Oreo

March 25, 2011 By Aundaray Guess

I remember the first time I met Joel. The first thing I noticed about him was he had this James Earl Jones type voice that drove me crazy. In fact I would sometimes call his answering machine knowing he wasn't home just to listen to his voice and now I'm fortunate to hear it everyday as we've been together for 11 years.

Since the relationship we have all the stuff that comes it, laughter, disagreements, compromises, who get the remote for the night or giving each other space until we get over the minor thing we were fighting about, but no matter what we always found our way back to each other.

Initially when meeting Joel there were two concerns. The first was that he was negative and I was HIV positive and the second was that he was white. In a crazy way it was his color that made me had more doubts than his status.

I grew up with a mother who had a phrase she would drill into our heads. "if they can't use your comb, don't bring them home". She said this as she was a child of the civil rights era when segregation was alive and well, not to mention she was raised in the south. Her views were so strong that once my uncle brought a white woman to Thanksgiving dinner and she flipped. I learned not only can white people can be prejudiced.

During the dating process with Joel I knew there was going to be some societal issues based on the fact we were a mixed race couple. And there were in the form of looks when walking down the street to eating together at a restaurant or sitting next to each other in a movie theatre. There was always looks even though people didn't know the aspect of our relationship. For all they knew he could have just been my friend. It's almost like if a black person and a white person are together in the same space, it's unnatural or sexualized. Yet I never let it deter me and learned to develop blinders.

Another interesting aspect comes from the gay community. If you really listen you can hear the whispers. Some thinking Joel was only with me because of the perception of the size of my penis or some who were convinced that I was with Joel thinking he was my sugar daddy and i was getting a free material ride in life.

In fact we took a recent trip to Italy and co-workers assumed he bought the tickets for me when it was I who bought the tickets for both of us as a Valentine Day gift. Yet I let them believe what they wanted to believe. Why should I explain my relationship?

I may get flack but it seems as far as verbal comments the most negative ones come from my own black community. They may not say it to my face but it gets back to me how I'm a sellout and how can I write or have any interest in black issues when I'm dating someone white. Then we have the perception that I'm a Snow Queen. For those not familiar with the term it's usually directed to someone of color who only dates or prefer white men. And their assumption were so off based as I have dated all races but again I wasn't going to use the energy to justify who I dated.

I can only tell my side of my experience as an African-American man as he may have had different reactions. But I know it's not everyone, but for those small ignorant ones they don't realize that love has no color. And for those who base their love on a color, I understand it's a personal preference but I feel

you’re missing out on so many wonderful people.
I’m no longer in a place where I give concern what others think. It’s nice to have someone to share in your life. especially being positive, knowing he has no fear and he accepts me unconditional. The fact he’s white, that’s just who he is. Another added aspect is that when things happen in the news along the lines of race or something happens to me in the outside because of my race, there’s comfort knowing I can come home and share it with him.
Even my mother has changed. She is no longer the bigot she once was when I was a child. Joel is like a son to her. It’s all about understanding and in hindsight I had to take a look at her history and the time she lived in and what she went through. But that’s all behind her.
It tickles me when people say they don’t see color. I ask how can you not look at me and see color. can’t you see the blackness all over my skin. My blackness comes with history and culture, achievements and differences that are not filled with negativity. I want them to see my color, I just don’t want to be judge just because of the color I am and the person I’m with.
When you have a relationship that works, who can say that it’s wrong?
Love plus love always equals love, no matter what color it is and never let it be based on the opinions of others. Just be happy!

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