

Ashley Lyons

Mckinnie

English 1001

September 13, 2012

The Day My Nose Ring Shook the World

Getting a non-ear piercing was something I had wanted for a very long time, but I had no idea that a simple piece of jewelry could cause so much trouble. After years of attempting to convince my mother, she finally agreed to take me to get my nose pierced. I was ecstatic. It was on my seventeenth birthday and just a few days after Christmas. I didn't realize how nervous I was about the whole thing until the day of. I spent the whole car ride to the tattoo shop pinching my nostril with my fingernails. "You can do this," I had thought to myself. "Don't wimp out now. It's not a big deal. So many people do this. People have felt worse pains. You're going to love it afterwards." I kept those thoughts running through my head until I sat in the piercer's chair. He handed me a plastic container of their display starter rings and I picked blue, my favorite color. "It will feel like a bee sting," the piercer told me as he put cold disinfecting cream on my nose. I had never been stung by a bee before. As he positioned the needle on the dot he had drawn on my nostril, I took a deep breath and counted to three. Before I knew it, I had watering eyes and a four inch needle sticking through my nose. Then he slipped the jewelry in and it was over.

The last day of Christmas break I finally gave thought to my school's "no facial piercings" policy. It was as ignored as the "no open toed shoes" policy. Kids walked around with all kinds of piercings; tongue, eyebrow, and several variations of lip. I wasn't too worried about it, because I was one of their best students. They wouldn't hassle me about it, I was sure. But I was wrong. I was treated like I

committed some kind of crime. I had only did something that made me happy despite knowing other people wouldn't like it, but I didn't think it would be such a big deal. The whole thing taught me that it should only matter what I think of myself and that it's stupid to be so hung over what someone else does.

It started on that first day back. No one had really noticed besides friends and people I had previously told. They would compliment me on my nose ring and I would compliment them on their new shoes, necklace, or backpack and we went about our day. My first class was a teacher I saw twice a day; in the morning for English and in the afternoon for yearbook. She didn't even notice my new piece of jewelry until that afternoon when a student pointed it out. The expression on her face immediately went from nonchalant to pure shock. It was the mouth hanging open kind of shock. After telling me how ugly she thought facial piercings were, she demanded I remove it over the weekend. Well that weekend came and went, I didn't remove it, and she carried on with her busy life not mentioning my nose ring again.

Over the course of a few weeks I grew accustomed to getting weird looks from various faculty members and comments about how I didn't seem like the type of student who would get something like that. Though the fact that people felt the need to stop what they were doing just to give me their opinion about it irritated me a little bit. Nothing was worse than when one teacher wouldn't allow me into her classroom to interview a student because she didn't like that "thing" on my face. I felt humiliated. It seemed like anytime someone wanted to give me hell about my nose ring was only because they "don't like it" and not because it was actually against some disregarded rule.

My trigonometry teacher was the one that started the real drama. Three months after having my nose ring, he FINALLY noticed it. "You're prettier without that earring in your face," he told me. He was the only one that actually brought up the disregarded rule, too. "It's because it's a distraction." The

irony almost killed me. He said he would give me until the next day to remove it or he would report me every day following until I did. So I decided to go to the principal on my accord and discuss it with him. Being the nice man that he is, he told me that he couldn't care less that I had my nose pierced. But it was a rule that was beyond him and since it was causing trouble something had to be done about it. He apologized and sent me to the assistant principal to deal with it.

The assistant principal allowed me to finish with my whole defense before brushing off everything I had said and sending me to in school suspension (ISS). Upon my arrival to the room with carpeted walls, the ISS advisor took one look at me and sentenced me to the "isolation" room. I attempted to object, but she stuck her palm in my face as if I should talk to the hand because the face doesn't want to hear it. I walked out and went right back to the assistant principal's office. After telling her how I was treated, she didn't seem to care at all. She told me that I was to spend the rest of the week in ISS and if I didn't have my nose ring removed at that point then I was to be suspended.

At home, the feedback wasn't much better. My mom, who paid for it, and my dad were the only ones who seemed to like it. My grandmother was disappointed in me and lectured me constantly about how I can't get a job with a facial piercing. My step dad pulled the bible on me and insisted that God doesn't allow the "destruction of your body." Although, me not being religious and the fact that earlobe piercings were somehow still "okay" did not impede on his biblical argument. My cousin insisted that I only wanted my nose pierced to be cool and that it was disgusting.

I had enough and just took the nose ring out. It wasn't worth all of the unnecessary trouble. I was extremely disappointed, but there was nothing I could do. I didn't understand why a tiny stone that just happened to be in some place other than my ear should be such a big deal. People had let their opinions get in the way of what was really important. I missed a class that day going from principal, to assistant principal, to ISS, and back to the assistant principal again. After a few sulky days, I decided that

once I graduated high school I would get my nose repierced and anything else I wanted, because it's MY body. I didn't care what people thought of it, because it was something that made me happy. It was something that I just thought was pretty. If anyone else has a problem with it I shouldn't let it get to me. It only matters what I think of myself.

That next school year, my senior year, I was elected student body president by the people who gave me weird looks. I was named a yearbook editor by the person who made a fuss and then forgot all about it. I was congratulated by the assistant principal after speaking at a National Honor Society ceremony as the president. She called me one of their best. Everyone had seemed to forget the nose ring mishap just the year before. A few days after being privileged enough to sit on the stage at graduation, I got my nose repierced. A few days after starting college, I got my eyebrow pierced. I still get weird looks from time to time, but they don't get to me anymore. Getting my piercings are a couple of the best things I've ever done, because they helped me to stop caring so much about what other people think. I wear them proudly and if anyone doesn't like them then it's a good thing they don't have them.