

heart•space guiding principle

# DOING WHAT MATTERS

taking values-guided action



HEART  SPACE

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# Have you ever experienced

a moment of delicious peace at the end of navigating a difficult or challenging situation? A sense of ease and unmistakable yes-ness? A feeling of unity between head, heart and body?

These are common experiences when our actions are in alignment with our values.

Aligning our actions with our values is a powerful way of embodying our authenticity and sharing what matters to us deep in our hearts. Additionally, it is deeply empowering because it supports us in standing up for what we believe in rather than simply following well-worn social norms.

Although we can invite and encourage others to take specific actions, it is through our own actions that we create safer, more empowering spaces. This is what makes values-guided action a key principle of heart•space.

## BENEFITS

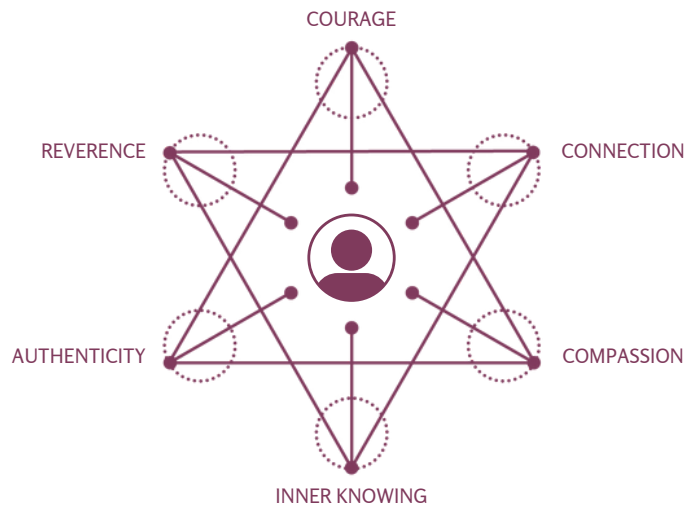
### VALUES-GUIDED ACTION

- respond more effectively and appropriately in the moment
- experience less burnout (by minimizing ambiguity and internal friction)
- have more impact (your passion and commitment shine through)
- feel more motivated even in challenging situations
- feel more authentic and aligned
- have more clarity and direction
- feel more satisfied (actions feel more meaningful)
- have greater control of your actions rather than being pushed around by unhealthy social or cultural norms



## WHY DOES IT MATTER WHAT MATTERS?

Values are like a compass that can help us stay focused on our chosen path, or on a particular task (especially when it's hard). Values are personal, and reflect what is important to us, rather than what we think should be important to us, or what might be important to the people close to us.



## WORKING WITH VALUES

Values may stay constant throughout life, or shift and change as we do. Sometimes, it can be helpful to sort values into multiple life domains, such as separating values around work and values around our personal lives. And sometimes the same values underpin everything, so we can work with just one set.

## EXAMPLES OF VALUES

AWARENESS  
GRATITUDE  
AUTHENTICITY  
CONNECTION  
KINDNESS  
CARING  
INTEGRITY  
COMMITMENT  
COMPASSION  
HONESTY  
CONTRIBUTION  
LEARNING

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOALS AND VALUES

Goals can be finished or achieved, while values are ongoing.

For example, **goals** to create a healthier workspace could be achieved by installing new lights, improving the ventilation system, or including an appealing lunch room, while **values** around having a healthy workspace, such as caring about employees, advocating for fairness in the allocation of resources, or fostering integrity and honesty can continue to manifest in various ways over time.

“Values are your heart’s deepest desires for how you want to behave as a human being. Values are not about what you want to get or achieve; they are about how you want to behave or act on an ongoing basis; how you want to treat yourself, others, the world around you.”

RUSS HARRIS



## CLARIFYING VALUES

If you are unsure what your values are, or how to articulate them clearly, here is a short activity designed to help.

