

I'm Gay and I Oppose Same-Sex Marriage

by [Doug Mainwaring](#), March 8th, 2013

While religion and tradition have led many to their positions on same-sex marriage, it's also possible to oppose same-sex marriage based on reason and experience.

"I know in my heart that man is good, that what is right will always eventually triumph, and there is purpose and worth to each and every life." These words, spoken by Ronald Reagan in 1991, are framed on the wall above my desk. As a gay man, I've adopted them as my own, as I've entered the national discussion on same-sex marriage.

I wholeheartedly support civil unions for gay and lesbian couples, but I am opposed to same-sex marriage. Because activists have made [marriage](#), rather than civil unions, their goal, I am viewed by many as a self-loathing, traitorous gay. So be it. I prefer to think of myself as a reasoning, intellectually honest human being.

The notion of same-sex marriage is implausible, yet political correctness has made stating the obvious a risky business. Genderless marriage is not marriage at all. It is something else entirely.

Opposition to same-sex marriage is characterized in the media, at best, as clinging to "old-fashioned" religious beliefs and traditions, and at worst, as homophobia and hatred.

I've always been careful to avoid using religion or appeals to tradition as I've approached this topic. And with good reason: Neither religion nor tradition has played a significant role in forming my stance. But reason and experience certainly have.

Learning from Experience

As a young man, I wasn't strongly inclined toward marriage or fatherhood, because I knew only homosexual desire.

I first recognized my strong yearning for men at age eight, when my parents took me to see *The Sound of Music*. While others marveled at the splendor of the Swiss Alps displayed on the huge Cinerama screen, I marveled at the uniformed, blond-haired Rolfe, who was seventeen going on eighteen. That proclivity, once awakened, never faded.

During college and throughout my twenties, I had many close friends who were handsome, athletic, and intelligent, with terrific personalities. I longed to have an intimate relationship with any and all of them. However, I enjoyed something far greater, something which surpassed carnality in every way: *philia* (the love between true friends)—a love unappreciated by so many because *eros* is promoted in its stead.

I wouldn't have traded the quality of my relationships with any of these guys for an opportunity to engage in sex. No regrets. In fact, I always felt like the luckiest man on the planet. Denial didn't diminish or impoverish my life. It made my life experience richer.

Philia love between men is far better, far stronger, and far more fulfilling than erotic love can ever be. But society

now promotes the lowest form of love between men while sabotaging the higher forms. Gay culture continues to promote the sexualization of all (viewing one's self and other males primarily as sexual beings), while proving itself nearly bankrupt when it comes to fostering any other aspect of male/male relationships.

When all my friends began to marry, I began to seriously consider marriage for the first time. The motive of avoiding social isolation may not have been the best, but it was the catalyst that changed the trajectory of my life. Even though I had to repress certain sexual desires, I found marriage to be extremely rewarding.

My future bride and I first met while singing in a youth choir. By the time I popped the question, we had become the very best of friends. "Soul mates" is the term we used to describe each other.

After a couple of years of diligently trying to conceive, doctors informed us we were infertile, so we sought to adopt. That became a long, arduous, heartbreaking process. We ultimately gave up. I had mixed emotions—disappointment tempered by relief.

Out of the blue, a couple of years after we resigned ourselves to childlessness, we were given the opportunity to adopt.

A great shock came the day after we brought our son home from the adoption agency. While driving home for lunch, I was suddenly overcome with such emotion that I had to pull the car off to the side of the road. Never in my life had I experienced such pure, distilled joy and sense of purpose. I kept repeating, "I'm a dad," over and over again. Nothing else mattered. I knew exactly where I fit in within this huge universe. When we brought home his brother nearly two years later, I was prepared: I could not wait to take him up in my arms and declare our kinship and my unconditional love and irrevocable responsibility for him.

Neither religion nor tradition turned me into a dedicated father. It was something wonderful from within—a great strength that has only grown with time. A complete surprise of the human spirit. In this way and many others, marriage—my bond with the mother of my children—has made me a much better person, a person I had no idea I had the capacity to become.

Intellectual Honesty and Surprise Conclusions

Unfortunately, a few years later my marriage ended—a pain known too easily by too many. At this point, the divorce allowed me to explore my homosexuality for the first time in my life.

At first, I felt liberated. I dated some great guys, and was in a couple of long-term relationships. Over several years, intellectual honesty led me to some unexpected conclusions: (1) Creating a family with another man is not completely equal to creating a family with a woman, and (2)

denying children parents of both genders at home is an objective evil. Kids need and yearn for both.

