

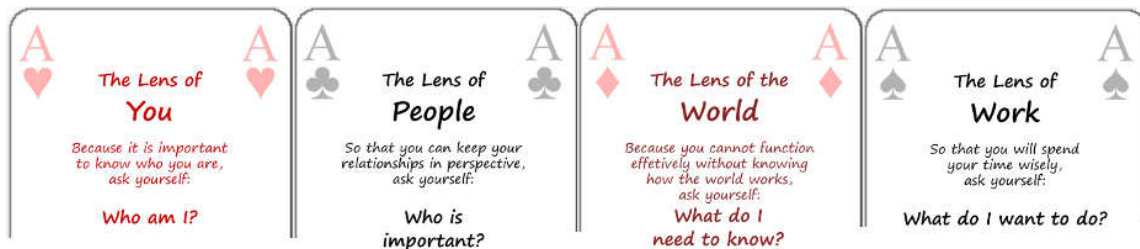


# Q54Club

# WORKBOOK

by Brooke Allen  
Brooke@BrookeAllen.com

Here you will find 54 questions to help you understand yourself, your relationship with other people, the world, and your work. Each question can help you focus on a different part of your life. That is why I call these questions "lenses."



# Hello. I'd like to introduce myself.



My name is Brooke, and I am a father. Here is my eldest son near the beginning of his life, and my grandmother near the end of hers. About 14 years after this picture was taken my son was getting ready to go to college, and I decided to try to figure out what he had not yet learned in order to have a good life.

For nearly seven years I tried to find out everything he would need to know.

I failed.

Instead, I came up with a bunch of really important *questions* that he must answer *for himself*. Here are the first four:

- Who am I?
- Who is important to me?
- What do I need to know?
- What do I want to do?

As you can see, only he can answer those questions. Also, the answers to these questions will not stay the same for all time.

I was able to come up with 13 questions in each of four areas. They are:

YOU - Things to understand about yourself.

PEOPLE - Things to understand about other people.

THE WORLD - Things to understand about how the world works.

WORK - Things to understand about what you do.

The good thing about this is that I was able to design a deck of cards with each set of questions on the four suits. Hearts (♥) are for YOU, Clubs (♣) are for PEOPLE, Diamonds (♦) are for the WORLD, and Spades (♠) are for your WORK.

These four sets of 13 make a total of 52 questions. But there are 54 cards in a deck because you must not forget the Jokers. The jokers ask the two hardest questions in the deck. After you answer the first 52 questions you will be ready for the Jokers.

Life is weird, and it can seem pointless at times. I know; I've often felt that way. The way I've gotten to feel good again is by figuring out what questions I need to ask myself, and then answering them *in writing*. There is something really special about writing an answer rather than just thinking about it. When you write something down your brain allows you to stop worrying about it. What's more, when you take the time to write your answers you will realize that you do a better job of thinking about the question. Finally, when we write down answers we tend to live in accordance with what we wrote.

These questions have no right or wrong answers. Do not think that once you give an answer you must stick with it forever. To begin, just write the first thing that comes to mind, and after you have thought some more - perhaps after a few weeks or years - revisit each question and write new answers.

Here is a challenge: Answer *every one* of these questions as best as you possibly can. Then ask for help from everyone you know, and come up with even *better* answers. I bet that when you are done you will be an entirely different person from who you were when you started - a happier more purposeful person.

**I'd love to read your answers to these questions. Write to me at:  
Brooke@BrookeAllen.com**

YOUR NAME:

# SCORECARD

Check the boxes as you complete each lens.  
Check ALL when you complete a row or column.

<p><b>A</b> ♥</p> <p><b>The Lens of You</b></p> <p>Because it is important to know who you are, ask yourself: <b>Who am I?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>A</b> ♣</p> <p><b>The Lens of People</b></p> <p>So that you can keep your relationships in perspective, ask yourself: <b>Who is important?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>A</b> ♦</p> <p><b>The Lens of the World</b></p> <p>Because you cannot function effectively without knowing how the world works, ask yourself: <b>What do I need to know?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>A</b> ♠</p> <p><b>The Lens of Work</b></p> <p>So that you will spend your time wisely, ask yourself: <b>What do I want to do?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>2</b> ♥</p> <p><b>The Lens of Gratitude</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>2</b> ♣</p> <p><b>The Lens of Fairness</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>2</b> ♦</p> <p><b>The Lens of Wealth</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>2</b> ♠</p> <p><b>The Lens of Motivation</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>3</b> ♥</p> <p><b>The Lens of the Boss</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>3</b> ♣</p> <p><b>The Lens of Family</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>3</b> ♦</p> <p><b>The Lens of Nature</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>3</b> ♠</p> <p><b>The Lens of the Hierarchy</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>4</b> ♥</p> <p><b>The Lens of Essential Experiences</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>4</b> ♣</p> <p><b>The Lens of Friendships</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>4</b> ♦</p> <p><b>The Lens of Attitude</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>4</b> ♠</p> <p><b>The Lens of the Product</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>5</b> ♥</p> <p><b>The Lens of Values</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>5</b> ♣</p> <p><b>The Lens of Community</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>5</b> ♦</p> <p><b>The Lens of Needs</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>5</b> ♠</p> <p><b>The Lens of Return on Investment</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

6 ♥ The Lens of Character ♥ 6	6 ♣ The Lens of Judgment ♣ 6	6 ♦ The Lens of Followership ♦ 6	6 ♠ The Lens of Leadership ♠ 6	ALL
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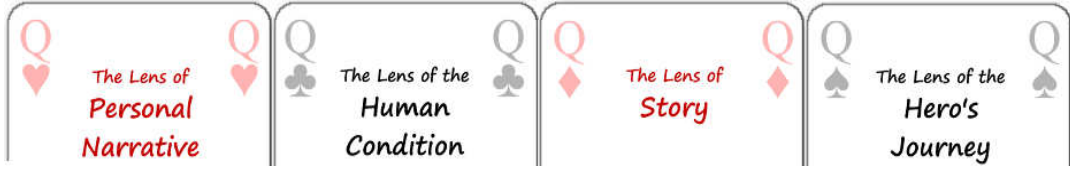
7 ♥ The Lens of Good vs. Nice ♥ 7	7 ♣ The Lens of War vs. Peace ♣ 7	7 ♦ The Lens of Knowing vs. Doing ♦ 7	7 ♠ The Lens of Now vs. Later ♠ 7	ALL
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8 ♥ The Lens of Health ♥ 8	8 ♣ The Lens of the Common Good ♣ 8	8 ♦ The Lens of the Economy ♦ 8	8 ♠ The Lens of Power ♠ 8	ALL
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9 ♥ The Lens of Thinking ♥ 9	9 ♣ The Lens of the Crowd ♣ 9	9 ♦ The Lens of the Markets ♦ 9	9 ♠ The Lens of Unknown ♠ 9	ALL
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10 ♥ The Lens of Self-Love ♥ 10	10 ♣ The Lens of Loving Others ♣ 10	10 ♦ The Lens of Loving the World ♦ 10	10 ♠ The Lens of Love of the Work ♠ 10	ALL
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

J ♥ The Lens of Forgiveness ♥ J	J ♣ The Lens of Empathy ♣ J	J ♦ The Lens of Entropy ♦ J	J ♠ The Lens of Salesmanship ♠ J	ALL
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ALL



