

## Celebrities coming out

### Ellen DeGeneres on Coming Out: 'Who's everybody else to tell me that that's wrong?'

She dances daily, makes audiences laugh nationwide, and celebrates individuals for who they are on her talk show. So it's hard to imagine a time when Ellen DeGeneres was burdened by<sup>1</sup> shame.

Before she publicly came out in 1997, "I just was carrying around this sadness inside and this shame of the fact that I was gay when it was like, why am I ashamed of who I am? And who's everybody else to tell me that that's wrong? It's my life," DeGeneres candidly tells MAKERS.

At the time, "to say the words 'I'm gay' came from such a place of shame. It had been just self-hatred and all these feelings that society feeds you on a daily basis to tell you that you're wrong," recalls DeGeneres. "So I just decided I was going to come out<sup>2</sup>, and it was the best thing that ever happened to me."

On Apr. 30 "Susan, I'm gay," said Ellen Morgan on the ABC sitcom "Ellen" in 1997. And in just three words, history was made - Ellen became the first lead character to come out of the closet on national television. The comedian also shared her story on the cover of Time Magazine and on the "The Oprah Winfrey Show." [...]

However, it is an act that DeGeneres also recognizes as a moment of great vulnerability from her own experience.

"I think I'd said it once to my mother when I came out. You don't walk around saying I'm gay to one another, because, if you're in a gay bar you pretty much— like, nobody just goes over and says 'I'm gay.'" she recalls. But, behind the scenes of the hilarious history-making moment, DeGeneres cried at every rehearsal<sup>3</sup>.

"Every time I would lean forward to the microphone and say I'm gay...I'd sob." Luckily, when the time came to film DeGeneres' groundbreaking and hilarious coming out moment, she had cried it all out— "Thank god," says DeGeneres.

At the time, her unprecedented coming out moment was extremely contentious— while 42 million people gathered to tune in and celebrate this moment in history, the show was later axed<sup>4</sup> by ABC due to the mounting backlash<sup>5</sup>.

After regaining her momentum with the debut of her

own daytime talk show in 2003, DeGeneres has done more to promote gay rights. She even announced her engagement to her current wife Portia de Rossi on the Emmy Award-winning show the day after California overturned its ban on gay marriage in 2008.

◆ Paulina Cachero, makers.com, 2018



◆ Ellen DeGeneres on the Oprah Winfrey Show, 1997

1. filled with 2. to announce one's homosexuality or bisexuality 3. practice 4. cancelled 5. negative reactions

### A. Methods :

#### Before reading :

Look at the title, the sources, the names, the dates and introduce document ( type, authors, date, topic...)

1<sup>st</sup> reading : use highlighters to identify people – places – dates - events

Who are the different persons mentioned ? What do we learn about them ?

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> reading :

What is the main topic ?

Are there different points of views ?

Are there any major events ? What's the chronology ?

What is the goal of the document ?

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> reading :

Underline the key ideas

Give a title to each paragraph to show you have understood how the document is organized.

What is the tone of the document ?

### B. Strategies :

#### 1. Understanding unknown words :

##### 1.1 : using the elements composing them :

How would you translate these words in French : self-hatred I14 - groundbreaking I37 – unprecedented I40 – daytime I46

##### 1.2 using the context :

How would you translate these words in French : sob I36 – contentious I41 – overturned I56

#### 2. Using link words to understand how the document is organized

##### 2.1 Read the document again and circle the link words

### C. Now use the methods and your findings to prepare an account of the document, in English.

