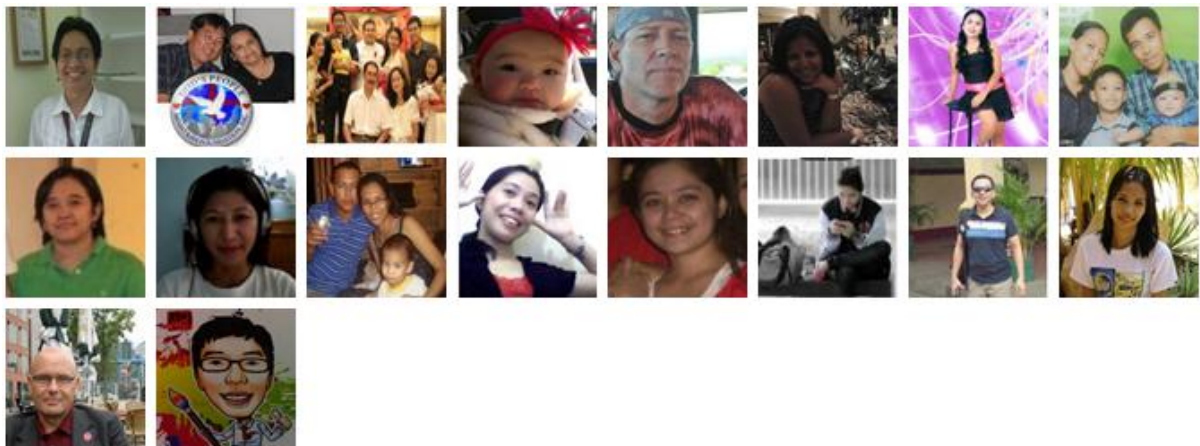


IDEAS 63

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 63rd INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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The True Concept of Individualism

Joseph Arre
Class of 2008, University of Baguio
B.S in Nursing

Based on ideology, individualism is a philosophical belief about individual worth. People who practice individualism are the ones who fully exercise their desires and independence. They achieve their goals through purely self-reliance, without the help of anyone. In most books, individualism is deeply associated with total freedom, without the aid of the society. The idea of individualism has been made synonymous to bohemian interest and towards self independence.

Today, individualism can be seen in every aspect of life. People are led to believe that individualistic people are built for success. Hence, entrepreneur magazines often depict young rich tycoons who have established their own business by their own means. Some think that an individualist is a person who serves his own without any consideration to the welfare of the public. Some even claim that the notion of being an individualist is to become a selfish, egotistical individual without sympathy or humanity. Yet in truth, individualism is not at all based on pure autonomy but as a pursuit for one's true independence.

Yes, it is true that individualism plays a crucial role in success yet it is not entirely the case with world history. Without the help of Nikola Tesla, Thomas Edison would not have been able to make an impact in the world of electricity. The first computer was actually based on several units which were created by several individuals. Many millionaires created their empire through the ideas of others. In reality, the people that we thought were inventors were actually marketers, trying to sell other's inventions to the public. Without the acceptance of the public, their inventions would not be marketable. Therefore, they did not have the individualistic philosophy yet they have the determination and the drive for success.

The true concept of individualism is not about selfishness or self-gratification but it is about one's freedom from dependence. It is the drive which allows us to stand-up without the help of others. True individualism is the freedom against the constraints made by the public. It is to live for oneself without the need for servitude. It is to work for oneself and succeed without asking for help or pity. It is not about greed and immorality.

Yet, even though there is the concept of individualism we should also learn to balance its nature with utilitarianism. We should learn that we also need the help of others in order to succeed and we should also think about the rights of others. By practicing the individualistic ideology and by respecting the worth of others, we will be able to truly succeed. We will be able to gain the respect of the public and we will be able to help not only ourselves but also others.

Questions:

- 1) Today, people believe that individualism is synonymous to?
- 2) What is true individualism?
- 3) Why should we also consider the right of others?
- 4) Who are Nikola Tesla and Thomas Edison?
- 5) What will we gain if we help out others?



INDIVIDUALITY - A DISTINCT PERSONALITY

Marian Baltazar
Class of 1980, University of the Philippines College of Manila
AB Political Science

We all have different characters, different attitudes and each to its own; we have our own personal, particular character that distinguishes us from the others, hence, a distinct personality which we call individuality. Individuality is synonymous to being unique, making you different from another person or a thing. Yes, we have our own personal identity that distinguishes us from the others. We cannot lose our individuality for this is the distinctive mark of a person. Even twins have their own individuality and personality wherein we can differentiate one from the other. This is why we can still pinpoint and figure out who is who from the twins even if they are identical.

