

## A Woman's Identity

Women lose their identity as soon as they get married and begin a family. Every little girl dreams of getting married and raising a family, because this is what women are taught to seek at an early age. When a woman achieves this goal, she loses her identity due to the many roles that she is now forced to play. Once married, a woman is expected to be a mother, nurturer, housekeeper, teacher, doctor, cook, chauffeur, and more increasingly, a career woman. Women are forced to carry out these roles because of society's traditional view of the role women should play, and young women are pressured to follow in their mother's footsteps. Because a woman's life revolves around her children and husband, her responsibilities are never far from thought. Consequently, women lose their identity because they are so caught up in being a wife and mother that they no longer have time to pursue their own desires and goals.

Women are increasingly becoming career women, while raising a family at the same time. Despite the fact that women have the job of raising their family, many women also have full time careers because the extra income is often needed in the family. Some men criticize women for trying to act too much like men, but women are being forced by society to move between the traditional definitions of male and female roles, because of the many different tasks they have to carry out from day to day. For example, in order for women to enter the "male" world of work, they have to obtain "masculine" traits and leave their "feminine" traits at home.

Bearing children is expected in today's society, because nurturing and child care are viewed as feminine traits. Women are conditioned at a young age to believe that once they are adults they will become mothers. If a middle aged, married woman doesn't have any children, people often assume that there is a biological reason for her lack of children. Motherhood is expected by society, but contrary to popular belief, many psychologists believe that it is not instinct, but a learned desire. In Betty Rollin's essay, "Motherhood: Who Needs It," one psychiatrist explains that, "women don't need to be mothers any more than they need spaghetti." Once a woman has children her life becomes an extension of her children's life. She has to provide for and take care of her children and she can no longer put herself first, because she is expected to always have her family's best interests in mind.

Most women, if posed with the question, "Are you happy?" will say that they are, but after some soul searching it is evident that on the surface they appear to be, while on the inside they are unhappy and often feel suffocated. It isn't until things in life are going poorly, that women let themselves realize that they have feelings. Women have lost touch with who they are and are many times running away from their feelings, because they have been busy masking themselves in order to maintain their family.

Women are imprisoned by the many roles they have to play, but it is essentially self-imposed. Although, this imprisonment wouldn't be self-imposed, if it weren't for society's pressure on women to fit into the traditional female mold. Due to these expectations that are placed on women, eventually a woman who is

married and has children, will become only a empty and hollow image of a mother and wife, instead of a living and breathing person with feelings and a mind of her own.