



what drives us together and apart

YALEI WANG

Throughout my own life as I'm sure is the same with others, I've had positive and negative experiences with other women. I've had my fair share of best friends and unfortunately bullies too who targeted things in me that girls should support each other with as opposed to use to demean each other. As a 23 year old, many people believe that I still have a lot more to learn about life and womanhood as well. What

I've gathered so far is a temperate body of experiences, but those experiences aren't even enough for me to stop exploring and musing on the intricacies of the way women engage with each other.

I've witnessed and been a part of the engagement of women in friendships my whole life.

The reason why I find relationships between women so fascinating, is because the more I unearth, the more I learn about how I think of myself as a woman. In the scope of the modern day where women have more rights than ever before, it's the little things that drive us apart as well as draw us together. Is there a sisterhood? Moreover, why is there a persistent reputation of women's nastiness overruling the media domain?

Without leaping to any gender stereotypes, I will say one thing. Women all around the world may not want the same things, but society certainly demands the same things from all women. Although some of us might not care less, in order to fulfill what is expected of us from the outside world, we have fierce competition on our hands. Things like "appearance," "success" and "accomplishments" or what a woman has that I don't drives me further away from her.

When I encounter women who have more than I do, all I feel is jealousy and I absolutely hate this. How can I contribute to a stronger sisterhood ever happening if I'm hating on other women? When I see other women who fare better than I do, I question if we are all created equal.

I don't think women are intrinsically more competitive against each other than men are, but I do believe that women have had more attention and study as a gender through history than men have. What this means is that the spotlight is on us. When a woman achieves, it's more of an event than a man. When a woman becomes CEO, that's more eventful than a man rising to that position. This only makes me more competitive against other women. I want that kind of attention.

Women drive each other apart in their competition to win recognition as a woman succeeding. Not just a person, but a woman. Sometimes it isn't about jealousy or competition. Jealousy is just one of the facets that turn women against each other, it's just the tip of the iceberg. It can simply be women who have had different lives that I don't agree with or even women who possess qualities that don't mesh well with mine. I don't expect myself to become best friends with these women, but if I truly believe in a sisterhood, then why should these things drive me away from them?

I believe that there's a stronger need for women to band together than with men. Don't get me wrong, women can be self sufficient, independent and solo

(I am all these things!) but if we're sharing the world with men, then who else can be our biggest allies besides other women?

What drives us together is the "sisterhood" that some of us say exists and some of us say doesn't. For me, it's definitely there. We just have to trawl through the rubble before we find the gold! I find that I naturally gravitate towards women as companions anyway. They are the ones who understand me on this innate and strange level that men just can't. I love spending time with other women because I love how in some deep part of ourselves, we share the same feelings, attitudes and emotions about life simply based on the fact that we're girls together in the world.

Whether I just assume other women understand me or not, is another question. But I just intuitively feel like they get it. Before, I said that women and men both run races that define their gender. Men run one race and women the other. Women get each other because we're all in that one race. We help each other, talk to each other and consul each other because we're women and despite our differences, we share so much more common ground. Even though we all encounter times when we are competing against each other for something, the thing I should ask is what happens when a woman wins that race? Does that mean she's 'better' than the women who didn't win that job promotion, book deal, beauty contest etc? She won that race, but in no way is she the 'best' woman out there in the world.

The sisterhood exists in the women who want there to be one and are ready to lend their hand out to other women who might need it. I'm one of those women. Even though I get jealous and competitive, I don't lose sight of what actually matters which is feeling supported, close and engaged with other women.

For me, there's nothing more uplifting than hearing a, 'I know exactly what you mean' or 'OMG me too' from another girl about something in their lives that we share in common. It makes me feel like I have supporters everywhere and that's something all of us want, isn't it? ●