



# Define Your Personal Values

Prepared by David Ocegüera

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MODULE 1 // Strengthening A Leader's Inner Life

TOOL #2

Pastoral Resilience Cohort 2023

## The Goal of this Tool

The goal of this tool is to help you identify your core personal values and help you implement them so that you can create alignment in your life and thus live a more fulfilling life.

## Why are Values Important?

Your values are deeply held beliefs and principles that guide your life. They are fundamental standards or ideals that you consider most important and use to make decisions. They drive the decisions you make from what you eat, the jobs you pursue, how you spend your money, the person you marry, the people you choose to spend time with. Values are like the operating system of your life quietly running below your subconscious and leading you to make the decisions you make.

Whether you have ever taken the time to intentionally define and acknowledge your values, or not, *you still have them*.

For many of us, our values are shaped by our parents. They are ingrained in us from a very young age. You've all heard the expression that children are like sponges'. As children we soak up our parents' values. While we soak up their values, we also pick up some of their negative characteristics. You are a product of your upbringing. It is important to be aware of how you were shaped by your parents and your family system. Your family system and your role in it are crucial to who you are as an adult, and as a leader. We will explore more about family systems in a later tool.

## Your Personal Values// Exercise 2.1

If you know your personal values, list them here. If you have not defined your values before, the exercises in this lesson will help you get clarity on them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

## Your Parent's Values// Exercise 2.2

Self-Awareness is crucial for successful leaders. In this exercise I write down the values you learned from your parents. Don't worry about being too verbose, or long winded in your writing. Don't worry about editing, or spelling, or punctuation. Simply allow yourself to have a stream of consciousness. The purpose of this exercise is to download the values that helped shape you. Below I have provided my own answers as an example for you. For reference I spent approximately 7 minutes writing this down.

### Examples:

1. Work Hard, even when you are tired. Even when you don't want to do it, you do it.
2. Be Responsible. Consistency. Reliability. Being Dependent. Living by the rules.
3. Maña: Maña is a Spanish word roughly translated as Grit, determination, imagination, thinking outside the box to accomplish the obstacle in front of you. It was the things that kept you from giving up when something was hard.
4. Simplicity. Living simply, and humbly.
5. Perfection. Everything had to be perfect. From the way we folded our socks, and our dresser drawers were organized, to the way we ironed our clothes, cleaned our rooms, etc. (Upon reflecting this was not actually a value, but an I). I see the negative effects it's had on my own expectations on those I lead, and even my family. *[NOTE: The reason I included this example is to help shed light on your own upbringing and bring awareness to unhealthy patterns and behaviors so that we do not repeat them with our families.]*

### Your Parents Values:

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

\*\*\* Mark an asterisk next to the values you find yourself displaying in your life today.

As with any growth in life, it is important to acknowledge where you've come from, hence the exercise about your parent's values, your current life circumstances, and how you would like to move forward as you become the person you want to be. It will be interesting to see how your current values match up to those of your parents.

## Your Proudest Life or Leadership Experiences// Exercise 2.3

In this exercise you are going to reflect on your most significant life and/or leadership moments that have had a profound impact on you. The goal in this exercise is to reflect on your stories and witness the values you practiced in those moments. Initially the prompt for this exercise was for you to reflect on your proudest leadership moments, but we are more than our leadership. Our values must transcend our leadership if they are to be deeply rooted within us.

### Examples:

1. **My Value: Family.** I turned down three jobs that paid more, were more prestigious and could have potentially opened many professional doors. My wife and I decided to turn them down because they were not in line with our value of family being the most important value for us. Had I taken any of those jobs, I would not have been home very much, it would have forced me to work longer hours and be absent from the family. While the pay would have been substantially more, what we would have to give up (quality time with my daughters and wife) was far more costly than the salary.
2. **My Value = Steadiness.** Leading my Elders at a previous church I pastored to develop trust and create a healthy environment after some tumultuous months of interpersonal friction.
3. **My Value: Maña.** When I was an extern pastor, some of the parents felt that I was too liberal, because I was teaching too much grace, so they brought me before the board. Thankfully nothing happened, because I did nothing wrong. But I was angry, upset and hurt. I walked out after the meeting in tears. I talked to my dad right after and told him I wanted to quit. He said, no you go back and finish the job you were called to do. I am most proud of the work I did after that, and being able to still give my best despite my feelings, or anger and being hurt.

**Question 1:** Choose your proudest life and/or leadership moments, where you feel you were at your best. [Choose as many as you'd like. I suggest you start with no more than 3] I have provided examples of my own.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Question 2:** What insights did you learn about yourself, or your leadership as you reflected on this story

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Question 3:** What are the values you see emerge from these leadership experiences?

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

## Crucibles//

Crucibles are intense experiences that test our limits. Tod Bolsinger quotes a mentor of his who is a pilot. His mentor said, when a plane encounters issues while flying, "In the moment of crisis, we do not rise to the occasion, we default to our training." I would contextualize this and add that in the moment of crisis, we will default to *our values*. This is why our values are so important.

Crucibles reveal our values. Crucibles are challenging or painful experiences we experience in life. The leadership guru Warren Bennis writes, "The crucible is an essential element in the process of becoming a leader." "Some magic takes place in the crucible of leadership, whether a transformational experience like Mandela's years in prison, or a relatively painless experience such as being mentored. Whatever is thrown at them, leaders emerge from their crucibles stronger and unbroken." (quoted from *Discover Your Truth North*, by George North, 61).

