

## Chapter 2: **Identity Yourself**

This chapter grounds the rest of this book. It contains a self-quiz you can use to discover an aspect of your identity. Understanding yourself allows you to put the rest of this book in context, to answer the question, “What does all of this mean to me *personally*?”

### What Is Your GRIN Identity?

Since the Qin Dynasty of China, officials have been collecting fingerprints from crime scenes as evidence to convict or exonerate accused criminals. Fingerprints are a leading form of identification. No two individuals have been found to leave the same fingerprints – even clones have different fingerprints – this history provides remarkable evidence that, among the billions of people on Earth, you are unique.

Yet your fingerprints are not who you really are. If your hands were transplanted, your fingerprints would change, but your identity would not. On the other hand, if *every* part of you were transplanted piece-by-piece from another person, you would eventually become that person – your identity really *would* change. The question of who you are essentially is wrapped up in the question of exactly where in that transplantation process your identity shift would take place. Most people would say the line would get crossed when transplanting certain parts of your brain, because damage to those brain parts in other people has consistently changed the ways those people made decisions. When a friend undergoes cosmetic surgery, we can accept that she is still the same person with whom we developed a friendship, even though she may look strikingly different. But, if she suffers certain kinds of brain damage, her personality

would change so much that we would feel like we were dealing with an essentially different person, a stranger, someone with a different identity.

The essence we are talking about here is not the actual decisions people make, nor the specific neurons they use to make them – it is their natural decision-making preferences. When Daniel Day Lewis acts like Abraham Lincoln, choosing words and gestures Lincoln would choose, he has not actually resurrected Lincoln, because Lewis has not actually changed his natural preferences. He has merely suspended them temporarily, putting his own identity "in the closet." He will eventually exhibit his natural preferences again. Then the resurrected Lincoln will be shown to have been an illusion. The reason why we associate our essence with our brains is that our brains store our preferences, and the reason why some people think they can download "themselves" into machines is that they expect those machines to exhibit their preferences like a great actor playing their role permanently. Our natural preferences are the essence of our identity.

This chapter will help you identify the way you naturally prefer to bring evaluation into your decision-making. "GRIN" is an acronym for the four known ways evaluation takes place. The self-quiz offered in this chapter and at GRINfree.com isn't the only way to identify your GRIN-identity. For example, scientists have recently shown that this kind of preference stems from genes and brain structure, so analysis of your biology might be another route to discover this aspect of yourself. You could also read chapters three through six and simply ask yourself which one best describes you. Try the self-quiz first. It's easy, and you can always explore other tools later.

## Before You Take the Quiz

When cat-burglars want to hide their identities, do they disguise their fingerprints via hand transplants? No, they simply wear gloves. Gloves make everyone's fingerprints indistinguishable. If everyone always wore gloves, the ancient Chinese police would never have realized that fingerprints are unique, and this form of diversity would never have been discovered. Social conflict results in fear of discrimination which, in turn, leads people to hide their identities. I am not saying people shouldn't hide – in fact, I advise you to keep your identity secret, and am personally committed to preserving your anonymity – I am just pointing out that discrimination exists and that hiding has become a habit. The prevalence of this habit is probably why GRIN diversity was not discovered sooner.

We have tools, analogous to gloves, for hiding our GRIN orientations. These tools are called “norms.” National laws are the norms we use most. The practice of attending a mosque is not a national norm in the United States. It is a norm only among mosque members, and choosing to be such a member reveals something about oneself. National laws, on the other hand, apply to everyone. The choice to obey a national law reveals very little about who you are. It does not reveal whether you like the law. It does not reveal *what* you like or dislike about it. It does not even reveal whether you expect the law to change in the future. If someone asks you about your GRIN-identity, you can tell them that you don't have one. If they point out that you make decisions, and therefore obviously *do* have an identity, you can claim that your decisions are made in accordance with the laws of the nation in which you happen to be. No one will be able to tell for sure who you really are inside.

However, to protect your own freedom, *you* will need to know who you are inside, so you will need to temporarily suspend the habit of hiding your identity. This can be difficult for some people, much as it can be difficult for some people to discover their sexual identity. The first thing you can do to help yourself is to keep your answers confidential. If you participate in any public use of the GRIN self-quiz, such as a survey of workplace diversity, make sure the responses you give are anonymous. It should not include any uniquely identifying information, such as your name or email address. Confidentiality is a standard tool to help people answer openly.

