

Advice to gay or lesbian person who is thinking of coming out...

What is shared below is from my notes in conversing with some straight folks whose loved one has come out to them. One of their loved ones had come out to them. They (though they are Side B) have told their loved one they still love them and they are maintaining a relationship with them and their partner. This is some of what they shared...

1. Realize it is a difficult conversation
2. Expect that you might have a melt-down / explosive situation / reaction but remember that your parents / siblings are learning how to process this news.
3. Recognize the parental dynamics that may be in play here ... dad's reaction .. mom's reaction and your parents interaction with each other..

Example If one of the parents does not want to talk about it .. it leaves the other parent without anyone to bounce things off of. (Also, generally speaking.. If one parents wants to respond strictly and the other graciously it can cause tension between the parents.)

4. Don't think that the initial reaction is the only reaction that will ever be.
5. Words said during that moment are often a gut reaction to something they have not dealt with.
6. Your parents have not gone through the turmoil you have gone through in coming out to yourself!!!
7. Awful words from your parents do NOT mean its over.
8. It is not a once and done conversation.
9. Recognize that when you come out .. the whole family comes out with you.
- 10 Recognize that the whole family is invested in this new dynamic.
11. There is the question of how do we respond to you .. to each other's reactions .. to co-workers (reactions) .. to fellow Christians (reactions).
12. Parents fear the community (and church) reaction to the news .. (fear for their child).
13. Don't come out during the holidays ... time of surgery or family crisis. ** However .. realize that there will never be the perfect time. **
15. Tell them without your partner present (let them process the news a little bit at a time .. not all at once)
16. Don't tell the whole world at once ... re: tell immediate family .. not all the relatives at the same time.
17. Arrange beforehand to have a safe place to go after you share your news in case you need it.

18. Plan ahead .. be prepared.
19. It is not your job to prove that a certain theology is correct .. re: that you're right and they are wrong
20. Keep the conversation about sharing a truth about yourself .. it's important for them to understand **you!!**
21. Let them know they didn't do anything wrong in raising you ... it's not their fault.
22. Recommend sharing the DVD "Through My Eyes" .. after the initial coming out. Show within the same month (but not the same night). Advantages to the DVD ...
 - a. It got rid of stereotypes
 - b. It had all the views expressed
 - c. It had no agenda other than for people to tell their story.
 - d. It really helped them understand their gay loved one
23. Here is an interesting recommendation... They recommended this season (2010/2011) of GLEE .. They said that it had some very thought provoking episodes on bullying this season with, in their opinion, a decent and realistic portrayal of Christians.