

## **How to Be an Activist Without Being a Victim: Personal Strategies for Activist Burnout, Blowout, and Breaking Up**

We need to get a model of leadership that leads and moves us forward as individuals. People's hurts get acted out on leaders - instead of dealing with their problems, they take it out on the leaders. When you are in a leadership role you must Stay on Task - Life, Love and Leadership.

Questions to Ask:

1. Where am I going?
2. Who will go with me?

You need to have #1 first. You must start with a vision! People (PFLAG members) don't want to discuss the vision - they need to CATCH the vision.

Put members on a round-table team first - don't ask them - just do it.

Activism can act like an addiction - when we use activism as something other than the vision we will get burned out. Some people use activism so they don't have to face their own issues. You have to do the Internal Stuff (work on yourself).

WRONG - the only way to lead is to sacrifice yourself. You must not sacrifice yourself - we need people who are not burned out. You want to do it because you're in the middle of it (parent of a GLBT child) - not because you feel sorry for those "poor people" - if you're doing it because you feel sorry for them, you'll get burned out.

Leadership is the best way to get your issues out.

Growth is painful - healing is messy - you learn you're not perfect. It's okay to make mistakes. Encourage each other as leaders not to try to be infallible.

Stay on topic - when being challenged - e.g. radio interview - stay on the task and always return to the vision. When being interviewed by someone "hostile" to your message, keep repeating yourself - "I know there are a lot of people who believe this, but I don't. OR "I don't agree with that at all."

We are dealing with a hurt community.

It's very important to NOT be a perfectionist - e.g. - if I don't get it right, the movement will fail. Perfectionism leads to procrastination which leads to paralysis.

You have to be able to say "I made a mistake" - you have to be able to apologize - you need models of how to clean up messes.

You need support - e.g. counseling, spouse or partner, friend - from someone not involved with the group.

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