

Today's Society

"Haha, he's mad gay look at his pants." My boy, Chad, was talking about a guy who was walking in front of us and happened to have on pink pants.

There's something funny about that sentence.. It's just that I could remember that there was a time in my life when I was Chad. I was *always* calling someone gay or saying things like "She's not supposed to do that because she's a girl." I would always judge someone off of what they wore. Not like the normal judging that we all do, because everyone makes judgments off of how someone acts or how they speak. This type of judging was just flat out negative. I never thought that what I was doing was bad. I think it was because of the fact that the people who I hang around were just like me. However, today, I am the *complete* opposite.

The thing that changed my life and motivated me to want to help others was my job that I've had since 2011. I worked at the Boston Public Health Commission with a program called Start Strong. Our main description is to prevent teen dating violence and promote healthy relationships. We do this by going to local community centers in Boston and running workshops. We also try to challenge society in these workshops. We do workshops on topics like gender/societal norms and we get the teens thinking about if these norms are actually fair. A realistic example would be the societal norm that girls shouldn't have sex because they are girl but guys can have all the sex they want.

My job changed me for the better. I feel an intense feeling of freedom whenever I go out in this world. I never really have any negative energy towards anyone and it just feels great to be a positive person. The problem with people today, and even the media, is that they put men and women into these gender boxes and expect them to abide by these characteristics that are in these boxes. Then, when they step out of these boxes, or be themselves, they get judged. This needs to be stopped. To whomever is reading this, hopefully you can spread the word and

try to get your peers to follow. Imagine a world where we all were able to do whatever we wanted without the fear of being judged.