

# Values Journal



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# WELCOME

I am delighted you joined a growing community of people excited about living a meaningful life and focusing on values! Since values guide your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, they influence your relationships, career, hobbies, home, friendships, and health. Values also influence how you show up for your community.

Want to get your thoughts more positive and identify meaning and purpose in your daily routine? Research shows that getting in touch with your values and choosing to live each day according to what is most important to you can transform your life, your family and your community.

This journal will help you focus on what is most important to you and make daily steps towards a life you love. It will help you deepen your relationship with yourself and see how your to-do list can be transformed into value based decisions and inspired action. Committing to checking in with yourself each day for 10 minutes is all it takes to focus on your values and carve out time for what you value most. Enjoy the process of self-discovery with curiosity and joy!



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Licensed Psychologist & Board Certified Art Therapist



# Slow Down...

Use this journal to focus your mind on your values. You likely already do many things in service of your values. A daily journal entry will bring your attention to your values, enhance your values based decisions, and help you cultivate positive thoughts about your daily life.

**Awareness is the first step to making any kind of change.**

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy is an evidenced based practice in psychology which helps people reduce distress and increase direction and purpose. Following these principles, I created my own journal template and have been using it for years to keep me focused on my values, bring clarity to decision making, and keep my thinking positive. It is a tool I share with clients and now you can use it to focus your mind on your values. Each of the prompts will bring awareness to the state of your mind and then help you focus your thoughts on what is most important to you and why you are doing what you are doing.

**Values are a direction rather than a destination.**

For example, you may feel rushed to get the kids to school. You might feel hectic getting yourself to work in the mornings. Focusing on your values such as parenting or your contributions at work can help you slow down to appreciate what you are doing and why you are doing it. You may be surprised to find that you can let go of resentments, grudges, and even an unhappy mood when you let your values take the lead in your decisions and thoughts. Don't worry if things start out slow - by the end of the month you will have the hang of using your values to guide your day.

**Get ready to see your values come alive in your thoughts and in your actions!**

# Daily Journal

To get started on your month of values journaling, read through the descriptions of values on the next page. Next, review the list of values on the next few pages to see which ones are most important to you *these days*. I emphasize *these days* because values change and evolve over time. Be sure to select values that are most important to you now and to your future self. You can attend to several different values this month or just focus one. You may have another value you would prefer to focus on this month and that is great too. If you need some inspiration, search online for a list of value words and see which ones most resonate with you now. Avoid focusing on values you think you *should* be focusing on or ones that seem more important to your past. However you move towards your current and future values will be great!

After you read the values, review the journal instructions so you get a sense of what to write. I have included a sample page from my journal so you can see one way to do it. Feel free to experiment with how you answer the prompts. By the end of the month, you will have your mind on your values and a keen sense of how to focus your thoughts on your values in a positive way. You will even begin to see the positive in situations you previously thought were negative.

Set aside 10 minutes each morning to complete one journal page. Do this each day for a month. This is less than 1% of your day! I encourage you to do this as soon as you wake up *before* you look at your phone, computer or begin your activities of the day. Your mind is fresh and this starts your day off in a positive way! Perhaps you can pair your journal with your morning coffee or tea. Find a comfortable spot in your house and dedicate 10 minutes each morning to your values. When you take the time to start your day with intention, you benefit tremendously and so does everyone around you! The longer you do this, the more you will see your relationships flourish and work take on increased meaning. Self care in this way is a wonderful gift to yourself and to everyone around you.

# ways to think of values



Values are your inner compass leading you towards, YOUR standards & priorities.

How you spend your time, think, & behave moves you closer to or farther from your values. When aligned with values, your actions reflect what is most important to you. Actions which demonstrate your commitment to the value, bring you closer to your value. Inaction in a value domain suggests it is less of a priority in your life - only YOU get to determine what is the priority.

Values are freely chosen, personal beliefs and standards of what is important to YOU. We inherit the values of family & society & it takes time to explore & define values for yourself. You may find some of your values align with family and society, while others differ greatly. You are the only person who can create your unique set of values.

Values are separate from goals - they INFORM your goals by letting you know what is important. If you value personal creativity, you might set a goal of 20 minutes of art or writing each day to ensure you are acting on this value each day.

