

## TOOL: Hierarchy of Values

We all have values that motivate us, whether we've identified them or not. Chances are that you haven't recently thought about your values. The Hierarchy of Values (HOV) tool will help reintroduce what is most important to you. Start by writing down as many of your values as you can think of. There are no right or wrong answers as these are very personal. When you have written as many as you can, group them into main categories, ultimately narrowing your list to five. List them in order of importance in this table. If you are struggling to figure out exactly what your values or priorities are, simply consider what you spend your money on. Often this will accurately reflect, in order, what we priorities in our life and value the most.

### Hierarchy of Values Worksheet

WHAT I VALUE MOST
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Your list may look something like this:

WHAT I VALUE MOST
1. My relationship with my partner
2. My children
3. My physical health
4. My financial well-being

Look over your list again. Do you notice anything missing? It's rare that a person lists their addictive behaviour as a value even though it's likely to be the single most important priority in their life. An addictive behaviour can become a priority in your life, even though it damages everything else that you think is important.

Now, think about how your addictive behaviour impacts each of your values. Every time you engage in your addictive behaviour, you choose it over your values. You gamble with what you treasure and hold dear; you compromise your value system. Take an honest look at your list and insert your addictive behaviour where you are in fact putting your addictive behaviour. For many people, when they are honest about this, they realise it is number one, their top priority.

<b>WHAT I VALUE MOST - In the Way I Live My Life</b>
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|---|
| 1. Engaging with my addictive behaviour |
| 2. My relationship with my partner      |
| 3. My children                          |
| 4. My physical health                   |
| 5. My financial well-being              |

A successful recovery requires sobriety to be a valued priority in your life. Everything else that you value depends on this so it makes sense to put this as your number one priority - look after your recovery and you have made a good start to protect all the other things you value most.

<b>What I Value Most -In the Way I Will Live My Life in Future</b>
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|---|
| 1. Abstaining from my addictive behaviour |
| 2. My relationship with my partner        |
| 3. My children                            |
| 4. My physical health                     |
| 5. My financial well-being                |

When people do this exercise, they often come away with an "ah ha" moment. At one SMART meeting, a woman who was new to recovery did this exercise with the help of the facilitator. When he asked her why alcohol wasn't on her list, she burst into tears. She hasn't had a drink since!

It can be helpful to carry around your completed Hierarchy of Values. Pull it out of your pocket and review it if you are not thinking clearly and have thoughts of using. You can remind yourself you were thinking better when you wrote it and considered what you want long-term.

You may now have a clearer picture of how your addictive behaviour affects what you value most. These next two exercises will help you look deeper into what you want for yourself and help you identify specific and important goals you want to achieve to bring more meaning to your life.