

"Could I Have Been Anyone Other Than Me?"

In a popular song, Dave Mathews asks the rhetorical question, "Could I have been anyone other than me?" That question is one that is very important to us as young women who live in a society that is very eager to define our gender. Think about it: In every element of society, your life has a definition. The question you need to ask yourself is what is your definition of yourself?

Buddhism is a philosophy that stresses "satori", or "the awakened state of mind". Followers spend their lifetimes meditating on who they really are. However, just a few minutes spent in self-analysis can yield amazing results. We are all at points in our lives when we are making big decisions about what directions our lives will take. It is so crucial to make sure that you are choosing your own life. After all, it's yours. It is up to you where you want to go with it, and with whom you wish to share it.

Right now, society is trying to label you: "Generation X", "slacker", "beauty", "Southern", "naive". Chances are, that when you think about you and what you want to represent, it is unlikely that any of these words spring immediately to mind. It is more probable that you think of your first day of kindergarten, your eleventh birthday party, your first date, when your grandmother died in the middle of your fourteenth winter. In other words, the definitive events and people who have directly influenced who you are spring to mind.

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. Chapel, we

remembered an icon of tumultuous times. But we did not focus on the fact that he was Southern, or had a Ph.D., or even that he went to jail for what he believed in. Instead, we celebrated his ideals: peace, equality, and justice for everyone. This was who King really was.

Recently, Dr. Bauso spoke on the risks of being an intelligent woman in our society. Certainly, intelligence and the ability to contribute to the community are goals for many of us. But what comes along with that? Do you get labeled a "bitch" by coworkers because you are assertive, and go after what you deserve? Do you get called a "snob" because you participate in the philanthropic efforts of the Junior Women's League? For all of your efforts, you will pay a price with all of the labels that you will receive. However, if you truly know yourself, you will have the strength to rise above them.

The most important thing you can know about yourself is what it is that makes you happy. Happiness comes from within. It is something that no one should be able to take away from you. It is also one of the many components that makes you who you are.

So, could you have been anyone other than you? The answer to that question is no, because you choose who you are. By choosing what defines you, you choose what makes you similar and different from anyone else. Just keep in mind that who you are is just fine, whomever you choose to be.

Student Government

Elections for the 1995-1996 Student Government Association are just around the corner.

Right now, the Nominations Committee is in the thick of deciding who will run for the offices.

At Saint Mary's, the Student Government Association includes every student, not just the officers. It is up to each one of us to make a difference through this organization. One of the most important ways in which we do this is by carefully deciding on whom to vote for.

The candidates will be asked to come before the student body and to address them in some way. Some will do a great skit, others will make speeches. Listen carefully to what these young women have to say. Chances are, that they have given a lot of thought to their presentations.

After you have examined all of the facts, make the choice for the candidate whom you feel best represents your ideals.

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The New Multi-Cultural Heritage

My father grew up in a town with a section of the newspaper headed with the title "News of interest to Colored people". My great-grandfather was one of the few white doctors in Winston Salem that treated blacks. In high school, my father's law partner played basketball in a jersey discarded by the city's white high school.

My parents and the rest of their generation never had a lab partner with skin a different color than their own. They sat in a history, or English, or math class amid a group that was one race. In these classes, they studied about George Washington and Ben Franklin from their history books. Curiously, the chapter on George Washington Carver was missing from these books. As were the chapters on Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglas.

I am of a different generation. One of my favorite pictures from my childhood was taken during a trip to the beach. In it, my four best friends and I are playing in the sand. Among the tangle of arms and legs, are skin colors that range from porcelain to mahogany. It was unacceptable not to tolerate people of every color in my house. My parents' idols were all people who had worked for equality and justice. They instilled in me an inherent

respect for anyone, regardless of color, who made a positive contribution to society.

I realize my background is unique, but what is not unique is that I have to function in a multicultural society. Ignorance was acceptable, even preferred by members of older generations. Our generation has lab partners that could be one of as many races as there are chairs in a classroom. Our generation sits in History classes that do not contain just one color of skin. We cannot learn just the lighter side of our collective history while ignoring the work of people such as Harriet Tubman and Martin Luther King.

While my history book differs somewhat from my father's, it includes a paragraph on the underground railroad and a page on the civil rights movement, the history taught in school is still largely the realm of dead white men. Therefore, there is the need for a special month to celebrate the contributions made to our society by Blacks.

Black History month gives our generation an option that members of our parents never had. We are not separated by school or law, only by ignorance. Black History month is more than learning about skin color. It is learning to see beyond it.