





## **FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND IDENTITY LABELS**

**RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES** 9–12



The Rick Hansen Foundation is committed to creating a fully inclusive society, where every person can contribute in meaningful ways to their community. Rick Hansen knows first-hand how difficult it is to change others' perceptions of you.

When people have already formed an impression of what you are unable to do, it is difficult to make them understand what you are capable of. Because he uses a wheelchair, Rick was told he could not pursue a physical education degree. He was also told he was crazy for wanting to wheel around the world. He did both, and throughout his life, Rick has significantly contributed to society's awareness of the abilities of people with disabilities.



## ACTIVITY

## **Answer the following questions:**

Think of some identity groups that may exist at your
school (e.g. popular, unpopular, ESL, EAL, immigrant
status, honours/gifted students, learning difficulty,
physical disability, sp.ed student, well-dressed
students, nonconformist or unusual dressers,
different race/culture/religion, athletes, bullies,
bullied students, etc.)

What are some challenges or obstacles that prevent us from approaching and/or engaging others who do not share the same identity groups as us?




2. If those obstacles are present, does this translate into assumptions about the person with that label, and a lack of understanding of their story (i.e. judging a book by its cover)?



3. Does this then translate into inaction or inappropriate action? What are examples of this?



4.	How does mainstream media influence our understanding and/or stereotypes of others?				



5.	Over the next few days, look for current media examples (news, TV shows, music, etc.) of how this happens in both positive and negative ways. Report the source and content.



6.	Do you typically evaluate or validate these messages through the media. If so, how?



<ol><li>Can you think of how media stereotypes might be changing in a positive way? Give examples of this change.</li></ol>



. How does social media influence your understanding and impressions of others, and has it been a positive, negative or mixed impact? Explain your answer.			

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