

TEEN queeries



by
Gaye Dell
&
Lucas Dell


*An open conversation
between a gay teen
and his Mum*

The title 'TEEN queeries' is presented in a stylized, high-contrast font. 'TEEN' is in a large, blocky, grey font with a distressed, splattered texture. 'queeries' is in a smaller, bold, black sans-serif font. A large, dark, irregular splatter graphic is positioned to the left of the word 'queeries', partially overlapping the 'TEEN' text. The background of the title area is a light grey with faint, larger-scale splatters.

TEEN queeries

A book to help
begin conversations
for teens

...and the grown ups
in their lives.

A large, faint, grey-scale image of a group of people, possibly a family or a group of friends, is visible in the background, partially obscured by the text and the overall design elements.

The title 'TEEN queeries' is presented in a stylized font. 'TEEN' is in a large, blocky, grey font with a distressed, textured appearance. 'queeries' is in a smaller, bold, black, lowercase sans-serif font. A large, black, ink-splatter-like graphic is positioned to the left of the word 'queeries', partially overlapping the 'TEEN' text.

TEEN
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TEEN **queeries**

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

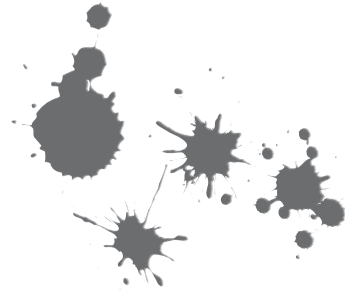
Everyone really. It is for boys and young men who are dealing with puberty and the possibility of being gay, all at the same time. It is also for those boys' parents, their friends, teachers, coaches etc. It is for anyone who has a teen queerie in their life...and for those of us that are just curious.

WHY WRITE A BOOK LIKE THIS?

It was written with the hope that it would help get conversations going; it always helps to talk about tricky subjects if you can come at them head on, put them on the table and talk freely and honestly. That's how these conversations began in our home. My son, Lucas and I thought it may help others see things in a different light and maybe even more clearly. In any case, as kids go through puberty, there is an in built curiosity about homosexuality and it is

not unusual for some of them to experiment with same gender sex. So, if nothing more, this will prove to be an informative, interesting read.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE!



Gaye Dell has had the most input here, she has published 11 books for children and young people, (www.gayedell.com). Turns out her son is gay. Why not write about the questions and experiences that have resulted from their journey together?

These conversations, in no particular order, were taken from a span of about 8 years, so some are quite naive and others ...well, not.

Questions have popped up along this (sometimes) rocky path, questions that are more than likely pretty common between a parent and gay boy child. Conversations between Gaye and Lucas were the basis of this book.

Teen Queeries may very well be comforting to others in the same circumstances, Gaye and Lucas certainly hope so.

QUEERIES:

How do I tell my parents?

This is probably the No. 1 question for most kids who understand they are (or suspect they may be) gay. “Telling parents” will be unique for every circumstance of course, because the cultural and/or religious expectations we all bring to the table, are unique for every family. The relationships all under the same roof (or roofs) are so varied; there may be a closeness or a distance already existing, when a child decides it is the ‘right’ time to drop the clanger. Some kids prefer to keep it to themselves because they are unsure how their parent(s) will react and that’s OK too. There’s always a choice...remember, it is your choice!

Son: I knew I was gay, but I thought my Mum would be disappointed in me when I told her. I’m lucky in that she thinks outside the box because she is a creative type, but I was still really nervous about telling her. I put it off for quite a long time. I have never met my Dad so it has been just the two of us all along, so we get along well most of the time.

When I was about 16, I felt comfortable enough in my own feelings to understand how I felt about boys. Up until that

IN OR OUT?

If I know someone is gay,
should I out them?

Son: I wouldn't. In High School I told one friend I was gay and the very next day, five other kids came up to me to ask if it was true. Needless to say, I felt my trust had been betrayed and felt really gutted about it.

