

Coming Out

Coming out? WOW! I would never say I sat my family down and told them I was gay. My actions showed from a very young age that I was gay. I was never confused as a child; I always knew, and your parents 95% of the time know their child is, too. Some are in denial, and others just wait until the child tells them that he's gay. Back to how my actions showed; it goes back to when I was a young kid. I was never the type to get into sports; I didn't even like them, no interest at all. Even "till this day, I don't like them or any other "boy" activities. I never really had male friends; most were female. I got along great with other guys; I just related to the females more.

Throughout elementary school, I always hung out with the girls. I loved cheerleading and doing things the girls did. Even as a young kid, with my musical tastes I was never into Kris Kross or any other hot rappers back then; they didn't grab my attention as much - I wasn't into rap! I was really into the boy group Immature. I was never ashamed that I was in LOVE with Immature because those who were closest to me knew I loved music; those who didn't fully know me didn't quite understand (which is cool, you don't understand what

you don't know). I had all their cassettes at that time, eventually upgrading to CDs. I had all their posters on my wall because I never missed a magazine that they were on the cover of or in. Immature's was the first ever concert I attended as a kid, so as you can see, at the tender age of eleven, twelve I really wasn't the "normal boy".

Growing up, I was mainly raised by females because my dad wasn't around, and some would say that I got all my female tendencies from women - but where else would I get them from if females were all I knew? I was never the type to dress like a female; I always wore boy clothing and loved to have the latest basketball shoes, even if I didn't know the player or even what team he played for...LOL I did perm my hair when I was twelve just because I was so in love with Marques Houston (Batman of Immature) and I really wanted to be him. So, back to coming out I guess I was twelve when it really became clear to my family and friends I wasn't straight, which was fine by me because I was at peace with myself even at eleven, twelve years old. Even though I had a lot of female friends, being asked was that my girlfriend or "Where's your girlfriend?" (Which I hated the most) made me really uncomfortable a lot of times because I guess since I never officially told anyone I was gay, it made that kind of hard to bear.

Believe it or not, I actually had a couple girlfriends in elementary and middle school (weird, right?) I don't think they put too much thought into the fact that I wasn't the most masculine boy; they just saw a very well dressed, funny kid and grew a liking to him (I mean, how can you blame them?...LOL). I did have female crushes, but guys were my main focus. When I was twelve, I experienced my first sexual experience with another guy (you guys can read all about that in 12 and sexing chapter). I have heard stories of people having their parents disown them, throw them out of the house, completely change in attitude, and even treat them as if they were strangers. Coming out

isn't an easy thing to do at all - I KNOW THIS! But if and when you feel comfortable enough to do it, then GO FOR IT! Remember, before you do, COMPLETELY THINK OUT YOUR PLAN; don't throw it on your loved ones. I say that because it may be a relief to come out, but you also have to be mindful of those who love you and how they will receive it.

Also, there's a lot of discrimination out here; even in 2012, people are discriminating against gays. So please completely think of your coming out before you do "come out". For those of you who are lucky enough, like me, not to have to come out verbally, then offer help to someone who isn't as lucky. I recently talked to some friends, and we had a good conversation about coming out and what age do you think is appropriate to do it. I personally feel you should wait until you're totally sure of your sexuality and you're not confused. In my opinion, have your own place and career and things going for you in your life. Back in 1995-96, when I was eleven, twelve years old, it was a lot different than today's eleven, twelve-year-olds. Today's eleven, twelve year-olds are "OUT", and I mean "OUT". I don't know how and why, but it seems to be happening younger and younger. Okay, back to me - of course! LOL When I was eleven, twelve years old I never really wanted to say, "Hey, Mom, Dad, can we sit down? I want to talk to you about something." I couldn't do that only because I didn't have that type of open relationship with my parents, and remember, my father wasn't around, so that definitely wasn't going to happen with him. I also didn't have that relationship with my stepfather.

With my mother, I felt and still do feel that she talks too much, and from a young age I have always been a private person. I didn't mind her knowing, but I knew that once she did she would jump on the phone and tell any and everyone who would answer, and that I couldn't deal with. Some things should be kept within the home, but it didn't seem to work that way with her, and that wasn't cool with me. It wasn't cool with me because with me I feel that once your parents know, to hell with everyone else - but remember, back in 1995-96 being gay wasn't as open and celebrated as it is today somewhat. Back then, being gay was very sacred and not talked about much, if at all, in most cases. Back then, to be gay meant you did hair and was known as the "faggot" (a word I hate with a passion), and no guys really wanted to be around you; they teased you constantly, every chance they got. Today's gays actually have it a lot easier than I did with coming out and being accepted.

It's still hard for some that may be struggling, but don't worry because Michael is here to help you. No! I can't do it for you, but I can most definitely offer help. Even as I'm sitting here listening to Rihanna (I love her music), I think of all the gays who want and need to come out so they can live at peace with themselves. So I would like to take a few moments to explain what it means to come out and what it can actually do for you. First, let's start with what it means to be gay. To be gay means that you are sexually, physically, and emotionally turned on by the same sex, which is a beautiful thing (where's the wrong in that?) Now, here's a few of my personal tips for coming out (I'm no expert; these are just my personal tips):

1. START WITH CLOSE FRIENDS!

Talk to your best friend that you know who loves you and can offer advice and support. REMEMBER, they can only offer their advice; they can't do it for you. Have a coming out dinner with your friends that may be going through the same thing. At the dinner, talk about ways you can express the real you to your loved ones. Make the dinner informative, but keep it fun to ease your mind a little bit. Remember, your friends are your support system. They're your backbone. THEY GOT YOU!

