

Slightly Off Centre...

By Belinda Iziercich

All my life I seem to be a minority. All my life I seem to be the outcast. Don't feel sorry for me, though. It is not as though I was the kid picked last for dodge ball or sat in the corner because I smelled like cheese. When I say minority – I was. But not to the absolute extremes. In my case it seems that no matter how hard I try, I always seem to fall just a little short from being, what others would describe as 'normal'. Not so strange that I was ostracised but not normal enough to blend in. Consider me – slightly off centre.

As a tween, I never had it quite right. When everyone was wearing Adidas sweaters and the track pants that had the 'snaps' along the legs (for super-quick removal...what every eleven year old needs) – I resisted the trend. But of course resisting a trend is only a great idea if you create your own trend. I tried to do this – but unfortunately I missed the memo that says that you need to be semi-cool to start with before you start doing your own thing. My first opportunity to express myself ends in a fail.

As a teenager trying to find myself, I thought I would start by cutting my waist length hair off in an act of rebellion. Yeah – take THAT institution – I don't need Jen Aniston from Friends hair. So, off I went to the hair dresser and had it all cut off. I pretty much wound up with a number two when the hair dresser was done. However, my neo-nazi hair cut did not help me find myself. All I seemed to find was a lot of "how to express yourself when you are coming out" brochures shoved into my locker on a semi-regular basis. The ugly truth of my hair dressing experiment is ever since then, I have been trying to grow my hair back down to my waist. Unsuccessfully.

The agony.

The irony.

At some point, all the girls that I went to school with had a meeting – sans me and about five others where they decided that the new measure of success was children.

Lots of them.

As long as you were having them, had them or planning to have them – you were in and accepted.

Am I jealous? Hardly. I've been wasting the last ten years making money and getting an education. What a fool I have been! They really want to make you feel useless as well, for

wanting to pursue other things. Comments along the lines of – ‘your life just CANNOT have meaning till you have children’. That can’t be true – I am sure Mother Teresa would disagree... Also, the other one that they are a big fan of is telling you that you aren’t busy till you have had kids. Pardon? I have spent the last ten years studying, working full time and part time jobs as well, looking after “special needs” family members on top of trying to climb the corporate ladder, land a husband, go on the Atkins diet, come off the Atkins diet, pretend to care about global warming and still find time to brush my hair. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen of the jury – I am plenty busy.

So, what have I decided to do about my slightly left of centre crisis? Nothing at all. I have accepted that I will always be slightly left of centre, no matter how hard I try. I will never be able to catch up with my peers. Even if I decided to grace god’s green earth with my own bundle of pure dysfunction – I would be too late. All of my peers have kids in Primary School already! I am SO behind schedule! What bothers me more than the fact that I cannot keep up with my peers is the fact that I am annoyed that I cannot keep up with my peers. Furthermore, I should probably stop people from telling me their ‘opinion’ on what I should be doing...

My problem, if you could call it that is that instead of trying to conform, I should just be myself and be honest. Always easier than it sounds. You see, when it comes to pushy saleswomen, rude waiters and strangers who cut me off when I am driving – I am the Chuck Norris of confrontation. But for my peers, I just seem to be lacking a back bone of sorts. For instance, a rather ‘rubesque’ woman in my office told me off and said that women with our body shapes should not consider wearing a wedding dress like that. I then sat there for the next hour and smiled politely about the dress that she had decided that would suit me better – something between a smock and a tent, I think it was. I even replied with a meek ‘oh’ when what I REALLY meant was how can you possibly get our body shapes confused? I am an hour-glass and you shaped like a damn sphere! A blob of goo delicately balanced on chubby legs. Or perhaps it would have been appropriate to tell the man at my work to bugger off after he had asked if I had a tattoo on my tits. Nothing shows professionalism like asking a co-worker that. I giggled and said ‘oh you’ when what I really meant was – why don’t you spend a little less time worrying about my tits and worry a little more about your own rapidly developing ‘man cans’. Perve. These people, these are the people who deserve – and I mean, really deserve my full honesty. Who deserve me to tell them that I think that they are nothing more than a waste of space. But I don’t. However, if I get bad service at the makeup department, you can bet that I

will be sending a very stern e-mail at my earliest convenience!

What have I decided to do about being the minority? The girl in the corner? The only one eating the funny coloured dip? Nothing at all. I get older and even though I spend entire evenings worrying about the how hydrated I am (is my pee a funny colour) or that my skin feels weird after I eat pizza(this can't be normal...) – I don't actually do anything about it. Some days I will spend hours fuming on the inside because I will be wearing uncomfortable underwear, but I still continue to wear them for some reason. So is this a message about letting your freak flag fly? I guess it is – but after you are done flying it... feel very awkward and very bad about yourself. And then eat a whole box of chocolate...

© 2010 Belinda Iziercich