

PEOPLE AS CHOCOLATE



RABITA SALEH

People like chocolates. People are like chocolates. When you don't know someone well enough, you might just mistake them for plain milk chocolate, nothing inherently wrong with them, but one dimensional in essence. Get to know them however and you might just discover an unusual centre: raspberry compote, caramel fudge, rice krispies, you never know till you've gotten past the unassuming exterior.

THE HAZELNUT TRUFFLE

Soft on the outside, but a tough nut to crack, these people seem to be quite sensitive. They're in trouble with their parents, or teachers, or friends every other week. They stumble around and never seem to follow your advice. Given enough heat though, their soft exterior melts away to reveal a resilient persona. They'll surprise you sometimes with their ability to deal with situations of real crisis, and come out stronger than you'd ever expected.

THE PEANUT AND NOUGAT BAR

This person will be at your house when you're at your lowest. They are the reliable friend who will take you out for a movie, or shopping, and crack lame jokes at every step along the way. If you want to stay in, they'll play video games with you till you get energised. It's never a bad time to have a peanut and nougat bar around, and if you haven't been around one for long enough, you find yourself getting cranky.

DARK CHOCOLATE

The mysterious ones, people with the dark

chocolate personality are almost always loners by choice. They have a regal aura about them that says they just don't care. They're an acquired taste, but if they give you the time of day, it feels like a privilege. Once you do begin to hang out with them though, they can get very addictive. With their dark humour and blunt observations about everyday occurrences that somehow feel "wise", you keep wanting to be around them just to keep exploring their coolness.

THE COCONUT BAR

An eccentric and naïve person, who is sweet on the outside and sweeter on the inside, the coconut bar is your clueless friend. They won't know when someone dislikes them, and can't stand up for themselves when someone misbehaves. But you've got their back, and will protect them whenever necessary. They're always up for tagging along with any spur of the moment plans you make, as well as a spontaneous selfie session in any bathrooms you find along the way.

BONUS: POPPING CANDY

I would never do something quite as atrocious as listing candy in an article about "chocolate", but I doubt another pitch about sweets and people will get past the editor's chopping board. If you've ever met a person with a popping candy personality, you'll know all too well that they're the life of the party, they can revive dead bones and get them to tango. When times are great, they'll be around; when they are around, times are great. When the going gets tough though, they seem to suspiciously pop away as fast as they appeared.

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JOB-SHAMING: IT'S TOO REAL

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Many of you reading this article will be graduates in the next couple of years. During that time, you'll see people from your batch getting great opportunities at the top companies. However, those positions are limited in number. So, the rest will have to miss out on those jobs.

Let's not be euphemistic about this. There are jobs which are much better than others in terms of career progression, compensation, and overall work environment. Inequality in the job sector is a major problem and the scarcity of good positions is a factor we do have to consider.

That being said, it's perfectly fine to not have an amazing start to your career. It's a marathon, not a sprint. People who get into the lucrative positions might not be able to sustain the momentum, allowing others to catch up and even overtake them. There have been cases where people failed to enter their desired organisation, only to work their way up the ladder in another one, and join the aforementioned organisation with a promotion.

Of course, the people who got into the best companies did so on their own merit. But that does not give anyone the right to look down upon people whose jobs are not on the same level as theirs. Job-shaming is a real problem among our fresh graduates, and it can adversely affect one's self-esteem and confidence.

"Oh, he earns 20,000 less than me. He's probably not a good resource, that's why he had to settle."

You probably now see where I'm going with this. Stuff like this is not uncommon. I've seen subtle jabs being thrown at friends in jest. But the jokes do affect people and it makes them doubt their own abilities. It's such a shame that we allow jobs to gauge a person's worth without trying to understand why they made the decision. Not everyone can bring their A-game to every assessment. In the high-stakes job market, one bad day can ruin your chances. I know talented people who didn't get the best jobs because of unfortunate circumstances. Most people aren't willing to see that and they would go right into judging them for their supposed "incompetence".

The people who are suffering because of this, they get it. They didn't get into that fancy corporate job. They hear it from their family members every day. Every day is a struggle for them. But understand this, not everyone is destined for mediocrity and it would be a crying shame if we were responsible for crippling a talented individual before they even got the chance to prove themselves. I know a lot of people who vent to me about these things on a regular basis. It is not a pretty sight.

It's time to realise that, subconsciously, we engage in a lot of acts that slowly alienate these people. That's not to say we should patronise them in any way. That is insulting in and of itself. Limiting this judgemental behaviour should be the way to go.

The next time you meet up for a university reunion, talk about your dog, or how you've gone back to one of your old hobbies. Reminisce days of old instead of talking about work. There are other things in life too.

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