

“Exploring Your Social Identities”

Hosted: February 22, 2024

Facilitated by: Lisa Jiménez

Ice Breaker:

As you join and take a moment to settle in, think about how you are feeling today and use one word to describe your emotions.

Intention setting for today's conversation:



Introduction:

Our February community conversation focused on our personal and social identities, allowing Guide participants to experience a shortened version of how members will engage with M3 content.

When we talk about personal identities, we refer to the sense of self that a person develops over their lifetime. Your personal identity is a mix of how you see yourself, the aspects you choose to define yourself by, and how others perceive you.

On the other hand, social identities relate to the groups we belong to, often assigned by birth or societal norms. These identities, whether visible or not, are societal constructs that categorize people, influenced by our upbringing, education, media, and community. They're intersectional, meaning they overlap and affect each other.

This discussion and lists below will cover key social identities, but it's important to note this list isn't exhaustive.

Personal Identities	Social Identities
- Skills / Hobbies / Interests	- Race
- Family structure	- Ethnicity
- Relationship status	- Class
- Your location	- Gender
- Introvert / extrovert	- Sexuality
- 3 adjectives that describe you	- Nationality
- Aspirations	- Religion
- <i>Etc...</i>	- Ability
	- Age

****Lisa shared an important facilitation note:** *As members engage in dialogue with their groups, remind them to focus the conversation on their own personal identity and refrain from commenting on the identities of others.*

Personal Identities

Our personal identities carry different weights in society and impact us as Guides and our members in different ways. As we explore personal identities, let's start by noting the ones most meaningful to us from the list provided below. Consider what aspects of your identity you want others to understand. Think about what's relevant across different areas of your life, what shapes your essence, how you show up, and what feels true to your core.

Personal Identities
- Skills / Hobbies / Interests
- Family structure
- Relationship status
- Your location
- Introvert / extrovert
- 3 adjectives that describe you
- Aspirations
- <i>Etc...</i>

A Modeling Example by Lisa:

"I am an introverted extrovert; I'm a massive introvert who needs an extraordinary amount of alone time. I often get exhausted in social situations and need time to recover. This is an important aspect of who I am and how I show up in the world."

Directions & Reflection

Bring back what we shared last time in your superpowers, and consider how those show up in these identities you've just reflected on.

The prompting questions to spend some time thinking about are:

- In what ways do your personal identities shape the superpowers you possess?
- How do your personal identities impact how you show up as a leader?
- How do your personal identities affect your facilitation as a Core Guide?

It's important to note that members might focus on different identities for various questions, acknowledging the intersections and overlaps among these identities. As a reminder, we will cover social identities next, so inform the group to refrain from including those for this first part.

It is important to note that you will reflect on each of the above questions, sharing about ONE identity each time. Encourage your members to be highly mindful of time so that everyone has equal speaking time. Each person will have 3-5 minutes to share.

Facilitation tip: Ask that one person starts the conversation taking just 1-2 minutes to respond. Then the next person shares using the same criteria as the first. Each person should have a chance to speak and share their thoughts before opening the discussion to the whole group.

Reflections, Takeaways + Tips from our Guides:

- Showing up intentionally involves drinking water, preparing, and sleeping, all of which prepare one to effectively read the room and observe. The source of our energy is crucial.
- Location impacts one's leadership by influencing the rhythm, and both internal and external drivers, based on where you are living.
- Movement focused - internal and external movement
- Create a space for all voices - both extrovert and introvert.
- Tapping into our core values is essential for understanding and shaping our social identity
- It's necessary to define terms that could be ambiguous to ensure clear understanding
- As an extrovert, understanding the importance of harnessing energy is key to showing up as an intentional leader.
- Identities are varied, deeply integrated, and primal to our sense of self.
- Connections and relationships are key.

Social Identities

For this part - Lisa directed participants to begin by noting your identities in the given categories, sharing only what you feel comfortable with. In small groups, there's no pressure to disclose specific identities unless you wish to. Instead, reflect on how these identities influence your leadership presence. Choose what you'd like to share with the group. Remember, this list isn't comprehensive, but it's our focus for today's discussion.

Facilitation tip: *It may be helpful to review the social identity and socialization materials that were provided as part of the Inclusion in Core Practice Sessions. The cycle of socialization will be a helpful tool as you set up this conversation. (Materials linked below)*

Below you will see a list of social identities which provide a framework for understanding how society classifies individuals based on various characteristics. Historically, these identities have been wielded to unfairly privilege some and discriminate against others. The intersection of our social identities, combined with factors like cultural values, subcultural affiliations, and personal tastes, contributes to our unique personal identity—a profile that defines what makes each of us distinctly individual.

