

# **VALUE CARDS**



## **Guidance Notes**

by  
Helen Harrison, CoachingCards.co.uk  
Nailsworth, UK  
part of [www.monkswoodassociates.co.uk](http://www.monkswoodassociates.co.uk)

## Purpose of Cards

The purpose of the cards is to get people thinking about what matters! This may lead to ideas, action, movement, new perspectives, new awareness.

## How to use the cards

You can use the cards in a variety of ways, depending on what you want to achieve, the circumstances and the participants.

What follows are some ideas that you may wish to follow or develop into your own approach. You may wish to use one idea, a combination of the ideas or none at all. I'm sure you will find what suits you and your client.

In the exercises I have written the description as though the client is reading it, just in case that is what you want to do.

When your client looks at a card they may:

- ♣ agree with only one word
- ♣ not see the connections with the other words
- ♣ like two words on one card and see them as completely separate
- ♣ think of a completely different word that better fits the description of their value.

All these responses are fine!

If you don't understand a word on the cards, then it is unlikely to be a word you'd use to describe one of your values! Out of curiosity you may wish to look up what it means – I'd suggest you do this later on.

## What are values?

In case you haven't got a ready summary here is one.

Values are **ideas about the worth or importance of people, concepts, or things**. They motivate behaviour and guide evaluations and decisions.

**If people know their core values** it can help them appraise and make decisions choice-fully, assuming they want their decisions to align with their values!

**Some values are more important than others**, so they form a hierarchy. Those on top exert more power over a wider range of situations than those lower down. It can be the case that ones lower down the hierarchy conflict with the higher-level

ones. This may lead to some values not being honoured, consciously and/or unconsciously.

**The more aware a person is of his/her values**, the more likely s/he will be making decisions that align with his/her values, particularly those that are at the top. And this can lead to greater enjoyment and fulfilment - and increased work performance.

I want to add that just because a particular value is important to a person **it does not follow that they are good at demonstrating it all the time!** And in some instances it may not be appropriate to do so e.g. frankness (I think there needs to be a level of appropriate timing with frankness).

Another relevant point about values is that a person's **values can change over time.**

### **Exercise 1: What are your values?**

What is most important to you in your:

- ♣ Career / work
- ♣ Finances (include material wealth, physical environment and possessions)
- ♣ 'Significant other' relationship
- ♣ Family and friends
- ♣ Leisure / travel / fun
- ♣ Personal development
- ♣ Health

or your life as a whole.

For each area that you wish to cover, **sort out the cards into separate piles:**

- The first one is for the value words that most resonate with you, jump out and call to you and you feel "yes, this value is really critical" – '**yes definitely**' pile
- Have a separate pile for those about which you are unsure – '**not sure**' pile
- And a final pile for those you know are not important values to you at present – '**definitely not**' pile

When you are working on more than one aspect of your life, you will find it helpful to write down the values that resonate/are important for each area.

**Sort quickly** as dwelling on each card will probably make it more difficult to decide.

You may notice some values are found in all areas. These are likely to be your core values. If you find you have more than 10 values written for any area you may find it worth finding out which are the most important ones. The more important they are to you the more they are likely to impact your feeling of well-being.

When prioritising use the 'yes, definitely' pile. You are likely to have enough cards in it as you want to find your core values.

## Exercise 2: what are your values?

Rather than use the categories suggested in exercise 1, you may wish to use other types of categories: eg

- ♣ Communication
- ♣ A particular objective
- ♣ A team
- ♣ Leadership

Then follow the rest of exercise 1.

## Exercise 3: Prioritising values

To work out the order of priority, work with the 'yes definitely' pile. There are a variety of approaches, which can be taken. However, I recommend that you use an approach that integrates all the values rather than put them aside or 'discard'. So here it is.

I suspect you have a good number of cards in the "this is definitely important to me" pile! What we want to achieve is to have up to 6 core values from the cards in this pile. There is a straight forward way to achieve this aim.

If you want to include "mmm, not quite sure" then do – it just means it will take you more time to do the next step.

Spread these cards out. Now how you find which of the values are core can vary. **The result is to find values within those you've selected which would encompass other ones.** For example, one client of mine selected 'frankness' as core, with values such as 'integrity', 'honesty', 'trust' and 'respect' encompassed within it. Some people want to put one value under more than one core values – that's absolutely OK to do.

