

Personal Values

Whether you realize it or not, every time you make a choice about doing one thing as opposed to another, you make a value decision. When you have a decision that involves two or more conflicting values that are of major importance to you, the decision can be extremely difficult to make (e.g., career values may conflict with family and friendship values). You can, however, make these decisions more effectively if you have some idea of what your most important values are and the priority that you give to each.

The following exercise will help you to understand what personal values are, which personal values are important to you, and what priorities you give to them. In reality, your values are expressed through your actions. If you can bring your actions more into harmony with your values, you will feel more in control of your life and more satisfied with the decisions you make.

A list of personal values is provided below. Using the following scale, rank each value according to its importance to you:

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = not important

Place the number that corresponds to your rating in the appropriate space to the left of each personal value:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ___ Good Health | ___ An exciting life |
| ___ Many close friendships | ___ Opportunity for physical activities |
| ___ A large family | ___ Opportunity to establish roots in one place |
| ___ A fulfilling career | ___ A good physical appearance |
| ___ A stable marriage | ___ To write something memorable |
| ___ A financially comfortable life | ___ Independence |
| ___ Creativity | ___ To help others solve problems |
| ___ Having children | ___ Participating in an organized religion |
| ___ A variety of interests and activities | ___ Freedom to create my own lifestyle |
| ___ Owning a house | ___ A happy love relationship |
| ___ Contributing to my community | ___ Fulfilling careers for me and my spouse |
| ___ Abundance of leisure time | ___ Ability to move from place to place |
| ___ A stable life | ___ A life without stress |
| ___ Strong religious values | ___ A chance to make social changes |
| ___ Helping those in distress | ___ To be remembered for my accomplishments |
| ___ Freedom to live where I wish | ___ Time to myself |
| ___ A life with many challenges | ___ Enjoyment of arts, entertainment and cultural |
| ___ A life with many changes | ___ Opportunity to be a leader |
| ___ A chance to get into politics | ___ To make a major discovery that would save lives |
| ___ Opportunity to teach others | ___ To live according to strong moral values |
| ___ A chance to become famous | ___ To make lots of money |

List five of your most important personal values. (1=most important)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

1. How does your life right now reflect your values? How does the way you spend your time correspond with your priorities?
2. If the way you spend your time is not consistent with your priorities, how can you make it so?
3. Are there some parts of your life that you would like to change but cannot right now? If so, what is your timetable for bringing your lifestyle more into harmony with your values?
4. How do you think your most important personal values will affect your lifestyle/behavioral choices?
5. What behaviors will demonstrate that your values are important? For example, what things would you be doing to demonstrate family is important? What things would tell you your self-care is important?