

Self and identity

Psychology



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On the practical level, it can be said that there are two main selves for every individual; one is referred to as the perceived self, and the other the presenting self. First, the perceived self is the real self-concept, researchers talk about all the time (Wann and Bosson). That is, our perceived selves are the real persons we believe ourselves to be in private moments. This perceived self can be also called “ private” because we are unlikely to reveal all of it to other people. Therefore, our perceived selves are our real identities, which we acquire through a variety of ways. In fact, we are not born with an identity, but others give it to us. For example, our parents, our friends, and our teachers all tell us who we are through reflected appraisals. So, we often get messages about ourselves from others (“ The Dynamic Self-Concept...”). That is, most reflected appraisals come from things people say about us. On the other hand, there is the presenting self, which is the public image. In other words, the presenting self is the way we want others to view us. Usually, the presenting self is the self we create to be approved by the society around us (Trzesniewski). The fact that we want our presenting selves to be ideal for society creates a gap between the perceived and presenting selves. In this context, it has to be stated that a language is an important tool through which people can show and express their “ selves” and identities. Through language, one's culture, tradition, and mentality can be revealed to others. In that sense, language and self are closely connected, as one usually attempts to express his beliefs and attitudes through the language he or she uses (Trzesniewski). Actually, the relationship between language on one hand and self and identity, on the other hand, is too obvious to disregard. The way one expresses himself or herself in words affects the way he or she thinks and believes about himself

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or herself. That is, the language capacities of an individual usually reflect his thoughts and culture (Wakslak, Liberman, and Trope). As such, self-representation can be defined as the way self is viewed and called to mind to formulate one's interactions with the surrounding world. Social psychology research reveals that most individuals maintain a variety of self-representation, not just one. In that sense, self-concepts, self-esteem, and self-disclosure are some of the types of self-representation that reflect the self's perceived essence or gist (Wakslak, Liberman, and Trope). Self-concept and self-disclosure are two important factors in personal communication. Self-concept is generally a set of perceptions individuals hold about themselves. Those perceptions are not only about our physical features but also other aspects of ourselves, such as emotional states, talents, likes, dislikes, values, role, etc. There are some characteristics of self-concept, such as subjectivity and resistance to change (Wakslak, Liberman, and Trope).