

What do you Value?

First I want you to grab a pencil and eraser (or the Delete key works too). It's important to remember that values can change over time. You may follow the exercise below today but then something happens in your life tomorrow and you realize you missed a key value. This is your list and it represents who you are in your life, right now.

A Peak Moment in Time

Think about a time in your life that was especially rewarding or poignant, when you felt like a winner. Try to be as specific as possible and choose a moment rather than a period of time. For example, a time you felt like a winner may be when you had the courage to stand in front of your peers and deliver a speech at an annual meeting. Once you have pinpointed a moment I want you to answer these questions:

- What was happening?
- Who was present and what was going on?
- What were the values that were being honoured in that moment?

Be aware of the words that ring true for you. Using the above example, some values that might be honoured after delivering the speech could be Courage, Success, or Accomplishment. Now I want you to do this again and this time I encourage you to choose a peak moment in time in a different area of your life. If you chose a work experience last time, think of a time in your personal life that was especially rewarding.

If I were coaching you I would continue to ask probing questions to get at the heart of what was happening in these moments and who you were in that moment. When you hit on a word that gives you energy, flesh it out. What does Courage mean to you? Tell me about another time you felt courageous? Honesty and Integrity may be other values that come out of this exercise.

I Must Have...

Beyond the physical requirements of food, shelter, etc, what must you have in your life in order to be fulfilled? Must you have a form of creative self-expression? Must you have adventure and excitement in your life? Must you feel like you make a difference in people's lives? The underlying question is "What are the values you absolutely must honour – or part of you dies?"

Your Top Ten

After doing these exercises you should have a list of words that really speak to you. Pick the top ten and then put them in order of importance. You now have a map to guide you in your life. If you have to make an important decision you can use your values as the litmus test. "Will this action move me closer to honouring my values or farther away?" We often make decisions based on fear of creating discomfort with friends or family, we base them on our bank balance or because we worry what others might think of us. This never leads to fulfillment because we have sold out on ourselves and our values.