

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Name: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes**

**Kelly**

**00:00:01:08**

It's been really hard to be honest with you, and it's something that I've had to deal with for all these years. And when people came and said "Assumed you were anyway." Your assumption is not my voice. Your assumption of anyone is not freedom. It doesn't free you from your fear, your terror, your everything that's fighting inside you just because you assume about something. Me having a platform to now have a voice frees me.

**Liam**

**00:00:30:16**

Hello and welcome to Pridecast. This is a podcast about all things LGBTQ+ brought to you by ITV. During the show, we chat about being proud to be LGBTQ+ today. We speak to people from across the community to find out where they are on their journey and where they're headed. We'll also keep you updated on the latest LGBTQ+ news and the things that matter to you. This is the ITV Pridecast.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Liam**

**00:01:04:09**

Hello there and welcome to this edition of the ITV Pridecast. Well the guest for this episode is none other than Dame Kelly Holmes. Now, Kelly is known throughout the world as a double Olympic champion and one of the most respected sporting role models the UK has ever had. Before her sporting success, though, she was also an esteemed member of the British Army and despite her sporting and military achievements, Kelly had to hide part of her life in fear of the discrimination she might have faced if people knew she's a gay woman. But earlier this year, Kelly decided it was time to let the world in, and she decided to come out to help her in that process. She was part of an ITV documentary called 'Kelly Holmes: Being Me', which allowed her to tell her story in her way and now she wants to help those who are also LGBTQ+ who may have had similar experiences to her. Well, I, along with my colleague Simone Gardner and Sonny Hanley, had the chance to chat with Kelly in a joint panel event between the ITV Embrace Women's and Pride networks. Well, I'm delighted to say that Simone and Sonny are here with me now to introduce this Pridecast. Both. It's lovely to see you. It's great to have you on. How are things with you?

**Simone**

**00:02:26:16**

Yeah. I'm good. Um, it's a sunny day outside, which always makes me feel like a bit bit brighter to start the day, to be honest.

**Sonny**

**00:02:34:23**

I'm good as well. Liam, I'm based in Leeds, so it's very, very cold up here, so it's not the same for where you guys are.

**Liam**

**00:02:40:05**

Is the sun shining though, Sonny? That is the question, of course.

**Sonny**

**00:02:43:05**

No no, no, we've had our five days of summer already, so.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Liam**

**00:02:47:00**

Uh. Well, let's hope some, uh, some autumn sunshine comes your way real soon, of course. Um, now of course we are here reflecting on the incredible talk that we held with Dame Kelly Holmes recently. And before we get on to that, though, I just wanted to talk about, you know, what you do, ITV, let's find out a little bit about you and the roles that you do. Um, so yeah. Simmone, uh, do you want to go first?

**Simmone**

**00:03:11:16**

Yeah. Great. Thank you. Um, so. Yeah. So I've got a bit of a dual role at the moment at ITV. So I'm on secondment and I'm doing two roles. Um one is an HR Manager looking after content. So that includes commissioning audiences and sport. And then the other part of my role is a People Development Manager, working within the People Development Team. Um, and my remit is mainly looking after different projects at the moment, a lot of them are bespoke projects that different departments are doing, like marketing or doing a 3% club where they are giving everyone in the marketing department 3% of their time a month, which works out a day a month to spend on their personal development. And it's arranging development around that. So it's very busy. But yeah, it's great. It's fun, keeps it interesting, having a bit of a dual role.

**Liam**

**00:04:01:21**

Oh I bet. Yeah. And I suppose, you know that's that's really fulfilling in terms of working out the ways that you can give people that time for themselves. Really?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Simmons**

**00:04:09:14**

Yeah it is. Um, and I like I'm really passionate about development, and I think that's how I ended up on a secondment. It's a bit like you have to practice what you preach and really understand the business, but it's. Yeah, it's like, how can we help people personally develop and make ITV a great place to work? And it's like such a big scope. So yeah, it's quite fulfilling. Like we do a lot of that through the Women's Network as well. And like you do get some really nice emails from people being like, that was brilliant. And it's really helped me have confidence to go for like my next role or it's helped me get my next role. So yeah, it's it's it's a nice role to have.

**Liam**

**00:04:42:09**

Oh brilliant stuff. And and Sonny, what about you. What's your role at ITV?

**Sonny**

**00:04:46:14**

So my day job is that I'm the controller for content services, which essentially means that I am operational, responsible for all the content that gets delivered into ITV, whether we've commissioned it or required it or that content, making sure that we process it and then deliver it out to people's TV screens, to devices, or to customers and clients around the world that buy ITV content. So we look after international distribution as well.

**Liam**

**00:05:11:03**

You know, like Simmons, being being able to do what you do is, is kind of helping people's wellbeing themselves in, in terms of like, you know, the output that ITV produces.

**Sonny**

**00:05:21:12**

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, people love to watch TV. You know, people love a bit of escapism. Um, you know, the soaps are so popular because people love to be kind of be in that world. And it absolutely does, does help with, with all forms of kind of mental health and mental wellbeing. So yeah, I feel I feel very proud of the job that I do.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Liam**

**00:05:40:15**

Oh yeah, absolutely. And, um, you know, you're also playing a massive part in, in one of the networks that we have here at ITV as well, aren't you? Tell us about your involvement in the Embrace Network and what it is.

**Sonny**

**00:05:54:10**

Yeah, so I'm one of the co-chairs for ITV Embrace uh, and that's the internal network at ITV for black, Asian and ethnic minority colleagues and their allies as well. Um, so what we try and do is we try and educate and inform, um, and entertain, uh, colleagues through our events that we put on. Um, but really, it's a, it's a support network for, for for colleagues and to kind of come together, have a safe space, um, to discuss and, and kind of get to know each other and also raise the profile of, um, of of colleagues from a BAME background.

