# Reclaiming My Time From These Types of People

If my truth pushes people away, it'll simply give me more room to twirl!

January 19, 2018 By Aundaray Guess

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Reclaiming my time.

Last year Congresswoman Maxine Waters created a new viral phrase when she exclaimed she was "reclaiming my time." I'm sure there are many who identify with her statement. In fact, as we enter a new year, although I'm not one to adopt resolutions, I'm adopting the act of reclaiming my time.

For so many years I've always felt like I was auditioning for the affection and attention of many. Spending my time investing and getting nothing back in return. My search of affirmation always came up empty. Especially from friends, family, or complete strangers. There was this part of me looking for something I couldn't and wouldn't give myself. So when I heard Congresswoman Waters' phrase, it resonated to me.

I even wondered if others who live with HIV feel the same? Do we share the same feeling of trying to prove to people, despite our health status, that we're "okay"? When it comes to our sexuality, do we becomes the entertainment in order for people to accept us? Feel comfortable around, enough so that they may accept us? How much time do we spend? If you're accepted at all?

Looking back at the time I've spent on other's behalf, I've become aware of how often I placed myself in a passive role. As a gay man I can't tell you how much time I spent trying to pretend I was straight. Telling people I was dating a she when it was a he. Making sure my macho tendencies were on display in the public so no one would question my sexuality. My friends and family lives went on as intended while I spent time keeping my secret, locked in the closet.

This was all compounded by me learning my HIV status. It was still a dance of acceptance I was performing, only for a different audience. This audience now included my newfound gay community who seemed they would only accept me if I was "clean." You can't believe how much energy I used to cast myself as someone worthy to date, even if it was belittling to myself. The very aspect of having HIV and the spent moments of sitting in my misery and blaming myself for my condition. I focused so much on "why me, why me, why me" instead of embracing the life I still had. In general I would say I spent close to 30 years of trying to make everyone happy. Everyone but me.

30 years!

That's a lot of time.

Well no more.

No more of me sacrificing my happiness for others.

No more of me pretending to be something I’m not so you can either feel comfortable or accept me.

No more of hiding my truths as I now embrace the African proverb that states: “A speaker of truth has no friends.” If my truth pushes people away, you’ll simply give me more room to twirl!

And I resolve to reclaim my time and stop shedding tears for anyone whose eyes remain dry to my situation. If you see my pain as a hard lesson I’m supposed to grow from, then know part of that growth will include removing the weeds from my tree.

And lastly, I will spend no more time waiting for anyone to change. That train pulled into the station many years ago and you chose to not get on it, and I have got to move on as I’m way behind schedule.

So here’s to 2018. Reclaiming my time. And it’s starting to feel so good!!

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