

# Stereotyping

Literature



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A stereotype is "... a fixed, over generalized belief about a particular group or class of people. " (Cardwell, 1996) Stereotyping is a crime committed by all. It is not done intentionally in all cases of course. Everyone will sneak in a little joke here and there about the nature of a certain hair color, race, age, weight, etc. What people do not realize is that these little harmless jokes have created stereotypes. I personally believe that the little harmless jokes ended up manifesting on their own into something much bigger and hurtful.

Humor is something that should be a part of our lives daily but not to the point of another's emotional expense – stereotyping. There are many stereotypes that happen every single day but the one that I experience daily is being blonde. Stereotyping can create so much hurt for someone that people should really take someone's sensitivity into context when making their jokes. It can affect activities in one's life, the amount of stereotyping that they are dealing with daily.

Professor Michael Inzlicht of psychology, who led the study, published in this month's edition of the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology stated, " Past studies have shown that people perform poorly in situations where they feel they are being stereotyped. " Kemick, A. (2010. Aug 12) Blonde stereotyping is something that I personally deal with every single day. People definitely assume since I am blonde that I am dumb. To add, I am naturally blonde as well but I do choose to be a Platinum Blonde (almost white) by the box, I guess you could say.

So I have a double whammy, natural and I choose to be lighter blonde. I do blow off the jokes and they really do not bother me much. It is more the

constant thinking I am dumb that irritates me. “ Everywhere people are freely spouting jokes that have at their core a distinctly anti-female bent. Even women (even blonde women) tell these jokes, and laugh at them. People who wouldn't be caught dead telling a racist joke tell blonde jokes. ” Blonde Bashing (1992, Jan 03) I have noticed cannot have an intellectual conversation with a new person due to the fact of the stereotype of blonde women.

Even mentioning to a couple of people that I am writing this paper made them laugh and make an ignorant comment. It did irritate me due to the fact that it was kind of hurtful because I was being serious and they know that I work hard in school to achieve my straight A status. Also, blonde women have a harder time moving up in the business world. It is proven that there are not many blonde-haired CEO's of companies. “ Hair colour stereotyping is well documented in countless jokes as well as in the psychological literature.

Blondes, for example, are stereotyped as incompetent, but likeable. Those with red hair are stereotyped as competent but cold or with a fiery temper. These and other stereotypes may affect job progression, mobility, and the rise to the corporate suite. ” Takeda, M. B. (2005) There are more brown and black-haired women high up in the business world than any other hair color. If it is not assumed that the blonde is dumb, it is assumed that the blonde has slept her way to the top.

It is sad that a hair color can alter someone's perception of one's mind/brain and what they are capable of achieving. For example, I used to work at a

casino in the Main Bank. The Main Bank is in control of all the monies on the boat (casino) period. When I first started at the casino, people did not take me seriously at all. I had to prove that I was not dumb. This was very frustrating for me. I have always been smart and worked very well with numbers – hence my major, BA in Finance. It did take me awhile working there to move up to my goal – Main Bank.

Once they realized I was not a dumb blonde, I moved up pretty quickly and achieved my goal. Unfortunately it took immense proving myself to get there. They also felt like they could lie to me and tell me my drawer was short a few different times just to see if they could get me to admit I was an idiot basically. Needless to say, they did not win nor justify the means for their grounds. Additionally, there were only two blonde females in the cashier world at this boat/casino, and we surpassed most of the other females in ranking and awards for our preciseness with the monies.

Hence, “ People do not necessarily behave as though the stereotypes are true. ” McLeod, S. A. (2008) Blonde stereotyping is even in a few movies. The first one that comes to mind is “ Legally Blonde” with Reese Witherspoon. Legally Blonde (PG-13) Blond and beautiful Elle Woods (Reese Witherspoon) from Bel-Air is an honor student with a list of impressive credentials that include being president of her sorority, a runner-up for Miss Hawaiian Tropic and the future wife of Warner (Matthew Davis), who is leaving for Harvard to be a lawyer.

On the evening Elle expects dinner and a proposal, Warner tells her she's too blond and not serious enough for his political career and dumps her. After

she overcomes her depression, she decides to win back Warner. She applies to Harvard and proves to herself and everyone else involved that blonds definitely have more fun being who they really are. Holly McClure (2001, Jul 20) This movie was prime example of people being biased to the fact that ‘ Elle’ was a blonde female going to Harvard and becoming a lawyer.

There was many stereotypes of blondes that were in this movie. Sure it was humorous but if that was a real situation, it would have been very frustrating for that female. In conclusion, humor is something that should be a part of our lives daily but not to the point of another’s emotional expense – stereotyping. “ These lingering effects hurt people in a very real way, leaving them at a disadvantage,” said Inzlicht. “ Even many steps removed from a prejudicial situation, people are carrying around this baggage that negatively impacts their lives. Kemick, A. (2010, Aug 12)

Studies have proven that stereotyping can majorly affect one’s life, work, decision making, etc. “ Aggression. Over-eating. Inability to focus. Difficulty making rational decisions. ” Kemick, A. (2010. Aug 12) People do not realize the impact that they are making on the person that they are stereotyping. It is one thing to joke a little here and there, but when it enhances to a more constant level, that is when there is a problem happening and feelings are getting hurt.

## References

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