

# VALUE CARDS



## Handbook

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

## Purpose of Cards

Welcome to the VALUE cards handbook! The purpose of the cards is to get people thinking about what matters to them! When I was first asked what my core values were, I found it difficult to answer, because I hadn't thought about it. Yet they influence how I am and what I think, do and say, whether or not I am aware of it.

Knowing what your core values have many benefits, including greater self awareness, increased active use of your values, more active choice (rather than habit), and ease of making decisions.

And the VALUE cards help you become more aware of what your values are as a starting point.

## What is a value?

There are various definitions of values that can be found on the Internet and in dictionaries. Penny Tompkins and James Lawley describe values as "**words, which embody what is important to us**" (go to [www.CleanLanguage.co.uk](http://www.CleanLanguage.co.uk) to find out more). I like this description because it seems to recognise that different people can use the same word, yet the nature of their value can be very different.

Values are **thoughts about the worth or importance of people, concepts, or things**. They influence behaviour and impact communication, 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**.

I have written more about values in my ebook **"Working with Values"**, which may be purchased from [www.CoachingCards.co.uk/shop](http://www.CoachingCards.co.uk/shop).

## 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 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 what you want to accomplish.

When using the VALUE cards ...

When you look at a card you may:

- agree with only one word
- not see the connections between the words on the card
- like two words or more on one card, possibly considering them as completely separate
- think of a completely different word that better fits the description of your 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 – however, I'd suggest you do this later on.

## Exercise 1: What are your values?

**Step 1:** You may want to consider what your values are in general or pick a particular aspect of your life, such as:

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

You may even want to consider a particular situation, e.g. developing your website, a specific work task or objective, communication, a team, leadership.

**Step 2:** For whichever area you wish to cover, **sort out the cards into separate piles:**

- 'yes definitely' pile - this 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"
- 'not sure' pile – this is for those cards which has value words, about which you are unsure
- 'definitely not' pile – this is for those cards that has value words you know are not important values to you at present

**Sort quickly**, using your gut feel/intuition, as dwelling on each card will probably make it more difficult to decide.

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.

If you are looking at more than one area of your life, you may notice some values are found in all areas. These are likely to be your more important 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. So the next step is to prioritise the values.

**Step 3: Prioritising values** - to work out the order of priority, work with the 'yes definitely' pile - you are likely to have enough cards in it. If you want to include "mmm, not quite sure" I would suggest you do that after you had looked at the 'yes, definitely' pile. Quite often people change their minds after going through them.

What we want to achieve is to have between **3 and 6 core values** from the cards in 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 any aside or 'discard'. For example, one client of mine selected 'frankness' as core, with values such as 'integrity', 'honesty', 'trust' and 'respect' encompassed within it. By the way, some people want to put one value under more than one core value – that's absolutely OK to do.

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 **personally**.

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

In all cases it is important to be **able to see all the cards at once**, so spread these cards out.

Everyone will have different ideas about what values are encompassed by core values. Seeing mine may help you understand what I mean – would you have put the same values under 'Fun' for instance?

<b>Compassion</b>	<b>Connection</b>	<b>Fun</b>
Appreciation	Authenticity	Choice
Decency	Clarity	Curiosity
Grounded	Ease	Flexibility
Honouring	Flow	Ingenuity
Impartiality	Friendship	Laughter
Insightfulness	Give-and-take	Optimism
Open-minded	Giving	Spontaneity
Patience	Learning	Well-being
Practicality	Respect	
Respect	Richness	
Tranquillity	Trust	
	Wholeness	

## **Exercises 2: your values day-to-day**

**In your every day life:**

- how actively do you bring to bear your values?
- in what ways do your values influence you ... decisions, thoughts, feelings, behaviours, words, actions?
- when 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 core 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?
- what are you expecting of yourself and others because of your values?

## Exercises 3: your values at work

Select an activity you engage in at work – e.g. how to market a particular product, your preparation for a meeting. Think how your values impact the activity:

- the thoughts that influenced your decisions
- your intended outcome for doing this activity (for others and you)
- what you want to achieve – and how
- the reason these outcomes are important to you/your organisation
- the relationship between personal and corporate values and its impact
- other factors personal/corporate values have on you and your decisions about the activity

What might you do differently within this activity now that you have reflected on the potential impact of values?

## Exercises 4: more about 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 5: your core values

Take a look at your core values 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 6: 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 7: values within organisations

Consider:

- 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 8: 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?
- What needs to happen for you to commit to this value? Can it happen? 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 9: 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.

## **Exercise 10: types of values**

You may have noticed that the cards have suits. I divided the value words into categories linked to the suits:

- **diamonds** ♦ - values linked to thinking e.g. logic, creativity,
- **clubs** ♣ - values linked to operational/functional matters e.g. change, expertise
- **hearts** ♥ - values linked to relations e.g. friendship, leadership
- **spades** ♠ - values linked to character/personality e.g. modesty, energy

Like all categories linked to human beings, there are words that could fit into more than one category!

You may wish to consider:

- how many of your core and supporting values fall into each category and what you infer from this information
- what other ways could you categorise your values e.g. supporting/transforming status quo, having/doing/being and what might this tell you about yourself
- what, if anything, does it affect?