



The Values Compass

**Discover the Values That
Drive Your Leadership**



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AUTHOR | COACH | SPEAKER
CEO OF YOUR LIFE



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Why Values Matter

Our values are the principles that guide what matters most to us. They serve as an internal compass, helping us stay aligned with who we are, especially when circumstances are challenging or uncertain.

Values Create Clarity

When we understand our values, we gain a clearer sense of our priorities, motivations, and purpose. They help us recognize what energizes us, what frustrates us, and where we want to focus our time and effort.

Values Lead to Better Decisions

Values provide a reliable framework for decision-making. When faced with difficult choices, they help us evaluate options based on what is truly important to us, allowing us to act with greater confidence, consistency, and integrity.

The Bottom Line

When our actions align with our values, we experience greater purpose, authenticity, and fulfillment in both our personal and professional lives. Identifying and living our values is a key step toward leading ourselves and others more effectively.

Your Personal Compass

Values are the principles that guide your actions, decisions, and priorities.

- **They create clarity** by helping you understand what matters most.
- **They simplify decisions** by providing a consistent framework for choosing the best path forward.
- **They strengthen leadership** by aligning your actions with your beliefs and purpose.

**The more aligned you are with your values,
the more confident, authentic, and effective you become.**

What You'll Find in This Ebook:

Steps 1-3...

Help you get clear on what really drives you. This involves a deep dive into your core self.

Steps 4-6...

Guide you to identify those values that are MOST meaningful to you, and put them into action.

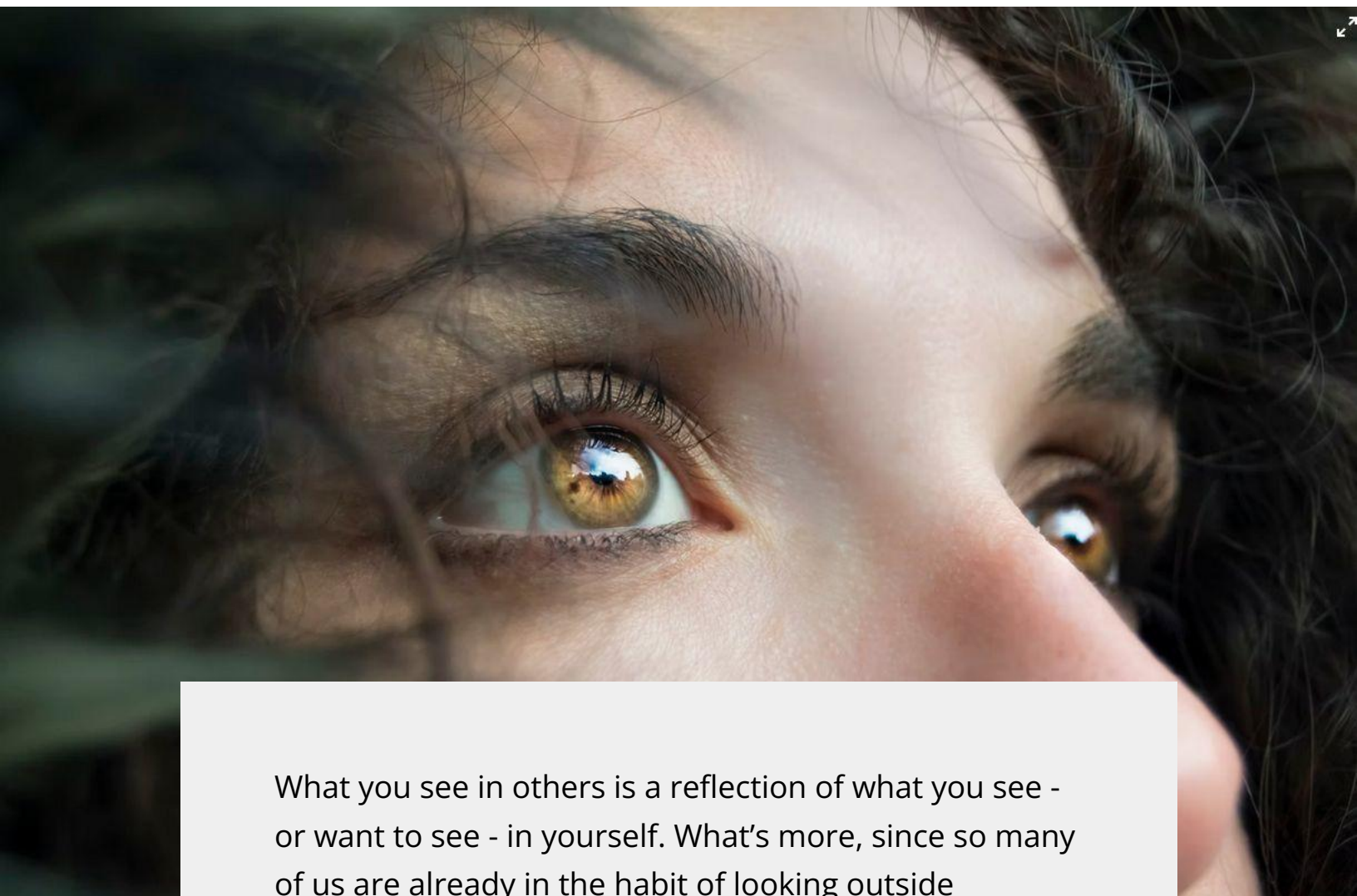
As you go through these exercises, focus on what you feel - on what you naturally gravitate towards. Your answers are for you and you alone. There is no one to please, impress or placate. There are no right, or even best, answers. To succeed at these exercises is to bring out as much of your true self as possible - your shadow and your light - with courage and vulnerability.

