EXPLORING YOUR FULL SEXUAL POTENTIAL, PART 20: FEAR OF REJECTION





Being rejected is one of our deepest human fears. Biologically wired with a longing to belong, we fear being seen in a critical way. We're anxious about the prospect of being cut off, demeaned, or isolated. We fear being alone.

A big part of our fear of rejection is fear of experiencing hurt and pain. Our aversion to unpleasant experiences prompts behaviors that don't serve us. We withdraw from people rather than risk reaching out. We hold back from expressing our authentic feelings. We abandon others before they have a chance to reject us. We are afraid.

Of what? We may be afraid that rejection confirms our worst fear — perhaps that we're unlovable, or that we're destined to be alone, or that we have little worth or value. When these fear-based thoughts keep spinning in our mind, we may become agitated, anxious, or depressed.

Here is an example.

Isn't it strange how my arm clicks at night on the mouse and all of a sudden, the computer surfs to a nice porn site. I fail to see how my arm does that. My hand seems to move, and then: Clickety click. This hunk appears. Hmm, not my type. Barely have I said that to myself, and clickety-click: Mr. Handsome is there smiling at me. Check out his self-confidence. How does my arm do it? It's simple. My arm has led me to a nice safe environment: there is no one out there to reject me. My arm has found a coping mechanism for my fear of rejection.

In the imaginary example above, we see the creation of a virtual world by means of the computer, in which there is no interaction with the other person. Research shows that the majority of all men view pornography, since it is so easily available on the Internet. The use of pornography has advantages: you don't need to go through the hassle of finding someone for a date or a sexual encounter; there is no one to reject you; there is no interaction, hence you can gaze at the other person as long as you like; and that person always looks great.

But it also has disadvantages: the models are merely actors, chosen (paid) for their good looks and the size of their genitals; the scenes they play are fake; they often use Viagra and

such to maintain an immediate and long erection (or the director removes the scenes in which the erection goes down); and you find yourself spending hours but achieving no real interaction. When you switch off the computer, the fake world is gone, and the original yearning will inevitably return.

Traveling out into the real world to achieve such a thing, triggers fear of rejection. Especially when you are feeling low-spirited, it is then that the negative voices in your head can start playing up again. An ancient tune, melancholy and downhearted, will revive. How do you get rid of that feeling of emptiness, that yearning to be as happy, powerful and confident as the men that you gaze at?

Perhaps we can analyze those negative emotions and see if we can change that forlorn tune which is resonating its throbbing mood like a bass guitar, pile-driving in the background.

James wrote a gem of an email to me, although he did not know that it was spot on for explaining the essence of fear of rejection.

2. James

James from Ohio wrote to me on a sad, blue day:

> "*Why does everyone else have it so easy? Why does everyone else handle difficulties so much easier than I do? Why do I feel everything? Why do I have to struggle so hard just to function some times? Why can't I be happy? Why does everyone else get to be happy? Why is everyone else so perfect? How come no one notices me drowning in pain and in sorrow and misery? Why does no one care? Why does everyone just tell me what I'm doing is wrong? Why do I hear nothing in my head except "you should be doing this and you're not, you should be doing that and you're not."*

Is everybody really telling James that all he is doing, is wrong? Is everybody else really all that happier? Are difficulties far less for others? Is everyone else really so perfect? Is no one noticing him at all? Does no one really care?

Aren't these just voices in his head, like an age-old computer script caught in a loop?

James asks himself: "*Why does no one care?*" Let us try to analyze this basic question, this core feeling of being rejected.

– James feels unlovable. He seems to know for sure. He projects his feeling of not being lovable onto the other person, and therefore fools himself that it is the other person who is upholding that opinion (projection #1).

– He then asks himself why it is that other people have that opinion about him. In other words, their rejection has become a certainty in his mind and he knows what direction their mind is going (projection #2).

– Now that he knows for sure that they find him unlovable and now that he knows for sure that their opinion has even become immutable, then he sets about to try to unravel their thinking, because their thinking needs unraveling, not his own (projection #3).

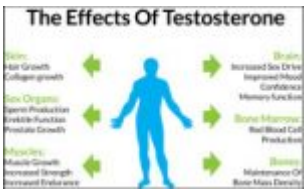
Were James to ask the persons whom he is accusing of not-caring, they would certainly say: *"James, what on earth are you talking about?"*

James is projecting.

And as long as he is stuck in that loop, he will never fathom the depth of his misery. He cannot reach the bottom of his predicament because he is attributing feelings to other people, feelings which have their origins in his own mind, not theirs. He externalizes these feelings outwardly, and in doing so, can acquire the victim stance, the Hurt Boy syndrome. This syndrome can decay into the Desperate Boy syndrome, a building block of depression, seen so often in men struggling with same-sex attractions.

3. Testosterone

It is then that good old testosterone comes along, and kisses it better.



It is such a powerful drug, such a wonderful lifesaver, soothing pain, loneliness and humiliation. With testosterone and the rush of hormones flooding the mind, the unbearable becomes bearable, whatever the trouble may be. In the psycho-sexual development of a man who later struggles with same-sex attractions, testosterone came along from age eleven onward to alleviate a multitude of seemingly unbearable feelings and ambivalences related to sexual identification. Good old testosterone.

