



# Identifying Your Values Can Be Key To Clarifying Your Career Path

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You may know some people who know exactly what kind of work they want to do and who just go out and find it. But a lot of us don't necessarily have that certainty within us. The good news, according to Anita Houghton, author of **Finding Square Holes**: Discover who you really are and find the perfect career, is that having a specific career choice is not as crucial as you most of us might think. You see, the things that people find important about their work tend to be more general than specific. For example, you may value working with people, overcoming challenges, intellectual stimulation or being creative. These things are general enough that they can be found in a variety of different jobs. So as an ex-pat living in a new environment, you don't need to limit yourself to the label of your old job, but be open to exploring different avenues where you could find or revisit the values that make you feel fulfilled.

Having said that, the important first step is to identify your values. Value clarification is an honest assessment of who you are, right now in your life. Thomas Leonard, author of **The Portable Coach**, makes a good distinction between needs, wants and values.

He says 'a need' is something you must have in order to be your best, such as time, space, money, love, information, food, exercise, or tools. Usually, getting a need met causes you to feel satisfaction.

'A want' is something that you relate to by trying to acquire or experience

it, such as a vacation, a promotion, a gourmet meal, sex, a good book, a new car. Usually getting something you want makes you feel gratification.

'A value' is something that you naturally gravitate toward, prompted from within.

However, for different people or sometimes even for the same person at the same time, the same thing can be a need, a want or a value. So Leonard offers these guidelines to help draw the distinctions:

- if there is urgency, it is probably a need
- if there is craving or desire, it's probably a want
- if there is a natural uncomplicated pull, it's probably a value.

Sometimes the things we believe to be our values are actually the values of our parents, our teachers or mentors and not our own. Carl Jung once said that nothing affects the child more than the un-lived dreams of the parent. Being in touch with your own values can help you to be true to your self, which in turn can help you escape the should-have, could-have, ought- tos in life.

A simple way to identify your values is to think of peak experiences in your life, moments when you felt on top of the world and completely yourself. They might be professional or personal, but by reflecting on what aspects of those experiences felt important, you can begin to identify what are the things you value most. As a career coach, when I hear a

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client sharing great work experiences from their past with certain emotion, I can help them spot how their values emerged and were fulfilled.

Link to Value Assessments on GN website  
[http://www.global-networker.com/pdf/web\\_based\\_resources.pdf](http://www.global-networker.com/pdf/web_based_resources.pdf)

Identifying your values is a perfect activity to do in the summer weather when you can get outside to a park or go on holiday to a beach and really take time to think about these things. I'd urge you to create the space and spend some time coming up with your list. Once you have that list of values you can place the top six on a wheel and then colour in to what percentage you are currently living that value. And then think through: what could you be doing that would allow you to have a fully coloured wheel?

The key point to keep in mind about values is that implementing them energizes everything concerned with it. For an individual, committing to and applying your values releases fresh energies, which attract success, achievement, and well-being. Likewise, when companies or other organisations adopt values, individuals working there become energized, as do its customers, its products and services, and everyone and everything else associated with that organisation.

Roy Disney once said, "It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are." If you were in touch with your true values, how would that change your career path and even your life?