COPYRIGHT NOTICE:
Ian Ayres and Jennifer Gerarda Brown: Straightforward

is published by Princeton University Press and copyrighted, © 2005, by Princeton University Press. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher, except for reading and browsing via the World Wide Web. Users are not permitted to mount this file on any network servers.

For COURSE PACK and other PERMISSIONS, refer to entry on previous page. For more information, send e-mail to permissions@pupress.princeton.edu

1

Heterosexual Allies and the Gay Rights Movement

A first-year law student named Nancy went to her Contracts class with Professor Jay expecting nothing out of the ordinary. But somewhere between sessions on “promise” and “breach,” between “expectation” and “reliance,” she one day noticed something quite different about Professor Jay. Jay, who combined left-leaning politics and scholarship with a distinctly conservative fashion sense, usually sported short hair, penny loafers, and oxford cloth shirts. But today, Nancy noticed, Professor Jay was also wearing bright green nail polish.

Unable to contain her curiosity, Nancy asked her professor about his new fashion statement. Jay explained that the day before, his young son Ted had come home in tears. On the playground that day, a group of children had encircled him with taunts about his “long messy hair.” Noticing Ted’s nail polish, they cruelly chided him for being “abnormal.” Later, a teacher found Ted hiding under a piece of play equipment, crying because one of his harassers had finally slapped him.

Professor Jay had taken the measures most parents would when faced with a beloved child in this state. He’d reassured Ted in every way possible. He called Ted’s teacher as well as the principal of the school and sought assurances that the other children involved would be made to understand that their behavior was unacceptable. But that evening, Professor Jay went one step further: he took his young son in hand and went to the bathroom where the nail polish was stored. Did Professor Jay remove his son’s nail polish at that point? No. He asked if Ted would like to paint his father’s nails as well. How better, Jay asked, to convey to his son his solidarity and support?

Nancy is bisexual. As she recounted this story to us, her eyes filled with tears. "I know it was just a little, silly thing . . . but I was blown away when my professor told me what he did for his kid," she said. "I mean, when he put on that nail polish he not only told his kid that it's OK to wear what he wants and look the way he chooses; he effectively put himself in something like the same position his son was in. . . . It was as if to say, 'If they go after you, they'll have to go after me too.' All I could think was, what if every gay, lesbian, or bisexual person got this kind of support from the people who loved them? Can you imagine how different our lives would be?"

Let's take this last question seriously. Suppose that every gay man or lesbian in America can call upon at least two heterosexual friends, family members, or coworkers to actively support their struggle for equality. This is not an outlandish possibility—even if the gay community can count just on parents, this would almost produce the level of support we're hypothesizing. Although some parents of gay children do not support their children's struggle, and some parents are no longer alive, we believe that almost every gay or lesbian person in America has at least two supportive nongay friends or family.

If this amount of support currently exists, right now twenty million heterosexual allies stand ready to support gay rights in the United States. Too often, however, those allies have remained silent, leaving gay, lesbian, and bisexual people to struggle alone in their quest for equality. This lack of support stems in part from a sense a helplessness. We sense a palpable anxiety among these allies. "What can I do?" they ask.

This book provides an answer. It gives pragmatic advice to heterosexual allies on what they can do to support their friends. It also suggests how supporters of gay rights (regardless of their sexual orientation) can work to restructure institutions and legal rules to activate heterosexual support. The book thus serves as a guide to action not only in our personal lives and economic activities but in the political sphere as well—suggesting new public policies that are designed to waken this sleeping giant of potential support.

One way to advance gay rights is to recognize instances in which heterosexual people can take action. That is, allies must identify times when they can express their decision to support gay rights; they must recognize the cusps when choice becomes available. Such occasions involve concrete decisions: to speak or remain silent, to act or remain passive. Therefore, the book begins by making visible the existing places in which heterosexual people can act to support gay rights; because these opportunities remain hidden, some people are currently making choices without realizing it.

We also use this book to create new occasions for those who believe in gay rights—especially heterosexuals—to act on their convictions. Finally, the book proposes public policies to create new opportunities for expressing support, suggesting specific legislation that would enable such expression.

Heterosexual allies possess tremendous political and economic clout—should we choose to wield it. Without leveraging this resource, full equality for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people may be difficult or impossible to achieve. So this is a book about when and how to level that influence, in individual choices large and small that in aggregate determine the level of equality in our communities and in our nation. It's also about recognizing when and how to express our preferences.

