

## ***Healing the Hearts of Parents – Pam and Judy***

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*Pam and Judy are both members of the Healing Hearts parents' group and friends of Reconciliation Ministries. Pam shares her heart from the perspective of a parent who has recently found out that their son or daughter is gay identified. Judy shares her heart as a mother that has walked this journey for many years – through the tears and through the joys. The heart of wisdom and love inside both of these ladies is priceless.*

### ***Pam - The Heart of a Parent New to This Journey***

Are you a parent who just found out that your son/daughter is a homosexual? Well, if your swollen tear-filled eyes can focus on reading this – then there is hope for your hurting heart. First of all, I want to be clear that I am no expert on this matter, just a parent who is in your same shoes. I do feel prompted to write this article to hopefully be of help for those of you who have just found out about your child.



Before my son broke the news to me, I had not given the subject of homosexuality much of a thought. It existed out there and that is where it stayed. Then on that fateful day in January 2006 my 16-year-old son told me he was gay. All of a sudden, life came to a screeching halt, homosexuality was no longer “out there”. It had entered our home and life would never be the same again. Let me say that again, “Life would never be the same again.” Did you read that with a negative tilt to it? It was all negative in the beginning. The tears, the pain, the sleepless nights, the days consumed by thoughts, thoughts, thoughts. It took all I had to make a grocery list, let alone put a box of Hamburger Helper together for dinner. Mind you, there is a natural and needed grieving process that must take place before we move on, and once we have picked ourselves up off the floor there is no guarantee that we won't end up in a heap all over again – and that is OK too. Walking through this is a process.



My first suggestion to a new parent is to do some research on the subject of homosexuality. The [Restored Hope Network](#) website is a great resource to start. One of the comforting facts that I learned early on is that homosexuality is NOT all about

sex. It is a relational issue. The homosexual has a craving for same sex affirmation and it is a legitimate need. You will also find first hand testimonies of men and women who have successfully walked away from homosexuality. Nothing is impossible with God.

Secondly, love your child with all your heart. They need you to love them unconditionally... Can you imagine what *they* have been going through? God really put my selfish grief into perspective when my son turned 17. He blew out the candles on his cake and looked at me and said, “Now I guess you know what I've been wishing for all these years.” Wham! Oh God, forgive me for all my complaining and moaning and questioning and playing the “what if” tapes over and over again in my head. I obviously can't fix this, my son can't fix this; Ding-Ding-Ding...it's time to turn to God! You know that little word called “trust”? Well, it's all throughout the Bible. And you know when I said, “Life would never be the same again.” Well, glory hallelujah, life can be



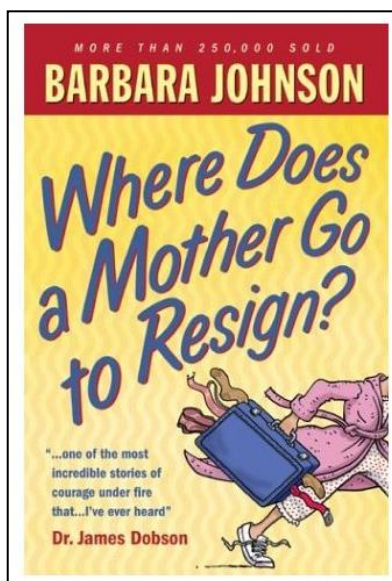
way more meaningful when you are in a deep relationship with your Creator. When life-altering events happen to us we can let them shape us or shatter us. Our first and most powerful line of defense is prayer. Naturally our first prayer is for God to change our circumstances, but if it endures then we have to change our attitude. Start by changing the things you say. Your mouth has power! Stop reaffirming your misery and choose to praise. Celebrate the greatness of our God even if the pain you are feeling is overwhelming, try to utter out something positive. Remember that everything that happens to us is not a surprise to God. It has been sifted through His hands first before it has ever hit us. Guess what? God has entrusted this circumstance to us. It is now our decision how we will handle it.

Thirdly, share your feelings with someone you can trust. There is a wonderful group of parents called “Healing Hearts” that meets in various locations in the area. Phone numbers are available for immediate concerns and an online e-mail group is open 24/7 to ask questions, get advice and offer insights. We are all on this journey together – some longer than others – but God has us all in the palm of His hand. There are no quick fix answers, but talking to other parents who are walking the same path is a great comfort. Lifting each other and our children in prayer is our most powerful ally. Consequently, I have learned to love the homosexual as Jesus does without condoning the sin. I have let God mold my heart, change my attitude and hopefully be used by Him for His glory.



