

Everyone is Secretly a Nerd!

You're a nerd, I'm a nerd, it's okay! When it comes to thinking about things that nobody knows about me, I like to think that everyone's on the same page about collectively hiding the nerdiest parts about ourselves. I believe part of that habit comes from the popularity structure from middle & high school... and maybe another part is us avoiding vulnerability when it comes to our interests and hobbies. Regardless, we're all in the same boat! To help prove my point, here are five things that not a lot of people know about me:

To start off strong, I was a summer camp counselor for 3 years! I grew up going to YMCA Camp Edwards and became a counselor going into my senior year of high school. I got paid very little money to spend 12 weeks at a time getting painted on, thrown into the lake wearing weird costumes, singing obnoxious songs, and running around with a bunch of 12 year-



olds. I loved every minute of it. There was a three week period during my second year on staff where, according to the 300 campers, my name had changed from 'Emma' to 'Tortilla'. During meals we sang songs and chants and things of that nature, and throughout the dining hall the name 'Tortilla' rang for hours. From

chasing sleepwalking campers in the middle of the night, to waking up to wild turkeys in the middle of the woods, it was an amazing job. Through silly experiences like that, I met amazing people, and the kids I had in my cabins still reach out to this day! If I didn't need to be making a livable wage, I'd go back in a heartbeat.

The second thing about me is Avatar the Last Airbender is a show that's super close to my heart. While it's a very popular cartoon and loved by many, this show has always been a comfort to me, and I grew up watching it during some hard times. While my parents were going through their divorce and either arguing or talking to lawyers, my little brother and I would sit and watch this show together for hours on end. It's both helped my brother and I bond, and aided in distracting us from difficult times. While it's a funny and wholesome cartoon, I believe that there are a lot of important lessons to be learned from



watching it. The one that has always stuck with me is that peace does not come from one person or party, but the effort from everyone involved. If you don't think this makes me nerdy, I'll admit that I may or may not have a tattoo from this cartoon on my body.

Aside from hobbies and interests, everyone about them has some weird quirk that makes them a total nerd. We all have something that if and when you tell someone else about it, they'll probably say something along the lines of "that's really weird" or "you're kidding right?". Mine is that my toes wiggle when I get super excited. Strange, I know, but I can't help it. When I get good news, a compliment, or even when something exciting happens in a movie, my toes wiggle. I have no idea why, but it's like crying when you cut onions; it's simply instinctive. The few times I've shared this information is when I have been asked what nobody knows about me/what the weirdest thing about me is, and each time I brought it up it was labeled as 'nerdy and weird' (not in a demeaning way). Because of this, it has become so fun knowing what everyone else's

little physical quirks are. Again, everyone has that one thing that's just strange, so we might as well laugh about them together!



Something that might be obvious to my friends, but not to others is my love of being totally out of left field when it comes to costumes/random purchases. One of my comforts when I get stressed out is buying unnecessary things like nerf guns, or a 7 foot blow-up dog costume a month before Halloween. The picture is me from last year when I very proudly spent seventy dollars on this costume, and wore it outside of my apartment because I thought it was absolutely hilarious. Getting excited about silly little things is something that makes me, me.

Was I a nerd for wearing this on a random day in early October? Probably.

Am I going to pull it out and wear it again this year? Absolutely.

Last but not least, something that only a few friends know about me is my obsession with the Game of Thrones series. Let me be clear, I have read the books more than once, and have watched the show three or four times. I have the Lannister family symbol as a keychain with my car keys, and I could talk about the series for hours. Season 8? Horrible ending. House of the Dragon is finally hitting HBO Max and I cry pretty much during every episode. I completely geek out about the series whenever given the chance, and I don't think that will ever change. Nor, should it. Everyone has something that for some reason, they absolutely love no matter how strange or nerdy! It's part of life and figuring out what interests you, and what gets you happy and excited to engage with others who have that source of joy in common.

Every single human has at least a little bit of nerd in them, and I believe that this is what makes everyone unique. However, there is a stigma against being excited and celebrating 'nerdy things', so people do not share their interests and quirks at the drop of a hat. By letting others in on just 5 things that nobody knows about you, you open a door to new friends and communities with things in common! Everyone is a nerd, and we should celebrate that, as nerds together.