



**Brio  
Leadership**

# Defining Your Core Values

**How to Mold Your Future,  
One Decision at a Time**



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## Defining Your Core Values: How to Mold Your Future, One Decision at a Time

Would you like to be known as a person who makes decisions according to her values? Would you like to be an authentic leader? Would you like to be in charge of creating the future that you desire? If any of these is your desire, defining your personal core values is essential to developing your leadership qualities.

Effective leaders need to understand their personal core values in order to act with integrity, not react according to past experiences or emotional triggers. Value-based decision-making allows leaders to shape their own destiny, one choice at a time. If you react, you reinforce previous behaviors and continue the patterns of the past. However, if you act according to your values, you choose a future that is aligned to your highest ideals.

How does a leader define his core values? Remember first that core values are the 3-5 most important, encompassing values that you live by. A good way to start, however, is by identifying your top ten values, then distilling those to a handful that are easy to remember.

Although the process is straightforward, it may take some time to work it to your satisfaction. Let these concepts percolate through your mind over several days, then carve out some quiet time to write down your conclusions.

Here's how to define your core values.

1. Use the following template to identify the top ten values that are important to you. Put one in each row in the “Value” column. Then complete the other two columns. Here is an example from my value matrix to get you started:

Value:	What this means to me:	Example actions I take to live this value:
<b>Integrity</b>	Doing what I say I will do, according to my code of honor.	I refund a client if they accidentally overpay me.
<b>Compassion</b>	Acting with love and the best interests of the people involved; creating a win-win situation.	I express my desires and vision in a way that respects the desires of the other person.



## WHITE PAPER Personal Core Values

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Possible Values (or choose your own):

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Achievement</li> <li>• Balance<br/>(home/work)</li> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Compassion</li> <li>• Competence</li> <li>• Continuous<br/>learning</li> <li>• Cooperation</li> <li>• Courage</li> <li>• Creativity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiency</li> <li>• Enthusiasm</li> <li>• Ethics</li> <li>• Excellence</li> <li>• Fairness</li> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Financial gain</li> <li>• Friendships</li> <li>• Future<br/>generations</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Honesty</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humor/fun</li> <li>• Independence</li> <li>• Initiative</li> <li>• Integrity</li> <li>• Intuition</li> <li>• Making a<br/>difference</li> <li>• Open<br/>communication</li> <li>• Openness</li> <li>• Personal<br/>fulfillment</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal<br/>growth</li> <li>• Power</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Risk-taking</li> <li>• Self-discipline</li> <li>• Success</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Wisdom</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|---|

Values	What this means to me:	Example actions I take to live this value:
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

2. Once you have your top ten values, step back and look at them through the following filters:

- a. Group similar values together. Find a word or phrase that describes the grouped values.
- b. Prioritize the remaining values by asking yourself these two important questions:



- i. Which of these are the most important to me?
    - ii. What values do I want to be remembered for at the end of my life?
  - c. Ensure that the top 3-5 include values that relate to your own personal development, to serving your family/customers and to contributing to society at large. This helps you create well-rounded values and a legacy.
  - d. Lastly, make sure that the values you choose are achievable for you. It helps no one if you are not truly committed and able to live your values.
3. Post your list of Core Values in a prominent place, perhaps near your desk or computer. Live with them for a few days to make sure they resonate with you. When satisfied, re-post the Core Values again so you can refer to them in future decision-making and as a daily reminder.

The best leaders know themselves. They take the time to inspect their values, their motives and they understand their tendencies. Create your own Core Values and use them as a compass on your journey to living, and leading, in wholeness.

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*Brio Leadership brings you this complimentary white paper to help you identify what will make you a happy, more productive individual. We can do the same for your organization, through the use of values assessments, strategic consulting and executive training and coaching. Feel free to contact Kristin Robertson, President, at [817-577-7030](tel:817-577-7030) or [kristin@brioleadership.com](mailto:kristin@brioleadership.com) to schedule a complementary 30-minute appointment to discuss the challenges your business faces.*