

Make your plan

The only way to live according to our life values is to define goals that are consistent with these. While values are the driving force behind your actions, setting the direction you want your life to take, goals are the activities you choose to engage in as you move in that direction.

In this activity we invite you to develop realistic goals you want to pursue in the short and longer term. Remember that these will be the goals you value and not the ones that are valued by those around you. They are the things that make you smile, that excite you, which you really care about.

This is a huge task, and one that will take you much longer than 30 minutes to complete. Do not rush yourself and feel free to come back to it multiple times in the short and long term run.

Let's practice

Please go back to the list of value statements you wrote during the activity 'Find what is important to you'. You may remember that you ordered them according to their importance. Write below your three most important value statements.

	Domain	Value Statement
1		
2		
3		

For each of your value statements, use the table below to write a long-term goal that you hope to achieve that puts your values into action. Once you established what your long-term goal is, you will need to develop some short-term goals that help you get there. For each short-term goal you can ask yourself where it will take you and where you would like to go after you get there. Good goals are not grand goals, they are simply goals that move us in the direction we want to go.

For instance, if you value citizenship and public service your long-term goal may be to develop a volunteering routine. Your short term goal may be to contact a charity and try volunteering for them for 1 month. Which charity exactly will again depend on the things you value, for instance, many people volunteer for cycling charities because they value environmentally friendly transports. Once you have completed your short-term goal you can further consider your course of action that will take you in the direction of your valued goal. If you enjoyed working for that particular charity you may consider continuing on a regular basis, if you didn't, you may consider trying another one.

Remember, goals are not set in stone. We can revise them for different reasons, including if we find out we are just not having any fun. The important thing is to choose goals that align with our values and then we commit to give it a real try.

Long-term goal		Short-term goals
1		1.
		2.
		3.
2		1.
		2.
		3.
3		1.
		2.
		3.

Now that you completed the table, please go through each goal and consider:

- Does it lead you in the direction of your long-term goal? Are you sure this is something you aspire to do and that will bring you some level of gratification or a sense of achievement? It is consistent with the value statement you wrote?
- Is it practical to pursue it in the context of your current situation? What impact will pursuing this goal have in your life and the people around you? Think about both positive and negative consequences. For instance, your partner may be pleased to see you doing something you enjoy but you may have less time to do things together. How can you minimise the negative consequences?
- Can you realistically expect to achieve it? One of the reasons why many people perceive to 'fail' in life is because they set themselves unrealistic goals, for instance in how well or in how many different goals they expect to achieve. It may be unrealistic to expect to be a good piano player within one year, but it is probably realistic to expect to learn one new music piece within a month. The wiser thing may be to aspire to learn the music piece and once that is done pick another and another and so on... without noticing you will definitely be moving in the direction of becoming a good piano player!

If you answered yes to these questions you have managed to set yourself a valid set of goals that should move your life in the direction of the things you value. If not, you may want to revise your table. Once you complete your table, you should not see it as something definitive, but something you can change as you go along. Remember, it is not achieving goals that takes us closer to our values but the act of trying to achieve them. Use the next activity, 'Commit to your plan', to help you find ways to approach your goals in a manageable way and keep on track with them.

It is up to you to decide if, when and how to realise the remaining value statements you wrote during the activity 'Find what is important to you'. When the time is right, you can repeat this exercise for the remaining value statements.