

AYIN'S BULLSEYE VALUES EXERCISE

The "Bullseye" is a values-clarification exercise that was originally designed by Swedish ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) therapist Tobias Lundgren. I incorporated it from this model and am applying it to artists working in the visual field. I feel it will help artists clarify their values and help them in their working careers.

The dartboard on the following pages is divided into four domains of the artist's life: the artwork itself, the art process, art business (and the relationships associated with this), and personal growth (the personal self as an artist).

To begin with, please write down your values in these four areas of your life. Not everyone has the same values, and this is not a test to see whether you have the "correct" ones. Make sure they are *your* values, not anyone else's. It is *your* personal values that are important.

Values are not the same as goals. Values involve ongoing action; they are like directions we keep moving in, whereas goals are what we want to achieve along the way. A value is like heading West; a goal is like the river or mountain or valley we aim to cross whilst traveling in that direction. Goals can be achieved, whereas values are ongoing.

For example, if you want to be a loving, caring, supportive partner, that is a value: it involves ongoing action. In contrast, if you want to get married, that's a goal—it can be 'crossed off' or achieved.

CLARIFYING YOUR VALUES

Think in terms of general life directions rather than in terms of specific goals. There may be values that will overlap. Write down what you would value if there were nothing in your way or nothing stopping you.

Deep down inside, what is important to you? What do you want your art to stand for? What sort of qualities do you want to cultivate as an artist? How do you want to be in your working relationships with others? Values are our heart's deepest desires for the way we want to interact with and relate to the world, other people, and ourselves. They are leading principles that can guide us and motivate us as we move through life. Values reflect *what* you want to do and *how* you want to do it.

NOW WRITE THEM DOWN!

The Work: This refers to your actual artwork, what it looks like, the messages you want to convey, its effects on others, the qualities (or even personal qualities) you would like to bring to your work, and the form you'd like it to take. Or anything else you can think of:

The Process: You may want to think about the policies you want to set within your schedule and in your workspace, your overall knowledge of art, education, skills development, setting your pace and output, the tools and supplies you want to use, your privacy, order/disorder of your surroundings, meditation and focus, and study.

Business: This refers to how you would like to conduct your business, your professionalism, how you would like to be towards your viewers and collectors, interacting with your colleagues and/or collaborators, volunteering, or your involvement in your art community, online involvement and interaction, internet presence, how organized you want to be, etc.

Your Personal Self: You, as an artist, is the person you are—your core self. It's important that you see yourself setting aside time for your personal growth in this way. This may include personal expressions of creativity, self-improvement, developing life skills and healthy boundaries, getting out into nature, meditation, challenging yourself, taking artistic risks, being authentic, honesty, integrity, discipline, and commitment to your craft.

