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**DIY TV Personality Carmen De La Paz ‘Out’ as Proud Latina Lesbian**

“If I want to stand for any of my rights, I have to stand for ALL of who I am.”

*AUSTIN, TX –* International TV personalityCarmen De La Paz, ([www.carmendelapaz.com](http://www.carmendelapaz.com)) carpenter and co-host of OWN’s Emmy-nominated makeover show *Home Made Simple* has publicly shared her identity as a proud lesbian Latina in an intimate lunch setting in Milwaukee, WI to a group of employees at a local company. In an employee empowerment session entitled “Challenging Cultural and Gender Expectations,” De La Paz candidly shared how she tackled challenges throughout her career in male-dominated industries of home construction, design, visual arts and entertainment. De La Paz discussed the pivotal moments that shaped her trajectory and very personal struggles to stay true to herself, her family, culture and religion. Today, for “National Coming Out Day,” Carmen also shared a video on Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/119449064799912/videos/1444593385618800/>

***Why ‘Come Out’ Now?***

De La Paz shared, “I knew it was time to face what I see as a responsibility, and if I am truly honest, time to face my very real and personal fears of negative judgments in the Latino, Catholic, *macho* culture I grew up in.”

“I am at a point in my life where publicly sharing all of who I am has become a responsibility on so many levels,” she continued. “I can no longer stand back silently observing when deep down I know I may be a voice for the good, of not only my family, but as an example for someone I may never know.” De La Paz continued, “I am worth nothing if I don’t stand proudly for all of who I am – a woman, Latina and yes I am gay and OK.” She chuckled, ”That’s the hashtag, #GAYandOK”

In a rare moment of transparency, De La Paz spoke with a quiver in her voice and tears tucked into the corners of her eyes, “I have shared my creativity for a very long time, hoping others will find the value and joy in making your house a home with sweat equity. For me, someone who has built a career out of home and lifestyle, to not share the happiness in my life, my love and my family could easily be misconstrued as lying by omission – that doesn’t feel good or comfortable when I am not trying to hide my identity, love or family.” In her numerous interviews focused on DIY projects, power tools, paint colors, textures, her personal life was never discussed.

***Latino Family, Culture and Tradition***

“Generically speaking, in the Latino culture, you are simply not allowed to love outside the ‘him and her’ concept and if you do, ‘don’t you dare say anything about it,” De La Paz explained. “When you add our culture to the mix, most Gay Latinos face parents that are not supportive of ‘coming out’ publicly. That was the case for me. I knew my parents loved me, but, because of ‘*el que diran*’ (what will others say) or ‘*lo que se ve, no se dice*’ (what you see, you don’t speak about) brings many emotions with the decision.” Until recently, De La Paz lived a self-described standard Latino mentality of living her gay life privately because it seemed like “the respectful thing” to do for her parents, her audience and her church. She explained, “The off shoot is, the happier I am about MY life, MY love and MY family, the weight of what others consider ‘the respectful thing’ grows heavy and ultimately feels disrespectful to ME, the person I love and the children I am honored to co-parent.”

She insisted, “How can I say I am a proud anything – woman, Latina, business owner, etc. if I don’t publicly stand proud for *all* of who I am. If I want any of my rights, I have to publicly stand for ALL of who I am and represent.”

***Empowering Others***

De La Paz has been hailed by many throughout the US and Latin America in letters and social media as a positive influence who has empowered them through the instructional use of power tools for home projects. She continued, “Empowering people with knowledge, and inspiring them to reach outside their comfort zone has always been a personally important part of my job on television and off.” She hopes to empower even more by sharing her full identity, despite fear that it may alienate some. “Everything unknown may be scary yet, I know there are many Latino Gays, all over world, facing struggles I have been through. Our culture is so entrenched in tradition that sometimes we narrow our perspective on what is acceptable love,” she explained.

***Being in LOVE and a Step Mom***

Another compelling reason for her announcement had a lot to do with her recent life change. De La Paz relocated to Austin, Texas, from Los Angeles in 2016 to be with her partner and 2 children. She beamed, “I am happy, I am in love, I have a family,” She proudly stated, “I am a good person and will continue to do good things with the talents this life has given. I want any child to be proud of their family and their parents’ love - regardless of if it is Mom and Mom, Dad and Dad OR, Mom & Dad. I want to lead by example and demonstrate every day that love is love.”

**About:** *Carmen De La Paz brings a female perspective to the world of power tools, design and the concept of “do-it-yourself” by demystifying basic home projects and repairs via many television shows and Internet projects. Carmen’s has appeared on eight TV networks with more than 50 shows to her credit. Currently co-host/carpenter on the Oprah Winfrey Network, two-time Emmy Nominee* Home Made Simple*. Other credits include 10 shows on HGTV with six seasons on “Hammer Heads,” hundreds of episodes, over many seasons with four different shows on FOX International Spanish-language channels airing in 18 countries. Accustomed to sharing her knowledge in a way that inspires and builds confidence, Carmen is considered a leading expert, social media and targeted consumer influencer having served as brand ambassador and spokesperson for major consumer product brands empowering women, men and children.*

*Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico and raised in Waukesha, Wisconsin, Carmen holds a BFA/Music Theatre from Syracuse University and has studied Broadcast Journalism through the UCLA Certificate program. Carmen recently relocated from Los Angeles to Austin, Texas to be with her partner and children.*

For more information on Carmen De La Paz, visit [www.carmendelapaz.com](http://www.carmendelapaz.com)

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