### LOOKING FORWARD & BACK

- bring to mind a difficult challenge you are facing in your interactions with others
- fast-forward in time and imagine that you have handled the situation in the best possible way, behaving like the person you really want to be, deep in your heart
- now, looking back at the actions you have taken, explore these three enquiries:

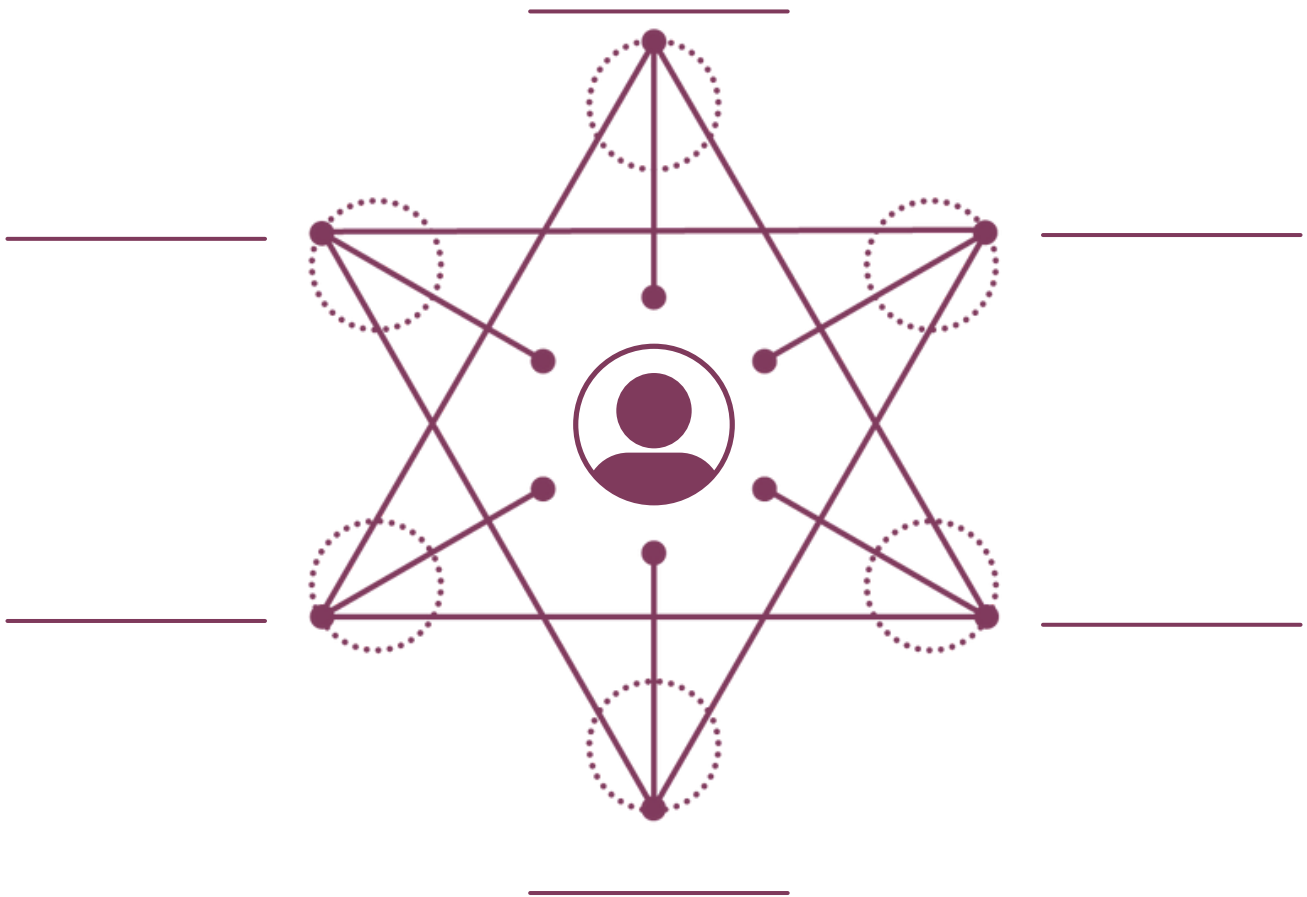
1. which qualities or values did you live by (or stand for) when dealing with this challenge? (i.e. flexibility, fairness, commitment, honesty, compassion?)
2. how did you treat yourself as you managed this challenge? (i.e. with patience, kindness, respect, curiosity, understanding?)
3. how did you treat others as you managed this challenge? (i.e. with openness, presence, empathy, gratitude, generosity?)





