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Integrity worth the price



Oct. 11 was National Coming Out Day, when closeted gay and transgender people are encouraged to stop living a lie and instead be true to themselves and others. But what does it say about a supposedly free society when so many citizens are afraid of being honest? In the 12 years since I have been totally out, I was disinherited by my parents and forbidden to visit them. Some other family members also have nothing to do with me. I was fired from a professional position after events beginning with blatant anti-gay bias.

Contractors refused to give me an estimate when they saw our rainbow flag. I received hate mail and hate phone calls. I get epithets and obscene gestures while driving with my rainbow-colored bumper sticker reading, "Teach tolerance." I am openly jeered if I hold hands with my spouse in public. One priest asked me to leave his parish. Twice men threatened to kill me.

This suggests why so many gays and transgenders are afraid of being honest. However, integrity is well worth whatever price and advances a truly free society where we all are equal and need not live in fear.

Douglas Marshall-Steele
Milton, Del