The Personal User Guide: Celebrate and Share What Makes You Tick

Created by Joel Zaslofsky

Table of Contents

What This Is, Why It Exists and How This Helps

We give ourselves the great gift of awareness by giving others a window into what makes us tick. Helping others learn about you also helps you learn about yourself.

What This Is

This is an organized instruction manual dedicated to *you*. Think of it as a framework for you to build what's important in your life.

Better yet, this template explains why the important things are important and how you go about getting them. Completing this will make it simple to communicate many things to others (and to yourself when you need a reminder) like:

- The belief systems you follow and the significance of certain relationships in your life
- How you want people to engage you and how you like to engage with others
- Your goals, areas of growth, and ways to generate certain feelings or actions

And once this is complete, you have a package of information to share with someone that would otherwise take *forever* for him or her to learn. Although this guide may seem long, you can complete it in thirty minutes or less if that's all you have time for.

Why This Exists

This was created to help you make sense of your world and to help others get the best experience from interacting with you. Although this is intended for everyone, it's especially useful if you struggle with communication issues, misunderstandings, or having people "get you." It's the best resource around to take the mystery out of understanding what drives you.

See the article at JoelZaslofsky.com introducing The Personal User Guide for the full context.

How This Helps

Most user guides are hard to navigate and not very helpful. This one is different.

This one gives you irreplaceable insight by viewing yourself through the eyes of others and how you want to be perceived. You'll soon see how constructing the framework to logically document what is seemingly unexplainable has some *huge* benefits.

And this guide goes way beyond explaining *what* you are. The real value comes from defining *why* you are who you are and *how* it came to be this way. When you can concisely share your personal blueprint, you and everyone else win. **Embrace this strongly and it will be an amazing resource.**

Additional Guidance

As all sections of this user guide are optional, you may not feel comfortable completing certain parts or may not want to provide detail in certain areas. That's fine, but keep in mind the more you put into this, the more you

and everyone else get out of it. It's advised to clear your calendar and remove all distractions like kids, Internet, TV or hobbies before tackling your guide. Don't feel the need to complete this in one sitting and come back to it as time allows.

A Note About Formatting

This guide was not designed to be printed and hand written. All the tables and fill in the blank sections expand automatically based on the amount of information in them. If you need to print and hand write this guide then expand the sections where you need more room by navigating to it and pressing <enter> a number of times until it's large enough.

Related Documents

If there are documents related to this guide – like a personal FAQ or an important online profile – list them here.

Document Name	Author	Description	Purpose, Comments or Notes	Location of Document (e.g. website link)

Version Details:

This guide is intended to be updated periodically. Keeping track of the versions will help you and others see how you evolve.

Version #	Date	Version Notes (e.g. what was added, modified, or deleted from the previous version)	Location of Document (e.g. website link or filing cabinet in home office)

How I Interact with the World

We all interact with the world in unique and seemingly unpredictable ways. Describe your preferences, the environment you thrive best, and major "don't try this with me" items to build the framework for the rest of your user guide.

Communication Methods

The why, how, and what of communication. What methods do you use to communicate, how do they change based on context or the person/group, and how often is each used? Example: "I always use the phone for any important interaction with my family but never with friends or co-workers." Get specific about your strengths and challenges.

Authority Figures

Explain your approach to dealing with authority and how it will be received depending on the person (e.g., mom, police, boss, etc.).

Handling Stress

Stress can be subtle, brutal, motivating, incapacitating, and everything in between. Think about what the triggers of your main stress points are and how you manage them. How would you like to manage them in the future?

Honoring Traditions and Messing with the Status Quo

Do your values come from honoring traditions or messing with the status quo? What are your values and important traditions (individual, family, business, cultural, religious, etc.) and how do you celebrate them?

Free Time

Your general approach to free time (e.g. fast paced or slow, structured or unstructured).

Preferred Learning Method(s)

How do you prefer to learn (e.g. listening and reflecting, visually, experiencing and immediately doing, etc.)?

Belief Systems and Blueprints

There are a variety of frameworks that govern how we see the world. Talk about whatever movements or labels are important to you.

Labels and Phrases That Define You

If you could only use one word or a simple phrase to label yourself, what would they be? Multiple labels or phrases are encouraged (e.g. religious affiliation, how you analyze your thoughts, movements, or philosophies you believe in).

