



Don't Judge A Purple Hat By Its Color

My first impression upon arriving at the dorm room that summer was one of fright and flight. Considering the attire I found in the closet, I thought there was no way that I'd be able to stay in that room. Seeing a large purple hat with a feather in the side and a pair of size 16 Converse All Star sneakers made me apprehensive about meeting my future roommate. I remember telling my folks, "I just don't think this will work out".

Later that night, I met the owner of the purple hat and large sneakers. He was a six foot-five, gentle giant from Lake Wales. Although intimidating in appearance, he made me feel comfortable in a place where I knew no one. His interests ranged from hard rock & roll to harder rock & roll and mine from old country to older country. He was a Braves fan; I was a Cardinals fan. The experiences we shared remain great memories for me. Though very different in many ways, he and I became close friends and shared college years together. Funny how exterior impressions influence all of us.

I relate that story because it had a tremendous impact on me. I try to recall it each time I make a "first impression" decision about someone or some company. Without getting to know the "interior" of people or organizations, you may miss out on great opportunities and input they may have to offer. Without allowing each individual to express his or her own diverse thoughts, we deny ourselves the chance of hearing or seeing new and different ideas.

Keep your options open with people and organizations until you get a chance to let them show you why "different" may be better. Don't let the "purple hat and large shoes" fool you.

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