

## **Celebrating "Queer"**

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I love the word "queer". For me, being queer means the freedom to love whomever you please and to be able to express that love freely, fighting to end homophobia and heterosexism, embracing diversity and frankly discussing sex and gender issues.

So I was thrilled The Spectator didn't water down my Community Editorial Board bio and change "queer" to "gay". The queer community is made up of numerous elements: Gays (men who love men), lesbians (women who love women), bisexuals (people who love both men and women) and transgenders (people born as one gender who transition, dress or identify as another).

But that's not all! Queer also encompasses intersexed (people born with sex chromosomes and/or genitalia from both sexes), two-spirited (aboriginal term for people who are queer), BDSM (Bondage, Discipline, Sadomasochism, Dominance and Submission), polyamoury (people in more than one loving/committed relationship), sex-positive advocates, AIDS/HIV activists and "straight but not narrow" allies.

I love the richness of the word "queer". It encompasses so much. But it is still considered a derogatory slur by many. My hope is that by reclaiming the word queer, it will no longer be a hateful word but a celebratory one.