

LGBTQ+ REAL EXPERIENCES

WAITING FOR THEM TO FIND OUT

When acceptance still feels temporary

REAL EXPERIENCE • SHARED ANONYMOUSLY



Waiting for Them to Find Out

When acceptance still feels temporary

I've got good friends.

A supportive partner.

A family who have accepted me.

Yet there's still a little voice in my head that says,

"If they really knew you, they'd leave."

For years, I thought everyone felt like that.

I'd replay conversations in my head, wondering if I'd said too much.

If someone didn't reply to a message for a few hours, I'd convince myself I'd done something wrong.

If a friend cancelled plans, I'd immediately think, "They're fed up with me."

Looking back, I realised those thoughts didn't start in adulthood.

They started much earlier.

Growing up, I learned that people like me were "different." Sometimes it was said as a joke. Sometimes it was said with disgust. Sometimes nobody said anything at all, but the silence spoke loudly enough.

Without realising it, I started believing that acceptance was temporary—that people would only like me until they discovered who I really was.

My therapist asked me a question I'll never forget:

- "What evidence do you have that the people in your life are going to leave?"

The honest answer was...

None.

The fear felt real, but it wasn't based on my life today.

It was based on my past.

I'm still working on believing that people can know the whole of me and choose to stay.

And every time they do, that old belief gets a little quieter.

Reflection

Internalised stigma often convinces us that acceptance has conditions. Healing begins when we allow ourselves to believe that we are worthy of love, friendship and belonging without hiding parts of who we are.

About This Real Experience

This is a real person's lived experience, shared anonymously. It was created collaboratively: the contributor spoke openly about their thoughts and feelings, and Maggie Learoyd wrote the experience in their own words. The contributor wanted their experience to be heard and understood, but has chosen not to be named.