In chemistry a crucible is a vessel in which substances are heated to a high temperature in order to trigger a chemical transformation. As Christian leaders, we know this concept well, in the form of God's refining fire! While crucibles test our limits and are often painful it does not mean they have to be negative. Instead, crucibles can be our teachers if we are open to learning and growing from them. Crucibles are a test of our values. Crucibles reveal our values!

Crucibles include but are not limited to the following: death of a loved one, illness, divorce of your parents, growing up in poverty, discrimination, rejection by peers, early failures. Everyone faces crucibles. It is ironic that the early crucibles we face shape us for the future. There are usually two outcomes that result from crucibles. You either feel like a victim or

you come out stronger. You can view crucibles as something that is happening to you, or something that is happening for you. Your mindset will determine how you navigate through it and beyond it.

## Exploring Your Crucibles// Exercise 2.4

1. Write freely about your greatest crucibles and describe the following if helpful:

- How you felt at the time
- What helped you get through it
- How did you resolve the issue
- How did this experience shape you as a person

### Your Crucibles:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2. As you reflect on your crucibles, what values helped you get through them?

### The Values that Helped You Get Through Your Crucibles:

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

### Examples of My Own Crucibles:

1. Hospitalized with Severe Pneumonia when I was 5 years old. What I learned? Value: Faith.
2. Parents' Separation. Value: Stability.
3. Experiencing First Leadership Resistance and Sabotage as an Extern Pastor in Anaheim. Value: Maña.

## Priorities//Exercise 2.6 [Optional]

If you've come to this point and still feel like you don't have clarity about your values, then complete this exercise. If you feel like you have a good grasp on your values, move to the next exercise.

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

## Make a List of Your Values//Exercise 2.7

Congratulations! You made it to the final exercise. This is where you can put it all together. There are two steps to this exercise.

**Step 1:** Use one word to define each of your personal values.

**Step 2:** Write a sentence of two describing the value and expand how it is important to you. It might be helpful to write a sentence of intention about your value. Examples are provided below.

### Examples of Personal Values:

1. **God.** My relationship with God is the important thing in my life, because it shapes me, guides, and informs every other aspect of my life. As such, I will prioritize my relationship with God, I will be intentional about carving out time daily for solitude daily, for Bible study, prayer, and journaling.
2. **Family.** Next to God, my family is the most important. I will make decisions about my health, career, opportunities based on how it will impact my family. I will only pursue opportunities that will create a healthy environment at home and lead to more quality time with my family, a safe place to live, and necessities met.
3. **Faithfulness.** I believe in being faithful to the life God has given me. I believe that it is important to get clarity on the work God has given me and then be faithful to the process of accomplishing the work. This includes my pastoral calling of leading a church, and my deeper calling of helping others live more deeply. I will accomplish this through my speaking, writing, coaching, and resilience cohort.

## Your Personal Values and Statements of Intention:


- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

### Compare Your Personal Values to Your Parents//Exercise 2.8 [Optional]

Full Circle. Take a moment and compare your values to the values of your parents. The goal of this exercise is to celebrate where you came from and commit to continual growth.

1. Celebrate. As you look at your parent's values and your values reflect on the positives you took from your parents and how they have shaped you into the person you are today. They did the best they could with the information they had to celebrate them.
2. Grow. Take a moment and reflect on the unrealistic expectations your parents placed on you and how you are still practicing them today? How can you change that so that you don't repeat their mistakes?






**Cheat Sheet:** Feel Free to come back to this section whenever you need a refresher on how to define your values, their purpose and how to implement them.

## Make Your Values Work for You // A Final Word

When you don't live based on your values, you will be out of alignment with yourself. You will find yourself getting frustrated, unfulfilled, and lacking the passion and energy you need to show up to your most important relationships and work. Allowing values to guide your life involves aligning your actions, decisions, and behavior with the principles and beliefs that are important to you. Here are some steps to help you integrate your values into your daily life:

1. **Prioritize your values:** Determine which values are most significant to you. Rank them in order of importance. This will help you make choices when values conflict or when you need to make difficult decisions.
2. **Understand your values:** Explore the meaning and significance of each value to you. Understand how they relate to different areas of your life, such as work, relationships, health, or personal development.
3. **Align your actions:** Once you have a clear understanding of your values, strive to align your actions and behavior with them. Consider how your daily choices, habits, and interactions can reflect your values. For example, if one of your values is kindness, you can make an effort to perform acts of kindness regularly.
4. **Set goals:** Use your values as a guide when setting goals for yourself. Ensure that your goals are in harmony with your values. This will provide you with a sense of purpose and motivation as you work towards achieving them.
5. **Make decisions:** When faced with choices or dilemmas, consider how each option aligns with your values. Make decisions that are consistent with what you believe to be important. This will help you make choices that bring you fulfillment and satisfaction.
6. **Reflect and evaluate:** Regularly assess how well you are living in accordance with your values. Reflect on your actions, decisions, and behaviors to determine if they are in line with what you value most. Adjust your approach if you find any inconsistencies.
7. **Seek support:** Surround yourself with individuals who share or respect your values. Engage in conversations, join groups, or seek mentors who can provide guidance and support as you strive to live by your values.



Remember that living by your values is a lifelong process. It requires self-awareness, reflection, and a commitment to personal growth. By allowing your values to guide your life, you can create a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and authenticity in your actions and decisions.

