

Identity

What is Identity?

To help understand identity, we use the image of an apple. The apple can be broken into three distinct parts.



The core of the apple represents identifiers that you had when you were born. At birth you have DNA written on your genes from family members that determine your height, hair/eye color and many other personal traits. Most of these traits remain for a lifetime and are difficult to change. This is your core identity and is sometimes referred to as “nature”.

What are some of your “core” identifiers?



The meat of the apple represents your circumstantial identity. Circumstances over time mold your identity. This is often called “nurture”. You may be a firstborn child at birth so you are not a sibling. However, you become a sibling when the next child is born. Similarly, you may become a graduate, a spouse, a parent or other identifiers based on the circumstances in life. These, like the core identifiers, are usually long-term in nature and difficult to change. Once a graduate, always a graduate. This makes up the bulk of who you are, like the meat of the apple.

What are some of your “circumstantial” identifiers?



The skin of the apple represents the situational identifiers and are typically short-term in nature or able to be changed with ease. These are labels we often wear such as a job title, or other internal labels you have worn that are subjective (opinion) such as pretty vs. ugly, smart vs. stupid, addict, etc. People tend to see these identifiers first in us and we make the mistake of believing this is who we are.

What are some of your “situational” identifiers?



Identity & Self Esteem

Self-esteem is similar to identity. The difference is that identity are **facts** about you whereas self-esteem is your **opinion** about yourself or those facts.

Many “facts” of your identity you probably agree with such as whether you are tall or short. But other traits go through a filter of your perception. You may be seen one way by others, such as attractive, but not agree with this assessment.

We often develop our self-esteem from others based of the messages we interpret from their words or actions. As a child you may have thought you were not important so you believe it is true. Carrying this into adulthood makes it very difficult to move beyond your own interpretation and accept both the strengths and weaknesses about yourself. How do you see yourself?

Inside this issue:

Pre / Post Assessments	2
Identifying low self-esteem	2
Are you doing this?	2
Worth or skills	3
Overcoming the past/Conquering the future	3
Find a balance	4
False identity	4
Coping with pain	5
Johari Window	5
Building self-esteem	6
3 building blocks	7
What's success?	7
What has S.H.A.P.E.D. you?	8
(S) Serving gifts	8
(H) Heart	8
(A) Abilities	9
(P) Personality	9
(E) Experiences	10
Miscellaneous Assessments	10
Pre / Post Assessments	11
What I Got From This Section	11

Broken Parts

We grow in various ways such as physically, emotionally and spiritually. Our bodies continue to grow but our emotional development can be stunted by events or people in our lives. This could be the loss of a significant person in our lives, such as a parent or traumas. When grieved properly, such losses have an impact but they do not impair our ability to continue growing. Consider a broken bone. When it is not allowed to heal well it can cause many physical ailments such as sore joints, etc. Emotional injuries impact us in the same way. It is as if wounds that are not healed well cause us to always walk with a limp in that area.

Good development, socially and emotionally, allows you to make the most of your natural abilities, allows you to make better decisions, and helps prevent you from being sabotaged by your weaknesses. Every choice you make is either helping you grow or it is feeding areas of brokenness. What are some areas that your past has impacted your emotional growth? What social skills do you think you struggle with?



Identifying Low Self-Esteem

Here is a list of what low self-esteem might look like. Check the ones you can relate to:

- ☐ Constantly striving for perfection.
- ☐ Having low or biased expectations of yourself.
- ☐ A tendency to exaggerate your problems.
- ☐ The habit of accentuating the negatives.
- ☐ Underestimating your personal ability.
- ☐ Ignoring the positives and potential opportunities.
- ☐ Being riddled with self-doubt.
- ☐ Constantly blaming and criticizing yourself.
- ☐ Lack of self-confidence in your ability to get things done.
- ☐ Inability to accept compliments.
- ☐ Unable to concentrate because of a lack of energy, which often results from inadequate sleep patterns.
- ☐ Hesitant and tense physiological movements.
- ☐ A tendency to avoid people and social situations in an attempt to steer clear of judgment, criticism, and the evaluations that other people might make about you.
- ☐ Often experiencing the emotions of loneliness, guilt, frustration, dejection, hopelessness, anxiety, anger, shame, worry, sadness and depression.

