



My Dearest Friends and Family: A Woman's Thoughts on

Discovering Her True Sexual Identity

By Anonymous

This is without a doubt the most difficult letter I have ever written. I have been writing it in my mind for months. It is difficult because it lays me wide open and makes me feel exposed . . . naked. It saddens me because it may be confusing, disturbing, and painful for you. It causes me fear because I love you and have felt safe and secure in your love for me. Even so, it is because of our love for one another that I muster the courage to share this. It is the desire of my heart that you hear the truth from me rather than hear some distorted version.

For a number of years I have been on a very personal journey—a journey to understand myself. Because I was in a marital relationship, my husband necessarily journeyed with me. I have been blessed by my husband.

I have had a puzzle in my life going way back to my first marriage. There is no way I can put into words or explain completely what I mean by puzzle, but I will try. In my first marriage I had much happiness. We were kindred spirits in many ways and enjoyed a lot of the same things. Though we had a wonderful family life, I often struggled with feeling at odds with myself. This was something my husband knew nothing about. I did not understand it, so I did not discuss it. I wrote it off as something wrong with me. In my second marriage, I have had these same feelings . . . same wonderings . . . feeling at odds.

Again, I am married to a wonderful man and share much joy with him and a wonderful family I love. I have felt a closeness with my stepchildren and have taken them into my heart. This has helped fill some of the void I have in my own life. Also, I am a proud grandma—an experience beyond words!

In the desire and need to understand my feelings, and lack of feelings, I have asked myself many questions. I have allowed myself to be honest about the mystery I have experienced in my life since my teenage years. You may have already guessed that the issue is sexual orientation.

I have tried to march to a certain drum, but it is not my drum. Had sexual orientation been talked about when I was young, I might have had more self-awareness and explanation of my admiration, and, yes, attraction to females. As it was, my feelings felt normal. Because of this, I did not question these feelings and was unable to identify the weight they had.

In the heterosexual world in which I lived, breathed, and had my being “boys liked girls” and “girls liked boys.” No question about it—end of discussion. I stepped into line and marched with the band. I never talked about this with anyone, so I truly did not realize that my attraction to women was different from what my female friends experienced. Was I naïve? I don't think so. I think I lived in an era of taboo attitudes where no one mentioned

the “unspeakable.”

As I entered my late teens and early twenties, I never had any thought other than that I would meet a really nice guy, marry, and have children—which I did. I have many wonderful memories. However, at times I felt a dissonance I could not understand or name. I thought to myself, “There’s something wrong with me,” but I made a good life and was a good wife.

Before I married the second time, I still could not identify my problem or comprehend the magnitude of trying to do and be what does not come naturally. “Men love women” and “women love men”; I still lived in that mind-set. When I met my second husband, I knew I had another great guy. We have had a deep love and caring for each other, and have enjoyed so many things together.

The Core of One’s Being

It is here that I long for all to have an understanding as to the very significant role sexual orientation plays in one’s life. I am not sure that I can do the subject justice, but I can say something. You see, when both partners are heterosexual, orientation is not an issue. It is not something you give any thought to because you don’t have to. It just is.

The truth is that sexual orientation is at the core of a person’s being. In a marriage, it is the “energy” of the relationship. It is *not* just what happens in the bedroom. I have come to describe sexual orientation as “the sauce that permeates the spaghetti.” It mixes and mingles, coats every aspect of a marriage and helps keep it alive and well.

I have been and continue to be totally adored by my husband. I know this, and at one and the same time, it causes joy and sadness. Something that should be so good, whole, and beautiful is endangered by two separate orientations. Because of this, we cannot reach the core of each other, which is a necessary ingredient of marriage. We have longed for this and have been very disheartened that our longing could not be fulfilled.

Our journey has been tiring, and facing reality has been extremely painful. But we have traveled in patience, tenderness, and love. I have prayed for change again and again and have struggled with the “the silence of God”—the Almighty God who surely must be able to simply “flip the switch.” And why wouldn’t he?! Isn’t he a loving God?

You may surmise that I have been angry with God. I have driven up to the mountains (to be better heard, I guess) and there I have pled with him. Only silence. But I am not alone. Many, many have cried out the

same prayer for change. To be gay would not be quite so difficult to accept if I were not married. But I am, so there is great pain.

