

Assess Yourself

Assessing Your Personal Behavior and Values

Objectives

- A** Explain the importance of assessing values and behavior.
- B** Demonstrate how to assess personal behavior and values.



1375 King Avenue, P.O. Box 12279, Columbus, Ohio 43212-0279

Ph: (614) 486-6708 Fax: (614) 486-1819

CopyIT!® Details: www.MBAResearch.org Copyright ©2017
by MBA Research and Curriculum Center®

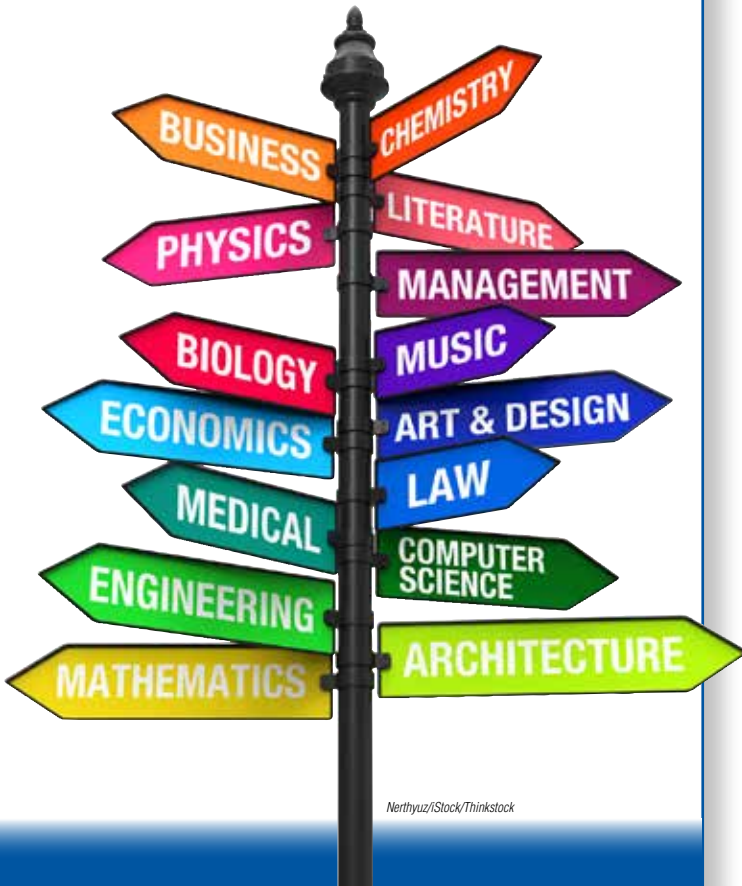
Table of Contents

A Value Added	2
B Let's Assess!	8
So What? Why bother learning about assessing your personal behavior?	2
THE GRAY ZONE What would you do?	5

When you are deciding what to study in college or what type of career to pursue, you may feel overwhelmed by the

So What

number of choices available to you. You may have no idea how to decide what career you'd like to pursue! Knowing what your values are and how to behave in accordance with them is a great way to guide yourself to a potentially fulfilling and rewarding career.



Nerthyz/Stock/Thinkstock

A

Value Added

What are personal values?

Values are the principles by which you live. They are the ideas, **morals**, and characteristics that are the most important to you. Values guide the way you choose to live your life. Each person has his/her own set of values that may be drastically different from others. Some well-known examples of values include achievement, relationships, personal growth, wealth, and security.



Barry Austin/DigitalVision/Thinkstock



DigitalVision/Photodisc/Thinkstock

- ▲ One person who values achievement might strive for good grades, while another might find achievement on the soccer field.

A person's values often stem from family, friends, culture, education, religion, media influences, and significant events in his/her life or in society. If your family is close and enjoys spending time together, for instance, you might value strong familial relationships for the rest of your life. Values can also come from your own personality, temperament, and preferences. For example, some people are naturally introverted, whereas others are extraverted. An **introvert** might value time spent alone in self-reflection, whereas an **extravert** might place higher value on having a wide social circle. Your values will most likely change as you get older and experience new things. What is important to you now might not be quite as important in 5, 10, or 20 years. Some of your current values, however, will probably remain important to you for the rest of your life.



