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DEFINE YOUR CORE VALUES

A powerful piece of advice: “Don’t just live your life, *lead* your life; your core values are your guide.” This advice was shared with me early in my career. Think of your core values as the fundamental beliefs and guiding principles that shape everything you do: how you think, act, and make decisions. They’re your internal compass, helping you discern what truly matters, what’s right, and how to navigate the complexities of relationships and challenges. Once you’ve identified these core values, the real magic happens when you intentionally weave them into your daily life.

Why Core Values Are Important for Personal Success

1 **Clarity and Direction**

Core values provide a clear sense of purpose and direction. When you know what you stand for, it’s easier to set meaningful goals and make decisions that align with your true self.

2 **Consistency and Confidence**

Living by your values builds consistency in your behavior and decision making. This consistency builds confidence—not just in yourself, but also in how others perceive and trust you.

3 **Resilience in Challenges**

When facing difficulties or uncertainty, core values act as anchors. They help you stay grounded and make decisions based on what matters most to you, rather than being swayed by pressure or fear.

4 **Better Relationships**

Being clear about your values helps you build authentic relationships. It allows you to attract people who share similar beliefs, and handle conflicts with empathy and respect.

5 **Personal Fulfillment**

Success isn’t just about achievements—it’s also about how you feel about your life. Living in alignment with your core values often leads to a deeper sense of satisfaction, peace, and happiness.



EXERCISE: Core Values

Explore and define what truly resonates with you. Then, consider their hierarchy: Which core values are paramount? How do they influence the others? And, most importantly, how do these core values already play a role in your everyday choices?

From the list provided, **choose 10 words** that you feel represent your core values:

Narrow that list down to 5 core values, those most important to you:

Prioritize the 5 core values

you selected (1–5; 1 = top priority):

When do you demonstrate each of your top 5 core values in your daily life?

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

What changes do you want to make to actively live and weave your values into your life and in context of what's important to you?

Keep your list and reflections on your computer or your phone, and easily accessible. Or write your core values on a piece of paper and post them where you will see them multiple times a day, like the refrigerator or bathroom mirror.

Refer to this list or use your own:

- Accountability
- Authenticity
- Balance
- Bravery
- Collaboration
- Community
- Courage
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Dignity
- Education
- Empathy
- Equity
- Excellence
- Flexibility
- Family
- Generosity
- Growth
- Honesty
- Humor
- Imagination
- Inclusion
- Inner Peace
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Justice
- Kindness
- Leadership
- Openness
- Passion
- Patience
- People
- Positive Mindset
- Resilience
- Respect
- Rest
- Self-Respect
- Service
- Stewardship
- Trust
- Wisdom

Connecting Your Core Value(s) to Your Discipline and a Performance

Below are examples to consider implementing in your performance practice. These connections encourage you to go beyond technical skill and explore the deeper “why” behind your art, connecting the abstract idea of core values to a concrete artistic action.

Leading Your Art

Instead of just performing, you are “leading” your artistic expression *through* your core value(s). This value is the driving force behind your choices in movement, sound, text, or visual elements.

Intentional Weaving

The performance becomes an intentional weaving of your core value into a tangible artistic experience for an audience. You could even briefly share your chosen value with the audience beforehand or allow it to emerge organically through the performance.



Share and discuss with your professor/mentor.