In discovering my orientation and fully understanding who I am, I am thankful for the partner I have. Most men, I fear, would put their wife out the front door and treat her in an un-Christlike manner. But my husband knows me, loves me, and respects me. He knows I did not choose to be gay. He has held onto me tightly when I have been down on myself and coming apart. He has literally saved my life more than once with his loving words and actions. It is because of him that I am able to hold my head high, with my self-esteem intact. I thank God for him! He has supported and kept me going while in the deepest pain himself. The deeper the love, the deeper the pain.

For several years we have worked with a number of incredibly skilled and caring therapists. We and they had only one goal in mind—to preserve our marriage. We have spent untold hours in earnest, ever agonizing conversation, with much crying and praying. Again and again there were late hours and lack of sleep for both of us. You see, most other marriage problems have the possibility of correction. It is not the same with our kind of problem. It is so debilitating to want with all of one’s heart to “fix” something and to find it “unfixable.” My husband is straight and I am gay. That is *unfixable*. I did not choose to be gay and I cannot change it, no matter how much we both wish and pray that I could.

We have blessed each other’s lives in many ways and do not at all regret but prize our years together. However, had we known of my sexual orientation when we first met, we would have immediately realized that our friendship could go no farther than just that—friendship. Marriage between people of different orientations is very problematic.

Pain over all this has been experienced at the depths not only by us but also by those family members and friends who thus far have come to know about it. We all love each other and feel devastated by what is happening. However, our ties of family and friendship remain strong. We all agree that we have become too important to one another to let our emotional attachments disintegrate. I feel very blessed.

The news about our situation has hit each family member very hard and taken considerable time to process. Some of our friends and family have a current knowledge of what homosexuality is and is not. This



is a tremendous help in their acceptance of me and in dealing with their own pain.

I am also fortunate to have a mother who has always shown unconditional love. As you might imagine, learning that your child is gay can be hard at any time, but when you're a parent up in years it is even harder. When it was time to share with my mom, I knew there would be many questions and much that she would not understand, but I never feared for one moment that her love would waiver.

She admits to knowing nothing about the subject and to being guilty of stereotyping. However, she knows her daughter, knows I would not *choose* to bring a "hell experience" into all our lives. She tells me over and over how much she loves me. She feels her own pain, and my pain. It is beyond comprehension how any parent can disown a child upon learning he or she is gay. Her words are, "They could not have truly loved their child in the first place." I agree and am thankful for my mom.

I pray God will wrap his arms around her and hold her tightly through this. I tell her she may have a new ministry because she is the ultimate example of "mother love."

You May Have Questions

My wish is that I could say all the things that would make this easier for you. I'm sure that you have questions, questions I may not be able to answer in a way that will

give you complete understanding. One of the first things you may wonder about is whether I am really gay. "No way, she's not gay," you may say. With the certainty of my current knowledge that would be the same as me saying to you, "No way, you're not straight!"

Sexual orientation is something one ultimately knows within oneself. It took me a long time to get to this place, but I have arrived at clarity. I have come to know deep within my soul who I am—with no questions or doubts. Even in the midst of much turmoil I have felt a new peace. I'm ok, there's nothing "wrong" with me. It is sad because I'm married. But I am thankful I finally understand. . . .

Even though no one is the guilty party, I am the change agent in the relationship. To find healing, I need to reconstruct my life and find new purpose. One of my goals now will be to help bring some understanding to this very complex issue and redemption to those who have been hurt by it.

There is misunderstanding and much cruelty. Unfortunately, even Christians are all too often involved in this. Anyone who knows me knows I did not wake up one morning and say, "Gee, I think it might be fun to be gay." I am a wise woman, and I am the same woman I've always been. I truly pray that God can use me to help educate and relieve some of the suffering felt over the issue of homosexuality.

Why don't I stay in the closet?

That's not me! I have always been an up-front, honest person, and I have read too many stories about the loneliness of the "closet." I refuse to live like a fugitive.

Will coming out be hard? Yes, but how else can I help myself and aid in bringing about change for the good? I am a product of God and I am his child. There is nothing more I wish to do than serve him. Am I scared? Yes, but the love and acceptance of family and friends is the foundation on which I stand. I have chosen to live, and I refuse to live any other way than joyfully.

Should I worry about your reaction to me now?

I don't know—should I??

Nah, it's too late . . . you already love me!

Thank you for your caring, listening heart.

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