


Values Prototyping: Using Action to Help Clients Explore Their Values

Jenna LeJeune, Ph.D.
 Jason Luoma, Ph.D.
 Brian Pilecki, Ph.D.



1

Disclosures:

- Relevant Financial Relationships:
 - Jenna LeJeune and Jason Luoma receive royalties from New Harbinger publications for a book co-written on a topic similar to the subject of this presentation
 - Brian Pilecki has no financial relationships to declare
- Relevant Nonfinancial Relationships
 - None

2

“We do not need, and indeed never will have, all the answers before we act ... It is often through taking action that we can discover some of them.”

- Charlotte Bunch

3

Outline

- Brief overview of values
- When and why build a values prototype?
- How to do values prototyping
 - Case study
- Practice designing a values prototype

4

Values are...

- How you are living when you are living a meaningful life
- Those qualities, that, when you get to the end of everything, you want to have embodied in your life
- The qualities of living that would lead to you say "Ah, now that was a life well lived!" once you have gotten to the end of it
- How you are living when you are living a well-lived life

5

Values are qualities of action.
They are behavior.

6

If values are behavior, then a great way to learn more about them is by taking them “for a spin”

7

Learning through valuing

Design thinking

- *Designing your life: How to build a well-lived, joyful life* by Burnett & Evans

Distinct from committed action

- Committed action: “How can I best enact this value that is important to me?”
- Values prototyping: “What feedback does this way of engaging give me about what might be most important to me?”

8

What is a prototype?

“When we use the term ‘prototyping’ in design thinking, we do not mean making something to check whether your solution is right. We don’t mean creating a representation of a completed design ... [Prototyping] is all about asking good questions, outing our hidden biases and assumptions, iterating rapidly, and creating momentum for a path we’d like to try out.” (Burnett and Evans, 2016, p. 112)

9

Qualities of effective prototypes

Prototypes are active

- No dead person goals here!

Prototypes attend to the quality of action

- No just *what* you are doing but *HOW* you are doing it

10

When to use values prototyping?

With clients who:

- Have difficulty knowing what is most important to them
- May be more overly intellectualized about values
- Stuck on trying to "figure out" the "right" values before acting
- Could benefit from experiential learning about what ways of living might be meaningful or important to them

After you've already done some initial values exploration

- E.g. Values Card Sort, the Sweet Spot exercise, or the Eulogy exercise.

You likely already have a sense of important valued domains you want to focus on

11

3 Steps of Values Prototyping

1. Design a prototype to test
2. Implement and collect data
3. Review, revise, repeat

12

12

10

11

Case Study: José

- 35 y.o., cisgender, gay man. Married father of 2.
- Initially presented with ambivalence about remaining in his marriage, longstanding depressed mood, and pervasive sense of apathy and meaninglessness
- Initial values work identified important valued domains of parenting and his intimate relationship
- Had already done a values card sort and eulogy exercise from which he identified “loving” “curious” and “present” as potential qualities he thought he may want to embody

13

3 Steps of Values Prototyping

1. **Design a prototype to test**
2. Implement and collect data
3. Review, revise, repeat

14

Three methods for designing prototypes

1. Prototypes that utilize perspective-taking interviews
2. Building prototypes around questions
3. Identifying an “ideal day” to prototype

15

**Method 1:
Perspective-Taking Interviews**

1. Identify a person/people to interview who are living out the quality, value, or valued goal that you want to explore.
2. Identify questions that will help the client step into the interviewee's shoes.

16

Potential questions to ask in perspective-taking interviews

- What do you do on a typical day to live _____?
- How would you describe what living _____ means?
- How have you put _____ living into practice?
- How did you get started on this path of _____ living? What keeps you going on that path?

17

After the interview...

3. Identify post-interview reflection questions:
 - What aspects of this person's story was I attracted to?
 - What parts of their story did I feel some discomfort around?
 - What thoughts/feelings showed up for me during the interview?
 - Could I imagine myself doing anything like that person does? What might the impact of that be for me and those around me?
 - What aspects of how this person is living inspire me?
 - Does their experience give me any ideas of things I could potentially prototype?
 - What do my reactions to their story tell me about what I might value?

18

Case Study

Prototype #1: Prototyping Interview

Step 1: Identify people to interview:

- Bob = curious
- Aunt = loving and present

****What was it about how these people are living that told you they might represent "curious" and "loving/being present?"**

19

Case Study

Prototype #1: Prototyping Interview

Step 2: Select interview questions:

- What does living "curiously" (Bob) or "lovingly" and "being present" (Aunt) mean to you? How do you think you live out these qualities on a daily basis?
- Is living that way meaningful to you? In what way? What impact does it have on you and the others around you?
- What helps keep you on that path of being "curious"/"loving and present" even when it's hard?

20

Case Study

Prototype #1: Prototyping Interview

Step 3: Reflection questions:

- What did I admire about how the person I interviewed lived their life? What did I dislike or feel more neutral about?
- What impact might it have on my life and those around me if I lived more like this person does?
- What does this tell me about what might be important to me and what might not be important to me in terms of living out these values?

