

BEING AN LGBTI AMBASSADOR & BRIDGE BUILDER

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Website and blog: **www.abbi.org.au**

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How did I get into this?

- Former life
- 2004 [A Life of Unlearning](#)
- 2005 Freedom2b
- 2006 National Day of Action
rally and experience afterwards

- **The Enemy**

- **Judgment & stereotyping**

- **Accusations**

- **Feed on misinformation**

- **Demonising & sensationalising**

- **Conspiracy theories**

- **One-way communication**

- **Conflict & attack**



**The
LGBT
World**

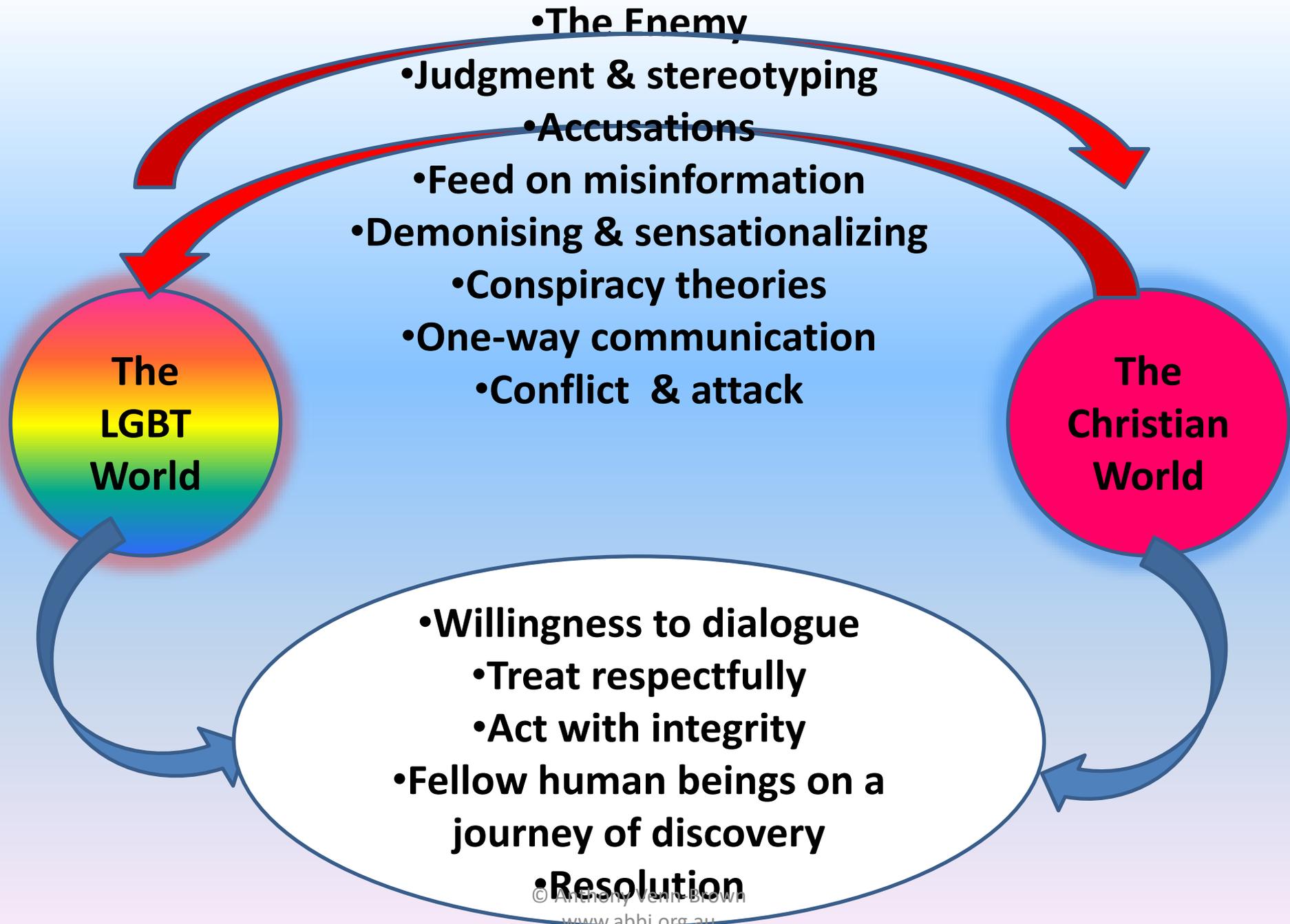
**The
Christian
World**

**Homophobe
Bigot
Haters**

**Abomination
Sodomite
Pervert**



A New Space



Gay and lesbian people go through several stages and a process in order to resolve the perceived conflict between their faith and sexuality.

Straight individuals , churches and denominations also move through similar stages and process to come to a place of greater understanding about sexuality and gender identity.

The Diversity Acceptance Continuum

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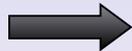
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People have an attitudinal shift and move along the continuum as they become more informed and aware

This learning can happen formally through education, self-learning or experientially

It's highly unlikely that this change will occur unless there is some personal connection with LGBTI people

CONTEXTS FOR BRIDGE-BUILDING

- **Social media (Facebook, Twitter? etc)**
- **Online forums**
- **Emails**
- **Face to face**
- **Blogs**
- **Comments sections on blogs and articles**
- **Churches and Christian groups**
- **Conferences**

7 BRIDGE-BUILDERS ESSENTIALS

- **Calling?**
- **Good working knowledge of passages**
- **Good working knowledge of science**
- **Heightened self-awareness**
- **Good written and verbal communication skills**
- **Integrity**
- **Able to maintain confidentiality**
- **Patience of Job**

SOME SUCCESS STORIES

- 2007 [Rev Dr Rowland Croucher](#)
- 2008 [Assemblies of God](#)
- 2008 [100 Revs Ps Mike Hercock](#)
- 2009 [Rob Buckingham and Bayside Church](#)
- 2009 [Ps Nicole Conner](#)
- 2010 [Tabor College lecture](#)
- 2011 [Hillsong and 'Ex-gay' Ministries](#)
- 2013 [Exodus closure](#)
- 2016 [YMCA Global](#) – creating safe spaces

Some things I've learnt

- 1. Some people have made their minds up already and have only one agenda**
- 2. Winning is not the goal, communicating effectively is**
- 3. Always speak respectfully**
- 4. Angry responses get angry responses**
- 5. People often speak from ignorance, preconceived ideas and misconceptions**
- 6. Watch out for your own and others triggers**

Some things I've learnt

- 7. Sometimes it's helpful to NOT respond immediately**
- 8. Name calling never enhances rational discussion**
- 9. Asking probing, insightful questions can be more helpful than telling people what the truth is**
- 10. Show your humanity by acknowledging when a comment hurt you**

Some things I've learnt

11. Humour, used appropriately and wisely, can help reduce the angst in a heated discussion.
12. Talking people down and not winding them up is a skill
13. Remind yourself of your own journey

You'll find more detail about this in my article [15 things I've learnt discussing homosexuality and Christianity](#)

“The enemy is not individuals, churches, 'ex-gay' organisations or political parties; the enemy is ignorance.”

Change is created by focusing our energies on overcoming the latter instead of attacking the former.”

Further information: www.abbi.org.au

Contact: info@abbi.org.au

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This concept and presentation created by Anthony Venn-Brown, founder/CEO of ABBI and author of [‘*A Life of Unlearning*’](#)