

Kara Roberts

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How individuality welcomes conformity in society

In society, we have encouraged everyone's sense of individuality and purpose within the community and within their own lives. We were raised being told that we were special and that there's nobody else in the world who acts like us or who dresses like us because we were made "one of a kind". So we became entitled to our sense of individuality and authenticity but as time progressed individuality no longer equated authenticity. The more we try to move towards finding our own identity we begin to become more like the people around us. As time progresses individuality "welcomes" conformity within our society. We claim the clothes we wear, music we play, and art we create to be our own but everything we thought of has been done days or even years prior to when we originally thought it. But we condemn others for their unoriginality and normalcy though we do it ourselves. This sense of entitlement drives us to continuously find our "own thing" to ride our own "wave" and to be different. With leading pop culture influences like Willow and Jaden Smith we long for what we believe to be, freedom and power of *self* expression through individualization though this form can never truly be achieved.

Individuality is the possession of characteristics that distinguishes an individual from others. This distinctiveness drives us to find our own niche in society, our role that only we can fulfill, and this journey to self actualization takes us our entire lives to "achieve". We were conditioned to obsess over the concept of individuality because as children we were taught that being different made us special. Uniqueness was praised throughout our childhood because students who excelled in academics were given awards and placed in honors or "gifted" classes and through this hierarchal system children were essentially forced to seek their own specialness so that they can be praised as well. Children are given

different tasks, from the arts to music to sports, so that the adults could see where they would fit best in school and eventually society. So through these activities children would find out what they were "best" at so that they can nurture these skills and create, what is thought to be, the best versions of themselves. But even through these activities we have become unsatisfied with our current "best" self's, leaving us to wonder where our true self lies and how can we achieve it.

So we look towards aesthetical appeal in order to help build the bridge to self actualization. Fashion has become society's way to showcase someone's individuality, because having a style helps us to showcase to the world how we wish to be perceived. Fashion was created so that individuals can build themselves in their own image and by having your "own" style it becomes easier for people to understand a person's character essentially without having to meet them . So we experiment with different styles like goth, hipster, skater and urban, to the best of our knowledge, characterizes our personality and then we begin to build a community with these like minded individuals.

Within this community of individuals we begin to base our individuality off of the standards already set by that community. Skaters wear Thrasher and listen to Odd Future while goths shop at Hot Topic and listen to My Chemical Romance. In our journey to individuality and authenticity we begin to become more like the group that we placed ourselves in. Members within these individualistic groups feel as though they can express who they "really" are yet they look towards these groups to essentially guide how they should act or dress. When we become acclimated into these particular groups we use their labels to help define who we are. Typically this form of generalization is unacceptable because it coincides with being conformists but through individualistic groups we use this generalization as self gratification and through this gratification we feel as though we have somehow come closer or even achieved self actualization. In doing so we begin to expel others from joining certain groups because they do not fit the group's image, all the while these people were just trying to find where they fit best

in society. But ostracizing certain people from these groups because of their indifference is the very thing we were taught that made us special in society.

These indifferent people are labeled as unoriginal for their inability to truly "find" themselves but the member's compliance to the rules of that community looks as though they are the conformists and that their unoriginality leads them to form this community of like minded individuals. From this perspective, it is as though these individuals are the ones that do not truly understand themselves and that their actions lead us to think that this inauthentic form of individuality creates normalcy, but this form of reasoning generates fear among these groups of people. This fear of the norm in our society is the fear of having no free will, living a life that was already laid out for us. Normalcy is the everyday, the typical and expected. So alongside being taught about how our indifference made us special these teachings subliminally generated the fear of being normal. But the norms we face in society is set by the generation prior and in each succeeding generation the youth look to detach themselves from these standards, all the while creating their own standards which eventually develops into the new norm. We hate normalcy but we continuously create it.

We idolize celebrities like Willow and Jaden for their self expression and understanding of where they fit in society but in their process of finding their "being" they first had to dissociate themselves from their parents. The more they began to learn and express themselves individually the more they became like one another and the way they were able to achieve their state of individualization was, ironically, through each other rather than individually. So following suit, many of us decided to detach ourselves from the "norm", or what was expected, to only join a group of similar people yet we all still feel like individuals. This leads me to believe that our journey to individualization creates normalcy because we cannot truly be ourselves without the guidance of others, the structure that is developed within these groups helps to guide us to where we fit best and through a community we are able to become who we were meant to be.