

# Stereotypes



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Stereotypes are thoughts adopted about a person or a group of people that may or may not be true. In reality a stereotype does not really have a definition. Different people view stereotypes differently. Researchers and psychologists have different definitions what a stereotypes can actually be. Some people regard stereotypes as being a negative thing, might go as far as saying it is prejudice. This is because cultures label others differently. If a person does not understand a culture but sees a trend they assume that the whole culture must be that way. This is an example of what stereotyping means to most. Psychologists Yueh-Ting Lee and Charles Stangor have their own believes on stereotypes. They do not agree on what stereotyping is, but both add a valid explanation. Yueh-Ting Lee a professor from the Westfield State College is a psychologist that has researched and wrote about stereotypes in our cultures. He believes that stereotypes might be perceived as a negative thing because they involve generalizing a culture or person. Lee believes that stereotypes are far from the truth. He doesn't believe that a person or culture can be generalized to one thing. The world is a big place that can be very unfamiliar to most people. People that have never traveled the world or seen many cultures do not truly understand these places. Most of the people in the world fall under this curious but unaware category. Lee believes that stereotypes are needed for these kinds of people. What better way to start understanding a culture then looking at the stereotypes? He believes that stereotypes are a starting point in understanding the different people and cultures. Stereotyping is a belief we use to categorize people, objects and events. Lee says that these stereotypes will help uncertain people deal with all the information about the vast cultures on earth. All this leads Lee to believe that stereotyping is a good and necessary way of

obtaining opinions on people and cultures. Charles Stangor a psychologist from the University of Maryland College Park has his view on stereotypes. He does not share the same views as Lee in regards to stereotyping being a useful or good thing. Stangor leans more into the idea that people need to rate others in order to know where they stand. This is an aspect of stereotyping shared by many. The fact that one culture or person will generalize another culture or person into a group based on who they are and what they do. Stagnor believes that powerful people use stereotypes to exploit selected groups of people. There are many negative stereotypes that arise from people generalizing on one aspect of a person or culture. For example African Americans are labeled to be good athletes but portrayed not to be as smart as Asians or whites. Stagnor believes that is a manipulation, and that stereotypes cannot be true, therefore they cannot be used to judge a person or their culture. Stagnor believes that generalizing can lead to more serious things like racism, sexism, or other prejudice. Stereotypes cannot be labeled as a good thing. This planet has many different people, cultures, beliefs, and races. Every single human being is different than every other human. If this is all true then how can we label people into categories? A human is not something up for sale and cannot be labeled and shelved in a specific section. This is maybe true about whole groups of people from the same race or culture. Like Stagnor believes stereotyping leads people to become prejudice against others. Labeling a race into one category is racism in a sense. A common stereotype is that all African Americans are great athletes but not as smart as other cultures. This is viewed because a lot of them are professional athletes. Being athletic does not make someone less intelligent, or being smart does not mean someone cannot be an athlete.

This is an example of viewing a race only through one lense. People will not be able to understand other cultures if they only see someone from one side. Lee argues that stereotypes will lead us to understand or just began understanding someone. What if someone takes these stereotypes and sticks to that idea about someone. This will lead people to generalize races and cultures into one idea. This will be a harmful stereotype because we will be unable to look past that one idea. Negative stereotyping will lead humans to be intolerable of other races and cultures. People must understand why someone different then themselves is the way they are. If a select group of people are labeled in some way we cannot label the whole race that way. We have to give the rest of that race a chance. The least we can do is to understand a race before we pass a judgment.