

PERSONAL VALUES CLARIFICATION EXERCISES

WRITTEN BY JANE

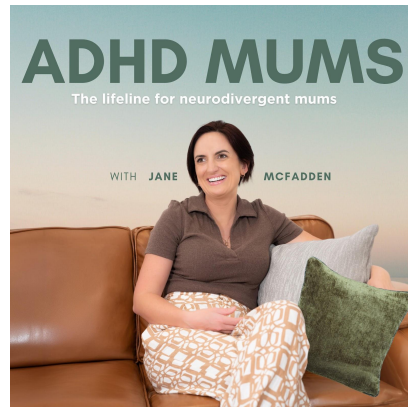
MCFADDEN



ADHD Mums



Introducing Jane McFadden - Founder of ADHD Mums



Certified Autism Spectrum Clinical Specialist Neuroscientist and Autism/ADHD Assessor and Specialist

Jane McFadden is a former psychologist turned Neuroscientist, Author, and Neurodiversity Specialist. After completing her studies in psychology, Jane initially worked as a psychologist but later decided to change her path. In 2019, she wrote the first-ever online psychology program for veterans with PTSD, which became the foundation of a business that has grown into the largest psychology company in Australia by 2024.

Jane has both lived experience and clinical expertise, which uniquely positions her as an expert in the field of neurodiversity. After years of battling burnout, stress, and anxiety, she received a life-altering ADHD diagnosis in 2022, which answered many of her questions and ignited her passion to help other women and girls avoid being misdiagnosed and wrongly medicated. While ADHD medication was life-changing, it also unveiled Autistic traits, leading to her being diagnosed as Autistic in 2024.

Currently pursuing a Master's in Child and Adolescent Psychology to further understand neurodiversity, Jane began the ADHD Mums podcast in 2023, which hit #2 in Australia within its first year. The podcast has been a great success, earning Jane multiple awards and a nomination as a Rising Star finalist at the Australian Podcast Awards. She is also the author of multiple books aimed at supporting neurodivergent women and girls.

Jane's unique combination of personal experience and clinical knowledge allows her to speak with deep insight on the challenges and needs of neurodivergent individuals. Now, she works as a speaker, author, and neurodiversity advocate, sharing her journey and expertise to raise awareness and support others navigating similar experiences. She lives on the Sunshine Coast with her husband and three children.



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Values can't just be words on a page.
To be effective, they must shape action.
— Jeffrey R. Immel

Finding Your Values: The Key to Feeling Like Yourself Again

Motherhood has a way of pulling us in a million directions, leaving us questioning, “*What is this all for?*” Sometimes that feeling of being stuck, anxious, or even chronically low isn’t just about the chaos - it’s about living out of alignment with what really matters to you.

Your values are like an internal compass guiding you toward a life that feels meaningful and fulfilling. But when you’re constantly pulled away from them - whether it’s by the endless logistics of washing, work, or saying yes out of guilt - life starts to feel heavy.

Think about it: if creativity is something you value, but your days are filled with nothing but tasks, you’re going to feel drained. Or if freedom matters to you, but you’re constantly doing things you don’t want to out of obligation, anxiety is going to creep in.

So many of us are chasing joy but can’t find it. Could it be because we’re trying to fill our lives with things that don’t match our values? You might see another mum rave about how 30 minutes of yoga transformed her life, so you try it too - but it doesn’t change your life at all. Perhaps it’s because yoga doesn’t align with your values? What if your version of “30 minutes” isn’t yoga, but writing, learning, or walking in nature?

For me, learning and personal growth are core values. When I spend too much time on logistics like email marketing or social media posting, I lose my spark. The podcast I love suddenly feels draining - not because of the podcast itself, but because I’m disconnected from what lights me up. That’s why I’ve built a team to support me, so I can stay focused on what brings me joy and aligns with my values.

