



## TRACK 2: WHOLE PERSON COACHING STUDENT GUIDE

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### Lesson 4: Discovering and Developing Personal Core Values

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#### Instructions

This is a fillable PDF. You'll be able to type your responses directly into this document.

1. Save this PDF to your desktop (File > Save As...).
2. Fill in the form fields.
3. Save it again after you've completed the lesson.

#### Introduction

Core values—everybody has them, whether they're aware of them or not. They take shape in the nurture of a family's love and the crucible of heartache and failure. Our values influence our responses in every situation and have a profound impact on our relationships and careers. However, many people don't dig beneath their surface desires and behaviors to uncover the source of their hopes and fears. In this lesson, we'll dig deep.

#### THIS LESSON COVERS:

- Essential #1** Defining Core Values
- Essential #2** What They Are—What They Aren't
- Essential #3** Values-Driven Decisions
- Essential #4** Examples of Core Values
- Essential #5** Value-Laden Words & Phrases
- Essential #6** Personal Constellation of Valued Attributes

## Essential #1 Defining Core Values

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The Oxford Dictionary defines values as: “the principles or standards of behavior; one’s judgment of what is important in life.” Values are the things we deem most important; they are the deeply held beliefs that direct our decisions concerning how we live, work, and relate to others. It’s obvious that people aren’t born with inherent values, so how do they develop?

Sociologist Morris Massey identified three major periods when a person’s values are developed: the Imprint Period, the Modeling Period, and the Socialization Period.<sup>1</sup> In the Imprint Period (birth to age seven), children adopt a sense of right and wrong from their parents. In the Modeling Period (ages eight to 13), we copy others’ values to see if they work for us. Those who are models—good or bad—are often teachers, coaches, aunts or uncles. In the Socialization Period (ages 13 to 21), friends, peers, and the media influence us. By the time we enter adulthood, many people, experiences, and environments have shaped our core values.

After we identify our values, we tend to judge our lives by how well our choices line up with our value system. If we feel our personal decisions, relationships, and work habits align with our values, we suffer little inward conflict. However, operating outside our value system produces anxiety, stress, and guilt.

Understanding our value system helps us establish priorities at work and at home. Although our values may deepen as we mature and have a family, they are fundamentally stable. For example, if as a youth you began to develop education as a value, you are probably going to pursue learning throughout your life—and instill it in your children’s lives, too. You’ll be willing to take on significant debt as a sacrifice to further your educational goals for yourself and your children.

In defining your values, it may be helpful to reflect on the times you were the most content. Someone may ask you:

- » What were you doing at the time you felt secure and content?
- » What relationships were important then, and what external factors contributed to your contentment?
- » Are there relationships in your life today that align with your value system? What are the benefits?

- » Are there relationships that don't align with your value system? How can you tell?
- » Does your work life align with your values? If not, how can you redirect your career toward your value system?
- » If you never had to work another day, what would you want to do?
- » If you could create a community around you, who are the people you would include? Who would you be wary of including?

These questions uncover what's most important to you. The answers point to your personal core values. Once you determine what your values are, think of ways you can reaffirm them and live by them. They are challenged every day, so be ready.

**Take time to reflect.** (This exercise will not be submitted to your Coach Trainer.)

**Define the concept of "core values" in your own words.**

**Pick two of the questions from the previous list and answer them.**

**What are some ways our core values are challenged at work, at home, and in relationships with extended family and friends? What are some of the ways people respond to these challenges? Which of the responses are productive? Which aren't?**

## Essential #2 What They Are—What They Aren't

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Quite often, a person's core values aren't easily identified. In fact, it can be challenging to analyze the alignment of your values and your life. You may discover that some of the beliefs you live by aren't your own—they're borrowed but not owned. In fact, you may spend your whole life trying to live up to someone else's expectations. When your life doesn't match your values, you feel frustrated.

Look at the contrasts in this chart.

