

Making Values Real



A Madd-Steiny eBook



... serious business made fun

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Making Values Real





CORE VALUES

Introduction

This eBook is designed to help you transform your values from ideas to action. Values become real when you live them and powerful when they guide and motivate you. There are several activities in this eBook that you can use to bring deeper clarity and meaning to your individual or shared values. We're confident you'll find them fun, and we hope you'll be inspired to make your values real.

— Georgine and Lynae

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The Importance of Values

A value is a principle, standard or quality considered worthwhile or desirable. Values provide the foundation on which the things we consider important are built. They help guide our decisions and motivate us to take action, achieve balance, and gain a sense of satisfaction in our lives.

When was the last time you gave thought to your values?

Many of us don't take the time to think about our values until we experience a crisis or personal challenge. Everyone struggles with uncertainty or stress at times. By focusing on what's important to us, we can reaffirm our sense of identity and build the courage and confidence necessary to face adversity.

When times are stormy, values are like a lighthouse, preventing us from drifting off course and anchoring us to our sense of self. In good times, values are the wind in our sails propelling us to live fully and with purpose.

“Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”

— George Bernard Shaw

In his book, *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*, Laurence Boldt defines three types of values:

Universal Values

Universal values unite us all as a human race. These include such values as peace, love, and happiness. These are the timeless and enduring values that are at the core of our humanity.

Cultural Values

Cultural values are the specific or agreed upon values held by a society or group — a country, religious community, family, organization, or team. These values define the customs, manners, and ethics of the group. Unlike universal values, these values can change over time to keep pace with the shifting conditions of the culture.

Personal Values

Personal values give us our individual sense of identity. They are a result of our life experiences and are reflected in our actions, relationships, and decisions. Like cultural values, personal values change with the ages and stages of life.

Values and Leadership

Leadership is the practice of bringing out the best in ourselves and others. It's not a position. Rather, it's a state of mind or attitude about how we choose to live that inspires others to follow. Leaders embody traits that help others achieve their full potential.

Values provide the foundation from which leaders act. People who “lead from within” use values to guide their decisions and actions. When we observe these leaders, we can see their values come alive through their actions.

Often, people operate on ‘auto-pilot’ and are not fully aware of how their values influence their actions and decisions. Gaining clarity about values provides insight to why we do the things we do. This understanding and self-awareness empowers us to make choices that “feel right” because we are better equipped to align values with action.

Values insight can also deepen relationships with others. Sharing our values helps us understand each other, appreciate differences, and accept other points of view.

“Actions speak louder than words.”

“What you believe influences who you are.”

“Be a role model.”

“Walk your talk.”

“Practice what you preach.”

“Say what you mean. Mean what you say.”

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Your Core Values

Our core values are shaped from our experiences with family, education, work, or religious affiliation. The values we hold dear represent the diversity of our cultural experiences and reflect our traditions or customs. They are central to how we live our daily lives.

When our actions and decisions align with our core values, we are more likely to experience harmonious relationships and satisfaction in our lives. Living our values highlights our natural abilities, talents, and strengths.

While being true to our own values, we must also allow others to be true to theirs. All values are worthy of honor. If we honor only our personal values, we may inadvertently project them on others or expect others to make choices or behave as we would.

The Values Discovery Process

Madd-Steiny's Values Discovery Process is designed to meet a variety of professional and personal development needs. The process centers on one of two different decks of values cards available at www.madd-steiny.com. The Culture Values Deck has 52 cards, each with a value that speaks to the needs of a team, group, or other social system. The Personal Values Deck, also 52 cards, has values that speak more to an individual's sensibilities.

- 1. Open the deck of your choice and shuffle the cards. You will notice that there is a value and brief definition on one side and a quotation on the other.*
- 2. Sort the cards into two piles with 26 cards in each. In one pile, place the cards that are most important to you and in the other pile, place the cards with values that are less important to you. When you have finished that sort, put the cards with the less important values back into the box.*
- 3. Repeat step two, this time sorting the 26 cards you have into two piles with 13 cards in each. Once you have finished this sort, put the 13 cards with the less important values back into the box.*
- 4. From the remaining 13 cards, select your five most important or core values, returning the other eight cards to the box.*
- 5. Write your five core values down, think about how you live them, and share them with others.*

Variations on the Basic Card Sort

The following ideas provide a variety of activities for using the cards according to the basic card sort instructions on the previous page.

Basic Idea #1—Key Relationships at Work

Focus on a key relationship at work. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that are most important to you in that relationship. If appropriate, ask the person in your key relationship to do the same. Share your five core values with each other.