Looking back, I realise part of why I struggled with postnatal depression after having two children under two was that I stopped learning. I didn’t read, write, or stretch my brain for years, and I felt bored, disconnected, and unsatisfied with motherhood. If I had known back then that learning was such a huge value for me, even 10 minutes reading something meaningful or writing a blog could have been enough to bring me back to myself.

Living in alignment with your values doesn’t mean you need to overhaul your entire life or “fix” everything. It’s about taking small, intentional steps toward what matters most to you. Maybe it’s carving out time for yourself, saying no to things that don’t align, or letting go of what others expect of you.

When you honour your values, you’ll feel more grounded, more like *you*. And isn’t that what we all need? To feel like ourselves again, even amidst the chaos of motherhood. 🧡

Let’s get started:

Values Finding Exercise 1

Step 1 - Reflect

Take a moment to review the list of values below.

Tick the ones that resonate with you the most - these are the values that reflect how you want to live and what you want to stand for.

If something important is missing, feel free to add your own.

Personal Growth & Self-Discovery	☐ Acceptance: Learning to be okay with who you are. ☐ Authenticity: Letting yourself be the real you, not what others expect. ☐ Curiosity: Exploring ideas and asking questions because it lights you up. ☐ Growth: Moving forward at your own pace, in ways that matter to you. ☐ Learning: Gaining knowledge or skills that fuel your life. ☐ Mastery: Building expertise in areas that matter to you. ☐ Mindfulness: Being present with what's happening now. ☐ Openness: Considering new perspectives or opportunities. ☐ Patience: Allowing things to unfold in their own time. ☐ Self-Acceptance: Making peace with who you are, as you are. ☐ Wisdom: Drawing from experience to guide your choices.
Empowerment & Independence	☐ Adaptability: Adjusting to changes or challenges with ease. ☐ Autonomy: Structuring your life/work to fit your needs ☐ Courage: Taking action, even when it feels uncomfortable. ☐ Empowerment: Trusting yourself to make good decisions. ☐ Freedom: The ability to make choices without unnecessary constraints ☐ Independence: Finding freedom in doing things your way. ☐ Integrity: Staying aligned with your values, no compromises. ☐ Resilience: Adapting when things don't go to plan. ☐ Self-Reliance: Trusting your own ability to handle life's challenges. ☐ Strength: Finding what helps you push through challenges.
Connection & Relationships	☐ Belonging: Being part of something that feels right for you. ☐ Compassion: Showing care for others without losing yourself. ☐ Community: Building a network of people who get you. ☐ Empathy: Understanding and feeling what others are going through. ☐ Family: **see note below**

	☐ Friendship: Finding people who make life better, not harder. ☐ Intimacy: Creating closeness with the people you trust. ☐ Kindness: Choosing to act with care, even in small ways. ☐ Love: Building relationships that feel mutual and meaningful. ☐ Trust: Knowing who you can rely on and being reliable in return.
Adventure & Fulfillment	☐ Adventure: Trying something new, whether big or small. ☐ Creativity: Expressing yourself in ways that feel right for you. ☐ Excitement: Leaning into what makes you feel alive. ☐ Exploration: Discovering new ideas, places, or interests. ☐ Fun: Prioritising moments that make you laugh or feel joy. ☐ Innovation: Finding joy in problem-solving and creating new approaches. ☐ Passion: Putting energy into what truly matters to you. ☐ Playfulness: Approaching life with a lighthearted and fun attitude. ☐ Pleasure: Enjoying what feels good, without overthinking it. ☐ Sensuality: Engaging with your senses in a way that feels grounding. ☐ Sexuality: Owning your identity and what connection means to you. ☐ Spontaneity: Embracing the joy of unplanned, unexpected experiences.
Purpose & Contribution	☐ Accountability: Owning your actions and following through. ☐ Achievement: Setting meaningful goals and reaching them. ☐ Advocacy: Supporting yourself or others in ways that make a difference. ☐ Career Growth: Building a path that feels meaningful and aligned with your goals. ☐ Collaboration: Working with others in a way that values everyone's input. ☐ Contribution: Adding value in ways that feel aligned with your strengths and values. ☐ Generosity: Giving your time or resources where it feels right. ☐ Making a Difference: Creating impact on your own terms. ☐ Recognition: Feeling valued for your contributions, even in small ways. ☐ Responsibility: Following through when you commit to something.
Balance & Well-Being	☐ Balance: Prioritising what matters without overloading yourself. ☐ Boundaries: Protecting your time and focus by saying "no" when necessary. ☐ Comfort: Building a life that feels steady and supportive.

