

Defining Your Core Values

so you can

Live Authentically

Lead with Integrity

Love Honestly



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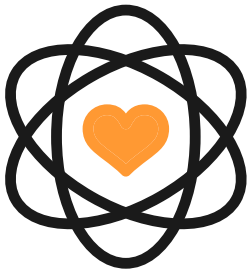


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Defining Your Core Values: A Productively Curious Approach

- *What defines you as a leader?*
- *How do you shape your life to be a reflection of what matters most to you?*
- *When faced with complex decision-making, what guideposts can best support you?*



What are Core Values:

A core value is a foundational belief. Like the foundation of a house, core values serve as the structural support for how you live, lead and love. They keep you grounded in what is most important to you and they serve as guideposts for decision-making when you feel overwhelmed, confused, or torn in multiple directions. There are no right or wrong core values and each person's choice of values and understanding of those values is unique to them.

How to identify your Core Values?

As they say, "There are a number of different ways to slice that pie." Below is our Productively Curious Approach that we have found to be very effective. The process includes the following steps (detailed process to follow):

1. Identify pivotal decisions and choices
2. Use the Core Values list to 'decode' the drivers behind those decisions or choices
3. Rank and reduce your list of core values
4. Construct your definitions
5. Elevate and apply

Step #1: Identify pivotal decisions and choices

You will need Handout 1 to complete Step #1.

Set aside some quiet time to begin. Use Handout 1 (all handouts are found at the end of this packet) to record pivotal decisions and choices you have made in your life. This may be a decision to travel, where to go to college, what to major in, whether to take up a sport or give up a sport you had been playing, to run a marathon, to end a relationship, to take a job or leave a job, to get married... You get the idea. These can be decisions or choices that feel big or ones that may seem smaller in comparison but are nonetheless meaningful for you. Fill up each of the bubbles.



There may be some cases in which you might feel, “I did this, but I didn’t really have a choice.”

The truth is, we always have a choice. Even if you felt trapped, you chose the better of two undesirable outcomes, and you made this choice for a reason. Even these choices can be informative. Record one event per bubble. When you are done, review the decisions and choices and identify 5 that you feel represent you at your core or at your best. You might say, “I feel really proud of this decision.” Or something like, “No one else wanted me to do this or thought it was a good idea, but I knew.” Star those five decisions / choices.

Step #2: Use the Core Values list to ‘decode’ the drivers behind those decisions or choices

You will need Handouts 2a and 2b to complete step #2.

Once you have identified your top 5 significant decisions and choices, record them in the chart located on handout 2a. Then, scan the list of Core Values located on Handout 2b of this packet. For each decision, identify 1 – 5 core values that you believe were drivers behind this decision or choice. As an example: I made a choice to enter the world of International Education and relocate multiple times around the world. The core values associated with this are adventure, growth, learning. I would list these beside my decision as follows:

<i>Decision / Choice</i>	<i>Core Values</i>
Leave my teaching job in the US to take an International Education position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adventure• Growth• Learning

Although the list of core values provided is lengthy, you may identify a core value that is not listed on the Handout. If this is the case, go ahead and write it in. **This is absolutely fine! You CAN use a Core Value more than once if it applies.**

Step #3: Rank and reduce your list of Core Values

You will need Handout 3 for Step #3.

Using Handout 3, list all the core values that you identified in Step #2. Add up the number of times each core value appeared as you made your lists. Put this number in the appropriate column. Then rank your values with a 1, 2 or 3.



- 1 = This core value feels absolutely true for me. I can see how this shows up in many places in my life. I value this in other people and anyone who knows me would absolutely know that this is something I value.
- 2 = This core value feels strong. I'm not sure if it is always true or if it is one of my top ones, but it feels important. Some people would know this is important to me. It is relevant at important times in my life.
- 3 = This is something I value but it may not be a core value meaning that it may not be part of how I define myself or how others see me, but it is something I care about.

Based upon the rankings you attributed to each core value, your goal is to whittle down the list to 5 core values. Sometimes a way to make this happen is to recognize a close relationship between two values and decide to let one term encompass both of them. For me, the values of growth and learning are so close that I am willing and able to let them both fall under a core value of Curiosity.

Step #4: Define Your Core Values

You will need Handout 4 for Step #4.

Now that you have identified your 5 core values, those that reflect the heart of who you are, take some time to write out your definition of each value. Do not look the words up online or in a dictionary; those definitions are irrelevant. What they mean to YOU is what is important. Trust yourself to be able to define what those words mean to you. This is the only definition that matters. Record your definitions on Handout 4.

