

Stereotyping, through the eyes of teenage girls

[Life, Adolescence](#)



STEREOTYPES Through the Eyes of Teenage Girls A 'stereotype' by definition is a generalized image of a person or group, which does not acknowledge individual differences and which is often prejudicial to that person or group. People in general develop stereotypes when they can't or are hesitant to get all of the information they need to make fair judgments about a person, or a group of people. When this type of situation happens, as it most often does, the person judging misses the 'whole picture.' Stereotypes in many cases allow us to 'fill in the blanks' and come to our own conclusions. Our society is the main culprit of the creation of stereotypes, but these stereotypes often lead to unfair discrimination and persecution when the stereotype is unfavorable. Stereotyping often results from, and leads to, prejudice and bigotry. (3) Concerning our group project we decided to narrow down this broad topic of stereotypes into specific teenage girl stereotypes. In starting we had to find out the major differences in the sexes, and how it related to stereotypes specifically. We decided to make up surveys to get answers that addressed our topic. We felt that with around 2,000 different answers we would be able to draw some kind of conclusion of the student body of girls in Souderton High School. Before we could do that though, we had to get the background information on some certain topics like how boys and girls differ in the issue of stereotypes, the consequences of stereotyping, and if stereotypes can be changed. Then we could address our specific questions like the different types of stereotypes, and the way each girl functions in her own stereotype. To start off, teenage boys tend to be more competitive and aware of their own achievements than teenage girls. Teenage girls tend to place a higher importance on forming close and meaningful friendships than

boys at that age. The differences between teenage boys and girls are influenced by traditional sex role stereotypes. Teenage girls tend to communicate more with their parents, including them in their life, while teenage boys are less likely to share their feelings and their activities. But the teenage girls who are able to communicate feelings, despite a negative self-image, are better able to withstand peer group pressure than boys are. Boys have a greater want to fit in with the others than girls do. Through researching we found that a stereotype can have a great influence on the behavior of a certain individual in that group. This is a process known as the self-fulfilling prophecy. (2) Also, once people form beliefs and feelings against a certain social group, those stereotypes can be transmitted to others in a variety of ways. They can be learned through behaviors of family and friends, like jokes demeaning an ethnic group, Jews for example. This can be even be enlarged by television, comics, magazines, and printed media criticizing a group that is normally stereotyped. An example of this would be characterizing a person looked on as a nerd. That is the guy who never gets the pretty girl, and is always getting a swirly in the bathroom from a football guy. The conclusion about the consequences would be that the transmission processes can influence both the types of categorizations made, and the content of stereotypes with the people who are considered a part of that category. (2) The thing with stereotypes also, is that everyday experience suggests that stereotypes often do not change over time. The white Americans' stereotype of African Americans has stayed the same pretty much for several decades. This shows many that stereotypes are highly resistant to change. That conclusion depends on the diversity of the

surroundings, and the perception of the people making the judgment. Our groups next step was to take a closer look into the actual stereotypes. Our surveys addressed each person's activities, and how they actually functioned in their own stereotype. Through this we came to our own conclusions of stereotyping, and the affect it has on people. We found that people who are stereotyped the same have similar grades, similar hobbies, similar likes, and dislikes, and are planning on the same future. We also saw how someone in one stereotype can follow the same patterns as a person in a totally opposing stereotype. With this type of information we concluded that stereotypes do not show the person you are, or who you will turn out to be. Stereotypes are strictly for amusement. A stereotyped person as a SKATER could follow the same exact characteristics as a PRISS. They could both get straight B's in school, and listen to Pink Floyd and The Backstreet Boys. They could both dress in clothes from Pacific Sunwear, and The Gap. They could also both plan to go to a four-year college, and become teachers.

Stereotypes are very common but misused in ways that do not fulfill any sort of purpose. In conclusion my personal opinion is that stereotypes do not show someone's accomplishments or goals in life, so stereotypes in every case are completely useless. Bibliography 1.) Cliques and Stereotypes in Today's Teenage Society. Mike Czesnowski Website: <http://www.prep.fairfield.edu/soundings/1998-1999/issue8/cliques.html> 2.) Encyclopedia of Psychology, Editor Alan E. Kazdin. Rape-System Issue, Volume 7. Copyright 2000 Oxford University Press. Pgs. 465-469 3.) Journal Of Social Issues, Hamilton D. L. Sherman. Stereotype-based expectations: Effects on information processing and social behavior. Copyright 1990. Pgs. 35-58. 4.)

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