

ENGLISH

Context: Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging

Our siblings know us better than anyone else.

Our journey of self-discovery begins from childhood where we establish our likes and dislikes, our passions and our hobbies. Throughout life we have a myriad of experiences from which we choose what impacts on the forging of our identity. The malleable nature of our identity results in it changing in response to pressures from society to conform to the majority. It is through these changes in aspects of our identity that our siblings will always know who we truly are as our identities are fostered in the family home through shared experiences of the culture and traditions of our families.

John F Kennedy once said 'conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth.' Society is a multi-faceted concept in which some people are so determined to belong they sacrifice what they truly like. It is during these sacrifices of our true identity that our siblings can recognize these uncharacteristic likes and dislikes and encourage us to stay true to ourselves. Instagram, a free photo sharing app for iPhone's and Androids was developed in 2010 and has reported figures of over 30 million downloads, 150 million photos uploaded and is valued at over \$1 billion. But what makes this photo sharing app so popular? What are the consequences for those very few who have yet to conform to this trend? Psychologist Malcolm Gladwell defines this as the Tipping Point, the 'moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point.' He explains in order for something to become a trend in which people feel pressure to conform to, it involves a unique few with vast networks to spread these ideas, products and messages. He explores the notion that people reach this 'boiling point' in which in order to fulfil their innate human desire to belong they feel the need to conform to these trends. It is during these circumstances of conformity that our siblings still know we truly are and can attempt to reassure us we don't need to suddenly develop a burning passion for photography in order to belong. People in our society live in great fear of not belonging, of being ostracized from the community however our siblings and family provide each of us with a guaranteed sense of belonging, primarily because we have an in depth understanding of each of our identities.

Throughout history, across cultures all over the world, our families have provided all of us with a sense of belonging through their understanding of our identity. The Aboriginal dream time stories shared amongst generations continues to provide Indigenous Australians with the foundation of their identity. Providing an insight into the morals, beliefs and customs of their clan, these stories foster a sense of belonging within their group fundamentally because of the shared values, an aspect of one's identity. The nature vs nurture debate attempts to conclude whether our genes or experience contributes more to our identity. This discussion if fundamental evidence that our siblings who are part of both these aspects know us better than anyone else. Our genes, inherited from our parents which we share with our siblings is believed to contribute to parts of our identity. This belief transcends the notion that our siblings know us better than others, partly because we biologically share aspects of our identity. Furthermore many of our life experiences, particularly in childhood, are shared with our siblings. It is through directly or indirectly sharing these experiences that they can understand elements of ourselves which no one else can. The strong connection to the land of different clans and the varying impact of this relationship has on an individual's is an example of how both nature and nurture can impact on our identity in a way only siblings with shared beliefs could understand. This fosters a sense of belonging with our family as often it is only them who can know who we truly are.

The South African apartheid is further evidence of this understanding of our identity exclusive to our family, with the horrifying prejudice blacks faced only members of their family could understand. The institutionalised racism saw blacks such as Sandra Laing ostracised from the wider community preventing them from opportunities of education and even to congregate as a community. Civil

rights activist Arthur Asle highlighted the frustration of many exclaiming 'my potential is more than can be expressed within the bounds of my race or ethnic identity.' The neglect and mistreatment of blacks during the Apartheid forced them to develop strong family ties as the understanding and protection each other could offer was the only feeling of belonging they could experience.

The Aboriginal dream time, the South African apartheid and more recently pressures to conform collectively provide evidence that our genes and shared experiences with our siblings offer them an understanding of our true identity and thus know us better than anyone else.