



The Art of Authenticity

Eisse Van den broeck

Hello everybody. My name is Eisse. You might be like *What?* which is an understandable reaction, I get that a lot. Having a name like that demands a lot of repeating, correcting, some even make fun of me for it to the point it sounds like a broken record. This is why I have wished multiple times I would have been gifted with another name.

A few months ago, I got so fed up that I went to my father to talk about it while he was watching football on TV. *Dad, why did you guys name me Eisse? I absolutely hate that name!* Do you know what he responded to that? *Ask your mother.*

So, when I did, she returned my question. *Eisse, why don't you want to be original?*

I told her I was sick of having to hear lousy jokes all the time, and that I just wanted to fit in with a regular name. She said *Darling, when you get asked who you are, you respond with your name. But you forget that you're not a word your parents labelled you with. You're a soul, a soul you should express through your behavior, presence, and appearance.*

This got me thinking. What made me afraid of standing out? Because after all, I would hate it even more if I would get confused all the time with the 30 other Annas or Lisas in school. So why was there a need, but not a desire to be like the others?

Society has made lots of progress through time as to being yourself, feeling confident no matter what you look like. *Expressing your soul through appearance.* You should appear the way you feel, not the way others expect you to be.

Weirdly, I still see kids getting bullied for their uniqueness every day, just like me.

And for what? Because I can assure you, I've never been laughed at by somebody I desired to be like. People like Coco Chanel or Christian Dior would never make fun of you for trying to become a fashion designer, since they know you have to start somewhere. And we have to start with ourselves.

From my point of view, we should not be led by phony commercials imposing one style on everyone! All houses must become minimalistic, white and sleek. No bits and bobs everywhere like grandma's living room? Benches in the park have become ordinary pieces of metal, and lost their romantic ornaments like you see in the movies. And this lifeless 'trend' reflected itself on our appearance. We started dressing all the same, casual way. Following the stream, just like dead fish do. How can we be who we really are, if we're constantly busy trying to fit in as another face in the crowd?

You only live once. Make them remember you as an icon who doesn't care what others think. When you reach that mindset, you will become unstoppable. Nothing can kill you more than your own thoughts. You become you, not a copy of society.

Moral of the story? Be authentic, be unique, embrace originality. Moms are always right.

Deze column werd geschreven voor Woord in actie en mag niet voor andere doelen gebruikt worden zonder de toestemming van de schrijver.



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