21

Method 2:
Build the prototype around questions

- What specific aspects or forms of _____ (e.g., curiosity) do I think might be most meaningful or important to me?
- What impact does it have on my interactions with others when I am more _____ (e.g., lovingly supportive)?
- What is the next smallest step I could take to embody the qualities of _____ (e.g., joyfulness) this week?
- What behaviors would I exhibit if I were embodying _____ (e.g., compassionate living)? What behaviors are not _____ (e.g., compassionate) and thus I would refrain from them?
- Is there something I have done in the past that was in the service of _____ (e.g., caring well for our planet)? What could I do now that is similar so I can see what it's like living out that values as the person I am today?
- What characters do I know from books or films that embody _____ (e.g., justice)? What could I do that would emulate that character in some way?

22

Method 2:
Build the prototype around questions

These prototypes can be:

- Singular activities or ongoing activities that take weeks to accomplish
- Completed in just one context or done across several different valued domains

Be specific including:

- What behavior(s)
- When
- In what context
- What data you are going to collect

23

Case Study
Prototype #2: Question Based Prototype

Domain: parenting

Questions we wanted to answer

- What impact does interacting with my kids in a curious, loving, and present manner have on them?
- What impact does it have on me?

Context: carpooling

24

Case Study
Experiment 1: curiosity

Monday at carpooling

- Arrive 10 minutes early
- Spend 5 minutes visualizing his kids throughout their day. What was potentially meaningful or difficult? What might they have felt proud of?
- Come up with one question he wanted to know more about
- Ask each of them the question on the drive home
- Record data when he gets home

25

Case Study
Experiment 2: lovingly being present

Wednesday at carpooling

- Arrive 5 minutes early
- Turn off car & be standing outside car when the kids come out
- Help the kids in the back
- Before getting in his seat, look at the kids while asking them "How was your day?"
- Wait for answer before getting in his seat
- Record data when he gets home

26

Case Study
Experiment 3: curiosity + loving presence

Friday at carpooling

- Do visualization from exp. 1 at lunchtime
- Arrive 5 minutes early
- Greet kids outside the car with car off
- Sometime that evening, while looking at his child, ask them the question he was curious about
- Look at their face and reaction while they answer
- Record data before bed

27

**Method 3:
Identify an "ideal day" to prototype**

- Could be an idealized version of an actual day when you felt you embodied the value you are prototyping or a fictional ideal day
- Write about that ideal day in detail including what you would be doing, thinking and feeling at the various points during the day
- What elements might be things you would want to test out through a prototype?

28

Plan for potential barriers

- Do I have the resources, both psychological and physical, I need to take action on this prototype? If not, what steps can I take to acquire those resources?
- Do I like this idea? How do I feel toward engaging in this action?
- How confident am I that I can actually implement this prototype?
- Is this prototype specific enough so that I know how to take action on it?
- Is this prototype actionable? Is it something I can do with my hands and my feet versus a feeling or thought that I have little control over?
- What difficult thoughts or feelings do I think are likely to show up once I start implementing this prototype?

29

Exploring the barriers can tell you about what other psychological flexibility processes you may need to target

30

Barrier	Potential flexibility repertoire to target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I'm not the kind of person who can..." • "This isn't going to work" • "I'm too anxious" or "I can't because of the pain" • "I'd love to prototype being more X, if only my partner would first Y" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-As-Context/Flexible Perspective Taking • Defusion • Acceptance/Willingness • Present Moment

31

3 Steps of Values Prototyping

1. Design a prototype to test
2. **Implement and collect data**
3. Review, revise, repeat

32

Step 2: Implement and Collect Data

Identify what data you are going to collect and how. **WRITE IT DOWN!**

Track the immediate and long-term consequences

Track the interpersonal and intrapersonal impact

33

What to include in data collection

When & where they will test out the prototype

What, specifically, will they be doing

Data collection questions

Consider including end-of-the-week reflection for multiple or ongoing experiments

34

34

Immediate and long-term consequences

- Did my actions make a positive difference in an area of life that matters to me? If so, what kind of a difference did it make?
- What got in the way, if anything, of me fully implementing my values prototype as I would have wanted?
- What would it be like if I continued this pattern of behavior over the course of a month, a year, a lifetime?
- If I were looking back on a life in which I had consistently lived out this value to the fullest, how would I feel about having lived that life? What thoughts or feelings might I have if I were to look back at the end of having lived that life?
- If I decided to not continue valuing in this way, what thoughts or feelings might I have a looking back a year from now of not having lived out this value? What might I think or feel at the end of my life as I look back on a life on not having lived out this value?
- Did I experience anything unexpected while implementing or reflecting on this prototype? What might say about me or my values?

