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On the cover: Veronica Schoen, Pat Saheed, Lauren Montanaro,
Susan Vernicek, Saira Marrero, Jasmin Saheed, Noelle Stary

Foreword to Identity Magbook

By Mike Michaelowicz
Author of The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur

Finally! Finally, there is a Magbook that lets you embrace who you are. A Magbook that lets you be adored by others, because you are allowed to adore yourself. Finally, a Magbook that doesn't show you how to change yourself to become perfect, but instead shows the perfection that is already you.

At first glance it may seem somewhat strange that a guy is writing the foreword for a Magbook about women, written by women. But there is a reason. I have something you don't. I have watched this new trend from afar. And there is something big happening. Women are taking the lead.

Women are taking the lead in all facets of life. And, as Martha says, "That's a good thing."

Women are leading the new economic recovery. Women are making more and doing more. Women are also leading in politics (I'm sure a woman president is just around the corner), are leading in entrepreneurship, and leading in the home front. This change has been needed for a long time, and I am thrilled to see it happening.

But just like everything else, there is a trade off. With all the progress and positive change women are bringing about, they are compromising themselves. They are allowing themselves to be sacrificed – maybe it's less sleep, or less alone time, or a barely noticeable, consistent dripping away of their identity.

Susan Vernicek is a dear friend to me and an inspiration to us all. In the *Identity* Magbook, she shows women how to appreciate and cherish themselves, how to live life again on their terms, and most importantly, how to reclaim their identity. And this is what is needed more than ever before.

For this wonderful movement to continue, it needs the support that Susan provides. This one little Magbook you hold in your hands does just that.

And, I believe, will be one of the reasons this world and the wondrous things women are trying to bring about, actually happens. Thank you Susan!

Foreword to Identity Magbook

By Catherine Bridwell
Psychotherapist, marriage and family counselor
and life coach

Chances are good that since you've picked up this copy of *Identity*, you have some knowledge of the online magazine by the same title. Chances are slim that you have knowledge about the personality and life experiences behind the single-minded determination that led to its creation. Entrepreneurism and creativity don't exist in vacuums. This Magbook's focus of inspiration, encouragement and validation sprang initially from a woman who needed reality checks and boosts herself.

Susan entered young adulthood having experienced a hefty dose of adversity: a family that dealt with alcoholism and drug abuse, a member in prison, negative and destructive communication patterns, awful relationship boundaries, infidelity, financial worries. She knew about destructive personal relationships and depression. She also reached adulthood with the personality traits and energy level to tackle the confusion and emotional tumult that linger from those background issues. For the past few years her positive outlook, curiosity about people, caring and willingness to forgive have been focused on outreach to others through the online magazine, *Identity*.

Susan is young. She's enthusiastic. She's energetic, determined and generous. The magazine and now this Magbook are about a beginning.

Now, Ladies (and Gentlemen), let's sit back, explore and absorb.

Acknowledgements and Appreciation



I have years of appreciation for my family, friends, and colleagues. This Magbook wouldn't exist if it weren't for **Identity's** writers, experts, and readers who continue to support Identity and share stories to help women embrace who they are.

To my family – being the youngest of seven, and having a non-traditional childhood, I have learned a tremendous amount from ALL of you. Thank you for supporting and loving me unconditionally. It means the world to me, and I'm lucky to have such a unique and amazing family. I love you!

To Rob, your love and support is what brought this Magbook idea to life. I'll never forget the car ride where the Magbook idea was conceived. It was a perfect 'Ah-ha' moment. Thank you for all that you do! I love you!

Thank you to Joann Difabio-Klinkner, Kimberly Elmore, Lauren Ruch, Jasmin Saheed, Pamela Levy, Crystal Gaynor, Ellen Goldman, Catherine Bridwell, Lisa Velazquez, Carol Gonzalez, Laura Breiten, Sheryl White, Mom, Dad and all of the contributors who have shared their stories, expertise, and advice. It's because of you that we have the content to create **Identity** and now this amazing Magbook. Thank you for being the **Identity** team.

Resources:

www.savorthesuccess.com

www.toiletpaperentrepreneur.com

www.justthinkbig.us

My Story



From a young age, my two driving forces in life were to run my own business and have a positive influence on others. Like many fine women I know, I've always had to work hard for what I wanted.

I'm a native New Jersey girl from Wharton, where I still reside, and I've always had a creative spirit. After graduating with a fine arts degree and a dual focus in graphic design and photography from Frostburg State University, I had a tough time finding a job.

I spread my wings and spent a summer in London with a friend who, just like I, thrived on life. I lived in a hostel until I found a job tending bar. I lived above the bar and I worked hard, traveled hard, and of course, partied hard. I traveled to France for the second time in my life, then to Dubai and South Africa for the first time. I met extraordinary people who taught me how values, morals, expectations, and survival skills are just a few characteristics that create your identity. Putting myself out of my comfort zone, these beautiful, intelligent friends taught me a world of lessons at such a young age. I thank them tremendously for that.

When it was time for me to return home, let me tell you, I cried for a good solid week straight. I mean bawling my eyes out every single day because I missed London so much and the friends I made there. It was such an emotional change that I will never forget the shortage of breath with heavy tears, emptiness, and feelings of loneliness. As that pain faded, as most things in life do from day to day, I found a job as a graphic designer in the medical and pharmaceutical industry.

