

CONFESSIONS

of a former 'gay rights' leader

By Michael Glatze

I used to be gay, or so I thought.

When I was about 13, I decided I must be gay because I was unable to handle my own masculinity. It scared me too much. My father had already given me a lot to be afraid of: He'd cheated on my mother and left her crying, alone and selflessly attempting to salvage a dead relationship.

When I was faced with the prospect of either being a "man" or being "me" – who I saw as "better than that" and "not someone who would do such awful things as men do" – I chose "me." Then, because "me" was not "a man," "me" became gay.

I'm not saying this is how homosexuality develops for everybody. It's just my story.

For me, however, it became all-encompassing because I've always been driven to strive and achieve in everything I do. So I became an activist.

I started activism when I was 20 at Dartmouth College where I went to school. I continued as a protester at the Republican National Convention in San Diego in 1996. We chalked outlines of ourselves on the sidewalk and ran around shouting slogans and such.

When I was 22, I started work at XY Magazine, the first-ever magazine targeted at gay youth. Then, when I was about 25, I edited "The XY Survival Guide: Everything You Need to Know About Being Young & Gay," the first-ever "guidebook" for being young and gay. Then when I was 26, I left XY to start Young Gay America, which was a non-profit, media-based outreach project that drove around North America, conducting interviews with gay and lesbian youth and uploading their interviews and stories to the Internet in a community-based website.

Young Gay America became Young Gay America Magazine in 2004. During the time between starting Young Gay America in 2001 and starting YGA Magazine, I was in over 50 magazines and newspapers, television and radio shows.

I was asked to speak on prestigious panels all over the world, at universities and conferences, as an expert on gay youth. In 2004, I sat on the first-ever gay youth in America panel discussion at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

I met world leaders as part of Young Gay

America. I met the mayor of Berlin and the prime minister of Canada. Young Gay America received a National Role Model Award, and a film that Young Gay America helped make was screened at 50 international film festivals, won awards and even screened for a special bipartisan gathering of the U.S. Congress.

As you can see, Young Gay America, at least for me, was a big success.

YGA Magazine was loved by many and accepted instantly into several North American high schools' library. Parents groups loved it. We had all 5-star reviews on Amazon.com; it was loved.

I, however, was not loved – not loved by myself, that is.

I was in a relationship that was challenging, because it had aspects to it that I didn't enjoy. I didn't know until later that those aspects were not unique to my situation at all. But at the same time, I didn't understand what was really bothering me.

It turned out, after I left YGA and my relationship, what was really bothering me was homosexuality itself.

It's not popular to say that, especially when you're a gay rights "pioneer" (or so some people called me; I never tried to see myself as such, though I didn't exactly turn down accolades). It's not a popular thing at all. It's more popular to say you've committed a crime than say – as a gay person – that you might have a problem with homosexuality.

That gets labeled "internal homophobia."

Well, I knew all about internal homophobia, having read up, studied, volunteered for Gay & Lesbian National Hotline counseling sessions with random people, having interviewed and "empowered" over 1,000 young people in 38 states and four Canadian provinces, and even Zagreb, Croatia, about the importance of overcoming internal homophobia. It was not news to me at all.

Then again, it wasn't internal homophobia that caused my so-called "hatred" of my own homosexuality.

It was God.

God – I know – is a buzzword. God scares people. I know this. I'm sorry that's the case.

However, this is my story. And, my story

includes me having a nervous breakdown, feeling like I was hurting tons of people with my actions, and turning to the Bible, praying and understanding that what was in the Bible was not nearly as scary as what people had made it out to be.

In my story, I became acquainted with a very personal God whom I spoke to and who told me that I was beautiful, and that everyone else was, and is, too. In my story I had a good relationship with God that got richer as I spent more time with Him. In my story, God is my best friend.

I continued to develop a deeper understanding of who and what I really am, thanks to God and thanks to what He showed me. I followed His guidance and found books that revealed all sorts of “deep, dark” secrets about things like “socialism,” Concerned Women for America, “abstinence-only education” and the National Association of Research & Therapy of Homosexuality. All these things I found truly opened my eyes.

For me, it was both a blessing and a profound curse – a challenge and a heartache – that God showed me all of this information. I knew what it meant: that I was going to have to forsake all of my life up until that point. Jesus, in the Bible, asks us to give up our lives for his sake. In a sense, I was ready and willing to do that.

In a sense, that’s exactly what I did. And I became a Christian. And I started to heal – and I stand today a healed man.

And so, my story becomes a story of healing from homosexuality, which I write in order to “set the record straight” about the notion that people can’t heal from homosexuality. **That is not true.** People can heal. I did it.

How did it happen? Well, a lot of that is private. A lot of that has to do with figuring out deep things about my mind, about the nature of where “desire” comes from, about what we think “desire” is and what it really is, about all sorts of things like that.

I can – and easily would – describe it if asked.

But for the sake of brevity here, I’m focusing on the fact that it did occur. And I did get cured.

I’m not looking for an award or recognition. I’m not looking for anybody even to be happy for me – I know a lot of people are probably really upset to hear me say this.

I know that’s the case, because I know that if I had heard somebody say these things a few years ago, I probably would’ve made them Public Enemy No. 1 on my list.

In my humble story, however, I’m happy this way. That’s it.

That’s not it, though, on second thought. Because on second thought, if I think about it, I was under the impression, right from the beginning, that homosexuality was an intrinsic part of me that I couldn’t get rid of. People scared me into thinking that. And people do that today. I did that to people! I led a media company that focused on doing that.

So, no, it’s not the end of the story at all – my story, that is. It’s not at all my end. Because, from my perspective, homosexuality is not just something I was healed from, but it’s something that is flat-out wrong, because it can be healed, even though people say it can’t.

And not only can it be healed, I’ve seen the difference between gay and straight in my very mind.

I’ve see it go from one ... to the other – NEVER to return.

I wouldn’t want it to return, because now I can’t even imagine it. It’s like thinking about doing the weirdest, grossest thing that just makes you feel sick inside.

This, again, is my story. And in my story, it makes me repulsed to think about homosexuality.

And when I step back a little bit, I know why! Because people are supposed to feel homosexuality is gross, because such a feeling prevents them from wanting to do it. And people are supposed to not want to do it, because doing it is something that prevents them from having babies, and having babies is something that we -- naturally -- are supposed to want to do, for human beings to survive. And, so, it’s obvious why people should feel gross about homosexuality.

It’s not “wrong” for people to think it’s gross. It makes sense!

If anything, it’s not thinking homosexuality is gross that’s weird. What if we stopped thinking that all harmful behaviors – all things that prevent us from doing what we’re supposed to do and being what we’re supposed to be – were gross? What then? Would we have no natural sense of who we are, why we’re here, what we’re supposed to do with our lives?

I understand this notion of “homophobia” – only it’s not a phobia at all. It’s common sense.

My story is that now I know the Truth about homosexuality. And my story is that now I’m going to do what I can to fight it.