

Judgement Day

by Tina Shaw

Somebody please talk me in from the ledge... I've had a rather disturbing thought. It seems that the world judges us from the moment we are born, to the moment we pass. It doesn't matter what our situation, there is always someone who will find something wrong with it and us.

As I sit here in my quiet house (yes it's after seven and my leading man three year old Z, is away in the Land of Nod) and I munch on my four hundredth mini flake - I ponder on comments made by a gaggle of mothers at my son's toddler fitness class. They were joking and laughing about our children pretending to vacuum the carpet, when one of them leaned over conspiratorially to me and said, "I bet he's the **only** man who vacuums at home." I promptly replied "Actually, he's the only man period. I'm a single parent." A hush descended on the gym and the mother in question uttered a quiet sorry and faded away into the background, along with the other mortified parents.

I don't feel odd about my marital status, so why do others? Why is it so hard to believe that I am happy with my lot? Z and I have never known it any other way and we like it. No-one to boss us around, no-one to annoy mummy, no-one to leave the toilet seat up and no-one to throw their wet towels on the bed. Life is perfect. Perhaps coupled people are the strange ones here. I never whinge about my husband (or lack thereof) to my married girlfriends and funnily enough I don't judge them when **they** do. So why is my single standing so shocking and unbecoming to others?

There is always going to be one individual (or in some cases an entire populace) who doesn't approve of the person that you are. We women have had a bit of a rough trot for the last billion years or so. We've been clubbed by cavemen, forced to fight for air while wearing hideous corsets, worked for lower pay-checks than men in the same positions **and** suffered through male domination

of the remote control (i.e. penile extension). Through it all we've stood in our collective high heels, united in the sisterhood. So when our sisters turn against us, who do we have then? In these times of female empowerment, is a single mother a friend or a foe?

When society judges us, we expect it, when our peers judge us; we are thrown for a curve ball and left standing in our field. I feel that I'm a good person (and mother). I'm competent, witty, I brake for small animals and I always put a dollar into the Salvation Army tins. So why am I left with a bad taste in my mouth when confronted with a situation like the one above? I wish that I could let it wash over me. Hell, I survived my twenties, a marriage (and divorce) to the wrong man and a ridiculous office rebound romance that blessed me with my wonderful boy. I have endured fluoro dresses, Milli Vanilli, a ghastly spiral perm, blue eye shadow and thirty one hours of labour **and** come through the other side relatively unscathed. So why oh why does this bother me so much?

I think the answer lies in my true belief that us girls should stick together (no matter what the circumstance). Perhaps it's time for me to hold my head high and confront the doubters amongst you. Let me reintroduce myself. In the immortal words of Samantha Jones (a la Sex and the City), "Hello, my name is Fabulous."

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About The Author

Article written by Tina Shaw of www.singleparentbible.com.au. Tina is available for speaking engagements, editorial and radio journalism and publicity work. You may contact her via the web.

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