

Journal 5: Identity and Relationship Dynamics

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- Prompt: **Intersectionality** helps us understand how different aspects of our identity—such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and more—intersect and shape our unique experiences and social position. I want you to reflect on the intersection of your own cultural identities. Start by listing the different aspects of your identity that are important to you. Then, which parts of your identity feel most significant or noticeable in your day-to-day life? For instance, do factors like your gender, ethnicity, or religion feel more prominent in shaping your experiences and interactions with others? Finally, reflect on how you think others perceive these aspects of your identity and how that perception impacts your experiences.

The intersection of my cultural identities is something that's been on my mind since middle school. Many aspects of my identity are important to me: sexuality, gender, hobbies, career path, and divorced parents. The two most prominent every-day ones are my sexuality and gender.

I hold my homosexuality very close to my identity, so it affects nearly all interactions I have with individuals. I wish I didn't think about it as much, yet my social anxiety doesn't allow that. When interacting with others, I'm constantly thinking about how my sexuality affects the relationship I have with that person. I think my relationship with this part of my identity is slightly more debilitating than it is a strength. This debilitation is also due to how I think others perceive my sexuality. I assume others assume that I'm straight upon first interaction (due to societal norms and interactions I've had with others historically). This creates this feeling that I need to almost prove my homosexuality to them. It feels like I'm playing a part to appear homosexual.

Another prominent part of my identity is my gender. As a nonbinary individual, I feel a need to prove my gender—like my sexuality. I think the way I'm perceived as a nonbinary individual completely changes based on my outward appearance. When I wear something more feminine, I feel like I'm perceived a little more accurate to my gender identity. But, when I wear something more masculine, I think I'm perceived more cisgender—because of my assigned sex at birth.