▲ Many people place a high value on time spent with their families.



iStock/Thinkstock

Learn more about values and where they come from by watching the video "Developing Personal Values" from VEA Australia-New Zealand: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgWy_zzghw8.

Relationship Between Values and Behavior

Values guide our everyday choices, actions, and behaviors. **Behavior** is the manner in which individuals act. It includes what you say, what you do, where you go, and how you present yourself.



In theory, your values should be in tune with your behavior. They should be the basis for your decision-making and help you know whether or not you are living your life in the way that you want. If you value financial stability, for example, you might find a stable, well-paying job, pick up overtime shifts, save money instead of making unnecessary purchases, and put in the time and effort required to achieve a pay raise.

When your behavior is not in line with your values, you may experience internal conflict or a lack of satisfaction. In these cases, you may be acting on your feelings rather than your values. Let's say Jack is a vegetarian because he values protecting the environment and animal rights. If one day, Jack feels a strong desire to eat a burger and does so, he might feel disappointed or upset with himself because he acted on a feeling instead of his values.

▲ *Working late isn't always fun, but if it supports your values, it's worth it!*

Using your values as a guide for your actions and choices can help you to have **integrity** and lead you to a life of fulfillment. However, no one is perfect, so it is nearly impossible to act in accordance with your values all of the time. When you notice these gaps between your values and behaviors, you can try to improve and adjust your behavior accordingly.



THE GRAY ZONE

When Elysa was first hired at her job, her manager told her that one of the reasons she was being offered the job was because Elysa said that she was looking for a long-term position and hoped to stay with the company indefinitely. However, after spending six months at the company, Elysa is beginning to realize that the job is not what she thought it would be. After spending some time thinking about why she is not happy, she realizes that her job does not align with her values. Elysa knows that she wants a fulfilling career, but she also values honesty. She does not want to upset her employer by leaving her job when she said she hoped to work there for the long term. What should she do?



Why Bother

Developing a strong understanding of your own personal behavior and values is helpful in many ways. It can help you improve your life both personally and professionally. When you know what your values are and align your behavior with them, you will easily be able to set priorities and goals that will make you feel fulfilled, motivated, and happy. For example, if you value helping others, you may seek out a career such as teaching, nursing, or nonprofit work that will allow you to experience that value every day and focus your professional goals around it. In contrast, if your career is not focused on helping others, you may not be motivated to reach career goals or may not be able to prioritize helping others. You can also engage in hobbies or activities outside of your career that support your values, as well as form relationships with people who share or support your values.

Knowing your values also helps you to make **ethical** decisions and act with integrity. Since your values are what matter most to you, they can help you uphold your principles in difficult situations. You will be less tempted to act unethically if you have a strong sense of what is important to you. If you strongly value honesty, for instance, you will likely not cheat on a test. **Assessing** your values and behavior will also help you to treat others with **respect** and **fairness**. If you're a person who values those traits, you can examine your behavior to make sure it supports them. On the other hand, if you realize that you don't value respect and fairness, perhaps you will discover the need to reassess what is important to you.



What is the difference between striving to achieve your **goals** and living a values-driven life? Watch "Values vs Goals" by Dr. Russ Harris to find out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-IRbuy4XtA>.

Summary

Values are the principles by which you live. They are the ideas, morals, and characteristics that are the most important to you. A person's values often stem from his/her family, friends, culture, education, religion, media influences, and significant events in his/her life or society as a whole. They can also come from a person's personality, temperament, and preferences. Values guide behavior, which is the manner in which individuals act. Your values should be the basis for your decision-making and help you know whether or not you are living your life in the way that you want. When your behavior is not in line with your values, you may experience internal conflict or a lack of satisfaction. Understanding your own personal behavior and values is helpful in many ways. When you know what your values are and align your behavior with them, you will easily be able to set priorities and goals that will make you feel fulfilled, motivated, and happy. Knowing your values also helps you to have integrity and make ethical decisions.

TOTAL RECALL

1. What are values?
2. Where do values come from?
3. What is behavior?
4. What is the relationship between values and behavior?
5. Why is it important to assess your values and behavior?



Let's Assess!

You might find it difficult to figure out what your personal values are and whether or not your behavior matches them. You can take a few simple steps, however, to assess your personal values and make sure you are behaving accordingly.



