THE VALUES EXERCISE

Here's my other favorite brainstorming exercise and it'll help you figure out the second half of your essay in about five minutes.

To begin, pick your top 10 values from the list below.

- personal development
- recognition
- accountability
- inspiration
- music
- helping others
- peace
- diversity
- expertise
- vulnerability
- global awareness
- hunger
- my country
- sleep
- productivity
- intuition
- culture
- healthy boundaries
- second chances
- listening
- family
- excitement
- travel
- adventure
- laughter
- entrepreneurship
- wonder
- health and fitness
- love
- close relationships
- humility
- art
- responsibility
- safety
- wealth
- creativity
- knowledge
- inclusion
- curiosity
- gratitude
- faith
- communication
- interdependence
- efficiency
- stability
- humor
- truth
- order
- excellence
- religion
- beauty
- meaningful work
- trust
- self-expression
- fun
- rationality
- democracy
- self-control
- balance
- adaptability
- success
- independence
- variety
- community
- patience
- challenges
- autonomy
- loyalty
- courage
- self-love
- ritual
- purpose
- privacy
- freedom
- quiet
- compassion
- cooperation
- growth
- authenticity
- practicality
- nature
- objectivity
- leadership
- wisdom
- respect
- strength
- flexibility
- financial stability
- empathy
- belonging
- equity
- resourcefulness
- decisiveness
- competence
- collaboration
- spirituality
- social change
- honesty
- mindfulness
- grace
- __________________
- __________________

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Next, Pick your Top 5 Values.

☐__________________
☐__________________
☐__________________
☐__________________
☐__________________

Once you have those, pick your Top 3.

☐__________________
☐__________________
☐__________________

And then, yes, pick your #1 value. Remember that you’re not losing any of the others, you’re just picking the most important value for you today.

☐__________________

Don’t read ahead ‘til you’ve done that.

Really.

Finally, if you know what career you’d like to pursue—Engineering, for example—put the first letter of that career (E) beside five values of a great Engineer. Maybe you write an “E” next to collaboration, autonomy, and helping others, and in the blank you write in “working with my hands.”

Once that’s done, set these aside.

I’ll tell you what to do with them in a little bit.

To continue writing your college essay, click here.