

to finding a mom and child and blog that I could relate to. Enough waiting and searching; I'd be that blogger I'd been looking for.

So my Christmas gift to myself and 2011 New Year's Resolution was to journal about the adventures in raising a slightly effeminate, possibly gay, totally fabulous son. As a new year launched, so did RaisingMyRainbow.com.

I started RaisingMyRainbow.com for myself. To record my feelings and experiences, like any blogger, but not to rant or stand on a cyber-soapbox or be sensationalistic.

I started it for any other person in a situation similar to mine, raising a gender non-conforming son. There have to be more of us out there, right? Right?! We need support, to hear other people's stories and know that we aren't alone.

I also started it in hopes that I would draw the LGBTQ audience, because they are the ones who have the answers to a lot of my questions about raising a child like mine. Questions like: When did you know you were different? When did you know you were gay? Did you do this? Did you do that? How did your parents treat you? How do you wish they would have treated you? How did your peers treat you? What can I do for my son that you wish someone would have done for you?

My audience isn't everybody. I understand that. I've heard from people who aren't comfortable with my blog. But for every one email of opposition, I get about a dozen of support.

When I started writing, I knew I had an effeminate son. I didn't know that I had a gender creative, gender non-conforming, gender variant son. I wasn't hip to the lingo. A few weeks in I learned that.

Although I knew the difference between gender and sexuality, I had it reinforced by readers time and time again. I still do. I don't mind. Have I considered that C.J. is transgender? Sure, I've considered it a lot, actually. It's hard to see a four-year-old boy in a cheerleader skirt waving pom-poms and not consider it. Go ahead, try. For now, he identifies as a boy.

Early on, people started sending me research, links to articles and videos that they thought I'd find interesting and they started sending mail to C.J. A dialogue started that spans 45 countries. As it happened, I realized something that I had never thought about before. All over the world, there are families raising gender non-conforming kids. The next generation of the LGBTQ community is being raised, right now. And you know us parents, the ones raising that next generation of the LGBTQ community? We have no idea what we're doing. As is the case with most parents. Some have assembled around my blog and some have emailed me. The joys and struggles that come with raising a possibly LGBTQ child are much the same, whether you live in United States, Ireland or Dubai. I didn't realize that until I was about six months into blogging.

At about the six month mark, too, the hate mail nearly stopped. I had prepared myself for it to only increase with time. But the opposite happened. I think there are three reasons for this. The first is that I think people got the sense that I wasn't going away. They were right. The second is that I think people saw, in the comments at the end of each post, that I have a huge amount of support. They were right. And, lastly, I think that if people read even one blog post they see that I love my child and I'm just trying to parent in the best, healthiest, most loving way possible. They were right again. From time to time people will ask why I don't approve negative comments to be published on my blog. I would, if there were any. Hate speech, profanities, bullying and foul comments wouldn't see the light of day. But constructive criticism, opposing views, and uneducated opinions would be there for all to



CJ on the swings during a playdate with his best girl friend

see, if there were any.

Read my blog and you'll see that I'm extremely mindful when I write. Mindful to share my adventures in raising C.J., not C.J.'s private stories, struggles, and challenges. Mindful not to make C.J. the face or poster child of a cause. Mindful to remember that I'm not here to prove a point. I'm here to share a small portion of my life, for one year, then to reassess. I don't write things in the heat of the moment or out of defensiveness; I'm learning to be more patient than I am generally programmed to be.