



The words are pretty simple. The phrase sounds reasonable enough: I am what I am. Or as Popeye once noted, “I yam what I yam and I yam what I yam that I yam”. Let’s be serious: who am I to debate Popeye, right?

These words could be used in the context of being present in the moment, right here, right now, with a deep sigh of acceptance and joy. If so, they would be five wonderful words with a beautiful meaning.

The unfortunate reality is that they are rarely used in that context. Sadly, these 5 words have become symbolic of excuses, indecision, and the paralysis of analysis. There is a fine line between acceptance and apathy, a line that seems to get crossed regularly these days.

It all starts rather innocently enough. We’ve probably all experienced a situation that demands or deserves some rationale or explanation to another person. Maybe it is a situation that could be made better by accepting responsibility, or a share of the responsibility, with the goal of making change for the better. But it could also be a prime time for defending one’s actions, beliefs, and self image – and how better to do so than to make the simple statement -

“Hey, this is just the way I am. Accept it. That’s just my personality, and at this point in my life, it probably isn’t changing.”

Written by Allan Besselink
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What starts as an opportunity to be present in the moment turns into an excuse. Why should you think that I would change? This is just the way I am. Get over it.

This might be one of the most passive-aggressive statements that exists in our language. In one way, it professes a supreme awareness of the moment. But in the same breath, it also professes passivity and acknowledges that growth is not an option at this point.

It's not just that I am what I am. There should be an addendum attached. I am what I am – *right now*

In this moment, I also have space for a choice. I have response-ability.

Do I want to learn from this? If it is important enough to me, then the answer is a resounding “yes”. Do I have the capacity for change? Yes. The study of human physiology indicates that we are constantly changing at the cellular level. We are constantly adapting to the demands imposed by the world around us, and the world within us. We are not passive entities floating in the ether.

Will I implement actions and behaviors consistent with that choice to change and grow? Therein lies the hard part.

The easy way out is to do nothing. I can always just say that I am what I am and leave it at that. But as Rush once noted, “if you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice”.

I am what I am – right now. But I can also be what I dare to be. All it requires is a choice. It is never too late.

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