



# EXPLORING YOUR FULL SEXUAL POTENTIAL, PART 31: ATTACHMENT THEORY

Human life can be seen as a pattern of emotional, physical, and spiritual growth. It is like the ocean beating on the shore as we grow older, forming a never-ending pattern of bumps and cracks in the sand. In paradox psychology, we recognize that thoughts and feelings can even be at odds with one another while the tide of life flows in and out, creating the small mounds of sand and then washing them away again. In one-dimensional psychology, however, the coming and going of the tide (or feelings and behavior) are denied, and everything is brought down to a simple and cheap slogan: born that way. That is to say, it has always been that way and will always stay that way.



In the realm of sexuality, paradox psychology studies the changes and the inner conflicts of intimacy and sex, but in one-dimensional psychology inner conflicts are renounced, and changes in one's behavior are suppressed.



*Malta Detention Center for psychiatrists, deviants and illegal aliens*

Therapists who believe in change are sent to prison, as of 2016 in Malta (see [our article](#)) and increasingly so in the rest of the Western world (Australia, for a start) . A sectarian gang of radicalized activists is seizing the public domain and is rewriting the scientific narrative to their liking. They call themselves "*the LGBT*", thereby making it look as if they represent everyone, although not a single radical is ever voted democratically into any accountable position; they just yell their heads off and hijack professional and political organizations to persecute and delete dissident thought. You can't vote them onto their throne, you can't impeach them off.

In [Gaystarnews](#), we read,

*“Moreover, Joe Biden, has promised he will ban the ‘therapies’ once he gets to the White House. Meanwhile international LGBT+ organization ILGA World predicts 2020 could be a breakthrough year on the issue worldwide. The current ban sadly leaves out ‘informal religious settings’”*

Read: even Sunday School will become a crime scene in the near future under Biden.

In this article, we will argue that people relate to their environment with attachment (intimacy) as if the tide is coming in, and with detachment (autonomy) as if the tide is flowing out. We will argue that current feelings even stem from the childhood and adolescence period of life when experience would seem to have engraved patterns in the soul, but we will also argue that the tidal rhythm will endure until death. Is change possible? What a ridiculous question to ask in paradox psychology, it goes unsaid.

We will argue that to get closer to intimacy with the opposite sex, one needs to get further away to accomplish a comforting sense of autonomy, but to avoid loneliness and to give in to, or to appreciate sexual and spiritual desires, one needs to approach the opposite sex and to address the crippling and repellent fear of the void. In short: to get closer, you need to create distance; when you have created distance, you need to explore what keeps you away.

In paradox psychology, we study the conflict of mind-frames. This gives us three distinct areas of conflict to study, namely seeking attachment, seeking detachment, and seeking liberation or internal freedom to be oneself.

In men who experience same-sex attractions, feelings for intimacy with the opposite sex often provoke the fear of being engulfed. This fear becomes strong when the childhood experiences can be described as being enmeshed with the mother.

On the website [Selfgrowth.com](https://www.selfgrowth.com), Oliver Cooper writes,



*Oliver Cooper*

*“When it comes to understanding what enmeshment is, it helps to look at what boun-*

daries are. Boundaries are what create a sense of individuality between people. And although we are all physically separate, it does not mean that we are emotionally separate from another person.

This becomes what is known as enmeshment, here one will look physically separate, but emotionally they will feel attached to the other person. One will feel that they have no boundaries between them and, as a result, that they are not an individual. So when it comes to mother enmeshed men, it is describing a man who is emotionally entangled to their mother. While it is true that they may live in a different house or a different part of the country; the emotional cord has not been cut.

In a functional relationship with boundaries, the emotional connection will be choice and what one has chosen. When it comes to an enmeshed relationship, however, it doesn't feel that one has a choice; one feels enslaved to the other person. And for the mother-enmeshed man it is a feeling of having no sense of self, other than an identity that is based on being attached to mother."

The fear of engulfment cripples the mind, and inhibits taking initiatives.

To come to grips with these feelings, Victor asked me the other day if perhaps I had a journaling exercise for him. He realizes he is deeply enmeshed with his mother, but also acknowledges strong guilt feelings prohibiting him from tackling this. So, I suggested he write some answers to a few very simple questions and send them to me.

My questions were very rude, ones he would never dream of writing down. In doing so, I take the blame, which relieves his sense of guilt. I asked him to write 5 times: "Get out of my soul, you bitch" and then jot down the feelings this writing gives him.

