Examples of Heterosexual Privileges

By Sam Killermann (This version is abridged to avoid sharing outdated legal information; original here: https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/01/29-examples-of-heterosexual-privilege/. Recent legal analysis about sexual orientation and gender identity is available here: https://www.lgbtmap.org/.)

If you're heterosexual, these are a bunch of unearned benefits you get that folks with other sexualities do not. Read them and consider them. It's not about shame. It's about understanding.

If you are straight (or in some cases, perceived to be), you can live without ever having to think twice, face, confront, engage, or cope with anything listed below. These privileges are granted to you, and many of them are things you've likely taken for granted. (Otherwise known as the "Why it's easier to be straight" list.)

- Receiving public recognition and support for an intimate relationship (e.g., congratulations for an engagement).
- Expressing affection in most social situations and not expecting hostile or violent reactions from others.
- Living with your partner openly.
- Expressing pain when a relationship ends from death or separation and receiving support from others.
- Receiving social acceptance from neighbors, colleagues, and good friends.
- Learning about romance and relationships from fictional movies and television shows.
- Having role models of your gender and sexual orientation.
- Having positive and accurate media images of people with whom you can identify.
- Expecting to be around others of your sexuality most of the time. Not worrying about being the only one of your sexuality in a class, on a job, or in a social situation.
- Talking openly about your relationship, vacations, and family planning.
- Easily finding a neighborhood in which residents will accept how you have constituted your household.

- Raising, adopting, and teaching children without people believing that you will molest them or force them into your sexuality.
- Working in a job dominated by people of your gender, but not feeling as though you are a representative/spokesperson for your sexuality.
- Assuming strangers won't ask, "How does sex work for you?" or other too-personal questions.
- Not having to hide or lie about women- or men-only social activities.
- Acting, dressing, or talking as you choose without it being a reflection on people of your sexuality.
- Freely teaching about lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals without being seen as having a bias because of your sexuality or forcing your "homosexual agenda" on students.
- Going wherever you wish knowing that you will not be harassed, beaten, or killed because of your sexuality.
- Not worrying about being mistreated by the police nor victimized by the criminal justice system because of your sexuality.
- Knowing that your basic civil rights will not be denied or outlawed because some people disapprove of your sexuality.
- Expecting that your children will be given texts in school that support your kind of family unit and will not be taught that your sexuality is a "perversion."
- Freely expressing your sexuality without fear of being prosecuted for breaking the law.
- Belonging to the religious denomination of your choice and knowing that your sexuality will not be denounced by its religious leaders.
- Knowing that you will not be fired from a job nor denied a promotion based on your sexuality.
- Not being asked by your child's school to only send one parent to back-to-school night so as not to upset the other parents by having two same-sex partners in the class together.
- Playing a professional sport and not worrying that your athletic ability will be overshadowed by your sexuality and the fact that you share a locker room with the same gender.
- Not having to worry about being evicted if your landlord finds out about your sexuality.
- Not having to "come out" (explain to people that you're straight, as they will most likely assume it).

- Knowing that people aren't going to mutter about your sexuality behind your back.
- Knowing that being open with your sexuality isn't going to change how people view you.
- Being able to live anywhere in the world and find people like yourself, unlike gay people, who are limited geographically. (Even if the people in more rural areas aren't homophobic, living in a low-density population means social isolation, lack of a dating pool, etc., for queer folks. Even among urban areas, there are only a few cities in the world, relatively speaking, where gay people can live openly and without too much fear.)
- Not having people think your sexuality is a mental health problem.
- Not having to think about whether your kid's friend's parents will flip out when they pick their kid up from a play date and are greeted by you and your partner.
- Not having to worry that people won't let their children play with your children because of your sexuality.
- Not having to worry about where you can move, alone or with your spouse, and have equal job opportunities abroad.
- Being able to move abroad with your children without sudden changes of your legal status and the possibility of even losing your children.