

## **Which side do I belong to?**

Sometimes I do not know who I am. I am constantly asking myself the same three questions: Am I white? Am I black? Can I pick sides? I know that I am black and that i am white, but ever since i was little i always wanted to label myself. I guess this is something that stems from that fact that my father was never in my life. I do know that i grew up “privileged” because i was raised by my caucasian side of the family. I'm not sure why that would affect me but it did. I didn't think less of myself or that no one would think less of me because who my family was. It wasn't until i dated my first boyfriend, and he became frightened to take me home to his parents. I was so confused as to why that would be a problem. I told my mom and she said because you're black. The look on my face was confusion and disbelief, because who cares. If i'm respectful and nice the color of my skin should not affect the way I am treated. That was when all the terrors of me being told as a child “not everyone is going to treat you the way you should be treated, because of your skin color.” As a child that was confusing to hear and kind of scary because it is unknown on how people would perceive me. I remember telling my first boyfriend that i wanted to meet his parents because i internally thought i could change their mind. I went to meet them and it was fine, but i could sense their questioning eyes or maybe their confusion as to why their son liked me and not someone who they had thought was ideal for him. Fast forward to present day, i just recently came to terms with i am who i am. No if and or buts. It doesn't matter who thinks less of me because i know what i bring to the table. I know what i can and can't achieve. No matter what happens at the end of the day we all lay in our own bed with our own thoughts and opinions. Back to my racial identity, for the longest i thought of myself as just white. I wasn't open to the idea of myself being black, just because that resembled my father. I didn't like him because he left me with no father figure, no one to look up too besides my mom. I didn't want to be any part of him. As i got older i realized all the great things black men and women accomplished and i didn't have to neglect other sides of me because of who hurt me in my past. There are so many other African American people I can look up to, feel loved by, or feel a connection with. Now I am proud to be black and I wouldn't want it any other way. You know as a woman i thought of the day I have kids and whether or not they will go through this same mind boggling thought. If they do i truly would feel melancholy toward them, just because it took me so long to be okay with myself. To finally be comfortable in my own skin. It wasn't the fact that i was black it all stemmed from my self esteem. I had to learn that if i loved myself enough, I can love each and every part of myself. At the end of the day i know that my life is what i make of it and if i make it happy it will be, and if i make it negative that is how i will proceed.