Here are some example approaches:

- some values jump out at you as really key then work out where the other values lie within these values
- work out which values support another value and do this as much as you can so that you start developing clusters of values, which then come naturally into core values
- sort your values into 3 - 4 levels of importance and see how the lower level values relate to the values in the top level. If you have more than

6 values in the top level, then you will need to assess which of them are even more important

What's great **about the result is that it includes all the values you have selected. In addition, you're** already getting a fuller appreciation of what the core values mean to you.

Everyone will have different ideas about what values are encompassed by core values. Seeing mine may help you understand what can be achieved:

HAPPINESS	WELL-BEING	PRACTICALITY	LOVE
Energy / enthusiasm	Confidence	Achievement	Abundance
Fun / enjoyment	Courage	Balance / give and take	Acceptance
Learning / growth	Flow	Clarity	Appreciation / gratitude
Spontaneity	Hope / optimism	Credible	Awareness / thoughtfulness
Variety	Intuition Meaningful Openness / curiosity	Expertise Grounded Ingenuity Motivation Professionalism Structure	Commitment Courtesy Friendship  Giving Harmony Honesty / integrity / authenticity Honouring / respect Mindfulness / understanding Self-worth Trust

## Exercises 4: to help get to know your values

### In your every day (working) life:

- How actively do you bring to bear your values?
- In what ways do your values influence you ... decisions, thoughts, feelings, behaviours, words, actions?
- What don't you (or haven't you) put them into practice?

- What downsides have you experienced in practising your values, if any?
- How have you applied your values today / this week / this month?
- How do your values relate to each other, if at all?
- Have you experienced any of your values clashing with each other? If so, what did you do?

## **Exercises 5: to help get to know your values**

**Select an activity you engage in at work** – e.g. how to market a particular product. Think how you make decisions in this activity:

- What thoughts influenced your decisions?
- What is your intended outcome for doing this activity (for others and you)?
- What do you want to achieve?
- What is important about that or those outcomes to you/your organisation?
- What impact do personal/corporate values have on your decisions?
- What other impacts could personal/corporate values have on your decisions?
- What will you now do differently within this activity now that you know your core values more?

## **Exercises 6: to help get to know your values**

**Consider each value individually.** If you were to truly live this value:

- what would you stop?
- what would you start?
- what would you do more of?
- what are you prepared to commit to?
- what fears would potentially prevent you from honouring your commitment?
- What are the possible consequences of practising your values?

## **Exercise 7: to help get to know your values**

Take a **look at the top four to six values** on your list and consider:

- What do they mean exactly?
- What are you expecting from yourself, big and small – even in difficult times?
- What are you expecting from others, big and small – even in difficult times?
- What behaviours are associated with them?
- What words are associated with them?
- What rights and responsibilities could be linked with these values?
- How would your life be different if those values were prominent and practised consistently in an appropriate manner?
- How well do they align with your employing organisation's values? If none stated openly, look at product values or informal values.

## **Exercise 8: values supported, violated or conflicting**

**How have you felt** when:

- you have stood up for your core value(s)?
- any of your core values have been violated?
- you have violated any of your core values?

What would drive you to violate/support your values?

Do you experience any conflict of values? If so, how do you manage them?

## **Exercise 9: values within organisations**

- which of your values do you believe are valuable to the organisation? Why?  
What impact does it have on you?
- Which of your values would be hard to uphold within the organisation? Why?  
What impact does it have on you?
- What values are formal norms (official) and what are informal norms  
(unwritten 'rules' that govern behaviour)?
- Why did you select your employer? And for what reasons do you stay?

## **Exercise 10: values in a team**

**Idea 1: select a card randomly** and discuss the words on the card within the team:

- what importance do any of these words have to you as an individual AND as a team?
- what do the words mean to you as individuals AND as a team?
- how do these words have an impact on work?
- In what additional way could you demonstrate one of the words on the card?  
Do you want to commit to it? Will you commit to this?

**Idea 2: select two cards randomly** and discuss within the team:

- which card's words are more important to you as an individual AND as a team?
- how do they have an impact on work?

**Idea 3: go through the cards and for each team member select a card** that has a value you think s/he demonstrates. Give examples of how the person demonstrates the value.

**Idea 4: go through the cards and for each team member select a card** that has a value, which you think s/he may benefit from demonstrating. Give some explanation that gives some of the reasoning behind the selection.

It is also possible to pre-select which cards to discuss.

### **Exercise 11: relevancy**

Select a card randomly and consider individually [or as a team]:

- how might this card be relevant to you individually [or as a team] today / this week / this month / this year/ in future?
- How might this card be relevant to you individually [or as a team] when you do x activity [name an activity]?

You can discuss all the different times, a couple or just one.