



## Rainbow Wisdom: 18 LGBTQ+ Life Lessons for Everyone

**Mischa Oak**

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*An actionable social science manifesto, Rainbow Wisdom includes a litany of empathetic advice for supporting queer communities, from within and outside of their bounds.*

Mischa Oak's compelling social science treatise *Rainbow Wisdom* is about supporting and uplifting the LGBTQ+ community.

Interweaving personal stories with references to science and cultural phenomena, this book includes a litany of empathetic advice rooted in the acceptance of, and celebration within, queer communities. Focused on shedding fear, fostering a respectful society, and shifting conversations toward inclusivity, this work is done for allies and LGBTQ+ people alike. There's also a personal element to the text, in which Oak, a former educator, addresses challenging parts of his past and his experiences as a gay man living in Canada.

Each chapter explores an aspect of queer life, with foci including encouraging people in their states of vulnerability and using language to foster a more accepting society. Concrete advice for living with more acceptance and inclusion closes each chapter, their takeaways practical. For instance, the book suggests avoiding "should" statements when discussing other people's gender identities; it nudges audiences to "prove yourself wrong by exploring opposing viewpoints ... rather than only seeking what confirms your own opinion," encouraging positive allyship throughout.

Each life lesson is illuminated by personal stories, which are used to humanize the cultural, often traumatic challenges that LGBTQ+ people face. In the chapter on the importance of inclusion, for instance, an example is given of an isolated town in northern Alberta where residents painted a crosswalk in rainbow colors to signify their support of their queer neighbors. Elsewhere, the story of a student coming to Oak and questioning their identity is shared; Oak recalls giving the student information that led to their accepting their differences. Amid the book's wider analysis of the complex struggles that queer people around the world grapple with, these everyday stories of hope and joy make the work more dynamic, engaging, and hopeful.

There is some repetition, however: Three separate chapters discuss the idea of questioning and discarding gender norms and living a life free from social expectations, with discussions of clothing choices, "girl" versus "boy" toys, and the dismantling of self-restraining ideas recurring. Still, as a celebration of life within queer communities that simultaneously provides allies with the tools and language necessary to be strong supporters, this is a work that exemplifies and encourages empathy and acceptance in a variety of ways.

*Rainbow Wisdom* is an uplifting social science tract about embracing queer communities and creating a more inclusive society.

JENNIFER MAVEETY (April 7, 2026)

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