For the next few days, I checked my inbox anxiously to see if I had missed the mark and gone too far. But lo and behold, Victor's answers were staggering:

*"Get out of my soul, you bitch!*

*When I tell Mum to get out of my soul, I feel like I'm more powerful and that I'm creating some distance between us. We are not the same person but two people who are individuals. A mother should be selfless in finding out what a child's needs are and should meet them in his early years until he's able to start doing so autonomously. I'm talking about me. She ought to have approved of my becoming independent and should also have given me permission to do so.*

*Instead, she did everything, oh, so 'selflessly'. That is my sarcasm. It is what she says*

*but what she doesn't mean. Instead, she wanted me to stay an infant so I'd never grow up and be my own self and leave her, I think. She crippled me, so that I would stay dependent and meet her needs."*

Let us analyze what Victor has expressed. Apparently, he has never got round to addressing his mother as "you bitch". That is, by all means, a very naughty thing to say, especially in this post-feminism day and age.

In his book 'No More Mr. Nice Guy', Robert Glover writes,



Robert Glover

*"The concept of the Nice Guy Syndrome grew out of my frustration of trying to do it "right," yet never getting back what I believed I deserved. I was the typical "sensitive new age guy" — and proud of it. I believed I was one of the nicest guys you would ever meet. Yet I wasn't happy."*

And so it is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that asserting yourself against a woman's influence, even if it is your mother, is sprinkled all over with shame. We are witnessing a new form of cultural shame. And we may even postulate that this post-modern attitude contributes to, or worsens, the shame drama which, in itself, is hard enough to overcome: it is a cultural overlay.

Victor claims that his mother stood in the way of his becoming independent and autonomous. And he feels that a 'good' mother would not have done such a thing. But is that true?

It is easy enough, of course, to ally with Victor and to reiterate what he has stated. It is easy enough to blame her and to sarcastically mock her ways as he does. A client can blame his parents for his predicament, but it is not a therapist's duty to reinforce that feeling at all times and to collude with the client's lashing out at others just because those are his feelings at this moment in life. We need to examine his feelings more closely.

He continues to write,

*"I should not have been expected, or made, to feel responsible for meeting any of*

*mum's needs."*

Many parents see how their children meet their needs, and often fail to see the difference between their own needs and that of the child.

Take for example Lucy, a mother of 39 who, at a rather late age, got a daughter called Dolores. Lucy always lovingly nicknamed her Dolly, and at age 4, enrolled her for a pageant contest.



*Shirley Temple*

Lucy was so excited and went to great lengths to give Dolly this once-in-a-lifetime chance to win the pageant: new clothes, shoes, curls. She looked like a regular Shirley Temple. Mom was so thrilled: a winner was born. And Dolly resonated with her mother's feelings, screeching when Mom opened the cardboard box with the winning costume.

I have bad news: Dolores came second.

Lucy was quite obese, uglier than she wanted to be, and had more inferiority feelings than are to be considered healthy. Coming from an alcoholic and broken home, her life had never been easy. Her dad beat her mother up occasionally, and to add to her shame, Lucy had had two miscarriages that she never discussed. The broken hopes, the shattered dreams, the dreary outlook on life until Dolores came along.

And then Dolly goes and spoils it all by losing something easy like a pageant (to quote Frank Sinatra: "And then I go and spoil it all by saying something stupid like I Love You").

Lucy ran from the stage in tears; her husband, Dan, followed in pursuit to console, not Dolly, but Lucy! Poor, poor Lucy. Dan went to great lengths to prove he was different than his father-in-law, he was a regular new age nice-guy. Lucy sobbed, and so did Dolly. In the car home, Dan snarled at Dolly: "Why did you have to start making a joke when they handed you

the microphone? How could you?"

In this instance, we see Lucy, Dan and Dolly being a regular triangular family pattern, a celestial constellation to be found as often as falling stars on a dark night if you lie flat on your back. We see pain, oozing from generation to generation. They are not born that way, but boy! does it look that way!

Needy people do not see their own neediness. Unknowingly, they expect others to fill that gap. Neediness is a hole in the soul, with lips dried out, and tongues forming blisters of pain: *give me, give me!* In deserts of loneliness and dunes of neglect, needy souls seek a drop of recognition, love, and consolation. *"Why don't you see me? Where is everybody?"*

Dolly replies: *"I'm over here, Mom"*. And Lucy and Dan go over to see what the kid is going to deliver. Good Lord Almighty, she failed for all to see! At the end of the day: who is giving consolation to whom?

-----

Victor goes on to write me his letter in a bottle, a leaflet on his distress:



*"I'm the child, she is the adult, but that's not the way things were. Get out! It feels good to now put her outside of me, on the other side of my skin. Because it now enables me to set some boundaries about her trying to reenter my soul because she needs me for her narcissistic needs. I want to be guilt-free in asserting to her 'I don't need you. I need dad and I'm on a journey to manhood without you.'"*

What *"journeys into manhood"* would a grown-up man be talking about? From kindergarten to retirement, there are four roads to tread: attachment, detachment, defensive attachment, and defensive detachment. Let us analyze them.

