



*April asks a different kind of question.*

Not "what do I need to get done?" but "what actually matters to me?" It's a subtle shift — and it changes everything.

This month's Healthy By Choice focus is Core Values: the internal compass that guides how we spend our time, make decisions, and respond under pressure. When our actions align with our values, we feel purposeful and grounded. When they don't, we feel the weight of it — often without knowing why.

Stress, burnout, and disconnection often aren't just about being "too busy." They're frequently a signal that something we're doing doesn't match something we deeply care about. Understanding your values doesn't add more to your plate. It helps you decide what belongs on it.

This issue is an invitation to pause and reflect — not because you need to overhaul your life, but because even small alignment creates real momentum.

#### **In This Issue, You'll Find:**

- Wellness Pillar #4: Core Values and why they shape well-being
- How values misalignment creates stress and burnout
- Words from an Expert: research on purpose and meaning
- A practical values reflection exercise
- Community events and engagement opportunities
- The April Values Alignment Challenge
- A fresh, spring recipe made for sharing

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# Core Values and Why They Shape Well-Being

The compass behind your choices — and what happens when you lose sight of it.

Values are not a list of aspirations you hang on a wall. They are the deeply held beliefs that shape how you see the world, what you prioritize when things get hard, and how you define a good day.

When your actions and environment align with your core values — even imperfectly — there is a sense of ease, motivation, and integrity. When they don't, the body and mind often register that gap as stress, apathy, or a quiet but persistent frustration you can't quite name.

This is not about being “good.” It's about being congruent.



## Values and the Nervous System

Research in positive psychology and occupational health shows that a sense of purpose and meaning is one of the strongest predictors of long-term well-being. When people feel they are living and working in ways that reflect what they care about, they report higher engagement, greater resilience, lower rates of burnout, and stronger immune function.

Conversely, chronic values misalignment — spending significant time on things that conflict with what you hold important — activates the same low-grade stress response as other environmental threats. It erodes motivation slowly, like a leak rather than a flood.

## What Values Are (and Aren't)

Values are not goals. Goals can be achieved. Values are ongoing — they are qualities of how you want to live, not destinations to reach.

Values are also not obligations. They are not what your job requires of you or what your family expects. They are what genuinely matters to you, beneath the noise.

Common examples include: connection, creativity, integrity, growth, service, balance, courage, family, freedom, health, and impact. But your values are yours — no list is universal.

## Values Misalignment at Work

You can be highly competent at a job that conflicts with your values and still feel depleted. Misalignment doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong. It means there is a gap between what matters to you and what your current environment is asking of you.

When employees have opportunities to express their values — through meaningful work, authentic communication, or contribution to something larger — both performance and satisfaction improve. Values clarity is not a personal luxury. It is an organizational asset.



# When What Matters Becomes Clear

Sometimes, life doesn't ask for your plans—it interrupts them.

Being diagnosed with breast cancer was a surprise—and a stressful one. But more than anything, telling my family was the hardest part. I was lucky, though, because it was caught while they were checking for something else.

At the time, I had plans to go to Europe in the fall of 2020. Life was moving forward. Then in November of 2019, everything shifted.

Being the person I am, I insisted on a second opinion and made the original team wait before moving forward. When the second opinion confirmed the same diagnosis, I went ahead with surgery—a lumpectomy—in January 2020.

After surgery, I learned I would also need chemo. I started treatment with my sister by my side, and for my second round, my daughter came with me. Then COVID hit, and everything changed again. From that point on, I had to go through chemo by myself.

That was one of the moments where things became very clear—what matters, who matters, and what you carry with you when no one can physically be there.

My hair fell out after the first treatment. My baseball cap quickly became part of my everyday life. Thankfully, I was able to manage the nausea with medication and keep going.

Because of chemo, I couldn't go into the office, so I worked from home the entire time. Staying connected to my work gave me something steady—something that reminded me I was still moving forward, even in the middle of uncertainty.

Daily life became more complicated in simple ways. I couldn't go out shopping, and at the time, delivery services were unreliable. It was frustrating—but also another reminder of how much we depend on others.

Luckily, my family was close. When deliveries didn't come through, I could call them, and they would show up—quietly, consistently—leaving groceries at my door. That kind of support stays with you. It changes how you see things.

Before COVID, I had bought a wig in case I needed it for an event. I never used it. There were no events, no gatherings—just a different kind of life for a while. Later, I passed it on to a friend who was diagnosed two years after me. It felt right to share something that

once felt uncertain but ended up not being needed.

Even in the middle of it all, there were moments of lightness. One of my Senseis from my karate dojo sent me pictures of six men I had trained with—all bald—and told me I was now part of the group. It made me laugh. And in moments like that, laughter mattered more than ever.

