

Searching for your Real Core Values

You must be aware that there are advertised core values and then there are real core values.

According to works of Louis E. Rath, Sidney B. Simon, Merrill Harmin, Howard Kirschenbaum and Leland Howe (The VALUES REALIZATION INSTITUTE), a value must meet seven criteria:

- **It must be prized and cherished**
- **It must be chosen from among alternatives**
- **It must be chosen freely, without coercion**
- **It must be chosen after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative, not impulsively, and after careful critical thinking.**
- **We must be willing to publicly affirm it**
- **We must act on it, and act on it repeatedly**
- **It must be consistent with the other values we profess or claim to hold**

Some questions for discussion and clarification

1. Can we make a list of the things that we are the most proud of over the last ten years?
2. Can we as individuals make a list of five things that if they do not happen, we will walk away from this church?
3. What are the things that we have been the most disappointed in over the last ten years?
4. What do we fear most that we might potentially lose as a church? List them in order of fear of loss.
5. What would you call the most successful things you have done? Make a list of at least five
6. What is it that you perceive yourself as a church to be good at? Make a list of at least ten items
7. Can we make a list of all the things we think might be our core values? Now rank them in order of priority that you would want to see them listed. What are the top 8?
8. What are the most important things about our church that we would want to pass on to the next generation? Make a list of at least ten items.
9. Can we make a list of the things that we get the most pleasure from as a church?

The next step:

1. Go thru the lists you have made and look for the common answers, write down any item that makes more than one list. Make a note of how many times this item (or a related one) is mentioned.
2. Filter through the list to determine the order of importance, rank them from top to bottom.
3. Get the group to agree on what can go from the list and what must stay, try to reduce the list to ten.
4. Rank the ten in priority
5. These will be what you really value