

YOU SOUP Recipe

by its pronounced **METROsexual** .com



Ingredients:

base & broth

- race
- ethnicity
- gender
- sexuality
- disability status



early additions

- socioeconomic status
- geographic location
- education
- family structure



optional

- hobbies & passions
- religion & faith
- career
- political beliefs



secret ingredients

- personal experiences
- changes to other ingredients
- hidden identities
- misperception of ingredients



Procedure:

Combine base ingredients to create broth and bring to a boil. Add early additions and simmer over low heat for 18 - 25 years, adding optional and secret ingredients to taste. Makes one You.

YOU SOUP UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY & THE INTERSECTIONS OF IDENTITY

Written by social justice comedian Sam Killermann,

this is an adaptation of an article originally posted at ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com

We're all snowflakes. But we're also all stereotypes. Let me try to help you understand that with a hot bowl of You Soup.

In doing the work I do, I often find myself struggling to help people make sense of the two extremes of identity: on one side we have the idea that people in a group are all the same (stereotypes); while the other side supports this idea that everyone is absolutely unique (snowflakes).

I find myself saying "we're not the same, but we're also not that different," to the furrowing of brows, so I wanted to take a moment here to talk about the relationship of individual identity and social group memberships, as well as introduce a new graphic concept.

THE SNOWFLAKE VS. THE STEREOTYPE

You have been told all your life that you're unique, you're special, like a snowflake. Nobody is like you, you're one in 7 billion (or one in 108 billion, an estimated total number of humans ever, if you want to get technical), and nobody can take that away from you.

Yet at the same time you've been told that you can guess that someone else will be like everyone else in a particular group based on their membership in that

I was taught when I was a kid that every snowflake is unique. When I asked Google “are all snowflakes really different?” the response I got was that there are only 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 different types of snowflakes, so my childhood is a lie.

A stereotype, defined by Google, is “A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.”

group (e.g., a gay person will be like gay people). And in your life you’ve seen evidence that supports this idea.

So which is true?

Both. Kinda.

YOU’RE PART SNOWFLAKE

You, at a basic level, are a combination of dozens (or more) of identities that merge to form one unique individual. Some of these identities were granted to you at birth (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality), others were imposed on or ascribed to you as a child (e.g., socioeconomic status, geographical location, education), some are your choice throughout life (e.g., religion, hobbies, career), and some aren’t (e.g., ability status, identities falsely assumed of you by others).

Take all of your identities, add them up, and you get you. There has likely never been another person, in all the 108 billion of Earth’s history, whose You Soup ingredient list has been the same as yours. Deeeelish.

AND YOU’RE PART STEREOTYPE

Calm down, Snowflake. Gimme a second here. Remember all those identities I talked about before? Each one of those has a long list of stereotypes attached to it — expectations we make of people based on their group identities. This affects you in two distinct ways.

One, in situations where one of those identities is salient (a fancy word we use to mean “particularly prominent”), folks will tend to ascribe the stereotypes of that identity to you, whether you’re expressing them or not, or be hyper sensitive to anything you might do to reinforce those stereotypes. And if people see you as

a stereotypical X, they will treat you like a stereotypical X.

Two, many of us unknowingly act out stereotypes of group identities we possess, or are drawn (knowingly or subconsciously) to particular groups based on certain stereotypes. Further, some folks act in stereotypical ways when figuring out their identity because they feel like they should (this is called internalizing oppression).

“ONLY THE PURE IN HEART CAN
MAKE A GOOD SOUP.”

– LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

So as much as you know you’re a fully unique *You Soup*, in many situations throughout your life you will only be seen as one or two commonplace ingredients (Rhubarb if you’re lucky, because that’s fun to say).

WHY THIS SUCKS.

You know you’re not one ingredient, you’re a unique flavor that could only be created by a combination of all of your ingredients, in exactly the right proportions (some of us are sweeter, some are sour, but nobody is made of hummus, or we’d be best friends). Yet many times in your life you’re going to be viewed as a one-ingredient dish.

You also know that other people are just as unique, yet whether you realize it or not, you're constantly seeing them as one-ingredient concoctions as well, and if that one ingredient is one you've heard nothing but bad things about, you'll probably never even taste them and learn their true flavor okay this analogy is getting gross.

WHY THIS ROCKS.

As you start forcing yourself to realize that everyone is made up of dozens and dozens of different ingredients, many of which make up a part of your You Soup, you'll realize something reality-shaking: even though you're completely unique, you're really not unique (you're a unique combination of common ingredients), and that can be awesome.

It's awesome to know that every person you meet probably shares at least one identity with you, a form of common ground. It's comforting to know that there are other people out there who know your plight, or have shared in your experiences. In this way, these big-picture group identities are wonderful to have.

THREE BIG TAKEAWAYS TO MULL OVER

Okay, so you understand the idea of You Soup, and you have a better idea of how we can be absolutely unique and not absolutely unique, all at the same time. Here's some food for thought as you continue to chew on this idea okay yes I'm a little addicted to this analogy:

1. **Even though you may share a group identity with someone, you don't necessarily know their story.** Ever noticed how some foods taste better with other foods in the same bite (like how cheese makes

It's important to keep in mind that the You Soup isn't meant to be a diagnostic tool for "figuring out" someone else's identity, but a tool for individuals to better understand themselves, or explain their identity to someone else.

broccoli edible?). Identities are the same way: the combinations make a huge difference.

2. **Even though you may share a group identity with someone, you don't necessarily know their story.** Sorry, this is incredibly important, so I felt I had to say it twice.
3. **Be careful deconstructing a person (or yourself) down to the individual ingredients.** While this will be a great learning experience and eye-opening in many ways, for every ingredient you know about there is likely one you don't (this goes for yourself, but more so for others), and those secret ingredients might have the biggest impact of all.
4. **Try to have a relationship with an entire person, not with one of their identities.** You are inevitably going to be drawn to certain ingredients in others, but a healthier relationship is one that is holistically inclusive of all identities.