

Being Gay and the Peak of the Roller Coaster

By: Damion Rochester

At the beginning of the gay experience, life in New York City is a sexually liberating adventure. We party from 10pm-6am at the top five gay bars and clubs in the city. We lurk for trouble and are tempted to test our limits with a combination of drugs and alcohol. Like the true biologists that we are, we experiment sexual intimacy with our equally inexperienced counterparts who eventually become our long lasting brunch *gurlfriends*.

Our world becomes entrenched with fashion and suddenly the gym becomes our sanctuary. Flattered by the gaze of 'straight' married and older gay men, who follow us into the saunas and steam rooms, bother us to sport (horseplay) with them and boost our egos by telling us how buff we look, we bashfully retreat from their attention. Ironically this experience has created a new found level of self-confidence for us and we begin to diet. We pump (strut) down on 8th Ave in Chelsea and men, women and babies cannot resist staring. Life seems perfect until the city introduces us to bad love. Bewilderment, fear and anxiety feed our insecurities and we lose our sense of self by pretending that we are happy. Society has never taught us what real love between men should look like, so we live by the motto that "bad love is better than no love at all."

We believe that we've fallen in love but the scum of a man we've given our hearts to, is only there to teach us a lesson of heart break. We find out about his promiscuous secrets and despair and depression becomes our scarlet letters. But like the cat that lands sturdily on her feet, we enroll in couple rebounds and encounter many summer flings. However life becomes tasteless because it lacks the meaning of love. Terrified from the past, we are hesitant to believe in the notion of a Mr. Right. Nonetheless, we intuitively desire true love. After all, what is the point of being born gay if true love between men does not exist? Surely our Lord and Savior did not create us to live a lie, nor did he create us to be ostracized, persecuted and die by suicide. True love exist, it is just rare to find.

It is out numbered by the down-low, the gold-digger, the perverted sugar-daddy, the impulsive cheater, the self-absorbed, and the imposter who assumes the position of Mr. Right. However the roller coaster ride begins when we do find our Mr. Right. Because of the missing blueprint, we conceptualize a lofty ideal of true love! We desire for our partners to view the world as we do and to make us completely happy. After many arguments we recognize that his differing views can be insights that educate the relationship and happiness is not completed until we find internal peace. Often times our inner demons come to surface and we expect our significant other to exercise them, but it is our own struggle to remedy.

We must work hard to maintain true love as life is simply empty sex without it. The first three steps are dropping the egos that we've developed, becoming active listeners and staying committed to communication. The final step is creating a new language that we both mutually understand. This keeps us focused on the peak of the roller coaster: marriage, property and family. There are dips on the ride, but it is a lot less scary when we have a trusted companion by our side.