

So what did I do? I created a new box. And this box was defined by what I did, and not who I was. What I loved, but didn't think I could get away with, were dresses, ruffles, bold jewelry and lipstick.

And it was so confusing for me because that is not what a tree-hugging, world-traveling, kale-eating, stay-at-home mama wears. On a Tuesday! Or is it?

I want to dive in a little deeper and talk about what **Inside-out Congruency** is and where you find it.

When I say congruency begins inside of you, I'm not talking about the tired, exhausted, worn-out you. I'm not talking about the you that needs to lose 10 pounds or start going to the gym, I'm talking about the essence of you. Your spirit -that place inside you that is pure, unadulterated magic.

As John O'Donohue, poet and philosopher, says, "There is a place in you that has never been wounded where there is still a sureness in you, where there is a seamlessness in you, and where there is a confidence and tranquility in you." That is where you go.

If you can connect to that part of you and define it, then you can answer the question, "Who am I?" And then imagine going to your closet and only choosing clothes that connect you to that you-ness.

Just think of the power that you possess underneath everybody's expectations of who they think you should be. I want you to imagine two scenarios for a minute: In the first scenario, I want you to imagine my daughter, Raissa, as an 11-year-old girl, she's standing on the playground, eyes down, shoulders forward, wearing a dress that leaves her feeling like a stranger in her own body.

Now imagine some kid, coming up to her, teasing her because she looks different than other kids. How is she going to respond? I've taught her that she's perfect, just the way she is, as long as she fits within society's norms and standards. But she doesn't fit. She looks different. How could I ever expect her to see and celebrate her own beauty or fit in, when she's a stranger in her own body.

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Now I want you to imagine her again, but this time, standing tall and proud of her body, eyes forward, shoulders back, wearing a button-down shirt and a bow tie, completely sure of who she is. She's right there.

Now imagine some kid coming up to her, teasing her because she's wearing hearing-aids, or because she has a four-fingered hand, or because she's wearing boy clothes. How is she going to respond? I'll tell you how she responds because I've seen it happen on the playground time and time again. She hears their criticism of her body or her style, and you know what she does? She rolls her eyes, shrugs her shoulders, snickers and walks away.

If I'm within earshot, she knows mama is going to be on the side lines, smoke coming out of her ears, so she says to me, "Mama, don't worry about it. They're probably just having a bad day." They are having a bad day, and that is the power of Inside-out Congruency.

When you know who you are and where you belong, you don't have to wait for anybody else's approval. Style isn't really about the clothes. It's about who you are on the inside and how you choose to show up in the world.

So, do me a favor: When you go to get dressed tomorrow morning, don't ask yourself, "What am I going to wear today?"

Instead, I want you to pause, look into the mirror, take a deep breath, and ask yourself this, “Who am I, and how do I want to show up in the world?”

Thank you.

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