HETEROSEXUAL PEOPLE who want to engage in the struggle for gay rights must come to terms with an important endowment they bear, an endowment that is both a blessing and a curse. We are referring to what is sometimes called *heterosexual privilege*, "the range of perks and incentives with which heterosexually identified persons are rewarded for conforming to the dominant sexuality."[1] As Jamie Washington and Nancy Evans point out, coming to terms with privilege can be "the most painful part of the process of becoming an ally."[2] Privilege creates certain dilemmas, as Bruce Ryder further explains. "[White heterosexual males] must speak and write with great care, acknowledging our privilege and using it and the authority that comes with it in a manner which is attentive to the limitations of our particular knowledge and experiences."[3] Heterosexual people are endowed with a privilege based upon the social implications of their sexual orientation, and this privilege, if not managed effectively, can create obstacles to their constructive engagement in the struggle for gay rights.

The first obstacle that heterosexual privilege can create is informational. One of its key characteristics is to render itself invisible to the privileged.[4] Those who benefit tend to see their status as a norm. Many progressive, well-intentioned heterosexual people are so used to the advantage their sexual orientation conveys that they are blind to it. Some well-meaning heterosexual people don't know how to support gay rights because they do not see how a *lack* of privilege disadvantages bisexuals, lesbians, and gay men.

For this reason, many heterosexual people are not able to perceive the gay rights issues within their everyday existence. Because they are not personally affected, they do not recognize that a particular policy, rule, or social norm is hurting gay people. For example, many heterosexual people are unaware of the real costs that the prohibition on same-sex marriage im-

poses on gay people. Heterosexual employees in a business that lacks health benefits for domestic partners, for example, may be unaware that their gay and lesbian coworkers bear the expense of health benefits for their partners. When a child's high school restricts the types of student groups that can meet on school property to prevent a fledgling gay-straight alliance from forming, many parents do not recognize that the free expression of gay and lesbian people has also been restricted.

Such ignorance isn't surprising. These problems don't affect heterosexuals directly and exist on the perimeter of the public sphere. One of the goals of this book is to highlight issues of gay rights that can play out in heterosexual people's "own backyard" and to suggest ways that they can promote equality by making their voices heard.

Although many heterosexual people are oblivious to privilege and its effect on gay and nongay lives, at times heterosexual people may become acutely aware of it. They may not name privilege as such, but they know that it divides them from the lesbians and gay men they would like to support. Many heterosexual people with progressive attitudes and good intentions feel presumptuous even trying to express support for gay rights. Because they are granted powers and privileges denied to gay people, heterosexuals may feel hesitant—embarrassed, disconcerted, inappropriate—discussing the structures and policies that give them these privileges. Perhaps their experience is similar to that of feminist men or white civil rights workers in the 1960s. Certainly heterosexual people must avoid the temptation to speak *for* gay people (this *would* be presumptuous). The challenge is to find a distinctly heterosexual voice that can constructively speak for gay rights.

This book proposes three distinct general strategies for managing privilege: exercising it, disabling it, and renouncing it. We suggest when it is most appropriate for heterosexual allies to use each strategy—when, for instance, to speak expressly as heterosexuals and when to speak in ways that make their sexual orientation ambiguous. We discuss when heterosexuals should work within institutions to economically support gay-friendly policies, and when they should walk away from institutions, boycott bigoted vendors, and renounce the benefits of privilege.

Exercising Privilege

The first strategy calls on allies to exercise privilege when it will upset conclusions people in power may draw about the views of heterosexual

people. Here's a fairly common example. Suppose that a school system is deciding how to cover homosexuality in the standard sexual education curriculum. Conservative organizations may object to any presentation of homosexuality as falling within a "normal" orientation. The school may also hear from gay rights advocacates who support a curriculum that normalizes homosexuality. In the middle are hundreds, even thousands, of parents in the school system who have their own views. Heterosexual parents who support frank, open, and fair discussions about homosexuality in sex ed curricula have a special opportunity, indeed responsibility, to make their views heard. They can work within the system, identifying themselves as heterosexual parents of kids who are going to take sex ed classes. Because heterosexual people are more likely than gay men or lesbians to have children, they gain access and privilege within school systems that gay people lack. It becomes the responsibility of heterosexual people, then, to exploit that privilege to make progress on gay rights within the school system.

