

Interview Code: RJ201438A & RJ201438B
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Interviewee: Allan Davis
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Family & Childhood (00:00:00 – 00:09:23)

Allan was born in London, he has one older brother and his parents are traditional Jews. His father's family came from the Ukraine and only spoke Yiddish. Allan's mother became ill when he was 11 years old and says this really affected him because she could no longer do the things she wanted to.

Allan attended Jewish school and his family considered it important for Allan to have a Jewish education. Allan describes himself as "*genuinely Jewish*" as he always had a kosher household and says it's something that makes him very proud. Allan says it's also the same for him being gay, he says these two factors make up his identity. He says he wants to marry somebody Jewish because he wants a Jewish ceremony and to keep his faith.

Gender Identity during his Younger Years (00:09:23 – 00:28:25)

Allan was around 11 or 12 when he realized that "*there was something a little bit different about me*". He said he was never bullied or called gay and had good friends at school. He knew he was attracted to boys but didn't know if it was a phase or if everybody felt that way. There was a boy in his class who he experimented with and this lasted a long period of time. He never felt any shame and it didn't upset him.

After Allan left school at 17 when he attended college. He made contact with an old school friend and they started having a relationship together. His mother would always ask what was going on between them and he would respond "*nothing*". His father had once caught him kissing a male friend goodbye at the front door and reacted in an angry fashion and told him not to tell his mother. Allan didn't get an opportunity to tell his mother he was gay before she passed away and says this would have made a huge difference in his life and it tortures him that he didn't get to have that conversation with her. His father now supports him.

Allan started clubbing in the 80's after looking in 'Time Out' magazine at the gay-listings with his boyfriend. They pretended they were going to the country club to their parents and went to 'Bang' a popular gay club in London. He says it was '*unbelievable*'. They didn't stay long as they had lied about where they were but from then they went every Monday, one Monday when Allan went to the club alone he was spotted by a friend and says he was so guilty he had to make up a story when he got home to try and cover his tracks.

TV and films in the 80's portrayed gay people as 'disturbed' and always as outsiders but the clubbing experience Allan was having made him feel accepted. He says from then on "*being gay was who I was and I was going to fall in and dive right in and be the proud gay man I am today*". He says aside from his father when he initially found out that he has never been marginalized for his sexuality.

Jewish LGBT Community Involvement (00:28:25 – 00:31:21)

Allan joined a Jewish LGBT group 'Hineni' in the UK during the mid 80's before he moved to Australia. He met people that he still has contact with, including primary

school friends. They would meet at a Jewish center in central London. He says there were 20 of them in the group but he felt the group didn't have direction and was just a very young group unable to decide what to do. He feels that in that period of time people couldn't come out and couldn't accept who they were easily.

END OF INTERVIEW A

Jewish LGBT Community Involvement Continued (00:00:00 – 00:15:30)

He can't remember how he got involved in Hineni and how he found out about the group. He also can't remember if there was much structure to the group and if they had an agenda or if it was just a social experience. He still thinks that as a group they were hidden and as they were made up of young people he felt their voice wasn't heard.

Allan doesn't like to hear the term '*gay marriage*' as this is just equality, he says when the discussion and debate around equal marriage was at it's peak he became quite upset. He would like to be married in a United Synagogue as he considers himself a conservative Jew and wants to be married in his own synagogue.

Allan says there are two things that "*are me*" and that is being Jewish and Gay and says that neither one cancels the other and he would "*argue this with my last breath*". He says it would complete him to have a Jewish partner who is familiar with all Jewish tradition and to know why it's important to attend religious events together. He says he is tired of explaining his traditions to people.

"I want to do all the things that I should have done, I want to keep kosher, get up on a Saturday morning and go to Schul. I want to do that, I want a partner that says, "let me come along""

Allan feels that Jewish people instinctually want to be part of a community and this is what spurred on the introduction of JLGBT groups.

Rainbow Jews (00:15:30-00:17:28)

"I guess we all have stories, we just don't know we have them and you don't have to have this amazing story, I don't know, a story is a story, it gets you to who you are. When I was asked it was an honor, yes I am a rainbow Jew and I guess my story should be told and to be part of that story is kind of a compliment overwhelming and to know that you're recognized that is just an affirmation that you are part of it, we don't always know we are part of it, we don't always know we have that story or something that is important."

"it's important for people to know that there were people before that were just as proud to be Jewish and gay and believed in that"

END OF INTERVIEW