The experience was humbling. There were people going through chemo who were much worse off than I was—especially younger people in their 20s. I found myself thinking about them often, praying for them, and gaining perspective in ways I hadn't before.

Looking back, it wasn't just about getting through treatment. It was about what carried me through it—family, support, purpose, connection, and the ability to keep showing up, even in small ways.

It was a crazy experience, but I was able to stay upbeat because of the people around me. That support made all the difference.

And now, I've made it past the five-year mark.

## Core Values in Action

We often think of values as something we define in calm moments. But they become clearest in the hard ones.

In this story, values weren't something written down—they were lived:

- Family showed up, again and again, without being asked
- Purpose created stability in the middle of uncertainty
- Connection remained, even when physical presence wasn't possible
- Resilience wasn't loud—it was consistent

When life becomes uncertain, values stop being ideas—and start becoming anchors.

So as you move through this month, consider:

**What are the values that carry you—not when things are easy, but when they're not?**

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# Purpose & Meaning

What the Research Says

Dr. Martin Seligman, founder of positive psychology and author of *Flourish*, identifies meaning as one of the five core pillars of well-being. In his PERMA model, meaning refers to belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self — a source of purpose that sustains motivation beyond short-term rewards.

His research, along with decades of subsequent work in occupational psychology, shows that people who operate from a clear sense of values and purpose experience measurably better outcomes across health, performance, and life satisfaction.

## Purpose Reduces Stress and Extends Life

A landmark study published in *Psychological Science* found that individuals with a strong sense of purpose had a lower mortality risk over a 14-year period. Purpose was linked to better sleep, healthier lifestyle behaviors, and lower inflammatory markers — all of which are downstream of chronic stress.

Research from the University of Michigan similarly found that employees who reported higher meaning at work showed lower absenteeism, stronger organizational commitment, and greater resilience during high-demand periods.



## Values and Decision-Making Under Pressure

Dr. Brene Brown's research on courage and vulnerability underscores that people who have identified their core values — not a long list, but one or two that genuinely anchor them — make clearer decisions under pressure, recover more quickly from setbacks, and report higher levels of authenticity in their work and relationships. Brown emphasizes that values are behavioral, not aspirational. They show up in how we act when it's difficult, not just when it's easy.

## The Takeaway

Clarifying your values is not a soft exercise. It is a foundational act of self-leadership. When you know what matters most, you can navigate uncertainty, set meaningful boundaries, and sustain effort over time — not through discipline alone, but through intrinsic alignment.

## Learn More

- Seligman, M. (2011). *Flourish*. Free Press.
- Brown, B. (2010). *The Gifts of Imperfection*. Hazelden.
- Hill, P. L. et al. (2014). Sense of purpose in life. *Psych Science*.
- Steger, M. F. (2009). Meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*.





TIPS & RESOURCES:

**Values in Action:** Small Practices That Create Alignment

Values don't require grand gestures. They are strengthened through small, consistent choices. Here are a few ways to practice values alignment this month:

- Name one value that matters most to you right now. Write it somewhere visible.
- At the end of each day, ask: "Did my choices today reflect what I care about?" Not as judgment — as information.
- When you feel friction or frustration, pause and ask: "Which of my values is being activated or ignored here?"
- Identify one small adjustment this week that brings your actions closer to a value you hold.

*Alignment isn't perfection. It's direction.*

**EMPLOYEE PERKS – TICKETSATWORK:**

**Daily Support for Intentional Living**

Whether you're dealing with anxiety, depression, stress, or any other mental health problem, Calmerry will pair you with a therapist who truly understands and meets you where you are. Their network of over 1,000 therapists is here to guide and support. Each is a trained professional, committed to providing the highest quality of care. They're your companions on your journey toward better mental health.

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- Live video therapy sessions feel more personal than text-based online therapy

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**EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**



**All Locations & Remote**

- Power Walks
- HBC Newsletter, **Apr 6**
- GoPivot Mini Challenge – Core Values Reset **Apr 14- 18**
- HBC Workshop | HBC Core Values Workshop **Apr 20**
- Virtual Walk Competition | **April 23**

**TEAM COACHING GROUPS**



**Pillar #4 Core Values**

**Values in Motion: Living What You Lead**

This month's anchor workshop explores how values clarity shapes decision-making, reduces burnout, and strengthens leadership from the inside out.

In this interactive session, you'll identify your top values, explore where alignment is strong, and choose one intentional practice to carry forward.

