

# Stereotypes in society and how to stop it

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In today's society it seems as though everyone is placed into a stereotype that has been developed of every race and how everyone within that race acts/or is. Stereotyping is an issue that affects all races and gender. If someone were to ask what is a woman supposed to do when they grow up, is the typical response still to get married, be a stay at home wife and mother, while the father figure of the family goes to work to support the family? What about the women who don't want to stay at home, the women who want to go and have a career?

Stereotypes are present in everyday life, placing the idea that you are only allowed to do what is described in that stereotype. Women are not only affected by what a typical woman should do stereotype, but as well as race stereotypes or stereotypes that are based on characteristics that are attained. Women are slowly, but surely starting to change the typically stereotype of them along with proving that they are more than just this object they are looked at as. Stereotypes are present in our lives from when we are a young age. Children's television shows are just as guilty of this problem as regular television shows are.

Dora the Explorer, for example, that teaches Spanish to children. But, the main character Dora is of course Hispanic, giving the impression that Hispanic people always speak Spanish to young children who have not been exposed to the multicultural world that America is because they simply wouldn't be able to comprehend the idea. These stereotypes are even present while going through school being taught that there are different cliques and that you can only fit into one certain clique, like a jock, a nerd, or the dumb cheerleader.

There cliques are revealed in multiple shows that attract teenagers. Not only is television responsible for teaching children these stereotypes from a young age, there also are the internet and magazines that contribute to this problem. Technology is not the only thing to blame; there is also influence by who you grow up around. You are not fully able to make your own decisions or opinions about certain things until you are an adult. The background of your childhood and who you grow up around greatly influence your opinions.

Stereotyping only continues in television shows and movies that attract adults. Examine a typical television sitcom, what role are the women characters playing? For example, in the television show, *The Big Bang Theory*, one of the main characters is an attractive blonde woman who seems to lack intelligence at times. Her best friends in the sitcom are two guys that would fit a nerd type role. It is as if the “nerds” are only friends with her because of her looks. Stereotypes evident in our lives since we are young, giving the idea that you fit into one of these stereotypes.

Such as if you are blonde, then you must be dumb or if you are Asian you must be intelligent. The idea that characteristics you hold places you into a certain stereotype and along with that stereotype you must do the things that are associated with that stereotype. On the other hand, there are many television shows and movies that actually challenge traditional views of women. For example, in the movie *Legally Blonde*, a blonde white woman in her middle 20's named Elle Woods depicts what one would think of as “dumb blonde”.

She wears all pink, almost always, her hair and make-up is always perfect and has that high pitch “like oh my god” voice. But she surprises everyone

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when she goes to Harvard Law School to become a lawyer; even the professors and fellow collages at the college doubt her. In the end, she prevails and surprises everyone with her knowledge. Elle Woods would be a perfect image of “ girl power”. The thought that yes women can are smart enough to accomplish their dreamsthat not only men can go to college, get a degree, and become a high paid profession like a doctor or lawyer.

There are tons of other movies and television shows that depict women the same way as Legally Blonde, so does that imply that women can eventually break these stereotypes that have been placed upon them? Many women do just what these movies and television shows depict women doing. More women go to college to earn degrees and obtain a high paying job. There are women that are doctors, surgeons, and the head CEO's of companies in todays' society. These women are the bosses of many other women, but more importantly men.

These are prime examples that women are not just staying home taking care of the children in todays' society, they are going to a well-paying job every day then coming home to do other responsibilities. Women as a whole are breaking these traditional stereotypes that haunt us all. But, the main question behind the problem of stereotyping is who is coming up with these stereotypes? It is not physically possible to classify multiple people into the same group, simply because everyone is an individual and is completely different from anyone else.

Stereotypes are politically incorrect because of these facts. For example, the stereotype that all black people like fried chicken and watermelon. It is nearly impossible that every African American in the world likes these types

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offood; there is at least one that does not, therefore proving the stereotype invalid. But, we still use these stereotypes every day without even thinking about doing it and by doing these you are in return neglecting the fact that everyone is an individual.

In order to stop stereotyping these types of issues must be looked at. While all stereotyping can be considered negative or hurtful depending on what is said. There is a difference between stereotyping and making an observation, as stated before stereotyping would be saying something like all African American people like fried chicken, while on the other hand saying something like there are many Asians at the Science and Engineering library on campus would be considered an observation.

By saying an observation, it wouldn't be considered a stereotyping because the observation is seen with that persons' eyes therefore in their eyes it would be considered true. Alternatively, stereotyping is stating something that can't be proven true and also usually possess some kind of hatred or hurtful feelings behind the statement. I believe that many people often get these two ideas mixed up with each other, causing further confusion and more hatred towards certain groups of people. Stereotyping is clearly a large problem in today's society.

First, the problem needs to be addressed on where it starts, which is often at a young age. The surroundings in which you grow up influence your opinions and ideas as your mind develops which is often the beginning of this problem. This problem develops further with today's technology such as television, movies, the internet, and social networks. Technology is a large

part of the stereotyping problem by continuing to show how women should act and be, but it also challenges the problem as well.

In order to stop stereotyping, women need to continue to make advances in the world to prove that we are not just an object that stays at home and cleans. Women holding high paying jobs and taking care of themselves without any help is becoming a more common idea. I believe women are starting to change the common stereotype of them and with these advances the idea of stereotyping can start to come to an end but only with the help of everyone in today's society.