








# Acting in Alignment

Getting to the heart of what guides your actions

BEING | Integrity and Authenticity

## → What you will need:

-  12-24
-  Individual and in duos, group share
-  15 - 30 mins preparation
-  60 - 90 mins execution
-  List of values

## → Related Tools:

 [Purposeful Storytelling](#)

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Imagine a world shaped by your values—how it looks, feels and how you share it with others, while also hearing their dreams. This tool will take you one step closer to turning that vision into reality.

—Esther Reefman





## I. Overview

To engage authentically with the world, it's essential to identify the core values that shape your perspective on life and others. Evaluating how your actions align with these values provides valuable insight into your authenticity.

In this activity, students use imagination and an ordering task to uncover and organise their core values. Then, they reflect on recent actions that either aligned with or contradicted these values.

Pairing, sharing and mirroring help deepen understanding of the connection between values and actions, allowing students to create a concrete action plan for integrating their core values into their behaviour. This empowers students to apply their values in future situations. This structured process fosters authenticity, self-awareness and a deeper commitment to living in alignment with their core values.

### Learning outcome

- ✓ The student gains insight into their core values and understands how these values contribute to their authenticity in daily life, reflects on challenges to act authentically and creates a concrete action plan to strengthen authenticity through values-based decision-making in the near future





## II. Learning Activity

Through imagination exercises, value mapping, reflection and paired sharing, students learn to identify, reflect on and act in alignment with their core values, gaining insight into how these values manifest in daily life to live more authentically.



### 1. Imagination 15 mins

Begin by explaining that this exercise offers students the opportunity to step back from their daily concerns and envision their ideal world—a world shaped by their most important values. Emphasise that this reflective process can uncover values they might not immediately think of, helping them connect more deeply to what truly matters.

Provide each student with a blank sheet of paper and encourage them to draw or jot down key words or ideas that arise during the exercise. These notes will help capture insights about their values.

Ask students to settle in a comfortable position. Invite them to close their eyes or lower their gaze, whichever feels best. Encourage them to simply listen and allow their imagination to explore freely.

As you read the Imagination script, have students face outward, towards a wall or window, allowing them to retreat into their world. This setup also gives them space to write or draw as they reflect.

After reading the Imagination script, give the students five minutes for individual reflection. Ask them to write down their thoughts on the following:

- What did you like most about the world you just imagined?
- What do you think this reveals about you? Which values seem most important to you?



**Tip:** you can use a check-in activity at the start to facilitate a safe learning environment, where students feel at ease to express their emotions and feelings and can fully engage with the affective experience.



## 2. Value Map 15 mins

Students reflect on the values they envisioned for their ideal world by creating an individual Value Map.

Explain that they will now organise and distil the values that emerged during the imagination exercise. Provide each student with a list of values and ask them to select 7 to 10 core values that they feel best represent their ideals.

Encourage them to include values from the imagination exercise, while also allowing space for any other values they find personally meaningful.

**Tip:** to support this process, consider using Brené Brown's "Dare to Lead" List of Values, which offers a diverse array of values, enabling students to articulate their guiding principles more effectively.



## 3. Reflective Alignment 15 mins

Now, encourage the students to reflect on how their recent actions align with their core values. Ask them to look back over the past 3 to 6 months and identify two challenging situations: one where they acted in line with their core values, and one where they did not.

Prompt them to think about a range of contexts, such as home, work, school, friends, social groups or personal interactions. Let students know they will be sharing some of these reflections with peers, fostering discussion and mutual learning.

For each situation, have them write down briefly what happened and how they acted.



Then, ask them to reflect on these questions:

- What made it challenging to stay aligned with your values?
- Which internal or external factors influenced your actions?
- What helped you stay true to your core value?



#### 4. Pairing, Sharing & Mirroring 15 mins

Students pair up for an activity designed to enhance self-awareness, which will prepare them for drafting their Action Plan.

Each student shares the examples from their reflection, using their Value Map to help explain their core values to their peer.

First, one student shares their experiences while the other listens attentively. The listener may take brief notes.

Then, the listener reflects on what they heard, saw and felt, offering an objective summary of the shared experiences.

**Tip:** stress that this is a mirroring exercise, not a discussion. The listener's role is to reflect the speaker's words and emotions without adding personal opinions, interpretations or feedback.



#### 5. Authentic Micro Planning 25 mins

Students create and share their Action Plan to stay true to their values in challenging situations.

First, each student individually identifies 1 or 2 specific situations they anticipate encountering in the near future, where staying aligned with their core values might be challenging, and writes down at least one concrete action they can take to remain true to their values in those moments.



