

Now when I say male dancer, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

A prissy male, a boy who gets manicures and pedicures he's very coordinated.

Gay, super attractive.

Very nice body, muscular.

Pretty face, tone.

Well I guess on the type of dance, but if you are talking about ballet, something that's typically girly or froofy, gay obviously. Scrawny and ...

What is the most ridiculous experience you have in the past week.

My 21st birthday in LA.

What made it so crazy?

A massive amount alcohol consumed. The dancers that I kissed.

Where did you go for your 21st birthday?

Eleveitz

The gay club?

The gay club. Yes.

Do you think that going to gay clubs is funner than going to straight clubs?

Yes, only for the comfortability level that I have right now. I feel a little bit unwelcome in straight bars right now.

Why do you feel unwelcome in straight bars?

Because I feel that in comparison to not all but some gay men I feel like you can tell when you look at me. As oppose to some people.

Would you rather people not be able to tell by looking at you?

Yes.

Just again for the comfortability? So people don't like, single you out? Do you feel like you have to put up with a little bit more I don't want to say animosity but ...

I feel like I have to downplay who I am and I have to play a role when I'm at a straight club.

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When I told people that I was gay the first girl I told was also gay and she was a senior at my school. I told her through e-mail and I was very very nervous and she responded to me with why would I care I'm a fag don't worry about it, its normal like totally supporting me and my point of view with the whole thing. When I was growing up I didn't know what a lesbian was. I don't think that it was a choice because you cannot control who you fall in love with. That for every person its different and has to do with their experiences in life as a child and growing up in different environments its not a choice its not you're born that way. Its just who you become because of what your experiences have been. Its the same exact thing as becoming a dancer. When you're little if you are a little soccer player and then your best friend is a dancer

you want to be like your best friend so you go and take a dance class.

I like, just thinking about it, I like performing and being on stage and being able to express emotions without actually speaking. Making a connection with someone that you don't really know.

Do you find the rehearsal aspect of it, the hanging out and camaraderie with people to be as fulfilling as performances on stage?

Oh yeah I met some of my best friends through dance, obviously to find people who are just as weird as me.

Weird like how, weird like how?

Just, you know, just the sense of humor that I have and the way that I'm very obviously I'm a performer and I'm very expressive with my humor and I'm very expressive with my body so its nice to meet other people who you know can relate to you as far you know simple things like dance class or you know even taking it beyond that and applying it to life.

Being professional dancers do you guys feel that its easier to meet other guys? Do you think that gives you a leg up on the competition? Or uh, accessibility?

I think that it's a more impressive you know topic of conversation and definitely gives you more to connect with somebody about if they are connected with somebody in the arts of their. I've dated both a dancer and somebody who's completely not interested, and they are completely different types of. But I'm personally I would rather be with somebody who has an artistic mindset not necessarily a dancer because I think that that's not necessarily a good thing. In my case it wasn't it was more an impediment.

It always helps if they can relate. Or be interested in what you do. If you tell someone you're a dancer and they go eww and they're like

And if you , like anyone I've ever told I'm a dancer isn't upset they're like "wow, that's interesting" so in that sense its like a you know a leg up, but like as far as meeting people I don't want to date dancers.

I feel the same way. You know, after having dated a dancer. Right now in my life I just feel like that's not appropriate for me because, I don't know. I'd like to, I'd like to you know, not really know a lot about the other person is into or have them be into something completely different so its. I mean its nice to have something in common with someone but its also nice to learn new things and learn, you know about different hobbies (to share) to share things. Yeah, totally. I'd rather somebody be into that, you know somebody.

So you can experience more, more than the world that you already...

Do you think that when you tell people that you're a dancer that they automatically make those assumptions if they didn't already?

Most definitely, I think that just like, confirms it, you know?

Like someone was borderline, you tell them you're a dancer and they're like woah, oh.

And even, even I can admit myself theres very few straight dancers and when someone's like oh yeah I'm straight I'm like "yeah right" you know. Because I was that person, I was that boy who was 18 and was like "I'm straight" and was, you know. Come to find out, not so much. So, you know, there's a lot that goes into that but yeah, to answer your question I do.

Can I ask you a very serious question? If you had the choice to be gay or straight would you choose to remain on the path that you are or would you feel more comfortable being, like the majority?

