

Using values to help work out who you are and what makes you special

You might not feel special, or you might think you've not done anything special. But you are, and you have.

Special doesn't mean big or loud or global influence. It can do, but it can also mean how you have changed someone's life in a way that has helped them.

Unique doesn't have to be Lady Gaga or Sam Smith or Elton John. You are unique because there is only one you and no-one else is as good at being you as you are.

When I work with clients on storytelling for their communications and marketing we go back to the beginning and look at their values.

The values that you hold dear and that make you tick are the start of your story. When you are crystal clear on what your values are it becomes much easier to tell your story and communicate in a way that is authentic and inspiring.

Let's use my Value Onion technique to work out the values that make you tick.

If you get stuck at any point or you want to have some help or ask a question, you can email me at ruth@imp-ideas.com

Or book a free 20 min call here >>

<https://calendly.com/impideas/storytime-chat-20-mins-free-chat>

**Feeling stuck or want to chat through your ideas,
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The Value Onion

There are 4 layers

- Ring 1 values - which underpin who you are and how you live
- Ring 2 values - how you want to show up in the world
- Ring 3 values - how others perceive you
- Ring 4 values - what does this look like in the action

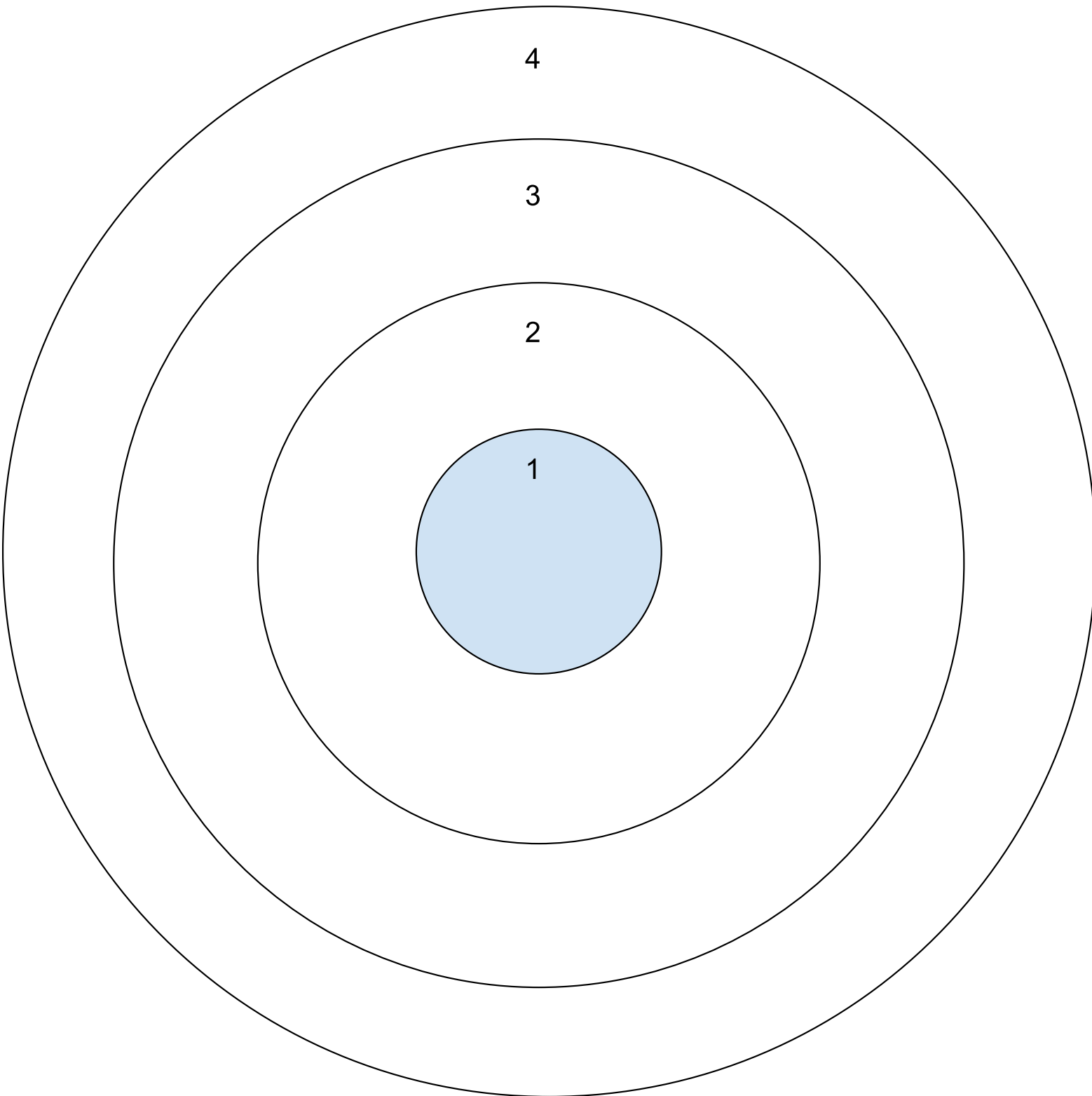
Filling out the onion helps to identify who we are and the values that move through the world with us. They are the first step in helping us understand what makes us special.

