Identity and Communication

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Yabo Li (2015) views identity as one of the fundamental concepts of social studies. He defines identity as "the subjectivity consciousness of an individual in the social life belonging to a group different from other group" (Li, 2015, p. 23). Identity involves individual discovering, imitating and taking in other people's outlook, norms and values then modeling their own patterns of behavior. Identity can significantly influence an individual's guidelines and behaviors such as gaining personal resilience and strength, and developing specific relationships.

Communication constructs identity through the cognitive, social learning process which consists mimicry of attitudes, behaviors, and emotions seen in other people. Important to note is that genetically acquired traits are not part of identity. However, when an individual finds traits that make him feel comfortable, he may identify himself with them through behavior communication. Communication means the interaction with the immediate environment including nature, animals, friends, and parents. If there is no interaction, there is no communication. It is not possible for personality traits to manifest in the absence of communication. Also, without personality traits, it is not possible to have an identity unless it is imposed. Therefore, the primary element of constructing identity is through the emancipation of personality traits in the environment.

Usually, people with similar personalities incline to bond together, therefore, reinforcing the strongest and salient traits that majorly identify with them. This is to say, the more people communicate, the more they learn socially through imitation and mimicry. Information, word usage and behavior that are more resonant to a person's personality traits and inner character will be the one that he will continue to repeat and adopt, hence identifying himself through them. Through interaction, people may find individuals of like-character that they share a similar

affinity. People tend to link themselves more with those they share a similar identity, and together they create a group identity based on things they learn when communicating.

Furthermore, communication can also lead to bonding identity. A bond can be formed when communication is geared toward conveying messages that provoke emotions or arguments. The communication that may provoke emotions includes romantic relationships, breakups and family conversations. Çeliköz, Erişen, & Şahin (2016) require people to put information and ideas together when they communicate with others to enable them to learn. Bonding can only be achieved through learning and relating the experience.

The three videos illustrate identity communication. In the first video, Julie is desperate to find someone to communicate and form a relationship with on social media. She has presented false information about herself as a marathoner yet she is disabled. Therefore, she feels heartbroken as she fails to identify with her online friend as two great athletes. In the second video, Aliyah and her friend describe their abilities, origin, and characteristics so that they develop an understanding of each other as they will be sitting together during the seminar. Both of the two ladies have done self-assessment and now have knowledge of their skills, hobbies, physical attributes and occupations. They have become attached to each other because they share a similar affinity, for instance, they are all Americans. The third scenario "misunderstood" indicates that an individual's identities can also involve starting new conversations and interactions with strangers to encourage self-reflection. The teenage boy seems to have a predetermined idea about the people in the library, thus he ignores everyone. When an altercation occurs between the three boys, the librarian faults the one with wary face yet he is the victim of the situation. Therefore, it is necessary to engage in interpersonal identity conversation in new places.

References

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