

Identity

what does it mean to you?

Who Are You?

Chada El Kettani
Advanced 2

Who are you? If you say that you're Fatima or Steve, I'll say that I asked *who* you are, not *what* your *name* was. If you respond that you're a boy or a girl, I will insist on *who* you are, not on your gender. If you answer "I'm Moroccan," then again I'll say that I didn't ask for your nationality. I asked you *who you are*.

Such an existential question has plenty of interpretations and explanations. It has sparked controversial debates all over the world, since the very beginning of philosophy and now into the 21st century.

Who you are is as far as I'm concerned, related to the expression of your deepest character traits. It's about what you think of yourself, long before you listen to what others think about you. Who you are is also

the original version of yourself, your natural identity, away from hypocrisy. It's about following your authentic human nature hidden in yourself since birth; your humility, forgiveness, kindness, optimism,

your principles and your personal opinion.

The community where you live also has a significant impact on you. You may choose not to do certain things, because you're afraid of

being marginalized or castigated by the "ruthless judge" of society's status quo. By being influenced by public opinion, you become a subject of societal control, which gradually strips you of the real you.

To be you, means to know how to balance the consequences, both positive and negative, of being different from the rest



Photo credit: Fatimazahra Rouas - ALC Photo Club

empathy and compassion. Consequently, the answer to this question may continually and unpredictably change, depending on the various perspectives gradually acquired from people you meet, the lessons learnt from past experiences, and especially the way these life stories influence your thoughts,

of society. If you think you can do better, then be your best! You have the ability to make remarkable changes without caring about what others think. Be the deep, pure and best version of yourself. As Shakespeare's Hamlet so eloquently said: *"To be or not to be, that is the question."*



Image credit: Oumaima Belkhammar - SVE Club

Healthy doesn't mean skinny

Ihssane Nejari Advanced I

What does it mean to be healthy? Health means different things to different people. For some it may be eating a salad for lunch, going for a walk, or perhaps devouring two tubs of ice cream while watching a movie. But taking care of yourself and being healthy aren't always the same thing.

A healthy lifestyle is a way of life, so it takes a lifetime to be fully achieved. It's not just a diet. Life is already rough, tough, and very confusing, so counting

and tracking every single bite using my fitness pal only makes the situation worse. Plus, tracking your caloric intake from a really young age leads to eating disorders, undereating, hair loss, and low self-esteem. So, I don't restrict, I don't *diet*, I just eat.

I work out six times a week, because moving my body gives me happiness and fulfillment. My goal is not (nor will it ever be) getting *that* body, because my body is mine and their bodies are theirs.

So when my pants get a little tighter, or my thighs look a little

bigger, and I start getting a little bit hungrier, I try not to think that my body is *broken* or *wrong* simply because it doesn't look the way it used to.

I remind myself that my body is the only one stuck with me for the rest of my life, and I choose to love it instead of hate it. I remind myself that I am enough, and I slowly fall in love with myself again. When you are down, self-care is productive, and this is what healthy means to me.

Taking care of myself is the best investment I can make in my life.

Does being successful mean being rich?

Chada el Kettani
Advanced 3

Striving to achieve a greater purpose is what keeps us fighting to survive and grow. Having a purposeful life pushes us as human beings, to overcome obstacles, encounter defeats and to pursue happiness and fulfillment.

While the definition of success varies from one person to another, I strongly believe that wealth and prosperity are the main goals of success. As Machiavelli said: "*the ends justify the means.*"

Although our dreams, desires and aspirations differ, they all converge in the river of wealth, and savor the taste of success. Simon Sinek, an unshakable optimist and motivational writer, assures us that resilience, assiduousness and ethical responsibility are the key ingredients to success and prosperity. It is well-known that, to be a successful person, you must relentlessly chase your passion. When you have the drive to do so, money kind of "grows on trees" as a result of your perseverance. Being passionate helps you to face hurdles and enrich your character and personality unless of course, you don't want to "reach the top of the mountain".

Financial wealth and success are interdependent - a fact that

some people tend to ignore, convinced that wealth has nothing to do with success. Nevertheless, the more we hide from this truth, the more we widen the gap between our dreams and reality, and the more we believe that wealth concerns only those things related to money.

We must not forget our "moral wealth" of values and ethics. Nelson Mandela, arguably one of the most iconic revolutionaries and political

leaders, proved that "moral wealth" which likely grows from education, provides a remedy to live better. He famously said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world", not money.

So success is much more than finances. It is imperative to follow our passions as this enriches our lives, and whether we aim to be rich or not, personal success is the path to money.



Criticism

Chams Gaizi

Advanced 3

Where I live, many things can be annoying to the point of discouragement and humiliation. But the one thing that really irks me is people making fun of each other. I wonder why we can't just be cooperative, instead of being sarcastic? Aren't we all breathing human creatures? Why don't we choose to spread positivity and tolerance instead? It really makes my blood boil, hearing criticism and discouragement coming from youngsters that only tarnishes the image of the upcoming generation! I suggest we stop the harsh fights over stupid meaningless things, and instead start working together to develop ourselves, and to have more honorable aims for all of humanity. My biggest concern is when are we going to recognize the bigger picture of our future and forget about the silly details that paralyze us?

