

Essay-Contest 2017/18

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Why don't you change your name to Isis?

She grew up standing up for herself and at the same time, for every other woman. Her name is Isis Anchalee and she is a 25-year-old Canadian engineer who works in San Francisco (NextShark, 2015). My favorite explanation of engineering is: "Engineers design, evaluate, develop, test, modify, install, inspect and maintain a wide variety of products and systems" (LiveScience, 2014). Clearly, engineering is complicated and encompasses much more than just the word alone. There are multiple types of engineering, and Isis works as a software engineer (YouTube, 2015). Although Isis is a successful engineer, I did not find her through engineering. My original field of interest was gender studies, which is the science of discovering the importance of genders, and fortunately, I encountered Isis's work in my research. I chose to write about Isis Anchalee because she is ambitious, inspirational, and optimistic.

Some people say things to hurt you, some are insensitive, and some others are just dumb. Being able to ignore what those people say and not let them affect you is superb. Isis' story shows that this is an ability she has. She taught herself how to code when she was eight years old by right clicking view source and reverse engineering other websites (YouTube, 2015). Since engineering became her career, it is fair to say that she loves what she does, and knowing that she started at a young age, on her own initiative, shows how passionate she is. If you really enjoy doing something you should continue doing it and not let other people decide for you; Isis did exactly that. According to NextShark, when she became an engineer, she appeared in an advertisement for her company, and almost all the responses were disbelief at Isis working as an engineer due to her gender and looks. Isis then wrote a short post including this: "I didn't want or ask for any of this attention, but if I can use this to put a spotlight on gender issues in tech I consider that to be at least one win." (NextShark, 2015). Gender issues have long been a

problem in society, and Isis, using her own experience as an example to raise her point, is extremely admirable to me. Her passion and persuasion really comfort me as a girl who has also experienced sexist discrimination.

If it were me on the internet being judged by a group of strangers, I would either cry in silence or respond with hate. But Isis did neither of those things and she might have even changed me by inspiring me to do the same. According to my understanding of Elle.com, after seeing the disbelief on the internet, Isis responded calmly without rash retaliation and eventually created the #ILookLikeAnEngineer hashtag, allowing other female engineers to tell their story, and encouraging them not to be afraid of not conforming to the expected and stereotypical look of an engineer. The hashtag trended for a while and became successful, causing Isis to create a website with the same name (Elle, 2015). Her most inspiring feature is her attitude towards her thoughts. Isis has made multiple comments on how you should not let your looks limit your ability to do your work, and after reading through all that, I felt very satisfied and encouraged. I love sports, every kind of sport, but no matter how good I am at one, the boys will never consider me as their first choice of teammate. Of course, I am not referring to all boys: my friends and I make a good team. However, when I play in a mixed team in a match, there are always chances where I am completely available and the other team members pass to another boy over me. I used to feel bad and keep quiet, but now I think I should start talking and convince them that I am worth passing the game object to by taking action. Through this hashtag, Isis Anchalee has gained both supporters on social media and respect at her workplace (Elle, 2015). She has discovered that people are using other hashtags like #ILookLikeAScientist that use the idea of her own hashtag, so apparently, I am not the only person who was inspired by her.

I love my name Isabella; Isis also loves her name. However, some people only criticize it for being spelled the same as the terrorist organization. This is completely unfair. People are comparing her *name* – that is not even her – to a completely different thing that also has nothing to do with her and is sadly negative. She is optimistic because no matter how many

people complain or tell her to change her name, she still maintains her own confidence and opinion towards it. Her response on byrslf.co reads: "I'm tired of seeing comments from strangers telling me to change my name, that it's embarrassing, or something for me to feel ashamed of. My name is not ISIS like the terrorists. My name is Isis like the Egyptian goddess...". Then she continues her statement explaining what a nice goddess Isis is, and compares herself to her (byrslf, 2015). Through this, I can see that she often looks at things in a positive way.

If smiles are contagious, so is positivity. I am grateful this world has someone like Isis. In my perspective, she has changed the world. Overall, I think Isis Anchalee was very interesting to research and write about. The reasons I chose her over all the other Canadian scientists are: she stands by what she believes in, is a role model for her supporters like me, and always stays positive towards everything, even hate. I believe I look like an athlete, and I think she would agree.

References:

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