



LET YOUR VALUES SHOW YOU THE WAY

Why?

One way to define values is to view them as the answer to the question: “What is important to me?” Values are ideals, and it may be that they are never fully realised. They can be compared to the cardinal points of the compass: if we want to go south, we can always move southwards, but we will never reach the final end point.

Values are a key part of our self-knowledge, and they form a solid foundation for career planning and our choices. When we are clear on what matters the most to us, it is easier to make choices and set goals. We spend a very large share of our time at work, which is why it is important that our work allows us to feel that we can promote matters, goals or values that are meaningful to us.

How?

In this assignment, you will first examine your personal values. Ideally, you can fulfil them also in your current or future job. But it is also useful to reflect on work-related values and hopes more generally. You will do this in the latter part of the assignment.

Your personal values

1. Spend some time making a list of your most important values – freely list any things that matter the most to you in your life. Values can just as well be general principles as practical everyday things, and you can describe them in any way you wish. Do not put anything on the list just because you feel that it should be there. Values are a personal matter, with no right and wrong answers.
2. Now rank the values you have listed in order of importance. Place your most important value first, the second most important second, and so on. If necessary, rename and group closely related values. Do this until your list is complete.
3. Now look at your top five values and assess them honestly using the following questions:
 - Why are these values the most important to you? Have they always been important to you, or have they become important because of certain experiences or people?
 - How well does your current life – your studies, possible job, free time and relationships – align with these values?
 - How have your career choices reflected your top values so far (e.g., in choosing your field of study and in your potential job searches)?
 - If one or more of your values do not align with your life at the moment, what changes do you want to make and which of these are feasible?
 - How do you want your values to be reflected in your future choices?
 - What kinds of challenges might you encounter when fulfilling your values? How can you overcome them?



Your work-related values

Next examine your work-related values and hopes specifically. You can use the list of typical work-related values below to help you, but you can also add values outside the list.

Compare the values with each other so that after you have scored them, you will have a list of your top work-related values. Do this:

1. Skim through the list of work-related values. Add your own work-related values if you want.
2. Start the comparison round with the first value on the list (inclusivity) and compare it with the next value on the list (creativity). Decide which of the two is more important to you and draw a tally mark next to the higher-scoring value to keep score. Continue working through the list, next comparing the first value (inclusivity) with the third value (job satisfaction) and choosing the more important one, then comparing the first value with the fourth value, and so on. Keep score by always marking with a tally the more important of the two. When you have compared the first value with all the other values on the list, repeat the process with the second value and then all the other values (comparing creativity with job satisfaction, etc.) until you have compared all values.
3. Now count the score for each value. Circle the values that scored the highest.
4. Look at your list of your most important values. What do you see? How are your top values reflected in your choices about your work and studies so far? How do you want to use them in your future choices?
5. Finally compare your personal values with your work-related values. What similarities can you see? What about differences? What thoughts does comparing the two lists evoke in you?

Examples of work-related values (adapted from Weiler 2001):

- Inclusivity: working in a group, committing to the group's goals and principles, loyalty
- Creativity: innovation, creating something new, finding new ways to work
- Job satisfaction: taking pleasure in your work, having fun, playing to your strengths
- Expertise: respect, recognition, giving advice
- Close relationships: having time for family, working with people you appreciate and who appreciate you
- Health: having a job that supports your physical and mental wellbeing
- Autonomy: independence, freedom to act and think, freedom to plan your work schedule
- Morality: working in line with your morals and in alignment with your values, openness
- Leadership: motivating others, taking responsibility, working in a team and leading a team
- Location: suitable workplace location, freedom to choose where you live
- Personal growth: learning, challenging yourself, using your knowledge and skills
- Power: having authority, being able to make decisions
- Reputation: recognition, acknowledgement, status
- Safety: stability, job security, income security



- Service: helping others, promoting wellbeing, working for the benefit of individuals or society
- Wealth: substantial pay, financial independence
- Inner wisdom: knowing and improving yourself, recognising your goals and true mission, possible religious calling
- Sustainability: working in accordance with the principles of sustainable development (ecological, economic, social or cultural sustainability)
- Some other value important to you: What is it?

Sources (adapted from): University of Helsinki. 2022. Guide to professional development and career planning (internal publication); Nytyi Ry. 2016. Learn life skills. Training for the students; Weiler, Nicholas W. 2001. Your Soul at Work.