35

35

Interpersonal and intrapersonal impact

- How did my actions impact others? How did others react to my actions? Is it possible I'm making assumptions about how my action impacted them and do I need to ask them directly to find out?
- Did engaging in this valued action contribute to a better quality of life for myself or for others around me? If so, in what ways? Do I need to ask others to find out?
- How do I feel about myself having engaged in this valued action? Did I like the person I was when I was engaging in this action?
- What thoughts, feelings, or bodily sensations occurred while I was engaging in this valued action? What thoughts, feelings or sensations showed up after I did the prototype experiment? What do these reactions tell me about what might be important to me?
- How might my relationships be different a year from now if I continued enacting this prototype? What might be possible in future relationships if I continued this way of living?
- How might I feel about myself one year from now if I continued to live out this way of valuing consistently over a whole year?

36

36

Case Study

José's data collection questions

What did I notice in my kids' reactions?

What were my reactions? Thoughts/feelings/sensations?

Was there anything that got in the way or anything I'd like to do different next time?

37

Case Study

José's end-of-the-week reflections

As I look back on prototyping this way of interacting with my kids, how do I feel? What does this tell me about what being a "good dad" would mean to me?

What would it be like if I continued this pattern of interacting with my kids over the course of the next year? What would it be like in a year if I didn't continue this pattern?

What barriers came up? How might I need to do/learn in order to address those barriers in the future? Did I experience anything unexpected while implementing or reflecting on this prototype? What might say about me or my values?

Did I experience anything unexpected while implementing or reflecting on this prototype? What might say about me or my values?

38

José's data collection sheet:

Values Prototyping Data Collection

Qualify:	Where/When/How/Who/What/Why/How Often	Data collection questions
Experiment 1: Solo, curiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active 10 minutes early Active my eyes & spend 5 minutes looking at the prototype during their day. What was potentially interesting to me about that night? What were my reactions? Come up with one question I want to ask them about that question sometimes on the way home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did I notice in my kids' reactions? What were my reactions? Thoughts/feelings/sensations? Was there anything that got in the way or anything I'd like to do different next time?
Experiment 2: Solo, curiosity, presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wed. carpool pickup Turn off car be standing outside car when kids come out Before I get in my seat, look at prototype and ask "how was your day?" What do you think about that? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did I notice in my kids' reactions? What were my reactions? Thoughts/feelings/sensations? Was there anything that got in the way or anything I'd like to do different next time?
Experiment 3: Carpool, curiosity, presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thu. carpool pickup Active 5 minutes early and greet kids Sometimes that evening, ask each child the question I'm curious about while they shower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did I notice in my kids' reactions? What were my reactions? Thoughts/feelings/sensations? Was there anything that got in the way or anything I'd like to do different next time?

39

End of the week reflection:
 What did I learn?
 What did I enjoy?

All I think back on prototyping this way of interacting with my kids, how do I feel? What does this tell me about what being a "good dad" would mean to me?

What would I do, if I continued the process of interacting with my kids over the course of the next year? What would it be like in a year if I didn't continue this pattern?

What barriers come up? What might I need to do/learn in order to address these barriers in the future?

Did I experience anything unexpected while implementing or reflecting on this prototyping? What might say about me or my values?

40

3 Steps of Values Prototyping

1. Design a prototype to test
2. Implement and collect data
3. **Review, revise, repeat**

41

Step 3: Review, Revise, Repeat

Review the data to see what can be learned

Decide next step

- Throw out the value
- Revise prototype
- Expand to other domains
- Commit to value

42

Case Study

Step 3: review, revise, repeat

Curiosity, loving, and presence weren't three separate values. They were both essential components of what he came to think of "lovingly engaging"

- Remember: values aren't words, they are qualities of action

We then moved on what it would look like to live out these values in other valued domains

43



44

Help your partner design a values prototype

1. Break up into groups of three. Decide who will be the "client," who will be the "therapist," and who will be the observer who will be taking notes.
2. Client: Identify the valued domain you want to focus on
3. Identify a quality, valued direction, or valued goal they want to explore
4. Design a value prototype based on a perspective-taking interview
5. Debrief

45

If you have extra time:

- Identify what data the “client” is going to collect
- Plan for potential barriers

46

Tips before you start...

- Don't take this too seriously 😊
- Start small and be specific
- As the therapist, focus on asking good questions rather than offering solutions

47

Time to practice

Follow the instructions on pages 1-3 of your handout under the section

Exercise: Help Your Partner Design a Values Prototype Using the Perspective Taking Interview Method (Step 1 of values prototyping process)

48


Type into the chat box one thing the therapist said in your role play that you thought was most helpful or most evocative or that you might want to use in your own practice

49

Debrief: What did you learn?

50

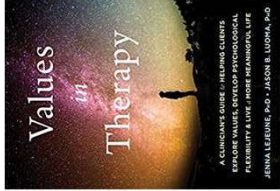
Next Steps...



51

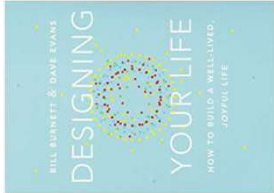
51

To learn more about values prototyping and a whole lot more about doing values-guided therapy...



52

To learn more about applying design thinking to building a life...



53

To learn more about an ACT theory on values...



54

54

53

52