Food for thought:

- How does this value enhance your work together?*
- How can you best honor each other's values?*

Basic Idea #2—Key Personal Relationships

Focus on a key relationship in your personal life. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that are most important to you in that relationship. If appropriate, ask the person in your key relationship to do the same. Share your five core values with each other.

Food for thought:

- How does this value enhance your relationship?*
- How can you best honor each other's values?*

Basic Idea #3—What I Need from Others

Focus on a key relationship in your personal life. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that you need to see demonstrated in the relationship. If appropriate, ask the person in your key relationship to do the same. Share your five core values with each other.

Food for thought:

- How can you request what you need?*
- How are your needs currently met in the relationship?*

“We either make ourselves miserable or we make ourselves strong. The amount of work is the same.”

— Carlos Castaneda

“Everyone has their own private Mt. Everest they were put on this earth to climb.”

— Hugh Macleod

Basic Idea #4—How You See Me

Give the deck of cards to someone with whom you have a key relationship — a spouse, family member, co-worker, peer, or manager. Ask him or her to sort the deck of 52 cards and identify the five core values that he or she thinks are most important to you. Have a conversation about why he or she chose these values for you.

Food for thought:

- Which of the values chosen most surprised you?*
- How is another’s perception of you the same or different than your self-perception?*

Basic Idea #5—Career Stages

Focus on your career path — past, present, and future. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that are most important to you in your career.

Food for thought:

- *How is your current work aligned with your core career values?*
- *What types of work would you be doing if you had your “dream job”?*

Basic Idea #6—Ages and Stages of Life

Focus on your current age and stage of life. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that are most important to you right now.

Food for thought:

- *What values would you like to bring more of into your life?*
- *What values do you feel most blocked from living and why?*

Basic Idea #7—Changes in Life

Focus on a past stage of your life — college, newly married, starting a career, your first child, etc. Sort the deck of 52 cards, and identify the five core values that were most important to you during that time in your life.

Food for thought:

- *How have your core values changed since that time?*
- *How did your values best serve you during that time?*

Basic Idea #8—Your Role at Work

Focus on the roles and responsibilities you have at work. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that are most important to your role and responsibilities at work.

Food for thought:

- *Why are these values important to your role at work?*
- *How do these values currently influence your behavior, communication, and decision making?*

Basic Idea #9—Your Personal Roles

Focus on one of the roles you play in your personal life and the responsibilities of that role. The role could be community leader, parent, spouse, sibling, care giver, friend, etc. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that are most important to this role and the responsibilities that come with it.

Food for thought:

- What value is the hardest for you to live up to and why?*
- What activities take up most of your time? Are those activities aligned with your core values?*

Basic Idea #10—Team Values

Give everyone on the team a deck of value cards and ask them to sort the cards to identify the five core values they think are most important to functioning as a healthy and productive team. Ask everyone to share the values they chose. Reach consensus on five core team values.

Food for thought:

- What set of behaviors best align with your team values?*
- What are the greatest strengths of your team?*
- Which of the core values align with your strengths?*

Basic Idea #11—Family Values

Give everyone in your family a deck of value cards and ask them to sort the cards to identify the five core values they think are most important to a healthy family. Ask everyone to share the values they chose. Reach consensus on five core family values.

Food for thought:

- What is one thing each of you can commit to doing that aligns with your family values?*
- What is one thing you can commit to doing together that aligns with your family values?*

Basic Idea #12—Health and Well-Being

Focus on yourself holistically – as a physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual being. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that most support your health and well-being.

Food for thought:

- What types of activities feed all aspects of your being?*
- What would you like to do more of that would increase your health and well-being?*

Basic Idea #13—Dreams and Visions

Focus on a dream or vision you have in your life. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that most support your dream or vision.

Food for thought:

- If you could do anything at all that would move you toward your dream or vision, what would you do?*
- What do you feel empowered to act on today that will take you one step closer to reaching your dream or vision?*

“A moment’s insight is sometimes worth a lifetime of experience.”

— Oliver Wendell Holmes

Basic Idea #14—Getting Unstuck

Focus on an issue or problem that is holding you back from an outcome you desire. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that most support your desired outcome.

Food for thought:

- To which value(s) do you need to give more attention?*
- How can acting on these values get you over the hurdles you face?*

Basic Idea #15—Values Interviewing

Give your interviewee a deck of value cards and ask him or her to sort the deck to identify the five core values that are most important to him or her in a work culture. Share how your work culture aligns with these values.

