

Straight Eye For The Queer Guy or Gal.

Written by Dave Howard



As are most people I know, I was extremely disappointed and disturbed by the passing of Prop 8. But who is really to blame?

My growing up is bit different than most of my other friends. I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area theater scene, so during the 80's a lot of my friends were suddenly dead. I'm not saying that Reagan administration and the religious right killed them, but by not acting out of fear they could have spared millions of lives. Instead they attempted to define family values, rather than acting. I watched from a country away as my Uncle's partner of 40 years passed away in a long complicated illness. Yet he wasn't allowed to see him in the hospital. Then he endured a long legal battle as Doug's estranged family suddenly showed up after thirty years to fleece the savings the two had built over the years. I am for equal rights for all, BUT I can't help but wince at the poorly executed campaign for No on 8 and now the subsequent protests. The biggest problem the gay community had on this was their failure to reach out to other folks of in California, just like other groups of folks have never reached out to them. LA is a very segregated place, the blacks stay in Baldwin Hills and Inglewood, the westsiders don't dare cross Sepulveda for social reasons, the newbie actors/muscians/waiters/whatever stay in Korea town and Beachwood Canyon (like Brad Pitt in "True Romance") and the power gays stay in West Hollywood, Studio City, Silverlake and Beverly Hills.

Sure, I am speaking generalizations but that seems to be true

I was at Hollywood/Highland on Saturday night as the protest begun. There was one black kid holding a "Yes on Prop 8" sign to the protesters and he was shouted down. Not one person tried to talk to him. Just yelled at him. In Hollywood, West Hollywood and Silverlake.. we get it.

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You are preaching to the choir.. and the media helicopters over my house after midnight are not good for my beauty sleep.

There's a lot of anger. I'd be fucking pissed too.

Yelling at people outside their church, sending fake anthrax and protesting downtown on a Saturday is not going to work. People have been protesting the Iraq Wars since its inception. Nobody in power cared.

Scaring people who are already AFRAID of you is not going to help. This is gonna take some work, so here is anecdote. My mother and her cousin have always been at odds on this issue. Mom's straight, Roy's gay. There's the old school morality issue. Roy could never understand why good christian's couldn't accept the teachings of "love thy neighbor as yourself." Over the years family members came out. I explained to my Mom that Uncle Tom's (a great man) roommate of 33 years was a bit more than a roommate. Her stepson came out (who is a prick) , her adoptive daughter came out (she's somewhere between prick and great) came out.

But I still couldn't crack her on the morality issue. UNTIL.. A few years ago, after my stepfather passed, I talked her into going to Palm Springs for Xmas. I did it mostly so we wouldn't have to spend a dreary, snowed in, under home arrest Xmas together missing him. I wanted something where we could go outside, enjoy good weather and ride bikes. So we went to Palm Springs and she fell in love with the place. So much that she would go down to golf with her girlfriends on regular trips. Regardless that it is the "not so underground" gay capital of California.

My favorite stereotypes about "the gays"? They are great to little old ladies, it has completely changed her.

.So here is the point. The folks that voted against you, don't know you and you haven't given them the opportunity to get to know you. They don't understand. Skin color, they get. The gay community didn't reach out to Inglewood or Bakersfield or Tahoe.

C'mon you didn't even drive down La Cienega to Culver City.

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You will not take this by force. You will only take this through peace, love and understanding. The people who voted against you don't get you. So this is what you need to do. Try it, it may not work but it is better than making them think they are being forced to do something.

Volunteer at "their" church. Volunteer in "their" communities. Let "them" get to know you. Let "them" work beside you. Let "them" understand. "Them" don't get you. One by one, let them get to know you. And perhaps you will learn something about "them" that you may like. It's gonna take some extra work. But who said this was gonna be easy? You got one hand for the taking and one hand for the giving. Reach out one hand and say "Ain't that what its is there for?"