What “facts” or “interpretations” do you have that lower your self-esteem?

What behaviors or thinking habits keep your self-esteem low?

What would it take to make corrections to increase your self-esteem?

Are You Doing This?

In the same way there are predictable patterns we can see with people having low self-esteem, there are also common things you can do to increase your self-esteem. Here are a few:

- ☐ Accepting yourself when you fail to meet the expectations of you or others – be okay with not being perfect.
- ☐ Become more realistic in what you expect of yourself.
- ☐ See problems as opportunities to grow instead of barriers.
- ☐ See problems as they really are instead of exaggerating them.
- ☐ Focus on the positives of you and your growth rather than the negatives.
- ☐ Challenge yourself to grow in a particular area.
- ☐ Look for the positives and potential opportunities.
- ☐ Reframe “I can’t” statements into more realistic statements such as “I can try” – allow for mistakes.
- ☐ Re-frame “failure” into opportunities the next time.
- ☐ STOP blaming and criticizing yourself.
- ☐ Regularly celebrate successes.
- ☐ Learn to accept, welcome and thank others for compliments. Give a few along the way.
- ☐ Take action toward good PATTERNS of self-care so you can handle what’s coming up.
- ☐ Relax – be more open to new ideas or ways of seeing things. Say, “Sure, I will try that!”
- ☐ Move toward people emotionally knowing that they will not all like you. Remind yourself it is not about you if they do not.... It is their preferences. There will be some who do and some who do not.
- ☐ Replace the emotions of loneliness, guilt, frustration, dejection, hopelessness, anxiety, anger, shame, worry, sadness and depression with hope, and acceptance of your limitations.

Are there more that you can think of?

Worth or Skills?

It is not uncommon for people to get down on themselves now and then. However, it is also common to take that too far. We can not be all things to all people. We are simply **good enough** which means that we are okay with making mistakes. Be careful not to compare your skills with your value or worth.

One person is an amazing musician and another an amazing cook. We can look at the outside labels of someone else and compare ourselves to them thinking that we're not as good as them.

Take a moment and write down a few things that you believe make someone a good person.

Equal value

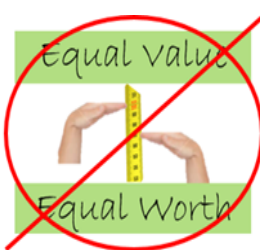


Equal Worth

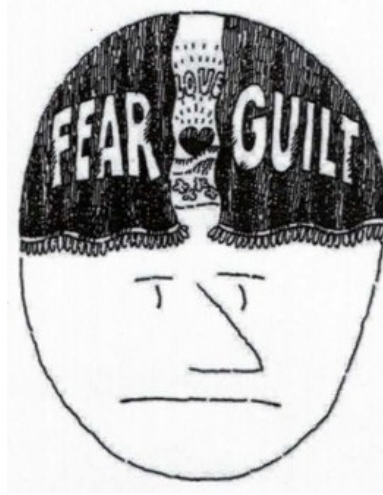
How many of those things can you actually be? If you are honest in this exercise, you will hopefully come to realize that lacking a skill is not what gives someone worth or value. The things that make us a lovable, good person are things that anyone can possess. They are things like the ability to listen, care, be there when our friends/family need us, etc.

Your value is not wrapped up in what you can do. But there are a lot of people in our American culture that do tie success to tangible talents. If you live in a big house, have a nice car, or wear expensive clothing can give a false sense of identity.

People who have made terrible choices in their past can still be amazing people. Those with less talents can also be amazing people. What we really need in others are the simple things that anyone can do.



Don't confuse your skill level with your self-worth. Doing so is one of the worst killers of self-esteem. Learn to appreciate the meaningful things that you offer others and let your self-esteem soar. There is more to who you are than you think.



What guilt/shame are you holding onto?

How does this impact your future?

Overcoming the Past & Conquering the Future

Self-esteem can be damaged when we cannot get past the perceived failures and traumas of the past. We then project those negative outcomes into the future which then produces fear.

The purpose for the emotions of guilt and shame are attached to the message that "you went off track". This can be off track of our plan or goals and it can also mean off track of society's values.

