



## ONE SET OF VALUES

Values are our fundamental commitments, our highest principles, the things in life that we consider worthy for their own sake. Values influence and guide our choices. And our choices, even those that take place in an instant, ultimately determine the quality of our lives.

Some people have thoughtfully developed a set of well-defined values. Others are guided by values adopted uncritically from others, or by values that remain largely unconscious.

Investing time and energy to define your values and then align your actions with them is a pivotal suggestion in this book. *Falling Awake* offers many opportunities to define and refine your values, to experiment with a wide variety of strategies, and to adopt methods that bring you closer to what you want.

Following is a sample set of values. This list was intended to summarize core wisdom from the world's great traditions, both Eastern and Western.

Think of each value that appears in bold type as a way to complete the sentence *I value being...* Listed under each value is a set of words or a few sentences that further define its meaning. You can use these ideas as a starting point in developing your own list of values.

### **Accountable**

This means being:

- Honest
- Reliable
- Trustworthy
- Dependable
- Responsible

Being accountable includes making and keeping agreements—operating with integrity.

### **Loving**

This means being:

- Affectionate
- Dedicated
- Devoted
- Equitable
- Accepting

Being loving includes appreciating ourselves and others—being gentle, considerate, forgiving, respectful, friendly, and courteous. It also includes being nonantagonistic, nonresistant, inclusive, understanding, compassionate, fair, and ethical.

### **Self-generating**

This means being:

- Self-responsible
- The creator of our internal experiences—regardless of our external circumstances

Being self-generating includes not being a victim and not blaming others. Instead, we choose to interpret and respond to all stimuli in ways that highlight our own role in creating our own lives.

## Promotive

This means being:

- Nurturing
- Contributing—charitable; thrifty; generous with time, money, and possessions
- Frugal—achieving the best results with the fewest possible dollars
- Helpful
- Encouraging
- Reasonable
- Judicious
- Cooperative—working as a member of a team or a community
- Appreciative

## Candid

This means being:

- Honest
- Authentic
- Genuine
- Self-expressed
- Frank
- Outspoken
- Spontaneous
- Sincere
- Free of deceit
- Free of both false modesty and arrogance
- Self-disclosing
- Open about strengths and weaknesses

## Detached

This means being:

- Impartial
- Unbiased
- Experimental
- Satisfied
- Patient (not resigned)
- Open-minded
- Without distress
- Adaptable
- Trusting
- Tolerant
- Surrendering
- Joyful—fun-loving, humorous, lighthearted, and happy

Detachment includes being aware of and not identifying our true selves with our thoughts, emotions, body, health, accomplishments, relationships, desires, commitments, possessions, values, opinions, roles, and expectations.

The opposite of detachment is being addicted (physically or emotionally), dogmatic, bigoted, absolutely certain, prejudiced, anxious, grave, or somber.

## Aware of the possible

This means being:

- Creative
- Imaginative
- Resourceful
- Inventive
- Foresighted
- Holistic
- Visionary
- Inquisitive
- Audacious
- Exploring

Being aware of the possible means expecting great things of ourselves and others.

## Involved

This means being:

- Committed
- Participating
- Focused—precise and attentive to detail
- Enthusiastic—having intense or eager interest
- Enduring—persistent, persevering
- Courageous—vulnerable, willing to risk, trusting
- Energetic—displaying the capacity for action or accomplishment; being vigorous, robust, hardy, rugged, and strong
- Productive—putting yourself at risk, operating with something at stake, pursuing excellence, acting with a sense of urgency without panic, and allowing projects to matter

## *Live from a purpose*

The American Heritage Dictionary *defines the word purpose as:*

*“... 1. The object toward which one strives or for which something exists; an aim or goal...  
2. A result or an effect that is intended or desired; an intention... 3. Determination, resolution.  
(From The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition, Houghton  
Mifflin Company, Boston, Mass.)*

*Having a succinct statement of your overall purpose in life can be a huge help in determining what you want. Your purpose is an umbrella, something that’s big enough to include all that you want in life—everything that you want to have, do, and be.*

*An effective purpose statement tells you when goals or behaviors are off-track. With your purpose firmly in mind, you can make moment-to-moment choices with clarity and integrity.*

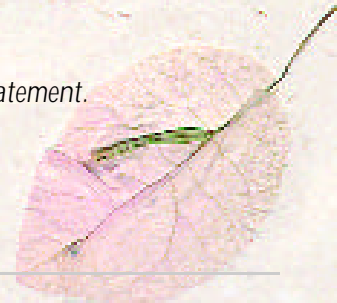
*Right now, writing in your journal or on a separate sheet of paper, spend five minutes drafting a one-sentence statement of the purpose of your life. Following are some guidelines for getting started:*