Food for thought:

- How well do your personal work values align with the organization's work values?*
- How do work values affect personal performance?*

Basic Idea #16—Meaningful Moments

Think about a time when you were touched by a situation or person in your life; a time that created a “meaningful moment” for you. Sort the deck of 52 cards to identify the five core values that were demonstrated during that time.

Food for thought:

- How did that experience help define who you are today?*
- How do your values show up during the meaningful moments you experience now?*

“Out of the Box” (OOTB) Ideas for the Value Cards

The following activities offer different and creative ways to use the value cards to help identify priorities, solve problems, or gain a new perspective.

OOTB Idea #1—Conflict Resolution

Focus on a conflict situation and choose the values that are not being demonstrated and, as a result, causing conflict. Craft a statement that articulates what you need or want in order for the conflict to be resolved.

Food for thought:

- How can you be the change you want to see to resolve the conflict?*
- What will the resolution of the conflict do for you?*

OOTB Idea #2—Value of the Week

Randomly choose one value card from the deck each week. In a central location at work, post the value and its definition. Allow spontaneous conversation to emerge throughout the week about the value.

Food for thought:

- When have you observed this value in action?*
- What is the effect of this value when present?*

OOTB Idea #3—Quotation of the Week

Randomly choose one value card from the deck each week. In a central location at work, post the quotation written on the card. Allow spontaneous conversation to emerge throughout the week about the quotation and value.

Food for thought:

- *What inspires you about this quotation?*
- *How does this value “show up” at work?*

OOTB Idea #4—Values-Based Meetings

Place a deck of cards in the center of a conference table used for regular meetings. Before a meeting starts, ask a few people to pick a value from the deck and share it with the group along with the quotation that accompanies the value. Invite everyone to share how they’d like the value to be honored during the meeting.

Food for thought:

- *After the meeting, ask everyone to reflect on how the chosen values influenced the meeting outcomes.*
- *Invite everyone to give examples of behaviors during the meeting that aligned with the chosen values.*

OOTB Idea #5—Trading Cards

Pass out three value cards to each person in the group. Instruct everyone to move around the room and find out what values the others have been given. Direct the group to negotiate and trade cards until they have the three values that most represent themselves.

Food for thought:

- What values were traded most readily and why?*
- What values did you want that others wanted to keep?*

OOTB Idea #6—Values Renewal

Ask everyone in your group to select one value card that is important to them. Invite them to individually reflect on how they can most improve living the value. If appropriate, ask individuals to share their reflection and invite others to offer their support.

Food for thought:

- What is the motivation behind improving upon how you live your values?*
- What support is most meaningful for you?*

OOTB Idea #7—Recognizing Strengths

Ask everyone in your group to select one value that is important to them. Take turns giving each person feedback about the strength they demonstrate that is in alignment with the value they chose.

Food for thought:

- What strengths did others recognize in you that you don't always recognize in yourself?*
- How can you best use your strengths to serve others?*

OOTB Idea #8—Absence and Presence

Pass out one value card to each person in the group. Ask everyone to share what it's like (at work or home) when this value is absent and what it's like when this value is present.

Food for thought:

- What values do you observe most often in your interactions?*
- What values do you want to observe more often in your interactions?*

OOTB Idea #9—Values Appreciation

Divide your group into pairs for an appreciation activity. Ask everyone to pick a value from the deck that reminds them of qualities their partner possesses. Then, have them use the value to finish this sentence and share it with their partner: 'I appreciate the value of _____ that I see in you.'

Food for thought:

- What behaviors do you observe in your partner that demonstrate the value that you chose for him or her?*
- How have you benefited from your partner's actions?*

OOTB Idea #10—All I Want

Ask everyone to select one value card from the deck and use it to finish this sentence: "I want more _____ in my life."

Food for thought:

- Why do you want more of that value?*
- What will help you get more of that value in your life?*

*“In the pursuit of knowledge,
something is added every day.
In the pursuit of enlightenment,
something is dropped every day.”*

— Lao-tzu

OOTB Idea #11—Who I Admire

Ask everyone to think about someone they admire — a co-worker, public figure, historical figure, leader, friend, family member, etc. Direct everyone to choose one value card from the deck that best represents the person they have in mind.

Food for thought:

- *What inspires you most about the person you admire?*
- *If the value card were a mirror, what do you recognize in yourself that you admire?*

OOTB Idea #12—Your Brand

Ask everyone to select one card that represents a quality for which they are known or often receive recognition. Invite everyone to identify how their actions and decisions embody the value everyday and help create their “brand”.

