The idea of stereotype threat is very interesting to me. I enjoyed watching Claude Steele's lecture on Identity and Stereotype Threat, as psychology is a subject I enjoy very much. He described stereotype threat as the impact on your ability to perform based on the perception that it was a certain identity causing you not to succeed when you hit points of frustration. This was shown in math tests among men and women. Women performed worse when they were under the impression men performed better at math. When they were told the test had not function of testing whether women or men were better at math, they performed much better. The very idea that they could not do something because they were woman caused them to spiral and do worse. Ignoring or alleviating these stereotypes can help avoid this vicious cycle.

I think stereotype threat has applied to me in the academic world just like it has anyone else. I must admit I was not aware of this idea so much but I was aware of how peoples' perceptions of stereotypes might affect how we deal with other upon meeting them. For example, I would approach a conversation with a child much differently that I would and adult, based on what I thought they could or couldn't understand and relate to. In academics, I often found myself to be guarded, afraid to participate in many situations. A good example of this comes within my major at USC. In some classes, I felt a little out of place because how frat guys were perceived among the cinema students. I felt that there was some stereotype that we were idiots who did not belong among the students who were trying harder than they thought I was. The best classes I had within the cinema-television school were the ones that alleviated this stereotype by forcing participation or rewarding it by allowing it to improve your grade or having more of an open forum type feel. It was the classes where I did not feel any direct benefit of participation that I frequently did not speak up. In these situations I was afraid I might come across as stupid if I was incorrect, and thus affirm the idiot frat guy stereotype.

Another time I felt stereotype threat may sound ridiculous, but it was when 'Passion of the Christ' came out. I had always had somewhat of a Jewish identity as I went to Hebrew school and had a Bar Mitzvah, but do not consider myself to be very religious. I had the perception growing up though that Jews tend to be very closed community that is often chastised. When this movie came out, and not too much later the South Park episode, I don’t think I ever felt more singled out for being Jewish. It start as obvious joking, like "Why did the Jews kill Jesus?", but it went on for a very long period of time, and for a while I felt like this identity was causing me undue harm. I started to show more disconnect with the Jewish identity in the later years of High School because of this residual effect. However, I am happy to say I have felt more connected to my Jewish identity by traveling to Israel for birthright. It was a great experience that I think any Jewish American should do. Also, I still have not seen Passion of the Christ...