	☐ Ease: Letting go of struggle, finding smoother ways to move through life. ☐ Flexibility: Adapting to changes in work or life while protecting your energy. ☐ Groundedness: Feeling steady and present, no matter the chaos around you. ☐ Health: Taking care of your body in ways that work for you. ☐ Fitness: Moving in ways that feel energising and sustainable. ☐ Flow: Finding a rhythm where life feels natural and steady. ☐ Harmony: Finding flow between your inner and outer worlds. ☐ Peace: Creating moments of calm in the noise. ☐ Rest: Recognising when you need to pause and actually doing it. ☐ Simplicity: Focusing on what matters most, without unnecessary clutter. ☐ Stability: Building routines or systems that keep life manageable. ☐ Solitude: Making space for yourself when you need it.
Justice & Fairness	☐ Equity: Ensuring everyone has what they need to thrive. ☐ Fairness: Ensuring things are equitable, not just equal. ☐ Inclusivity: Making sure everyone has a place, including you. ☐ Justice: Standing up for what's right, even when it's difficult. ☐ Respect: Treating others (and yourself) with dignity. ☐ Tolerance: Accepting differences without compromising your values.
Safety & Grounding	☐ Emotional Safety: Feeling secure enough to be yourself. ☐ Environmentalism: Caring for the world in ways that align with your values. ☐ Protection: Creating spaces that feel safe and secure. ☐ Safety: Knowing you're physically and emotionally supported. ☐ Spirituality: Connecting with something bigger in your own way.
Knowledge & Intelligence	☐ Intelligence: Using your strengths to solve problems and grow. ☐ Knowledge: Learning what you're curious about, on your terms. ☐ Openness: Staying flexible and willing to see things differently. ☐ Patience: Taking the time you need to understand and adjust. ☐ Truth: Being honest with yourself and others.
Drive & Ambition	☐ Assertiveness: Advocating for what you need without apology. ☐ Fame: Being recognised for your work, if that matters to you.

	☐ Fulfillment: Feeling proud of the life you're building, step by step. ☐ Hard Work: Putting in the effort when you have the energy for it. ☐ Influence: Wanting to drive positive change in your field or community. ☐ Persistence: Staying with something because it matters to you. ☐ Power: Using your influence to create meaningful change. ☐ Wealth: Building financial stability to support the life you want.
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Getting real about family as a core value

It's easy to pick "family" as a core value. After all, most of us love our families and want to do right by them. But here's the thing: *family* is a big, broad word, and it's worth breaking it down into what it truly means to you.

There's no prize for trying to do it all. The goal is to get specific about what truly matters to you so you can focus your energy on the things that align with your core values. For example, when I think about my family values, two stand out for me:

Being a dependable presence **Supporting family members through challenges**

For me, these two values guide the way I structure my life. I know that if I worked long hours every day and sent my kids to after-school care, it wouldn't align with my value of being a dependable presence - I want to be the one picking them up and bringing them home. That's where my heart feels at peace.

But let's say someone else's top value is **"building memories through traditions and experiences."** They might prioritise working long hours during the term so they can take the whole family camping every Easter or plan a special Christmas trip every year. That's what feels most important to them, and that's okay too. It's important to recognise that no one can do *everything*. For instance, while I'd love to create community or go on family trips, those aren't at the top of my list. I don't particularly enjoy travelling, and I know my energy is better spent on smaller, everyday moments that matter to me.

