



**VAL**  
**VALUES ARRANGEMENT LIST**  
John P Golden Ed.D.

**Understanding Your Personal Values:  
a clarification companion guide to the  
Values Arrangement List™ assessment.**

## Contents

Understanding Your Personal Values	1
The Nature of Human Values	2
Values Clarification Exercise 1: Your Values Hierarchy	5
Values Clarification Exercise 2: Defining Your Values	9
Values Clarification Exercise 3: Effective Decision Making	11
Values Clarification Exercise 4: Personal Conflict	12
Values Clarification Exercise 5: Respect	14
Values Clarification Exercise 6: Your Final List	15
Values Clarification Exercise 7: Values and Your Life Tribute	15
References	18
The Values Arrangement List™ Sorting Cards	19

## The Values Arrangement List (VAL)

There are many factors in one's personality that define or influence behavior. This companion piece to the Values Arrangement List report is designed to help you explore the impact of your values on your daily life as well as their long-term influence. All aspects of behavior are complex, and values are no exception. It is important to give serious and thoughtful attention to your values, for they have subtle and profound implications for your life in general, and specifically for your relationships with loved ones, friends and those with whom you work. Finally, knowledge of your values is a critical factor that can help you define and achieve career satisfaction.

Where do your values come from? The answer to this question is also complex. They arise out of and are influenced by your social background, family mores, birth order, generational factors, and genetic inheritance, to mention just a few contributing factors. Values serve as your personal guide, policeman, judge and physician.

If you are able to follow your hierarchy of values, then your life can be straightforward and relatively free of complications. Conversely, violating your values is to court disaster; and violating the values of others often confounds and contaminates relationships. If you are able to live according to your values and respect the values of others, then you will truly have integrity. The strength of the VAL survey over other methods is its precision of ranking and ease of interpretation. Another benefit of using the VAL is the ease of online scoring. It also enables you to see how your own results compare to others. Furthermore, through the use of this database we can create organizational or departmental profiles so that work groups and organizations can benefit from these greater understandings.

Following the development of the VAL, this publication, "Understanding Your Personal Values," along with the Values Sorting Cards were developed to help you examine your personal values. The purpose of this resource born from over thirty years of clinical experience with thousands of people like yourself, is to help you understand what is truly important to you. The exercises in this book will help give you a better understanding of yourself and others. It is my hope that this will lead you to a more productive, happy and satisfying life.

## Understanding Your Personal Values

In the course of studying any new concept it is essential to first define what it is we are examining. I can think of no topic where this is more important than the topic of values. The terms Values and Value System are defined and described as they were by values researcher Milton Rokeach in his book *The Nature of Human Values*.

*"A Value is an enduring belief that a specific way of behaving or a specific life goal is personally or socially preferable to any other. Values have cognitive, affective, and behavioral components."* ‘

His definition clearly points out that values are "enduring" or stable, and that means that they can be reliably measured. There are two kinds of values, those that describe "behaviors" and values that describe "life goals". Values can be defined as those that are personal, that they

have meaning to individual people or those that are important to a group of people. He further stated that values and their meaning occur at a “cognitive” or rational within the brain about what is desirable. We place levels on the importance associated with them. Second, a value is “affective” in the sense that you can feel emotional about it, be for or against it, like or dislike it, approve or disapprove of someone who exhibits a particular value or behavior. Finally, values have behavioral components in the sense that they lead to action when triggered.

## The Nature of Human Values

We can make four assumptions about the nature of human values:

1. The total number of values that a person possesses is relatively small. A study of dictionary terms that can be described as human values results in approximately 450 terms which could be greatly reduced by eliminating those that are semantically similar.
2. Values are universal. While definitions will differ, all people everywhere possess common values.
3. The origin of human values can be traced to culture, society, its institutions and organizations and to individual personality and life experience.
4. The consequences of human values will be apparent in virtually all phenomena and behavior that is worth investigating and understanding

Values are a complex set of standards that guide or conduct our lives in a variety of ways. It is our values that lead us to take particular positions on social issues. Our values predispose us to favor one particular philosophical, political or religious ideology over another. They are guidelines that determine how we present ourselves to others. Values also provide us with the framework that we use to persuade and influence others. They are the basic assumptions that allow us to rationalize beliefs, attitudes and actions that would otherwise be personally and socially unacceptable, so that we can maintain our feelings of morality and competence (the essential elements of self-esteem). Lastly, the employment of values as standards is a distinctively human quality that is not shared with other species, and is one way of defining the difference between being human and being non-human.