Remember:
everything you do,
starts with you.
Proceed with love ❤️

STEP 1

Who do you most admire?

Uncovering your core values is about tapping into *your* best self, not someone else's best self. So, why am I starting with... other people?

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's face, specifically focusing on their eyes. The person has dark, curly hair and is looking directly at the camera with a slight, contemplative expression. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of their skin and the intensity of their brown eyes. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting with greenery.

What you see in others is a reflection of what you see - or want to see - in yourself. What's more, since so many of us are already in the habit of looking outside ourselves, why not embrace that? Let's start with looking outside, then allow that to reflect back and illuminate what's happening within.

STEP 1

List 3-5 people you admire.

These could be business leaders, influencers, celebrities, entrepreneurs, athletes, mentors, scientists, authors, people in your community, family members, friends, colleagues... anyone who inspires you, sparks your creativity, shows you a new way of being, opens up new ideas for you, or leaves you in awe. It could even be a fictional person.

Part 1: Write down what you admire most about each of these people. Write freely. Don't try to extract values or deeper meaning yet. Let your heart guide what you write.

Person I Admire	What I Admire About Them
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

STEP 1

Part 2: Now try to identify the values behind what you wrote. For example, if you admire how someone helps others, the values behind it could be empathy or compassion. If you admire someone's personality or presence, the values could be charisma, success or confidence. If you admire something they created, the values could be intelligence or innovation.

Search for the value(s) behind what you admire about each person:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

STEP 2

What makes you angry, frustrated or upset? What really gets under your skin and triggers your sense of fear, anger, shame, resentment or judgement?

These strong emotions indicate a value system in contrast to what truly matters to you. For example, if being stuck in traffic triggers feelings of being trapped and frustrated, it may indicate values of freedom or efficiency. If you dread getting emails from a particular colleague or manager, maybe you value accountability and this person is a known blame shifter. If poor manners are a pet peeve, maybe you value respect or civility.

If you dig deeper, maybe what triggers you is triggering because you see it in yourself and you want to change it.

All parts of you are human and worthy, and are best met with compassion and curiosity. Any strong feeling, positive or negative, is something to investigate. Why does it trigger you? What is it pointing to that matters to you, or that you want to grow?

Part 1: List the things that trigger you and the emotions or states of mind they trigger.

Trigger	Emotion / State of mind

STEP 2

Part 2: Dig deep and get gritty to identify what values are on the other side of those feelings.

Trigger	Hidden value



Heart + Strategy

STEP 3

What is your favourite animal and why? This could be a favourite animal in general, or your preferred animal to keep as a pet.

If you immediately thought of a non-domestic animal, what is it that you like about this animal? What about its lifestyle, demeanor, mythology, habitat or any other defining characteristic are you drawn to?

If you thought of your preferred pet, what do you see this animal adding to your life or home that resonates with you?

Part 1: Write down your favourite animal and what you are most drawn to about it.

Animal: _____

What I'm drawn to about this animal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Part 2: Identify the values behind those feelings. For example, if you love an animal because it brings a smile to your face, the value behind it could be happiness, love or goodness. If you are drawn to an animal because of what it overcomes, the value behind it could be resilience or perseverance. If you are drawn to a pet that makes your house feel like home, the value could be family, togetherness or loyalty.

What I'm drawn to	Hidden value

STEP 4

Now that you've done your deep dive into what matters to you, go back through the values you uncovered in each step and list the ones that came up most often, or that you felt a deep connection with. **Try to extract at least 6.** Even if two or more values seem similar, but you used different words, list them separately, as they may resonate with you in different ways.

