



The Diligo Vita Manual

A psychological & philosophical guide
for child to adult transition

Sheet 1

“What am I”? An exploration

A basic beginning exercise for all ages 12 +



What Am I ?

*Diligo
Vita*

At face value it sounds a simple question but it should be noted it is “what”, As opposed to “who am I,” to start with, our exploration is looking at the physical and working our way towards the innate nature of our being.

To start with we are looking to “brain-storm” ideas to put in the box below. So what are you? Try and put in a number of Items that are true; be expansive.

I am a

For older teens,
don't over think
this exercise

Look at your list and pick the one you feel is the best one and move on to the next slide. (why is this the best?)

What am I?

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**What we have done in is expansive thinking.
So what dose our list tell us?**

Star

brick

mountain

tree

fish

dog

ape



Although we are different from all these thing we have a commonality with every thing around us: this view give us a holistic appreciation of what we are. We are, in a real sense, recycled! The atoms that are in you now could have been in tens of thousands of different thing before you: a blade of grass? A dinosaur, a car or indeed another person!!! Some particles in us could only be made in a star! So one could argue we transcend time, that what is in you was “made” billions of years ago!!

Take time to mull this over; think about it. Do you have any feelings about this?



What am I?

That's all very well but expansive thinking doesn't help me know what makes me, me?

Comparative analytical thinking

Having completed our table we are now going to look at What Is the difference between the elements of our list, working from the bottom up. When you get to working out what makes humans different from animals, You might need some help.

comparative tool asks; "Whats the difference"?	suggestions	Magnifying tool asks "What is this"?
	Human-being	animal
	animal	Life form
	Life form	Made up of stuff
	Stuff	matter
They're near enough the same	Matter/ atoms	

Well "matter/Atoms" and "stuff" are really the same, So you try "stuff" and "Life forms." What is it about Life form that makes it Different from stuff?

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What am I?

All lifeforms are made of stuff but not all stuff is a life form.
 A living thing has certain characteristics that make it living:
 They can react to their environmental condition.
 They can replicate themselves. (there are more)
 A brick can't do either of these thing 😊



comparative tool asks; "Whats the difference"?	suggestions	Magnifying tool asks "What is this"?
	Human-being	animal
?	animal	Life form
Reproduction & react to conditions	Life form	Made up of stuff
They're near enough the same	Stuff	matter
	Matter/ atoms	

Now you try, life forms compared to animals,
 (Hint A tree is a life form but is it the same as a dog, what qualities makes the dog different.)



What am I?

Well how did you get on separating life-forms from animals? Well a dog can run away from a falling tree but a tree can't run away from a *naughty* dog doing something on its trunk 😊 so movement must be one difference. A dog eats dog food but you can't feed that to a tree, Do you know what a tree "eats" ?

Comparative tool asks; "Whats the difference"?	Suggestions	Magnifying tool asks "What is this"?
	Human-being	Animal
	Animal	Life form
Has freedom to move about & eats complex food which it breaks down.	Life form	Made up of stuff
Reproduction & react to conditions	Stuff	matter
They're near enough the same	Matter/ atoms	

Now the difficult one; animal compared to human. What makes humans different?

What am I?

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The difference in DNA between all mammals is very small, that is to say that genetically we are all very similar, so may be what makes us different is not so much physical abilities but something else?

The characteristics that separate man from an animal can be a bit more difficult to quantify. Lets see if we can help: fill-out the table below.

Can a gorilla....?	YES/NO	WHY/NOT	Conclusion: man can because?
Drive a car			
Worry about the future			
Explain the meaning of love. (assuming it could talk)			NOT JUST YET
Survive in its environment.			
Be revengeful of man's bad treatment to wards gorillas			

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Well I'm sure you arrived at something like: the Gorilla wasn't cleaver enough? So we can conclude rather than there being a difference of physical abilities between man and other animals the differences are one of mental ability.

So we are cleaver and its true, physical we have a very large brain that allows us to do some very complex things, can you think of one particularly extraordinary ability that man has to a degree that no other animal has? It is something we take completely for granted being one of the very first things we learn as a baby.

A riddle:

*Thanks to the tower of Babel's demise there are hundreds of them,
all doing the same thing.*

Made up of thousands of elements; like bricks we build them together.

And use them to touch the souls of men with fear or love.

We augment them with our hands and arms.

We use them in our heads, our hands and mouth. What is it?



What am I?

*With out any shadow of a doubt the **key** that makes the fundamental difference between humans and other animals is complex language*

Why? What is it about the ability to talk that makes such a huge difference?

Can a gorilla....?

Drive a car

Worry about the **future**

Explain the **meaning** of **love**.

Survive in its environment.

