

Where are the Real ISU students?

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I often wonder to myself who exactly is the 18-22ish year old ISU student? When I walk around campus, I see replicas of the newest celebrity, musician or extremely wealthy socialites. I see the worship of the MTV Spring Break/ Real World life style and better yet a desire to socialize (or should I say party) like the superstars. But wait are these ISU students or are they just an illusion? It can't be easy living this illusion. I think it would be very dissatisfying living such a hollow life. What with the difficulty of finding the perfect outfit to match the newest celebrity photo, or to go against your values to achieve the lifestyle, or the uncertainty of what superstar image you are going to try to achieve today.

When one is trying to make choices about who and what they are I could see how attractive it is to adopt the illusion. If you think about it-the risk (of personal rejection, ridicule and shame) is minimal. The illusion is a bonafide, sure-fire winner. It is adored by thousands, maybe even millions, of MTV watchers. The illusion is ready made; you already have an idea of what to wear, how to behavior, and what to like. It can easily be slipped on in the morning before you leave for the day and easily tossed aside before you go to bed. Plus, you never have to worry about fitting in or being the odd one in the crowd because so many people have chosen the same illusion.

But who really wants to be remembered as a fake? Few students realize that during this time of their life they are finding out who they are and who they want to be. By slipping on the illusion, you are not able to develop a real sense of who you are as a person. You can feel lost and lose track of those big questions like what is important to

me or how do I want to live my life. The choices we make in life are not based on what we find important but what we believe others find to be important. This lack of authenticity carries over into relationships too. You can't honestly expect to have deep meaningful relationship when you are being fake. A fake persona leads to superficial fake relationships. Deep meaningful relationships require authenticity or a willingness to be genuine with a fellow person. It does not take a nuclear physicist to figure out that many people experience feeling isolated and alone when they have nothing but superficial relationships.

The choice to be authentic is scary, challenging and time consuming, but the freedom to choose who you want to be is great. Authenticity allows you the freedom to explore who and what you either are or desire to be. Authenticity provides the chance to be in relationships where you feels comfortable being yourself and can find the support and connection that is not possible with superficial relationships. Authenticity allows people to live their lives according to their values and what they find to be important in their life.