Value 1:	
Value 2:	
Value 3:	
Value 4:	
Value 5:	
Value 6:	



PHOTO BY BURST ON UNSPLASH

***What got you
here is not
what will get
you there.***



PHOTO BY POP & ZEBRA ON UNSPLASH

STEP 5

Now go back through the list you built in Step 4. For each value, ask yourself:

- Does this (or would this) bring out my best self? (No? Cross it off.)
- Is this something that will guide me towards courage, or something that's been holding me in status quo? (Status quo? Cross it off)
- Looking ahead to what I want to create, or what I envision as my ideal life, is this something I want to bring forward into the next chapter of my life? (No? Cross it off.)

Look at everything not crossed off. Which of those resonate with you the most, fill you with the most hope, or energize you most about the possibilities for the future?

Choose the 3 values that resonate with you most. These are your core values!

My Core Values	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Print this page and cut out your values, or write your values down somewhere special. You will want to keep them visible and accessible to you!

Ask yourself, am I honouring my core values in my life and work?

To answer this, really think about what it looks like to honour your values. That will look different for everyone depending on their unique set of values. Here are a few things to consider that will help you get clarity:

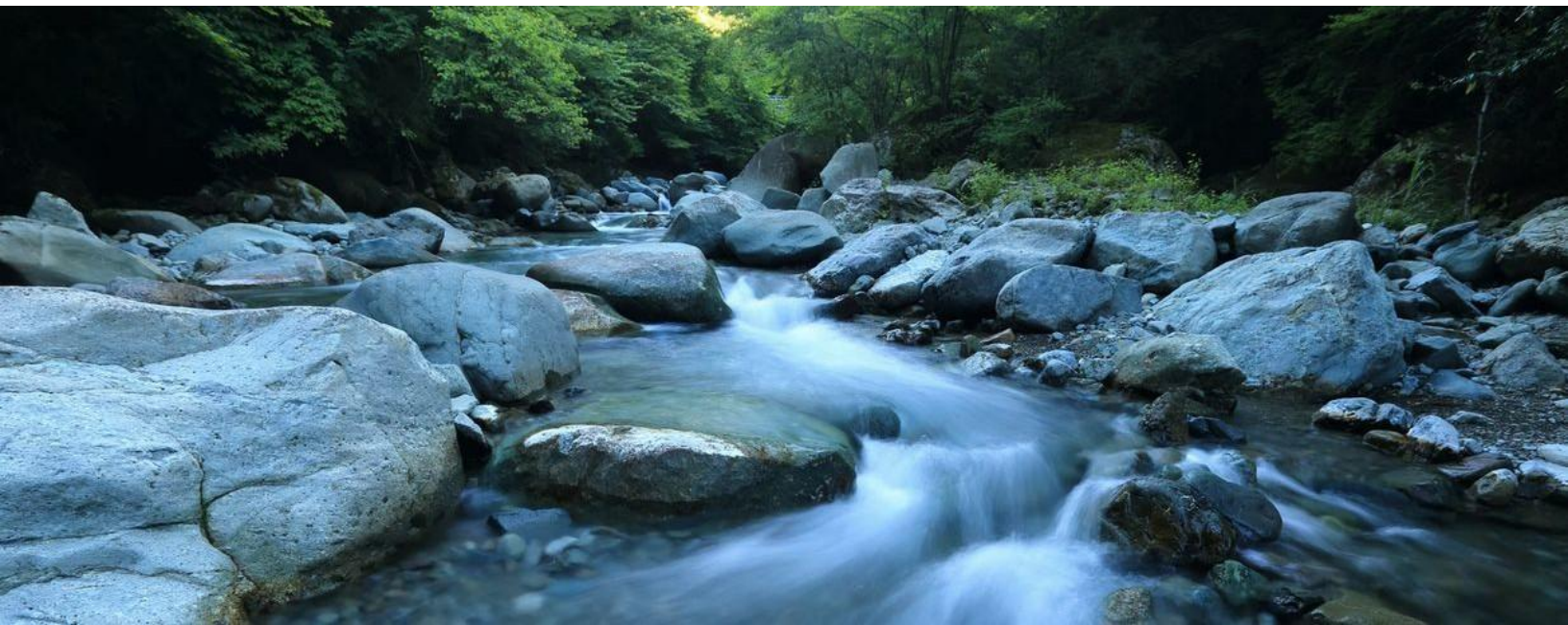
- **What do the first moments of your day tend to look like?**
 - Are you turning outwards - news, social media, emails, traffic/weather reports, etc. - and letting other things set the tone for your day before connecting within?
 - Are you rushing through your routines on autopilot?
 - Are you taking time to nourish yourself?
- **What does a typical day at work look like for you?**
 - Is your work aligned with your values?
 - Do you have opportunities to use your strengths, talents, knowledge and experience?
 - Are there opportunities to grow, either as career advancement or inner growth?
 - When do you feel most fired up or at peace in your work?
- **How did your last conversation with a colleague or loved one go?**
 - How did the interaction align - or not align - with your values?
 - Do you feel that your boundaries were respected?
 - Did you speak your truth?

