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**BEING GAY**

THE LIFE OF GAYS THROUGH THE ANALYSIS  
OF REAL EXPERIENCES

*by Project*

Published by GAY PROJECT  
July 16, 2019



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# About this book

Gay reality can be compared to an iceberg of which only a small part emerges. Publicly declared gays, despite being a clear minority, have a real, even if reduced, media visibility, while not publicly declared gays, which make up the vast majority of gays, are socially invisible.

Gay Project is an association founded in 2007 in order to raise awareness of the reality of life of gay people, with particular attention to gays not publicly declared, which, for their invisibility, are generally completely ignored by sociological research and media. The activities of Gay Project have expanded over the years and several people have collaborated with me in the management of the technical and organizational aspects of the Project, but my activity has always been focused on direct dialogue with gay people of all ages, via email, in chat, through forums and also, of course, in person.

Gay Project has collected a huge amount of testimonies, consisting of exchanges of e-mails and discussions on the forum, which allow to widen the look seriously on the reality of undeclared gays. All this material, mostly of a private nature and therefore not immediately available for reasons of privacy, or dispersed in many forum posts, required a serious work of reworking that made it ordered within a logical scheme and therefore easily usable by interested people.

My work of reorganizing and reworking the enormous documentation collected has led to this volume, which tries to summarize in 26 chapters the experience gained in Gay Project over the years.

Obviously I don't mean by this volume to summarize the "truth" about gays, which constitute an extremely complex and jagged reality. This work aims to be simply the synthesis of what emerged in the activity of Gay Project. It is a synthesis that has been carried out trying to maintain the maximum fidelity to the observed data, and in this sense it is therefore a work conducted with scientific method, through the analysis of hundreds of concrete situations, obviously, related only to people who came into contact with Gay Project, it is a very large sample but not representative of the general gay population.

The situations considered refer to the overwhelming majority of Italian gay guys, not publicly declared, with an average age of around 26 and active web-goers.

The guarantee of the scientific nature of this work lies in the absence of *a priori* purposes of any kind and in full compliance with the collected data. The syntheses that make up the various chapters have been widely discussed in the Gay Project forum and are widely shared. Despite all the limitations and field restrictions indicated, this volume remains, in my opinion, a source of unique knowledge of the life of undeclared gays. The documentation at the end of each chapter is all of first hand and tends to underline the complexity and variety of situations.

Project

# Chapter 1

## UNDERSTANDING TO BE GAY

### 1.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 1.1.1 The discovery of masturbation

Let's start with a concrete example.

A boy 12 years old (seventh grade) experiences for the first time the spontaneous swelling up of his penis (erection) while he is in the locker room along with his mates and while concentrating his attention on one of them who is undressing. The experience is pleasant, the guy comes home, sits and starts to think about his mate, has an erection, the feeling is newly enjoyable, the guy starts a long manipulation of his penis (masturbation) at the end of which he feels a strong contraction of the testes (orgasm) that makes a white substance (semen) squirt up from his penis (ejaculation), immediately after, the guy experiences a strong feeling of relaxation, as if all the tension caused by sexual arousal had been discharged (post-orgasmic phase). During all this succession of events, the imagination is concentrated on the image of the mate undressing in the locker room (masturbatory fantasy).

Let us now analyze this example. It is the discovery of masturbation, that is the first real sexual experience. In this experience, there are two different components linked together, the physical one (erection, masturbation, orgasm, ejaculation, post-orgasmic phase) and the imaginative one (masturbatory fantasy).

It is usual to call masturbation also the whole physical-imaginative process we have just described. During masturbation the guy brings to mind the images that had caused the erection spontaneously, because focusing on those images (masturbatory fantasies) he can easily get an erection or keep it (sex-

ual arousal through masturbation fantasies) this way the erection is more vigorous and all the process of masturbation is strongly involving. If the masturbatory fantasies of a guy are directed towards other guys we use to say that masturbation is gay-oriented, or in a gay key, or in gay direction; if masturbatory fantasies are directed towards girls we use to say that masturbation is hetero-oriented, or in a hetero key, or in hetero direction. When the masturbatory fantasies are really spontaneous, they represent the fundamental indicator of sexual orientation: a guy who masturbates exclusively and constantly in a gay key is to be considered a gay guy.

