

INTERVIEWER: And I mean, it all boils down to look at the caliber of person that you're dating rather than their sexual identity, I think.

SUBJECT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, what do you think?

SUBJECT 1: Well, that's something I can definitely agree with. I mean, I've not-- just like any people, I've met some bisexuals that I wouldn't want to be near. And I've met other bisexuals who I really like and enjoy to be with.

And I mean, it's just like the same way with lesbians, gay men, straight men, straight women, just any group of people. We should really like to be individual instead of just, oh, I'm bisexual. I'm straight. I'm gay and just make that something that you totally judge the mind and just--

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Agreed.

SUBJECT 2: One thing I'd like to say on the topic is that I know that sometimes driving down the street, I'll see someone, and I'm-- right out of the corner of my eye, and it's like I see them. And I'm not sure if they're male or female. But to me it doesn't matter.

It's like I feel an attraction for them. And I think, ooh, wow, they're really hot-looking. And then I find out the identity, the gender identity and think, oh, cool. That is a good-looking guy. Or ooh, that's a good-looking girl.

And then it's like-- but to me, the gender isn't that important. It's a person underneath the gender. And I think that's what love is really all about at a certain level.

INTERVIEWER: That speaks of humanitarianism. It's like loving people regardless of who they are. And that's a level of freedom that people probably criticize you for being able to express this--

SUBJECT 2: Definitely.

INTERVIEWER: --this feeling?

SUBJECT 2: And I think another thing, I hear it talked about in gay meetings and in the straight world and also a little bit in the bisexual community. We say, well, this person-- we like to put these labels on everybody.

INTERVIEWER: I hate--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

SUBJECT 2: We try to determine the person by their label and think we know something about them. And it's like a lot of times, one of the things I'm always bringing back up in the meetings is that our gender orientation, no matter what it is, it's a self-identified process. No one can determine it for us.

INTERVIEWER: I had a discussion about this last evening. I did with someone very close to me. I am the mother of four children. I have had relationships primarily with women for the last 11 or 12 years.

However, there have been a couple of men in my life. And based on her knowledge of that, she said, well, you're bi. And I don't identify as bi. I identify as a lesbian. Just because I have had a relationship with a man doesn't necessarily make me bisexual. .

Talk to me more. How do you see the roles? How do you identify?

SUBJECT 2: I think, one thing that simplifies it, it's like when you go back to some of the definitions, when we look at what is it to be homosexual, does that mean that you have to have a homosexual experience to be a homosexual? No. It just means basically that you're attracted to members of your own sex.

INTERVIEWER: Primarily.

SUBJECT 2: Primarily. Same with bisexuality. You don't have to have a sexual experience to be bisexual.

INTERVIEWER: You just--

SUBJECT 2: You can be totally virgin and still identify as bisexual just because you're attracted to members of both sexes, both genders.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I think all of the labels that are currently being slapped on people should be labels that we ourselves choose. We should not stand around and let anybody slap a label on us for any reason regardless.

SUBJECT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I identify as a lesbian because I choose to live my life as a lesbian. And you choose to identify as bisexual because you choose to live your life and that lifestyle. And those are good if those are labels that are put upon ourselves by ourselves.

SUBJECT 2: And one thing I realizes that the-- I think one of the things that confuses the issue about bisexuality is that we have such a diverse group. We've got some members that are primarily gay and once in a while like to sleep somewhat-- with someone of the opposite sex.

And then we have some people that are primarily straight. And they may not even want to sleep with someone of their sex, but sometimes they're attracted to someone of their gender. And then we have everything in between. I'm right there in the middle. I like both equally.

SUBJECT 4: There's a continuum.

INTERVIEWER: I--

SUBJECT 2: There's a continuum.

INTERVIEWER: I have a very, very dear friend that I've known forever and ever and ever. And every once in a while, she'll complain that her fence is giving her just a little bit too many splinters. And she rides fences quite a lot, so--

[LAUGHTER]

SUBJECT 2: And I think the other issue that I come up with, I mean, if you could see me tonight and how I'm dressed--

[LAUGHS]

INTERVIEWER: Girl, hot little number, a little leather skirt, fishnet hose. I want those, girl. Take them off right now.

[LAUGHTER]

SUBJECT 2: It brings that the other side of bisexuality. And that is that we both have male energy, and we both have female energy regardless of our outside gender. And to me, part of bisexuality is identifying with both my female side and my male side.

And being in androgyny to me is a big part of the bisexual experience. Whereas for other bisexuals, they're not so much in tune with the androgyny but more in tune with being a male attracted to males and females or being a female attracted to males and females but don't really see the two sides in themselves.