**Liam**

**00:06:31:07**

Likewise, I imagine, Simone, you're you're, you know, trying to make sure that you, you raise the profile of women at ITV, aren't you? And tell us about your role in the in the Women's Network.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Simmons**

**00:06:42:07**

Yes, that's exactly what we're trying to do. So yeah, I'm one of the co-chairs as well, for the Women's Network. We've got like three pillars that we try to work towards. So we've got Connect, Inspire and Develop. Um, and obviously the connection one was one of the things that we think really stood out during the pandemic, like it was so important during that time. Um, and again, it's really stuck with us. So we have like a lot of initiatives that just naturally keep rolling on. So we do a thing called the Coffee Roulette, or we have our monthly book club just to bring the networks together to have a chance to connect with each other, discuss topics that's important to them. And we've also incorporated leaning circles recently for that as well. So it's where you can like see if you've got an issue like confidence for example, that might be important to you. You can reach out to people, and then you've got your small group and a new chair and you come together as like weekly until you feel like you've got to the end of it. So it's really nice. So it's giving people the ownership, but the tools to sort of help them connect with others and then obviously develop is quite a big one. Obviously, that ties in with my role and that's probably where I oversee it most. I helped more project manage the women's network as a whole. So we've got the different groups that like we've got the events team and we've got the leaning circles team, and we've got like a comms team who all work together. I tend to project manage that, but then also look after the developed side. So we're really excitingly working on a women's network development programme at the moment. So we're currently in the design phase. But yeah, the idea is that it's open to all, all levels. We're trying to design it so it doesn't - not a leadership programme, but it's open to leaders. Or if you're an apprentice or like all the way up. And so yeah, hopefully help people grow in their careers and just help them develop a bit more.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Liam**

**00:08:28:22**

It sounds fantastic from from both their and, you know, knowing from the work that the Pride Network does. And you know, I'm of course part of that. And you know, you see how the networks can really represent, you know, parts of our company which is is really wonderful. But I think also what it shows is that it allows different groups to come together, doesn't it? Because, you know, we've shown in this event that we held recently. Um, you know, where we interviewed Dame Kelly Holmes? It was a joint effort, wasn't it? And, you know, it's something that I think we can show how different groups and communities can come together, not just in our company, but across society, really?

**Sonny**

**00:09:06:15**

Yeah. I think it's so important that we do come together and we don't just kind of, um, you know, just kind of look after our kind of silos of, you know, I just look after people from a black, Asian and ethnic minority background or, you know, the pride network just looks after people from the LGBT+ community. It's really good that we we can kind of come together because a lot of people within ITV, um, are part of more than one network. Um, and so, you know, when we put on these events and I'd like to put on cross network events, I'd love to do more. They do feel big and they feel special, but more importantly, they feel inclusive.

**Simmone**

**00:09:44:15**

Yeah, I agree with what Sonia said. I think the cross networks are definitely important. So yeah, as you say, like there are so many people that are in more than one group. But also if you're not, I think it's really important like to be an ally.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Liam**

**00:09:55:15**

From what we saw, I think, I think we can all agree here that, you know, Dame Kelly Holmes, her lived experience shone through in our talk. And I think as well with that, from what you were saying there, you know, she's someone who represents many communities. And, you know, I think we really felt that from her chat, didn't we? And before we get on to talking a bit more in depth about the chat, um, certainly you helped lead the, um, the event for Black History Month, didn't you? And I wanted you to tell us a little bit more about, you know, how that's going, and, uh. Yeah. Like how, um, how the network has come together to, to celebrate this time. Yeah.



***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Sonny**

**00:10:34:12**

So, um, I mean, for obvious reasons, uh, I love Black History Month. Actually, I say for obvious reasons, this is a podcast, so I'm black. Uh, and I do love putting on events, uh, for Black History Month, I think, um, you know, there's such a kind of, uh, rich heritage and so many untold stories to be told. Um, I think, um, it's so important to kind of not rewrite history, but tell history the way that it should be told. Um, and so we always kind of go quite big on Black History Month for the whole month of October, putting on events, uh, that are a mixture of, um, like I say, entertainment. Um, but but really education at their heart. And I think with the Kelly Holmes interview, that was a really kind of it was an education piece on, you know, somebody, um, who grew up as a mixed race child in, in, in white Britain in the 80s and, and all the things that came along with that. And it might be a well-told story, but actually, Kelly had such a way of of telling it and drawing people into her story and her journey. And it was, um, it was a really, um, amazing interview. That was the the flagship event, I guess, for, for Black History Month. But we put on so many different events where we're putting on an event next week where we're profiling senior black colleagues, for example. So, uh, colleagues that wouldn't normally, um, be seen, I guess, um, and that that is with the aim for kind of newer colleagues, newer black colleagues in ITV, to kind of see that there are senior black colleagues within ITV doing fantastic jobs. Um, we have always had an end of year, um, end of month celebration where we put on, um, food and music and culture just so people that are not from that background can experience, um, can experience that for just one day or kind of get involved. So Black History Month is kind of one of my favourite months of the year, definitely.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Liam**

**00:12:25:24**

Just looking, you know, at the uh, the interview with with Kelly, of course. Um, it came off the back of a documentary that she's done. And for anyone who's listening to this and hasn't been able to see the, you know, 'Kelly Holmes: Being Me' documentary on ITV. I firstly would really recommend watching it because it is incredible. And, you know, you really learn about Kelly, don't you, in a way that I suppose most of us never really, really knew of before. And, you know, I just want to get your take on the documentary. Really? You know. Certainly. What what did you think of it?

**Sonny**

**00:12:58:00**

I, um, I thought the documentary was brilliant. I think it was just such a powerful bit of TV. Um, you know, one hour of Kelly telling her story and, like you say, drawing you in and and really making you think and feel, um, and it was a very emotional, you know, you could tell that she was constantly fighting back the tears, which I guess as a viewer then then you also, in turn, are fighting back the tears because you're feeling it.

**Liam**

**00:13:24:24**

Yeah. No, absolutely. It um, you know, I said to Kelly, actually, I was inspired by her before, just as you know, her being an Olympic champion. After that interview, I was awe-inspired, like, I, you know, I was just overwhelmed by by her, you know, ability to kind of tell her story. And I felt that from the documentary. And, you know, Simone, I gather from, you know, you watching it, you know, you must have felt a sense of, wow, you know, I can't believe what I'm watching here, really?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Simone**

**00:13:57:15**

Um, yeah. So the documentary, for me, as I say, I was, like, really blown away by actually, like, how vulnerable Kelly was. And I think that sat with me a lot, um, just how open she was about her stories. And I guess, like for more of a personal perspective, it was a bit of a learning curve for myself. Like, I was completely unaware that it was illegal to be gay in the Army up until 2000. Um, which again, maybe it was in the news, maybe it just passed us by. But that was a big learning curve for me. And, um, obviously in the documentary, Kelly talks about how that affected her so much. But then obviously when we spoke with Kelly, she opened up a lot about what she's doing to help share stories with people that it's affected up to this day, even though it's been, what, 22 years since the ban has been lifted?

