

## Life Values and How We Use Our Money by Richard L. Peterson

Being a Financial Freedom Coach, I am frequently asked: “So, what’s the most important step for me to take?” My answer is to make sure what you own and how you spend your money is in alignment with what you value the most.

**Values are a blueprint for living.** Living in alignment with our core values keeps us moving toward our dreams, vision, and goals. Values define what we truly stand for, what is most dear to us as individuals, and where we draw a line in the sand. So, it would only seem logical that we would also align our use of money with our values. Why wouldn’t we want what we own and how we spend our money, to be in alignment with our core values?

The following exercise will help you clarify your core values, relate those values to your money life and then create some action steps for change.

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### Clarifying Core Values

Step 1: Study the list *below*. **Note that the list carries over to the next page.** Read through all of the words before you begin. After you’ve reviewed all the words in each of the three columns, circle up to 20 words that feel important to you. Also, feel free to add words of your own. These can be things you have in your life currently and want to maintain, or they can be things that you’d like to integrate more fully into your life moving forward. Be careful not to circle words that you feel you “should” choose. Instead, choose the ones that speak to the essence of who you are and who you are becoming. Don’t over-think this part of the exercise.

Abundance  
Accomplishment  
Accountability  
Adventure  
Art  
Authenticity  
Authority  
Beauty/aesthetics  
Being present  
Collaboration  
Comfort  
Community  
Compassion  
Connectedness  
Contentment  
Contribution  
Control  
Courage  
Creativity  
Dependability  
Education  
Entrepreneurship  
Environment  
Excellence  
Excitement  
Family  
Freedom  
Flexibility  
Friendships  
Fun  
Goal achievement  
Following my heart  
Freedom of spirit

Full self-expression  
Generosity  
Going with the flow  
Good parenting  
Happiness  
Harmony  
Having a life partner  
Health/fitness/exercise  
Hobbies  
Home  
Honesty  
Humor  
Independence  
Influence  
Integrity  
Intimacy  
Joy  
Justice  
Knowledge  
Leadership  
Learning  
Leisure  
Life balance  
Location/Place  
Love  
Mastery  
Meaning  
Mentoring  
Nurturing  
Order  
Originality  
Partnership

Passion  
Peace  
Perseverance  
Personal growth  
Personal safety  
Play  
Power  
Productivity  
Quality  
Recognition  
Relationships  
Religion  
Risk taking  
Security  
Serenity  
Serving others  
Sexuality  
Simplicity  
Spirituality  
Spontaneity  
Stability  
Success  
Teaching  
Teamwork  
Tradition  
Travel  
Trust  
Truth  
Using my skills  
Vitality  
Volunteering  
Wealth  
Wisdom

Step 2: Narrow the list of words to the most important 10 and transfer them to this section.

1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

Step 3: Now, narrow your list even more to your five most important, most essential values.

1
2
3
4
5

Identifying our core values helps us separate needs from wants. Wants can be unlimited, whereas identifying our true needs helps us narrow our focus to what's enough which creates greater opportunity to be happy with what we have. It is a path to answering the question how much is enough - *for you?* Vickie Robin, co-author of ***Your Money or Your Life***, says the following about people who know how much is enough:

*"They have an internal yardstick for fulfillment. Their sense of 'enoughness' isn't based upon what others have or don't have. It's based on a capacity to look inside and see if something is really adding to their happiness, or is it just more stuff to store, insure, fix, forget about and ultimately sell at a garage sale."*

How does what you currently own reflect your values (or not)? Like your home, your car?

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And your spending?

- If your value is relationship you might ask: Is this expenditure enhancing my relationship with my partner?

- If your value is integrity you might ask: Am I being honest about my reasons for spending money on this thing or experience? Or do I want to support this company based upon their actions?
- If your value is creativity you might ask yourself this: Is there another way to achieve the same result?

Also look at it another way. Look at your monthly expenditures. Let's say you spend \$300 in a month on restaurant meals and wine. What value does that represent? Convenience? Relationship? Or are you sacrificing other more important values, like maybe adventure or learning and growth?

So how are you spending your money in alignment with your values (or not)?

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If you were using money in accordance with your most important life values and priorities, what would you be doing differently?

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If you only had 6 months to live, how would you spend your time and your money?

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So the bottom line is: What, if anything in your money life, are you willing to commit to doing differently? When?

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**Too many people spend money they haven't earned,  
to buy things they don't want,  
to impress people they don't like ~ Will Rogers**