INTERVIEWER: Well, see, this is one of the joys of being queer. We're already-- by definition, we're already different from the norm. And that gives us the freedom to express ourselves pretty much in any way that we possibly want to as long as we're not harming other people. It's expected of us, so we can. Yeah.

[LAUGHTER]

SUBJECT 2: That's one of the things I love about the bisexual community is that it's so diverse. We get a lot of differences in the group. And we get a lot of people that are-- identify on all different levels.

It's like-- but one of the neat process is it does occur within the group is that we get people that come in for their first time, and they say, yes, this is how I feel inside. No one's ever said it before, but I feel attracted to both genders. And I feel sometimes that there might be both genders ending.

INTERVIEWER: I believe that there are both genders in all of us.

SUBJECT 4: One thing I'd like to say is I've just been really impressed with the diversity in the group. It's been-- like I've had people ask me-- I've tried to promote the group over the internet a little bit. And people ask me, what are the people like in the group?

But are they going to be like me? I'm like this, like this, like this. And I was like, I couldn't really say because everyone in the group is just so different from each other that it was just, oh, you'll fit in no matter who you are pretty much.

INTERVIEWER: What's the age range?

SUBJECT 2: We've had people from 18 and on up to what, [INAUDIBLE]? In their 50s?

SUBJECT 4: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

SUBJECT 2: And at the conferences, I've gone to one in San Diego and just recently, the North Carolina conference.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, boy, I bet that was a hoot. I got relatives there.

SUBJECT 2: Oh--

[LAUGHTER]

And Gigi was really appreciative.

INTERVIEWER: Was she?

SUBJECT 2: Yeah, she did a striptease.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, my God.

[LAUGHTER]

SUBJECT 2: And even got whipped by Loraine Hutchins of all people.

[LAUGHS]

INTERVIEWER: Well.

SUBJECT 2: But at the San Diego conference, we had one woman that was in her, I'm guessing, but probably in her late 80s.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, really?

SUBJECT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Hi, granny. How you doing? Wouldn't it be while to get her up on that conference and see her grandmother?

[LAUGHTER]

So you have really diverse people. Is it pretty well parodied male to female? To say--

SUBJECT 1: OK. Well, on some weeks, it does. Some weeks, it doesn't. And we have a lot of I guess variety and attendance from week to week.

And it does sometimes seem like there are more men than women there. But recently, there has been more and more women coming, so we're hoping to get more women to come. So if anyone want to come, you can come to the meetings. It's-- yeah, great. Maybe we should tell them where the meetings are.

INTERVIEWER: That would help. Look for your little address. Where is it? Is it 1919 Decatur? It's meeting at MCCR Church, correct?

SUBJECT 2: Correct, and it starts at 7 o'clock every Wednesday night.

INTERVIEWER: Every Wednesday night. OK. Great. OK. We're going to go to [? nope-- ?].

SUBJECT 2: I wanted to let you know there is a song that I came across at a very young age. And the song had a very special appeal when I sat down and listened to the words. It's an all Crosby, Stills, and Nash, and Young song, and it's called "Triad." And it's about bisexuality.

INTERVIEWER: Is it really?

SUBJECT 2: Yes, it is. And this is Gigi's record that he brought in to play. And I'm really excited because it's a live version. And before the "Triad," I've got it queued up, too that great song, that great song, "Teach Your Children."

SUBJECT 5: All right.

SUBJECT 2: Let's go to that right now. OK?

INTERVIEWER: OK.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[AUDIO OUT]

JIMMY: KPFT Houston. Hmm. You're listening to After Hours, a continuing tradition on KPFT Houston. I'm Jimmy, and with me tonight is Gigi and Michelle from BiNet. And Gigi, we just played the song by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young called "Triad." What does that mean to you? What does the song evoke?

GIGI: Well, it was early on that I ran across this song. And it was the first song I ever heard about bisexuality.

JIMMY: OK. I didn't get to listen to very real close to the words. What in it talks about?

GIGI: The first line that ever caught me was when they said the line about water brothers, and I thought, wow, what a concept?

JIMMY: Yeah, true.

GIGI: And then when I listen to the words real closely, I realized the person he was singing about, you couldn't tell the gender of.

JIMMY: Oh.

GIGI: It was like very magic.

JIMMY: So probably written specifically not to talk about gender. I mean this is a 20-year-old song we're talking about here or at least 20 years old, 25 years old. It's '68, I think.

GIGI: Yeah, '68. And I think the lines that just really stood out for me was the lines that he's singing about a lover coming to understand his difference. And I could relate to that so deeply because I'd had lovers that were both gay and straight, and none of them seemed to understand.

