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| Declan | So, Calum, when did you start noticing that your sexuality was different from other people around you? |
| Calum | I think I first noticed my sexuality was different when I was 8 years old, which is really, really young, I think, compared to a lot of other people’s experiences and I, kind of very, very quickly realised that made me different and I remember kind of dropping that into conversation very subtly with some of my friends at that age and their reactions make me quickly realise that was deemed “ok”. So, I kind of bottled that up and kind of pushed it down and almost forgot about it. Then it wasn’t until I was into my teenage years 13/14 years old that I started to really realise what that meant and started to slowly come to accept myself |
| Declan | Have any of you had any other reactions, positive or negative? |
| Amelia | In my case I am Asexual, and it wasn’t until I was about 14 or 15 when my peers started talking about sex that I realised they were actually being serious. (giggling) That I realised they weren’t just saying it because people on TV and real adults said it. Like they actually wanted to have sex. So, for me, it was only when that started happening and I realised “Oh, I don’t want to”.  |
| Maja | So, I was really lucky because I kind of grew up in an environment where I never really needed to even come out, it wasn’t deemed as something that needed to be corrected per se, like, at least in my family and my friendship group now one assumed I was straight so I never had to have that conversation of “Oh actually this is different”. Erm the kind of more negative side of it is when I tell new people that don’t know me so well because, obviously they just assume, and I have to kind of correct them |
| Jenny  | I had basically kind of like the same experience. I just started slipping it into conversations with my friends and with my family and people were like “yeah cool, cool that’s totally fine” But then I do sometimes get negative reactions when I say I’m currently in a relationship with a man. Its kind of the whole thing of well “you’re not really bi then are you because you’re with a man” and it’s like that’s not how it works okay. (giggles) |
| Declan | What about for those people that might have more of a negative reaction are you worried about that? |
| Calum | I know that when I first came out to my parents it was when I was around 16 years old and my parents are some of the most supportive parents in the world but their initial reaction was negative, not hugely negative but it was negative. And that came from a place of love and support because they were worried about the different life I might have as a gay man. So, their initial reaction really kind of surprise me and threw me off and I got quite upset and angry about that and it was only really through properly communicating with them. Quite quickly in the space of a month they’d gone from “oh, no we’re not sure about that” to “Oh, this is amazing. We have a gay son!”. Quite often as LGBT people we often have several years to kind of realise that and come to terms with it ourselves and then, when we share that with other people we almost expect them to instantly accept it and sometimes it can take a little time. That doesn’t mean people are homophobic, or transphobic, maybe they just need a little time to adjust.  |
| Amelia | Something I would suggest is coming armed with information and be ready for questions to be asked that are problematic or embarrassing or you can’t believe they would ask what you think is an obvious question. If you make sure beforehand, you’re kind of prepared for those questions that they could have then and what you are going to say the process might go a bit more smoothly. |
| MAJA  | I think also it’s really important to know that you’re doing it when you want to, it’s like it’s a deeply, deeply personal thing that’s different for every person. You have to be really sure that it’s what you want to do because then, if you do have that slightly negative reaction, you’re gonna still feel secure and still feel safe and its not going to make you question yourself.  |
| Declan | What about those people who don’t feel safe coming out? |
| Amelia  | I don’t think there should ever be any pressure to come out. I think at the end of the day your orientation is your business and maybe one day your partner’s business but until then you can tell as little people you want or as many as you want. And if you are in a situation where you think you could get thrown out of your house or you think you could get bullied or its just not safe for you, you shouldn’t feel like you have to. You’re not lying to anyone by not .. |
| Maja | People can call you all kinds of names and it sucks and in a perfect world we wouldn’t have that but its about your relationship to yourself and also there is an entire world of people out there who feel exactly like you do and who understand how much it suck and how difficult it can be. Maybe you’re not in the right place now and your little bubble isn’t al there is  |
| Declan | Do you have any final tips for anyone who’s thinking of coming out? |
| Maja | Your sexuality is so fluid, and you can think that you are one thing on one day and be completely on the other side of the vast spectrum the other day. Keep your mind open to what could possibly happen. And explain that to people when you’re coming out as well.  |
| Calum  | Labels are a really really helpful tool, but they can also be very, very, restrictive. And I think it’s really important not to let a label define you. I recently heard a wonderful story about man who came out as gay when he was a teenager and he spent his whole life dating, being in love with men, having sex with men, And then, when he was like 40 years old he met one woman and fell madly in love with this women and they’re now together to this day. And he still identifies as a gay man because, outside of this one woman, he is only attracted to men. He still identifies as a gay man and I think that’s wonderful and a great example of how you can use a label to explain how you feel but not let it restrict or define you.  |
| Jenny  | I didn’t really know that bisexuality was a thing, like I was made to feel a bit weird about it. Always remember that your feelings are totally valid.  |
| Calum  | I think there can be a great deal of power in coming out to yourself before you come out to anyone else. I know that a lot of people when they try to come out to somebody for the first time, they almost can’t form the words. They feel wrong and stick I their mouth and it’s because saying “I’m gay” or “I’m bisexual”, “I’m asexual” “I’m trans” saying that out loud for the first time can be terrifying”. Just taking the time to say it yourself can be wonderfully empowering”.  |
| Declan | Thank you so much for coming in today. It’s been really informative.  |