



kort's korner

Are You What You Orgasm?

IN THE TALKS I GIVE AROUND THE country, audiences often ask me about what being gay or straight really is. Most people believe that if you engage in—or even think about—certain

homosexual sex acts, then that reveals your basic sexual orientation of being gay. Interestingly, the opposite is not true. If a gay or lesbian person thinks of or engages in heterosexual sex than that is either meaningless to many or a sign that “maybe they might be straight”.

This line of thinking is not necessarily true. In fact, it's often not the case at all! You can fantasize about all kinds of activities that have everything, or very little, to do with your sexual orientation. You can engage in and even enjoy sexual acts that are the complete opposite to what your sexual orientation really is.

Confused? Many people are—even therapists! So let's break this down.

Sexual Identity or Orientation

Sexual identity or Orientation refers to how someone self-identifies, and not how others may categorize him or her. Some self-identify as heterosexual (straight), gay or

lesbian, homosexual (a person who is not “out” but enjoy homosexual sex), bi-attractional (bisexual) or questioning (bi-curious, or “If it feels good, no problem”). Sexual orientation is a constant and does not change. This can be confusing when someone comes out of the closet. It looks as though the person changes orientation when in fact they are coming out to who they always really were. They stop role-playing the wrong orientation. An example of the constancy of sexual orientation is a transsexual who undergoes gender reassignment surgery. I know of men who are heterosexual who feel they were born the wrong gender. They are sexually satisfied by females only. However they feel as though they are female themselves. They undergo a gender reassignment from male to female. They are now lesbians. It is not an episode of bewitched where now they are suddenly attract to men just because they are now female.

This is a good example of how sexual orientation is constant.

Sexual Preferences

These are sexual acts, positions and fantasies that someone prefers to have when engaging in sexual activity. They can take it or leave it however they enjoy it when they do it. This is different than sexual orientation which is one's identity and the object of passion for which they are compelled and naturally drawn to. Preferences can change over time and one can become more open or closed to certain sexual fantasies, behaviors and acts.

Sexual Behavior

Sexual Behavior is any behavior intended to pleasure oneself and/or one's sexual partner. But the sexual behavior you engage in won't necessarily reflect your orientation.

Sexual Fantasies

Sexual Fantasies are any thoughts and ideas that arouse you. They can be about virtually anything—not just body parts, but clothing and shoes, and even natural objects such as trees and mountains—especially if they remind you of a previous erotic encounter. Memories of music and of aromas (perfume) can

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have a similar aphrodisiac effect.

For the sake of discussion, I'm going to offer some sweeping generalizations by way of examples (though of course there are many exceptions to what I'm about to describe).

Heterosexual Men

Men who are heterosexual enjoy the company of women, romantically and sexually. They are aroused and feel compelled to have sex with woman. However, when they're in prison or in the armed forces, where woman aren't available, often they will find sexual gratification with other men. This doesn't mean that they have switched to a gay or bisexual orientation, simply that they have no one but other men available for sexual release. Once these heterosexual men get released or discharged, back they go to their female objects of desire and usually, never again have sex with men.

Heterosexually Married Gay Men

Conversely, heterosexually married gay men have often fallen in love with their wives and been sexual with them. They're often monogamous, performing sexually and enjoying orgasms with these women. They are sexually satisfied. These men are not bisexual; nor are they heterosexual men gone bad! They have either chosen—or felt compelled—to live heterosexually, but are innately gay. In some ways this is a personal prison imposed upon one's self by not permitting

their homosexuality to come out. Once divorced, they seek out other men exclusively for sexual gratification, and never do return to women.

Homosexual Imprinting

Homosexual Imprinting occurs when a boy or teenage male has been sexually abused by an older man. In my practice, I see many such cases. These men come in concerned or merely inquisitive about their homoerotic impulses and enjoyment, wanting to know whether this means they're gay. Upon further evaluation, we discover that many of them were once abused sexually by male authority figures. Their psychosexual mapping now includes being sexual with other men.

Sex and Love Mapping

By mapping I mean that one's love and sexual preference map are determined early on in childhood. It is how we learn how to love. We observe and absorb how others love or neglect or abuse us and that becomes our "love map" according to John Money, a pioneer in the field of sexology. This map becomes a template for what you seek out for pleasure in your adulthood. It

Early in childhood, we're all imprinted with family beliefs and societal norms. Imprinting is the psychological process by which specific types of behavior are locked in, at an early stage of development. All of us, gay and straight alike, are conditioned to think, feel, and act

the way our early childhood caretakers nurture and teach us.

The first important thing to consider is this doesn't mean the client is gay or even bi. He is simply left with an imprint to re-enact his homosexual abuse and find "pleasure" in what was inflicted on him as a child. In reality, this isn't pleasure at all, but trauma turned into orgasm. In the book, *Male Victims of Same-Sex Abuse: Addressing Their Sexual Response* by John M. Preble and A. Nicholas Groth they say it best:

" . . . this may actually reflect an effort at mastery of the traumatic eventwhen he was being sexually victimized, someone else was in control of him sexually. During masturbation he is literally in control of himself sexually, and this may be a way in which he attempts to reclaim mastery over his own sexuality. Likewise, his participation in consensual sex reflects his choice and decision."

The authors go on to say that "the fantasy thoughts are prompted by fear more than desire, by anxiety more than pleasure". In other words, they become a way of managing the fear and anxiety.

Second, just because the sexual abuse was committed by a male doesn't mean that it constituted homosexuality. When men sexually abuse girls, we don't claim it's about heterosexuality! We say it is simply sexual abuse—which involves power, violation and rape. Nothing about that is related to orientation.

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Homoeroticism

Homoeroticism is the concept that men and women (who are basically heterosexual, of course) can enjoy some sexual activity with members of their own gender—if only vicariously. Surfing the Internet, you can find thousands of sites that offer tag lines like these:

“Do my wife while I watch”

“My husband is too small—I need to show him something bigger”

“My wife wants a female partner to join in with us”

“Voyeur to watch you and your spouse”

“Wife likes to watch me suck cock”

These preferences don't necessarily imply sexual abuse or homosexual imprinting, nor do they necessarily involve bisexuality or homosexuality. There are simply men and women who, from time to time, become aroused by the same gender enjoy sexual activity with them.

Indeed, research has shown that some men and woman are even turned on by the idea of their spouses having an affair. For them, there is something homoerotic in the idea, just as in “swinging,” when couples enjoy bringing in others to be sexual with them, temporarily, without breaking up their committed relationship. They may not admit to homosexual desire however. In his book, *Extramarital Affair*, Herbert S. Streaan writes that “couples who openly advocate extramarital affairs also derive a great deal of pleasure

[because] they identify with their spouse and unconsciously have sex with [their] spouse's lover.”

Stream says that also, “because this is unconscious process, most couples who sanction extramarital activity deny their homosexual involvement and justify their stance on the basis of free expression.”

There is so much more to say and be written about this topic. I hope that after reading this, you'll be able to expand your mind about your own sexual fantasies and desires—and also, understand be aware that not everyone is “what they orgasm.”