

## The Essential Self: Who am I?

In the March Module, there will be an overarching theme of “Personal Leadership Brand” or developing a distinctive identity in the market. Just how do you get to the upper right quadrant of the relevance and unique/distinctive matrix?

Those of you who have studied it know the 4 Ps of Marketing (Product, Place (distribution), Price, and Promotion), but in personal branding it works slightly differently in translation (Persona, Product, Packaging, Promotion and, the additional, Permission). It is not sufficient to just have your Product (qualifications, experience, expertise, ideas and track record: the “what” we can do), but our Persona (the visceral reactions and emotional connections we elicit in others: the “how” we do it) determines our success in the marketplace. We will do some pre-work to help you gather the important elements of how you are wired so that you can understand and harness your natural tendencies and strengths rather than try to “change” yourself. When we embrace and leverage our “essential self”, we move more authentically in the world and will be more fulfilled and satisfied in our careers.

Over the next few modules we will explore how you can develop your own personal brand that will be a competitive advantage over your career as an investor. It can take three parts: Discovery, Development and Deployment. The **Discovery Phase** helps us capture the “Why” we do what we do: Who we are at our core, what drives us, what we are passionate about, what we are naturally good at. The **Development Phase** has us declare the “What” we are called to do. Using Market Positioning, we can succinctly define what we are uniquely qualified to do and how people will remember us for that. Lastly, the **Deployment Phase** is the “How” part of our story and includes a process to implement our vision and tag line in the market.

This paper and the questions that follow will focus on the Discovery Phase and help you reflect on and articulate your persona, how your personal energy and style show up in the marketplace. Then you can add your product components to complete your unique offer to your ecosystem.

In the July Module, we will go deeper into the Development Phase by designing and putting into practice our Packaging (the wrapping we put around our product: how we dress and speak, who we hang around with, our presence, etc.), our Promotion (how we inform the market about our value (persona + product)), and granting ourselves the Permission to operate effectively (Our sense of legitimacy, internal confidence, and core belief that we have important contributions to make). Those pieces will help you define and implement your strategy to accomplish your vision.

Finding your Essential Self is really about discerning and declaring your purpose and intent in the world: what is your story about who you are and what you are out to accomplish (your vision)? “Who you are” is a cultural journey as well, your actions and behaviors must align with your story or it is just so much hot air...

In later module sessions, we will work on

Who you are starts with your **character**: the questions to ask here are:

- What are my core values?
- What are my operating principles in life?
- Do I have integrity with those values and principles?

Next come my **concerns**:

- What's important to me?
- What do I care about?
- Do I act consistently with those declarations?

Where does my **passion** and **energy** come from? When we find our essence, we find what we are compelled to do.

- What is it that you can't not do? [Part of this is nature, part has been nurtured in us.]
- What are my desires and motivators?
- What unleashes my creativity?

What are my **styles** and **preferences**?

- How do I communicate?
- How do I build relationships?
- How do I deal with conflict?
- How do I see the world?
- How do I interact with that world?

What is my **vision**?

- What is my story for the future, professionally and personally?

What is my **product**?

- What are my strengths and qualifications?
- How do my training, experience and expertise fit together?
- What have I done (track record) and what can I be counted on to do going forward (market trust)?
- What level of Intellectual (IQ) and Emotional Competencies (EQ) do I possess and can I develop?

What you do best commercially is a **manifestation of the Self** that you have defined above.

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Here are some other questions to trigger your thinking further if those above leave you scratching your head (don't worry, some of us are feelers rather than thinkers...):

- What are my favorite work and living environments?
  - Do I prefer the beach or the mountains? The city or the farm?
  - What is my risk profile now? How has that shifted?
  - What is my learning edge? [What do I need to learn most right now?]
  - What would make my "best day"?
  - What is my favorite reward or recognition (Affirmation, Quality Time, Gifts, Service, Touch)?
  - What makes me angry? [We care so much about something that violation of that thing -  
- whatever it might be -- moves us to anger.]
  - Where do I want to visit?
  - Do I prefer people or tasks?
  - Who are my heroes? Who are my villains?
  - What is my kryptonite? [My blind spots and blockers.]
  - Am I a self-starter or do I need a kick in the ass or to be pulled along?
  - What music, books, movies are our favorites?
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Some challenges to developing and building a brand include being able to let go of your old ways while shaping something that may take 12 to 18 months to bear fruit and developing the emotional skills to handle pressure and cope with the required changes in behavior that we are trying to engender. Success with our brand only comes with consistency in our personal (internal) and professional (external) lives. These are places where a coach can come in handy.

A well developed brand concept becomes a filter for our life: we are able to focus and align our choices and decisions, our resources (time, attention (energy), and money), our activities and the people we interact with and have around us. We wind up with the right people, the right companies, the right markets, and the right relationships for us and we end up with a competitive edge that includes a profile of recognition and trust. The clarity afforded by a proper brand energize us and help us live in "Flow" (in the zone), with maximum results from minimum investment.