

An abstract graphic in shades of blue. A large, dark blue circle is positioned in the upper half. Below it, a stylized hand with five fingers is shown, palm up, holding the bottom of the circle. The background is a lighter blue with a subtle circular gradient.

# From the Leadership Mastery Suite

## VALUES EXERCISE

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This technique is reprinted from chapter 11 of **The Three Levels of Leadership: *How to Develop Your Leadership Presence, Knowhow and Skill*** (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) by James Scouller



# THE LEADERSHIP MASTERY SUITE

## Values Exercise

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### Stage 1: Uncovering

The idea is that you take some time to consider the set of questions you will see below and note down your answers in short, preferably one-line statements. You may choose to spread the stage 1 exercise over two or three weeks, working for perhaps 10 minutes a day, but take longer than that if you wish.

#### Peak Moments

- Recall a moment when life was especially satisfying. A moment, not a period. See it, feel it.
- Ask yourself, what was happening? Who was present? Relive it in your mind.
- Now ask yourself:
  - What was so satisfying about that moment?
  - Probe to get a clearer understanding: (A) What was so important about that? (B) What did it bring me? (C) And what did that give me? (D) And what did that do for me?
- When you find your answer keeps coming back to the same value you can end your questioning and note what you have learned so far.
- Now you recall another peak moment and repeat the procedure.
- Then you repeat again until you have done this perhaps 4-5 times and have at least 3-4 value statements. (You may find that different peak moments are founded on the same value.)

#### Concealed Values

- Remember a time when you were angry or deeply frustrated.
- Name and describe the feelings around the occasion.
- Ask yourself, why was I so angry or frustrated? What value of mine was being trampled on?
- Also ask, what for me would be the opposite of the feelings I experienced? For example, feeling “helpless” might give an opposite of “powerful”. Then probe for the value suggested by this positive opposite by asking, what would that give me?
- Note down the value and repeat the exercise 4-5 times.

#### Essentials

- What would you miss most in your life if you lost it or it was taken from you?
- Why? What is so important about that? What does it bring you that matters so much?
- Note down the value you have uncovered in a statement and repeat the exercise 4-5 times.

## Admired Figures & Chief Accomplishments

- Whom do you admire in life (past or present)?
- Why? What is it about their life, character or achievements you admire so much? What is important about that to you?
- Repeat 2-3 times, each time noting down the value in a short statement.
- In your own life, what do you consider to be your most important achievements so far?
- Why? What was so important about them in your eyes?
- Again, note down your insights in a one-line value statement and repeat 2-3 times.

## Legacy

- How would you like to be remembered? What would you like people to say about you?
- Why? What is so important about that? And what would that bring you?
- Note down what you have learned in a short statement and repeat the exercise 4-5 times.

## Stage 2: Ranking & Rating

When you have completed stage 1, you may have a dozen or more value statements, ideally no more than fifteen words long such as, *"The sense that I'm fulfilling my potential."* The next step is to rank them in importance and assess your degree of satisfaction on each value. You can do this in any way you choose, but below is an exercise to help you.

- Write the value statements onto post-it notes (one per note).
- Count them and mix them up. Then spread them out on a table in front of you.
- Decide which values make up the lowest third in terms of importance to you and put them aside (in no special order).
- Then find the values that you judge to be in the second tier of importance. Again, put them aside in no particular order.
- This leaves you with your top third of values. Review them and then take a look at the values in groups two and three. Move any that you feel are in the wrong group.
- Take the bottom group and put aside each post-it note one by one, with the least important discarded first. This gives you the bottom third of your total rankings. Now look at it, decide if you're happy with the rankings and make any changes. Then do the same with the middle group and finally the top group. Now you have ranked every value.
- Review the total list, check you are still comfortable with the rankings and then write them down, top to bottom, in a table with these headings:

**Rank**                      **Value Description**

**Current Satisfaction Score**

- Score your degree of satisfaction on each value (that is, the degree to which are honouring and expressing that value) on a score of 0 to 10, with 10 being the maximum.

Now you have a league table of your personal values. The ones near the top are your core values, the ones that motivate you most. Now what? Well, now you know what motivates you most. You can use this knowledge in three ways. First, you can see which of the highest ranked values have low satisfaction scores. Those are your frustrated values and you could regard them as your top priorities for action. Second, you can note the high values with high satisfaction scores and ensure you continue to look after them. Third, you can use the table to guide you in defining your next steps, which may include writing a personal mission-vision statement.

