

Psychologist Sabina Read shares the secret to finding career fulfillment

Our values shape the career choices we make, but what exactly are values and how can you identify the values that are important to you and that will positively impact your career?

Values play a significant role in our lives, but sometimes it can be hard to know exactly which of our values are important to take into consideration in a work context and how they shape the decisions we make.

What are values?

Simply put, values are the things that are important to you in your life and your career. Psychologist Sabina Read says values are relevant to every domain of our life; from work and managing people, to parenting, decision-making and relationships. “If we honour our values personally but ignore them professionally, we inevitably feel eroded, frustrated, resentful or empty,” she says. “Values are not about what we want to achieve, but rather about how we want to behave or act on an ongoing basis.”

Despite the importance of having a true sense of your values and then making career choices to complement them, many of us struggle to identify our core values.

Choosing your values from a menu

“It’s often easier to order food when a menu provides options,” says Read. “A values menu offers the same prompt, but we can also add to the list when we gain clarity about the kinds of values that matter most to us.”

Some common values to help you getting started thinking about what's important to you are listed below. Ask yourself, which of these values are important to you and whether there are any you want to add.

- **Adventure:** To be adventurous; to actively seek, create, or explore novel or stimulating experiences
- **Assertiveness:** To respectfully stand up for my rights and request what I want
- **Authenticity:** To be authentic, genuine, real; to be true to myself
- **Caring:** To be caring towards myself, others, the environment
- **Challenge:** To keep challenging myself to grow, learn, improve
- **Cooperation:** To be cooperative and collaborative with others
- **Creativity:** To be creative or innovative
- **Curiosity:** To be curious, open-minded and interested; to explore and discover
- **Fairness:** To be fair to myself and others
- **Humour:** To see and appreciate the humorous side of life
- **Independence:** To be self-supportive, and choose my own way of doing things
- **Open-mindedness:** To see things through/from other's points of view, and weigh evidence fairly
- **Power:** To strongly influence or wield authority over others, e.g. taking charge, leading, organising
- **Respect:** To be respectful towards myself or others; to be polite and show positive regard
- **Self-development:** To keep growing, advancing or improving in knowledge, skills, character, or life experience
- **Supportiveness:** To be supportive, helpful, encouraging and available to myself or others
- **Trust:** To be trustworthy; to be loyal, faithful, sincere and reliable

Why knowing your values is important for career fulfilment

“Being clear about our values can help decision-making when we are job-hunting, wanting to make changes to an existing role, interviewing or negotiating with a current or potential employer,” says Read.

Our values tend to define our priorities; so doing a job that aligns with your values means that you are more likely to be content and satisfied at work. For example, if cooperation or compassion is a core value, it's likely that you'll be suited to a job where you help and work closely with others, or if resourcefulness is an important value for you, an ideal job may be one where you have to find clever ways to overcome

obstacles. “Most employers welcome employees who know what makes themselves tick and being authentic ultimately results in increased productivity and well-being which serves everyone’s needs,” says Read.

Once you have a good handle on your own values, don’t be afraid to ask about the values of the organisation or the values of the key people you’ll be working with as values are often overlooked, but crucial part of what makes you happy at work.