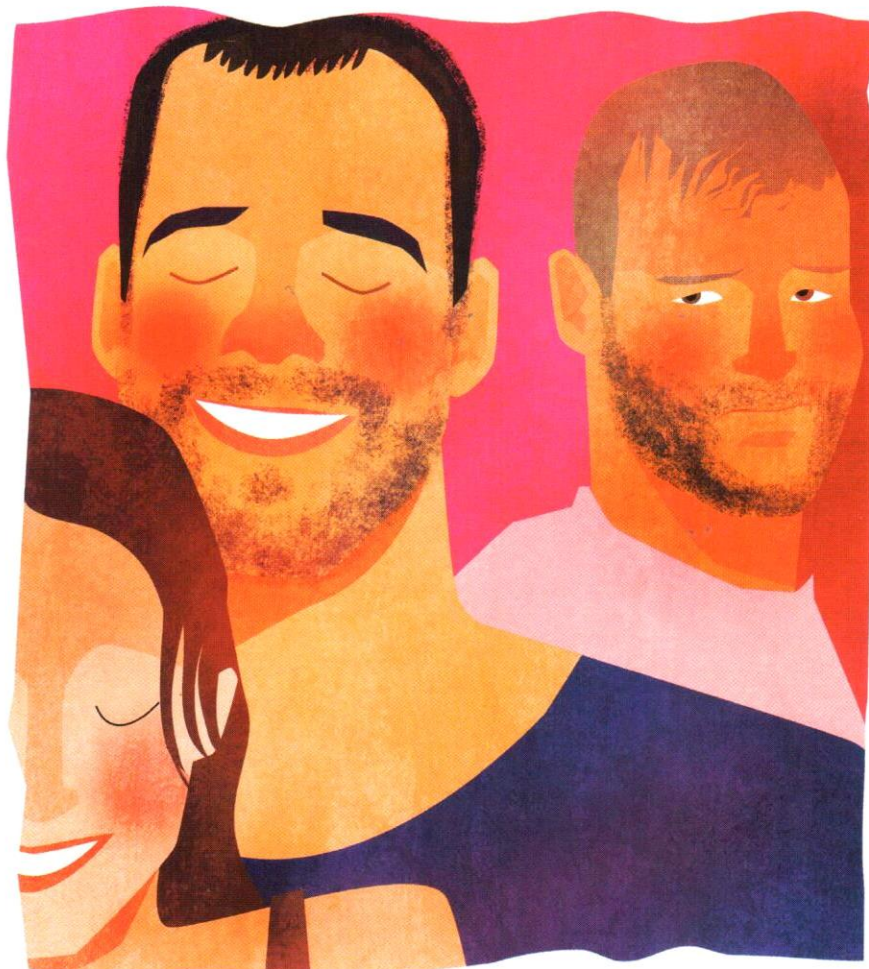


GAY RELATIONSHIP EXPERTS ALAN DOWNS & JOE KORT ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

## I LIKE STRAIGHT-ACTING GUYS, BUT EVEN KNOWING THEY'RE GAY USUALLY TURNS ME OFF



THIS MONTH:  
JOE ON FANCYING STRAIGHT MEN

DEAR JOE ▶

*I am a gay guy and am only attracted to straight men. I want a relationship with another man, but every time I try dating gay guys, I'm instantly turned off because they're usually not masculine enough. I like straight-acting guys, but even knowing they're gay usually puts me off. I know that, by only looking for straight men, I'll stay lonely and single forever. But I don't seem to be able to help who I'm attracted to. Help!*

PETE, ESSEX ▶



## DEAR PETE

Many gay men fantasise about being intimate with straight men, and there's nothing inherently wrong with these sexual scenarios. The problem you're describing is that your attraction to straight men is so rigid that it blocks you from enjoying a genuine relationship with another gay man. Over the years, I've seen gay men focusing and obsessing on straight men and have discovered many reasons for this. Growing up male demands the rejection of everything feminine, in order to gain admittance into the masculine brotherhood — becoming a man among men — a privileged position. However, gay men do not reject every feminine attribute, and some other men — particularly straight men — often ostracize them and punish them for this. When growing up, gay men experience rejection and alienation from straights, so it only makes sense that parts of our psyches are longing to connect with them, bond with them and ultimately, try to be one of them.

