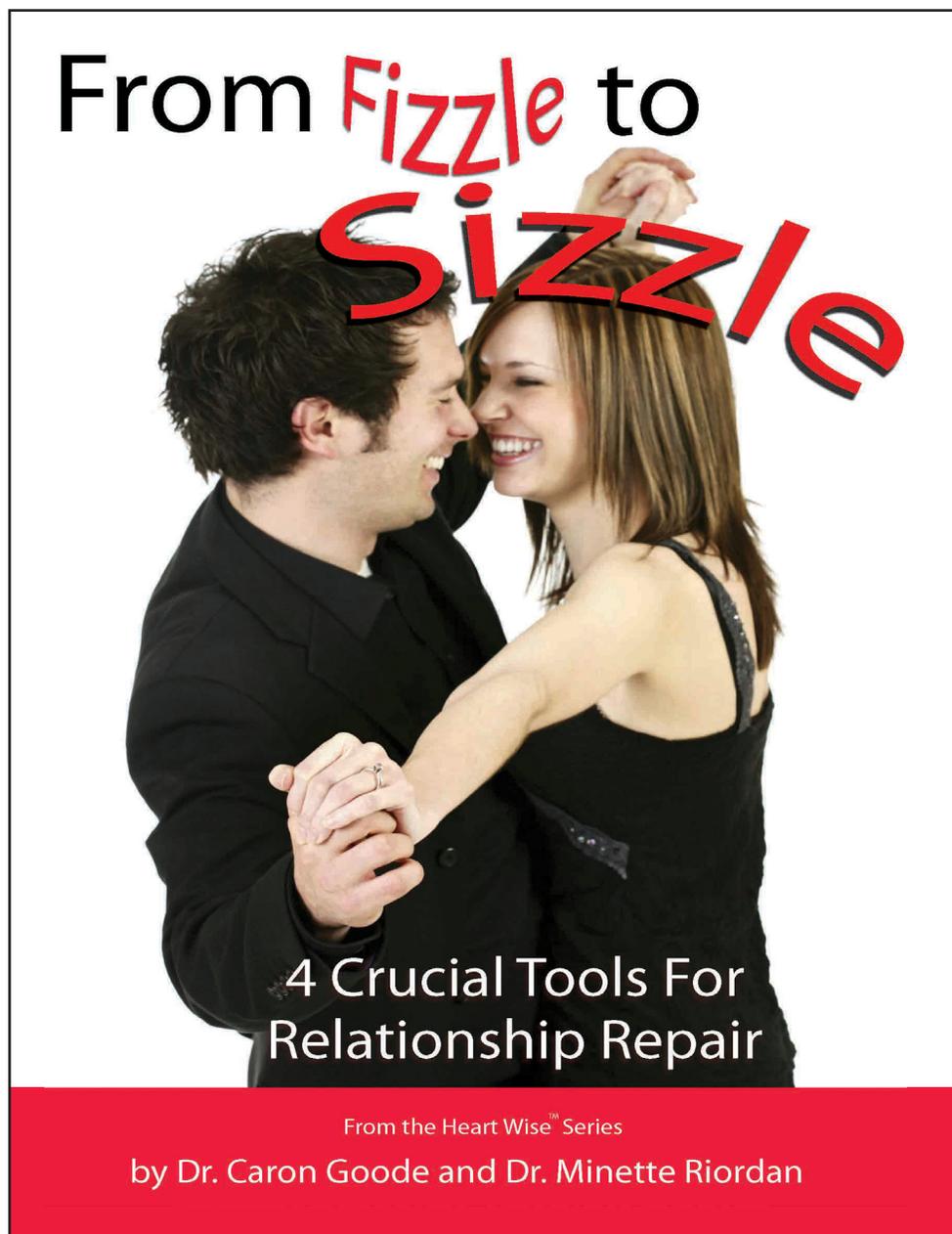


Core Values Assessment

an excerpt from

From Fizzle to Sizzle:

