

Tearing Off Your Labels

7. How Do I Label Myself?

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup: little or no space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: 2-12

Group Size: 4 or more

Time: 15-20 minutes

Introduction: It's not always other people that give us our labels; sometimes we give labels to ourselves. This activity will help students understand this, and show how positive or negative labels can help or hurt a person as they move through life.

Materials:

- An old discarded computer keyboard (pop of all of the keys), or cut out the keys on the handout provided at www.whytry.org/activities.
- A box to hold the keys
- 1 3x5 card for each student
- 1 pencil for each student
- A large picture of a keyboard on display at the front of the class

Activity:

Place the box of keys in the middle of the group, either on the floor or on a table. Give each participant a 3x5 card and a pencil.

Ask the participants to pick a key from the pile, then to examine the key and decide how it could represent them. Have them write that representation on the 3x5 card.

Show the picture of the keyboard. Ask the students to find another student that has a number, letter, or symbol close to their key on the keyboard. Invite the partnerships to share the meanings of their keys with each other.

Invite the participants to sit together in a big group next to their partner. Each participant will then share their partner's meaning of their key with the group. The partners can fill in the blanks with additional information.

Processing the Experience:

- Was the label you gave yourself positive or negative?
- How can we avoid giving ourselves negative labels?
- If you have a negative label, how do you tear it off and get a positive label?
- Are labels ever an excuse for our behaviors?
- Have you ever been given a negative label because of your actions?
- How do you prove if your label is true?
- What can you do today to tear of a negative label?