The second thing you can do is to use questions which have no normal answer. Such questions are called “balanced.” As an example, Jonathan Haidt asked whether each of the following behaviors is morally OK:

1. A woman is cleaning out her closet, and she finds her old national flag. She doesn't want the flag anymore, so she cuts it up into pieces and uses the rags to clean her bathroom.
2. A woman is dying, and on her deathbed she asked her son to promise that he would visit her grave every week. The son loved his mother very much, so he promised to visit her grave every week. But after the mother died, the son didn't keep his promise, because he was very busy.
3. A family's dog was killed by a car in front of their house. They had heard that dog meat was delicious, so they cut up the dog's body and cooked it and ate it for dinner.
4. A brother and sister like to kiss each other on the mouth. When nobody is around, they find a secret hiding place and kiss each other on the mouth, passionately. <sup>1</sup>

Notice that balanced questions make you do some soul-searching. They cite situations beyond norms, so you can't use norms to hide your identity. Balanced questions are often uncomfortable. They may make you pick between two awful choices or between two good ones. You may want to answer "neither" or "both." If you find a balanced question in the self-

quiz frustrating, please understand that it is designed to be that way. Go with the first answer that pops-out to you, even if it feels random.

A third thing you can do is to use questions that seem unrelated to what you are trying to hide. For example, rather than ask yourself what you prefer to do, you might ask yourself what you have done in the past. Past behavior often reflects preferences, and behavior can be more difficult to hide because it seems less a matter of opinion than a matter of fact. On the other hand, this strategy for measuring preference will backfire to the extent that you have done things you would have preferred to do differently. This is why surveys typically involve batteries of questions. They use averaging to wash-out the risks of indirect questions. Be prepared to face questions on the self-quiz for which your answers might be misleading. Answer them truthfully and rely on the averaging – you can adjust your answers later if necessary.

The final and most important thing you can do to help discover your identity is to come with the right attitude. Ideally, you know not only that you are safe, that nothing bad can happen to you for being open and thoughtful in answering questions about yourself, but also that your uniqueness is valuable. Ideally, you are curious about who you are, and want to know the truth. This kind of attitude comes from living in a society free of discrimination. As a result of the civil rights movement, for example, more members of racial minorities are curious about their racial identity. If you become convinced that GRIN-diversity is worth investigating, please help to curb GRIN-discrimination by sharing your opinion with others.

## The GRIN Self-Quiz

If you have access to the Internet, you can take the GRIN Self-Quiz anonymously at GRINfree.com where your scores will be calculated for you automatically. The same quiz is included below with a scoring sheet for those who prefer to take it manually:

*Instructions:* The GRIN Instrument consists of the following 24 questions. Some are very similar to others – that is intentional. For each statement, circle the letter (A or B) for the ending with which you agree the most.

1. My higher priority in life is...
  - A. ...to know what I am trying to achieve.
  - B. ...to discover new possibilities.
2. In the future, I will...
  - A. ...focus on the people I love the most.
  - B. ...stay pure.
3. My higher priority in life is...
  - A. ...to know what I am trying to achieve.
  - B. ...to serve something greater than myself.
4. I cannot be my best self...
  - A. ...when my work does not require creativity.
  - B. ...when I cannot empathize.
5. My higher priority in life is...
  - A. ...to get results.
  - B. ...to be lovable.
6. People who have known me longest treat me as if I am more...
  - A. ...morally strict.
  - B. ...idealistic but impractical.
7. I cannot be my best self...
  - A. ...when my work does not require creativity.
  - B. ...when I do not know the criteria by which success is measured.
8. My higher priority in life is...
  - A. ...to serve something greater than myself.
  - B. ...the feelings of the people closest to me.
9. I am more concerned about stress which...
  - A. ...leads me to experiment with less-pure behaviors.
  - B. ...puts my plans on hold.
10. My higher priority in life is...
  - A. ...the feelings of the people closest to me.
  - B. ...to discover new possibilities.

11. In the future, I will...
- A. ...focus on the people I love the most.
  - B. ...make measurable achievements.
12. My higher priority in life is...
- A. ...to discover new possibilities.
  - B. ...to serve something greater than myself.
13. I would prefer to have...
- A. ...unquestioned authorities.
  - B. ...no plan.
14. My higher priority in life is...
- A. ...to be lovable.
  - B. ...to exercise self-discipline.
15. In the future, I will...
- A. ...make measurable achievements.
  - B. ...stay pure.
16. More than others do, I...
- A. ...question existing best practices.
  - B. ...maintain relationships.
17. My higher priority in life is...
- A. ...to know what I am trying to achieve.
  - B. ...the feelings of the people closest to me.
18. People are more likely to complain about...
- A. ...my old-fashioned morals.
  - B. ...my far-fetched proposals.
19. I am more concerned about stress which...
- A. ...blocks my creativity.
  - B. ...puts my plans on hold.
20. More than others do, I...
- A. ...uphold moral principles.
  - B. ...maintain relationships.
21. My higher priority in life is...
- A. ...to exercise self-discipline.
  - B. ...to get results.
22. In the future, I will...
- A. ...focus on the people I love the most.
  - B. ...convince others to open their minds.
23. I would prefer to have...
- A. ...no plan.
  - B. ...a “pure business” culture.
24. More than others do, I...
- A. ...question existing best practices.
  - B. ...uphold moral principles.