A person may exercise his own choice and he can as well decide whatever customary style of life will best suit him. Yes, that means freedom of choosing for oneself. In this case, individuality may lead you to happiness. It even leads us to having self-reliance and assurance of oneself. Yes, our individuality helps us recognize our personal identity. But of course, we would want to be different from the other people around us. Let us acknowledge ourselves by means of developing our individuality.

Every emotion that we feel is based on our own feelings and our own living. This is the sole reason why we develop our individuality. We are endowed with a special power of life by God and this gives us the more reason to stand out and express our being unique from one another. This vitality or life is a precious power given to humans, wherein we are completely accountable for each and every property of individual growth and achievement. Let us not put it all to waste.

This special quality of individualism that we possess should be recognized by every person. This taps our unlimited resources of talents that every individual was enriched with and puts out their creativity as well. The school, home, workplace, community and everywhere we go for that matter emphasizes one's individual development according to his own caliber and individuality. Therefore, we should nurture our individual talent and uniqueness. Hence, we all give due respect to each and everyone's individuality.

Everything about ourselves is all individualized. As for me, individuality also means having self-reverence for this is tantamount to having sanity. If you feel yourself in yourself, then you start to feel your worth and begin to appreciate your life's worth. Moreover, you start having self-management too and work out your sensibility. We become objective and acquire wisdom that dispels all illusion for now we create our own identity.

We now feel the staying power of life, the appetency of endurance and feel confident enough to face life itself in all its intricacies. This is very true for we are all highly individualized at all levels for everyone is unique. To sum it all up, we can say that individuality is a separate existence, a distinct personality that everyone possesses.

Questions for discussion:

1. How do you show your individuality? Explain your answer.
2. Is self-confidence synonymous to individuality? Why or why not?
3. Do you think you have already achieved your individuality? Explain further.
4. How special is the quality of individualism in your life? Justify your answer.
5. Have you achieved self-reverence through individuality? How?



A NON-PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE ON INDIVIDUALISM

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

Individualism is a kind of ideology that places emphasis on the total development of the self, as opposed to more communion-based principles and concepts such as statism and totalitarianism. It stresses the significance of the individual as against others, even society in general. It can not, however, be equated with egoism no matter how seemingly similar they may be. It is concerned with the upholding of individual goals and desires as separate from those of other individuals. On this basis, a society is considered a group of individuals entitled to their own thoughts, their own objectives and their own gains.

Individualistic thought should not completely espouse lawlessness, however. Although individuals are free to express their feelings and articulate their thoughts, individualists are well advised to avoid aberrant behavior, as this may only trigger chaos. Although individualists favor social unconventionality, society itself will not hold up with overly libertarian concepts; society might even crumble under such forces. Although the principle of individualism embraces uniqueness in every individual, no human being can ever exist alone and totally disjointed from the society he belongs to. We are free to be what we want to be, but never to the detriment of our fellow individuals.

Individualism assumes that all individuals are capable of independent thought, that self-governance is possible. Yes, as individuals, we are indeed endowed with individualistic capabilities that enable us to exist independently from each other. We do not need to be controlled or watched over from time to time, because those whose jobs it is to control or monitor us are also prone to committing their own foibles, subject to their own weaknesses. Why should anybody be allowed to rule our lives? Precisely because with total absence of control, society will infinitely fail and crumble. Too many cooks spoil the broth, leaving all things messy and without considerable organization in the long run.

Who would want to live in a world where everyone plays by their own rules? There are those who suppose that they are now able to do that, but such people also are subject to certain areas of non-self-governance, whether at work or on the domestic front. It's wonderful to be given complete freedom, but who monitors everything in the process? Wouldn't that all result to complete anarchy?

Declaring that everything has to be your own choice may be a proud moment, a sterling achievement. But without others to guide you, tell you what must be done and what can't be done, where's the order in that? We can be individualists up to a point, but having others beside us to prompt us or remind us of the limits of self-freedom will still prove greatly beneficial in some events.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Is absolute individualism beneficial? Why or why not?
2. How can we avoid the possible pitfalls of individualism?
3. Do you believe that people can really exist apart from each other? Why or why not?
4. How does individualism encourage anarchy?
5. Why do individualists need to subject themselves ultimately to the rules of society? Is social unconventionality always a solution to everything?



INDIVIDUALISM IN TODAY'S ERA

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

Espousing the full development of the individual and his capabilities, individualism is an ideology that many of us could find both agreeable and desirable for ourselves. We all want to face recognition for our own selves, our individual efforts, and our personal merits.

