

Leaving my Amish World

Leaving my Amish world was excruciatingly painful, to put it mildly. It was the toughest decision I would ever make.

I love my Amish family. They are my world. The only one I've ever known. My heritage! How could I ever make such a harsh, drastic decision?

5 On my own, it would've been impossible. I couldn't bear the thought of hurting my parents. It would be very hard on them to find out I was no longer following in the traditions they had taught me. It was very hard, not only on them, but also on me, my husband, and children as well. And for that I am very sorry.

10 On my own, I never would have chosen to leave. I never ever meant to hurt them or any of my beloved siblings whom I love very deeply. Some of the dearest people in the world to me are my siblings, and it tears my heart out not to share my world with them: My joys and sorrow, the birth of my babies, the triumphs and struggles. The victories of my children. Will they ever know my boys? I surely hope so. [...]

As a young girl growing up, I loved to read books. We didn't have the screens, the tech toys children have today, but we had books and I read many of them. They took me to another world. [...]

15 I enjoyed growing up in the Amish community. I have two older brothers who are thirteen months older than me. I loved following them around all over the place down the cow path to bring the cows in for milking, to clean out the pig pens (a stinky job), and up to the hayloft to throw down the hay bales, which usually ended up with us swinging from one loft to the other hanging onto the long thick ropes.

20 I did all this wearing my little Amish dress since girls were not allowed to wear pants, but it was still so much fun. Because of their age, the twins got to go to school while I stayed behind. I remember those days vividly. After they got on the bus, my sisters and I had to do the dishes. At that time, I was not fond of the task. There were days when we lolly-gagged, doing dishes all day long. We would still be doing dishes when the boys got off the bus in the afternoon. [...]

25 We got along well and these times were fun and enjoyable. I absolutely adored my older brothers and they didn't seem to mind me trailing along behind them. Sometimes they would ask me to choose which one of the two I liked the best. Of course, I couldn't choose one over the other. I dearly loved them both. And absolutely loved all the fun times we had together.

Leaving My Amish World: My True Story, Eirene Eicher, 2019.