In its truest form, this message is simply to remind us to get back on track. We can always correct and repair behaviors. But unfortunately, many people see this as a personal failure when guilt or shame visit.

Rather than take it for the message it is meant to be, some people will internalize the message to validate their already existing negative beliefs about themselves. An example of this is someone being corrected for a mistake and hearing, "see, I am no good" instead of, "I can fix this".

They carry these types of messages into other relationships and send the message that they are no good. In essence what they are doing is a "self-fulfilling prophecy" by making the very thing they are afraid of become true.

When guilt and shame attack you, remember that you can repair mistakes but must then let it remain in the past. Bringing it to the present will only leave you feeling afraid of the future.

Let go of those old messages, stay in the present and face the future with confidence.



Make space for something better!



Find a Balance



A LIFE OF FAILURE	A LIFE OF SATISFACTION	A LIFE OF ARROGANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I don't deserve to be happy and I never will be happy. ✓ I'm too stupid to do anything that will earn me a good living. ✓ I am unlovable. ✓ Who cares what I think? ✓ No one would ever notice me if I were gone. ✓ I'm not as good as others. ✓ Life always gives me lemons. ✓ Other people have it better than me. ✓ I'm angry at everyone because they think they're better than me. ✓ Why should I care? No one likes me. ✓ If people get to know me, they would be disappointed. ✓ I fail at everything I try. ✓ I can't do anything as good as others can. ✓ I lack talents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ I deserve to be happy and I am happy. ♥ I have skills needed to earn a good living. ♥ I am lovable. ♥ People care what I think? ♥ I'd be missed if I left. ♥ I'm as good as anyone else. ♥ Life sometimes gives me lemons, but I can handle it. ♥ Everyone struggles and we help each other. ♥ I learn from people who can do something better than me. ♥ I care about others. That might be why they like me. ♥ If people get to know me, they would accept my flaws. ♥ I fail sometimes but keep trying. ♥ It's okay if I can't do things as well as the next person. ♥ I have things I am good at. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I'm so much better than others. I can't see how they're happy. ✓ I always knock it out of the park. I can't make mistakes. ✓ I'm a pretty big deal. ✓ Everyone should hear what I have to say. ✓ How could anyone have fun without me? ✓ I'm better than others. ✓ Why are others so lazy. ✓ I don't need other people. ✓ It's hard to be with people who are less than me. ✓ Who cares? Everyone wants to be me. ✓ If people get to know me, they would be amazed! ✓ I succeed at everything I try. ✓ I can do things better than anyone else. I'm the top dog. ✓ I overflow with talent.

Can a good self-esteem be taken too far? Notice the differences between the types of self-esteem on this graphic.

There is a problem with having a low self-esteem because you will rarely advocate for yourself, make choices that enhance your life or set and/or recognize your hopes in life.

On the other hand, having an inflated sense of self can make you appear proud and judgmental of others. You may lose friends when you think your value is higher than theirs.

A good balance is shown in the middle. Highlight the ones you feel best describe you to see which category you fall under the most.

How can you ensure you have a healthy and balanced self-esteem?



False Identity

If someone put a million dollars into a bank account for you and you did not believe they actually did, you would be missing out on an incredible gift. Likewise, if there are positive traits about you but you are believing only the bad ones, then you are missing out on an incredible gift. It would seem silly to you that someone would miss out on the money simply because they did not believe. So why is it not just as silly that you believe false things about yourself when it is not true either? Just because you think or feel it doesn't make it true.

No one is all bad nor is anyone all good. We are a mix of strengths and weaknesses. Our ability to accept our weaknesses is critical to building self-esteem. Share below some of your strengths and some of your weaknesses that you learned about yourself in the personality assessments.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Coping with Pain

No one likes pain yet it is necessary for our survival. Pain always comes with the message that something is wrong. However, pain can be very annoying if you lack the skills to fix the problem. Imagine having a broken water valve and water is spewing all over. If you do not know how to fix this you will have a very big mess on your hands. Emotional pain is the same way. We need to learn the tools to fix the pain we face. The need cycle refers to this as "discomfort" and is often what we feel before we realize we have a problem.