**Join FRI Apr 18 - 1:15 PM Session**



## WELLNESS CHALLENGES

**Mini-Challenge:** The Values Alignment Reset

**Duration:** Apr 14–18

**Points Available:** 250 points per day | 1,250 total

Take 2–5 minutes each day to reflect on your core values and how they're showing up — or being squeezed out — in daily life. No pressure. No judgment. Just honest awareness.

### Daily Prompts

#### Day 1 – Identify

What are your top three values right now? Write them down without overthinking.

#### Day 2 – Reflect

Where do you feel most aligned with your values today? What does that feel like?

#### Day 3 – Notice the Gap

Where is there tension or misalignment between what you value and how you're spending your time?

#### Day 4 – Choose

What is one small action you can take today that reflects a value you care about?

#### Day 5 – Anchor

Write down one value you want to lead with this month. How will you know you're living it?

*Values clarity is not a destination. It's a returning.*

## SHARE YOUR WINS!



We want to celebrate YOU! Whether you've achieved a fitness goal, started a new healthy habit, or accomplished something personal, we'd love to hear about it. Submit it [Here](#) or Email us at [wellness@procarerx.com](mailto:wellness@procarerx.com) to have your story featured in our next newsletter.



## A FEW NOTES TO REMEMBER

Participation in wellness activities, including fitness classes, coaching sessions, 5k and wellness walks, helps us continue to grow and improve our offerings.

You can find the PDF version of the Newsletter for printing at [hbc.procarerx.com](http://hbc.procarerx.com) under resources or [Here](#)

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We couldn't be more excited to celebrate our April birthdays! Your special birthday shout-out is [right here](#). Cheers to another fantastic year ahead!

# CORE VALUES

## WORDSEARCH

I	N	T	E	G	R	I	T	Y	Q	W	T	R	A	S
P	U	R	P	O	S	E	L	A	T	I	O	N	F	G
L	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	X	B	N	M	E	H	J
S	A	F	E	T	Y	X	B	N	P	M	L	S	L	M
D	T	R	U	S	T	V	M	T	E	Q	P	I	N	P
X	H	Z	B	U	M	N	D	F	H	J	L	L	T	S
K	Y	J	Q	P	W	C	A	L	M	R	T	I	L	P
S	F	G	J	G	R	O	W	T	H	Z	X	E	D	K
X	V	B	C	O	M	M	U	N	I	T	Y	N	L	M
S	D	F	G	R	J	K	L	Q	W	R	T	C	D	J
X	L	I	S	T	E	N	I	N	G	Z	Q	E	W	T
E	M	P	A	T	H	Y	T	R	Y	Q	W	X	Z	X
B	A	L	A	N	C	E	P	Q	Z	V	B	M	V	O
Z	V	R	N	M	K	L	P	O	Y	H	W	T	R	U
T	Q	W	M	O	P	Q	E	R	T	Y	U	P	M	Z

INTEGRITY

PURPOSE

COURAGE

GROWTH

COMMUNITY

EMPATHY

SAFETY

TRUST

BALANCE

LISTENING

# Garlic Butter Chicken & Zucchini Skillet

*One pan. Under 30 minutes. Done.*

Some nights you need a meal that works as hard as you do — fast, satisfying, and no complicated cleanup. This skillet delivers juicy chicken, tender zucchini, and a rich garlic butter sauce that comes together in one pan. Low carb, full flavor, weeknight approved.

## **Ingredients: ( Serves 4)**

- 1½ lb chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 3 zucchini, sliced into half-moons
- 3 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup chicken broth
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- ¼ cup parmesan, grated (optional)

## **Why We Love It:**

- High protein supports muscle recovery and keeps you full longer
- Zucchini is low carb, hydrating, and rich in potassium and vitamin C
- Garlic has natural anti-inflammatory and immune-supporting properties
- One pan = less cleanup, more time for what matters

*Nourishing yourself on a busy night is its own kind of values alignment.*



## **Instructions:**

1. Pat chicken dry and season well with salt, pepper, and Italian seasoning. Dry chicken = better sear.
2. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add chicken in a single layer and cook without moving for 4–5 minutes until golden. Flip and cook another 3–4 minutes. Remove and set aside.
3. In the same pan, add 1 tbsp butter. Add zucchini and cook 3–4 minutes until just tender with a little color. Season lightly. Remove and set aside.
4. Reduce heat to medium. Add remaining butter and garlic. Sauté 60 seconds until fragrant — don't let it burn. Pour in chicken broth and scrape up any browned bits.
5. Return chicken and zucchini to the pan. Add red pepper flakes and toss everything in the sauce for 2 minutes until heated through.
6. Top with fresh parsley and parmesan if using. Serve straight from the skillet.

*Thank you for reading!*