My Story — continued

Imagine spending every day looking at a photo of your own face, using computer techniques to change it constantly – adding wrinkles, lip volume, or crow’s feet lines according to a scale – sometimes just a few wrinkles, other times more severe transformations. That was the work I did for five years. Of course, I didn’t always use my own face, sometimes the photos were of others.

Part of my job was to develop the “rating scales” doctors use to determine the progressive stages that a patient was in before and after Botox injections, plastic surgery, or other procedures. The scales were posters with a number of images showing progressive stages ranging from zero to five, for example, with five showing a severe case of wrinkles, crow’s feet, or plumped lips. Developing the scales required an intense process before they were approved, but that wasn’t the problem for me.

The real problem was that the posters made me feel insecure and very critical of my skin and body, which was an unwanted reminiscent memory from when I was a young child. I found myself judging the features of every man and woman I met based on my current project. I had problems listening as I would be focusing on comparing myself with the person I was communicating with. It was mentally exhausting and killing my focus and listening skills!

While I was thrilled, at first, to land a job in my field, eventually I knew I had to leave. Every evening I found myself critiquing my face and obsessed with the mirror! I couldn’t get the imperfections out of my head and away from the mirror

My Story — continued

fast enough. It was a vicious cycle that I'm happy to be out of, yet at the same time, I'm still thankful that I had it because the end result was *Identity*.

As a woman with many interests, and all the same concerns as my female counterparts, I relied on the media for information that could improve and inspire my life. Through my own discontent with all the in-your-face ads and useless information about diet fads, fashion trends, and celebrity gossip I found in other magazines, *Identity* was born. I believe our role models should be in our everyday lives; not photo-touched fashion plates on a page. *Identity* is my gift to every woman for being who she is and the best that she can be. I hope this Magbook inspires you to share with others and share your story with the online community at identitymagazine.net.

About *Identity*

The *Identity* Mission – Accept. Appreciate. Achieve.™



Identity is an online magazine that was created not only for the average woman, but for that unique woman within you. *Identity* empowers women to Accept. Appreciate. Achieve.™

We are all individual in our thoughts, interests, beliefs, and experiences. Each of us harbors our own fears, doubts, questions, and insecurities. That's why we bring you a positive and safe place to turn for information, inspiration, support, sharing, and permission to just be who you are.

We're not all about the latest and greatest diets, fashion fads, celebrity chatter, and beauty miracles – there's enough of that out there – and there is no quick fix when it comes to your health. *Identity's* purpose is to encourage our readers to embrace their inner selves, to love who they are, and to achieve their potential without comparison to anyone else.

Our articles and insights are hand-selected to reflect these important philosophies of self-love and self-help. They are meant to guide you so that you see yourself in the best possible light, as you always should.

So, celebrate your lives, your bodies, your successes, and your imperfections.

The *Identity* Woman – You!



Whether you're a wife, mother, student, business professional, teacher, or artist– YOU are the *Identity* woman. The *Identity* woman strives to be stronger and intelligent, with professional achievements and personal convictions. You're funny and curious, always wanting to lend a hand and learn something new. You're ambitious and outgoing, open to new ideas that will make a worthwhile difference in your life. You're caring and nurturing, often more focused on home and work obligations than you are on yourself. You go all day, yet can't resist priceless time curled up on the couch with a good movie or book. Separate from that, you're a woman with moments of discontent, like us all, at times feeling less than self-confident, and alone in your concerns. You need a place to reach out. *Identity* is that place.

Identity is designed for women who turn their nose up at the typical gossip and crazes with which we're bombarded. It's for those of us who have no interest in feeling inferior while looking at the airbrushed and enhanced cover girls who dominate our media, and who we sometimes feel compelled to emulate. The *Identity* woman doesn't want to be constantly reminded of who she's not ... she wants to know that who she is, by far, is more than enough.

Why the Magbook and How to Use It

Since I launched my first online *Identity* issue in 2006, I have been frequently asked if the online magazine was going to go to print. I had no intention of making *Identity* into a hardcopy magazine. I did, however, want a way to archive all of the content, and offer a solution for the women who could not get to the computer to read *Identity*. Discussing all these ideas on a car ride with my boyfriend, gave me the 'Ah-ha' Magbook idea. Our content is positive, inspiring, funny, and interactive.

I suggest you Accept. Appreciate. Achieve.™ and while you're doing that, embrace your not-so-perfect ways to be able to love yourself! I've tried to make the Magbook unique, real, fun, and interactive so that it will engage your mind, body, and spirit and push you outside of your comfort zone. You can read the Magbook from beginning to end, or middle to end, or from the end to beginning, but *Identity's* goal is to help you Feel Beautiful Everyday!™

Testimonials

"Thank you for creating a breath of fresh air."

- Candice, NY

*"Your magazine looks great,
what an awesome concept!"*

- Felicia, NY

*"I was really inspired by your
Emotion Commotion articles, I look forward
to reading those each issue. Thank you!"*

- Denise, MD

*"Mrs. Identity, I truly appreciate you and all women
like you. I can feel your positive, loving energy."*

- Bridget, NJ

*"Holy cow! This is so empowering.
I feel free and inspired!"*

- Sally, MD