

Tell Me About Yourself

“So, tell me about yourself.”

This is why I hate networking events, first dates, meeting new people in general. “Tell me about yourself.” How am I supposed to respond to that?

I consider myself an open book, but when presented with such an open ended question, I don’t know where to start.

What do you want to know? I want to ask.

You probably don’t care to know that my favorite color is purple or that I actually really like airplanes. That my favorite flower is either a sunflower or a tulip depending on my mood, that I love the smell of jasmine on a warm summer night. That the night before I take a trip I spend hours making a new playlist.

I imagine it’s too informal to tell you about the television shows I’m watching – that’s anecdotal evidence about myself, too. If you first define yourself by what you watch, what does that say about you? Probably nothing good.

And if we’re just meeting, it’s too early to tell you my life story. I’d be happy to tell you about my seemingly perfect childhood that was actually rife with loneliness and discontent, but you probably don’t want to hear that. I’d gladly walk you through everything - how depressed I was in high school; that my grandmother and cousin both died when I was 15 and I didn’t know how to cope; that in junior year of high school doctors thought I had cancer and didn’t even tell me until after surgery had confirmed otherwise. I’d show you a picture of me in the one spot on the couch where some of the most important moments of my life happened, the couch where I came out to my friend, then to my mom; the couch where I opened my acceptance letter to Chapman and where I officially accepted my place here. The couch my parents got rid of that couch over Christmas without the significance it had to me.

You definitely don’t want to hear about my career or housing uncertainties. That I’m already questioning my life choices at the age of 22 before I’ve made the choices that matter. You don’t want to know that I’ve never been in a relationship, that at this point I’m not sure whether it’s because I’m picky or because I’m broken.

You don’t want to know the worst parts of me, but without them you’ll never see the best. If you don’t put in any effort into understanding someone, you’ll never have a deep or meaningful relationship on any level. I suppose that’s all right with some people. But not me.

But I don’t want to scare you away with my first sentence. So, instead of being honest, I’ll tell you what you want to hear.

“I’m a writer, I’m about to graduate from Chapman. I’m from the Bay Area. I miss it, but I don’t think I could live there anymore. What about you?”