


Sunday, 25 July 2010 12:00 AM | Libay Linsangan Cantor

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About a decade ago, I remember a lesbian teacher once ranted about this common friend of ours, another lesbian, whose girlfriend was trying to finish her bachelor's degree. Our friend suggested to her girlfriend that she should get the lesbian teacher for a penalty subject she needed. She did, and there should be no case about that, except that as a student, the girlfriend kind of neglected some of her duties, and took her lesbian teacher for granted. The teacher noticed that since they were both lesbians, the girlfriend was using this factor in the class, perhaps thinking that if she played hooky, then she won't get

punished as much, because “we lesbians should stick together.”

But such is not the case for my teacher-friend. She didn't really care if a delinquent student was a fellow lesbian or not, or a member of the **LGBT** community, our community. To her, a delinquent student is a delinquent student, period. In this sense, I agree with her.

Just because we are members of the same marginalized “minority” group doesn’t mean LGBT people should give a wider leeway to fellow LGBTs, especially those who are already erring. This could also be said of women, yet another marginalized sector. I remember one of my officemates in a women’s NGO saying that the biggest enemy of women are women themselves. Well, maybe in certain cases, yes, but not all the time. I guess she was referring to an officemate of ours, the one that didn’t really apply the tenets of **feminism** in her daily dealings with us. And of course this is ironic because our office was known for its feminist advocacy and agenda. I guess some really don’t practice what they preach.

So could we say the same about the LGBT community? If a **gay**, **lesbian**, **bisexual** or **transgender**

person thinks that they could get away with something because they are dealing with LGBT persons like them, then I don't highly agree with this attitude. To attain success, one must put out the work that needs to be done. If it involves networking with fellow LGBTs, then it's fine to lay out "the LGBT card." But if it means being lax at work because you think your fellow LGBT co-worker or boss won't mind or will let you go with only a slap on the wrist, then think again. If we retain this attitude, how do we differ now from the other corrupt and diabolical individuals of our society who do things like these on a daily basis? We are no better than those we criticize if we practice, develop or retain this attitude.

I was also put in a position like this once, and it was rather hard to decide, especially when it involved helping out a fellow lesbian. Years ago, I was holding an academic administrative position and it involved evaluating the part-time lecturers we occasionally hire to teach in our department. I recommended a lesbian friend, an artist, to be hired for one year, and my bosses agreed. But during that year, I saw how dismal her performance was when it came to teaching. I heard negative feedback from the students who wished that they learned more about the subject she taught, since the lesbian teacher didn't teach them much, they said. That complaint could have been easily remedied, but a bigger problem ensued: my fellow lesbian colleagues and I noticed that this lesbian artist was

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developing a rather unhealthy crush on a female student. By unhealthy, I meant that she was misreading the student’s friendly attitude, thinking that the student’s kindness meant she reciprocated the infatuation. It came to a point where even the other students started noticing the teacher’s behavior, and that was when I was alarmed. As a **lesbian feminist**, it was already hard for me to deal with the **sexist**

macho shit teachers on my watch, but to have a lesbian predator amongst them? No, not on my watch, never. So with a heavy heart, I told her case to my superiors who were unanimous in the decision of letting her go. I told her I will talk to her about why I let her go, but we never got around to meeting up after that for that talk.

I thought all will be well once I see her again, but I discovered from other colleagues that she was already spreading rumors about why I “fired” her. She was under the impression or illusion that I had a crush on her ex-girlfriend, an ex whom I was working with at that time. I guess it never entered her mind that I am a **monogamous** person who had a girlfriend during that whole time. I guess some truths don’t matter to those who want to fabricate stories based on lies. I tried to trace where she was getting these ideas, and it saddened me to learn that the person who could be influencing her was another lesbian, a common friend of ours, who once left me hanging on a job.

That was another bad work episode I never should have handled. I should have learned my lesson the first time, when this common friend left me hanging, that I should have never gotten close to her again as a friend or a co-worker. We were working together in an office before where we also had a handful of lesbian friends. There was a point when her performance in that office wasn’t really that great, and fellow workers—lesbians or not—were actually trying to warn her and help her. I somehow tried to understand her better since she was having love life problems during the last part of our work there, plus she was a good friend of mine. But I guess no matter how much you help a person, they won’t move forward if they don’t start helping themselves.

This lesbian friend suddenly disappeared from our radar, and I found myself working in the academe already when she resurfaced. She was looking for a job and I gave her one. But when the time came to execute that job, she suddenly disappeared again, without a trace, leaving me and the work position hanging, and my boss wondering whether the job would be done at all. I nearly risked my reputation for her, but I just tried to understand her, since I think she was again having love life problems again at that time.

With two not-so-good work experiences trailing her, you would think I would just ignore her if we saw each other again after that. But since we were both lesbians and we really had a good friendship before, I overlooked her really dismal work performance and took her in as a friend again. Plus I have to admit, I gave her a chance because I knew what it’s like to be devastated by a love gone wrong, especially in our world. So yes, I used the lesbian card and took her in as a friend again. But I never realized that it will lead to another falling out, and this time, it involved another person, that lesbian artist we hired, among other things. Well, I guess negative people tend to drift together. After those episodes, I never treated these two as friends anymore, and I really don’t care if they continue spreading rumors about me up to this day.

If there’s one thing we LGBTs should learn is that in the world of employment, we should know that we are going to be assessed and judged by our merits or demerits, whether we are functioning well or if we are non-functioning parts of a whole. Plus we shouldn’t use one’s “LGBT-ness” when it comes to currying favors, requests and pulling shenanigans. Like I said, how will we differ from the rest of society if we do the things we find despicable in them? So let us be fair and fine workers first, because after all, our sexualities shouldn’t be used to highlight our job descriptions and capabilities in the first place. //

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