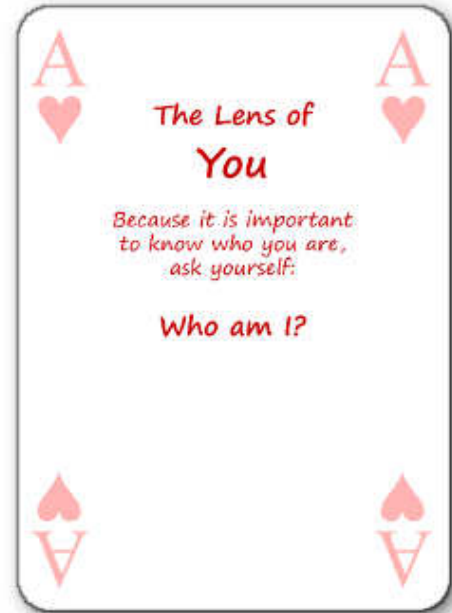
ALL

ALL  
♥♣♦♠

All ♥       All ♣       All ♦       All ♠

*The Lens of **You***  
*Because it is important  
to know who you are,  
ask yourself:*

***Who am I?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **People***  
*So that you can keep your*  
*relationships in perspective,*  
*ask yourself:*

***Who is important?***

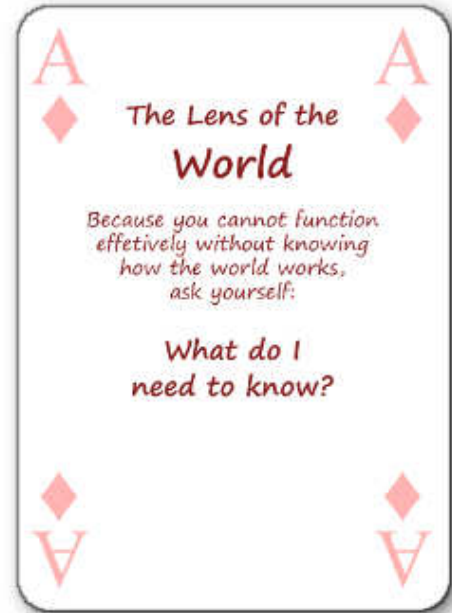


Write your answer here.



*The Lens of the **World***  
*Because you cannot function*  
*effectively without knowing*  
*how the world works,*  
*ask yourself:*

***What do I need to***  
***know?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Work***  
*So that you will spend*  
*your time wisely,*  
*ask yourself:*

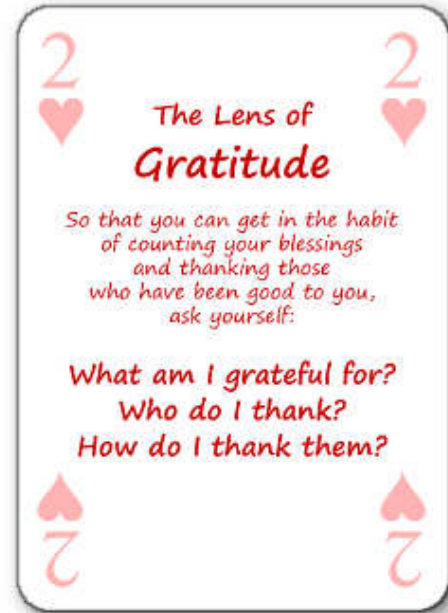
***What do I want to***  
***do?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Gratitude***  
*So that you can get in the habit*  
*of counting your blessings*  
*and thanking those*  
*who have been good to you,*  
*ask yourself:*

***What am I grateful for?***  
***Who do I thank?***  
***How do I thank them?***



Write your answer here.

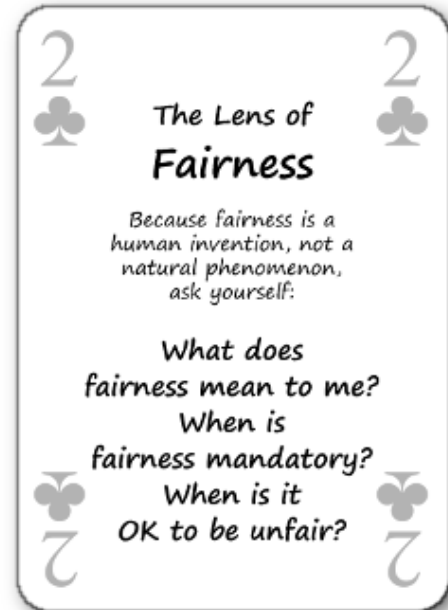
## *The Lens of **Fairness***

*Because fairness is a human  
invention, not a  
natural phenomenon,  
ask yourself:*

***What does fairness mean to  
me?***

***When is fairness mandatory?***

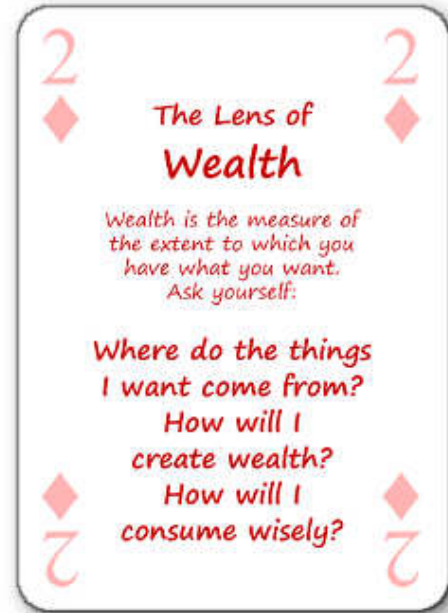
***When is it OK to be unfair?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Wealth***  
*Wealth is the measure of the extent to which you have what you want.*  
*Ask yourself:*

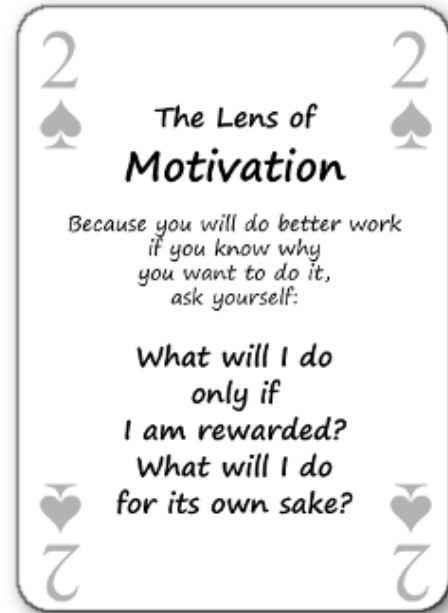
***Where do the things I want come from?***  
***How will I create wealth?***  
***How will I consume wisely?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Motivation***  
*Because you will do better work*  
*if you know why*  
*you want to do it,*  
*ask yourself:*

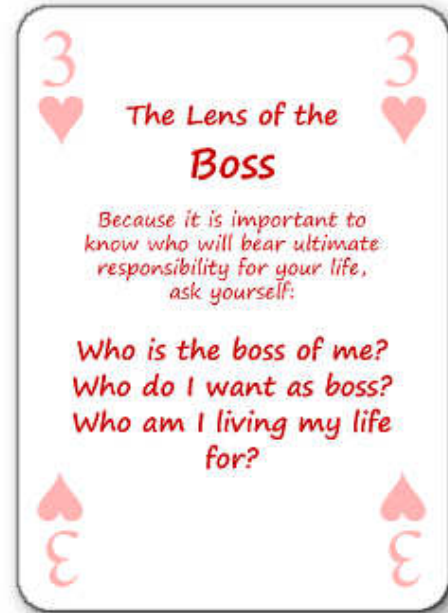
***What will I do***  
***only if I am rewarded?***  
***What will I do for its***  
***own sake?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of the **Boss***  
*Because it is important to know  
who will bear ultimate  
responsibility for your life,  
ask yourself:*

