

## **Student/Client Exercises History and Profile Quiz**

### ***How Childhood Dreams Become Adult Habits***

As with the learners in your classrooms and seminars, your own family history influences your decisions today. Dreams and fantasies about wanting toys, clothes, and other possessions (material and intrinsic) begin in childhood and stay with us more or less over the years. The dream of getting the “treasures” we want is both symbolic and literal for children, and the dream endures for many of us throughout adulthood. The following exercise is designed to help you examine your unique money history and recall your dreams and fantasies about the way your parents taught you to value money and the things money could buy. Doing this will contribute to self-understanding and should help you better understand the patterns of your students and clients.

Whether spending money, managing money, or making investment decisions, you can unwittingly reenact your original family culture without being aware of why you are doing it. In fact, you may be imitating a parent’s behaviors *even when you do not like those behaviors*.

When you establish a relationship with a partner that will involve joint finances, you now are dealing with the family patterns and cultures from *two* distinct pasts. Identifying your childhood relationships to money will help give you insight into what you value (or hate) about your financial life today and will allow you to shed the behaviors you have outgrown. The goal is to make choices that fully reflect your adult values rather than the needs, wants or shoulds that might still be mired in your childhood.

### ***Your Unique Financial History***

With only a few minutes of serious reflection, you can record vital information about your childhood that will help you understand your relationship to money today.

**Step One:** Think carefully about what went on in your childhood and how you interacted with your parents and siblings when it came to your allowance, discussions (or fights) about money, silences when you asked questions, the purchases you made, the “things” that you wanted, how and whether you got them, and the purchases and decisions about money that were made for you. Write a few summary points that you recall as being particularly significant.

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**Step Two:** Write a brief description of your most positive childhood memories about money and finances, or the things that you knew that money could buy. What did you enjoy? What were the special features? What made it “special”?

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**Step Three:** Write a brief description of your most negative childhood memories about money and finances, or the things that you knew that money could buy. What did you most dislike? What experiences related to money and finances made you unhappy when you were a child?

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**Step Four:** Now, compare your childhood experiences with your positive and negative financial habits as an adult. Do you recognize any childhood patterns or preferences brought into adulthood? If so, are they compatible with your adult values and lifestyle, or do they cause disharmony? It is time to claim your own values without ever again having to look back in time.

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***The Payoffs of Becoming Financially Competent***

The payoffs of learning about these influences and about your money motives and behaviors can be huge. Ask your partner to complete these exercises too, because the issues you will uncover can help smooth the way for improved communication and mutual understanding. In fact, the relationship benefits that will emerge are immediately transferable to the other personal and professional choices you will make in life.

To begin to use your money history to gain insight into your current behaviors, here are three crucial questions to ask yourself before you approach the checkout counter on your next shopping trip:

4. Why do I want to buy this/these items?
5. How do I make spending decisions? Am I actively engaged or passive and reactive?
6. Does my decision-making approach help me or hurt me?

As you become better acquainted with your own inner motivations, the answers to these three questions will sharpen. Focusing on these three questions will help you to further hone your understanding of your spending patterns. You will discover which purchases are habit-driven or based on satisfying childhood desires, and which ones are truly value-driven, and you can use this insight to purposefully navigate your way through the financial decisions you face everyday.

### ***Now Try the Quiz for Yourself***

The LifeValues Profile will show you how your four LifeValues categories influence your own decision making. The results can help you start a conversation with loved ones, advisers, and even those who depend on you. Encourage the key individuals who participate in or influence your decision making to take the quiz as well. That should help you improve your ability to work together, while maintaining your own identity as you make wise choices.

*Expect your categories (inner, physical, social and financial) to overlap.* Bear in mind that there is no “wrong” answer. You are simply identifying your preferences. Remember that your answers are intensely personal—resist the urge to choose an answer someone else might believe is right for you. Quickly choose only one answer per statement, the one that feels most like who you really are. Record your answers in the space provided. Then, use the instructions that follow to interpret your score. You will learn how your values are impacting your financial and other decisions.