### FOLLOWING ARE SOME REASONS I'VE SEEN WHY SOME GAY MEN ARE ONLY SEXUALLY ATTRACTED TO STRAIGHT MEN:

#### • INTERNALISED HOMOPHOBIA

This is the easiest reason to cite. Some gay men who haven't acknowledged or addressed their shame and internalised homophobia find themselves attracted to unavailable men. If one of them did return their interest and became emotionally available, that would confirm that they are gay and force them to deal with all the issues of coming out.

Whenever I hear the label 'straight-acting', I cringe because to gay men, usually it really means 'acting masculine'. Whenever 'masculine' is defined as 'straight', it's a form of internalised homophobia, implying that gay men can't be masculine. Of course, there are plenty of masculine gay men, and there's nothing inherently 'straight' about masculinity.

#### • FORBIDDEN FRUIT

The simple fact that we know we cannot have straight men might enhance our desire to want them. The dangers involved in hitting on a straight man and the risks of humiliation, verbal and physical harassment can actually add to sexual arousal.

#### • STRAIGHT MEN REPRESENT AUTHORITY

A common scenario in gay porn is the hot military/police/boss/coach/teacher or other straight authority who forces himself onto a gay man. This allows gay men to feel desired — or at least, accepted — by a certifiably straight man and lets them feel good about

being dominated. Of course, when this happens in reality, outside the realm of sexual role-play, it's horrifying — but, it's safely and pleasantly disguised in sexual fantasy.

Sexual fantasies about straight men can be displaced longings for acceptance by straight guys in general. Arousing a straight guy may suggest (consciously or not) that you're special enough to win his affection.

Straight men can also represent our fathers and other male caregivers, including priests, coaches, teachers and other men known for positions of authority. When we become gay adults, sexualising those straight 'daddy figures' gives our unconscious a way to feel safely attached to them. The sexual fantasy of pleasuring a straight guy lets you make intimate contact with him and finally win your father over. With this, you receive a straight man's approval — which you've always wanted. (Source: Oedipus's gay brother.)

#### • BELONGING

Gay porn abounds with fantasies set in American fraternities. During initiation, frat brothers humiliate the pledges, and you'll notice that one overpowered gay guy is enjoying himself, to everyone's erotic satisfaction. The frat brothers get to stay straight, dominant and in charge, while the gay pledgee gains their acceptance and the sense of belonging he's always longed for. Everybody — and every body — wins.

#### • POWER AND CONTROL

Some gay men fantasise about seducing straight men and/or forcing them into gay sex. These fantasies can offer exciting fun, but getting preoccupied with them or acting on them — even with a willing straight male — is unhealthy in the long run, if, in fact, you're looking for Mr. Right. It can also distract you from examining your own issues and conflicts in dealing with straight males.

#### • FATHER HUNGER

If any gay man enjoys excessive fantasies about straight men, I suggest that he explore his relationship with his father — and with all the other influential straight men in his life. Not having received a father's acceptance and unconditional love, you can transfer that longing onto a series of straight men you admire.

In and of itself, there's nothing wrong with this. After all, people work out all types of challenges by maintaining relationships. For you, the solution is to discover what you find so compelling about straight men. If it has to do with belonging and acceptance, then join groups and organizations where you befriend straight men without the bond turning sexual, which will only leave you feeling empty and alone. If you have unresolved issues with your father, go to him and work through them. If that's not feasible, then find a therapist to help put them to rest. That way, you will no longer seek a relationship that seems to promise what your father didn't or couldn't provide.

While you're out dating, go ahead and make an effort to seek out masculine guys. Strike up conversations with blokes. Join sports teams that attract men with more testosterone. Study those men closely enough, and you'll soon learn that every man — even a hyper-masculine one — has some feminine qualities.

Nobody gets everything he wants in a relationship. See straights as potential friends, not partners, and focus on the masculine traits in other gay guys.

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'STRAIGHT' ABOUT MASCULINTY**



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