

## ***Yvonne, born 1944***

I have never been in love with a boy, it was never there. Only for show, because you had to. Since I didn't really know anything about all this...

I fell in love when I started working, I was 16 or 17 years old. She was older, much older than me and I was so much in love. She met this man on and off and I was so jealous of him, at that time I didn't really know what it was all about. But the weird thing was that one of the assistants at work, she understood. I didn't know anything about homosexuality – what is it? But then she told me. Just then there had been articles in the New York newspapers that you could get an injection against homosexuality. She showed me the article. So I was thinking: Am I ill or what is this all about?

I continued falling in love with girls – but only platonically... So somehow I wasted my teens. When I was around 18-19 I started to give up, thinking: What is wrong with me? Is it only me? What am I going to do? I was just depressed and kept playing funeral music, didn't want to go on with life. But then when I was about 20, I read about this girl in the evening newspaper, Aftonbladet, she was asking and describing all the things that I felt and was wondering where to turn to. She got such an incredibly good reply, that she was to get in touch with RFSL (The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights). I cut it out of the paper thinking this is exactly what I will do as well. So I wrote a letter, put it in an envelope and left that envelope in a drawer for a week. I

didn't dare send it. Finally I found the courage and put it in the letterbox. Having done that I could have literally torn the box open, thinking No, no, no – I have just opened myself up wide open!

But then they telephoned me and we made an appointment and I went there, and was met by two older women. It felt as though something had just fallen into place. I was so happy when I left there.

But the most difficult part was at work. When you got back to work on Mondays and someone said: So how did you spend your weekend? Well, my boyfriend and I... I was in a period of lying that I don't even want to look back upon. And you never remembered what the heck you had said either.

No, it wasn't until I was 40 that I was completely open about it. Completely! I had reached the point where I would not deny things anymore. Now I tell everybody I am so happy, I would never have preferred to be straight. I have had such a good life, and these other things are forgotten.

Photo: Andreas Nilsson