I wouldn't definitely not change who I am. I wouldn't want to change myself to be straight. I have found that people perceive gay people in a more negative way than they do straight people, even though both lifestyles are really parallel. You know, compared to... But I wouldn't change myself. Would I choose to be from birth? Because personally I feel like I was born this way, I feel like I've grown up knowing in some way or another that I was and I just hid it. Lied to myself and said I wasn't. And I grew up in a really small town, too, so it wasn't accepted and I grew up in a Christian family and so it wasn't.

So everything was kind of pressing down upon you .

So it took my, took a huge leap of faith in one direction to say I know what my feelings are and I know what I feel and I don't feel all those things that everyone told me I was. Would I choose to be straight from birth? I definitely think there would be some advantages. I don't think that I would be as strong a person as I am. I think that being with straight men anyway, because a lot of things are handed to them. I feel like competition wise in the work force that a straight man would obviously be chosen in an interview. Just on the basis that the other person is homophobic. And that's just the way it is.

How do you deal with stuff like that?

It used to really bother me. And now I feel like I've found my path and I don't feel like I have to really interact with that kind of negativity or...

You basically surround yourself with good people.

Right, good people. And the people that are interested in my field and my career are all of the same mindset as I am. So its not the competitive feel, the degrading feel.

Do you think that's one of the attractions that keeps you in the professional field that you're in?

Yeah, definitely.

Jason, have you ever felt like you've had an advantage in situations out like in the just like your everyday life because you are gay.

I've never really felt and advantage I felt like I might have. Like growing up and coming out and being as lucky as I was to be so accepting of it I think has given me a certain kind of outlook on life. More of an optimistic than pessimistic outlook on life. So, I guess as far as like I feel like I'm able to handle situations a little bit easier than somebody who hasn't really had to go through. Not that I've had to go through this horrible experience, but somebody with the experience would be able to handle in that way I feel like I have an advantage over people. But professionally or you know, in any kind of like that kind of way I don't really feel like I have any kind of advantage.

What about the opposite, have you felt disadvantaged a lot?

Well, in the way that I feel you know like very smart or very savvy in a lot of ways, but because I've had those experiences. But I also in the opposite end of the spectrum I feel very stupid about a lot of things too. Not stupid but very ignorant about a lot of things. I didn't have a very hard time coming out, like I said and it was a great experience for me, so when I meet people that have had a hard time or you know have had a different experience than that I feel very like I can't really relate I feel very ignorant towards that. Also when I do encounter ignorance out in the you know the day to day life I feel very shocked and I feel like I shouldn't be shocked because there are ignorant people everywhere, you know. Its not just about being gay, its about being black, or being Mexican or being a different race you know being white, whatever you know. People hate in general. I feel that I was a little sheltered from that because I never had to handle it so when I do encounter ignorance it is very, its kind of appalling t me because I can't understand it you know. I feel like its just very confusing to me how people can be so ignorant. But, like I said, I have been really lucky and haven't really encountered it as heavily or intensely as some other people have but in a way I feel

like that's a disadvantage because I feel naïve almost.

Oh, so you're gay, so you want to come decorate my house, so you want to like, have you ever had like those types of experiences?

Yeah, actually, I mean, surprisingly my roommate um, as soon as I moved in expected me to remodel the place. So, you're gay, I'm expecting you to like, really pimp out this place and make it good, which I did, but. He expected me to, it was an expectation and its not like all gay men have that skill, or have an eye for it.

It's not an inherently gay skill...

Right, it's just stereotypical. Lots of gay men that you would be shocked to find out that they were gay, and other people are like really wow, I never knew, who don't possess those traits. I think that just comes from my artistic brain, you know, that I could be some jock and not be able to decorate this place but he would still expect me to. But that's the only one, you know, other than that.

I think people place judgments. Everyone places judgments. I place judgments, you know, you meet someone new and you automatically assume things about them, and I think that being gay is definitely not the most important part about me. I would never introduce myself and say "Hello, my name is Jason and I'm gay. You know. If it came up, you know whatever. But as far as judgments go, the way that its portrayed in the media and you know. A lot of people are very unknowledgeable and I don't want to say ignorant, but they can be ignorant in that they don't know. You don't realize that its still the same person, or its still its still a person, a human being, you know, its not, its not like being gay changed, you know what I mean...