Mum: I imagine that would have to be the worst thing for a young person; that is, to have their choice taken away. I would say a resounding 'NO' to that one. Someone's sexual orientation is their own business...no-one else's!

Why am I gay?

Son: I wondered if I am gay because I don't have any brothers or a father figure. I went on the internet with this question and found the following information which was helpful for me. It is not conclusive, but rounded out, it says that your 'gayness' is somehow caused by all or a combination of: your genes, what happened while you were developing inside your Mum and/or your brain structure. Read on: *"No simple, single cause for sexual orientation has been conclusively demonstrated, but research suggests that it is by a combination of genetic, hormonal, and environmental influences,^[1] (with biological factors*

rush, so keep it public while you are getting to know each other. Think about the possibility of having a difference of opinion with this person; it would be a pity to have that happen in an environment where you couldn't just simply walk away if you couldn't work out your differences. Be careful with online stuff...it seems safe enough, but it can go very wrong, very quickly when you are actually face-to-face and there is no internet between you and that friendly stranger. Be smart, be safe!

How come I love having girl friends,
but not girlfriends?

Son: When I hang with friends at school almost all of them are girls. My best friends are girls, I just don't want to have sex with any of them. It just feels wrong to even think thoughts about them like that...it is kind of like 'having sex with your sister' type of yuk for me.

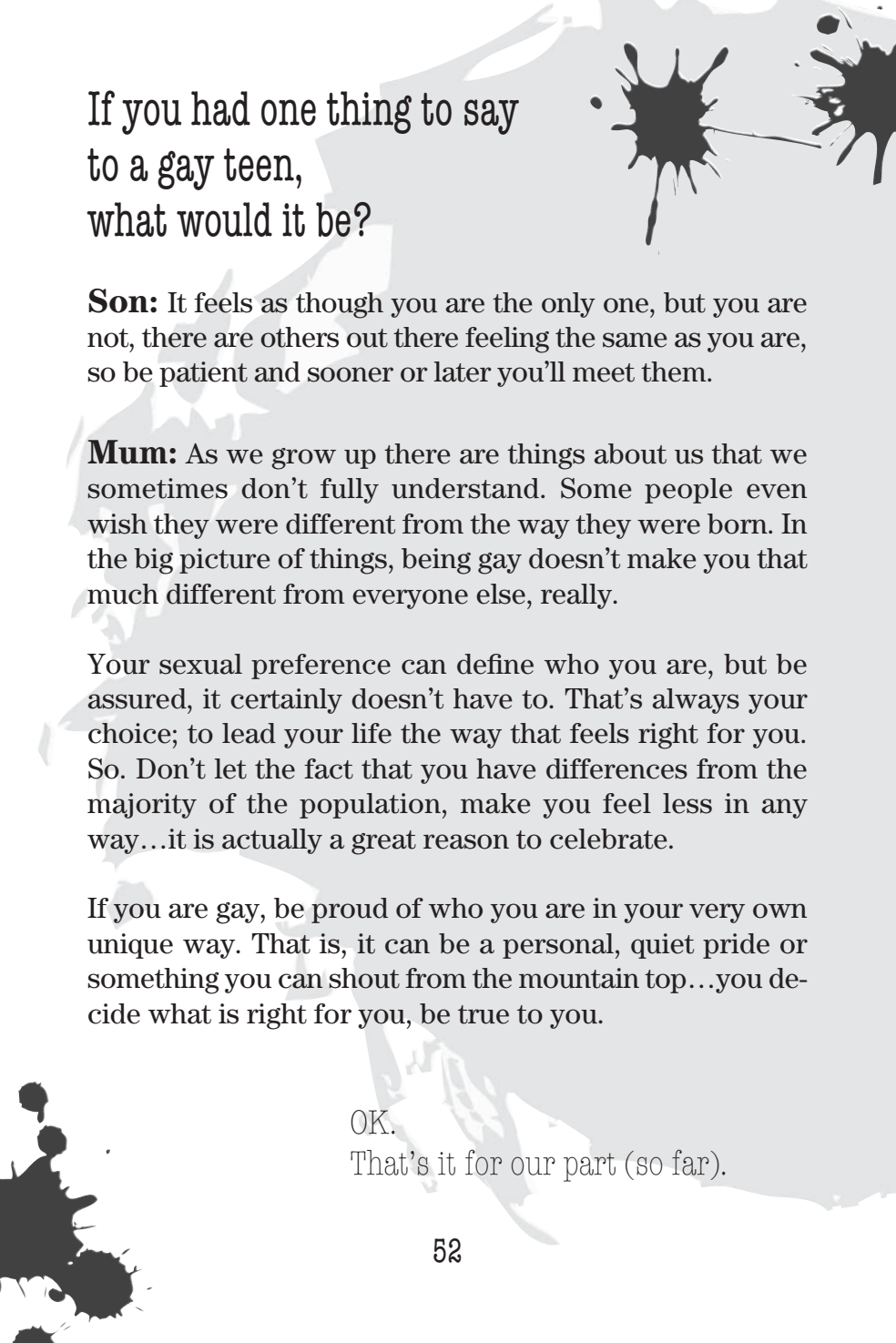
Mum: When you first 'come out' your straight male friends can be concerned about how to behave around you, they may even be worried about whether you will come onto them at any given moment if they let their guard down...strange really, it is almost a reversal of roles; girls generally have that pressure with boy friends. Because of that uncertainty, you may feel tension with boys and so girls' company, feels more relaxing to you.

