

Personal Reflection – What Matters to Me

The deep question is, how do you want to live? How do you want to be in this period of your life?
Michael Lerner, M.D.

Think about what is right for you and start thinking about your values, beliefs and understanding about your healthcare.

Articulating your values is important to ensure you receive the medical care you want but also to provide your loved ones with the foundation necessary for making difficult decisions under changing circumstances.

You may want to write down your answers and provide copies to your family members and healthcare providers, or simply use the questions as “food for thought” and discussion.

What is your story? Acknowledge your beliefs, values and concerns

One way to help you identify and articulate your value is to consider how personal experiences make you feel. Consider personal experiences with your own illness or healthcare experiences of family or friends.

Useful questions in the care planning process:

**What experiences have you had with family or friends who became seriously ill or injured?
What have you learned from those experiences?**

What are your hopes, fears or worries about your health condition now and in the future?

- Reveals personal values
- Helps healthcare agents with future decision making

What activities, experiences and beliefs bring your life meaning and allow you to live well?

- Clarify what specifically constitutes a good quality of life for you
- Explore religious, cultural or personal beliefs
- Helps healthcare agents with future decision making

What are your goals if your health worsens?

What trade-offs are you willing to make to meet these goals? What are you willing to sacrifice or not?

- Helps manage expectations
- Reveals priorities

“Asking these allows everybody to understand what the goal really is — what are you really fighting for? It’s for a life that contains certain things.” – Atul Gawande