

EXPLORING YOUR FULL SEXUAL POTENTIAL, PART 21: BEING NEEDY



Neediness, your life consists of neediness. Needy as a kid, needy as an adult. But look at that guy out there, he doesn't have that. Wow, look at that self-confidence. He is not needy, he is just great. He walks, hangs around, or just gazes. He does so with beautiful eyes, with nice hair, and a great body although he is not even a bodybuilder. How does he do it? I, on the other hand (so you feel,) am needy. Why isn't he the same?



So, you may find yourself sinking back in wonder, in silence. Who understands my predicament? Why can't I change? Will I change? Look at him: the ease, the elegance. He has no clue about what I am thinking. And then he looks at women, and they sort of look back. They chuckle, and he just keeps a straight face. Man, he is good.

A deep sense of jealousy, of amazement, of longing and yearning keeps on bubbling up, waiting for some form of resolution. But that resolution just never seems to happen. We must investigate neediness.

1. Squaw Camp.

Men who experience unwanted same-sex attractions find themselves living a life in the world of women, or to use the metaphor of the American Native Indians, living in Squaw Camp. What does that feel like?

You never were rescued by male warriors and taken or initiated into the world of men as they go out into the environment with each other, the braves.

As a kid you were in Squaw Camp, the world of the female, the primary form of identification for all men from birth, but you stayed there.

You lingered there endlessly and all along you did the right thing: you were a good little boy. You did as you were told, and you complied. Didn't the Beatles sing: "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, all good children go to heaven"?

So, you hope for some sort of salvation, for the day when everything will be alright and when you will join the ranks of men. Genetically and instinctively, every boy needs to identify with the male; it is the strongest instinct in the human body. But for some, it becomes a secret longing because in Squaw Camp typical male behavior is not desirable, nor is it encouraged.



Hanging around with women in Squaw Camp for such a great period of time has consequences for the perception of women and the perception of the self. The male or maleness feels to be far away, and the boy will have to learn to develop a view of women and of himself without the assurance, love and acceptance of adult males, who are physically or psychologically far away.

Many with same-sex attraction develop views about women that are not accurate for women as a whole. For example, they may view all women as powerful, dominant, or controlling. The boy remains feeling weak or inferior, and does not dare to show rude, cocky or self-confident behavior. His sissy behavior can be laughed at, and he can be shamed for being such a weakling. Therefore there is a chance that he may start seeing women as demeaning, emasculating, and shaming. And being shamed for being such a weak boy can lead to a deep sense of hatred, of powerlessness and to the pain of unmet emotional needs.

In Squaw Camp, a boy who later on in life develops same-sex attractions may see himself as needy, weak and inferior in comparison with women. It creates a sense of being vulnerable, of being a loser, and in the back of the mind he may start concluding that he is undesirable, unlovable and an insignificant element in Squaw Camp, insignificant in the lives of adults. He may feel small, a failure and incapable of handling the demands of an intimate opposite-sex relationship.

Because the males in his life and maleness are emotionally so far away, he may idealize women, considering them to be more intelligent than men, unrealistically pure, or even sacred.



Waiting to be rescued from Squaw Camp

Why didn't the males come to rescue me from Squaw Camp? How come other boys are fully into maleness? Where was Dad when you needed him? But Dad feels to be far, far away. And so the boy reaches an important (but wrong) conclusion: it's me. It must be me. I am no good. No wonder Dad didn't come around. No wonder I feel so strange.

A deep sense of inferiority sets in, shame for being a boy, shame for having this body, shame for being ME.

And then when he becomes four to six years old, he learns how to gain some approval and to be someone, he can be useful as a fixer, as the repairman in the female world. He is desperately trying to be a good little boy, and searches for ways to be good, to be seen, valued and loved. He hears how negatively men are talked about by the women, he hears how bad it can be to be a man (after all, if he is the one who feels distance toward his father, perhaps his mother and sisters feel the same). And so he hears the negative stereotypes that are mentioned about men, especially if the mother and sisters are into feminism, a movement that is devastating for boys to acquire a healthy sense of maleness. The mother may very well use him as a confidant, complaining to him about the problems with her husband and the difficulties she is having raising his older brother.

And so the fixer is born.

He can help his mother in her problems and the problems in the family, and at the same time, he is useful for Dad because he is taking care of things, things that Dad has no clue about. He is useful for both parents; he is fixing the family and his feelings of inferiority are substituted by the pride and joy of being the good boy, helping everyone out.

2. The fixer

Let us look into this predicament: the fixer. It becomes a way of life, and fixing may grow well into adulthood as a coping mechanism to deal with inferiority, gender shame and body shame.