### 1.1.2 Gay discomfort

Let us now go further with exemplification. The same guy that we talked about before, listening to his mates when they talk about masturbation becomes aware that they experience something similar to his own experience with regard to the physical aspects but different with regard to the masturbatory fantasies, and realizes that his mates, during masturbation, don't focus attention on other guys but on girls. Back home, the guy tries to masturbate focusing on a girl, that is, using the same masturbatory fantasies used by his mates, but those fantasies do not produce results and are on the contrary experienced as something alien and not really exciting. The guy then comes back to masturbation fantasies focused on some of his male mates and the physical response is rapid and convincing.

Let's analyze the example.

This is the first perception, by a gay guy, of the fact that his sexuality is not similar to that of other guys. The thing in itself would not cause any problem, but the guy, speaking with his mates, becomes aware, with a growing awareness, that his sexuality is considered by his mates as an object of ridicule and as something quite offensive to joke about, so he begins to connect his sexual orientation with words like gay, fag, queer, fagot and so on, that people use as an insult. This way the guy perceives for the first time the discomfort of being gay, which is not caused by the fact of having a sexuality different from that of the other guys but by the contempt shown by other guys.

### 1.1.3 Gay falling in love and frustration

But let us proceed with the examples.

The guy that we talked about in the previous examples starts to feel the presence of the guy who is the object of his masturbatory fantasies as something very pleasant, he is happy while being beside that guy, talks to him for

as long as possible, appreciates his voice, his physical presence and smile and tends to create a relationship with him. At first that relationship seems to have the typical characteristics of friendship but really differs from friendship because that guy is also the subject of masturbatory fantasies.

All the process described above represents a typical gay love affair, in which there are two components: one affective, which consists in creating a relationship of proximity and affection with the other guy, and the other strictly sexual, which consists in being sexually involved by the other guy, assuming him as object of masturbatory fantasies.

For the other guys, who live similar experiences, but oriented towards girls, the natural outcome of being in love is the declaration of love to the girl they love, that statement is usually considered by girls like something flattering. A gay guy understands on the contrary that, for him, declaring his love for another guy carries the risk of being identified as gay and thus of being branded with offensive epithets by his mates and also by the guy he is in love with. In essence, the gay guy realizes that he's a gay guy in a group of guys who have a different sexual orientation and concludes instinctively, that not to be labeled as gay by his mates, he has to pretend to be straight. So far we have presented a very simple model of getting aware of being gay applied to a 12 year old gay. In reality, this scheme can be complicated by many disruptive factors. Let us therefore examine the most important factors that interfere with the awareness of homosexuality.

#### 1.1.4 Sexual imprinting

Let's consider an example.

A guy 11/12 year old is involved in sexual games with a girl slightly older than him, his first erections are not really spontaneous but are induced by the sexual manipulation of the penis put in practice by the girl, which is especially rewarding because allows the preadolescent to perceive himself like a man. The guy will repeat on his own the handling of the penis and will arrive at the discovery of masturbation and, at least apparently, his masturbatory fantasies will be oriented toward girls. In this case, during masturbation, the spontaneous sexuality cannot easily emerge because the first erections weren't spontaneous but induced by a girl through explicit sexual stimulation (the manipulation of the penis or the intimate caresses). The "sexual imprinting", that is the first real sexual or para-sexual experience, in this case, has been experienced by the guy "in a hetero atmosphere" not spontaneously but due to external elements (the girl) and thus is not the result of the sexual spontaneity, but nevertheless such sexual experiences are not superficial. The sexual imprinting can induce quite easily masturbation fan-

tasies related to the imprinting, i.e., in this case can induce hetero fantasies, restraining and shadowing spontaneous sexuality. Following an hetero imprinting, even a guy who, if he could spontaneously develop his own sexuality, would manifest a gay sexuality, can present a straight masturbation for years. Gay guys sooner or later come certainly out of the constraints that derive from the hetero imprinting because in the long time spontaneous sexuality comes always afloat.

