EXPLORING YOUR FULL SEXUAL POTENTIAL, PART 6: A SELF-HELP QUESTIONNAIRE





In this article we present a self-help questionnaire, designed to help men who experience Same-Sex Attractions (SSA) understand their psycho-sexual development, and to help focus on crucial issues. We do this because the understanding of the psychology of sexual development has come a long way in the past twenty years.

1. A Questionnaire

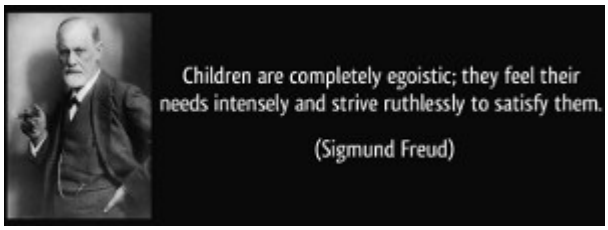
A major step forward was created by the psychologist Dr. Joseph Nicolosi and his wife Linda. While working with hundreds of clients, they observed and wrote down the feelings of men who experienced same-sex attractions, taking careful note of similarities in the numerous accounts. From this body of evidence-based knowledge, they have pinpointed the crucial developmental issues that help shape the preoccupation with the same sex and the sexual longing for them (in this series, we deal with men only). From this body of knowledge, we have constructed a self-help questionnaire.

For pdf format, click here: Self-help Questionnaire

For doc format, click here: Self-help Questionnaire



We acknowledge that the gift of human sexuality does not come in restricted flavors or constrained variants, as some narrow-minded activists propagate. After all, no other bodily function comes restricted either, be it eyesight, sense of touch or sense of hearing. The same applies to your innate sexual drive, the core instinct that saves every sexual creature from extinction. Sexual drive and attraction are not just coincidental casual pastimes like eating a chocolate bar that you may just as well ignore when in the mood: they are the essence of our existence strategy as an animal species. And every individual from mosquito to transvestite has got it all, deep inside. Yes, you.



Even way back in the beginning of the previous century, Sigmund Freud wrote that the child is "*polymorphic perverse*", meaning that the full repertoire of imaginable sexual feelings is theirs. He was hated then by staunchly religious crowds, he is still hated now by staunchly homo-sexist activists, all of whom dread the idea that the full potential of sexual possibilities lies dormant and enticing as part of every human being's heritage. Psychotherapists are not allowed to defy the status quo, not way back then at the beginning of the 20th century and neither at the beginning of the 21st century, as we see around us now. Always a fear for the shrink.

In our hearts, we as ex-gays are proof of the fact that there is no separate homosexuality, or separate bisexuality, or bestiality, or fetishism, or masochism, etc. Nothing is fixed, immutable or an ultimate destiny which would exclude each and every other possibility of the human condition for ever more. It's possible to get rid of labels, and the stigmatization that goes with it. Looking back allows you to feel the toss and tumble of the emotions that bewildered you as a child. Way back then, you internalized preliminary outcomes at an age when you were not yet mature, or capable of critical thinking about yourself.



This series is not about criticizing *OTHERS* as do Gay Affirmative Therapists. They conveniently blame all feelings on a '*big, bad straight world out there'*, whatever that may mean. This questionnaire is a first step to self-understanding and to changing the story we have believed about ourselves since childhood. At the core of Same Sex Attractions lies a number of psychological issues, which can easily be identified by asking the right questions. Answering these will make it simple to get to the bottom of the predicament that made you sexualize your longing for men, male attachment and male identity. The approach is secular and psychological, not religious or spiritual.

2. Narrative

The questionnaire follows this narrative:

> *"The normal psycho-sexual development for a boy has a general pattern. At birth, every child automatically identifies with the mother, but at age 18 months babies begin to understand that there are men and women. With boys, this is what usually happens: at age 2-3, he starts identifying with Dad (Dad is who I am, or who I will be, and who I want to become). In doing so, he creates a distance to Mother, and realizes he is different. At age 4 he starts feeling good about the distance to Mother, because identifying with Dad feels good and right. From his 5th to 10th year of age, he will be having fun with other boys, who are "all like I am," and "we are all ME."*

At the same time, the male gang creates a distance from girls, "girls are stupid" (boys on the other hand are great, we are kings of the world, we play games in which we are kings, we have sword fights, we play cowboys and Indians, we fight because we are tough, and we try to be tough). We learn to feel good with boys, to appreciate and accept our peers, and to love being a boy. We are great.



In all these moves while becoming a boy, both Mom and Dad approve. They like it, they affirm it, they respect it. Most important, Dad is proud of his little boy, this replica of himself, his offspring. In his male child he recognizes his former self and wants the boy to become like him. This includes becoming a fully sexual male and having sex with women someday. Dad is openly heterosexual, approves of himself as a man, and he expresses approval of his developing heterosexual boy, because being like himself is great. He also shows an example of the way to have a sexual relationship with a woman through his relationship with his wife, and becomes a role model for his son.

The mother does not appeal to her son or use him for her personal needs and problems, nor does she use him as a confidant. She keeps a healthy distance, and does not entangle him in her marriage problems and secrets, or her ambivalence towards her husband. She demonstrates how healthy boundaries are kept in the parent-child relationship and in all relationships."

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3. ANSWERS:



Here are the answers that one man sent to me on the first two questions. Let us for the sake of privacy call him Jeremy. After that, I will comment on them.

Question 1.

