

Gay by God. Proud by Choice!

by Mary Pearson

Gay by God

PRIDE in being gay is not something that comes naturally when we live in a world that tells us we are "evil" and "immoral". For most of us, it is first a road of self-awareness, and then of self-acceptance. We then need to take a further step to determine the consequences of our "Coming Out" to family, friends and co-workers. For many, the losses are not worth revealing the truth and so they remain closeted. This is understandable.

For those who are able to accept themselves for who they are, and have risked the consequences of being "Out", there is deserved PRIDE in acknowledging the truth.

Although no "gay gene" has yet been found, research does indicate that the gay brain is wired differently than the straight brain, but whether or not research confirms it, I know that God made me gay.

From as early an age as I can remember, I hated dresses and having my hair curled. I wanted to wear boy's jeans with a fly and lots of big deep pockets instead of girl's jeans with the zipper at the side. I wanted high cut runners, not tennis shoes, and my favourite piece of clothing was my brown hunter's cap with the big peak and fur earflaps from cousin Jimmy.

I suppose the fact that I went to an all-girls school and an all-girls camp each summer may have added to the environment aspect, but I know now that I was gay long before I ever started school.

I had simple crushes on my female teachers and when I was 12, I fell deeply, madly, excruciatingly in LOVE with my swimming counsellor at camp.

It was only when I started sharing with others how much in love I was, that I found out that it was "unacceptable" to love another female. Well how ridiculous is that! Why Not? Who can dictate another's feelings? How can ANY love, in the most innocent and pure sense of the word be "wrong"?

My mother kept saying it was "unhealthy". I had no concept that she was referring to mental health, and she couldn't bring herself to explain it. I just couldn't grasp what health had to do with loving someone.

I soon learned that it wasn't wise to tell anyone about this "love that dares not speak its name". It was a way to be very quickly ridiculed and ostracized. I learned that the word "lesbian" was so awful that a person just did not say it, so how could my mother possibly explain it to me if she couldn't say the word.

I was someone so awful that it couldn't even be talked about! Well what does that do for a person's self-esteem! So I learned to keep my secret - but something inside of me told me that I wasn't a bad person for loving another female. I just could not feel badly when this person gave me so much joy just by her mere presence around me. She was straight and it was like a big sister relationship to her, but to me, she was the love of my life, and I just could not feel like it was wrong.

So after years of indoctrination by society and the church, insisting that I am an abomination to God and that I will spend eternity in the fires of hell, I have done the research to know with certainty that God loves me just as I am, with no need to change my orientation, and I celebrate my uniqueness by CHOOSING to be PROUD that God has created me gay.

Proud by Choice!

I am PROUD that I knew intrinsically, in spite of being surrounded by all the negative messages, that I was not bad.

I am PROUD that although it took a lot of years to come to terms with my sexuality, I finally arrived and accepted myself for who I am. Until that time, there was a HOLE in me and now, in its place, there is a WHOLE me.

I am PROUD of the fact that God has chosen me to be among a select few, estimated at only 10% of the population. I am blessed.

I am PROUD that there are thousands of famous gays and lesbians who have made a positive impact on every aspect of society and our culture.

I am PROUD of the heritage from which we have come, and of those courageous few who took the lead for our cause in spite of the dangers and criticism of the masses.

I am PROUD of the millions of others who fight quietly to hold on to their dignity in spite of the persecution of those who claim to love them, but would reject them if they only knew.

Due to the extreme persecution perpetrated by the Christian church on gays, it was as hard for me to come "Out" as a Christian in the Gay community as it was for me to come "Out" as a Gay in the Christian community. Thank God Christianity is not based on Christians . . . "God save me from Your followers". Christianity is based on Christ, and Christ stood for an inclusive, loving membership of faith for ALL. Jesus was the first Advocate of women's rights, of the rights and inclusion of people of all cultures and races, of the disenfranchised and the rejected of society. It only follows that Jesus is an Advocate for gays.

So I am PROUD of the Christian Gays who are willing to stand up and not let others attempt to steal their faith away from them.

It is hard to have self-esteem when external forces bombard us with subliminal and overt messages that we are "evil" and "immoral". So I am PROUD that many of us are able to dismiss that negativity, knowing that it's a lie.

It was not so long ago when it was illegal for interracial couples to wed. It was emotionally repulsive for many whites to even conceive of the idea.

It is now no longer unusual to see mixed-race couples, and in time, I believe that people will regard same-sex marriages with as little thought as we now view mixed-race marriages.

We have come a long way from the days of my youth when the "L" word was so awful that it could not be said even by ourselves, to the legalizing of marriage for same-sex Canadian couples.

This has not just happened. It has been the result of pioneers fighting on our behalf, and we owe them all our support and a huge debt of gratitude. It is those brave men and women who have allowed us today to take PRIDE in who we are as individuals and as a community.

We have not won the war and many still need to remain closeted for safety and economic reasons, and because they need the acceptance and love of family and friends, but the day is coming when we will ALL be able to stand tall and PROUD as the people we were created to be, and we will be accepted for who we are, with no need for secrets and lies. May that day be very soon!