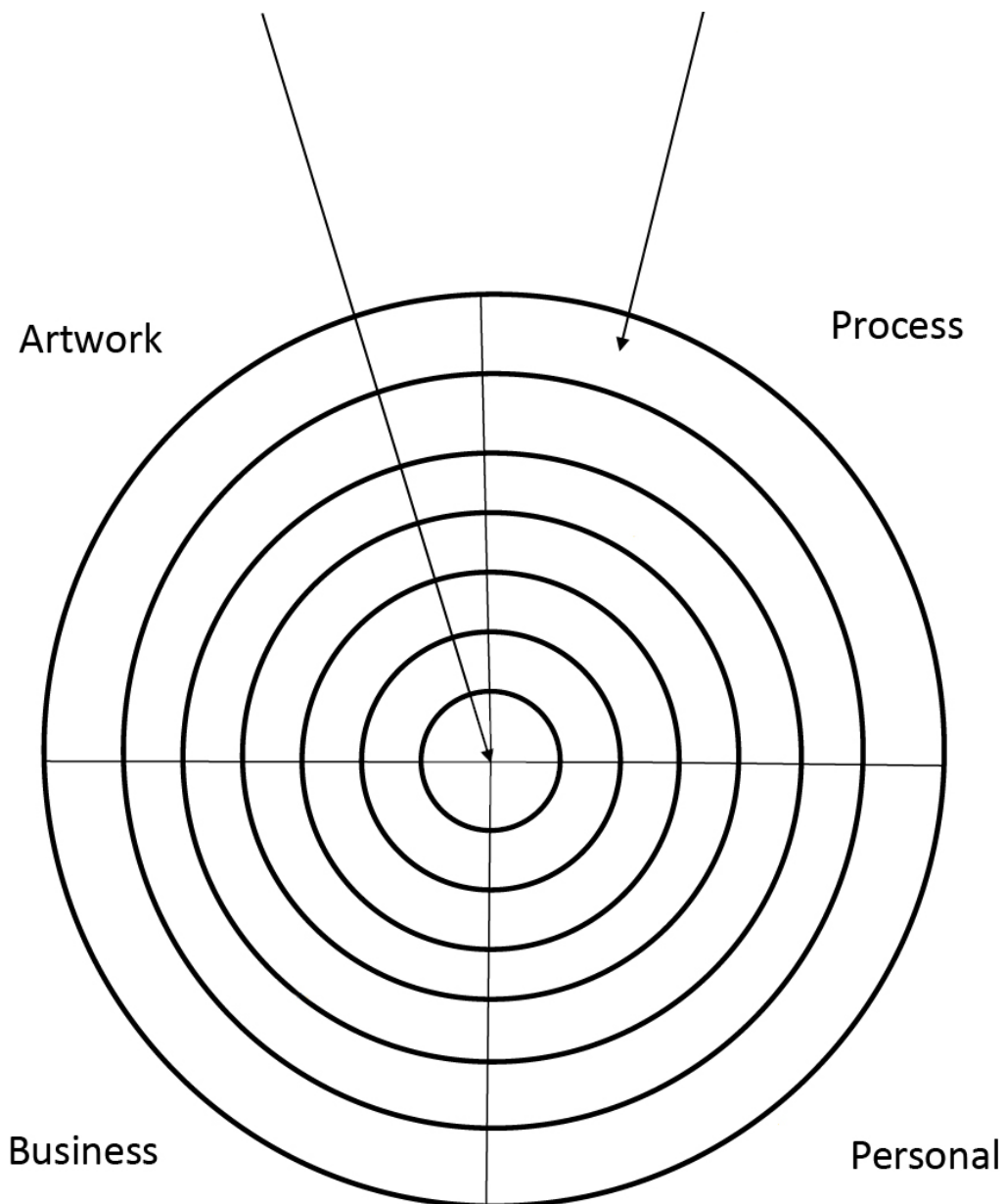
THE BULLSEYE

Read through your values, then make an X in each area of the dartboard to represent where you stand today. An X in the Bullseye (the center of the board) means that you are living fully by your values in that area. An X far from Bullseye implies that you are way off the mark in terms of living by your values.

Since there are four areas, you should mark **four Xs** on the dart board.

I am living fully by my values

I have lost touch with my values



IDENTIFY YOUR OBSTACLES

Now, write down what stands between you and living your current life as the artist you see in your mind based on what you have written regarding your values in these areas. When you think of the values you would like to put into play, what is getting in the way? Describe these obstacle(s), if any, on the lines below:

Now, estimate to what extent these obstacle(s) prevent you from living in a way that's in line with keeping with your values. On a scale of 1-7, circle one number that best describes how *powerful* these obstacles are:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Doesn't prevent me at all

Prevents me completely

ACTION PLAN

Think about actions you can take in your daily life that would tell you that you are zeroing in on the bullseye in each of these artistic areas of your life. These actions could be small steps toward a particular goal, or they could be actions that reflect what you want to be. Taking a valued step includes being willing to encounter the obstacle you've identified and taking action anyway. *Can you think of at least one small step for each area?*

The Artwork:

The Process:

Business:

Your Personal Self as an Artist:

You can come back to this exercise from time to time and re-assess how on-point you are, and how in line you are with your values while finding new solutions and new steps for your Action Plans.