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## EXERCISE: BUILDING YOUR LIFE COMPASS

We've broken this exercise up into four easy steps. Referring back to your Valued Directions Worksheet will make building your Life Compass easy. The Life Compass appears at the end of the exercise.

### Step 1: Focus on Life Domains You Find Important

You'll notice that there are two small, blank boxes attached to each value in the Life Compass below. These boxes are for rating each value in two different ways: how important the value is to you ("i" is for "importance") and how often you have actually moved in that direction over the past two weeks ("a" is for "action").

Let's start with the importance rating. Go back to the Valued Directions Worksheet and copy your importance ratings into the "i" box connected to each value.

### Step 2: What Are Your Intentions?

Write a brief intention statement in those value boxes you rated as either moderately important (1) or very important (2). You can start by going to the intention statements on the Valued Directions Worksheet. We've found that these statements tend to be one or two sentences long. We suggest that you boil these down to a shorter statement that will fit into the box of the Life Compass so that you'll be able to remember the intentions more easily when you're in the grip of WAFs. Do this for all areas you rated 1 or 2. If you have three or more areas that you rated as very important (2), you might want to focus on those and write in an intention for only those areas. Remember, intentions are statements about how you would like to live your life in that area—what is most important to you. Now go ahead and write your intentions in each box.

### Step 3: Are You Doing What Matters to You?

After you've finished writing down your intentions, please think about your activities in the past two weeks. Are your actions consistent with your intentions in each area? We call these activities "your feet." So, were you doing things consistent with the intentions you just wrote down? For each intention, rate how often you've done something to move you toward your important values during the past two weeks. Use the following scale for your ratings: no action (0), one or two actions (1), three or four actions (2), and five or more actions (3). Write your ratings in the "a" (actions) box next to the "i" box that's connected to each value. We're not asking about your ideal in each area or about what others may think of you. Just rate how actively you've been living out your intentions over the past two weeks.

Now go back and look at your intentions and actions. How well do they match up for each value domain you rated as important to you? Take stock here. Look for areas where the "i" number is larger than the "a" number. This mismatch means that you're not living your life as you want to live it. For instance, if you consider family very important (say, "i" is rated a 2) and your action rating is low ("a" is rated a 0 or 1), you're living a life that is quite different from the one you want. If you're like most people with anxiety problems, you might find discrepancies between your importance and action ratings.

### Step 4: What Stands in Your Way?

Discrepancies between your intentions and actions in valued areas are often related to barriers. Barriers are anything that stands in the way of you living out your values. Go back to each value area that's important to you and examine what exactly stands in the way. Perhaps it is a fear of a panic attack or other intense feelings; thoughts about being overwhelmed, embarrassed, or exposed; intrusive unwanted thoughts that seem to show up out of thin air and invade your mind; painful images or memories; specific worries about what will happen if you move in that direction; thoughts about failure, incompetence, or inadequacy; or other worries and doubts. Whatever the barriers may be, just write them down (in a word or two) in the signs on your Life Compass. These signs are the barriers between you and your values.

Recreation/leisure

Work/career

Intimate relationships

Parenting

Education/learning

Friends/social life

Health/physical self-care

Family of origin

Spirituality

Community life/environment/nature

i= a=

i= a=