

Hello!

Welcome to the Big Change Values Exploration Exercise

Our values drive our behaviours - like an internal operating system. That thing that drives you crazy? It's very likely tied to your values. Think about it. We don't get upset about things that don't matter to us. If something gets you riled up, it's likely because there's something about it that matters to you.

One of the best and most fun ways to identify your values is to start paying attention to what pisses you off - the things that push your buttons or cause you to twitch. As you go about your days, notice what gets you riled up. You don't have to change anything - just notice what you are feeling and get curious about why.

Ready to dig in?

This exploration into values isn't a quick one. To do it right takes time, space, and percolation (like a perfectly brewed cup of coffee, time and patience make it completely worth it).

I'll encourage you to slow down to get clear about what matters to you at your core. I'll help you plan to live and lead through your values more authentically, and find the words to communicate your values to others, in the name of less frustration and more collaboration with those you work with, lead, and love.

CARD SORT EXERCISE

If you have a deck of Big Change Value Cards, this is the time to open them up!

No deck? No problem. You can use the Big Change List of Values too (find them on the last page) - instead of sorting the cards, create your own index cards for a tactile experience.



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There's something magical about the tactile experience of holding the cards in your hands. As you read each card, start to sort them into three categories as a first step.

- Yes, this is a value
- Maybe, this might be a value
- No, this isn't a value

There's no right or wrong here; we're simply considering each word.

A few tips:

- Don't overthink it. Listen to your intuition.
- Be aware of choosing values you think you *should* choose - things like integrity and honesty. You can value honesty without it being a value that drives your behaviour.
- Think about the things that drive you CRAZY. What's underneath your pissed-off-ed-ness? It is likely a value being stomped on, ignored, or is unknown to you and/or others. We don't get upset about things that don't matter.
- Consider what *your* interpretation of the word is; what is *your* experience with it? The dictionary definition of the word doesn't matter here.

If you have a lot of cards in the 'Yes' pile, go through the cards another time or two; further sort and filter until you have a list that feels right (for now).

Lay out the 'Yes' pile in front of you. Are there any words you can combine because they feel similar? Can you put them together for now? Or is there one that you're willing to discard? Perhaps *truth* and *honesty*, or *creativity* and *beauty*; discard one and keep one. Remember, the dictionary definition doesn't matter here - it's what the words mean for *you*.

When I first did the card sort, I chose *fun* and *play*. While they somewhat captured the value I was looking for, neither captured it in the way I needed it to. It took time for me



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to find the right word - “irreverence” - and when I did, I felt that ‘Yes! That’s it!’ Be patient. The word will appear when you least expect it.

Take stock of your ‘Yes’ pile. Our goal is to get to a maximum of 8-10 cards, and then to further reduce from there. Look at the cards; is there another opportunity to combine or reduce? If you had to give one up, which one would you be willing to let go?

Continue refining your ‘Yes’ pile until you have the 3 values that are the most important to you. Three is a great number because you’ll be able to remember them. Any more would be too many for you to bring them to life every day. I have a hard time remembering what I ate for breakfast yesterday, so a list of 10 values won’t work for me.

VALUES DEEP DIVE

Now that you have your top 3 values identified, let’s delve deeper into why they matter to you. In this exercise, you’ll answer a few questions about each of your values, so print it out and grab your favourite pen. Here’s a personal example to get you started.

Value #1: Generosity

What generosity means to me: I give and share generously. I give food, time, resources, energy, hugs, smiles, kindness, humour, and so much more, because it matters to me. I want to leave the world a better place, and this is one of the ways I choose to do that.

I originally thought what I valued was service and helping others, but as I went through life, I learned that valuing *service* and *helping others*, combined with people-pleasing tendencies, resulted in me saying yes to way too many things. I loved saying “Yes!” to every request because it felt good in the moment. Flash forward to Saturday mornings, when I would sit in my office with a very large cup of coffee,



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resentful to be working on all the things I had said yes to. It was my own fault; I was stomping on what mattered to me and it was hurting me.

The behaviour that helps me stay *in alignment* with my value of generosity is **pausing**. I needed to identify the behaviour that would help me stay in genuine *generosity* and not resent it. That behaviour was *pausing*. When asked for something, I started pausing to consider all the information, asking for any missing information, and then deciding to say yes, no, or negotiate a different solution based on what I could offer. Pausing allows me to be sincere about taking on requests and favours, and to make a committed promise to deliver.

The behaviour that takes me *out of alignment* with my value of generosity is saying yes without thinking it through.

Failing to pause; saying yes before I think about it, or before I have all the information, works against me because I end up being a resentful, coffee slurping human on a Saturday morning, when I should be spending time with my family, friends, and on myself.

