



TELL

The Story of You

When we speak, we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak.

- Audre Lorde

Telling your story can be daunting. How do you fit decades of life into a few short minutes? When I get scared, I have a mantra that I repeat (sometimes out loud) to myself: Feel the fear and do it anyway. My roommate Christine has another one: Just take the first step.

You don't have to write your memoir today or script out a one-woman show. You don't even have to tell your story at all—though I invite you to. Let's just tell one story. Let's tell it in three minutes. Keep it simple.

What is one of your “conversion” moments?

Over my life, I've had a few “conversion” moments—moments when, like the wise men who came to visit the infant Jesus, I experienced something so profound that I was utterly changed and could not help but to return a different way. I share one such experience in “Homosexuality & The Bible: My First Time.” It is the time I first looked up homosexuality in the Bible and was confronted explicitly with what the religion of my childhood believed about people like me.

Perhaps this is a moment when you found God. Or lost God. Perhaps it's a moment when you realized that you're queer. Maybe it's a series of moments spread out of the course of a day... or a decade. Perhaps it was your first kiss, or your last one.

There's no right answer, just pick one.

One of my “conversion” experiences was when

**Now let’s break it down.
Set the stage for us. Where were you?**

Who was there with you?

**What did you feel?
Not what happened, but what did you feel? In your head but also in your body.**

What did you do? Tell it in the first person.

What did you say? What did others says?

Pro Tip: It’s OK if you can’t remember the exact words. Studies show that most of our memories aren’t historically accurate anyway. Capture the emotional truth of the moment. Paraphrase, condense, combine, expand if you need to.

Put it all together.

If you plan on telling your story in writing, jump in and start writing! I'd say "Don't tell us, show us" but you're writing so of course you'll have to "tell us" in some sense of the words. Imagine you're talking to a friend, rather than writing a book report. Describe the room; describe the scents, sights, or textures. Add in dialogue. Interrupt yourself.

If you plan on telling your story out loud, just start telling it. Practice by yourself or with another person—whichever feels more comfortable. Make mistakes, change the story each time you tell it. Pay attention to what works and what doesn't.

Keep it to under five paragraphs written or under three minutes spoken. If you want to, share it with others! Post it to a blog or website or YouTube and link it back here. Send a link to connect@queertheology.com — we'd love to hear it too!