

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU?**Why Values Matter**

Many students spend a great deal of time thinking about majors, careers, and jobs. However, research suggests that long-term satisfaction often depends less on what you do and more on whether your work and life align with what matters most to you.

Your values are the principles, priorities, and conditions that help you feel fulfilled, motivated, and purposeful. Understanding your values can help you evaluate opportunities, make decisions, and design a future that feels meaningful and coherent.

This worksheet will help you identify the values that matter most to you and consider how they might influence your future pathways.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY IMPORTANT VALUES

Review the following list and check 10 values that feel most important to you.

Achievement & Growth

- ☐ Achievement
- ☐ Adventure
- ☐ Challenge
- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Curiosity
- ☐ Excellence
- ☐ Innovation
- ☐ Learning
- ☐ Mastery
- ☐ Personal Growth

Relationships & Service

- ☐ Collaboration
- ☐ Compassion
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Friendship
- ☐ Helping Others
- ☐ Kindness
- ☐ Mentorship
- ☐ Service

- ☐ Teamwork
- ☐ Community

Lifestyle & Well-Being

- ☐ Balance
- ☐ Flexibility
- ☐ Freedom
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Independence
- ☐ Security
- ☐ Stability
- ☐ Time for Family
- ☐ Work-Life Balance
- ☐ Well-Being

Purpose & Impact

- ☐ Faith
- ☐ Influence
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Meaning
- ☐ Purpose
- ☐ Social Impact
- ☐ Stewardship
- ☐ Contribution
- ☐ Making a Difference
- ☐ Integrity

Success & Recognition

- ☐ Achievement
- ☐ Financial Success
- ☐ Prestige
- ☐ Recognition
- ☐ Reputation
- ☐ Status
- ☐ Excellence
- ☐ Professional Success

Other Values Important to Me:

STEP 2: NARROW YOUR LIST

Review the 10 values you selected and narrow them down to your Top 5.

My Top 5 Values

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

STEP 3: REFLECT ON YOUR EXPERIENCES

Think about a time when you felt energized, fulfilled, or proud.

- What were you doing?
- Who were you with?
- Which values were being honored?

Now think about a time when you felt frustrated, discouraged, or disconnected.

- What was happening?
- Which values may have been missing?

STEP 4: PRIORITIZE YOUR VALUES

Imagine you could only keep three of your Top 5 values.

Which three would remain?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why are these values especially important to you?

STEP 5: APPLY YOUR VALUES TO YOUR FUTURE

Review your Future Pathways Worksheet. For each pathway, consider:

- Does this pathway reflect what matters most to me?
- Which of my values would be fulfilled?
- Which values might be difficult to honor?
- What tradeoffs would I need to make?

Future Pathway 1: My Current Direction

Values this pathway supports:

Potential concerns:

Future Pathway 2: My Alternative Direction

Values this pathway supports:

Potential concerns:

Future Pathway 3: My Wild Card Direction

Values this pathway supports:

Potential concerns:

STEP 6: COHERENCE CHECK

The Future Pathways Worksheet asks you to evaluate coherence. Coherence is the alignment between:

- Who you are
- What you value
- What you do
- The life you want to create

After completing this worksheet, answer the following:

Which Future Pathway currently feels most aligned with your values?

Why?

FINAL REFLECTION

There is rarely one perfect career or one perfect future. However, some paths will align more closely with who you are and what matters most to you.

What is one insight you gained from this exercise?

How might this insight influence your future decisions?