

I'm an Otherwise Straight Man (Who Fell in Love With His Best Friend)

My personal story about falling in love with my straight best friend, originally printed in MindBodyGreen and shared by over 100K people overnight.



I've always prided myself on being open. I'll try any new therapy or modality or New Age idea—and, believe me, I've tried them all. I've done the self-work. I've “found myself.” I've

even practiced my affirmations. I knew who I was, without a doubt.

That's why I found myself in unfamiliar territory when I—the open guy, the “figured out” guy, the unquestionably straight guy—**realized that I was in love with my best friend, a man.** A man I had known for seven years. A man I had never before even thought of in a romantic way. But, there I was, in love.

Only it didn't start out as love. **See, two summers ago, I came down with a mysterious illness.** Not the common cold kind. Not even the achy back kind. This was the kind where you vomit massive amounts of blood throughout the day. The kind where doctors pass you from specialist to specialist. The kind where you're bent over in pain with tears in your eyes.

And my roommate Garrett, one of my best friends at the time, took pity on me. He took care of me. He picked up my prescriptions from the pharmacy. He cooked me dinner. He stayed in on Friday nights to watch movies. He'd even rub my back when I was in pain.



Garrett and me in 2012, just before I was sick.

Each day, I waited anxiously until he came home from work. My face lit up when he surprised me with my favorite dinner. **I replayed conversations we had when I was alone.** I missed him when he was gone.

Two months into this routine, I had a thought—a tiny, little thought—that I loved him. It seemed preposterous. It seemed laughable. I shooed it away immediately. But that thought started creeping into my mind whenever he was away. That thought snuck in whenever he did something nice or made me laugh.

And it all came down to this moment—one moment when he was cooking me dinner, and he looked over and smiled at me. And I knew this was it. **This was the moment where I had to decide if I could allow myself to love a man against everything I had previously known about myself.** This was the moment where I had to decide if I was going to take a step forward into this crazy idea of telling my best friend that I loved him.



Garrett and me at at pre-wedding event in 2017

There's a certain freedom in a life-threatening

sickness. There's a certain liberation in staring down death in the face. It makes you do crazy things. It makes you unafraid to tear down the only identity you've ever known for a gamble. It makes you walk right up to your best friend and tell him that you love him. So I approached him cautiously. I could hear my heart beating in my ears. I opened my mouth and no words came out. Again, I tried, and all I could say was, "Garrett, I have something to tell you."

He looked at me earnestly.

"Garrett, I think I'm in love with you."

His expression changed to that of confusion.

"Well, you've been so great and taken care of me, and I know it doesn't make much sense. But, if I've ever felt love, this is it. And, well—I think I'm in love with you."

He stopped and thought for a moment. It was a long moment. Then he opened his mouth again and asked, "Do you miss me when I'm away?"

I nodded my head slowly—uneasily.

"Do you get excited to see me?"

I nodded again, this time with a hint of uncertainty.

He looked back timidly. “Well, then I think I might love you too.”

We had no idea how to make this work. We had no idea if this even could work. Sometimes we still don't. It took time—years even—to figure it out. But it's a relationship. None of us know what we're doing. We just try and negotiate and compromise. **And, little by little, you become just another boring couple.**

So, yes, I'm an otherwise straight man in love with a man. **But I would never reduce Garrett down to just being a man.** Because he's more than that. He's a pharmacist and a good cook and a great cards player.

And I love him for all of those reasons and so many more. I love him for who he is, not what he is.



Our wedding in 2017

We have this myth of an identity—that who we are is the summation of a lot of choices we made in the past. That we've got a map for the life we're supposed to lead, and we've got to stick to it. But that's assuming that we're all static beings, and that's not how people work at all.

In every moment, we're changing and evolving and growing. In every moment, we're reconstructing our identity.

We're not defined by our decisions from two years ago. We're not even defined by our decisions from two minutes ago. We're defined by who we choose to be in this very moment.

We'll never be "figured out." Over the course of our lives, we'll constantly be transforming into a more and more authentic version of ourselves. Our preferences will change. Our passions will change. And we have to be brave enough to choose the thing that makes up happiest in each individual moment.

When I chose to tell Garrett that I loved him, it didn't matter if it didn't fit my identity. It didn't matter if it didn't fit my sexuality. **It just mattered if it brought me love.**

In truth, that's all that ever really matters. We're only here for a very short time. In every moment, we only have one real choice: Will it bring me closer to or further away from love?

So, tell me—will you choose love?

**This article was originally posted in MindBodyGreen on September 19, 2014.*