

SPIRITUAL VALUES



When was the last time you sat down and really considered the values that resonate with you most in this moment of your life? Often, we consider values to be the moral or standards in which we were raised to honor and esteem. However, our values, or the principles that are important to us, can shift and change with time. As we grow and evolve as a human, it is natural for what values speak to us to evolve and change as well. Some values or principles remain in top-importance throughout our life, but it can be meaningful to consider in this season of your life, what values are really meaningful to you.

I use the following activities for individuals, couples, and families. If you are personally in a season of big change, it can be helpful to identify your top 1-3 values and see how it feels to make choices in alignment with them. It can also provide awareness into why you experience discomfort or struggle in an institution where your top values don't match with the top values of the organization. If you're in a partnership where growth is occurring, and fear might be cropping up, it can be meaningful to understand our decisions and our partner's decisions through the lens of the values they hold dearest at this moment. This exercise has been especially powerful for couples who are beginning to differ in their religious/spiritual beliefs or practices, understanding our loved one's values are leading the way and they might be different than our own can be comforting and lead to really meaningful conversation. One important point to recognize is there is no value more important than another, different does NOT mean deficient. As a family, it can be eye-opening and empowering to see the different values different members hold dear. As a parent, if you know your child values fairness as a top value, it might create a window into better understanding their interactions with other siblings when situations feel unfair. I also love this activity in fostering conversations about different values within a family and what common values do you hold etc.

As mentioned the exercise allows us to see what values are currently the most important and meaningful for ourselves and our partners. Our values shift and change throughout our lives in significance and importance. We often don't actively sit down and identify what values dictate our current behaviors, so this exercise can help us understand ourselves and our loved ones better.



This exercise is just the tip of the iceberg in possibilities in understanding and integrating our values into our daily lives and understanding and supporting the values of our loved ones. I would encourage you to place a list of your top values somewhere you can see daily and really begin to get curious about how you as an individual, couple or family more fully honor your values in this season of your life.

Sara Hughes-Zabawa,
LCSW

SPIRITUAL VALUES EXERCISE



When was the last time you sat down and really considered the values that resonate with you most in this moment of your life? Often, we consider values to be the moral or standards in which we were raised to honor and esteem. However, our values, or the principles that are important to us, can shift and change with time. As we grow and evolve as a human, it is natural for what values speak to us to evolve and change as well. Some values or principles remain in top-importance throughout our life, but it can be meaningful to consider in this season of your life, what values are really meaningful to you.

Circle the values that are really resonating with you at this moment in your journey.

| | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Honesty | Vigilance | Trust | Benevolence | Happiness |
| Openness | Self-discipline | Unity | Calmness | Inclusiveness |
| Willingness | Sharing & Caring | Gratitude | Charity | Individuality |
| Acceptance | Patience | Service | Cooperation | Inspiration |
| Surrender | Forgiveness | Safety | Curiosity | Intuition |
| Hope | Optimism | Mystery | Empathy | Joy |
| Commitment | Selflessness | Social Justice | Ethics | Loyalty |
| Faith | Compassion | Diversity | Fairness | Making a Difference |
| Courage | Consideration | Dialogue | Family | Open-Mindedness |
| Humility | Kindness | Contemplation | Generosity | Peace _____ |
| Unconditional Love | Positive Thinking | Abundance | Grace | Other: _____ |
| Perseverance | Responsibility | Accountability | Growth | Other: |
| Awareness | Tolerance | Balance | Flexibility | |

Looking at the spiritual values you circled or wrote in, narrow down your top three and write them here:

Looking at your top three spiritual values in this moment, what are some behaviors, rituals, actions etc. that would allow you to nourish those values in a way that would be meaningful to you?

Questions to consider individually:

1. What contributed to the top 3 values being the values that speak most to you in this moment of your life?
2. What does it feel like when you are really honoring those top 3 value, and do you have concrete examples of times where you really honored those values that you can share?
3. If you are experiencing changes or shifts in your life currently, how do your values influence those shifts and changes, if at all?
4. What would your life choices, behaviors, and relationships look like if they were in alignment with your top values - would they be the same? Would be different?
5. What barriers show up in your life that prevents you from stepping more fully into your values (example, fear, addiction, resentment etc.)
6. What would allow you to safely and bravely step into more alignment with your top values at this moment in your life?

