

4 SIMPLE STEPS TO SOLVE YOUR BIGGEST PROBLEM

This E-book is for you if you answer 'Yes' to any of the below questions:

- Are you stuck with a goal and need a boost?
- Have you hit a wall and want to move forward but don't know how?
- Have you ever felt like you have potential for greater happiness, but you're not sure what's missing?
- Do you want to live a life that makes you feel fulfilled, but something is stopping you?
- Would you like to discover what is informing every decision you make?



In this e-book, I share some of the useful knowledge I've gained from both my own coaching journey and from my experiences of coaching others.

This knowledge was one of the main catalysts to me deciding to quit the corporate job that I hated and start a business doing what I really love.

It helps me every single day in both day-to-day, and big life-changing, decisions.

The following pages will help you to:

- **Understand what personal values are**
- **Understand how your values are formed and organised**
- **Discover and explore your *own* personal value hierarchy**
- **Have a greater understanding of what makes you happy or unhappy**
- **Gain a greater insight into conflict with others**
- **Gain a greater insight into your own internal conflicts.**

I love to hear from my clients about the changes or personal discoveries they've made – please do get in touch to have a discussion and to explore how I can help you further.

You can see some examples of coaching packages I offer at the end of this E-book.

Best wishes,

Cat



Why do I Feel Unhappy or In Conflict?



When we feel unhappy, or in a state of internal conflict, it is nearly always down to us living our life in a way that is *not aligned* with our own personal values.

When we act in a way that *is aligned* to our values, everything feels easy; life is smooth and happy – we are ‘in flow.’

When we feel *out of alignment*, where our life is not aligned to our values, we become stressed, tired, depressed and everything is a struggle. This can even manifest itself as health problems, both physical and mental.

An example

To bring this to life a little more, I’ll share an example of when I felt out of alignment, back when I was working in an HR role in a large corporate organisation. Although the organisation’s ‘official’ values of ‘Succeeding Together,’ ‘Making a Difference’ and ‘Putting the Customer First’ absolutely aligned with my own values, in reality, these values were not lived out in the everyday life of the organisation.

I was operating in a team where individuals took credit for other people’s work, worked in isolation and backstabbed each other to get ahead. We were encouraged to do things because they were easiest for us, despite not being the best option for our clients. And despite advocating work-life balance and rewarding talent in the organisation, our managers told us that we were expected to work long, hard hours, often operating at a level above our pay grade, for no extra reward, or even a word of thanks.

This was completely at odds with my personal values: things such as ‘Collaboration,’ ‘Feeling Valued,’ ‘Teamwork,’ ‘Responsibility,’ ‘Ownership,’ ‘Doing the Right Thing,’ and ‘Recognition’.....I could go on. As a result, I felt like I’d fallen into a black hole of despair; I dreaded going into work, I felt tired all the time, I struggled to concentrate and I felt stressed and deeply unhappy.

Being coached through the exercise I share later on in this E-book helped me to work out *why* I was so unhappy in that organisation, and what values I needed to be met in any career that was going to make me happy. Further coaching helped me to work out exactly what I wanted to do and helped me find the courage, confidence and motivation to do it.

What are Personal Values?

Our personal values drive every single decision we make, from day-to-day choices, such as what we wear, and what we eat for breakfast, through to big-ticket items, like where we live, our career and choice of partner.

Some values we may already be consciously aware of, and know that they are important to us. Other values will be held unconsciously. We do things because ‘we want to’ but we often don’t know ‘*why*’ we want to.

Values are abstract concepts – you can’t touch or hold them. They can be a single word, like ‘Security,’ ‘Fun,’ ‘Passion’; or a phrase, like ‘Helping People,’ ‘Making a Difference’ or ‘Understanding How Things Work.’

Our values are imprinted at an early age, any time from birth up to about age 7. They are shaped by our parents, family, culture, religion, early experiences and society in general. That’s not to say they can’t be changed if they are no longer serving us well.

How Are Our Values Organised?



