

Sophie Qin

Redwood Middle School

Grade 8

People are our mirrors. They reflect what type of human beings we are, revealing our characteristics, features, and voice. When we look into a mirror, we either take a glance and go on with our days, or we take a second look and spectate our physicality. Every person we interact with molds us into who we are, as individuals can shape how we view ourselves and give us a sense of identity.

The way we see ourselves is influenced by the outside world, mainly by people. For instance, one of the biggest influences is social media. Platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Tiktok can be detrimental, as they have unrealistic expectations and sources of popularity. When others have negative feelings about themselves, such as being too critical, whining, or gloomy, I tend to adopt the same attitude toward myself. However, the prosperous singer and songwriter Billie Eilish has influenced me more than anyone else, teaching me that music is medicine, an escape, and a lifestyle. After multiple interactions throughout my life, learning that external feelings shown by individuals are greatly shaped by influence and association is one of the biggest life lessons.

Not only do people influence our lives, but the main purpose of living on earth is also feeling accepted as an individual. The beginning of middle school was the largest boulder I have encountered in my life so far. Sixth grade hindered me from depending on myself, for I was only listening to what others would tell me. The amount my cousin would fuss about me was almost unbearable for my ten-year-old self to listen to. From small teases about my “absurd” outfits to taunting me in front of her friends nearly defeated me mentally and emotionally. It took a couple of months to realize how naïve I was, yet it also taught me that despondency did nothing but feel unaccepted.

Social institutions such as the media, family, and even strangers all have a significant impact on a person's identity, including myself. It allows me to shape how I see myself and provides me with a feeling of self-identity. The mirrors revolving around me have shown my strengths and weaknesses, inspiring me to ricochet the same impact people placed on my life for them as well.