

Celebrity Big Brother 2018

I have been a keen viewer of this series. The hook for me was that it is 100 years since women gained the right to vote and the series has celebrated this by being an all woman house for the first few days.

I have been really pleasantly surprised. I have watched Big brother in the past but I think the last time I saw it was the infamous Celebrity version where 3 British women were accused the Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty (who eventually won it). I have memories of talking to my training therapist about the bullying at the time, which upset me, and although it was rich material in some respects I feel that the fact I did get caught up in that aspect of the show was perhaps a reflection of where I was at the time, maybe where society was. I have just looked back at some of the eviction interviews and it does seem dated.

This series has been classed as tame and mild by the media, yet I think there is so much to learn from the wonderful array of people who have agreed to do the show. The latest show has generated a lot of activity on social media, a lot of people are angry at John Barnes' comment about Andrew. John commented that if Andrew, who is straight, did anything (sexual) with Shane, who is pansexual (one who can love sexuality in many forms), then John would not socialise with Andrew. Andrew and Shane are great friends on the show and have been flirting with each other.

The really interesting learning that I take from the show is Shane's wonderful communication skills and decorum when dealing with traditionally difficult subjects. Shane went to talk to John after this comment was made. Shane acknowledged that John had said it in a rather jokey way, but wanted to explore what John had to say. John engaged with the conversation and explained that straight men are threatened with gay men because they think the gay guy will want sex with them, he admitted he didn't feel this way about women. Shane listened with integrity and interest and John (in my view) explained that he knew it was wrong to think badly about gay people, but he said he had always thought this way so didn't feel it was possible to think differently. Social media has now been predominantly angry with John.

For me there are 2 massive points just from this conversation that presumably took a couple of minutes.

One is the fact that John Barnes' is displaying 'a belief is just a thought I keep thinking', so clearly. He believes something is wrong with being gay because that is what he has always thought, because that is what people around him thought. When we are aware that 'a belief is just a thought we keep thinking', it can empower us as we can then start slowly changing our beliefs, by incrementally reaching for healthier and more joyous thoughts. For instance we can challenge beliefs about being an addict, a control freak, a victim, a womaniser, or any other negative beliefs about ourselves and others. It is wonderful to know that beliefs that feel, (as it seems John is suggesting), ingrained and hardwired and impossible to change are in fact malleable and open to evolve with the world and the society that we live in. So for John, I think that Shane has offered him a massively wonderful opportunity of starting to be aware of what he is doing and therefore there will be a possibility of change. Shane is a natural at allowing others to explore their inner worlds, just as we would want from our psychotherapists.

The other fact is that Shane (aka as Courtney when in drag), is an amazingly secure and self aware person. Those words could conjure up thoughts of being boring or a killjoy, but far from it. In fact in line with being secure and self-aware he is such fun in the house, he is also a fantastic listener and also displays compassion when other housemates are feeling stressed. I have been wondering the secrets to this individual. For me it is linked to the 100 years anniversary since women got the vote, ie women doing something that previously only men had done. 100 years ago also marks the time that some women started wearing trousers and as we know today it would be rare to find a woman who hasn't worn trousers. So is the fact that Shane enjoys wearing women's clothes and make up one of the keys to his happiness, creativity and security? I am planning to vote for Shane to win the series, as he represents an all inclusive society and attitude that doesn't push against anyone else's views. He embraces everyone in an emotional sense, yet still ends up solidly loving his inner and outer world, which for me represents how society could

be in the future. I love the idea of a world where we are all confident and secure to have fun and to be who we truly are. Following our passions and dreams, which of course are different for everyone. We all love ourselves, which means we would then be available to truly love another.