



YOUR COMPASS WORD[™]: HOW YOU LEAD YOURSELF IS HOW YOU LEAD OTHERS

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Anchor Yourself: A Compass Word™ Exercise



Finding Your Compass Word™

What is a Compass Word?

Your Compass Word is a single, intention-driven word that anchors you and guides your behavior, especially in moments when you're feeling triggered, overwhelmed, or unsure of what to do next. Think of it as your personal North Star: a steady, internal guide that helps you navigate challenges and make choices that reflect your highest self.

If it's true that we are always at choice (and it is), then your Compass Word helps you choose how you want to show up in the face of no matter what.

The Meaning of the Compass Word

True leadership starts with self-leadership. Your Compass Word is a single, powerful word that represents the essence of how you want to lead yourself—and, in turn, how you lead others. It's rooted in your core values and serves as a steady, internal guide when you face challenges, feel overwhelmed, or need to make aligned decisions.

Like a compass, this word points you back to your truest self. It reminds you who you are at your best and helps you choose how to respond, even when things are uncertain, stressful, or emotionally charged.

Your Compass Word is:

- **Intentional** – chosen with purpose, not passively inherited.
- **Anchoring** – something you return to in moments of doubt.
- **Guiding** – a lens for how you show up, lead, and live.
- **Personal** – unique to you and your values.

It is not just a word—it's a commitment to show up as the person you want to be, no matter what the situation.

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Anchor Yourself:

A Compass Word™ Exercise

Who do you want to be in the face of no matter what?

Circle 5 to 8 value words that are most important to you. Then, narrow the list to 3 words. If you have a word that is important to you, but not listed, you can write it at the bottom.

Accomplishment
Abundance
Achievement
Adventure
Altruism
Autonomy
Beauty
Clarity
Commitment
Communication
Community
Connecting to Others
Creativity
Emotional
Health
Environment
Excellence
Family
Flexibility
Freedom
Friendship
Fulfillment
Fun
Holistic
Living
Honesty
Humor
Integrity

Intimacy
Joy
Leadership
Loyalty
Nature
Openness
Orderliness
Personal Growth
Partnership
Physical Appearance
Power
Privacy
Professionalism
Recognition
Respect
Romance
Security
Self-Care
Self-Expression
Self-Mastery
Self-Realization
Sensuality
Service
Spirituality
Trust
Truth
Vitality
Walking the Talk

Anchor Yourself: A Compass Word™ Exercise



Who do you want to be in the face of no matter what?

Now that you have selected three values, we will conduct a brief exercise to help you identify the one that resonates most with you. Understanding “why” these words are important to you is a critical component of anchoring change. Practice the change until you master it.

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- Name your **first** Compass Word.
 - What does it mean to you?
 - When you are practicing your Compass Word, what behaviors are you displaying?

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- What is my **second** Compass Word?
 - What does it mean to you?
 - When you are practicing your Compass Word, what behaviors are you displaying?

-
- What is my **third** Compass Word?
 - What does it mean to you?
 - When you are practicing your Compass Word, what behaviors are you displaying?

Anchor Yourself: A Compass Word™ Exercise



***In every situation, your leadership is shaped by one core question:
who do you want to be in the face of no matter what?***

You've explored your values and chosen the word that resonates most deeply—the one that feels like you at your best. This is your Compass Word. It's more than a word. It's a commitment. A clear, powerful guide for how you want to lead yourself, especially when the pressure's on.

Practicing the Change: From Word to Way of Being

Knowing your Compass Word™ is the first step. The next step is embodying it—bringing it into your daily decisions, conversations, and challenges until it becomes second nature. Real transformation happens in the moment, when you're triggered, uncertain, or faced with a decision that matters.

How to practice in the moment:

1. **Pause and Stay Neutral** - When emotions are high or stakes are uncertain, take a breath. Don't react right away. Give yourself a moment to access clarity.
2. **Find Your Compass. Ask yourself these two grounding questions:**
 - Who do you want to be in the face of no matter what?
 - What is the most _____ response I can have given my current situation?

Now, let your compass word guide your actions—practice the behaviors, tone, and choices that align with it.

A Gentle Reminder:

This is a practice. Some days it will feel natural. Other days it will take effort. But the more you return to your Compass Word, the more it will return you to yourself.

The 7 Levels of Energy

By now, you've identified your Compass Word—the one word that reflects how you want to lead yourself, especially in moments of challenge, choice, or pressure. It's your anchor. Your intention. Your internal compass.

But here's the thing: knowing who you want to be is only part of the equation. The next question is: What kind of energy are you bringing into the moment?

Even with the best intentions, we can slip into patterns of stress, frustration, or avoidance—often without realizing it. That's because our energy level, not just our mindset, determines how we interpret and respond to the world around us.

In the next section, we'll explore the two types of energy—catabolic and anabolic—and walk through the 7 Levels of Energy Leadership.

