



## Valued Living During Challenging Times

Your values are things that truly matter to you deep in your heart. They point to what kind of person you want to be in this world and how you want to spend your time. All too commonly, we lose touch with our values when things go wrong in life, which is counter-productive when our values can help us be resilient. This exercise helps you reconnect with your values in light of a current personal challenge.

### Step 1: Describe the challenging life event

Take a moment to consider a challenging event that you are currently facing. For example, maybe you lost your job. Briefly describe this challenging event in the space below.

### Step 2: Identify values with which you lost touch

Values are things that are important to you, and it may be the case that this challenging event in your life (identified in the previous step) is making it difficult for you to live in line with your values. For example, if you have become ill, you may have lost touch with your best friend because you have been focusing most of your time on getting better and understanding your illness. In this example, your illness has caused you to lose touch with your value of “friendship.” Consider three values with which you have lost touch because of your current problematic situation. A list of possible values is provided in Appendix A.

1. *Value:*

*What it means to me:*

*Why it is important to me:*



2. Value:

*What it means to me:*

*Why it is important to me:*

3. Value:

*What it means to me:*

*Why it is important to me:*

### Step 3: Reconnecting with my values

The values that you came up with in the previous step tell you something about your ideal self; the person you would like to be. While this challenging life event may be getting in the way of you being your ideal self, you can take action to reconnect with your values as much as possible, given the current circumstances. That is, your current circumstances do not need to prevent you from living in line with your values.

Concerning the values you listed in Step 2, consider the actions you can take *right now*. What can you do now to reconnect with these values? What actions will allow you to be - as much as possible - the person you want to be under the current circumstances? Hint, living in line with your values can look different from how you have lived by them in the past. For example, if you have lost your job and one of your core values is to provide for your family, one action that you could take to reconnect with this value could be taking over the responsibility of the household cooking for your family. Or, if your illness prevents you from physically meeting your friends, you may still connect with them using video calls.



For each value, come up with as many possible valued actions as you can, no matter how small:

*Value 1:*

*Actions:*

*Value 2:*

*Actions:*

*Value 3:*

*Actions:*

An example of a completed exercise is provided in Appendix B.

#### Step 4: Taking action to re-connect

For as long as you are facing this challenging life event, remind yourself to stay connected to your values. From time to time, ask yourself: What can I do *now* to be the person I want to be under these conditions? Consider the actions you listed in Step 3 and start with the action that is most feasible or most attractive at this moment.



## Appendix A: Examples of common values

Acceptance	Efficiency	Inner Harmony	Quality
Achievement	Elegance	Inspiration	Radiance
Advancement & Promotion	Entertainment	Integrity	Recognition
Adventure	Enlightenment	Intellect	Relationships
Affection	Equality	Involvement	Religion
Altruism	Ethics	Knowledge	Reputation
Arts	Excellence	Leadership	Responsibility
Awareness	Excitement	Learning	Risk Safety & Security
Beauty	Experiment	Loyalty	Self-Respect
Challenge	Expertise	Magnificence	Sensibility
Change	Exhilaration	Making a Difference	Sensuality
Community	Fairness	Mastery	Serenity
Compassion	Fame	Meaningful Work	Service
Competence	Family	Ministering	Sexuality
Competition	Fast Pace	Money	Sophistication
Completion	Freedom	Morality	Spark
Connectedness	Friendship	Mystery	Speculation
Cooperation	Fun	Nature	Spirituality
Collaboration	Grace	Openness	Stability
Country	Growth	Originality	Status
Creativity	Happiness	Order	Success
Decisiveness	Harmony	Passion	Teaching
Democracy	Health	Peace	Tenderness
Design	Helping Others	Personal Development	Thrill
Discovery	Helping Society	Personal Expression	Unity
Diversity	Honesty	Planning	Variety
Environmental Awareness	Humor	Play	Wealth
Economic Security	Imagination	Pleasure	Winning
Education	Improvement	Power	Wisdom
Effectiveness	Independence	Privacy	
	Influencing Others	Purity	



## Appendix B: Example of a completed form

### Step 1: Describe the challenging life event

I recently lost my job.

### Step 2: Identify core values

1. Value: care

What it means to me: to take care of important others, such as my son and wife

Why it is important to me: because I want the people I love to be safe and happy

2. Value: financial independence

What it means to me: to be able to buy the things I want and need without relying on others

Why it is important to me: I do not want to be financially dependent on others because it greatly reduces my feelings of freedom and creates a sense of indebtedness.

3. Value: learning

What it means to me: to develop myself

Why it is important to me: I am eager to learn new things, as this allows me to feel young and alive.

4. Value: inner peace

What it means to me: to feel balanced and at ease

Why it is important to me: I feel happiest and strongest when I experience a sense of emotional stability. It allows me to make wise choices and genuinely connect with others.

### Step 3: Consider actions for valued living

Value: Care

- I will actively search for a new job so that I will be able to provide for my family as soon as possible again.
- I will try to manage my emotions as well as possible so that my kids and wife will not be affected by my stress.

Value: Financial independence

- I will explore options to cut our expenses so that we can remain financially independent for as long as possible during unemployment.



Value: Learning

- I will talk to others who have also faced unemployment to learn how they dealt with it.
- I will search for vacancies in related fields, and I will invest time to re-educate myself to find a job in a related field if necessary.
- I will keep reading and developing myself, even if it is not at work.

Value: Inner peace

- I will take enough time to rest to prevent becoming overwhelmed by the stress of my unemployment.
- I will meditate to stay connected to my feelings and needs.