### Two Kinds of Values

Values are essential because they define what it is that you want out of life, and how you are going to behave to get it. They determine how you will use your time, energies and resources. Few psychologists have pursued the study and research of human values. Rokeach, a professor of Sociology and Psychology at Washington State University, spent over twenty-five years studying the nature, origin and impact of human values and beliefs. Among his many remarkable insights, his model was influenced by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle identified two fundamental types of values, he called Terminal and Instrumental values. Terminal meaning end of life values and Instrumental meaning that they are in service to the achievement of the terminal values. Rokeach used these value labels in his research, but our experience has showed that most people have a hard time applying these terms in their everyday lives. To aid in the application of these concepts are renamed Life and Operational values.

Life Values are those values which are associated with your long term or ultimate aspirations. Life Values are the ends which you strive to achieve and maintain over your lifetime. The values held most important to you are the essence of your motivational system, that is, the core subject of your highest ambitions. They are the underpinnings of your personal goals and life mission. Life values can be described as having either a personal or social focus. Personal-oriented Life values relate to the individual alone, as these are focused on oneself or intra-personal relationships, whereas a social focus suggests the involvement and importance of other people. Social-oriented values tend to be society-centered or interpersonal in nature. While Life values can be either Personal or Social in nature, several can be defined as both Personal and Social depending on how they are defined by each individual. Life values differ from Operational Values in that Life values are more difficult to define and actualize.

Below is the list of Life values arranged in alphabetical order. Next to each definition you'll find the designation Personal, Social or both.

**ACHIEVEMENT**—attainment of goals and aspirations. Personal  
**ADVENTURE**—pursuing excitement and taking risks. Personal  
**AESTHETICS**—appreciation and enjoyment of the arts. Personal  
**COMMUNITY**—activity in social or citizen groups. Social  
**EQUALITY**—justice and fair treatment for all Social  
**FAME**—recognized and known for your contributions. Personal/Social  
**FAMILY**—close relations and support of loved ones. Social  
**FREEDOM**—independence in thought and lifestyle. Personal/Social  
**FELLOWSHIP**—having important relationships with friends. Social  
**HAPPINESS**—satisfaction, joy and contentment. Personal  
**HEALTH**—soundness of body and mind. Personal  
**LOVE**—intimacy, devotion and warmth. Social  
**NATURE**—respect for animals and the environment. Personal  
**PEACE**—enduring harmony and freedom from violence. Personal/Social  
**PLEASURE**—entertainment, relaxation and fun. Personal  
**POWER**—authority, control and influence. Personal  
**SELF-WORTH**—high regard for oneself and others. Personal/Social  
**Social SERVICE**—contributing to the welfare of others. Social  
**SPIRITUALITY**—at one with God; religious beliefs. Personal  
**WEALTH**—affluence, ease, and prosperity. Personal  
**WISDOM**—insight, knowledge and understanding. Personal

Operational Values are those beliefs that can be carried out in the activities of your day to day experience. By their very nature, the process of operational value attainment is shorter in duration and easier to define or measure. Think of Operational values as the "means" by which people achieve their "ends," that is, their Life values. When understood and used effectively your Operational values link short term goals to long term mission. Like Life values, Operational Values can be further described as having a moral (social) focus or a competence (personal) focus. Moral values refer to ethics and standards of right or wrong, and for this reason tend to have an interpersonal focus. Competency values, are related to performance and effectiveness, and tend to have a personal rather than an interpersonal focus.

