

## Growing In A Positive Faith



Rubin

Photo by  
Stacianne  
Visco

by Lisa Rubin

(The following is an excerpt from a sermon delivered on April 28, 1996. Rubin is the Director of the Religious Education program at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington. She also officiated at the first annual Interfaith Worship Service during the 1996 Vermont Pride weekend.)

I have learned more about speaking up for one's concerns and values from the youth that I work with continentally and locally than from almost anywhere else. Their business meetings are run more efficiently and effectively than any others I have attended. They know how to combine the purposefulness and order of Robert's Rules with very creative ways of having fun and rejuvenation of energy breaks during ten-hour meetings. The youth I've worked with use their patience and go through the often painful time to do the best they can to build consensus. Everyone's needs are looked at; everyone's concerns are addressed.

It was working with the youth that I first experienced the need to get honest with myself about my sexual orientation. At conferences, sexuality discussion groups and workshops are common occurrences.

At my very first workshop, the young female leader said "OK. Let's go around the room and say our names and our sexual orientations." The youth felt comfortable in that space to say their names and things like, "I'm gay," "I'm straight," "I'm a dyke," "I don't know yet," "I'm bi," and "I don't like to put a name on my sexuality." I said, "I'm Lisa, and I'm interested in the subject."

How could I progress to support youth with all of their questions and concerns if I couldn't be honest with them? The first person that I had to be honest with was myself, of course. So I came out to myself as a bisexual. I thought that's what I must be, since I was married to a man. I could no longer push down the feelings; I had to tell my husband and my teenage daughter, Dayva.

Things at home seemed relatively OK. Joe was no longer pushing me to be someone I couldn't

be. I had no idea at the time that he had found someone else who could. He left seven months later. I was crushed. All my plans for the future dissolved, all my fears about being independent arose. Food, my favorite drug, tried to call to me, but I turned to my spiritual connectedness instead.

With the help of lesbian and gay friends in the community and congregation, I explored my feelings. I was given books to read, invited to attend events and talked and listened for hours and hours. I also prayed, a lot. I slowly came out to myself and others as a woman who loves women, a lesbian, a dyke. The interesting thing that happened was that other women in similar situations in the congregation (or hearing about the congregation) quietly came to me to talk about what they were also going through. We formed a small support system and, for anonymity's sake, we met away from the church building.

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all is the sixth Principle of Unitarian Universalism. Although I am not a person of color and have a temporarily-abled body, I thought I had a sense of oppression coming from a Jewish family and being a woman. World community? Peace, liberty, and justice for all? I was frightened to find in our Unitarian Universalist magazine that not all of our spiritual brothers and sisters affirmed and promoted this principle for the family to which I have now become a part.

Today, I have come to truly know love for the first time in my life. I am now in an open, honest, and caring relationship with a most special woman. My children and my family accept me as I am.

At home I have a purple poster with large white letters that say "LESBIAN RIGHTS NOW." On the back is this inscription: "Dear Mom, On April 14th 1996, I carried this sign for you all the way through the San Francisco Fight the Right March! I love you, I'm proud of you. Dayva." ▼

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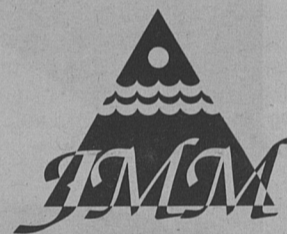
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