

PARENT RESOURCES

VALUES, BOUNDARIES AND DEMANDS

*THIS RESOURCE CAN BE
USED AT ANY STAGE OF YOUR
PARENTAL LEAVE JOURNEY

HELPING YOU NAVIGATE THIS **NEW** PHASE OF LIFE

Going through any transition can be challenging. Our normal routines are shaken up and we are often left with new roles and responsibilities.

This is definitely true when we embark on the parenthood journey. As exciting, and at times overwhelming as it can be, there are things we can do to help us navigate this period.

Being intentional and proactive with our work- life plans, goals and demands is one way of doing this.

The following document is designed to help you gain some clarity and calm when it comes to navigating this often-busy transition. It includes three separate activities which are designed to build on each other.



We hope that by completing this tool, you will have more confidence, calm and clarity to navigate this part of your parenting journey.

1. **Identify your values**—these will serve as a compass and foundation for the remaining activities, and a lighthouse for you to orient yourself to when you find yourself in rocky waters.
2. **Take stock of all the demands** on your time and life. You can't plan what you aren't aware of!
3. **Use your values to create authentic boundaries** and get clear on how you want to move forward.

BUILDING YOUR LIGHTHOUSE

CORE VALUES

Just as a sailor looks to a lighthouse to orient themselves and avoid danger, so too can we use our values to ensure our decisions and behaviours are guided intentionally during this uncertain time.

Values can help us ‘get out of auto-pilot’ so we start to make intentional decisions towards the life we want. As we navigate through life, getting clear on our deeply held personal beliefs (values) is a skilful way to prioritise our precious time and energy.

Another way to think about this is to ask ourselves; ‘Thinking about my team/family in a year’s time, when I look back at what we’ve all been through, what do I want their experience to have been? What are the things that I most want them to remember about the way we were as a team/family during this time?’

It’s also important to recognise that values can change as we go through life. What was important to us five years ago may be different now.

Give it a try—The exercise below will help you identify your values and build your ‘lighthouse’. You may even find it valuable to build a family or work lighthouse. Whilst completing the activity, know that there are no ‘right’ answers. We all have a different set of values.



Activity: Building your lighthouse

STEP 1:

Go through the list of common values on the next page and cross out any words that are irrelevant or don’t seem important to you.

STEP 2:

Add in any additional words that are important to you.

STEP 3:

Re-read the list, putting a number between 1-3 against each remaining word (One is the most important and three is the least important).

STEP 4:

Circle the items which you scored a one.

STEP 5:

From the words circled, refine your list to five values that really resonate with you and write them below.

MY TOP 5 VALUES

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

See page 7 for a printable template

STEP 6:

Once we have built our lighthouse, it’s vital that we don’t leave it on the horizon. We need to bring it into the here and now so that it can guide our everyday behaviours. It’s helpful to think of values not as abstract ideals, but as qualities of action that we can implement today.

For example, if staying healthy is one of our values, then what actions can we take each day to stay well—like going for a walk, or prioritising sleep over ‘one more’ Netflix episode!

Remember and use the values you have identified as you move onto the next activity. Knowing what’s important to you and where you draw the line can help immensely when evaluating your life demands.

LIST OF COMMON VALUES

Acceptance	Passion	Expertise	Tolerance	Learning
Competition	Sharing	Independence	Belonging	Results
Happiness	Ambition	Privacy	Faith	Variety
Nature	Equality	Success	Justice	Commitment
Security	Honesty	Autonomy	Recognition	Freedom
Achievement	Peace	Fairness	Tradition	Love
Connection	Solitude	Influence	Challenge	Risk taking
Harmony	Appreciation	Productivity	Fast pace	Winning
Nurturing	Excellence	Teaching	Kindness	Community
Self expression	Humour	Balance	Respect	Friendship
Adventure	Personal growth	Fame	Travel	Loyalty
Contribution	Spirituality	Intellect	Choice	Romance
Health	Authenticity	Promotion prospects	Financial rewards	Wisdom
Order	Excitement	Team work	Leadership	Compassion
Service	Imagination	Beauty	Responsibility	Fun
Altruism	Power	Family	Trust	Making a difference
Creativity	Status	Intuition	Collaboration	Routine
Helping others	Authority	Reaching potential	Focus	Zest for life

WHAT'S ON YOUR PLATE?