How I Express Myself

Physically	
Emotionally	
Spiritually	
Intellectually	
Other (Specify)	

What I Care Passionately About

The ideas or causes that energize and drive you. Really dig into why you're passionate about them.

The Role of My Relationships

Some relationships are more important than others. What role does each relationship play and how significant is it?

People

Relationship	Role
Significant Other	
Friends	
Parents	
Grandparents	
Siblings	
Co-workers	
Children	
Other (Specify)	

Things

Relationship	Role
Money	
Freedom	
Personal Possessions	
Where You Live	
Work	
Technology	
Nature	
Other (Specify)	

The "Do"s and "Don't"s of Communicating with Me

Explain the strategies or tactics for communicating with you that produce the best outcomes. For example, should I engage you head-on or tactfully? Should I be formal or make heavy use of words like "dude" and "hon?"

Good Strategies or Tactics

Bad Strategies or Tactics

My Schedule

Whether it's a weekday or weekend, a national holiday, or some other meaningful time, tell us when you interact with the world. Also describe typical activities or routines you have on a given day or at a given time.

Time Zone	

	Typical Weekdays	Typical Saturdays	Typical Sundays
Best Time(s) to Reach Me			
Wake Up			
Morning			
Afternoon			
Evening			
Bedtime			

Special Times of the Week/Month/Year

What are your rituals, traditions, and habits that regularly occur at certain times of the week, month, or year?

Weekly	Monthly	Annually

How to Make Me Feel or Act ...

List the common, uncommon, and unexpected ways to generate an emotion from you or cause an action by you.

Emotion or Action	How to Make Me Feel or Act This Way
Happy	
Sad	
Excited	
Motivated	
Angry	
Loved	
Disrespected	
Appreciated	
Annoyed	
Respect You	
Be Responsive	
Other (Specify)	

Goals and Areas of Growth

By defining your goals – personal, professional, relationship, or other – and detailing areas of growth, you'll better know what's important to you. Remember: readers of this might be happy to help you achieve your goals or assist in your growth areas if they know what they are.

Goals

Goal Type (Personal, Professional, Etc.)	Goal Length (Short, Medium or Long Term)	Details

Areas of Growth

Area	How Do You Want to Grow

Things I Like to Do and Why

What are the activities you like to do with other people or for other people? Why? What are the hobbies or actions that energize you? Are there things you love doing so much you would do them for free just for the enjoyment of it?

When Trouble Occurs

Messages and Their Meaning

When you don't like the way people are interacting with you, you'll often give off signals. List the common warnings – and their meaning – that people might generate from taking the wrong approach.

Message	Meaning

Problems and Possible Solutions

List the number of ways that your typical problems may be fixed. They can be as minor as fixing a sweet tooth to as major as reoccurring crises.

Problem	Possible Solution

Special Notes

If there are special notes or something in particular you want to call attention to, do it here.

Category	Notes
Eating	
Exercise	
Sleep	
Personal Care	
Most Meaningful Quotes and Why	
Other (Specify)	

Create Your Own Section

This template would look very different if you created it from scratch. This section is intended as a supplement for you to add as much as you like. Examples of section names could be "Random but important information," "How I handle gossip", "High level visual of how I operate" or "Warnings." Get creative.

Section Name	Content

What Now?

Your prize for finishing this guide is a fountain of knowledge and the ability to share it. I hope it feels good to package up the essence of you and explain it in a way that would normally take people years to understand.

Now that you've invested the time to create this special resource, its value will be multiplied by the number of people who use it. And if you have the time, different versions for different groups of people could be useful. Be somewhat careful who receives this, but you may want to distribute it by:

- Emailing to friends, family, co-workers, or that cute guy/girl you've been trying to impress.
- Uploading it to your blog. You can then share it freely or control who gets access to it.
- Publishing the location of it on social media like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, or LinkedIn.

Reflecting on the new things you learned about yourself can also be extremely rewarding. Give it a try!

Did You Find Value In This?

I hope you enjoyed completing this as much as I enjoyed creating it for you! I always try to give away my best tools and resources and this is just one of many. I would be grateful if you helped spread the mission behind this guide and JoelZaslofsky.com.

Some Simple Ways to Show Appreciation:

- Email someone a link to the original article and explain why The Personal User Guide could be valuable to them.
- Post about this on your blog or wherever else you share your thoughts and ideas.
- Send me an email about your experience with the guide and its value to you. Direct feedback is awesome!