Much more complicated and problematic is the situation of guys who have been subjected to violence or sexual abuse. I would simply point out that sexual abuse can leave on anyone who has suffered it very heavy consequences, particularly if it was committed with physical or psychological violence or by a close family member.

### 1.1.5 Religious education and homosexuality

Let us consider now the more common disturbing elements that can interfere with the process of getting aware of being gay. We start here with an example.

An 8 year old guy is part of a quite large group of friends older than him, and hears them speak with great interest about pornography on the Internet. For him, 8 years old, genital sexuality is still something to come, but he is induced by what he heard to go and see what it is. In this way, the guy discovers pornography, which means, in the vast majority of cases, he discovers heterosexual pornography, before having sexual maturity to understand the real meaning of sexuality. In this way, the guy gets a form of pre-orientation toward sexuality almost always towards heterosexuality, which tends to stabilize the guy because using pornography he feels integrated with the group of older guys. Over the years the tendency to imitate the sexuality of the older guys leads that guy to the discovery of masturbation that takes place in a "hetero atmosphere" and therefore manifests a heterosexual orientation. This not spontaneous "hetero orientation", precisely induced by the described mechanism, precisely because it is not spontaneous, may not coincide with the spontaneous sexual orientation and therefore, also in this case a young guy with an exclusive hetero masturbation may, over time, have to deal with the subsequent emergence of a spontaneous gay sexuality.

We come now to another important point, namely the education that a guy receives about sexuality, and as usual we consider a concrete case.

A guy has been accustomed from childhood to attend Catholic circles, typically the parish. In that environment he feels comfortable, the family has confidence in the priests and is happy that the child grows up in that environment because even the parents grew up in that environment and feel it as

safe and suitable for the growth of the child. Gradually, from childhood on, that guy has assimilated the values typical of a Catholic environment that are related to the idea of family (father, mother and children), seen as the center of the life of an individual. This model does not create any problem to the guy before his first contact with sex life and indeed is regarded as quite natural because, before discovering sexuality, a guy identifies himself only in the role of child and not in a possible role of father. But there are also other things to take in account, a guy, before discovering sexuality considers as natural the idea that sexuality, which he still does not know concretely, is aimed exclusively to the procreation and that any other use of sexuality is wrong.

When the guy discovers masturbation and the horizon of real sexuality, he is brought automatically to suppress the new feelings and to feel guilty about the fact of not being able to do without what he believes to be absolutely to avoid. Up to this point the conditioning of sexuality operated by the religion is practically the same for both the gay and hetero guys, but for gay guys there are also other problems. In religious circles in general people tend to take for granted that all the guys are heterosexual; the existence of homosexuality is usually considered as a manifestation of disease and sin. The priests who care for older boys only talk about relationships between guys and girls and these behaviors lead gay guys to stay as far as possible away from homosexuality, considered like a very serious sin but avoidable.

Let us pause to reflect on the situation we have just described.

The Catholic Church considers heterosexuality as the only natural form of sexuality and considers homosexuality as a pathological tendency, something against nature, which must be repressed. The Church considers a grave sin every homosexual act, that is, all forms of sexuality shared with someone of the same sex and also considers masturbation a grave sin.

