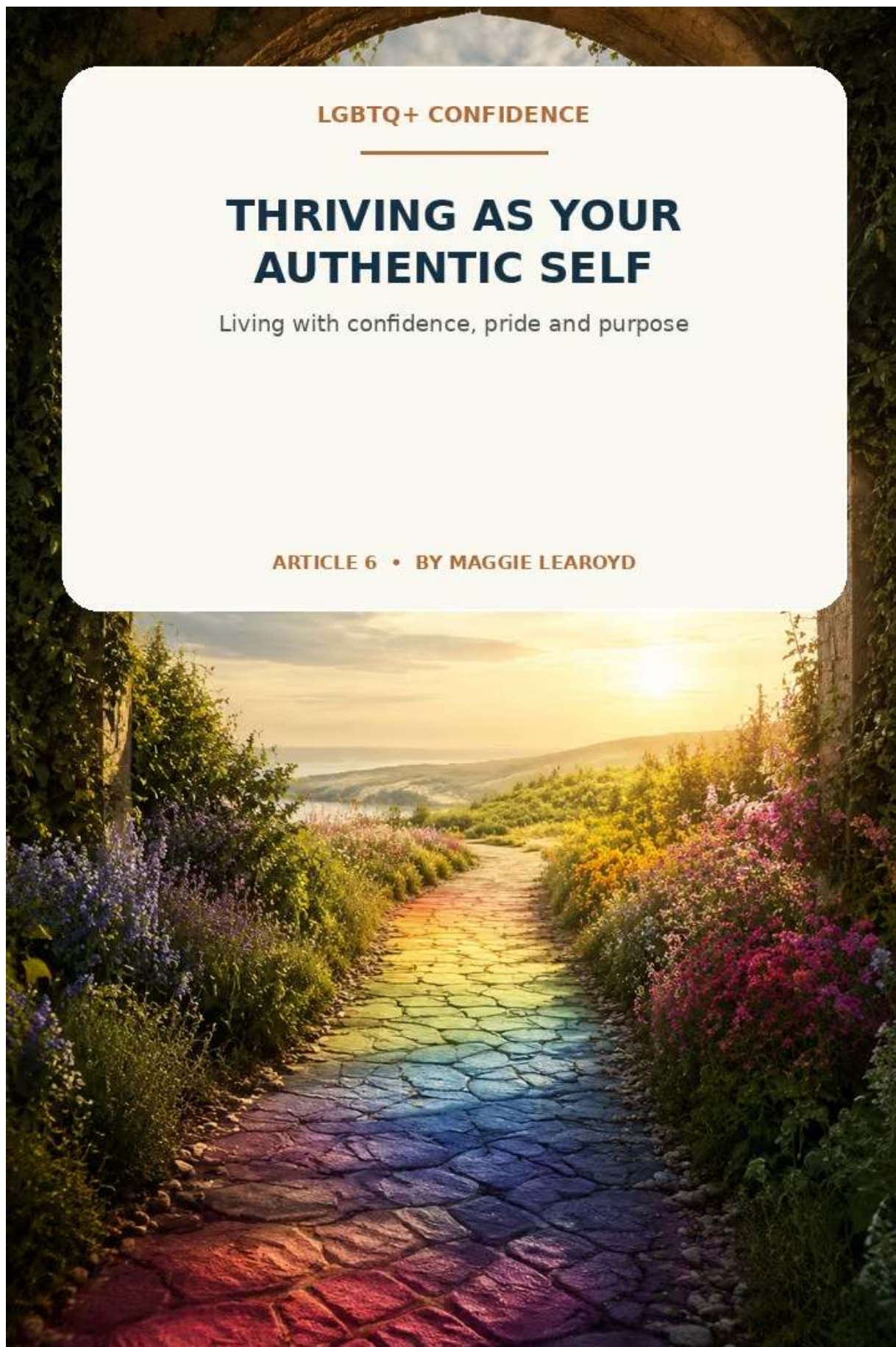


LGBTQ+ CONFIDENCE

THRIVING AS YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

Living with confidence, pride and purpose

ARTICLE 6 • BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



Thriving as Your Authentic Self

Living with confidence, pride and purpose

Thriving is about far more than simply getting through each day. It means living a life that feels meaningful, authentic and aligned with who you truly are. It is about having the confidence to make choices that reflect your values, build healthy relationships, pursue your goals and recognise your own worth without feeling that you need to change yourself to gain acceptance.

For many LGBTQ+ people, the journey towards thriving can involve overcoming unique challenges. Experiences of misunderstanding, discrimination, rejection or pressure to conform may have influenced confidence or self-esteem at different points in life. Yet these experiences do not determine what the future must look like. With support, self-awareness and self-compassion, it is possible not only to recover from adversity but to build a life that is fulfilling, connected and authentic.

Thriving does not mean that life is free from stress or difficulty. Everyone experiences setbacks, uncertainty and periods of self-doubt. What matters is developing the confidence to navigate these challenges while remaining connected to your identity, your values and the people who support you.

This final article brings together the themes explored throughout this series and focuses on moving beyond simply coping towards living a life in which you can flourish.

What Does It Mean to Thrive?

Thriving looks different for everyone.

For one person, it may mean feeling confident enough to pursue a new career.

