



IS GAY SPIRITUALITY BETTER....?

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“Gay spirituality is better than any other” - the reporter desperately wanted me to endorse his belief. I wasn’t going there. Righteous spiritual segregation is antithetical to the idea of a spiritual journey. So where does spirituality for LGBT people connect with the human family and the Holy? What does it reveal about our common humanity and search to be fully alive?

The normative LGBT story usually includes experiencing bullying, fear of coming out, rejection by family when we do and the Holy used by religion to condemn. We might even be the victims of violence, abuse or discrimination. Our journey also contains another story line. It is about courage and love birthed in us.

A more spacious invitation than the reporter’s belief invites us in. Spirituality is not about a theory, it is discovered in the reality of who we are. I’ve discovered that in the spiritual journey of immigrants, women, people of color and other minorities my own journey is inspired. Most of us fall into several self-identifying categories.

The question is not whether your spirituality or mine is “better.” It’s how does your journey create empathy with others? How does your spirituality get fed by the wisdom of those who are different from you? How does it connect you to oneness with others?

Unlike the belief of that reporter my spirituality is not celebrated as a “better” treasure. I discover a much richer inclusive path in three pathways to celebrate and share the gift that is my life.

Beyond Enclosures. Whoever and whatever tries to define you wants to confine you. It creates an enclosure keeping you from the Holy discovered in your life. In accepting an enclosure you become cut-off from the unique gifts that only you have to offer. You deprive yourself and the world of them. Allowing yourself to be enclosed can happen subtly over time. The good news is that we have a choice to break out of the enclosure.

Celebrating Your Voice! When we discover our voice and claim it we are on sacred ground. Instead of listening to the bad advice of those who do not want you to claim your voice, you discover that the Holy is present in it. Not outside “there” somewhere,

but in you. You begin to be free of a narrow consciousness. Claiming your voice is a spiritual practice taking you to a field of feasting with others on which our voices help to weave the narrative of our inter-connectedness.

Your story is vital! The Universe needs your story as much as that of anyone else. As you tell your story you discover self-compassion. In the telling you become awake to the sacred in you as a person. As you settle into celebrating your voice you begin to listen to the stories and voices of others with new attentiveness. They become connecting stories. Through them your appreciation and love for yourself and others deepens. You discover a new way of being alive.

These three pathways of moving beyond enclosures, discovering, trusting and celebrating your voice and your vital story are markers of your authentic experience of being a unique human being whose presence is needed for the life and harmony of the world.

Love is the only thing that matters on our spiritual quest. Everything else pales in comparison. I am loved by the Holy for all of who I am. It's a struggle for many to know and believe it every day. When I love myself and know that I am loved life becomes more radiant. I become more fully human, more alive as I am.

It takes courage to journey through the three pathways. The root word for courage means love. To be grounded in love we cannot avoid being courageous about who we are. Not the lonely isolated warrior courage, but the courage discovered in trusted people to call on along the journey. It's all part of our spiritual positioning system.

When I'm grounded in these three pathways my encounters with others become sacred ground. Like the Hindu greeting *Namaste*, the light in me honors the light in you.

The three pathways are not just for LGBT people because love and courage are not confined to any segmented spirituality. Instead, they're each part of our common journey to become fully human - as we are. We bring to the journey the only gift we can – ourselves.

So what are the markers of your spirituality?