**VALUED LIVING by Steven C Hayes**



Values are guiding principles that lead and motivate us through life. Values are directions we keep moving in and different from goals, which are specific things we want to achieve along the way. For example, a value is if you want to be in a relationship where you and your partner are loving and supportive to each other. If you or your partner stop being loving and supportive, then you are not living by that value. If you want to run a marathon, that is a goal not a value as it can be ‘crossed off’ once achieved.

The following domains are typical areas of life that are often valued by people. Everyone is different, so there are no ‘correct’ values. This exercise is to help you think about what is important to you in your life in terms of general direction rather than goals. Deep down, what is important to you? What do you want your life to stand for? What sort of qualities do you want to cultivate as a person?

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| **Domains** |
| Family with two children with solid fill**1. Family -** What sort of family relations would you like to have? What personal qualities would you like to bring to those relationships? What sort of relationships would you like to build? How would the relationships be if they were ideal? |
| **Man and woman with solid fill2. Couple** - What sort of intimate relationship would you like to have? How would you interact with your partner if you were the ‘ideal you’ in this relationship and how would they ideally interact with you? |
| **Man changing baby with solid fill3. Parenting** - What sort of parent would you like to be? What sort of qualities would you like to have? What sort of relationships would you like to build with your children? How would you behave if you were the ‘ideal you’?  |
| **Social network with solid fill4. Friendships/Social Life** - What sort of qualities would you like to bring to your friendships? What sort of friendships would you like to build? How would you like your social life to be?  |
| **Work from home desk with solid fill5. Employment/Career** - What do you value in your work? What would make work more meaningful? What kind of worker would you like to be? What sort of work relations would you like to build?  |
| **Classroom with solid fill6. Education/ Training** - What do you value about learning, training, or personal growth? What new skills would you like to learn? What knowledge would you like to gain?  |
| **Bucket and shovel with solid fill7. Recreation/ Leisure** - What sorts of hobbies, sports, or leisure activities do you enjoy? How do you relax and unwind? How do you have fun?  |
| Asian Temple with solid fill**8. Spirituality** - Whatever spirituality means to you is fine. It may be communing with nature, or participation in an organised religious group. How do you express yourself spiritually. |
| **Neighborhood with solid fill9. Citizenship/ Community** - How would you like to contribute to your community, for example, volunteering, recycling, supporting a charity or a political party? |
| Heart with pulse with solid fill**10. Health/ Wellbeing** - What are your values related to maintaining your physical and general well-being? How do you look after yourself in relation to sleep, diet, exercise, relaxation etc? |

**Instructions - Completing the Domain Table Inventory:**

1. Read through the information on the different domains on the pages 1 and 2.

2. Write a few words to summarise your values in each domain in the table below. For example, in the Family domain you may write “loving, harmonious, fun”.

3. Rate the Importance of each Domain to you on a scale of 0 to 10 (you do not have to rank them against each other).

4. Rate the Success (on average) you feel you have in living in accordance with your values from 0 to 10 in each Domain.

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| **Domain** | **Brief summary of how you would live this value?** | **Importance** low 0-10 high | **Success**low 0-10 high |
| Family with two children with solid fill1. Family |  |  |  |
| Man and woman with solid fill2. Couple  |  |  |  |
| 3. ParentingMan changing baby with solid fill |  |  |  |
| Social network with solid fill4. Friendships/ Social Life |  |  |  |
| 5. Employment/Work from home desk with solid fillCareer |  |  |  |
| Classroom with solid fill6. Education/ Training  |  |  |  |
| Bucket and shovel with solid fill7. Recreation/ Leisure |  |  |  |
| Asian Temple with solid fill8. Spirituality |  |  |  |
| Neighborhood with solid fill9. Citizenship/ Community  |  |  |  |
| Heart with pulse with solid fill10. Health/ Wellbeing |  |  |  |

There are a number of ways to assess the results. The first is to look at all domains that

have relatively high importance scores (a score of 9 or 10), and also have relatively low

consistency scores (6 or less). These are clear problem areas, and I suggest starting

your initial work with any one of them. Then you can move on to other areas.

It’s also good to calculate your overall score. Multiply the two numbers from the first and

second parts for each domain. So if for family, in the first part you scored it as 10 and in

the second part you circled 4, for that domain you’d get 40. Add all of those numbers

and then divide them by 12 to get your composite score. To get a rough sense of how

your score compares to those of the broad public, the average composite result is 61.

Do not begin beating yourself up if your score is lower than that. Practice some defusion

from that negativity. This is a discovery process not a critique, and after all, you’ve

embarked on this journey – give yourself some credit for that. You’re here to embrace

change.

If you scored quite a few of the domains as low in importance to you, you should

consider whether you were being fully honest with yourself about them. It is perfectly

reasonable to have some domains that are unimportant. You may not care about

citizenship, or the environment, and if you do not have children, you may not care about

the parenting practices of others, and so on. That being said, research suggests that if

many of these domains are unimportant, that’s a contributor to psychological distress.

Use this assessment as an opportunity to admit your true values to yourself.

Now, with a good idea of the values domain you’d like to start working on, you’re ready

to get going.

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*Steven C Hayes is Nevada Foundation Professor in the Behaviour Analysis program at the Department of Psychology at the University of Nevada. An author of 44 books and nearly 600 scientific articles, his career has focused on an analysis of the nature of human language and cognition and the application of this to the understanding and alleviation of human suffering. He is the developer of Relational Frame Theory, an account of human higher cognition, and has guided its extension to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), a popular evidence-based form of psychotherapy that uses mindfulness, acceptance, and values-based methods.*

*For more information on Dr Hayes and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy go to his website* [*https://stevenchayes.com*](https://stevenchayes.com)