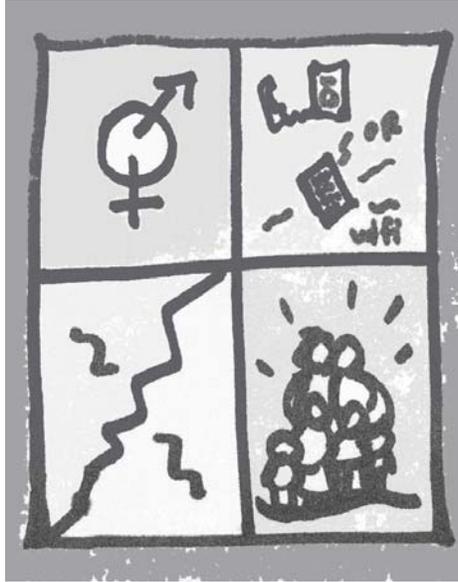


## STEP TWO

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## WHAT MAKES YOU YOU

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4 MAIN BUILDING BLOCKS

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## WHAT MAKES YOU YOU

To open up to the infinite of all possibilities we start at the beginning. We are born as a human being into this physical world. There begins our journey into possibilities. The possibilities for each one of us are a complex swirl in an intricately woven pattern. But the basics of who we are as a human being starts in the Tiny Little Human House of which we are born. And the Tiny Little Human House we exist within starts with a foundation. These are our Basic Building Blocks, the structure from which our whole life and path to possibility grows from. We start with the foundation and grow from there.

Our first breath into life begins with birth. The first question asked of every new parent at the birth of their child is the first characteristic that defines you as a person. Is it a boy or girl?

Here begins your personality formation as a human being. Parties are thrown to announce the sex of the baby. Parents secretly long for one gender or another. Clothes are bought and rooms are painted. All of the projections of your parents, grandparents, friends, relatives, caregivers, and the world are projected onto you in that one statement. It's a..... and what are you?

### 1. GENDER

For most people it's one or the other: male or female. For some it's both. For some physically it's not the same as they feel inside. But for all people, the question at birth is the same. It is the beginning of defining who we are in this world and how the world defines us.

In some families a boy means baseball and football and rolls in the mud. For others it means musician, singer, or artist. In another it means engineer, mathematician, or professor. Girls may be allowed to cry while boys are told to, "Man up." At the same time girls may be told to be nice to boys so that they can "catch a man" someday.

Intentionally or not, even the most cognizant of all parents cannot help but project a part of who they are and how they feel about their own gender onto the new baby that sits in front of them. Parents naturally want to connect with this infant. A baby cannot say, "This is me!" so the adults project themselves onto the child.

### WHAT ARE YOU?

For a girl or a boy this can mean limits are set. What color is the baby dressed in? What shapes or sounds or books or education is this child set up to receive? What expectations are put upon this child based on that one single question. Is it a boy or a girl?

There are biological reasons why we do this as human beings. At this point in our current history, women carry and birth babies. Men provide the sperm. That simple biology creates the rules and sets the tone for the many societal expectations of genders. Add lots of hormones and sex to the mix and there's much biology as to why society treats genders differently.

These stereotype archetypes change as humans and the way we create babies change, but it still the most prevalent focus as of now. The roles of society will change and with them so too will the importance of this question change. But for now, it is still the first question asked and answered before birth and therefore the first of the Four Main Building Blocks that is placed in the foundation of your Tiny Little House.

The gender you were born with begins your identity formation of who you are as a person and the possibilities you have available to you in this world. Such a simple question leads to such a major Building Block in our Tiny Little House. It is one of the biggest and most Basic Building Block of our lives, no matter how we feel about it.

And that leads us to the second Building Block: The Era.

## 2. THE ERA

So here you are: a male or female baby. But what era were you born into? On the day you were born was there a doctor present? Were you in a modern hospital or a home with running water? Did your mother take or have available to her prenatal vitamins and prenatal care? Were you taken home in a car seat? In a car? What foods were you fed as you grew up? What did your home look like? Your school?

All of these things, all of these variables and many, many, more make up the second part of the limitations with possibilities for your life: The Era. The Era you were born into helped shape and create the options and desires available to you in your life today. If you were born into a time before computers, would a smart phone be on your Christmas list? Probably not.

### ERA BUILDS POSSIBLE

The dreams, desires, and possibilities for our lives change and grow as the world changes and grow with us. We have a symbiotic relationship with the world around us. As the choices in our selves grow, so too does the needs, wants, and desires for our world grow. It is one reason people long for "simpler times." With fewer choices comes less need to choose. Choosing itself can be time consuming and difficult!

But you can choose. If you are open to possibilities you are able to see through the clutter and focus on what is really important to you. You can narrow down the choices and live the days of your dreams that are authentic to you, no matter what Era you are born into!

This leads us to the Building Block most people focus on: Family.

## 3. FAMILY

When you are born into a family you are born into an identity. This identity was formed long before you had a choice. The ethnicity race in your genetic make-up, chronic conditions, mental and emotional predispositions, and even how tall you may likely become all are present within your physical body. All of these aspects of What Makes You You are inherent at birth.

Inherited talents are present. Body shape, hair color, eye color, skin color, physical and mental disorders, even balding or aging traits are all present within the DNA that forms the physical body that is you! Even some likes and dislikes are part of the genetic makeup of the family you are born from. On top of that, the interests of said family, the interactions between family members, and the interactions between family members and the world, are all present at your moment of birth, even if you never meet any of your birth family members at all. It is a critical part of who you are and a major Building Block in the foundation of the Tiny Little House that makes up you!

