Who am I? Do I really need to face an uphill struggle to delve into the true identity of myself and other people? Will I ever be able to achieve it? These questions truly reflect the state of mind of virtually every Pole, regardless of sex or nationality. I would like to illustrate a universal way of embracing our own identity and the identity of other people. A fairly uneasy way. A way full of vicissitudes and obstacles no one can inoculate us against. A walk in the darkness on the lookout for a night-sight device. You may initially regard this manner of weaving the details into a story as an amazing quirk of mine, but the truth lies somewhere else.

Trying to find our true identity, we must start right from scratch – when we are born, we are merely influenced by our parents or grandparents (if we are sufficiently fortunate to still have the latter) who in fact predominate the first period of our development. The nearest and dearest do their best to instill into us some basic virtues of human tolerance and compassion ­– we are reared to guide ourselves by a famous proverb “Do not judge the book by its cover”. However, life is far from providing us some ample evidence that would confirm the truthfulness of this expression.

Until we are for the first time confronted with what is called real world, we are perfectly comfortable within our own borders of self-perception. Nothing appears to distort our inward sense of integrity, our life fails to amaze us with any serendipitous events. The more sheltered upbringing one becomes, the more evident the situation is. Being forced to mingle with all and the same people, we do not even conjure up any images of other nations. Consequently, we do not develop any kind of stereotypes simply because we do not have any foundations to build them on.

Comfortable as this sweet innocence may be, it does leave us fully unprepared for various adversities of fate. The more conscious and mature we become, the more flooded we are with various information. These confront us with some biased, distorted visions. Even though media may be a real fount of knowledge due to the high plurality of views they present, one cannot easily and unambiguously evaluate to what extent they reflect the real *status quo*. Especially small children are especially vulnerable to some negative patterns spread by (mainly social) media. Parents, who act in good faith and want their children to keep their minds open for the modern, better though volatile world, inadvertently make them uncritically absorb any, even most extreme views.

Consequently, these impressionable children feel they have a well-justified right to discriminate against other nations or groups for a variety of sometimes contradicting (sic!) reasons. These prejudices are very often additionally fueled by some deeply rooted reluctance or patronizing attitude towards certain people; these appear to be part and parcel of our country`s heritage. Sadly, the amount of prejudices would rank Poland 1st or 2nd if such statistics were to be ever made.

Finally, some could say that crossing the threshold of maturity provides one with sufficient knowledge and experience for a conscious, self-determined life. This is, however, quite far from the truth — one can never entirely escape stereotypes. Since they are simply omnipresent, they will never cease to exist. Even if we ban all of them from our public space at moments (which appears to be rather fighting a lost battle), they will abruptly come back, as they are often deeply embedded in our brains; the attempts to get rid of them are likely to be rather futile in the long run.