



Know Your Values; Live Your Values

In the work that I do, I am always talking to people about their values. This is especially true in career counselling. When meeting with people who are deciding on their first career, coaching individuals through a career transition or helping people manage their careers in retirement, identifying personal values is a key priority.

Values are the key drivers in our lives. They are the people, things and ideas that are important to us. Some values are held throughout our lives. Other values change over time as we enter different stages in our life and have experiences. For instance, money is often of value to recent grads because they eagerly want to pay down student loans. Family may have increased meaning as people become parents or as loved ones pass away. For this reason, I recommend that all individuals assess their values from time to time to understand what is motivating them right now. To do this you can use an exercise like the one I have included with this article or take time to reflect, journal, meditate or pray.

Understanding your values, really being in touch with who you are and what is important to you is extremely relevant to many aspects of your life. In relation to your career, values can help you determine the type of work you want to do, give you an understanding of what aspects of your job fill you up vs. drain your energy, help you decide if you want to re-locate with your job, who the right people are for you to work with and the kind of organization you want to be associated with. If you happened to be married or have a business partner, it can be very enlightening to compare your personal values to ensure you are headed down the same path.

There is a significant difference between people who know their values and are truly living them, and those who aren't. It has been my experience that aligning your life with your values is parallel to the pieces of a puzzle falling into place. It may take some hard decisions to get there, but giving up the high-paying job to spend more time with your kids or separating yourself from a faceless organization to join a small business (or whatever scenario fits your values) is totally worth it. Life seems to become simpler and there is a new level of satisfaction and happiness that is reached.

So, I encourage every reader to give some thought to what your values are and whether you are really living them. Your values will be different than mine and unique when compared to others. There is no need to apologize for that or offer explanations. Be courageous! Live your values and you will have no regrets!

Jen Denys is living her values as Principal of The Right Path Consulting Group. We optimize the personal, professional and organizational growth of our clients. Our areas of expertise includes: HR Consulting, Career Management, Mentoring, Retirement Lifestyle Planning, Executive Coaching and Mediation. Visit our website to find out more or contact Jen directly: www.rightpathconsulting.com



Values Exercise

Adapted from "Take the Step: The Bridge Will Be There by G. Cirocco

1. From the following list of values, select the 10 that are most significant to you. If you have a value that is not listed here, add it.

Love	Loyalty	Meaning	Wisdom	Education
Family	Spirituality	Money	Service	Friendship
Security	Creativity	Health	Career	Pleasure
Joy	Honesty	Environment	Altruism	Learning
Faith	Beauty	Humility	Playfulness	Growth
Balance	Religion	Courage	Compassion	Adventure
Music	Freedom	Status	Solitude	Fun

2. Now put your Top 10 in order. #1 is most important and #10 is the least important of your Top 10.
3. For each of your top 5 values, define what the value means to you. Then think about how well or how much you've lived this value in the last month.

For example:

My #1 value is Family.

Family for me includes my relationships with my spouse, my children, my siblings, parents and extended family.

In the past month, I have lived this value 75% of the time.

Food for thought:

Am I getting distracted from my values? Am I spending my time and energy on things that aren't important to me? What steps can I take to start living my values?