

Coming out

I've finally gathered up the courage to use this month, 'Pride Month,' to come out. As of today, I officially declare my sexuality. I am an actual, honest-to-goodness, bona fide, life-long and proud heterosexual. I know this may sound controversial and even be intimidating to some people, but I felt that it was necessary to throw caution to the wind and run the risk of being 'canceled' by non-heterosexuals who seem to be intent on using their views on sexuality as a cudgel to beat us heteros into submission and force us back into the 'closet.' As a proud heterosexual, I believe that children are best raised in the traditional, one-man, one-woman family as children need balance in their role models. It goes without saying that those role models must have more going for them than just their gender and that's where I depart from the 'gender hegemonists' that are only concerned about making families "open to all comers" without regard for children's welfare.

I also declare that I am an American patriot, someone who gets choked up when the National Anthem is played as I stand with my hand over my heart to show my respect for those who have fought and died that I might stand in peace. I am an unashamed believer in - and defender of - the freedoms and opportunity that the U.S. has given me and all citizens of this great country.

I am also proud to come out from behind my passport and thank my ancestors for braving the hardships of leaving the country of their birth to risk everything on a month-long perilous journey from Norway to our golden shores in 1862. I acknowledge their courage to emigrate legally to the United States and I take pride in the fact that none of them ever owned a slave and that my great great grandfather actually fought on the side of the Union to abolish slavery and was wounded in three separate battles before coming home.

I come out, too, as a proud Conservative who believes in personal responsibility and personal accountability for his words and deeds. *Conserving* everything from my environment to my family ties to my relationships with those who agree *and disagree* with me is my credo. My Conservatism is not exclusive or restricted to me as an individual. As long as I do well and prosper, I believe that my prosperity spills over and improves my community and my country. I come out as a believer in the rights of every individual to be included in the collective body of citizens in this country or to be left alone as he sees fit.

I declare my allegiance to the rule of law and support the time-honored processes that lead us to establishing those laws and I support the fair and consistent enforcement of them. Many claims have been made that some of those laws have been applied unfairly and discriminate against some in our society. I agree that no law is perfect, neither are all those that enforce them, but I do not hold with the view that my country is either systemically racist or biased against our minorities. I am pleased to reveal that I am not proud to be Caucasian nor am I ashamed of it. I was born that way and cannot be proud of a physical condition that I had nothing to do with. On the other hand, I am proud that people who were White like me worked to make this country a beacon of freedom for peoples of all colors and creeds and that the vast majority of them took up arms against discrimination over the centuries. I am proud of what they did to cross racial barriers to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

I come out as a defender of common sense, the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, the Constitution and Bill of Rights. I support civil dialogue and forbearance, the right to peaceful protest and disagreement, a free press, a fair and impartial judiciary and honest elections. I support critical thinking in education not critical race theory. I stand with those who would protect themselves, their families and their property from those who would do them harm. If this means they use firearms as a last resort, so be it. I come out, too, as an individual who asserts the right to make his own medical choices and who maintains the right to keep the details of his medical history to himself and not have them used against him by either his government or by corporations. Today, I am proud to declare my fallibility. I have made many mistakes in my life, but I have never been ungrateful for the life that allowed me to make them...or correct them.

As a deeply religious person, I humbly thank God every day for all that I have. In truth, *coming out* should have nothing to do with pride in one's self. It should be seen for what it is, a stock-taking exercise that reminds us of what really matters.

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