## The LifeValues Profile Quiz

1. My decision about which vehicle to drive comes down to this main issue:
  - a) My family members are on board with my decision, and the vehicle will serve all our needs as a family.
  - b) I want a vehicle that is dependable and gets me where I'm going with the least amount of trouble.
  - c) I'll weigh the costs and benefits of each vehicle and choose the one that meets my budget.
  - d) I make enough to be able to afford the vehicle I love to drive even if the gas mileage is not great.
  
2. One important priority I have in looking for my next home includes finding
  - a) A place where I can make new friends (and/or my children can find friends and playmates).
  - b) A home in a location where I can have more quiet and privacy.
  - c) A home in a nice neighborhood that will appreciate in value.
  - d) A home that has more space, more interesting amenities, or more modern features than my present home.
  
3. If I were to be late with a payment that would have serious credit consequences, I would worry most about
  - a) My reputation and credit score
  - b) How this mistake could possibly have occurred and what I need to do so it cannot happen again.
  - c) Where I could obtain the money to make the payment.
  - d) The impact this might have on my partner or family.
  
4. The fundamental reason for health insurance is, in my opinion
  - a) To prevent bankruptcy or severe financial strain possibly due to medical bills.
  - b) To be insured against loss of home, material things or lifestyle.
  - c) To protect the wellbeing of family or loved ones.
  - d) To allow life's adventures to continue.
  
5. When I think about changing jobs, my main concern is
  - a) Whether the new job would pay enough so I can cover the costs of my lifestyle
  - b) Finding work that allows me to help others and enjoy my colleagues
  - c) The total financial package: pay, health care and retirement
  - d) Having opportunities for personal fulfillment and challenge in my work.
  
6. I tend to deal with my housing priorities
  - a) In terms of lifestyle, reworking my ideas to learn what I really want for myself.
  - b) On a bottom-line basis: Do I have enough to make a comfortable down payment? Can I handle the monthly payments without too much worry?
  - c) In terms of physical space: Will it have enough amenities? Extra guest rooms? Closets?
  - d) By regarding home as the center of my family and social life where I can entertain and my children can have their friends over.
  
7. In deciding what to do with a sudden cash windfall, I would
  - a) Consider taking a trip around the world and enjoy myself thoroughly
  - b) Investigate a variety of investment possibilities and the long-term return of each.
  - c) Use it to fund a need, wish or desire of a family member.
  - d) Buy a new house with all the amenities and comforts I've always wanted.
  
8. In case of serious accident or illness, my support network would likely be

- a) Well-established and responsive.
  - b) Not readily accessible.
  - c) Something I haven't really thought about.
  - d) In place but loosely organized.
9. Any decisions I would make (or have already made) about planning for retirement are based on
- a) The future needs of my partner and adult children and grandchildren.
  - b) The retirement calculations that I have made, which have given me a benchmark number toward which to target my savings for later life.
  - c) My desire to live an intellectually and physically fulfilled life as an older adult.
  - d) My ambition to maintain a comfortable lifestyle in a beautiful place and pleasant community during retirement.
10. To feel totally satisfied with my housing, I would need
- a) A place where I can live as I please and that reflects the "real me" to the outer world.
  - b) To know my family was 100 percent satisfied and comfortable in the home in which we live.
  - c) To know that my home represents a good investment as well as a comfortable place to live.
  - d) A different location or more physical space to expand into than I have in my present home.
11. When it comes to "impulse purchases" of items not previously intended
- a) I reflect on whether I've treated myself lately and then make my decision.
  - b) I recall the commitments I have made to others and consider whether I should buy the item.
  - c) I tend to buy only what is on my list unless the item offers serious savings on something I know will be needed in the future.
  - d) I think about how well it will fit in with what I already own and enjoy.
12. The definition of "health" most appropriate for me would be
- a) The ability to earn living and maintain my lifestyle.
  - b) Freedom to share the company and affection of others.
  - c) The foundation of financial security and wealth accrual.
  - d) Freedom to pursue my dreams and goals.
13. In making vacation plans, I weigh the value and cost mostly in light of
- a) The opportunity to share the trip with people (or someone) I care about and enjoy being with.
  - b) The chance to see new places, architecture, cuisine, and lifestyles.
  - c) Fulfilling my desires of being able to do whatever I please during my vacation.
  - d) The likelihood that the enjoyment will be well worth my investment.
14. If I "fell in love with" and wanted to buy a really big-ticket item (boat, motorcycle, furniture suite) that was not within my budget
- a) I would figure out how to adjust my budget in order to be able to afford it if it were, in all ways, attractive to me.
  - b) I would figure out a way to be able to afford something just like it at some future point.
  - c) I might buy it on impulse and experience serious "buyer's remorse" later.
  - d) If I thought it would enhance my family life or give me greater access to friends, I would sacrifice to buy it—maybe even work extra—to be sure I could make all the payments.

