

Values Can Guide Small Actions

Identity values and self compassion | Adults | 5 to 10 minutes

Describe how values can support flexible action during difficult thoughts or feelings.

Values describe qualities you want to bring to your actions. They can guide a small choice even when a feeling is uncomfortable or circumstances are limited. You choose the words and meanings; another person cannot decide your values for you.

Directions and goals work together

A direction such as caring for health can be expressed through many goals. A goal might be arranging an appointment or making time to eat. If one goal becomes impossible, the direction can remain meaningful while you find another action that fits.

Feelings do not have to disappear first

You may notice worry, doubt, or self criticism while taking a valued step. Acknowledge what is present and return attention to the action you choose. This does not mean ignoring danger, denying injustice, or pushing beyond your limits. Protection, rest, and asking for help can also express values.

Use a flexible review

After trying an action, ask whether it expressed the quality you intended and what made it easier or harder. Adjust the size or timing of the next step. A missed plan offers information; it does not establish that you lack values or commitment.

A value I choose and one action that could express it today are