I invite you to complete your Values Onion!

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This value onion belongs to _____



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Ring 1 - core values

At the centre are your bedrock values. These are the ones that all others spring from.

I used Brene Brown's exercise in Dare to Lead for this, you can find her list here >

<https://brenebrown.com/resources/dare-to-lead-list-of-values/>

In Brene's exercise you choose two. Just two. It is hard, but worth doing because it helps you understand your inner motivations and where all your outward actions spring from.

As Brene says in her book;

"Our values should be so crystalized in our minds, so infallible, so precise and clear and unassailable, that they don't feel like a choice - they are simply a definition of who we are in our lives."

Exercise

Take a half hour to sit with the list of values and whittle them down to two.

These are your core values, add them to your value onion

Ring 2 values - how you want to show up in the world

This ring is for the values that didn't make it to your core values. They might be closely related to them, or not. This is where you put down all the ways you want to show up in the world - both personal and professional

Exercise

Take a half hour to fill the next ring

Ring 3 - how others perceive you

This is how others see you and requires a bit of bravery as you have to ask other people to describe you in five words.

When I did this exercise I asked five people that I had both worked with and who I considered friends. I asked people who I knew would say nice things, but I was still pleasantly surprised.

Exercise

Email five or more (minimum three) friends and ask them to describe you in five words.

When you get these emails back you can use an internet doohicky to create a word cloud

<https://www.freewordcloudgenerator.com/>

<https://monkeylearn.com/word-cloud/>

These words then go into your next layer of the onion.

Here's my wordcloud



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Ring 4 - what this looks like in action

What our clients say about us and the impact we make in the world. If you have any testimonials or thank you notes from clients, collect them together and look for the emotions and values that they talk about in relation to your work.

Exercise

Gather together testimonials and feedback and weed out the value led descriptions of your work add these to the fourth ring.

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Using your onion

How's your onion looking?

You should have a busy onion word salad by now.

There may be some words that are a surprise to you. I remember being surprised because values turned up from friends that I'd never considered as relevant to my business but were important to me; loyal being one.

Hopefully the surprises are pleasant ones.

How do we use the onion?

You can pin it up and use it as a reminder that you are an excellent human being that does good work and is special and unique.

You can use it to identify values that will form the basis of your story and communications.

These don't have to include your core values because everything springs from them, but they can.

At most you want 5 values, think of these as representing how you want to show up in the world when you tell your story and do your work.

If you have any overlaps between your ring 2 and 3 values then these will be obvious choices, as they show what is already happening. Ditto for ring 2 and 4 or 3 and 4 overlaps.

Exercise

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Use your Value Onion to identify up to five values that you want to run through your story, the way you work and communicate.

My values

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Congratulations! You've completed the important work of identifying your values.

Use these values to underpin the work that you do and the way you talk about it. You can use these values to act as a sense checker when facing a difficult situation or decision - does what is being asked of you fit with your stated values?

These values are the first step to creating a powerful story that communicates who you are and the difference you make in the world. The next step would be to look at your vision and mission.