That is how my arm moves on its own. And testosterone is still doing the trick. Always will.

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4. Understanding James

Point is, what is the underlying conflict for which good old testosterone steps in? James told

us all about it, if we are willing to see.

James says: "*Why does everyone just tell me what I'm doing is wrong?"* Even this is a projection. The problem that each and every man struggling with same-sex attractions is facing, is the fact that all his problems, all the woe and all the hurt which seem to stem from others, are in fact projections.

As we have seen in Part 4 of this series, the psycho-dynamic explanation of SSA's consists basically of the fact that the young boy did not, could not identify with his same-sex parent to the degree that other boys carelessly and automatically did.

There is a multitude of reasons for this, see Part 3. This rejection which he felt (whether actual or not) was such an important pivotal turning point in his acquiring a sense of total maleness that he felt left out, rejected, an outsider, and felt abandoned as he tried to make sense of his childhood. He remained in the world of the women, the world to which he has been attached since birth, and the world to which he is still connected with a psychological umbilical cord.



He never let go, he never left Squaw Camp and never felt initiated into the male world of the warriors leaving Squaw Camp on horseback. He stayed at home, feeling abandoned by all the males in his life. Good old Teddybear (his make-believe companion). This realization of essential loneliness will last a lifetime, and will haunt him till the day he dies.

And so it is with James. At nights or in the day, it is as if strange spirits have come around to echo again that voice from way back then:

> "*Where are you, James?", "Come with us, James!", "Don't hang around the female folk, you sissy, James!", "James, don't lag behind!", "James, saddle up, ride with the ponies!", "James, you are doing the wrong thing!".*

And so the ghosts continue to say to James that he is doing the wrong thing, and those ghosts have been around for a long, long time. They still haunt.

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5. A reply to James

Let us see if we can offer James a new tune, a boost for his old chorus-line of sadness and self--pity. Perhaps it may even work.

James writes "*Why does everyone else get to be happy? Why is everyone else so perfect?"* Because you are lagging behind, James. You still have not left the Squaws and fulfilled your ultimate destiny, to be an average non-perfect male amongst males. You have not learned the joy of imperfection, the only way to be.

James writes *"Why does everyone else have it so easy?"* They don't, James. But you were too far away from the boys being initiated into men to notice that becoming a man is a hard thing to do. For you, becoming a regular normal man seems to be a cinch for others. Well, it isn't. But there was no man in your life to help you through that experience and to stand by you when you failed. No one lifted you up. Your life in Squaw Camp was basically male loneliness. Still is.

James writes: *"Why does everyone else handle difficulties so much easier than I do?"* Because you need glasses, James. You are short--sighted. Never went to the optician.



James writes: "*Why do I hear nothing in my head except "you should be doing this and you're not, you should be doing that and you're not."* Because you were raised in Squaw Camp, and that nagging voice is the over-concerned and over-protective female parent, who meant well with her dominating, with her kindness, a person who you could not defy or abandon. Feeling one with the squaws in Squaw Camp is really only meant for girls, not you. No male ever told you that it is okay to be mediocre at times, to fail at times, to be a moron at times, senseless and insensitive at times, and how to find an equilibrium with more apt behavior.

Men can be morons at times, but they can also be great. That insight makes male life so much easier.

Your genetically programmed need for male affirmation, attention and love were never met in a non-sexual way before puberty. And if Dad was not around before that age to hug you, another guy will be around later. And it will satisfy your need temporarily, especially thanks to good old testosterone, which kisses all unsolvable identification issues better.

And so your arm just seems to surf to that nice good looking dude, such confidence! *"Wish it was me",* you dream.



Roger Daltrey, 1969, "See me, feel me, touch me, heal me"

It is a mirage, James, the idealized image of the man you might have been, a hieroglyph. It is your longing, your secret desire, your role model from an age when adult men were gods. *"See me, feel me, touch me, heal me",* sings rock-star Roger Daltrey, expressing a normal male feeling, way back in Woodstock, 1969.

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6. Expressions of fear of rejection

Fear of rejection is a crucial aspect of the feelings of men who experience SSA's. It is the basic reason why gay emancipation started in the first place. Every Gay Pride Parade is an expression of that fear.



2017 Gay Canal Parade, Amsterdam

Collectively, one defies normality as outrageously, unashamed and obscene as possible, and then sees what happens. No limits. The participants are observing the crowd more intensely than the crowd is observing them: *"Am I being rejected?"*

When being the center of attention at a Gay Canal Parade (*"See me, feel me"*), the participants are not behaving in their normal fashion or in their normal attire. Many gays who do not participate in it, who are not into obscenity, narcissism or emphasizing otherness, are even angry about the Gay Parade, because it gives a false impression of being gay, so they bring forward, *"You are not speaking on my behalf".*

But their voices are silenced by the radical activists who, with great amounts of finances have hijacked the gay activist scene and marginalized all moderates. The parade is an expression of defiance, and it is used as a test case. So, we can safely say that in the gay liberation movement, fear of rejection is an obsession.

