



## Finally Out: Letting Go of Living Straight

**Loren A. Olson**

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*Compassion is key in this book that serves to inspire those within the LGBTQ+ community to see that everyone's struggle is different.*

The second edition of Loren A. Olson's *Finally Out: Letting Go of Living Straight* achieves an expert balance between the genres of memoir and self-help to advise and comfort newly out or closeted gay men later in life. This edition builds upon the 2011 edition by actively being more inclusive, addressing some concerns of bisexual erasure and biphobia, and recognizing recent strides in LGBTQ+ rights, while also acknowledging that the fight is not over.

Olson uses heartrending personal experiences to offer insight into the specific isolation and difficulties for gay men coming out when their lives are primarily woven into a heterosexual community, sometimes with wives and children. Through psychiatric theory, cultural and historical context, and personal anecdotes, Olson successfully comforts and validates this isolated community.

By using the phrase "men having sex with men" (MSM) rather than "gay," Olson highlights that most MSM are not out, and successfully includes them in the conversation. This inclusiveness is important, as is his recognition of the geographic bounds of an active gay culture and ageism.

Some of the language used does reinforce the hetero/homosexual binary that could be interpreted as not only bisexual erasure, but failing to include others along a spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities. Olson rejects the linear idea of a continuum and makes a good case for "a complex matrix of self-expression."

The book is an extremely useful and insightful resource for gay men, and it includes pertinent information for more in-depth research. As Olson acknowledges, there is much division and misunderstanding within the LGBTQ+ community, and the book serves to inspire those within that community to see that everyone's struggle is different. Compassion is key.

While Olson mainly focuses on issues of gay men coming out later in life, the book is useful for all members of the LGBTQ+ community, their loved ones, and their allies alike.

PAIGE VAN DE WINKLE (LGBTQ+ 2017)

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