Then, bring the class together in a standing circle. Invite each student to share one planned action in a quick, straightforward “pop-up” style.

Remind students that this is a sharing exercise, not a discussion, so no feedback or commentary is expected.

**Please note**, as part of assessment *as learning*, students answer the reflective questions.





### III. Assessment

Students share personal insights into their Value Map and articulate an Action Plan to develop their authenticity in the short term.



#### **Purpose**

Assessment as learning aims to strengthen the learning process and the development of metacognitive skills. It empowers students to direct their own learning and to become independent, critical self-assessors.



#### **Roles**

Self-assessment, aided by mirroring actions of other participants



#### **Characteristics**

Self-regulated learning



#### **Materials**

Reflective questions



## Assessment

### Reflective questions

1. Can you describe the dynamic of the dialogue in a few sentences? Was there anything unexpected?
2. What things did you do during the conversation that helped to hold a genuine dialogue with the other person?
3. How or what will you do differently next time you are in a dialogue?
4. Did this dialogue change something about your opinions? Why, or why not?
5. What are you going to do next?







## IV. Key Advice

Instructions for various **check-in activities, guidelines for a safe learning environment** and the **Imagination script** (Step 1) can be downloaded below. Feel free to adjust the text if necessary, but please note that the current version is designed to support the subsequent steps, where the focus is on core values. If you're short on time or feel that you or your participants may struggle with the Imagination exercise (Step 1), you can skip it and begin with Step 2.

The **Value Map** and Brené Browns **List of Values** (Step 2), and the **Action Plan** (Step 5) can be downloaded below.

Consider arranging a follow-up meeting (after Step 5), where students can reflect on their experiences, ask thought-provoking questions to deepen their insights, and brainstorm additional actions for future situations.





## Imagination Script

**Tip:** take your time, allowing pauses in between each question. This unhurried pace is crucial for helping students fully immerse themselves and create a vivid mental picture. Observe the group, and if many are still reflecting or jotting notes, allow extra time as needed.

“Imagine that you have the power to create the world anew, molding it carefully into your ideal vision—piece by piece, connection by connection—until it feels like the world as it truly should be.

As you begin to explore this world, tune into your senses.

[...]

What do you hear around you?

[...]

Listen closely to the sounds: the soft ones, the loud ones.  
Let the sounds resonate with you.

[...]

What do you hear?

[...]

Now, look around. Notice the colours surrounding you.

[...]

Where do you find yourself?

[...]

What does this place look like?

[...]

Are you inside or outside?

[...]

Are there people nearby?

[...]





If so, what are they doing?

[...]

What are you doing?

[...]

Now, imagine you're going somewhere else. An important place in this world of yours. Where are you going?

[...]

How are you getting to this place?

[...]

What is happening in this new place you've arrived at?

[...]

Why is this place important?

[...]

How does it make you feel?

[...]

Imagine you want to find people your age – where do you go?

[...]

What are they doing there?

[...]

It's time to go home – where is your home?

[...]

What does it look like?

[...]

Who else lives there?

[...]

Right before you get home, you take a moment to appreciate the world around you. This is your world—a reflection of your values, your dreams and your imagination.

Feel the air on your skin and the ground beneath your feet. Take a deep breath.

When you're ready, open your eyes and return to the present moment, carrying the inspiration of your imagined world with you.”





## Key Advice

### **Seven golden guidelines to create a safe learning environment**

Creating a safe and inclusive learning environment is an ongoing process. By implementing these guidelines, you can foster open communication, a sense of belonging and collective learning:

#### **1. Set clear expectations**

Clearly communicate your expectations and routines from the beginning. Ensure that students understand what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Encourage them to participate in creating these expectations, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility.

#### **2. Build trust**

Establish a trustworthy and secure environment by emphasising that anything shared within the group should remain confidential. Encourage students to make their own decisions about sharing personal experiences and respect their individual levels of comfort.

#### **3. Foster active listening**

Emphasise the importance of truly listening and understanding. Foster an environment where students feel free to express themselves without fear of judgment or criticism and discourage interruptions. Strengthen active listening skills by teaching non-verbal cues and using prompts.

#### **4. Encourage empathy**

Encourage students to consider the feelings and experiences of others and to respond with kindness, acceptance and understanding, even when perspectives differ from their own. Foster an inclusive and respectful environment where empathy is valued and embraced as an essential aspect of communication and mutual understanding.