	<b>Personal Core Values Are:</b>	<b>Personal Core Values Aren't:</b>
<b>1.</b>	Our inward belief system by which we make life decisions.	Workplace norms and codes of conduct.
<b>2.</b>	Things that are reflected in a person's life, such as attitude or character.	Society's norms.
<b>3.</b>	How we nurture family and friendships.	Cultural norms.
<b>4.</b>	How we relate with God.	Church or religious traditions.
<b>5.</b>	How we make financial decisions.	Success as judged by others.

**Take time to reflect.** (This exercise will not be submitted to your Coach Trainer.)

**Pick two of the contrasts on the list. Describe what happens to people when they have clear, compelling core values . . . and what happens when they try to live by others' expectations and demands.**

## Essential #3 Values-Driven Decisions

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The information that follows is taken from Chapter 4 of Sam Chand's book *What's Shakin' Your Ladder* entitled "Decision Making."<sup>2</sup>

Maria's Maids is a successful cleaning business, and Maria would be happy if it weren't for one of her employees. Her newest hire, Lorna, is incompetent. Lorna was hired to clean, but she doesn't want to work alongside her coworkers. She was hired as a favor to a friend; but she always has a bad attitude, and she rarely shows up for work on time. However, Lorna's father manages three large businesses, and they all use Maria's cleaning services. Her father has also recommended Maria's Maids to other local businesses. Since he represents a significant source of revenue for Maria, firing Lorna could be bad for business. In addition, Maria's daughter and Lorna are friends. They hang out with the same group of people socially. Firing Lorna could affect her daughter. What should she do?

**When you're 100% certain, you're too late.**

—Charles W. Robinson

### Situational and Principled Leaders

Either we are *situational* decision-makers or *principled* decision-makers. We communicate who we are by the decisions we make. If Maria is a situational decision maker, she will be more concerned about her relationship with Lorna, Lorna's father, and her own daughter than she will about how Lorna's incompetence affects her business. As a situational leader, Maria would rather put up with Lorna's bad behavior than make a big deal out of it or risk causing conflict.

If Maria is a principled decision-maker, she will make the decision based on what she believes is right or wrong. She will realize it isn't fair to the other employees or to her customers to pay Lorna if she is incapable of doing the job. It is likely that Lorna will be fired, regardless of the personal consequences to Maria. While she obviously doesn't want to hurt her business or her daughter's friendship, she will make her choice based on what is right, not what is easiest.

As a principled leader, Maria will follow a detailed plan before firing Lorna. She will document everything that is going on, not only what she feels like recording. She will give Lorna additional training. She will have conversations and will involve other people if necessary. If Lorna's behavior still isn't resolved, she will not worry about the short-term consequences. If circumstances call for it, she will terminate Lorna.

Decision making is predictable when done by a principled leader. Employees of a principled leader feel secure because they know it is not *who* you know but *how* you act. Decisions are consistent, and they consider long-term consequences.

Situational leaders rarely think about future consequences. They are mostly interested in avoiding conflict right now. Their decisions are inconsistent. People who work for situational leaders are rarely sure how the decision will be made. Employees may try to control the information the leader receives in an effort to influence her decision in a direction that is favorable to them. Working for a situational leader can be very difficult because the employee is always trying to second-guess what the leader's response will be, for it is rarely the same twice.

As I write this chapter, the media is reporting about a national company whose computers were hacked. This action resulted in the theft of confidential information affecting thousands of people. When confronted with the information, company officials denied the size of the problem but later had to admit it was larger than they thought. As the true size of the information breach became apparent, the company offered to make some changes. When those didn't appease government officials, it added a few minor concessions to their customers in an effort to avoid lawsuits. As the situation calls for it, they agree to do a little more.

This is an example of situational leadership. Officials are doing what they have to do to appease the situation without making drastic changes. Instead, compare this one with the Tylenol® pain reliever incident over twenty years ago. When a couple of bottles of Tylenol® were tainted with cyanide, executives didn't say, "Well it's only in this small area." Instead, they removed every Tylenol® product off store shelves regardless of where the product was made, how it was wrapped, or where it was sold. These executives were principle driven.

