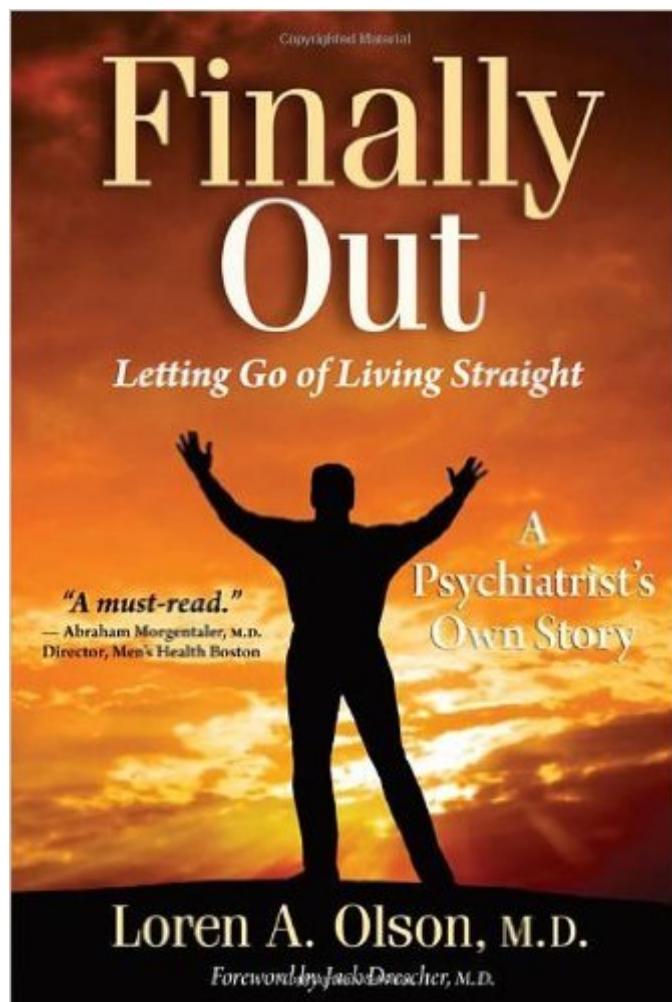


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# Finally Out: Letting Go Of Living Straight, A Psychiatrist's Own Story



## Synopsis

Dr. Loren A. Olson has frequently been asked two questions: How could you not know that you were gay until the age of forty? Wasn't your marriage just a sham to protect yourself at your wife's expense? In *Finally Out*, Dr. Olson vigorously answers both questions by telling the inspiring story of his evolving sexuality, into which he intelligently weaves psychological concepts and gay history. This book is a powerful exploration of human sexuality, particularly the sexuality of mature men who, like Dr. Olson, lived a large part of their lives as straight men - sometimes long after becoming aware of their same-sex attractions. *Publishers Weekly*: Olson, a psychiatrist and father of two who came out at 40, begins his first effort by answering a question: "How could you not know you were gay until you were 40?" He relates years of feeling like an outsider, and not quite masculine enough, and explores the cultural and personal barriers that kept him from self-discovery. Less a handbook for coming out late in life than one man's story of doing so, Olson's always-compassionate voice asserts the importance of being true to oneself. The complexity of applying the label "gay" is a central thread, and the focus is on older men, though not exclusively--this could be of use to men of any age struggling with sexual identity. Bolstered by his expertise as a psychiatrist, Olson capably explores issues of self-image, identity, self-esteem, and depression, as well as history, culture, morality, law, and religion in relation to homosexuality. Olson's own story is compelling, but as a writer he better handles the less-personal material. But ultimately Olson's book is engaging, and helpful in illuminating the coming-out processes. *National Alliance on Mental Illness* *Going beyond* simply retelling the coming out story of a middle-aged, married man, Olson's thoughtful and provoking memoir details the difficulty in not only gaining acceptance in society, but learning to accept one's self. *Foreword Reviews*: For those who have struggled with coming out, Olson's expert combination of private struggle and professional reflection will prove invaluable. His down-to-earth, conversational tone makes the work even more accessible. Olson's journey is a captivating tale rife with abundant introspection and analysis. *Library Journal*: Part memoir, part psychology book for the lay reader, *Finally Out* is informative and compassionate. Olson succeeds in offering himself as a sort of role model and in providing vital information to older gay men. *Inspirational*. *LibraryThing Early Reviewers Program*: This book will be valuable for any person who finds homosexual acts to be sinful. *Finally Out* should be on reading lists for all queer/gender/sexuality studies. Dr. Bernard J. Brommel, co-author of *Family Communication: Cohesion and Change*: *Finally Out* represents a carefully reasoned book about all human sexuality. Lay readers, both gay and straight, will relate his ideas to their own lives, and professionals in social work, religion, psychology, and sociology will find this book invaluable. Amity P. Buxton, author of

