



Internalized Homophobia/Transphobia ...Homophilia/Transphilia: A Model

By Beth Reis, © 1990, revised 2008, with gratitude to professor Dorothy Riddle, Ph.D.,
on whose model for heterosexuals' experience of homophobia this is based (www.wiu.edu/ucoso/riddle.htm)

Stage One: Repulsion

I am disgusted and mortified by the behavior of homosexual people. I may be attracted to or in love with someone of my own sex or I may feel inside like a different gender than my body, but I have nothing else in common with them and would rather just call myself a person than to have to choose a label for myself. I may actually participate in bullying or assaulting these people because they so offend me.

Stage Two: Pity

Those homosexual and transgender people who belong to a ghettoized community are, for the most part, pretty immature and/or psychologically damaged in my opinion. I feel sorry for those who need their own publications and places to socialize. I may consider myself bisexual, gay, lesbian or transgender in a very theoretical sense, but I don't believe that most of us belong to any "gay community" and I consider myself to be, culturally, no different from my heterosexual neighbors and friends. The only difference between us is who we happen to love.

Stage Three: Tolerance

I do not have much in common with other transgender, bisexual, gay or lesbian people, except what we do in bed or how we act in private, but I can be around them without much discomfort, especially when there are no heterosexual, non-transgender people present, in front of whom I might feel embarrassed by the behavior of stereotypically gay or lesbian people.

Stage Four: Acceptance

Not only can I be around other bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people, I actually choose to on occasion. Militant folks may embarrass me, but most people in the LGBT community are just regular people, not especially different from heterosexual, non-transgender folks.

Stage Five: Solidarity

I am entitled to the same civil rights as heterosexual people and so is the rest of the LGBT community. I might not ever choose to engage in public displays of affection. I might not choose to dress or act in gender variant ways, but I have the right. And it certainly seems to me unfair that my people can't be with our loved ones in hospitals or share rooms with them in nursing homes. We shouldn't get beaten up for wearing an earring. It seems unfair that we can't serve openly in the military.

Stage Six: Admiration

I have gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender heroes, people who have died as martyrs because they were LGBT or queer or who contributed wonderful things to the world. I have some amazing brothers and sisters. And I am proud of the work I have done to be myself and others about LGBTQ issues.

Stage Seven: Appreciation

My People have gifts and a delightful culture. Our sexuality is a part of our special perspective, not the thing we are wonderful in *spite* of. We have certain humor and an ability to play with gender that is good for the culture around us. Many of us make healthy relationships that can serve as great models for heterosexuals. We may excel in certain fields partly because there's room for us there (less bias) but also perhaps partly due to biological factors associated with our queerness ... I don't know if it's biological and I don't care. I'm not troubled by the stereotype that gay men are artistic or lesbians, athletic. Of course, we don't all fit the stereotypes, but it is OK with me if a higher percentage of us do.

Stage Eight: Celebration

I am unabashedly proud of my queerness and to be known/seen as me. I don't feel any need to hide or pretend and, in fact, I am really grateful to be lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, genderqueer or gender-fluid. It is intrinsic to who I am and who I am is good. Not superior to other people, but absolutely fine, healthy and normal for me.