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Why You're More Than One Woman

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Mother working and holding son on lap

Who am I and how do I define myself? You'd think this would be easy to answer, but it's really not. As women, we're so many different things, yet we're expected by most people to define ourselves in pretty specific terms. This begins almost from when we're born, because our parents label us, even if they don't mean to. We've all heard parents quietly refer to their kids as 'the smart one' or 'the pretty one,' or 'the one that will likely go into foreclosure.' And once we go to school, we're labeled again by our classmates. You might be the popular kid, the bully, the smart kid or the kid in the corner figuring out how her super powers will propel her across the lunch room.

As we become adults, the labels may change based on what we decide to do for a living. Whether you're a doctor, a lawyer or a maid, labels are a way for other people to put you in a neat box, thus making it clear in their mind who you are and where you fit into society. Have you ever gone to your high school reunion? Even 10 years after you graduated, a classmate will ask you what you do for a living to see if it matches up with how they remember you. That is, after they've told you that you look the same as you did in high school, even though it took them five

minutes to figure out who you were.

As a woman, telling someone what I do for a living today doesn't remotely describe me; I mean, don't my past ventures also make up who I am? Years ago I was a comedy writer, and then I was a stay-at-home mom. When my kids entered kindergarten, I became a clinical nutritionist and now, I'm working on a book and am a contributor to The Huffington Post. On some days, I feel like a nutritionist, and on other days, I feel like a writer or a mother. I can't tell someone I'm all of these things for fear that they'll think I'm a flake, but the reality is, I am all of these things. On any given morning, I can be the neurotic mother following one of my snotty-nosed kids around, picking up dirty tissues so they don't end up in the dog's mouth. Other times, I'm a writer with a deadline so inside my own head that if the toilet spoke to me, I wouldn't notice. I'm so many different things to so many different people, and it changes depending on the time of day or even the month.

For all these reasons, I don't like labels, they're extremely limiting and don't tell you a thing about my personality. When I used to tell people I was a comedy writer, they expected me to entertain them with witty lines and snappy comebacks. I'm a reserved person who can be funny on the page, but I've never been the life of the party. And when I was a stay-at-home mom, I knew I was creating an environment for my kids that was nurturing and safe. But when someone asked me what I did and I said I was a mom, that never felt like a good description. I would've loved to say: "I'm helping to guide my boys towards a productive life, where they'll be confident, work hard and become strong men in society." But I think the confused stares I would've gotten from people who really wanted a one-word answer would've

been too much.

To my kids, I'm mom; to my nutrition clients, I'm the person who's making them responsible for eating healthy; and to my readers, I'm a writer with a point of view. I like being all these things, and I like being able to say any of them at my high school reunion when asked what I do, so next time you want to give me a label, try woman. That is the only word that says it all.

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