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Notes from a Dyke Diary

by Alyx

Sept 27 S. comes to me and says, "Can you get more of those buttons? I'd like everyone in the store to wear one on Coming Out Day." I couldn't believe my ears! As far as I know, I'm the only queer among about ten employees (there's that 10% of the population). A bigger statement will be made if everyone wears a button. Talk about really confusing the customers!

I spend some time searching for someone to turn out a small button order, and I finally find a guy who'd be glad to do it on short notice. In fact, I decide to get extras made so I can distribute them among the community.

Oct. 5 October 11 is fast approaching, and I wait in anticipation. While my co-workers look forward to the day, I am a bit apprehensive. After all, they have nothing but their support for me to defend. They cannot wait to see the reaction of some of our regular clientele, some of whom are very homophobic. I just hope that I don't attract too much religious wrath.

Oct 10 Tomorrow is the big day, and I'll most likely be freaked out until we open the store. After the first customers come through, I'll hopefully shift into high gear

and enjoy myself, feeling strong because I am making a statement (and because the entire store is making a statement!).

Oct 11

5 a.m. Okay... It is still dark out, and I'm stiff as a board, internalized homophobia raging inside of me. Let's do some deep breathing and try and relax. I need to be rested for today...

8 a.m. I get to work and have one hour to prepare myself mentally before the store opens. I'm wired, jabbering away at J. incessantly.

9 a.m. Now we are open, and I am trying to hide. When will this fear no longer have control over me? Perhaps with practice? I spend extra time in the storeroom, or in counting the deposit. Any excuse to stay away from the counter where I will have to interact with people.

9:30 a.m. I decide to face myself, get it over with, grit my teeth, and confront the oppressors (if there are indeed any in the store). The very first customer I wait on is a religious type, a local Jehovah Witness. She reads my button while I break into a cold sweat. She says that she doesn't understand what it says. I think to myself, "Come on, lady, isn't it obvious what it

means? What's the alternative to being a heterosexual?" Instead, I try and dance around the label of homosexuality by explaining that one shouldn't always assume that things are as they appear on the surface, that one cannot judge a book by its cover, etc. She leaves perplexed, and I could kick myself for faltering. Why couldn't I just say that I am a Lesbian, with a capital "L", and that I am insulted when the assumption that I am straight is made. Oh well... At least she will probably ponder the meaning of my button all day.

12 p.m. All the employees are wearing the button now, and everything is fairly smooth and quiet. The responses are varied, from looks of confusion, to smiles and knowing nods. S., the boss, is surprised at some of the homophobic responses she has gotten by wearing the button. I tell her that is exactly what Lesbians and Gay men have to deal with all day long.

5 p.m. The rest of the day went easily for me. I became busy and soon forgot that I was wearing the button unless someone mentioned it. In fact, it seems that as soon as it wasn't such a big deal for me, most people didn't even notice anything different. I was the same old employee, doing my job well. To most of the customers, what I am doesn't seem to be an issue. I am amazed at the number of people who actually knew that it was Coming Out Day, or that they remembered the March on Washington last year. I guess that we are becoming a more visible minority! The day is over, and I can go home and relax. Perhaps next year I will wear a button that says "A dyke and Damn proud of it!"



" I saw Daddy kissing Santa Claus ... "



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