## **Adeptly Shifting Priorities in Uncertain Times**

How do I prioritize these fundamentals of effective, skillful living?

Self-care	Valuing & regulating <b>feelings</b>	Valuing fact-based thoughts	Relating to people important to me	Work	Negotiating relationships
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- Bathed in the sun of self-kindness, the consistent, enduring practice of **self-care** makes everything else possible.
- If I value my **feelings** and adjust them to a stable range, I can help myself make conscious choices, rather than speak or act automatically or impulsively.
- If I value my **thoughts**, challenge thoughts that are beliefs, and take action based on facts, I can make conscious, realistic, helpful choices.
- Science supports—and human hearts and minds corroborate—the need for meaningful **connection** with others.
- Work—whether paid or voluntary—gives a sense of direction, meaning, and purpose to life.
- **Negotiating relationships** is defined as using self-awareness, other-awareness, awareness of differing and mutual needs, and interpersonal skills to help most people get most of their needs and wants met most of the time. "Relationships" refers to any interaction between two human beings, whether at home, work, or in line at the grocery store. Some fundamentals of negotiation include: 1) all situations are complex, not either-or, 2) begin with curiosity vs. criticism, and 3) with each brain at an estimated, 100+ billion neurons, no one can be assumed or expected to know anything unless they are informed of it.

Below is a list of contexts. In the blanks below, please rank order the fundamentals of effective living listed above in your priority order, highest to lowest, from left to right. If the priorities listed are not a fit for you, please substitute them with others. You are encouraged to use scissors to cut out the boxes above, proceed through the questions one-by-one, arrange the priorities in each context, and observe the rearranging of rankings as contexts change. You are free to handwrite or type your answers.

When I was 5 years old, my priorities—to the best of my ability to remember them—were, in order:

When I was 10 years old, my priorities—to the best of my ability to remember them—were, in order:

When I was 15 years old, my priorities were, in order:

When I was/will be 30 years old, my priorities were/may be, in order:

### When I was/will be 80 years old, my priorities were/may be, in order:

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When I am with my boss/employer/\_\_\_\_\_, my priorities for myself are, in order:

When I am with m	y boss/employer/_	, my ex	pectations for my	employer's priori	ties are, in order:

### When I am with my customer/client/patient, my priorities for myself are, in order:

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# When I am with my customer/client/patient, my expectations for my customer's priorities are, in order:

### When I am with my partner, my priorities for myself are, in order:

### When I am with my partner, my expectations for my partner's priorities are, in order:

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When I am with a person of authority, or perceive myself as less powerful than the other person, my priorities are, in order:

When I am in a position of authority, or perceive myself as more powerful than the other person, my priorities are, in order:

When I feel stable, my priorities are, in order:

When I feel destabilized by stress (pressure from without) or distress (pressure from within), my priorities are, in order:

When I feel	, my priorities are, in order:						

When I am thinking \_\_\_\_\_\_, my priorities are, in order:

I can adeptly shift my priorities in different contexts. In most situations, however, I would like my priorities to be, in order:

Questions for reflection:

- 1. What insights did I gain from examining my priorities at different ages?
- 2. What insights did I gain from examining my priorities when relating to different people in different situations?
- 3. What insights did I gain from examining my priorities in different power relationships?
- 4. What insights did I gain from examining my priorities when I am aware of my feelings, my thoughts, and varying levels of stress and distress?
- 5. In what contexts not mentioned here might I benefit from examining my priorities?
- 6. What insights did I gain from considering what priorities I expect others to have?
- 7. What might I wish to change? What might I wish to keep the same?
- 8. What did I learn from engaging in this exercise?
- 9. How do I think this learning will be of value to me?