

FITTING-OUT

BREAK-FREE FROM THE PRESSURE OF PERFECT SELF-IMAGE



By Abbey Elalouf

I hate my teeth. I hate my hair. I hate my nose. I hate my personality. The list goes on. The pressure to be skinnier or prettier has altered who I am, but why? People care so deeply about their reputation and how they look. I felt obligated to become insecure too.

In 6th grade, I started caring what others thought of me. I never wanted to go to the mall with certain people because I hated being told to, “get a bigger size,” or certain styles wouldn’t “compliment me.” Those words would ring in my ears as I put the shirt back. Why did it even matter to them what shirt I wanted to buy? Was I a person who lets others knock me down and pick out my flaws? Where did the girl, who never cared what anyone thought, go? The girl who would wear stripes on top of plaid with a big rainbow skirt?

I started to change myself as I entered middle school. Not only my looks, but also my personality. I was constantly told I was too much, too loud, and too extroverted for just being myself. I started talking less, dressing differently, and being more reserved.

When did it become okay to tell others who they should be, or how they should act? It took me an eternity to learn to overlook what others thought about me and to be able to tune their comments out. In middle school, I only cared about how I looked, dressed, acted, and most of all, who I hung out with. I craved the feeling of being wanted, and when I received it, I realized how toxic it was.

I promised myself in elementary school I wouldn’t try to be popular, but I broke that promise the second I stepped foot into school.

Being popular came with requirements and comments like, “to be in the group you must...”

or, “well, all of us are doing this, so you have to also.” I don’t know why I let others influence me so greatly. With words like knives, people sliced me apart each day.

When I started to realize who I was becoming, I hated it and quickly began to ‘fix’ myself. I worked day and night to rediscover my true self, and to find people who brought out the real me. I could finally wash my hands of every toxic person who made me feel like I was less than.

Every person has issues they struggle with, but they shouldn’t be rooted in others’ opinions. I believe every person should be honest with their friends and tell them how they feel.

No one should be so incredibly insecure they feel the need to bring others down and attack them. That is unjustified.

It’s crucial to remember you are never alone and

judgment from others is a projection of their own insecurities.

Surround yourself with people you can trust and who love you for you, and not someone they expect you to be.

I now look at myself in the mirror with a new take.

Today, I love my hair, teeth, body, and everything in between because it makes me who I am.

I don’t have a problem with others having opinions. My problem, is when others use their opinions to drag me down. All I ask is that everyone blocks out unnecessary criticism. Everyone should know they are perfect and more than enough, just as they are.

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