What values are important to a life well lived?
What do you want to be known for?
What qualities do you admire in others and work to cultivate in yourself?
And how do those qualities reflect your core beliefs?

But what is the point of **identifying your values**, and how do **they contribute to your growth and happiness?**
To answer this question, we're exploring 12 of the most important values in life and showing how they influence everything you do.
But before we do that, it makes sense to explain what values are in the first place.

What Are Values in Life?

- Values are **about what you consider important to the life you want to live.**
- They inform your **priorities** and, when practiced consistently, **form the character you want to have**.
- They're rooted in your core beliefs about what makes for **a life well-lived and about the behavior you want to model for others** (including children if you have them).
- Shared values are the basis for a common code – a value-based compass – that speeds up decision making and unites those who share that code.
- By **expressing those values, the common code** articulates different aspects of the __shared mission__ **and becomes the key motivator for those who share it.**
- You can take each of the following examples of values in life to create a code or motto that motivates you to practice that value every day, so it will become second nature when it's most needed.

12 Most Important Values to Life By

1. Courage

Courage is about **doing what you believe needs to be done** — not in the absence of fear but in spite of it.

You might feel unenthusiastic to offer a genuine apology out of fear that the other will reject it, **but courage will help you apologize anyway**, because **it's the right thing to do**, out of respect for the one you hurt or offended. Whether they accept your apology or not is their business.

- *Courage requires a step outside of your comfort zone*.
- If you have no fear, you don't need courage, but when something you know you have to do makes you feel sick inside, **courage is what makes you do that thing anyway.**

Courage code (or motto):
"I do what needs to be done, even when fear comes along for the ride."

2. Kindness

Kindness is about treating others the way you want to be treated.

It's more than just holding your tongue when you're tempted to say something unkind; kindness looks for ways to make life better for others.

It takes delight in **lifting others up** and reminding them **they're not alone, invisible, or insignificant**.

Kindness (gentleness) والرقة and compassion والإهتمام are closely related; the latter involves the readiness to see a situation from someone else's perspective and to **give them the benefit of the doubt**.

It also takes into consideration what the other person has gone through and chooses to respond with kindness rather than **anger or vengefulness. الغضب والإنتقام**

Both demonstrate at least a subliminal appreciation for the connectedness of all living beings; when you show kindness and compassion to others, you benefit (at least) as much as they do.

Kindness to yourself is also important, and it's the basis for self-care.
Don't forget to be as kind to yourself as you want others to be.
Schedule time each day for reasonable and thoughtful self-care, and practice mindfulness to be fully present for it. In practicing kindness to yourself, you also make yourself better able to render kindness to others.

> *Kindness code:*
> **"I treat others as I want to be treated — with thoughtfulness, patience, and respect."**

3. Patience

When someone is pushing your buttons, taking your time or attention away from something you want to finish, or making your life harder in some way, you practice patience (tolerance) by putting yourself in the others' shoes, trying to see the situation from their perspective, and responding with **kindness and respect.**

No one wants to be treated like an inconvenience or a burden, and sometimes your priorities have to change to make room for something (or someone) more important or more likely to help you grow.

> *Patience code:*
> **"No matter how I feel when someone interrupts me or gets in my way, I always treat them with the same patience I hope for from others when necessity compels me to interrupt them or get in their way."**

4. Integrity (Honesty & reliability)

Integrity is about acting and speaking in accordance with your beliefs.

If you say one thing but do the opposite, witnesses to this contradiction aren't likely to recognize you as a person of integrity. They're more likely to accuse you of **hypocrisy**. (insincerity) النفاق

Though you may not be fully conscious of the disagreement between your words and actions, if you believe one thing but your actions profess a contradictory belief, you might feel a growing unease and unhappiness with the way you're acting.
It doesn't feel right. And you're faced with a choice: either change your belief, or change your actions.

> *Integrity code:*
> **"What I believe is made clear by what I say and do."**

5. Gratitude (Thankfulness)/ Appreciation

==You prioritize both **feeling gratitude and expressing it** — in your thoughts, in the words you speak or write, and in your attitude and actions.==
<u>You might create the habit of writing a daily gratitude list.</u>
And if you recognize the importance of emotion to the fullest experience of gratitude, Showing appreciation to others for their words and actions is also essential to making this a core value.
Just as you appreciate it when others thank you for a job well done, for a thoughtful gift, or for rendering the help they needed, others appreciate that recognition too.
And far too often, we act as though others must already know how much we appreciate them. **<u>Don't assume that they do; make sure of it.</u>**

> *Gratitude code:*
> *"In the morning, throughout the day, and in the evening, I feel and express gratitude for the good things in my life. And I make sure everyone who has done something good for me knows I appreciate them for it."*

6. Forgiveness التسامح

==Forgiveness is **about letting go of anger and resentment toward those who have hurt or offended you.**==

You're not saying what they did was okay or not a big deal; you're acknowledging that what they did was hurtful but choosing to forgive them in order to be free of the anger and resentment (toward them) that are making you miserable.

In forgiving them, you take back your power and <u>choose happiness</u> and peace of soul for yourself, even if the one who hurt you has never shown the slightest hint of regret.
Everyone has a capacity for forgiveness — just as everyone has the capacity to hurt others with their words and actions — but not everyone has **cultivated a habit of forgiveness**.

We learn to be more forgiving by forgiving more. If you write morning pages, add a short list of people you forgive, adding what you forgive them for and something you appreciate about each person.

