

Hot Topic

I'm NOT like the rest

Where do we begin to talk about stereotypes? Would that be by race, gender, fashion, music, profession, age... where does the list end? It seems in today's society there is no end to the pigeon holing of people for not being likeminded to others. How often do you hear as a youth, when getting on a bus, adults complain about 'kids today'; rolling their eyes and sighing. I tell you, it's the most frustrating thing for me; I just want to scream out 'I'm not like the rest!' But this is not the only stereotyping I face, as a politics student I had to defy the odds everyday in a ratio of 4:1, me being the only girl. I am constantly trying to prove my abilities as a young person and as a female; let's think about it really, just how many times have you told someone that you're different? I find myself doing this so much to the point that it's almost become automatic to me now.

One of the most hard hitting stereotypes that I see every day is race, apparently this determines who you are, what you're capable of and your social class; quite similar to that of gender. On countless occasions I have seen black teenage boys being stopped and searched and only once have I seen this happen to a white boy, and as for girls being searched, does it even happen? As Courtney, 16, said: "race doesn't affect your behaviour". Yes! A 16 year old girl had the wisdom to come to this conclusion, if only we could all close our eyes for a second and imagine the world without these racial distinctions, would it be then that you realise that we're not all the same. This rule does not only apply to minorities, every person on this planet at one time or another has been discriminated against due to a stereotype they apparently fit into, and that's exactly it, as Clark, 17, so rightly put it: "if you do fit people into stereotypes you basically categorise them and therefore judge them before you get to know them, in my opinion everyone has a right to be taken for who they are".

Stereotypes have become so strong that people try to fit into one or the other, people have begun to make bold statements to prove themselves to belong into a category, take Paris Hilton for example, rumoured to be a lot smarter than she lets on, but in a recent project she was quoted in saying that playing to the role of a blonde/bimbo/party animal was 'entertainment'. How sad is it to think that we need to change or, mould ourselves to be able to fulfil this want to be accepted. So what option do we have really? In order to defy one stereotype, we unconsciously take on another. Should we hide who we are in fear of being scrutinised, or shall we hold our heads up and be proud of who are and be pigeonholed? I for one am proud of my quirks, but others don't always see them as all they can see is the features that can be labelled and grouped together: white/black/male/female/tall/short/fat/thin.

How sad it makes me feel to know whether consciously or not, authorities and other groups in society use such social profiling to make their decisions on those who 'fit the bill' and those that don't. How do we move forward, when we're constantly going backwards in time? And once again I feel the urge to scream out "I'm not like the rest", and I don't need to be, we all need to be confident in who we are. Do not accept the stereotypes that have overtaken our cultures, dare to defy the odds and be bold in a positive way. I was once told that I had surprised a person because of the way I presented myself, in both the way I dressed and spoke in comparison to the hellhole I was born into. A small victory, but a victory all the same.



Pariss

Your Views

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