TAKING STOCK OF YOUR LIFE DEMANDS

The next part aims to help you take stock of your life demands. It can be done at any stage of your parenting journey.

For most of us, life will always be a little bit messy, but doing this activity can help create a bit more clarity, direction and calm in the midst of a busy life.

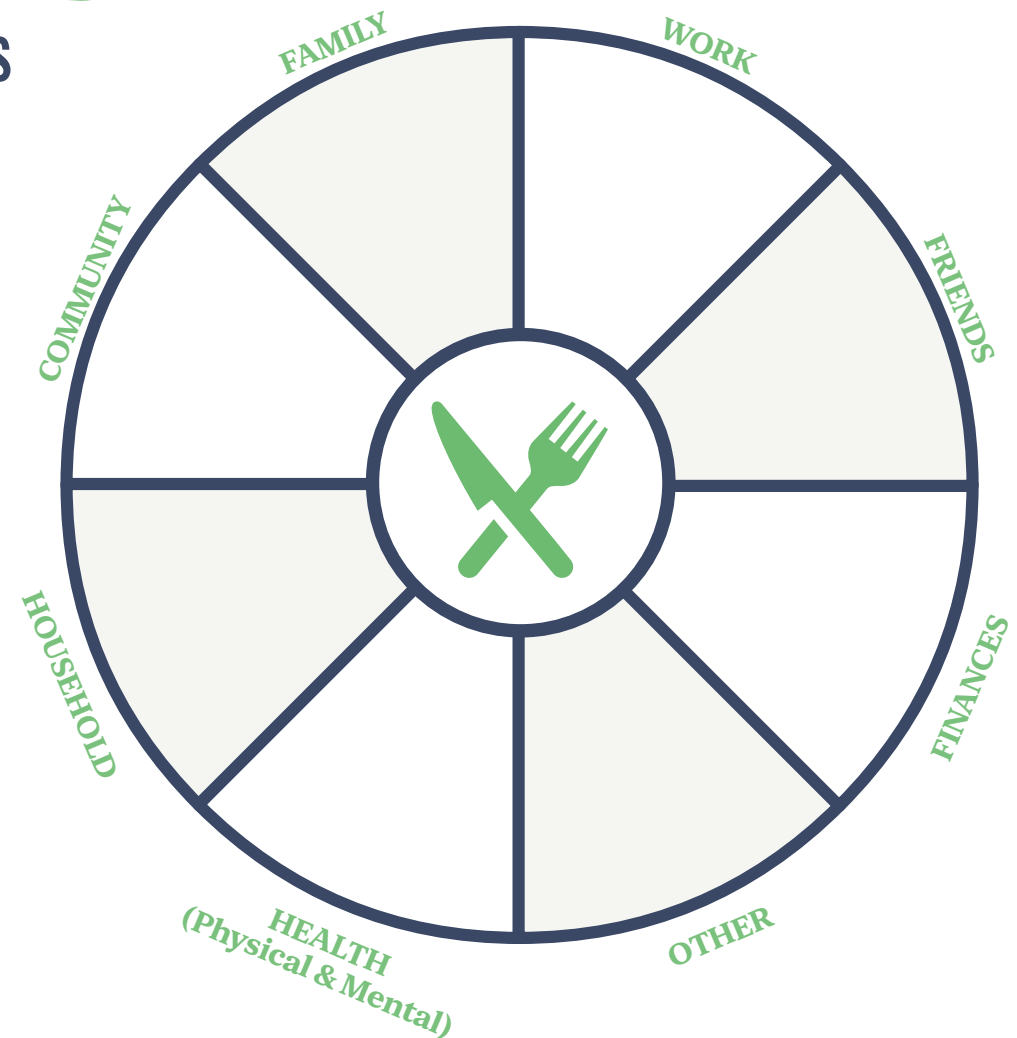
Before we can make decisions around our time and demands, we need to get clear on what is currently on our plate.

In each of the sections in the wheel, fill in any demands /responsibilities/activities you can think of. Be sure to include both 'have to do' and 'want to do' tasks.