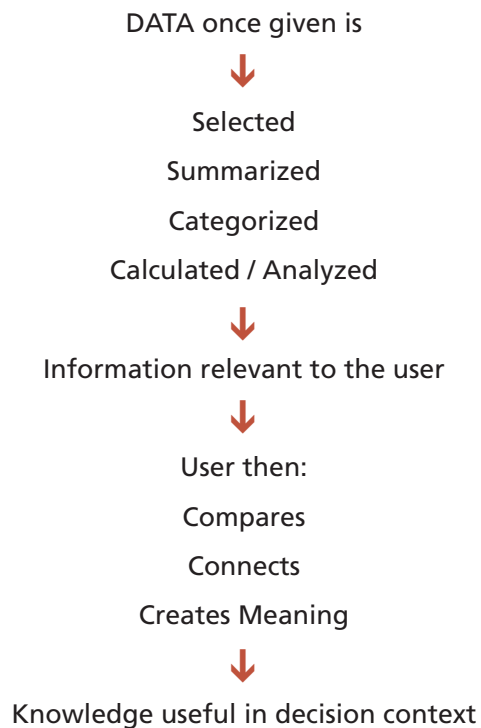
It is important for us to understand how we make decisions because our decisions tell other people who we are.



## Decision-Making Model

Decision making is an art and a science. Sadly, most of us were never taught how to make good decisions, so we make decisions based on the situation. But we can learn to make better decisions if we analyze the steps we use. Each time we make a decision, we follow several steps. Most of these happen unconsciously. The most common steps include gathering data, sorting out the information that is relevant to the decision, combining it with our knowledge, and then ultimately making a decision. Here's a closer look at these steps:

### Decision-Making Steps



Let's say that Pat lives in North Georgia and needs to travel to South Atlanta for Grandma's birthday party. Doesn't seem like much of a decision, does it? Pat loves her cooking and nothing is better than spending Sunday dinner at Grandma's house since she always makes a feast. But to get to her house while the mashed potatoes are still hot, Pat has to make many decisions. Here's a demonstration of one: How will he get to Grandmother's house?

### **First Step: Data Collection.**

During this step, we collect all of the data that we need or could possibly need. For Pat, that data might include the answers to these questions:

- » What time does dinner start?
- » How early does he need to get there to get a seat at the adult table?
- » What time does the Sunday worship service start and end at his church?
- » Does he need to go home first, or can he leave directly after church?
- » Will he be attending Sunday School that day?
- » What subject will the pastor preach on?
- » How long does it take to get to Grandma's?
- » Will he be hungry when he gets there?
- » Will he take I-75 or Highway 400?
- » Which is the fastest route? Safest route?

Once Pat has gathered all the pieces of data, he begins selecting which ones are important, summarizing and categorizing them. Finally, he analyzes them and makes calculations based on the data.

### **Second Step: Select Relevant Information.**

At this point, Pat has to select which pieces of data are relevant to his decision. Whether or not he will be hungry and the topic of the pastor's sermon on Sunday won't affect his travel plans, so he can safely eliminate those pieces. By comparing and connecting the other bits of data, he can get information that is actually useful. Here are some pieces that will be meaningful for the decision he is about to make:

- » He plans to attend the worship service at his church. It ends at 11:00.
- » Grandma wants him at her place by 1:00.
- » There are several ways to get there. If he takes Interstate 75, it will take approximately an hour and a half.
- » Currently there is construction on I-75, and the traffic could delay him up to 45 minutes.
- » If he takes State Highway 400, it will take an hour and forty-five minutes, but there isn't any construction.

### **Step Three: Combine with Preexisting Knowledge.**

Now that Pat has the relevant information he can combine it with preexisting knowledge, such as the fact that if he is late for dinner, not only will Grandma be mad, but Cousin Arthur will finish off the banana cream pie.