This framework will help you:

- Identify the energy behind your reactions
- Understand what drives you in different situations
- Recognize the gap between how you want to show up (your Compass Word) and how you show up

This is where intention meets action. ***Remember, who do you want to be in the face of no matter what?***

Catabolic vs. Anabolic Energy

Catabolic Energy:

- Destructive, draining, and stress-driven
- Useful in short bursts (like fight-or-flight), but harmful when sustained
- Found in Levels 1 & 2

Anabolic Energy:

- Constructive, fueling, and growth-oriented
 - Promotes creativity, collaboration, and sustainable performance
 - Found in Levels 3-7
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Level 1: VICTIM

Emotion: Apathy, fear

Mindset: "I can't."

Energy: Low, disengaged, powerless

Level 2: CONFLICT

Emotion: Anger, resentment

Mindset: "I have to fight to win."

Energy: Combative, competitive, controlling

Level 3: RESPONSIBILITY

Emotion: Tolerance, coping

Mindset: "I'll just deal with it."

Energy: Productive, but often self-sacrificing

Level 4: COMPASSION

Emotion: Care, service

Mindset: "I'm here to help."

Energy: Collaborative, service-oriented

Level 5: RECONCILIATION

Emotion: Peace, acceptance

Mindset: "Every challenge is an opportunity."

Energy: Innovative, win-win thinker

Level 6: SYNTHESIS

Emotion: Joy, wisdom

Mindset: "We are all connected."

Energy: Intuitive, flow-based, visionary

Level 7: NON-JUDGEMENT

Emotion: Absolute passion or detachment

Mindset: "Everything just is."

Energy: Pure creation, limitless potential



Emotional Audit Worksheet

Catch the Pattern. Shift the Energy.



Step 1: Identify the Moment

- What happened? (Briefly describe the situation. Ex: A team member challenged your direction in front of others.)
- What emotion did I feel first? (Anger, shame, anxiety, disappointment, etc.)
- How did I express it (or suppress it)? (Raised voice, shut down, people-pleased, froze, over-explained, etc.)

Step 2: ELI Lens - What Energy Level Was I Operating From?

Which energy level were you likely in when you responded?

- Level 1 - Victim: "Why does this always happen to me?"
- Level 2 - Conflict: "I have to push back or I'll lose control."
- Level 3 - Responsibility: "I'll just deal with it."
- Level 4 - Compassion: "I'm here to help."
- Level 5 - Reconciliation: "Every challenge is an opportunity."
- Level 6 - Synthesis: "We are all connected."
- Level 7 - Non-Judgment: "Everything just is."

Mark the energy level(s) that most apply.

Step 3: Choose a More Empowered Response

- What did I want to feel or create in that moment? (Clarity, respect, connection, authority, calm?) Use your compass word to guide your response.
- What could I do differently next time to shift my energy? (Pause before speaking, ask a question, breathe, choose curiosity, etc.) Plug in the associated behaviors with your compass word.

Optional Journal Prompt: What's one recurring situation that triggers me, and how can I shift my energy to create a different outcome?

Your next step starts now.

You've done the work. You've uncovered your Compass Word, explored the energy behind your responses, and practiced tuning into how you want to lead yourself. This workbook was never just about reflection. It was about building the awareness, language, and tools to lead your life with intention.

Now it's time to take this work with you:

When you're in a tough conversation, pause, and ask:

- What would my Compass Word do here?

When you feel emotionally charged, check your energy

- Which level am I leading from right now?

When you're at a crossroads, stay grounded in choice:

- Who do I want to be in the face of this?

This is your invitation:

- Use your Compass Word daily.
- Shift your energy when you can.
- Lead yourself with curiosity, courage, and care.

The more you practice, the more natural it becomes. And the more you lead yourself, the more powerfully you lead others.

You're ready.

Let this be the beginning, not the end.

Who do you want to be in the face of no matter what?



Let's Stay Connected

If you'd like continued support, coaching, or resources as you move forward, here's how to reach me:

 Email: bernice@bernicedonato.com

 Website: <https://www.bernicedonato.com>

 Click here for my [Linktree](#)

 Book a 30-minute Discovery Call on [Calendly](#)

 Let's connect on [LinkedIn](#)

Let's continue building a leadership culture rooted in courage, emotional intelligence, and sustainable growth.

With gratitude and belief in your journey,

Bernice Caruso-Donato

Executive Coach | Strategic Consultant | Growth Partner

| BS, PCC, ELI-MP

Bernice
DONATO
COACHING

Thank You!

Dear Reader,

Thank you so much for allowing me to be part of this moment in your journey.

It's no small thing to pause and turn inward—to explore who you are, what matters most, and how you want to move through the world. By engaging with this Compass Word workbook, you've taken a meaningful step toward leading yourself with greater clarity, intention, and heart. It makes my heart skip a beat to think about!

Your willingness to do this work inspires me. I created this tool because I believe in the power of a single word to anchor us, guide us, and call us back to our truest selves—especially in the messy, complicated moments of life and leadership.

I don't take your trust lightly. Whether this is your first step into coaching or part of a longer path of personal growth, I'm deeply honored to walk alongside you. My hope is that your Compass Word becomes more than just a word—it becomes an anchor, a steadying force, and a reflection of the leader you already are.

Thank you for showing up—for yourself, for your growth, and for the impact you're meant to have.

With gratitude and belief in your journey,

Bernice Caruso Donato

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