The gut reaction of most of us is to try to rid ourselves of the pain. That makes total sense. Except that the problem never goes away when we do that. We might avoid one instance but will have to continue facing it until we take appropriate action. Getting rid of the pain by ignoring it or running is only helpful in the short-term. For long-term effective outcomes, we have to take the problem head-on.

When others have hurt you and that emotional pain is too common, there are many things you can do. Below are just a few. See if you

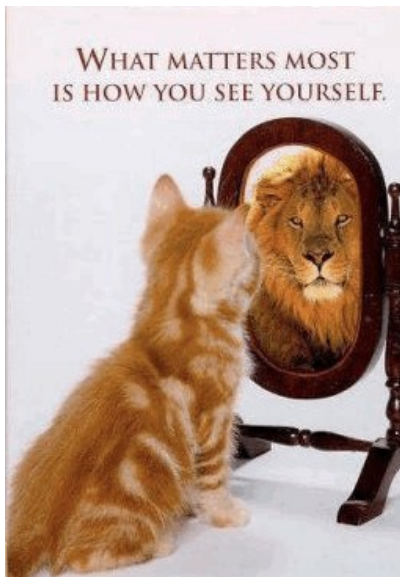
can identify other things to move past the emotional pain others have caused you.

1. Protect your identity: Separate the behavior from the person. You may have made poor choices, but that does not mean that you are a bad person.
2. Repair what you can and let go of what you can not.
3. Learn from past mistakes.
4. Forgive yourself and others for mistakes that have caused pain. Recognize everyone involved are flawed and did what they knew how to do at the time.
5. Learn to respond instead of react.
6. Learn to reframe by checking the facts and finding truth.
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

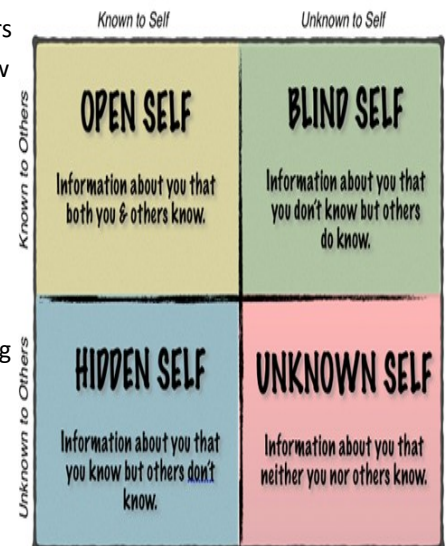
Johari Window

The Johari window can be used to help you identify more about yourself. Each square reflects something different. See if you can identify things in each quadrant.

- ⇒ **Open Self** - this is the space that you share with anyone. You are aware of traits about you and so are others. This is the healthiest place to be if you want to build relationships. Why do you suppose it could be hard to be open and authentic with others?
- ⇒ **Blind Self** - this is the space that others can see about you but you are not aware of. A funny example of this is someone leaving the rest room with toilet paper stuck to them. They do not see it but others do. What things about you might others see that you can not?



- ⇒ **Hidden Self** - this is the space that only you know but others do not know about you. Not letting others in to get to know you is often a reaction to being hurt in the past. How could a person move past this in order to learn to trust again?
- ⇒ **Unknown Self** - this is the space that neither you or others know about you such as your future or some talents. Taking chances and learning new things might surprise you as you learn more of your capabilities. What might that look like?



Building Your Self-Esteem

So how do we go about building our self-esteem when it has taken a beating most of our lives? Is it possible? Yes it is!!! Anyone can build their self-esteem. Follow these suggestions and then see if you can find other ways. Enjoy the journey as you go into the future.

