

Letter of Recommendation for Eric Francis

Dec. 27, 2019

Dear People,

My name is Loraine Hutchins, Ph.D. I teach multi-disciplinary sexuality studies at my local community college, Montgomery College, in Montgomery County, Maryland. I co-edited *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*, a ground-breaking anthology on bisexual lives that has been in print for 30 years. I co-founded BiNet USA: the national bisexual network and have published other books and chapters on bisexuality and human sexuality. I served for 25 years as Grants Administrator at the Winslow Foundation, a small family philanthropy that supports environmental research and grassroots environmental advocacy groups and have a basic knowledge of environmental issues locally and globally.

I first met Eric Francis years ago when we were both sexuality educators studying with Betty Dodson. I experienced his phenomenal astrology lectures and analysis at a national conference I attended at Harbin Hot Springs, California and later learned about his background in investigative and environmental journalism. I stayed in contact with him over the last thirty-plus years via other national gatherings and via the internet.

One of my favorite memories of him is having shared a communal massage and meditation-awareness seminar at a national convening of healers and bodyworkers. This was a mixed gender activity where the usual attractions and intrigues among women and men were a somewhat tense part of the social mix.

Having grown up in the feminist sex-positive community and become a leader in that community, through my own research and practice, I was wary about the men in the room, whether they could handle strong feminist energy from a number of the women, who were not necessarily heterosexually-focused at all.

To my great relief and delight I found that Eric took a leadership role in modeling respectful attitudes and good boundaries around consent (way before we used the word so easily in vernacular) with the other women and men there. Moreover he was responsive to communicating with the other men, making sure they felt included in the learning experiences about massage technique, human sexuality responses, etc.

I live in the Washington, DC area and am not that aware of what happened with the recent incidents in New York where he got into disagreements with

women in the #metoo movement, but I have read his accounts of this and others' accounts as they came to me.

I have also been a participant in arguments, on-line, with him, about men and feminism and men's reactions to feminist accusations of sexual harassment and sexual disrespect, as expressed or perceived-to-be-expressed by men who are in the sexuality education fields.

I have strongly disagreed with Eric on some issues and also found him open to dialoguing about his views, and mine. He and I may start off disagreeing about something and I have found, if I continue to ask questions, and listen, that I often learn a lot about our differences of opinion and become more insightful once I take that step. It is fine with me that we disagree if there is an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual respect and that is primarily what I feel with him in his participation in and work within this field of human sexuality educating, which we share.

He often brings up and explains perspectives that male-identified educators have that I would not be open to, at first, or do not automatically agree with, and sometimes find troubling or bewildering. That doesn't mean I'm not open to learning in dialogue with him, which I have consistently found to be the case. This letter therefore is in defense and support of his efforts and asking people who may have pre-judged him to give him other chances.

I find his willingness to put himself out there as a sexuality educator on masturbation and self-love, as well as to ask the difficult or challenging questions about sexual communication and control to be very brave and risky and worthy of support.

Thanks for listening.

s/ via email

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