

Excerpt from WE'VE GOT ISSUES: How You Can Stand Strong for America's Soul and Sanity by Phillip C. McGraw.

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I want to help you *be who you are on purpose*.

I want to help you give yourself permission to live consistent with your beliefs and values and do so with pride and conviction. We Americans are a melting pot with many definitions of *who* we are and *what* we consider important. And that's great as long as embracing one's personal values doesn't infringe on the rights of others, or as long as there is no effort to cram a personal agenda down other people's throats. Living with differences can be both interesting and healthy.

Ultimately, though, I believe all change—namely societal change and global change—starts with the individual. It's like the story of the little boy who was pestering his father while he was trying to work. The father started to look for something that could distract his son for a while. He found a page in a magazine with a map of America. He ripped the page out and cut it into pieces. "You like puzzles," he said. "Here's some tape—see if you can put the America back together." Thinking he had bought himself an hour or two of peace, he was surprised when his son came to him ten minutes later with a perfectly reassembled map of the United States. "How is that possible? You don't even know the map of the United States." The son said, "I don't know the world. But on the other side of the page you tore out there was a picture of a person. When I fixed the person, it also fixed the world."

That's why we're going to help you be who you are on purpose.

Because in the process, we're going to fix some of this divisiveness in our country.

Without the more than 330 million of us Americans, America is just a big landmass. What makes America "America" is *We the people!* You and me.