

FREE TOOL · 10 MINUTES

What Actually Matters

A 10-minute check-in on the kind of person you want to be

*If you don't choose what matters to you on purpose, your brain will choose for you.
And it will choose comfort, safety, and the familiar — not the fulfilling.*

Michael Chester, MA, LPC · Mindset Evolution, Session 1

Most of us can rattle off our goals. Far fewer of us can say, clearly, what we want to be *about*. That's the difference between a goal and a value. A goal is something you eventually check off. A value is a direction you keep choosing through your actions, again and again — the kind of person you want to be whether it's easy or not, and whether anyone claps for you or not.

STEP 1 · CIRCLE 5 THAT FEEL LIKE YOU

Mark the five that feel most true — not the five you think you *should* pick. This isn't about values that sound good; it's about getting honest. If something that matters to you isn't here, add it. You don't have to get it perfect. Close is a great place to start.

☐ Family

Making time for and investing in the people you love.

☐ Integrity

Living in alignment with what matters most.

☐ Courage

Facing fear and doing the hard thing anyway.

☐ Contribution

Making a difference for others.

☐ Compassion

Caring about the pain of others.

☐ Fun

Making room for play and lightness.

☐ Kindness

Treating others with warmth and care.

☐ Your own:

☐ Growth

Continuing to become a better version of yourself.

☐ Connection

Feeling close to and understood by others.

☐ Peace

Feeling calm and settled, even when life is busy.

☐ Discipline

Doing what you said you would, even when it's hard.

☐ Authenticity

Being real, not performing for others.

☐ Curiosity

Staying open to learning and asking questions.

☐ Creativity

Expressing yourself in original ways.

☐ Health

Taking care of your physical and mental wellbeing.

☐ Freedom

Having the space to make your own choices.

☐ Honesty

Telling the truth, even when it's hard.

☐ Adventure

Seeking out new experiences and challenges.

☐ Faith

Trusting in something greater than yourself.

☐ Security

Feeling stable and safe in your life and finances.

☐ Balance

Giving fair time and energy to what matters.

STEP 2 · THREE HONEST QUESTIONS

1. What actually matters to me?

(Examples: “My kids knowing I was present,” “being healthy enough to keep up,” “doing work I’m proud of.”)

2. What kind of person do I want to be — no matter what life throws at me?

(Examples: “Someone who shows up with patience,” “someone who keeps moving forward,” “someone who tells the truth.”)

3. What do I want to be about in this one life I’ve been given?

(Examples: “Living with courage,” “helping people,” “building something meaningful,” “staying close to the people I love.”)

STEP 3 · ONE SMALL MOVE THIS WEEK

Values only become real through action. Pick one of the values you circled and name one small thing you could do this week that looks like that value in practice. Small is the point — a five-minute walk, one honest sentence, one text you’ve been putting off.

The value: _____ One thing I’ll do this week:

How confident am I that I’ll actually do it?

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

NOT AT ALL

COMPLETELY

If you’re under a 7, make the move smaller until you’d bet on yourself. Then write the smaller version above.

Where this leads

This check-in is a small piece of Session 1 of Mindset Evolution, a 10-session guided course from licensed therapist Michael Chester. Clarifying what matters is the starting point. The rest of the course is about what to do when your brain talks you out of it.

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