

Who am I? It is the usual question we are asked to answer but with great difficulty. However, to describe yourself with what you most closely identify is easier and more interesting. Each person on this planet has unique qualities that are shared with others. Knowing people is a way to broaden one's horizons, create new ideas and spread them.

I can identify myself with so many things. I love sports (particularly soccer and basketball), social gatherings, books, movies, shopping, swimming, the beach, hanging out with friends, dancing... the normal things. However, I must say that I most closely identify myself with music. From Day 1, I was listening to all kinds of music. I remember when I was eight years old, I would come home from school and sit next to my mother who was painting and listening to opera on the television. I would watch her closely and then become hypnotized from the powerful voices coming from the television screen. I was inspired to create music myself, but I detested the piano. Every time I looked at it, I remembered all those difficult and challenging pieces that my teachers were trying to make me learn. I wanted to compose my own pieces and play them. During practices, I would spend maybe fifteen minutes maximum on the pieces I was to learn and then the rest of the hour on my compositions. When we moved to Milan, I could no longer continue with the piano lessons because the level of school work was increasing greatly. The absence of music in my life for the first three months made me depressed. The school band could not take a piano player, so I decided to join the choir. Little did I know that I had found the key to my life. At first, I did not consider choir as an important class. I thought I was not really good at singing compared to the other students in my class. However, by the end of my first year of taking choir I was influenced to take it again the following year. My ideas of choir started to change. I was more inspired by the people around me. I realized that I did have a singing voice and that I should use it more often. I felt happier singing than I had when I was playing piano. I

started auditioning for honor choirs and performing in concerts, etc... Singing became a part of me. It has become the best way for me to express my thoughts, feelings, and emotions. It has healed me in times of sorrow and has brought a meaning into my life. I learn a lot from music, whether it be from famous artists or just from the pieces I learn in choir class. Music teaches me about love, hate, life, religion... It brings peace and comfort. There are many different types of music from all over the world that can help better understand the different cultures that exist. For example, even if I have never lived in Turkey (my home), I learn so much about Turkey's culture through Turkish music. I even learn the Turkish language through Turkish music!

I have been able to learn so much from music because it really touches me. My appreciation of music has opened doors for me. I now feel more comfortable about expressing myself because of music. I just hope I can get over the stage fright when it comes to singing solos! I can also say that singing has given me more self confidence than I had before as a child. Moving around a lot and seeing other countries had always frightened me, especially since I had to always go through it alone seeing as I am an only child. The question every time I moved was, would I fit in? How was I supposed to act? Would people accept me for who I was or would I have to pretend to be someone else? What would the other people be like? Would I adapt into this new society quickly? Would people like me? These questions could only be answered when it was too late... when I was already there. I felt different though when I left Milan. After two years of experiencing choir and honor choir, those questions meant nothing to me. The only things I thought of were that I hoped people would be nice and that I would have lots of fun. I did not think of whether people would like me or not. So what if some people did not like me. There would be many who would. In general, my outlook on life became more positive because of music. Without music, I do not believe I would be who I am today.