

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy

Tuesday, 04 December 2018 16:05 - Last Updated Wednesday, 05 December 2018 06:32



Sister Act

Dear Aunt Bossy,

My sister is way smarter and prettier than I am and it makes me feel bad. I love her, but it is hard when she has such an easy time and I don't. She is the most popular girl in the class and I don't think most people even know I exist.

Since she is two years older than I am, we don't hang out together much, but she is always very nice to me. I'm just miserable, but I know it isn't her fault, but I sometimes wish bad things would happen to her just so she would know what it feels like. Do you think I am a bad person?

Lannie the Lesser

Dear LL,

Oh, darlin', this is so difficult. I am assuming you are in your teens, which makes it even worse because we are all much more vulnerable at that age (even your sister) and hormones make our brains and bodies confused. What you are facing is very, very challenging at any age, but let's break it down and see if you can find some pieces to work toward feeling better about yourself and the world..

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Frist of all, there will ALWAYS be someone prettier, smarter, richer, more talented, luckier, and more indulged than you are. That is true for every single one of us. No one escapes that fact, no matter how it looks to the outside world. What you need to do is find the part of you that you like the most about yourself and start nurturing and growing that part.

None of us is "less." We are all different. We are equal in our value as humans, not our individual gifts and talents. The challenge is making the best of what we each have.

Ask your sister for help if you think she would be kind. You can tell her that you know you weren't born with her gifts, but you admire her so much and want to be more like her. If she is a good person, she will jump at the chance to help because she loves you and understands that life is not fair. You might also find out something that you have that she wishes she did too. Remember, though, that you do not want to try to BECOME her. You want to become the best version of yourself.

If she doesn't cover the superficial stuff, or isn't interested in being your guide, take it into your own hands. If you like how you look, but want to look better, that is the easiest thing in the world. Make sure you have GREAT posture, are eating properly, exercising enough, and are neat and clean. Then, visit a cosmetic counter and choose a friendly, unpushy and nice salesperson to show you how to make the most of what you have. You should buy something, but it can be something little. You do not have to buy the whole kit and caboodle. If you like what the expert shows you, you can replicate it with Maybelline or another very good and inexpensive product line. That is all I use.

Look for people with similar hair and ask them who cuts it. I was very timid when I first moved to New York, but would walk up to any stranger and ask that question. It is how I found the best haircutter in the city.

Get a department store or boutique employee to help you find what is most flattering for you. By the way none of this is so you will look prettier, it is all so you will feel prettier. Start paying enough attention to others so that you find someone who isn't even as good looking or as smart as you, but moves through life with such confidence that no one notices. That is the person you want to emulate.

Ok, that is the visual stuff, which is a good head start because it will make you more confident. Now for the mental part, which is even more important. This takes more effort and time, but it has a compounding benefit and increases confidence by leaps and bounds.

Pay close attention to other people. Choose the qualities in others that you admire the most and imitate and replicate and adjust until they are your qualities too. Imitation is the highest form of flattery. (Just don't go too far and give up your authenticity. There is one gal I know who is perfectly lovely but who has taken to mirroring another gal, even down to exactly how she poses for selfies. It makes me sad.) You have to make the qualities your own and infuse them with your personality.

Paying attention to others takes the focus off of you, which gives you the room to relax and expand. I know how self-focused we can become when we are struggling, but thinking about ourselves so much leads to stagnant narcissism. You don't go or grow, but merely obsess about yourself. And, by the way, eliminate self-deprecating remarks. Telling someone you know you aren't pretty or smart does not make him or her think you are.

Once you are feeling like you look better and have a better attitude toward the unfairness of life, get to work finding something where you excel. It doesn't matter what it is as long as it is legal and moral. If you make the best cookies in the world, start producing them and sharing them. If you aren't academically inclined or gifted, learn how to do something manual. Build things, fix things, and check out YouTube to learn anything, step-by-step, and then share your talent. Do you know how much people admire a gal who can change a tire? Or even a fellow, since so many can't?

Take notice of how dogs behave. Their major quality is making their humans feel valued and important. Show enthusiasm for others. All others, unless they are approaching you with a weapon. Nothing is more attractive to us than someone who appears to like us.

And, lastly, find someone who appears to have even less going for them than you thought you did. Befriend or mentor them. Even the smallest nudge can make an enormous difference. I remember every nice thing anyone said to me when I was an awkward teen. Every single word. Spread joy. It will make you beautiful and intelligent and happy.

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And, sign up for “Messages from the Universe” from tut.com. They are a fine way to start the day.

By the way, none of this is easy. Go for it. Someday your sister will come to you for advice.

Love,

Aunt Bossy