

The Basics:

What are my Values?



Autonomy is one's intrinsic ability to make decisions for one's self without influence of external control. We have various influences in our lives that shape our value system and how we interact with the world. These influences include relationships, upbringing, religion, education, and much more. It is okay to allow these influences to shape our value system and way of thinking; however, it is not okay when these influences dictate these systems for you. By reflecting on what our values are and how they have come about, we can start to be more conscious of our own autonomy. This worksheet aims to help practice identifying and evaluating one's values.

Practice Questions:

What are my biggest values?

Hard work, helping others, treating everyone with kindness

Pick one value. Where did this value come from (Ex: Do my parents uphold this value, does my religion uphold this value, do my friends uphold this value)?

Helping others. My parents always taught me to help others. Catholicism taught me to help others in need, even to the detriment of self. My friends were all caring and we always looked out for each other. Whenever I helped others growing up, teachers and other adults told me I was kind and reacted positively.

Do I agree with this value?

Yes, I agree with helping others. I think it's important for people to help each other and build community.

Why is this value important to me?

We need to help others. Humans are social creatures and scientifically, it's wired into us. And personally, it just feels so ingrained in me. I feel like I am capable of helping others, so I must do it.

Did anyone else influence this value?

My husband and my grad school program remind me that I can only help others if I'm okay first. I can't pour from an empty bucket.

Are there positive outcomes if I adhere to this value (Ex: If I get straight A's, I can get into a better college. If I use this value at work, I may get a promotion).

Other people are happy and less stressed. I feel like I accomplished something by helping.

How strongly do these outcomes affect my adherence to the value?

Pretty strongly, it gives me the motivation to keep helping others.

Are there consequences if I don't adhere to this value (Ex: My family will be mad, I might be judged by my community, I risk eternal damnation, etc)?

If I don't help others, then I feel bad and like I've wasted some of my potential. The other person may or may not receive help from someone else and they may struggle. I feel guilty

How strongly do those consequences affect my adherence to the value?

The guilt does affect how much I help others, but not as much as the positive outcomes do. When I was younger, I think the guilt and expectation that I should help others definitely drove me more.

How has this value affected me positively?

I've found happiness in helping others and a sense of accomplishment.

How has this value affected me negatively?

I struggled with how much I can help others throughout my life, to the detriment of my own mental health and well being. I used to attach that my own value as a human was only affected by my use to others. That was a very unhealthy mindset to have.

Is this value still important to me at this stage of life?

Yes, this is still important to me. It is something that helps me with my profession now.

Do I still want this value in my life? If so, how will I use this value in my life? If not, is there another value you would like to practice instead?

Yes, I still want this value in my life. I want to make sure that I am not overextending anymore, but I want to use this value to make the world a better place. It helps me in my profession and helps me to remain open to other people's experiences and enhances my desire to learn. It makes me a better person at the same time.