

GAYGENDA

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**TYRA
BLIZZARD**





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TYRA BLIZZARD

TANNER JAMES | ELLIE BROWN

You've likely seen them on your For You Page engaging in gender discourse, or maybe diving deeply into the Lesbian Master Doc. Tyra Blizzard is a creator who encourages us all to question everything we grew up believing about gender, sexuality, and identity. Tyra has generously documented their entire queer journey over the past few years, helping thousands of LGBTQ+ youth navigate their own experiences. We've had the privilege to follow Tyra's personal journey online through the highs, lows, and confusion that defines the queer experience.

Identifying as a Black genderqueer lesbian woman places Tyra at several critical intersections. A lot of their content on TikTok revolves around education, calling attention to social justice issues, and offering advice to their followers. While they are genderqueer, Tyra's day-to-day reality is still influenced by the fact that society perceives them as a Black woman. Consequently, Tyra is always consciously negotiating between who they feel they are on the inside and how society perceives them from the outside.

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“I finally felt comfortable in my identity when I realized nothing matters. Not my label, not how other people perceive me. When I realized that, like, 70% of how I was presenting was determined by other people, that upset me.”

Today, Tyra feels comfortable with their identity, but the journey to get here was not linear. Tyra's advice? “Continue to question everything, even if it's not related to gender or sexuality—when it comes to race, or anything from a social perspective—and then work backwards to figure out what you actually identify with and what's actually true for you.”

Creating content with unapologetic takes is great when your videos reach their intended audience, but it can spell out trouble and hate comments if they reach the wrong side of TikTok. Tyra notes that once they came out online as a lesbian (thank you, Master Doc!), the negative comments turned into blatant homophobia, something they hadn't really experienced before. Since starting to post regularly on social media during lockdown, Tyra has learned to cope with the challenges of an online presence—for them, this includes silencing notifications and ignoring negative comments.



GENDER CRISIS GENDER CRISIS GENDER CRISIS

Once you begin to unpack society's made-up rules about gender and sexuality, things start to unravel... What is gender? We honestly couldn't tell you. If you're just as confused as us, you're luckily not alone—Tyra has an entire playlist of 45+ videos on their TikTok profile aptly named "**Gender Crisis.**"

If you were to sum up one piece of advice for anybody struggling with their gender identity right now, what would you say?

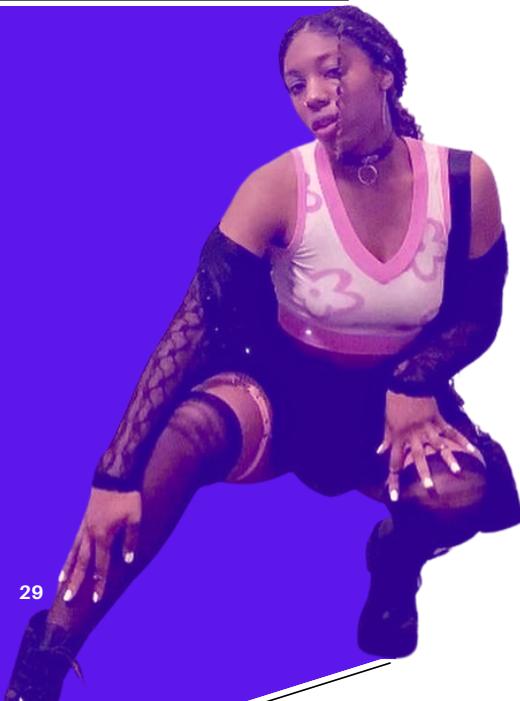
Tyra: "I would say to question everything that you've been taught about yourself from the moment you were born, and kind of pretend that it was all a made-up lie. Try to work backwards and think through all the ways that you've been socialized."

What is the most rewarding part of documenting your (often personally confusing) queer journey?

Tyra: "Firstly, it's receiving feedback from other people who are in a similar position and seeing that it's helped them as well. That's definitely the most rewarding part, because I know that sharing my journey is actually helping. Also, receiving the validation that I'm not alone in this, and that I'm not the only one who's confused. We're all in this together because none of it makes sense—we're all confused together!"

Let's talk about the Lesbian Master Doc! What was the impact of the Master Doc for you personally?

Tyra: "The Master Doc really sent me over the edge. Initially, I came out as Bi-curious, then Pan, and then the Master Doc just really made me focus on my attraction to men. That's really what got me thinking about all of this stuff on a deeper level in terms of socialization, because I didn't know it ran that deep. It really made me think about the way I was socialized to be attracted to men. Then I had to determine whether or not that attraction was real for me, or if I was just told that that's the journey I'm supposed to be on."





What has been difficult about sharing so much of your journey online? Are there any silver linings to your struggles?

Tyra: "I think the first time I identified as a lesbian online was the first time I received homophobic comments. That was a shock to me because, obviously, I had never seen that before. It didn't hurt so much, I was more surprised, and I kind of laughed. I was like, 'Oh, wow, I completely forgot about the downsides of all of this.' I'm just so used to online hate in general, and this was just adding another thing to the list. It was a rude awakening, realizing that I'm already Black, I'm already perceived as a woman, and now I'm queer on top of it? Damn!

It kind of helped me navigate the people who were saying things like, 'Oh, you're just doing this for attention,' or, 'You're not actually queer because....' It's like, okay, I'm not gonna go out and seek a more difficult life just for funsies, just because I'm bored. So that helped me solidify my own identity. This isn't just because I'm confused and I'm having all this new information thrown at me. This is legitimate, and there's not anybody who can tell me otherwise."

How has TikTok and content creation helped you to work through the process of discovering your identity?

Tyra: "Honestly, it has just exposed me to different people, different perspectives, and different identities that I didn't know existed. Growing up in suburban Ottawa, I was never exposed to anything. The most queer thing that I knew about was *Rupaul's Drag Race*, and even then I wasn't even really paying attention."



Make sure to keep up with Tyra on all social media platforms! You can also join their Patreon for exclusive behind-the-scenes content, rants, and access to iconic apparel. We'd like to acknowledge and thank Tyra for their relentless contributions to our community. We're excited to watch Tyra continue to take the world by storm.



TYRA BLIZZARD | EVERYWHERE IS QUEER | TWO MAIDEN LADIES
THE HIDAD PROJECT | MY GENERATION | QUEER RUN CLUB

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“OPENNESS MAY NOT COMPLETELY DISARM PREJUDICE, BUT IT’S A
GOOD PLACE TO START.” — JASON COLLINS