## Scoring

To calculate GRIN scores, copy your circles onto the grid below. For example, if you circled choice B for question 1, then circle "1B" below. Count the number of circles in each row and write the count (0-4) in the box to its right. The six pairs of boxes represent your preference between each possible pairing of GRIN-natures. Check your work: Since you picked one choice for each question, the numbers in each pair should sum to four. To get your overall GRIN scores, add up each column. The sum of your GRIN scores should be 24.

1A	7B	13A	19B	→	□	} GN
1B	7A	13B	19A	→	□	
2A	8B	14A	20B	→	□	} RI
2B	8A	14B	20A	→	□	
3A	9B	15A	21B	→	□	} IN
3B	9A	15B	21A	→	□	
4A	10B	16A	22B	→	□	} GR
4B	10A	16B	22A	→	□	
5A	11B	17A	23B	→	□	} RN
5B	11A	17B	23A	→	□	
6A	12B	18A	24B	→	□	} GI
6B	12A	18B	24A	→	□	
			+	+	+	+
			□	□	□	□
			G	R	I	N

## Interpreting Your Result

When biologists classify specimens by species, the result they most want to get is that the specimen cannot be identified, because that means they have discovered something new. If all of your GRIN scores are between three and nine then that is the kind of result you got, and you should look as Chapter 7, “Discovering Other Orientations.” If you believe that you understood all of the questions and answered carefully and honestly, then you may be well-positioned to articulate a new form of evaluation. It is never easy to articulate something new, but countless generations could benefit from this contribution.

If you had one or more GRIN scores over eight or under four, then it can help you narrow-down who you are. Based on this self-quiz alone, our best guess would be that you have the GRIN-orientation with the highest score, but you can weigh evidence from other sources as well. At the very least, your reactions to the descriptions in Chapters 3-6 would also count as additional evidence you should consider. In order to combine evidence from multiple sources, you need to know how strongly to weigh each. Statisticians typically express strength of evidence as “p-values.” The following table offers the p-values for the self-quiz:

Highest GRIN score	Lowest GRIN score	p-value	Odds against this happening randomly
11 or 12	0 or 1	0.015	67:1
10	2	0.08	13:1
9	3	0.29	3:1

If you got an eleven or twelve, then you should interpret your result like a positive fingerprint match (with eight discernible coincident minutiae). Betting that your result is just random noise would be like betting that a coin will come up heads six times in a row (which generally happens only once per 67 tries). If one or more of your scores is a one or a zero, it would be just as bad a gamble not to rule that orientation out. If your highest score was a nine or ten, and you believe the corresponding chapter describes you well, then you can count the self-quiz as confirmation of your belief. However, something is amiss if you got a relatively low score for the orientation you believe describes you most accurately. You might want to look at the individual questions that contributed to your results to figure-out what happened.

There are two more cautions to mention here: First, the self-quiz and your introspection about Chapters 3-6 both provide evidence about your self-image, and self-image can be skewed. We tend to generate self-image through comparison to others: A giant who lives among giants might not realize that she is tall, and a genius among geniuses may underestimate her own intelligence. Similarly, if you spend a great deal of time around people who share your GRIN-orientation (which many people do), you may underestimate the degree to which you have that preference. This can be a good reason to investigate your second-highest score in addition to the highest.

Second, it is theoretically possible to have a split identity. Imagine an automated taxi which speaks with passengers and empathizes with them, but which also obeys traffic laws. If it encounters a passenger desperate to get to a hospital as soon as possible, the taxi could get internally conflicted, one part wanting to break the speed limit and the other part wanting to uphold it. If you have the potential to experience similar internal conflict, then you probably

compartmentalize your life into separate worlds, e.g. “the office” vs. “the bedroom”, exhibiting a different nature in each context, neither of which is your whole true self.

These complications having been acknowledged, people do tend to exhibit a single preference on the GRIN self-quiz and to segregate based on that orientation. We administered the self-quiz to 250 Internet users in the United States through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk. Among those in artistic careers, we found that a high G-score was about twice as likely as any other high score. Among people who identified with childcare, we found that a high R-score was about twice as likely as any other high score. Among people who identified with team sports, a high N-score was about three times as likely as any other high score. People with a high I-score were over six times as likely to convert to Christianity as to convert to no religion, and people with high G and N scores were ten times as likely to convert in the opposite direction.

Much as your GRIN nature will be a minority in many social circles, humanity does not actually thrive where most of our ecosystem exists: underground, underwater, and in jungles. We may feel like we rule our ecosystem, but we are challenged to find ways to participate in more environments. You may similarly feel like your preferred GRIN-orientation rules your social circles, but know of other social circles where you feel out of place. The rest of this book explains how to make each social environment hospitable to a wider diversity of people.

<sup>1</sup> Haidt, J., Koller, S. & Dias, M. (1993). Affect, culture, and morality, or is it wrong to eat your dog? *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 65 (4), 613-628.