

**Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me /
GMFA, CHAPS.**

Contributors

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Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me ¹⁹⁹⁹

You remember that old chestnut? Do you remember just how much names did hurt? Not all gay men grew up with frequent homophobic shit, but many of us did. Names are just words. It's the meaning behind them that does the damage. They're used as weapons to injure, make you feel bad about yourself and let you know exactly what a flawed person you are.

When we become adults, we start to reject that abuse, we realise that homophobic values are nothing more than prejudice and unfounded hate. But the residue of growing up with abuse can often stay with us - at a level that we may not be conscious of.

Often we put up with second best from others - and ourselves. But just because we've done this in the past, it doesn't mean that we have to continue to do so. As adults we are in control of our actions and behaviour.

It often takes a hell of a lot of courage to come out as gay, and we should be proud of ourselves - we've started to reject the influence of homophobic values. But now its time to finish the job. The next time you're about to put yourself at risk from HIV, remember that you are worth much more than that fuck - however good. Dump the baggage of homophobia. Love yourself enough to want the best for yourself, respect yourself enough to make the effort to get it.

All GMFA's campaigns and actions are designed, planned and executed by volunteers. To volunteer for GMFA, or to make a donation write, phone or e-mail. Unit 42, The Eurolink

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Gay Men Fighting AIDS

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