For another, it may mean building healthy relationships, living openly, improving mental wellbeing or simply feeling more comfortable in their own skin.

Thriving is personal.

It is not measured by:

- Income.

Job title.

Relationship status.

Popularity.

Social media followers.

Other people's expectations.

Instead, thriving is about living a life that feels authentic and meaningful to you.

Living Authentically

Authenticity means allowing your actions, values and identity to align.

Living authentically may involve:

- Expressing your identity openly when it feels safe.

Building relationships based on honesty.

Choosing environments where you feel respected.

Letting go of unrealistic expectations.

Accepting yourself with kindness.

Authenticity is not about pleasing everyone—it is about no longer hiding who you are in order to gain acceptance.

Embracing Your Strengths

Every person has unique qualities, abilities and experiences.

Strengths may include:

- Creativity.

Compassion.

Problem-solving.

Determination.

Empathy.

Curiosity.

Humour.

Resilience.

Leadership.

Kindness.

Rather than focusing only on perceived weaknesses, confidence grows when we recognise and develop the strengths we already possess.

Your identity is only one part of who you are—it exists alongside many other qualities that make you unique.

Letting Go of Perfection

Many people believe they need to become "perfect" before they can feel confident or successful.

In reality, perfection is neither realistic nor necessary.

Thriving involves accepting that:

- Mistakes are opportunities for learning.

Growth takes time.

Confidence develops gradually.

Progress is more important than perfection.

Everyone experiences setbacks.

Allowing yourself to be imperfect creates space for genuine growth.

Building a Meaningful Life

A fulfilling life is often built around personal values rather than external expectations.

Ask yourself:

- What matters most to me?

What kind of relationships do I want?

How do I want to contribute to the world?

What brings me joy?

What gives my life meaning?

Living according to your values creates a strong foundation for long-term wellbeing and confidence.

Finding Joy in Everyday Life

Thriving is not only about achieving major milestones.

It is also about noticing everyday moments that bring happiness.

Examples include:

- Spending time with loved ones.

Walking in nature.

Learning something new.

Being creative.

Enjoying favourite hobbies.

Sharing laughter.

Celebrating small successes.

Practising gratitude.

These moments contribute to overall wellbeing and help build emotional resilience.

Continuing to Grow

Personal growth is a lifelong journey.

Growth might involve:

- Developing new skills.

Exploring interests.

Building healthier relationships.

Learning from challenges.

Becoming more self-aware.

Increasing self-confidence.

Supporting others.

There is no age or stage of life at which growth ends.

Every experience offers opportunities to learn and develop.

Being Part of a Community

Feeling connected to others supports confidence and wellbeing.

Community may be found through:

- LGBTQ+ organisations.

Volunteering.

Sports clubs.

Creative groups.

Professional networks.

Faith communities that are inclusive.

Local support groups.

Community reminds us that we are not alone and that our experiences are shared by others.

Supporting Others

Many people discover that supporting others strengthens their own wellbeing.

This might include:

- Listening without judgement.

Mentoring.

Volunteering.

Sharing experiences.

Challenging discrimination respectfully.

Being an ally.

Helping others does not require solving every problem.

Sometimes simply being present and accepting someone for who they are makes an enormous difference.

Looking Towards the Future

Confidence grows when people begin to see possibilities rather than limitations.

The future may include:

- New friendships.

Career opportunities.

Healthy relationships.

Personal achievements.

Continued learning.

Greater self-acceptance.

Improved wellbeing.

Your past may have shaped your journey, but it does not have to limit your future.

Remember That You Matter

Perhaps the most important message of this series is this:

- You matter.

Your experiences matter.

Your voice matters.

Your identity deserves respect.

Your wellbeing deserves attention.

Your dreams are valid.

You do not have to earn the right to belong—you already do.

Key Takeaways

Thriving means living a life that reflects your values, strengths and authentic self.

Authenticity supports confidence, wellbeing and meaningful relationships.

Everyone has strengths that can be developed and celebrated.

Progress matters more than perfection.

Community and supportive relationships help people flourish.

Personal growth is a lifelong journey.

Every person deserves to live with dignity, respect and the freedom to be themselves.

Final Thoughts

Thriving as your authentic self is not about reaching a point where life becomes free from challenges. It is about developing the confidence to face those challenges without losing sight of who you are. Throughout this series, we have explored self-confidence, self-doubt, relationships, boundaries, resilience and mental wellbeing. Together, these themes highlight an important truth: confidence is not something that is given to us by others—it grows through self-acceptance, supportive relationships and the courage to live according to our values.

For LGBTQ+ people, authenticity can sometimes require navigating difficult decisions about safety, acceptance and belonging. There is no single "right" way to live openly, and every person's journey is different. What matters most is recognising that your worth is not determined by other people's opinions or expectations. You deserve to feel respected, valued and able to build a life that reflects who you truly are.

As you move forward, remember that thriving is not measured by perfection or by meeting someone else's definition of success. It is found in everyday acts of courage, kindness and self-compassion. It grows through meaningful connections, lifelong learning and embracing the unique qualities that make you who you are. By living authentically, nurturing your wellbeing and recognising your inherent value, you create the foundation for a life that is not only fulfilling but genuinely your own.