Me, Myself, and I
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Labels have been given to people since the beginning of human existence. These descriptors, whether true or not, have shaped life as we know it. The labels that have impacted my life the most are friend, judoka, and Mom.

I was labeled a friend early in life and have been shaped by this title ever since. Being a friend has taught me respect for others and how to share and love. I have also learned that the word friend varies in definition as people age. Being a friend has shaped me differently in recent years. As our circle of friends gets smaller, how we perceive our friends changes.

Although my circle of friends is small, I am a part of something much larger. I am a judoka. A judoka is someone who practices judo. Being a judoka makes one a part of a large family that spans the world. Judo isn’t widely known locally. It is a martial art and is a way of life for many people. I must say that I don’t fit the stereotypical mold that many people think of when they hear judoka. Judo has given me confidence and shown me that I do not need to fit into that mold. I can be me and still be accepted.

The label that has impacted me the most is Mom. I am the mother to three of the most challenging and perfect children. I have two girls who are nine and a little boy who is six. When people hear that I have twins, they immediately act shocked or tell me that I must be busy. When my girls were in a stroller, strangers would look at me with pity and say “Don’t worry. It will get better.” I never understood what the strangers meant in their assumptions. The apparent perception was that I would sit in my home crying because of my children. Remarks of pity and sympathy increased with the birth of my son. Fellow patrons of my local grocery store would ask “Oh no, what would you have done if you had twins, again?” The perception must be that
parents with multiple children are overwhelmed. I can say that at times it has been overwhelming, but I am not overwhelmed. My children have shaped, molded, and changed me so much. They will continue to change me. It is quite possible that their perception is the only one I will be concerned with. I have altered my life so that the perception my children have will be positive.

I wear many labels, some more than others. Friend, judoka, and Mom have been the big labels in my life. I think it is fair to say that these labels do not define me; however, I define the labels. My self-image is based on the perception of a certain few, not society, as a whole.