

## ACTIVITY: Defining and Aligning Your Values

### Purpose

Values are individual ideas and beliefs about what is important in life. Our values shape our behavior and our actions. Research shows that resilient people are committed to their values.

When we take time to truly examine what our values are and why they are important, we are better prepared to meet life's challenges. Having a strong sense of our personal values provides us a road map through life.

When we are not living by our values, we feel uncomfortable – we are out of alignment. This can result in sadness, anger, anxiety, or other negative feelings and leads to a lack of life satisfaction and a decrease in our ability to be resilient.

### Try This!

Try the activity on the following pages to help you:

- Identify your values in various areas of life: family, social relationships, career/work, leisure, spirituality, community, and health.
- Reflect on where you are out of alignment with your values and why.
- Start to identify ways you could begin to live more fully with your values.

**Activity adapted from:**

**The Happiness Trap.** Russ Harris.  
[www.actmindfully.com.au](http://www.actmindfully.com.au)

**Step 1:**

For each category below and on the next page, take some time to reflect on the following questions:

**What is important to you, or what do you value, in this area of life?**

**How important is this area of life?**

**What qualities or characteristics do you want to bring to this area?**

Write down a few notes about your values in each area. You may want to further break down some categories (for example, under family you may have different notes for spouse or siblings or parenting). Some categories may overlap. Some may be much less important to you than others.

**Family** (*spouse or significant other, children, siblings, parents, etc.*)

**Social relationships** (*friends, social groups, etc.*)

**Career/Work**

**Leisure** (*hobbies, recreation, etc.*)

**Spirituality** (*whatever this means to you*)

**Community** (*groups you may be involved in that are not strictly social, community service, politics, charity, neighborhood, children's school, etc.*)

**Health** (*physical and mental health, nutrition, exercise, etc.*)

**Step 2**

Fill out the table below, assessing how successful you have been in fully living your values over the past few months. Rate yourself between 0 and 100%, with 0 meaning you are not at all living by your values and 100 indicating you are successful in living by your values all the time. For areas where you are out of alignment, write down possible reasons.

Area	Alignment With My Values (0-100%)	If I am not aligned, why not? (What am I doing or not doing? Are there things preventing me from fully living my values?)
Family		
Social relationships		
Career/Work		
Leisure		
Spirituality		
Community		
Health		

## **Step 3**

Based on your reflections, are there things in your life that need to change?

What are some steps you can take to live more consistently by your values?