

Letters Home....

Dear Dad,

I am writing you a letter that I have wanted to write for a long, long time. Until now, I've been too afraid to. We haven't had a real father/daughter talk for a long time. One thing I always remember you telling me through the years is that happiness is the most important thing. I've searched for that happiness, changing my life when I've felt it necessary.

Dad, these three years in Vermont have been ones of self-discovery. I have found purposes and meaning to my life. And I have not shared any of it with you for fear of your rejection of me. You have always trusted me and my instincts. You've never really questioned my actions. And, sadly, I have to admit that I haven't told you the whole story. I love you and have been afraid of hurting you. But I now realize that if my happiness hurts you, I cannot blame myself.

Dad, I am gay. I've known for awhile now, but I was too afraid to tell you...too afraid that I would lose your love. But it is a chance that I take now because I don't think it's fair for either you or me that I should hide 95% of my life from you. It hurts me that I haven't felt I could share the happiness and peace of mind I've found.

My life is good now. I have a great job.

I have many friends, both gay and straight. I'm healthier than I have ever been, both physically and mentally. I'm involved in many activities--social, political, educational. Being gay is just one part of me, but it is an important part. Many people would use my private life as an excuse to condemn and reject and deny my existence and rights. Maybe that's why I've kept this secret from you for so long. The thought of losing you was something I couldn't bear. I love you and want you to know why I'm happy. It only seems fair. If you choose to reject me and no longer love me, I will feel a great loss.

I love Vermont; it is home to me now. But I came here for a self-imposed exile. I could not lead two lives in Texas...one for my family (straight) and one for everyone else (gay). I did not know how to reconcile the two halves, so I put a lot of distance between us in order not to have to deal with it. But I do have to deal with it...I miss my family, and I think of y'all daily. So there it is...Please call or write me if you need to talk.

Love, Alyx

Dearest Daughter,

...Your sexual preference is entirely your personal business and should be kept personal. We who are not of your persua-

sion don't completely understand it but accept that it exists among otherwise talented normal people. My only misunderstanding is the compulsion of gays to announce to the world their orientation. How silly. Maybe the law should require every person to wear a sign saying, "I'm a heterosexual" or "I'm a bisexual" etc.

Always remember that you are loved by your parents and although we may not approve of everything you do, we do love you dearly and will continue to support you in any of your endeavors...So no more is necessary in this matter.

We hope the holidays are peaceful for you and you continue to stay happy and well.

Love, Dad

Footnote from Alyx:

What is a queer's major fear when coming out to parents? Phrases often used figuratively are "They'll have a heart attack" or "They'll just die." The figurative became literal for me when I sent this coming out letter to my father.

My dad received a long cried over and struggled over letter from me on a Saturday in October. The following Tuesday, the day Mom says he was to respond to my letter, he had a massive coronary, stroke and subse-

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NO \$ DOWN !!

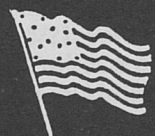
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