Heterosexual allies can also exercise their privilege by supporting gay rights economically. This book will not only make existing choices more visible, it will also create new opportunities to express such support—a chance for allies to "vote with their wallets." *Straightforward* will launch a web site (www.vacationpledge.org) where people can sign a "Vacation Pledge for Equal Marriage Rights." People who sign promise to vacation in the first state that legalizes same-sex marriage within three years of legalization. Many states rely on tourism to support their local economies and generate tax revenue. Through the web site, gay and nongay supporters can make clear that significant rewards await states that innovate on gay rights.

As this book goes to press, the ruling of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court requiring equal marriage rights for same-sex couples in Massachusetts has just gone into effect. The court's action has created pressure for state and federal constitutional amendments restricting marriage to different-sex couples; state civil union may be a compromise position in this battle. At this point, the Vacation Pledge is designed to reward the first state that votes democratically to grant equal marriage rights to same-sex couples—either by legislative action or by the vote of the electorate rejecting constitutional amendments designed to undo judicial action. In the future, a pledge could reward the first state that recognizes a same-sex marriage solemnized in another state. A pledge could reward the first state west of the Mississippi to allow gay marriage. The point is that the pledge can reflect the evolving recognition of same-sex marriage, holding out rewards to

the states that propel legal change. More broadly, the pledge demonstrates the economic power of heterosexual allies who act on their privilege.

Another new space for the expression of heterosexual support is the Fair Employment Mark. Launched contemporaneously with the publication of this book, the Fair Employment Mark can be used by licensees to certify that products bearing the mark have been manufactured in compliance with a specified standard of gay friendliness in employment. To start, the mark could be licensed only to employers who voluntarily comply with all that has been proposed in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), the as-yet unsuccessful congressional bill that would protect gay and lesbian workers from discrimination in the workplace.[5] If ENDA eventually passes, the Fair Employment Mark could reflect a yet higher standard of gay friendliness, usable only by employers who offer benefit plans open to employees' same-sex partners, and so on. While the Vacation Pledge calls upon people to express their support in a public, coordinated way, the Fair Employment Mark facilitates individual consumers' private, decentralized choices. These complementary strategies (each embracing a broad range of support levels, and both deploying heterosexual privilege) could maximize the number of people who participate in the gay rights movement. Even as this book encourages gay rights organizations to more effectively deploy heterosexual people in their struggle, it also implements two instruments for doing so.

Small states and small producers have disproportionate incentives to compete for gay-friendly dollars. Even when there are more gay-unfriendly than gay-friendly consumers, some small firms or small states still have strong economic incentives to commit to nondiscrimination policies. In other words, the benefits of "buycotts"—for example, gay-friendly consumers' preference for products bearing the Fair Employment Mark—are likely to outweigh the threat of boycotts by consumers who oppose equality.

Disabling Privilege

The second general strategy (and for some heterosexual people, the most difficult) is to disable one's own heterosexual privilege by making one's sexual orientation ambiguous. You cannot claim the perquisites of heterosexual status if others can't discern your sexual orientation. Making sexual orientation ambiguous requires a tolerance—perhaps even enjoyment—of uncertainty. While exercising privilege involves acting explicitly *as a hetero-*

sexual person, heterosexual allies who "ambiguate" serve the cause of gay rights by *forgoing* opportunities to identify as heterosexual. In some contexts, we'll make progress only when heterosexual people are willing to be "mistaken" for bisexuals or as gay.[6] Heterosexual people's willingness to present themselves ambiguously is, in some ways, a test of their support for gay rights and a prerequisite to making a real difference in some areas of public policy.

This strategy requires heterosexual allies not to be so quick to clarify their sexual orientation, to resist the urge to say, "Well, I'm heterosexual, but I support gay rights." From time to time, heterosexual people should merely state their support for gay rights—and let the audience draw whatever conclusions it likes about their sexual orientation. Creating ambiguity can be as simple as a choice of words. A woman can refer to her husband not as her husband but as her "spouse" ("My spouse and I are academics"). She might leave open the question of whether her spouse is a man or a woman.[7] Perhaps use of the word *spouse* rather than *partner* already identifies her as legally married and therefore involved with a member of the "opposite" sex. But as increasing numbers of same-sex couples participate in religious and civil wedding ceremonies and thereafter refer to each other as "spouses," the mere avoidance of gender specificity can create ambiguity. All of this is to suggest that when a woman uses the word *husband*, she marks herself as part of a heterosexual couple, ridding her description of even the hint of ambiguity.

