

RiverBender Blog: The Search for Identity Through Coffee Snobbery

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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I'm pleased to report that I'm slowly becoming a coffee snob.

Well, sort of. I'm more of a "Folgers is alright with me" person. But I *want* to be someone who grinds beans for espresso and can wax poetic about the notes in a cup of coffee. I'm not at that level quite yet, but I have high hopes.

Why do I want to become someone with barista-level knowledge? We all know that person, and they're annoying. But the thing is, I want to have that aesthetic. I want that casually sophisticated appeal.

My current aesthetic is more "English major meets seasonal depression." A lot of sweaters and last-minute instant coffee, basically. It feels less pulled-together than I'd like. It screams, "I hit 'snooze' one too many times."

I'm kidding, mostly. I don't really know what my aesthetic is, I just know that I like the idea of crafting a vibe that is more effortless and self-assured. Of course, the irony here is that by pretending to be this person, it is effortful and self-conscious.

I think this desire to appear differently than you are is a pretty natural human experience, but my question is: How long does it take? How much longer until I'm *actually* confident instead of just faking it?

If you know, reader, please write in and tell me your secret.

This quarter-life crisis hit me the other day when I was cleaning out my closet. A little spring cleaning seemed like the perfect way to spend a Sunday, and I started out strong with my piles to donate, toss and keep. But past the clothes I wear all the time — basically, two inches deep into the closet — I discovered a whole vault of clothing that I had either outgrown or completely forgotten about.

An old Halloween costume. My junior year prom dress. And even, hiding way in the back, a tiny ballerina outfit. The phases of my life, all laid out in front of me.

I looked back at my current outfits, my mediocre cup of coffee with too much creamer, and felt compelled to reconsider. These were all of the people I had been. But who was I now?

Or rather — who could I be, if I was just a little better than my current self, just a little more assured, more refined?

Hence the coffee talk. I don't really want to be a coffee snob, but I like the idea of having a schtick. By deciding on a thing, maybe I can decide on the person I want to be.

Of course, life doesn't really work this way, and it's also a little pathetic. But these are some of the things I've been thinking about lately. A confidence crisis? Maybe. A natural response to the age of social media? Probably. I want to be exactly who I am, just with sharper edges.

There's no natural conclusion to this column, because I'm still searching for the person who fits into that ballerina outfit and that prom dress and my current favorite sweater. I'm still sipping my instant coffee and dreaming of Nespresso machines.

But I'll say this: At least I'm doing this self-discovery alongside everyone else. Because if you tell me you can't relate to this at least a little bit, you're lying. We've all wanted to be just a little better than we are. I think even the most confident person on the planet has thought about these insecurities before.

So, like it or not, we're in this together. You and me. And we'll get through it. In the meantime, I'll bring the coffee.