

# How to Make Better Decisions by Using Your Values

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- What are values and why they matter
- How to identify your values
- How to make decisions based on your values

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## What are values, and why they matter

Values are who you are today. They are your guiding principles, what really matters to you. For some people, the most important values might be status and financial wealth, for others they may be family, love and collaboration. There are no good or bad values, values are simply who you are.

Even though most people think they know what is most important to them, very often they do not live according to it. Their boss, business partner or spouse may have totally different values (and therefore expectations), and it can become a source of conflicts or unhappiness. If you thrive when you work in a team, it may be very difficult for you to spend your days alone in your office. Many people say: "It's the way it is, I have to accept it". And yet, it is possible to find solutions that suit both your needs and other people's needs better: it's a matter of taking responsibility for one's happiness and success, being open, creative and pro-active.

How can you recognize whether you are living according to your values or not? That's fairly simple: if you feel there is something missing, if you feel dissatisfied, anxious, unhappy, frustrated, or if you keep criticizing others, it's very likely that you are not honouring your values. You are probably neglecting or denying a part of yourself that is crying for attention.

If you want to start living a life that is more aligned with what you really want, the first step is to establish the values that are uniquely important to you. This will help you to re-align those areas in your professional and personal life to your core values, helping you to make better decisions and create more balance and fulfilment in your life.

## How to identify your values

One way to identify your values that is often suggested (that I personally find a bit 'limiting' though), is to look at a list of values and choose the ones that resonate with you. While this is a good approach, you may tend to choose those values that "sound good to you". At the same time, you may not recognize values that are having a high impact on you, that you are not fully aware of.

### Step 1

In order to access your most important values, including the underlying but important ones, you can use the following questions. These questions are very helpful in the exploration process. Sometimes it can be easier to work with a coach, in order to identify key values that may be missed through the questions. Every person is unique and has a different level of readiness to explore values.

Below you will find a list of questions, and after Question 4 I included a list of values as examples, in case you find it difficult to identify or express your own ones.

### Exploration 1:

Think of a moment in your life, no matter if at work or in your private life, in which you felt full of enthusiasm, energy or satisfaction.

- What was happening?
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- Who was there with you?

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- What was making you feel that way?

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- What values were you experiencing?

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### Exploration 2:

Think about a moment in your life in which you felt really frustrated or angry.

- What was happening?

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- What or who was making you feel that way?

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- What was missing in that moment?

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- What values were being suppressed?

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### Exploration 3:

Think about something that should never be missing in your daily life, or in your life in general. Something that when you experience it makes you feel alive, and when you miss it makes you feel empty or dull.

- Write all the things that come to your mind:

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- Which values are you noticing here?

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#### Question 4:

Write down one of your favourite quotes:

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- What words have the biggest impact on you?

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- What do they express?

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- What values do you notice here?

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You can do this one time, or you can repeat this exercise with other situations and quotes, to help you identify further values.

### Examples of values

Here is a list of possible values that you may choose from. There are many more that can be unique to you, so please explore your values beyond this list.

Financial Security	Harmony	Adventure
Collaboration	Connectedness	Beauty
Participation	Recognition	Humour
Money	Lightness	Health
Contribution	Appreciation	Joy
Community	Spirituality	Elegance
Service	Justice	Accuracy
Performance	Freedom to express yourself	Risk Taking
Romance	Success	Reliability
Personal Power	Integrity	Professionalism
Focus	Personal Growth	Independence
Fame	Status	Partnership



# How to make decisions based on your values

## Value-Based Decision Matrix

List all the values you identified, and prioritize them putting the most important ones on top.

Use the matrix below to evaluate two or more options for a decision you need to take. For example, Option 1: Stay in your current job, Option 2: Look for a new job, Option 3: Start your own business. For each option as yourself: On a scale from 0 to 5, how much does each option allow you to honour your value?

<b>My Values</b>	<b>Option 1:</b>	<b>Option 2:</b>	<b>Option 3:</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

## Questions to support your decision process:

### 1) How much does each option respect your values?

Option 1

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Option 2

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Option 3

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### 2) Which values are 100% important to you, that you are not ready to trade off?

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### 3) Which ones are you ready to give up? To what extent?

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Once you have identified your values, you can use them in this matrix for your future decisions.

If you feel you are still missing something important to make your decision, explore your values further. You may have not considered some values that have an impact on you, such as for example what other people may think or feel about your decision, and how important that it to you.

## Decisions within an organization

The focus in these pages lies in individual decisions in personal or professional issues. Nevertheless, the same matrix can be applied for several decisions within a company. In order to do so it is advisable to set up a decision making team that will identify the objectives and the values of the organization, and that will evaluate the options together.

## More Free Resources for you

I really hope that these pages will be helpful for your present and future decisions.

You can find further free resources for your personal or professional reinvention at:

[www.effective-actions.com/resource-center](http://www.effective-actions.com/resource-center)

Wishing you success and happiness,

Myriam Callegarin