



# I AM WHAT I AM

WHAT DOES "COMING OUT"  
MEAN AND WHY IT'S SO  
IMPORTANT

## INTERNATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

FROM 1988, EACH YEAR ON OCTOBER 11, INTERNATIONAL COMING OUT DAY CONTINUES TO PROMOTE A SAFE WORLD FOR LGBTIQ INDIVIDUALS WHERE THEY CAN LIVE TRUTHFULLY AND OPENLY. A LOT OF PEOPLE CHOSE THIS DATE TO COME OUT WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM, WHILE WHO'S ALREADY OUT USE THIS DAY TO CELEBRATE AND DO ACTIVISM.

SO, FOR THE NEXT 10/11, VISIT YOUR CLOSEST LGBTIQ ASSOCIATION TO JOIN THE DIFFERENT EVENTS THEY WILL TAKE PLACE IN THAT DAY. SUPPORT WHO'S COMING OUT AND TAKE A STAND!



**"COMING OUT" IS AN EXPRESSION THAT IMPLIES MORE THAN JUST TWO SIMPLE WORDS.**

The coming out is a declaration, a fundamental moment in which LGBTIQ people decide to live their lives "out" ... Out from where? "Out of the closet", out of the closure the society impose, breathing fresh air, speaking freely about their identity and about their path against the discrimination they face for their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Since we live in a heteronormative society, which gives for granted that everybody is "straight" and conformed to binary gender roles, LGBTIQ individuals will never stop to come out to people. Coming out, for certain extent, isn't a permanent decision, rather is a continuous series of decisions to be taken each time, starting from the moment when people understand their feelings, their sexual/affective orientation and their gender identity. Since then, in fact, people will have to decide each time they will encounter a new person in their lives if and when it will be time to "declare" them-selves out or not. Declare them-selves out doesn't mean boasting about their sexuality, it simply means instead to make other people aware of an important part of their-selves. It's a big, delicate and necessary step: an affirmation that says

**"THIS PERSON IS ME, AND I WANT TO LIVE MY-SELF IN FREEDOM"**

Coming out is an action that involves both the person who's doing it and the people around: the receivers of the message, in the moment they listen to it, create communication and become part of that process. Unfortunately, not everybody understands the issue and some people, especially young people, decide to live their life "in the closet", not revealing their true identity. Other, face terrible experiences after coming out, feeling rejected by everyone around, causing them loneliness and depression. Is estimated that around 30 to 40% LGBTIQ young people have attempted suicide, between 1,5 and 3 times more than straight kids did.

## WHY COMING OUT?

First of all, to be honest with one's-own emotions. Other possible motivations could be to raise awareness and visibility of LGBTIQ people, to show that mainstream gender conformity to heterosexuality is socially-constructed and, eventually, to disclose one's "true" self to friends and relatives. For a certain extent, coming out could be also a strong political act; it helps to let the others understand that LGBTIQ people do exist, and that they aren't just an "invisible minority".

## FAQ

**Now that my friend came out with me, does it mean that they think I'm gay too? Is it a sort of sexual proposal?**

There's a huge difference between declare their-own sexual orientation and declare their feelings. Most of the LGBTIQ people when come out want to be accepted, not annoyed by situations like this one. Sometimes, an LGBTIQ person could tell you they have a sort of attraction for you, but you can handle the situation in the same way you would do when someone who you don't feel attracted to has some feelings for you.

**Now that I'm aware of my LGBTIQ friend's identity, I don't feel comfortable anymore with nudity, dressing up, take showers, sleep in the same room, etc.**

There's no reason to don't trust this person anymore: they were LGBTIQI even before telling you!