**Liam**

**00:14:45:20**

Yeah, completely. And I think there as well. What really shone through is, you know, like you say, you know, Kelly was incredibly vulnerable. She really showed her vulnerability in the documentary. Like you say there at the start of it, we see that she's really, really struggling to even, you know, say that she's a gay woman. And then I, you know, when you see the difference. Actually, when we interviewed her on the panel event and how, you know, how determined she is to kind of get the message out there to to make sure that LGBT people are supported in so many ways. You know, in just a short space of time. She's grown in huge amounts of confidence, hasn't she?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Sonny**

**00:15:24:05**

Yeah, she, she, she really has. And, um, you know, that was the first time I met Kelly, you know, I don't know, but I sent I felt a sense of pride. Like I was very proud of her because, you know, she probably has no idea how many people she's probably helped in doing that documentary. How many people that are probably in her position sat there, not feeling themselves or not being able to live their lives, their or authentic selves. And she has probably helped, you know, hundreds of people come to terms with who they they are and who they they want to be in life. Um, and that's massive. You know, people probably wonder why, you know, celebrities and I use the inverted commas. "Celebrities" go on TV and tell their story. And, you know, is 'it just for the money or for the fame?' When actually, you know, there's people like Dame Kelly that do it. Um, one, because they want the world to know who they really are, and two, because they want to help. And, you know, Kelly spoke in the documentary about her ongoing help for the people that were in the armed forces that got discharged with, uh, dishonours and got their medals taken away from them and the plight that she has now in helping them, um, get those back. And I think that's fantastic.

**Liam**

**00:16:37:21**

And as well, with that, I think what you see from, from this event is that Kelly has become very aware of her own intersectionality, hasn't she really?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Sonny**

**00:16:47:22**

For her, you know, there was a point in her life where she didn't realise that she was different, uh, until it was pointed out and I think that that echoes certainly, you know, with me or with a lot of people from the black community or many kind of ethnic minorities that live in this country. Um, I think for Kelly, I think she's obviously a role model for a lot of people, and I think she was comfortable with being the role model in the kind of the Olympic athletics world, because that's kind of how it comes when you win a gold medal and then you're doing lots of press and and that kind of stuff. And there's young children looking up to you, wanting to be, you know, just like you as an athlete. But I think probably she was maybe more uncomfortable with being that kind of a figurehead or beacon for, you know, the sides of her life that she probably kept secret for, for such a long time. And that's that's really difficult. It's really difficult to be, um, the spokesperson for all those things that that you, you know, whether you've got mental health issues, um, whether you're from a, an ethnic minority background or you're gay, that it's really difficult to be put on that pedestal and be the spokesperson for all those communities. Um, but I think now she's kind of embracing it, uh, which is lovely to see.

**Liam**

**00:18:02:06**

Yeah, absolutely. Of course. And we'll hear a bit more on that in the chat that we had with Dame Kelly, which is of course coming next. But for now both. Thank you so, so much for agreeing to do this Pridecast and also for allowing us to be all a part of this event. I know it was really welcomed by so many people. So yes, thank you so, so much again.

**Simmone**

**00:18:22:20**

Thank you both.

**Sonny**

**00:18:23:14**

It's been great. Thanks, Liam. Thanks for having us.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Liam**

**00:18:32:01**

Ah, well, thank you so much again to Simone Gardiner and Sonny Hanley for introducing this ITV Pridecast and to all colleagues who are part of the ITV Pride, Embrace and Women's Network who helped put on this event. At the start of our chat with Dame Kelly, I asked her what it was like to film her documentary 'Kelly Holmes: Being Me.'

**Kelly**

**00:18:58:02**

Uh, it was one of the hardest things I've ever done. And there's a lot of things, as I'm sure we get to know, uh, like many people have gone through, but, um, it was just so hard. Because for me, those that haven't seen it, is that privately, I've lived my life who I am but publicly I wasn't able to for so many reasons. And to then talk publicly for the first time in, for me, 34 years of having a fear of being who I am and being exposed or to actually get those words out of my mouth took ages. I mean, you see that? I mean, like, keep that going. I was just literally sitting there like, I couldn't speak because I felt so overwhelmed with one, the opportunity to do it. But like, how do I approach this in, remember in the context of what the documentary was, to be authentic, but to have a documentary that educated and informed in the right way because of who I was in the public domain of what people thought I was like, this Olympic champion, Dame Kelly Holmes. It's really hard to just do that first piece.

**Sonny**

**00:20:08:24**

And I mean, we'll come back to obviously come back to the documentary, but can you take us back to like the 80s, what it was like growing up in a small village in Kent as a, as a mixed race girl?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Kelly**

**00:20:18:20**

Yeah. So I'm from a small village. Still live in the village, um, whiter than white Kent, as I like to say it. Um, I didn't know my biological father, so I lived with my mother. And after a period of time, early years in care, I was then with my stepdad from the age of five. I had two white siblings. Two brothers went to all white schools in the village. Um, and then really, the only time I can honestly say that I've realised that, oh, I've got different coloured skin was when Boney M. - Brown Girl in the Ring came out and they went, you're Brown, you go in the ring. I was like, oh yes. So I was the brown girl in the ring. And it was really funny because people say to me, well, does that feel like you were bullied into it? And I went, no, I just thought I was like, yeah, la la la la, you know. I loved being the sugar in the club. I loved it, and it was really weird again, because I remember when my first brother was born, Kevin, I was seven and we were walking across the road and somebody at school says, why have you got a white brother? And I was like, I don't know. Like, I don't know, because no one had had a conversation because it wasn't a thing, you know what I mean? It just wasn't a thing. So then I was questioning, and it was only at that time that my mother then says, well, actually, you have a different father. And of course, then your head goes all over the place, doesn't it, as a young person, because at a point, I think for young people, they don't really see difference as such. It's built into you, it's kind of driven into good or bad, those changes and those differences. It's only when people really highlight it. So I think, yeah, and I went to secondary school, it was all white secondary school, but I don't think I had an issue because I think I turned it into, well, if I'm different, I'm unique. So you, you know, I don't want to be the same as all of you. So I had a different attitude around me that maybe gave that aura of not caring.

