

Building the **Priorities** Characteristic



This characteristic helps you:

- direct your energy effectively during change
- have a clear sense of purpose and direction
- define and clearly articulate your goals and objectives
- maintain a sense of direction in confusing situations
- avoid taking on too many activities

You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:

- find yourself drained of energy during change
- lack clarity about your goals or priorities
- experience disorientation during a major transition
- are involved in a variety of unconnected activities
- find it hard to say “no” to requests from others
- do not receive clear direction from leaders in your organization



Clarifying Your Values

Each day, we make judgments about how to spend our time and energy based on what is most important to us. The important things include people and activities that are meaningful to us, and they also include our *values*—important and lasting beliefs about what is worthwhile and desirable.

During change, we often have many choices to make. If we have not thought about what’s important to us, we may make these choices based on what is most convenient, or what is most urgent, rather than on the basis of our true priorities. Each time we say “yes” to one thing, we are saying “no” to other things that may be more important. Being out of touch with our values can lead us to waste energy on less-important things, while being clear about our values enables us to use that same energy more effectively.

Try It Yourself

Here’s a simple exercise to help you get in touch with one of your core values:

1. Identify a specific goal you want to achieve.
2. Then answer the question, “What is the purpose of that?” and write down your answer.
3. Take the answer you just wrote down and ask, “What is the purpose of that?” again.
For example:
 - “I want to run a marathon.”
 - “What’s the purpose of running a marathon?”
 - “I want to fully develop my running abilities.”
 - “What’s the purpose of fully developing your running abilities?”
4. Continue this process for three to five rounds or until you can go no deeper and feel you have reached an awareness of a core value.
5. Think about the ways this core value is expressed in your life, and whether you are making decisions that reflect its importance.

Micro-Practice: What can you do “in the moment”?

- ✓ If you feel overwhelmed, stop, take a breath, and identify what is most important to do right now.
- ✓ When someone asks you to do something you don’t want to do but feel you should, ask yourself what you will be saying “no” to if you accept the request.