

# Letters Home

*I decided to share with you this warm and supportive response to a coming out letter I recently sent to an old college friend of twelve years.*

Greetings near All Hallow's Eve!

...Someday someone will explain to me, in words not exceeding two syllables, why it is that my gay/lesbian friends are among the most stable people I know. It isn't because of their calm, smooth lives, as far as I can tell, and their families vary through most of the spectrum, so that isn't it either. This is not, I hasten to add, to say that I have NO stable friends on the other side of the street, just that the ratio is worse, and I certainly have never been numbered among the stable, so I don't help.

Concerning your fears about the proper wording of such things, I remind you of a delightful Doonesbury cartoon which ran many years ago. A young lady was introducing a gentleman of close but informal acquaintance to an older woman. After stumbling for several frames for an appropriate description of his role in her life, the older woman cut in gently, saying "Don't worry, dear. They'll find a word for it some day." In this instance, society has a word for it, but hasn't sufficiently to develop, at the very least, a sane response. I'm not sure if "knew" is too strong a verb or not. Suspected is probably too weak. But I'm delighted that you are happy enough with the situation to be letting it be a part of your outside life, although I think, in the same situation, I would have waited a millenium or so before letting an oh-so-enlightened family in on it.

I'm very sorry your mother is being such a nit. Not surprised, but sorry. You deserve much better. I almost wish family wasn't such an important concept to society, although I can lecture at length on why it is. I'm just not sure I think your energies



are most happily spent on people who have no base from which to return them. Except, perhaps your sister's children. I've come to feel that children are worth a great deal of pain and agony, if you've got any kind of chance of making decent human beings out of them. And they're so plastic, it's nearly impossible to judge when that chance no longer exists, so you just keep trying until you can't. I'm afraid I'm still a pretty harsh cynic where adults are concerned.

On the subject of outside opinions of your personal worth, I would take a factorial of the large opinions of friends, co-workers, church members, landlords et cetera, and subtract the inverse of your mother's small opinion, and work from there. The resulting number should be big enough to help smother self-doubt.

I have trouble picturing you as Julie Andrews (Ladies and gentlemen. The understatement of the century was made recently in correspondence between...). Were your mother to spend any time on the project, I suspect it would probably daunt her imagination as well. For that matter, German nobility is probably in short supply these days, and no easier to encounter in Vermont than in Maryland.

Give my wholehearted congratulations to A. for having the fortitude to SURVIVE 7th and 8th graders, let alone teach them. And happy condo-warming. I'm jealous. I would love to have a nest somewhere, but I don't know when, let alone where.

I must get back to whatever it was I wasn't wanting to do. Let me know when your vacation plans firm up. Huge hugs to you both. Think good thoughts.

Love and incoherence, V.

*Aunt Gay, housepainter and gardener, lives in a cold corner of the Northeast Queerdom. She's been learning from her mistakes for 86 years.*

Dear Aunt Gay,

My family is very conservative, so I haven't told them I'm gay. Mostly it's not an issue, because we're not close geographically or emotionally. But just on general principle, I'd like to be out to them.

Isn't there a service that would send them an official notice?

Dear Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_;

We are pleased to inform you that your son \_\_\_\_\_ is a proud and happy gay man. Congratulations on raising a well-rounded person and valuable community member!

We conduct discussion groups for family and friends of lesbians and gay men. If you would like to attend a meeting, or if you have any questions, please call us at this number: \_\_\_\_\_.

Thanking you in advance for your support of our openly gay population.

Signed, Proud and Happy

Dear proud and happy,

**Coming out is awkward! Really, you shouldn't have to do it. Lots of us are working for a world where there wouldn't be a heterosexist assumption to overcome.**

**Your form letter is great. You could send something like that to the folks. Or, do something more gradual, such as ask them what they think about gay rights. If they foam at the mouth, give them bite-size pieces of information over time.**

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) could be a resource for you and your family. See VT Resources page for the local address.

Dear Aunt Gay,

I have a thing for fat women. When I lie on mounds of soft flesh I get a deeply grounded, floating high that has no comparison.

My problem is that I'm being pursued by a stick. Maybe I've lost my perspective, but this woman is so thin it looks to me like she survived a concentration camp. She's a very nice woman; I think I could dig her a lot. But, honestly, her body horrifies me.

Signed, Horrified

Dear Horrified,

Your description of being with fat women sounds somewhat spiritual. Perhaps your attraction to bigness is a subconscious desire to mate with the Goddess. It sounds like you've experienced that, so you know the Goddess is in every woman. I'm sure you can find Her in your stick.

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