No matter who raises you for the remainder of your life, your physical body's formation begins with DNA. This is why those who are adopted directly at birth may still hold a desire to discover their biological family and when they meet them may discover a multitude of similarities. Who we are is built first through family DNA and then second through family behavior. The irony is the most crucial relationships we may have in the foundation as a human being and the possibilities for our lives happen in our earliest years, when most of us have few if any memories. And yet, these people and how they react to, care for, love, abuse, or neglect us form the possibilities for our lives and unknowingly create the foundations of our Tiny Little House!

Family behavior and how it relates to you starts at your birth. At birth members of your family and those who surround you begin to react to you.

“Oh, isn't she pretty?” “Oh, he'll grow up to play football one day. Look at those sturdy legs!” At the moment of birth everyone who comes to see you has a reaction to you.

Now, mind you, you have not even said a word yet! You are not even able to tell shapes from colors, know language, or understand what they are saying!

All of the observations made upon you are your time of birth have to do with just a few traits:

1. Your physical appearance and
2. The personal hopes, desires, judgments, and opinions of those around you who love you and raise you, mainly family.

This is why family becomes one of the most important Building Blocks of our foundations in life and even how if we don't have family, we long for it.

## FAMILY BUILDS THE BOX OF *NORMAL*

This does not stop at birth. This continues each day. The people who raised us, especially in our earliest days, form the foundation of who we become and who we feel we can become in this world. The possibilities are formed with each and every action and reaction from the small group of people we see each day in our lives, ie: our family. Being part of the small group we call family is an inherent need within the human condition. It is a defining wall in our house that builds who we are in this world. It is why pain is felt when family members move away or relationships are severed, for whatever reason. It is why you will take flack from your family members you would never take from anyone else. It is the stuff of movies and legends and honor and pride. It is blood that unites.

Being near someone who looks like, acts like, or feels like you, is validating. That is why adopted children who find siblings or parents when they are older often discover they have the same accent or mannerisms. Shared connection is felt when we are around someone who behaves the way we do. It means we are not alone in this world. If your family is not there

for you emotionally or physically it can shape your view of the world as not being safe, protecting, stable, or welcoming. How you were treated by your family growing up and today create your view of possibilities for you and the world you see. They are more influential than we want them to be and why so much therapy is focused on them!

How you were raised, what family you were born into, and what was their belief system about the world, becomes your baseline for what is commonly called *normal*. It is what your brain and body believe the world is and the formation of how we see ourselves in the world. Your normal is not the same as the person next to you or down the street. Everyone grows up with different views, abilities, and preconceived notions of the world. These beliefs can often last a lifetime.

Opening up to the possibilities of the world different from the one we were raised in is the beginning of living a life full of possibilities! To open up to a new possibility and form a new behavior we can ask ourselves, “What if I was born here or raised by so and so? How would I react to this situation then?” Using this simple act of empathy with just a few Curious Questions opens us up to new possibilities. Walking in someone else’s shoes (or family) can give us a greater appreciation for who we are and the family we did or did not have.

Our Tiny Little House with our Tiny Little Family that is so well built for survival is just a starting point, an ever moving, growing, changing vehicle alive with the possibilities we choose to give it! We can still create new memories, relationships, and connections to others if we are willing to be open, honest, and do the work. We can renovate and redecorate all these pieces that have been built for our foundational survival! These are just Building Blocks, not unmovable stones. But it is a complex and intricate pattern that has been built for us to grow as human beings in this world.

It is also fascinating! This whole human journey is astonishing. If we look closely we may be delighted and surprised at what we discover.

So here we are. We have our bodies, our families, and the year of our birth, but then? Then life happens. Circumstances and Events beyond our Tiny Little House shake up our world and create more or less possibilities.

#### 4. CIRCUMSTANCES AND EVENTS

The Building Blocks of your life are set. You have this body you were born into. You have this family with its values and opinions. You have the town/city/country and Era you were born into. Then life begins to happen as life wants to do. Your parents decide to move, have another child, change your school, go to school themselves, divorce, remarry or just never come home at all. You have a new sister or brother. You attend the school of your dreams. You attend the school of your nightmares. You don’t attend school at all.

Someone you love dies. Someone you love gets hurt badly. There is a war. There is a natural disaster. There is a pandemic. You get hurt badly. There’s a car accident, a fire, a shooting, a robbery, an illness. Your family freaks out. Your family remains calm. Your family unites like never before. Your family divides and never recovers. All of these big experiences in your life and how the people around you react become part of how you see the world and how you see the possibilities for you and others.

#### EVENTS SHAPE OUR VIEWS

When we are young children these events are described or explained to us. When we get older, we explain them to ourselves. Life happens. Things happen. A plot twist occurs. Your five year old self takes it all in, processes it to cope through your five year old brain, and viola! Another block is added to your walls. A new wall is built. Another Basic Building Block in your Tiny Little House is born.

Life happens. How we, and others around us translate those events to us box us in or open us up to possibility. And as the rest of our life progresses we build these walls. Block by block, piece by piece, we build the Tiny Little House of our lives and the world we live in.

## TIME TO REMODEL

There are many parts of ourselves that help create the view of the world and ourselves in this world, but these are the basics. These are the ones that exist in the beginning and throughout our lives as we grow and change into who we are to become. Some of these never change. Some cannot be changed. Most of who we are never changes, but some of it we can look at to assess and see what we like, don't like, and what we want to become a part of the possibilities for our lives.

To bust the blocks we must first become aware of our blocks! And then? Then the fun begins. We bust down, remodel and rebuild, until the path to possibility shines as bright as those stars sparkling in the infinite night sky above us.

