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But, Why Not?

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But, Why Not?

Abstract

I am the lucky one.

That's how I've felt growing up in backwater Pennsylvucky, yet somehow managing to be openly queer. I came out to my friends and family as [bi/pan-sexual](#) in the 8th grade. None of my coming-out experiences resulted in horror stories. At that point most people had already guessed and accepted the fact that I was most definitely a queer kid. Even the most conservatively religious members of my friend group seemed perfectly okay with the fact that my sexuality didn't fit with their ideas of morality. I was who I was, and to all outward appearances that was just peachy. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, Gender & Sexuality, Queer

Disciplines

Gender and Sexuality | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies | Other Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Social Psychology and Interaction

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](#) Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

BUT, WHY NOT?

March 23, 2015

I am the lucky one.

That's how I've felt growing up in backwater Pennsylvucky, yet somehow managing to be openly queer. I came out to my friends and family as [bi/pan-sexual](#) in the 8th grade. None of my coming-out experiences resulted in horror stories. At that point most people had already guessed and accepted the fact that I was most definitely a queer kid. Even the most conservatively religious members of my friend group seemed perfectly okay with the fact that my sexuality didn't fit with their ideas of morality. I was who I was, and to all outward appearances that was just peachy.



I had other queer friends whose experiences weren't as benign as mine. I dated a girl who wasn't out to her family. My mother knew all about it, but to her family I was simply a nice friend who liked to come over a lot. Another one of my close friends was harassed for being gay by his siblings. His parents were unaware of his sexuality, and the siblings continually threatened to let the cat out of the bag. I was aware how scary it could be to a queer kid, but for some strange, magical reason I was never made the target. I felt accepted by all of my friends. Even the straight, conservative, or religious ones seemed to not give a shit about my sexuality. I felt comfortable to talk openly about it with pretty much everyone. Only later did I find out that not all of these friends understood my queerness as well as I had believed.

It wasn't until my junior and senior years of high school that I began to feel any tension. Friends of mine, close friends, my former best friend, started to make me feel uncomfortable with my sexuality. Nobody told me that my sexuality was wrong or unnatural. Nobody tried to change me. Their prejudice appeared through a different disguise. There is a stigma surrounding people who identify as bi- or pansexual. We are often perceived as promiscuous or more open to different kinds of sexual experience. While I've always had an open mind towards different kinds of sex and sexual relationships, I learned early on what I wanted for myself – a monogamous relationship. But it slowly became apparent that my friends could not or would not comprehend the fact that while I am attracted to all genders, I only feel comfortable having romantic and sexual relationships with one individual at a time.

A close friend of mine wanted me to have a threesome with him and his girlfriend. She was curious what it would be like to have sex with another female. He was curious if having sex with a bisexual would be any different. He had fetishized my sexuality. After I turned him down, he repeatedly asked every year for the next three years of high school. Before each time he propositioned me he would ask if I was still into girls as well as dudes. [Yes, but that doesn't mean I want to have a threesome with you.](#)

During my last years of high school up through college, more and more people asked me if I'd be willing to participate in threesomes. The first time it happened, I didn't know what to think or how to respond. But soon I started asking why I had been singled out.

I think it'd be hot to watch you goin' at it with my girlfriend, you're the only hot bi girl we know, we thought you'd be up for it since you like both, you're bi so it's not really cheating for you... The answers I received made it pretty clear that my friends who had been so supportive and understanding when I came out, still had some misconceptions and prejudices related to my sexuality. These were people I'd been friends with for years. They'd seen me go through several monogamous relationships. Why did they think they could safely assume that I'd be willing to participate in threesomes and cheat on my significant others? Why was my sexuality a validation for that assumption? I felt so hurt and confused. Even after I explained that no, I didn't want to have a threesome with anyone, they decided that I must be an exception to the rule. I became afraid to talk about sex and relationships with my friends for fear of being fetishized again. And as another Surge writer has pointed out, these assumptions can [lead to violence and sexual assault.](#)

Acceptance is not enough; it is only the starting point. The next steps need to include education and understanding of a broader spectrum of queer identities. Instead of making assumptions, let's ask respectful questions. Yes, I am one of the lucky ones when it comes to growing up queer, but that doesn't mean that conceptions of sexuality don't have room for improvement.

Anonymous