## MY CORE VALUES

Choose up to six core values (from your answers to the enquiries above) that inspire you to offer your energy and service to the world. Trust your instincts (you can always change your list later!)



## KEEPING YOUR VALUES CLOSE BY

As you begin to intentionally add values-guided action into your practice of building heart•space, you may want to create a playful and visual reminder of the core qualities that matter to you deep in your heart. This will help you access and recall your values until they become fully integrated into your way of working and being.

### Ideas for recalling your values:

- post them on sticky notes in high traffic areas (your computer screen, bulletin board or binder/portfolio case)
- make a business card-size list and place it on your desk, or slip it into a transparent case on your mobile device
- include them on your computer desktop or screen saver
- frame a simple printout of them on a wall near where you work
- use magnetic letter tiles on a filing cabinet, whiteboard or fridge door

Knowing your values is powerful.  
Taking consistent values-guided action is transformative!



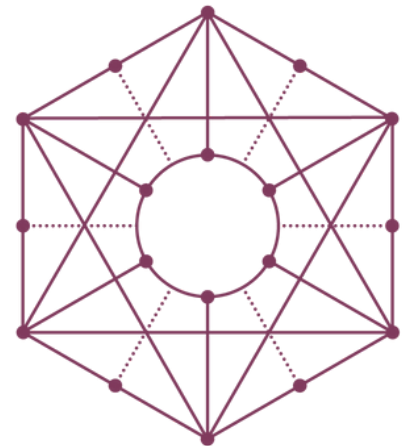




## EMBODIMENT PRACTICE

As a way to deepen your embodiment of values-guided action, I invite you to experiment with the following practice.

- choose a challenging situation you have recently experienced
- replay the situation slowly, frame by frame, and stop when you arrive at an action place (when you said or did something)
- referencing your list of core values, choose one values-guided action you could take that could shift or ease the situation
- reflect on how it feels (in your mind and body) when you take actions that align with what matters to you deep in your heart
- repeat as needed until you recognize what it really feels like to take values-guided action



## AN EXAMPLE

Imagine choosing a situation where you let something slide because you didn't want to deal with the potential conflict. Replay the situation slowly, and stop at the moment where you walked away or didn't say anything. Using one of your core values as a reference point, imagine what values-guided action you might take next time you are in a similar situation. Then, for a moment, notice how it feels when you align your words and actions with your values.

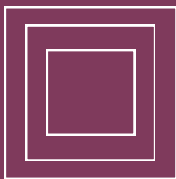
## GOING FORWARD...

Whether you lead meetings, classes, 1-1 sessions or groups of any kind, incorporating values-guided action into your work will help you prevent personal burnout, increase your connection and satisfaction with the transformative work you do, and amplify your overall impact in the world!

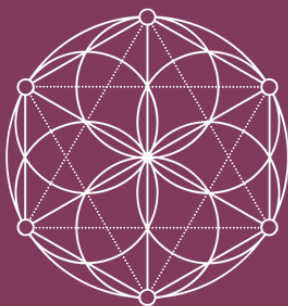


I hope this guide has been helpful. I would love to hear about your experiences using it. If you want to reach out, you can write to me at [connect@heartwideopen.ca](mailto:connect@heartwideopen.ca).

with love,



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Hello heart-centred coach, counsellor,  
teacher, facilitator, leader, change-maker,  
volunteer...

Do you have a vision of a more empowered,  
connected, compassionate world? Discover how  
to build heart-centred trauma-aware spaces from  
the inside out!

Less burnout.  
Less harm.  
More meaningful impact.

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