- 1** Live as though you are equal to everyone else even when you do not believe it! You are an amazing person that is unique. Stop comparing yourself to others and accept you for the strengths and weaknesses you have. Embrace both. When you find your self-esteem slipping, remind yourself that your value is never based on what you do or do not do. Your value is based solely on the fact that you are a human being with unique characteristics. We need the strengths of everyone, including you!
- 2** Recognize that you have unique skills! The skills one person has is not necessarily the ones you have. But their skills do not make them anymore valuable than you. Our skills makes us unique! Your worth or value is not dependent on your skill level. Learn to notice your own strengths and impress others with them. Then begin to celebrate the diversity of everyone and enjoy their strengths without feeling inferior to them. It is okay to have less skill in an area because your worth and value always remains.
- 3** Explore new things! You might take a personal inventory and feel that you lack skills and that is bringing your self-esteem down. Just because you are not aware of your skills yet does not mean they do not exist. Keep learning new things and explore. Be okay with not being good at something. Just enjoy it for the learning experience. Eventually you will begin to find your passions, talents and skills. Take a class at a community center, help coach a youth sport team, find interesting places to volunteer. Enjoy the world around you.
- 4** Do amazing self-care! Check the eight areas of PATTERNS of self-care to see how you are doing at taking care of yourself. Self-esteem can slip when we forget to treat ourselves to good food, laugh with friends, sleep well or make sure that our bodies are healthy. Make sure that you are doing self-reflection to ensure that you are living according to your personal values and goals. Check to see that you are using healthy coping skills instead of short-cuts.
- 5** Fill your joy tank! Do not forget that it is your responsibility to do things that make you smile and put energy back into your emotional joy tank. Things we face during the day can drain us so we have to fill back up just like filling a car's gas tank. In your good moments, make a practical list of at least 50 things you can do to bring your joy back up. Then do those things on a regular basis including when your self-esteem slips. Make yourself laugh and smile!
- 6** Celebrate small successes! Everyday you do things that probably go unnoticed that you accomplish. Though they might seem small, even Navy Seal's train this way. They give themselves credit for eating a healthy meal, making it to an appointment on time, or helping a friend in need. By giving yourself credit for the small stuff, you build your self-esteem. Most of us never live in the excitement of accomplishing amazing things every day. It is the little things that keep everyone moving forward, including you!
- 7** Lift others up! Helping someone else is one of the most amazing ways of taking your mind off the negative self-talk we all do. When we feel down, it is easier to bring others down with us rather than the work it takes to lift ourselves back up. Helping a friend or volunteering can do just that. Never bring others down when you find your self-esteem slipping. We all need help maintaining our self-esteem. Do not be guilty of knocking someone down just because you're down. Lifting them up will lift you up as well.
- 8** Focus on solutions! It is easy to complain about our situation when we are feeling down. Re-frame your problems into opportunities for you to use the skills you have been learning. Find ways to solve problems and see the world through the eyes of possibility. Ask yourself these questions: *How am I exaggerating the negatives? *How am I minimizing the positives? *How might someone I look up to see this situation? *What is there to be grateful for today? *What is one step I can take toward overcoming this problem?
- 9** Avoid limiting language! Do you notice how often you put yourself down? If you paid attention to your words throughout the day, would you fill a grateful bucket first or a misery bucket? Use critical thinking skills to see how you talk about situations, yourself or others and turn your words into words that inspire you to conquer. You may not have all the answers or confidence, but you have some that can get you started. Positive self-talk can help you gain more control over your situation.
- 10** Model others with high self-esteem! One of the best ways to grow in any area is to find someone who is already successful and then copy them. We learn so much from each other. Are you surrounding yourself with negativity? Then find people who see the world more optimistically. Find out how a confident person thinks, believes, and interacts with others. Maybe join a support group. Just be careful that those in the group are not over focused on problems but are encouraging all to move forward successfully.



Your recovery can be measured by your gratefulness. Find grateful words that fill your joy tank rather than see the world through doubt, fear and uncertainty. You do not have to be shackled to that way of thinking. Bring your best forward and leave the misery behind.



Three Building Blocks

Attachment or Separateness?

Attachment and separateness are two sides of the same coin. On one hand, it is critical that we are able to form relationships (attachment). Pain from a person's past can keep them in a position of mistrust and they are unable to form strong bonds. Those relationships are what get us through hard time.

On the other hand, we need to be a person who is separate. This means becoming an adult and not allowing parents to influence our lives. It also includes maintaining our uniqueness in each relationship we enter. A person might operate in a co-dependent manner when they feel rejection so they let go of who they are and begin adopting aspects of those they are attached to.

Having a good balance between the two is important. Where do you think you are on this topic?

