



The Queer Eye Fab Five: Karamo Brown, Antoni Porowski, Tan France, Bobby Berk and Jonathan Van Ness (Photo: Denise Crew & Gavin Bond)

BOOKS

The Fab Five are back, serving you self-care realness with their new book

8
MIN

Cate Sevilla chats to the cast of Queer Eye about self-care, identity and the importance of having an emotional-support network



By Cate Sevilla on 16.11.18

The undisputed worst part about Queer Eye is that there are only eight episodes in each series. And, because it's on Netflix, we greedily gobble up each and every episode as if it were a simple-yet-satisfying hors d'oeuvre, sensually crafted by the hands of Antoni Porowski.

To fill the void, we follow them all on Instagram – squealing with delight at their comments and appearances in each other's feeds (“Oh, my God, did you see Bobby at Karamo's birthday?!"); we cry with joy when they rip the piss out of each other's selfies. (We also may, or may not, screengrab certain selfies and send them to our friends with the

drooling emoji.) Their podcasts and various media appearances feed our feverish need for more, until season three is finally with us – but, thankfully, a new book, *Queer Eye: Love Yourself, Love Your Life*, is here to give us our next quick fix of Tan, Karamo, Bobby, Antoni and Jonathan.

And, not to be dramatic, but it was genuinely a highlight of my career that I got the chance to speak to all five fabulous men about their exciting new book. (No, reader, I could not believe.)

Now, as someone guilty of purchasing “unauthorised biographies” of celebrities – and even the Buffy The Vampire Slayer Sunnydale High Yearbook – in the past, I must admit that books about TV shows are usually rather crap and pointless. However, the Queer Eye book is a *genuine delight*.

It’s an overwhelming task to try to interview five people – never mind dynamic, interesting, beautiful and talented men such as these – and I took this time with them seriously, not just because of my own personal love of them, but because they are five of the most caring and kind men to bless our popular culture in years. In 2018, to have a group of diverse queer men spreading the message of love, acceptance, kindness and positivity to a society that is in desperate need of all of it... well, it’s really bloody important.

Running throughout both the book and the TV show are the recurring themes of self-care, identity and masculinity – which were exactly what I wanted to talk to the cast about.



BEING OK WITH THE DISCOMFORT OF SAYING NO

When it comes to self-care, Jonathan Van Ness is a beacon of positivity. From yoga and Instagramming the inner monologues of his cats to excitedly attempting a triple Lutz on dry land in front of live studio audiences, Jonathan is 100% authentic and 100% real, 100% of the time. But, as anyone who is a giver and does that much work to be honest and real at all times will know, it’s quite easy to suddenly wind up exhausted.

“I’m a people-pleaser, but I don’t think in a bad way,” Jonathan explains, when I ask him how he looks after himself. “Like, I do love to connect with people and I do love to get to know people, but I think at some point, you know, for me the journey has been about, like, being OK with feeling uncomfortable with saying no because of self-preservation.”

Saying no, as many of us who love to cancel plans and stay in instead

do, is indeed a form of self-care and essential to balancing your energy, especially when you've overstretched yourself. Which is hard, especially if you're grateful or feel indebted for opportunities that have been given to you.

"Like, if you have to say no to that project or that thing or whatever, because you like kinda bit off a lot, that's kinda the journey for me. It's knowing when it's OK to say no, because it's uncomfortable for me. Because, you know, I'm always, like, really grateful and I do love [my job] – this has all been such an amazing ride.

"Sometimes, you gotta take care of yourself, and, I think, is like one of those things that we will always deal with, with balance and adulting, you know? But it's not even a really a 'being in the public eye' thing. No matter where you are, a lot of times we want to be everything to everyone in our lives that we care for, but sometimes that can exhaust you, so you have to be OK with saying no."

“

No matter where you are, a lot of times we want to be everything to everyone in our lives that we care for, but sometimes that can exhaust you, so you have to be OK with saying no

FILLING YOUR HOME WITH HAPPINESS

Another way of taking care of yourself, as anyone who has seen an episode of *Queer Eye* knows, is also your personal space – particularly in tough times of transition, heartbreak or mental-health struggles. On the show, we see people who are recovering from illnesses, the loss of a loved one or taking major next steps in their career. One particular life moment that many women and men go through – but isn't tackled that much in everyday pop culture – is divorce. This is a subject that is complicated and tricky for numerous reasons, but particularly for women with children who are now single mothers, and remain living in the family home they once shared with their partner. I asked Bobby Berk if there were some simple things women who are going through this can do, to reclaim their space.

"For me, I would think it's really important to just really make sure that you think about the things that make you happy, you know?" says Bobby. "Not to make it sound like you're being selfish, but really do think about the things that are going to affect your happiness and mental health... the things that you know will really help you take care of yourself. And also things that help you have moments with your kids."

Another simple thing you can do? "Make sure that you get yourself amazing bedding, so that when you wake up in the morning, you're in a good mood; that when you go to sleep at night, you're in a good mood, that you're thinking about how great that bedding is and not that you're, y'know, in the middle of a divorce!"

SELF-CARE BUT MAKE IT FASHION

There is a spectacular quote in the *Queer Eye* book that says in big bold letters: "Making an effort in one area of your life, like dressing in

clothes that look good and fit well, can affect so many other areas of your life." Obviously, the author of this quote is Tan France. I asked Tan to elaborate on what someone, who wants to change their personal style but doesn't really know where to start, should do. Is it a Pinterest board? Do we throw out all our old shit? WHERE DO WE START, TAN??