SPIRITUAL VALUES EXERCISE



For Couples

If you're in a partnership where growth is occurring, and fear might be cropping up, it can be meaningful to understand our decisions and our partner's decisions through the lens of the values they hold dearest at this moment. This exercise has been especially powerful for couples who are beginning to differ in their religious/spiritual beliefs or practices, understanding our loved one's values are leading the way and they might be different than our own can be comforting and lead to really meaningful conversation. One important point to recognize is there is no value more important than another, different does NOT mean deficient. I would encourage you to place a list of your top values somewhere you can see daily and really begin to get curious about how you as a couple more fully honor your values in this season of your life.

1. Circle the top 10 values that really stick out to you as values you connect with.
2. Put a star by the top 5 of the 10 values you picked.
3. Write the top 5 values down on separate sticky notes and place them on the wall so you and your partner can see them.
4. One at a time, slowly remove two, leaving your top three values on the wall for you and for your partner to see.

| | | | | |
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Looking at your top three spiritual values in this moment, what are some behaviors, rituals, actions etc. that would allow you to nourish those values in a way that would be meaningful to you?

Questions to consider if doing exercise as a couple:

1. What contributed to the top 3 values being the values that speak most to you in this moment of your life?
2. What does it feel like when you are really honoring those top 3 value, and do you have concrete examples of times where you really honored those values that you can share?
3. How do your top values influence your choices related to your any shifts or changes happening in your life or relationship right now?
4. What values do we have that are different or similar?
5. Are the aspects of what your partner values that you admire?
6. What would your life choices, behaviors, and relationships look like if they were in alignment with your top values - would they be the same? Would they be different?
7. In what ways can each of you honor our partner's values and in what ways can they honor yours in this season of your life and relationships?
8. Get curious to better understand how your values and your partner's values influence your choices, thinking, and emotions. Notice that no one value is more important than another, just different, though you better believe it's human to believe our core values should be other people's core values to be "correct". Do your best to step into curiosity versus defensiveness.

SPIRITUAL VALUES EXERCISE



For Families

As a family, it can be eye-opening and empowering to see the different values different members hold dear. One important point to recognize is there is no value more important than another, different does NOT mean deficient. As a parent, if you know your child values fairness as a top value, it might create a window into better understanding their interactions with other siblings when situations feel unfair. I also love this activity in fostering conversations about different values within a family and what common values do you hold etc. I would encourage you to place a list of your top values somewhere you can see daily and really begin to get curious about how you as a family more fully honor your values in this season of your life.

1. Circle the top 10 values that really stick out to you as values you connect with.
2. Put a star by the top 5 of the 10 values you picked.
3. Write the top 5 values down on separate sticky notes and place them on the wall so family members can see them.
4. One at a time, slowly remove two, leaving your top three values on the wall for you and your family to see.

| | | | | |
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Questions to consider if doing exercise as a family:

1. Consider making it really fun and dramatic when you tell your kids you have to "take away" 1 or 2 of their top 5 values to help refine the list - little kids eat this part up! You can even help them pick their number 1 value and create a family values list with each of your top values, for example, the Jones Family is "Brave, Kind, Creative, & Honest".
2. Ask your kids what was a time they felt like they were honoring the chosen values and when was a time when they weren't - what was the difference in how they felt?
3. Explain that no value is better than another one, just different, but still important - how boring would it be if everyone's number one value was dependability?
4. Highlight the beautiful similarities and/or differences in your family and discuss how we can love each other with different values
5. Explore how each member feels supported in their different values Get curious about why they chose the values that they did!
6. Is there someone in history or in their present life that lived/lives the values they chose?
7. Put each of your family members top three values on an individual sticky note and put them somewhere you see daily (possibly the fridge) - bring them into everyday challenges.

For example:

- "John, I know you're really struggling with your Math assignments right now, they are feeling extra challenging - I wonder if you can continue to dig deep and tap into your value of dedication to power through tonight's assignments?"
- "Sally, I'm wondering how you can apply your value of justice to helping you and your brother navigate your conflict about who borrows the car."
- "Jimmy, I know one of your values and superpowers is kindness, can you remember kindness and practice sharing when you play with others today at playgroup?"
- "How could you use your values to tackle this situation?"
- "How would you behave if your top three values were leading the way in this situation, would you act differently?"