

Heterosexual Privilege Checklist

Found at:

<http://thepaintedturtle.blogspot.com/2005/03/heterosexual-privilege-checklist.html>

Many thanks to Midnightbleu for sharing this with me (and many others).

[Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack II](#)

Sexual Orientation

Daily effects of straight privilege

This article is based on Peggy McIntosh's article on white privilege and was written by a number of straight-identified students at Earlham College who got together to look at some examples of straight privilege. These dynamics are but a few examples of the privilege which straight people have. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer-identified folk have a range of different experiences, but cannot count on most of these conditions in their lives.

On a daily basis as a straight person...

- I can be pretty sure that my roommate, hallmates and classmates will be comfortable with my sexual orientation.
- If I pick up a magazine, watch TV, or play music, I can be certain my sexual orientation will be represented.
- When I talk about my heterosexuality (such as in a joke or talking about my relationships), I will not be accused of pushing my sexual orientation onto others.
- I do not have to fear that if my family or friends find out about my sexual orientation there will be economic, emotional, physical or psychological consequences.
- I did not grow up with games that attack my sexual orientation (IE fag tag or smear the queer).
- I am not accused of being abused, warped or psychologically confused because of my sexual orientation.
- I can go home from most meetings, classes, and conversations without feeling excluded, fearful, attacked, isolated, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, stereotyped or feared because of my sexual orientation.
- I am never asked to speak for everyone who is heterosexual.
- I can be sure that my classes will require curricular materials that testify to the existence of people with my sexual orientation.
- People don't ask why I made my choice of sexual orientation.
- People don't ask why I made my choice to be public about my sexual orientation.
- I do not have to fear revealing my sexual orientation to friends or family. It's assumed.

- My sexual orientation was never associated with a closet.
- People of my gender do not try to convince me to change my sexual orientation.
- I don't have to defend my heterosexuality.
- I can easily find a religious community that will not exclude me for being heterosexual.
- I can count on finding a therapist or doctor willing and able to talk about my sexuality.
- I am guaranteed to find sex education literature for couples with my sexual orientation.
- Because of my sexual orientation, I do not need to worry that people will harass me.
- I have no need to qualify my straight identity.
- My masculinity/femininity is not challenged because of my sexual orientation.
- I am not identified by my sexual orientation.
- I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help my sexual orientation will not work against me.
- If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has sexual orientation overtones.
- Whether I rent or I go to a theater, Blockbuster, an EFS or TOFS movie, I can be sure I will not have trouble finding my sexual orientation represented.
- I am guaranteed to find people of my sexual orientation represented in the Earlham curriculum, faculty, and administration.
- I can walk in public with my significant other and not have people double-take or stare.
- I can choose to not think politically about my sexual orientation.
- I do not have to worry about telling my roommate about my sexuality. It is assumed I am a heterosexual.
- I can remain oblivious of the language and culture of LGBTQ folk without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
- I can go for months without being called straight.
- I'm not grouped because of my sexual orientation.
- My individual behavior does not reflect on people who identify as heterosexual.
- In everyday conversation, the language my friends and I use generally assumes my sexual orientation. For example, sex inappropriately referring to only heterosexual sex or family meaning heterosexual relationships with kids.
- People do not assume I am experienced in sex (or that I even have it!) merely because of my sexual orientation.
- I can kiss a person of the opposite gender on the cheek or in the cafeteria without being watched and stared at.
- Nobody calls me straight with maliciousness.
- People can use terms that describe my sexual orientation and mean positive things (IE "straight as an arrow", "standing up straight" or "straightened out") instead of demeaning terms (IE "ewww, that's gay" or being "queer") .
- I am not asked to think about why I am straight.
- I can be open about my sexual orientation without worrying about my job.

posted by Victoria/Beachcomber at [Sunday, March 27, 2005](#)

Found at <http://members.aol.com/ahotcupofjava/hetero.html>

Heterosexual Privilege

By Linda Ketner

In 1989, Peggy McIntosh wrote an article, "[White Privilege](#)," dealing with the unacknowledged privileges of being white. Her view was that among Caucasians, there were many special and unearned assets that accrued because of their skin color -- assets that could be counted on each day, but about which white people remained largely oblivious.

Her premise intrigued me and I began thinking about heterosexuals and the many unearned assets and advantages accorded them based on their sexual orientation. Having "passed" for heterosexual for many years before "coming out," I knew firsthand.

Heterosexual privilege, like white privilege, seems to operate largely unconsciously, with no malice. There are everyday ways in which heterosexual people enjoy unearned privilege without even recognizing their advantages.

Below you'll find an abbreviated list of some daily effects of heterosexual privilege -- advantages that attach somewhat more to sexual orientation than to skin color, class, religion, or geographical locations.

If I am a Heterosexual:

1. I can go into a music store and find the language of my sexual orientation represented in the lyrics.
2. Television and movies reflect my relationships in widely diverse and nonstereotypical ways.
3. My children are given texts and information at school that validates my sexual orientation.
4. Society encourages me to marry and celebrates my commitment.
5. As a responsible and loving parent, I won't lose my children in a custody battle because of my sexual orientation.
6. I can easily buy postcards, books, greeting cards, and magazines featuring relationships like mine.
7. I don't have to worry about being fired or denied housing because of my sexual orientation.
8. I can be sure that if my spouse is in the hospital and incapacitated, I can visit and will be consulted about any decisions that need to be made.
9. Insurance provided by my employer covers my spouse and my children.
10. Hand holding with my love is seen as acceptable and endearing.
11. I can serve my country in the military without lying or keeping silent about my family.
12. I can keep pictures of my loved one on my desk at work without fear or reprisal.

13. I will receive all of my deceased spouse's estate, tax-free.
14. I never need to change pronouns when describing the events of my life in order to protect my job, my family, or my friendships.
15. If I'm a teenager, I can enjoy dating, first loves, and all the social approval of learning to love appropriately.
16. If I'm called to work with children or to serve God (in most denominations). I don't have to violate my integrity and lie in order to keep my job.
17. As a responsible and loving adult, I can adopt without lying about my sexual orientation.
18. I feel welcomed and accepted in my church.
19. I can be certain that my children won't be harassed because of my sexual orientation.
20. I can count on my community of friends, strangers, and institutions to celebrate my love and my family, mourn my losses, and support my relationships.

Certainly, none of the "privileges" listed for heterosexuals should be denied to the holders. Expectations that neighbors will be decent to you and that your sexual orientation will not cost you your job, your children, or your life should be the norm in any principled society.

Having spent a great deal of my life fighting for the rights of other groups, in 1994, I "came out" as a lesbian and began advocating for the rights of "my" group. Coming out is an important part of the process of eliminating heterosexual privilege, because typically there is a complicity of silence between gay people and straight friends, coworkers, or family. Some know that we're gay, but we tacitly agree not to talk about it. As more of us begin to tell the truth of discrimination and let people see inside our lives, hopefully the response will not be sympathy, but new allies in our struggle for social justice and civil rights.

I believe that more heterosexuals would not choose to be entitled, but they are simply unaware of the preferential treatment they receive and the more than on thousand discriminatory laws that are aimed at homosexuals. Bringing the injustices to consciousness is the first step in correcting these violations of core American values. What will you do with such knowledge? What personal acts of courage are you willing to commit in the name of justice?