They probably enjoy you a lot too. During puberty, hormones are going wild particularly for boys, so girls welcome the company of a male without having to keep him at arm's length. Girls' friendliness can be misinterpreted as a come-on by eager teen boys. Gay boys have the maleness without any pressure...and girls love boys who are sensitive. In fact, more than once, I have heard my friends say, "*He's gorgeous; respectful, great dresser, even loves to dance...must be gay!*"

I hate feeling like a stereotype
but I am the only gay teenager I know.

Son: The hardest part for me is feeling not only stereotyped by everyone, but feeling like I'm the only one like this. I know I can talk to my girl friends and Mum about it, but can't with any of my mates... when I was younger, I never had an opportunity to talk it through with any other gay guys who might have understood what I was going through.

Mum: It's hard to feel like you are the only one. Remember though, being the only one makes you unique, extra special. I know, when you are a teenager, you don't want to hear that from your mother, but there is some truth to it. Another truth is that there are other gay boys at school, they either are not sure whether to, or do not have the support to 'come out' just yet. Embrace and even celebrate that you are sure about your orientation and that you have taken a huge step to leave a lot of confusion for



If you had one thing to say
to a gay teen,
what would it be?

Son: It feels as though you are the only one, but you are not, there are others out there feeling the same as you are, so be patient and sooner or later you'll meet them.

Mum: As we grow up there are things about us that we sometimes don't fully understand. Some people even wish they were different from the way they were born. In the big picture of things, being gay doesn't make you that much different from everyone else, really.

Your sexual preference can define who you are, but be assured, it certainly doesn't have to. That's always your choice; to lead your life the way that feels right for you. So. Don't let the fact that you have differences from the majority of the population, make you feel less in any way...it is actually a great reason to celebrate.

If you are gay, be proud of who you are in your very own unique way. That is, it can be a personal, quiet pride or something you can shout from the mountain top...you decide what is right for you, be true to you.

OK.
That's it for our part (so far).

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY?

...what others have to say
to teen queeries:

Ask questions! Just as mothers have insights that can help the development of boys, so straights have insights that can help the development of gays.

—Stephen, (52yrs), University Professor

When I was a teen, I thought I was the only girl in the world who was attracted to other girls. I was really lonely. ***I know now that there ARE others like me out there. Have courage through the blue times, as time will teach you, you are not alone.***

—Roberta, (45yrs), Primary School Teacher

After I realised I was gay, I mostly hung around other gay men, but then I began to miss women. I love to be around some women, I just don't want to have sex with them. I guess if I were to offer some insight, I'd say, ***“Being gay shouldn't alter or hinder your friendships with anyone.”***

—Joseph, (68yrs) Fine Artist

***Don't let being gay
define who you are***

...you are a unique person first...your sexual preference is just one of the many details that make up the beautiful person you are.