- Keep the above definition of the word purpose in mind. Or prompt yourself with questions based on that definition: What am I striving for? What is the aim or goal of my life? What is the main result I want in my life? What am I determined or resolved to achieve with my life?*
- If you have no idea what to write, then just make up a purpose for now. You can change it later.*
- Write several different versions of your life purpose. Later you can select one statement or combine several statements.*

*You could state your life purpose as a discovery statement or an intention statement.*

*Complete either of the following sentences:*

*I discovered that my purpose is to ...*



*I intend to ...*

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*Once you've drafted a purpose statement, spend another 10 to 15 minutes revising it. See if your purpose can serve as an umbrella for everything you desire. If you find that your purpose statement excludes some of the important things you want, then you can revise it to create a bigger "umbrella."*

*Repeat this journal entry several times. To gain more insight and creative input, do this journal entry with a group, giving people the option of reading their purpose statements out loud.*

*Following are some sample purpose statements:*

*My purpose is to live, learn, love, and laugh.*

*My purpose is to have a wonderful life and to dramatically contribute to the quality of life on earth.*

*I intend to become financially independent and raise happy, healthy children.*

*I intend to live in harmony with all creation.*

*My purpose is to be a healing presence in the world.*

*My purpose is to promote the well-being of my family.*

*I intend to seek to release suffering and serve others.*

*My purpose is to become a famous, accomplished pianist.*

*My purpose is to serve.*

*My purpose is to be loved and be loving.*

*I intend to promote evolutionary change and be a catalyst for growth.*

*My purpose is to have a great time and laugh a lot.*

*Besides writing a purpose for your life, you can write a purpose for each aspect of your life—your family, your career, your projects at work, your volunteer work, your vacation, or anything else.*

*Ask What do I want from this relationship? Why is this project important to me?*

*Experiment with living with a purpose, on purpose, moment-to-moment.*



## Create your life line

One powerful way to determine what you want is to consider what you'd like to see happen during your entire lifetime. You can even look beyond your lifetime, if you choose. Creating a life line offers one way to do this.

To get the most out of this exercise, be willing to let it move you. In my workshops, I've done this exercise with thousands of people. Many reported it to be an emotional and life-changing event. Some people even wept.

Following are some suggestions for making your life line:

1. Begin by taking a blank sheet of paper and orienting it horizontally. For ease in writing, you might want to use a larger-than-notebook size sheet, such as 11x17 inches. Using larger paper also adds significance to what you're about to create.
2. Draw a horizontal line across the middle of your paper. This is your life line. It represents the approximate number of years you'll be alive.
3. On the far left end of the line, draw a dot and label it with your date of birth.
4. Estimate how long you might live. Then place a dot about three-fourths of the way to the right and label it with your projected date of death. Remember that this step simply serves a useful function for this exercise and has no connection to reality. You're under no obligation to die on the date you write! The purpose of projecting a death date is just to remind you that you're mortal.

Note: Do not place your date of death at the extreme right-hand edge of the line. Leave some space on the line for goals that exceed your life span.

5. Next, place a dot on your life line that represents the present. Label it with today's date.
6. At appropriate points to the left of today's date, plot some significant events in your life. Examples are graduations, marriages, career changes, children's birth dates, deaths of relatives, and the dates when you landed a new job or started a business. Take at least 10 minutes for this part of the exercise.

7. Now set goals for the time between today and when you might die. Do this by adding dots to the right of today's date. Label these dots with goals that represent what you'd like to have, do, or be in the future. Add a target date to meet each goal.
8. Finish your session by considering what could happen after you die. Here you can include predictable events, such as the retirement of your children or the death of a younger relative. Also think about what you want to occur after your life is done. Include goals for your family, friends, workplace, city, community, state, country, and world. Be willing to set goals that extend far into the future.
9. Write any insights, discoveries, or lessons that emerged as you did this exercise. Then generate new goals based on what you've learned.

You can repeat this exercise many times, ranging from once a month to once a decade. Each time you create a life line, you can gain new insights into the past and create a new vision for your future. Look at your life line as a living document—one that changes as you learn and grow.

At any time, you can get other people into the act. For example, create your life line and reveal it to your partner, family, and friends. Ask them to create a life line for themselves. Look for points of intersection, shared events, common goals, and similar values. It might also be useful to look for differences in what you consider significant about the past and in your visions for the future.

Each time you do this exercise, you can allow the artist within you to emerge. Use separate colors for different categories of goals. Put your life line on a long piece of paper or connect several pages together. Draw pictures that depict significant events—a diploma next to the day you graduated from high school; a heart next to the time of your first date.

Your life line does not have to be a straight line. Experiment with circles, arcs, slopes, rainbows, or waves. If you want to invest some extra time, make it three-dimensional. Express your life line in sculptures, collages, paintings, or mobiles. Make that life line come to life.