Here are some common examples to get you started:

- **Family:** Saturday sport, weekly bedtime stories, game night, Sunday roasts, school pick-up.
- **Friends:** Weekly coffee, book-club, walking group, annual weekend away.
- **Finances:** Reviewing home loan, seeking financial advice, drawing up a will.
- **Household:** Cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping, cooking, lunchbox preparation.

[See page 7 for a printable template](#)



BOUNDARIES

If you are feeling overwhelmed by all those life demands, you're not alone.

Now that you have some clarity around your values and 'what's on your plate', the next step is to start setting some boundaries.

At any stage of life, setting healthy boundaries is very important, but doing so is not always easy. For most of us, it doesn't come naturally, and often we can believe that setting boundaries is selfish. However, this is not true, and setting healthy boundaries can help you to:

- Build a strong sense of self.
- Improve your relationships.
- Conserve energy and protect your wellbeing.

As we become parents, the importance of setting healthy boundaries often increases as the demands placed on us grow. The next activity is intended to help you identify and set boundaries.

The first step in setting boundaries is getting clear on your needs and the boundaries you want to set. Boundaries can be created in all areas of our lives, so have a think about the life demands wheel above to help. They are a way of saying 'this is what I am willing to give, and this is where I stop'.

Some common areas people set boundaries include working hours, household responsibilities and how they spend their time. When completing the table, try to consider your personal values and needs.

See page 8 for a printable template

TEMPLATE: BOUNDARIES

AREA	WHAT I AM WILLING TO ACCEPT	WHAT I AM NOT OK WITH	WHY THIS BOUNDARY IS IMPORTANT TO ME
Working Hours	Working 9-5 Monday to Friday. The occasional post-5pm work call.	Not being able to pick my kids up at school. Being contacted on days off unnecessarily.	Being present for my kids and picking them up from school is something I value.
Housework	Vacuuming once a week. Taking the lead on laundry. Sharing the cooking.	Do not	

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TEMPLATE: SETTING THE BOUNDARIES

BOUNDARY	MY SCRIPT
Work	"I feel overwhelmed when I get work phone calls on my days off. I enjoy my job, but it makes it difficult for me to be a present parent, which is very important to me. I am happy to respond to anything that is urgent, but if not, I would rather address it when I am next in the office."

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Developed for the Perinatal Workplace Wellbeing Program



Setting the boundaries

Once we have identified the boundaries we want to set and why they are important, the next step is to actually set them.

This can be difficult, and often emotions like fear and guilt can show up, but it's important to follow through. During the conversation there are a few things to remember:

- Be assertive and direct (but not rude). Try not to spend too much time justifying and explaining yourself. You don't need to apologise for your needs/values.
- Keep the focus on yourself and try not to blame.

Some people like to write down a bit of a 'script' to help guide their conversation.

This table gives you space to do this (along with an example of effective boundary setting communication).

See page 9 for a printable template



MOVING FORWARD

Now that you have gotten some more clarity around your values, the various things ‘on your plate’ and your boundaries, the final step is to think about how you want to move forward with each of your life demands.

There is no right or wrong here. You may be happy with how everything is and not want to make any changes.

You may be transitioning back to work and need to make some more room in your life. It could be that you just want to make some minor changes to a few areas of your life.

Checking in with your values and boundaries can help you when making these decisions. This activity is designed to get you started.