Every boy and girl has the original attachment to his/her mother because the child was once part of her body and was not perceived by the maternal immune system (killer cells) as a foreign object, even though the genetic pattern of the child's cells were different.

After birth, the child remains attached to his mother, whose voice, sounds, moods, and rhythms are all he ever knew. This attachment is crucial to his survival in the world outside the womb. Without it, he would die. Every child yells and cries when facing abandonment, the

fear of the void. This fear, therefore, goes back a long, long way.

The next stage of development that is recognized in child psychology, is detachment from the mother to obtain independence and growth into maturity.

Zimberoff and Hartman (2002) write,



*Diane Zimberoff and David Hartman*

*“The basic premise is that people relate to their environment with attachment (intimacy) and detachment (autonomy) from their earliest (prenatal and perinatal) experiences. Ultimately, people strive for a synthesis of the two, i.e., balancing attachment (freedom from fear of abandonment) with detachment (freedom from fear of engulfment), resulting in liberation from the subjugation to either (the freedom to explore the external and internal worlds).”*

Victor describes in his own words that he did not experience sufficient detachment from his mother. This could be seen as a flaw in his development, and for him, it certainly feels that way. This move to shift away from his mother is called defensive detachment. It is as if he is trying to free himself from a woman who unknowingly is clinging too long to her self-sacrificing son.

What is sacrifice? In his book ‘*Violence, Desire And The Sacred*’, Rene Girard (2016) writes,

*“Sacrifice is the offering of food, objects or the lives of animals or humans to a higher purpose, in particular divine beings, as an act of propitiation or worship.”*

Well, that is putting it very, very dramatically. But perhaps the writer is correct because men who do not succeed in adequately severing the psychological umbilic chord with their mother are said to worship her as a goddess. (I haven’t seen someone killing the cat, though, so as to perform the correct worshipping rites. Come to think of it, they may even kill part of their

soul in the process (see our article, [Part 6: 'Soul Murder'](#)).

In moves of defensive detachment, Victor writes,

*"I feel angry that she was ever tied to me, or make that, that I have kept the ties to her. I am responsible now for breaking these. Mom, fuck you for not sorting out your problems before having me, Mum, because my life has been about trying to please you and ease your pain so you don't have to face your problems. It is unfair, but I have to bear this and fight, since all I want is to cement my identity as a male and to be able to relate to males without hesitating, and also to sexualize women and feel good about such a relationship."*

So, we now witness how Victor realizes he needs to detach from his mother, who represents what it is to be a woman to all young children, in order to be able to attach again to others at a later age. This means that men who struggle with same-sex attractions and are eager to get closer and more intimate with women, actually need to get further away in their mind first.

The solution of Victor's "*journey into manhood*" is to proceed forward in the natural detachment from his mother (or mother figure) and to attach more to his father (or other representatives of manhood) in order to seize and experience the birth right of being a man.

We call it the inevitable attachment to your genetically induced understanding of gender. It feels deeply empowering. But what if the umbilical chord is not made of soft tissue but almost made of a resilient steel cable? What if a feeling of not-being-okay sets in? What if guilt feelings about being male set in? Then, we often observe that seeking manhood happens in a frantic frenzy of avoiding the ties to Mother. We can label it as defensive attachment, that is to say, desperately seeking maleness in an artificial way.

Normal feelings of maleness can come about by being affirmed by men and peers at moments when the child needs it most. But when those affirmations are not available, then, at an adult age, defensive attachment can be observed almost as a caricature, an exaggeration by means of often ludicrous distortion of characteristics.

For example, the gay leather scene is filled with tough-looking men who glorify certain aspects of idealized maleness. But underneath the rather expensive costume, bought to feel "*one of the gang*", we can sense an aching neediness and an undersupply of childhood male affirmation which should have occurred at an age when '*being with the boys*' mattered most.

Missing out on such important events at a critical age can cause a lonely and life-enduring quest. Drinking beer and looking tough may just not do the trick. It is the mental challenge of



the adult to start looking into one's desires for toughness (a coping mechanism to create a much needed independence) and to acknowledge emotional needs (gratified by seeking attachment) that bring insights and happiness into view.

### Summary

Attachment, which arises out of a secure well-balanced childhood base, provides the starting point for intimacy. On the other hand, healthy protest and therefore its opposite, detachment, is the basis of a road to autonomy. From there, the journey into manhood continues for a state of independence (non-attachment) in which the capacity to reflect on oneself becomes the default mode of operation.

In doing so, an adult learns new patterns, making him able to disidentify with painful or traumatic experiences. These, then, become no more than memories. Is change possible? What a ridiculous question to ask in paradox psychology, it goes unsaid.

to be continued

Job Berendsen, MD

