Do Hyeon Kwon
CO210

Labels, we do it all the time. We all have looked at a person and labeled them internally. I know I have. When I was in the eighth grade, I remember lining up to enter my first period math class and seeing this new girl that was going to be my new classmate. I remembered looking at this girl and thinking she looked like one of those mean girls that I would probably never talk to all year. But I was proven wrong, she came up to me and started talking to me and I realized how wrong I was. Then by the end of the year, we became best friends. I remember telling her what I first thought of her after I got to know her, and she thought it was the most hilarious thing ever. But for me, I kind of felt bad and made me really reflect on the way I view people.

When we label people, we categorize people to act or behavior in a certain manner based on the way we label them. Instead of individuals just being themselves, labels shape these individuals to become that stereotype. Personally, I have always been categorized as that "smart girl". I was always expected to read books and always study. So for a while growing up, I always convinced myself that I enjoyed reading books. And I would always kind of force myself to read some literature works that were way beyond my years. But now looking back, I actually do not like reading books. I do not hate them but I prefer to spend my time doing something else.

But because of that label, I was trying to force myself to become this "smart" person because that is how everybody viewed me as. I have always been labeled as such repeatedly for such a long time that I actually believed I was that person everybody labeled me to be. The expectations that come with the label pressures people to behave as their stereotype.

This I believe, I believe people should not be categorized into labels because everybody is their own person. People should not feel pressured to act a certain way because they are expected to do so. And with my personal experience, I understand how it is like labeling someone and being someone who is labeled. For people who label others, I understand we all subconsciously do it but as humans we all have the choices to not act upon it and go about treating people differently because we have labeled them mentally. And as for people who are being labeled, we all have a choice to not mold ourselves to these labels and hold on to our individuality.

And now at the age of eighteen, although I have not figured my life out, I have a deeper knowledge of myself than I did when I acted upon my label. And I definitely now know that a label does not define me nor does it define other people.