Creating a map of your identity is a way to capture and articulate how you see yourself. You can look clearly at your obvious, surface-level identity and then begin to look deeper. This can be very useful in exploring how others perceive you as a leader—who will feel more at home with you, who will give your words more weight, and so on. Your identity map should include your given identity, chosen identity, and core identity.

**Instructions**

Draw three concentric circles on a piece of paper. In the outer ring, write words that describe your given identity: the attributes or conditions that you had no choice about, from birth or later. You may want to include your nationality, age, gender, physical characteristics, certain family roles, and possibly religion. Examples include *female, only child, tall, blind, African American, cancer patient*.

In the next ring, list aspects of your chosen identity. Consider including your occupation, hobbies, political affiliation, where you live, certain family roles, and possibly religion. Examples are *cyclist, mother, engineer, expatriate, college graduate, wife, leader, New Yorker, Buddhist*.

In the center, write your core attributes—traits, behaviors, beliefs, values, and skills that you think make you unique as an individual. Select things that are relatively enduring about you or that are key to who you are today. For example, you may see yourself as funny, artistic, kind, conservative, attentive, creative, impatient, musical, family focused, assertive.

After you complete your map:

- Underline the items that are important to you personally. These are likely to be the terms you would use to describe yourself.

- Put a plus sign beside the items that you believe contribute to your ability to lead effectively in your organization.

- Put a minus sign beside the items that you believe detract from your ability to lead effectively in your organization.

- Put a question mark beside the items that may vary in how they affect your leadership ability, depending on context.