On the next page is the list of Operational Values arranged in alphabetical order. Next to

each definition is the designation Competency or Moral. In some cases an Operational value can be described as having both a Competency and Moral focus.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**—being responsible, credible and trustworthy Competency

**AFFECTION**—being passionate, loving and caring Moral

**AUTONOMY**—being self-directing, self-reliant and free Competency

**COMPETENCE**—being productive, efficient and skillful Competency

**COURAGE**—being brave, intrepid and fearless Moral

**COURTESY**—being respectful, considerate and polite Moral

**CREATIVITY**—being inventive, original and innovative Competency

**DISCIPLINE**—being restrained and self controlled Competency/Moral

**DRIVE**—being industrious and goal directed Competency

**FAIRNESS**—being unbiased, impartial and just Moral

**FLEXIBILITY**—being adaptable and able to change Competency

**FORGIVENESS**—being able to excuse and let go Moral

**HONESTY**—being moral, ethical and truthful Moral

**HUMOR**—being light-hearted, witty and funny Competency/Moral

**KNOWLEDGE**—being wise and scholarly Competency

**LOYALTY**—being dedicated, devoted and steadfast Moral

**OBEDIENCE**—being compliant, deferential and yielding Moral

**ORDER**—being systematic, organized and well-kept Competency/Moral

**REASON**—being rational, analytical and logical Competency

**SERVICE**—being supportive, aiding and assisting Moral

**TOLERANCE**—being open, accepting and patient Moral

### **A “Systems” View**

Important to a better understanding of values is the idea that they organized into complex systems. Following Rokeach’s earlier definition a Value System is an enduring set of beliefs about preferred ways of behaving or preferred life goals. A Value System is a set of life priorities. The remainder of this resource is designed to help you explore both the meaning of your values individually and values as a complex system of your personal beliefs.

One way to begin thinking about your values as a system is to think of them as existing within a hierarchy. Abraham’s Maslow’s renowned “Hierarchy of Needs” model emphasizes the benefits of hierarchical models and the importance of human values, although the latter is often overlooked. Maslow stated that Self-Actualization is defined as the achievement of one’s uniquely defined values.

Within the VAL report there are two aspects that fit within the conception of values as a complex hierarchy. First, values contained within each of the Life and Operational values lists are identified with those at the top being more important than those below. Second, Life values can be thought of as more important in that they reflect ultimate aims and can therefore be presented as more important, or higher in the hierarchy.

Once an understanding of your values as a system is achieved you can begin to think about your values in a more comprehensive way. This may be more realistic and practical, because life and the specific situations you encounter do not conform to a perfect hierarchy. If a perfect hierarchy existed you would only need to determine exactly what the order in the hierarchy is,


and then simply implement it in your actions. It seems simple, but a simple understanding does not always match reality. Such a system would fail to account for the complexities brought about by the nuances of the situation in which you find yourself. The values embraced by others and the unique priorities, definitions and interpretations brought to bear by others, as well as societal and cultural influences all act to make each situation entirely unique.

It is helpful to think about your values in a more complex way. In the real world human values exist within as a fluid or complex system. Within a fluid system your values are affecting, and being affected by other people's values. This may differ from situation to situation. Thinking about your values as a complex system made up of Core, Situational and Less Preferred Life and Operational values is now possible. Core values represent those that are central to your beliefs and as such do not change greatly from situation to situation. As enduring beliefs your Core values remain fairly stable throughout your life.

Some events, decisions or circumstances may require you to consider values that are not central within your core beliefs. These values are referred to as Situational Values. They are neither really important nor unimportant, but their value is dependent upon the specific situation and facts at hand. At times one Situational value may be critical to making a decision, at another time it may not. Less Preferred values are not unimportant. The very fact that they are called values suggest that they are important, only relatively less so. While you might not consider the importance of a Less Preferred Value in a given situation, the knowledge that they are not as important may be useful information. Within your VAL report we have color coded your Core (Green), Situational (Blue) and Less Preferred (Red) life and operational values for easy identification.

## Values Clarification Exercise 1: Your Values Hierarchy

The VAL Sorting Cards found at the end of this book provide an alternative means for determining your values hierarchy. They are also a helpful tool for examining and clarifying the full meaning of your values both now and in the future as you confront new realities in your career, family and community life. The Sorting Cards use the same values' definitions as the VAL Survey and therefore provide a fun and insightful way to explore your values.

**Step 1.** Print the pages containing the sorting cards and cut  them out along the borders. Remove the title cards from the deck and count to make sure all 21 Life value and 21 Operational value cards are present. Including the two title cards there are 44 values cards.

