

PART ONE

**Discover Yourself:  
A Journey to You**

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# Mind Your Values

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*'Those who look outside dream, those who look inside awake.'*

Carl Jung



**At the heart of a truly fulfilling personal and business life there will always be a set of strong core values. The question is: Do you ever give yourself the time and permission to stop and ask yourself what matters to you?**

## **DISCOVERING YOUR ESSENTIAL VALUES**

Becoming more conscious of your values gives a strong sense of identity for you, your life and your career. If you have chosen a career that is a vehicle for generating money, but does not provide you with any personal satisfaction, maybe it's time to reconsider. Values provide focus and direction for (in this instance) financial success and give your desires more meaning.

So what about you? Let me ask you again: How do you feel about getting connected to your true values so that you can live a life that will make you happy and fulfilled?

I warn you, this process can be life changing. You may change your business, re-evaluate your friendships and find your soul-mate, take better care of your health and show more affection to those around you. Ultimately, it will be your choice. With

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values comes choice. With choice comes change. And with change comes growth.

Now, how do you feel about leaping into the world of values? Ready? Put your mind, body and soul into first gear and let's go!

## WHAT ARE VALUES?

What drives most people is a yearning to improve the quality of their lives while at the same time remaining true to themselves. Becoming conscious of what fundamentally drives you is not always obvious. While you are busy running on the treadmill of life, you will undoubtedly miss and potentially suppress those hidden drivers that are a powerful force within you.

Connecting to your deepest values, the ones you hold most dear, will give you the renewed energy, motivation and impetus to live your life more fully.

### Consider the following questions:

- What is my life's purpose?
- What is my unique contribution?
- What will I be remembered for?
- What makes me feel alive and vital on this planet?

These four questions will be answered over the course of the book, starting from the position of values.

While answering these questions you will inadvertently start to connect to what is important to you, the quality or essence you can't live without. Although you may have been hitherto unaware of these hidden drivers, not knowing them can

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be – in the worst case scenario – a contributing factor to an overall sense of meaninglessness.

Many people tend to chase goals only to find that when they achieve them there is a strong sense of anticlimax. When this happens, they get a fleeting moment of happiness and joy that is rapidly followed by ‘what’s the next question?’ Living a life that is disconnected from your values may lead you to pursue goals that will not ultimately satisfy nor nourish you longer term.

It’s a bit like going for a sugary treat or pick-me-up when we are hungry for a proper meal. We go for the biscuit or bag of crisps only to find out we are still hungry. We have not been properly nourished so we begin to crave more and more junk food that will never feel satisfying.

**Connecting to your core values and activating them in your day-to-day life is the fastest way to feel nourished and the most motivating and direct route to personal fulfilment and satisfaction.**

Values act like a compass and guide you towards your life’s purpose and true north. Values are your pure essence – that which is you and your essential self. Knowing your values and acting in accordance with them provides focus and direction in the choices you make, the roles you take on, the jobs you choose and the way you use your leisure time.

## **EXPRESSING YOUR ESSENTIAL VALUES**

One of the most life-enhancing exercises I have ever done was getting in touch with my key drivers and values and then

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*creating a life where I experienced and expressed them on a daily basis.* This does not happen overnight; it is an ongoing process, where the learning comes from the journey rather than reaching the ultimate destination.

When I first started to contemplate the bigger ‘why’ questions, I thought I knew who I was and what my values were, but I didn’t. My mentor kick-started a process that set me on a highway to confusion armed with only a set of abstract adjectives: you name it, I valued it. I valued courage, honesty, respect and integrity. However, none of these were, in reality, my core values and they were in fact utterly meaningless. They were too easy to choose.

In the ensuing personal chaos, I felt deflated and as though I was on a roundabout with no clearly marked exit signs. When I tried to work out which direction I should travel in, all the roads seemed equally inviting yet somehow closed. At every junction there was a roadblock or another dead end. As I turned to face another potential road, misleading signposts appeared everywhere. Then, and only then, did I put on the brakes and allow myself to connect to the essence of who I thought I was.

I have come to realize that life is an adventure, and this has helped me to grow as a person, as a mother, as a facilitator and as an executive coach. Today I am clear about what my values are. I know what the most effective means are to fast-track me to achieving them and what the end result of remaining faithful to the essential me is.