### ***Judy's Story – Our Journey as Parents of Two Gay Children and the Start of Healing Hearts***

When our second child came out, my husband and I spent over a year in Christian counseling trying to find out what we could have done wrong to have two gay children out of four. We had gone to our Pastor and asked him if he knew of any support groups or other parents in our situation and he said, “Sorry, I don't.”



I had been told by a friend about Barbara Johnson's books so I picked up one and began reading it after several weeks of crying and just feeling so ashamed and alone. I made a frantic call to Barbara Johnson and much to my surprise, she answered the phone, I told her my situation and asked her if she knew of a support group in our area. She said, “No, but I talked with a lady at my last conference and she sounded like she might try and start one”. She said, “I'll give you her name and number and you can see if she has started one and if she hasn't, then why don't you think about it?” I called this gal named Fran who was still looking for a support group and I said, “If I were to have you over to our house would you come?” She jumped at the chance and within a couple of days she called me back and said we have two other couples that would like to come.

Sept 11, 1994 four hurting couples sat in our family room where I had boxes of Kleenex on every table thinking we would all be crying. Instead we realized that because we were no longer alone and had each other we were already feeling better. We decided we better plan our next meeting but first we would have to have a name for this group. We put several names on a paper but couldn't decide that night. One morning my husband got up and said, "What about Healing Hearts?" We ran it by the others and they loved it.

What we all agreed on at that first meeting was that we loved our children, but as Christians didn't know how to deal with them because we didn't accept their homosexual behavior. What I learned more than anything else during this journey is that it's not until we as parents have a healing heart, can we then talk and calmly move forward with our children. Standing firm with no flexibility just puts up walls and drives them further away. It wasn't until we decided after a long journey that this decision in their life is between them and God that we were able to "LET GO AND LET GOD ". Our group has never and will never bash our gay children. Instead we try and learn how to work with them to keep the family together.



About three years ago our gay daughter died suddenly and the thing that helped us the most to get through this terrible time other than our strong faith in God was that she knew that we loved her and she loved us. After her death, while going through her personal belongings, I found this taped inside her wallet, "Your Family Is One Of Nature's Masterpieces". Would I want her back today if she were still gay? You bet I would.



Our son who was in a committed relationship for over eight years left his partner about two years ago and has been living alone. When my husband died last year my son went into grief counseling with a chaplain. Since this counseling he has had some major breakthroughs and says he has never been happier with his life and is finding his own identity. I pray daily he will continue to heal and grow in his own identity. No matter what, I will still love him.

I told my son I had been asked to write this story and he said, "Mom can I suggest a few things because I know people that haven't talked to their parents in years? Some of their parents have died and they didn't even attend the funeral because of the years of rejection in their life".

Here are my son's suggestions for parents:

1. Don't blame yourself.
2. Don't put walls up. Keep the communication lines open so that you and your kids can be a family.
3. Always tell your kids you love them when you see them. You can love the sinner and hate the sin.
4. The more you force an issue the further they may run.

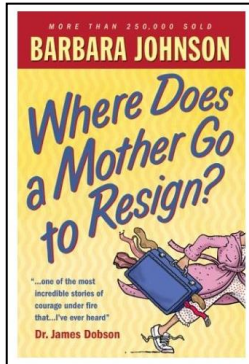
After losing both my daughter and my precious husband I have come to realize that life is a gift from God and sometimes too short - start taking those walls down now. **You may not have tomorrow!**

Finally we can't thank God enough for Tom Cole and Dan Hitz who have given us hope, valuable information and continued support.

*Recommended Reading – Renee Boyle*

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### ***Where Does A Mother Go To Resign? – Barbara Johnson***



This is the first book Healing Hearts recommends to hurting parents. In her own unique and very honest approach to all the wrong ways of handling devastating news, Barbara Johnson shares her story of discovering her son's homosexuality. You will laugh and cry with her as she takes you from being disowned by her son, and then reconciled after 11 long years. You will find release for your own pain, and you will learn to wrap yourself in Gods comfort.