

Reflection Journal 2: Starting with You: Understanding Yourself

LaQuandra Z. Gooden

Alliance University

My worldview of being an African American woman in the workplace and non-workplace is what I wonder about at times, can be both positive and challenging at times when it comes to my being. The positive aspect is strong work ethic, community solidarity, striving for success and achievement. The challenging aspect is always being viewed as strong, finding acceptance in a community and/or workplace that lacks diversity, trying to emulate stereotypes, and my name. These aspects of my worldview affect my life, because sometimes I am praised for my work ethic and adhering to tasks and details. However, when I push myself too much, I tend to put so much pressure on myself when it comes to my work ethic, causing me to be busy and tired. Sometimes I may not engage in certain conversations or say certain words because I assume others may not understand my point of view. How I wear my hair gives a sense of pride in regards to my African American heritage, but I start to question how others may view my hair texture and style such as is this acceptable in the workplace or not. In addition, I don't want to come off as combative, so when it comes to my internship, I may not always speak on things I may disagree with that have to do with decision making. However, because I understand community solidarity, I understand the importance of empowering communities and how volunteering, and having empathy towards others can encourage others to do something too. Due to my current internship value of communities, I believe my worldview about community solidarity is aligned with their values of community development and community integration. The questions these worldviews raise for me is "How can I live in a world without always viewing myself as an African American woman?" "Does my race and/or ethnicity really matter in the workplace/internship?" "Does my name determine how far I can go within the social work practice?"

The effects these questions have upon my thinking and acting can cause me to feel insecure about myself and ethnicity. Meaning, I may feel insecure about applying to certain jobs because I worried about my name being the determining factor if I get called for an interview or not. Or maybe a client may not want me to serve them because of my name, which has happened in the past. Furthermore, I start to act more poised because I do not want to be viewed as ghetto or stereotyped.

When it comes to my internship, no questions are raised so far because I have not felt or been treated differently due to my ethnicity. However, the things I want to see change in myself by not caring how one may view me because of my ethnicity, and be who I am not change myself to make other people comfortable. There is nothing I can change about my ethnicity and gender, but I don't want to always view myself as an African American woman, but a human being who is worthy of respect and dignity. In addition, be confident that I behold the skills, competence, and traits to be in the social work practice .