EXPLORING YOUR FULL SEXUAL POTENTIAL, PART 15: LEARNING NEW NARRATIVES

In this article, we will investigate the switch-off moments that can occur on all sorts of occasions. We will show an array of 24 instances that some men sent me, and we shall demonstrate a way to create a new narrative. The goal is to learn to connect to other people instead of retreating into yourself as you have always done.

Here is a list of possible switch-off moments:

Passing a stranger in the street:

1. *He looks so good, I barely dare to look at him. So I switch off;*

2. *He didn't greet me immediately. I am so inferior, no wonder he didn't. So I switch off.*

Feelings of jealousy being envoked:

3. *Boy was he muscular! I am of course no match with my lousy physique. He had it all! So I switch off.*

4. *What a smooth talker, that gorgeous confidence. Everybody likes him. Look at me, I will never be that good. So I switch off.*

Anticipatory fear of rejection:

5. *They're playing football, I'd love to join in. But I know I'm a drip and they'll end up mad at me when I fumble the ball. So I switch off.*

6. *"Hey, do you want to join our volleyball team?" "Oh, no thanks, I'm real-*

ly not very good at it." And I switch off.

7. *I have never been good at athletics or team sports, so I fear humiliation. I turn down offers to join men playing sports, because I fear feeling humiliated. I withdraw from men and I switch off.*

8. *I am afraid he will see that I have SSA's. I am so embarrassed. How do I come across? I don't know. So I switch off.*

9. *That group is laughing and is so confident. I'll be a total heel amongst them. So I switch off.*

10. *Some guys drive past me and shout something. They must be bigots and see I'm gay! I am not sure. So I switch off.*

11. *That guy looks so violent. I swear he wants to kick my head in. So I switch off.*

12. *I see him, he's so attractive, but he's looking at me so accusingly. He must know I'm gay. So I switch off.*

13. *There were these two rowdy guys making a lot of noise in the locker room. Attractive but ever so dominant. I secretly sneaked a peek, but then I switched off.*

Feeling superior and aloof:

14. *That guy's so rude and vulgar — no finesse. And a smoker. YUCK! So I switch off.*

15. *Men in the street looking at women are so offensive and demeaning to women. They see them as sex objects, the look in their eyes! So I switch*

off.

Angry at other people

16. *When I reach out with affection that is not returned, I feel rejected and I shut off.*

17. *When questioned about my actions or decisions, I feel defensive and take this as criticism whether or not it is criticism. Then I shut off.*

18. His tone of voice is just as offensive as my father's used to be. I hate that in a man. So I switch off.

19. *I looked at him, but he immediately set his eyes on a girl at ten yards distance. That hurt. So I switch off.*

Anticipatory shame toward the other sex

20. *She's gorgeous all right, but scares me to death! She'll give me hell if I don't satisfy her. So, I switch off.*

21. *"Hey, look at that cute chick! She's a total stunner. Let's go chat her up". "Oh, no, I'm out of time now, I've got some work to finish. See you later". And I switch off.*

22. *That woman with her happy children must think I am really weird to not be married at my age. So I switch off.*

Instances of self-pity

23. *When I feel ignored, I feel unimportant and I withdraw and shut off.*

24. *I have been lonely for so long. Just leave me.*

1. Not investing

In this array of spontaneous feelings, we see over and over again that a man decides beforehand not to invest any more effort into contact with people in his direct vicinity. He feels that he has his reasons, and he subsequently withdraws into himself. The other person is never aware of the reason why this is happening, and only sees a man who withdraws, who is not there, or who may be avoiding eye contact or who is slipping or walking away.

The thing is: nothing ventured, nothing gained.

What are we doing in these situations? We repeat lousy self-talk, and for all sorts of personal reasons, do not venture anything. Old self-talk from way back when, a lonely child who learned to suffer in silence. No nuisance: a good little boy.

We just hang around, waiting for better times to come. Waiting for the day that the other guy shows more initiative, better behavior, more enthusiasm. In fact, we passively expect him to see our neediness and kiss it better, because we feel he has the power, he is the *MAN*. Well, he won't.

Which then adds to our self-pity and further lack of self-esteem. What to do?

Men with SSA's do not just feel lousy about their gender, it is worse: they have low self-esteem all around. The problem of homosexuality is not just a sexual problem, it is a problem of self-image and self-value in general. Their sense of self-love is continuously fluctuating. It is not just a gender inferiority feeling, it is a sense of being the odd man out in many other ways too, out of contact and out of touch.

All therapy which focuses solely on the sexual aspect and sexual attractions is doomed to fail, because the sexual attraction is merely a small corner of a bigger painting. It is merely a hieroglyphic, a street sign, pointing to the larger picture of diminished self-esteem. It is your existence between all men and

women out there, which is tormenting you, which nags and which seeks an ultimate solution. Your body and mind compel you restlessly to move about on a journey and to search for the ultimate feeling of okay-ness.

This then is the motor for despair and the leading drive and incentive of jealousy. And that jealousy bubbles and boils inside with every self-confident guy you perceive, and who appears to have no self--esteem issues at all.

> *"I want it, I want it, I can't keep my eyes off of him".*

What you are basically saying deep down inside is:

> *"I want it too! Give me some, let me hug you and then share that feeling. Give me some of yours, please, pretty please. Will you be my friend and then give me a little portion of the cherry pie you are eating, the pie of self-esteem? Please?"*

And before grief and fear of rejection can get the upper hand over you, you walk away and just switch off. A defensive move.

Yeah, a move into loneliness. You wisely avoided pain (haven't you always done that?) but have not resolved the issue. You are safe, but lonely. And almost no one understands this feeling. What to do?

Easy. Switch on again.