2. COME RIGHT OUT WITH IT!

Don't beat around the bush, meaning when you decide to tell your loved ones, make that meeting simple and to the point. EX: "Hi! Mom, Dad, I have you here to tell you that I'm GAY." The meeting already will be tense and seem to be moving very slow. Just don't prolong it any longer; here's your time to come clean.

3. ALLOW PEOPLE TIME TO PROCESS!

Once you have lifted that burden off your shoulders, give the person(s) time to come to grips with it. Don't expect them to fully accept what you just told them right off the bat (it takes time). Don't dwell on what was just told; that's the reason for the meeting. Ask them to ask all the questions they may have right then and there because tomorrow will be a new day and a fresh start for you.

4. UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT!

Prior to having your coming out meeting, you first have to think completely of what impact coming out may have on whom you're telling. You already know discrimination is out here (sadly!), but you still have to be mindful. Sad but true, sometimes coming out may cost you your career, and even some friends and relatives. People aren't as open-minded, and they may use it against you and even blame their religion for what they don't want to understand about you.

Those are just a few of the things I have either experienced or had friends go through. Most importantly, with the whole entire coming out, "Don't Rush It"; take your time, completely think it through, and read up on it. Talk to people to help offer advice. REMEMBER, YOU ARE NOT ALONE! YOU CAN DO IT!

While deciding to write my part of coming out, I reached out to three of my really good gay friends to see how they came out. Here's what they all had to say:

*I was drinking one night and on the phone with my younger sister, who was in the car with my mother and a family friend. I ended up telling my sister (who already knew) to tell my mother that I was gay. After that, my mother was distant from me for about a month. **C. Street - Came Out At 24***

*LOL... I sat my mom down and told her my spiel. She basically was saying, "Oh, okay." She basically knew because me and my best friend at the time were a little extra close, and she had heard us before when he stayed over. One morning, I remember her waking me up, and when I picked up my head I realized I was lying on his arm and she saw it. So she was basically saying, "I love you regardless, but I don't like it!" I don't throw it in my family's faces either. It is what it is! I've always said, "What does it matter what I'm doing in my bedroom? Shit! Isn't like you sitting there watching." **G. Warren - Came Out At 21***

*Me and my mother were eating Chinese, and she just came out and asked me was I in a relationship with a guy...LOL. **C. Cook - Came Out At 20***

After talking with my gay friends, I texted a really good female friend and asked her if her child was gay, how would she want him to come out? Here's what she had to say:

*I would want him to just tell me. I wouldn't love him any less, and I would NOT let his father have him feeling bad about his life choices. **C. Benjamin***

I know all the testimonials of my friends seem very realistic, and some of you reading may say, "Well, it's not that simple for me." I KNOW! I can only offer what I have been through and heard; I can't really speak on worst case scenarios because I haven't experienced them. Know that it will get better and much easier if you're honest and true to yourself, but first YOU have to ACCEPT YOURSELF before you can expect anybody else to. Self-acceptance involves self-understanding, being realistic and subjective, and the awareness of one's strength and weaknesses. It results in an individual feeling about him or herself that he or she is of UNIQUE WORTH! LOVE YOURSELF!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I hope that I have helped some of you reading this, and for those that have already come out, hopefully you saw yourself in my story or one of my friends' stories. I'm not an expert; I'm just a gay male speaking from experience. Remember, as a gay it's already hard enough to be accepted. We're all family, and we must stick together and support one another. Positivity over everything, or you have nothing!

As far as my sexual role, I'm considered a bottom. I never struggled with what role I wanted to be because I realized that I wanted to play the female role, which is the bottom of course. I'm the type who likes to be dominated in the bedroom. Take control of me; if you want it, take it. Coming out and knowing I was a bottom didn't affect my life much, and I'm glad that at a young age I was able to find myself so soon and didn't have to struggle. Some used to question, "Well, how do you know what you are so soon?" You know what you like and don't like, and I didn't like being on top, topping anyone.

I will say that if you are gay and haven't experienced both roles, you shouldn't claim one or the other until you do. How can you like or not like something you've never tried? I never understood that part of it; just because you hang around mostly bottoms, you classify yourself as one? I don't get it! Understand also that just because you're fem doesn't mean you can't be a top, and vice versa. In the gay community, to be fem automatically puts you in the bottom category, and being masculine makes you a top.

Nonsense! You are whatever you want to be and what you like and feel most comfortable being. The down side of that is that it's hard in the community for a fem top to ever be taken seriously, just because you're fem and looked at like the female role. I always had a saying: "If you're more fem than me, then you ain't climbing my back." I'm still that way to this day. I like what I like, and I like masculine guys or guys just a bit more manly than myself.