### **Step Four: Make Decision.**

At this point, Pat decides he will take Highway 400 because, while it may not get him there earlier, it will ensure that he is at Grandma's house on time. And the consequences of being late (and missing Grandma's banana pie) are too great. Decision made.

### **Conclusion**

We follow these same steps each time we make a decision; but with most decisions, we do it so fast that we aren't conscious of it. This model tries to diagram that unconscious process, whether our choices involve driving directions, leadership, or even dating decisions. Regardless of the content, these same four steps are involved.

Understanding how we make decisions can help us get better at solving problems because we can test our assumptions at each step in the process. For example, if the data that we used to make a decision was wrong, the decision won't be a good one. If we incorrectly categorized or selected information that wasn't relevant, that step will influence our decisions. If our pre-existing knowledge is wrong, then combining it with excellent data will still lead to a poor choice.

The ability to articulate each of the steps in our thinking process can help us to make better decisions. It can also lead to better relationships with the people we work with.

### **Decision Making Is an Opportunity to Communicate**

When those around us make bad decisions, don't come down hard on them. Use this time as an opportunity to talk with them. Ask them how they made this decision. What process did they go through? Using the decision making model in this section, ask them what data they

started with. How did they decide which pieces of information were relevant to their decision? What existing knowledge did they combine with the data to make their decision?

When coaches ask these questions and listen to the answers, we understand more about how our clients approach their own decision-making. More importantly, it will become an opportunity for us to teach them how to make better decisions in the future.

As we enter this dialogue, we can use the opportunity to refocus them on the vision and teach them better decision-making skills. We also can examine our own decision-making patterns. In any organization, the better we understand our own decision-making blind spots and the blind spots of those who work with us, the better we can conquer them.

In most cases, four key questions clear away the fog and sharpen the client's thinking:

### **Ask These Questions in This Order**

1. Is this decision in line with our vision, mission, and core values?
2. Do we have the organizational and human capacity to do this? Do we have the heart for this?
3. How will God be glorified?
4. How much will it cost?

### **Digging Deeper into the Four Questions**

When presented with a complicated decision that could change an organization, we need to ask four questions; and it is important that we ask them *in this order*.

1. *Is it in line with our vision, mission, and core values?*

No matter how great an idea or opportunity, if it isn't in line with the vision, we must say "No" to it.

2. *Do we have the organizational and human capacity to do this? Do we have the heart for this?*

Maybe the program is so large that it would tax the entire team. Maybe we don't have the right people on the team to make this happen. Or maybe we don't want to do it at this time.

### 3. *How will God be glorified?*

Most leaders will ask, “Will God be glorified?” and the answer is usually “Yes.” That’s not very reflective or helpful. Instead, ask, “How?” Answering this question will help us to understand the true impact this decision will have on God’s Kingdom. Those in the secular marketplace can ask the same question with a slight twist: “How will this decision serve the community or my organization?”

### 4. *How much will it cost?*

Understand the significance and complexity of this question, and then consider it carefully. It’s not, “Can we afford it?” Most organizations don’t have money sitting around waiting to be used. The answer is usually “No.” But the answer to “How much will it cost?” is different. The cost includes not only dollars, but people, resources, and the time and energy pulled from other projects and programs.

A program that won’t make it past the question, “Can we afford it?” might get a different response after asking these four questions. If the vision is big enough, if the people have a heart for doing it, if God will be glorified in a mighty way, then the money will come.

Answering these specific questions in this order helps us understand the true opportunity before us. We will be making a principled decision based on a larger organizational context, not on a situation, such as the amount of cash in the checkbook.

## **Practical Decision Making**

The information above gives us a foundation for making good decisions, but there are a few practical tips that will help us as well.

*Be able to explain why.*

We need to be able to articulate why we made the decision. This isn’t so we can defend ourselves when we make a bad decision; the analysis helps us learn from all of our decisions. If we don’t know why we did it in the first place, we’ll never get better at making decisions. Understanding how we make decisions will help us to make even better decisions in the future.