This idea is worthy of the Nobel Prize, but it is true. Just switch on again. How?

2. Rational Emotive Therapy

Albert Ellis showed a way to do that. It is called Rational Emotive Therapy. He proposed that you alternate your emotional reactions with your detached rationalizations. Most people see rational thinking as something negative and to frown upon. So, he said, alternate between both ways of thinking and acting. Make them two sides of a new coin. Make the best of both worlds.

In step one, you become conscious of your emotional reactions, as we have described above. You need to write them down, so we can turn them into material to work with.

The next step is rational: you write down a precise plan to limit the shut-down and to create re-engagement.

The third step is emotional again: you try to recognize this type of shut-down exactly when you defensively display it and then implement the re-engagement you made up.

Your mind is now being forced to engage in new behavior, just like your body is forced to engage in new movements when you go to a sports instructor or personal trainer ("Keep your chin up, move your arm all the range of motion! Come on.")

You know beforehand that the new behavior is appropriate (after all, you made it up yourself) and now you force your mind and body to go down a new lane and not up the old path that you always marched down since you were a child. This is work, a mind game and an important one. You must learn to actively reconnect and to practice it.

3. Switch-off moment #2

Let us look at switch-off #2.

He didn't greet me immediately. I am so inferior, no wonder he didn't. So I switch off.

New behavior: I smile at him, I say:

(a) *"How are you doing?"* Or:

(b) *"So, you are here on time too, just like me, afraid to come too late?"* Or:

(c) *"Getting over here on time is the hardest part, now the fun is about to start."* Or:

(d) *"Did you manage to avoid the queue just like I did? I hate the queues here all the time."* Or:

(e) *"So, did the heavy traffic bog you down, it did me."*

In this way, you not only make your presence known ("Here I am", actively), but you give him a hook-up line so that he can interact with you. You give him a sentence with which he can switch on too and carry on the communication with you. Do not make all too intense eye-contact. Keep it casual and low profile. He will hear you just the same. Just don't make it a therapy session with eye-to-eye gazing. Give him room and space, and make it no big deal. So he will say:

(a) I say: *"How are you doing?"* He says:

"Oh, not bad. I was in a bit of a rush. Were you caught up in the traffic?" (see how he gives you a hookup line back?). Then you can say: "Some guys even buy a bicycle for this problem, but I am too lazy".

And then see what he says. He is bound to react.

(b) I say: *"So, you are here on time too, just like me"*. He can say:

"Yeah, I try always to be here on time, it is pretty hard with my job" (he is

giving you a switch-on back). You can say:

“Oh, lousy job and working your butt off just the same?” (giving him a switch-on). After which he will probably laugh and give you a switch-on back:

“I am not complaining about the money but it has its downsides”. After which you can switch-on back:

“Tell me about it, but not now”. Both laugh.

You did it, you connected. Straight guys love other guys, never forget that. He is not rejecting you, it is all in your mind. Remember that. You were the little boy doing the rejecting; straight guys have no idea what that feels like.

(c) You say: *“now the fun is about to start.”* In doing so, you are offering him a switch-on. He can say:

“Do you really think that fun is starting tonight?” (He is offering you a switch-on back). You say:

“Well, you can go back through the entrance door if you want to, it saves you the money and the effort”. He will probably laugh (you gave him a switch-on back). He will say:

“I am not the kind of guy who walks away from a challenge”. (he is giving you a switch-on back, so bite the bait and say:)

“In case of an emergency, they serve vodka”.

Both laugh, man-to-man talk about crap, but it is also about connecting. No big deal, better than silence and preoccupations, I always say. Don’t worry about it, just connect. Better than trying to be perfect and shutting up in the process. Guys are not that picky. Find out for yourself.

(d) You say: *“I hate the queues around here”.* (You are offering a switch-on and being vulnerable in the process; men always recognize and appreciate that!) He says:

> *“Gives you the time to check out the chicks”.* (This is really threatening, so joke about it and say:)
>
> *“Yeah, check out the chicks and come to the conclusion that this is not going to be my night out!”* Both are bound to laugh their heads off.

Do not confuse cracking jokes about women (warding off the fear of rejection that every man also experiences) with sexist behavior. We are men, and fear of rejection by women is a common problem, not only with men with SSA’s. So share that fear, and do as kids do: joke about it. Men’s language. No harm done.

(e) You say: *“Did the heavy traffic bog you down”* (you are offering a switch-on with no idea what will come of it. Don’t worry, men appreciate other men.) He will say:

> *“It is getting worse. I am getting a new car next week. At least I will suffer in comfort”.* (he may sound like a show-off, but do not switch off; this is a switch-on). You say:
>
> *“A new car for a traffic jam! You must be desperate!”* (thereby offering him yet another switch-on). He will laugh his head off,
>
> *“Yeah, but it has a super sound system”.* Don’t forget to roar with him. No big deal. Don’t be picky. Keep male-to-male contact light-hearted at all times. It is the way to go.

It is not about the content, it is about connecting. His size, importance, self--confidence, muscularity, aloofness, all come into a realistic perspective, and you will notice that you get the attention you deserve, although not the hug that you are waiting for.

But then again, a big hug as soon as you show your face, is a remnant from a distant past, the boy who enters the room and expects Dad to spread his arms for you to fling yourself into. If he didn't, then that wish will never be fulfilled, no matter how long you yearn. Men are not into flinging themselves into each other's arms, but they do occasionally. Be prepared for it to happen during big man-to-man things like sports events. If you are caught up in one, don't ever reject again. Those rejecting days are over.

There is more to say on the language which helps you re-engage with other people. In the next part, we shall look further into this problem: *"What on earth am I going to say?"*

To be continued

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