

## Identity Quotes

*About knowing who we are, what we value and where we are going . . .*

"Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy."

*General H. Norman Schwarzkopf*

"The leader for today and the future will be focused on how to be – how to develop quality, character, mind-set, values, principles and courage."

*Frances Hesselbein*

"It is a poor and disgraceful thing not to be able to reply, with some degree of certainty, to the simple questions, 'What will you be? What will you do?'"

*John Foster*

"Every human being is intended to have a character of his own; to be what no other one is, and to do what no other can do."

*Channing*

"The most difficult thing in life is to know yourself."

*Thales*

"You need to claim the events of your life to make yourself yours."

*Anne-Wilson Schaefer*

"Undoubtedly, we become what we envisage."

*Claude M. Bristol*

"What you have outside you counts less than what you have inside you."

*B. C. Forbes*

"He who floats with the current, who does not guide himself according to higher principles, who has no ideal, no convictions – such a man is a mere article of the world's furniture – a thing moved, instead of a living and moving being – an echo, not a voice."

*Amiel*

"Every human being is intended to have a character of his own; to be what no other is, and to do what no other can do."

*Channing*

"Every individual has a place to fill in the world, and is important in some respect, whether he chooses to be so or not."

*Nathaniel Hawthorne*

"Wealth is not only what you have but it is also what you are."

*A. H. K. Boyd*

"The most difficult thing in life is to know yourself."

*Thales*

"Purpose is the most essential core of leadership. Without purpose there is no mission, vision, or reason for being."

*Tom Votel*

"One need ask only 'What for? What am I to unify my being for?' The reply is: Not for my own sake."

*Martin Buber*

"Great minds have purposes, others have wishes."

*Washington Irving*

"Ninety percent of the world's woes come from people not knowing themselves, their abilities, their frailties, and even their real virtues. Most of us go all the way through life as complete strangers to ourselves – so how can we know anyone else?"

*Sydney J. Harris*

"I now know myself to be a person of weakness and strength, liability and giftedness, darkness and light. I now know that to be whole means to reject none of it but to embrace all of it."

*Parker Palmer*

"The ancient human question 'Who am I?' leads inevitably to the equally important question 'Whose am I?' — for there is no self outside of relationship."

*Parker Palmer*

"An effective human being is a whole greater than the sum of it's parts."

*Ida P. Rolf*

"If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else."

*Laurence J. Peter*

"Give us a clear vision, that we may know where to stand and what to stand for - because unless we stand for something, we will fall for anything."

*Peter Marshall*

"We ought to think that we are one of the leaves of a tree, and the tree is all humanity. We cannot live without the others, without the tree."

*Pablo Casals*

"One must know oneself. If it does not serve to discover the truth, it at least serves as a rule of life and there is nothing better."

*Blaise Pascal*

"We can only thrive when we have a goal - a passionate purpose which bears upon the public interest."

*Margaret E. Kuhn*

"All people should strive to learn before they die what they are running from, and to, and why."

*James Thurber*

"Nature never repeats herself, and the possibilities of one human soul will never be found in another."

*Elizabeth Cady Stanton*

"I have often thought that the best way to define a man's character would be to seek out the particular mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself deeply and intensively active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says, "This is the real me."

*William James*

"Since you are like no other ever created since the beginning of time, you are incomparable."

*Brenda Ueland*

"Learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself and know that everything in this life has a purpose."

*Elisabeth Kubler-Ross*

"The noblest of all studies is the study of what man should be and of what life he should live."

*Plato*

"To discover we have no story is to acknowledge that our existence is meaningless, which we may find unbearable."

*Robert Fulford*

*(in Triumph of the Narrative)*

"You never find yourself until you face the truth."

*Pearl Bailey*

"Make yourself the sort of person you want people to think you are."

*Socrates*

"Be what you is, not what you is not."

*The Wizard  
(Rocky & Bullwinkle Show)*

"Do not let the past dictate who you are, but let it become a part of who you will be."

*Nicki in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"*

"No need is so compelling as the need we all feel for our lives to make sense, to have meaning."

*Willis Harmon*

"When you empty yourself of the illusion of who you are and what you think you are, there is less to lose than you had feared."

*Carol Orsborn*

"It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are."

*Roy Disney*

"You can out-distance that which is running after you, but not what is running inside you."

*Rawandan proverb*

"It's never too late to be who you might have been."

