

This I Believe...

I believe in your own personal voice and the self-confidence to be proud of it, because we live in a world that tries to silence dissenters. I grew up in a lower middle class family, in a small town in Pennsylvania. There is one high school, no shops except antique stores, plenty of farms, and an unerringly high amount of white republicans. I wouldn't exactly say conformity is demanded, but anything different is scrutinized. To intimate this local thinking: my dad only stares questionably at me when he hears the music I listen to, my mother wouldn't let me own anything black for a year because she thought it would give into my eccentric 'tendencies', and my sisters ridicule anything I pretty much do or say because it doesn't fit into their view, more like their view defined by society, of the world. I love them, but I cannot say they fully understand me. I think sometimes they wish I was as like-minded as they are, but I was never able to keep up the charade of 'normalcy'. It seems there is something in me that rebels against anyone's authority but my own. It is not the urge to be different, I have been challenged on that too many times for me not to know that it is just a stubborn refusal to like something, do something, and think something just because everyone else does. If I honestly like what the vast majority likes, and sometimes I do, I have no problem saying that truth. But I also like the off-beat, the obscure, and I have that right, I have the right to be true to myself. There is nothing I am that isn't sincere, and I have no problem letting other people know, even if it comes down with censure. I am me, and I would love if others were themselves, because I would accept them for it. There is not enough true acceptance in the world, not enough faith in ourselves and each other to rise above the limited, antiquated perceptions of conventionality and do what we want. Anything that we want. Until we all reach out and speak up about who we truly are, those who have already reached self-enlightenment will risk exposure. Risk it I say, challenge all, scream your name with everything you do- the personal strength gained will carry you through the haters. My mom always says, in the most loving way, if everybody's swimming right, I'm drowning left, and she is right. If it is something I want to do, no one can 'save' me from succumbing to my own choices. So go drown, figuratively speaking of course, your voice isn't on the approved surface of society, it is down below, in the waiting depths of yourself.