



Identifying Your Values as a Neurodivergent Person

Who we are is defined by what is important to us—our values. Your values reflect how you want to approach your life and how you want to behave towards others in your everyday life. Values are not something you ever complete—instead, they describe an ongoing process of doing what feels deeply important to you. However, values are not the same as goals. Your goals are specific outcomes you work towards, while values describe an ongoing process of doing what is deeply important to you. For instance, if you value having a loving relationship, moving in with your partner could be a goal that aligns with this value. When your goals align with your values, achieving them can help you live a life that feels meaningful and authentic to you.

Identifying Your Values

Your values are chosen by you and describe what is important to you, not what is important to others. To explore your values, circle the words below that reflect how you would like to approach activities and relationships in your life. Choose the words that resonate with you—the ones that seem more important to you personally. This might include several words from each category.

Connections to Others

Acceptance (of others)	Forgiveness	Kindness
Appreciation	Friendship	Loyalty
Authenticity	Fun	Loving
Caring	Generosity	Openness
Commitment	Gentleness	Passion
Compassion	Honesty	Patience
Communication	Humour	Respect
Considerate	Intimacy	Supportive
Family	Joy	Trust

Work & Achievement

Accountability	Diligence	Quality
Accuracy	Efficiency	Refinement
Challenge	Excellence	Reliability
Competence	Leadership	Responsibility
Competition (healthy)	Organisation	Thoroughness
Decisiveness	Perseverance	Timeliness

Personal Growth, Physical & Mental Health

Acceptance (of self)	Determination	Resilience
Adaptability	Enjoyment	Safety
Awareness	Health	Security
Balance	Humility	Sensitivity (own needs)
Calmness	Integrity	Self-discipline
Consistency	Learning	Thoughtfulness
Curiosity	Openness	Wisdom

Helping Others, Social Justice, Animals & the Environment

Balance	Equality	Passion
Challenge	Equity	Respect
Concern for others	Fairness	Sensitivity (to others)
Community	Frugality	Service
Contribution	Helping others	Stewardship
Cooperation	Justice	Support
Diversity	Leadership	Sustainability

Creativity & Aesthetics

Beauty	Intuition	Persistence
Creative expression	Imagination	Playfulness
Diversity (of ideas)	Non-conformity	Risk-taking
Exploration	Novelty	Symmetry
Innovation	Openness	Variety

Spiritual Beliefs & Faith

Faith	Peace	Simplicity
Gratitude	Religious faith	Spirituality

Aligning Your Actions to Your Values

Understanding your values helps you determine how you might approach people, problems, and obstacles in your life. If you can align your actions with your values, they will feel authentic and important to you. Below are some examples of actions that align with the values.

Values	Behaviours that align with these values
Being kind, loving, and supportive in your relationships	• Taking time to ask your partner about their day • Actively listening to your friends to understand their ideas and perspectives • Making time to do the things you both enjoy • Asking your friends about their interests and listening when they infodump on their favourite topics
Being imaginative, playful, and creative	• Focusing on enjoying the creative process • Surrounding yourself with inspiring art, music, or thought-provoking books • Drawing, painting, writing, filming, photographing, or using any other creative medium • Challenging the status quo by proposing novel and innovative solutions to problems
Being someone who values fairness, respect, and diversity	• Actively speaking out against bias based on factors such as gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or appearance • Taking time to listen to others' unique experiences • Challenging internalised ableism and treating yourself with respect

Living your life in a way that is aligned with your values is an ongoing process of considering what is important to you in critical moments and making choices about what you do as a result. Your values act like a compass, guiding your choices. This means that no matter how many difficulties you may experience, your values can still be reflected in how you choose to respond.

Exploring Your Values Further

- [The Neurodivergent Skills Workbook for Autism and ADHD](#)
- [The ACT Workbook for Perfectionism](#)
- 'The ACT Therapist':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZQO0kMdzPU>
- 'ACT Auntie': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZM9Z4vM-iM>
- Psychology Today:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/stop-avoiding-stuff/202207/we-are-what-we-do>
- Podcast featuring Jim Lucas and Ray Owen:
https://bit.ly/deeper_into_values_ray_owen

About the Author

Jennifer Kemp is a clinical psychologist based in Adelaide, Australia. Her neurodiversity-affirming approach is founded on her own experience of being late-diagnosed as Autistic and an ADHDer, listening deeply to the experiences of her neurodivergent clients and the latest research. Jennifer weaves together acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) with compassion-focused approaches to help her clients improve their mental health and develop greater self-acceptance, self-compassion, and pride in their neurodivergent identity.

Jennifer is the co-author of "[The Neurodivergent Skills Workbook for Autism and ADHD: Cultivate Self-Compassion, Live Authentically, and Be Your Own Advocate](#)" and author of "[The ACT Workbook for Perfectionism: Build Your Best \(Imperfect\) Life Using Powerful Acceptance & Commitment Therapy and Self-Compassion Skills](#)."

For free resources and e-books go to www.jenniferkemp.com.au.

