# The story of an 'outing' on National Coming Out Day



Peter Benn shares a thought-provoking and personal reflection in this month's Grey Matters column, coinciding with National Coming Out Day, celebrated on October 11th. The day is dedicated to recognising the courage it takes for individuals to come out as members of the LGBTQ+ community and to highlight the freedom and support that some may experience, while acknowledging that this is not a universal experience.

Benn's coming-out story is marked by a significant personal revelation that was not initially of his making. His journey began with an unexpected disclosure by his father-in-law during a conversation with Benn's parents, who resided in a small, country town. "Do you know the real reason why Peter is leaving his wife?" the conversation reportedly began, leading to a pivotal moment when Benn’s father reached out to him for confirmation. It was then, without hesitation, Benn confirmed, "Yes, it's true," seizing this unexpected moment as an opportunity to embrace his identity and declare his truth.

Despite this abrupt and unsolicited coming-out scenario, Benn relays that his parents handled the news with unwavering love, albeit with unspoken quietness about his sexuality. His father, perhaps in an attempt to preserve social conformity and avoid potential embarrassment, did not broach the subject again. However, Benn's relationship with his mother evolved over time, and her support became apparent when she expressed her wish for his happiness and safety—notably in a moment of light-heartedness when referring to him in drag for an event.

Reflecting on whether he wished he could have initiated the coming-out process on his own terms, Benn acknowledges the fortuitous timing of the events surrounding his marital breakup. This period became an unintentional stepping stone toward embracing his authentic self, allowing him to live his life as openly and sincerely as possible.

National Coming Out Day stands as both a celebration and a point of reflection. While it recognises the strides made in societies where coming out is possible and even celebrated, it also serves as a recognition of those whose circumstances do not permit such freedom. The event reinforces the notion that whether or not an individual chooses to come out is a deeply personal decision, intricately tied to their unique journey. The privilege of living openly is seen as desirable, yet not obligatory, with an emphasis on authenticity and self-truth.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.starobserver.com.au/news/grey-matters-national-coming-out-day-and-what-its-like-being-outed/233327> - Corroborates Peter Benn's column on National Coming Out Day and his personal coming-out story.
* <https://www.starobserver.com.au/opinion/grey-matters-write-it-down/204353> - Provides context on the 'Grey Matters' column series, although not directly related to this specific article.
* <https://consommationverte.ca/readnews/139214/> - Reiterates the content of Peter Benn's column on National Coming Out Day and his coming-out experience.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - Mentioned as the source of the article, though the specific article is not directly linked.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Coming_Out_Day> - Provides general information on National Coming Out Day, which is the context of Peter Benn's column.
* <https://www.hrc.org/resources/national-coming-out-day> - Details the significance and history of National Coming Out Day, supporting the celebration aspect mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.pflag.org/blog/national-coming-out-day> - Offers insights into the personal and societal aspects of coming out, aligning with Benn's reflections.
* <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/national-coming-out-day/> - Discusses the importance of National Coming Out Day and the complexities of the coming-out process.
* <https://www.glaad.org/publications/national-coming-out-day> - Provides resources and stories related to coming out, supporting the personal and societal reflections in the article.
* <https://www.out.com/news/2022/10/11/national-coming-out-day-2022> - Offers additional perspectives on National Coming Out Day and the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals.