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Personal Excellence

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Crack Your Identity Code

Synopsis:

Crack your identity code and the contours of your life will shift. You will not only come out stronger, you will come out *larger* — larger in heart, larger in influence, and larger in your capacity to love and be loved. You will marry smarter. You will find the right line of work, or field of study, and place to practice it. You will understand the *why* of your life.

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—NIDO R. QUBEIN, INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER AND CONSULTANT



CHARACTER • IDENTITY

Crack Your Identity Code

Address these eight essential questions.

by Larry Ackerman

THE IDEA THAT YOU ARE AT LIBERTY TO PICK whatever path in life you want is the unspoken agony of the modern person. Call it the myth of personal freedom. This popular, but misguided, belief ignores the fact that life has order, and that that order bears heavily upon your choices, on what makes sense to do with the time you have.

The good news is that, although you can't be anything you want, you have more potential than you know.

The order I speak about is contained in a code—the *identity code*. Much like our biological, genetic code, your identity code is born into you, providing a map of how you are designed to function—how you are supposed to live—when you are living according to who you truly are. Within the framework your identity provides, genuine freedom is yours.

By “identity” I mean the unique characteristics, which in combination with one another, define your potential for creating value and for making a contribution that springs naturally from the core of your being and touches the lives of others in positive ways.

Living according to your identity doesn't happen automatically. How your life unfolds is not predetermined. It is up to you to learn who you are and, then, to act upon this knowledge in ways that enable you to realize

your potential. You are responsible for what happens to you in life. You are responsible for making identity your framework for living.

Your identity code isn't obvious. You can't see it. Your physical senses are inadequate to comprehend it. But it is there, waiting to be discovered and embraced. Crack your identity code and the contours of your life will shift. You will not only come out stronger, you will come out *larger*—larger in heart, in influence, and in your capacity to love and be loved. You will find the right friends. You will marry smarter. You will discover the right line of work, or field of study, and place to practice it. You will parent better. You will honor the right heroes and worship the right gods. You may

even live longer. You will understand the *why* of your own life.

The Eight Questions

Your identity code is found in the answers to eight questions: 1) Who am I? 2) What makes me special? 3) Is there a pattern to my life? 4) Where am I going? 5) What is my gift? 6) Who can I trust? 7) What is my message? 8) Will my life be rich?

At first glance, these questions may appear similar to other life-shaping questions, such as *Why am I here?* and *What is my purpose?* But, these eight questions aren't arbi-



trary. They come from one source—the *Laws of Identity*—eight natural laws that are part of the very constitution of nature and govern our lives.

The effects of the Laws of Identity can be seen, for instance, by observing the quality of your life: How content or discontent are you? How grounded are you? Are you your “own person” or do you follow the crowd? Do you stand up for what you believe in, or acquiesce to others’ opinions? The answers to these questions provide clues to whether you are living in harmony with who you are. The closer you live in accord with your identity, the closer you are in sync with the natural laws. The opposite is equally the case.

Not only do these eight questions flow directly from the Laws of Identity, but their sequence is crucial to cracking your identity code. The sequence builds in a way that tells a story about how life develops when it is lived through the lens of identity.

But the journey you will take begins by finding and embracing a feeling for the life you have, most likely, never experienced before. The feeling I am referring to can’t be reached through any of the five physical senses we take for granted: touch, sight, hearing, smell or taste.

Once you locate this feeling, you will wind your way through a period of self-discovery during which you will unearth capacities you never knew you had and come face-to-face with trials you never knew existed.

Finally, as your identity becomes clear, taking on form and meaning, you will arrive at a place where you are filled with passion, conviction, and serenity—a place you will recognize, finally, as *home*.

How do you get there? You must answer the eight questions in turn. Here is what each question asks you to do:

To answer the question, *Who am I?*, *define yourself as separate from all others*. Before you can know who you are, you must first know who you are not. What you seek in separation is independence—the ability to think and act on your own and in your own best interests, despite what others may expect of you. Defining yourself as separate from others is about finding your own integrity as an individual.

To answer the question, *What makes me special?*, *unearth what you love*. We are all imbued with deep-seated capacities that reside below the surface of our lives and inform who we are. After much searching, I came to realize that I am distinguished by my love of discovery, of light and of building.



These traits are pillars of my identity.

To answer the question, *Is there a pattern to my life?*, *make the connections that explain past events and foreshadow your future*. These “connections” come clear when you see the pattern formed by the achievements that mark your life.

To answer the question, *Where am I going?*, *commit yourself to the path revealed in what you’ve learned so far*. Answering these questions will fill you with new insights about yourself and a sense of hope that is fresh and vibrant. Yet, you may not know exactly what these insights imply about your future. Frustration may take hold. Do not get discouraged. Stay the course. Have faith you are on the right track.

To answer the question, *What is my gift?*, *follow the signs of joy*. Within you is an overarching drive that cries out to be developed and exercised. Call it a gift, a purpose, or a passion. It is that irrepressible need you have that captures your imagination and urges you forward. It is something you are compelled to do, simply because of who you are. Your identity is your gift to the world. Follow its call.

To answer the question, *Who can I trust?*, *take stock of who matters and why*. Of all the people you know—including family, friends, and colleagues—you can really only trust a few in terms of how your identity aligns with theirs. These people form your inner identity circle. Find them. They are your sanctuary.

To answer the question, *What is my message?*, *declare yourself on the strength of your gift*. At some point, when your identity is clear, it will be time to stand up and be counted. At this moment, fear of rejection by others no longer matters. What does matter is letting the world know who you are. It is a moment of true liberation.

To answer the question, *Will my life be rich?*, *surrender to the pull of identity*. Allowing yourself to shape your life in ways that are informed by your identity brings ever-greater integrity to everything you do. It doesn’t mean life will be easy, or always simple or fun. It does however mean that you are likely to find a sense of happiness you’ve never experienced before. By *happiness*, I mean that you are at peace with yourself among others in the world. You are home. PE



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ACTION: *Live in harmony with your identity.*