"The first thing I always suggest, if you're struggling with finding your own style, is to gravitate towards somebody who you think has great style. For example, whether it's a friend, if it's Jonathan Van Ness, if it's a sibling, if it's a celebrity or if it's Tan France, look at what they would do. Think about that when you look through your wardrobe and pick a piece that you think they would wear."

Now, before you scream, "I don't have anything JVN would wear!" don't worry. "If you don't have those pieces," says Tan, "then think: what would this person buy if they were shopping right now? Use them as a point of reference."



GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR SEXUALITY (WHILE IN THE SPOTLIGHT)

Clothing and personal style are a major vehicle for self-expression, and, for many, a huge part of one's identity is their sexuality. And, while Antoni Porowski, our Sexy Avocado God In A Tight-Fitting Band T-shirt, is (heavily) desired by *literally everyone*, regardless of gender and sexual preference, his own sexuality is, as he says in the book, "not how I express myself".

In a subchapter titled "Late To The Game", Antoni tells his own, admittedly mild and unexplosive, coming-out story and says that being "straight or gay" wasn't necessarily part of his identity in the past. So, how does one grapple with one's shifting sexuality, especially in the spotlight?

"It's a tricky kind of ongoing thing with me, because I do consider myself a very private person... I'm also in this position where my life is very public now, and with that comes a lot of responsibility..."

"What's shifting and what's changing in me is that now that I do have responsibility to sort of like stand there and be visible for people who don't have a voice. Like, the amount of DMs I get from Polish kids, for example, how... it's really messed up with what's going on there right now. There's a lot of these, like, very far-right conservatives, and [the kids] don't really feel safe expressing themselves – and I'm able to do that freely, mostly without consequence, so it's kind of pushing me outside my comfort zone."

“

I think that what we do on our show is that we allow men to speak about things that they normally wouldn't speak about

GIVING MASCULINITY A SAFE SPACE TO EVOLVE

It was at this point in the interview that I wanted to discuss, with Karamo Brown, masculinity and how it's represented in the series and the book. But, unfortunately, Karamo needed a wee at this exact moment, as did Tan when I asked the lads my very first question. ("We have terrible bladders, I apologise!" – Antoni Porowski, 2018).

Although he's been given the title "culture expert", Karamo, in particular, has been so pivotal in the Queer Eye series in combating stereotypes for straight men – giving them the space to be vulnerable, encouraging them to put in the effort with their partners and their family and, specifically, in emphasising the importance of friendship and of having an emotional-support network.

"I think that what we do on our show is that we allow men to speak about things that they normally wouldn't speak about," Tan, in lieu of Karamo (who was in the loo), explains. "We give them a forum, or we lend them a forum, that is very comfortable and open. And people can have those mini Queer Eye moments in their own homes in their own life by speaking to people that they know will totally support them."

And what of the "straight guys" out there, who don't necessarily feel they have an emotional-support network and friendship group available to them?

"Times are getting better where it's more comfortable for you to be able to have an open and honest conversation as a straight man with your friends. I think that there's more of an accepted forum now; if you don't find it with your straight male friends, then it's hopefully with a family member – even if you have to speak to your sister, your mum. Even if they're not of the same sex, speaking to somebody that you know will be able to give you emotional support... if they don't have anybody... go out there and find a group you know you're interested in – if you're into soccer, speak to those kinds of people you know will have a similar life view to the issues that you're going through."





Queer Eye: Love Yourself. Love Your Life
(Headline, £25) is out now

[@CateSevilla](#)

Sign up

Love this? Sign up to receive our Today in 3 email, delivering the latest stories straight to your inbox every morning, plus all The Pool has to offer. You can manage your email subscription preferences at My Profile at any time

ENTER EMAIL

OR

SHARE THIS ARTICLE: [f](#) [t](#) [g+](#) [p](#) [✉](#) [in](#)

TAGGED IN: [QUEER EYE](#) [BOOKS](#) [LGBT](#)

WHAT'S ON NOW



READ
"NICE GIRLS DON'T MAKE
VERY GOOD DRAMA"

Rachel Weisz and Emma Stone talk their new movie, *The Favourite*, the #MeToo movement one year on and how "niceness" plagues women on screen

5
MIN

[SEE TODAY'S PROGRAMME](#)

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE



LIFE
QUEER EYE IS A STRAIGHT
WOMAN'S FANTASY

6
MIN



NEWS & VIEWS
WHAT MICHELLE OBAMA
MEANS TO ME, A BLACK
WOMAN

4
MIN

ALSO IN 8 MINUTES



HEALTH
GOOP ASIDE, GWYNETH IS
RIGHT - WE NEED TO TALK
MORE ABOUT THE
MENOPAUSE

8
MIN



LIFE
DEAR VIV: WHAT CAN I DO
ABOUT MY SEXIST BROTHER?

8
MIN

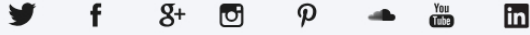
ABOUT
TODAY'S PROGRAMME
CONTACT

INFO
TERMS & CONDITIONS
PRIVACY

Sign up

Sign up to receive our Today in 3 email, delivering the latest stories straight to your inbox every morning, plus all The Pool has to offer. You can manage your email subscription preferences at My Profile at any time.

SIGN UP TO TODAY IN 3



COOKIES



We use cookies on your computer to help you get a better experience from this website.
You can change your [cookie settings](#) at any time. Click below to continue.

DON'T SHOW AGAIN