I'll admit, when I hear about other families who go on annual trips or create these community events, I sometimes wonder, *"Am I doing enough?"* But then I remind myself: my values are my own, and they shape the kind of parent I am and the kind of family we have.

So before you write down a long, dreamy list of everything the "perfect" family would do, pause. Ask yourself: *What makes me feel fulfilled as a parent? What makes my family unique?*

When you stay true to those answers, you'll know you're living in alignment with the things that matter most to you. And that, at the end of the day, is what will help you feel at peace.



Here are ways to narrow down the family values

Emotional Connection	• Quality time spent together • Feeling loved and supported • Open communication • Building memories through traditions or rituals
Responsibility	• Providing stability and safety • Teaching and modeling values or life skills • Supporting family members through challenges
Support & Care	• Caring for aging parents or relatives • Being a dependable presence • Advocating for your family's needs
Legacy	• Passing down cultural or family traditions • Preserving a sense of heritage or history • Creating a strong family identity
Community Aspect	• Belonging to a network of extended family or "found family" • Maintaining close relationships with siblings, cousins, or other relatives
Parenting (if applicable)	• Guiding children to grow into kind, capable adults • Building emotional connections with your children • Providing education or life opportunities

If you have older kids, *ask them* what they value and how they feel most connected to you. Their answers might surprise you! Understanding love languages can be a game changer for this - it's such a simple concept but so powerful when applied. I've got a resource explaining love languages for kids you can [check out here](#).

Taking the time to figure out what matters most to your children - and your partner, if you have one - helps you connect in ways that truly resonate with them. For example, you might be spending hours trying to plan quality time with one child, but if their love language is gifts, they'd actually feel just as loved when you remember their favourite snack or surprise them with a small treat.

In my family, I value acts of service, while my husband values physical touch. Knowing this has helped us meet each other halfway and understand what makes us both feel appreciated.

Step 2 - Narrow It Down

Try to narrow your list to your top 6-8 core values.

If you're stuck, compare two values at a time and ask yourself:

"Which one would be most important to me most often in how I make decisions?"

Top 6-8 core values
(in no particular order)

Top 6-8 core values (in no particular order)	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Step 3: Be Honest with Yourself

When choosing your values, resist the urge to write what you think you "should." Don't list *family, friends, or children* at the top just because you're a mum.

This is your chance to reflect on what truly drives you - not what society, your family, or anyone else expects of you. It's okay if your top value is *freedom, creativity, or peace*.

Being a mum doesn't mean sacrificing your individuality. No one else will see this, so let it be an honest reflection of who you are at your core.

Step 4: Rank & Define

Once you've identified your core values, rank them in order of importance. For each value, write a short description (1-2 sentences) of what it looks like to live in alignment with that value. See the next page as an example.

	Value	Why it's important to me	How I put it into action
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

EXAMPLE ONLY - Step 4: Rank & Define

	Value	Why it's important to me	How I put it into action
1	Advocacy	I'm my child's biggest advocate, and sometimes it feels like nobody else is going to step up. But I've learned that standing up for what they need - and what I need - makes all the difference.	• Before a school or doctor's appointment, I jot down a few notes about what's important to me so I don't freeze in the moment. • Keep all the "important stuff" (reports, letters, plans) in one folder or app so I can grab it when I need it. • Connect with other mums who've been through the same thing - they've been lifesavers for advice & support.
2	Connection	It's easy to feel isolated as a mum, especially when life is already overwhelming. Having people who "get it" makes all the difference, even if it's just one or two people.	• Text a friend or my partner when I'm having a rough day, even if it's just to vent or share a meme. • Carve out 10 minutes at the end of the day to sit with my son, just talking about his day (or mine). • Joined an online group of mums who "get it," so I always have someone to reach out to when I feel stuck or alone.
3	Empowerment	It's so easy to doubt myself, but I know I'm doing the best I can. Empowerment is about remembering that I'm capable, even when things feel messy.	• Use a notebook to keep track of small wins - like getting through a tough day or solving a meltdown - and look back when I'm feeling unsure. • Remind myself that saying "no" to something that doesn't work for me is a strength, not a weakness. • Listen to podcasts or read something inspiring to remind myself of my power.
4	Balance	Balance isn't about getting everything perfect - it's about not letting the scales tip too far. I can't pour from an empty cup, and I've learned that's okay.	• Schedule rest and breaks like appointments - sometimes that means putting on a show for my kid so I can have 20 minutes to breathe. • Use meal delivery or batch cooking when the week feels overwhelming - it's not cheating, it's surviving. • Stopped feeling guilty for setting "work-off" times so I can actually enjoy being with my family.

