

Am I Living by What I Value?

Read the article first. This worksheet accompanies [Do the Ends Justify the Means?](#) at ThoughtsFromATherapist.com, which looks at what we risk when we act against our values to get what we want, and why congruence is its own kind of goal. Search “ends justify the means” on the site to find it.

Integrity is where values become action. When what we do and what we value drift apart, the cost is quiet and cumulative: dissonance, self-doubt, a vague discomfort we can't easily name. This worksheet compares what we actually do with what we say matters, then looks at one decision and one double bind. Choose an ordinary week and one live decision, large or small. A few words per space is enough.

PART ONE

What I do and what I say matters

Imagine a week of our life on video. List what we do most often, where there is some choice, and name the feeling or attribute each behavior is after. Then list what we say matters most. Comparing the two shows the overlap, and the values that are outdated, handed to us, or misfiring.

PART TWO

One decision, three voices

For one decision, name the value it expresses, the emotion that fuels it, and the logic that grounds it. Then the three questions.

Does this approach reflect who I want to be?

Will this action require me to disconnect from myself?

Am I reinforcing a form of behavior I ultimately want to reduce?

PART THREE

The quiet discomfort

When behavior and values drift apart, anxiety can follow that reassurance does not touch. Rate it, and notice what it points toward.

PART FOUR

The double bind

It takes integrity to follow a rule, and it takes integrity to go against a rule. We name what integrity looks like on each side, then one choice to remove and one means this week that is already the end we want.

A WORKED EXAMPLE: AN ORDINARY EVENING

WHAT I DO	Come home, pour a drink, and turn on the TV.
WHAT IT IS AFTER	Feeling rested and less stressed.
DOES IT DELIVER?	Not really. It ends up making me feel more anxious, and it may be causing some of the stress.
WHAT I SAY MATTERS	Rest, and being present with my family.
A MEANS THAT IS THE END	I want to be present with my family, so I schedule time for their games. I value rest, so I choose work that allows spaciousness.

A SECOND EXAMPLE: THE GARDENER'S DOUBLE BIND

THE BIND	A gardener stays in a job that does not fit him because people count on him, and he grows more and more emotionally tired. His partner asks him to remedy the burden on the family.
IF HE STAYS	He keeps a broken system functioning, and he and his family fall farther from wellness.
IF HE LEAVES	He could manifest his purpose, and many would feel the anxiety inevitable in change.

What I do and what I say matters

Be specific: “preparing food in creative ways” or “ordering comfort food,” not “eating.”

A WEEK ON VIDEO

What I actually do

The behaviors I would see most often, where there is some choice, and the feeling or attribute each one is after.

WHAT I DO MOST OFTEN

THE FEELING OR ATTRIBUTE IT IS AFTER

IN MY OWN WORDS

What I say matters

The feelings I want to live within and the attributes I want to be defined by, and what I would do if I lived by them.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO ME

WHAT LIVING BY IT WOULD LOOK LIKE

COMPARING THE TWO

Check what I notice.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Lots of overlap: I am mostly living by what I value | ☐ A value left over from earlier in life that still drives me |
| ☐ A value handed to me by family, community, or media | ☐ A behavior aimed at a value that delivers the opposite |
| ☐ A value that is important, and does not need to run everything | |

WHAT THE COMPARISON SHOWS

Which behaviors could change, increase, or end? What new behavior would meet the value with fewer consequences?

One decision, three voices

If value, feeling, and reason were instruments, what would harmony sound like?

THE DECISION

A decision in front of me now, large or small.

THE VALUE

What it expresses

What value does this decision express?

THE EMOTION

What fuels it

What emotion is fueling it?

THE LOGIC

What grounds it

What logic grounds it?

THE THREE QUESTIONS

DOES THIS APPROACH REFLECT WHO I WANT TO BE?

WILL THIS ACTION REQUIRE ME TO DISCONNECT FROM MYSELF?

AM I REINFORCING A FORM OF BEHAVIOR I ULTIMATELY WANT TO REDUCE?

THE QUIET DISCOMFORT

When what I do and what I value drift apart, a quiet anxiety can follow. Rate it for this decision.

How strong is the discomfort when I imagine going ahead as planned?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

How strong is it when I imagine the option that fits my values?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

What value is the discomfort pointing toward?

The double bind

It takes integrity to follow a rule, and it takes integrity to go against a rule.

THE BIND

A situation where staying and changing both carry a cost, for me or for the people around me.

BOTH SIDES

What integrity
looks like

Name each side honestly. Neither column cancels the other.

IF I KEEP GOING AS I AM

IF I CHANGE

CHANGE

A different
relationship with
change

If I could hold a different relationship with change, what decision would I make?

ONE CHOICE TO REMOVE

What choice, if removed, would most positively impact my well-being? What choice would I be better off not having?

ONE MEANS THIS WEEK THAT IS ALREADY THE END

How we do the work is the work. The process becomes part of the outcome.

THE MEANS:

WHEN:
