

You're Intentional Difference - One Word changes everything

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A ripping yarn summarised by Neil Rainey 2014

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View of the Book

This is an exercise book with a difference. It is an exercise book to help you discover your difference.

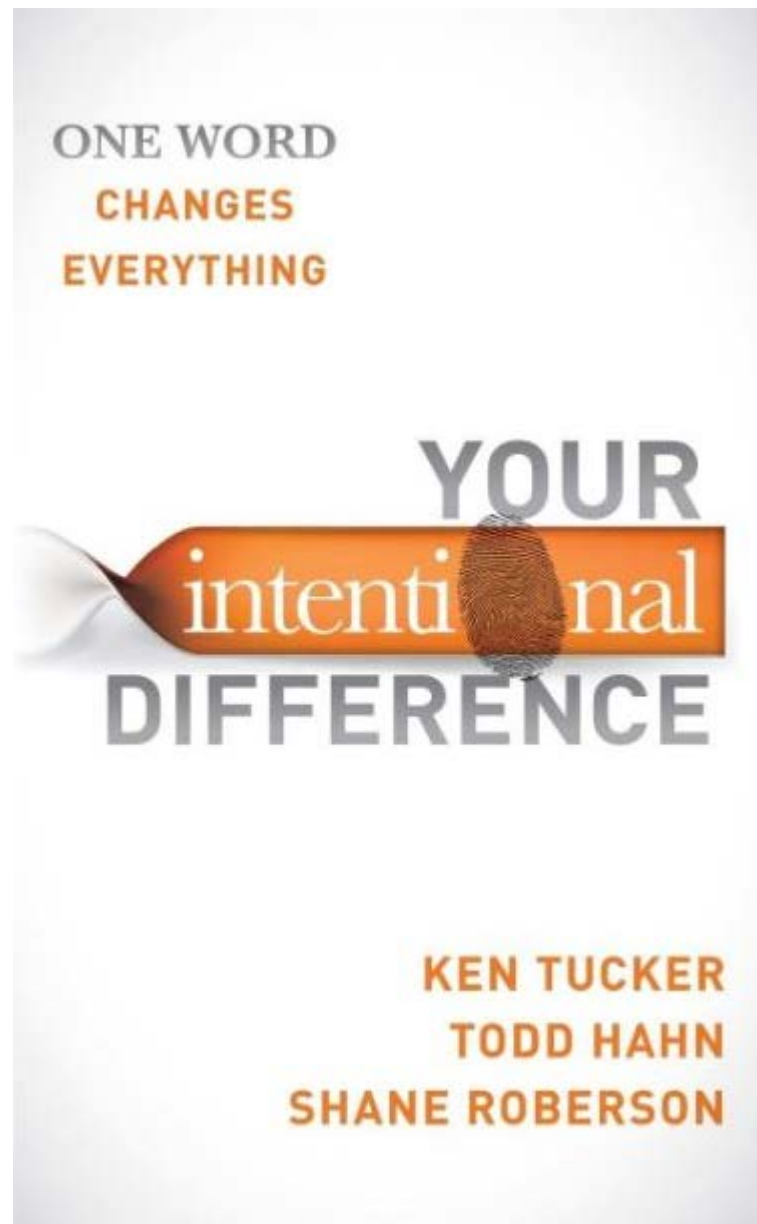
Intentional Difference is about knowing what differentiates you and using that in your life. Companies do it every day, so why shouldn't you?

Summary of the Summary

1. Your Intentional Difference is the purposeful, determined and productive use of that which is different about you.
2. It is by looking at that which makes us different, our differentiated strengths and then using these productively that will lead to our greatest achievements.
3. We all have a difference and it represents your potential.
4. There are 6 dimensions to your Intentional Difference
 - a. **Your critical outcome:** - this is what you are known for - your brand. The measurable, unique and great results you can achieve.
 - b. **Your driving passion:** - This is the thing for which you have a real appetite. It may or may not have relevance to the work world. It is the thing that you can get excited by, passionate to protect.
 - c. **Your assimilated experience:** - this is the perspective you have gained, your model of the world that directs and informs your behaviour.
 - d. **Your cumulative knowledge:** - the learning experiences that have stuck with you and now is your unique store of information.
 - e. **Your emergent skill:** - this is the innate skill you were born with. It has been honed and now finds regular expression in your actions.
 - f. **Your prevailing talent:** - this is your measured pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving. This is unique to each person.
5. You are made different to make a difference. So what do many of us do? We try not to be seen as different. We believe that is the way to fit in and be accepted. Successful people put to good and productive use that which is different about them.
6. Your ID is 5% of what you do. 85% of what you are capable of doing, most other people could do. Things like crunching numbers or running a meeting. There is then 10% of your capability that is more specialised. Again other people in a more specialised group can do that work. The real difference, the bit that really can differentiate you is in that final 5%. It is the part that only you are capable of doing that others are not. It is your unique differentiator.