**Simone**

**00:22:19:00**

And we obviously know you is one of the best loved athletes to ever come out of the UK. But did you always know that athletics or something physical was like the career route you wanted to go down?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Kelly**

**00:22:29:15**

Um, it was the only thing I was good at. Running. So I was at school. I wasn't academic whatsoever. And, uh, sport was the hook. Sport was what gave me at the time, uh, an identity, purpose. Because, you know, when you become a teenager, you do start to think about different things and environments around you. And sport was just something that gave me, me. And it was my PE teacher that told me and got a grip of me really and said, like, 'You can be really good if you believe it and focus on it.' You know, there's more of a mentor than a PE teacher. And she shoved me into this cross-country race. Like, who likes cross-country? No, no. And I was like, you know, young girl, Afro. Um, high-knee. White socks. Plimsolls. This is the 80s style PE kit, skirts and a see-through airtight shirt, you know, on a cross-country field. And anyway, what happened was, is that I come second, and it was the first time that I felt I had a purpose. I hated losing, and suddenly there's this fire in my belly like, ah, I got to do it. And then Olympics came and I watched it when I was 14, and that was it. I wanted to be Olympic champion.

**Sonny**

**00:23:36:13**

Is it true I read somewhere that you, um, you were watching the Olympics and there was some or an athletics competition. There was someone in it that you'd competed against that you that you could have beaten and that's what made you kind of get into the sport properly.



***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Kelly**

**00:23:50:01**

Yeah. So I started off being inspired when I was 14 by the Olympic Movement and Sebastian Coe. Some of you may or may not have heard of him. He was a British legend for middle distance running, and he won the gold medal for the 1500 metres, and I was in school holidays at home going, and I just saw the British flag flying and the national anthem, and he had a gold medal and I was a 1500 metre runner and I was like, that's me, that's what I'm going to be. Um, roll on till I was 22 and the Barcelona games came and now I'm serving in the military. Um, watching as you describe a young girl who I used to race against and beat. I will add from Kent in the Olympic Games and I was like, so it kind of reignited that fire in my belly.

**Simmone**

**00:24:37:09**

Can you give us a sense of- you've talked to us a bit like your the fire in your belly to win the Olympics, but how proud were you when it got to 2004 and you did win? How did that feel?

**Kelly**

**00:24:47:05**

Oh, you know, it's hard to explain without going through my whole history of how much that was always in my DNA to believe I could be. It saved me through my journey and my mental health journey with sport as well, of having something to live for and to go for. Um, I'd been to three Olympic Games. I'd won 11 other international medals prior to the my double win, which, you know, when you run at the Olympic Games. What I've noticed is some people aren't really interested in sport unless it's a real sport that you care about. Otherwise the Olympics, everyone wants to see it because it just really different, isn't it? You know, people compete for Great Britain. It's just the thing. And I remember people thinking like when I came back from double that, that was the first games I've ever run in, like no one knew me. I'd like suddenly pops out as a 34 year old being really good. Then I have to explain. No, this was like I started when I was 14. I had a dream. I tried for 12 years to be the best runner in the world, and I was number three in the world for 12 years, and I won multiple medals off the back of injuries and, you know, stress

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

fractures, ruptured calf, torn Achilles, mental health problems, glandular fever, tonsillitis. Yeah, I was still in the game and I actually, you know, earned that. Um, did I ever think I'd win, too? No. Never. I mean, you see, my face crossing the line on that. I always believed I win a medal 800 because I had in the previous Olympics, when I was 30, in Sydney, I'd won a bronze off of a back of really bad injuries. Uh, and I can honestly say my dream was to be Olympic 1500 metre champion. So when I won that 800, which for me was a shock, it almost took the pressure off of winning the 15, because now I'm standing on the track already as an Olympic champion, if you know what I mean. So actually my head was like, well, if I get any medal of any colour, it's fine because I'm already Olympic champion. Had I not had won that, even though it was an event I'd thought of winning, I think I would have put every bit of pressure on myself to have to achieve that dream. So now this side of it, I can feel like it's fate. You know, I can feel like the struggle to get there. And the journey was almost like, prove that you want it. And then by sticking at it, you know, I get the glory. I always believe that if people stick at things, they get more than they ever expected.

**Simone**

**00:27:06:04**

Do you think the second one was more fun to win?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Kelly**

**00:27:09:00**

Uh, fun? Um. Uh, it's six races and nine days. You know, you weren't running world class times all the time. Uh, it was a relief. I'd fought so hard, mental and physical. My life post my Army career. So for what, five, um, five, six years was consumed every day with the high performance attitude that you have to have. You eat, sleep, breathe it, you know, every day. And it's hard. And you have to remember that most people see the very small part of that, the glory winning a medal, or the upset, because you might be disappointed and they hear you disappoint. You don't see the tears that you've cried, the pain that you've been of the times you you know, you're literally running with the worse injury where people were telling you your career's over with the needles that are stuck in you because you've ruptured your calf with the elbows that are in there and you're forcing yourself to get off. You know, the the table. No one sees that, you know. And that's the crux of it, that every day is consuming because you've got to keep mentally strong through really bad pressures that you put on yourself and expectations. But you know would people say, would I do it again? Only if I won two Gold medals again.

**Liam**

**00:28:28:06**

Kelly, I mean, you know with that you seem to suggest that the military career probably gave you a bit of that discipline that you needed to take into your athletics career. I suppose in many ways, that kind of really grounded you, I gather.