*George Eliot*

"The thing that is really hard, and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and beginning the work of becoming yourself."

*Anna Quindlen*

"Only you can be yourself; no one else is qualified for the job."

*Bits and Pieces*

"The more you know who you are and what it is that you want, the less things bother you."

*Bob Harris in "Lost in Translation"*

"No trumpets sound when the important decisions of your life are made. Destiny is made known silently."

*Agnes DeMille*

"Men and women who know themselves are no longer fools; they stand on the threshold of the Door of Wisdom."

*Havelock Ellis*

"Talents are best nurtured in solitude; character is best formed in the stormy billows of the world."

*Goethe*

"For years, copying other people, I tried to know myself.  
From within, I couldn't decide what to do.  
Unable to see, I heard my name being called.  
Then I walked outside."

*Rumi*

"To know what you prefer instead of humbly saying Amen to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive."

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

"Every person is intended to have a character of his own; to be what no other is, and to do what no other can do."

*Channing*

"The most important thing about having goals is having one."

*Geoffrey A. Abert*

"Clarity of purpose exposes the foundation of the inner heart."

*M. H. McKee*

"When one is out of touch with oneself, one cannot touch others."

*Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

"Expedients are for the hour, but principles are for the ages. Just because the rains descend and the winds blow, we cannot afford to build on shifting sands."

*Henry Ward Beecher*

"To be a person you have to have a story to tell."

*Isak Dinesen*

"True strength is found not in perfection, but in understanding our own limitations."

*Annette Simmons*

"Armed with self understanding and knowledge of where we can make the greatest contribution, anything is possible."

*Al Watts*

"When any organization is defined by an arbitrary division between the so-called facts of institutional life and the institution's values, the institution's basic identity is eroded."

*Thomas Holland and David Hester*

"What we do is a measure of who we are. If we imagine our work as labor, we become laborers. If we imagine our work as art, we become artists."

*Jeffrey Patnaude*

"We know what we are, but know not what we may be."

*William Shakespeare*

"No amount of human having or human doing can make up for a deficit in human being."

*John Adams*

"The ideal is in thyself; the impediment, too, is in thyself."

*Thomas Carlyle*

"Man is made by his belief. As he believes, so he is."

*Bhagavad Gita*

"It is not our abilities that determine who we are, but our choices."

- Prof. Dumbledore in Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

"One secures the gold of the spirit when he finds himself."

*Claude M. Bristol*

"A life without purpose is an early death."

*Goethe*

"Think more about who you are and less about what you do, for if you are just, your ways will be just."

*Meister Eckhart*

"Personality can open doors, but only character can keep them open."

*Elmer G. Leterman*

"You've got to be original, because if you are like somebody else, what do they need you for?"

*Bernadette Peters*

"The purpose of our lives is to find the purpose of our lives."

*Thomas Merton*

"All paths lead to the same goal, to convey to others what we are."

*Pablo Neruda*

"If we don't know where we are, we don't know who we are."

*Wallace Stegner*

"All men should strive to learn before they die what they are running from, and to, and why."

*James Thurber*

"Our character is our destiny."

*Heraclitus*

"It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

*J.K. Rowling (In Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets)*

"Fixing your objective is like identifying the North Star - you sight your compass on it and then use it as the means of getting back on track when you tend to stray."

*Marshall E. Dimock*

"This is the true joy in life: the being used up for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one."

*George Bernard Shaw*

"I want to work for a company that contributes to and is part of the community. I want something not just to invest in. I want something to believe in."

*Anita Roddick*

"I yam what I yam and that's all that I yam."

*Popeye the Sailor Man*

"Without self-understanding, without aim we can hurt others around us as well as ourselves. If we don't have a sense of the "bigger picture" when things go wrong, we are not able to respond appropriately to events or people."

*Caroline Myss (Sacred Contracts)*

"We grow neither better or worse as we grow older, but more like ourselves."

*Mary Lamberton Becker*

"We may be personally defeated, but our principles never."

*William Lloyd Garrison*

"When people base their lives on principles, 99% of their decisions are already made."

*Anonymous*

"If a man does not know what port he is steering for, no wind is favorable to him."

*Seneca*

"If you don't decide where you're going, life will decide for you."

*Tim Allen*

"What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery, and without it, all the others are not only useless, but disastrous."

*Thomas Merton*

"Each of us needs an adequate biography: How do I put together into a coherent image the pieces of my life? How do I find the basic plot of my story?"

