

American Latinos, Latinas and Latinx Young Adults Center Their Stories

Link: [America Ferrera: My identity is a superpower -- not an obstacle | TED - YouTube](#)
[2019 (14 mins)]

Latina actress America Ferrera, describes her early experiences auditioning and asked to play a “Latina”-- meaning a stereotype of what the dominant [white] culture wanted to see, “... the gang banger’s girlfriend, the sassy shoplifter, pregnant chola #2...” She was perceived as, “too Brown, too fat, too unsophisticated... [so] These were the kinds of roles that existed for someone like me... [but] I wanted to play people who were complex and multidimensional, people who existed in the center of their own lives. Not cardboard cut outs that stood in the background of someone else’s.” She was given the message that her culture was something to overcome. Ferrera describes her breakthrough film “Real Women Have Curves”—critically acclaimed and appreciated by audiences worldwide—followed by no roles that centered her identity. She then starred in “Ugly Betty” and received the first Emmy given to a Latina in a lead role, “That is not a point of pride. That is a point of deep frustration. Not because awards prove our worth, but because who we see thriving in the world teaches us how to see ourselves, how to think about our own values, how to dream about our futures.” Ferrera ends by describing how—so often—she felt demoralized and ashamed for not getting cast: “I believed what the system believed about me.” What she finally learns: *“It is possible to be the person who genuinely wants to see change while also being the person whose actions keep things the way they are... [but] change isn’t going to come by identifying the good guys and bad guys. Because most of us are neither one of those. Change will come when each of us has the courage to question our own fundamental values and beliefs. And see to it that our actions lead to our best intentions.”*

Link: [Defining Latino: Young People Talk Identity, Belonging | NBC Latino | NBC News - YouTube](#)
(2018 [4 mins])

This informational “short” highlights young people describing the intersectionality of identities they experience as Americans who identify as Latino or Hispanic.

Link: [A Conversation With Latinos on Race | Op-Docs - YouTube](#) (2016 (6 mins)] NYT Op-Doc

This short documentary lifts up voices, representing several countries from which the American Latinx, though generations have migrated. It poses issues related to language, color, privilege, relationships with elders and with the non-Latino world in which they live. Voices of pride and also pain come forward as individuals are centered in the telling of their stories.

Additional Resources:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/09/23/who-is-hispanic/>

The U.S. Latino Population By The Numbers <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/15/1037358346/us-latino-population-demographic-figures-pew-center-hispanic-heritage-month>

<https://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin/about.html>

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/09/09/key-facts-about-u-s-latinos-for-national-hispanic-heritage-month/>