

Living a Meaningful Life (Living by Your Values)

Destination or Direction?

Life isn't about getting somewhere (it's about the journey itself), AND it's good to have a clear direction as this will help to make life more meaningful and more fulfilling.

Values

The best direction for your journey is in line with your personal values:

- The things you care about
- The things that matter to you
- The things that give your life meaning

What about Goals?

Goals can be useful milestones which can guide us and mark our progress BUT we shouldn't confuse a particular goal with our direction in life:

Goals vs. Values

Goal: To run a 5 minute mile

Value: To be fit and healthy

Goal: To get a degree

Value: To learn and grow

Goals have a definite endpoint whereas values are endless

Identifying and Choosing Your Values

You can identify your values by using your feelings as a guide. When something feels just right or something feels very wrong, these both indicate one of your values. So think about these questions:

- *"What gives me a warm feeling—and why?"*
- *"What really irritates me—and why?"*
- *"What makes me feel proud—and why?"*

When you have identified your values, you can think about how you can live in accordance with those values. Making a commitment to do this is the pathway to "Living Wisely, Living Well".

*Although living in line with your values will often take a lot of courage and effort, spending more time doing things that really matter to you will feel **right**.*

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Commitment

When you decide what's important to you, you need to make a commitment and decide on small steps that will take you toward your valued living, even if it is very difficult.

Values, Commitment, Action

Mark's Example

One of Mark's values is to be healthy. To live by this value, Mark is going to start exercising more regularly. He will at times feel unmotivated and have thoughts that it's too much effort and he will have urges to give up. If he can accept these thoughts and feelings and commit to some small actions, he will be able to move toward his value of being healthy.

It is hard to make a commitment and at times you may break it (this is normal). The important thing to do is accept this and make the commitment again. Remember this is a lapse NOT a relapse.

Greater Flexibility

To take control of your life, you may need to overcome certain things that may be holding you back e.g. fears, worries, avoidance. You can achieve greater flexibility by deliberately doing things that are out of your comfort zone and in line with your values. *Increased flexibility* will mean that you are less constrained and able to do more of the things that really matter to you.

This is My Life

When you live more in the present moment, your Mind will have less influence over you. When you take conscious control of your actions, you will be able to live wisely. You will have a more meaningful life, with less suffering.