Nora A. What is an identity?

What do you think identity is? PAUSE

I personally think that our identity is the way we perceive and express who we are. It’s the way we define ourselves and our actions. Our identity is very flexible, and can change based on the environment and people around us.

PAUSE

For example, have any of you ever noticed that with certain people, you act a certain way? SHORT PAUSE Like, when I am hanging out with friends who are loud, make bad jokes and laugh and be stupid, I act in a similar way. However, when I am with a friend who is more serious and calm and collected, I won’t be making jokes, because I know they’ll give me that “What’s wrong with you?” look. But just because you act completely different with certain kinds of people doesn’t mean that you are a fake person that copies what people around you are doing. Something else is affecting how you act, which also affects how your identity is shown.

PAUSE

Instead of copying the people around you, what’s happening is that you are subconsciously adjusting the way your identity is being portrayed to the people around you, which is based on the expression of the identity of the people around them. PAUSE (MOVE TO NEXT SLIDE)

Danah Boyd, a Research Assistant Professor in [Media, Culture, and Communication](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/mcc/) at New York University, has studied people’s identity and it’s reaction to social communications. Her research shows that identity expression is influenced by socializing with people. Your inner identity is conveyed and affected by ‘social interactions’ with people who will be presenting themselves in a different way, which makes you adjust how you are being portrayed so that you can effectively communicate with others. This helps people ‘discover’, in a way, the different aspects of their identity, because most people change their portrayal of their identity to be able to successfully interact with others.

PAUSE (MOVE TO NEXT SLIDE)

Group involvement also has a major affect on one’s sense of self, or their identity. SHORT PAUSE When people become involved with other people and socialize more, their decisions can be affected by the people around them. Being in a group helps focus the world, and creates a sort of environment where an individual can be themselves and work effectively, at the same time working with others in their group.

SHORT PAUSE (MOVE TO NEXT SLIDE)

Studies at The Canadian Institute For Advanced Research, a group of people researching group and individual behaviors, shows that an individual creates a ‘group identity’ when they become involved with other people. That can be created by the sense of security and sureness in themselves, and having control over their actions. Confidence from being in a group can also affect a person’ identity and change the way they interact with people and the environment. SHORT PAUSE (MOVE TO NEXT SLIDE)

The BBC Prison Study, which is research on the effect of groups on an individual, has shown that individuals are drawn to groups whose ideologies match their own. For example, if you are a person who believes in aliens and extraterrestrial creatures, you will most likely join a group who share the same beliefs. This interaction between people who share the same belief will make the individuals identify that group as a part of their identity.

PAUSE (MOVE TO NEXT SLIDE)

There is a theory called the social identity theory that introduces the idea that when people are involved in a group and become a group member, they tend to define themselves as part of their group, making it a part of their identity. Many people include their nationality (American, British, Australian) as a part of their identity, because they are a part of that group of nationality, which defines who they are. This goes to show that social interaction most definitely impacts one’s identity.

PAUSE (MOVE TO NEXT SLIDE) Stand next to computer

A person’s identity is flexible because social interactions and the people surrounding them influence how their identity is being portrayed. You will reveal different parts of your identity to different kinds of people, who are also showing you different parts of their identity. As a result, you will notice that you show different levels of your identity when you interact with a variety of people due to your ability to negotiate the different aspects of your identity. However, even if you act differently with certain people, **remember (MOVE TO NEXT SLIDE)** they are all a part of your identity. Thank you.......