Spoken word performed by the author, video: <https://youtu.be/q0qD2K2RWkc>)

Audio only: <https://princeea.bandcamp.com/track/i-am-not-a-label>

**I Am NOT Black, You Are NOT White**

by Prince Ea

I am not Black  
I mean, that’s what the world calls me, but it’s not... me  
I didn't come out of my mother's womb saying, “Hey everybody, I'm... Black.”  
No, I was taught to be black  
And you were taught to call me that  
Along with whatever you call yourself  
It’s just a label  
  
See, from birth the world force feeds us these.... labels  
And eventually we all swallow them  
We digest and accept the labels, never ever doubting them  
But there's one problem:  
Labels are not you and labels are not me  
Labels are just ...labels  
But who we truly are is not... skin... deep  
See, when I drive my car, no one would ever confuse the car for.... me  
Well, when I drive my ...body, why do you confuse me for my...body?  
It's my…body...get it? Not me  
  
Let me break it down  
See, our bodies are just cars that we operate and drive around  
The dealership will call society decided to label mine the "black edition,"  
Yours the "Irish" or "White edition"  
And with no money down, 0% APR, and no test drive  
We were forced to own these cars for the rest of our lives  
Forgive me, but I fail to see the logic or pride  
In defining myself or judging another by the cars we drive  
Because who we truly are is found inside  
  
Listen, I’m not here to tell you how science has concluded that genetically we’re all mixed  
And race in the human species doesn't exist  
Or how every historian knows that race was invented in the 15th century  
To divide people from each other and it has worked perfectly...  
No.... I'm not here to lecture  
I just want to ask one question  
Who would you be if the world never gave you a label?  
Never gave you a box to check  
Would you be White? Black? Mexican?  
Asian? Native American? Middle Eastern? Indian?  
No. We would be one; we would be together  
No longer living in the error  
Of calling human beings Black people or White people  
These labels that will forever blind us from seeing a person for who they are  
But instead seeing them through the judgmental, prejudicial, artificial filters of who we THINK they are  
And when you let an artificial label define yourself  
Then, my friend, you have chosen smallness over greatness and minimized your.... self  
Confined and divided your .....self from others  
And it is an undeniable fact that  
When there is division, there will be conflict  
And conflict starts wars  
There-fore every war has started over labels  
It's always us... versus them  
So the answer to war, racism, sexism, and every other -ism  
Is so simple that every politician has missed it  
It’s the labels...  
We must rip them off  
Isn't it funny how no baby is born racist  
Yet, every baby cries when they hear the cries of another  
No matter the gender, culture or color  
Proving that deep down, we were meant to connect and care for each other  
That is our mission, and that it's not my opinion  
That is the truth in a world that has sold us fiction  
Please listen, labels only distort our vision  
Which is why half of those watching this will dismiss it  
Or feel resistance and conflicted  
But, just remember...  
So did the cater-pillar  
Before it broke through its shell and became the magnificent butterfly  
Well, these labels are our shells and we must do the same thing  
So we can finally spread our wings  
Human beings were not meant to be slapped with labels like groceries at supermarkets  
DNA cannot be regulated by the FDA  
We were meant to be free  
And only until you remove them all  
And stop living and thinking so small  
Will we be free to see ourselves and each other for who we—truly—are