Dear Diary,

Today was Pavarana Day, the day I had been dreading for three months. As you know I have been participating in my first Rains Retreat, as I only joined this Monastery a few months ago. The Rain's Retreat is a period of three months where monks/nuns don't travel away from a certain location from one location for more than 5 days and it can only be for Dhamma purposes. I didn't even travel. As I was saying, today was Pavarana Day. This occurs at the end of Vassa (Rains Retreat). Today we got together and talked about any problems we had with each other for these last three months. We could talk about religious practice or personality on this "Telling Off Day". This can be, as I found out, a very embarrassing and heated experience, because EVERYONE in the community gathers to hear what everyone has to say. The first comment I received was, " Sister Advika, you have the tendency to sing while in the dormitory and when others are sleeping."

I mean, I personally didn't see any problem in this, after all my name does mean I am unique and have my own habits. However, I understood singing can annoy people. I replied, " I am sorry, Sister Vedika, In future I will take on board your comment and make sure I do not sing as much."

I had to reply with love and compassion as the person saying the comment had to. I then received another comment which slightly hurt my feelings, " Sister Advika, you always have the need to make scientific remarks on everything you see."

I was taken aback and my friend (Sister) Yashvi looked at Sister Pihu in disgust, at which I looked at (Sister) Yashvi and (Sister) Yashvi stopped looking at her. I simply said, with as much love and compassion, " I am sorry that you may feel that way Sister Pihu, however that is my personality and I love science and I like teaching and learning new things".

Sister Pihu didn't seem content with my answer but simply nodded her head. I had to accept the comment anyway. My friend (Sister) Yashvi then remarked on how Sister Pihu always had a somewhat negative outlook on life and always brought everyone down which made feel slightly better. I didn't receive anymore comments. This kept on happening for about 30 minutes until it was my turn say anything that had been bothering me. There was only one thing and I knew I shouldn't say it, not because it was about I was going to say, but who it was for. I said quite quietly, " I think some people talk quite a lot, and it isn't that I don't like it, it is just I don't always get to air my opinion, when this person is talking."

" Would you like to say which sister it is?" said Sister Vedika , very sweetly.

(Sister) Yashvi looked at me in an urging manner. I said meekly, "Sister Kavya."

At this everyone either laughed or smiled. I didn't want to say anything because Sister Kavya was well respected. Maybe what I said was perfectly fine. Sister Kavya stepped forward and responded, " I have heard this many times before, nearly every year. You are not the first person and certainly not the last. As always, I will try and make sure I don't talk as much".

I was the last person to comment and then everyone left the room. I felt quite happy after that and relieved, a weight had been lifted off my chest. I can't wait for tomorrow and then I can take all these comments into account and everything will be back to normal. Goodnight Diary.

Love,
Advika