And when I came across this song, I thought, wow, this is saying what I've been wanting to get into words. And explain to people that I love you and because I love someone else doesn't mean I love you less. I love you just as much, maybe even more. And that's what the song is really about.

JIMMY: So it speaks to you not only of bisexuality but of the polymorphous?

GIGI: Polyamorous.

JIMMY: Polyamorous. OK.

GIGI: And it's like I've always looked at love as an extension of friendship that you can have more than one friend, and you can have more than one love. And it doesn't subtract from one friendship to have several friends. It only adds to it because what you get from your other friends, you can bring back to your--

JIMMY: Yeah. Yeah

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

JIMMY: --the same thing with lovers.

GIGI: Right. And I think the other thing it talks about that really hit me was that-- well let me read the lines.

JIMMY: Sure.

GIGI: "You cannot do that. It breaks all the rules you learned in school." Yeah. "I don't really see why can't we go on as three?"

JIMMY: Oh. OK.

GIGI: Yeah. I really related to that because not only am I bisexual, but I'm also dyslexic. And it's like I learn that--

JIMMY: I bet you're left handed.

GIGI: I'm ambidextrous.

JIMMY: Oh, OK.

GIGI: I do it with both hands--

JIMMY: I see. Whoa. Whoa.

[LAUGHTER]

So tell me more about the dyslexia part.

GIGI: Well, it's something I grew up with. And I realized very early that I didn't fit into our school system. And rules, I don't-- my brain works a little differently. And the rules just don't always apply to me. I can't work by the same methods other people work at.

JIMMY: Sure.

GIGI: And when it came to gender and sexual attractions and sexual identity, it was like, then the rules worked for me.

JIMMY: You must have been a handful for your parents.

GIGI: Well, I was--

JIMMY: When I think about--

GIGI: Hyperactive and--

JIMMY: Yeah, and we-- I think we try to read the books by Dr. Spock and bring everybody up the same and do everything the same way and all of that. And sometimes we don't think about special needs for special people.

GIGI: Yeah. And school was a horror. I mean, I spent more time in the principal's office some weeks than in the classroom.

[LAUGHTER]

I had one principal that just set up a little corner for me. And every time-- I mean, he was cool. Some principals weren't. They swap me and put me through all this emotional abuse.

But this one particular principal, he says, oh, you're back again. OK. Go play in the corner, and do your thing. And he was really cool about it. And it taught me that sometimes you have to make exceptions to the rules.

JIMMY: You do.

GIGI: And you have to look at what is the intent of the rules? And what are we accomplishing by the rules? And those are questions I asked myself.

And when it came to bisexuality, I realized that none of the rules fit me. And I had to look at the intent of the rules. And the intent of the rules for love is love. Yeah.

JIMMY: Yeah.

GIGI: And that's what this song really encompasses is that we can love people no matter if they're male, female. I remember not too long ago, my boss at work. There, I was having my yearly evaluation. And she said, well-- she's brand new on the job. And she said, well, how do you-- how are you when it comes to people of color?

And I said, I'm colorblind. And she did a double take for a minute. She said, what?

[LAUGHTER]

That's it. I didn't tell her this part, but I said, I've slept with just about every kind of color there is. I mean, that was going through my mind. And she says, well, you're diverse. And I was like--

JIMMY: Wow.

GIGI: [INAUDIBLE], baby, I am diverse.

JIMMY: You're diverse.

GIGI: But to me, it's like I'm colorblind. I'm also gender blind. I like people, and it's like I don't want to sleep with everybody. And I do research--

JIMMY: You don't?

GIGI: --people that are married.

JIMMY: I thought all you bisexual people just wanted to sleep with everybody.

GIGI: Oh, I've got better taste than that, baby.

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY: It's not one of those myths.

GIGI: No.

JIMMY: Oh, I see. I see.

GIGI: I mean, I like-- there are some people that turn me on and others that, oh, not [? and back ?].

JIMMY: OK. OK. Well, I-- thank you for the song. I always like new music, and here we are, new, old music. And--

GIGI: Well, this is a song that slipped by for a long time.

JIMMY: Sure did. Sure did. I mean, I've never heard of it.

GIGI: People didn't ever realize that it's about bisexuality. Or some did but they-- because it's-- it was put in very subtle ways. You really have to--

JIMMY: I think, yeah, in 1968, it had to have-- it had to have been written very subtly. There weren't-- there was only one group called The Kinks, and they did "Lola." And how they got away with it I'll never know. But--

GIGI: I'm glad they did.

JIMMY: Yes, I am, too.