Be revengeful of man's bad treatment to wards gorillas

We will now go through our list of “*can do cant do*” one at a time and look at the nature of the abilities that allows man to be able to do them but specifically in terms of how language might help

Words in **black** denote something to take particular notice of. Words in **Yellow** are words or concepts you might not be familiar with, they are press-able hyperlinks to Wikipedia.

What am I?

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*With out any shadow of a doubt the to the **key** that makes the fundamental difference between humans and other animals is complex language*

Why? What is it about the ability to talk that makes such a huge difference?

Communication

Can a gorilla....?

Drive a car

Clearly to drive a car requires excellent eye to body coordination but on top of that can you imagine how much more difficult learning to drive would be if the person teaching you could not use language.

Communication

I'm not sure but I believe chimpanzees may have been taught to drive but only in a rudimentary fashion; as a "learnt by by wrote" and reward, it will probably not have a concept of driving a car.



What am I?

*With out any shadow of a doubt the to the **key** that makes the fundamental difference between humans and other animals is complex language*

Abstract thinking

Can a gorilla....?

Worry about the **future**

Explain the **meaning** of **love**.

Future, meaning, and love, are “extra ordinary” words; they represent things that can not be touched or seen, the English scholars amongst you will tell you they are **abstract nouns**. Without language we could not “hold” such concepts in our minds.

Abstract thinking

The Future is not a concept that any animal, other than man, can really have in the manner man dose. All other animals live in the “present”; the here and now. Yes they can remember things that have happened in the past, and can learn from it to modify their behaviour, (a good survival trait). They may well be anxious in a present moment because of a memory but in broad terms they can not project that to a future time: I might be frightened tomorrow, next week.

Love and indeed all the emotions/feelings take on a very different roll when in conjunction with an abstract thinking mind. I am certainly not saying that other animals don't have feelings or emotions just that for them they just have the feeling and not the conscious quantification of the feeling; it is I think fair to say it is more **rudimentary. continued**



What am I?

*With out any shadow of a doubt the to the **key** that makes the fundamental difference between humans and other animals is complex language*

Consequential corollary.

Can a gorilla....?

Worry about the **future**

Explain the **meaning** of **love**.

Much of our (man's)anxieties say a worry about the future relate to another skill, that through language man has discovered:

Early man at some point began to work out some of the physical laws to his environment. If, what, who, how and why, again it is his use of language that has given him a questioning, enquiring mind. An understanding that particular action can produce a predictable out come. **Consequential corollary.** An example of what I am talking about.. *another riddle: Take 1, to multiply it by 10fold through it away and leave it or even bury it. What have I done?*

Of course with this consequential understanding of his environment came both good and bad, on the one hand he can use his ingenuity to build things but the same mechanism will allow him to consider the future out comes: what if the rains fail and my crop dies!!! his understanding of growing crops allows him to worry about the future.

Well did you get the riddle? The growing of crops was one of the greatest development to make modern man. The understanding of panting and growing seed took man from being a hunter gather to farmer, this allowed him to make permanent settlements.



What am I?

*With out any shadow of a doubt the to the **key** that makes the fundamental difference between humans and other animals is complex language*

Self-awareness & Ego

Can a gorilla....?

Survive in its environment.

Be revengeful of man's bad treatment to wards gorillas

A philosopher called renne decart coined the famous saying: "I think there for I am". He may have coined it for slightly different reasons than I am using it but fact remains that he recognized the concept of his own existence and he could do that because he could use language to have the abstracted concept of him-self as a living entity. He had **.Self-awareness**. Conscious self-awareness is really a quite an extraordinary ability, one that you should take time to consider it's implications;

The gorilla and man do have an imperative in common. We are both "programmed to survive". Like it or not, it is inescapable that we both have a basic motivational force in common with all living things: **survive to procreate**. But in man an extraordinary transformation happens to that imperative when in conjunction with self-awareness. What, for the gorilla is just an unconscious instinctual imperative, becomes in man a conscious consideration "I care about my survival" it all sounds so trivial even **pedantic** but it is the birth of **ego**. **Ego** allows man to conceive of very complex consideration such as revenge, one that all other animals remain innocent of.



What am I?

Well I think we have shown that language is a very important component in terms of the abilities we have gained and has defiantly helped us in discovering what makes us different from other animals. Well we are nearly ready to make a statement as to what you think you are but just before you do that lets have a little help. Click the button and you will go to an article that should help:

Language, Abstract Thought, Self-awareness

Can a gorilla....?	Conclusion: man can because?
Drive a car	communication
Worry about the future	Abstract thinking Consequential corollary
Explain the meaning of love. (assuming it could talk)	Abstract thinking
Be revengeful of man's bad treatment to wards gorillas	Self-awareness, ego

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What am I?

Finally you should now be able to write a brief paragraph explaining what you think you are.