—Gary, (64yrs) Graphic Designer

Don't worry, life gets better, was one of the most annoying pieces of advice I was given in my school days because for so many years, I didn't see that it would. Once I looked at my life from an outsiders' point of view, I could see the small changes that made life worth living and I could see more hope for the future.

It is the small things in life that matter;

take enjoyment in them and remember that the world is a big place and one day you will be in a position to choose where you want to be in that world.

—Julie, (22yrs) Uni student

I embraced the whole catastrophe...girlfriends, wife, child! When I got divorced and met a man I was attracted to, I realised what had been 'off' about my whole life. I had never actually made decisions about my life, but rather did what everyone else expected me to do.

***As a teen queerie
you get to choose
your life
yourself!***

That is certainly something to celebrate.

—Adam, (44yrs) Tax Auditor

Know that no matter how you identify yourself in this world—socially, spiritually or sexually—there are not only communities, but entire worlds that will envelope you in love and support. Never stop seeking these places.

***When you find your home,
not only will you flourish,
but you will never know shame,
only shine,
as you should.***

These places are out there and probably closer than you think.

—Molly, (19yrs) Hostess

I lived in the Middle East for a while where being gay was punishable with serious prison time...it certainly shaped my behaviour. It was imperative to stay in the closet or leave the country. I had a successful career that I was reluctant to abandon, and so it was a difficult time for quite a few years. It gradually wore me down however, and so I came to Australia where I have enjoyed the freedom of being who I am without the obvious drawbacks in the Middle East.

If you are a 'teen queerie' here in Australia, you have the freedom to be anything you want to be...cherish that liberty and be 'you'. We really do live in the Lucky Country.

—Eddy, (43yrs) Business Owner

Lady GaGa said it right, "*Baby I was born this way.*"
Enjoy the ride.

—Wendy, (22yrs) Student

If you feel something to be true, give yourself permission to explore it first before setting your mind about it.

***If it is something you feel
with honesty,
then there is nothing wrong
with embracing it.***

Although there may be those who disagree with your decision, or potential life-choice, if you have courage and act without shame, they will eventually respect you.

—Rob, (21yrs) Dance major

When questioning who you truly are, try to remember that no answer you find is going to be forever. Everything changes, so explore who you are today, and be excited about the future. Try not to spend time worrying,

***just love the person
you are today!***

—Tom, (25yrs) Coven priest

The world is vast and we are but a grain of sand in the ocean. Moving to the flow of the thousands of waves of society. Remember though, a grain of sand can evolve into an iridescent pearl.

***Be yourself.
Love yourself.
Shine!***

—Lleu, (22yrs) Shop assistant

Enjoy your awakening sex.

Question

***the thing that is considered 'normal'
and define yourself
without boundaries.***

Queer, Gay, Lesbian...these are labels we create to help others understand us, but they do not contain us. You may be as fluid and whimsical with your sexuality as you want to be

***—everything is natural
and nothing is normal.***

—Luke, (27yrs) Film-maker

Now...your turn:

- Ask either Gaye or Lucas a question
- Add a comment to support ‘teen queeries’

www.gayedell.com/teen-queeries/

- Read comments from gay and straight people (both important and not-so) in the community

www.gayedell.com/testimonial/teen-queeries-what-they-are-saying

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Other great resources

by Gaye Dell include:

500+ Questions Kids have About Sex

400+ Questions Kids have About Relationships

100+ Answers About Puberty

SOS Save Our Schools from Bullying

Bidge's Mob

...for more information about
these & other books for kids:

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TEEN queeries

This book is to help
begin conversations
between teens (straight
and queer) and the
grown ups in their lives.

It helps to talk about tricky
subjects if you can
come at them head on,
and talk freely
and honestly.

*So, join in
the conversation!*

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