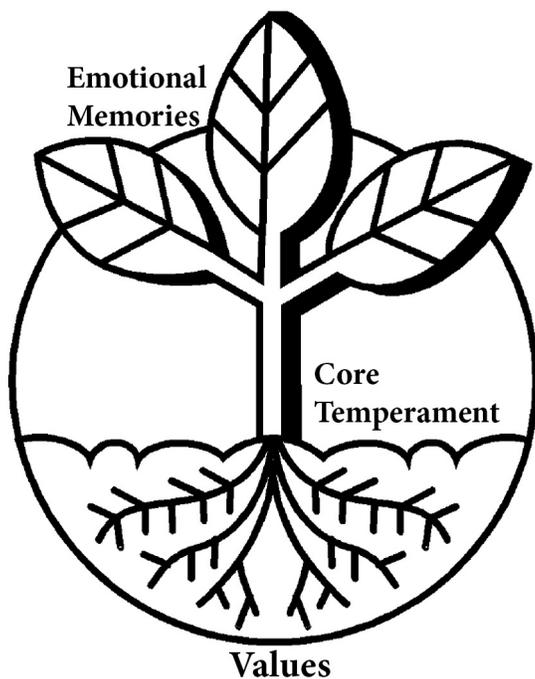
Four Crucial Tools for Relationship Repair



Values: The Second Tool in the Relationship Repair System

Embrace and incorporate these powerful values, and you will start living with more integrity, honesty, compassion and enthusiasm. This, in turn, will breathe new life into your relationship.

~Dr. Phil



Values are the cornerstone of your relationships and determine what you believe about money, free time, work, friends, intimacy, clothes, politics, family, and spirituality. Values drive your actions and add meaning to your life. One of your essential roles in relationships is to identify your values: first as an individual and then together if in an intimate relationship. Values are the first thread you will use to determine what you have in common or where you clash in your relationships - whether in the kitchen, with your children, or at work.

Each of us has a set of values which are easily identified and prioritized for you to make the best decisions; these values feel right to your gut, your heart, and your head. Imagine the freedom of knowing that you are making accurate decisions and never have to look back or think twice!

Do you remember a time when you made a wrong decision to lie - to skip a day from work and call in sick? When you examine that decision you'll see that you knew what you were doing was wrong - like buying alcohol in high school - but you did it anyway. The voice inside that made you feel guilty or reminded you the action was wrong was your core value voice speaking.

You can of course ignore the truth about what you value but the voice never really goes away. To help you to strengthen your values, you'll next determine what you value or feel strongly about.

Know what you value as an individual.

Living a values-based life is equivalent to living a heart-centered life.

Your values hover in the background of your thoughts and emotions as ghostly reminders of what you believe is important: you'll recognize them as strong desires that motivate you and lead you to action. We have found that you can identify your true-to-you core values by asking yourself the following questions.

Record your responses in a journal.

What are the priorities in your intimate relationships?

Examples of values include education, fitness, health, love, happiness, and adventure. The first way to recognize what you value is that you enjoy it, feel passionate about it, and enjoy sharing it with those in your relational sphere. Your values are the grease on the grill that makes your life sizzle: the buzz starts inside when you are on the path to something right on and right up your alley. This is proactive living.

- If you never experience the sizzle, then you are not feeling the fire of your values.
- If you are not feeling the fire, the reason could be that you are busy being angry, upset, or defensive about what you do value, as though no one gets it like you do, can do it as well as you do, or just doesn't appreciate your talent and empathy. Answer the next question in depth to find and define your values.

Identify the behaviors that bug you.

Other people's actions or choices that bug you provide clues to your values. For example, your own value system includes strong feelings about the behavior of those around you. If integrity is number one on the list of your core values, then people who lie disturb you deeply. If you value results, you find it stressful to deal with people who don't follow through. If you respect people's time and keep appointments on the hour, you might consider someone who is always late as disrespectful to you personally, as opposed to understanding it could be a part of their core temperament. Sometimes actions that bug you the most can cause you to work hard for a good cause because your emotional memories have triggered your sense of injustice.

How do you choose to spend your time?

Do you spend time working, cleaning house, having fun, seeking adventure, being creative, cultivating laughter, reading, or praying? We recently participated in a business mastermind session in which we discussed what we value and how we spend our time. The leader of the group said, "Show me your check book and I will show you where you spend your time." Think about it. If you say you value saving money or eating healthy food or exercising, but really you are antique shopping, eating out, and running up credit card debt, you are internally at odds with your core values. Where in your life are you not being true to yourself? Where does this show up in your relationships?

