Find what is important to you

Values bring meaning into our lives and help shape who we are as a person. They are the things we care deeply about and the basis for the choices we make in life. Values are not things we achieve or possess, they are more like directions we take in life in order to be the kind of person we desire to be and have a meaningful existence.

To realise our life values we choose and pursue specific goals in life. Sometimes we manage to achieve these goals, sometimes they are not achievable and we have to relinquish them. Indeed, life values stay the same but the goals to realise them can change, depending on whether goals are achievable or not. There are a number of ways to live in harmony with your values.

For instance, you may value being a loving person. When growing up, you may have had the goal to be protective towards your younger brother, later you may have decided to join a charity, and this may also be why you desire to have children. Whatever goals you set, whatever goals you manage to achieve, there is no end to this journey, there will always be more things you can do to be loving.

Most people think they are successful when they achieve their goals. A different way to look at it is to think of success as living by our values. But for that, we need to be aware of what our life values are. If we clarify our values we will be able to take perspective and define our actions.

In this activity we will ask you to reflect about what your core values in life are.

Let’s practice

One way to try to clarify your values is to think about your motivations to have (more) children. Below is a list of the main motivations that underlie people’s desire for children. Tick the ones you think apply to you.

- Love and caring for a person
- Raising and educating a person
- Strengthen my partnership (if there is one)
- Fulfilling my partner’s wish for children (if you have one)
- Creating my own family
- Achieving personal fulfilment and meaning in life
- Meeting my family’s expectations
- Fulfilling a religious or moral responsibility
- Being socially valued
- Continuing the family name, lineage or values
- Having a source of economic support
- Having support in old age
- Realising my maternal or paternal instinct
- Experiencing pregnancy and child birth
- Experiencing parenthood
- Ensuring that my partner (if you have one) and I are recognized as a family
- Other: ____________________________________________
- Other: ____________________________________________
- Other: ____________________________________________
Your answers to the previous question should give you an indication of what your values regarding your family, intimate relationships and parenting are. Please consider the life domains presented below. For each domain write a value statement about the things you value and/or the type of person you want to be and rank them regarding how important they are to you.

For instance, if someone ticked the ‘Meeting my family’s expectations’ and ‘fulfilling my partner’s wish for children’, their value statement for intimate and family relationships might be something like: ‘I want to take care of others’.

Keep a note of these value statement as you will be able to use them in another activity called ‘Make your plan’. Meanwhile, you may choose to discuss them with the people that are close to you, for instance your partner or other family members. You may also reflect about how your life would look like if you fully lived by your value statements.

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<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Value Statement</th>
<th>Importance</th>
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<td>Intimate relationships / Marriage / Partnership</td>
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