

What are the Ten Valued Domains?

I want to start this off by being really clear about something. In my opinion, every single life is a life worth living, no matter how we might feel about the way we're currently living it. Maybe, as you read this, you feel completely stuck in your old behaviour patterns that are really difficult for you to get away from. You might even be thinking that it's an impossible task to change the way you're currently doing things. If that's the case, don't worry, it's totally fine, you are exactly where you need to be. Why? Because you literally can't be anywhere else than you currently are, so let's begin with acceptance. When we want to make changes, we first have to accept where we are. From that point, we can decide where we want to be so we can take deliberate actions to get there.

For me, accepting that my life was in a place that definitely wasn't where I wanted it to be was the springboard for making changes. Before I could actually make those changes, I needed to know what areas of life were important for me to make those changes in. Where did I want to focus my attention? What was important for me to work on? Living the Life I Want to Live, is all about living a life with purpose and meaning. It's about lining up with your true core values and beliefs. We will only be motivated to take the actions that are needed to create that purpose and meaning if we are taking these actions in areas of life that are important for us.

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~Steven Morris RP.

At the same time, keep in mind, nobody has the right to tell you what should, or shouldn't be important to you. This was a concept that took me a while to get my head around. I get to choose what's important to me, just like you get to choose what's important to you. Once we know what it is that's actually important to us, we can use our understanding of the Five Core Values to figure out what our true authentic core beliefs are. Then we use this information to guide the way we live our lives. This understanding is essential in any type of self analysis for behaviour change, but particularly in a Dialectical Behaviour Therapy approach.

From a DBT perspective, we are not looking to judge our choices as good or bad, right or wrong. We are simply analysing whether they are effective or ineffective for Living the Life I want to Live. When practicing Self Analysis, we ask the simple question, are the things I'm doing, the decisions

that I'm making, and the actions that I'm taking, lining up with my true Core Values and Beliefs in the areas of life that are important for me? If they are not, then we get curious, not judgemental, about the reasons, and the stories that are keeping me stuck in a behaviour pattern that's simply not an effective thing to do.

So, what are these 10 different areas of life that I need to be aware of, and how do I establish which ones are important for me? Let's start with what they are. The following is a list of the 10 Domains of Life from which we get to choose what's important to us.

- Marriage, Partnerships, and Intimate Relationships.
- Parenting.
- Family Relations (Other Than Intimate Relations and Parenting).
- Friendship And Social Relations.
- Career and employment.
- Education/Training/Personal Growth and Development.
- Recreation and Leisure.
- Spirituality.
- Citizenship and Community.
- General Health & Physical Wellbeing.

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~Steven Morris RP.

Obviously, this list is in no particular order and remember, you are assessing each domain's level of importance as it is for you right now! This can, and definitely will change as your life evolves. The importance that each domain holds for you is extremely unique, and fluid by nature. For example, right now, as I write this, I am developing a new business and working on building a private practice. It makes sense that career and employment are high on my level of importance. Over time, as my life changes, these areas will no longer hold as much significance, and other domains will overtake them in importance for me.

This is the case for all the domains, as they can shift and move throughout our lifespan. I suggest completing this exercise every 6 months so that you can evaluate your life, see how you're living according to your values and beliefs, and make the necessary adjustments in behaviour to bring things in line with the direction you want your life to go. Take some time to work through the

exercise attached to the PDF at the bottom of this page. It is central to the work of behaviour change that we understand what's important to us in the way we're living our lives. Completing this exercise gives us direction moving forward, in that, each week, we choose an area of life that we want to work on, as well as a specific value that we want to practice living that week. Then, we take definitive actions to live this way, and analyze what comes up internally when we take the actions we want to take.

When this analysis is done mindfully, nonjudgmentally, and with self-compassion, it establishes a connection with the parts of our personality that are activated when trying to live the life we want to live, parts that are usually stuck in a state of fear about what it means to do the things we are trying to do. This fear is often generated by the many different Schema we've developed as a result of our unmet childhood needs, and building awareness for these stories, and the impact they have on our system opens the doorway to the possibility for individual change, and Unconditional Self-Acceptance, which is the ultimate goal we are all attempting to achieve by doing this work.

In the PDF, you will find a list of the 10 domains we listed above, along with a brief description of what each one represents. Try to establish their importance to you right now. Remember, this might change over time, and that's completely ok, you can revisit this exercise as many times as you like throughout the journey of your life. I often revisit this list myself. It helps me to take a look at how things might've changed for me, moved in a different direction, or just shifted slightly. As you read the description for each domain, think about its importance to you at this time of your life. You might see things that could be important for you in the future, but right now they're just not on your agenda.

For example, it might be important for you to develop an intimate partnership in the future, but at this point in time there's just not the space for this type of relationship in your life. Maybe you have to work on your mental health, develop a new career, or finish school before you can explore this area with the right degree of commitment. When you decide the level of importance each domain has for you, grade it from 0 to four and use the scale at the top of the form to guide your choices. Then, at the end, list the top domains that are important for you, we will use this list later to define you Values and Beliefs.

