



A United Front

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I'm Kisha, a wife, homeowner, and mother of five girls. I was born in Brooklyn to an African-American mother and a Caribbean father. My children's father, a Guyanese Rastafarian, and I were high school sweethearts. In our marriage we made all of our decisions together, but he was the head of the household. We had a strong marriage and our children saw us as a united front.

Things got rocky when my daughter, Ilana, entered middle school and started having problems. Over the next five years, she went from being a B student to failing grades. I got phone calls from school about her fighting, not doing homework, and being disobedient. It was so bad that the Administration for Children's Services got involved. When that didn't help, a judge sent us to family court. The week we were scheduled to go she got very upset. I asked her to tell me what was really going on. She cried and told me, "Mom, I'm bisexual. I like boys and girls."

I was shocked and didn't believe what she was telling me. I asked, "How long have you felt this

way?" She said, "Since middle school. I didn't tell you because I know Daddy would not accept me and you guys always make decisions together."

I made a decision right then to accept my daughter, but her father could not. To him, homosexuality is strictly forbidden. It wasn't happening in his house. He wanted to send her away to Guyana or Trinidad. I refused — she is a part of us. I began to realize that just accepting her was not enough; I had to make our home safe for her. After months of arguing, my husband told me I had to choose between my marriage and our daughter. At that point, I went to my father for guidance. I was afraid of his reaction, but he told me he accepted my daughter and would be there for us no matter what. With my father's support, I chose my daughter.

Everything changed when my husband left and my daughter felt safe in our home. Today my daughter is thriving. She finished high school with good grades and is going to cosmetology school. My girls and I are the new united front and they all know I, and my new husband, will love them no matter what.