As with the strategies of exploiting and renouncing heterosexual privilege, the book will approach ambiguation from the collective as well as from the individual perspective. For example, we propose a form of ambiguation that would promote the integration of sexual minorities in the military, disabling heterosexual privilege in a venue that has enshrined discrimination.

Straightforward proposes that the Department of Defense, with congressional support, could create "inclusive commands" to which recruits could be assigned when they indicate a willingness to serve with fellow service members who are openly gay or lesbian. This idea relies upon the notion that the best way to integrate sexual minorities into the U.S. military may be through a voluntary system. By asking all recruits whether they are willing to serve with openly gay or lesbian service members, the inclusive command would force recruits to express and perhaps confront their own prejudices. Even more importantly, the question permits willing recruits (gay and nongay) to express their support for an integrated military. The inclusive command thus creates a special role for heterosexuals in the process of

integration, shifting the focus away from gay service members (who, as even opponents of integration concede, are not the problem) to the heterosexual soldiers working beside and responding to them.

For the inclusive command to work, progressive heterosexual service members must be willing to serve with openly gay and lesbian soldiers in a unit characterized by its inclusive nature—even if a consequence is that some people assume that members of the inclusive command are gay or lesbian. Like strategies that harness privilege, disabling privilege through ambiguation relies upon individual choices, but it also stems from a structure put in place to coordinate individual decision-making (the inclusive command itself, as well as the statutory or regulatory reform necessary to implement it).

Despite its usefulness in some contexts, ambiguation isn't appropriate in every situation. Ambiguity can cause problems that have rarely arisen in other civil rights struggles. When white people supported civil rights for African-Americans in the 1960s, they were clearly members of the majority who supported the rights of the minority. The same may be said about gender, age, and (sometimes, not always) disability. In these contexts, people outside the minority can speak without implying that they personally gain from the changes they advocate—their altruism is clear. A white man will not be mistaken for black, nor will an activist standing at a microphone be mistaken for a quadriplegic. But sexual orientation doesn't work this way. Those who speak for gay rights are often assumed to be gay or lesbian themselves. Perhaps this is a sad commentary on a lack of empathy in our culture; perhaps this is just a reflection of the hatred that has been directed toward gay people for so long (the assumption being that only someone personally harmed by discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation would object to it). Either way, the problem of ambiguity creates tensions for heterosexuals who support gay rights.

Ambiguation thus creates a dilemma for heterosexual allies. If a heterosexual supporter who is assumed to be gay too quickly clarifies her sexual orientation, her flight from a lesbian identity stigmatizes gay people.[8] If being gay isn't so bad, an observer might ask, why are you so quick to make clear that you are *not*? On the other hand, if heterosexual supporters cultivate ambiguity, they engage in a kind of reverse passing, pretending to status and experience they lack. Moreover, if *everyone* were to "pass" as gay or lesbian, an odd sort of recloseting could occur, hiding the "truly" gay or lesbian among a sea of pretenders.[9] This strategy was powerful—if only in legend—when gentiles in Denmark wore the yellow Star of David on their

lapels during the occupation of Denmark by the Nazis during World War II.[10] At that time, some gentiles felt that the only thing they could do to help Jews was literally to hide them.[11] Most gay men and lesbians no longer need literally to hide. Some must remain closeted to keep their jobs—especially members of the armed forces—and others come out only selectively to maintain social or family relationships. Generally, however, the shared goal is to have the option to be open about sexual orientation. The world for which most gay rights activists strive is one in which people can be open about their lives and loves without fear of violence or condemnation. The task of heterosexual supporters therefore becomes not to hide gay people but to work to create a world that is safe—one in which gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight people can live with love, respect, and integrity.

We propose guidelines for nongay allies that may help them determine when ambiguation is a useful strategy. We encourage allies to ask themselves several questions.

