**A USEFUL GUIDE
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***Questions that can help a middle-class person ‘know thyself’***

Just a few questions. Answering them can help a middle-class person cross-examine himself / herself to broaden his/her ken, gain insights and "know thyself".

Be brutally honest, sincere and factual in your answers to these 15 simple questions.

Some (like questions 12 and 15) may be multi-part questions; others (like question 14) may appear long. But rest assured, all are still questions you will find simple, insightful and hence empowering. You don't have to share your answers with anyone (not even us) but yourself. That will help you to “know yourself”.

How? Just type in your answer below each question. This exercise is for YOURSELF.

There is no word-limit. Remember, you are trying to understand yourself, re-discover yourself, know yourself inside out. Be as elaborate and as specific as possible.

This questionnaire may take half-hour to one hour to complete, but could potentially alter your life for the better.

Answer all questions fully, to the best of your ability. Ideally, you should answers all the questions in one session, at one go.

*Good luck.*

1) What is your world view? That is, what is your idea of how the world works today? (Write your answer in the space below.)

2) Describe your understanding of the "system" you are now part of, at the a) city, b) state/provincial/regional, c) national and d) global levels? "System" means the umbrella framework of various institutions such as religion/community, government, culture, society, etc.

3) Did you consciously choose the "system" you are now part of? Or, were you simply born into that system, and just grew up in it, accepted it blindly, unquestioningly, and never even thought about it, much less review it or take a stance on whether or not it is right and appropriate?

4) Do you endorse, support or back the "system" you are now part of? Please elaborate on your simple “Yes” or “No” or “partly” with specific details – like, for example, if your answer is “No”, explain your reasons.

5) On the one hand, super-quickly-developed COVID vaccines are being threatened by the rise and spread of new multiple variants of the killer coronavirus across the globle; on the other, we ordinary people all seem to be staring at the rise of brazenly totalitarian, authoritarian, dystopian societies even as millions lay dead, even more continue to get infected, but anti-people technologies, new businesses and business models, and futuristic space missions are receiving not only mega-investments but undisrupted attention / priority. In your view, what brought the world, and yourself, to the current impasse where the very future and survival of our species – human beings / homo sapiens – seems to be in question as of mid-February 2021?

6) In your view, what is really important in life (in the context of humans)?

7) In your view, how should human beings organize themselves, going forward (in terms of size/scale and nature of community/society), now that we have all the knowledge and experiences of our own human history of thousands of years so far?

8) How should the transition to that new vision, if any, be made from the current situation?

9) What role should an individual play in the new larger community / New World once that is formed (co-created)?

10) What exactly would you be willing to do/contribute as an individual NOW toward the goal of envisioning and co-creating a New World where not only yourself but your children would be safe, secure, healthier, prosperous, joyful and fulfilled?

11) A. How would you describe or define your personal “value system” – the inner compass, or inner reference points comprising a set of principles, morals, rules, guidelines, dos-and-don'ts) – that drives or shapes your decisions, choices, actions, preferences and priorities in life?

B What is it that you value most in life?

**For example, could it be, say, any or some of the following?**

**i.** Power, position, privileges, “prestige” and pelf / perks (5 Ps)

**ii.** Domination and unfair advantage over others; psychlogical edge over others; oneupmanship; bullying tactics

**iii.** Ability to con, manipulate, control, trick, mislead, hoodwink, outwit, dupe, cheat, or betray others (through rhetoric, emotion, deceit, subterfuge, double-dealing, two-facedness)

**iv.** Skill to steal or appropriate (or deprive others of) something that belongs to them and you don’t deserve

**v.** Skill to destroy something belonging to, or created by, others that you envy, or don't / can't have, or can't attain because of your "nature" (or the way you are conditioned / programmed / hardwired)

**vi.** Ability to get ahead of others, no matter what, often employing modern-age “virtues” like “soft skills” (that is, insincere interpersonal “skills” like soft-spokenness, sweet and polite external demeanor, agreeable behavior, “yes-sir” / “yes-madam” toadyism, conformism, wilyness, wickedness, crookedness, duplicity, hypocrisy, blackmail)

**vii.** Influence, fame, glory, public attention, celebrity status

**viii.** Money, wealth, assets, accessories, jewellery, fashion, luxury goods, material possessions, external (cosmetic) beauty

**ix.** Sex and other carnal pursuits

**x.** Indulgences, vices, addictions, comforts, conveniences, pleasures, cheap thrills (perceived personal “freedom”, “liberty” or “independence” to do what one pleases, no matter what)

**xi.** A life defined by selfish interests, personal preferences, and self-centredness (characterised by the central idea or overriding theme of "*me, my nuclear family, my job, career, profession and a small circle of friends and relatives is 'my universe'. All else is secondary. The world, its systems, and other people are just a means to my selfish ends. All I need to do throughout my life is just make use of, manipulate, exploit, misuse, and abuse the world, its systems, and other people to reach my selfish goals one after another. And, in the process, if the world, its systems, and other people get hurt, so be it, that is life, which is tough and unfair*".)

