

Everyday English: I Changed My Hair

Today I want to talk to you about three things: first, obviously, is the topic of my hair. But also, I want to talk about **stereotypes** and **self-image**. How do you think all three of these topics tie together? I'm not going to tell you, but I bet a good way to find out is to listen to today's recording.

Before You Start the Recording

If you don't know the word stereotype, check the vocabulary below for a definition. Now, think a moment about the stereotypes you have of people based on their hair. This can be their hair color (I know there are some stereotypes about blondes, for example) or their hairstyle. When you meet someone, what do you think their hair is saying about you?

Now, think a moment about your self-image: the way you think about yourself. How is your self-image different from the stereotype people might have of you? Can you change the impression you make, so that it's closer to your self-image?

Now, start the recording.

After You've Listened to the Recording

Do you think I'm a little bit. . . crazy for thinking so much about these stereotypes and the kind of impression that I make? Have you ever changed the way you looked so that it matched more to the self-image you had of yourself? What did you do? Why?

Vocabulary

Stereotype: Many people think that all Americans are fat. Others think that all Germans are punctual and hard working. Some people think that all politicians are dishonest. When you start talking about "all people," you're probably talking about a *stereotype*. A stereotype is a 'picture' of a group of people that tries to say what they are like. Often, the stereotypes are negative, but not always: tall men, for example, have a stereotype of being intelligent. (Because we are!)

Self-Image: What stereotypes do people have about you? Are they true? How do you think of yourself? That's your *self-image*. It's the 'picture' you have of yourself and your idea of what kind of person you are. It's important to remember that you don't always know what kind of person you are: your self-image can be as incorrect as your stereotypes!