



## Identify your values

Do the following exercise to help you to start to identify your values

### A Peak Moment in Time

Identify special, peak moments when life was especially rewarding or poignant. It's important that the time frame be quite limited—a "moment"—or there will be too much in the experience to pinpoint specific values.

When you have a specific moment in mind, ask yourself:

"What was happening?"

"Who was present and what was going on?"

"What were the values that were being honored in that moment?"

### Suppressed Values

Another way to isolate values is to go to the opposite extreme, looking at times when you were angry, frustrated, or upset. This will often lead to identification of a value that was being suppressed. First, name the feelings and circumstances around the upset; then flip it over and look for the opposite of those feelings. For example, you might say, "I felt trapped, backed into a corner. I had no choices." If we flip that over, it sounds like there might be a value around freedom or options or choice.

Many of us have created our lives in such a way that we automatically and easily honor many of our values without even being aware that we are doing so. Therefore we may not recognize them as values until something gets in the way. The key here is to note that every upset or moment of distress is likely to signal that a value is being suppressed.

### Must-Haves

Another way to identify values is to look at what you must have in your life. Beyond the physical requirements of food, shelter, and community, 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 have partnership and collaboration? Must you be moving toward a sense of accomplishment or success or be surrounded with natural beauty? An underlying question for the process is *What are the values you absolutely must honor—or part of you dies?*

Or try completing the table below, whichever is easier, examples have been included.

What's most important to you right now?	What does this give you?	And what does <i>that</i> give you?	And what does <i>that</i> give you?
My husband	Somebody to care for who cares for me	Love	Love
Exercise	Feeling good about myself	A sense of being in an optimum state physical	Health