Values naturally evolve and their importance changes as you grow and age.

For example, what you value in relationships changes over time and as you meet new people. Ongoing evaluation creates a life consistent with your values.

Values are about what YOU care about and how you want to BE as a person in any moment or situation. Your values reflect YOU & how YOU want to show up.

For example, defining your value of friendship refers to what YOU find important & how YOU want to behave.

# Values in Relationships

01

## Friendships

Friends are the people you perceive as close, important, and valuable in your life, and how you choose to interact with them.

02

## Family

Family are the people you are related and how you interact with them. It also can refer to the people you choose to call family and how you interact with them.

03

## Romantic Relationship

Romantic relationships refer to the person or people you love, and how you express your love to them.

04

## Parenting

Parenting refers to your relationship with your children, step-children, adopted children, God-children, or others who come into your life in that capacity. It includes how you interact, care, support, and love them.

05

## Community

Community is your neighborhood, the people around you in various contexts, and how you interact and engage with them.

# Values in Work

06

## Acquaintances & Colleagues

Acquaintances and colleagues refer to people with whom you occasionally interact. This refers to how you engage and interact with them and the spirit of your interactions.

07

## Financial Health

This refers to how you care for and appreciate your money, including knowledge of your finances, planning, organizing. It also refers to your thoughts and feelings about money.

08

## Work Ethic

Work ethic refers to your principles, morals, and beliefs about work and how you want to show up for your work. This can include pride, dedication, professionalism, dedication, and trust.

09

## Personal Growth

Personal growth refers to your commitment to yourself to improve any aspect of your life, including education, knowledge, and commitment to growth.

10

## Career/Vocation/Education

This refers to how you engage in your job/career/vocation or education.

# Values in Style

11

## Surroundings

Your surroundings include: how you design your home; the state of your cupboards, drawers, cabinets, and closets; the inside your car; your desk, office, and files.

12

## Personal Style

Your personal style includes: your choice and care of your clothes, lingerie, shoes, makeup, and jewelry. It is how you care for your personal presentation each day.

13

## Making Special

Making Special refers to how much care and attention you put into personal, family, and home rituals each day or year. The practice of making special is thought to be vital to advancing societies.

# Values in Context

14

## Spirituality

Spirituality is your connection to the greater whole of the planet, to humanity, and to the God of your understanding. This aspect of the self can directly inform meaning and purpose.

15

## Nature

Nature refers to how much time you spend out of doors, how you bring nature into your home and daily rituals. It also relates to your connection to spirituality and what you eat.

16

## Advocacy

Advocacy refers to how you respond to improve situations you perceive as important. This includes facilitating changes in yourself, work, family, groups and society.

# Value in Self

17

## Inner Boundaries

Inner boundaries refer to limits you set with yourself including, self respect, discipline, keeping self commitments, what you will accept from yourself, and personal responsibility.

18

## Outer Boundaries

Outer boundaries refers to limits you set with others. It includes knowing what you want, articulating your limits and wants with others, and asserting yourself.

19

## Self talk

How you counsel and advise yourself constitutes self talk and includes the origins of your self talk, language and tone of voice you use with yourself in various circumstances.

20

## Physical Health

Physical Health refers to how you appreciate your body and how you care for your body. This includes your food choices, sleep, fitness, consulting experts on health care, and managing stress and anxiety.

21

## Mental Health

Mental health refers to thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and our reactions to internal or external experiences.

# Daily Journal

## Get ready to bring your values to life!

Complete one page every morning for a month to bring your values to life! Set aside 10 minutes each morning before you look at your phone, computer or jump into action for the day. Commitment to a daily practice is key - the more consistent you are, the faster you will see values come to life. Notice how your commitment to a daily practice feels. Another essential component to this practice includes self compassion...if you miss a day, that is ok, just pick back up the next day without judging yourself.

**Each journal page has six boxes where you answer the following questions:**

### 1. Current mood

What is your mood, how are you feeling? This can be a one word or a few sentences to acknowledge and accept how you are feeling in that moment. These might be feelings you like (happy, energetic, content, calm, etc.) or feelings you dislike (anxious, worried, resentful, etc.). Just notice whatever feelings are present and then move on without trying to hang on to or push away the feelings.