5	Inclusion	My family and I deserve to feel accepted just as we are. Inclusion means creating spaces where we don't have to explain ourselves or hide who we are.	• Email or speak up in meetings when I notice something isn't inclusive, especially for my child at school. • Talk openly with my child about how being different is a strength, not a weakness. • Surround myself with people who understand and respect us, instead of trying to "fit in" where we don't feel welcome.
6	Resilience	Life doesn't always go as planned, and resilience is what helps me adapt instead of falling apart. It's not about being strong all the time - it's about getting back up.	• I've learned to focus on what I <i>did</i> get done today instead of what's left on the to-do list. • I have a couple of go-to self-care strategies that work, like walking or listening to music - even if it's just 10 minutes. • Remind myself that asking for help isn't weakness; it's resilience in action.
7	Family Harmony	My family doesn't need to be perfect - we just need to feel safe, supported, and like we're all in it together.	• Plan one simple family activity each week, like movie night or a walk, that we can all enjoy together. • Check in with my partner regularly about what's working and what isn't - it keeps us on the same page. • Try to set flexible routines that make things run smoothly but don't stress us out if life gets chaotic.
8	Growth	Growth isn't about fixing myself - it's about finding ways to thrive and show up for myself and my family in ways that feel good.	• Read or listen to something that helps me learn about myself, whether it's a book, a podcast, or an article. • Try to set one personal goal a month, like getting more sleep or trying a new parenting strategy. • Remind myself that even small progress is still progress - it all adds up.

Values Finding Exercise 2: The Funeral Exercise

I know it sounds intense, but stick with me.

Imagine this: You're stranded on a deserted island, and everyone back home thinks you've died. They hold a funeral for you, but don't worry - you get rescued and later watch a recording of the service.

Now, picture someone you love deeply stepping up to the microphone:

What would you want them to say about you?	
How did you treat them?	
What kind of person were you?	
What are the qualities they admired most about you?	

This exercise isn't about being morbid - it's about understanding what you want to stand for. What values do you want to be remembered for?

Values Finding Exercise 3: Your 80th Birthday

This one's a bit lighter!

Imagine your 80th birthday. Everyone who matters to you - friends, kids, family, colleagues - has gathered to celebrate. It's a magical day, and someone you love dearly stands up to give a short speech:

What do they say about the life you've lived?	
What have you stood for?	
What role have you played in their life?	
What do you most hope they'll remember about you?	

Now, picture two more people giving their speeches. What would you love to hear? Take a moment to reflect on what these speeches tell you about who you are and what you value. Is there anything you're neglecting in your life right now that feels important?

The Values Based Living Exercises:

Adapted from Act Made Simple (2nd Ed), Harris, 2009, p. 219

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Note: *This guide is here to help you reflect and explore - it's not a substitute for professional advice or support. Your personal values and experiences are unique, so take what works for you and use this as a starting point for your own journey of self-discovery and growth.*

If you have questions about this guide or want to share your experience, feel free to reach out to us at admin@adhdiums.com.au. For personalised support, please contact a trusted professional.

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