7. This book has a set of 6 exercises to build out the detail behind your brand, your ID (pages 7-12 of this summary). You will think about what drives you, the experiences that have impacted on you in your life, your unique skills and when you first noticed them. Finally we consider what this says about you. You can articulate you ID in a sentence and then finally in a single word, your ID word. This is the one word that articulates the difference in you.
8. There are three zones that we can live our lives:
 - a. The Distraction Zone: - where we have not thought about or discovered our ID and spend our lives doing the 85% of activities that do not differentiate us.
 - b. The Leverage Zone: - where you are beginning to optimise your ID. You are conscious of your ID word, use it, and act within your purpose.
 - c. The Flow Zone: - where life becomes effortless. The 5% area. Where everything but the present moment falls away and you are totally focussed on excellence. People refer to it as "being in the zone"
9. You are a custodian of potential; it is your role to spot and nurture potential. In yourself and in others. We often do this by identifying strengths and weaknesses. Instead if you can identify the ID of a person you are then focussing on the difference in that person. By identifying that natural difference we can tap the true potential of a person. Taking that difference to something that is unconsciously present to something that is intentionally known and acted on.
10. What if you could be in flow more often? What if YOU could understand and be intentional about your difference? Your ID word is for you to discover.
11. Your IDWord clarifies and identifies your unique self and you have created it. Your ID names the 5% that is your differentiator. This is where your capacity for excellence is.
12. Use your IDWord to identify your 5% zone, to enhance relationships, to make career choices, to live your purpose, to improve the effectiveness of your communication, to deal with conflict.

Focus on the difference in a person and create opportunities for that difference to come to the fore.



1) Your Intentional Difference (ID) - the concept

Defining difference

Your ID is the purposeful, determined and productive use of that which is different about you.

Deficit based thinking

It is easy to define ourselves by our deficiencies. It could be lack of focus, attention to detail or ability to undertake administration. We all have deficits. It is by looking at that which makes us different, our differentiated strengths and then using these productively that will lead to our greatest achievements. We all have a difference and it represents your potential.

Distilling your difference down

Your ID can, in the end be boiled down to a single word. This book walks you through a process to get to that one word. Once labelled by you that word will help you know yourself a little bit better and help you gain more success in what you do.

The elements of your ID

There are 6 dimensions to your ID. They work in tandem to produce the you that others have come to know and rely on. The dimensions give you the lens to look at and understand your talent:

- 1) **Your critical outcome:** - this is what you are known for - your brand. The measurable, unique and great results you can achieve.
- 2) **Your driving passion:** - This is the thing for which you have a real appetite. It may or may not have relevance to the work world. It is the thing that you can get excited by, passionate to protect.
- 3) **Your assimilated experience:** - this is the perspective you have gained, your model of the world that directs and informs your behaviour.
- 4) **Your cumulative knowledge:** - the learning experiences that have stuck with you and now is your unique store of information.
- 5) **Your emergent skill:** - this is the innate skill you were born with. It has been honed and now finds regular expression in your actions.
- 6) **Your prevailing talent:** - this is your measured pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving. This is unique to each person.

What are you called to do?

You are different; you are made different to make a difference. So what is your difference and how are you different?

Fitting in

When you examine the outputs of the major leadership measurement tools such as Myers-Briggs, 360 degree surveys and others one thing emerges as true: - every leader is different from others. A second interesting thing also became clear to the authors: - that every successful leader put their difference to use in an intentional way.

Surface your
Intentional
Difference is a
journey through a
set of exercises

So what do many of us do? We try not to be seen as different. We believe that is the way to fit in and be accepted. Successful people put to good and productive use that which is different about them.

