

## An Organic Approach: Cultivate the Authentic You™ Lesson Four - Values & Priorities

*“Some things you know all your life. They are so simple and true they must be said without elegance, meter and rhyme. They must be laid on the table beside the salt shaker, the glass of water, the absence of light gathering in the shadows of picture frames. They must be naked and alone. They must stand for themselves.”*  
- Phillip Levine

I ask every client I work with to develop her list of values and priorities. Why? Well, very often clients tell me that they're lost about what they want - they sure as hell know what they **DON'T** want - but not what they **DO** want. Or, maybe they think they know what they want, but they're still unhappy. You must have a grasp of what is important to you, or you have no basis on which to make decisions about how to spend your time, your energy, your talents, your love, your money, your everything.

Some ways to get some ideas about values and priorities are to ask yourself questions, like:

- **Why do I spend money on the things I spend money on?**
- **What do I stand for? What issues am I passionate about?**
- **Why is it important for me to live where I live and drive what I drive?**
- **What is important to me about the possessions I own?**
- **Why do I have the job I have or do the work I do?**
- **Are these things making me feel joy in my life or do I feel anxiety, anger, frustration or burden?**

**This is the key** - Possessions in and of themselves are not the problem - McMansions or a Lamborghini or the latest electronic gadget. I think that stuff is great, if it brings you true joy. However, if you're stressed about the house payment, frustrated because you'd rather be a stay-at-home Mom instead of slaving away in a job that sucks your soul in order to pay for the Lamborghini, then there's a disconnect. Look at your calendar. What events listed truly make your heart sing? Okay, I know the dentist never makes your heart sing, but what about supper with the Smith's? Yea! How about that date for the opera with the Browns? Oh, you hate opera and you're really not that crazy about the Browns? Then, **WHY** are you going?

These types of questions help you discover your values and priorities and are the beginning steps to learning what you really want out of life and the way in which you want to live your life. And, once you know what you really want from life and how you want to live, you quit doing all the stuff you dislike and that is unimportant. And, once you quit doing all the stuff you dislike and that is unimportant, you'll stop feeling so stressed. And, once you stop feeling so stressed, you're happy and relaxed. And, when you're happy and relaxed, you feel connected and at peace and life has meaning.

## • Values

*“And, you try to find yourself in the abstractions of religion and the cruelty of everyone else. And, you wake up, to realize, your standard of living somehow got stuck on survive.” -Jewel*

Start listing your values - words, sometimes phrases, that describe how you'd like to live your life, what kind of person you want to be. Maybe you knew these words once and you've just forgotten them and they'll come easily as you allow your mind to clear, or maybe it's something you've never thought about... If you have trouble, think about someone you admire and list the things about them that make them great! Are those words you want to include about yourself?

I'm going to share with you a list of my values to give you an example of what I mean. These are the words that guide my life. Your list of values may be quite different or we may share some of the same ones.

### **Lisa's Values**

Integrity/Loyalty  
Fairness/Justice/Objectivity  
Compassion  
Love of Learning/Knowledge/Growth  
Freedom/Independence  
Authenticity/WYSIWYG  
Beauty/Order/Creativity  
Gratitude  
Perseverance/Taking Risks/Where There's a Will, There's a Way  
Humor  
Connection with Nature

## • Priorities

*“Every ‘Yes’ to my life's purpose requires a corresponding chorus of ‘No's’ to the conflicting purposes of others.” - Pam Shaw, Mary Kay National Sales Director*

Once you have your list of values, then you can begin to build your list of priorities, which will contain the **essence** of your values. You might be tempted to say that your priorities are things like your family, your job, your friends, your church. What do those things **really** mean? **How** are they priorities? What makes them **important**? What behaviors come from the fact that they are priorities?

Here are a few of my priorities. Once again, your list of priorities may be quite different or we may share similar ones. I'm listing mine to show an example of the format.

## Lisa's Priorities

- To take good care of myself physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually, so I can serve my highest purpose.
- To live a simple, authentic life and make as little environmental impact on the Earth as possible.
- To do my best in each moment, sharing my gifts and talents in co-creating with spirit (Avodah).
- To see others without judgment and filters, with clarity and compassion.
- To live in an orderly and beautiful home environment.
- To have fulfilling relationships of love and depth with family and friends

These are the things I **aspire** to that allow me to live as the **real** Lisa.

***“Action is Intention in Motion.”*** - Lisa Capehart

Now, there's a little catch here. You can list your values and priorities until the cows come home. Yet, in order for you to live the life you envision and want, your **behaviors** must reflect those values and priorities a **BIG** percentage of the time.

Here's what I'm talking about. Now, let me say, I'm far from perfect, yet, let's look at one of my priorities and the corresponding behaviors as an example:

- **To take good care of myself physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually, so I can serve my highest purpose.**

I strive to support this priority by eating healthy, doing exercise several times per week and getting adequate sleep. I spend about one hour early each morning with a cup of coffee and my gratitude journal and/or reading inspirational works or simply being quiet. Do I do these things because I **have** to? No, I do them because I **want** to and they define to who I am.

Here's another:

- **To live a simple, authentic life and make as little environmental impact on the Earth as possible.**

I've been called the "rabid recycler" because I recycle EVERYTHING! This year I plan to have a compost pile to support my goal to eventually have zero garbage going to the landfill. I choose to drive a car with a 4-cylinder engine to get better gas mileage. I choose to clean with vinegar and baking soda, instead of chemicals. I strive to eat locally-sourced produce, meat, chicken, eggs and dairy to support my local farmer and to remove support from "Big Agriculture," which embraces practices that are incongruent with my values.

Does it require some thought to define your values & priorities and then to behave and

take action in ways that are **congruent** with them? Yes, it does. Is it inconvenient and difficult to do so sometimes? Yep. Is it worth it? **Yes!**

In an email I wrote to a friend a few of years ago after a time of contrast in my life, I said, *"I guess this experience over the past year has brought to the fore for me what I really want and what I really need - how much or how little I need to be happy and content. I decided that I don't care how big the living space, just that it reflects my taste and that it's cozy and warm; and that if I have my laptop, my books, my Select Comfort bed, a good cup of coffee, a good glass of wine, dark chocolate, work that I care about and good relationships, I'm perfect! Oh, and a gas stove to cook on doesn't hurt, either. And, all my hang-ups about living my purpose, etc. have been reduced to the idea that sharing my gifts and talents in co-creating with spirit IS my purpose, whether that's decorating my house, helping out a friend, working with clients or planting a garden."*

**Knowing your values & priorities reveal the authentic you. You will discover that your life purpose is to be YOU and your actions & behaviors will reflect that fact.**

### Questions for Pondering and/or Journaling

1. Why do I spend money on the things I spend money on? What do I stand for? What issues am I passionate about? Why is it important for me to live where I live and drive what I drive? What is important to me about the possessions I own? Why do I have the job I have or do the work I do? Are these things making me feel joy in my life or do I feel anxiety, anger, frustration or burden?
2. Make a list of your values - have at least five. What do these words mean to you and why are they important? How do they show up in your life? Do the people you choose to let into your life share similar values?
3. Make list of your priorities - have at least three. What types of actions and behaviors spring forth from these priorities? Can something be a priority if there is no corresponding action?
4. Take a look at your calendar and your check register. Where are you spending time and money? Do the events and the items reflect your values and priorities? What can you eliminate?
4. Where is **incongruence** showing up in your life? Is it because you need to redefine your values & priorities? Or, is it because your actions need tweaking to reflect them better?

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