

Our Identity – What makes our Identity?

You may ask yourself, 'what makes up our identity and what identifies us as individual beings?' Is it bound by your culture? Ethnicity? Your skills and abilities? Your physical attributes, your gender? Or is it impacted simply by your occupation and hobbies and the values and beliefs you abide by and live your life by?

To some people, our identity is made up of a culmination of the above and together it provides us an identity as an individual being. While others may say about identity, is it is an individual reflection of who you want to portray yourself to be at any one time by choice.

Our idea on what encompasses our identity has evolved over time from the Stone Age and well into Modern Civilisation. Back in the Stone Age Era where our survival instinct was solely dependent on our hunting and gathering skills, our identity was with our tribe and between the weak and the strong. The better the tribe got at hunting and gathering the higher it catapulted their survival rates as a tribe and the stronger they were identified to be the stronger tribe.

Over the many eras and well into Modern Civilisation, post war times where the fighting had stopped and trading began where businesses flourished. People began to be more and more independent to a point of socialising within different groups, cultures, ethnic groups, associated beliefs, work groups and hobbies and more. So now, our identity is not bound to one thing that defines us as a person or individual. But rather, a culmination of several things that make us have an identity.

Let's see the individual categories that can make our identity.

RELIGION

Religion can tie a group of people together and identify them to be of a religious group whom follow the same beliefs and teachings.

ETHNIC BACKGROUND or CULTURAL BELIEF

Any particular ethnic group will identify themselves to be an ethnic community who follow the same cultural belief or spoken language. Simply because they have that commonality of values and belief system inherited by their culture that bonds them together to be a part of the community.

VALUES AND BELIEFS

Values and beliefs despite what background or culture you come from can strike a common ground with people and give themselves an identity. For example, if you live your life and have built beliefs and values upon what a warrior would do. Then you may have an identity of a warrior attitude.

OCCUPATION AND HOBBIES

Occupation and hobbies can also define your identity because occupation and hobbies itself is a title of the type of work that you do or a hobby that you enjoy. For example, if you work as a builder as a brick layer then you are identified by your work as a brick layer, if you are a cleaner and do end of work cleaning then in the working environment people identify this particular group as end of lease cleaners. The same goes for hobbies, whether you enjoy surfing or act as a magician, actor, gymnast all these hobbies associate you with an identity that others will perceive.

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

Your physical attributes also play a big part of your identity. Many people have spitting image in their mind of how such a person with a particular identity would look like. That's how we stereotype. Fitness fanatics are stereotyped to be muscular, thin, toned and always wearing sport clothes. Whereas, basketballers are stereotyped to be tall and lean people and celebrities are given the stereotype of uniqueness, fashionistas and even glamorous with the style of clothes they choose to wear.

So the question comes back to 'what makes our identity?' The truth is our identity is made up of one or more layers of the above categories and it doesn't define your sole identity as a person but it can define the identity that you want to be perceived to be. There are some things that you will not be able to control when you are born that make up your identity such as your ethnicity or sex. But there are also many things that you can do to change in order for you to mask the identity that you want to portray yourself to be, simply by learning a new skill or changing jobs or taking up a new hobby even changing your style of clothing to build your identity profile so that you can be whoever you want to be

Source: <http://www.ouridentity.org.au/our-identity-what-makes-our-identity/>, 25 May 2018