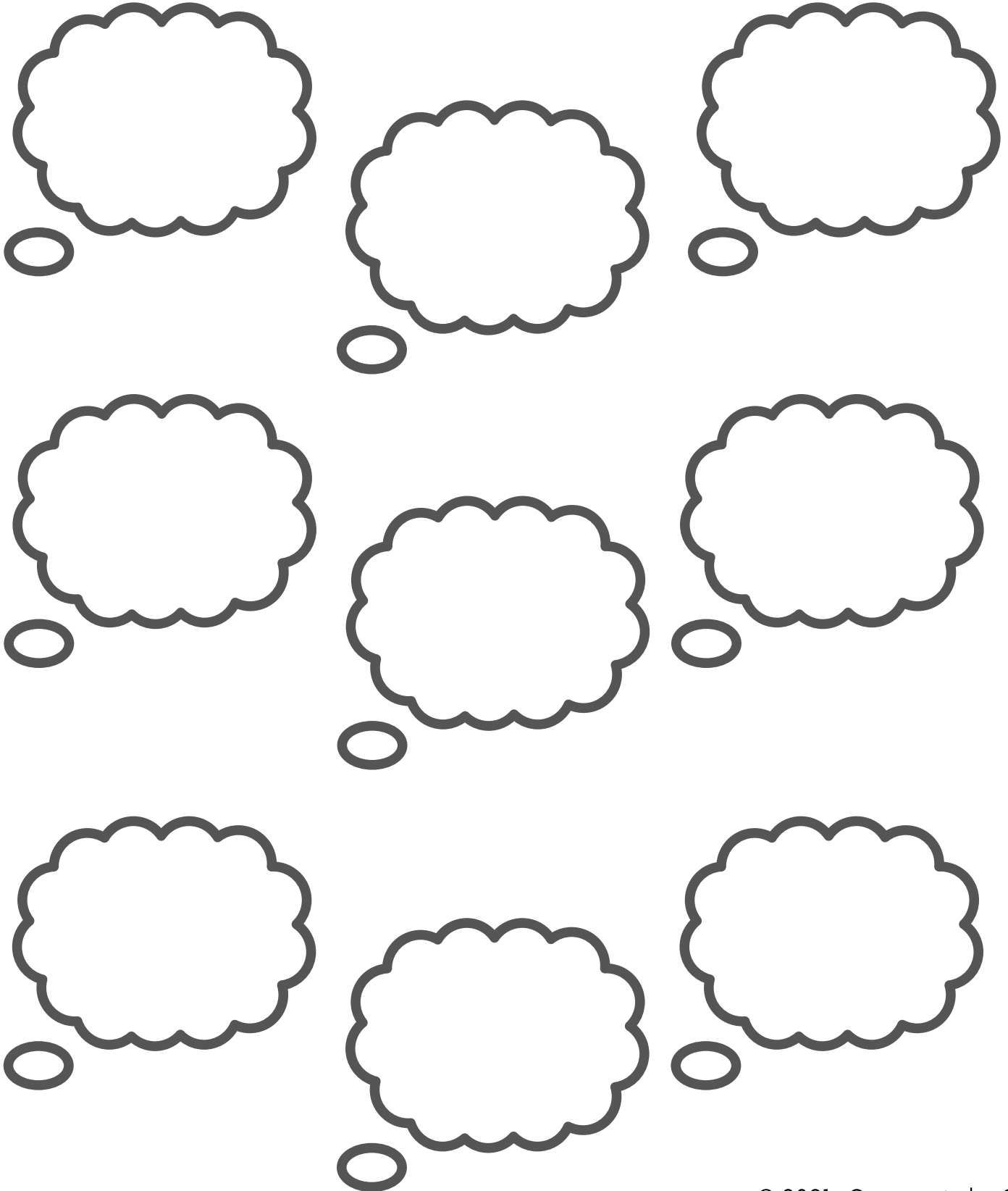
Step #5: Elevate and Apply

Now that you have clarified and fully defined your core values, it is time to elevate the role they play in your life and leadership and begin to consciously apply them. Some people place copies of their values in their wallet, planner, or journal, on their desk, by their bed, or on the kitchen refrigerator. Determine where you wish to place copies of your core values so they remain at the forefront of your mind. You might place them in multiple locations and you might consider memorizing the 5 words.

The final step is to begin to use your core values as guideposts. When you are uncertain about what to do, consult your core values. When you need to make an important decision, consult your core values. When you are feeling out of sorts, review your core values. Chances are that something in your life is out of alignment with them. And when you feel sad, angry, frustrated, or inauthentic, consult your core values. They will provide clues as to what may be behind your experience.

Core Values are meant to be guideposts for life. Let yours become an active part of your life and leadership.

Handout 1:
Important Decisions and Choices



Handout 2a:
Matching Core Values to Decisions
& Choices

<i>Decision / Choice</i>	<i>Core Values</i>

Handout 2b: Core Values List

Abundance	Flexibility	Play
Accomplishment / Achievement	Freedom	Positive Attitude
Adventure / Discovery	Fun / Enjoyment	Privacy
Authenticity	Happiness	Recognition
Beauty / Attractiveness	Harmony	Relationships
Charity / Altruism	Health	Relaxation
Community	Honesty	Reliability
Compassion	Humor	Religion
Connection / Intimacy	Imagination	Respect
Clarity	Independence	Safety
Commitment	Influence / Power	Self-Care
Communication	Inner Peace	Self-Protection
Consistency / Constancy	Innovation	Sensuality
Courage	Inspiration	Service
Creativity	Integrity	Simplicity
Economic Security	Joy	Spirituality
Education / Knowledge	Justice	Stability
Emotional Well-Being	Leadership	Success
Environment	Loyalty	Trustworthiness
Equality	Mastery	Truth
Excellence	Nature	Wealth
Family	Order	Other_____
Fitness	Partnership / Cooperation	
	Peacefulness	
	Personal Development	

Handout 3: Rating Your Core Values

	CORE VALUE	TALLIES	RATING (1, 2 OR 3)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Handout 4: Defining Your Core Values

	Core Value	Definition
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		



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