



Zico in his favourite outfit

You Can't Skirt This Issue

Izzy's Mumma Files **By Izzy Buda**

My son Zico likes soccer, skateboarding, horses, dinosaurs and skirts. Right now, he's sporting a shaved head, a black eye and a pink tutu. He's as rough as they come, always jumping off things and yelling at his sister, yet at the same time he loves to race around in circles in a big tutu singing 'Let it go'. I suppose Disney now portray females as powerful leaders and no longer the damsels in distress, so why the heck wouldn't little boys want to be Elsa?! This is the great thing about 2021, we don't have to suppress our sons and say 'No, you're a boy, you can't wear that!'

I see boys outside school in fairy-tale dresses, waiting with their mums to pick up their siblings. Sure, the idea that a boy can't wear a skirt isn't totally eradicated, but at least on the Northern Beaches it's become far less taboo. And my son's enthusiasm for

skirt-wearing really got me thinking, where did all the outrage for boys wearing "women's" clothing even come from? Are people afraid it means the boy is gay? Does that even matter? Are people worried it means the boy wants to be a girl? Does that even matter either? I think it's fantastic that boys have female idols. It's a game changer, a huge step forward for feminism, and if boys are sincerely idolising strong female characters, surely this will have a massive impact on the way boys treat women.

Girls wear pants and shorts. No one cares. Boys wear skirts...the sky's falling, supposedly. Why the gender disparity here? If boys were allowed to wear whatever they wanted at all times, I think many lads would opt for enticing sequinned skirts. Because, well, shiny! It is only through being told 'No, you

can't wear that! You are a boy' that we cement ideals in the first place. I have many friends who are fathers who don't like the idea of their son wearing a skirt. It's fine, it doesn't offend me, but I would just like them to reflect on why they feel so strongly about it.

We are becoming increasingly open and accepting to people's choices. To think that wearing a skirt will affect your sexual orientation or gender is wrong. Many gay men don't wear skirts. Plenty of straight men have been known to. I've even seen the Tawny editor go surfing in a bikini! He loved it!

To dig further, I asked my extremely talented gay friend Sam Leighton-Dore, for his two cents on the matter.

Sam is an author, artist, screenwriter, director and social commentator who uses these mediums to express his views on toxic-masculinity and all things gay. "The idea that clothing is gendered is a recent phenomenon. Men have been wearing skirts, dresses and gowns from the mid 16th century through to the early 20th century. To think what we wear speaks directly to our sexuality or gender is narrow minded."

Clothing is just a way for people to express themselves or feel comfortable. The idea that skirts or dresses determine gender or sexuality is simply an idea, one you can choose to follow or not. If my son wants to continue wearing tutus, I'll let him, but don't come up to him and say, "Why are you wearing a skirt? You're a boy!" Because it's just a god damn ideology. I know what's inside his nappy and the skirt, shorts, jeans or superman outfit on top doesn't determine his sexuality or gender.

How To: Infidelity-proof Your Relationship

The Love Scout **by** Scout Smith-O'Leary, Matchmaker & Relationship Educator



Don't let the sun go down on your monogamous relationship

Promising your private parts to your dearly beloved may seem like a deeply romantic notion. While it can work for some, there lie inherent challenges for many. So what happens between "I do" and "I accidentally did..."? Why do millions of hearts end up shattered because of cheating? More importantly, how can you infidelity proof your relationship?

Awareness - Cheating rarely just happens. You don't happily commit to a person on Monday and turn around and bonk someone else on Tuesday. (If you do, please stop committing; people are getting hurt). There are usually one hundred things that precede any unfaithful behaviour. It starts with thoughts, ideas, fantasies or unmet emotional, physical, sexual or intellectual needs. We often manage to keep these thoughts at bay; sometimes we put them in a little

box in the basement of our psyche. Unfortunately they don't always stay there, and over time are quite tactful at sneaking out unnoticed. You first need to recognize these thoughts and consciously choose to not suppress them, but observe them.

Honesty - Before you can even be honest with someone else, you need to be honest with yourself. This may be hard, especially when who you think you are, and who you really are clash. Be gentle and patient with yourself. Try not to judge and allow yourself space to understand and integrate the information. After all, you're only human, and I can promise you, you're not the only one.

Safety - Very few people are willing to be vulnerable and honest if the condi-

tions are not safe to do so. If you are scared about your partner flying off the handle, screaming at you, judging you, shaming you or blaming you, chances are you're going to keep it to yourself. Be careful of this the next time your partner tries to be honest with you. Know that every negative reaction is another nail in the coffin of communication.

Communication - Once you feel safe to do so, muster up the courage to talk about what is going on in your head. If you are feeling neglected emotionally, not getting enough in bed, not having enough quality time, let your partner know. We forget that most of us can't read minds! Don't expect your partner to know you inside out and don't punish them. Help each other out and make it a relationship goal that both of you work on so you can be happier, more content and live more authentically.

Monogamy (especially til death for those married folk) is a big ask, more so given that our life expectancy has almost doubled in the last 100 years. Contrary to pop culture, it's not just sign, sealed, delivered and I'm yours. Monogamy doesn't come for free; you choose it and you work for it. While it is very possible, we must understand that awareness, trust and communication are a few essential elements we need if we're to stand any chance of making it.

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