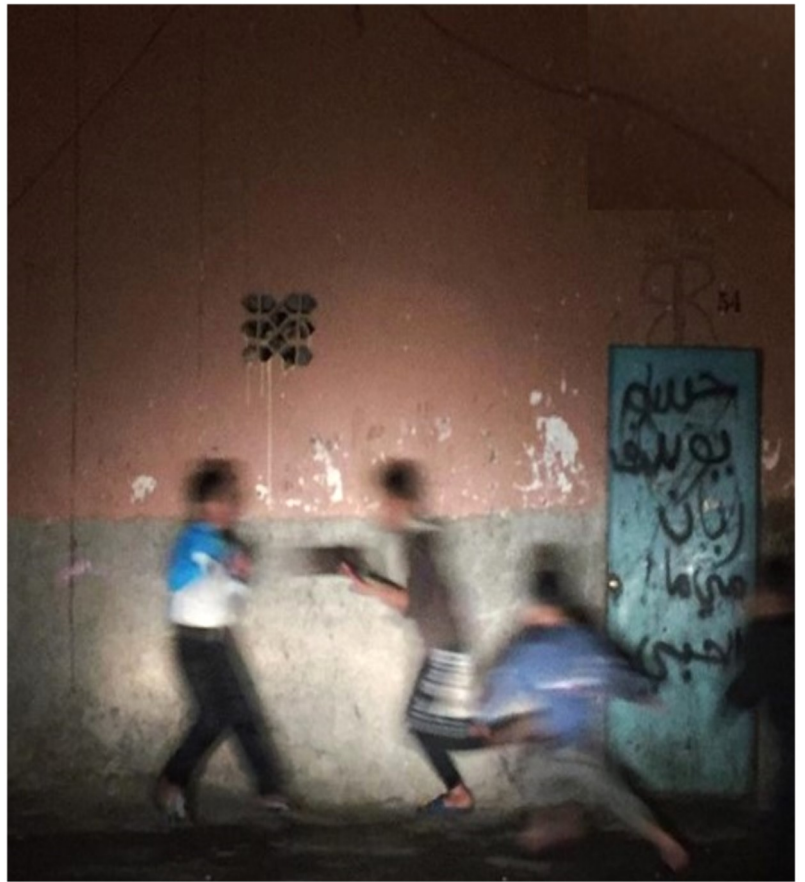


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Beliefs

Mouad Boutaleb

Advanced 2

In my culture, it's not a good idea to talk about your beliefs. Talking about your beliefs will get you in strange and unusual situations, with people judging and making comments about you. That talk might even turn into chaos, physically or verbally with the famous "my opinion/belief is right & yours isn't" sentence being thrown at you. Also Moroccans, in my opinion, are the nosiest people, always trying to find out what's up with someone and then straight-up judging them about it! One might as well create hour-long lectures about what on God's green earth is wrong with you! My cousin recently decided to become allied with the LGBTQ community, but good old Moroccans just couldn't keep quiet and confronted her about her way of living. Noses did get broken might I add, but they were not my cousin's. Do what you must, live as one should, and don't care about what others say, because they have too much to say. They are just big bodies with tiny brains.



Image credit: Oumaima Belkhammar - SVE Club

Dots

by Adil Latefi

Communication Class A

With a strange wind in my left hand,
I was walking on the idea of the earth,
in the Eternal Darkness.

I was walking on the idea of earth,
throwing away dots and bad days.

[Poetry was the scream. Poems are the echo]

The wind in my insane left hand is about to die.

Meanwhile,
I am still walking on the idea of the earth,
aiming to connect random dots
and build a meaning.



Photo credit: Lara Viskovich - SVE Club

Trapped

by Reem Sendide

Juniors 6 Advanced

The only reason why I sing
is to express my feelings.
The only reason why I draw
is to remember what I was.
The only reason why I write
is to create the perfect knight .
The one that will never be real
nor even fictional.

You attracted my attention
and were up to my expectations.
The only reason I came
that specific day,
was to know if at first sight
I would become your snow white.
I was obsessed with perfection
and trapped in my imagination
I had no escape.

It was my fate. It always was.
That's why it's never worked between us.