#### **5. Be a role model**

Lead by example and embody the behaviour you expect from your students. Treat all students with respect, fairness and kindness, and appreciate their diverse backgrounds, individual strengths and contributions. Ensure the safety and well-being of all students by promptly and decisively addressing any form of harassment or discrimination. Reflect on mistakes and offer apologies when necessary.





## **6. Adapt the pace and intensity**

Recognise when emotions escalate and become overwhelming, adjusting the pace or intensity of the activity as necessary. For example, implement the "five-minute rule", where each student can express their controversial view in a respectful manner, or offer a short break for students to journal and reflect on their emotions, enabling them to regulate their feelings.

## **7. Follow up and check-in**

Encourage students to reflect on the impact of the experience on themselves as well as the group. Provide individual or group follow-up and inquire about the well-being of students. Offer the opportunity for further discussion or support if needed. If you believe that the emotional intensity or well-being of the students exceeds your expertise, do not hesitate to seek advice from a student advisor, mental health professional or the appropriate support services provided by your institution.





## Key Advice

### Check-in activity

When working with a group of students who may not know each other well, begin with a check-in activity designed to build a sense of connection between the students and yourself. This connection is the foundation for a safe and open learning environment, which is key to a successful session.

Adapt the activity to the group size, choosing between small groups or a full-class setting. Here are some options to help students feel comfortable and included:

**Personal object sharing:** Ask students to bring or select an item, photo or song that represents something important to them. Invite them to briefly explain why they chose this, and how it reflects their values or experiences.

**Descriptive adjective introduction:** Invite students to introduce themselves using an adjective that reflects their personality or interests (e.g., "Adventurous Sam" or "Curious Maria"). This adds a fun and memorable element to introductions, making it easier for students to connect and remember each other.

**Mood card selection:** Provide a set of images, mood cards, or simple drawings and ask students to select one that reflects how they're feeling in the moment. Encourage them to share why they chose that particular card. This allows creative, non-verbal expression and can help students feel more at ease expressing their current state.

As the facilitator, actively listen to each student and ask follow-up questions that show genuine interest and engagement with each participant's contribution. This will make students feel seen and heard and set a respectful and inclusive tone for the activities to follow.





## List of VALUES

Accountability	Ethics	Kindness	Self-respect
Achievement	Excellence	Knowledge	Serenity
Adaptability	Fairness	Leadership	Service
Adventure	Faith	Learning	Simplicity
Altruism	Family	Legacy	Spirituality
Ambition	Financial stability	Leisure	Sportsmanship
Authenticity	Forgiveness	Love	Stewardship
Balance	Freedom	Loyalty	Success
Beauty	Friendship	Making a difference	Teamwork
Being the best	Fun	Nature	Thrift
Belonging	Future generations	Openness	Time
Career	Generosity	Optimism	Tradition
Caring	Giving back	Order	Travel
Collaboration	Grace	Parenting	Trust
Commitment	Gratitude	Patience	Truth
Community	Growth	Patriotism	Understanding
Compassion	Harmony	Peace	Uniqueness
Competence	Health	Perseverance	Usefulness
Confidence	Home	Personal fulfillment	Vision
Connection	Honesty	Power	Vulnerability
Contentment	Hope	Pride	Wealth
Contribution	Humility	Recognition	Well-being
Cooperation	Humor	Reliability	Wholeheartedness
Courage	Inclusion	Resourcefulness	Wisdom
Creativity	Independence	Respect	
Curiosity	Initiative	Responsibility	<b>Write your own:</b>
Dignity	Integrity	Risk -taking	_____
Diversity	Intuition	Safety	_____
Environment	Job security	Security	_____
Efficiency	Joy	Self-discipline	_____
Equality	Justice	Self-expression	_____





## Action Plan

After discussing your values, identify one or two specific situations in the coming weeks where you may face a challenge in staying true to these values. For each situation, describe the action you will take to express your values authentically.

Template:

*On/in..... at ....., I will .....* [indicating the (various) core value(s) that align with the actions in brackets]

*Example:*

*On Monday, 7 October at the club hockey meeting, I will share (openness/honesty) how I feel about the new rule that the goalie is solely responsible for the goalie's bag. I will indicate that I believe that we should share this responsibility as a team (collective responsibility/interdependence) and will propose a schedule (proactive).*

Situation 1: .....

Action: On/in..... at ....., I will .....

Situation 2: .....

Action: On/in..... at ....., I will .....







## V. References

Brené Brown (2020) Dare to Lead. List of Values

<https://brenebrown.com/resources/dare-to-lead-list-of-values/>

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