

Integrity:

We discover our authentic core values and strive to live in alignment with them.

Living in integrity builds self-respect and allows us to live lives of honor and dignity. Distinguishing the difference between myths, rules and values can be difficult given our histories. The effort involved is well worth it, as our increasing understanding allows us to live with a sense of adult self-awareness and blossoming self-integrity.

Myths are what were taught to us in our childhoods or times of trauma. Many of them instilled in us negative beliefs about ourselves and our capabilities. Rules try to force people and situations into conformity. Rules are rigid, eliminate connection and minimize personal ownership.

In contrast, values are essentially core principles that are used to guide behavior and attitudes.

We were born with inherent core values but may have lost touch with them for a while due to trauma we suffered. When we live out of alignment with our own core values it erodes our self-esteem, our sense of purpose and ability to experience joy. We need to rediscover our intrinsic value systems. As we continually align with our values we're mindful that both our values and our selves are works in progress and growth is something we seek. Values help to determine who we are and how we respond to choices we face every day. Healthier practices evolve out of living true to our personal core values.

Some examples of core values are: honesty, caring, humility, individuality, creative expression, treating others with respect, acting with dignity, etc. Core values differ from person to person. One person may have a core value of putting others above oneself, while another person values individuality and expression of self. The list goes on and on. Only we can know which core values are the most important to us.

When discovering or rediscovering your core values, ask yourself:

- What are the 3-5 most important core values that are most important to me?
- What would I tell my children are the core values that I hold throughout my life, and that I hope they will hold when they become adults?
- If I awoke tomorrow morning with enough money to retire for the rest of my life, would I continue to live these core values?
- Can I envision them being valid 100 years from now?
- Would I want to hold those core values, even if at some point one or more of them became a disadvantage?