Unhung Heroes: Men with Small Penises

The March 2005 issue of Out magazine there Erik Piepenburg’s article titled “Is Small Beautiful?” His article focuses on gay men with small penises. The journalist interviewed Robert Woodworth, a 59-year-old gay man and Director of Institutional Services at New York’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center. Woodworth began an ongoing series of discussions about gay men and their penises, which led to a four-week support group for gay men who feel theirs are small.

Bravo to these men! They are truly unhung heroes, willing to disclose their genital size and come out of their fly, as well as the closet. What pressure they must feel as men—particularly in the gay community—where penis size is talked about so relentlessly and so judgmentally, as if it were a measure of the whole man.

I’m sure there must be many, many jokes about it. When I was researching this article, one colleague asked me, “Is it a small support group?” Another colleague inquired “How long will your article be?” Snicker all you want, but the real joke is on all of us men—gay and straight alike—since such remarks make many of us feel self-conscious about our size. When I hear any gay man make a small penis comment—particularly in front of others in my gay men’s groups or workshops—I cringe to think of those insecure men who might feel badly or those who just worry about their size in general.

Guys Turned to the Wall
Guys Gone Wild, a companion DVD to the original Girls Gone Wild that’s been available for a while, displays men’s buttocks more than their frontal nudity. I know this from having watched Guys very carefully, and more than once (strictly for research purposes, of course). Why—you might ask—do we view so many more butts than penises? The reason, I suggest, is that men in general worry about their penis size. It seems safer to moon the camera or flash your behind—the worst criticism you might receive is that it’s too hairy, too flabby, or sports too many pimples. But one of the most hurtful insults you can say is that a man’s penis is too small.

What is Too Small—Really?
The standard for penis size was set by the Kinsey Institute in the 1960s. Alfred Kinsey and his merry men studied American college-age men and found that 80 percent of fully erect penises measured between 5 and 7 inches (long), with most falling in the 6- to 6½-inch range. But size queens beware! Despite what you might surmise from gay personal ads, less than 1 percent of those erections Kinsey witnessed in the flesh exceeded 8 inches. The odds against finding a true 9-incher are a thousand to one, but still considerably better than winning at Lotto. The difference between AOL inches and real-life inches is in the eye of the owner, not the beholder.

But does the rarity of those knitting needles in the haystack make any one of us men feel any better? Nope. Men are hung in different sizes, widths, directions, shapes and each of us is different, whether continued
hard or soft. Some men are showers and some men are growers. Still, going to a nude beach or locker room, men with bigger and longer flaccid endowment are more fortunate. They have less to worry about in terms of being judged and found wanting, or hearing snide remarks made about them. Even if their four-inch softie doesn’t grow when erect, straight guys in a locker room, bathhouse or nude beach won’t know that. The guy who might boast only 1 to 2 inches soft and grow to 8 inches hard, still feels self-conscious, thinking that when at ease, everyone sees him as too small, even though at attention, he knows he’s not!

**Measures for Manhood and Masculinity**

What we’re really talking about here is how much of a man someone is. And we tend to measure masculinity by various standards—by how tall or short he is, how successful or wealthy or athletic or stoic . . . the list goes on. All these measurements are on outward qualities, and how sad this all is. We need to look more at the inside, evaluating a man by his integrity, responsibility, talents, eloquence, and accountability. Why not measure a man by the size of his heart? That way, you’ll wind up with more satisfactions than you’ve ever dreamed of!