[LAUGHTER]

So what else is going on with BiNet? Michelle.

MICHELLE: Hang on. What's going on with BiNet? Well, we've been doing a lot of new things recently. We've realized that sometimes it-- even though a lot of us feel that gender isn't important and-- I mean, not unimportant, but not an important issue in choosing a sexual partner that sometimes it's valuable to me as women and men separately. So we started to do that every month, once a month, or last week on him.

JIMMY: Was this for gender specific things you want to talk about or what? Or do you think that maybe some-- if you have a separate group, maybe there's going to be-- it's going to be easier for people to talk about things?

MICHELLE: Yeah, because I really feel that men and women do tend to have different experiences in our society, and that sometimes it's beneficial for us to meet together and try and discuss these experiences. And also, I know some women are more comfortable in a meeting of all women than a mixed meeting. So hopefully, that'll bring some more-- some women who might be apprehensive about a mix meeting. They might come to this meeting.

JIMMY: OK. Let me ask you maybe a question. Maybe I already know it, but what about transgendered people?

MICHELLE: We do have a transgendered person who comes to our meeting fairly regularly. What about them? What would you--

JIMMY: Which group?

MICHELLE: We respect people's rights, too, and whatever they identify as, whatever a person's identity or whatever group they choose to attend.

JIMMY: Oh. OK.

MICHELLE: It's their right and their privilege.

JIMMY: OK. So what else is going on?

MICHELLE: Well, on December 21, we're going to have-- we're going to talk about the-- some winter solstice rituals and possible because there's so much talk about Christmas and Christianity. And yeah, we do have a lot of Christian members. And it's definitely a religion that's represented in our group.

But there are some people who have alternative religions, like paganism, or some people are just atheists. And we're going to talk about some alternative ways to celebrate the solstice or Christmas or Kwanzaa that whole season.

JIMMY: Right. Right. Kwanzaa is a celebration that I had never heard of until I came to KPFT. And it's really a very rich and beautiful celebration that seems to have taken a lot of things from different cultures and different religions, which is a nice thing to do. If you want to start a tradition, traditions haven't always been there. Sometimes you have to start your own, and what a nice thing to take things you like the best from this one and that one and put it all together?

GIGI: I would like to say we did have-- just recently had a Thanksgiving dinner party. And at the end of the evening, we ended it with a pagan-like celebration. Since paganism doesn't really have an official Thanksgiving ritual, we made one up--

JIMMY: OK. Now, when you say paganism, what does this mean? Does this mean that you have a golden calf, and you worship it? Or I mean, I don't know. I'm serious. What is paganism there?

GIGI: To me, it's a celebration of Mother Earth and the laws of nature and the governing of life forces and the movement. It's recognizing that we have the air, the winds, the forces of nature, and that we have also spurred--

JIMMY: The ancient four elements?

GIGI: Yeah.

JIMMY: Air, wind-- no air.

GIGI: Air.

BOTH : Fire, earth, and water.

JIMMY: Oh, OK.

GIGI: And it's partly of what-- where we come from. Yeah. And we also take a look at not only worshiping Mother Earth but having some regard for Mother Earth, especially in this day and age when we have landfills and chemical dumps and radiation dumps and all this fouling of the Earth, it's-- and the ozone layer deteriorating.

Paganism is a way of respecting the Earth and taking a look at how the Earth-- what the Earth means to us. We get life from the Earth. And this is a celebration of that life.

JIMMY: Oh. So what's going to happen during the December solstice? And what happened on-- at Thanksgiving? What kind of celebration did you have?

GIGI: Well, the winter solstice, we haven't finished the planning on yet.

JIMMY: Oh, OK. Oh, I see. You're creating this as you go.

GIGI: Oh, yes.

JIMMY: Oh, good.

GIGI: But the Thanksgiving celebration, we went over and asked each participant to name certain things. We wanted them to name accomplishments of the previous year and to name what was important to them in a different way of giving things.

JIMMY: A way of showing thanks, yeah.

GIGI: A way of recognizing people that are important in our lives. And it's really an interesting ceremony. We also acknowledge the family of choice.

JIMMY: Oh, yes.

GIGI: And how beautiful that it is to have a family that-- extended family.

JIMMY: Oh, yeah. People that love you because you.

GIGI: Yeah. Not because of duty or--

JIMMY: Or because--

GIGI: --responsibility, who you were born from.

JIMMY: Yeah, because I have to, because they want to. Yeah, that's--

MICHELLE: Yeah, that's something I can really relate to because I came out of the closet about, oh, a year and a half ago. And--

JIMMY: Wait a minute. Out of the closet as what?

