

The self in the social world

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



The concepts of self are various defining characteristics that piece together who individuals are and include influences from their environment which affect personal attributes. The intricate and unique interactions experienced help tie together how a person defines their self (Fiske, 2013). Social influences contribute to the development of people from the moment they enter the world. Both positive and negative interactions during childhood may affect future social perceptions. During the developmental stages, social interactions and behaviors influence a person's attitude, perception and social reactions within their environment ultimately affecting individual's self-identity and how one places themselves within a social group.

According to Fisk (2013), how one sees themselves or their cognitive representation of one's self within a group, comparing themselves to others social success and failures, cultures and opinions will affect one's development in school, work, family, and friends. Experiences and interactions define the role we play in each aspect of daily life. Based on the contributing environmental interactions, one develops a level of self-esteem which weighs heavily on their cognitive representation of the self.

The importance of the environmental identity in predicting pro-environmental behaviors has already been demonstrated by studies showing that this concept predicts recycling of self-perceptual concepts throughout developmental stages (Bertoldo & Castro, 2016). During the early stages of development, parental figures or primary care givers are significant to the shaping and development of the self. According to Erik Erickson, because an infant is utterly dependent, developing trust is based on the dependability and quality of the child's caregiver. At this point in development, she is

utterly dependent upon adult caregivers for everything she needs to survive including food, love, warmth, safety, and nurturing (Cherry, 2018).

There are many people in the author's life who had a significant influence on her development throughout her toddler, childhood, and adolescent years. Her father and mother were a big influence in her life. For example, she has always been a sweet, kind hearted, and determined person from the time her parents could remember. Her mom specifically was very sweet and gentle, and she reflected that characteristic onto her as a toddler. During the early childhood ages, she focused on developing greater sense of personal control. She started to gain a little independence and started to perform basic actions on her own and making simple decisions about what she prefer. By allowing her to make choices and gain control, her parents and caregivers still helped guide her to develop a sense of autonomy. During the teenage years, this is when she developed a sense of personal identity which continued to influence behavior and development for the rest of her life. She explored her independence and developed a sense of self. Her mom is a strong and independent woman and she instilled her to be the same way. Those who receive proper encouragement and reinforcement through personal exploration will emerge from this stage with a strong sense of self and feelings of independence and control. Those who remain unsure of their beliefs and desires will feel insecure and confused about themselves and their future (Cherry, 2018).

There are two main kinds of causality that social psychologists have studied; one kind reflects dispositional causes, such as mood, personality traits,

values, and intentions. All these factors indicate internal causes of behavior. The behavior occurs because the person apparently wants to do it, so it reflects will or intent. Dispositional contrasts with situational, which infers that a person's behavior is due to their situational factors (Friske, 2013). When dealing with dispositional attributions, the author can recall a time when her laptop quit working one night. She thought that she may have mistakenly pressed the wrong button. Her dad used to always tell her when she was younger that she wasn't the keenest when it came to electronics. Therefore, she inferred that this event occurred because of her lack of knowledge about computers. An example of situational attribution happened when she did not complete her homework assignment on time because her friends kept her out late the night before. This is situational attribution because she blamed situational factors for her own behavior. Her parents were strict with her and verbally told her that she seemed to be easily influenced by her friends and that it had to stop immediately.

Both of her parents came from very respectful, honest, trust worthy and strong households; which is how she developed her current attitudes towards people of another generation, particularly the elder generation. She was always taught to say yes ma'am, yes sir, or no ma'am, no sir. She was also always taught to never let an older person stand up while she was sitting, it is proper manners to give the elderly person your seat. Also, always be respectful and use proper manners while talking to someone who belonged to the elder generation; such as looking at them in the eyes and really listening and comprehend what they are telling you. Both of her parents

instilled in her that if you respect others, especially elderly people that will take you very far in life.

The social world has had a very huge effect on her developing professional identity. Most of her childhood life, she could recall being very shy and timid; she was very much an introvert. Throughout high school she began to get involved in extra activities such as dance which made her a little more social and willing to bond and talk with others. That was her stepping stone to becoming social. She also worked in childcare for many years and as a job requirement she had to speak to many parents about the progress of their children. She became really comfortable with it when she started to receive good feedback about her communication skills between the parents. Her mom and dad are both social people and she knew it was in her blood somewhere she just had to step out of her comfort zone to find it. Today, in her professional world, she enjoys talking to others and being around others. People seemed to gradually gravitate to her because of her welcoming spirit and her ability to be very social.

Finding yourself in this very complex and social world can be challenging for many. It is important to understand that our upbringing and the social interactions around us molds us into the individuals we are today. We will stumble and fall but, we must get back up and be the best we can be.

Whether being faced with negative or positive interactions, through research we can understand how much of an impact that can have on our childhood, teenage years and adulthood. Our interactions with people around us can also be factors that shape our attitudes towards people and it effects our

development in our professional lives. Overall, we as human beings aren't perfect, and we can only be the best we can be by making the best out of our situations to be successful in life.