

Family traditions and cultural legacies



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There are numerous factors that either make up or restrain the self-identity of a person or an individual. Culture, in addition to family traditions, is one of the factors that affect the self-identity of an individual. When growing up, the environment around affect the personality, values, as well as, beliefs of an individual. The environment includes friends, family members, and the people that affect the life of an individual. So, if the environment is negative, then an individual will have low self esteem.

Moreover, as an individual grows up from being a child, they receive cultural values from the family or the society around. There are questions raised on matters dealing with identity: Can an individual choose his or her own identity? If yes, how much can one choose? Identity is a very complex issue. It comprises of many inner qualities, as well as outer representations of an individual. There are numerous characteristics that do define what an individual is made up of. The self can include things like gender, sexuality, and sense of belonging to a family, culture, nation, or any other group.

An individual's identity incorporates the personality, looks, fears and beliefs. It is important to note that, the identity of an individual is not permanent. Moreover, nowadays, surgery can be done to alter the face or shape of an individual. There are also numerous books and workshops that have come up to help individuals grow personality. This means that people nowadays have greater choices in developing their self-identity.

Self-identity is influenced by how an individual lives, the work they do, and the way they carry themselves. It is also determined by perspective. The people around a person have different perceptions about an individual. They

also affect how a person will behave or carry themselves. Identity has been equated to images and masks. This is because many individuals would mould themselves to be what a certain society or family wants them to be (Missy & Alan, 2004, 497).

The current forms used in social communication like the films, including the society rules, perceptions and many more others, play an integral part in shaping an individual's identity. The question is how do these issues affect self-identity? It is certain that people could choose what to do or wear, but what influenced these decisions?

Scientific research has it that, beliefs, traits and emotions can be factors inherited from parents through the DNA. The memory of an event experienced by a grandparent could be passed through generations. This means that there exist certain identity traits in the genes of an individual. Images of violence or shows that are less empowering could have a certain negative amount of influence in self-identity. A grown up also faces pressure from family and community beliefs, which make them put on a different piece of identity from their own.

A theory known as the postmodern theory, explains that identity has become a mask put over an individual, and not from within. The mask is created as a result of influence from external forces that dictate what is right and what is wrong, or what is normal and accepted. The postmodern theory goes ahead to stipulate that, as an individual, one creates a self-identity through these external influences. People do this so as to fit into the environment around

them. In the United States, for example, there is a tendency of consumer culture to influence the way most Americans think and make decisions.

Giddens has described that the lifestyle of an individual include a routine of practices, which are vulnerable to change in the nature of self-identity (Giddens 1991, 81) However, not all choices are open to people (Giddens 1991, 81). One other important question is how is cultural self-identity defined? Are they imposed on people or self-chosen?

People who are bi-cultural always find themselves in a hard position trying to adopt a culture or creating their own identity. These types of individuals go through an identity crisis. This is where families come in to play an important role in instilling values into these individuals. There have been cultural and national identities created by other people that are harmful to the self-identity of an individual. This means that individuals can face a hard time trying to adopt other cultures apart from their own. There are certain values that could be seen as imposed to the members of that particular society.

There are people who have had identities thrust upon them that don't reflect their own. For example, an American Muslim would always feel like a terrorist in the United States. This means that the Islamic culture influence affects their identity in a negative manner (Fin 2001). The today's world poses a challenge to individuals in choosing their identity. Although one has an authority in deciding on how to live, there is a fraction of traits that have had an external influence.

An individual is influenced by the environment around because no one can survive by themselves. There are social structures that individuals are in, they also descend from a certain family, and are interconnected with other people. A genuine choice in creating a self-identity can be possible if individuals embrace the various influences assets and decide on how to use them in their lifestyles.

In conclusion, a child who is growing up experiences cultural identity. The family teaches these children about their culture as well as religious traditions (Missy & Alan, 2004, 506). These cultural practices could be passed on to the children during meal times, religious practices, or various different celebrations. These experiences add up to either enriching or influencing the self-identity of a child. An individual can also develop a self-identity after the influence they receive from interacting with the family members. An individual can also form a group identity and social identity by their affiliation to various groups. Self-identity refers to an individual's knowledge, in addition to the understanding of his or her self.