Identifying & Prioritizing Your Values in Relationships

On page 44 you will find a list of possible values. To assess what your values are, follow the steps listed. Think about each word in the context of the answers you gave to the questions in the last section: what bugs you; what are your priorities; how do you choose to spend your time. You should do this on your own first and then with your partner, kids, or coworkers. You'll compare and contrast your values and prioritize two lists. The first is your personal list of values that guide your choices and the second might be a list of family values or professional values. Your list can include two options:

- Non-negotiable Values** are values you will not compromise or be willing to change because they are important to you.
- Negotiable Values** are values that you are willing to modify and prioritize together with the set of values held by your partner, kids or coworkers.

Your Core Values Assessment

Instructions

1. Using the list on page 44 put a circle around all of the words that you feel are important, right, or necessary. Circle up to 30 words on the list that are meaningful to you. Don't think about it. Just start circling! Give yourself several minutes to do this.
2. Next, go back and put a star next to half of the listed words that are the most meaningful to you. These words are the core of what is important and what defines right or wrong for you.
3. Finally, narrow down that list by underlining, highlighting or marking ten of the words. These words drive you, internally motivate your decision-making process, and define you as a person.

The key here is to drill down to the critical core of who you are from a values-based perspective. Note that on your original lists from steps two and three, you probably found words that were important to your family, your community, or your church that feel like "shoulds."

Your goal is to create a very clear mental image of what matters to you in your relationships, both personal and professional. If you have a solid list for each type of relationship, then even better! Our values can shift between work and home. Trust your heart and trust your gut because values elicit strong feelings.

If you are in a marriage or committed relationship, your partner needs to define his/her core values, independent of yours. You would do the same when creating values around how you want to parent your children.

Understanding what is important to you will help you see where you are similar and where you differ from your partner in everything from intimacy and parenting to bigger themes like money, time, stress, security, spirituality, and work ethic. When you have this information, you'll work together to choose a list of values that reflects the best of both of you and mirrors the vision of the relationship that you want to create.

If you are single, you might talk to other single friends or your parents about your list and why it's important to you. It's great to have a sounding board in a good friend who will listen to your aspirations and ask you thoughtful questions about why these values matter in your relationships.

Together, you and your spouse/partner will now compare your lists and agree on 10 values that are central to what you want to create as a family.

Your Core Values Combined

Instructions

Step One. Get a giant piece of paper and markers (we used large art paper, but you could use anything you have at hand. A white board would work well, also.) Assign one person to do the writing. Write a list of the words and concepts that you feel

- Define you as individuals or
- Are important to you in raising your children and growing as a family or
- Define your business.

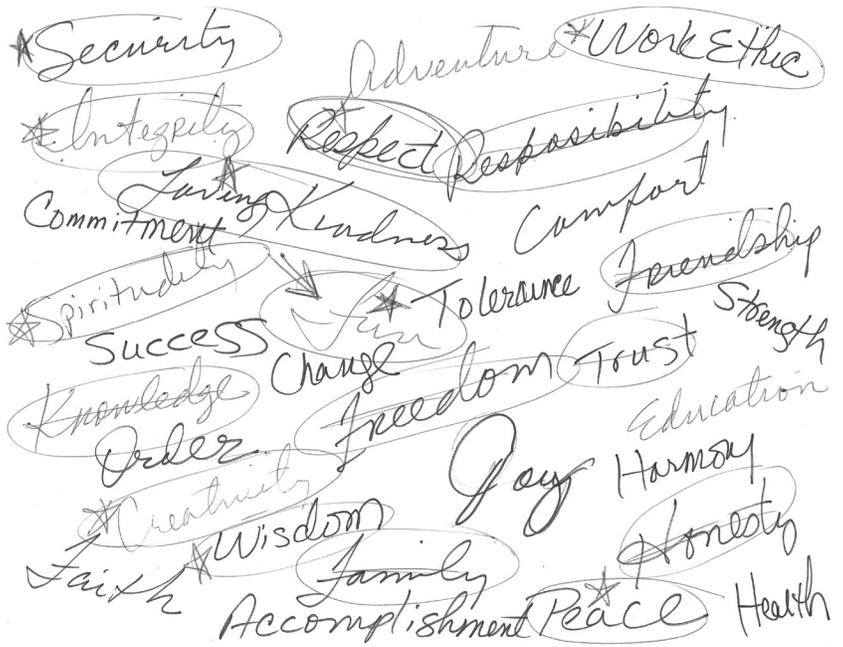
Use the list of ten values you chose from the exercise in the last section as a starting point. Have the entire list available as new values may arise when you consider your family or relationship.

