

Accept Me as I am

Students will know and be able to do:

- Analyze the role of the speaker of the poem.
- Explain how the speaker influences the tone of the poem.
- Recognize sexual identity as a part of people's human identity.

Student activities:

Opener:

1. Students brainstorm in partners what it means to "come out."
2. Students share out their ideas in pairs.
3. Talk about the significance of this process of sharing identity with others and how it is different from and similar to other kinds of identity.

Poetry activity:

1. Read letter/poem "Accept Me As I Am" aloud as a class (either teacher or student-led).
2. Students complete a free-write answering the following questions:
Who is writing this letter? How do you know? Who is the letter for? How does the person writing the letter feel? How does she want the person reading the letter to respond? How do you know?
3. Write the following questions on the board and have students talk with their partner about them or lead a class discussion:
 - a. Who is the speaker of the poem?
 - b. What do we know about the speaker?
 - c. Is the speaker in the poem the same as the poet? Why or why not?
 - d. How is the speaker's relationship with her mother?
 - e. What is she asking her mother for?
 - f. What issues of identity are present in this poem?
 - g. What lines in the poem exhibit the "coming out" process for the speaker?

Note: Poems are often very personal and often can be an outlet for the poet's own* experience. But poems can also create characters (speakers) to tell stories or make a point.

Extensions:

1. In pairs (or as homework) students choose a line from the poem to analyze. Ask – how does this express the speaker's identity as lesbian? Be specific.
2. What does the speaker mean when she says: "We get long so well when we talk, saying nothing at all. Each knowing we're not saying what we're thinking. Sad." What is sad? How do you talk but say nothing? Has this ever happened with someone close to you? How did it make you feel?

*Umans, M. (Ed.) (1988). *Like coming home: Coming-out letters*. Austin, TX: Edward-William Publishing Company.

Accept Me As I Am

I am different, but so are you. Accept me as I am, understand my individuality, it's my reality.

My religious beliefs are difficult I know, for you to understand, but to me, so are yours.

You ask me to share with you, more about me, but you reject what I have to say, and that hurts.

You only know a part of me, the rest I keep inside, afraid of your criticism, and . . . that look in your eyes.

That look that says "I love you." But, your "fantasies" and "self-delusions" have hidden the real you behind your own "deceptive lies."

And if you know the real "me" you'd probably close your eyes and pray to God that I'd be saved.

We get along so well when we talk, saying nothing at all. Each knowing we're not saying what we're thinking. Sad.

Sometimes I see your eyes begging me to lie. To cover up the truth, so you won't have to face it.

Everyone says I hurt you by my rebellious actions. But couldn't they see? You hurt me.

I try so hard in little ways to please you, but to you I am a mystery, a stranger you once know yet never knew.

You say it's been the last few years that my attitudes have changed, but actually I was once you, and now I am being me.

You try so have (and always have) to dress me up in pinks and lace while I choose dull grey's and levi's.

You say my new haircut, looks like a boy's. You'd rather have it long . . . and feminine.

How shocked you were the other day by my outburst. I said I hated men. I don't really hate them, I only said it out of anger.

You would think though, by all these not so subtle clues you would know by now, that I am a lesbian.

Yes, I would tell you, face to face, if I thought you'd understand. But I won't have you cut down another part of me that I hold dear.

I heard you make a comment the other day about "Homosexuals" and "those" kind of people. Yes, it was derogatory, but I chose to ignore it.

There's lots of things I've told you, that you rejected and when you rejected them, you rejected me.

Like when I told you, I wanted to move to San Francisco, and you said it was filled with "gays" and "crime."

Or when I announced I was taking up the martial arts, and you didn't support my efforts like you would have ballet.

You often criticize my choice of reading material saying it is of the devil and I am letting him in.

Mom, I'm asking you to let "me" in, to accept me as I am. Stop trying to conform me to your way of thinking.

It wouldn't really matter to me either way, if I didn't care, but I do care, because mom, I love you.

Thursday, April 10

Special guest!

"Accept me as I am" poem

Be ready to type tomorrow!!!

"Accept Me As I Am"
4/10/08

Quick-Write

Write about a time when you felt unaccepted or judged. What was the situation? Who did you feel was judging you? How did you react? How did the situation make you feel?

◆Volunteers willing to share?

"Accept me as I am"

◆Listen to the poem.

◆Write about:

What are your initial reactions to the poem?

Who do you think is speaking in this poem? What do you know about them? Who is the speaker writing to? What is the speaker trying to say? Why do you think so?

◆Share.

“Accept me as I am”

- ◆ Listen to the 2nd half of the poem.
- ◆ Write about:

What are your initial reactions to the second half of the poem?

What new things did you learn about the speaker in the poem? What is her relationship with her mother? What is she asking her mother for? Why do you think so?

- ◆ Discuss.

“Accept me as I am”

- ◆ What other groups/people face rejection based on their identity?
- ◆ Write your own “Accept me as I am” poem about a time someone wouldn’t accept you or someone you know OR write a poem about a fictional character who is not accepted.

Reflection

- ◆ What new ideas related to identity did you hear or think about in class today?