*James Hillman*

"Dreaming is not only permissible for leaders - it is obligatory."

*John Carver*

"Clarifying the value system and breathing life into it are the greatest contributions a leader can make."

*Peters and Waterman, 1982*

"Joy can be real only if people look upon their life as a service, and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness."

*Tolstoi*

"Set me a task in which I can put something of my very self, and it is a task no longer; it is joy; it is art."

*Bliss Carman*

"When a man begins to understand himself he begins to live. When he begins to live he begins to understand his fellow men."

*Norvin G. McGranahan*

"Purpose is what gives life a meaning."

*C. H. Parkhurst, D. D.*

"When we know how to read our own hearts, we acquire wisdom of the hearts of others."

*Denis Diderot*

"Dreams are the touchstones of our character."

*Henry David Thoreau*

"Character is what you are in the dark."

*Dwight L. Moody*

"Don't let anyone steal your dream. It's your dream, not theirs."

*Dan Zadra*

"Nothing so much contributes to tranquilize the mind as a steady purpose – a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye."

*Mary Shelley*

"No sooner do we think that we have assembled a comfortable life than we find a piece of ourselves with no place to fit in."

*Gail Sheehy*

"The great and glorious masterpiece of man is how to live with purpose."

*Michel de Montaigne*

"You can find on the outside only what you possess on the inside."

*Adolfo Motiel Ballesteros*

"Only when one is connected to one's inner core is one connected to others."

*Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

"You cannot be really first rate at your work if your work is all you are."

- Anna Quindlen

"True self, when violatate, will always resist us, sometimes at great cost, holding our lives in check until we honor its truth."

*Parker Palmer*

"To discover we have no story is to acknowledge that our existence is meaningless, which we may find unbearable."

*Robert Fulford (in Triumph of the Narrative)*

“When you know who you are, you know what to do.”

*Lori Palm, Core Passion*

“The meaning of life is to find your gift, the purpose of life is to give it away.”  
*Joy J. Golliver*

“Where there is a purpose underpinning the business of an organization, then there is an unavoidable moral discipline that engages individuals.”  
*Nikos Mourkogiannis*

“You, who are on the road, must have a code that you can live by.”  
*Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young*

“It is never too late to become who you might have been.”  
*George Elliot*

“No person ever really lives until he has found something worth dying for.”  
*Charles Allen*

“Beware of no one more than yourself; we carry our own worst enemies within us.”  
*Charles H. Spurgeon*

“The world stands aside to let any man pass who knows where he’s going.”  
*David Starr Jordan*

“Our aspirations are our possibilities.”  
*Robert Browning*

"Evil isn't done so often by evil people, but by good people who do not know themselves."  
*Reinhold Niehbur*

Until you make peace with who your are you'll never be content with what you have.  
*Doris Mortman*

"It is better to be hated for what you are than loved for what you are not."  
*Andre Gide*

"Be you very well."  
*St. Francis de Sales*

"Nothing is easier than self-deceit. For what each man wishes, that he also believes to be true."  
*Demosthenes*

"Each of us has a fire in our heart for something. It's our goal in life to find it and to keep it."  
*Mary Lou Retton*

"First, say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do."  
*Epictetus*

"Planning for the future without knowledge of the past is like trying to plant cut flowers."  
*Daniel Boorstin (former Librarian of Congress)*

"A vision without a plan is just a hallucination."  
*Will Rogers*

"He who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened."  
*Lao Tzu*

"The greatest of all weaknesses is to be conscious of none."  
*Harvey Mackay*

"If you don't understand yourself you don't understand anybody else."  
*Nikki Giovanni*

"The outward journey is nothing without an equivalent journey within oneself; otherwise, we travel to the ends of the earth and yet stay exactly the same."  
*Doug Ammons in Whitewater Philosophy*

"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how."  
Friedrich Nietzsche

"The purpose of our lives is to give birth to the best which is within us. "  
*Marianne Williamson*

"One is not born into the world to do everything but to do something."  
*Henry David Thoreau*

"None of us can be a genius. But we each have a genius, to be served or disobeyed at our own peril."  
Ananda Coomaraswamy

"Integrity simply means a willingness not to violate one's identity."  
*Eric Fromm*

"Success demands singleness of purpose."  
*Vince Lombardi*

"Make your work to be in keeping with your purpose."  
*Leonardo da Vinci*