- *Would creating or tolerating ambiguity trivialize sexual orientation?* Nongay allies should take care lest they suggest that homosexuality is a game or a costume to be taken off and on at whim.
- *Will my audience think less of me if they perceive me to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual?* Ambiguation is useful in upsetting the assumptions of antigay audiences, and in aligning the nongay ally with a group the antigay audience seeks to harm.
- *Can I entertain internal ambiguity about my sexual orientation?* The closet and the deception it requires have done a lot of damage. Nongay allies should be careful not to compound the lies by reversing them; ambiguation makes more sense if a nongay ally can acknowledge and appreciate the fluidity of sexual orientation.
- *Should sexual orientation be irrelevant to the discussion or transaction at issue?* Ambiguation can be a good strategy for diluting the prejudicial effect of homosexuality in contexts where sexual orientation ought to be irrelevant. In some cases, however, a person can speak with greater authority if he or she has the lived experience of a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person. To ambiguate in this latter group of cases—where the sexual orientation of the speaker is relevant—would effect an unseemly misappropriation of gay identity; nongay allies should make clear their privileged location in such situations.

How might we apply this theory to ourselves as we write this book? In some ways, we are reluctant to "come out" about our sexual orientations be-

cause we believe that sexual orientation is far too complex and fluid to be cabined into the narrow categories that most political discourse permits. On the other hand, it is important to be clear about the perspectives and experiences from which we address the subject of this book. We are privileged: husband and wife, a happily married couple and the parents of two wonderful children. To the wider world, we would be identified as heterosexual.[12] That might lead some readers to give what we say greater credence, and others to dismiss it out of hand. To the extent anyone gives us greater deference based on our heterosexuality, we are inclined to ambiguate and tell you we are bisexual. Certainly we both acknowledge and appreciate the indeterminacy of sexual orientation and can honestly say we perceive some bisexuality in our own identities and desires. But that is not our lived experience—we've not had the relationships and experiences that subject so many LGBT people to discrimination. And because those experiences and histories are relevant—our position as privileged people limits our perspectives in ways that are important here—we think it best to disambiguate. At least right now and for this purpose, we speak to you as heterosexuals.

Renouncing Privilege

The third strategy is to renounce heterosexual privilege, explicitly separating oneself from an institution that ordinarily grants or enhances heterosexual privilege. Rather than calling on allies to work for change from within a system, this strategy encourages us to abandon some systems altogether. For example, if a private association makes clear that it reserves the right to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, then a member (perhaps after making some attempts to change the policy) can support gay rights by quitting the organization. The key is to renounce this membership in the institution and the privilege that accompanies it in a public way so that the action can have the desired symbolic or political effects.

The arc of the book, from strategies of exercising, to disabling, and then to renouncing privilege, roughly tracks the distinction between strategies of "voice" and "exit."[13] This arc also corresponds to a shift from opportunities many heterosexual supporters would welcome, to choices that may seem difficult and unwanted. It is almost certainly easier for allies to exercise privilege than to ambiguate or renounce privilege.

Many of the ideas in the first part of this book will seem pretty sensible. Although it takes strength, speaking up in our communities will appeal to

most readers—the challenge is to identify issues and resources in ways that enable such courageous speech. Some of our proposed strategies will even seem pleasant: taking vacations and purchasing products are things most people like to do, and many already exercise their social conscience in making such choices (animal testing in cosmetics being but one example). *Straightforward* suggests ways to make these choices in the service of human equality.

In contrast, ambiguation—particularly the proposal for an inclusive command—may make some people uncomfortable. They might prefer not to answer the inclusive command question ("Are you comfortable serving with openly gay and lesbian soldiers?"), or they may dislike any suggestion that they should closet their own heterosexual orientation ("This is my partner").

And finally, renouncing privilege—the third general strategy—may require divisive and therefore potentially counterproductive choices. Any discussion to exit perforce cuts off voice—when we disassociate, we remove ourselves from difficult but often constructive conversations. Asking heterosexuals to renounce marriage or to boycott the Boy Scouts may exacerbate the backlash against gays and alienate potential supporters. Some of these choices to renounce privilege will be rejected by readers. We believe, however, that it is good to be honest with oneself and others about the way we benefit from, and thus participate in, discrimination. And if such reflection leads us to change our lives or our laws, so much the better.

Thus, we will provide guidance on when renouncing strategies may be productive. And as before, we will suggest not only guides to personal action but also types of public policy that might facilitate the choice of renunciation. In particular, we propose a specific statute to respond to the discrimination practiced by private organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America.