**Imagine living every day with a certain inner knowledge and allowing your values to pull you effortlessly along an invisible thread towards a life of fulfilment.**

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**My watershed moment – A fish can love a bird but where will they live?**

*Have you ever felt like a fish out of water? As a young woman fresh out of college deciding on what to do for my gap year, I remember believing that ‘girls like me do not go backpacking around the world’. I came from a very sheltered and conservative background. Girls like me did not go travelling to strange countries unescorted. It would be far too dangerous and inappropriate for a single girl. No, what we do is find a nice steady job, just to get some useful work experience, preferably not too far from home.*

This is precisely what I did. I obtained a job in a local government careers office. My job entailed interviewing young people and cajoling them to go for a job or, if I could not place them in any of the available jobs, signing them up for benefits. This role provided me with two amazing insights:

**First:** I realized that the part of the job I enjoyed most was spotting the hidden talent and potential of these youngsters. Helping them to create a better life than the one they seemed destined to lead. Rescuing them from a life of benefits to a life of employment and contribution gave me a strong sense of purpose.

**Second:** I did not fit into the environment I found myself in. Everyone around me was a civil servant working out how they could have a sick day or a training day to get out of working. It was not so much that they were demotivated; they were just playing the system for anything they could get away with. It was an entrenched culture that was at loggerheads with everything I believed in. They were not dishonest or bad people; they just did not seem to want much out of life. It appeared to me that they were happy in their 9 to 5 mentality.

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It was a huge challenge in this stale culture to get any buy-in for creative new ideas. The attitude that I was constantly faced with was ‘that’s not the way we do things around here’! I realized that although I had learned a lot about myself, I needed to get out before I got sucked into the same mindset. I was a fish out of water who couldn’t get enough oxygen into my system. I needed to utilize my emerging talents in a different environment. I longed to explore new oceans and gain new perspectives, but it was as if I had to swim quietly and safely to get through the day. I very rapidly outgrew this particular fish bowl.

I wanted to make a bigger contribution. So I enrolled at university to read English and Education. My driver? If I could qualify as a teacher, I could help educate young people to demand a better future. At 18, I had a strong need to make a CONTRIBUTION. Contribution became my compass.

Identifying my compass occurred almost by accident, which is often the way things happen. But it became one of my essential values and remains to this day a primary driving force in my life. Through this experience I discovered my ‘why’, and ‘why’ values are such important guiding principles for life choices and decisions.



### Your million dollar questions

Read the following questions several times and then take yourself for a walk and a breath of fresh air. When you come back, consider your answers:

- How do I know what my values are?

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Consider for a moment what lights you up. Get out a pen and paper and ask:

- What gets you out of bed in the morning?
- What do you love doing with your spare time?
- What are your favourite hobbies?
- Where do you like to travel to and why?
- What films or books move you deeply?

As you reflect on your answers you will begin to arrive at what is essentially important to you. Make sure you record your answers in your journal as you go through the practical exercises in this book. Remember that your core values are your internal, essential compass for satisfaction, fulfilment, meaning and purpose. When you act from your core values, you are operating at your highest level. Everyone has a higher level and a lower level of being (highest self and lower self) as you will discover in the following chapter. However, you may not be aware of this all the time. Gathering to mind a number of these experiences will help you to begin to get in touch with your spiritual drive that is harnessed through your values and comes from your highest self.

When you are at your best, feeling invincible,  
happy and purposeful, this is when you are living  
your values.

### **SAME QUESTION, DIFFERENT ANGLES**

You have to ask yourself the same question over and over again from different angles for it to make sense – e.g. what do I love doing? When am I at my most happy? Who do I like to be around? Why? –because values are multi-dimensional.

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One of the aspects of my career that nourishes me on a daily basis is the letters and testimonials I receive from satisfied clients. Clients who tell me that as a result of a seminar they have had a life-changing experience or a realization that has made them change direction or has transformed a self-limiting mindset. When I receive this feedback, my need to make a difference and a contribution is fully activated.

Ask yourself: What activates any of your values so that they nourish and quench the hunger in you?

### ***What activates your values?***

Everyone connects to experiences in different ways. For some it might be a visual experience, for others sound, for others feeling, and maybe some will relate to other senses. Let's make a start with something as ordinary as watching a film. Have you ever thought about why some films move you and others leave you cold? It is because they connect emotionally to the essence of you, to something you hold dear. It could be the amazing visuals, incredible soundtrack or brilliant story and acting that reminds you of times past or dreams long forgotten. It might evoke memories of a meal and all the associated flavours, or a holiday romance.

It's the same with a book. A film or a book (or even a talk) can really inspire you to take action. You will have come across many worthy causes, but there will be something about *this* particular one that triggers you at a deeper level. When triggered, you are moved because you resonate with the energy of the message. It's a compelling motivator. Why? Because it speaks to a deep value, connects you emotionally, and you identify with aspects of the theme. For example, in the film *The Remains of the Day* when the central character, the loyal

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butler played by Anthony Hopkins, places duty above love, he subsequently ends his days isolated and lonely. If this theme moves you it could be because you identify with the central figure and his predicament. Films/books that deeply move us may give us an indication of our deeper values.



