Don Lemon: Young, Gifted, Black, Gay and Handsome!

May 18, 2011 By Angel Mason

Recently, you may have heard the news that the esteemed CNN news anchor, Don Lemon has “come out” and announced to the world that he is a gay or a same-gender-loving man. I congratulate him for taking this very courageous and personally liberating step. However, I am also extremely dismayed that he is being criticized for why it took him so long to do so.

Some say that Lemon came out to create buzz about the release of his new book, Transparent, and to increase book sales when his memoir is released. Others are criticizing him because he did not make a bolder public announcement. As a same-gender-loving man, I know that it is not uncommon for gay people to delay announcing to friends and family that they are gay, and perhaps with good reason! Even though America purports itself to be a democratic nation that embraces all cultures, religions, and ethnicities, regrettably, still many Americans unfairly bash President Obama, spewing out racial slurs like venomous snakes characteristic of the 60’s and adamantly oppose equal rights for same-gender-loving people--specifically in regards to marriage equality. One need look no further then the fierce battlegrounds of New York City, where a heated contentious war is being waged against same-gender-loving people to prevent them from marrying the person of their own choosing.

In the past three years there has been an unprecedented number of youth and young adults committing suicide because of gay bullying. Movies and music have been saturated for decades with gay slurs, homophobic lyrics and stereotypical story lines that insult, demean and discriminate against gay people, much like blacks were portrayed in black and white films in the past.Noted Essayist, Cleo Manago, founder and CEO of the African, American Advocacy, Support-Services & Survival Institute (AmASSI), could be named among the long list of critics, who in my opinion engaged in the recent bashing and criticizing of Lemon for not being more vocal on issues that relate to the African-American community and insinuating that the only reason Lemon was selected by CNN is because he is a fair-skinned brother whom as Manago puts it, “may possibly be in his position at CNN because he is a light-skinned, homosexual Black man who is likely seen, by Whites, as less threatening than another type of Black man.”

While I do agree with Manago, that CNN has skirted around and even blatantly ignored pertinent issues that pertain to the African American community and same-gender-loving people, I do not agree with his assessment of Mr. Lemon’s journalistic skills, qualifications and/or CNN’s reasons for hiring Don. Don is a man of integrity. He is personable and caring, in addition to being an excellent journalist who is more than qualified to be an anchor for CNN.

Moreover, I applaud CNN for supporting Don in his decision to make his sexual preference public and I believe that they were very wise to do so! Rachel Maddow, as you know is perhaps one of the most

respected and courageous same-gender-loving female journalists on television today! People all over the world regularly view her telecast and appreciate her thorough, unbiased, incisive cutting-edge style of reporting. I sincerely believe that because Don has elected to be more transparent regarding his personal life, that he is poised and primed to become one of CNN's most dynamic and most watched anchors, who will boldly seize new opportunities to address many of the issues that Mr. Manago claims are intentionally omitted by CNN.

I'd like to remind everyone involved in any type of judgmental action, that Don Lemon's private life is exactly that, "Private!" No one but God is privy to the elements, factors and reasons that motivated him to bravely announce to the world that he refuses to go on hiding this aspect of his "Private" life any longer. Furthermore, it is clear to me that he is self-assured and comfortable enough in his own skin to publicly say to the world, this is who I am! You may judge me on my professional merits and my public persona, but you may not judge me on who I choose to love!

Whether Mr. Lemon realizes it or not, his public admission will impact his life positively, if viewed from an objective perspective. It has become clear to me that this revelation has no doubt helped him to identify who his true friends and supporters are. His true friends will be the people who will continue to love him and embrace him for the wonderful man that he is. The people who will now shun him and negatively criticize him and his sexuality will be the people (that in my opinion) he can easily do without. Furthermore, it is to his advantage to identify these people now and remove them from his life so that the quality of his life will be more fulfilling, happier, more productive, and stress free.

Thousands who heard his announcement unanimously agree that Don Lemon is setting a terrific positive example for our LGBT youth. It is undeniable that it was his phenomenal talent, drive, and journalistic ability which landed him the job as news anchor and these are the wonderful attributes that the world's LGBT youth will recognize and want to emulate.

In conclusion, I wish to state that when questioned by the media as to why he chose this moment and time to come out, Don responded by stating that he did it to save lives because so many LGBT youth and young adults are committing suicide.

As a global HIV Advocate, I know that Don's coming out is extremely significant, not only because his actions are a deterrent in regards to keeping same-gender-loving people from committing suicide, but also because it has been proven by clinicians and HIV caregivers the world over that people who embrace their sexual orientation are less likely to become infected with the AIDS virus!

Today, millions of Americans remain unaware of the fact that HIV rates continue to climb at terrifying rates in the African American and Latino communities. More than 1 million people in the United States are now HIV positive, and 1 out of 5 people are unaware that they are even infected with the disease. According to The Center of Disease Control, AIDS is the third leading cause of death for both black men and black women ages 35 to 44.

For teens and young adults, the statistics are even more daunting. Ciara Thomas, a writer for www.HealthyPlace.com (America's Mental Health Channel), stated that gay teens account for one-third of teens who commit suicide. With so many countless teens and African Americans falling prey to premature deaths and disease, this perhaps, is the most significant reason as to why Don's coming out is so very timely and will without a doubt be the life-saving remedy for both heterosexual and same-gender-loving people as well.

I think News Analyst and author; Herndon Davis said it best when he expressed his congratulations to Don in his article entitled “Will Black America Embrace CNN’s Don Lemon’s Coming Out??”

Said Davis, “Whether you are straight or gay, you should embrace Don Lemon’s coming out not because of a politically correct induced statement but because he is someone taking a risk, placing himself, his career and even his physical safety on the line in order to help so many others. And that within itself is well worth my support. Congratulations to Don Lemon!!”

I would just like to add my Amen! to that thought-provoking statement!

by Angel Mason, Global Author
WWW.TERRYANGELMASON.COM

FOLLOW THIS BEST SELLING AUTHOR ON TWITTER LINK: http://twitter.com/ALOVEBALLAD

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/blog/don-lemon-young-gifted-black-g