I'd love to hear your thoughts and questions please dm me on

LinkedIn > <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ruthdouglas1/>

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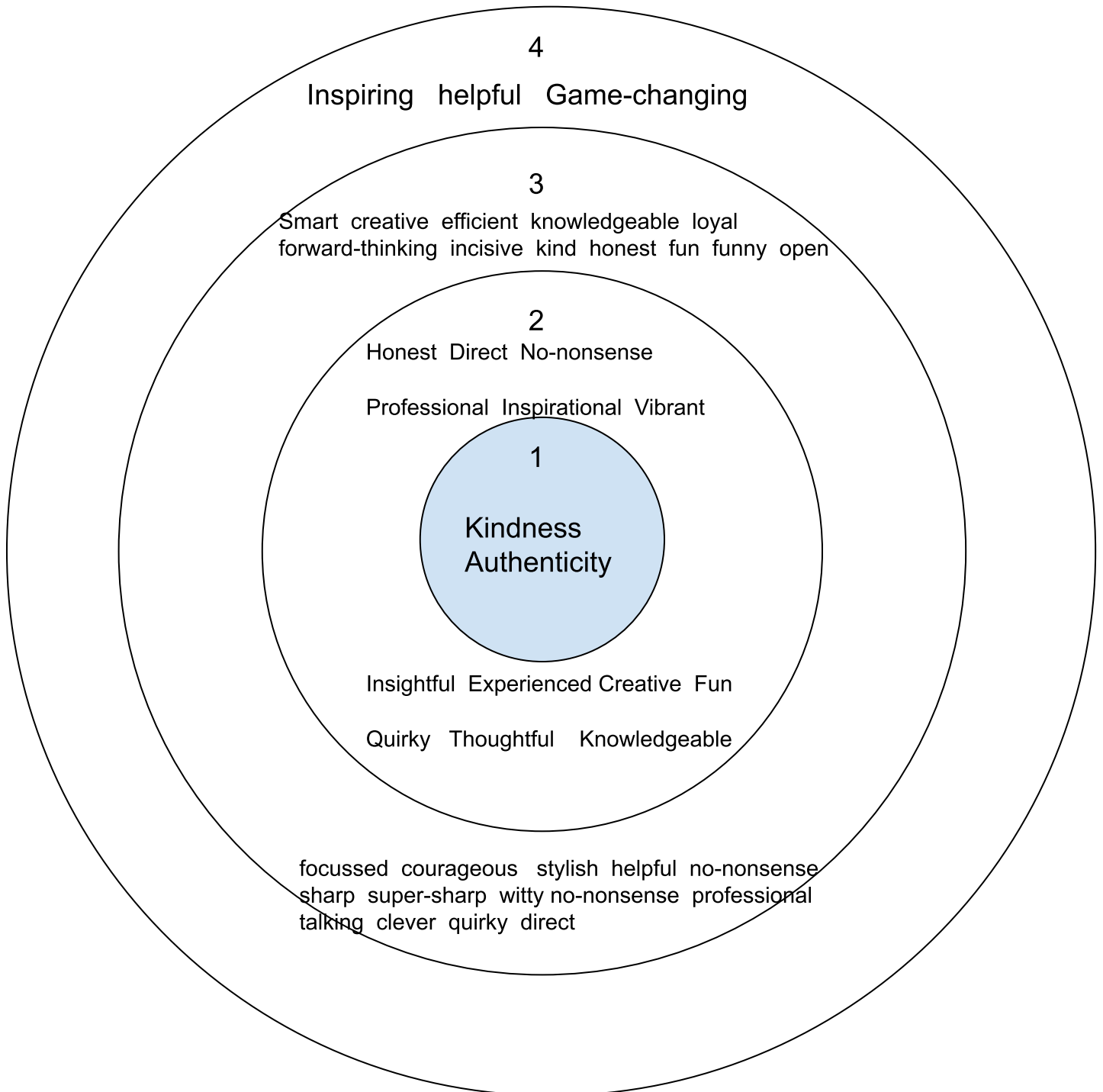
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Ruth's values onion



Ruth's values

1. Honest
2. Creative
3. Insightful
4. Inspiring
5. Thoughtful

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