*Who is the boss of me?  
Who do I want as boss?  
Who am I living my life  
for?*

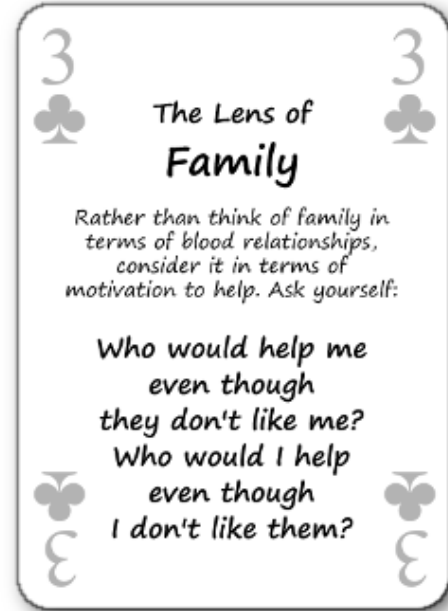


Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Family***  
*Rather than think of family in terms of blood relationships, consider it in terms of motivation to help.*

*Ask yourself:*

***Who would help me even though they don't like me?***  
***Who would I help even though I don't like them?***



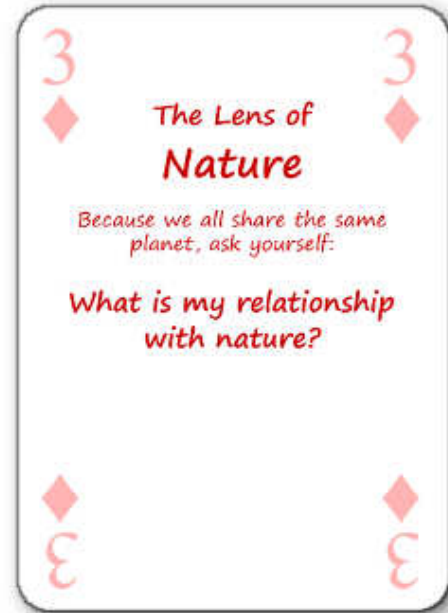
Write your answer here.



## *The Lens of **Nature***

*Because we all share  
the same planet,  
ask yourself:*

***What is my  
relationship with  
nature?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of the  
Hierarchy*

*Because everything is not of  
equal importance,  
ask yourself:*

*Whose interests come  
before mine?*

*Whose interests come  
after mine?*



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Essential Experiences***

*Consider your life in terms of experience rather than accomplishment.*

*Ask yourself:*

***What experiences do I want to have?***

***What is essential to those experiences?***



Write your answer here.

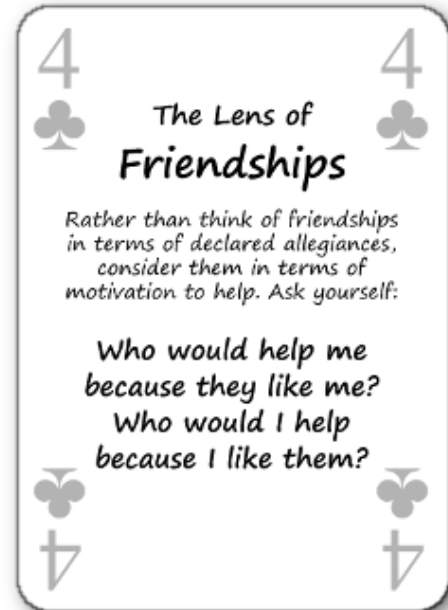
## *The Lens of **Friendships***

*Rather than think of friendships in terms of declared allegiances, consider them in terms of motivation to help.*

*Ask yourself:*

***Who would help me because they like me?***

***Who would I help because I like them?***

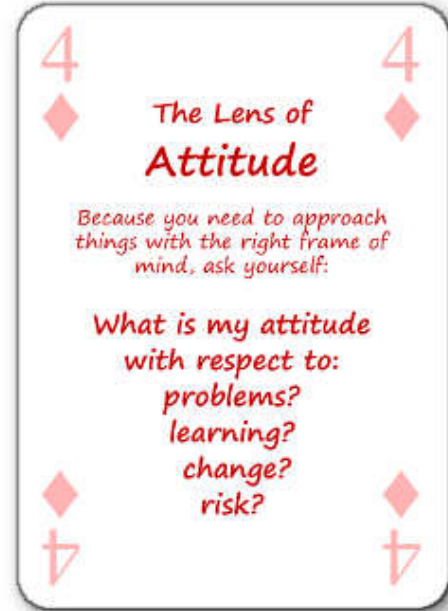


Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of **Attitude***

*Because you need to approach things  
with the right frame of mind,  
ask yourself:*

*What is my attitude with  
respect to:  
problems?  
learning?  
change?  
risk?*



Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of the **Product***

*Because one goal of work is  
to produce something of value,  
ask yourself:*

***What am I producing?***

***What needs do I fill?***

***How?***

***For whom?***

***Why?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Values***  
*You need to know what is*  
*important to you.*  
*Ask yourself:*

***What do I value?***  
***Why?***



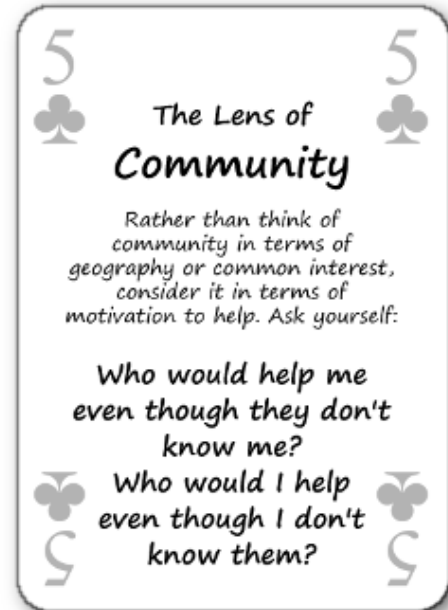
Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of **Community***

*Rather than think of community in terms of geography or shared interest, consider it in terms of motivation to help.*

*Ask yourself:*

***Who would help me even though they don't know me?  
Who would I help even though I don't know them?***



Write your answer here.



*The Lens of **Needs***  
*We survive and thrive by*  
*meeting each other's needs.*  
*Ask yourself:*

***What do I need?***  
***What is needed of***  
***me?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of*  
***Return on Investment***

*Society and many individuals have  
made a direct and indirect  
investment in you.*

*Ask yourself:*

***How will I  
pay back that investment?  
How will I  
pay it forward?***



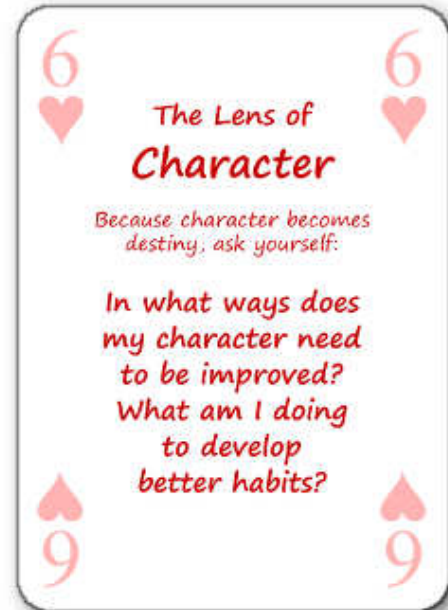
Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of **Character***

