

The concept of self-identity and its importance

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



Self-identity is a topic that many of us think we have mastered, but, in the real sense, we haven't. Through exploring several studies, psychologist Tasha Eurich discovers that approximately 95 percent of people think they are self-aware, but only 10-15 percent of them truly are. The phrase "know thyself" has had various meanings attributed to it in literature. However, in philosophy, the meaning of these two words engraved in the courtyard of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi is accredited to the Greek philosopher Socrates. In a nutshell, this philosophy dictates that one must stand and live according to their nature. For centuries, this topic has been controversial and has sparked a lot of debate from various scholars and philosophers around the world. The philosophy laid down by Socrates that "man has to look at himself" still shines to-date. However, some of the questions that remain at the heart of these arguments are; what is the motive of looking at oneself? And by what means should one consider while looking at themselves? In my opinion, self-identity serves as the main ingredient of discovering oneself through fostering happiness, satisfaction and personal improvement. Factors that would have occurred prior to this inception.

Knowing Yourself

Although achievable, knowing yourself can prove to be one of the most difficult tasks ever. One of the most effective ways to know oneself is through introspection. One can easily pay attention and take note of their own action, reactions and experiences in general. Personal observations are priceless sources of information towards self-identification. Paying attention to how one feels inside while undertaking certain activities can hint them of their behavioral preferences hence deriving self-identification. In the process

of self-identification, it is important to use the assessment tools to understand the inner thoughts and self-observation. One of the most effective assessment tools is the winning colors. The winning colors process supports self-identification by promoting the affirmation of the things one can and cannot do.

Self-identity

Personal identity is one of the most fundamental questions of the philosophy. Who am I? what makes me different? Outside the scope of philosophy, 'personal identity often refers to certain properties to which an individual feels a special sense of entitlement. Someone's personal identity in this sense comprises of those characteristics that define them as a person. In philosophy, the self is divided into two distinct parts, the physical body and the soul. The physical body is bound to the earth and changes with time while the soul does not change. The mental features give most people the capability to differentiate one person from another, hence proving to be a critical part of self-identity. If this view is correct, then losing one's peculiar desires in memory can result in the utmost alteration to one's identity. John Locke demonstrates this impression with a well-thought experiment about two people, Person A and Person B. Imagine the mind of Person A, encompassing all their past experiences were to enter into, and replace, the Person B's reminiscences and experiences. This new person, will they be Person A or Person B? John thinks the answer is quite obvious: of course, he will be Person A! Just that now, Person A is dwelling in the body of Person B.

From the dialogue *The Phaedo*, Socrates draws dissimilarities between immaterial, invisible, and immortal things and those that are material, visible, and perishable. From his analogy, the body is of the second type contrary to the soul which is of the first kind. This statement suggests that the soul ought to be immortal. Therefore, making the mind the most essential part of self-identity. Subsequently, self-knowledge can be realized only through the Socratic method, meaning, the dialogue between the soul and itself, or between a student and his teacher.

Importance of Self-Knowledge

Why is self-knowledge imperative? There are practical reasons which highlight the magnitude of self-knowledge in our lives.

First, it is important to note that the role of self-knowledge cannot be underestimated in one's life. It is evident that self-knowledge and happiness correlate. As a matter of fact, establishing self-knowledge is the beginning of experiencing true happiness. According to Socrates, one of the greatest philosophers, happiness is not earned from physical materials such as wealth, power and bodily pleasures, but living a life that is right for the soul, the deepest good. Therefore, it is almost impossible for one to experience happiness if they do not know what is good for their soul. More often than not, they will be misled into pursuing happiness based on the conventional perceptions. On the other hand, if an individual knows what is good for their soul, then they will do it automatically, since it is the nature of good to be desired. In other words, the path of happiness dictates that, for one to be happy, they need to know what is good for them. For example, from the

dialogue The Apology by Plato, Socrates concludes that he must be wiser than other men only in that, he knows that he knows nothing. From this statement, it is evident that Socrates was contented and happy with his status despite not knowing much. Similarly, self-knowledge can serve a purpose by increasing self-awareness hence driving personal growth through the facilitation of the process of learning from one's mistakes. It can also prove useful when one attempts to overcome unwanted behaviors among other areas of weakness. Despite several of its advantages, self-knowledge can prove damaging to one's self-esteem. In most cases it ends up preventing the individual from taking risks, emphasizing own opinions and believing in one's abilities.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, self-identity refers to the concept one develops about themselves, which develops over the course of their lives. This may include features of one's life that they do not have control over, such as the color of their skin as well as the personal decisions they make in life. Socrates philosophy about self-identity, happiness and personal growth can be powerful if carefully put into practice. Instead of fighting the instant-indulgence desires, one can easily view them as conservative and illusionary. However, the pursuit of self-identification can at times cause more harm than good. Self-knowledge can prove damaging to one's self-esteem; a factor that contributes to a lack of confidence hence leading to poor decision making. Lastly, the mental features give most people the capability to differentiate one person from another, hence proving to be a critical part of

self-identity. Meaning, the mind plays a critical role compared to the body comes to self-identity.