

A SHORT GUIDEBOOK TO OVERCOMING
IDENTITY CRISIS

SABINA RUSE

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YOUTH  ALIVE

DAY 1

A "TRENDY" INCONVENIENT CRISIS



Howdy! Even if you do not know me, we have many things in common. So many, that we might even think we are living the same life. This guidebook deals with one of the things we all (may) have in common: the identity crisis.



While some claim they have never gone through an identity crisis, others say they have not yet managed to overcome theirs. Whichever of these two sides of the issue applies to you, you surely have heard already from a friend of a friend of one of your friends about this kind of crisis. Although the identity crisis can occur at different ages, this guidebook approaches it in young adults, i.e. in those people who step out of adolescence into adulthood.

Scientific literature and popular belief are both considering adolescence



and young age as difficult stages in one's life, as a time when we are inclined to behave recklessly and expose ourselves to different kinds of risks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), set up and developed in the United States, indicate some types of risky behaviours that we are prone to as young adults: drinking alcohol and using harmful substances, violence, smoking, compulsive eating, excessive diets, sedentary lifestyles, high-risk sexual behaviour etc. To these we may add school drop-outs (for example, abandoning higher education and taking a job to earn a living as early as possible in life).

These examples may sound extreme, but I think you have, at least once in your lifetime, heard people from the older generation complaining about "kids today", with that look on their faces that encompasses their disappointment with current or other generations that followed their "golden age".

„OH, KIDS THESE DAYS...!“

On the other hand, as Schools of Public Health in the country and abroad teach us, this life stage (between 20 and 30 years old) is also the time when we acquire some of the healthiest life principles. Having overcome the teenage challenges, we embark on a journey full of trials and tribulations that help us evolve both personally and professionally.

I would be happy if, after reading this guidebook, we will see ourselves as the result between what we are and what we can become. We will be more aware of our strengths, understand ourselves a little better than before, and establish the principles to guide our lives. I invite you on a short, but necessary journey that will lead us through issues dealing with life values and principles, social roles, personal traits and goals, expectations from others, and challenges we have to deal with.

Here's a first challenge for you! This will take a few minutes. Grab a piece of paper and a pencil, and try to answer in writing the question: "Who am I?" Do not answer the question in your mind! Stop telling yourself that you know who you are! Take the piece of sheet and the pencil and start writing! You may even draw up a summary of your life so far. But be careful not to exceed 100 words! This is the first step towards getting to know yourself better. When you finish, put the sheet of paper aside and read the 100 statements you find at the end of this guidebook, in Appendix 1. Read them carefully because everything that is written there defines you to a greater or lesser extent.

PRINT APPENDIX 2!

- 1 Choose 5 statements that best define you and write them down on the answer sheet (see Appendix 2) next to the "+" sign!
- 2 Choose 5 statements that define you the least and write them down next to the "-" sign!
- 3 Of the 90 remaining statements, choose 8 that define you better and write them down under the "+" sign, immediately next to the first column of 5 statements next to the "+" sign.
- 4 Do the same with another 8 statements that define you less and write them down next to the "-" sign and immediately next to the column of the first 5 statements written under the "-" sign.
- 5 Continue like that and fill in the rest of the columns. In the end, you will have 18 statements in the middle column, which define you only partially. Read what you wrote on the first sheet of paper and answer again the question: "Who am I?"

This is the starting point of our journey!

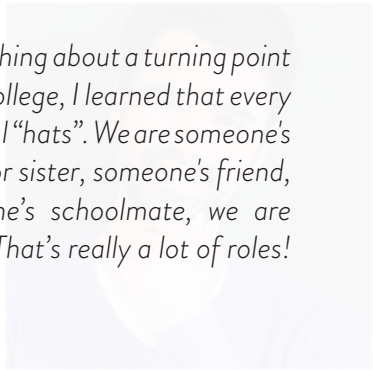
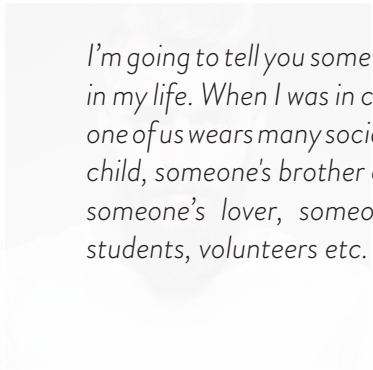




DAY 2

THE HATS WE WEAR IN SOCIETY

I'm going to tell you something about a turning point in my life. When I was in college, I learned that every one of us wears many social "hats". We are someone's child, someone's brother or sister, someone's friend, someone's lover, someone's schoolmate, are students, volunteers etc. That's really a lot of roles!





Every time someone asked me, “Who are you?”, my answer was, “Which of my roles are you hinting at?”. I somehow ironically tried to show that person that I was not hypocritical, that I wasn’t wearing masks, but that I was simply very hard to define as a person. Things went on like that until one evening, when the person I was talking to at some point reacted to my standard answer in a way that made me reconsider it:



“Okay, okay - said my interlocutor - I understand you wear many ‘hats’. So, what you’re saying is that when you are in the friend role you are more lenient than when you are in the colleague role and that you are more compassionate as a daughter than you are when you are a volunteer, is that right? Ok, but when you get home at night and you’re alone in your room, what “hat” do you wear then? Who are you then?”

I did not know what to answer. I realized that if I had known the answer to that question, I would’ve been more sure about who I was exactly. For years and years I had been unable to find a clear answer to that question.

It’s been quite a while since that conversation. I now realize how important it is to understand that my values and principles are not interchangeable or for sale, and that I don’t even have to try to make them more flexible.

Whether rigid thinking is good or bad, that’s another discussion. The fact is