The World Health Organization has recognized, for several decades now, that homosexuality is a "normal" (i.e. non-pathological) variant of the human sexuality. In many states Homosexuals have been granted the right to join together to form a family, a family formed by same-sex partners, in some states, it is also granted to homosexual couples the right to adopt children exactly as it is granted to heterosexual couples. The World Health Organization has also explicitly acknowledged the value of masturbation not only as a fundamental element for the formation of sexuality in adolescence but as a positive element that produces pleasure, accompanies the entire sexual life of an individual and also involves married man and women, who clearly have also a sexual life as a couple. The World Health Organization has included education to masturbation as part of sex therapy aimed at the well-being of

the person as an individual and as part of a couple.<sup>1</sup>

The teachings of the Catholic Church in matters related to sexuality and especially homosexuality and masturbation, are not only not universally shared but are completely incompatible with what the scientific community says about the same subjects.

Sexuality education in accordance with the dictates of the Catholic Church or other religious groups with similar attitudes, promotes feelings of guilt and leads to the repression of sexuality and in particular of homosexuality, which is seen only in the dimension of sin and not as a natural and spontaneous behavior.

What are the consequences of all this for a homosexual guy? the boy tries to force his sexuality toward heterosexuality and considers homosexuality as a vice to be eradicated, seeks to create a relationship with a girl that can reassure him by giving him the illusion that his homosexuality will disappear if he will be able to resist temptation particularly avoiding masturbation, so in fact the feeling towards a girl will grow "pure" that is not tainted by sex. In repressing masturbation, which would inevitably be gay oriented, and in building a relationship with a girl chastely, that is, without any trace of sexuality, the guy sees a merit, a victory over himself and the sign that his "heterosexuality" is true love and not vice because it is not contaminated by masturbation. In fact what looks like a "pure" falling in love with a girl is not at all a falling in love because is missing entirely any sexual involvement. That apparent falling in love allows the guy to pretend to be straight, relegating homosexuality to the rank of marginal vice that will decrease easily, over the years, until it completely disappear when he will arrive to the wedding time. It is in essence a problem of removal of homosexuality that is denied and minimized. In some cases, starting with these concepts, when the first attempts to realize a sexual intercourse with a girl are more or less successful, the guy can get easily even at the wedding.

### 1.1.6 Pornography and educational pressure

The expression "sexual imprinting", in the strict sense, is used to denote the first sexual or para-sexual experience (nudity, physical contact) that induces, through sexual arousal, the initial orientation of masturbation towards guys or girls. It is quite common to speak of sexual imprinting also referring

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<sup>1</sup>In the chapter titled "Homosexuality and guilt" of this book, I quote a part of chapter 8 of the fundamental document of the World Health Organization "Achieve Recognition of Sexual Pleasure as a Component of Well-being" which illustrates the function of sexual pleasure, and therefore, explicitly, also of masturbation, in the construction of individual and social well-being.



to the discovery of pornography and even to the educational pressures. While the discovery of pornography, particularly if very early, can effectively determine the initial orientation of masturbation, and therefore can constitute a real sexual imprinting, the educational pressures act mainly through deterrence. In general, the removal of homosexuality as a result of educational pressures does not lead a gay guy to hetero masturbation but to the abstinence from masturbation, in this case we can speak of sexual imprinting only in very general terms.

### 1.1.7 Masturbation and sexual orientation

Here it should be clarified that a guy who lives a straight imprinting can masturbate, for a period of time at least, with heterosexual fantasies, even if he is not straight, and a gay guy, in situations of particular emotional involvement, can have a sexual intercourse with a woman.

It should be borne in mind that the true sexual orientation is the "spontaneous" sexual orientation of a person, therefore a guy is gay if, without any conditioning, his sexuality is focused on guys, and similarly a guy is straight if, without any conditioning, his sexuality is focused on girls, but that does not mean that a gay guy, that is a guy who, without any conditioning, focuses his sexuality on guys, cannot, under particular conditions, i.e. with strong constraints, respond to a heterosexual stimulation.

