

The Truth about People Who Bully Gays and Lesbians

By Joe Kort, Ph.D.

1. They are suppressing their own homosexual identity.

It is true that those in the early stages of coming out are usually the most homophobic. Usually they will talk about who else they know or suspect to be gay, talk about their negative feelings about those “obvious fags or dykes” and be most critical of the “homosexual lifestyle”. Over time they continue on with their coming out process and feel must regret for how they were in their early suppressed stages of being closeted.

2. They are suppressing homosexual impulses and desires.

This is a popular belief that if, “one protests too much” that he himself must have the same issue or concern. In other words, when someone bullies or talks a great deal negatively about lesbians and gays the instant reaction is that they must be gay themselves. A study done on this very topic in 1996 actually proved this to be true. Henry E. Adams, Lester W. Wright, Jr., and Bethany A. Lohr published their research in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* entitled, “Is Homophobia Associated With Homosexual Arousal?” The study was done only on males and found that men who were most homophobic and held negative views on homosexuality were those who were aroused by gay male erotic stimuli. To read about the actual study go to Wikipedia.org http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latent_homosexuality.

3. They are hiding their own sexual issues of which they are ashamed and disgusted.

Many people equate the word *gay* with the word sex. They don’t even hear the word gay they hear, “I want to have sex with you.” So those with sexual secrets which they are hiding and feeling shame and confusion for will often target others sexuality to throw off their own sexual issues. For example, Dr. Laura Schlesinger, a popular talk radio show host, declared homosexuality a “biological error” and “a sadness.” She used the airwaves to spew her hatred and disdain for homosexuality. She often calls men “animals” sexually and tells women to wait to have sex until they are married. During the time of her anti-gay rhetoric, pornographic pictures surfaced all over the internet of her taken during a sexual relationship she had with a man while unmarried. These pictures were eventually published in Hustler magazine. Playboy magazine pictures are tame compared to the type Dr. Laura took which was a perfect match for Hustler magazine. If you don’t know the different between the two magazines, ask any non-gay man.

4. They were sexually abused by a male perpetrator.

I had a client once tell me that he was “queered” by his brother. When I asked what he meant he told me that his brother sexually abused him. Many men who were sexually abused confuse that with homosexuality. They refer to their perpetrators as gays and believe the act was of a homosexual nature. The truth is that sexual abuse is never about sex and always about power and control. Like rape, the intent is to use and humiliate the victim using the vehicle of sex. Sadly these male victims are never taught the difference nor understand what happened to them was separate from homosexuality and they take it out on gay men who they project are all predators and perpetrators of sexual abuse.

5. They were put down for their gender expression.

Many men who are insulted and humiliated for not expressing their masculinity in traditional ways often target others who seem effeminate and gay or lesbian. Because they were the recipients of gender bashing they engage in their own gender bashing themselves of others.

6. They were bullied themselves.

This may not have anything to do with homosexuality and everything to do with victim becoming victor. Many people who are bullied as children in the home and/or in school find empowerment in bullying others to shake their feelings of inadequacy. This is a natural outgrowth of being put down and targeted oneself for something about them that is seen as stigmatized. Consequently, picking on another minority who is stigmatized gives a bully feelings of power and removes the spotlight off from them onto someone else.

7. They are deeply religious.

Whether people want to admit it or not, children learn that homosexuality is wrong right in their churches and synagogues. Walk into most Christian churches and you will hear the ministers as well as the teachers and parents talking about homosexuality being a sin. Lesbians and gays are demoralized and talked about as if they are not even human beings. Given this is there any wonder that people view them as easy and acceptable targets to hate and abuse? Studies show the more religious someone is the more negative views they hold about the GLBT population.

8. Their family and culture were against homosexuality and were very verbal about it.

I treat many gays and lesbians from Arab, Hispanic, and Eastern Indian descent all of whom were taught as children that homosexuality was wrong and heard their parents and other adults say, “no child of theirs will be accepted if that is what they are.” I am not at all suggesting that these kids grow up to automatically bully. However the GLBT kids coming from these families and cultures all experience the same post traumatic stress disorders that those who are bullied exhibit. Growing up with such negative and strong hateful messages *is* a form of bullying.

9. People who make money and claim to be Reparative Therapists turn people gay to straight.

Reparative Therapy, (RT), is the most polite form of bullying which exists. RT is the false belief that someone can change their sexual orientation from gay to straight. Study after study shows this not to be true however RT continues to hold out hope to suffering gays and lesbians who are in the early stages of coming out and don't want to be gay. The reason I add this to this list of bullies is that if you read RT literature you will find that very early into their writings and teachings they say, “There is nothing gay about being homosexual.” They believe that homosexuality is always wrong and a result of faulty development. They make large amounts of money off of scared, lonely and bullied people and end up being the bullies themselves.

10. People who simply hate.

I don't think I need to say much here that most of us don't know. We often hate what is different and what we don't understand. I know that that the more lesbians and gays come out and expose others to who we are, the less likely will we be hated.