

Guess what? Being gay isn't wrong

One of my dearest friends is gay. So is one of my favorite cousins. And an aunt. Actually, two aunts. They are a couple; my daughter knows she has two aunts who are married to each other and she loves them both equally and in the same way she loves all of her other aunts and uncles.

Our kids will grow up knowing that there is nothing wrong with loving someone. They will understand that a mature love between two consenting adults — regardless if the two adults are both female or both male — is human nature.

If my kids follow what their parents believe, they will know that love is the reason we are all here. They will understand that the real foundation of a healthy relationship is not about whom you love, but the ability to love openly and whole-heartedly.

Obviously, there's much debate around this issue and many people who would disagree with what I am teaching my children. A certain presidential candidate's spouse comes to mind. He has not only made anti-gay comments, but is connected to programs that try to "teach" the very opposite of what I am instilling in my children.

Whether or not you support gay and lesbian rights is most definitely your prerogative.

But, to believe you can teach someone how "not to be gay" is ... hateful in the most literal interpretation of the word.

How could "teaching" someone to be different from their true nature — when their true nature is in no way harmful to themselves or others — be acceptable? It is the same as teaching someone how not to be compassionate. Or inquisitive. Or a brunette.

I realize that I will not change anyone's mind who believes differently than I do. I debated even turning this column over to my editor. After starting it two weeks ago, I avoided finishing it.

"What's the point?" I thought. I'm not going to change anyone's mind, and worse, I may be opening the door for nasty and hurtful comments about the lifestyles of people who I love and adore.

But then I thought about the people who are gay but don't talk about it because they fear there may be something wrong with them.

My friend, cousin and aunts know that I love them because of who they are and not in spite of it. They know there is absolutely nothing wrong with them. They live authentically and truthfully. They do not hide, ignore or avoid their true nature.

It occurred to me that I have an intrinsic urge to love anyone who has the ability to do this — to love themselves and live authentically, no matter if they are gay, or have a wicked sense of humor, or can sing like a bird or run like the wind. I'm attracted to people who are at ease in their own skin and let their true selves shine.

I can't imagine living in a world where I was confronted daily with strangers telling me that I was wrong for loving my spouse. Or that anyone would be so presumptuous as to assume I would want to be "taught" how not to love someone.

What I can imagine is the day I get to tell my children how antiquated our laws once were — in the same way I learned of suffragettes and those who fought segregation. I will explain the ridiculous and hypocritical nature of the Don't Ask-Don't Tell legislation. I will sigh in disbelief along with my children when they find out that there was once a time when not everyone could marry the person they loved.

I wanted to write this column should my children ever ask if I did anything to stand against the unfair and unjust laws around gay and lesbian rights. I wanted to write it to stand in opposition of any ideology or educational programs that teach hate.

Shouldn't we be teaching tolerance? And the importance of loving one another? With the many economic and environmental struggles we must overcome as a nation, how could devoting energy to telling people who they should and shouldn't love be an effective use of our government's time?

Mostly, I wanted to write this column to show how much I love my friend, my cousin (and her partner) and my aunts. I decided to finish this column for anyone who feels that they must hide who they love or pretend they are someone they're not.

You will never be wrong for being who you are.



Amy Gesenhues' column is distributed by the CNHI News Service. Her email address is amy@amywroteit.com.

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