Your ID is 5% of what you do

85% of what you are capable of doing, most other people could do. Things like crunching numbers or running a meeting. There is then 10% of your capability that is more specialised. Again other people in a more specialised group can do that work. The real difference, the bit that really can differentiate you is in that final 5%. It is the part that only you are capable of doing that others are not. It is your unique differentiator. You're ID and this 5% are interchangeable. It is this 5% that holds you out to be you in the perceptions of others. This book is about your identifying that 5% in order that you use it intentionally.

5% of what you do is a unique element of you. The aim is to be aware of what that is and use it intentionally.

2) Uncovering your ID - 6 exercises

1) Critical Outcome

Your Critical Outcome is the main measurable impact that you make...what is yours?

Uncovering your critical outcome

This is what you are known for - your brand. The measurable, unique and great results you can achieve. To get you in the frame of mind think of some companies - Apple for example. What would be the adjectives that you would use to describe that company? And what is their main measurable impact. It could be innovation, superb design, and great customer advocacy. And the measurable outcomes are their impact in the technology world and their market share. Or let's take a person - Mother Teresa - how would you choose to describe her and what were her measurable outcomes? Your critical outcome should be consistent, not one off. It should lead to notably excellent results and it should be unique.

Critical Outcome exercise:

- 1) **10 adjectives:** - List 10 words that others use to describe you.
- 2) **Next - add to the list:** - Talk to some people who know you and have them add to the list.
- 3) **Cut to 3 words:** - take the list and write out the 3 that resonate most to you. This gives you 3 strong words most descriptive of you.
- 4) **Write out how these words are manifested and measured in you** - be as descriptive as you can. So if you are perceptive, curious and strong willed (as an example) how does this show up?

2) Driving Passion

Your Driving Passion is what you get excited about.

Uncovering your driving passion

This is the thing for which you have a real appetite. It is the thing that you can get excited by, passionate to protect. It is the **energising, intense appetite that demands action**.

- 1) **What energises you..?** Is it getting stuck into a really complex problem? Is it fixing things? Is it unifying groups of people?
- 2) **What do you have an intense appetite for?** Michael Jordan's relentless practices was because he had an intense appetite to get better. A similar intense appetite to get better drove Angel Macias to the top in his sport - baseball. What is yours?
- 3) **What action does your passion demand of you?** It could be that your passion to pass on knowledge to others causes you to mentor or volunteer at a local school.

Elements of driving passion

Emotion - emotions are our innate responses to the world. Emotions are key to your driving passion. **Physical reaction** - we have visceral reactions to things that matter to us. When you feel most alive? When you go scuba diving, when you are listening to a great orator?

Driving Passion exercise (write down the answers to each part):

First answer three questions quickly and honestly:

- 1) What keeps me awake at night?
- 2) What do I think about over and over again?
- 3) What ignites my creativity?

Second: Call a couple of friends right now and ask them:

- 1) What is it that you think that motivates me?
- 2) What do you think is the one thing I am most passionate about?

Third: Challenge yourself

- 1) What keeps me from following the passion that is in my heart?
- 2) What are the impediments that stop me following my passion?
- 3) What would I do if all the impediments went away?
- 4) If I had unlimited time/money what would I do?
- 5) What would you do to make an impact on the world?

Finally: Review the list you have made list out and pull out:

- 1) What do you believe to be the world's greatest need?
- 2) What do others say is the one thing for you?
- 3) If you had unlimited time/money what would you do?

This exercise explores what drives you (via what you see as the world's greatest need). It reveals what your friends say that drives you. It allows you to see the possibilities of following your driving passion (via removing impediments and time/money constraints). From all of that you can now write out your Driving Passion.

3) Assimilated Experience

Your Assimilated Experience are those events and incidents that dictate you behaviour today.

Elements of Assimilated Experience

Life experience does not shape us, it is the way we assimilate our life experience that makes us who we are today. Assimilated Experience is an accumulation of events or incidents from the past that shape, inform and direct our behaviour today. What moment or moments have shaped you? What specific incidents come to mind?

