

Determining Your Core Values

A worksheet to help you determine what you believe in.

By [Dennis Rainey](#)

What do you believe in?

What really matters to you?

What values help govern how you live your life?

What values do you want to pass on to your children?

We find that most people make decisions according to a few "core values." But many have never taken the time to articulate just what those values are.

If you want to leave a godly legacy, you first must determine what you believe in—what is most important to you. And then you need to evaluate how well you are living according to those values, because your children will learn from your actions and lifestyle more than your words.

For example, if one of your core values is, "My family comes before my job," and they see you consistently working so many hours that you rarely have time to spend with them, they'll conclude that your real core value is, "My work is more important than my family." This project is designed to help you surface what your real core values are.

Complete Part One individually and then interact with your family in Part Two over your answers and develop a core values list together.

Part One: What are your core values?

Answer the following questions individually:

A. Take some time and list as many values as you can that you would like to pass on to your children.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

B. Out of this list, designate your top five core values in order of priority:

- 1.
- 2.

- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

C. Reflect on your lifestyle and how you spend your time. How well does your life reflect your core values? Pull out your calendar if it's handy and see how your schedule reflects your real values. Be specific.

D. How do your mate's values complement yours as you raise your family? (Be specific. Try to list at least three ways.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Part Two: Developing a unified list

Interact as a couple:

A. Share your answers from Part One. In what areas do you agree and disagree with each other's conclusions? Where are you different? Talk about how you need one another for balance.

B. Now develop a unified Top 10 Core Values list (in order of priority):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

C. From that list, choose the values that you think you would need to consider as you look at different schooling choices. (For example, your desire to pass on a core value of being "helpful" or "caring" may not affect your school choice. But a core value of developing a solid work ethic may influence your decision if you learn that one school choice would not provide your child with the academic challenges he needs.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

D. Close in prayer together, confessing any failures in this area and asking God to enable you to live according to your core values.

Part Three: Developing a plan for installing core values

A. Select one of your Top 10 Core Values that is not a strength for your child.

B. What are you doing right now to model and to teach this value to your child? How well does your life reflect this core value?

C. Write down your thoughts about your child's personality, behavior style, and various strengths and weaknesses and how this might affect how you teach and model this value to him.

D. What influences outside your home are helping or hindering your child as he learns this value?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

E. What ideas do you have for helping your child live by this core value? Caution: Don't limit your ideas to discipline or negative reinforcement. Think of proactive ways you as parents can positively instill and reinforce this value.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Note: You can repeat questions A-F for each core value you want to pass on to your child.

F. What are three things you want to start doing this week in order to begin instilling your core values in your child?

Core values list

If you have a problem thinking of some core values, the following categories might spark your thinking.

Spiritual values

Trust Christ as Savior and Lord
Love God with a whole heart and serve Him
Childlike faith
View life from God's agenda
Trust the Scriptures
A broken and contrite heart
Tenderhearted
Humble
Hunger after righteousness
Fear (reverence) of God
Dependence upon God
Forgiving
Full of hope
Submissive

Civic and cultural values

Law-abiding
Social-minded
Patriotic

Convictions about specific issues
Sense of Christian ethics

Relational values

Respect for others
Friendly
Gracious
Compassionate
Merciful
Caring
Thoughtful
Kind
Helpful
Giving
Generous

Moral values

What you base your moral choices on
Stands on moral issues

Lifestyle values

How you spend your time each day
Level of emphasis on material things
Work ethic
Level of emphasis on relationships
Mission mindset

Family values

Commitment to your mate
Level of importance of commitment to each other as a family
Level of importance of grandparents and relatives

Personal/development values

Personal health convictions
Intellectual growth
Developing skills and hobbies
Cleanliness
Discipline

Character values

Honest
Loving
Truthful
Faithful
Trustworthy
Obedient
Teachable
Tolerant
Temperate
Patient
Loyal
Morally pure
Financially ethical