*Be brave.*

Sometimes when we make decisions, we want to stay in our comfort zone and not go outside of it for additional data. This is a bad idea. Whenever possible we should seek information from those people or places that have it, even if it makes us uncomfortable. For example, ask:

“Who on my team will show me the things I most need to see?”

“Who will tell me things that are hard to hear?”

“Who is the best source for the information needed to make this decision?”

*Be decisive.*

We won't always have all the information we need to make a decision. Sometimes, the best thing we can do is make a decision without having all of the information. How do we know which decisions should wait and which we should make now? Put time into the decisions with the biggest payoff. Allow others to make those to which we can add little, even if we like making them.

*Be willing to smash icons.*

We can't let turf wars, misuse of power, or phony motivation schemes affect our judgment. Resist the idea that loyalty is a one-way street. Junk short-term strategies prevent long-term successes.

We make many decisions each day. Some of them are important; some of them aren't. But the more we can pay attention to the process we use in making decisions, the better decisions we'll make. For example, if Maria can separate her feelings for her daughter and her concerns about Lorna's father from her ability to take an unbiased look at Lorna's performance, she will make a good decision. If she can't, her other employees will know this is not someone they want to work for; and her customers won't be getting the service they expect.

It's important to understand good decision-making because the number of decisions we will make increases exponentially with every person we hire. And like Maria, the most critical decision we make is deciding who is on our team.

**Take time to reflect.** (This exercise will not be submitted to your Coach Trainer.)

**Reflect on situational and principled decisions described in this section. How can identifying your core values assist you in making good decisions?**

**What decisions are you facing at the moment? How will applying your core values help you make good decisions?**



## Essential #4 Examples of Core Values

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Everyone lives by core values—noble or selfish, consciously or unconsciously. We need to bring our values to the surface so we can evaluate them, embracing some and discarding others.

Below are two examples of the personal core values that Sam and Brenda Chand live by.

### **Family core values**

- » Honor our family members
- » Make family members feel special
- » Pray regularly for family members and intensify prayer when someone is struggling
- » Love unconditionally—even when you don't feel loved in return
- » Don't speak negatively of family members to others
- » Praise publicly, correct privately
- » Value honesty in all matters
- » Earn trust, build trust

These values guide our decisions about how we treat each other, how we handle disagreements, the impact we want to have on one another, and the quality of our relationships.

### **Financial core values**

- » Tithe on all income
- » Integrity in paying bills
- » "Owe no one, except to love one another": no debt except the home mortgage
- » Everything we have is a gift, even our ability to make money
- » Save and invest a predetermined amount
- » Live modestly, spend cautiously
- » Give the rest away

Our financial values have been internalized over the years. We've experienced freedom, joy, and the benefits of being stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

These are very simple but powerful phrases for the Chand family. You can identify your own core values for important areas of your life. Think about your most important relationships, purposes, and goals. Don't rush your reflection. Take several days to think, pray, and write. Clarifying your core values will help you become more intentional in decision-making and goal setting. Most of us have some common areas to consider: family, finances, health, career, hobbies, intellectual development, and friends. You may also have others that are important to you.

Area of life	Core Values

## Essential #5 Value-Laden Words and Phrases

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In *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality*, Gary Collins offers a list of words and phrases to assist you in determining what you value most.<sup>3</sup> (Note: If you have not already purchased this book please do so.) Look over the list on the next page and check the words/phrases that describe your values. Add others that are meaningful to you.

(This exercise will not be submitted to your Coach Trainer.)