MICHELLE: As a bisexual.

JIMMY: Oh, OK.

MICHELLE: And my family just didn't respect it at all. And so now I'm like really estranged from them. And I try to talk to them, but they really want to relate to a person who's not really me. So I found that the queer community has been very accepting of me and that it's been nice to have this other family that I can go to, that I can be myself with, talk to, and enjoy.

GIGI: I think you touched on something that's really been important to me.

JIMMY: Yes.

GIGI: And that is when I'm in the gay community, I feel like I have to-- there's a part of me, even though I don't do it too much, that feels like, oh, I shouldn't say this, or I shouldn't do this because it's culturally out of the norm, even though it's normal for me as a bisexual, and same with the straight community, especially in the strike community. [? I'm ?] going to watch.

I can't just walk down the straight and go, oh, isn't that guy good-looking? Some of my straight friends. I mean, I can, but it's like they always look at me a little odd. But I mean it's so important to have some-- a group of people that you don't have to explain everything to. It's like, you don't have to explain why you think somebody is cute.

JIMMY: A friend of mine who is a member of BiNet expressed that this way to me. Is that he really likes hanging out at the bi group or even at your house garden because he can be him. If he wants to hug and kiss a female or hug and kiss another male, everything is acceptable and welcomed.

So it's just-- I can relate to it, too, as my coming out as a gay man and finding my first gay bar and my first gay friends. And it's like coming home here or people who think like me and feel like me, and it's a sense of belonging.

GIGI: It's that. And then there's also because the bisexual members are so diverse, it's--

JIMMY: They really are.

GIGI: --it's an acceptance, and sometimes it's an acceptance with the identification, and sometimes it's an acceptance with the curiosity--

JIMMY: Yeah, that's true.

GIGI: --to learned something new. And I find the bisexual experience is such an ex-- it's an exploration as well as an education. There's meetings I go to, and it's like I learn so much from some of the new members coming in. They'll bring something that I'd never even thought about before.

JIMMY: See?

GIGI: Yeah, and it's so cool.

JIMMY: I've noticed that with the membership I've been to some BiNet meetings, and I've noticed that there's a-- it-- the people there are a continuum from the type of bisexuality that they enjoy to the type of person they are from very left wing to very conservative. It's an amazing group.

GIGI: One man that identified as a minister that came to the group and was very much in the closet. And I think the thing that just really caught me was that here's a man that had been in the closet for all his life and can never even not only not act on it but not have anyone to talk to about it. We have such a secret.

JIMMY: That's right. That's right. It could be-- it'd be hard to trust anyone to tell.

GIGI: And he just opened up so totally in the meeting, and just-- everything just came pouring out of this guy. It's like all these years of hiding and all of a sudden, he could just be himself. It's just such an amazing experience. I did want to play a song that we played at the ritual we did, the pagan ritual the other night for Thanksgiving. And that was my way of really expressing the family of choice.

JIMMY: OK. Here we go. From Garrett and Michelle to you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[AUDIO OUT]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

GIGI: Hello.

JIMMY: Hmm. Yes, we are family, Sister Sledge. That brings back a lot of good memories.

GIGI: Doesn't it, though?

JIMMY: And what does it mean to you, Gigi?

GIGI: I think there's one line in that song that really meant a lot on many different levels for me, and that line is that, "we have faith in you and all that you do. You can't go wrong on them."

And that is like, I really identified with that because in the whole family process of bisexuality, it's like we're scoring from the gay community, from the straight community. And that's one of the essences of the bi group is that I feel that there's nothing I can do wrong in that group-- gets to that process we were talking about a little earlier, that all of a sudden we have somebody else that can identify with us.

JIMMY: Yeah.

GIGI: And it's like, once you get that going, you understand that they have faith in you. They believe in us. And there is no doing wrong.

JIMMY: There you go.

GIGI: And you have trust.

JIMMY: OK.

GIGI: And that, to me, it's the heart of that song [INAUDIBLE], yeah.

JIMMY: Before we go into the QMZ, the Queer Music Zone, we had a caller, caller, Michelle?

MICHELLE: Yes, we had somebody call in to-- call into the station wanting to know whether you had to be out of the closet to come to our group. I'd just like to say that even if you're totally in the closet, anything that's said in the group is completely confidential.

GIGI: Yes.

MICHELLE: And you don't even have to give us your name. You can use an alias. That's perfectly acceptable. And so we basically encourage anybody to come and hopefully not to be afraid to come just because you're not out of the closet.

JIMMY: And while we're doing the QMZ, if that caller wants to call back 526-5738. Gigi and Michelle will be here to talk to you. OK.