

My values and beliefs

Use this resource to identify your values and beliefs.

The following resource is divided into four sections:

1. **Brainstorm your values and beliefs**
2. **Prioritise your top 10 values and beliefs**
3. **Finalise your list of values and beliefs**
4. **What to do with your values and beliefs**

1 - Brainstorm your values and beliefs

Brainstorm all of the values and beliefs that mean something to you, and/or, brainstorm all of the values and beliefs you hold around exercise, health, fitness and well-being?

This could include values and beliefs you consider to be positive, negative or anywhere in between.

For an explanation of what values and beliefs are, including a comprehensive list, access the 'Values and beliefs list' at the [Exercise Change resources page](#).

2 - Prioritise your top 10 values and beliefs

Review your list of values and beliefs and choose which ten are most important to you. Prioritise each value and belief, starting with the most important (no. 1) and finishing with the least important (no. 10). When you're done, consider your chosen top ten values and beliefs and answer the reflection questions.

Values	Beliefs
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Reflection questions

- Which of your identified values and beliefs have either helped or hindered past change attempts? What makes you say this?

Positive (beneficial or helpful) values and beliefs

- Which of these values and beliefs are helping you, or taking you towards where you want to be currently? What makes you say this?

- How could you enhance these values and beliefs so as the positive impacts on your change attempt could be enhanced?

Negative (not so good or unhelpful) values and beliefs

- Which of these values and beliefs are taking you away from where you want to be, or at the very least aren't helping you get to where you want to be? What makes you say this?
- How could you begin to address these values and beliefs so as the impact on your change attempt could be minimised?

Other values and beliefs that you would like to develop

Considering the change(s) you currently want to make...

- What additional values and beliefs would help you to get where you want to be?

Values	Beliefs
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

- How/why would these additional values help you get to where you want to be?

3 - Finalise your list of values and beliefs

Describe why each of your identified top ten values and beliefs are important.

Now that you have a list of values and beliefs that are important to you it is crucial you link them to what else is important in your life. Putting this into words will help you to strengthen and resolve your thinking around why these things are important in the first place and why they will help you to achieve your goals.

My top ten VALUES and why they're important

An example of how you might write about a 'value' is as follows...

For the value 'DETERMINATION' you might write... *'By being determined now and in the future I will be able to maintain my motivation to exercise and finally achieve my exercise related goals.'*

VALUES	Why this VALUE is important
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

My top ten BELIEFS and why they're important

An example of how you might write about a 'belief' is as follows...

For the belief 'I WILL ALWAYS GET TO WHERE I WANT TO BE' you might write... *'By thinking this way I will remain positive and focused even when my motivation is waning. This means instead of quitting like I've done in the past I will be able to get through these tough patches.'*

BELIEFS	Why this BELIEF is important
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

4 - What to do with your values and beliefs

Identifying your values and beliefs is great, but there is more you can do to really make the most of what you have learnt about yourself. Below are three additional things you can do to strengthen the work you've done on your values and beliefs.

Link your values and beliefs to your hopes and dreams and to what's important to you

Linking your values and beliefs to your hopes and dreams is important if you want to achieve long term change. Doing this will strengthen and maintain your motivation to change. For example your hopes and dreams (goals) could be to lose 10 kilos and to run 10 kilometres without stopping. You could link this to your values of 'being physically fit' and 'being an active and involved parent' and to your beliefs that 'I should be able to play with my kids without puffing' and 'I need to be a good role model for my kids, part of which includes being physically fit and active'.

Develop discrepancy between your current and desired situation

Developing discrepancy, also known as 'creating cognitive dissonance', involves identifying what you want to do or what you find important (values and beliefs, and hopes and dreams), then holding these things up side by side against what you are 'actually doing'. For example you might tell yourself that... *"I'm saying that being healthy is an important value, yet I'm not looking after myself by exercising or eating a balanced diet?"* Essentially what you are trying to do is to create discomfort between your current position and your desired position. It's important to remember that change doesn't happen when you're 'comfortable' with life. Why would you put effort into changing a situation that you considered to be comfortable or not too bad? What developing discrepancy does is grow any underlying gap between where you are and where you want to be, and in doing so creates discomfort that will hopefully drive change.

Use your values and beliefs as a filter for future behaviour

We all have a pretty good idea when we are doing things we've told ourselves we don't want to do. For example you might have decided that you won't eat past 8:00pm every night for a week. When you get up from the couch at 8:45pm and you start looking in the pantry for food, there will no doubt be a little voice in your head saying *"you said you weren't going to do this!"* Most of the time, as you probably know, this voice is ignored. One way to get around this or at least tip the odds in your favour, is to keep reminding yourself of your values and beliefs as well as what's important to you. Using the same example, it might look something like this:

8:00pm – Your deadline for not eating arrives but instead of letting it pass unnoticed you tell yourself... "Right this is it! I've promised myself that I will not eat until tomorrow. If I feel the urge I'm going to remind myself that being healthy (value) and being determined and sticking to my plan (belief) is important to me.

8:45pm – You're watching TV when in an ad break you find yourself drifting to the kitchen. You realise what you're doing as you grab the pantry door and at this point you remind yourself of your values and beliefs (as above) and that achieving this goal is important.

This might not always work but it will definitely make you think more about whether or not to follow through with a specific undesired behaviour.