



Staff Photo

IN THE FAMILY WAY TENDING THE ROOTS OF A REVOLUTION

It's Pride month – a time we gather as a community to remember and celebrate the Stonewall Riots in June 1969. For several days and nights, LGBTQ bar-patrons-turned-revolutionaries fought back against police harassment and brutality, igniting what many consider to be the modern LGBTQ civil rights movement in the United States. But on our mind this year is this. Does that movement continue with our choice to parent?

Cathy: For fifteen years, as I worked in the LGBTQ movement, I resisted assimilationist frameworks that claimed LGBTQ people are just like everyone else. I avoided any 'homosexual agenda' that simply mimicked what the late Adrienne Rich called, "compulsive heterosexuality." I had questions about LGBTQ people parenting -- it just seemed so *straight*.

I had my own work to do. As feminists insist, "The personal is political." When I came out as a lesbian at the age of 25 in conservative Lancaster, PA I didn't know any 'out' lesbians, and certainly not out lesbians with children. Therefore, despite loving children, I put away ideas and desires I had around parenthood. It just didn't seem to be what lesbians did.

I'm happy to say that I have not only changed my mind, but I'm looking forward to changing the diapers of our first baby, due this July. Choosing to parent feels like one of the most profoundly radical acts I have ever done. LGBTQ parents disrupt conventional and outdated images of 'family.'

Recently, while shopping the local baby resale store, the cashier asked, "Are you expecting?" I responded, "Yes – my partner is due in July." Her brow furrowed making room for a new paradigm. She then smiled and said, "Congratulations!"

The baby isn't even here yet and already I'm engaging in daily activism. Do these individual acts rise to the level of Stonewall? There was a time my activist self would have said, "No." However, I now imagine the collective, quiet power of queer parents at PTA meetings, pediatrician visits and preschool field trips. I think of the etymology of the word radical – "of or having roots from" and think that, perhaps, this revolution can take root in those places. Anna?

Ana: Perhaps it's because I have a fiercely independent streak that tends to grimace when the populace declares something to be so, but I prefer to put my focus on what it is I want to do and not worry about how that may be read by others. Is it radical to you that I want to parent a child with my female partner? Oh, ok. Is it radical we bought sperm online? Fine. We made this decision as a couple and I'm