Hello. My name is Kim Kuiper and I am excited to share my dissertation with you. In the next few minutes I want to describe what I am researching, discuss why it matters, and share my results with you. Let’s begin with what I am studying. I’m interested in identity and how we coordinate all of the different aspects of our identities. What do I mean by that? Every single one of us has lots of different aspects to our identities. For example, I am a friend, a student, and an instructor. I also consider myself to be patient, hardworking, and organized. Often the different aspects of our identities may be at odds. They may not match up or complement each other. Consider my previous example, I usually see myself as a patient person but last night I yelled at my friend for no apparent reason. My actions were not in line with how I normally see myself and I was embarrassed. That’s the focus of my dissertation. How do we respond when different parts of our identities don’t match. But why does this matter to you? Why should you care about this? Our responses to these situations are a part of how we communicate our identities and are related to important aspects of our lives. When we communicate our identities more effectively, we tend to feel better about ourselves, be more satisfied with our communication, have fewer mental health issues, and experience reduced stress levels. Would you like to know what I found? I asked about 1700 people to tell me about a time with different aspects of their identities didn’t match like when I yelled at my friend last night. I also asked them how they responded to that situation. I looked for patterns in their responses and found there are four distinct types of responses when our identities don’t match.

1. We dominate. This includes fighting, screaming, swearing.
2. We integrate. This is setting new goals, being supportive, and learning from the situation.
3. We personally reflect. This includes embarrassment, regret, and feeling ashamed. This is how I responded when I was yelling at my friend.
4. We disassociate. We pretend it didn’t happen, we don’t respond, or we stay quiet.

Here’s the catch, I don’t have a final end all answer. I don’t yet know what the most effective responses are. My dissertation is the first of many steps. With that in mind, lets do a quick recap. We know that the different aspects of our identities often don’t match. We also know that how we respond when this occurs is connected to important aspects of our lives. And lastly, we know that there are patterns to our responses when our identities don’t match. Thank you for allowing me to share my work with you and I hope I’ve sparked your interest in identity research.