# **Learning Journal - Unit 6**

Computer Science, University of the People

PSYC 1504-01 Introduction to Psychology - AY2024-T4

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**Reflective Writing on Societal Influences**

The society we live in is an important part of what makes who and what we are. It is what shapes and molds our behavior, belief system, and how we interact with the people around us. My personal experiences have had a noticeable and deep impact any the person I am today. Society has had a big impact on how I view the world around me and has also created a need inside me to try and conform to my surroundings.

**Society’s Influence on My Views**

Growing up in a diverse melding pot type society has had a big influence on how I look at and approach issues in my day-to-day life. This is notable in both traditions and in social norms and personal values. The emphasis on education and academic achievements and the need to have a successful career and home life has always been a driving force pushing towards those goals. The strong work ethic that was shown and driven into me by my surroundings. Has also been a major factor in my constant strive to better myself and succeed in my job and personal life. The downside of this, however, has been a life of high pressure at a very constant level and rate. This has been caused by my constant need to both meet and exceed the expectations that people have of me.

Also, both my social surroundings and my family being compromised mainly of women has made an impact on my views of gender roles and gender equality. Living in this surrounding has more than once forced me to see the world through the other sides point of view. This has also made it important for me to try and advocate and prioritize the goal of gender equality and to try and fight stereotypes. This too has shaped my outlook on life and relationships through the years, for better or for worse. But I still strive to fight and do my part to protect the opportunities and rights of all I meet no matter race or gender.

**Pressure to Conform**

Social media and branding in modern life is a definite place where I have found my self conforming the most. The always connected and almost live stream sitting in my hand continually tries to push the idealized lifestyle into my face. This creates an urge and drive for me to boast and publish my own successes more and more, both personal and work. I admit at times I have seen a post or video and felt briefly inadequate in my own life.

To fight this, I try to limit my social footprint as much as possible. And when I do use it, I try to focus on the more realistic posts and information. I also never check my likes and comments to any post since I found that is where all the real pressure and dirt comes in. But my goal is to use social media as little as possible and when I do to focus on the need, such as business and not glamour.

**Conformity in others**

Through the years I have seen many of my friends and acquaintances change their lifestyles, appearances, and opinions to conform to their surroundings. For example, I have a friend who wanted to be an artist for most of his young life. But due to pressure from his family in decided to change direction and move into a career in the financial district. As time went on, I saw when I met him the effects of stress and complete dissatisfaction in his life. And he would confide in me from time to time how sad and lost he felt in his life.

After some years of suffering, he did decide to make the brave and hard choice to escape the job he was in and pursue a life in Art. The decision was not an easy one and it was very hard for his family to accept and understand this need and change. However, despite this he fought on and found happiness in finally prioritizing his own personal fulfillment over that of others.

Importance of Pro-Social Behavior and Altruism

Pro-Social Behavior and Altruism are important parts in building and promoting a compassionate and supportive environment and society. In my culture we try to value communal support, traditions, and helping others. Random acts of kindness no matter the size help the community’s well-being and the individuals along with it.

For example, I try to volunteer in community services whenever possible and time allows. These small acts not only help those people I am helping directly now. But also helps to grow social bonds and promotes a sense of solidarity and community. The pro-social acts encourage people to look beyond themselves to the welfare of others.

## References

* Spielman, R., Dumper, K., Jenkins, W., Lacombe, A., Lovett, M. & Perlmutter, M. (2017). Psychology. OpenStax College, Rice University. Download for free at <https://openstax.org/details/books/psychology>