**Kelly**

**00:28:43:06**

Yeah. From a sporting perspective. I joined the Army and I was 18. So again, I was inspired to do when I was 14 years old, and it gave me a great grounding and it taught me a lot. I grew up a lot, obviously, but I became a three years into my career physical training instructor. So you can imagine being five foot women and what what you can easily say is a male dominated world, the military as it was then, really. And yet I've got to hold my own, you know, because I'm not somebody who's going to be, you know, looked at is as a derogatory thing of only a woman. No, I'm a woman with a big mouth and I'm really strong. Um, you know,

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

and this is how I came into it, of pushing myself to get absolutely physically the best I could be. And being a naturally good runner was an asset to it. But it's more than running, you know you are. I used to always say lead by example. I wouldn't tell any soldier that I was training to do something I could not do, but I'm not going to tell them to do nothing because they're getting ready for really high pressure situations, potentially going to war, but also what they're doing in their day to day life. So I was a strong I was a strong beast, you know? So when I came in back into international athletics after watching the Olympic Games using my leave, I must say to go away and compete. I remember I told this really quick story is that I am getting back into international athletics was just a fight really. The Army said I was competing for the Army because I kind of just they forced me into it because I was beating a lot of the guys. Like coming like you can be part of the team. You might be an asset to the women's team. All right, I'll do it. So I got invited to this national championships. The only way that you can get into a world class team is to run a certain time. So a standard and getting the first two for any championship there is. So I go to a national champs and it was qualifying for world championships. I get announced as Corporal Holmes on the track. Everyone was like, looking at me, like, who is this? You know, it's a civilian world and I'm there as Corporal Holmes, you know? And this guy said to me, just chase those two girls. They're going for the world qualifying time. I was like, yeah, right. So I just chased them like a soldier, chased them down and beat them and got the world qualifying time. There I was going to world champs like that was it. And the Army were like, 'What?', you know, and off I go. And being the likes of a team with, I don't know, the old hats of Linford Christie and Sally Gunnell and Colin Jackson and that and that was my sort of stuck into it. But sport- Army definitely in that way gave me strength as a sports person.

**Sonny**

**00:31:23:10**

And you spoke in the documentary about your, you know, the proud moment you stood there, but the sadness of not being able to be yourself. Could you tell us a bit about that.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Kelly**

**00:31:32:24**

Yeah. So, um, I have a very complex, um, relationship with the military, so I served for nearly ten years, proud of my service. I'm now honorary colonel with a Royal Armoured Corps. and that role was just to be now, to be elevated soon. Uh, but in the military, there was a law against homosexuality. Uh, up until 2000. So it was an absolute law and barbaric law, but law. That meant that for me personally instilled fear of me. Having joined as a 17 year old, just before my 18th birthday. A fear of losing a career that I wanted. A fear of literally being kicked out and being humiliated. Yet I learnt very quickly that in the military that I was attracted to women, to girls at the time, and I didn't necessarily know that before I joined because I was living a life of sport, you know? Um, but once it's instilled in you in such a way, you know, it's scary because you want to do one thing, yet you're hiding a big part of your life, even though to those people that were gay were very open. You know, it's it's very easy to talk the good talk and not, you know, in any conversation you kind of have, you know, but you don't need to say that sort of thing. Um, anyway, like, the personal story is that that affected me right up until me doing that documentary, and it affected me because I was absolutely petrified of there being some repercussion of me admitting that I had broken the law while I served, even though I'd been out for years. So when I got out in the Army, there was still in ban in three years. Yet I'm a world class athlete. Become an Olympic medallist up until 2000. No one in sports talk about being gay. Like I didn't know where was my role models. How could I feel that? Okay, maybe I didn't know. Then I become a double Olympic champion. Of course I'm in the spotlight. I mean, how terrified am I? One minute it's brilliant. The next minute I'm thinking anyone could say something that's going to then cause me massive issues because I thought I would still be in trouble. So I went through my life of having this complete barrier of only I had enough to talk about. I'm a public speaker around the world. I had enough to talk about, about being mixed race family and a council girl in a care home, being in the military as a woman, uh, having mental health problems and being Olympic champion. I

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

mean, I have enough to talk about, right? So I can skirt around everything. And it only really got to very recently, in the past three years, that I had to do it for my own sanity. Um, and you can ask me those questions, but, um, so the complex, uh, the complex relationship is that that cause this life of fear to enable me to live my life authentically, publicly, because of the barriers it instilled in me. So fear is debilitating. It doesn't mean about this world, in any world, that fear of the unknown and the worry of judgement and the worry of retribution, and the worry of the barriers that might put in front of you, it stops people completely being who they are, but also what they can do in life.

**Liam**

**00:34:59:03**

It's quite crazy, isn't it, that, you know, the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK was in 1967, and you had to wait so long to, to be able to come out. Um, one of the things I think we see in the documentary, and for anyone that hasn't seen it, they will definitely see when when they watch it. Your dad is a hero. He's an absolute hero.

**Kelly**

**00:35:21:01**

Aw, so sweet.

**Liam**

**00:35:21:23**

You decided to come out to him, um, quite early on and maybe took a little bit longer to come out to the rest of your family, didn't you? What was the the reason behind that?

**Kelly**

**00:35:31:06**

So I was serving, obviously. And when I met somebody in the Army that I shouldn't have probably met because everything I just called him and said, oh, I've met, you know, met someone but not allowed to say anything. And, you know, I was 18 at the time and I was based up in Leconfield, so north east. And he said, I'll come up and see, because it was all letters or phone calls, of course, didn't have the, you know, text messages. And he said, I'll come up and see. You really worried about me. I went, you really don't have to do him, okay? I just thought I'd tell you. You know

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

what I tell someone who like. And so he was so sweet. And he's a man of not many words, but what he does say is good. And I then didn't tell anybody until I left the army in my family. My best friend Kerry, who from day one at school has been my best friend, who I actually told I was going to be Olympic champion at 14, and she said, yeah, you probably are. It's the only thing you're good at. Um, she's still my friend and um, my sister Lisa and I told them because I met somebody else by then, and I just want I brought them home once, and I kind of need to tell them. But it was such a big thing of I thought they would look at me differently or act differently towards me because I was telling them something about my sexuality. And they kind of said, well, don't you think we guessed anyway? Like, what's the problem? And it was obviously a relief. But I suppose the story from that and what I look from in these days is I'm very lucky to have a supportive family. All of my friends and family have known and know now. Like all of them, I have a big family. Um, I actually have three brothers, two sisters and ten nieces and nephews. Um, and, uh, you know, majority of my family, obviously, I've known about me forever, but I'm lucky because I know of so many people from the community that do not have that support and are disregarded, vilified through their family one because of cultural backgrounds, religious backgrounds, or just not acceptance because they don't understand it. And because we haven't got we haven't got again, much better to a place of this visibility, uh, social and generational changes have allowed us to be more open and transparent, but over the years it's not been that case. My family, no one else in my family, is from the community. Most of my friends, as I've grown up, have been sort of straight. No one cares. All I care about was me. And the reason why I had to come out is because I was in a bad place. You know, we we know in society generally that mental health is a huge thing for people, especially recently with, uh, Covid and pressures and things that women go through and hormonal things are so many things that mental health does. But in the LGBT world, I think it's exacerbated. I think it is more because if you are holding back a crucial part of who you are just by verbally explaining it, can't realise how that screws and keeps