Facilitation tip: *For a clear understanding, you may want to define and give examples for each identity. Below are the definitions Lisa provided during this conversation. If time is tight, feel free to ask if anyone has questions about specific identities. It's crucial to clarify the difference between race and ethnicity at the very least. Where comfortable, share your own examples of how you identify.*

Social Identities

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Class
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Nationality
- Religion
- Ability
- Age

Race: This pertains to group membership based on distinct genetic ancestry, often but not exclusively identifiable by skin color, hair texture, eye shape etc. While we commonly categorize races using terms like White or Black, it's important to recognize the diversity within racial groups and the evolving nature of family structures. Examples include: White, Black, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Indigenous.

Ethnicity: Rooted in the cultural origins of one's family, influencing morals, cultural traditions, food, and religion. While linked to race, ethnicity focuses on cultural aspects, with examples including Korean, Native American, Mexican, Puertorican, , Pacific Islander, Maori, Nigerian, African-American, and Kurdish.

Class or Socioeconomic Status: Primarily related to wealth, education, income, this category also encompasses various social and cultural markers associated with different social classes, such as job types, food preferences, and values. Traditional classifications include working-class, middle-class, and upper-class.

Gender: An individual's self conviction of being a man, woman, non-binary, trans, etc. This conviction is not contingent on sex assigned at birth which is based on anatomy, chromosomes and hormones. Gender encompasses categories such as man, woman, non-binary, transgender, two-spirit (Native American), among others.

Sexual Orientation: Refers to a pattern of one's attraction or capacity to engage in intimate, sexual/physical and sometimes emotional relationships with people or genders and the behavior and/or social affiliation that results from this attraction. Examples include heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, queer, and others.

Nationality: The status of being a citizen of a particular country, place or space, acquired by birth, inheritance, or naturalization.

Religion: The belief in a higher power and/or identification with a set of spiritual practices, often associated with organized religious groups such as Catholics, Anglicans, Protestants, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus.

(Dis)Ability: Being differently able (physically, mentally, emotionally) from that which society has structured the "norm" that can result in disadvantages, influenced by social barriers like inadequate infrastructure. Examples include: able-bodied, blind, deaf, depression, anxiety, neurodiverse, physically- disabled, etc.

Age: Years since birth or current life stage. c .In addition to your age, may include your generational identification (Boomer, Gen X, Millennial)

The social culture element and its origins often stem from oppression. In terms of diverse inclusion, this aspect examines how different groups either do or do not hold power.

A Modeling Example by Lisa:

Lisa demonstrated to our Guide participants how she would facilitate discussions within her group. She began by stating that she is a mixed-race, light-skinned Latina, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging light-skinned privilege. Lisa highlighted how being ethnically ambiguous often leads to confusion, impacting her experiences and perceptions in the world. This ambiguity affects her leadership style and how others perceive her, influencing her facilitation approach and what she shares at the core of these discussions.

Directions & Reflection

Following Lisa's example of sharing her social identities, you are now encouraged to use the same reflection questions as before. This time, let's focus on how our social identities manifest in our professional lives. Revisit your superpowers and reflect on your leadership style, considering how your unique identities influence the way you lead and interact in professional settings.

- In what ways do your social identities shape your superpowers?
- How do your social identities impact how you show up as a leader?
- If you don't think your social identities impact these, why do you think that is?

Participants might concentrate on various identities for different questions, acknowledging that these identities can intersect and overlap. Encourage them to spend 60 seconds writing down their reflections.

Facilitation tip: Before opening the floor for group discussion, lead by example. You could say, For me, reflecting on my <insert identity> helps me understand how it has shaped my superpower of <insert superpower> in X, Y, Z ways.

Important: *Unlike last time, where we discussed one identity per question, we now encourage participants to explore their intersectional identities. Recognize that these may present themselves in unique ways.*

Again, encourage participants to be highly mindful of time so that everyone has equal speaking time.

Facilitation Tip: *Remind participants that these identities have historically been used to privilege some while discriminating against others. Sharing how these dynamics have impacted us can be sensitive. It's important to allow everyone the space to share what they're comfortable with, without pressing them further with probing questions*

Reflections, Takeaways + Tips from our Guides:

- Stay Curious
- Embracing what is.
- My name, Karen, is a social identity that shows up a lot.

- Most social identities are determined at birth, whereas personal identity can evolve and be chosen.
- The experience of oppression from previous generations is still affecting people today, and how members of our groups who visibly belong to an 'other' category might experience similar feelings.
- "As a Black woman, my identity enters the room before I do. I'm conscious of this as I prepare to facilitate these meetings, thinking carefully about how I will present myself and how it might affect the dynamics of our discussion."
- "How does the way I present myself (or the way you perceive me before I even speak) influence our conversation, if at all?"

Links + Resources

- [M3 Core Group Identities](#)
- [Social Identity](#)
- [Socialization](#)
- [Social Identity Wheel](#)