

Judging a Book by Its Cover

Don't judge a book by its cover. It's a short yet powerful saying at which we all fail. Every day. Unfortunately, with the advent of the Internet, the whole world can share with our failures when we post them online or on Facebook. For example:

I'm sure you've heard about the overweight news anchor from America who got an email from a viewer who criticized her weight and for not being a good example to young girls. The news anchor went on air in response and called the guy a bully who didn't know her. Turns out she has a thyroid condition which makes losing weight hard. She's also a triathlete, runs marathons, and has a beautiful family and a successful career.

Um . . . now which part of that isn't being a good example?

The viewer responded by expressing his hopes in her "transforming herself" over the upcoming year to positively "influence the health and psychological well-being" of kids in their area.

Coming from the viewpoint of a person who has fought hard to lose weight and keep it off (he admitted he was obese as a kid and has been fighting fat all his life), it's nonetheless not a very compassionate view. At least he apologized for hurting her feelings.

Meanwhile, another woman was criticized for her "book cover." It wasn't her weight which caused a backlash; it was her facial hair. As a practitioner of Sikhism, this university student is forbidden to alter her body because the body is considered a gift of God. That means hair must remain uncut. When her hormone levels changed during puberty, it caused her to grow more facial hair.

When someone snapped a photo of her (unbeknownst to her) while she was standing in line at the library and then posted it online, it started an avalanche of criticism about her looks, leading some to even question her gender.

While "bearded women" are anathema to modern, "civilized" cultures which dictate that to be acceptable women must shave a good portion of their bodies, this gal has an extremely positive outlook on life and responded to the ridicule in a positive way: "Yes, I realize that my gender is often confused and I look different than most women. My attitude and thoughts and actions have more value in them than my body... by not focusing on the physical beauty, I have time to cultivate those inner virtues and hopefully, focus my life on creating change and progress for this world in any way I can."

Um . . . wow. 'Nuff said.

The person who took the photo of her soon apologized. "Making fun of people is funny to some but incredibly degrading to the people you're making fun of. It was an incredibly rude, judgmental, and ignorant thing to post."

Here are two women thrust upon the world's stage because ignorant people judged them by their covers. When are we going to stop? When will we cease insisting that people transform themselves in order to be more acceptable? When will we look at the inside of a person instead of basing our opinions on the outside?

When will we stop altering our own covers to be more marketable to the world?