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## "A" Is Not For Ally

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# "A" Is Not For Ally

## **Abstract**

Most people can recall their first crush. They think fondly back to age ten or eleven when they first “went boy-crazy” or couldn’t focus on sixth-grade English because that cute girl was in their class.

This did not happen for me. I do, however, vividly remember it happening for everyone around me. [*excerpt*]

## **Keywords**

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, sexuality, gender, asexuality

## **Disciplines**

Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies | Other Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Women's Studies

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Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](http://www.gettysburg.edu) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com) Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

# SURGE

[ VERB ] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

## “A” IS NOT FOR ALLY

April 16, 2014

Most people can recall their first crush. They think fondly back to age ten or eleven when they first “went boy-crazy” or couldn’t focus on sixth-grade English because that cute girl was in their class.

This did not happen for me. I do, however, vividly remember it happening for everyone around me.

Being part of a group of girl friends in sixth grade meant you had to fit three main criteria: first, you had to understand the inside jokes; second, you had to go wild over the right male celebrities; and third, you had to have a crush to talk about at sleepovers. The jokes were easy, but the other two were a problem. None of the boys interested me, and the celebrities were all just old men. I chose a boy at random from my middle school class and clung to him as my “crush” for two years. I got a subscription to *Seventeen* magazine and studied its pages [decrying the hottest celebrities](#) of the time so I might have a better chance of determining who was “hot” and who wasn’t: they all just looked like people to me. I learned to make and laugh at dirty jokes, but I ran from anyone who showed interest in me. My efforts paid off, but not without work.

I knew something was different about me. I’d known that all my life. But what was I? I was growing up in a world where “everyone” was gay, straight, or bisexual. I wasn’t gay enough to be a lesbian and I wasn’t straight enough to be straight, and I certainly wasn’t bisexual, so what option did that leave me?

*Broken?*

An asexual is defined by the [Asexuality Visibility and Education Network](#) as “a person who does not experience sexual attraction.” I didn’t find the asexual community until I started college, and I didn’t realize there was a place for me there until several years later. Since discovering that there are others like me, learning to accept myself and validating my experiences has changed the way I see and value myself. I am no longer looking for a “solution” and I understand that there is a happy life awaiting me just the way I am.



This happy, open life comes closer every day; however, misconceptions about asexuality burden the asexual community and make it harder for us to express ourselves. To begin to contextualize this concept for those new to the idea, I will explain in a few points what asexuality is NOT.

**Asexuality is not** (in this context) **a form of reproduction**. Do not tell me your amoeba, sponge, or plant jokes. You are not funny, and I am a mammal.

Asexuals are not “late bloomers,” we do not “need to get laid,” and certainly do not need to be “fixed.”

**Asexuality is not a disorder**. Based on a misconception that everyone has to be attracted to “somebody,” some mistakenly claim that asexuality is really a lack of libido which can be corrected with hormone treatments. This is simply not the case: asexuality is a lack of sexual *attraction*, not necessarily a lack of sexual *desire*. Some asexuals are indeed repulsed by the idea of sex, but some crave sexual contact just like allosexuals (or non-asexuals) do. They simply do not feel an impulse to direct their desire at any specific person based on gender or physical characteristics.

In a related point, **asexuality is not celibacy**. A celibate person chooses to abstain from sexual contact, usually for a moral or personal reason, regardless of attraction to others. An asexual does not experience sexual attraction to other people, and may choose to remain celibate or choose to have sex anyway. Sex happens for any number of reasons in relationships between partners of any sexual orientation, and reasons other than specific sexual attraction may also exist for an asexual. These reasons may include physical pleasure, a desire for closeness with one’s partner, a desire to please one’s partner, or a desire to have children, among other reasons.

Choosing to remain celibate as an asexual, however, is a perfectly valid life choice and should in every case be respected. Some allosexuals feel it is their place to tell celibate asexuals that they are missing out on “the most important part of adult life,” or worse, that it’s “only human,” implying that their disinterest in sex makes them less mature or less human. An important life experience for one person may be horrible for another, and no one is in a position to tell others which experiences are necessary. To decide that another person’s sexual choices are your business is not kind and it is not “for their own good.” It’s simply arrogant.

**Asexuality is not lovelessness**. Asexual people are just as capable of love as people of other sexual orientations. Many asexuals will also have a “romantic orientation,” which denotes which genders they are open to forming romantic relationships with; for example a homoromantic asexual is open to dating people of the same gender as them, though they may choose their partner based on non-sexual criteria. Some asexuals (as well as people of other sexual orientations) may identify as aromantic, which means they are not interested in romantic partnership at all. They are still capable of love, it’s just not romantic love.

While not exhaustive, these are the main misconceptions about asexuality. The most important thing right now is to make sure as many people as possible become aware of this small but growing community. If more people become aware of what asexuality is, maybe one day I can come out without having to explain myself first.

If more people understand what asexuality is, maybe the next generation of asexual kids can grow up with a privilege that I did not: knowing that they are not broken, they are not wrong, and they are not alone.

To find more information about asexuality, please see the following links:

<http://www.asexuality.org/home/>

[An Asexuality Infocomic](#)

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<http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2014/04/16/a-is-not-for-ally/>