

2024 Elie Wiesel Competition

Special Commendation, Junior Essay

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How we can Embrace our True Colors in Today's Society

As children we learn to discover who we are, and the things that make us unique become our identity. However, as we become teens, these identities are eroded by the influence of social media and new trends. Everyone is encouraged to look the same, like the same things, and pretend they have perfect lives. With such pressure, it makes you wonder, "How am I supposed to be able to retain my identity in a world influenced by social media?" Being different can be hard and subject you to cyberbullying. A much worse version of this happened during World War II when Jewish people were sent to concentration camps and stripped of their identity against their will. As a result some lost the will to live. We can learn the dangers of losing your identity from these experiences. It is important that everyone learns how to find who they are and not let the opinions of others or popular trends change how they feel about themselves and affect their identity.

During the Holocaust, prisoners in concentration camps were assigned numbers, their heads were shaved, and they all wore the same uniforms. They no longer had names, and instead they had numbers tattooed on their arms. They were humiliated, abused, and treated like, which made them lose their hope, heritage, religion, and identity. Children lucky enough to avoid concentration camps often had to change their names so they wouldn't sound Jewish. Many were sent to orphanages and were assigned a new religion along with a new name. These things changed the entire course of their lives and left them lost. One victim of this was Kitty Saks. She was a young nine year old girl who was encouraged to go into hiding by her physical education teacher. He wanted her to change her religion to Catholicism and change her name to hide "in the open." She was moved from convent to convent from Catholic orphanage to Catholic orphanage. To survive, she had to give up her identity, which left her confused about who she really was at a young age. She learned to be ashamed of being Jewish and had to be like everyone else. Knowing this happened to many young children, it's important that we raise awareness in today's society to stay true to ourselves and embrace what makes us unique.

Most teens will say that peer pressure and social media has affected them in some way, which include body image and fashion trends. Many kids in my school follow trends on TikTok, like becoming interested in skin care or using Stanley cups. As soon as Stanley cups became trendy, almost every middle school girl owned one. They also had skin care products on their holiday wish lists. This proves how when one person does something and it becomes popular, it can change the entire way someone acts in large numbers of people. The same thing applies for fashion trends and body image issues. Many people change their entire wardrobe based on what's trending or want lip injections to look like a Kardashian. This changes people's identities and how they act. The same also applies to the kind of people you hang around. If you hang around people who get into fights, then chances are you will feel the need to get into fights as well. When you follow the groups, it's easy to get lost in the crowd.

If I am honest, peer pressure and these trends have impacted me as well. I find myself wanting to fit in with what is popular and drifting away from who I really am. I am working to stay authentic to my true self, but it can be challenging sometimes. I think there are multiple ways to express yourself and

maintain your identity in today's society. It is also exceptionally hard to be true to yourself in this generation due to the heavy influence of social media. In order to stay true to your identity in this environment, you need to learn how to accept yourself and your flaws. Accepting yourself helps prove that you are enough and helps boost your self confidence, and it's important to have friends that accept you too. Another way is to tell the truth and be yourself around others. When you're around someone who is bigger, stronger, or prettier than you, then it's important to prove to yourself that you are enough and don't need to be intimidated by others. Lastly, I would say exploring your own values helps define who you are as a person. Staying true to your values, interests, and thoughts helps you stay true to yourself and keep your identity.

As a society, we need to learn how to embrace each other's differences rather than diminish them and encourage everyone to look the same. Our power is in our uniqueness, and the ability to accept ourselves and each other can make all the difference in the world.