



We're talking about...**FEELING LEFT OUT!**

Everyone has their insecurities: one person doesn't like her nose, another wishes she was thinner, another thinks she's boring...the list goes on. At some point in your life, you realise you just have to either learn to love yourself the way you are, or remain stuck in a world of comparison and fictional beauty.

I know that, as a teenager, I struggled with a lot of insecurities, but none bigger than the feeling that I was being left out. I had a solid group of friends and a God who loved me, and yet I felt like I couldn't be accepted. I was always asking myself: "Do they really care? Maybe, if I lost some weight or was funnier or more confident, would I feel like I was more appreciated? More part of the gang?" Now, several years on, I realise that the only person who actually cared whether I was thinner or prettier or funnier was me. My friends, family and God accept me exactly as I am, and they always have. If you are feeling excluded, chances are – when you take a step back and have a good look at your life – the only person who is excluding you is yourself. I look back now and I remember how I would draw away from groups of friends because I thought I wasn't *properly* a part of their "clique", when in actual fact, the loneliness came not from being left out, but from choosing to be alone rather than accepting that I was loved the way I was.

That's not to say I never feel left out now – it's a work in progress. But never has the saying "you have to love yourself for others to love you" made more sense to me. And who better to teach you how to love yourself than God, who loves you more than you could ever imagine? If you feel left out, talk to God about it. He will never exclude you, and can help you more than you think. He certainly helped me.