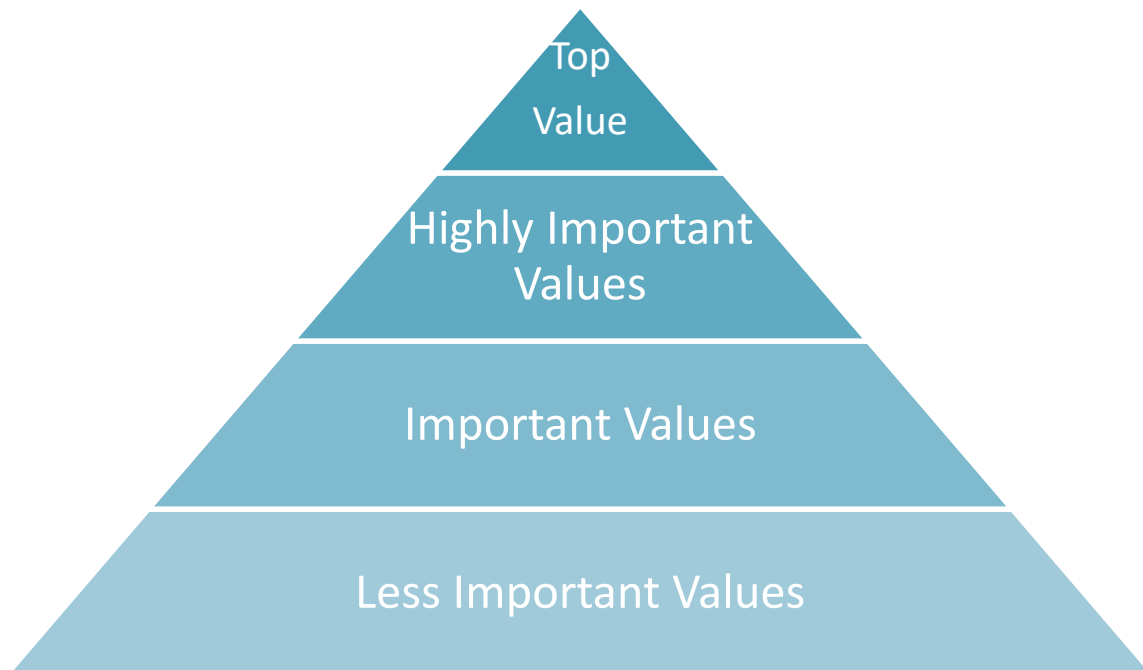
Our values are organised in a hierarchy, which is more or less consistent over time, although certain values may be highlighted by events in our life, often when they are contravened or brought to the forefront of our minds (e.g. being betrayed in a relationship may highlight a value of 'Faithfulness' or 'Honesty'.)

Our values are also broadly consistent between different parts of our lives although there may be some variation between what you value at work and what you value in a relationship.

At the top of the hierarchy, you have a 'Top Value' – the one thing that everything you do is working towards. This is usually consistent across every part of our life. Common top values are things such as 'Happiness,' 'Peace,' 'Contentment,' 'Love' – yours may be one of these, or it may be different.

Below your Top Value, there will be a hierarchy, or sometimes a cluster of 'Highly Important Values.' This may include values like: 'Success,' 'Achievement,' 'Freedom,' 'Family.'

Below that, will be another cluster or hierarchy of 'Important Values,' and again below that, 'Less Important Values.' These Less Important Values are still things that you value, but may be overridden in favour of something else you value more highly, if faced with a situation where you need to choose.



How Can I Discover My Own Values?



There are a lot of different ways to discover your own values hierarchy, or at least gain more insight into it.

Below are some quick, simple questions to ask yourself, to gain an initial insight in your values, followed by a more in-depth Values Hierarchy exercise.

Quick Insight Questions (You may find it useful to write the answers down.)

1. At my 80th birthday party, how would I want people to describe me?
2. When I'm out of the room, what type of words would I appreciate other people saying about me?
3. In life, what is *most* important to me?
4. What else is important to me?

Values Hierarchy Exercise – Part One

You may find it helpful to write down your answers, or get someone else to help you by asking the questions.

1. Identify an area of your life that you are happy to use to explore your values – this could be work, relationship, a hobby, health and fitness, or something else.
2. Ask yourself – “What’s important to me about this area of my life?”
3. Write down any of the phrases or abstract words that come out in your answer.
4. Pick the phrase or word (we’ll call it ‘X’) that seems the most important, and ask yourself – “What’s important to me about ‘X’?”
5. Repeat Steps 3 and 4 until you run out of answers or find yourself going in circles – normally between about 7 and 10 times (it may be more or less.)
6. If you get stuck, or find yourself going around in circles between 2 or 3 words, ask a different question – “When I have ‘X’, what will it get me?”
7. This question may take you on to find further values, or may signal that you’ve got to your Top Value.

