



Write With Me
Wednesdays
www.WellfleetCircle.com

I teach an in person writing class at my local college. Over an eight week semester, my students write stories about themselves based on universal “themes” such as family, turning points, work and career, etc.

The last three themes are interconnected.

In the theme “Spirituality”, students spell out what they VALUE.

In the theme “Death” they explore how they want to be remembered and what they would miss the most.

Finally in the theme “Goals and Aspirations”, they use the information from the previous two themes to map out how they want to live now and in the future - what’s important to them and what their goals are.

The three themes combined are a powerful exercise in self-knowledge and awareness. I want to share these with you over the next three “Write With Me Wednesdays”.

Please let me know if you have any questions. You can just hit reply and I’ll respond back to you.

Here is the Values Exercise. You can find a list of Value words on the internet or [grab the list on my website here](#).

VALUES EXERCISE:

We all have values, but those values may change over time. Some of our values may stay the same throughout our lives but the priority of the value or the goals associated with that value might change.

In addition, you have values, goals and priorities for your work, family and personal lives that might conflict or compete with each other. How do you reconcile these?

There are many ways to explore our values, goals and priorities, below are some thought questions and writing exercises that may be useful.

Step 1:

Look over the list of values and choose the eight-ten from the list or your own list that immediately appeal to you as your values. DO NOT worry that you have to pick the right ones now; you can do this exercise over and over. In fact I recommend doing so every 90 days.

Now that you have your eight-ten values write them out here in **random** order:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

10.

A sample list might look like: Health, Love, Fun, Comfort, Learning, Intimacy, Success, Peace, Wealth, and Happiness.

Step 2:

Next to each value write a sentence beginning with "I believe" and then complete it with a statement relating to that value.

Example: If the value is Caring: "I believe that all people should be treated with compassion, kindness and generosity."

Use your own words, there are no wrong answers and you can keep this to yourself.

Step 3:

Look over what you have written, is your list of values in the order of importance to you? What is your top value? The next? And so on.

Tips:

If you are having a hard time ordering your values, ask yourself, if I could only satisfy one value, which one would it be? Write that one down first. Then ask the question again.

Another way to help you prioritize if you are stuck between two values is to imagine doing an activity relating to each and see which activity you would rather be doing. For example, would you rather take a class on a topic of interest to you (value: Learning) or spend that time practicing yoga (value: Health)? Of course this can be fuzzy as I can see that taking a class could be good for my mental health and that yoga is also about learning. Don't over think this, use your gut.

Write your newly ordered list here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

It is important to note that given the same list of values, two people are very likely to order the lists differently. **The order of your lists speaks to your personal priorities.**

Did anything surprise you? Did you learn anything about yourself? Are you living your life right now, each day, according to both your values and priorities?

What do I mean by that? Well there is just so much time in the day, so you probably cannot focus on all of your values at the same time with equal intensity. Also, in the world of text, email etc, distractions are everywhere and it can be easy to drift away from values and priorities.

In these next 90 days, can you focus on your top one or two values? If not, why? Is there something in your life you need to adjust?

Happy Writing,
Melanie

P.S. If you live in the Bay Area and want to take a live class with me, I will be teaching at College of Marin in Kentfield. If this is your first class with me, you can sign up for Guided Autobiography, Class 3741 at <https://marincommunityed.augusoft.net/> . Registration is open starting January 3. Hope to see you there.