An example is an eminent female doctor in Saudi Arabia. At an early age she overheard a conversation that said that she and her sisters could be brilliant, if they were boys. That has shaped her behaviour to stamp out that stereotype and in a country that has only 4% female participation in the workplace she has risen to a senior rank in the health system. Her critical outcome is to respect Arab Culture whilst becoming a global leader in her field. Her driving passion is to create a platform for women to succeed in Saudi Arabia. This driving passion is created by her assimilated experience.

Assimilated Experience plays out in 3 ways in our lives:

- 1) It impacts our **natural** self - you react to life circumstances in a unique way. Each of us reacts differently. To one person the impact may be positive, opportunistic; to another the response could be fear or threat avoidance.
- 2) It gives perspective - how you see a thing will depend from where you are standing, how you look at something. Looking at a mountain is a whole different experience for a qualified Geologist and an experienced mountain climber. You have pattern recognition. You will be expert at interpreting events based on Assimilated Experience - "I have seen something like this before and this is what it meant". It could be you are good at reading the emotional temperature of a meeting. Or a stage in a commercial deal. We all have pattern recognition abilities and this can help you to come to conclusions more rapidly than others in your area of assimilated experience.
- 3) It shapes who we are becoming - Assimilated Experience shapes your choices and your choices drive your present circumstances and who you are becoming.

Assimilated Experience exercise

To flesh out your Assimilated experience write out two short resumes:

- 1) **Your failure resume** (and be honest) - a list of failures in your life personally and professionally.
- 2) **Your success resume** - a list of successes in your life personally and professionally.
- 3) **Look at the two lists and look for patterns and correlations.** List these out. They are your Assimilated experiences (that is why you remember them) and they are key to figuring out your ID.

4) Cumulative Knowledge

Your Cumulative Knowledge informs our Assimilated Experience. It is the learning's you have chosen to retain. From teachers, books, courses, parents.

Elements of Cumulative Knowledge

We are constantly acquiring knowledge and we like it. It is the stuff of game shows, the reason we love them. Some things we gather effortlessly and it is these things that we now just know. Each of us is unique in terms of the information we retain. Cumulative Knowledge is the unique retention and purposeful, productive use of information.

What we learn is how our Assimilated Experience is informed by our Cumulative knowledge. How you assimilate experience is unique to you because it is informed by what you uniquely have retained. If 3 people have five pages of a book and are asked to underline the really important parts...they will each underline slightly or in some cases greatly, differing parts of the book. That is their experience assimilation being drive by different retained knowledge.

Think about what you retain - Action is useless without knowledge. Think about how you can purposefully use it - Knowledge without action is futile.

We learn by doing and then by not doing. We learn not to do things from an early age when we are told that they are wrong. Think of the number of times you were told to "stop doing that"!

Cumulative Knowledge exercise

Write out the answers to these questions in order to understand what knowledge you retain and why:

- 1) Think of the most impactful teacher in your life. Write their name down.
- 2) What knowledge deposits did that teacher make in your life?
- 3) List the most important other knowledge investments in your life. Could be diplomas, books, classes, on the job learning or other things that gave you knowledge you judge to be significant.
- 4) How are you applying those knowledge deposits in your life? Now?
- 5) Of the lessons your great teacher taught you, which still show up today?
- 6) Of the lessons that you learned from your other knowledge investments, which ones still show up today?
- 7) Look at the areas of your life, do you see some ways you can more intentionally put to use that which you learn easily?

5) Your Emergent Skill

Elements of Emergent Skill

This is the skill that came easily to you, that was innate. An Emergent skill is the innate ability that finds automatic and repeated expression. Could be that you are a born organiser. Or have a natural ability with figures or painting or music. It was something that you just had. And it had to be expressed. Your Emergent skill becomes better with time and applied effort. This is not to say if you have a skill as an artist that you will become a Van Gogh but you will become better at it. Malcolm Gladwell in his research uncovered the 10,000 hour rule, where 10,000 hours of practice at an innate skill **could** lead to mastery. This is not a guarantee though!

Emergent Skill exercise

Write out the answers to these questions in order to understand your innate skill:

- 1) Thinking back to a young age, say 12 years old or earlier, what did you do exceptionally well?
- 2) People noticed me doing _____ well at an early age.
- 3) People said "you know you are really talented at _____?"
- 4) As you grew up with that skill, in what activities did it show up?
- 5) Is it a major part of your life and work today?
- 6) If so, how?
- 7) What are some steps you can take to grow these innate abilities into amazing skills? Step 1, Step 2, Step 3?
- 8) What things can you stop doing now to devote more time to developing your innate skills? List them.
- 9) What are two areas of your Emergent skills where you can commit to making the investment to gain mastery? I.e. To gain mastery I must invest in _____?
- 10) Let's make a commitment! I (your name) commit that I will devote (time) to doing (activity) in order to increase mastery of my (skill).