Top tips

- Values are abstract concepts. If you find something more concrete or material in your answers, keep asking the question until you get a more abstract concept. For example, when talking about work and career, a concrete/material answer might be “I get paid a good salary to do my work.” In this case, it is helpful to discover what ‘a good salary’ means to you, so ask “what’s important to me about a good salary?” For some people, this might be ‘Recognition,’ for others ‘Security,’ for others ‘Independence’ or ‘Status.’ Or it may be something else.

How Can I Discover My Own Values?



- You may find the first few values come easily, and then you get stuck. Keep asking, to allow you to dig a little deeper – the values that come out after this point are likely to be the ones that you hold unconsciously and are less aware of.
- Be honest with yourself, and write down the values you *actually* have, rather than the values you *think* society expects of you. Values are neither right nor wrong, they are just *your values*. They will give you an insight into how you, uniquely, make decisions.

Worked Example

Here, as an example, I'm going to explore a work area of my life - running coaching retreats. This is a shortened example – for you, this cycle of questions may (or may not) go on for longer.

Q: "What's important to me about this area of my life?"

A: I love **helping people** to explore whatever situation they are faced with and find their own answers.

Q: What's important to me about helping people?

A: I like to **see the changes people make in their life** as a result of the help I've given them, and how they are happier.

Q: What's important to me about seeing people make changes in their life?

A: It feels good – it's an **achievement**.

Q: What's important to me about achievement?

A: I feel **successful**

Q: What's important to me about feeling successful?

A: Its gives me a **sense of freedom**, and allows me to spend time doing what I really love

Q: What's important to me about a sense of freedom?

A: It makes me **happy**.

Q: What's important to me about being happy?

A: Er.....Its good to be happy. Being happy makes me happy.....

Q: And when you are happy, what does that get you?

A: Well, it's everything really.

How Can I Discover My Own Values?



As there are no further values coming out, I will finish the questions here. And now I can list my hierarchy of values, in relation to this area of my life – running coaching retreats:

1. Happiness
2. Freedom
3. Success
4. Achievement
5. Seeing People Change Their Lives
6. Helping People

Values Hierarchy – Part Two

Now you have your list of values from Part One, let's check they reflect your true hierarchy of importance. You may find they are already in the right order for you, or there may be some changes you want to make to the order of your values.

One way to test this is:

1. Take each value in turn, starting at the bottom of the hierarchy and compare it to the value above.
2. Ask yourself 'If I could only have one or the other, which one would I have?'
3. Move the one you choose above the other one in the hierarchy, if it isn't already.
4. Then, compare the higher value, from the two you have just compared, to the next value up and repeat Steps 2 and 3.

Top Tips

If you really can't choose between them, this could be for a couple of reasons.

1. The two words represent the same thing for you. In this case, combine the two words on to the same line, for example, 'Success/Achievement.'
2. The two words represent different things but these things are of equal importance to you. This would be a cluster of values.
 - In this case, it doesn't matter which order they are in, but you can compare each word in the cluster to the next value above the cluster – this will either reinforce that they are of the same importance, or will give you more insight into which one may be more important to you.

How Can I Discover My Own Values?



Worked Example

Based on the example I used earlier, here's what I would do:

My list was:

1. Happiness
2. Freedom
3. Success
4. Achievement
5. Seeing People Change Their Lives
6. Helping People

Q: If I could only have 'Helping People' or 'Seeing Other People Change Their Lives,' which would I have?

A: *Helping People.* (So 'Helping People' moves above 'Seeing Other People Change Their Lives,' and is now compared to Achievement.)

Q: If I could only have Helping People or Achievement, which would I have?

A: *Achievement.*

Q: If I could only have 'Achievement' or 'Success,' which would I have?

A: *Well, they feel like one and the same thing to me.*

Q: Ok, so if I could only have 'Achievement/Success' or 'Freedom,' which would I have?

A: *Freedom.*

Q: And if I could only have 'Freedom' or 'Happiness,' which would I have?

A: *Happiness.*

Therefore, my revised hierarchy looks like this:

1. Happiness
2. Freedom
3. Success/Achievement
4. Helping People
5. Seeing People Change Their Lives

Why is it Useful to Know Our Values?



So if we're already *unconsciously* making decisions based on our personal values, why is it useful to *consciously* know what they are?