This still happens at times. Authentically living your values doesn't make life magically become easy. Rather, there are times where we bump into, trip over, and stomp on our own values. It feels icky and awful. And then we need to make amends - with ourselves and with those around us.

When I'm fully aligned with my value of generosity, I create space and time in my day. I pause to consider offers and requests and I use my values to help me make decisions. I'm not overly scheduled and frantic.

Now, it's your turn.

Consider each of your values, thinking through how they show up in your life, like I did with my value of generosity. Use the space below to write your reflections.



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Value #1 (write it here):

What does this value mean to you?

What is one behaviour that helps you stay in alignment with this value?

What is one behaviour that takes you out of alignment with this value?

When is a time your behaviours were fully aligned with this value?

Value #2 (write it here):

What does this value mean to you?

What is one behaviour that helps you stay in alignment with this value?



What is one behaviour that takes you out of alignment with this value?

When is a time your behaviours were fully aligned with this value?

Value #3 (write it here):

What does this value mean to you?

What is one behaviour that helps you stay in alignment with this value?

What is one behaviour that takes you out of alignment with this value?

When is a time your behaviours were fully aligned with this value?



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Now, reflect on how you are living your values.

How does it feel when you're living your values?

Is there alignment between your values and your behaviours? If not, where do you believe the gaps are?

Do you need to address gaps between your values and your behaviours? If so, how will you do this?

What early warning signs signal that you might be headed in a direction that doesn't support your values?

Who can you share your values with, who will support you in living them more fully?

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How can they support you?

How can your own self-compassion support you as you explore your values?

A FEW FINAL WORDS

Through this exercise, you may have identified your values for the first time, or you may have confirmed what you already knew. Your values are powerful because they are *yours*, regardless of the process you used to define them.

Effective, ethical leadership is about aligning your behaviours with your values. In other words, having the courage to stand up for what you believe.

I encourage you to use these cards and this process with your work team, partner, friends, and children. One of my greatest insights was learning about my son's values. It helped me understand why he made the decisions he did. They may not have the words to tell you what their values are, so listen differently; listen with the intention of identifying what matters to them most. What frustrates them or makes them upset? What deeper meaning lies beneath the surface-level story?

Understanding our own values and those of people around us can help us make sense of so much. You might value *achievement* and I might value *balance*. Can you see how our values might be in opposition, causing us to get crunchy with each other? Bringing awareness to each other's values allows us to bring intention to how we are with one another. We could learn to say things like, 'I understand this project is important to you



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and you know that getting home to my family is important to me. How can we do both?’

Maybe you have a value of *stability* and I value *adventure*. Eek! This could get sticky if we aren’t aware of each other’s differences and don’t talk about them. You love all the change that’s happening at work, while people see me as digging my heels in. But it’s actually that I’m uncomfortable with the instability and it feels like no one cares.

Finally, take your time with this. Seriously. Go bump into life and get curious about what feels amazing and what makes you bananas! Get under the hood to the heart of what these feelings mean for you. I promise you - it’s never the surface-level conversation that makes you bananas - there’s always something underneath. Be patient with digging through the layers to get to the heart of what matters - to you and others.

If you get stuck along the way or have comments, questions or feedback, please reach out. We’re always happy to hear from you. Email us at hello@bigchangeinc.com.

Get curious, be open, and dig in!

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Big Change List of Values

Acceptance	Dignity	Intuition	Safety
Accountability	Diversity	Joy	Self-Respect
Achievement	Efficiency	Justice	Serenity
Adaptability	Encouragement	Kindness	Service
Adventure	Enthusiasm	Knowledge	Silliness
Ambition	Equality	Leadership	Simplicity
Authenticity	Excellence	Learning	Stability
Autonomy	Fairness	Legacy	Stewardship
Balance	Faith	Love	Success
Beauty	Forgiveness	Loyalty	Teamwork
Belonging	Freedom	Making a Difference	Tradition
Boldness	Generosity	Meaningful Work	Tranquility
Calm	Gratitude	Openness	Trust
Caring	Grit	Optimism	Truth
Challenge	Growth	Order	Understanding
Collaboration	Happiness	Organization	Uniqueness
Commitment	Harmony	Patience	Usefulness
Community	Helpfulness	Peace	Vulnerability
Compassion	Honesty	Perseverance	Wellbeing
Competence	Hope	Pleasure	Wisdom
Confidence	Humility	Preparation	
Connection	Humour	Pride	Write your own:
Contentment	Imagination	Prudence	
Contribution	Inclusion	Recognition	
Cooperation	Independence	Reflection	
Courage	Influence	Relaxation	
Creativity	Initiative	Reliability	
Curiosity	Integrity	Respect	
Determination	Intelligence	Responsibility	



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