At age 2-3, a boy gets to identify with dad. Dad is who I am, or who I will be, and who I want to become. Was that true for you too? Can you explain:

Answer:
I remember that I wanted to sit and play in my dad's chair during the days when my dad was at work. I don't have memories though of sitting in the chair with my father in the evenings. Perhaps I did, but I don't remember this. I don't remember my dad playing with me when I

was young, and no particular memories of him being tender or loving with me.



Rusty, his dog Rin Tin Tin and his adult comrades.

My mother wanted to give my brother and me some sort of cuddle toy to sleep with and my father insisted that they be masculine. I had a Dennis-the-Menace doll and my brother had a Rin-Tin-Tin Dog, a TV hero, who assisted the All-American child hero Rusty ("Go, Rinnie!!").

I think that I thought my dad was strong and I liked him. I know he carried me into bed sometimes if I fell asleep somewhere else. I don't remember any night time rituals with my dad in preparation for going to bed. In general, I would say that my dad was not involved in my life very much at age 2-3.

One time he teased my siblings and me by placing a scary mask on the wall in the basement and sending us downstairs into the darkened room. We would scream and go running up the stairs and he would send us down again.

Another time my dad told us that the chicken we were eating was rattle snake. We refused to eat it. Then he told us that is was really rabbit. We still wouldn't eat it. Finally, he said it was really chicken. We still didn't eat it.

Question 2.

At age 3, boys will create a distance to mother, knowing they are different. Was that true for you too? Can you explain:

Answer:
"I never created distance from my mother. She was the one who gave me attention and love.

I didn't feel closely connected to my father and I continued to feel closely connected to my mother."

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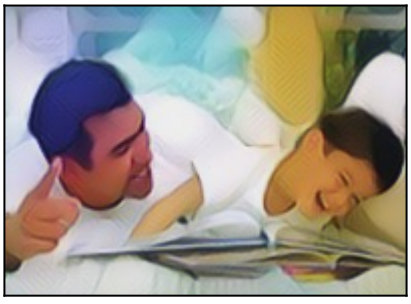
4. Our comments:



Here we see the core predicament of almost all men who experience SSA's. They have a father (some don't), but there is no emotional connection. The connection that really mattered for them was with the mother. This connection to mother had been there all the time since birth, and we see that Jeremy never got around to letting go of that connection and connecting to Dad and his male world.

What Jeremy realizes now (if we look at his answers to the questionnaire), is that he did not make an emotional connection to Dad, but preferred to stay in Squaw Camp. There, he kept on playing games with the girls and feeling comfortable with them. He felt he could not connect with Dad, but what Jeremy has to learn is that not only did he not connect with Dad, he actively rejected him too. And this the core predicament of acquiring SSA's.

The story consists of two halves: there is one side in which the father was not available or emotionally unavailable or there was a gap (like for instance a sensitivity gap), but there is also another half of the story: the boy rejects him back! And that is an understandable, but deeply tragic mistake. Let us look carefully at what Jeremy wrote:



He says that Dad was joking and laughing his head off as he informed Jeremy and his sister that they were eating ghastly things. Finally, he told them they were eating good old chicken (after all, why would he feed them anything else but the best?), and what he expected was for the children to see into the joke, to see how he had made fun of them, and then to join him in laughing away the fact that your taste of food (or other things) can be influenced by the context that you had already previously conceived: your prejudices. An important lesson in life. He was showing the power of prejudices.

But no. Jeremy still didn't eat.

Jeremy rejected him back. Jeremy still remembers that evening meal, and Jeremy still feels hurt. He is still sulking. And he still feels Dad is to blame. There is not going to be any reconciliation with Dad at this rate, until Jeremy learns to love and trust his Dad after all, and to see that perhaps things went wrong from BOTH sides.



Dad was a bit too harsh (many insensitive men are), but Jeremy was already dwelling in Squaw Camp and had not acquired the feeling that this Indian Warrior might be on his side. No, Dad was out riding ponies, and Jeremy belonged in Squaw Camp, no matter how much chicken Dad brings to the evening dining table in the teepee. Sulking Jeremy failed to see signs of caring from his dad.

5. Conclusion:

You can't change Dad or your youth, but you can nevertheless learn to see that at an early age, you started rejecting back, and that this drive was so strong, that you did not perceive any further attempts from Dad as fruitful efforts to gain your love and approval, and as subtle invitations to ride the ponies with him. Jeremy gave up on him.



Jeremy closed the teepee entrance, and he retreated into a private lonely world of isolation and femininity. No one is to blame: this is just the way it went. But he needs to learn to see, that he was also active in those childhood years, and that he had also given up on, and deserted Dad, leaving his own yearning for male connection unmet, until testosterone came along, and he started sexualizing that craving for connection and male identity. It was then that SSA's set in. In this process, Jeremy was more than just a mere passive victim, Jeremy was the one who shaped his world way back then, and he is the one who can reshape his world now, as an adult through insight.

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Jeremy wrote back to me, saying:

> *"I think your insights are good. I think that I desired connection with Dad, but the distance that was there (his reserve, his fear of children, his own lack of parenting modelling to be an involved father, etc.) kept me from connecting, and inwardly I internalized this as rejection and rejected him.*
>
> *He was not the parent I connected with and somehow, I probably thought the fault was mine or that I was defective as a boy. I chose to live in Squaw Camp – not a conscious de-*

cision, but one that seemed natural. The unhealthy connection to Mom and my remaining tied to her, was such a blind spot before. You have pointed it out. I chose to live where I got my affirmation, attention and affection. Those were real needs that were unmet by my father or other men. So I rejected men and what they stood for. I have been doing so ever since. And yet at the same time, I long for them."

To be continued.

Job Berendsen, MD.

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