

Q+A

Tommy Hartman

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A LIVING?

Great question! I am on a career shift plan. After ten years in banking and financial services, I stretched out of the cubicle and behind a stylist chair. I attend the Aveda Institute Portland full time. In about ten months I will be a licensed cosmetologist.

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY?

Gay. I used to have homosexual tendencies, engaged in gay-activities but I didn't want to give anyone the idea that I was a queer. Then I attended a Pride service at Metropolitan Community Church Portland in June of 2009. Pastor Nathan Meckley asked the congregation of LGBTQ peoples to close our eyes and think on the first moments we recalled being proud. I was like "BAM!" I feel it. I am gay. Gay! Gay! Gay! Not only am I proud to be me. I am proud of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans people, and queers around me who are so loving and supportive.

WHAT'S THE BEST PART ABOUT BEING PART OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY?

Being queer is awesome. What jumps out to me is when I meet someone, and we acknowledge we are both in the LGBT, there is a magic moment I would call, "I get you in a way that your parents or co-workers do not." We share some of the pressures and some awkwardness of our youth. We can be excited about the developing world around us making it more and more of an empowered environment for someone who is LGBT.

WHAT WAS THE BEST PART ABOUT COMING OUT FOR YOU?

I no longer hold anything back and the more open I am the more I believe I am empowered by supportive individuals around me.

WHAT WAS THE WORST PART ABOUT COMING OUT FOR YOU?

The hardest part was telling my parents and some of my friends that my life would not follow the path that they dreamed for me. It was frightening because I did leave behind me an entire identity and perceived future. §

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