

WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU WANT COACHING GUIDE LESSON 1: IDENTITY

The three exercises in **Lesson 1: Identity – Who Am I?** will help you clearly identify and articulate your strengths, gifts and talents. Once you know what they are, you can then use them to position yourself and influence the future you are creating for yourself. Don't worry if you are not sure what you want next, these exercises in this entire lesson on identity will help you figure it out. You will find that you will use your results from this session as a foundation for everything you do from now on professionally of the information you will obtain from these powerful group of exercises. My coaching clients just love these exercises and I think you will too. In fact, this may be the most important piece of work you ever do for yourself. Let the adventure begin.

Use a notebook or journal to complete the exercises below and keep them all together in one place so you can refer to them throughout the lessons and throughout the entire series.

EXERCISE 1: IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS

On a blank page, make a list of *at least* 25 things you think you are good at or excel in. The items on your list are things about yourself of which you are most proud or you might think of as your strengths, gifts and talents. Make sure to include a range of qualities, behaviors, ways of being, and technical expertise items on your list. Your list can be as long as you want but there should be at least a minimum of 25 items on it. Do not ask anyone else for help; other exercises below will require you to ask others, not this one. Some examples: persistent, entrepreneurial, smart, caring, strong financial acumen, problem solving, intuitive, marketing, empower others, strong written communication skills, optimistic, relationship centered, fun.

STOP: It is important to do this exercise before going on to the next exercise.

EXERCISE 2: INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT

Step 1: Select 10 people who you think know you pretty well. Write their names down on the left-hand side on a blank page in your journal and next to their name indicate their relationship to you. Select a combination of personal and professional relationships equally; although it doesn't have to be exactly half and half. It's preferable to have more work people on your list versus people with whom you have personal relationships, especially if you are focusing on work or your career. Your list may include prior managers or colleagues, current colleagues, bosses past and present, spouse, parents, siblings, partner, and friends.

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Step 2: Ask each of the people on your list in a private 1:1 conversation to tell you 5 strengths, gifts or talents they think you possess. You might ask, “Tell me 5 things you think I am good at technically or interpersonally.” Write down verbatim what they tell you.

Don’t edit or change what they say in any way. Write it down exactly. It is preferable to conduct these interviews in person, via zoom or phone. My recommendation is NOT to do these interviews by email. People who lean towards doing this exercise in writing are either not comfortable interpersonally and trying to remove the human element or they complain it’s too hard to get connected. It is intentional that I recommend you do this in person or phone/video conferencing as it is part of positioning yourself and building and maintaining key relationships strategy. In addition, talking live with someone will give you more information and you will notice nuances that you cannot get if you do these interviews in writing via email. Some people find this exercise a bit embarrassing to ask for or to receive feedback about themselves. If that’s you, here are some statements you might use to help with the awkwardness. “Thank you, I appreciate that”, “Wow, that’s interesting you would say that, can you give me an example or explain what you mean?”

Example:	Name	Relationship	Strengths
	Nick Jones	prior boss	good listener, detail oriented, analytical, loyal, creative

STOP: It is important to do this exercise before going forward.

Step 3: Read through your list of strengths and identify patterns or commonalities in what people have said about you. Circle the common themes or list them under the exercise.

EXERCISE 3: QUALITIES YOU ADMIRE

On a blank page in your journal, list three people you most admire. The people you select can be alive, no longer living, real, or fictional. Write their names down the left-hand side of your page. Next to each name, write down 5 qualities you admire most about them. Example:

Name	Qualities I admire
Abraham Lincoln	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Brought the nation and its people together2. Followed and led by his strong moral values3. Influential as a leader4. Good planner5. Fought for what he believed in
Dad	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Spent quality time with family2. Sacrificed personally for the good of the family3. Committed to coaching and mentoring others4. Caring5. Planned for the future

STOP: It is important to finish this exercise before reading further.

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Once you have completed your list, ask yourself what do you find interesting about either the people you selected or the qualities you admire about them? From a coaching perspective we often say, ‘that which we notice in others is also true about ourselves’. Therefore, every single thing you admire about the people on your list is also true about yourself, even if that seems impossible to you. When I do this exercise with coaching clients, I am always reminded just how delighted this idea makes people feel. I hope you too can experience the joy knowing you share the qualities with the people on your list that you admire.

JOURNAL AND REFLECTIONS

Richard Leider in his book, *The Power of Purpose*, says it is important to “uncover our gifts (talents and strengths). This includes the strengths and gifts of which we are already aware and are motivated to master, as well as those that are emerging that we would like to try to develop or explore further. What are your natural gifts? The power behind our purpose in life is knowing and using our most enjoyed gifts.”

Ask yourself: What are my gifts? How can I best give my gifts to something in which I believe - a value, product, person, service, ideal, problem, or organization?

Reflecting on what you learned from doing all these exercises in Lesson 1 will give you more clarity about yourself and maybe even some next steps to implement. Journal your answers to the questions below. Journaling is more about writing stream of consciousness versus getting it right or making it sound pretty. Journaling is a process that unearths curiosity and wonder within us.

What top 3 observations do you have?

What patterns, if any, do you notice?

What specific things resonated most or seem right on target for you? And why?

What resonated least or seems less relevant for you? And why?

What are your biggest ahas or take-aways?

What did you learn about yourself that delighted you most?

What are 1-2 next steps you will take with this information you now have?

STOP: It is important to answer these questions before completing this lesson.

FOLLOW UP

If you want more help understanding what this all means and how it relates to where you are or where you’re going, reach out to me at Wendy Capland, wcapland@visionquestconsulting.com to schedule a one hour 1:1 Coaching Session. Investment-\$500.