**Step 2.** The purpose of this exercise is to identify the values that are most important in your life today. What you deem important is a personal decision. It's up to you to decide how these values rank in importance. Holding all 21 Life Values cards in your hand, sort them into 3 piles High, Medium and Low. The first pile, High values, should contain the values that are most important to you. The middle pile represents values that are next most and the last pile those values that are less important. Think carefully, but don't "over think" each choice, as the following steps will help you confirm your choices.

**Step 3.** Starting with the High value cards lay them out in front of you in a column. Arrange them from high to low with the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom. Then do the same with the Medium value cards and then the seven Low values cards until all 21 Life values are arranged in front of you in a 3 x 7 matrix.

**Step 4.** Write the name of the value ranked highest in the space below marked Life values #1. (Note: you don't have to write the definition.) Then write the names of the remaining values in their order of importance to you as ranked in the three stacks of value cards from 1 to 21.

**Step 5.** Repeat Steps 1 through 4 using the Operational Values Sorting Cards. Write your list in the space provided on the next page or a a separate piece of paper.

**My Values As I See Them Today**

Life Values

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21 \_\_\_\_\_

Operational Values

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21 \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 6:** If you have your VAL report, compare and contrast the survey results and the sorting cards' results. Are the values in the top seven and the bottom seven ranked similarly? How close are the values ranked in the middle? How can the differences be explained? Which do you feel is a better gauge of your values system?

**That Was Then**

The results of your survey, the sorting exercise, or both, reflect the importance you place on these values today. It is likely that your values and value system will change as you become more conscious of what's really important to you. New life experiences, the natural maturation process, unexpected events both good and bad, can cause you to rethink your life's priorities. The purpose of this exercise is to see how your values have changed or will change over the years.

**Step 1:** While holding the Life Values Sorting Cards in your hand, think back to when you were 17 years old. Recall the priorities that caused you to act back then. What was important to you as you were just entering adulthood or getting out of school? Sort through the cards and pick out the top seven Life Values that represent those most important to you at that time. Place them in a separate pile. Then, sort through the remaining cards and determine which seven values were not of much importance. Place those in a pile. Place the remaining middle seven value cards in a separate pile between the high and low piles.

**Step 2:** Prioritize each of the high value cards from one to seven. Repeat the ranking for each of the two remaining piles of middle and low values.

**Step 3:** Write the names of the Life values in their proper order in the space provided below.

**Step 4:** Repeat Steps 1 through 3 with the Operational values. Write your list in the space provided below.

**Step 5:** Repeat the entire exercise this time imagining that you are 75 years old and preparing to enter retirement. Imagine what your values will be then, and list both the Life and Operational values accordingly (use space provided).

**My Values As I Think They Will be When I Am 75 Years Old**

Life Values

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21 \_\_\_\_\_

Operational Values

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21 \_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewing this Exercise.** How has your value system changed over the years from the time when you were 17 to when you are older? Do you like the changes you see? What are the most significant changes reflected in the three lists. What factors caused the changes between ages 17 and the present time? What factors might cause those predicted changes between now and when you are 65 or older? How might this understanding aid you in your future life?

**Ideal Values!**

A common question that people ask when exposed to their VAL results is "Do the results show the way I am or the way I want to be?" The answer to this question is not simple because it depends on the approach taken when completing the exercise. If you followed the instructions your results should closely reflect the values that are important to you now. Put another way they reflect your actual value system. In some cases you may have interjected your ideal values or those you wish to hold important. Using the VAL Sorting Cards can help you explore the concept of ideal values vs. actual values.

**Step 1:** As before, start with all the Life values cards placed in one pile before you. Reflect on the values that you think you should have as guiding principles in your life. The Life values you select should be associated with the ideal life you hope to live up to. They mirror the type of person you think you should be.

**Step 2:** Sort each card into one of three piles with seven cards each (high, medium and low). Then rank each pile from one to seven as in the previous exercises, creating a 3 x 7 matrix of Life values ranked 1 through 21.

**Step 3:** Write the names of the Life values as you have ranked them in the space provided below. Repeat the exercise with the Operational values until you have them ranked and listed from 1 to 21 below.

