

You can't let a ruined moment ruin your day.

You also have a choice over how you react to things.

I choose to react to disgusting behavior by giving the offender a piece of my mind.

Yesterday, my girlfriend and I headed downtown to do some work. She had rented a workspace by Pershing Square, so after dropping her off, I walked to an espresso bar I had yet to check out in Little Tokyo. We met for lunch at Grand Central Market a few hours later. After pupusas, we parted ways. I began walking down the street. I passed The International House of Music, and decided to go in.

I was checking out tenor ukuleles. There was a guy nearby me at a counter, looking over at me every so often as he strung an electric guitar. He was a customer, too. He was wearing sunglasses. He had big, curly brown hair. He was wearing bright green. I had a feeling he would speak to me.

"You from around here?" he asked me.

"No. I'm from upstate New York."

We began chatting. Actually, he just began asking me questions.

"Where do you live? Live with anyone? So what are you about?"

He talked a bit about a "pretty famous" cellist he knew when I told him that I play. He told me that he played "actually exciting" music as opposed to what I must be playing as a cellist. I told him the music I play is exciting, thank you very much, although he might not think so. As is classical music. It's exciting as hell.

Then he asked me, "You got a boyfriend?"

Before he asked me this question, the inevitable question it seems, I could tell he wasn't just making polite, friendly conversation, nor was he just plain curious. I tend to make conversation with people everywhere I go, and I usually entertain conversation so long as nothing gets out of hand or breaches my comfort zone. People can be curious, and that doesn't turn me off. I can usually tell when the inevitable question is coming, and I was pretty sure it was about to come from this dude before he asked it. Now, after this whole ordeal happened, I met up with my girlfriend to head back to my place. She responded with the fact that she felt I had slightly invited the harassment that I am about to report to you. That sounds harsh, but I did understand her; she said that I should have simply replied to this question with a "no", and walked away. It could have cut the interaction and saved me some serious grief.

But I didn't, and by this point, I had decided that this guy was a creep. Once I have decided this, I tend to go into attack mode.

“Hell no.”

“Why not?”

“I’m a lesbian.”

“Oh, you’re a lesbian. But you like guys.”

“As friends only.”

“No, that’s not true.”

“Yes, it is”.

“How did you get here? How were you given life? How were you created?”

Excuse you? Goodbye. I decided to immediately leave the store. I placed the ukulele that I had been checking out back on its rack.

“Alright” I said calmly. “I’m gonna get out of here.”

I began walking to the exit. I had to walk around a bunch of setups to get out. It was a good 20 seconds until I successfully got outside. And he made it a point to fill those twenty seconds with as much bigoted trash as possible.

He was yelling. “You think two lesbians got together and created you?”

I yelled back. We were being pretty loud. “It doesn’t matter.”

“Yes, it does!”

I kept walking, and we kept yelling at each other. I caught glimpse of the faces of everyone around me. The customers and staff were all staring at this prick. No one else spoke.

“I’m sorry, you’ve got a total asshole in this store and I need to leave,” I said to some staff I passed as I was about to exit. They said nothing, but gave understanding looks.

He was still going at it when I reached the door.

“You think being a lesbian is natural?” was the last thing I heard him say to me.

I was holding the door, about to step outside. “I don’t give a fuck what’s natural. All I know is you are a piece of shit, and anyone who associates with you is a piece of shit. Go fuck yourself.”

I stormed out onto the sidewalk, and walked to the nearest corner. Breathing in deeply, the first thought that crossed my mind was that I had to talk to someone to calm down. My adrenaline rushed. My heart pounded. As I looked down at my phone to call someone I noticed that my hands were trembling.

I called about five trusted friends; no answers. I stood on the corner, looked up at the sky, closed my eyes, and breathed in again, deeply.

When I opened them, someone I recognized from the store was walking toward me.

“Hey!” a man was waving his arms and calling to me. “You left these.”

He handed me my coffee and sunglasses.

“Thank you so much.”

“No problem.”

His name was Tony. He worked at the music store. He told me that he had heard the commotion but not what exactly was being said. I briefly recapped.

“I’m sorry. We informed him that he is no longer allowed at our store.”

“That’s a great thing. Not just for me, but for your store. Nobody wants to be around a douche.”

He agreed. I told him I was happy he came out and caught me; I needed to talk to someone. To relax. To not feel attacked. To feel supported.

I felt much better. We said goodbye.

That was, apart from one other time, the worst harassment I have received because of homophobia.

Yesterday was a really great day. The guard at the Last Bookstore let me use the bathroom even though there was no public restroom because he liked my blue Sambas. A few real sweet moments had happened as I walked around the sunny streets and listened to music.

It goes to show: you can’t let a ruined moment ruin your day.

And that humanity has a long way to go.