“Wisdom – a deep understanding and realization of people, things, events or situations, resulting in the ability to apply perceptions, judgments and actions in keeping with this understanding. It often requires control of one's emotional reactions so that *universal principles*, reason and knowledge prevail to determine one's actions. Wisdom is also the comprehension of what is true coupled with optimum judgment as to action.”

Good & Bad?

We would all agree that everyone has strengths and weaknesses. We are made up of life experiences, values and goals that make us unique. But that always comes with bad (negative) traits as well.

A person might focus more on their bad traits and come to the conclusion they are bad. They might focus on their perceived failures and over-exaggerate their “badness”. This person might struggle identifying their strengths and ultimately believe they don't have any.

Being able to take the good with the bad is an important skill to have. We have to love ourselves enough to find those strengths and give them honor. It is just as wise to recognize and implement behaviors that minimize our weaknesses. But it is not wise to focus on them too much. Just acknowledge problems and take action to reduce their presence.

How well do you balance these?

How well do you handle the “bad” in others?

Authority & Responsibility?

Those who have been harmed by parents or primary care takers can often move into adulthood with negative thoughts about authority.

Authority is simply the right to make choices on behalf of another. Those who handle positions of authority well do so with the best interest of those they serve. But not all who are given this role are able to handle it well.

This causes mistrust that can harm a person as an adult. Adults have unique rights as they begin making choices on their own. But they also have heavy responsibilities.

An inaccurate understanding of authority can interfere with their ability to take full responsibility for their own actions as they continue to blame their past authority figures for their problems. This is only partially true. Overcoming this is no small task.

Where are you on the issue of authority? What words come to mind when you think of that word?

How well do you take responsibility for your choices?

What is Success?

Many people go through life seeking success but few actually can verbalize what it means. Our society has its own definitions which tend to consider wealth, power or education as measures of success. This creates strife, division and judgment rather than offer any sort of universal happiness. If a person is always trying to attain, then someone has to lose in order for them to win.

Success is in the eye of the beholder. Many people worry about living up to their parents expectations. Yet, most parents are less concerned about **what** someone becomes than **who** they become. Being a person of strong character is therefore more important than becoming a doctor. If you looked ahead 20 years, what would make you feel that you were “successful”?

Take a moment and write your definition of success. Try to follow your ideal rather than adopting the definition of those around you.

What Has SHAPE'd You?

Using the acrostic for the word S.H.A.P.E. we can dig deeper into who you are. We each are a mixture of the DNA we were born with and the experiences we have had. Those things make up who we are. Everyone's life has shaped them for their own path. Think about yours.

Spend a few minutes writing below your answer to this fill-in: "I am _____", "I like _____", or "I get excited about _____". Do not give it much thought, just write what comes to mind. Try to not stop writing for two minutes. Use extra paper if necessary.



(S) Serving Talents

The first category is "S" or "serving talents". We all have talents that can help others. We each have ways to make the world a better place. Some are good listeners while others love entertaining. Think about ways that you make a difference to those around you. What are you good at?

(H) Heart

The second category is your "Heart" or passions. These are things around you that you care about a lot. You may be passionate about taking care of wounded animals or helping the homeless. The possibilities are endless. It is not uncommon that we have passions we have not even explored. Getting out into the community and being exposed to a variety of needs that exist is a helpful way to know what you care about and what you do not.

Take a moment to think about the following questions and write your answers on a separate piece of paper. Take time to evaluate what excites you. Think about issues or causes you are interested in as well. Let yourself dream and hope about your future.

What drives you? • What would you do if you knew you could not fail? • What pushes you to action? • What would you do with a million dollars? • What moves you so deeply that it keeps you awake at night? • Who are the people you most want to help? • Who do you feel you can influence the most? • Is there an age range you feel most drawn to? If so, what age group? • Is there a group of people you feel most drawn to? • What are the needs you feel most drawn to? • What are the top two needs you would love to meet for people? • Why do you love meeting those needs? • What cause are you most passionate about? • What cause or issue makes your heart race? • Where could you make the greatest impact?

