



Cannes Lions 2017: Speak Freely— In Conversation With Gigi Gorgeous

Published
July 2017

In the last Lightning Talk from the YouTube Beach at Cannes Lions 2017, Gigi Gorgeous and Tea Uglov, Creative Director of Google Creative Lab in Sydney, sat down to discuss how online video is enabling LGBT+ creators to tell their stories to a diverse, global audience.

think with **Google**

Friday was Pride Day at the YouTube Beach, and what better was to celebrate awareness, tolerance and empathy than with an intimate chat between YouTube superstar Gigi Gorgeous and Tea Uglow from Google's Creative Lab in Sydney?



"When I started on YouTube I was in highschool and had no idea what I wanted to do with my life," Gigi says, recalling her earliest memories of posting videos online. "I found YouTube and it was a safe space to express myself and be creative. The first video was scary, but also not that big of a deal. We were all just having fun."

With so much of her life documented digitally, including all the joy and pain of coming out as a trans woman and then transitioning, Tea wonders how Gigi feels about living her life on YouTube. "Honestly, it was not that serious ever. It was just me living my life," Gigi remembers, confessing that, compared to making her own videos, she found it much harder to give up creative control during the production of her YouTube Red movie, *This Is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous*.

"I found YouTube and it was a safe space to express myself and be creative."

The title of Gigi's movie isn't just a favorite catchphrase - it describes the reality of a film in which no aspect of Gigi's life was treated as off limits. Talking about the depiction of her father's journey towards accepting her gender, Gigi says "we transitioned together," and that the documentary has strengthened their bond. Gigi's family and friends are regularly featured in her videos, but she's acutely aware of the need to respect their boundaries and privacy. "For the most part I'm just living my life and sharing what I want, but of course there is a balance," she says.

It's been almost ten years since Gigi posted her first video, and while much has changed in that time, the support of her fans on YouTube has been a constant. "My relationship with my supporters is the most important thing. When I'm down, what brings me back is knowing that they're there and that I help and inspire them." Having shared so much already, Gigi says that the pressure of producing new material does occasionally weigh heavily, but that as a role model for millions, there's no chance of her giving up: "You're not promised tomorrow, so just have fun with it!"

With her huge following, Gigi inevitably encounters hatred and negativity from time to time - a reality for many LGBT+ voices expressing themselves on digital platforms. How she deals with this trolling and toxicity perhaps sums up best why people of all genders, races and sexualities have found a home on YouTube: "You need to find a family," she says, "even if it's online."



Gigi Gorgeous
YouTube Creator



Tea Uglow
Creative Lab, Google