Knowing our values consciously can:

- Help us to **make decisions** more quickly and more easily.
- Give us a conscious understand of **what makes us happy** and therefore, enable us to make choices towards meeting these values.
- Enable us to **identify frustrations and why we are frustrated** – normally because one of our personal values is not being met or is being contravened.
- Increase the chances of us **achieving goals**, as we can choose to align our goals with our Highly Important Values.
- Be aware of **why we might sabotage our attempts to achieve a goal** – it often shows that a Highly Important Value is not being met by the new goal, or was met to a greater extent by the old situation.
- Give us an appreciation that **other people hold different value hierarchies** to our own.
- Help us to **understand more rationally where feelings of conflict come from**. For conflict between people, or groups of people, we often take it personally, when, in fact, it's just two different sets of values rubbing up against each other.

So how does this help in real life?

Below is an example where I coached one of my clients through the Values Hierarchy exercise, which led to her identifying an area of conflict in her relationship and taking steps to solve the problem. (This example has been used with my client's permission.)

My client, Sarah, found she would often argue with her partner over what to do with an evening. She wanted to snuggle up on the sofa with him watching a film or TV series, and he wanted to play computer games on his own in his study. She identified that this was actually a conflict of values in that moment. She was valuing the things she got from watching a film together, such as 'Togetherness,' 'Comfort,' 'Warmth,' 'Cosiness,' and 'Sharing,' while he was valuing what he got from playing computer games: 'Excitement,' 'Adrenaline,' 'Alone Time,' 'Achievement,' 'Escapism.' While Sarah did hold these things as values in other parts of her life, they were not high on her list for what she wanted to do in the evenings and this led to arguments and resentment for both parties.

Through having a conversation about the different things they valued from their separate activities, Sarah was able to identify ways in which both partners could meet their own set of values, together. They agreed that on some nights, they would compromise and do one or the other activity, and that on other nights, they would find a shared activity they could do together (meeting Sarah's values of 'Togetherness' and 'Sharing') that also met her partner's values of 'Excitement' and 'Adrenaline,' for example playing a computer game together, or watching a film that was suspense-filled and exciting.

TAKE ACTION – 4 Simple Steps



STEP 1: Hooray! – You have already completed Step 1 to Discover Your Personal Values.

STEP 2: Now that you have any understanding of your personal values, reflect on your biggest problem, or a situation you are facing at the moment, and explore what new insights you find.

STEP 3: Imagine that problem has gone.....What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel?

STEP 4: Ask yourself the following questions:

- What will it mean to you when the problem is solved?
- What will be different in your life when that problem is gone forever?
- On a scale of 1-10 - how committed are you to making this change?
- What stops you taking action now?
- Who can help you?
- What is the first step you need to take towards resolving this problem/situation?

WRITE THIS STEP DOWN NOW! Or in the words of Nike, JUST DO IT!

If you found this E-book useful:

If this e-book has got you thinking, but you haven't yet found the full solution to your problem, please read on to find out how I could help you more.

I love to hear from people about the changes they've made – please get in touch!



How Can You Work With Me?



Here are 5 examples of how you could work with me:

1. **Free Discovery Session** – a free 30-minute telephone coaching session to discuss your current situation, some immediate ways to move forwards, and any further support you may need. And it's completely free!
2. **1-hour Coaching Session** – gain some insight into a problem or situation you are facing and discover something to make a change. Investment: £200.
3. **3-hour Breakthrough Session** – a 3-hour intensive session to help you make significant progress on a specific issue or problem. Can be held indoors or outdoors. Investment: £540.
4. **Coaching Package** – choose between 6,12,18 or 24 hours of coaching, to be used in single hours or blocks as you like, to help build and maintain momentum on tackling a situation or issue that is important to you. Investment: from £1080.
5. **Transformational Trek** – a 3-day walking-coaching journey through the Scottish Highlands – an intense and immersive coaching experience. Investment: £3000.

To discuss any of the above, or an alternative solution, please get in contact on 07757 542956, or at cat@reachthepeak.co.uk.



About Reach the Peak

I am a qualified NLP Master Practitioner and a Mountain Leader. I love to combine my two passions of mountains and helping people by running walking-coaching retreats, based in the Scottish Highlands.

I take clients out into nature, and through some guided coaching processes, I help them to move forward on an issue or situation they are struggling with. You can join me, in stunning scenery, for an intense and inspiring getaway of walking, coaching, home-cooked food, luxury accommodation and a cosy log fire.

I also do one-to-one coaching, tailor-made to each individual, based from a coaching studio in Edinburgh. Where possible, I like to work with clients outdoors, by going for a walk in a nearby park or in the local Pentland Hills. Coaching sessions are also available via Skype.

If you would like to have a conversation with me to find out how I could help you move forwards, you can contact me at cat@reachthepeak.co.uk or on 07757 542956.