

FROM THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

TESSA




Shot in black and white with a jazzy soundtrack, Tessa is an original twist on a familiar theme. Tessa lives with her mother and goes to school. In the evenings she talks on the phone with Clay. Her mother doesn't want her talking on the phone with boys, but Tessa knows that this is true love—or is it? As any teenager of thirteen years knows, it's hard sometimes just being yourself.

First Prize at the Chicago International Festival of Children's Films (1992) and the 1991 National Screen Institute 'Reaching Out' Competition.

Produced by Bootleg Film
with assistance from National Screen Institute, National Film Board, and Canada Council, Explorations Program

Director: **Lori Lansens**
Producer: **Milan Cheylov**

7 minutes 15 seconds
Order number: B 9192 116

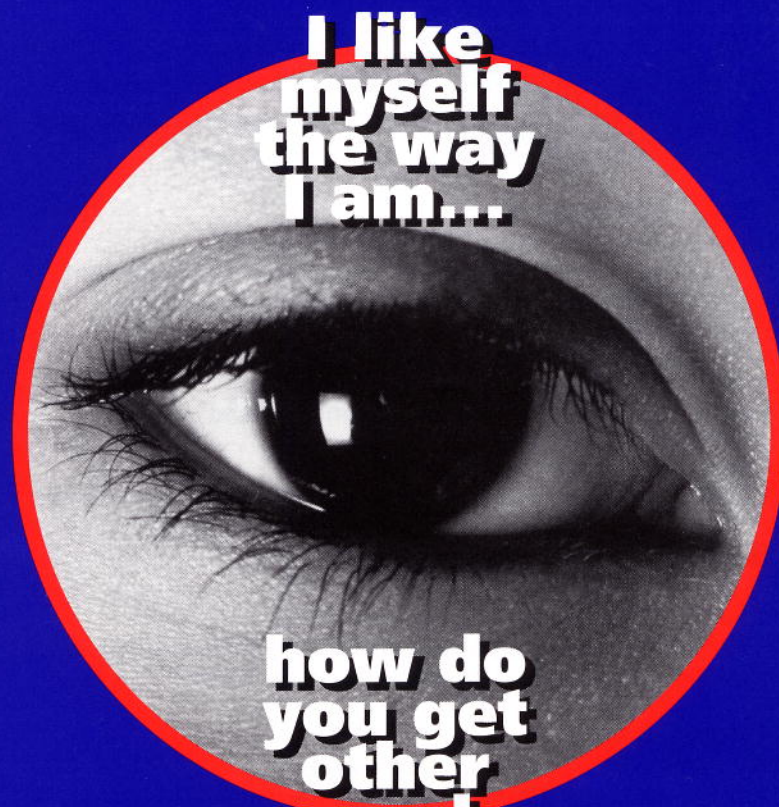
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Printed in Canada

TESSA

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**I like myself
the way I am...**

**how do you get
other people
to?**



VHS
113B
9192 116

TESSA

I like myself the way I am... most of the time.

Tessa raises many issues familiar to most young teenagers: peer pressure, body image, young love, self-affirmation, parental restrictions and parental support. For children of colour, or of mixed race, there is also the question of cultural identity. In spite of pressures both at home and at school, how do you go about finding out who you are and then liking what you find?

To facilitate discussion following the video, below are some suggested questions arranged according to theme.

Peer Pressure

How important is it that other people like you?

Do you like yourself even when your friends don't seem to?

- Is it unusual that Tessa likes herself, even after the note from Clay?
- If Clay doesn't like Tessa, why did he talk to her on the phone every night?
- Do you think Clay felt pressure from his friend to write that note?
- Why was it "uncool" to like Tessa?
- What kind of girl do you think Clay would rather have liked?

Body Image

What is a "perfect" body?

What is a "nice" body? A "not nice" body?

- Should Tessa lose weight or is she just right the way she is?
- Do you think Clay worries about his body image?

Young Love

How do we know when we love somebody?

How do we know if they love us?

- Is Tessa right to think Clay is her best friend?
- Is Clay Tessa's boyfriend?
- Should Tessa be angry at Clay?
- Did Clay act appropriately by writing that note to Tessa?

TESS

Jocelyn Loyer

MOTHER

Meita Winkler

CLAY

Chance Lewis

LEE

Nigel Roberts

Director

Lori Lansens

Director of Photography

Kim Derko

Music

Rick Bortolotti

Musicians

Rick Bortolotti

Chris Chiassen

Steve Lederman

Milan Cheylov

Editor

Milan Cheylov

Sound

Manse James

First Assistant Director

Moira Holmes

Focus Puller

Lisa Brill

Gaffer

John Crockford

Grip

Christopher Carriere

Swing King

Tony Browne

Production Assistants

Lynne Boyer

Annelies Weisser

Producer

Milan Cheylov

Special Thanks to

Lynne Loyer

Alan Raffé

Deb & Ken Cerone

Phil & Judy Lansens

Produced by

Bootleg Film

with assistance from

National Screen

Institute, National Film

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Black and White

7 minutes 15 seconds

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B 0192 116 (film)

B 0192 116 (video)

Self-Esteem

What makes us like ourselves? Not like ourselves?

How do we feel about other people when we don't like ourselves?

- Why does Tessa like herself?
- Would most girls still like themselves after being rejected by a boy they liked?

Colour/Race

How important is the colour of our skin to ourselves and to others?

How do we define ourselves when we are "in between"?

- Is Tessa black? white? Is it important?
- Do you think Clay would like Tessa if she was darker, or lighter?
- Do people like Tessa ever have difficulties because they have parents of different colour?

Parents

Do parents really always know best?

When should parents intervene, and when should they back off?

- Is Tessa's mother right to hang up on Clay?
- Is Tessa right not to open the door to her mother when she says she's sorry?
- How does Tessa feel about her mother? Do her feelings change?
- How do you feel about the scene when Tessa and her mother hug?
- Do you think Tessa's mother helps Tessa like herself?

Film Style

Students may find it interesting to discuss the style of the film. For many first-time filmmakers, using black and white film stock and non-synchronized sound are ways of saving money. In spite of the film's financial limitations, however, the filmmakers have created a style that is unique and expressive. Such devices as jump-cut editing, sound layering and the use of music to create a mood are important to the final feel of the film.

- Have you ever seen a movie that looked like this one?
- What does this film have in common with some rock-videos?
- How is this film different from most movies in the theatres or on TV?
- Does the unique style of the film help tell the story better than a regular approach?
- Can you identify some of the following techniques in the film:

Extreme Close-up • Jump Cut • Voice-Over • Dissolve