(A) Abilities

The third category are your abilities. These are things you are able to do. One person may type well while another person fixes machines. Each of us has abilities that we have discovered and learned over our lifetime. Read through this list of specialized abilities and check the ones that you excel at and love doing. This list is not all abilities but can get you started thinking.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Adapting – The ability to adjust, change, alter, modify <input type="checkbox"/> Administrating – The ability to govern, run, rule <input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing – The ability to examine, investigate, probe, evaluate <input type="checkbox"/> Building – The ability to construct, make, assemble <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching – The ability to prepare, instruct, train, equip, and develop <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating – The ability to share, convey, impart <input type="checkbox"/> Competing – The ability to contend, win, battle <input type="checkbox"/> Computing – The ability to add, estimate, total, calculate <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting – The ability to link together, involve, relate <input type="checkbox"/> Consulting – The ability to advise, discuss, confer <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking – The ability to prepare, serve, feed, and cater <input type="checkbox"/> Coordination – The ability to organize, match, harmonize <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling – The ability to guide, advise, support, listen, care for <input type="checkbox"/> Decorating – The ability to beautify, enhance, adorn <input type="checkbox"/> Designing – The ability to draw, create, picture, outline <input type="checkbox"/> Developing – The ability to expand, grow, advance, and increase <input type="checkbox"/> Directing – The ability to aim, oversee, manage, and supervise <input type="checkbox"/> Editing – The ability to correct, amend, alter, and improve <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging – The ability to cheer, inspire, support <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering – The ability to construct, design, plan <input type="checkbox"/> Excelling – the ability to be the best and make my team the best, setting and attaining the highest standard. <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating – The ability to help, aid, assist, make possible <input type="checkbox"/> Forecasting – The ability to predict, calculate, see trends, patterns, and themes <input type="checkbox"/> Implementing – The ability to apply, execute, make happen <input type="checkbox"/> Improving – The ability to better, enhance, further, enrich <input type="checkbox"/> Influencing – The ability to affect, sway, shape, change <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping – The ability to garden, plant, improve <input type="checkbox"/> Leading – The ability to pave the way, direct, excel, win | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learning – The ability to study, gather, understand, improve, and expand self <input type="checkbox"/> Managing – The ability to run, handle, oversee <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring – The ability to advise, guide, teach <input type="checkbox"/> Motivating – The ability to provoke, induce, prompt <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating – The ability to discuss, consult, settle <input type="checkbox"/> Operating – The ability to run mechanical or technical things <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing – The ability to simplify, arrange, fix, classify, and coordinate <input type="checkbox"/> Performing – The ability to sing, speak, dance, play an instrument, act out. <input type="checkbox"/> Persevering – The ability to see things to completion, persisting at something until it is finished. <input type="checkbox"/> Pioneering – The ability to bring about something new, groundbreaking, original <input type="checkbox"/> Planning – The ability to arrange, map out, prepare <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting – The ability to sell, sponsor, endorse, showcase <input type="checkbox"/> Recruiting – The ability to draft, enlist, hire, and engage <input type="checkbox"/> Repairing – The ability to fix, mend, restore, and heal <input type="checkbox"/> Researching – The ability to seek, gather, examine, study <input type="checkbox"/> Resourcing – The ability to furnish, provide, deliver <input type="checkbox"/> Serving – The ability to help, assist, fulfill <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping – The ability to collect, or obtain things, getting the highest quality for the best price. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategizing – The ability to think ahead, calculate, scheme <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching – The ability to interpret, decode, explain, and speak <input type="checkbox"/> Traveling – The ability to journey, visit, explore <input type="checkbox"/> Visualizing – The ability to picture, imagine, envision, dream, and conceptualize <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming – The ability to entertain, greet, embrace, make comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Writing – The ability to compose, create, record <input type="checkbox"/> Are there more you can identify? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
|--|---|

(P) Personality

Certain personality traits have been identified that we all fall into dating back to philosophers of ancient times. They have been categorized and given a variety of names. Not scientific in nature, these traits can give us a basic understanding of how we see ourselves and the world around us as well as how we interact with others.

Look back at your assessment to better understand your own strengths (how you operate when you are doing well) and your weaknesses (how you operate when you are not doing well). Learning how to identify the traits in others can help you know how you work well with some traits and struggle with others. It can help you better understand why people are different and recognize that different is not bad. When we have an understanding we are more apt to work through issues rather than judge others during conflict or frustration.