Image credit: Nouhayla Omrar - SVE Club

Being a Teenager Today

Ali Zehouani

Intermediate 6

According to Google, being a teen is a phase full of energy, hope, life, beauty and passion. An age to experiment, try new things, to fail, learn and grow. Well, I can assure you it's not like this; it is hard being a teenager today. I say this not to gain sympathy, but to raise a sensitive issue and back it up with facts. In 2022 growing up is a challenge in itself, a challenge difficult to navigate when you are constantly under the microscope, monitored and documented. Although it may seem that life of most city-bred adolescents is full of fun and fashion, high-tech gadgets, all-night parties and non-stop social media exposure, statistics show that teenagers today are more vulnerable to problems like exclusion, bullying and rejection. It's funny because while we are young we want to be adults, teenagers, 18. Our parents tell us that our teens are the best years of our life, filled with fun, joy, happiness, excitement and new friends. But for some reason the older we get the more problems we face. The older we get the more we hate ourselves and our insecurities grow. The older we get the more heartbreaks we experience. I would do anything to be a child again not to have to worry about stress, insecurities, fake people, and unrealistic beauty standards. To not be judged because of what I wear, what I do, and what I say. Just because I am a teenager doesn't mean I am recklessly hormonal. Schools and parents say that we are going through a phase and that it will pass soon, but it's impacting my life right now and all my foreseeable tomorrows. It's crazy.

When you turn one, your life's just begun,

When you turn two, you learn how to chew.

Then when you're five, dad teaches you to dive.

At thirteen you're finally a teen,

but when you turn sixteen, you have to be lean. It's mean.

They want you to be perfect, flawless, exquisite, immaculate and exceptionally excellent. What kind of messed up generation is this? What kind of messed up society is this? What are they teaching us. the generations of the future? That in order to succeed you have to be perfect!?

No! You have to be **YOU**.

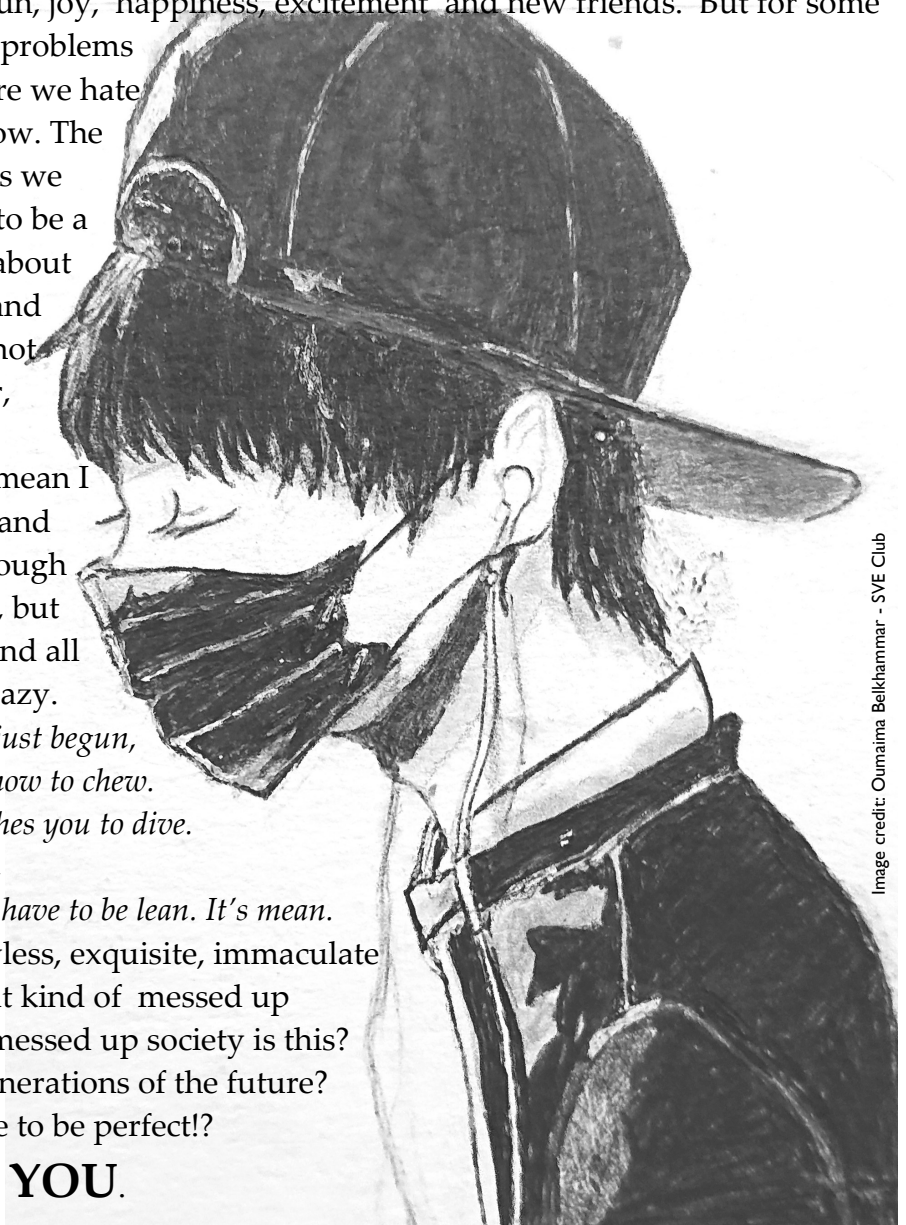


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