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DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

My problem may seem not to be a problem at all to most people, but it's slowly eating away at me. One of my best friends, an openly gay and rather flamboyant man, has recently decided to "turn straight." He has been dating and sleeping with a woman, and often feels the need to tell me how great the sex is between them.

My first reaction was to joke with him, in disbelief. But over the past several months, he has slowly dropped out of the gay scene in favor of staying in with his new woman, or going away for romantic weekends with her. More recently he has taken offense to my jokes about him "becoming a breeder" and defends the relationship by stating that "she knows what I've done and what I like," adding that "she likes women also—she's very open-minded." He now expects me to be happy for this new person in his life, but I can't bring myself to do so. To me, the whole relationship appears to be two desperate individuals getting together as a last resort. I see my once independent and confident friend as a person who has chosen to take the easy way out and "settle" for a relationship that requires minimal effort.

Am I wrong to feel this way? Should I just "snap out of it" and be happy for my friend, or do I have the right to want true happiness for him? I don't want our friendship to end, but I

# Straight Up,

## Now Tell Me Why My Flamboyant Friend Has Switched Teams



ms. behavior

don't see much hope if he continues living in a fantasy world where his sexual preference can be switched on and off like a light switch.

—Mr. Reality Check

DEAR MR. REALITY CHECK:

Your surprise seems to indicate that your "flamboyant" friend's sexual orientation never before seemed fluid, or at least not to you. So if he's a close friend who is suddenly trying to be straight now, aren't you curious about why? Since you value your friendship with him, a curious attitude would be the best one you can take—as opposed to a judgmental one—"Look at that queen trying to pass himself off as straight!" or a frightened one—"What if I never get my friend back?" or, "OMG, what if I myself wake up someday with a strange and nagging desire to touch female breasts?" The bottom line is that it is best to ask questions and try to understand your friend, while saving

your judgment for later.

Why do people who have worn tiaras and marched in gay parades suddenly jump the fence? It happens for a variety of reasons:

- 1 Self-loathing;
- 2 Money motivation—e.g. a large homophobic bequest being left only to straight offspring;
- 3 Religious beliefs or brainwashing;
- 4 A deluded desire to become someone else in time for a significant life milestone or event, e.g. the need to gain approval in time for a reunion or 40th birthday;
- 5 A phase. Or a need to get rid of heterosexual "virginity."
- 6 Youth and fluidity. Younger people don't pay attention to labels the way that older people do.
- 7 Sometimes gay people find other gays of the opposite gender and form families or

have sexual relationships with them. This is their definition of queer and it seems to work for them.

- 8 Confusion.
- 9 Kinkiness. (Yes, straight is the new kinky.)
- 10 Unexpectedly falling in love with an unlikely person (e.g. of the "wrong" gender). Yes, it does happen, though it's rare.

You're going through a sense of loss because your friend—as you once knew him—is gone. At least for now. You can't just "snap out of it" or change the way you feel. But this gives you an opportunity to learn to be a more supportive friend. Keep in mind that the fat lady hasn't sung yet.

Meanwhile, we're obviously going to have to tighten the homo borders. Too many people have jumped the fence lately, which must mean that there's been a security breach. Perhaps we should invest in a moat with alligators to keep the gays in and to keep out those wandering straight people who define themselves as "curious."

Meryl Cohn is the author of *Do What I Say: Ms. Behavior's Guide to Gay and Lesbian Etiquette*. Send questions or correspondence to [msbehavior@aol.com](mailto:msbehavior@aol.com).