*Because character  
becomes destiny,  
ask yourself:*

***In what ways does  
my character need to be  
improved?***

***What am I doing  
to develop better habits?***



Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of **Judgment***

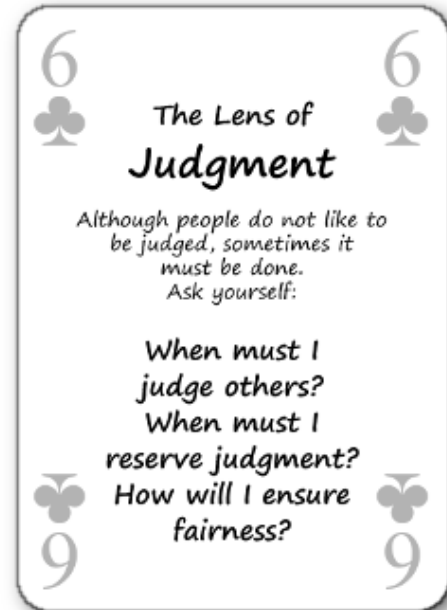
*Although people do not like  
to be judged, sometimes it  
must be done.*

*Ask yourself:*

***When must I judge others?***

***When must I reserve  
judgment?***

***How will I ensure fairness?***

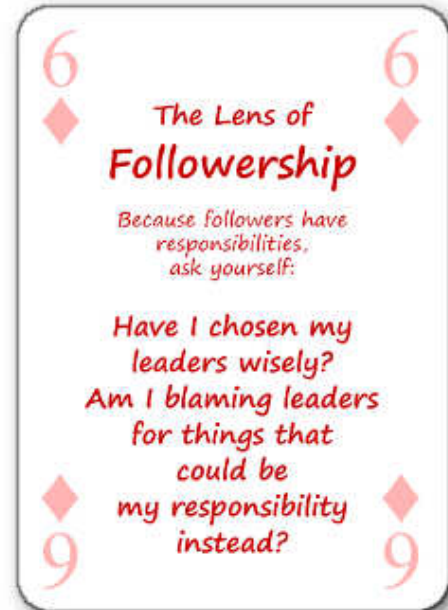


Write your answer here.

*The Lens of  
Followership*

*Because followers have  
responsibilities,  
ask yourself:*

*Have I chosen my leaders  
wisely?  
Am I blaming leaders for  
things that could be my  
responsibility?*

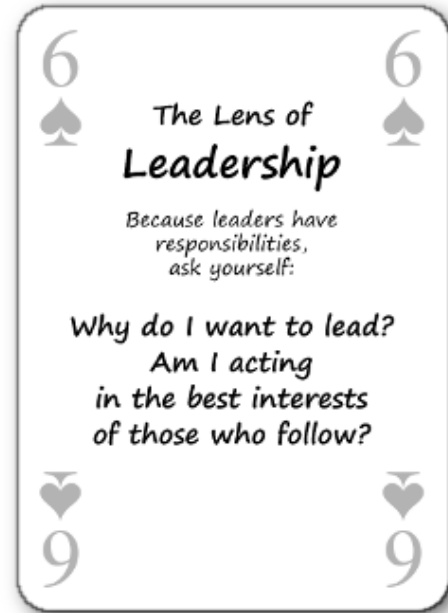


Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of **Leadership***

*Because leaders have  
responsibilities,  
ask yourself:*

***Why do I want to lead?  
Am I acting in the best  
interests  
of those who follow?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of  
**Good vs. Nice***

*Because the opposite of Good is Evil,  
and the opposite of Nice is  
Unlikable,  
ask yourself:*

***Do I choose to be Good knowing  
that in order to avoid being Evil  
I might have to do things  
people will not like?***



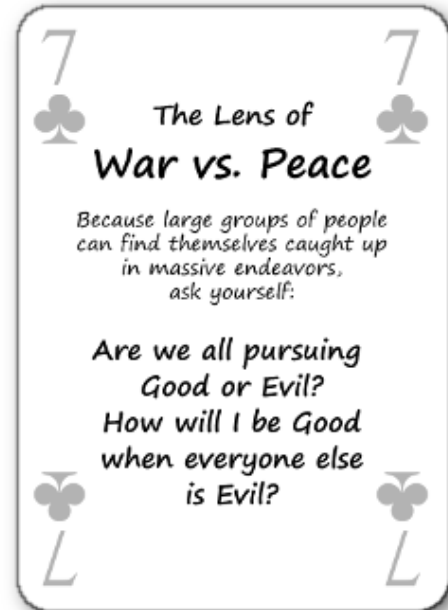
Write your answer here.

*The Lens of  
War vs. Peace*

*Because large groups of people  
can find themselves caught up in  
massive endeavors,  
ask yourself:*

*Are we all pursuing Good or  
Evil?*

*How will I be Good when  
everyone else is Evil?*



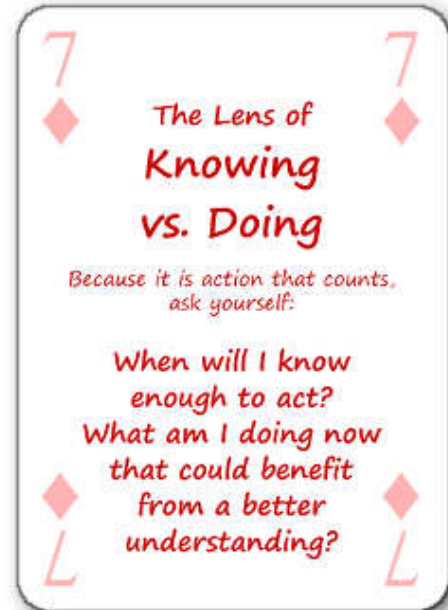
Write your answer here.



*The Lens of  
**Knowing vs. Doing**  
Because it is action that counts,  
ask yourself:*

*When will I know enough to  
act?*

*What am I doing now that  
could benefit from a  
better understanding?*



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of  
**Now vs. Later***

*Because delayed gratification is  
the best predictor of success,  
ask yourself:*

***What rewards can I put  
off until later so I can  
concentrate on doing my  
best work now?***



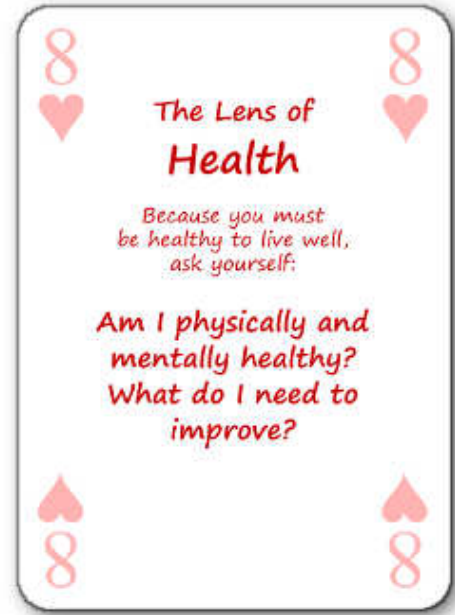
Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of **Health***

*Because you must be  
healthy to live well.*

*Ask yourself:*

***Am I physically and  
mentally healthy?  
What do I need to  
improve?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of the  
**Common Good***

*Because we are  
all in it together,  
ask yourself:*

***How can I make the  
world  
a better place?***



Write your answer here.

