Values and goals

The difference between a value and a goal, and how to turn one into the other.

People often mix the two up.

Values

- A direction, like heading west
- Never finished
- Available right now, in any situation
- About how I act
- "Being a caring friend"

Goals

- A destination, like a town on the way
- Can be ticked off
- In the future
- About what I achieve
- "Ring Maeve on Friday"

Why the difference matters

- **Goals without values feel empty.** You reach one and wonder why you bothered, or you chase the next.
- **Values without goals stay vague.** Good intentions that never turn into action.
- **Values are always available.** You may not be able to reach a goal today. You can always take one small step in the direction of a value.

From value to goal to action

Value	Being a present, involved parent
↓	
Goal for this month	A regular evening with each child
↓	
Action this week	Board game with Seán on Thursday, phone in another room

A check for any goal

1. Which of my values does it serve?
2. Is it something I can do, not only something I hope will happen?
3. Does it say what I will do, not only what I will stop? ("Stop shouting" and "not drink" only say what to avoid. Turn them round: what will I do instead?)

A value that matters to me, and a goal that would serve it

The first small action, and when

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Committed action plan

Turning what matters into something you do this week.

Name _____ Date _____

The value I want to act on

A goal that serves it (specific, and mine to do)

The smallest next step: what, when, where, with whom

What will get in the way

Thoughts and feelings that will try to stop me

- ☐ "I cannot"
- ☐ "What is the point?"
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Tiredness
- ☐ Self-doubt
- ☐ Guilt

Practical obstacles

☐ Time ☐ Money ☐ Other people ☐ Energy

How I will respond to each

How willing am I to have those thoughts and feelings and do it anyway?

0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

Not at all — Completely

If willingness is below 7, make the step smaller until it is not.

Who I will tell

After I did it: what happened, and what I noticed

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