Food for thought:

- *How do people describe you?*
- *What legacy do you want to leave?*

OOTB Idea #13—Personal Icon

Ask everyone to select a card from the values deck that best represents them and create an icon that symbolizes the value. Icons can be images, characters or words that capture the essence of the value. Provide art supplies and encourage everyone to have fun and be creative.

Food for thought:

- Why did you choose this value?*
- How does the icon you created represent you?*

OOTB Idea #14—Team Icon

Divide larger groups into small groups of three to five people and ask each group to select one card from the deck that best represents the team. Ask small groups to create an icon that symbolizes that value. Icons can be images, characters or words that capture the essence of the value. Provide art supplies and encourage everyone to have fun and be creative.

Food for thought:

- Why did you choose this value?*
- How does the icon you created represent the team?*

OOTB Idea #15—Personal Motto

Ask everyone to select up to three cards from the deck that best represent them. Using their chosen values, direct them to write a motto for themselves. A motto is a phrase meant to describe the general motivation, intention, spirit or purpose of a person or organization.

Food for thought:

- How does the motto you've written motivate you?*
- How does the motto you've written express your spirit, intention or purpose?*

OOTB Idea #16—Team Motto

Establish small groups of three to five and ask each group to select up to three cards from the deck that best represent the team. Using their chosen values, direct them to write a motto for the team. A motto is a phrase meant to describe the general motivation, intention, spirit or purpose of a person or organization.

Food for thought:

- How does the motto you've written motivate teamwork?*
- How does the motto you've written express the spirit, intention or purpose of the team?*

*“If you wish your merit to be known,
acknowledge that of other people.”*

— Asian Proverb

OOTB Idea #17—Values in Nature

Pass out one value card to each person or to a small group. Ask everyone to identify where they see this value in nature. An example may be the “discipline” of birds working to build their nests in the spring.

Food for thought:

- What universal laws do you recognize associated with values?*
- What are some other common natural expressions of values?*

OOTB Idea #18—Values Synergy

Ask individuals or groups to select three cards from the deck that represent a theme or synergistic idea. Ask everyone to share the values they chose and the theme that was identified.

Food for thought:

- How does the interconnectedness of values serve you?*
- How are values similar and different at the same time?*

OOTB Idea #19—Singing Values

Pass out one value card to individuals or small groups. Direct everyone to write song lyrics about the value to familiar tunes such as “Three Blind Mice”, “It’s a Small World”, “Happy Birthday” or “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” Invite everyone to sing their values song to the group.

Food for thought:

- What key messages were sent through your song?*
- What popular songs have clear values messages in them?*

OOTB Idea #20—Values Poster

Establish small groups and ask each group to select three cards from the deck that best represent the team. Direct groups to create a values poster for the team. Provide magazines, newspapers, scissors, tape and poster board. Encourage groups to have fun and be creative. Take turns sharing the posters.

Food for thought:

- What is your favorite part of the poster and why?*
- How can you use this poster to continually motivate and inspire you to live your core values?*

OOTB Idea #21—Values Gifts

Pass out one value card to each person or small group. Ask everyone to think about the gifts of this value. Ask everyone to share the gifts they identified.

Food for thought:

- How and when can you gift this value to others?*
- What do you get when you give these gifts?*

OOTB Idea #22—Priorities

Ask individuals or small groups to select one card from the deck that is important to them. Direct everyone to create a “to do” list for living this value. Once the list is created, ask everyone to prioritize the “to do” list and share it with the large group.

Food for thought:

- What resources or support do you need to help you accomplish the “to do” list?*
- What outcomes do you anticipate as you complete each action item on the list?*

“If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.”

— Abraham Maslow

OOTB Idea #23—Habits

Ask individuals or small groups to select one card from the deck that is important to them or the team. Direct everyone to identify both good and bad habits that are often associated with this value. A habit is a behavior that is repeated regularly and tends to occur without one being fully conscious about it. Invite everyone to share the habits they identified.

Food for thought:

- *What good habits do you want to cultivate?*
- *What bad habits do you want to break?*

OOTB Idea #24—Values Superhero

Establish small groups of three to five and pass out one value card to each group. Direct the teams to create a Superhero who has one super power associated with the value that “saves the day” in a situation or event. You can also have teams create an icon for their superhero and write a news story of a “save the day” event.

Food for thought:

- *What super power would you most like to possess and why?*
- *How can we “save the day” in situations we encounter by living our values?*

