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PSY 215 – Prof. Levin

Homophobia and Discrimination

**"Reports of violence directed against lesbians, gay males, bisexuals, and transgender people have increased each year since the NGLTF (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force) has been keeping records, and such incidents are only the tip of the iceberg. By no means are they isolated to certain locales, rather they are widespread, occurring throughout the country. LGBT people are among the most despised groups in the United States today.”**

 It is definitely a scary process. I know I questioned my sexuality for some time. I was afraid of the label. I was afraid of not fitting in with what a lesbian was, what a bi-sexual girl was. Was I even gay? Would my parents be okay with it? These questions plagued me for a while when I realized I liked a girl. It wasn’t my liking her that scared me. It was the rest of the world that scared me. It is for this reason that the statement above not at all surprises me. Going through the struggle myself, I found that being different scared me just as much as it scared others. Now, I am not saying that that is any excuse for the violence against the LGBTQIA community, but rather that I understand where it stems from. That extreme fear is what turns into violence. It’s a threat to the “natural order of things,” and some cannot handle that prospect. Liking a girl, in my opinion, made me different, yes, but I wasn’t comparing myself to others – I was comparing myself to who I “used” to be. I was wondering why I was all of the sudden different than what I was for 20 years. That is why this statement doesn’t surprise me. I know that others think along the same lines. They wonder where this change occurred and why. They wonder why people choose to act on it rather than keep it hidden. What they do not understand is that it didn’t just pop up. People have been gay, lesbian, bi, forever, but change is scary and hiding it was easier than expressing it.

 I am fortunate to say that, so far, I have not faced any discrimination against me because of my sexuality. I have endured some stares but that’s not an action I didn’t foresee. They weren’t cold looks but rather someone looking at something different. Like I said, I didn’t fit the typical outline of what people think a gay girl should look like. So the stares are more inquiring rather than menacing. I think that with the changing laws and the introduction of gay marriage that those in the LGBTQIA community will be more comfortable to explore their sexuality out in the open but discrimination and bigotry are learned. There will always be those who do not agree and those who will not agree out loud. As long as there are parents willing to teach their children that this lifestyle is unacceptable, there will always be the belief that it is a choice rather than a predisposition, that religion and prayer can fix it, that hell is the only option for those who live this way and that they can not and can never be accepted. It is unfortunate but that is the world we live in.