15. When people visit my home and see my lifestyle
- a) They know that my family and community take priority in my life.
  - b) They can learn a lot about who I am and what I care about.
  - c) They cannot tell whether or not I am financially successful.
  - d) They know I take great pride in the comfort and beauty of my home and its surroundings.
16. In general, I make life's serious, non-financial decisions
- a) Rationally and unemotionally, mostly as business decisions.
  - b) Mostly on the basis of how they support my quality of life.
  - c) After discussing them with friends or family I trust.
  - d) Independently and privately, unlikely to discuss them with others.
17. When I hear the word "security," I automatically think of
- a) A lifestyle in which I have what I need to be comfortable over the long term.
  - b) A diversified and sound investment portfolio, and a home that is not mortgaged to the hilt.
  - c) Family and friendships and a sense of community that will last for a lifetime, no matter what happens.
  - d) Having achieved a sense of accomplishment and the freedom to be who I really am.
18. If a home gives me the "freedom" I need, that means I can
- a) Be independent, coming and going as I please and living my life as I see fit.
  - b) Share many common interests with friends and family who live close by.
  - c) Pay off my mortgage quickly because I would like to own it free and clear as soon as possible.
  - d. Make any changes I would like to expand, remodel, improve or redecorate.
19. In my ideal financial position, I would have the freedom to
- a) Live my life independently without worry.
  - b) Share in the activities my friends and family enjoy without stressing my budget.
  - c) Keep my expenses as low as possible while building financial security for the future.
  - d) Buy the things I like most and enjoy a comfortable lifestyle.
20. Given a choice of health care plans, a major criterion for me would be
- a) Having control over which medical providers I can use.
  - b) A strong referral by a reliable friend or co-worker.
  - c) Lower deductibles and co-pays for more extensive coverage.
  - d) A health plan that emphasizes wellness and preventative care.

### ***Scoring Your Profile Results***

Now that you have completed the quiz, here is the key to determining which combination of decision factors tends to drive your financial decisions. Your ultimate goal, of course, is to help your students or clients see which decision factors are driving their financial choices and to help them adjust appropriately. Interpreting your own results first will provide you depth of understanding.

- I stands for inner values
- S stands for social values
- P stands for physical values
- F stands for financial values

Refer to the following list as you score your answers, keeping count of how many Is, Ss, Ps and Fs you have chosen.

1	a. S	b. I	c. F	d. P
2	a. S	b. I	c. F	d. P
3	a. I	b. F	c. P	d. S
4	a. F	b. P	c. S	d. I
5	a. P	b. S	c. F	d. I
6	a. I	b. F	c. P	d. S
7	a. I	b. F	c. S	d. P
8	a. S	b. I	c. F	d. P
9	a. S	b. F	c. I	d. P
10	a. I	b. S	c. F	d. P
11	a. I	b. S	c. F	d. P
12	a. P	b. S	c. F	d. I
13	a. S	b. P	c. I	d. F
14	a. P	b. F	c. I	d. S
15	a. S	b. I	c. F	d. P
16	a. F	b. P	c. S	d. I
17	a. P	b. F	c. S	d. I
18	a. I	b. S	c. F	d. P
19	a. I	b. S	c. F	d. P
20	a. I	b. S	c. F	d. P

## ***Interpreting Your Score***

A very high LifeValues score (above 9) and a lower LifeValues score (4 and below) clearly reveal dominant (high scores) and less important (low scores) decision drivers. Scores that are fairly even across all categories suggest that the four domains are balanced in your life. Neither situation is preferable to the other. The point is simply to understand how and why you decide as you do.

