

Our stories: Pride 2020 - Emily Mushin

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What is an LGBTQ+ ally? The Stonewall definition of an ally is 'anyone who acts to bring about positive change for people who identify differently to them'.

It is true to say that I have always identified as an ally (long before I was aware of the definition). I attended a school in a conservative area of the UK, where I supported my friends in the LGBTQ+ community and would always challenge any wrong behaviour. Back then the definition of an 'ally' to me simply meant 'friend'.

At university my friendship group included many gay and bi friends, although the area was conservative and there wasn't a 'gay scene'. At this time, I did witness my friends being beaten up in clubs. I even met one of my friends through stopping a fight and getting his shoes back. This changed me forever and I knew I would forever support the LGBTQ+ community as much as I could. At university, I met my best friend who would become my Man of Honour at my wedding. Over the years, I have truly seen him grow and flourish and couldn't be prouder of what he has achieved and the man he has become.

It has been proven time and time again that employees perform better in the workplace when they feel like they can be themselves, which then leads to a stronger business performance. EY's global research in, 'The Corporate Leadership Council and The Centre for Talent Innovation' has demonstrated that organisations who invest in diversity and inclusion have obtained the following benefits regarding staff performance:

- Team collaboration 57% better;
- Team commitment 42% stronger;
- Improved market share 45% more likely; and
- Success in new markets 70% more likely.

Last year, I marched in the London Pride Parade together with LeGal BesT and a close friend. My friend cried seeing how many young supporters there were in the crowd (both from the LGBTQ+ community and allies), displaying such a positive sign of things to come for the next generation!

I realise that I don't have my own personal journey or experiences to share, however my story is just purely one of friendship, love and support.

Be proud. Be you. Happy Pride everyone.

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