The seduction of living life by one's own rules is at once exciting as it is interesting. Business enterprises have strived to cash in on the individuality scheme, supporting revolutionary ideas that scream "I am me" at all angles. Even young people are motivated to seek their own corner of the sky and to seize opportunities that will empower them to be themselves. This is all well and good, considering how so many of our own ancestors were "imprisoned" by what had been considered right, just and true. To be able to carve a niche in this world is both beautiful and novel, a feat that anyone would want to succeed at.

However, having your own quirks and enjoying them can sometimes be a challenge. We have been trained from childhood to follow rules; we can't just easily abandon older teachings in order to follow our own calling and dance to our own beat. We have to bow down to tradition in the face of overwhelming change. And in order to prove ourselves, a certain level of individuality must be reached, with no room for the mediocre and the inherently weak. In other words, in order to be recognized for our personal abilities, we must be able to show the world that what sets us apart is clear enough to be seen.

Self-identity can be very difficult to find in these times when teamwork is considered the norm and organizations are deemed effective because of the sheer reality of their existence as groups. We can not strictly play by our own rules; we have others with us to think about. Self-experimentation and creation easily make way for what is deemed popular or conventional, so self-reinvention is considered risky and rebellious, if not downright contemptible.

In a world that thrives on singular accomplishments and lauds joint efforts even more, individuals must prove themselves worthy of accolades and recognitions. Room for error might prove inconsequential at times because there will always be another individual out there better than we are. Although much of the world would be better off with an "I don't care" approach, we have already been oriented about the benefits of universalism from the very beginning. Convention is not quite easy to let go of.

Still, individualists have all the time in the world to support their individualistic philosophies. Just as long as their self-interests do not pose a threat to others in society, then they can go their own way all the time.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define individualism in your own words. Do you honestly agree with this ideology? Why or why not?
2. What are the risks of individualism? How can the pitfalls of individualism be avoided?
3. Do you believe that all men are created equal? Why or why not?
4. How would you practice individualism?
5. Do research on famous supporters of individualism and their philosophies. Be able to talk about them in class.



FINDING INDIVIDUALISM IN A WORLD FULL OF INDIVIDUALS

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

Trying to be oneself in a world full of other individuals can be really tough, but numerous people have proven just how rewarding the entire experience can be, in a manner of speaking. It's easy to fall into the jaws of convention and tradition. Revolutionary self-creation can be too challenging to handle. We face many obstacles along the way of establishing our own identity. However, as has often been said, each and every one of us is unique in our own way. Even identical twins are entitled to be different from one another. Living at one's pace and one's rules is the ideal.

We undergo numerous changes and face everyday occurrences that build us up to how we aim to become. Our experiences create both imperceptible and apparent changes in us, with each stage significantly teaching us more about ourselves at every turn. We need to welcome those changes and embrace them simply because they endow us with the necessary skills and capabilities, with some that might be pleasant surprises and all. We need never lose interest in living, because by just being alive we are able to establish our own identity in this world. We need to love life and remain optimistic that our potentials will eventually lead us towards the path we are each supposed to traverse.

Parents have a huge responsibility to see the uniqueness in their own children. They need to recognize their children's special gifts and abilities in order to encourage great development and wonderful outcomes for everyone in the future. Parents need to teach their children that it's perfectly okay to be oneself and that in fact their children are each meant to become individuals who are happy with their accomplishments, who are willing to explore their strengths and work on their weaknesses. In other words, children should be taught to know themselves in contrast to others. However, they need to learn the valuable truth of being comfortable in their own skin. If children unceasingly compare themselves to others, there's a pretty good chance that they will learn to be either vain or bitter. There will always be somebody worse or better than them.

As individuals, we must not make it a habit of using others as yardsticks. We have been created differently, made to sing different songs and dance different tunes. We may have common points of interests and similar (if not identical) trains of thought and concepts. But we must remember that in the midst of all that makes us the same, we have a "self" that needs to be released and set free. Trying to imprison ourselves within a shell just to bow down to convention is mere self-hypocrisy. And no one has ever really benefited from lying to themselves, have they?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What unique traits do you possess that make you glad you are who you are? Why?
2. How can we become unique in a world that's so tied up with tradition and convention?
3. Why should parents participate in their children's road to self-discovery? How can this be achieved?
4. Do you feel constricted by all the rules you have to follow everyday? How would you change things?
5. Why are self-discovery and self-creation important?



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