Shauntell Journet

Does everyone here like apples? Well, not everyone I’m sure, AND DEFINITELY NOT ME! I never did like apples. You take a bite, and they have a thick skin, and then there is the soft, and somewhat mushy texture of the fruit, UGH!!

Anyway, I chose apples because they represent my thick skin and the fact that I am also soft on the inside. Apples also represent my passion for education, and oddly enough, the way that I have always felt about apples is the same way that I felt about myself for a long time.

My name is Shauntell Journet, and I would like to share a little bit about myself, and how I relate to this apple.

Growing up I was always told that I was not good enough and that there was nothing about me worth loving. If you hear that often enough, especially coming from your mother, you will internalize it. I truly believed her. There were so many things in my life at the time that I could not care less about, and I was on the top of that list. OH, and apples may have been second…

Speaking of caring less, Over the years I have developed a persona that comes across as harsh and straightforward. With people that I am not close to, I am forced to have a thick skin. Just like the apple has a thick skin that serves as a barrier to protect the soft flesh of the fruit from bruising, my thick-skinned persona is nothing more than a security measure, an unconscious barrier to protect myself from emotional bruising.

BUTTTTT, if you can make it past security, you will get to the real me. You know it takes little effort to bite through the apple's skin to get to the flesh. For those of you who like apples, you know that the flesh is the sweetest part, and the same goes for me; If you take the time to get to know me, it takes little effort to get past my thick skin and experience the sweetest part of me, which is my heart and vulnerability. Once I let someone in, I give too much, I love too hard. And there is nothing about my story that I am not willing to share.  I just pray that the people I let into my emotional space will handle me with care.

I have suffered a lot of emotional bruises throughout my life, but if it weren’t for those bruises, I wouldn’t have sealed the fate of this poor apple as the co-star of my introduction speech. Apples are symbolic of knowledge and education dating back to The Garden of Eden. At 15 years old I was encouraged by my mother to quit high school, and I did just that. This haunted me for years. I felt robbed of my education. But because of that, here I am 20 years later majoring in secondary education so that I can inspire, motivate, and educate. When an ex-student runs into me later in life, I want to be remembered as a person what made a positive educational impact on his/her life.

After spending so much time with this apple trying to define its characteristics, I realized something; I MAY HAVE BEEN WAY TO HARD ON THIS APPLE and way too hard on MYSELF. I found this apple to be quite simple, and beautiful, and over the years I also found the beauty in myself. I love my thick skin; it allows me to survive, it allows me to stand up for myself, stand up for others, and stand up for what is right. Also, that soft, mushy, and vulnerable inside allows me to still give love, and receive it even after all that I have been through and it has allowed me to discover my passions and my purpose.

I have learned a lot going over this speech; For one, APPLES AIN’T FOR EVERYBODY! But hell, NEITHER AM I. But just because one person can’t see the beauty in something, that doesn’t mean that it is not there.

So, from where I stand today I can honestly say that I LOVE MYSELF.

 OH, AND APPLES, I LOVE APPLES!