In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision permitting the Boy Scouts to discriminate against James Dale on the basis of his sexual orientation, this book proposes legislation, the Informed Association Statute, that gay rights organizations can pursue at the state level.[14] This legislation would require any organization wishing to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation to obtain the written consent of its members, certifying that the discriminatory policy of the organization has been disclosed to, and ratified by, each member. Members, then, would have to acknowledge and thus implicitly support discriminatory policies. This strategy would harness heterosexual support as people declined to join such organizations or rallied to repeal their discriminatory policies. The Informed Association Statute would force

heterosexual people to decide whether they are willing to signal their support for discrimination against gays. For many, this would be uncomfortable, as it would force them to confront the discriminatory nature of their associations and to choose whether to affiliate with such discrimination.

While it is useful from time to time to think about the "forest" of choice, this book is more interested in the "trees"—the specific choices that confront real people in their real lives.

The rest of the book traces these ideas in greater detail. Part I develops various strategies for selectively exercising heterosexual privilege. Chapter 2 aims to make more visible the existing spaces in which heterosexual people can support gay rights. It suggests that heterosexual allies can work for gay rights by exploiting the privilege and access they possess in their own parishes, PTAs, parenting, and workplaces.

Chapter 3 offers a new strategy for heterosexual allies troubled by marriage laws that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. The Vacation Pledge for Equal Marriage Rights, launched with the publication of this book, uses a web site to collect promises from individuals that they will reward progressive legislation on marriage rights by spending tourism dollars in states that extend marriage rights to same-sex couples. This strategy harnesses the economic and political clout of gay and nongay consumers collectively.

Chapter 4 presents the Fair Employment Mark, a strategy that would allow supporters of gay rights to exercise their economic clout individually, as they choose to purchase products bearing a mark that signals gay-friendly employment policies on the part of the manufacturer. As it does with the Vacation Pledge, with the Fair Employment Mark *Straightforward* is working to create and publicize a space in which heterosexual people can express their support for gay rights.

Part II turns from strategies in which supporters act *as heterosexuals* (exercising privilege) to strategies of ambiguation. Chapter 5 provides a theory of ambiguation, including examples of ambiguation in other contexts, and then provides guidance about when it is appropriate.

Chapter 6 presents a legislative strategy that rests, in part, upon heterosexuals' tolerance for ambiguation. The inclusive command as a means to integrate sexual minorities into the U.S. military relies to some extent upon ambiguation because it calls into question the assumption that discipline and good order can be maintained only if we pretend that all service members are heterosexual. By permitting gay and lesbian members to be open about their sexual orientation, the inclusive command simultaneously ambiguates and clarifies.

Finally, Part III turns to the strategy of renouncing privilege through boycotts of discriminatory organizations. Chapter 7 provides a general theory of when renouncing privilege (including boycotts and public shaming) is likely to be productive and when counterproductive. The chapter considers a public policy that would apply the renunciation strategy to discriminatory organizations. Using the Supreme Court's decision in *Dale v. Boy Scouts of America* as a springboard, this chapter proposes the Informed Association Statute, legislation that would facilitate more informed and therefore more principled decision-making on the part of heterosexual people contemplating membership in discriminatory organizations. Some people put to the hard choice might not be willing to sign a private acknowledgment that they are associating with an organization that retains the right to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

Chapter 8 explores the possibility that "renouncing marriage" could be a powerful way for heterosexual people to express their support for gay rights.

The book concludes in chapter 9 with a discussion of the relationship between heterosexual allies and the major organizations advocating gay rights. This chapter answers the question: How much are heterosexual people morally obliged to sacrifice for the cause of gay rights? Various approaches are possible. Supporters could give up some pro rata share of the societal benefits they receive by virtue of their heterosexuality, or simply follow instructions from a credible gay rights organization. Who should select the optimal strategy, and if heterosexual supporters retain the authority to decide, how should they exercise that decision-making power? This final chapter will make clear that the theory of advocacy propounded by this book is not one that requires self-abnegation by heterosexuals. Instead the book will present a pragmatic approach to help heterosexual allies determine how much of their resources they are morally obligated to devote to the cause.

Straightforward is deeply concerned with affecting change. The goal is to provide a concrete guide to action. We hope to mobilize heterosexual allies with a mixture of welcome (and perhaps not-so-welcome) opportunities. The collective impact of our individual choices can help dismantle a status quo in which gay and lesbian people are subject to overt discrimination in marriage, in the military, and in employment. We aim for a world that is more joyful and more just.