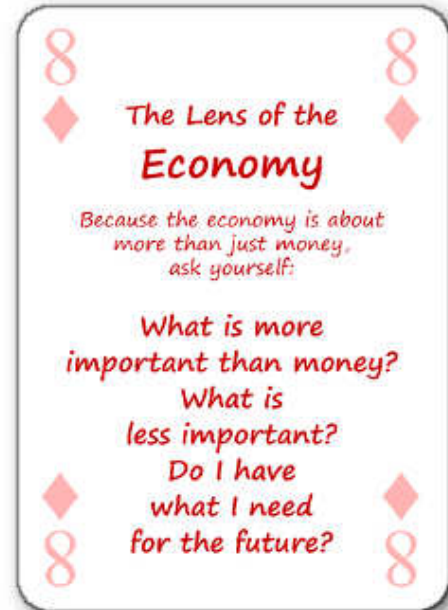
## *The Lens of the **Economy***

*Because the economy is about  
more than just money,  
ask yourself:*

***What is more important  
than money?***

***What is less important?***

***Do I have what I need  
for the future?***



Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of **Power***

*Power is the ability  
to get what you want.*

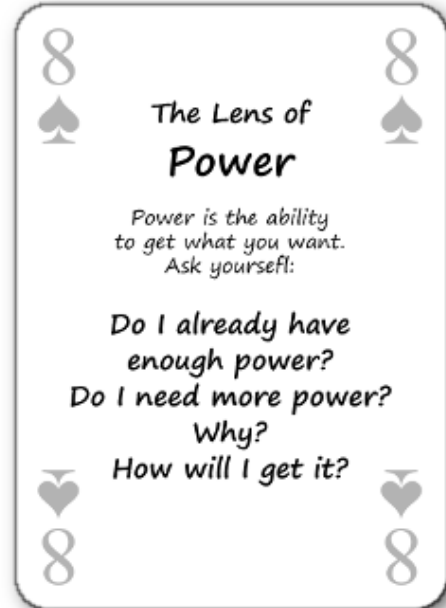
*Ask yourself:*

***Do I already have  
enough power?***

***Do I need more power?***

***Why?***

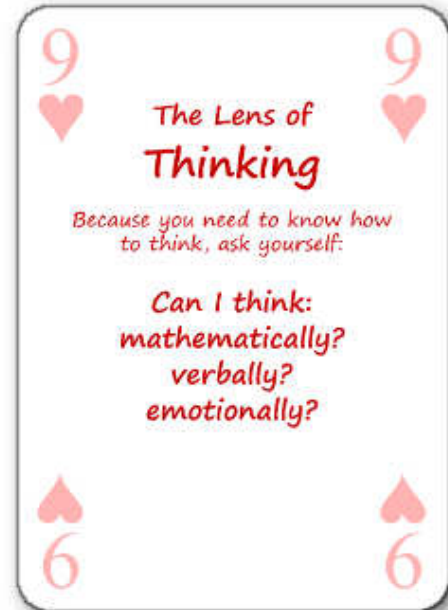
***How will I get it?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Thinking***  
*Because you need to know how  
to think,  
ask yourself:*

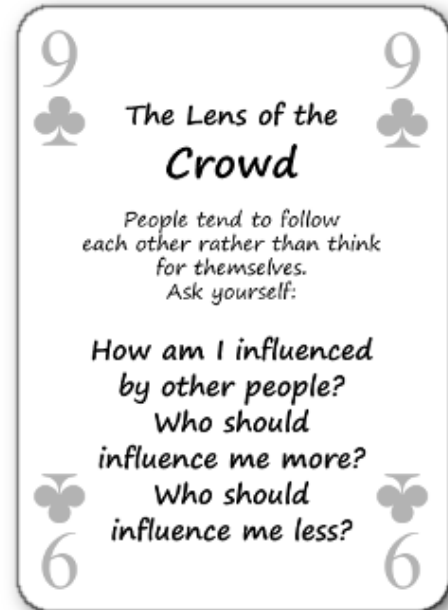
***Can I think  
mathematically?  
verbally?  
emotionally?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of the **Crowd***  
*People tend to follow each other  
rather than think for  
themselves.*  
*Ask yourself:*

*How am I influenced  
by other people?  
Who should influence me  
more?  
Who should influence me less?*



Write your answer here.



## *The Lens of the **Markets***

*Markets set prices and bring  
people together to trade.*

*Ask yourself:*

***What markets do I  
operate in?***

***How can I be more  
successful  
in the market for who I  
am?***



Write your answer here.

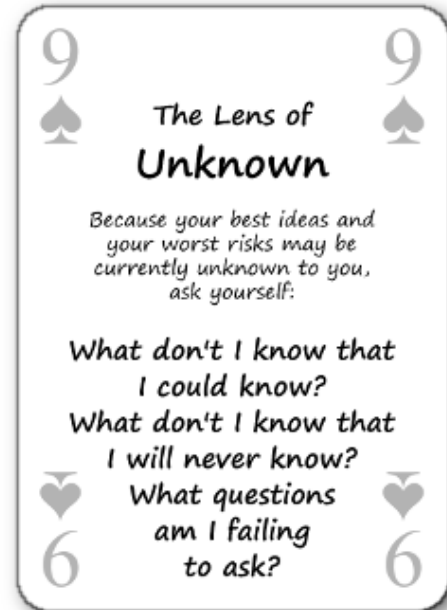
## *The Lens of the **Unknown***

*Because your best ideas and your  
worst risks may be currently  
unknown to you,  
ask yourself:*

***What don't I know that  
I could know?***

***What don't I know that  
I will never know?***

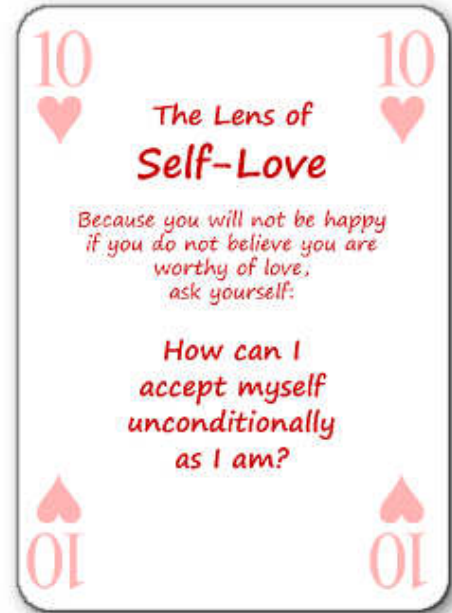
***What questions am I failing to  
ask?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Self-Love***  
*Because you will not be happy*  
*if you do not believe you are*  
*worthy of love,*  
*ask yourself:*

*How can I accept*  
*myself*  
*unconditionally as I*  
*am?*



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of  
**Loving Others***

*So that you can fulfill your  
potential as a human,  
ask yourself:*

*Who do I love?*

*Why?*

*How?*

*Who loves me?*

*Why?*

*How?*



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of  
Loving the World*  
*So that you can seize every day  
and make the most of it,  
ask yourself:*

*What gets me up  
every morning?*

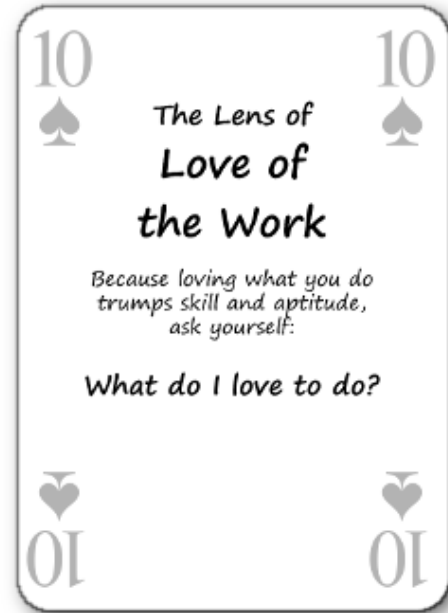


Write your answer here.