> *Forgiveness code:*
> *"I forgive those who have hurt me, because I know I've made mistakes and hurt people, too, and I want to be free of this anger and resentment. I choose freedom, and I choose to genuinely want (and work for) the good of those who've hurt me."*

7. Love

Love sees the good in everyone, and it wants good things for them. You may not always know what's best for someone else, but if you love them, you want their ultimate happiness, and you want to see them grow.

You recognize that no one reaches adulthood with their character fixed and unchangeable; **we're all a work in progress.**
Things your 20-year-old self would say might shock your 40-year-old self. It's part of being human if you're a human that continues to grow.

Forgive them for not knowing better before they learned whatever stopped them from doing those terrible things.
And **forgive yourself for not knowing that human beings are all capable of terrible things** — just as we're also capable of growth.
When you love someone, you don't base that love on the kind of person they were ten or twenty years ago, or on the person, you hope they become or that you wish they were. Your love tells them, "You are enough — just as you are today."

You recognize that their beliefs and behavior may change as they grow, but since your love doesn't depend on what they believe or on whether you agree on everything, your love doesn't lessen with time and with the challenges those changes bring.

Love code:
"I love with both passion and understanding; real love is wide awake."

8. Growth

If growth is one of your core values, **you look for opportunities to grow as a person and to help others grow, too.**

You take the time to identify your values and your overall mission, so you can live in accordance with it and become more and more the person you have to be in **order to fulfill your mission.**

You know that growth isn't a destination but a process, and you want to enjoy that process and help others to enjoy their own.

You might take an interest in coaching or in group growth opportunities, where members support and encourage each other. You recognize true and wholehearted collaboration as an asset and a growth facilitator, and you prioritize growth over comfort and security.

Real growth might mean shaking things up at home or at work, but the more committed you are to your growth and to that of those you care about, the less you mind rocking the boat.

> *Growth code:*
> *"Every day, I'm growing more into the person I want to be."*

9. Listening

If active & attentive listening is a core value for you, you value others' input and invest time and energy in *learning how to see things from their perspectives.*

So, it makes sense that when someone wants to tell you something, you give them your full attention and thoughtfully consider their words.

Whereas before you felt tense with the expectation of having to defend your beliefs against an unfriendly viewpoint, you've learned (through practice) to listen with genuine openness rather than an ego-centric fear of being proven wrong.

You recognize that you don't know everything, and you don't see even familiar things from every angle, so you appreciate it when others share their perspectives. And your body language as well as your feedback shows them you're listening and that you care about what they have to say.

> *Listening code:*
> *"I listen to others with my full attention, so I can learn from them and show thoughtful consideration for their ideas."*

10. Respect

If you want to be known for treating all human (or living) beings with respect, you probably base that respect on something more fundamental than someone's rank or social status.

Otherwise, why would you consider it a priority to treat all humans with equal respect — regardless of their age, income, or background?

Or why would you put more energy into making sure the least exalted among you is treated with respect than into making sure others treat *you* with the same consideration.

It doesn't mean you don't consider **yourself equally worthy of respect**, but you find it easy to put yourself in other people's shoes, so in making sure they feel respected, you feel more respected, too.
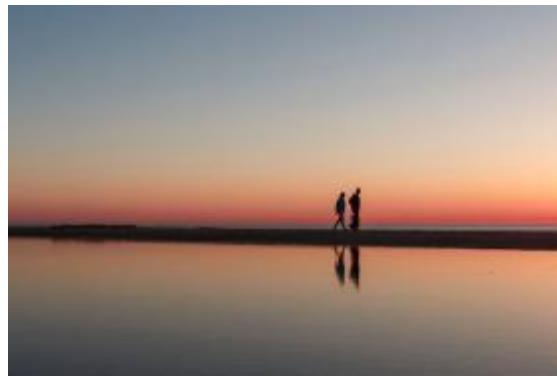
Respect code:
"I treat all living beings with the same respect with which I like to be treated."

11. Self-Giving

Another word for self-giving is **sacrifice**, but self-giving has a more positive connotation.

Essentially, you're giving of yourself — your time, your attention, your energy, your treasure, your abilities — to help or enrich another.

Real love doesn't hesitate to give of itself until it hurts, knowing that the momentary pain is nothing compared to the benefit won by that self-giving.

The word "selfless" implies that someone has given so much of themselves, they've reserved nothing for their own use or enjoyment, but in giving yourself — if you give out of love — your joy is in what that gift brings to others.

Self-giving can be overdone but only when the motive is pride (or insecurity) rather than love.

Self-giving code:
"I give of myself to others not only to connect with them but to acknowledge our connectedness. What I give to them, I also receive."

12. Vision

You may be used to talking about vision in the context of a specific person's "vision for the future," but the larger sense of vision is not something that you own or that comes from you; *it comes through you and inspires you and others*.
Because the larger vision isn't confined to your ego, the power of that vision is free to attract, illuminate, and flow through you.

Your vision is connected to one that is infinite and uncontainable — you do not exist to serve yourself at the expense of others; you **exist to cooperate with others** in the creation of a community that benefits all living creatures.

Your personal vision – what you see as your response to the larger vision — informs your personal mission and the process by which you live out that mission.
It's not about the lifestyle you want or the things you'll have when you're "successful." It has more to do with allowing yourself to be led by the greater vision through your personal links to it — your intuition and inner wisdom.

Vision code:
"I live according to a vision guided by my inner wisdom and judgment."