**My Values As I They Should Ideally Be**

Life Values

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_

Operational Values

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_

15 _____	15 _____
16 _____	16 _____
17 _____	17 _____
18 _____	18 _____
19 _____	19 _____
20 _____	20 _____
21 _____	21 _____

**Reviewing This Exercise.** What are the significant differences between your actual values and your ideal value system? Often your ideal values reflect a desire to change in a manner that is consistent with your perceptions of the ideal. This exercise may help you in determining where your actions or beliefs are "out of sync" with your ideal values. Often it is only through the realization of such inconsistencies that the desire to change can be realized.

## Values Clarification Exercise 2: Defining Your Values

The values used in the VAL, as well as their underlying definitions, were selected from a variety of sources observed and utilized over the course of our three decades experience working with values. The values were selected because they are representative of commonly held values throughout the world. An effort has been made to update the values included in the list. The most recent addition was the inclusion of "Nature" to account for the growing concern over environmental and ecological concerns. (In the past this value had been originally incorporated by Milton Rokeach into the value labeled "Beauty.") Finally, it is important to note that the values selected are not all inclusive. You might find that no value accurately defines a value you possess. If you find this to be the case you should incorporate this finding into your final list and analysis.

The supplemental descriptions which accompany each value were selected to define a broader range of personal interpretations and allow for greater understanding and acceptance by all people regardless of their race, sex, national origin, religion or cultural upbringing. These definitions were designed to give you a basic or general idea about the meaning of the label so you could complete the survey more easily. However, rather than embracing the definitions utilized in the survey, it is more important to determine what these values mean to you. The exercise below is designed with this need in mind. This exercise is designed to help you define your Core Values (Life and Operational) in your own words, and then use this insight to check the accuracy and priority of each list. When ties occur in the rank ordering of the values the VAL reports uses a sophisticated method of breaking and listing tied values. You may want to rearrange these ties so that they reflect your true beliefs and understandings.

### Step 1. Select the 7 highest or Core (Green) Life Values.

**Step 2.** Look at the original definitions on your VAL report for each of the Core Values. Do you agree with these definitions? Does each definition adequately capture the full or precise meaning for you, or is further definition required? Are these what you believe the values to mean? If an original definition does not fit with your belief, re-write the definition in your own words in the space provided.

**My Life Core Values    My Own Definition**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Step 3.** Now go back to the VAL report and examine the rank scores for values. Are there any ties? If so, do you agree with the ordering or would you like to re-arrange these? If you would like to switch the order of a tied value make a note of this and make the change in the final list.

**Step 4.** In the spaces provided on the next page, list the values as you would now order them, and write your definitions next to each.

**Core Life Values**

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
5 \_\_\_\_\_  
6 \_\_\_\_\_  
7 \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5.** Review your Core Life values and their definitions. Do you agree with these? Are they the most important values in your life? If not, what changes would you make? Are there values ranked lower that you might raise higher, or vice versa? If so, make a note of these changes.

**Step 6.** After you have completed Steps 1 through 6 with Life values, repeat this process using your Operational values list.

**My Life Core Values    My Own Definition**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Core Operational Values**

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
5 \_\_\_\_\_  
6 \_\_\_\_\_  
7 \_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewing This Exercise.** After completing this exercise you should now have definitions for your Core Life and Operational values, either using the original definitions where these were accurate or your own definitions. Now that you have closely examined the definitions and in some cases given a more accurate meaning to the values, did your analysis of these changes compel you to change the order of importance for either list? Make note of those changes.

## Values Clarification Exercise 3: Effective Decision Making

Values play an important role in the decisions we make. In order to explore this concept with your own decision-making, you need to look at your past decisions. With a clear value system you can make even more effective decisions in the future.

What makes a decision good or bad is purely a matter of personal interpretation. If the result of a decision left you feeling pleased, satisfied or relieved, then it was probably a good one. On the other hand, if you felt irritated, annoyed, frustrated or think you would make that decision differently if you had it to do over again, then chances are it was a poor one. Keep in mind that what you may have once considered to be a good or bad decision could now be viewed in a different light due to changes resulting from increased age or changing circumstances.