*The Lens of*  
***Love of the Work***

*Because loving what you do  
trumps skill and aptitude,  
ask yourself:*

***What do I love to  
do?***



Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of **Forgiveness***

*You must accept the past  
because it cannot be changed.*

*Therefore, ask yourself:*

***Can I forgive others?***

***Can I forgive myself?***

***Do I?***

***Will I?***



Write your answer here.

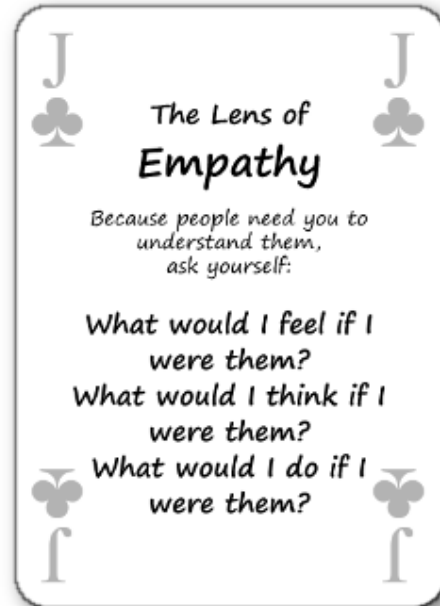
## *The Lens of **Empathy***

*Because people need you to understand them,  
ask yourself:*

***What would I feel  
if I were them?***

***What would I think  
if I were them?***

***What would I do  
if I were them?***



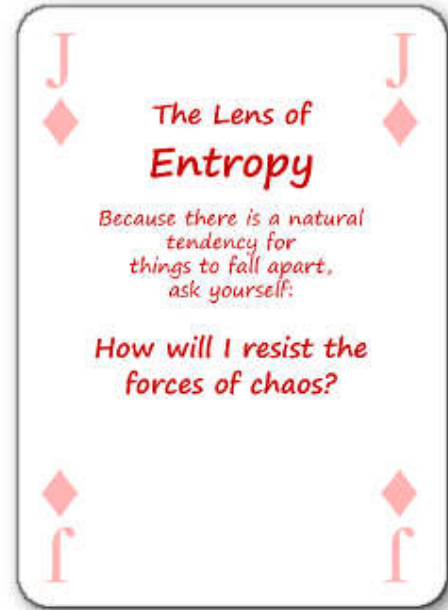
Write your answer here.



*The Lens of **Entropy***

*Because there is a natural  
tendency for things to  
fall apart,  
ask yourself:*

***How will I resist the  
forces of chaos?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of  
Salesmanship*

*Because sometimes other  
people need persuading,  
ask yourself:*

***What do people need?  
Can I help them?  
How can I get them to  
want me to help them?***



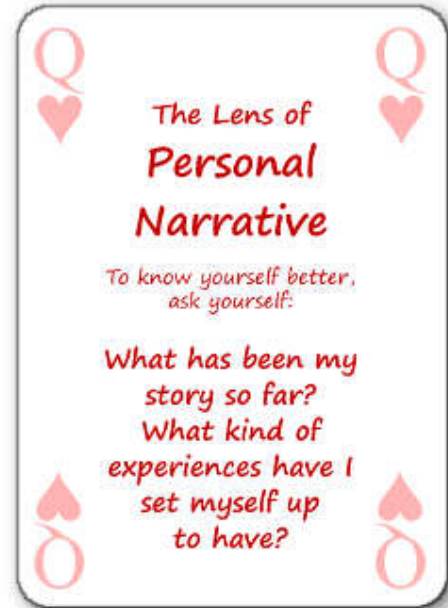
Write your answer here.

*The Lens of  
Personal Narrative*

*To know yourself better,  
ask yourself:*

*What has been my story  
so far?*

*What kind of  
experiences have I set  
myself up to have?*



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of the  
**Human Condition***

*Because we are all  
brothers and sisters,  
ask yourself:*

*What do I have  
in common with everyone?  
How can I be  
of service to mankind?*



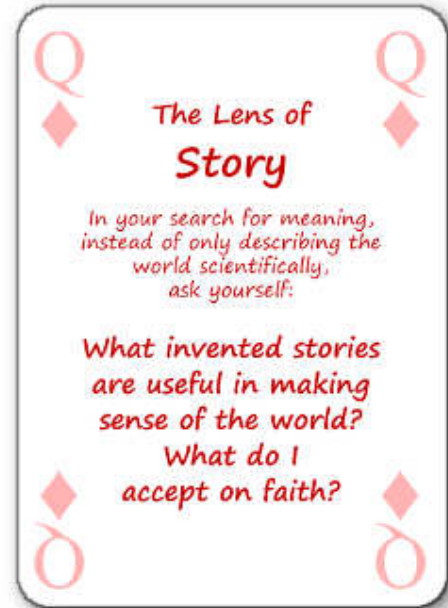
Write your answer here.

## *The Lens of **Story***

*In your search for meaning,  
instead of only describing the  
world scientifically,  
ask yourself:*

***What invented stories are  
useful in making sense of  
the world?***

***What do I accept on  
faith?***

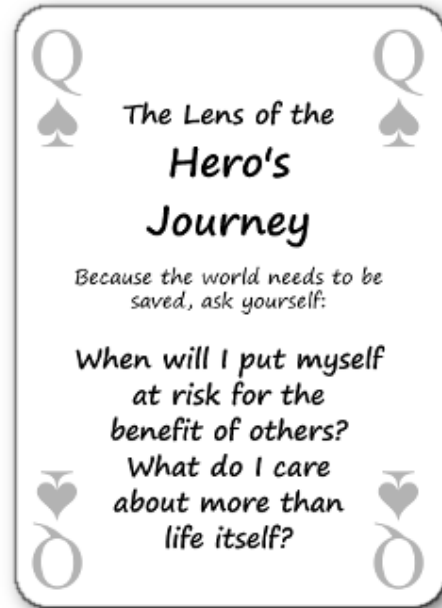


Write your answer here.

*The Lens of the  
**Hero's Journey***

*Because the world  
needs to be saved,  
ask yourself:*

***When will I put myself at risk  
for the benefit of others?  
What do I care about  
more than life itself?***

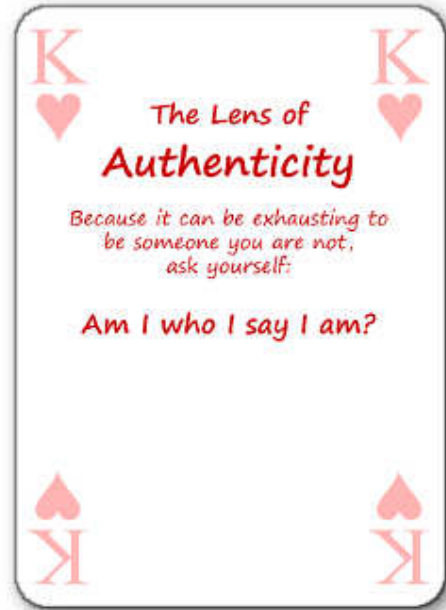


Write your answer here.

*The Lens of  
**Authenticity***

*Because it can be exhausting  
to be someone you are not,  
ask yourself:*

***Am I who I say I  
am?***



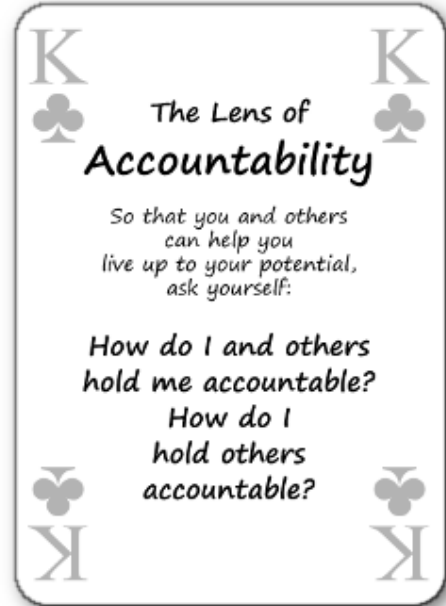
Write your answer here.