### Over to you

#### Films/books that move you

1. Start by thinking about your top five films. If films aren't your thing, choose books. Not necessarily the most recent ones, but the ones that you could watch (or read) over and over again, because they inspire you in some way.
2. Now consider what it was about these films that moved and inspired you, lifted your spirits and sparked a yearning.
3. Now write down some of the values those films encapsulate.

If a film or book doesn't immediately come to mind, look back through your DVD collection (or bookshelf) and make a date to enjoy a film tonight.

#### Some examples to help you:

*The Shawshank Redemption* is a film about the strength of the human spirit, dignity, having a vision and purpose that transcends the prison walls, friendship and loyalty.

*Schindler's List* is about the courage, selflessness and integrity of one human being who saved Jews from the gas chamber in spite of the risk to himself.

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### Your turn

1. The film (or book) ... Value/values it represents for me
2. The film (or book) ... Value/values it represents for me
3. The film (or book) ... Value/values it represents for me
4. The film (or book) ... Value/values it represents for me
5. The film (or book) ... Value/values it represents for me

Can you see how, by consciously distilling your essential values, you can build a meaningful and purposeful direction in your life? Of course, some of these values will be inherited from parents, school, culture and faith. However, you are not your parents, so it's worth actively taking ownership of those values that serve you now. This single action will catapult you along a new and more meaningful path. Imagine how exciting it will be to choose to back the values that represent who you are today and the way you want to be defined. How does it feel? What other visuals or sounds do you get when you think about this?

When you are truly operating from your highest values, you feel a strong sense of being on the right path. You don't feel lost or foggy but clear and purposeful. Your values become your compass for life. Without awareness of your compass, you can easily lose your way.

### IS THIS YOU?

I have worked with some people who reach a certain point in their lives and suddenly realize that they have invested a lot of energy chasing the wrong things. They may have tons of 'form', i.e. material things like houses, cars, or holiday homes,

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but they do not experience satisfaction or fulfilment. They are the proverbial rat on the treadmill of life set to an ever-increasing speed. They have become victims of their need for constant achievement. Their overheads are so high they have to keep making money to fuel the machine.

#### **'I was living the life my parents had designed for me' – Deepak**

One of my clients arrived at one of my retreats feeling exhausted by the life he had created. While doing the values work, he acknowledged that his top value was FAMILY. However, he was concerned about the relationship he had with his wife: it had become flat and had lost its spark. He only saw his wife during school holidays and vacations as his business, which needed him, was in Africa. He wanted the best education money could buy so he decided to put his older kids in English private boarding schools. His wife, in the meantime, lived in London with his younger daughter. She wanted to be close to the children should they need her. He realized that, while his businesses were thriving, he had set up his life to neglect his biggest priority, his family.

Deepak came from a wealthy and privileged Indian family. All his life he had been the good son doing what was expected of him in his culture and family. Being the firstborn son, he carried the burden of duty to continue the business that had been in his family for many generations before.

One day he attended one of my retreats, and I watched him struggle with the question 'what do you want out of life'? He told me it was not a question he could answer easily

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as he did not get to choose. Through the process of life planning, he came to realize he was living the life someone else had designed for him. His whole life had been a 'should' and a 'must'. However, no one had ever taken the time to ask Deepak what his heart's desire was for fear he would take a direction away from the running of the family business.

At that moment, he made a radical decision. *'If I want to be free I need to find a responsible CEO to navigate the ship while I go away and do what I want to do.'* Deepak had always had a desire to be a consultant coach to other businesses. He was finally committed to making some radical changes.

Deepak's life to that date was about fulfilling his parent's expectations, but he never once considered *what* he wanted. Now he is.

### ***When is a yacht not a yacht?***

Being more conscious of your values assists you in activating your true powers and gifts. Wanting a great car or house, yacht or the best education is fine as long as you know which value it is helping you manifest.

Imagine if you had a strong desire to own a yacht. It may be that you simply want to show off. Alternatively, on a deeper level, you may want a sense of freedom, adventure and of being at one with the elements while you sail the seas. For everyone, it is recognizing what values your desires trigger

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that gives meaning to the ‘form’ items you crave. When you think about a yacht now, I bet it has taken on a completely different meaning. It is essential for you to consider what you want as much as why, as it’s there to serve a deeper, stronger purpose; in other words, it’s not just bling! As you have already seen, getting down to what your essential value drivers are is a prerequisite to understanding why you want the things you do.

If you become a ‘form junkie’ you can lose sight of what’s important to you and become cut off from the bit that sustains you, e.g. the pursuit of money and status may end up alienating your family. So understanding what’s important to you helps you prioritize and create balance in your life.

