



My Journey

- **Becky**

Becoming a straight ally was not difficult for me. Once the scales fell from my eyes, I could not un-see what God had revealed to me and I knew I needed to lean into learning from, serving, and loving my LGBT friends, even if it meant sacrificing parts of the comfortable Christian life that I had built for myself. After all, this was the least I could do as more and more I came face to face with stories of the rejection, mistreatment, and abuse of LGBT people that rocked me to my core.

However, being an ally and knowing what to do with my allyship has been the harder part. Am I overstepping? Am I doing enough? Am I aware enough of my privilege? Am I really prepared to cope with losing friends and relationships due to my theology? Am I prepared for my husband and children to lose relationships due to my affirming stance? Am I truly prepared to have others question my faith and judgment?

I have learned much since becoming an ally—about myself, about humanity and about the substance of my faith. I have learned not just to hear, but to listen. I have learned to

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educate myself about the diversity of gender and sexuality and not expect LGBT folks to answer all my questions. I have learned to amplify LGBT voices. I have learned that my privilege can be used to educate others with privilege and maybe even open their eyes to what I now see. I have learned to love and embrace all the ways that God has made us unique, as well as the common bonds we share. I have learned the importance of supporting and promoting LGBT organizations. I have learned that however challenging at times, the opportunity to form friendships with and stand in solidarity with my LGBT Christian brothers and sisters has been one of God's greatest gifts in my life.

The Christian life can be complicated and messy and difficult—and beautiful and healing and life-giving. Whatever ups and downs or spiritual doubts or failings I may struggle with in the years to come, my identity is secure and confident in this knowledge: that I am a child of God. Out of this identity flows my responsibility to be Jesus to the people He puts in my path. This means listening for God's voice and doing my best to discern and move forward despite the many questions I may have about how to be a good disciple, wife, parent, or ally. The questions will always exist and the road may not always be smooth, but I can take comfort in the fact that I am never traveling alone.



“Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

—Romans 13:10



“ ‘Cause there’s so much good in the worst of us, so much bad in the best of us, it never makes sense for any of us to criticize the rest of us. We’ll just find what we’re looking for.”

A. Grant and M. Smith

The stories we tell

- Diane

We each have a narrative, a story to tell – about ourselves, about our experiences, about our beliefs, about the world in which we live. Sometimes the stories we tell about others, those others don’t recognize as being their story. It’s our story about them, not theirs.

We live in this world together. But how ‘together’ do we really live? How much do we allow ourselves to be impacted by the narratives of others? And who are the others we do allow ourselves to be impacted by?

At a recent local event, some folks gathered around conflicting narratives. There were speakers addressing their topic, and protestors challenging the speakers. It became rowdy. Police escorted a few people out, one man was injured. One of the speakers stated that, while he speaks all over the nation, he had never seen a crowd behave like this.

Which prompted me to think, “Who do you speak to?”

Call it preaching to the choir, talking to the ‘Amen’ crowd, or enlisting others in our cause, we all like to be affirmed and have others on our side. Support is a good and necessary part of being human. It can help

build community and strengthen us as individuals. It truly is “not good for man to be alone”.

But when we surround ourselves only with those who agree with us, when we exclude those with whom we differ or who would challenge us, we lose. We lose opportunity for growth, and we run a risk of living a distorted story. We may develop a narrative that causes harm, even while we are convinced we are doing good.

Where narratives intersect, there is opportunity.

Where there is adamant refusal to allow narratives to intersect, we are left with only an “I’m right and you’re wrong” story .

But where we allow our narratives to intersect we open opportunity. It may be that we will find connection, understanding, growth, even joy – all kinds of good things. So, then, what can you and I do to create a space where we can listen and be heard, perhaps establish empathy, perhaps hear another’s heart?

For those who want things to be better

If you’re reading this, you may have some interest in improving the conversation between the LGBT and Christian communities. We have greatly appreciated the ongoing financial contributions many of you have made and continue to make to Bridge Evidence Group’s efforts. Much of our work is dependent on contributions. We are able to do more or less according to the financial support we receive. Please join in this effort. You can make contributions securely online via PayPal from our website. Or send your check or money order via US mail to: Bridge Evidence Group, PO Box 888160, Grand Rapids, MI 49588.

4th Quarter 2014 and 1st Quarter 2015 financial statement

Previous balance	\$5253.97
Total gifts:	\$3600.00
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