Rating Scale				
Not important at all to me on my agenda for life at this point in time.	Sometimes important, but mostly not high on my current agenda for life.	Middle of the road, fairly average level of importance on my agenda for life.	Quite important most of the time, fairly high on my current agenda for life.	Extremely important to me, at the top of my agenda for life.
0	1	2	3	4

Domain of Life	Importance (0-4)
<p>Marriage, Partnerships, Intimate Relationships</p> <p>For some people, intimate relationships are very important, for others they are not. For some people, having a relationship with a partner is something that will be important in the future, but not something that is on their agenda right now. Sit with how you feel about this area of your life <u>right now</u> and then assign a level of importance to it that is the appropriate score for you, in the space provided.</p>	
<p>Parenting</p> <p>Think about how important it is for you to be a mother or father at this point in time in your life. If you don't have children, you can still answer this question. How do you want to support this role for others? If children are not a part of your life, and it's not important to you for them to be a part of your life, then this is not an area of life that is high on your agenda, so score it appropriately in the space provided.</p>	
<p>Family Relations (Other Than Intimate Relations and Parenting)</p> <p>This domain is about family, not about your partner or your children, but about other areas of family life. Think about what it means to be a son, daughter, aunt, uncle, cousin, grandparent, or in-law. How would you like to BE in your family relationships? You may think about this broadly or only in terms of your nuclear family. Some people have family around them all the time and they hold a high level of importance to their presence in their life. For some people they have no family around them, or their family relationships are toxic for their current way of living so the importance of their presence is low. Sit with how important your family relationships are to you right now and assign the appropriate score in the space provided.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Friendship And Social Relations</p> <p>Friendships are another area of personal relationships that a lot of people value. This revolves around finding a group of people that you can relax with, be yourself around, and enjoy activities that are supportive of the life you want to live. Sit with your thoughts and feelings around what kind of friend would you like to be? Think about your closest friends and see if you can connect with what you would like to manifest in your life regarding your friends. Decide how important this area of life is to you right now and assign the appropriate score in the space provided.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Career, Employment.</p> <p>Work and careers are important for many people, but not for everyone. For many people this area is where a great deal of their time is spent. Whether your work is humble or grand, the question of values in work always remains pertinent. If work is something that holds a great deal of importance for you right now, then it will be high on your agenda for life. However, if it is not, for whatever reason that may be, then it's important to reflect that in the score you attach to it. Either way, you decide the level of importance work and career holds for you. Take the time to decide how important this area of life is to you right now and assign the appropriate score in the space provided.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Education/Training/Personal Growth and Development</p> <p>This area can cover all kinds of learning and personal development. School based education is definitely one way of looking at it, but this area includes all the things you do to learn, as well. There are many ways people practice personal development and growth, building your own recovery lifestyle is something that falls into this category. If educating yourself is important, it can become a vocation for your life, developing your mind is something that you can do at any time, regardless of your socioeconomic status, due to the massive amount of educational material that is available for free these days. However, if this area is not important for you, that is totally fine, as you decide what areas of life hold relevance for you. Decide how important this area of life is to you right now and assign the appropriate score in the space provided.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Recreation & Leisure</p> <p>Recreation, leisure, and relaxation are important for many people, but definitely not for everyone. It is important to note that this is the area of your life where you practice healthy Self-care, where you recharge your batteries, and develop your ability to destress in a healthy way. This can express itself in a variety of ways: connecting with family and friends, flying solo on a mission of relaxation that is driven by your ability to switch off. Either way is totally fine as you get to choose what this looks like for you. Think about how important it is for you to engage with your hobbies, sports that you like, applications, ways to play, vacations, and other forms of recreation. Decide how important this area of life is to you right now and assign the appropriate score in the space provided.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Spirituality</p> <p>When we talk about spirituality, we do not mean religion, although that could certainly be included in this section too. I am a big believer in the adage that there is plenty of spirituality in religion, but very little religion and spirituality. Spirituality includes everything that helps you feel connected to something larger than yourself, to a sense of wonder and transcendence in life. It can include your own personal faith, spiritual practices, and your connection with humanity in general. If spirituality is important to you then it is something that you want to set aside time to practice, if not, that's totally fine, as you get to decide what is and what is not high on your agenda for life right now. Decide how important this area of life is to you right now and assign the appropriate score in the space provided.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Citizenship And Community</p> <p>How would you like to contribute to society and be a member of the community in which you currently reside? How do you want to participate in social, political, charitable, and community activities? If these questions activate a thought-provoking process for you then this area of life is important to you. If not, that's totally fine, as you get to decide what is and what is not high on your agenda for life at this particular moment in time. Decide how important this area of life is to you right now and assign the appropriate score in the space provided.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">General Health & Physical Wellbeing</p> <p>We are physical beings and taking care of our bodies and our health through diet, exercise, good sleep hygiene, and sound physical and mental health practices is a domain that is important to many people. If this area of life is something that holds meaning for you, then it will be important to set aside time in your daily life to follow the necessary practices for you to be true to your values and beliefs inside of this domain. If not, then its level of importance will be low and this, once again, is totally fine. You decide what is, and what is not, high on your agenda for life right now. Decide how important this area of life is to you right now and assign the appropriate score in the space provided.</p>	

List the top domains that are important to you, right now, in the space provided below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____