**Step 1.** Recall 3 Good decisions you've made in the past 3 to 5 years. Give each decision a brief name and write that down in the space provided. Examples of good decisions might include: Bought a new car, left a job, or accepted a job transfer.

**Step 2.** Recall three Bad that you made over the course of your life. Give them a brief name and write it down. Examples: Turned down a promotion, made a bad investment, or hurt a friend's feelings.

### 3 Good Decisions/Honored Values

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Bad Decisions/Dishonored Values

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3.** Review your values as you defined them or use your actual VAL report. Using the first good decision from Step 1 above, identify the Life and Operational values from both lists which support your belief that this was in fact a good decision. Write the names of those values in the spaces provided next to decision #1. Repeat this step for each of the remaining good decisions.

**Step 4.** Identify the values that you dishonored when you made each of the bad decisions and list them in the spaces provided.

**Reviewing this Exercise.** You may have come to the conclusion that many people have, that when you've made a Good decision it was most often supported by the values found among your Core Life and Operational values. Conversely, when you made bad decisions, they were the result of ignoring these very same values. The valuable lesson to be learned is that the quality of your decisions made in the future can be improved by incorporating these core Life and Operational value understandings into your decision making thought process.

The remorse or regret you experience can be avoided in the future by making sure your decisions are consistent with those values most important to you. As a result, in the future when a decision doesn't work out well it won't be because you ignored your values. Remember, you can't control all of the events and conditions that affect the outcome of your decisions, however, when you act in accordance with your core values, every decision you make is a good decision for you!

**Reviewing This Exercise.** Did the insights gained cause you to reprioritize or redefine your core values in any way? If so, make a note below.

## Values Clarification Exercise 4: Personal Conflict

We've all been angry at one point or another. If not angry, then perhaps frustrated, upset, depressed, or irritated. Sometimes we let situations get the best of us. Often our reaction to a incident just adds fuel to the fire and makes the situation worse. The exercise below is not about uncovering old wounds; it's designed to help you avoid these kinds conflicts in the future. In this exercise you will examine the role of your value system in situations where you became very upset, depressed, exasperated, irritated, annoyed or just plain frustrated.

**Step 1.** From your past, identify a 5 situations where you became angry, upset, etc. Give each situation a name or title. For example, "When Joan's boss overlooked her contribution to the successful outcome of the X Project at her performance review." She might call this "Project X."

**Explanation:** Joan's self confidence was affected when her boss overlooked her contributions to Project X. She felt that she had accomplished much and without her contribution the project might not have been a success. This has negatively affected her happiness. She not only thinks that her capabilities were being overlooked, she thinks that her boss was not acting capably and responsibly in conducting her performance review. Joan's values that were impacted: Accomplishment, Self-Respect, Happiness, Capable and Accountable. In the spaces provided write your four conflicts.

### My Conflicts

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2.** Focus on the first situation. Recall the events that led up to it. Who was involved?

What was the behavior that triggered your reaction?

**Step 3.** Review both your Life and Operational values. Which of your values were being violated or ignored in this situation? Identify as many Life or Operational values that were being affected in this situation as you can. Write these values in the spaces provided. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 for the remaining 4 conflicts.

**Life and Operational Values Involved in My Conflicts**

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5.** In the spaces provided below write the names of the values that were most in common or frequently involved in the five incidents identified. First, list the name of the value most frequently involved, then the second, and so on, until you have listed each value that has been identified more than once.

**My Conflicted Life and Operational Values**

Life Values

Operational Values

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Reviewing This Exercise.** We can sometimes lose sight of our values and the critical role they play in our lives. When a conflict surfaces, the cause is usually the violation of one or more of your Core values. This may involve people violating your values or it may be of your own making. When you are not clear about your values, you can become your own worst enemy. Such a lack of awareness only adds to the conflict, resulting in damaged relationships, lowered self-respect and self-esteem.

Regardless of the cause, the outcome can be detrimental to your career, your relationships and

your physical and mental health. By bringing these values into consciousness and understanding how they influence your actions, you can deal more effectively and responsibly with conflicts when they arise.

The old adage "count to 10 before you get angry" is a good rule to live by. Next time you find yourself in a conflict and feel your emotional temperature start to rise, think of your Core values. Are they at the root of the problem? These values not only hold the key to understanding conflicts they can also lead to a solution or provide a way to manage them. You can take responsibility for your own reaction and turn it into positive one learning experience?