Your Emergent Skill is the skill that always came easily to you, was innate.

6) Your Prevailing Talent

Recap time

As we approach the end of the elements of your ID.

Your Critical Outcome is driven by your Driving Passion

Your Driving Passion is initiated by your Assimilated Experience

Your Assimilated Experience is informed by your Cumulative Knowledge

Your Cumulative Knowledge is expressed by your Emergent Skill

Your Emergent skill is fashioned by your Prevailing Talent

Elements of Prevailing Talent

Our Prevailing Talent is our spontaneous, observable, reliable and measurable patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving.

We notice these easily in others "Mary is the go to lady if you want something done". "John is the guy you need if you want a group to get on with each other".

We notice Prevailing Talent less easily in ourselves. Hence the proliferation of self analysis tools that are so popular.

Talent is spontaneous - a natural outflow from how you are wired. It is observable, reliable and measurable. People know you for that talent and can observe it in you.

Talent is about how we feel, think and behave and when you are acting from your Prevailing Talent it actually energises you.

Prevailing Talent exercises

These two short exercises will reveal to you your valuable Prevailing Talent. Think about the last time you went home energised. You had had a brilliant day:

- 1) What had you done that day?
- 2) What particular talents that you have were you tapping into that day?

Think about the last time you went home depleted and worn out. You had had a not so good day:

- 1) What had you done that day?
- 2) What particular talents that you have were you tapping into that day?
- 3) What particular talents that you have were you NOT tapping into that day?

Your Prevailing Talent are your spontaneous observable, reliable, and measurable patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving.

3) Your Identity and your ID word

Understanding your ID

The 6 exercises built out the detail behind your brand, your ID. You have thought about what drives you, the experiences that have impacted on you in your life, your unique skills and when you first noticed them. Finally we consider what this says about you. You can articulate your ID in a sentence and then finally in a single word, your ID word. This is the one word that articulates the difference in you.

Your Intentional Difference

When you have derived that word it is not just something to sit there on the shelf. That would just be a Non intentional difference. The aim is to optimise your ID by selectively putting your difference to use.

Zones we live in

There are three zones that we can live our lives:

- 1) **The Distraction Zone:** - where we have not thought about or discovered our ID and spend our lives doing the 85% of activities that do not differentiate us.
- 2) **The Leverage Zone:** - where you are beginning to optimise your ID. You are conscious of your ID word, use it, and act within your purpose.
- 3) **The Flow Zone:** - where life becomes effortless. The 5% area.

More on the Flow Zone

Originally and famously identified by Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi, flow is your 5% zone. It is what you experience when everything but the present moment falls away and you are totally focussed on excellence. People refer to it as "being in the zone" or similar. You can achieve greatness in flow and it is where you totally differentiate yourself.

Exercise to optimise your ID

Before you start, give yourself 10 days where you are actively leveraging your ID that you identified earlier. Then come to this exercise.

So here we are 10 days later, write out in full:

1) Critical Outcome

Write out a summary of my Critical Outcome

How I have been intentional around this dimension in the last 10 days?

How I will be intentional around this dimension in the next 10 days?

2) Driving Passion

Write out a summary of my Driving Passion

How I have been intentional around this dimension in the last 10 days?

How I will be intentional around this dimension in the next 10 days?

3) Assimilated Experience

Write out a summary of my Assimilated Experience

How I have been intentional around this dimension in the last 10 days?

How I will be intentional around this dimension in the next 10 days?

4) Cumulative Knowledge

The Flow Zone is where you are at your most effective. It is where you differentiate yourself.

Write out a summary of my Driving Passion
 How I have been intentional around this dimension in the last 10 days?
 How I will be intentional around this dimension in the next 10 days?

5) Emergent Skill

Write out a summary of my Driving Passion
 How I have been intentional around this dimension in the last 10 days?
 How I will be intentional around this dimension in the next 10 days?

