

Who we are is truly tested when we encounter conflict assignment

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Year 12, 2010 Writing Folio ENCOUNTERING CONFLICT ??? WRITING

FOLIO ??? PIECE ONE Who we are is truly tested when we encounter conflict

The true test of someone's character is not determined by how we deal with conflict in our life, but how we deal with all the aspects of our lives, for example; how we are when we are happy, grieving or angry. Our maturity levels also play a huge part in defining who we are. There is no doubt that conflict alters our emotions, thus it effects our actions, but this does not determine who we are.

It only shows how we act in times of stress. Conflict can be encountered in many aspects of people's lives including social, work and home lives. An emotional state of our being is not indicative of our true self; it is simply symptomatic of an event. Home is often an accurate indication of who we truly are. Being with family members often means there is no necessity to 'look good'. Our identity is defined by numerous aspects of our lives. One major factor that helps to define who we are is our family.

They mould and shape us from a very young age and we are taught how to behave by the ones close to us. We are who we are, and in most cases this is accepted, especially amongst parents. In the eyes of parents, they do not see much wrong with their child. In some cases expectations are unfulfilled and this can lead to conflict between children and parents. For example some races or cultures have great academic expectations or differing opinions on the physical appearance of their children, such as altering hair colour or getting a piercing.

These are by the youth considered expressions of individuality, however, condemned by authoritarian parents, hence often leading to violent explosions of anger. No doubt in these situations parents are still very caring and loving for their children, as their children are of them, however, very violent and nasty exchanges of words often occur within the family home, but this does not totally define who they are. This violence is only a small part of one's personality and does not truly test us as a complete individual; it merely tests how we deal with things in times of conflict. Conflict can also occur in our social lives.

Young adults are very much establishing themselves as individuals, independent of their families, sometimes children can be rebellious of the core heritage and values they have been brought up to believe in. Children can often choose to go 'the other way' and go against their family's beliefs in order to conform to the prevailing pressures of their peers. This is not necessarily indicative of who they are as people, but who they think 'they should be'. Often young adults feel they need to label themselves. Boys and girls may feel they need to be "Tough", "Sexy", "Funny" or "Cool" to fit in socially with people inside or outside of school.

Unfortunately a number of the fights, rapes and pregnancies are not due to pitfall of character, but more so from wanting to "fit in" or be accepted outside of their comfort zone. Some major contributing factors helping people out of their comfort zone and leading into these fights, rapes and pregnancies are alcohol and drugs. Alcohol and drug abuse can completely change the way we act and behave. It can persuade us to make stupid or

regrettable decisions. An example of this is the rapes that took place on Phillip Island by the Montmorency Football Club players.

The boys allegedly raped girls in their apartment after a night of boozing at the pub. Before this event, the boys were not considered rapists, and quite possibly would not have acted in such a way if totally sober, but alcohol had played a part, and things got out of hand, both violence and the assault.

These decisions that we make under the influence do not completely define who we are, but they do, however, define how we act when we are under the influence, which again, is only a small part of one's life. Another place where we encounter conflict is at work. Work environments can be exceptionally interesting when dealing with conflict.

At work, people can seek to impress and perform to exceed expectations, and at the other end of the spectrum, people can often say they are better than everyone and refuse to do what is required or expected of them. Often when taking part in large work groups of varying hierarchy, people may be keen to impress and show great work ethic, or they would rather complain about inefficiencies and management structure causing conflict between colleagues and managers. Whether passive or aggressive, humans tend to react very differently to their core personality when under conflict.

Conflict that is encountered at work is often dealt with very differently to that of conflict encountered in home or social environments. At work there may be some conflict encountered with a customer, and in this case, the rules may suggest certain ways, or procedure to deal with this conflict. An aggressive person may be forced to deal with the situation on a passive way

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to avoid putting their job at risk. This does not truly show who the person is, merely showing how well they have been trained by an organisation. People may put up a wall, or a mask to cover their true self and save them from people seeing their true emotions.

Again people act differently when away from their home environment, because that is where we do not have to worry about 'looking good' in front of others. Hence, we are not only truly tested when we encounter conflict, but throughout every aspect of our life. We are being tested all the time, and we are constantly developing who we are. Conflict is not the only part of our lives that defines who we are. We have no idea what to do in times of conflict or crisis other than 'react', and this is clearly no real indication of who we are.