

I Can't Get Over Being Told to 'Get Over It'

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Abstract

It's amazing what's expected of us as trans people. We're supposed to watch our trans sisters succumb to unspeakable brutality on a constant basis. We're supposed to ignore the fact that we can be legally fired in thirty-eight states simply because we're trans. We're supposed to "understand" when we are denied admittance to public places [...]

Article



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We're supposed to ignore the fact that we can be legally fired in thirty-eight states simply because we're trans.

We're supposed to "understand" when we are denied admittance to public places or refused public restroom access based on our appearance or our paperwork.

And we're supposed to "get over it" when someone uses offensive language to refer to us because they're lashing out in pain or anger and it's not really directed at us at all.

When people use the word "tranny" as a slur or in hostility, we're supposed to "get a sense of humor."

(We all have one, actually - just give us something to laugh at besides the increasing homelessness, unemployment, and body count in our community.)

When people use phrases such as “chick with a dick,” we’re supposed to understand that these are not real slurs, and in fact, in some cases, they “accurately represent members of our community.” Why can’t we see that? Why can’t we just lighten up?

When people insinuate that being a “tranny” is the most disgusting, abhorrent, and really gross thing that a person could possibly be, we’re supposed to “get over it” and deal with the pain of the person who said it, rather than the pain of the person (and the community) on the receiving end.

Yes, words are said in anger and words said in anger are intended to hurt. But those who say words in anger with the intention to hurt also must believe, in some little recessed corner of their mind, that those words refer to something or someone negative - to something or someone no one would want to be associated with.

Think of the absolute worst thing that you could call someone in anger - the thing that you think would hurt and shame that person the most. Why did you pick that thing? Most likely it’s because you yourself think that it is negative or bad. If you didn’t, it wouldn’t be much of an insult, would it?

This type of thing happens all the time. Most incidents are private. Some are very public. All reflect and reinforce the transphobia that leads to the discrimination and violence suffered by our community. And all reveal a little bit about the person who made the offensive and hurtful remarks.

I have actually “gotten over” a lot of things (it’s easier for me, because I’m not the target of most of the vile remarks aimed at trans people, and I’m not a primary target of the violence aimed at trans people). I have gotten over being called “it,” “half-man, half-woman,” “freak,” and “monster.”

I’ve pretty much gotten over just about everything that’s been thrown my way - but so far, I can’t get over being told to “get over it.”

Readers, what do you think?

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