## Values Clarification Exercise 5: Respect

When you meet new people you compare them against your internal standards. You like, enjoy the company of, and even immediately respect and admire people with whom we share similar values. When an acquaintance displays conduct contrary to our internal standards, you may find an immediate dislike for them and a strong desire not to associate yourself with them.

When you are clear about what is most important to you, you can make effective decisions about whom you wish to have as friends and those whom you do not. If you've ever had to work around people who have extremely different values and beliefs, you know that these differences can make the job unbearable even when the tasks are enjoyable.

Complete the exercise below to learn more about yourself and those people for whom you have respect and admiration!

**Step 1.** On a separate piece of paper write the name of 3 people you respect and admire. The first individual should be a person whom you personally know or knew, the second should be a famous person who is currently living, and the third think of a person who is a prominent historical figure.

**Step 2.** Picture the person you know personally and write an explanation for why you respect this person. What characteristics, behaviors, accomplishments, contributions or impressions stand out in your mind?

**Step 3.** Repeat Step 2 with the remaining 2 people.

**Step 4.** Now that you've explained why you respect and admire these individuals, examine these reasons and identify any pattern of values or value themes that are contained within these explanations.

Describe them. For example, maybe they all shared a courage of conviction or, All were loyal to their families, etc.

**The patterns or themes found among the three people I respect and admire are:**

---



---



---

**Reviewing This Exercise.** The explanations you listed above are reflections of your values. Do these common explanations capture any hidden aspirations of yours? We tend to identify with, respect and admire those people who possess the same personal qualities and behaviors as we do, have accomplished the same type of challenges we aspire to, or display the same values we hold important. Do the insights gained as a result of this exercise cause you to reprioritize or redefine your Core Values? If so, make a mental note or write a note to yourself.

You can also learn more about yourself by learning more about the people you've listed above. You could request special time with them. You can ask them about their views, beliefs, attitudes, values, etc. You can also read biographies, autobiographies or historical accounts about their lives and their accomplishments.

## Values Clarification Exercise 6: Your Final List

Having reviewed your VAL report and worked through the previous 5 exercises you have come to know how your Life and Operational values and values system are really prioritized. maybe your list is exactly the same as it is on the report. Maybe though, you've learned a few new things about yourself and your values and the priority among your Core Life and Operational values has now been clarified and reprioritized. They might be similar to the lists in the report or maybe its very different. Here's your chance to set the record straight for yourself.

**Step 1.** From the insights you've gained from the exercises above or the notes you've made on your own List the top 7 Core Life and Operational values that reflect what's important to you now. You can use the VAL Sorting Cards or even retake the VAL at [www.goldenllc.com](http://www.goldenllc.com) if you want to be more precise.

### My Core Values As I They Now Are!

#### Life Values

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Operational Values

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_

**Review This Exercise.** What changed? How different are your lists from where you started?

## Values Clarification Exercise 7: Values and Your Life Tribute

*"If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else."*

—David Campbell, Ph.D.

Up to this point, the exercises have all focused on the impact of your values on your past and present life. You've discovered how these values affect your decisions, underlie your conflicts,





## References

- Golden, J.P. (2001) *The Values Arrangement List Facilitators Manual*, Renewal Publishing, NJ.
- Rokeach, M., (1973). *The Nature of Human Values*, The Free Press, NY.
- Rokeach, M. (1979). *Understanding Human Values'*. Individual and Societal, The Free Press, NY.
- Simon, S.B., Howe LE. & Kirschenbaum (1972). *Values Clarification, A Handbook of Practical Strategies For Teachers and Students*, Hart Publishing Co. NY.
- Smith, M. (1977). *A Practical Guide to Values Clarification*, University Associates, LaJolla, CA.

