



Dear Barry,

I am 74 and still in the closet with my parents. My mom and dad are in their 90's and I really want to tell them who I am before they are gone. I know at this late date it seems foolish. I feel sure they must know but they are both not well and I don't want to hurt them. I have met someone much younger and he keeps telling me I need to tell them for my own good and the good of our relationship. He says if I don't tell them it shows that I am ashamed of our relationship. I certainly know that being gay is not what it was in my day, but truth be told I am scared. I don't want to lose my partner or hurt my parents.

Please help!

Signed "Sam from the Cape"

Dear Sam,

It is never foolish to come out at any age. Do it because you really want to, not because your new younger boyfriend wants you to. If your relationship is based on coming out to sick parents who are in their 90's, you better watch your bank account as well. Telling your parents is not going to prove anything in this relationship.

If you are ashamed of being gay then that is another issue to be dealt with. But your boyfriend has his own issues of insecurity. A healthy relationship does not ask someone to prove their love by hurting others or themselves.

Love is about support and understanding. Your boyfriend needs to learn these skills. What will he ask you to do in the future to prove you love him? Your fear of losing him gives him the control in the relationship. Take back the control, by telling him, that if he needs to leave because you're not willing to "prove your love", then so long and good riddance.

Believe me, the pain of watching him walk out the door is far less than the misery of a relationship built on control and fear!