Who Am I: Activity Details

- **Groups**: class should be split into 6 groups of roughly equal size (4-6 students)

- **Group roles**: in each group, students must pick one person to be responsible for each of the following roles

  o **Note-taker**: writes down everything group discusses (person should have legible writing)

  o **Moderator**: keeps group on focused on the topic and on time

  o **Presenter**: person who will present the group's ideas to the class and will write down the group's thoughts on the board

- **Purpose of first video clip**: introduce students to the question 'who am I?'

  o This clip should establish that (1) the way in which we normally answer this question is potentially faulty or lacking (it's not as straightforward and simple as it might seem), and (2) this question is important because misconceiving or misunderstanding who we are can have potentially negative consequences

  o Brad Warner describes misunderstanding ourselves as the "root problem. Thus, it's not just 'idle speculation' or mind games: there is a practical benefit that investigating this question can bring

  o **Note**: 'who am I?' is not a specifically Buddhist question, but Brad Warner approaches it through a Buddhist lens, and this may be discussed if the instructor has relevant background or if it is pertinent to the course material

- **Typical responses to 'who am I?' that each group will investigate, then discuss as a class**:

  a. I am my name
  b. I am my nationality
  c. I am my body
  d. I am my social media profile
  e. I am my thoughts
  f. I am here today because of my the choices I've made

  o Each group will explain why someone would give this answer (encourage the use of 1st person voice to make it more personal)

  o Instruct them to include as much detail, context, examples, etc. as possible

  o Following this, each group will ask "am I really _____ [name, nationality, etc.]" The goal will be to find exceptions to this statement. In other words, they will try to explain why this proposition is **not** true

  o **Class discussion**: the instructor can use the notes in the 'Prompts' PDF to guide/stimulate conversation. Almost certainly, many other things not listed there will arise!

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- **Purpose of second video clip**: proposal that not knowing the answer to 'who am I?' is not such a bad thing
    - The instructor should also encourage students to think about the practical **benefits** of knowing they don't know, and the potential **dangers** of thinking they do know who they are
    - Examples of this might include fairly obvious things like racism, sexism, and nationalism. **Refer back to the Warner clip where he mentioned "We start fighting each other over things that don't exist."**

- **Other notes**:
    - Knowing that I am not my thoughts could be very liberating for someone suffering from anxiety, depression, etc.
    - It's important to note that 'who am I?' is a testable hypothesis. Various methods of meditation have been developed so that each individual can look at and examine the truth of these statements for him/herself. See other class on meditation for details.

- **Time Breakdown**:
    - (~15 min): Class set up and 1st Brad Warner video clip
    - (~15 min): Group work (how am I X-answer, how am I not X-answer)
    - (~25 min): Building the map of self as a class, class discussion
    - (~20 min): 2nd Brad Warner video clip and wrap-up

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