

SELF / NOT A STATIC OBJECT

A field guide for writing a portrait that can change

This is a writing instrument, not a psychological assessment. Its purpose is to make a more truthful, generous description of a person possible.

01 / START HERE

Write five descriptions of yourself that do not include a job title, institution, income, score, diagnosis or follower count.

02 / MAKE IT PRECISE

For each description, write one situation in which it has been true, and one in which it has not. A statement can be meaningful without being universal.

03 / KEEP A DOOR OPEN

Finish with: "At present, I am curious about..." The phrase "at present" can matter more than any grand declaration.

01 / THE MULTIPLE-SELF MAP

Make room for more than one facet

A person can be a friend, craftsperson, researcher, family member, learner and somebody who simply wants a quiet evening. These are not mutually exclusive.

01 / DRAW SIX CIRCLES

Label six contexts in which you show different, authentic parts of yourself. Put no trait at the centre.

02 / FIND THE TENSION

Where do two roles pull against one another? Avoid solving the tension prematurely: write down what each role protects.

03 / WRITE THE REVISION

"I used to think I was _____. I now think that was incomplete because _____." Notice what changed: the person, the context, or your interpretation.

02 / EVIDENCE AND STORY

Notice what you actually know

Autobiographies contain facts, interpretations and desires. They need not be separated forever, but it helps to know which is which.

01 / FACT

Write a verifiable event or choice. Example: "I changed direction after studying a subject."

02 / INTERPRETATION

Write two plausible explanations for the same event. Example: "I was searching for challenge" or "My situation changed."

03 / OPEN QUESTION

What information would help you distinguish those explanations? If it cannot be resolved, can you live with the uncertainty?

03 / THE ANTI-RÉSUMÉ

What the impressive sentence leaves out

Credentials and milestones can tell part of a story. They cannot establish who deserves dignity, what a friendship means, or whether a day was worthwhile.

01 / VERSION A

Write the standard 90-word bio, with education, skills, past work and projects. Make it accurate, not apologetic.

02 / VERSION B

Write a different 90-word bio using care, rituals, learning, humour, ordinary pleasures and relationships.

03 / COMPARE

What does each version reveal? What does each hide? Neither needs to be destroyed for the other to matter.

04 / A PRIVATE CONVERSATION

Questions worth returning to

The goal is not to win a personal-development competition. Think of these as prompts you can set aside and revisit.

01 / QUESTION ONE

What are you willing to change your mind about? What evidence or experience might move you?

02 / QUESTION TWO

What activity would still matter to you if nobody could applaud it?

03 / QUESTION THREE

Where have you confused a useful label for a complete identity?

04 / QUESTION FOUR

What kind of ordinary day do you want to be able to enjoy?

05 / MORE TO EXPLORE

Read and wander, with intellectual care

These are starting points, not endorsements of every sentence you may encounter. The local practice pages are the companion to this field guide.

01 / SAHILVERSE PATHS

[me.sahilverse.online](#) — interactive self-portrait | [about.sahilverse.online](#) — professional context | [identityaction.sahiltayal.com](#) — intention and friction | [reciprocityatlas.sahiltayal.com](#) — evidence and inference | [olfactorycathedral.sahiltayal.com](#) — scent and story.

02 / FURTHER READING

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: “Personal Identity” ([plato.stanford.edu/entries/personal-identity/](#)). Albert Bandura (1982), “Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency”, *American Psychologist* 37(2), 122–147. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.37.2.122.

03 / FINAL NOTE

You are allowed to revise the portrait. You are also allowed to put the pen down.