Identify your values. The first step is to figure out what your values really are. Some people are confident in their knowledge of their values, but others might be less sure—and that's okay! Discovering your values just takes a little time. First, **brainstorm** a list of everything that is important to you. If you're feeling stuck, you can find a list of values online or take a quiz that will guide you in the right direction.

To see a list of values that might spark some ideas about your own values, visit "What Are Your Values?" from Mind Tools: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_85.htm.

You can also take this quiz, which will help you determine what some of your strongest values are: http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0073381225/student_view0/chapter2/self-assessment_2_2.html.

Also, think about times in your life when you were happy or proud, or certain experiences that stand out in your mind as meaningful. For example, if one of your proudest accomplishments is when you received a raise at work, associated values could be recognition, accomplishment, success, and/or financial gain. Your favorite hobbies and pastimes can also help you to uncover the values that make them so enjoyable to you. Many athletes love their sport because of values such as teamwork or achievement, for instance. You can also take the opposite approach, reflecting on times when you were frustrated, angry, or upset. Are there any common factors associated with these memories? These could be related to your values as well.

Once you have compiled a comprehensive list, you can begin to group similar values together. For example, maybe you value your friends, parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers, and classmates. All of these could be grouped as one value, such as “meaningful personal relationships.”

Once you have grouped your values, narrow down the groups of values to the top 7-10 that are most important to you. These are the core personal values that should guide your behavior. Limiting yourself to just a few is important; if you try to align your behavior with too many differing values, you may find yourself stretched too thin or in conflict within yourself.

Read over your list of values and see if they seem like the most important aspects of your life. If you feel like something is missing or inaccurate, change your list! Your values do not have to be set in stone—they will change as you do.