**xii.** A live-and-let-live philosophy, and a genuine win-win approach to life and living, that informs your life and which you believe should also inform other people's choices, preferences, decisions and actions.

**xiii.** Health, fitness, wellness

**xiv.** Relationships that are genuine, sincere, intense, caring

**xv.** Achievements, feats, rewards, recognition

**xvi.** Adventure, purposeful travel that opens mind, broadens ken

**xvii.** Knowledge, research, inventions, discoveries, intellectual or scholarly pursuits of excellence

**xviii.** Altruism, selfless work, social service, genuine philanthropy / charity (that is not done for publicity, or to wash away 'sins', or to dissolve guilt)

**xix.** Ability to view an issue from multiple perspectives without stubborn 'attachment' to ego's / lower self's viewpoint

**xx.** Ability to transcend subjectivity and be truly objective and dispassionate, with sensitivity to context, nuance and subtle aspects; capacity for inner reflection and introspection

**xxi.** Peace of mind, contentment, fulfilment, equanimity, sagacity, wisdom;

**xxii.** “Divine” traits like genuine inner humility, self-realization, self-actualization, God-realization, spiritual evolution, devotion.

These are just examples. List your own top 5 things that you TRULY, REALLY value in life. Be original, sincere and honest.

*(If you are intellectually lazy or if you are incapable of thinking, originality, honesty and sincerity, you may choose your top five things from the list above.)*

C. In the life you have already lived so far, are your choices, preferences, priorities, decisions made so far in conformity with the top 5 things you really value in life?

D. If not, why not? What, in your view, might be the reasons why your choices, preferences, priorities and decisions made so far are not in conformity with what you truly, really, value in life?

12. A) Did you consciously choose your personal value system? B) Are you consciously aware that it operates/runs your life silently, in the background? C) Has your personal value system held you in good stead over the years? D) Are you confident it will continue to hold you in good stead now and in the future? E) If not, why not? F) What are you going to do about it, if you think your personal value system is going to fail you in the future? G) Until now, has your personal value system been a win-win, win-lose, or lose-lose proposition vis-à-vis others? (Type your answer below in terms of A, B, C...G.)

13) Do you strongly believe that if everyone in this world adopts your personal “value system” and implements it exactly the way you do vis-à-vis “others” (who include you as well), the world would be a better, happier place?

14) Although this question is in the context of India, this may he applicable to most of the other countries in the world, particularly those whose system of governance is lofty democracy in theory but fake, subverted, corrupted, elite-driven feudalism of crony capitalists or royal boot-licking aristocrats-in-disguise in reality/practice.

Now we have the benefit of hindsight on the experience of last 75+ years. Those decades were marked by the majority middle-class non-elites blindly, unquestioningly accepting and complying with the "system" and its institutions, and following the principle of "minding one's own business" and "business as usual, no matter what". The majority led their lives with intense focus on selfish, personal/family interests, characterized by a self-centred and self-absorbed approach to life and living. The majority entrusted, delegated and outsourced the responsibility of the community, society, nation and State to a select few (elites), and limited their own role as community members to just voting, paying taxes, abiding by the law, rules, regulations. The size of the State in terms of geography/territory, population, GDP (total economic output) kept expanding through the period. The results of the system after 75 years are there for everyone one to review and evaluate, particularly in terms of (lack of adequate) development, (tardy, haphazard) progress, socioeconomic (in)equality, fractured society, etc, relative to other comparable countries in the global context. It is possible now to figure out what might ensue next if the same system is persisted with, given the dynamics of the globalized world.

Now, the question is, should the majority middle-class non-elites continue living in the same format of the last 75+ years, even after the recent experiences of COVID, lockdown and life-disrupting experiences?

15. **A**. Is it right to continue to persist with an obviously failed, flawed, highly risky system merely because it appears too big in scale and too complicated in complexity relative to individual constituents of the majority middle-class non-elites? **B**. Or, should the majority start to focus on the reasons why all of them can't exactly pool their brains and resources together to imagine, conceptualize and co-create a new system where their role as community members is redefined? **C**. In your view, what might those reasons be that stop individual members of the majority middle-class non-elites from uniting, cooperating and collaborating together in this digital, high-tech age? **D**. Having listed the reasons in your answer to C, which of them are applicable to you personally? **E**. Do you think continuing to maintain 'attachment' to your real personal reasons that stop you from uniting, cooperating and collaborating with your fellow middle-class persons will hold you in good stead now and in the future?