The Other Side of the Closet: The Coming-Out Crisis for Straight Spouses and Families and founder of the Straight Spouse Network: Finally Out is a much needed book that fills out our picture of how gay men come to terms with the apparent dichotomy between their rational assumptions about the two sexes and their own set of sexual attractions that do not fit that norm. An insightful read.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Dr. Olson has given us a template for the times in his book "Finally Out". Given the large numbers of men who have come to the realization that they are indeed gay...no matter what their age when they discover it...this book can be utilized as a reinforcement of the feelings that come flooding out of nowhere when the discovery of their true self is revealed. Using his background of experience and expertise, Dr. Olson melds these two areas, along with factual and accurate studies done on the subject of homosexuality into a well rounded arrangement. Since this book is part personal and part professional, the two aspects jell into a cohesive combination that can help the men who the book is aimed at, while teaching others who are puzzled and perplexed as to why such a lifestyle change can happen so "late" in life. The real key here is not that it can happen at age 40 (and be considered late), but that it can also happen in successive decades on into ages 80 and over. Another critical component of this book that shows the human side of life is how Dr. Olson bares his soul multiple times when he describes some of the real life situations he faced while discerning his real place in the world as a gay man. The fact that his ex-wife and daughters (and grandkids) are all solidly in the corner of he and his partner Doug, is an indication that despite his turmoil inside that he may not have always been doing the right thing, it has somehow worked out just fine. Relationships are hard

work, and no matter if it is with your partner, or your extended family...not to mention former social friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc., the rewards are out there to be had if you continue to forge on and follow your heart and soul. This is what Dr. Olson has done.

Psychiatrist and author Loren Olson writes an honest and unique story of what it is like to come out as gay at the age of 40. One of the strengths of this book is that not only is it empowering for people who have suffered similar identity and lack of self esteem issues related to coming to grips with their sexuality when it deviates from mainstream views about family and sexuality to see a psychiatrist tell a story that matches theirs, it is also very useful to have a medical and mental health expert offer a cogent and readable summary of the scientific literature and facts related to what he calls the MLM or men loving men. He uses this term to highlight the fact that many men who have sex with men, even exclusively so, do not identify themselves as "gay". They often live in conventional marriages with women and have families. They may say they "love" their wives but are not sexually attracted to them. MLM men see being openly gay as some sort of political statement that they don't agree with, i.e. they want to be seen as mainstream or conventional. But as Dr. Olson points out this can lead to a kind of schizophrenic existence, where certain "limits" are put on their sexual encounters, like no kissing, which serve to depersonalize the experience and detach it from loving connections with other human beings. The world of men living in this shadow world was something I hadn't thought of before, since as a straight heterosexual I didn't know much about it, and it is interesting as a student of behavior and mental health. But something I find equally interesting was Dr. Olson's experience of losing his father at the age of 9 and some of the conundrums he experienced as a result of that, like not knowing how to start a lawn mower.

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