*The Lens of*  
***Accountability***

*So that you and others can help  
you live up to your potential,  
ask yourself:*

***How do I and others  
hold me accountable?***

***How do I  
hold others accountable?***

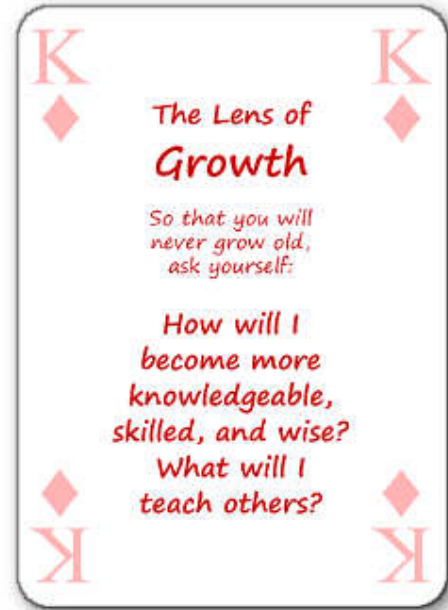


Write your answer here.



*The Lens of **Growth***  
*So that you will never grow old,*  
*ask yourself:*

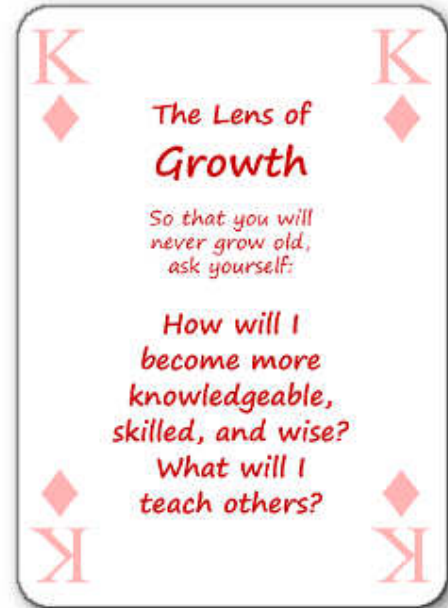
*How will I become more:*  
*knowledgeable,*  
*skilled, and wise?*  
*What will I*  
*teach others?*



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Integrity***  
*So that you can live at peace*  
*with your conscience,*  
*ask yourself:*

***What are the rules that***  
***I live by?***  
***Do I do what I say I***  
***will do?***



Write your answer here.

## Have you noticed that the Aces are both Low and High?

The Ace of Hearts asks, "Who am I?" and the King of Hearts asks, "Am I who I say I am?" Being "who you say you are" is called being "authentic." Nobody cares who you say you are if you are not really that person.

The Ace of Clubs asks, "Who is important?" and the King of Clubs asks you and the people who are important to help each other be good and say when you are doing the wrong things. This is what it means to be accountable.

The Ace of Diamonds asks, "What do I need to know?" and the King of Diamonds asks you to continue to grow for your entire life, and help yourself others to become more knowledgeable, skilled, and wise.

The Ace of Spades asks, "What do I want to do?" and the King of Spades asks, "What are the rules that I live by? Do I do what I say I will do?" Nobody cares what you want to do if you don't do what you say you will do, or if you live by rules that allows you to lie, cheat, steal, or harm.

In summary, each of these suits asks you to make a commitment.

♥ **HEARTS** begin by asking: **Who am I?**  
... and end with a commitment to **AUTHENTICITY**.

♣ **CLUBS** begin by asking: **Who is important?**  
... and end with a commitment to **ACCOUNTABILITY**.

♦ **DIAMONDS** begin by asking: **What do I need to know?**  
... and end with a commitment to **GROWTH**.

♠ **SPADES** begin by asking: **What do I want to do?**  
... and end with a commitment to **INTEGRITY**.

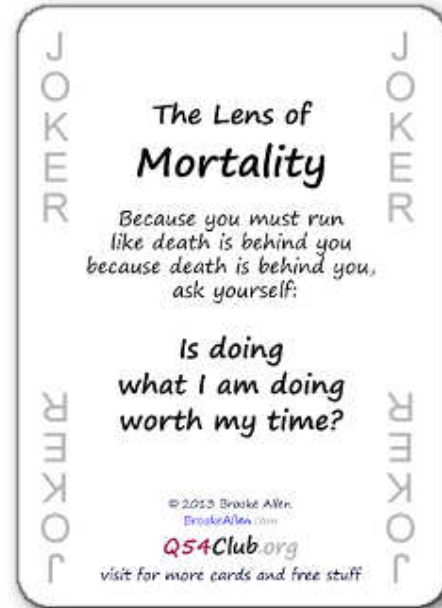
Once you have answered all the questions and made all the commitments asked by the four suits, you will be ready to tackle the two biggest problems facing every human being:

- 1) **We are all going to die, and**
- 2) **We all need a reason to live.**

## *The Lens of **Mortality***

*Because you must run  
like death is behind you  
because death is behind you,  
ask yourself:*

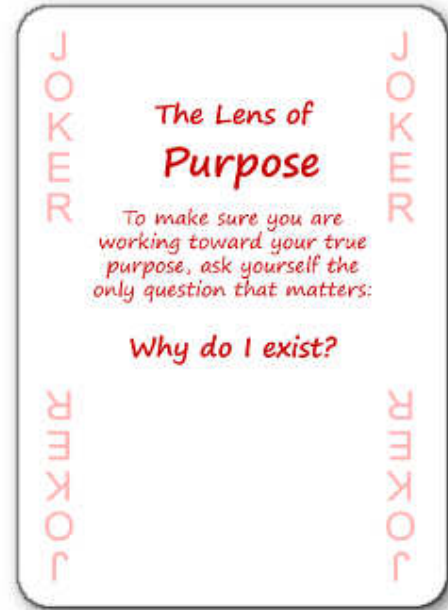
***Is doing what I am  
doing  
worth my time?***



Write your answer here.

*The Lens of **Purpose***  
*To make sure you are working  
towards your true purpose,  
ask yourself the only question  
that matters:*

***Why do I exist?***



Write your answer here.

# The History of this Project

I began this quest in the summer of 2005 when my son was approaching high school graduation. I began by asking everyone I knew, "What should be taught in college that isn't." I collected about 220 answers that ranged from "common sense" and "cooking" to "courage."

Then I began asking colleges why they don't teach those things. In case you are wondering, the answer is: because they don't consider it their job to teach anything they don't want to teach. Trying to figure out why colleges are the way they are led to a project called Questions for Colleges ([www.Q4Colleges.com](http://www.Q4Colleges.com)).

As a worker and an employer, I have always been interested in what makes for a good match between a person and their work. I was speaking to a class of college seniors when a student asked, "What do I look for in an employee?" My answer is: the ability to do the job, a commonality of purpose, and integrity - in reverse order. The class laughed, and the student said, "Do you mean to say anyone cares about integrity?"

Apparently not. Many students don't care about integrity, and quite a few cannot even define it. Given how badly many companies behave, it doesn't seem they care much either. I've also noticed that very few job applicants have a sense of purpose. Most of the conversation seems to be about how so many people lack marketable skills, but not about a purpose and integrity. The problem is that even if you have skills, they might be put to bad use.