These are just a few suggestions. Consider what a typical day looks like for you and what occupies your time, mind and heart. Take an honest look at all of it and ask yourself if you're truly honouring your values in how you show up and respond, and in how you use your time and energy.

STEP 6

If you find that you are fully honouring your core values... Congratulations! Consider this exercise a crucial check in with yourself and come back to it from time to time to reassess, reflect, and determine if you need to course correct.

If, like many of us, you're realizing how much you are not honouring your values, it's time to make changes. Otherwise, you will forever be pushing up against your own inner struggle; against what truly matters to you. That's a recipe for burnout and "stuckness".



When you honour your values, life flows like a river. **A river may encounter obstacles along the way, but it continues to flow freely, over and around them.** Likewise, when you are aligned with your values, you are able to flow through challenges with ease, keeping your focus on the way through and where you want to go.

**Real.
Brave.
Fun.**

**You now have clarity on your values. So...
What does living them look like to you?**

Ask yourself:	Your answer:
What do I need to say YES or NO to in order to show up in a way that is aligned with my core values?	
How can I adjust my approach to my personal or professional roles to better align with my values?	
What habits or routines can I shift so that honouring my values becomes baked into my day-to-day life?	
If my life and work were fully aligned with my core values, what would that look and feel like?	
What steps can I take today, tomorrow, next week, next month, etc. to move closer to that feeling?	

STEP 6

Going forward, anytime you have a decision to make, ask yourself, “Which path is most aligned with my core values?” Remember that this isn’t a habit for you yet, so you will need to do this with intention. After a while, aligning with your values will become an ingrained habit and feel more natural, empowering your inner leader to shine through in all areas of your life.

Discovering your core values and working to align yourself with them is just one step in developing your inner leader.

Here are a few resources to help you continue that journey:

- [How to Develop Your Inner Leader](#)
- [The Triangle of Disempowerment](#)
- [5 Ways to Lead Through Chaos and Uncertainty](#)
- [Conscious Leadership FAQ](#)



The higher you go, the more human leadership becomes.

When you honor your values in your life and work, you honor yourself as a human being, worthy of unconditional love and acceptance, exactly as you are. In this way, you build true confidence in who you are and empower yourself to set healthy boundaries that strengthen relationships, keep you on a path that's right for you, and give clarity to decision making. When you know who you are, and feel at ease being who you are, you move forward with a confident energy that guides you to continuously take yourself to the next level, and that has a positive impact on the people around you.

Companies and teams can only go as far as their leaders. Let's take yours to new heights.

The greatest driver of success is feeling good about the work that you do. I will help your team connect with their inner leaders, uncover what truly drives them - their core strengths and talents - and understand how to bring it all forward with courage and confidence. Starting with core values, I will guide them to get so comfortable being their true selves that they are empowered to turn away from self-preservative behaviours and negative patterns, and towards creative problem solving, mutual trust and respect, stronger interpersonal relationships, and a growth mindset that takes them and your organization to the next level.

Ready to go deeper?

If this exercise helped you uncover your values, imagine what becomes possible when we apply them to your leadership, your decisions, your team, and your life.

[Explore Executive Coaching](#)



Leading Through Your Values

- Which meetings drain your energy — and which align with what matters most to you?
- Which of your responsibilities align most with your values? Which conflict with them?
- Which decisions have you delayed because they conflict with your values?
- Where is your calendar aligned — or misaligned — with what matters most?
- If your team described your leadership, which values would they see?

Lead with Heart. *Lead with Strategy.*

At CEO of Your Life, we believe the most impactful leaders do not choose between results and humanity. They lead with both.

Based in Montreal and working globally in English and French, Melissa Dawn partners with executives, CEOs, founders, and leadership teams navigating growth, complexity, change, and high-stakes decisions.

Her work blends executive coaching, CEO advisory, leadership retreats, and speaking — helping leaders strengthen how they think, decide, communicate, and lead.

Because leadership is not only about what you build. It is about who you become while building it.



Connect with me

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Melissa Dawn is the founder and CEO of CEO of Your Life. A former Vice President of Marketing with over two decades of corporate experience, Melissa now serves as an executive coach, CEO advisor, keynote speaker, and retreat facilitator.

She works with executives, founders, family-business leaders, and high-performing leadership teams across North America and internationally.

Melissa is known for creating conversations that are real, direct, insightful, and deeply human. Clients often describe her as both a strategic thinking partner and a trusted advisor — someone who helps leaders see what is happening beneath the surface while staying grounded in practical action.

Credential	Awarding Body
MCC	Master Certified Coach — International Coaching Federation
CPCC	Certified Professional Co-Active Coach
CTPC	Certified Team Performance Coach
Conscious Business	Certified Conscious Business Coach