✓	Word/Phrase	✓	Word/Phrase	✓	Word/Phrase
	Accomplishment		Good Taste		Respect for life
	Ambition		Growth		Respect for people
	Authenticity		Hard work		Respect for the environment
	Beauty		Honesty		Risk taking
	Being a model		Humility		Security
	Being in control		Humor		Self-esteem
	Career		Impacting people		Self-expression
	Caution		Independence		Sensitivity
	Collaboration		Influence		Servanthood
	Communicating		Inspiring others		Service
	Community		Integrity		Sexual fulfillment
	Compassion		Joy		Silence
	Competence		Lack of pretense		Sincerity
	Competition		Love		Solitude
	Consistency with biblical teaching		Love of Learning		Spiritual growth
	Creativity		Loyalty		Stability
	Determination		Making money		Success
	Diligence		Marriage		Temperance
	Efficacy		Mentoring		Tolerance
	Encouragement		Nurturing		Tongue control
	Enlightenment		Obedience		Tranquility
	Excellence		Orderliness		Trust
	Excitement		Patience		Winning
	Experiencing pleasure		Peace		Worship
	Faithfulness		Perfection		
	Family		Performance		
	Forgiveness		Persistence		
	Forward looking		Personal Power		
	Freedom		Physical vitality		
	Frugality		Productivity		
	Fulfillment		Purity		
	Fun		Quality		
	Gentleness		Recognition		
	Genuineness		Relaxation		

For further exploration of values, principles, and qualities, go to:

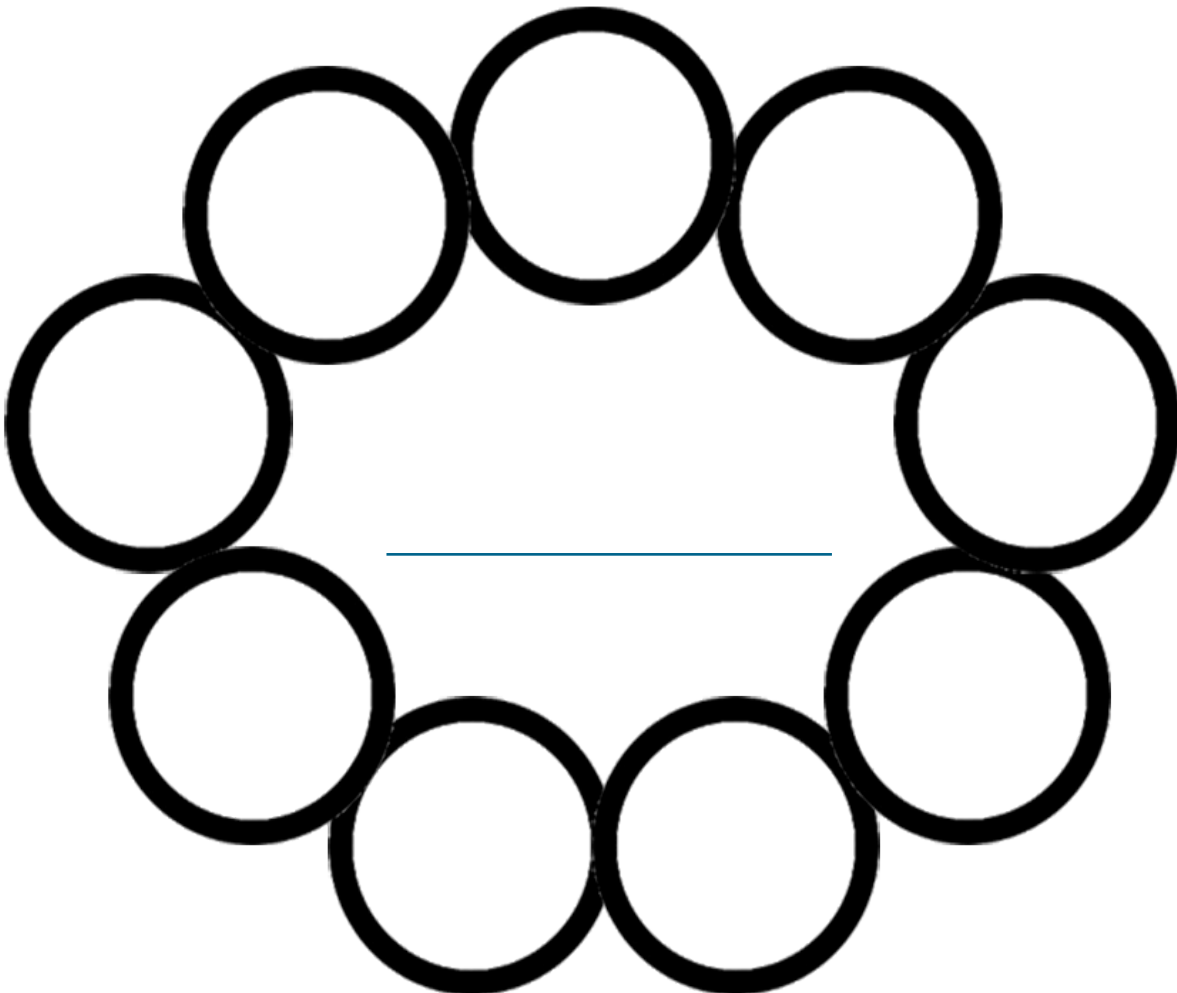
[healthskills.files.wordpress.com/2010/08values-worksheet-river.doc](http://healthskills.files.wordpress.com/2010/08values-worksheet-river.doc).