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

winding up at the moment. You can't just talk, you just want to say something you know? Add to a conversation. I used to always sit there like an events and things, and it would always be they or them for my partner, because I couldn't say she because I was scared somebody was suddenly going to go, you're gay. You know, um, I'd go on holiday with mates rather than now I'm going holiday with my girlfriend. I would stop any conversation that had anything. Personally, I'd say, 'I've gotta go. Gotta go away.' I would second guess every part of my conversation. And no disrespect, but heterosexual people don't have to think like that. You just get on with life, okay? When it comes to sexuality you just get on with life. Boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife. We don't. We have to second guess the environment that we're in, the people that we're working with, the place that we go to, the countries now that you go to, you've got to really. It's a constant narrative, isn't it?

**Sonny**

**00:39:26:22**

Um, does race play any part of kind of, you know, you taking so long to come out or anything like that?

**Kelly**

**00:39:34:10**

Not so much in that respect, but I do realise that I now feel like a tick off many boxes. Women, LGBTQ community, mixed race and the disability of, uh, side of hidden disability, of admitting many mental health problems. I now realise I take off lots of boxes. Right? Um, no, but Black Lives Matter became something that I had to really have again, a different thought process for when that came really heavy during lockdown. And the reason for that wasn't really a part of coming out, to be honest with you. But it was a society thing that I had to understand my place in that because of course, being a motivational speaker or speaker, people suddenly asked my opinion on Black Lives Matter. When you've lived almost in a different closeted world of- I live in Kent, have been in Kent, kind of, you know, I just don't look in the mirror of anyone different. I just kind of am. Maybe that's naive or something. I'm mainly in a room that I have to say is like this. You know, there's a lot of white faces in front of me right now.



***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

This is the life that I've led a lot of the times, you know? Um, it came and they were all asking my opinion, and I'm like, I feel really ignorant and naive because I'm going to sit here and say, I haven't had a problem. Then I'm thinking at the time that I might have had a problem with clashed against someone, or I haven't got a job that I thought I'm a good enough and qualified enough to get to, or why I didn't pass a course, because. Is that now? Because I wasn't good enough? No, I was good enough. Good. My reporters are good. Now, is it because you thought I was gay? Oh, you didn't know I was gay in the army? Oh, my colour of my skin. Suddenly, I'm questioning everything throughout my whole life of where I may have had barriers just because of my colour, of my skin. So it became another issue that was putting on top of all of this fight during lockdown, where this really came to the fore of me needing to do the doc because now I'm going: 'Have I asked the mates that I now have got who are from different backgrounds, different cultures, different thing? Have you ever had real racism and problems?' Because I felt that we're talking for people like, I can't talk for somebody else that's lived or grown up in a different cultural environment to me because I don't know. So culture is very different and it's the same in the LGBT world is that you assume you know everything and that we all understand it all. I've had to learn a lot about the community because I was away from it. I just lived my life as a gay woman in my closeted world of my friends and family. Now I am having to learn so that I can be authentic and a powerful voice for the community who are fighting in all different ways, but not to talk about a fight. Talk about conversation. And how do we, you know, how do we have the conversation about inclusion and diversity is a human topic, not a segregation. It's about humanising it and normalising conversation about we all have a fight in this world anyway, just to succeed, to live, to be the best person. We can't have the best job, to have finances that can look after us and get on with life realistically. But we put all these barriers in place because of judgement and preconceptions of what people think and feel about having these honest conversations.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Sonny**

**00:43:13:15**

I'm assuming everybody's been supportive of you since since that day that you came out?As far as I know. there's always someone saying something.

**Sonny**

**00:43:22:07**

Do you wish then, that you've come out sooner or made that change sooner?

**Kelly**

**00:43:28:09**

Yeah. I mean, you know, I don't have many regrets in life, but I wish my life could have been a lot easier in that sense, you know? Um, hasn't been easy. It's been really hard, to be honest with you. And it's something that I've had to deal with for all these years. And when people came and said, well, "Assumed you were anyway". Your assumption is not my voice, and your assumption of anyone is not a freedom. It doesn't free you from your fear, your terror, your everything that's fighting inside you just because you assume about something. Me having a platform to now have a voice frees me, not what anyone else thought about me. Me now having that freedom. I couldn't do it before because I was scared. I was so scared of potentially going to jail. I mean, it's irrational. Most of our fears are irrational, but their fears that you can't help until somebody gives you an opportunity to talk or somebody actually sits with you and says, okay. And my calls to two really high ranking officers changed my life at that moment because I realised now it's okay, but I had to find a an educational and informative way of doing it because I'm not a person that would just go, oh, 'I'm gay, blah blah blah blah' because I felt that wouldn't give credit to the community just to go, 'I'm gay, accept me, blah, blah, blah.' Because it's not about acceptance in that way. It's about understanding people and that we are who we are. Can't just change somebody's sexuality or the way they feel or the way they act. It's just us. But you feel. I felt like if I just come out on my social media going, oh, I'm gay and I haven't been able to tell you you wouldn't understand the context of the mental health issues I've had with it at the point where I didn't want to be here because I couldn't cope with not talking

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

anymore, you wouldn't understand that. So it was my right to. I felt I needed to do it in a way that explained it. So now you listening to me can go. I understand why she didn't, and she's no different to what she was. As a if you want to put me as a hero, running around the track and winning two gold medals for the Great Britain, I should still be that, you know, I still should be that person just because you know that I'm actually attracted to women, but I'm not attracted to every woman sitting here, you know, no disrespect, just like you're not attracted to every guy or women. I hate the fact that coming out in the community sexualise everything. It doesn't. It's just a human being that likes people happen to be women. If I meet the right person who's a nice person, you know, I'm just. Oh, God. Oh.

**Kelly**

**00:46:05:20**

So my whole way is to normalise conversation of being a human who has a voice now to hopefully help, because I'm in the public eye. Hopefully help when we come to challenges of women's rights and empowerment and give us a chance to be who we are because we're as good enough to be on a board with any other man as anyone else. Because diversity matters. Everybody's point. Because we're diverse. That's why it matters. Because we all have a different way of being and thinking and expressing. That's why diversity matters. That's why you want a mix of people, because all of us have different experiences. It's not rocket science. So yeah.