It is the fear itself which one wishes to be liberated from. When a world is created in which the fear would not be justified, then we would be happy, so one imagines.



2017 Gay Canal Pride Parade, Amsterdam

But in super-tolerant countries like The Netherlands with its Canal Parade or Scandinavia with its City Pride March, we witness activist manifestations (*"See me, feel me"*), but nevertheless the fear still exists.

The defiance, the showing-off, is obviously there as the participants anxiously study the faces staring at them from the canal sides or street curbs respectively.

In Amsterdam, radical activists reiterate the pledge that they are on a crusade against malice and that history is in the making. However, according to the 2017 annual government survey, 98% of the Dutch population has no problems with gay marriage and subsequent divorce, gay colleagues and politicians or even a gay prime minister. Many of the Dutch political ministers have been, and in the new government, are yet once again openly gay, including the Minister for the Interior, but to no avail. The Netherlands now looks back at 18 years of legalized gay marriage, adoption and gay divorce (1 in 3), but the fear does not subside, and at the collective level it is even cultivated by the activists.

Therefore, it is too simple to say that the fear is by definition an expression of hostility coming from the outside world. In NW Europe, it does not come from without. It is an acquired and ingrained mental process, stemming from within. This makes it an important psychotherapeutic topic to handle. All psychotherapists need to make this a topic of vital interest for their professional work, the unfounded gay fear of rejection.

To see this, we need to observe the early psycho-sexual development that has helped shape a boy's world-view of himself and others: the concept of *double-binds.*

7. Childhood development, the clue in understanding the adult

The male child who later struggles with SSA's, not only felt rejected, but he did something to fight back. His anger for not being seen and recognized for who he is, even as an infant at age 2 to 3 (and infants can get angry) made him recoil away from that promise of own maleness, and like a snail or hermit crab, made him shirk back in his shell towards Mom, who felt safer. After all, she was there all along. She may not be perfect, but still …

The little male infant returns the perceived rejection of his same-sex parent, because he doesn't want that humiliation and pain ever again. *"Go away, I didn't want you in the first place"*, he says to Dad and all that Dad stands for.

The liar.

And in doing so, he is tragically making the biggest mistake of his life. He is giving up hope. The pain will last a lifetime, unless he undoes it through therapy or insight.

The most worrying is the thought: *"Go to hell, I never wanted you in the first place".* The boy is clearly rejecting maleness (although later as a man at night, in the darkroom or gay-bar or on the Internet, his soul dwells where he imagines he may unite with maleness after all; a secret pleasure, so promising yet so elusive).



He is rejecting Dad and all he stands for, and yet seeks attention and affirmation. He demonstrates the *healthy* need for affirmation and an *unhealthy* defiance at the same time. *"I want you, I hate you"*.

That behavior is not inborn, as activists insist. It is a double-bind, the essence of SSA's. It reflects a painful inner turmoil, one he hopes to settle in a safe and trusted environment, in his case under a separatist rainbow colored flag. Just like a shoal of fish does, he is seeking safety in numbers in a gay identity. And from there, he dares to defy the scary streets, denouncing straight society, and projecting his ancient rime onto unknown onlookers. He is caught in a never-ending computer loop.

8. The solution.

The answer to the riddle is quite simple: stop rejecting. In men with SSA's, the fear of rejec-

tion is primarily a projection of the own mind. You are rejecting, but you project that rejection onto the other guy. And then you fear it. The other guy has no idea what you are talking about, because it is a projection. It has nothing to do with *HIM*.

You are quite sure that the other person is doing it, and is constantly doing it. Yes, because you would know all about that, wouldn't you?

There is a simple game to play, in order to overcome it. When you see a group of young men and you feel the fear coming on, then say to yourself with every step you make:

"*Step, step forward, they are not rejecting me. Step, step forward, they are not rejecting me.*"

And repeat this phrase with every step you make. You are adding new lines to your brain computer program. You are resolving the faulty mental loop which you are accustomed to. And you need to do this consciously at first.

The rewards are great, because the fear of rejection will automatically evaporate. This positive incentive then reinforces your trust in repeating the sentence as you walk on the street.

You can also say these lines in your head when you are at the gym, for example, and there are three big (and great looking) guys, fooling around noisily.

You will then perhaps find the courage to connect, to make a casual remark, no matter what. You are showing non-hostility. You will be surprised when you hear them talking back to you, seeing you, recognizing you. It is then that you will start realizing that they have those needs too, and that you have never satisfied *THEIR* needs, because you were too self-absorbed in your preoccupations.

At Gay Parades, the participants are certainly not *'seeing'* or *'recognizing'* the needs of heterosexual on-lookers. The latter are condescendingly looked down on. People who are labeled as heterosexual need affirmation too; life is a two-way street.

Ultimately, you will be replacing fears and self-pity with adventure into new uncertainties. And that is what all young boys do. You will be resuming the journey that all men have been through, and still travel on, on a day to day basis.

Fear of rejection is a projection of your own deep-rooted rejections.

To be continued