## Essential #6 Personal Constellation of Valued Attributes

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**Complete the following worksheet.** (This exercise will not be submitted to your Coach Trainer.)

1. From the words you selected in the last exercise select the words and phrases that are the most important to you.
2. Type your name on the line in the center of the worksheet.
3. In the surrounding circles type in all the words and phrases that are most significant to you.
4. These words represent your personal constellation of valued attributes.



## Faith and Coaching: The Most Important Thing

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One of the most crucial tasks of any person's life is to identify and prioritize goals. Many things are important, but only one is of ultimate value. Our choices—especially those made under pressure—reveal what has captured our hearts. For instance, we may say our family is important to us, but if we neglect our spouse and kids to get ahead in our careers, they have reason to doubt our assertions. In life, many goals compete with each other for preeminence. A lot of things may find their way to our list of core values, but what's at the top?

Jesus was often in heated debates with the religious leaders of his day. One of them asked him, "Which is the most important law God wants us to follow?" Jesus replied, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-39).

Our relationship with God isn't an abstract adherence to a set of principles—it's knowing, loving, and honoring Someone. When we put God first on our priority list, we're saying, "Lord, you are great and gracious. You're worthy of my affection and obedience. You created me, and you bought me. I'm yours—mind, body, and soul."

Many desires and demands compete to push God out of the center of our lives. The promises of power and prestige are tempting; difficulties and worries threaten to absorb our attention and bring us down. In the middle of his most famous sermon, Jesus told the crowd to stop worrying about secondary things and focus on the one thing that's of ultimate value: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:33-34).

That's his message for us, too.

Worry is a symptom of unbelief. The Bible, though, assures us that God knows, God cares, and God is always working for our good—even when we can't see it. In *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer encourages us, "One day we shall see that nothing—literally nothing—which could have increased our eternal happiness has been denied us, and that nothing—literally nothing—that could have reduced that happiness has been left with us. What higher assurance do we want than that?"<sup>4</sup>

## Next Steps

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- » Save this PDF to your desktop after you've completed the lesson.
- » [Click here](#) to watch the video by Chris Bowen on core values.

**[Click here to go to the Next Steps, Track 2, Lesson 4 assignment page.](#)**

When you've completed the assignments, email the forms to your coach.

## Endnotes

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- 1 Morris Massey, "Values Development." *Values Development*, N.p., n.d. Web, 28 Sept. 2012, [http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/values\\_development.htm](http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/values_development.htm).
- 2 Samuel R. Chand, *What's Shakin' Your Ladder?*, (Niles, IL: Mall Publishing, 2005), 41-50.
- 3 Gary R. Collins, *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2009), 367-368.
- 4 J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1973), 246.