PERSONAL REFLECTION

STEP #1: Reflect on your early childhood and how it shaped your development. Look for patterns, motivations, and values that you have as a result of the way you were raised. For example, think about…

- **Family composition:** birth order, family rules, economic status. What feelings do you have about your family? What traditions did you have? What personal characteristics did you inherit?
- **Gender significance:** Being male or female influences the way we think and what we believe is possible. To understand the significance of gender, write down 10 ways your life would be different if you were a member of the opposite sex.
- **Geographic influences:** Where were you born? Different regions of the country have diverse cultures and lifestyles. Think about the customs, pastimes and cultural influences unique to the region in which you were born.
- **Cultural background:** For some people, cultural identity is a key to understanding who they are, while others have little awareness of their heritage. How do you describe your culture? How significant has your culture been in shaping your life?
- **Generational influences:** Events that occur during the particular period of time in which people are born shape their lives and give identity to their generation. For example, Baby Boomers who were born between 1946 and 1960 understand the generational influence of television. How have your generational influences affected your beliefs, standards, expectations?

STEP #2: Draw a time line of your life and list your major activities and jobs in chronological order. For each point along the time line, list the skills and talents you exhibited as you moved through life. Group these skills by category—people-related, technical, and intellectual, etc. What were your greatest strengths? Which skills and talents did you enjoy using? In what areas did you excel? What came easy to you? What inspired you and why?

STEP #3: Think about the moments in your life when you made significant decisions that may not have seemed most logical or expedient at the time but just “felt right.” What do these periods of intuition, hunches, perceptions, and feelings tell you about what you truly value?

STEP #4: Ask yourself, What would I do even if I didn’t get paid for it? What do I dream about doing? What is my passion? What would I do if I won the lottery, had only six months to live, or could live in good health for 100 years? And yes, your answer can be to play golf, travel, or shop ‘til you drop.

STEP #5: Review the first four steps and circle the values you consider most important to your self-definition.