Remember there are no wrong personalities, just different. What did you learn about yourself?

(E) Experiences

The fifth, and last category is experiences. Our life experiences shape us tremendously. In the argument over nature versus nurture, nature are those things that we are born with such as her personality traits. Nurture on the other hand, are those things that shape us based on our environment and experiences. Almost everything of who we are can be shaped by our experiences. Therefore considering the life experiences you have had is an important part of knowing who you are.

People often find that they care about things because they have a personal connection to them. Their passions, and even dislikes, are linked directly to life experiences. Take a moment and write about the things that have impacted your life. Think about your experiences in these different domains such as spiritual, family, friends, education, work or career, community involvement, health and well-being issues, and experiences you have had that have major life joyful, or experiences that have been painful.

You completed a timeline and did a project about those events. Give a summary or snapshot of what you have learned about yourself. The great thing about learning about ourselves is that we can make changes if there are things that we do not like and we can celebrate the things that we do like. How have your life experiences shaped you?

Miscellaneous Assessments

We have many additional assessments you can take to better learn about yourself. Some of those are listed below.

- ◇ [Love language](#) (how you give and receive love)
- ◇ [Apology language](#) (how you give and receive apologies)
- ◇ [Attachment styles](#) (how you attach/don't to others)
- ◇ [EQ](#) (measuring your emotional intelligence)
- ◇ [Can you survive](#) (how different economic classes think)
- ◇ [Conflict reaction](#) (passive/assertive/aggressive)
- ◇ [Resiliency](#) (how well you bounce back)



Are You Suffering?

The word "suffer" means to experience pain or distress. Based on that definition we all suffer from time to time. But if you look at suffering as a verb, a doing word, then suffering takes on a new meaning. We can experience pain and distress yet still hold onto joy.

Recognizing that suffering is inevitable, we can accept those trials as we face them and move through it. We can use critical thinking, problem-solving and coping skills to handle what we face. We cannot change many of the obstacles we face. But we can always change the way we see them.

Suffering is not just experiential, but it is also a mindset. To engage a mindset of suffering we become the victim to our circumstances. That is sometimes true when others make choices that negatively impact us. But to become a victim of that act means that it has control over us in the long-run.

To choose joy or hope in a situation means that we recognize we can respond with skills. We can overcome even if our circumstances are altered. Consider a person who is crippled in a car accident. This person can choose to allow this to define his/her happiness or they can grieve the losses of what they expected life to be. They can choose if they will fall under the control of the circumstances that forever changed them, or they can choose that they will overcome by establishing a new normal and using the situation as their launching pad.

Is there a way you can see your situation differently so that you are not suffering, but are instead facing it victoriously?

Look straight ahead and fix your eyes on what lies before you.
Proverbs 4:25

Directions:

- All questions are “behavior” based, meaning that you are rating yourself on what you “do” rather than what you “know”.
- Answer the questions below by rating yourself as follows:

0 - Does not apply to me at all.

1 - Applies sometimes, but not often.

2 - Applies to me often.

3 - I have this one down on a regular basis.

Check the boxes of the behavior you’d like to work on during this section.

Pre		Post
	I have learned my S.H.A.P.E. and three identifiers. From this I have an accurate picture of me.	
	I recognize where low self-esteem comes from and how to rebuild it. I am rebuilding.	
	I respect both my strengths and weaknesses. I am working toward improvement but like who I am.	
	I make choices that show I am equal to others. I do not confuse value with skills.	
	I am not allowing guilt from the past or fear of the future impact my choices today.	
	I am working through my faulty beliefs so that I can be proud of myself around others.	
	I am learning how to cope with pain rather than run from it or numb myself.	
	I respect myself and expect others to do the same. I do not sell myself short to anyone.	
	I make choices as a maturing person who is not dependent on others.	
	I am learning to be whole before entering into an intimate relationship. I do not need that to be whole.	

“I Will” Statements

To get closer to my Big Hairy Goal, “I Will” do the following:

◇

◇

◇

◇

What I Got Out of This Section