



Acceptance of LGBTQ Children: A General Discussion

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Acceptance is a fickle idea. Everyone craves it, but more often than not, people fail to allot it. It's not an easy thing to do - accept. But it is vital for movement and for living in today's day and age. Now, acceptance is not approval. Approval is when someone agrees with you, when someone supports you and your ideas; whereas acceptance is the "okay" that someone loves you enough to take whoever you are and not judge. This idea of acceptance is rare among families of LGBTQ children. This is not to say that all families, or even most, are unsupportive of their LGBTQ children, but it does bring to light the intolerance expressed by some families surrounding this prevalent issue. Furthermore, this issue of unacceptable intolerance is seen with families and through religion - an important aspect that needs to be discussed.

To first understand this intolerance from the point of view of an LGBTQ child, one must listen and not judge. This issue is delicate and demands patience but also tenderness. In an interview with *HuffPost*, Jae Alexis Lee, advocate for LGBTQ rights, explains how, "I want to rant, to scream, I want to shout and point fingers at a stew of toxic modern Christianity, Traditional American Family Values, and a fundamental lack of education about queer people. I want to point to political organizations that demonize trans and LGBT people, that paint us as freaks or perverts or predators. I want to blame something." This excruciatingly realistic depiction of what goes through the mind of an LGBTQ person is truly eye-opening. Although Lee is no longer a child, her experiences and words give a voice to an otherwise voiceless minority. In describing the frustrating part of the very identity associated with an LGBTQ person, Lee sheds light into the importance of acceptance.

Another aspect of prejudice against the LGBTQ community is prevalently displayed in religion. Some households across the nation are strictly religious; and this rigidity often is at the expense of parents' LGBTQ children. For example, in a difficult article by *Rolling Stone* about a homeless gay teenager coming out to her religious parents, the difficulties and problems faced by LGBTQ youth are not just seen, they are broadcasted. For example, after the teen, named Jackie, came out to her mother over the phone, the article expresses how, "As soon as the line went dead, Jackie began sobbing. Still, she convinced herself that her parents would come around and accept her, despite what they perceived to be her flaw." As expressed above by the views of Lee, the issue of acceptance within the LGBTQ community is far from solved and is heart-wrenching.

Furthermore, another view both supports and refutes this cause of LGBTQ acceptance. Although both Jackie and Jae Alexis Lee outlined disturbing accounts of the horrors associated with acceptance (or lack thereof) others choose to look at the issue holistically. For example, Dr. Caitlin Ryan, Director of the Family Acceptance Project™ at San Francisco State University, explains an aspect of "acceptance" among parents. She outlines how, "FAP researchers found that families who are conflicted about their children's LGBT identity believe that the best way to help their children survive and thrive in the world is to help them fit in with their

heterosexual peers. So, when these families block access to their child's gay friends or LGBT resources, they are acting out of care and concern." Now, this opinion is not to defend unaccepting parents or even justify their mistakes, but it does offer a separate approach to the very issue of acceptance within the LGBTQ community. Overall, it is important to remember that acceptance is not support and support is not acceptance. One is necessary, the other is trivial.

Resources

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-do-parents-reject-their-lgbtq-children_us_58b9a3f7e4b0fa65b844b26d

<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/the-forsaken-a-rising-number-of-homeless-gay-teens-are-being-cast-out-by-religious-families-46746/>

https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/LGBT_Brief.pdf