

BUILDING CORE VALUE - MINI WORKBOOK

Building core value is the most powerful tool for any kind of mental health problem. If we can step out of our habitual negative self talk, and remember our innate self worth, everything gets better: anxiety, anger and depression dissipate, and our confidence is boosted.

The concept was refined by psychologist Steven Stosny, who believes that we build core value simply by valuing ourselves more. It's important to strengthen our beliefs in the following:

My life is worthy (I know I'm valuable) because I:

- Have a sense of basic humanity – I feel more humane recognizing the humanity of others
- Have a sense of meaning and purpose (I know the most important things to and about me)
- Am able to love (which makes me lovable)
- Have some sense of spirituality
- Can feel a connection with or an ability to appreciate nature
- Have a sense of community (physical or virtual)
- Can perform small acts of compassion and kindness.

Short cuts to Core Value: Improve, Appreciate, Connect, Protect

A powerful way to build core value is to develop habits of coping with stress by trying to improve, appreciate, connect, or protect. These four motivations change most feelings for the better. If you follow one – improve, appreciate, connect, or protect -- you will feel better. If you do two, you'll feel even better. If you do the first three, you'll feel euphoria. And if you do all four, you'll feel joy.

1. Aspects of my Core Value:

Fundamental Humanity:

Imagine you are encountering an abandoned child that is in great distress. What emotions come up as you imagine rescuing and comforting the desperate child?

Meaning & Purpose:

1. The most important thing about me as a person:

2. The most important thing about my life in general

Love

List of the people I love

Spiritual

My spiritual connection to something greater than myself

Nature

Something beautiful and awe inspiring in nature

Creativity

Something beautiful that was created by me or other fellow humans (art, music, architecture, furniture etc)

Community

My community connections

Compassion

Compassionate things I have done (list at least three)

ADD AT LEAST ONE ITEM PER CATEGORY EVERY DAY FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

Weekly log (write down at least one example for each of the following. Begin writing the book of your Core Value):

Fundamental Humanity

Recognized humanity of others	Accepted human frailty	Valued others	Respected others	Made the world a little better through my attitudes & behavior

Meaning and Purpose

<p>Describe the <i>most important</i> thing about you as a person (your deepest value) (How you want those you love to remember you; what you'll regret not doing enough of)</p>

The rewards for staying true to your deepest values are great: Authenticity, conviction, long-term wellbeing. And the reminders for violating them are terrible: guilt, shame, anxiety, regret, feeling inadequate, or feeling unlovable. (Unfortunately, vulnerable feelings are almost always defended with resentment and anger.)

Here is the first route to core value: When resentful, anxious, depressed, or obsessing, make sure you're being true to the most important thing about you as a person.

Love

Acted as the partner, parent, adult I most want to be	Was loving, compassionate, and supportive to the people I love	Helped loved one achieve their fullest potential	Was loyal, helpful, and optimistic

Spirituality

Expressed my soul	Felt connection with something larger than the self

Nature

Went out of my way to observe natural beauty	Regarded natural beauty as a core value

Creativity

Expressed my creativity	Went out of my way to appreciate creativity (concerts, galleries, looked at beautiful objects, etc.)	Read, listened to music, watched movies, etc.

Community

Participated in community group or activities	Focused on similarities with various groups of people

Compassion

Helped someone	Listened to someone who needed a listener	Tried to be thoughtful & kind	Other (describe)

If you do the above consistently, you should experience longer lasting states of wellbeing.

Source: Adapted from Steven Stosny's, Compassion Power workshop
<http://www.compassionpower.com/core-value-workbook/>

2. Improve, Appreciate, Connect, Protect

Write down how you make an effort to do one or more of the following:

I strive to improve when/by:

(for example: learning, growing, analyzing, building, repairing, renewing)

I strive to appreciate when/by:

(for example: what I appreciate about myself and others)

I strive to connect when/by:

(for example: connecting to close loved ones/community/spiritual beings and values)

I strive to protect when/by:

(for example: protecting/feeling protective of self or others)

3. How to change your thoughts

Reframe your anxious thoughts by giving them a positive spin. For example:

Anxious thought

Reframe

I said something that upset this person

I really care about this person

I'm so nervous about this job. I can feel my heart beating faster

My heart is beating faster out of a feeling of excitement about the job

Does this incident really warrant all this anxiety?

There are much more important things in my life

I can't take this

I have shown resilience in the past when ...

This person/situation will never change

I can adapt to this situation while focusing on my own needs

This person's habit drives me nuts

I can tolerate annoying habits

I really messed this up

This is what I can do to make it better

I am such a loser

What is the most important thing about my life?

I'll never get this fear out of my head

I can choose to focus on soothing images like a beach or a flower park

I can't slow down my racing thoughts

Write to slow down thinking

This will go terribly wrong

I can improve the situation by...

I am a mess

I am not anxious during these parts of the day...

I can't stand to feel this way

Most feelings pass after 5-10 minutes

All these terrible things will happen

I can choose to focus on this present moment

I am a slave to my anxiety

All emotions are habitual and can be reframed and calmed

I can't take this feeling

I feel anxious right now, but I'm ok

I'll never change

It's ok to feel low level anxiety, I am human

I am not good enough

I can work to become the person I want to be

I feel miserable

I will feel better soon

Anxiety is a scourge

Being anxious is human and a signal to focus on my strengths

I am weak

I can be strong for... (my family, my my community, my values)

Write down your own thoughts and reframe them with a positive spin