MEANING, DIRECTION & EMERGING POTENTIAL

# Values Versus Expectations

About 10-15 minutes, with optional time to return

This workbook offers a gentle introduction to the practice for you to explore on your own; deeper work is best undertaken with the support of a professional counsellor.

## Find what matters in an ordinary choice

Some choices feel crowded by what we should do, what others might expect and what we want for ourselves. This exercise offers a way to hear those influences more clearly.

A value is a quality you want to bring to how you live: perhaps care, honesty, creativity, learning or fairness. Expectations can express values too. The task is to consider which expectations you want to stand behind, and where you need more room to choose.

### 1. Choose one everyday question

Start with a modest decision: how to spend a free afternoon, whether to take on an optional task, or how much time to give a personal interest. Leave major life decisions for a setting where you have time and support to consider them fully.

### 2. Write down the expectations

What do you feel you should do? Write the expectations as you hear them, without deciding yet whether they are fair. They might come from other people, a role you hold or your own standards. It is fine if you are unsure where they come from.

### 3. Ask what matters to you

For this particular choice, what would you like to make room for? Which quality matters here? Choose one or two words and describe what they mean in this situation.

If a value feels abstract, recall an ordinary moment that felt worthwhile. What mattered about the way you were living or acting then?

### 4. Look at the relationship

Which expectations support what matters to you? Which seem to pull you away from it? There may be several values in tension. Consider responsibilities, practical limits and the needs of others as well as your own.

### 5. Choose a small expression

What is one realistic action that would give a chosen value some space? It may be a small adjustment rather than a new commitment. If the next step is unclear, leave the question open and return another day.

> You do not need certainty or a final list of values. Pause if the exercise becomes another demand to make the perfect choice.

VALUES VERSUS EXPECTATIONS

# Explore one choice

**The choice I am considering, and the expectations around it:**

**What matters to me here, and what it means in this situation:**

**One small action I could choose, taking account of my circumstances:**

### An ordinary example

You have a free hour and feel you should use it to catch up on work. Reliability matters to you, and so does creativity. You might check whether anything genuinely needs attention today, then choose to spend some of the hour drawing. The useful question is what this choice makes room for in your actual circumstances.

> A freely chosen responsibility may still feel difficult. Ease, excitement or discomfort alone cannot tell you whether a choice fits your values.

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# Returning to the practice

**Over four weeks**

If this exercise is part of your Development Map plan, use the pace suggested there. Return to one ordinary choice at a time. You do not need to resolve every area of your life.

**Week 1 | Hear the expectations**

Notice the language around your chosen decision. What do you tell yourself you should do? Record a few words without trying to change them.

**Week 2 | Clarify what matters**

Return to the decision and consider the values involved. Which expectations do you still endorse? Where is there a tension you would like to understand better?

**Week 3 | Try one small action**

Choose a manageable expression of a value. Afterwards, notice what it was like in practice. You may discover that the action, the timing or your understanding of the value needs adjusting.

**Week 4 | Review your direction**

What became clearer? What remains uncertain? Decide whether there is something you want to continue making room for, without turning it into a rule for every day.

**What matters enough for me to keep exploring?**

This practice supports self-reflection. It is not a treatment or a substitute for professional support.

## Work with me

If this workbook has opened up something you would like to explore further, you are welcome to get in touch. I offer psychotherapy and counselling in Dalston, East London, and online. We can use an initial session to consider what brings you to therapy and whether working together feels right for you.

| BOOK AN INITIAL SESSION | CONTACT ME |
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