

## Social Identity Reflection

We've talked about how our beliefs can impact how we plan for and think about the future. Identity can also be a significant influence. Recognizing that we all have different backgrounds and lived experiences, it's worthwhile to spend some time considering how aspects of our own identities have formed underlying narratives that inform our approach to life design.

This exercise is meant to help you gain greater awareness of how identity may inform bias / leadership / interactions, recognize systems that may impact people inequitably and set the groundwork for work and worldviews (you'll recall this was some of the pre-work we asked you to do). It's also going to help you notice how identity and positionality may inform these views.

**You won't be sharing any of what you write with anyone in the class or with us as a teaching team. This is a private reflective tool.**

Also, identities shift based on context. Because of this, and because we were dispersed all due to the pandemic and studying/working virtually, complete this reflective tool with the current context and environment you currently find yourself in.

### **Completing the Social Identity Worksheet**

- ✓ Open the Social Identity Worksheet in Excel. On the left-hand side, you'll find elements that comprise social identities. Maybe some of them apply to you. Maybe all of them do. You decide.
- ✓ We've left some blank at the bottom since we don't pretend to know all of the identities you may be carrying.
- ✓ To help you engage with the tool, we've included definitions where we thought they might be helpful. When you open up the Excel document, you will be able to hover over the social identities to see the definition.
- ✓ However, for any of the social identities, you are welcome to interpret them as you see fit.
- ✓ Next to the categories is a column called "Group Membership" which you fill in for all the categories that are relevant to you. For example, next to age, you might write your age. Or early 20s. Or middle-aged. Or mid-life crisis. How you describe it is entirely up to you.
- ✓ Once you have filled in Group Membership for all of the identities that pertain to you, your next step will be to go row-by-row and add an X to the box that describes how you feel about said identity. Perhaps your age is something you think about the most... or never... or is something you try to hide. etc. For the "Discomfort/Comfort with expressing this identity" column, attempt to rate on a scale from -3 to +3 how much discomfort or comfort you have with expressing the identity related to the row you are filling out; similarly, rate on a scale of -3 to +3 how much the social identity lacks or holds privilege in your context in the column that follows
- ✓ There is a comments column, because there will be times where you may struggle with answering the questions about a specific identity marker. This may also be a place to note context, complexity, intersectionality, etc. (For example, age can connote wisdom and bring privilege, but in other contexts it might be viewed as not current, lacking strength or vigor)

After you complete the exercise, take a few moments to reflect on the process & what you have written:

- ✓ How was that for you?
- ✓ What surprised you, if anything?
- ✓ How might these identities impact how you design for yourself?
- ✓ What rows, if any, did you add? What was important about adding them?
- ✓ What categories elicited additional comments? Any you want to explore further?