ACT Therapy Worksheet: Identifying Your Core Values

Intro: Why Core Values in ACT? In Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), core values are your personal compass—guiding you toward a meaningful life despite OCD thoughts or challenges. Identifying them helps you commit to actions that align with what truly matters, fostering fulfillment and resilience. Use the list below for inspiration and follow the steps to discover your unique values.

Core Values List (250 Words for Inspiration)

Below is a list of process-oriented values (verbs or adverbs) to spark ideas. Choose ones that resonate deeply with you.

- Accepting
- Achieving
- Acting boldly
- Acting compassionately
- Acting creatively
- Acting ethically
- Acting independently
- Acting justly
- Acting kindly
- Acting mindfully
- Acting responsibly
- Adapting
- Advocating
- Appreciating
- Aspiring
- Balancing
- Being authentic
- Being courageous
- Being curious
- Being dependable
- Being empathetic
- Being generous
- Being honest
- Being humble
- Being loyal
- Being patient
- Being present
- Being reliable
- Being respectful
- Being supportive
- Building community
- Caring deeply
- Celebrating
- Challenging oneself
- Collaborating
- Communicating clearly
- Connecting
- Contributing
- Creating
- Cultivating growth
- Dancing joyfully
- Daring greatly
- Discovering
- Embracing change
- Encouraging
- Engaging actively
- Exploring
- Expressing gratitude
- Fostering harmony
- Giving freely
- Growing continuously
- Healing
- Helping others
- Honoring traditions
- Inspiring
- Learning constantly
- Listening actively
- Living adventurously
- Living authentically

- Living intentionally
- Loving unconditionally
- Mentoring
- Nurturing
- Persevering
- Practicing gratitude
- Promoting equality
- Reflecting deeply
- Seeking balance
- Serving others
- Sharing generously
- Striving passionately
- Supporting faithfully
- Teaching
- Trusting oneself
- Valuing diversity
- Other: _____

What Values ARE

- **Process-Oriented:** Focus on ongoing actions, like adverbs or verbs (e.g., "loving" instead of "loved"—something you actively do).
- **Lifelong Commitments:** Things you always want to pursue, feeling an internal need without societal pressure.
- **Independent of Others:** You'd embody them regardless of what others do or notice.
- **Your Responsibility:** The burden is on you, not outcome-based (e.g., not "being rich" or "successful," which you can't fully control).

What Values ARE NOT

- **Feelings:** Fleeting and unstable (e.g., acting kindly based on value, not daily emotions toward someone).
- **Morals and Rules:** Not societal codes; they're your flexible internal guide, not rigid dictates.
- **Goals:** Specific destinations that can overshadow values (e.g., chasing a million dollars might neglect other values).
- **Correct or Incorrect:** Subjective and unique—no right/wrong; like favorite colors or why you love someone.

Step-by-Step Guide to Identifying Core Values

Step 1: First Draft List

Use these prompts to brainstorm core values from the list above:

a) Favorite memories that fill you with meaning/pride: What values were you embodying? _____

b) Times of extreme anger/pet peeves: What values were suppressed? _____

c) Other values for fulfillment: _____

Initial List: _____

Step 2: Refine to Process-Oriented Verbs

Eliminate outcome-based nouns (e.g., “happiness” as a result, not action). Keep/convert to verbs (e.g., “creating” instead of “creativity”). Ensure it’s something you enjoy engaging in forever, not a burden.

Refined List: _____

Step 3: Group Similar Values

Combine related ones (e.g., “creativity” with “learning”). Choose the main value for each group.

Grouped/Main Values: _____

Step 4: Define Each Value

Write a personal definition for each main value (e.g., “Family” might mean modern vs. traditional).

Definitions:
1. Value: _____ Definition: _____
2. Value: _____ Definition: _____
3. Value: _____ Definition: _____

Step 5: Specific Ways to Live Each Value

For each, list 3-5 ways you already/want to embody it (e.g., for “Creativity”: make jewelry, play guitar 10 min/week).

Ways to Live:
Value 1: _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Value 2: _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Step 6: Make It Realistic

Review and adjust for balance (e.g., "Write 5 min/day" not "1 hour/day"). Avoid black-and-white ideals.

Adjusted Ways: _____

Step 7: Trial and Error

Act on values daily, re-evaluate feelings. Litmus test: Fulfillment from aligned actions, even briefly.

Reflection: After trying, how did it feel? _____

Core Values Chart

Organize your final values into categories. Add as many as fit.

Category	Values (with brief notes)
Personal Growth and Development	_____ _____
Relationships and Community	_____ _____
Integrity & Ethics	_____ _____
Mindset & Approach	_____ _____
Work & Achievement	_____ _____

Pro Tip: Revisit this worksheet regularly—values evolve. Consult an ACT therapist for deeper integration!