It took some doing, but after ten years of divorce, we began to pull our family back together. We have been under one roof for over two years now. Our kids are happier and better off in so many ways. My ex-wife, our kids, and I recently celebrated Thanksgiving and Christmas together and agreed these were the best holidays ever.

Because of my predilections, we deny our own sexual impulses. Has this led to depressing, claustrophobic repression? No. We enjoy each other's company immensely. It has actually led to psychological health and a flourishing of our family. Did we do this for the sake of tradition? For the sake of religion? No. We did it because reason led us to resist selfish impulses and to seek the best for our children.

And wonderfully, she and I continue to regard each other as "soul mates" now, more than ever.

Over the last couple of years, I've found our decision to rebuild our family ratified time after time. One day as I turned to climb the stairs I saw my sixteen-year-old son walk past his mom as she sat reading in the living room. As he did, he paused and stooped down to kiss her and give her a hug, and then continued on. With two dads in the house, this little moment of warmth and tenderness would never have occurred. My varsity-track-and-football-playing son and I can give each other a bear hug or a pat on the back, but the kiss thing is never going to happen. To be fully formed, children need to be free to generously receive from and express affection to parents of both genders. Genderless marriages deny this fullness.

There are perhaps a hundred different things, small and large, that are negotiated between parents and kids every week. Moms and dads interact differently with their children. To give kids two moms or two dads is to withhold from them someone whom they desperately need and deserve in order to be whole and happy. It is to permanently etch "[deprivation](#)" on their hearts.

Rich Versus Diminished Lives

Sexuality is fluid for many, and much more complex than many want to acknowledge. Gay and straight activists alike pretend this isn't true in order to fortify their positions. If they fail to maintain that mirage, fundraising for their organizations might dry up, as would the requests for television and radio interviews. Yet the "B" in the middle of "LGBT" acknowledges an important reality concerning our human sexuality.

Here's a very sad fact of life that never gets portrayed on *Glee* or *Modern Family*: I find that men I know who have left their wives as they've come out of the closet often lead diminished, and in some cases nearly bankrupt, lives—socially, familially, emotionally, and intellectually. They adjust their entire view of the world and their role within it in order to accommodate what has become the dominant aspect of their lives: their homosexuality. In doing so, they trade rich lives for one-dimensional lives. Yet this is what our post-modern world has taught us to do. I went along with

it for a long while, but slowly turned back when I witnessed my life shrinking and not growing.

What Now?

In our day, prejudice against gays is just a very faint shadow of what it once was. But the abolition of prejudice against gays does not necessarily mean that same-sex marriage is inevitable or optimal. There are other avenues available, none of which demands immediate, sweeping, transformational legislation or court judgments.

We are in the middle of a fierce battle that is no longer about rights. It is about a single word, "[marriage](#)."

Two men or two women together is, in truth, nothing like a man and a woman creating a life and a family together. Same-sex relationships are certainly very legitimate, rewarding pursuits, leading to happiness for many, but they are wholly different in experience and nature.

Gay and lesbian activists, and more importantly, the progressives urging them on, seek to redefine marriage in order to achieve an ideological agenda that ultimately seeks to undefine families as nothing more than one of an array of equally desirable "social units," and thus open the door to the increase of government's role in our lives.

And while same-sex marriage proponents suggest that the government should perhaps just stay out of their private lives, the fact is, now that children are being engineered for gay and lesbian couples, a process that involves multiple other adults who have potential legal custody claims on these children, the potential for government's involvement in these same-sex marriage households is staggering.

Solomon only had to split the baby in two. In the future, judges may have to decide how to split children into three, four, or five equal pieces. In Florida, a judge recently ordered that the birth certificate of a child must show a total of three parents—a lesbian couple and a gay man (the sperm-providing hairdresser of one of the lesbian moms). Expect much more of this to come.

Statists see great value in slowly chipping away at the bedrock of American culture: faith and family life. The more that traditional families are weakened in our daily experience by our laws, the more that government is able to freely insert itself into our lives in an authoritarian way. And it will.

Mark Regnerus, a sociologist at the University of Texas at Austin, recently [said](#), "I think you can have social stability without many intact families, but it's going to be really expensive and it's going to look very 'Huxley-*Brave New World*-ish.' So [the intact family is] not only the optimal scenario ... but it's the cheapest. How often in life do you get the best and the cheapest in the same package?"

Marriage is not an elastic term. It is immutable. It offers the very best for children and society. We should not adulterate nor mutilate its definition, thereby denying its riches to current and future generations.

Doug Mainwaring is co-founder of the National Capital Tea Party Patriots.