I am pretty sure colleges themselves are not stellar examples of good behavior. For example, the head of the career center at one college told me that she was ordered to suppress the fact that for years all the graduates from one department had failed to get a job in their field of study. The college president said, "If the students knew that fact, then what would I do with all the people in the department?" She told me that is when she realized the students were there for them; they were not there for the students.

In 2009, after the financial collapse of the year before, I discovered that 40% of my friends were unemployed, so I started a website called No Shortage of Work ([www.NoShortageOfWork.com](http://www.NoShortageOfWork.com)) to promote the idea that,

even when you aren't doing something for pay, you should do something anyway. Through this website I met many students, but also hundreds of adults who were in trouble. Without a job they not only lacked income, they lacked a sense of purpose.

I began reading more than I had, and began talking to everyone who would give me their time. I met the head of a guidance department at a local school who is very critical of how we educate and raise our children. Together we began writing essays for each other to help us clarify our thoughts. It is our fantasy that some day we publish our thoughts in a book we'll call: *The Parent Yourself Handbook (If nobody else is going to prepare you for adulthood then you'll have to do it yourself.)*

In my day job I run a trading desk I founded in 1995. My job description is: "To keep things fun and keep us from doing stupid things." One of the fun things we did was that in May of 2011 is that we all worked for a week on a cruise ship. We had a professional game designer teach us how to make things more fun, and he recommended a book called [The Art of Game Design](#) by [Jesse Schell](#).

This book turned out to be exactly what I had been looking for. Jesse starts out by explaining that "design" is the art of asking the right questions, and then deciding what you are going to do. "Implementation" is the act of doing the thing you decide upon.

His book contains 100 questions to ask yourself about the game you want to design. As I read these questions (which he called "lenses") I could not help but notice that if I substitute the word "game" with "life" most of the questions seemed to apply to "designing a life." You try it: substitute "life" for "game" in these questions:

- What experience do I want my game to give people?
- What is essential to that experience?
- What parts of my game are fun. Why?
- What parts need to be more fun?
- What questions does my game put into people's minds?
- What is my game's theme?
- Does my game create a heroic story?
- How can my game change people for the better?
- How can my game change people for the worse?

He ended his book with two of the most striking questions I'd ever read:

- Because you must run like death is behind you because death is behind you, ask yourself: Is making this game worth my time?
- Ask yourself the only question that matters: Why am I doing this?

When I finished the book I wrote to Jesse and said that I think that he was secretly writing a book on Life Design, not Game Design.

He wrote back and said, "Heh — you figured out the secret of the book, all right!" I drove to Pittsburgh to interview him in his design studio, and you can see that interview here: <http://www.noshortageofwork.com/pages/2899>

The principle insight is that most people design their lives all wrong. They imagine they are writing a script for a movie. People will ask, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" and they think they need an answer. But if they have a very clear answer they will: 1) blind themselves to other opportunities 2) get left behind if the world goes somewhere else.

A better model for building a life is to imagine you are building a game. Games are not stories - they are story generating engines. Asking, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" makes no more sense than asking a chess player, "Where do you see yourself in 30 moves?" The answer is, "It depends."

But if you get good at playing chess, you will have chess stories, and you won't have bridge stories Monopoly stories. Likewise, if you go to law school, you are more likely to have stories that deal with the law than deal with medicine. But both lawyers and medical doctors might discover their true purpose in life is to be a novelist, as did John Grisham and Michael Crichton.

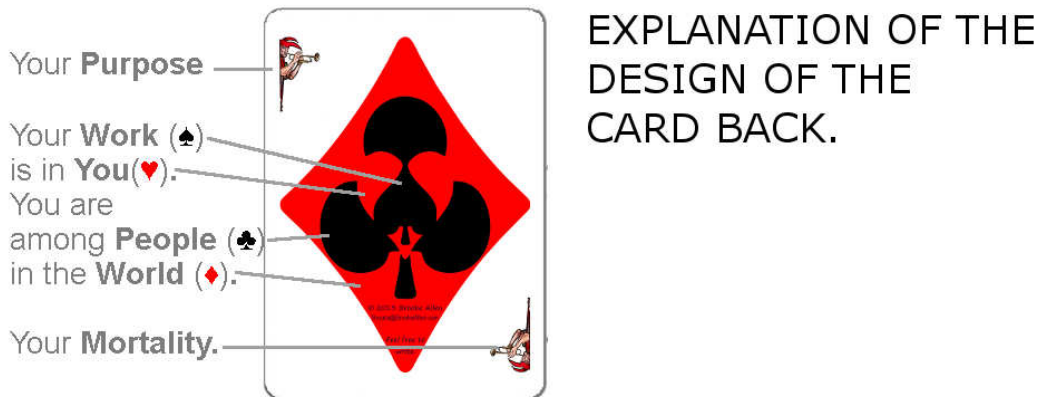
But good design starts by asking the right questions. Too many people start with the answer, "I want to go to law school." But why? What kind of experiences do lawyers have that you want? More succinctly, if you know what your true purpose in life is, then is going to law school the best use of your time?

As soon as I realized that I need to start with the right questions, things began moving quickly. I began asking everyone for questions instead of answers, and soon it was clear that they fell into four broad categories.



There were only about a dozen questions for each topic that really mattered, so it became clear that I would have to make a game out of these questions.

I am not much of an artist, but I am very proud of the design I came up with for the card backs:



I truly hope you find this workbook fun, and that if you get your hands on a pack of cards you'll enjoy playing with them.

If you want a deck go to [Q54Club.org](http://Q54Club.org) to learn how you can get one for yourself, or fifty for your class, or a thousand for everyone in your company. If you're rich, I'd like to talk to you about getting a deck into the hands of every student and soldier in the country. For what it is worth, I am not rich enough to pay for that myself, but I do not need to make any money off of this project, so I will license you to print copies of these cards if you promise to give them away rather than sell them.

The reason I am doing this has to do with my answers to my lenses of Purpose and Mortality. I exist to teach, and doing this is *definitely* worth my time.

# Notes for Educators and Coaches

Here are some of my thoughts on how you might use these:

Just giving a deck to someone can have a profound effect. I've had people tell me a few weeks later that the questions were beginning to disturb their sleep. If they play solitaire they cannot help but ask, "Is this why I exist? To play cards? Is this the best use of my time?" Just as how the Military was able to use a deck of cards with Iraq's most wanted keep the objective in mind with their soldiers, so too might they use these cards to help their people develop as humans.

I think the best time for a young person to begin answering these questions is going into the 7th grade. But I would not throw all the questions at them at once. Perhaps it would be great to give students a file folder with just the score sheet taped on the inside. Then you could give them a question at a time. The first four should be easy; they might be given as homework to be done in an evening.

Then it would be great to spring the other questions on them as they fit into the syllabus. For example, the Lens of Nature might fit into a biology class, the Lens of Story when studying Shakespeare, the Hero's Journey when discussing a war in history class, and so on.

Of course, I suspect you will find some important questions will not fit easily into your syllabus. I wonder, should we interpret this as indicating that the questions should not be asked, or our syllabus is incomplete?

The person to give these questions to an adult is a current or prospective employer. In my experience, very few adults will take the time to really question themselves, although if they are unemployed they are likely to have the time, and if someone tells them these will be interview questions *then* they will prepare answers.

In a way, we can all consider these interview questions. We just have to interview ourselves.

Please write to me and tell me how you use these, and how they can be improved. I'm at: [brooke@BrookeAllen.com](mailto:brooke@BrookeAllen.com)