### 2. To do list

Write three tasks you want to accomplish today. These might include work tasks (prep and attend a meeting), home chores (wash & dry clothes, put them away), social activity (lunch with a friend), or whatever else you want to accomplish (make reservations for a vacation, run errands, exercise etc.). Research suggests more than three things on your list is unhelpful and makes accomplishing anything difficult. While you may have a long list of things to do for the week, limit what you add to your journal to only three. Be as specific as possible in your list of what you want to accomplish. I encourage you to include at least one task which supports you, helps you feel great, and is in line with your values. This is different from your usual to do list - think of these as gifts to yourself or your future self. For example, you might want to finish an art project, ready a chapter, write for 20 minutes, garden for 30 minutes, take a bubble bath, schedule a lunch with a friend, sign up for a class, etc.

# Daily Journal

## **3. Values**

What values are reflected in your to do list? Consider what value(s) you are focusing on for your tasks. You can use the list provided in this book or use your own values. Often, one task can relate to many values. For example, if you have laundry on your to do list, your values might include caring for your family, having a neat home, taking care of your body, looking stylish, etc.

## **4. Desired Feelings**

How do you want to feel when you accomplish these tasks on your list? For example, you might want to feel relieved, at ease, accomplished, impressed, satisfied, energized, etc. There is no need to try and create these feelings - it is your attention and committed actions towards your values that will ultimately create the feelings you desire.

## **5. Thoughts**

What thoughts do you need to think to help you accomplish your tasks while keeping your values in mind? Choose positive thoughts that specifically link your task with a value. For example, if you are attending a work meeting you might want to think: "I present my best self at work. I share my positivity with others at work. I am proud to contribute to my company. I am happy to get a regular paycheck."

## **6. Art response**

Art Therapy has proven benefits for relaxation and stress reduction. Furthermore, our inner experiences and feelings are experienced without language, thus, using art increases your understanding of your feelings and values. Your art can be just one line, a drawing using lines, shapes and colors, or a representational picture. However you do this will be great! Add three words or phrases to describe your art and you just used both sides of your brain and added new ways of expressing yourself!

**Enjoy the process and start looking for your values in everything you do!**

# Daily Value

## SAMPLE

### 1. Current mood

Anxious/worried

Happy

### 4. Desired feelings

- Proud of how I show up at work and for my friends.
- Happy to be meeting a new friend, relaxed, fun.

### 2. To do list

- Attend work meeting.
- Meet new friend for lunch.
- Deliver package to post office.

### 5. Thoughts to support values

- I love meeting new people.
- Quality work is a reflection of my wish to contribute value and my appreciation for having a job.

### 3. Values

- Work: give high quality service.
- Friendship: cultivate new friendship & joy.
- Friendship: caring for a friend by sending a cheerful little gift.

### 6. Art



# Begin

**Now it is your turn.**

Spend the next month focusing on your values each morning and see how your life begins to evolve.

Decisions will become easier when you make them with your values in mind. Relationships flourish when you treat and talk to others using your values. Your relationship to your thoughts will begin to change and you will more easily generate a positive outlook on life and what is happening. Your relationship to your self becomes less judgmental and more positive when you prioritize your values.

**Enjoy the process and let your values guide everything you do.**

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1. Current mood

4. Desired feelings

2. To do list

5. Thoughts to support values

3. Values

6. Art

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# COPYRIGHT DISCLAIMER

This journal is offered as an educational tool to inspire you to reflect on your values. The journal is not therapy and participating does not constitute a therapeutic relationship. The assignments are offered as inspiration to increase authenticity in your relationship with yourself, and achieve your value-based goals.

Interested in art psychotherapy and more focused work on authentic expression and a joyful life? Contact *The Art Therapy Center of San Francisco* at [ArttherapycenterSF.com](http://ArttherapycenterSF.com) or email [Amy@Amybackos.com](mailto:Amy@Amybackos.com). You can also check your insurance company or primary care physician for a therapy referral.

**Enjoy the process!**

Want more? Email me!  
Have any questions/concerns? Email me!  
Love the journal? Tell a friend!!  
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