Once you have reconnected to your essential values you can choose your direction and stop being a victim of the circumstances you find yourself in. You can take an active role. You are in the driver’s seat, so to speak, rather than a passenger who has no control of where the car will end up. What you aspire to depends on what you perceive you need to be fulfilled. Life is a bit of a balancing act. When you get one thing right, other things can go out of kilter. However, when you are connected to your essence or inner spirit and true to yourself – that is when your true values surface.

It is important to remember that it is not the number of values that is key, but the strength of their meaning. That is why discovering your dominant values is a practical way to know that you are going in the right direction and are on track to fulfilling your purpose. It is those values that, like your DNA, make you unique!

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The Dalai Lama, when asked what surprised him most about humanity, answered:

'Man, he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. Then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present: the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as though he is never going to die, and then he dies having never really lived.'

Arriving at the answer to what your core values are is a fundamental step towards a better, happier, more congruent life. Some people have to wait for a life-threatening illness that gives them a complete change of perspective. Is that you?

## THE JOURNEY TO THE INNER SELF

You have already considered your top five films (books) and have made a start into the world of your essential values. You should have a longish list of values that you identified from the films.

### *Values transgression*

Sometimes you become most aware of your values when you see them being transgressed. This is normal, and it is one of the things that I would ask you to look out for. Some of these might have come up as you were watching a film. Alternatively, maybe there is something currently happening that moves you. What is causing you pain or irritation? What are

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the causes that stir you? Think about the people that wound you. Add these values to your film values list.



### Over to you

#### Identifying your top five to eight values

##### Step 1

- Think of someone you admire, a celebrity, historical figure or a member of your family or a member of your peer group.
- Think of a quality (or qualities) this person has.
- What is it about them that inspires you?

What you have written down are some of your highest values, and they are a mirror of you at your best. You would not be attracted to these qualities unless you valued them. You may struggle to express these qualities fully but, ultimately, when you are activating these you are plugged into that energy. Meet yourself, as this is you at your best and highest self.

*A Return To Love* (1992) by Marianne Williamson is a beautiful poem that was used at Nelson Mandela's 1994 inaugural address. Every time I read it I am moved, because it speaks to me at a deep level. Go to this URL ([https:// Marianne.com/a-return-to-love](https://Marianne.com/a-return-to-love)) and read it, reflect and journal what comes up for you.

The main principle here is that what scares us is our huge potential rather than our limitations. And it is the qualities we most admire in others that are a direct mirror of our own highest qualities. So, for instance, if you admire someone for their great courage, what you are connecting to is your courage which you may have not fully expressed as yet.

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### **Step 2**

You might find a walk or some reflection time helps before you start.

Looking down at your film (book) list and at the causes and the qualities you wrote for the people you admire list:

- Distill this list into your top values, ensuring they are important to you (you may need to do this several times).
- Now choose five to eight values you wish to focus on, e.g. love, contribution, etc.

### **Step 3**

#### **CLARIFYING QUESTIONS**

Once you have listed your values, put them through the filter of these questions. This will help make your values three dimensional. If you can't come up with answers easily, maybe you need to rethink which values would be in your top five to eight.

- Why is this value important in my life?
- Who benefits when I am expressing this value?
- How do I feel about myself when I am activating this value?
- How do I feel when I am disconnected from this value?

### **Step 4**

Record your core value statements. Here is an example.

#### **Love**

This value is important in my life, it manifests when I am connected to my centre. When I express love, I feel whole, authentic and at one with the universe and everyone in it. It diminishes when I am cut off, hurt, angry and feeling judged.

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When I express love, I am strong, powerful, invincible. When I disconnect from it everything around me is dull, diminished and I feel isolated, so much so it's difficult to breathe.

Love is my vital life source; therefore, I must stay connected to it and look for opportunities to express it. When I express love I am coming from my highest self; I am operating out of my Angel – I have wings. I am defenceless, vulnerable, open. I am pure light and energy.

Distill one or two of your top values into a statement like the one above about how you will express this value in your life. Use the clarifying questions in Step 3 to help you articulate your value statement.

#### **Step 5**

Once you have your values, define what they mean to you AND how they will manifest in your life.

- How will you activate these values in your day-to-day life?
- How will others see you living your values?

Once you have identified your core values, the next step is to activate them as a priority in your life. Having values is one thing, but expressing and living them is quite another. This way you will be being true to yourself, rather than living the life others expect of you. Living your values becomes your organizing principle, it will simplify and focus you on what is most important and fulfilling.

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In the next chapter, we will be further exploring how being conscious of your values directly guides you towards articulating your purpose.

#### ***Key thinking points***

- What were your five to eight values and why?
- What would it mean if you were to incorporate at least one of them starting right now?
- How do your values differ to the ones you thought you had at the beginning of the chapter?
- What would it mean if you couldn't live your life according to your values?
- What is the one action you will take as a result of reading this chapter?

#### **Practise this mantra**

'I allow my values to guide me every day.'