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## Are You Being Stereotypically Labeled And What To Do If So?

You will have many dreams in your life, but the likelihood of attaining these dreams is based on your perception of your abilities. You need to have the confidence to know that you have what it takes to do it. So it's extremely beneficial to assess your beliefs about yourself, understand where they came from and identify any lies you've accepted from others, or have been telling yourself, so that you can shift them into new, positive truths.

Here are 4 steps to determine if you've been stereotypically labeled and what to do if so:

### 1. Determine If You've Been Stereotypically Labeled:

- 1. Reflect:** Take some time to reflect back on your life stages. Can you think of someone, or even you yourself, who may have boxed you into a category or label of some kind? Since this really requires getting into a different headspace, consider doing it lying down, in a relaxed meditation pose, on a walk or in conversation with your partner, friend or life coach.
- 2. Journal:** On a piece of paper, or on your favorite mobile app (I prefer Evernote), write down a list of stereotypical labels that were ascribed to you. Who assigned each to you? How old were you? How did it affect your perceptions about yourself? Which ones empowered you and which limited your perceptions of your skills or opportunities for your future? Do you remember decisions you made because of it? In this process, it's important not to second-guess yourself. Trust your instincts and be open to what you may discover through the exercise.

**2. Understand the Effect of Old Labels:** Review the old labels you wrote down and try to trace back any decisions you might have made, consciously or not, that may have limited your potential. For example, were you labeled the "smart" one in the family and when given the opportunity to explore your creativity, you chose to focus more on academics instead of taking art or musical instrument lessons? Identifying the decisions you made and any interests you may not have discovered due to your labels can get you thinking about new ANDs to explore today.

**3. Replace Old Labels with New ANDs:** Now that you have a clearer understanding of your labels, think back a few years. What are some achievements you've made, skills you've honed or passions you've developed that are contradictory to your old beliefs? Write these items down and try to define them. For example, did you believe you were never a good writer but now do a lot of writing that gets praise? Were you told you were not creative, yet several of your accomplishments required creative skills? Reflect on these new qualities and where you want to focus your energy and self-identity in the near future. Doing this will help you rid old false beliefs and recognize the new ANDs that make you the remarkable, multi-dimensional woman you are today.

**4. Start Taking Action on New ANDs:** Now that you've found new ANDs, take actions that will allow you to explore these ANDs and realize more of your potential in those un-tapped areas! In the above example, you could sign-up for a local art class or watch YouTube videos to begin to learn how to play that instrument you've always wanted to. Moving from idea to action makes your new ANDs real, helping you to see your tremendous potential.