



Has The LGBT Community Become 'Mean'?

September 25, 2013 By [David Mixner](#)

Having been working for LGBT equality for near four decades the one constant for me has been how proud I have been of how we have conducted ourselves in a time of such struggle. Our story through an unbelievable barrage of hatred directed toward us, the darkness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, our neighbors and families not supporting our search for freedom and so much more has been one of love, grace, nobility and extraordinary courage.

Don't get me wrong.

There have been strong and differing viewpoints on our visions for the future, strategy, organizations and who should lead. Those views were often expressed passionately and with great vigor. There were times people didn't speak to each other and then months later they would be working side by side.

When adversity really hit the LGBT community without fail we had each others backs. With a few exceptions never did we use hateful bitter and ugly words toward each. Quite honestly, our ability to operate out of love in times of struggle, hardship and challenges was simply amazing to behold.

The great lesson and great power of our struggle from the last decades is that we did not become our oppressors. As a community we never surrendered to their hate. We never become ugly and filled with their hatred. Never did we sink to their low, low level and practice uniform and blanket hatred blindly directed to any group. While far from perfect we have shown this nation a new way of passionate resistance built on love and hope. Rising above the hate directed toward us was a magnificent sight to behold.

Over the last year I personally have had some concern that we are losing our marvelous story and increasingly feeling it is alright to express bitter and ugly anger at each other with no boundaries nor respect for our brothers or sisters.

Everyone should be concerned.

While is perfectly alright to express passionate disagreement with our brothers and sisters, fight for what you believe is the right vision and decide who you believe should led us or not led us, the boundaries of love and respect are disappearing.



Some small examples of what recently I have observed and experienced.

Never, until recently, people who disagreed with me feel it was acceptable to express that disagreement by calling me a 'fat pig', 'an aging and cheap whore' or 'Fascist'. Believe me, never have I encountered that until recently.

In the recent primary election for Mayor of New York City, there were strong and legitimate debate in the LGBT community about the race. In fact, in the end result, the community supported Bill de Blasio instead of openly gay candidate Christine Quinn. Both candidates are good people who have the community interests at heart. Of course there would be spirited debate and passionate commitment to whoever you were supporting.

However, never in five decades in politics have I witnessed such character assassination by other members of the community directed at Quinn. This is a woman who has dedicated her life to supporting LGBT rights, who has fought side by side with us for marriage equality, who has fought for the poor and has one of the biggest Irish hearts I have ever seen.

While strongly disagreeing with her policies is perfectly fine, the ugly and bitter personal attacks were appalling. For the first time in the history of this blog, I deleted many comments filled with hate, derogatory terms directed at her and completely lacking of good taste. At one rally where I was speaking, a young professional gay man in suit and tie who was a veterinarian came up and was screaming at me that Quinn was nothing but a 'dyke c**nt' and how could I be supporting her.

I only wish that had been the exception.

Another appalling case is the recent departure of Dr. Marjorie Hill from the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City. She is a dear friend who I have known since the days of the Clinton administration. Marjorie is another person who has given her life to public service and constantly had to overcome both being a lesbian and a person of color. Clearly there were some disagreements about her direction for the GMHC and her vision for HIV/AIDS. That is perfectly fine. Marjorie would be the first one to support freedom of speech.

However if the emails, messages on Facebook and comments are any indication, the same type of ugly character assassination is taking place against her and the community is largely remaining quiet about the attacks on this fine individual. Here is just an example of an email that I recently received (of course unsigned) from a 'Will.I.Am.Son' and the hateful words he/she used to make a point:

"Euphonious airhead and sneaky hater MARJORIE HILL.....Back to Mar-gore-ie Hill the phony, contemptuous, money-grabbing, award-snatching Gay woman "

The LGBT community has largely over the years embraced the wonders of the visions of people like Dr. Martin Luther King. Our community has embraced love as a way of organizing. We taught the world about great strength, courage and nobility in the time of death and devastation. The

story of our epic struggle has simply been amazing.

The LGBT communities moral strength has inspired countless millions and we can find our brothers and sisters working around the world helping others. Everywhere I travel on this plant, I find American LGBT people taking what they have learned from our struggle and helping others in need. My heart bursts with pride.

Please, my dear friends, disagree all you want with whoever you want. Chose your words carefully because bullying of adults is just as wrong as bullying young people. Treat each other with respect and dignity. Most importantly remember we are never that far (as Russia shows) from those who would see us hang and we must, we must have each other backs.

With much love.

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