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TEMPLATE: MOVING FORWARD

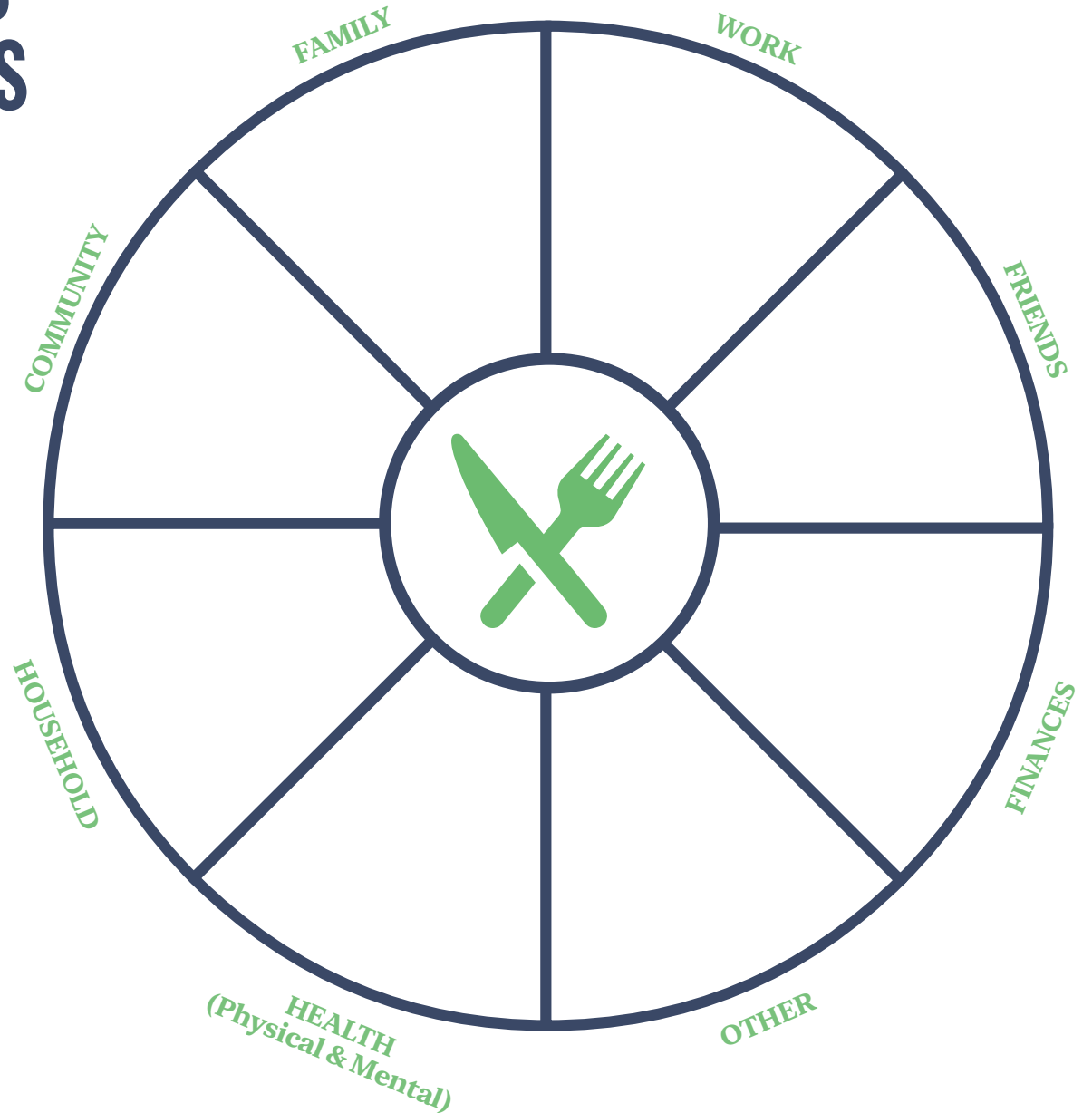
TASK	KEEP	CHANGE	LET GO
Life demand/to-do-list task	I want to keep doing this the same way	I'm going to make a change to how it's done	I am going to let go of this demand
Grocery Shopping		I am going to start ordering online and getting it delivered.	
Morning walks to school	This is very important to my kids and I.		
Treasurer for local cricket club			Can't make room for this anymore. Will tell the club this week.



TEMPLATE: VALUES AND LIFE DEMANDS

MY TOP 5 VALUES

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5



TEMPLATE: BOUNDARIES

AREA	WHAT I AM WILLING TO ACCEPT	WHAT I AM NOT OK WITH	WHY THIS BOUNDARY IS IMPORTANT TO ME

TEMPLATE: SETTING THE BOUNDARIES

BOUNDARY	MY SCRIPT

TEMPLATE: MOVING FORWARD

TASK	KEEP	CHANGE	LET GO
Life demand/to-do-list task	I want to keep doing this the same way	I'm going to make a change to how it's done	I am going to let go of this demand