In general, your scores can be interpreted in this way:

1. *Inner LifeValues (Your "I" Score)*. If you scored very high here, you value identity, autonomy, safety and security. Taking charge of your finances can give you the peace of mind you require in a dynamic global village and a challenging economy. You prefer to make your own decisions as a means of self-expression. A very low "I" score suggests that you might see your financial decisions through the eyes of someone else, perhaps deferring to someone else's expectations about your earning, spending, saving and investment patterns. Consider whether that type of decision making is actually providing comfort for you.
2. *Social LifeValues (Your "S" Score)*. A high S score usually indicates that your chief concerns involve family needs or preferences of friends. Are you caring for an aging parent, saving for a child's college fund, or trying to keep pace with an active social circle? Individuals with high S scores generally live and finance interactive, perhaps supportive, lifestyles. A very low S score, on the other hand, might indicate that you live alone, enjoy solitude, and really value financial independence.
3. *Physical LifeValues (Your "P" Score)*. A high P score suggests concern with your health and physical surroundings, perhaps your home or the home you dream of owning. Wise financial planning will support your attempts to maintain a comfortable lifestyle, enjoying the tangible benefits you value. A high P score also indicates an interest in comfort and beauty beyond mere functionality. A very low P score might indicate you are always on the go, more interested in experience than environment, one who tends not to collect "things."
4. *Financial LifeValues (Your "F" Score)*. If you scored high in this category, financial management is probably important to you already, or you are strongly inclined to learn to handle your finances more effectively. Developing your financial skills will honor this value and maximize your knowledge and interest in things financial. If you scored very low in the F category, you probably make your financial decisions impulsively or at least subjectively. You might be using money to satisfy your social or physical preferences, and that's just fine as long as you can afford to do this. Consider as well that you might be neglecting your need to save, invest and spend wisely because these concerns are not of high enough value to you.



### ***Interpreting a Balanced LifeValues Profile***

Scoring fairly evenly across all categories suggests a balance among relationships and independence, community and privacy. It might mean that you value your job for everything it offers: great co-workers, good compensation, and pleasant working conditions. You are probably handling your earning, spending and saving habits well—or at least well enough to provide a sense of comfort. Each category impacts your capacity for decision-making.

### ***Interpreting Higher and Lower Scores***

For scores in particular domains that reach 9 or higher, refer to the following *Table 1. High Scores* to help you understand how that domain helps drive your financial and other decisions.

If you scored 4 or below in a particular domain, the following *Table 2. Low Scores* can help you see how that particular part of the decision making process is playing a minor (but possibly important) role in your choices.

**Table 1. High Scores**

High I Score	High S Score	High P Score	High F Score
<p>You have a clear sense of self.</p> <p>Whether you are yet a disciplined saver or not, you know that financial security can be a key to personal fulfillment.</p> <p>You “invest” in self-expression, seek your own sense of purpose and want an environment that reflects “who you really are.”</p> <p>You are concerned with doing whatever you can to achieve your goals and make your dreams come true.</p> <p>You are more concerned with your own future well being with less regard for others’ needs or demands.</p>	<p>You probably look after the needs of others as much or even more than your own.</p> <p>You seek to work and play with people you care about.</p> <p>You probably make financial decisions mostly to nurture relationships.</p> <p>You budget with the needs and well-being of loved ones in mind.</p> <p>You might make investment and other financial choices because trusted individuals advise you to do so.</p> <p>Your financial goals involve family and/or your community.</p>	<p>You seek an income and cash flow that helps you achieve a certain lifestyle or standard of living.</p> <p>You value prosperity in order to enjoy material goods and comfort.</p> <p>Your main goal in earning and spending is to enjoy life in your home and surroundings.</p> <p>As you invest in your savings and retirement accounts, you are likely to be planning for a <i>comfortable</i> future with the time and place where you can enjoy your retirement lifestyle.</p> <p>If you’ve been spending too much, better start saving NOW.</p>	<p>You probably like your job mostly for its financial benefits.</p> <p>When you spend money or invest, knowing you are getting value gives you pleasure.</p> <p>You make financial plans for long-term security and short-term goals.</p> <p>Your financial decisions are “hands on.”</p> <p>You also value accuracy, organization, and discipline in the financial professionals and organizations that you deal with.</p>