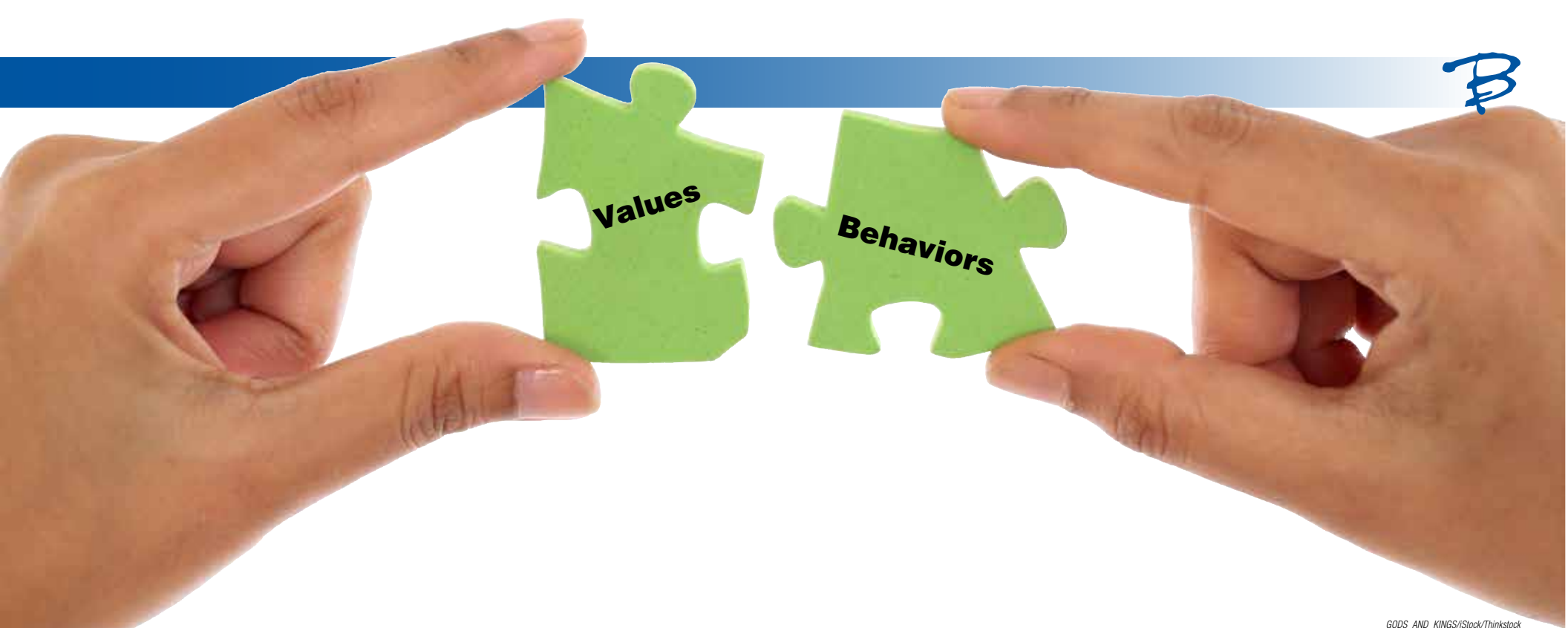


Wavebreakmedia Ltd/ Wavebreak Media/Thinkstock



istock/Thinkstock

The video “What Are Your Values? Learn How to Identify Values and Beliefs” from MindToolsVideos explains more about the importance of assessing values and behavior, as well as provides a technique for figuring out what your values are: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kz_qGJmTMY&feature=youtu.be.



Match behaviors with your values. The next step is to identify behaviors that correlate with the values that are the most important to you. For each value, identify 3–5 actions or choices that you could make that would be in accordance with the value. If you value meaningful personal relationships, for example, you might write down the following behaviors: spending quality time with family and friends, reaching out to others to show you care, performing nice gestures for your loved ones, and listening when your friends and family need to talk.

Recognize gaps between your values and your behaviors. Now that you have an idea of some of the behaviors that align with your values, you can start to compare what you have learned to your own actions and choices. Ask yourself whether or not you act in the manner listed, and how often you take such actions. Do not expect yourself to be perfect—no one is able to act in accordance with his/her values at all times and as much as s/he would like!

However, if you are struggling to find any overlap between your values and behaviors, you may need to take a moment to think about why that is and how it makes you feel. You may need to re-evaluate the values you selected, but you may also discover the need to make a change in your behavior.

Let's say Angela values learning and personal growth. The times she has been happiest and most engaged were when she was in school, taking classes, or attending training sessions where she could gain new abilities. However, she now works at a repetitive, time-consuming job in which she never has the chance to learn new information or master new skills. Angela is likely not happy with her job because it does not help her live a life in accordance with her values.



◀ *Since she loves learning, Angela might find that a career in research is more in line with her values.*

Attempt to close gaps by changing behaviors. If you realize that you are not satisfied with the state of your values and behaviors, don't fret! You can try to bring them back into alignment by engaging in more of the behaviors that support your values. Try to set a goal for yourself, such as taking one action per week that would support your personal values. You do not have to radically change your life overnight; rather, take small, manageable steps that make you feel fulfilled. Over time, you can gradually increase your focus on your values and associated behaviors.

Regularly self-monitor to refocus on your values.

Assessing your behavior and values is an ongoing process. As you make decisions and engage in new activities and relationships, it is important to reassess them in relation to your values. Your values might change, or you might become involved in a new situation that diverges from what is important to you. Take the time to check in with your feelings and make adjustments as necessary.

Listen to others' feedback about your behavior and values.

Sometimes it is difficult to see ourselves in an unbiased way. Outside perspectives can be helpful, especially if you are struggling to align your behavior and values, or if you cannot determine what your values are. Ask someone you trust and who knows you well (such as a friend or family member) what s/he thinks about your values and behaviors. Talking to others can bring clarity that you might not otherwise achieve. You may think you are honoring your value of creativity by taking painting lessons, for example, but a friend may point out that you have been skipping a lot of lessons lately and that you should make it a priority to engage in creative activity, even when you are busy.





Summary

Assessing your personal behavior and values is important to living a fulfilling and ethical life. The first step to doing so is to identify your values by brainstorming what is important to you. Once you have a list compiled, you can group these ideas into similar categories, which can be further narrowed down to form your core values. After your values have been identified, you can match these values with behaviors that support them. Then, look for gaps between your actual behavior and those you have identified. These gaps can point to areas in which your actions are not in line with your values, or where you might need to reconsider your values. You can attempt to close these gaps by gradually changing your behavior to re-align with your values. Regularly check in with your behavior and values and work to continuously bring them into alignment. Finally, if you are unsure about a particular decision or action, or are struggling to define your values, talk with a close friend or family member. His/Her feedback can help you see yourself from an outsider's perspective and understand your behaviors and values better.

TOTAL RECALL

1. What are the five steps to assessing your personal values and behavior?