

## **My Fight for Authenticity As a Man: Changes Over the Year 2010**

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[Introduction: Jacob's journey over the year 2010 is a good example of what can happen when an active homosexual man decides to attempt to regain his innate heterosexuality. We thought our readers would find it interesting to know that sometimes the journey from gay to straight can happen rather quickly.]

So, it's the end of 2010 and with that comes reflection. I began the year in a much worse place than I am now, feeling essentially on my own with very little support regarding unwanted SSA. I am in a place now where I feel very blessed to have some great friends, an amazing girlfriend, and support including my own coping skills. This past year was difficult overall - confronting my fears, past, emotional issues have made me feel exhausted in a way. Like, damn -- life shouldn't and probably isn't this hard for most people. However, if you want to step down this path, you've got to be a fighter - no way around it. You've got to decide this is the path for you, whatever society or any group with a polarizing agenda might say. You've got to fight for yourself!

Difficulty aside, in some ways I'm surprised it's worked so well. One year ago I had very little attraction to girls, and now I can say without any pretense or exaggeration I am a well-functioning heterosexual guy. My own experiences confirm it. And, my girl friend is a testimony to that. My attraction to men has decreased, and when I do feel intense attraction I think about it differently. I don't shame myself or pretend the feelings aren't there. Instead I ask what's really going on - do I feel weak and insecure? Do I need to connect with some guy friends? What does this guy have that I don't? I find if I answer these questions honestly with gentle inquiry, and if I find a way to connect with men the attraction almost completely subsides.

I feel like I've been on the therapy fast track. I think I'm an extreme person - when I was in the gay life I would spend lots of time at gay bars. Since I switched course, I went to JiM, Warriors, and Noble Man all within six months. I started seeing a counselor and learned to meditate. Since I wasn't going to gay bars or dating men, I read and slept. I learned true self-care. I surrendered what I could not do on my own to God, and gradually began to heal. Finally after years and years I accessed the deep hurt and emotion underneath my attraction to men, and have come out on the other side. Each process was a step, and taught me something about myself, allowing me to move forward like small chains being broken.

The biggest blessing of all is having a renewed faith in myself to be who I want to be. I'm that guy - the one who decided who I want to be and found out how to do it. I am grateful I found organizations that believe in change of sexual orientation and engaged in several processes that helped me do so. Hidden beneath it all is a need - a need for attachment and interaction with men. I've learned it does not serve me to repress that need, however, before I filled it sexually with men, now I interact with men in healthy, platonic ways, which is really what I needed all along. Before I just didn't know any better.

Dating women is great and new to me. Speaking honestly, I feel more excited about my interactions with men. I have friends now who I go rock climbing with, watch football with - the typical guy things, and I love it. It's been so new to me, having always felt excluded from the world of men. I've tried to level with myself on this and just admit I'm really not out of the woods yet; there's no point in pretending otherwise. I wonder if I ever will be. However, what I've learned is how my need to be well anchored in my masculinity needs to occur before I am fully attracted to my opposite gender. So I am not worried as long as I continue to give myself what I need.

At this point dating is still secondary for me. A recent weekend sponsored by Jonah helped me be in the presence of the feminine and to face fears around women; these were all things I needed to do. I learned a lot about being present and how to stay mindful of myself and my feelings. All I can say is God bless all of the patient, beautiful women out there. My girlfriend in particular has been essential for my healing. What was once terrifying is now well within my reach, and I plan to only move onward and upward.

For any man considering this road, it is difficult. You may face ridicule from people who don't even know you because they believe (or want to believe) sexuality cannot be altered and therefore may well hassle you. But lots of men (including myself) are successfully traveling this road and many before me have successfully gone on this path. All of us have found the courage to go against the political correct current. We who have chosen this path have discovered that what once seemed hopeless to us (i.e. changing sexual orientation) turned out to be an incredibly rewarding experience that permitted us to experience joy and to live authentic emotionally fulfilling lives. So to those who may read about my journey, my advice is: Find ways to connect, don't doubt yourself, and above all -- fight.