**Weekly Email 8**

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1. How do children and youth perceive themselves and why?

Children and youth perceive themselves as being just as self-aware and intelligent as adults. They view themselves as themselves, and not as someone who does not know very much or is immature. Because children and youth are humans, just as adults are, we perceive ourselves as being entirely self-aware and our perception of ourselves doesn’t change when we turn into adults. Our perception may gain more intelligence and maturity, and look back at our younger selves and think how foolish or unknowing we were then, but if we are honest with ourselves, we will realize that even though our younger selves were less knowledgeable and mature than our current selves, we still had the same level of self-awareness that we did when we were younger. This is easier to realize when we think about our future selves and how they will look back the foolish and immature acts we are going through currently.

1. How do others perceive them?

Other, usually older people, perceive children and youth as less self-aware then themselves. This applies to most older people, even our older selves. If, for example, you look at someone who is younger than you (say you are 15, and you look at the actions of a 7 year old) then you would be inclined to believe that they are less self-aware than you are. However, if you look back through your own memories and remember what it was like when *you* were seven, you realize that you thought of yourself as just as self aware as a 15 year old. The only thing that has changed is your life experience, knowledge, and maturity.

1. How do others’ perceptions influence the identities that children and youth have of themselves?

Others’ perceptions of children and youth will sometimes influence the identities that those children have of themselves. If, for instance, a child does poorly in school and the teachers or the parents of the child have the impression that the child is not very intelligent, then the child will pick up on that and will think poorly of themselves, which might create an ever depressing spiral. A lot of times, the perceptions held of a child of youth by someone older will affect that child’s self confidence. However, older people’s perceptions aren’t the only ones that can influence the identities that children have of themselves. The children’s peers are also able to influence the self identity of the child.