# The Values Arrangement List™ Sorting Cards



 <p><b>Life Sorting Cards</b></p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>ACHIEVEMENT</b> attainment of goals and aspirations PERSONAL</p> <p>Card # 1</p>
<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>ADVENTURE</b> pursuing excitement and taking risks PERSONAL</p> <p>Card # 2</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>AESTHETICS</b> appreciation and enjoyment of the arts PERSONAL</p> <p>Card # 3</p>
<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>COMMUNITY</b> activity in social or citizen groups SOCIAL</p> <p>Card # 4</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>EQUALITY</b> justice and fair treatment for all SOCIAL</p> <p>Card # 5</p>
<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>FAME</b> recognized and known for your contributions PERSONAL/SOCIAL</p> <p>Card # 6</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>FAMILY</b> close relations and support of loved ones SOCIAL</p> <p>Card # 7</p>
<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>FREEDOM</b> independence in thought and lifestyle PERSONAL/SOCIAL</p> <p>Card # 8</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>FELLOWSHIP</b> having important relationships with friends SOCIAL</p> <p>Card # 9</p>

<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>HAPPINESS</b> satisfaction, joy and contentment PERSONAL Card # 10</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>HEALTH</b> soundness of body and mind PERSONAL Card # 11</p>
<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>LOVE</b> intimacy, devotion and warmth SOCIAL Card # 12</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>NATURE</b> respect for animals and the environment PERSONAL Card # 13</p>
<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>PEACE</b> enduring harmony and freedom from violence PERSONAL/SOCIAL Card # 14</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>PLEASURE</b> entertainment, relaxation and fun PERSONAL Card # 15</p>
<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>POWER</b> authority, control and influence PERSONAL Card # 16</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>SELF-WORTH</b> high regard for oneself and others PERSONAL/SOCIAL Card # 17</p>
<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>SOCIAL SERVICE</b> contributing to the welfare of others SOCIAL Card # 18</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>SPIRITUALITY</b> at one with God; religious beliefs PERSONAL Card # 19</p>

<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>WEALTH</b> affluence, ease, and prosperity PERSONAL Card # 20</p>	<p>VAL Life Value</p> <p><b>WISDOM</b> insight, knowledge and understanding PERSONAL Card # 21</p>
 <p><b>Operational Sorting Cards</b></p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b> Being responsible, credible, and trustworthy Competency Card # 22</p>
<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>AFFECTION</b> Being passionate, loving and caring Moral Card # 23</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>AUTONOMY</b> Being self-directing, self-reliant, and free Competency Card # 24</p>
<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>COMPETENCY</b> Being productive efficient and skillful Competency Card # 25</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>COURAGE</b> Being brave, intrepid and fearless Moral Card # 26</p>
<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>COURTESY</b> Being respectful, considerate and polite Moral Card # 27</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>CREATIVITY</b> Being inventive, original, and innovative Competency Card # 28</p>

<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>DISCIPLINED</b></p> <p>Being restrained, and self-controlled Competency/Moral</p> <p>Card # 29</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>Drive</b></p> <p>Being industrious and goal directed Competency</p> <p>Card # 30</p>
<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>FAIRNESS</b></p> <p>Being unbiased, impartial and just Moral</p> <p>Card # 31</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>FLEXIBILITY</b></p> <p>Being responsible, credible, and trustworthy Competency</p> <p>Card #30</p>
<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>FORGIVENESS</b></p> <p>Being able to excuse and let go Moral</p> <p>Card # 33</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>HONESTY</b></p> <p>Being moral, ethical and truthful Moral</p> <p>Card # 34</p>
<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>OBEDIENCE</b></p> <p>Being compliant, deferential and yielding Moral</p> <p>Card # 38</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>KNOWEDGE</b></p> <p>Being wise and scholarly Competency</p> <p>Card # 36</p>
<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>LOYALTY</b></p> <p>Being dedicated devoted and steadfast Moral</p> <p>Card # 37</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>OBEDIENCE</b></p> <p>Being compliant, deferential and yielding Moral</p> <p>Card # 38</p>

<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>ORDER</b></p> <p>Being systematic, organized, and well-kept Competency</p> <p>Card # 39</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>REASON</b></p> <p>Being rational, analytic and logical Competency</p> <p>Card # 40</p>
<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>SERVICE</b></p> <p>Being supportive, aiding and assisting Moral</p> <p>Card # 41</p>	<p>VAL Operational Value</p> <p><b>TOLERANCE</b></p> <p>Being open, accepting and patient Moral</p> <p>Card # 42</p>