Uncool.

By Sarah Bradley

1. The first time I discovered it wasn't cool to like Nickelback, was when I said I liked them in my 6th grade church group, and the silence that followed was deafening. Since then I've learned to keep certain interests to myself. Which is why nobody knows about my passion for rare and exotic floor tiles.
2. I learned that it was not normal to have acne in the third grade, when a skinhead looking boy named Dylan called me pizza face. Dylan learned that it felt like to get hit the nose with a disc golf. In secret I still hope he grew into a pill addiction.
3. I was really good at disc golf, for about three years in elementary school and junior high. I've learned since that on the Totem pole of sports, disc golf ranks somewhere between amateur tap dancing and professional tickling.
4. I used to wear my brother’s leftover hoodies every day after he moved out. I learned it's not cool to wear the same outfit every day. People assume you're poor; or, weird and poor. Most girls figure this out when they’re 12-13 years old, and it's this discovery that makes fashion start to matter; which is why all girls carry a deep-seated fear of being spotted in the same outfit twice.
5. I learned what it was like to be fat shamed when I stripped to my underwear in my 6th grade gym class. This is the logical thing to do when you change, but no one in my school was logical. They were all so ashamed of their strange, new, pubescent bodies, and all changed pants first, then shirt, so they were only half naked at any given moment. I didn’t know enough to know I should be ashamed, until Rashida Michaels slapped my soft white stomach, and yelled “no one wants to see that shit”, and everyone thought it was hysterical. She was a regular Richard Pryor. It was completely ok to fat shame in 2007, which is why I do not hope Rashida Michaels has a pill addiction. I hope Rashida Michaels is fat.
6. I learned that I was a loser by discovering that my friends were losers. I spent one afternoon at lunch trying to see which social classes sat where. I didn't see the social rejects table, so I assumed my school didn't have any. I overheard my friend Maggie as she talked about different kinds of reeds for her clarinets; that's when I knew.
7. I learned that weeaboos terrify me. A friend invited me over to watch anime. She was a full force Weeaboo, with blue hair styled in a dry frizzy bob. The anime in question was by far the most violent thing I had ever seen in my life, and it made her **so happy.** When they would rip somebody in half or raped with alien appendages, her smile would just get bigger. That's why weeaboos make me uncomfortable; as do exploding Japanese girls.
8. I thought putting on eyeshadow and no mascara was a nice look for three straight years; until my drama teacher said I looked like a cancer patient. I've learned that it's not cool to have lashes that look like dusty old spider legs.
9. I also thought it was cool to wear a lot of foundation and no powder. I've learned that doing that makes my face looked like it was dipped in mayonnaise.
10. I first learned what it was like to kiss a boy when I was 19 years old. I don't like telling people that because I feel like that's weird, to be such a late bloomer. It feels like I got left back a grade in life experiences.
11. I did actually get left back a grade. In kindergarten. I don't know how you fail kindergarten, but I managed it.
12. When I walked into a ‘friends’ room with everyone else who had come over to visit, she put a hand on my chest and said, “I think we have enough people”. I said that was ok, I had stuff to do anyway. I walked home and spent 35 minutes listening to Tony Robbins, bawling my eyes out. I was the puppy, getting euthanized because it was too ugly to take home. I learned who wasn't my friend.
13. I was hard core goth in high school. I wore black lipstick and space boots to my graduation and my principal looked terrified when he handed me my diploma. I learned nothing.
14. I learned that if you’re hard core goth, everyone assumes the worst. Even if you're not. Even if you're a straight edge thespian, who's really likes black flag, they will assume you're up to vile shit. I learned this from the Madison county sheriff's department when they pulled up next to me in a parking lot and illegally searched my car. They found nothing, because I am a perpetual good noodle. Every NWA lyric seethed in my brain. The cop shoved my unlawfully retained license to my chest, and said,

“I just want to let you know, you look suspicious”-

What did this rebel, this outlaw, this menace to society say?

“You’re right officer, I'm sorry for bothering you.”

1. I cry very easily, and I hate it. I hate it because I've learned that emotions are like a French press; to get results, you just have to keep pushing down. They're gonna try and come back up, but you just. Have. To. Keep. Pushing.
2. I am so very not cool that it is brutal.
3. I'm learning to be ok with that.