

Six Ways to Clarify Values

Captain

Have your client identify the values that showed up in the Captain visualization.

“I notice as you speak about the inner journey that nature and the ocean play a big part. What value of yours does that express?” or “Let’s ask Mountain about his top values.”

Peak Experience

Ask your client to describe a peak experience and listen for the values that show up in the story (see Fundamentals Section 4: Resources & Tools for further explanation).

Suppressed Values

What makes us angry, frustrated or upset is often something that is contrary to a high value. In other words, it’s a value that is being suppressed. The key is to point out to the client that most upsets are clues to values that are being suppressed.

For example, getting stuck in commuter traffic frustrates your client. He becomes antsy and angry. When asked what makes him angry, the client replies “I have no control, I’m trapped.” The coach then says, “If we flip that over (look at the other side) it sounds like you have a value of freedom. Is that right?”

Invisible Values

These values are invisible to the client. The values are being honored naturally so the client doesn’t think about them much. Because of their invisibility, it may be difficult for the client to spot them. As coach, look at your clients: Are they orderly and put together? Do they express creativity in how they dress? How are they at honoring their agreements with you? All of these things point to an expression of the client’s values.

Must Haves

Ask clients to look at what they must have in their life. Beyond food, shelter and community, what needs to be in clients’ lives to have them feel fulfilled? Adventure? Partnership? Accomplishment? Nature?

Obsessive Expression

We all are capable of obsessive behavior — insisting on honoring a value as a demand. For example, everything must be in its place to the point of perfection. When we insist on something — my way or the highway — there is a good chance there is a value being expressed in the extreme. Ask your clients to look for places they may be taking a value to the extreme. Another place to look is to the feedback clients get from friends and family. For example, your client often hears: “You are so controlling. You hog all the attention.” These statements might point to a value of leadership or recognition.