He becomes the rescuer, the enabler. He becomes the great godfather to the entire world. Not only does he meet people's needs, he anticipates them. He fixes, nurtures, and fusses over others. He is the one who makes it better, who solves things, and attends to all life problems. He has learned to do it all so well. "Your wish is my command," is his theme. "Your problem is my problem," is his motto. He is the caretaker, on his way to the next rescue.

But in doing so, he is making grave mistakes. He is rescuing people from their responsibilities. He takes care of people's responsibilities for them. Later he gets mad at them for what has been done. Then he feels used and sorry for himself. And he is back to Square One, feel-

ing his deep sense of inferiority, feeling his shame for being male, his shame for his body, his shame for being ME.



Still waiting

So, he resorts to his old coping mechanism, and that is being the fixer and the rescuer. He is trapped in a vicious circle and his brain starts using his old computer program, the only one he knows from childhood. It has become a habit. He makes himself yet again useful as a fixer, hoping and craving for love or recognition. It is a frantic attempt to fulfill unmet emotional needs.

3. The care-taker

In her book on codependency, Melody Beattie describes following acts which constitute a rescuing or caretaking move:

- *Doing something we really don't want to do.*
- *Saying yes when we mean no.*
- *Doing something for someone although that person is capable of and should be doing it for him- or herself.*
- *Meeting people's needs without being asked and before we've agreed to do so.*
- *Doing more than a fair share of work after our help is requested.*
- *Consistently giving more than we receive in a particular situation.*
- *Fixing people's feelings.*
- *Doing people's thinking for them.*

- *Speaking for another person.*
- *Suffering people's consequences for them.*
- *Solving people's problems for them.*
- *Putting more interest and activity into a joint effort than the other person does.*
- *Not asking for what we want, need, and desire.*

There is a multitude of feelings that cause a fixer to fix: he may feel pity for the other person but perhaps also guilt, he may feel some urgency to do something, he may need the joy of feeling saintly, he may have an extreme responsibility for that person or that problem, he may feel more competent than the person he is trying to help, he thinks that the person he is taking care of is helpless and unable to do what he is doing for him or her. He feels needed.

By being a fixer, at last he is somebody. But he is forgetting to take care of himself.

4. An old computer program

It is a computer program that we use when involved with others, but it is a bad computer script because care-taking doesn't help; it even causes problems.

When he takes care of people and does things he doesn't actually want to do, he ignores personal needs, wants, and feelings. He puts himself aside. Sometimes, his entire life is put on hold. Many caretakers are harried and overcommitted; they enjoy none of their activities. Caretakers look so responsible, but they aren't. They don't assume responsibility for their highest responsibility - themselves.

If you are a caretaker and a fixer, notice how you consistently give more than you receive. Then you end up feeling abused and neglected because of it. You wonder why, when you are anticipating the needs of others, no one notices your needs. You may become seriously depressed as a result of not getting your needs met. Yet, a good caretaker feels safest when giving; you feel guilty and uncomfortable when someone gives to you or when you do something to meet your needs. Sometimes, you may become so locked into a caretaker role that you feel dismayed and rejected when you can't care-take or rescue someone - when someone refuses to be "helped."

The worst aspect of care-taking is we become and stay victims. As care-takers, we don't take care of ourselves.

5. Conclusion

In the life of a boy who remains in Squaw Camp, we can identify when and how his emotional needs went unmet. But this does not explain why a vague pain and neediness persists into each and every adult day. After all, we have grown up; surely we have grown over it.

The true secret is to understand that at a child's age in Squaw Camp, it was other people not meeting legitimate emotional needs, but at an adult age, there is someone else who is now not meeting your emotional needs, and keeping you bogged down: *YOU*.

You are the one not meeting your needs; you are the one who does not identify them; you are the one who does not acknowledge that you are totally alright as you are.

A new computer line needs to be added to your life script, namely: you do not have to perform, fix, rescue or save the day in order to be lovable.

The most exciting thing about understanding your care-taking is learning to understand what it is and when you are doing it, so you can stop doing it.

You can learn to recognize a rescue. Refuse to rescue. Refuse to let people rescue you. Take responsibility for yourself, and let others do the same. Whether you change your attitudes, your circumstances, your behavior, or your mind, the kindest thing you can do is remove the victim - yourself.

In the beginning we said: *"He is not needy, he is just great. How does he do it?"* Quite simple, he feels strong enough to make the distinction between his own needs and those of others. And he has chosen to care for himself. If he doesn't do it, no one else will. He just keeps a straight face. Man, he is good.

To be continued

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