Partial Core Values List

For a printable version of this list go to: <http://www.heartwiserrelationships.com>

Accomplishment	Diversity	Ingenuity	Rule of Law
Accountability	Ease of Use	Justice	Safety
Accuracy	Efficiency	Knowledge	Satisfying others
Acknowledgement	Equality	Leadership	Security
Adventure	Excellence	Love, Romance	Self-giving
All for one & one for all	Expertise	Loyalty	Self-reliance
Authenticity	Fairness	Mastery	Self-thinking
Beauty	Faith	Meaning	Service to others
Calm, quietude, peace	Faithfulness	Merit	Seeing clearly
Challenge	Family	Methodical	Simplicity
Change	Family feeling	Money	Skill
Cleanliness, orderliness	Flair	Openness	Solving Problems
Collaboration	Freedom	Order	Speed
Commitment	Friendship	Originality	Spirit in life (using)
Common Sense	Fun	Patriotism	Spirituality
Communication	Genius	Peace, Non-violence	Stability
Community	Global view	Perfection	Standardization
Competence	Good will	Personal Growth	Status
Competition	Goodness	Pleasure	Stimulation
Concern for others	Gratitude	Power	Strength
Connection	Hard work	Practicality	Succeed; a will to-
Content over form	Harmony	Preservation	Success
Continuous improvement	Health	Privacy	Systemization
Cooperation	Honesty	Progress	Teamwork
Coordination	Honor	Prosperity, Wealth	Timeliness
Courage	Improvement	Punctuality	Tolerance
Creativity	Independence	Quality of work	Tradition
Customer satisfaction	Individuality	Regularity	Tranquility
Decisiveness	Inner peace, calm, quietude	Reliability	Trust
Delight of being, joy	Innovation	Resourcefulness	Truth
Democracy	Integrity	Respect for others	Unity
Discipline	Intensity	Responsiveness	Variety
Discovery	Intimacy	Results-oriented	Wisdom

Step Two. Once you have at least 20 words on the page(s), use your marker to circle or star the most important values. Whittle your list down to ten key values that define your core as a couple or a family. Be prepared to explain to your partner why each value matters to you. These core values can serve as your moral compass in a romantic, loving relationship. You can imagine how Minette's understanding that her husband needed more fun in their relationship changed her perspective of him and allowed them to interact in new ways. They now enjoy finding ways to have more fun together and explore how they experience fun differently.



Step Three. Transfer your values in order of importance to a clean sheet of paper. One of the challenges you face is that if, after you do all this work (coming up with a great list of values and getting excited about how it can help you), you stick it in a drawer and forget about it. Keeping your values visible helps overcome this challenge of obscurity. Print your list out and hang it somewhere that you can see it.

It's okay to have several different lists of core values: your individual list, family list and a business list for example.

One last note: the list of 10 core values you are creating does not infer that other values are not important as well. We all have different ideas, emotions, and feelings attached to a variety of values. Don't feel that you are limited to the top ten: just be clear that values you choose are true to you and not values you feel you "should" adopt because of race, religion, politics, community, or culture.

Write your list of 10 core values here with a few words about why they matter to you:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

How Values Assist Your Relationship Repair

Now that you know what your values are, this is how they help you in relationship repair.

First, your values guide your decisions. You ask yourself questions about the issues you are unsure about in this way:

- Is dating this person in alignment with my value of harmony, or love, or adventure?
- Am I keeping my integrity by going to this party or participating in that action? Can I live with myself in the morning?
- In keeping with my value of independence, is now the best time to have children?
- Does staying in this job support my values or limit my values?
- Does investing this money feel in alignment with my head, heart, and gut?
- Does taking this action compromise my value or cause my gut to twinge or my heart to feel odd or different?
- Is there something I am not seeing? Is there a point I need to be aware of?

Summary: Values are the guardrails on your highway of life, and they keep you from veering too far off the shoulder. They help you focus and define the most empowering choices to enhance your journey, whether your goal is passion, parenting, being a professional, or simply living with a purpose.

Core Values is just one of the 4 relationship tools shared in *From Fizzle to Sizzle: 4 Crucial Tools for Relationship Repair* by Dr. Caron Goode and Dr. Minette Riordan. The book is available for sale on Amazon.com. You can find out more about the authors, the programs they offer and their individual coaching at <http://www.HeartWiseLife.com>.

If you are interested in becoming a Certified Relationship Coach, please visit www.HeartWiseLife.com for details about our 8-week niche certification in Relationship Repair.