6) Prevailing Talent

Write out a summary of my Driving Passion
 How I have been intentional around this dimension in the last 10 days?
 How I will be intentional around this dimension in the next 10 days?

You as a custodian of potential

You are a custodian of potential; it is your role to spot and nurture potential. In yourself and in others. We often do this by identifying strengths and weaknesses. Instead if you can identify the ID of a person you are then focussing on the difference in that person. By identifying that natural difference we can tap the true potential of a person. Taking that difference to something that is unconsciously present to something that is intentionally known and acted on.

You are made different to make a difference

What if you could be in flow more often? What if YOU could understand and be intentional about your difference? Your ID word is for you to discover. The exercises in this book have helped you to zero in on the elements of your difference. Your ID word is a noun for your identity. When you have truly surfaced that word then you can become intentional to live that difference and everything changes.

An example

It could be that you eternally ask questions. Cannot help but to query things that do not make sense, things that you do not understand. That you will do this even if it is not comfortable for others, not politically correct. That you need to see patterns. So your ID word could be QUESTIONER. Is this what people see you as? When you actually to label your difference then you can use it going forward with intention.

4) Putting your ID into action

Your ID is more than a word

By now you have been on a journey to surface your ID. It is more than a label. Think of your name, there are many other people with your name. It was given to you in a process over which you had no control. We are all different but your name does not embody that difference. Your ID word does. It clarifies and identifies your unique self and you have created it. Your ID names the 5% that is your differentiator. This is where your capacity for excellence is. First up let's identify the characteristics of your ID, what does it look like?

My ID word suggests I like to _____
 My ID word suggests I need to _____
 My ID word suggests I prefer to _____
 My ID word suggests I dislike to _____
 My ID word suggests I yearn to _____
 My ID word suggests I that I often _____
 My ID word suggests I insist on _____

Focus and nurture difference in others. Focussing on strengths and weaknesses is limiting.

My ID word suggests I avoid _____
 My ID word suggests I am unlikely to _____
 My ID word suggests I am most fulfilled when _____

Turning the concept into performance

- 1) **Use your IDWord to identify your 5% zone:** - think of the tasks where you know your ID helps you do an excellent job.
- 2) **Use your IDWord to enhance relationships:** - to improve a relationship with a person, think about what you are known to them for. Think of the characteristics of your ID that will have a positive impact on them and take action.
- 3) **Use your IDWord to make career choices:** - half you're waking time is impacted by your career choices. Compare the requirements of your job with the characteristics of your IDWord. And think about the culture of your organisation and the extent to which it will let you be you. Based on these two assessments what is your performance likely to be in the role? And based on that you can make some career choices.
- 4) **Use your IDWord to live your purpose, daily:** - without clear purpose you have no basis upon which to make decisions, allocate your time and use your resources. So, as you dress in the morning, do a check of your purpose with the characteristics of your IDWord in mind to set your day up. Then reflect how well you lived with your purpose in mind at the end of the day.
- 5) **Use your IDWord to improve the effectiveness of your communication:** - exercise your ID in a way to engender trust and clarity. Pay attention to the 6 aspects of your ID (Driving Passion etc) - awareness helps you bring clarity. If you consistently exhibit the characteristics of your ID over time you will build trust with others. Show respect to others.
- 6) **Use your IDWord to deal with conflict:** - each of us has our triggers. Things that provoke us in a conflict. Deeply knowing your ID will reveal to you the things that are your "hot buttons". Recognising others ID will help you understand their triggers. Imagine looking at yourself through the other persons eyes. Finally be intentional about learning from each conflict. Conflict will tell you something about your driving passion, your critical outcome. It brings to the fore your assimilated experience and uses your cumulative knowledge. It may also make use of your emergent skill, informed by your prevailing talent. All told, you can learn a lot about your ID by reflecting on a conflict situation.
- 7) **Use your IDWord to live into your greatness:** - you are made different to make a difference. By definition, the more you live your IDWord the more difference you will make. And practice makes permanent.
- 8) **Explain your ID and IDWord to others:** - what it means and what results from your identity. This reinforces your knowledge of your ID. And will give you feedback as to the accuracy of your ID.
- 9) **Finally:** - go to www.intentionaldifference.me for more!

There are many ways to intentionally use your difference. Listed here are 8 of those uses.