**Simmons**

**00:46:49:01**

And Kelly, you've talked really openly about obviously, the how being illegal in the Army really affected you up until quite recently, but obviously in 2000 when it was lifted, how did that make you feel?

**Kelly**

**00:47:01:15**

To be honest, I was so engrossed in my career I didn't even know it had been lifted. That's how little it was really said about it. So they did the announcement with, um, Johnny Mercer, um, who announced the lifting of the ban, but they did it on that balcony

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

that's outside Parliament. So you might see a lot of things. They have a lot of events in Parliament by the river. There's this balcony, and that's where a lot of announcements get made and things from the government get announced happened there. But did you know about it? I mean, did one did you even know there was a ban and two didn't know when the ban was lifted? I mean, it was quite just said, uh, I don't really know about it. And to be honest with you, I was still fearful of anything, so I separated myself from that. What I am doing now is two things. One, to try and be that authentic voice. Learn about the community from every single aspect. I'm meeting with so many organisations right across the community, so many powerhouses that have come way before me, um, just to understand it. So when I see something out there, I hopefully can, uh, desensitise fire or anger or what people think and feel about it, because I'll understand it more. And on the other side is the fight for the LGBT veterans affected by the ban since '67 and 2000. And when I say that if I talk about being raided, so raided is people coming into my personal space where I lived and slept completely destroying myself. Imagine you go back home and you've had burglars and they've literally destroyed everything you ever own, taken down whatever. That's what raiding is, right? Humiliating, interrogating, interrogation, humiliation, absolute fear and everything. I had that as a 23 year old, right? That was the good side of it. Some people were dragged out of their, um, barracks, put on to charge, court martialled, jailed. Some people were, um, told to get out, given a red book, which is your employment book written in capital letters, discharged with disgrace from the army or because they were either insinuated, not even definitely homosexual, maybe an insinuation because somebody blabbed off their mouths, said, 'I think they're gay', gone to a senior officer. They don't like it. Taking them out lost long service medals, which is 15 years of serving in the military. So you could have been good enough during that 15 years. But at the moment somebody says you're gay or there's an insinuation or they find a letter, you know, you're out. So these people still exist. These people have lost homes, livelihoods. They're homeless, long service metals. I said the mental and physical health is absolutely

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

gone. So there's a review happening to get as many veterans to come forward. Because this independent view, we need as many veterans to come forward who are affected by the ban, to come and tell us so that it goes into the review, their testimony of it, Then by next May, it goes to the government to come back with some justice for these people that served our country. Most people don't know the extent of it. You're getting really, really bad sexual and, uh, verbal abuse by blackmail. So I'm talking people who have come forward who were raped by senior officers and blackmailed that they would be kicked out if anything happens. What happens that happens, then they get kicked out. So this is how bad this review is bringing people to the fore. So that is one of my other missions to get justice for people that have suffered for all these years. I suffered with fear. A lot of suffered with other things. I'm lucky that I had my sliding door moment that no one caught me in that raid or suggested anything, and I went on to get an MBA for services to the military to become double Olympic champion. Dame Kelly Holmes, honorary colonel, because I didn't find out as my sliding doors moment.

**Simmons**

**00:51:09:09**

Do you think it's still an issue now in the Army, although it's lifted? Is it still undercurrents of problems?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Kelly**

**00:51:15:07**

Well, I've just been with the MOD just now because I was being, you know, I went with some brigadiers just now, uh, who might not have known enough about it, or they were a bit shocked because obviously now I've got my voice, I'm going to use it. Um, it is one of the best industries now to be employed by because it's completely transparent. You can be whoever you want. I love that, I mean, it's brilliant. So the policies are more against homophobia, homophobia now so that if you get, uh, if, if there's an altercation, you have a right now to go and make a complaint. That complaint will now be heard. So of course, that's a complete flip. But I've just heard recently that there is these issues coming out because there's, um, this teamwork thing that's just happened in the military where they stopped the whole military working for a whole day. And it was all about discussion on inclusion and diversity. And it was all about team talking and saying the issues that still are happening. And some things come out that of course there are still bad eggs. There's bad eggs in this whole world anyway as we live, and there's still bad eggs in the military, the same as there is in the police, the same as everywhere. So they're ironing out the bad eggs, basically. So that's a massive step, right? The community is a huge step that people are now listening from their point of view as opposed to the other.

**Liam**

**00:52:34:20**

Yesterday was National Coming Out Day. And I imagine from, you know, doing what you've done, there'll be so many people that were in your situation that will be able to come out. And, you know, that must be an amazing legacy to be able to to give to people. Really?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Kelly**

**00:52:49:05**

Yeah, it really is. And, you know, I've been heart warmed by the amount of messages I've had through I've social or emails or meeting people on the street who said, you've just given me the strength to be who I want to be. You know, it just took that guts to do it. It is sometimes just the guts, just one thing, just to make that little critical change or just having conversation with someone, even if they haven't yet come out. Starting the dialogue for change with people. So I'm really proud of that. And I have to say, some of the messages have been quite intense. Um, to read their stories, because of course the first bit is expressing it to me. Um, and they're not all from the Army, of course. Uh, and some of the things that have come through, I've had these guys come to me and they go, right, I just want to tell you, Kelly or Dame Kelly, I'm a heterosexual man of age 50 or 40 or 60 said, I don't care about your sexuality. I just love you for you and your more as your respect, how you hold yourself. What you do said shouldn't even matter. And I want to tell you that now, because I want to put my piece there, that no one should care what your sexuality is. You do good things, you go for it. And those ones make me weak because I feel like you don't have to want to email me. But they're making a point of almost sticking up for what we've had wrong is that heterosexual people were saying, no, what's the problem? You know, so once we have these conversations about why, like, if I'm a horrible person, not like me for being a horrible person, don't dislike me for what you see in front of you and what I talk about, you know, that way.

**Sonny**

**00:54:23:18**

We're nearly out of time, I really want to go to the audience. Is there any questions from the audience, at all?

