



# UNDERSTANDING VALUES

Working with direction, not just outcomes



## What are values?

Values are ongoing directions that describe how you want to live, act, and relate to yourself and others.

They are not outcomes that can be achieved or completed. They are reflected in what you do, repeatedly, over time.

You might think of values as a compass. They help guide behaviour when things feel uncertain, uncomfortable, or demanding.

## Values are different from goals

Values are ongoing directions. Goals are outcomes. Values guide how you behave. Goals focus on what you achieve.

For example:

Being present → completing an exam

Acting with courage → performing well

Values can be enacted in any moment, regardless of outcome.

## Why values matter

Values become most relevant when things are not going smoothly. At times, you may notice anxiety, pressure, or self-doubt.

Behaviour can shift toward avoidance or short-term relief. Values provide an alternative point of orientation. Given what matters to me, how do I want to respond here? This supports acting in a way that is consistent with who you want to be.

## Values and performance

Performance often pulls attention toward outcomes such as results or evaluation. Values bring attention back to how you perform.

For example:

Focus → returning attention to the task

Courage → acting despite discomfort

Commitment → following through

Composure → responding rather than reacting

These are actions, not results.

## Values are shown through action

Values are expressed through small, observable behaviours.

Connection → listening and being present

Growth → engaging with challenge

Self-respect → speaking to yourself in a measured way

Values are not about getting it right all the time. They are about returning to a direction.

## Beginning to explore your values

Consider: What kind of person do I want to be? How do I want to show up?

You do not need clear answers immediately.

## Next step

Review a values list and notice what stands out. Highlight anything that feels important. Do not narrow too quickly.

If helpful, choose a few values and identify one simple action this week.

## Final note

Values are not something you complete. They are something you return to and enact over time.

The aim is to build the capacity to act in line with what matters, even when things feel difficult.

## Values list...

A full list of values is provided on the next page

# Values

There are many possible values, and not all will be relevant to you. There are no right or wrong values.

Choose one area of your life to focus on. As you read through the list, mark each value:

V = Very important   Q = Quite important   N = Not important

Acceptance – being open to thoughts, feelings, and experience

Adventure – seeking new or stimulating experiences

Assertiveness – expressing your needs respectfully

Authenticity – being genuine and true to yourself

Balance – attending to different areas of life

Beauty – appreciating or creating what is meaningful

Caring – showing care for yourself and others

Challenge – engaging with difficulty

Commitment – following through on what matters

Compassion – responding with kindness to suffering

Connection – being present and engaged with others

Contribution – making a positive difference

Cooperation – working collaboratively

Conformity – respecting shared rules and expectations

Courage – acting despite fear or discomfort

Creativity – approaching situations in flexible ways

Curiosity – being open and interested

Encouragement – supporting helpful behaviour

Equality – treating others as equal

Excellence – striving to do things well

Fairness – being fair to yourself and others

Fitness – supporting physical and mental wellbeing

Flexibility – adapting to change

Forgiveness – letting go of resentment

Freedom – choosing how you live and act

Friendliness – being warm and approachable

Fun – allowing enjoyment and play

Generosity – giving and sharing

Gratitude – appreciating what is present

Honesty – being truthful and sincere

Humility – being modest and grounded

Humour – appreciating lightness

Independence – choosing your own way

Industry – working with effort and dedication

Intimacy – being open in close relationships

Justice – upholding fairness

Kindness – acting with care

Leadership – guiding others constructively

Love – expressing warmth and affection

Mindfulness – being present and aware

Open-mindedness – considering different perspectives

Order – valuing organisation

Patience – allowing time

Persistence – continuing despite difficulty

Pleasure – allowing positive experiences

Power – influencing or leading

Preparation – engaging fully in preparation

Reciprocity – balancing giving and receiving

Respect – showing regard for self and others

Responsibility – taking ownership of actions

Romance – expressing affection

Safety – protecting yourself and others

Self-awareness – noticing thoughts and feelings

Self-care – supporting wellbeing

Self-control – acting in line with intentions

Self-development – continuing to grow

Sensuality – engaging the senses

Sexuality – expressing sexual identity

Skilfulness – developing and applying skills

Spirituality – connecting with something larger

Supportiveness – being helpful and encouraging

Trust – being reliable and dependable

Once you've marked each value, return to those rated V (Very important) and select the three that feel most important in this area of your life.

Then identify small, practical ways to act on these values.