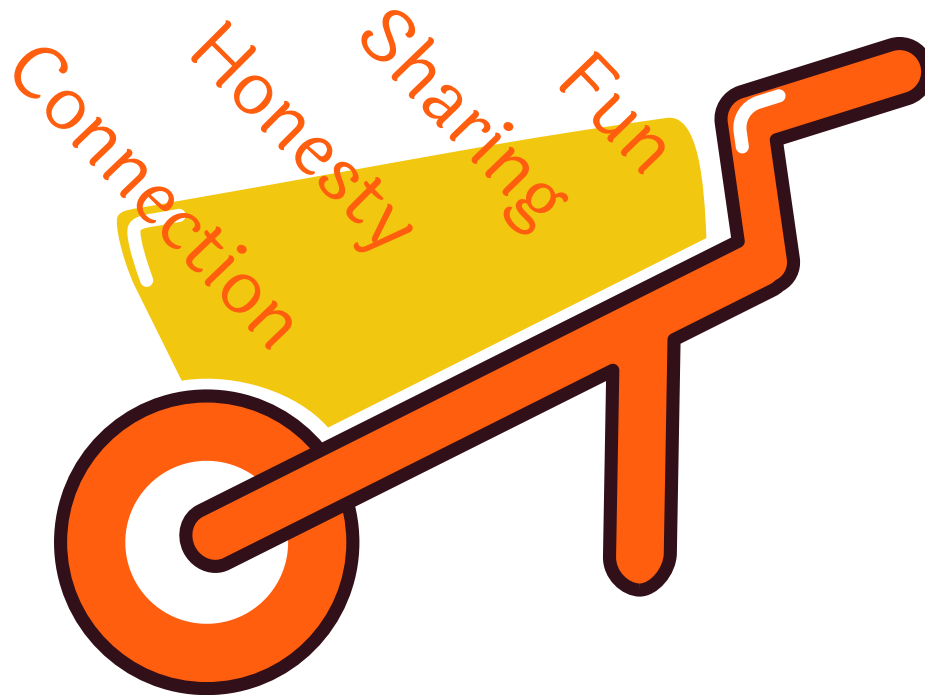


If you would like to do some more work on your values, and/or haven't managed to identify them yet, there are lots of free online resources that you can use to help you. Here's a couple to get you started:

Personal Values free online test: <https://personalvalu.es/>

Core values finder: <https://www.findyourvalues.com/>

Some of my values are in the wheelbarrow below -
I know, I said you couldn't put them in a wheelbarrow!!!



If you've found my **Understanding your Values** guide useful, I'd love to hear from you. It's great to connect with people & hear their feedback - see contact details below.

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