

## ***LABELS***

Labels are everywhere. We see them, use them, and refer to them to help others find things. Labels were a great invention and very valuable in organizing our household, work space, and even our lives.

There is, however, a place where labels or labeling does not belong. That is PEOPLE. We are so use to hearing descriptions of people, individuals and/or groups of people, that we find ourselves repeating these labels to describe someone.

I admit it can be difficult to refer to someone you do not know and you are telling someone else about this person. But adding a label to the person I feel is unjust.

Take a minute to reflect on how you label a person. There are so many examples such as: Occupations – cop, banker, manager, president, astronaut, pilot, receptionist, etc. Then there are religious labels like: catholic, baptist, Jew, Mormon, evangelist, etc. And even more descriptive labels: black, white, old, young, middle aged, male, female, man, girl, tall, short, fat, skinny, and the list goes on and on.

Even if the label may fit the person, the person is so much more than the label!

Each of us is a Soul having a human experience. We each have a package we came in and grew into, as well as, a belief system and what we do with most of our time.

Is it fair to say that a 38 year old, chubby, white male, who works as a cop, attends mass every Sunday, completely describes this person. While there are several labels this person falls under, do any of these labels tell you WHO this person is or may be? This person may be the life of the party but is always looking out for the safety of others and not letting anyone drive home after a few too many cocktails. He may spend a few hours a week playing sports with neighborhood kids to keep them from

going out and causing mischief or worse, join a gang. This person could be a very loving husband and dad and has a family he rushes home to so he can spend time with them and they can't wait until dad gets home.

Without taking the time to get to know a person, we will never know who this person really is. We will miss out on their passion, abilities, and talents, which may be helpful to so many others. We could be missing out on encouraging someone to run for public office because we see their potential and know they would be an ideal candidate for so many people.

**Labels:** use them for objects, directions, and staying organized. If you must use a label for a person, be kind and thoughtful at least until you get to know them.