# Stereotyping vs prejudice

Sociology, Racism

Stereotyping and prejudice are not the same thing, but are somewhat linked to one another. Stereotyping is defined as a preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people/person without regard for individual differences. Even when stereotypes are positive, they always have a negative impact and can lead to discrimination. Prejudice as defined in our text is an irrational, negative attitude toward a category of people. Now that I have defined the terms I'd like to take you further in depth on the differences between the two. Stereotyping to me is the act of labeling a specific classification or trait to a person strictly based on a person's ethnic background, gender, age, socioeconomic status, or role. Generally speaking when people think about stereotypes they automatically think racial, or in the negative . . . . however thinking that African Americans are good dancers can be seen as an offensive stereotype. Even though it appears to be a positive comment, people are very uncomfortable with specific labels of competency or incompetence solely based upon things like race and gender. Everyone, no matter who you are, has been stereotyped whether they choose to acknowledge it or not. Interesting enough, most stereotypes have been formulated from very commonly shared traits of a specific race, gender, or professional background. Example: To say all Doctors drive nice cars is a form of stereotyping. I did not say all white doctors or Mexican doctors – so it had NOTHING to do with race or gender. The fact that a person has received an extensive education and now holds a professional position that is known to provide very promising wages therefore providing the means to buy nicer things, the public generally assumes they have purchased themselves a high end vehicle. Prejudice is a negative term.

Unlike stereotypes, prejudice is in no way positive. I stated earlier about the stereotype of African Americans dancing well – prejudice is me saying I don't like African Americans because they dance well. (May I now disclose that I, myself am indeed African American). The most common from of prejudice is racism. Racism is the belief that inherited physical characteristics associated with racial groups determine individuals' abilities and characteristics and provide a legitimate basis for unequal treatment. Stereotyping and Prejudice are best linked by the fact that they can both lead to the unfair treatment of individuals based upon assumptions.