**Table 2. Low Scores**

Low I Score	Low S Score	Low P Score	Low F Score
<p>You might be a little out of touch with your need for personal expression, perhaps staying in a job with little fulfillment.</p> <p>You spend your money on other people or to achieve a particular lifestyle.</p> <p>You might enjoy finding a bargain, but you might also unwittingly be depriving yourself.</p> <p>Your plans for your future might be hard to finance and secure because they are not fully developed.</p>	<p>You may be a loner and tend to make financial decisions-wise or not- in your own self interests.</p> <p>Your spending may be guided by lifestyle, or the need for self-expression, but it is not related to the needs or wants of others.</p> <p>You save to honor personal goals rather than to ensure a certain type of family or community lifestyle in your retirement years.</p>	<p>Material pleasures and consumables have little interest for you.</p> <p>Others might question your lifestyle, but you are more focused on people or job satisfaction than on keeping up with the Joneses.</p> <p>You are likely to spend on behalf of others or in order to ensure your safety or self-expression.</p> <p>Saving is, for you, a way to protect family needs or self-fulfillment. A modest retirement might work out just fine for you.</p>	<p>Budgeting is annoying to you, and you have little interest in investing or in balancing your accounts.</p> <p>Your spending is aimed at rewarding relationships or comfortable lifestyle; job satisfaction drives your work.</p> <p>You might be susceptible to impulsive buying.</p> <p>You are probably not a faithful saver unless you establish automatic systems to do this for you.</p> <p>Money topics are not likely to be enjoyable to read or discuss.</p>

***Changing LifeValues***

Your Profile can shift over time, and your preferences might vary in response to the particular issues or opportunities facing you at any given time. Remember Joan, the graphic artist who left husband, home and everything familiar to strike out on her own at the age of 58? Several months after her move, when she was settled in, living on her own for the first time in her life, she took the LifeValues Profile Quiz again. Her scores were markedly different from her earlier profile, now aligned with her deepest values. For the first time in her life, her highest score was in the “F” Financial domain! Her next highest scores,

Inner and Physical, were tied at 5, and Social was at a low of 2. Joan was not surprised: “I’m taking care of myself for the first time in my life, and I’m finally managing my finances on my own,” she said.

In addition, your own profile might be very different from that of your spouse, partner, or other person central to your financial decisions. Such a situation should be considered carefully.

If your “other half” scores low where you score high and vice versa, financial decision making over time could eventually undermine your relationship. And, if you are not even able to discuss your individual results on the quiz and consider accounting for differences, chances are very good that financial decisions are already negatively impacting your mutual lives. In that case, professional help would be a very good idea.

### ***Applying Life Value Scores for your Future Security***

You have taken the Profile Quiz because you are about to give this exercise to your students or clients. You will be enriched as a teacher or counselor by learning how this simple exercise can open up their ability to reflect and to communicate their deeply held values—sometimes values they never knew they even had. As you continue to learn about your own financial posture and money decisions, thinking hard about what matters to you in life, the interaction with your students or clients will continue to inform your teaching style and help you become a more empathic financial educator.

It is a good idea to date and save today’s results as a comparison to future quiz results, as you will also counsel your learners. At the end of your course, you will see some “aha’s” coming from your students and clients as they resolve to change—if they can—some of their decision making habits that no longer serve them. You too will know whether you are on the right financial path, so it is always wise to retake the quiz from time to time and see how your decision making process has changed with new knowledge and insight.

Awareness over time gives us more information about how we are influenced by the social realities that surround us. At the same time we begin to resist those social influences that prevent us from living life and handling our affairs according to our own core values.

The LifeValues Profile Quiz also can be an excellent tool to consult whenever you are facing a major life decision: career change, marrying, starting a family, buying a home, retiring, taking over the care of an aging parent, or any planned or unplanned major life transition.

Too often, we can get caught up in the momentum of these emotion-laden decisions without thinking them through. Before we know the whys of our own decision making, we might have made irreversible choices that later “do not feel right” to us and have disastrous consequences. Like Joan, even after a long marriage, discovering one’s own core values can have a profound effect. Grounding your choices in your needs and values can help to prevent and avoid poor life decisions.