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6 Steps to Discover Your Core Values

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Discovering what your core values are can increase your confidence and strengthen your [decision-making skills](#) [🔗](#) because you've identified whether a decision aligns with your

values or not. Knowing your values can also help in choosing a career or knowing whether to change careers. Discovering your values takes some time and self-reflection.

In this article, we will discuss the many benefits of identifying your [core values](#), provide you with the steps to discovering your own core values and share several values to help you create a list of your own.

What are values?

The most basic definition of values is that they are a set of beliefs or opinions that influence how you live your life. They are ideas that are important to you personally characterize who you are as an individual. Values play an important role in shaping how you respond to situations and how you set goals.

Related: [The Importance of Values \(Plus Benefits and Tips\)](#)

Examples of core values

Everyone's set of core values is unique and influenced by their life experiences.

Psychologists also recognize that it's important to stay conscious of your values throughout your life because they can change as your career and personal life develops. To get a sense of what your values may be, it can be helpful to review a list of core values for ideas.

- Achievement
- [Ambition](#)
- Caring
- Charity
- [Collaboration](#)
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Dependability
- [Empathy](#)
- Encouragement
- Enthusiasm

- [Ethics](#) 
- Excellence
- Fairness
- Family
- Friendships
- Flexibility
- Freedom
- Fun
- Generosity
- Growth
- [Happiness](#) 
- Health
- Honesty
- Humor
- Individuality
- Innovation
- Intelligence
- Intuition
- Joy
- Kindness
- Knowledge
- [Leadership](#) 
- Learning
- Love
- Loyalty
- Making a difference
- [Motivation](#) 

- [Optimism](#)
- Open-mindedness
- Passion
- Perfection
- Performance
- [Personal development](#)
- Popularity
- Power
- Professionalism
- Punctuality
- Quality
- Recognition
- Relationships
- [Reliability](#)
- Resilience
- [Risk-taking](#)
- Safety
- Security
- Self-control
- Service
- Spirituality
- Stability
- Success
- Thankfulness
- Traditionalism
- Understanding
- Wealth

- [Well-being](#) 
- Wisdom

Related: [Types of Values in the Workplace \(And How To Determine Yours\)](#) 

Guide to determine your values

Follow the steps below to generate a list of [your core values](#) 

1. Write down your values

Review the list of examples of core values above and write down every value that resonates with you. Add any you think of that are not on the list as well. Select the values that most accurately describe your feelings or behaviors.

Related: [Defining Your Values To Find Work Happiness](#) 

2. Consider the people you most admire

Values are typically personified in people whom we admire and love. Generally, when we admire a quality in others it's because it's something we value ourselves. Write down six people you admire, who are role models or valued connections for you.

For example, you could include a colleague because of their perseverance and dedication. You could include a family member because of their empathy. Try to include people you consider heroes as well. For example, you may admire Martin Luther King, Jr. because of his kindness to others and his commitment to fighting for social justice. Note the values that these six people embody.

3. Consider your experiences

To learn about your values, think back to the best and most painful moments in your life. Consider what these experiences reveal about your core values. For example, if you won an award for teaching, it's possible that motivating others and leadership are important values for you. A painful experience may have taught you that empathy and compassion are important to you.

Related: [Values Interview Questions: How To Answer Them](#) 

4. Categorize values into related groups

Now you have a master list of values. Next, review the list and see if you can group the values into categories. For example, you may have written down growth, learning and personal development. These values are all related and could be placed in one category. Another example is if you selected stability, reliability and punctuality. These values could all be grouped together.

Related: [5 Areas of Personal Growth \(Plus Tips for Development\)](#) 

5. Identify the central theme

Once you have categorized your values, choose a word that best represents the group. You can leave the other words in the group in parentheses next to the central theme word to give the primary value more context.

6. Choose your top core values

Rank the top values in order of importance. While the number of core values people have can vary, it's typically best to narrow them down to five to 10. If you have more than 10, ask yourself what values are essential to your life. You may want to leave them for a day and come back to them later to see if they truly reflect your core values and if they are in the correct order.

Related: [SMART Goals: Definition and Examples](#) 

Benefits of identifying your values

There are several reasons why it's beneficial to identify your core values. They include:

- **Finding your purpose:** Knowing your values helps you figure out what you want out of your life.
- **Guiding your behavior:** They help you behave in a way that matches who you want to be.
- **Helping you make decisions:** When you're facing a decision, you can ask yourself what someone who values the things you do would choose.
- **Helping you choose a career:** When you know what matters to you, it's easier to choose the right career path.
- **Increasing your confidence:** Identifying your values brings a sense of safety and stability into your life because you know what you want and what's important to you.



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