

# Unit 1: Introduction to personal values

## Overview:

- What are personal values?
- Personal values vs core beliefs
- Why personal values are important?
- How can personal values improve self-awareness?
- How do our personal values affect your personal and daily life?





# What are personal values?

Personal values encompass a collection of guiding principles and deeply held convictions that assist in delineating what is deemed "right" and "wrong." These principles encompass concepts such as honesty as opposed to dishonesty or the choice to work diligently rather than take shortcuts. The unique arrangement of these fundamental values is a personal matter, and they play a pivotal role in shaping your approach to life.

Your personal values have a significant influence on your conduct, interactions, and daily existence. They serve as a compass for making important decisions, contribute to your personal development, and even mold the trajectory of your chosen career. Every individual possesses their distinct set of values, and it's entirely possible that your priorities differ from those of your friends and colleagues. Nevertheless, those closest to you are more likely to share some of your fundamental values.

Research suggests that you may naturally gravitate toward individuals who align with your values more strongly than others. Establishing relationships with partners, coworkers, and family members who share your values is highly recommended.



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Each person expresses these principles in a distinct manner. For instance, if you and a coworker share an appreciation for community, you might demonstrate altruism by organizing a food drive for the entire company, while your coworker might focus on team-wide leadership development. Both expressions of the same value are valid and meaningful. Your personal values may not always be immediately evident to you, so identifying them can aid in your professional advancement, the cultivation of deeper connections with others, and more purposeful use of your leisure time. A clear understanding of what holds significance to you can help you align your actions with your inner self.





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This self-awareness empowers you to remove detrimental relationships, jobs, or situations that deplete your energy and hinder your pursuit of a joyful life. Engaging in activities that align with your values can decrease feelings of sadness and anxiety, ultimately boosting your mental well-being and potentially leading to a greater sense of satisfaction.

Furthermore, actively seeking a profession that resonates with your cherished values can heighten your dedication and motivation in the workplace. This increased drive to excel can ultimately be a valuable asset to your career progression.





# Personal Values vs. Core

## Beliefs



Core beliefs and personal values both impact your decisions and actions, yet they differ in their origins and potential effects. Core beliefs typically develop during childhood and can be harmful or untrue, while personal values are consciously selected and tend to be advantageous.

For instance, you might have a fundamental belief that expressing emotions is inappropriate because your parents never did so, even though you highly prioritize honesty and diligence.

A core belief represents something you consider true about the world or yourself, regardless of supporting evidence, while a value reflects something you hold in high regard and aim to express through your behavior.

There are three main categories of fundamental notions:

- Beliefs regarding oneself
- Beliefs regarding other individuals
- Beliefs about the world

While changing these can be more challenging than changing your values, it can be done by identifying your key beliefs, noting their sources, and reframing the problem.

## Why your personal values are important?

Your personal identity is intricately linked to your principles. These ideals play a crucial role in shaping your genuine self and infusing your life with meaning and purpose. Consequently, they have a profound impact on your personality, goal-setting, and way of life. Your values enable you to gain a deeper understanding of your true self, and rather than working against your aspirations, they guide you in achieving them. Making decisions that align with your personal ideals allows you to feel most authentic and in harmony with yourself.

Moreover, your relationships with others are heavily influenced by your personal values. When you can articulate your principles clearly, you have the capacity to form strong connections and establish partnerships that honor your self-esteem.



Furthermore, recognizing your beliefs can assist you in connecting with friends and colleagues who share similar values. Your relationships with individuals in your social circle who align with your beliefs are likely to be more authentic, supportive, and significant.

Lastly, but certainly not least, emphasizing your principles can be valuable in expressing your needs in various aspects of your life, whether in business, with family members, or among friends. Sharing these significant feelings can contribute to your overall well-being, as suppressing your emotions can have detrimental effects on your health. Additionally, mental health professionals argue that reconnecting with core beliefs can serve as a potent motivator for mental well-being.



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How can personal values improve self-awareness?

Oxford Language defines self-awareness as "conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires."

Self-awareness, the process of understanding your own identity and how you compare or contrast with others, hinges on having a deep grasp of your personal values, attitudes, and actions.

Enhancing self-awareness involves deliberate self-examination. This can be a challenging undertaking, as it may compel you to confront attitudes, choices, or behaviors that do not align with the person you aspire to become. Nevertheless, it represents a critical initial phase in personal growth.

Despite the effort required, the self-awareness cultivated through the identification of your distinct values will serve as a source of motivation, helping you stay authentic to yourself. This authenticity, in turn, equips you to make more informed choices, allocate more time to your personal development, and establish more robust connections with others. Moreover, the demanding internal introspection can enhance your creativity, self-confidence, and emotional regulation.





How do our personal values affect your personal and daily life?

Your personal values have a reach that extends beyond your personal life. Take, for example, one of your core principles: loyalty. This value can significantly impact your professional life, making you a reliable and trustworthy employee.

Demonstrating loyalty to your employer can be instrumental in advancing your career. Your manager may consider you for promotions, and your colleagues might look up to you for leadership and guidance.

Another value that you may hold in high regard is honesty. This could shape you into a team member who values collaboration, integrity, and constructive feedback. Your coworkers will recognize and appreciate this quality because it contributes to the overall success of the team.

Now, consider how embracing values like self-assurance, tenacity, and perseverance might influence your career. Your personal values define who you are, ultimately determining the kind of leader or employee you become.

A study conducted by the University of Western Australia has emphasized the significant role that values play in shaping our daily actions, including how we allocate our time and financial resources.





The researchers examined three primary aspects in this study, namely individual values, how individuals allocate their time, and their financial choices.

Professor Julie Lee, affiliated with the Centre for Human and Cultural Values at UWA, pointed out that people's everyday decisions are strongly influenced by their values, even if they may not consciously realize it. The study reveals that individuals prioritize a wide range of values in their lives, such as benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, environmental protection, equality, justice, and the welfare of others.

Despite this diversity in values, most people tend to assume that others share similar values with them, when in reality, there is much more variation.





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Professor Lee observed that the judgments people make about others often reflect their own values, rather than considering different perspectives.

Professor Lee also noted a connection between people's investment of time and their values. For instance, individuals who place a high importance on achievement and power tend to work, on average, approximately one hour longer on a workday and one and a half hours longer on their days off compared to those who do not prioritize these values. Consequently, they allocate less time to family and engage in fewer social activities. Conversely, those who prioritize the welfare of others typically achieve a more balanced work-life equilibrium.

It is intriguing to note that individuals who work longer hours often recognize the significance of spending time with loved ones, but they still choose to work longer hours if they prioritize personal success.