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Questioner**

**00:54:28:22**

Um, I really enjoyed the documentary, Kelly. I watched it on the train and cried and was really embarrassed because all the other people on the train could see me. Um, but I wanted to know what's the most surprising thing that has happened since the documentary came out? Um, that you have just been overwhelmed by. What's the most surprising thing?

**Kelly**

**00:54:48:05**

Oh, wow. Well, I've got two awards recently. I had one at the National Diversity Awards. So I've got celebrities. I don't mean like the word celebrity, to be honest. I want to be known for my charity work for winning two gold medals, but I got Celebrity of the Year for that. And then I got, um, Trailblazer Award for Hello! Magazine, last week. So they've been surprising because I didn't do this for awards. So it's lovely to get sort of recognition of the voice that hopefully I'm starting to have. Um, Pride. Pride was- I'd never been to Pride before. And I got asked by a few people and got one, like, 'Come on the bus, come on the bus. Phillip Schofield is going to come as well, you know. Uh, um, Alison Hammond, blah, blah, blah, come on the bus.' And I was like, oh, God, you know, really like just Pride. Um, and, uh, one of the organisers, the Pride, gave me a billet, said, 'if you do come, come and speak on the stage.' I'm thinking, really? I've just come out. I've never been to any of this. Now I've got to speak. So anyway, get on the bus, go over the gulp, you know, thinking, okay, so I'm on the bus, it's all going well and this is pretty much- I've been away for three weeks. So after my doc, I was sort of like thrown in it, you know, and so I'm thinking, So I'm thinking to myself, okay, I'm on the bus. This is all right. Everyone's waving, everyone's okay with me. I'm not getting pelted with anything, you know? And bus broke down. What the hell? Now they're saying that you're gonna have to walk. My face drops. Phil's face drops. And everyone was like, um. 'Would you mind walking?' And I was like, having to think. What does that mean? I've got to walk now. Like, I mean, I felt protected, um, on the bus, so we went. It was brilliant. Oh, it was so good. I mean, Alison was saying that she couldn't walk that far. She was loving



***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

life, you know, and met loads of people on the side and everyone's shouting out. And I felt so empowered. It was brilliant day, everyone being totally their authentic self. I'd never been around that before. I thought it was brilliant. It was just so good, you know? But I'm always a person that remembers where we come from. That's 50 years of fighting to get to that point. You know, I, I am a person that I always respect, the giants that have come before us, the reason why we can do the stuff we do, the reason why women can vote, the reason why we have whatever it is. I mean, I mean, I'm always quite into that. Anyway, I then get to speak on stage and I. Oh, before that, you know, I'm kind of in questions about lots of things. Will you speak about this? Will you speak about that? Will you speak? I said, look, I've had my own fight. Can I just speak? You know, and then what I did do is I got them all chanting. Apparently, there's a million people come to Pride. I probably had about 3 or 400,000 people in front of me in Trafalgar Square. I've got him chanted. 'Freedom is my voice, freedom is my voice.' It was brilliant. They were all chanting back at me. I was just like, I'm now listening. But yeah, it was overwhelming to say the least. And then, you know, just getting a platform to finally free. Like I don't have these conversations. I would not be sitting on a stage here, even though I've been a public speaker talking anything about diversity inclusion before June this year, and I've been a public speaker for 20 years. That's how different my life has become. And this is what I'm overwhelmed with. The fact that I've got that freedom, the fact that I'm happy to do it. You know, this is all new to me, but I'm loving it. And I'll hopefully I'll keep learning and transitioning and, you know, go for my third gold medal, whatever that's going to be, I don't know, some big awards somewhere. I don't know, whatever comes. I'm so like blown away by, in fact, at the moment that taking one day at a time.

**Questioner**

**00:58:37:06**

One of the questions we've had online from anonymous and is 'What piece of advice would you give to your 18 year old self?'

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Kelly**

**00:58:45:11**

I would literally say, tell me, as an 18 year old, life is going to be a challenge and life is going to be won for fighting. And if you give up on it, those things don't come true. But I'm also going to be someone that's going to be there for you, and one day you'll be okay. Because going through all the crap that everybody goes through and a lot of people have gone through even more for me. You know, I lost my mom. That was the worst day of my life. You know, all those things. Um. I would just tell myself. That, you know, it can be okay and things will change. And, you know, got back. I wish I had me on my shoulder when I was 18 to say it's all going to be good and just breathe and take the time for you. And I probably would have said to myself, don't be so hard on myself, because I have been really hard on myself over my life, so I wish I could have given myself that reassurance.

**Sonny**

**00:59:37:14**

Uh, Kelly, we're out of time. We obviously could have spoken for another hour, easily. Um, but I hope you enjoyed it.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Kelly**

**00:59:44:09**

Yeah. Thank you. Thanks for the opportunity. And, you know, I will say to people that the fear and judgement of- especially from a community perspective, if people are still struggling, it's not as bad as the other side. It's easy to say it because I had it from that side. But I think we're in a world now that if you just talk about you and your life and how things affect you and you just want to be able to open that conversation is really important. I do believe from a organisational point of view, you have to have visibility, you have to have people leading their way. I think you have to be transparent with policies and how actually things can be supportive of people, instead of the fear of lack of promotion. If you say something and shout out, it's going to hurt. I think they need to change that. And I feel like, you know, people we have a I have a right, you have a right. We all have a right to stand side by side with the next person. And when we all remember that, that we're all here to live and not just wake up every day that I was doing for my life, we actually have a right to wake up and live our life as us. When we all connect with that, I think we have a better world.

**Sonny**

**01:00:51:15**

Great words to end on.

**Kelly**

**01:00:52:12**

Thank you.

***Clip: ITV Pridecast w/ Dame Kelly Holmes***

**Liam**

**01:01:05:16**

Oh, wow. That was amazing. The awe inspiring Dame Kelly Holmes there chatting to me, Simmone and Sonny about her coming out story and the importance of embracing and celebrating all forms of your identity. I have no doubt so many people will be able to take courage from Kelly's story there, and be proud of who they are. So thank you, Kelly, so, so much for being so honest and open in telling us about your journey. Again, thank you so much to the colleagues from the ITV Embrace, Women's, and Pride Network for putting on this event and to all the technical staff in helping to produce it. And a reminder, if you are part of the LGBTQ+ community and work for ITV, why not join the ITV Pride Network if you haven't done so already? Thanks again for listening to this edition of the ITV podcast. I hope you can tune in for the next episode.