

# POS/COS Exercise

Get out a piece of paper and pen, or your laptop if you prefer, and we'll start with this simple, yet foundational, exercise (*This exercise is adapted from the work of Dr. John Demartini's work on values*).

## Instructions:

### Step 1: Get to know your own POS (Personal Operating System)

What matters most to you and where you typically orient in life? You'll list out these "preferences" in terms of how you orient your day, chosen or not. Write out three answers to each of the questions listed below. Really be honest. Think hard about what your life really looks like. Think and reflect upon your **behavior**. Your behavior and actions are the most trustworthy answers here.

*Notice the difference between what you think your preferences are (or what you want them to be) versus what they actually are.*

Sometimes we might say we prefer "money", but really we prefer to spend money. So, if you truly *prefer* money, you would be investing it, saving it, learning about it, growing it, etc. A person saving rather than spending, truly has money as a priority in their life. Remember, you're listing the way your life is, not the way you *wish* it were.

For example, if one of your preferences is "work," what is it about work that you prefer? Money? Time away? Time focused on your life purpose? The team of community you're surrounded by? You don't have to write all those down, but it could be that you appreciate and value the community feel of work, but that you don't really love or value what you do. So, you'd write down community there, instead of work.

Invite your spouse to do this exercise with you. Do it together and share notes. If they are not interested, do them alone and see what turns up.

## Step 1 Exercise

**Write 3 words to each question below. You'll have 24 words total when you are complete. Spend 10-30 minutes doing this now. Then move on to step 2.**

1. What matters most to you? (Your internal compass points and orients to what three most important things in your life)
2. What do you spend most of your time doing?
3. What do you spend most of your energy doing?
4. What do you spend most of your money on?
5. Who do you spend the most time with?
6. What are the themes, content, and patterns of your internal mind chatter?
7. What does your spouse see as your top three preferences?
8. If I followed you around for a week, what would I start to see as your top three preferences?

## Step 2: Sort the answers into your personal hierarchy

Within all 24 answers, themes begin to emerge. Write down how many times you mention each answer. You'll notice certain ones repeat. Order these from most mentioned to least mentioned. These are your preferences that make up your internal POS.

**Your list will look like this:**

1st Highest priority (most mentioned)	
2nd Highest priority	
3rd Highest priority	
4th Highest priority	
5th Highest priority	
6th Highest priority (least mentioned)	

Pay special attention to where your marriage is, or where your intimate relationship is. Also note if sex, love, connection was or was not mentioned. Again, be honest. No fudging here. Put what is actually true, versus what you want it to be.

**Ideally share your top three preferences with your spouse or a close friend.** Get their feedback and ask them if these seem right to you, given who you present yourself to be.

Your highest priority is that thing you spend the most energy on. You are most disciplined and reliable with that thing. Even if you disagree with what the results were, none of us need any external motivation to do that top priority thing.

For example, let's imagine your top preference was work, but you hate your job. You might say that your job is a low priority, given how much you don't like it. But if you spend the bulk of your hours, time and energy at work punching the clock, you clearly prefer your job over other things.

### Step 3: Write down what you want your preferences to be

Do you want your relationship to be a higher priority? Or, do you want to be a higher priority on your spouse's preferences? If you are "oriented" to a lifestyle that is hurting you or not inspiring, what do you want it to orient to instead? Do you hate your job, but it's still your top priority? Then, what do you want your top priority to switch to? In a dream scenario, what do you wish you spent the most time, energy, and money doing? Getting very honest about where you stand is important. Then, you have the real information and now you can choose what you want to do about it.

Watch the tendency to compare yourself to what you think you "should" be doing. That's someone else's life or trip, not yours. Stay with your own dreams and desires.

If there's a gap between what your preferences actually are and what you want them to be, you have work to do to change your preferences and orientation in life, right? And, if you were honest and your relationship was lower down on the list, and you want different results, you'll need to move it higher up.

**The good news is that you can change your POS  
to whatever you want it to be.**

However, it will take some work since you've oriented your life around the other priorities and you have some old hardware and software.

**Now, make a personal commitment to tweak your POS and give yourself a deadline.** By when will you have an updated POS in place that is more aligned with your higher self?

**Next, what action steps do you need to take to make that a reality?**

Remember, you don't want to be someone you're not. So, if you feel guilt because your relationship is low on the list and you think it "should" be higher, that's not what you really value. You might not even want to be in a relationship right now. That's okay. Don't make that wrong. Be true to you, whatever the information is. The only way it's going to feel great is if you honor whatever is true, including ending a relationship. Your relationship life will not change for the better until it is in your top three priorities.

## Step 4: Learn your partner's preferences and how they orient in life.

This is the key step if you want to learn how to communicate more effectively with your partner and this can transform stuck relationships into a thriving COS that is a source of strength and nourishment.

For example, let's say the wife orients toward family as the top priority and the husband orients to work as his highest priority. These priorities could conflict right? But they don't have to. The husband will need to learn how to communicate in his wife's highest orientation—family. If he wants to go on a business trip and she doesn't want to be left alone with the kids for a week, he could come up with a way to bring her and the kids. He could remember that family is paramount to her and that the kids love sports. So, he could propose his business trip with this in mind. In doing so, he'd invite her and the kids to come if the location has live action sports, professional athlete restaurants, a chance to meet a real player, etc. He also knows she likes nature, so he includes a nature excursion into the trip. So now, instead of doing business for 7 days straight, he gets a couple of days of family time, and the rest is work. They see each other at the hotel at night and the couple can strengthen their connection during those hours. Knowing all of this, he will then approach his wife with this in mind so when he proposes him leaving town for seven days, he's also proposing a condensed family trip.

Both parties need to find ways to communicate in each other's highest priorities by knowing each other's POS.

Let's say the husband doesn't like to talk much about his feelings (low priority), but the wife enjoys emotional connection (high priority). Speaking from her heart and her emotions is one of the ways she communicates and shares herself. If he truly cares about her, he'll need to learn how to support her emotionally, and/or help her find friends that can really support her there. And, it's in his best interest to learn her language. So, if the man wants more intimacy, learning about his own emotions and being "emotionally available" will only serve to help their bond.

Likewise, if she wants to be closer to him, she'll need to learn to accept his approach to life in the language of his preferences and priorities. She'll need to get, and know, his POS in a way that has him feeling loved and accepted by her.

By now, you are seeing how knowing your partner's POS, and where their internal compass is oriented toward, will lead to a strong connection and increased intimacy.