“To label or not to label, that is the question...”

Words are a great gift to mankind. They are the foundation of communication, the way we express ourselves and how we pass on information. One of the rules that govern the written and spoken word is the assumption that words have the same meaning to the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader. Without a common frame of reference for language and a consistent meaning of words and phrases, communication can be difficult. Even worse, a totally erroneous message may be given, quite accidentally. For example, when you ask an Australian (or English) person to ‘nurse your baby’ they take it to mean to hold and cuddle the infant. To an American ear of course, this means to breast-feed. It doesn’t take much imagination to work out how that kind of conversation can go awry! This is an example of how inconsistent meanings of words can bring grief as well as laughter.

A lot of the culturally-specific terms have become more global now thanks to the internet and television shows, but there is still major scope for misinterpretation.

Today’s society has been dubbed the ‘me generation’ where the rights of the individual have been placed above all others, including the welfare of the country, family or other group. It has also overseen the rise of powerful and effective individuals who have dramatically transformed portions of our society. Like most radical changes, it is a twin-edged sword.

As part of this ‘individualisation’ of society has come the rejection of labels and stereotypes. To be fair, there has been some good come from all of that. A lot of labels were largely gender-based, religious or racially constructed or other kinds of inaccurate and restrictive labels that did no one any good. However, the flip-side to this has been the growing refusal to accept labels of any kind or worse, to redefine them at will and without justification.

The Adult Baby Diaper Lover community has long suffered through the use and mis-use of labels to the extent that they are the foundation of many debates and some vicious arguments. Recent calls to not label each other are well-intentioned and ultimately, a good idea. But are labels intrinsically bad? I would say that they are not bad. On the contrary, labels can be of immense value, as long as they are used appropriately and correctly....

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