Similarly, a straight guy, who is spontaneously led to a hetero sexuality, in some particular situations, may also respond to a homosexual stimulation. It is precisely for this reason that, in the presence of strong environmental constraints, when the orientation of masturbation does not coincide with that of couple sexuality, the true sexual orientation is what emerges from masturbation because during masturbation the weight of the constraints is enormously less and there is no expectation to satisfy on the part of the partner. The fantasies that accompany masturbation are, for these very reasons, the fundamental index of sexual orientation.

It should be noted that, given that 92% of the population is composed of heterosexuals, environmental pressures that push toward heterosexuality are very strong, while those that push towards homosexuality are virtually nil. That's why there are many gays who have problems, even for long periods, with their being gay, while it is very rare to find a straight guy who has problems with his being hetero.

About 30% of the guys who end up recognizing themselves exclusively gay have had before periods in which they considered themselves to be heterosexuals and some of them, and not a few, also had sex with a girl and also with more than just one. Those guys are not heterosexuals who have become

homosexuals but they are homosexuals who have been induced to pretend to be heterosexuals by environmental pressures or by an education for nothing respectful of sexual spontaneity and typically have lived long and troubled periods of uncertainty about their sexual orientation. It is significant that most of these guys, even when they have a girlfriend and have sex with her or other girls, continue to practice masturbation with gay fantasies.

### **1.1.8 False sexual orientation indicators**

Let us now deal with elements that can appear but are not indicators of sexual orientation.

Let's consider an example.

A 11 year old guy goes for swimming and compares his penis with that of his peers. In this case it is true that there is an interest in the penis of other guys but it should be clear that for the guy this is only an element of comparison for assessing his own sexual maturation in relation to that of other guys, exactly as it happens when considering physical development, height or strength in relation to the similar characteristics of other guys. All this has nothing to do with homosexuality.

Let's move on to another situation which is incorrectly related to sexual orientation or gender identity, that is the feeling of being a man or a woman.

A child about 5 or 6 year old sometimes puts on mum's shoes, plays with dolls together with the girls and not with toy soldiers together with his male mates, feels at ease more with the girls than with his male mates, does not like to play football and so on.

Such situations are not indicators of sexual orientation or of gender identity (feeling of being male or female) but can sometimes express forms of discomfort in the integration into the peer group, often caused by a very rigid education or simply by shyness. Adults should avoid to negatively emphasize these behaviors with attitudes amazed or worried that can really magnify insecurities that are likely to remain unexpressed and unresolved.

### **1.1.9 Awareness, mechanisms of removal and underestimation**

Let us now try to highlight the typical mechanisms underlying the unawareness and non-acceptance of being gay, in this sense we will consider some of the most typical mechanisms of removal and underestimation of all the elements that, if properly interpreted, would lead to awareness and acceptance of being gay.

### BEING GAY

We assume as a basic definition that being perfectly heterosexual means to fall in love affectively and sexually in an exclusive way with people of the opposite sex and that being perfectly homosexual means to fall in love affectively and sexually in an exclusive way with people of our own sex. Of course, all intermediate positions are certainly possible.

Now the problem is to identify, first of all, how the affective and sexual falling in love takes shape. What does it mean, for example, to fall affectively and sexually in love with a guy?

I'll try to respond based on the experience gained in Gay Project.

Falling affectively in love with a guy means:

1) desiring strongly his presence, coveting it; creating opportunities to stay often with that guy; trying to delay the separation moment as much as possible when you are with him; perceiving that time passes very slowly when you wait to see him and that it passes very quickly when you are together with him; exchanging a lot of text messages with that guy, anxiously waiting for his answers; trying to put him totally at ease; having the pleasure of listening to him.

2) feeling for that guy forms of solidarity, feeling discomfort when he is in trouble or is not well, feelings happiness when he is happy even for things that have nothing to do with you, looking forward to stay close to him to help him to solve his problems.

3) desiring to know as much as possible about that guy's life: if he has a girlfriend, who his friends are, how he spends his time, what hypothesis he does for his future.

4) experiencing forms of jealousy when that guy shows particular sympathy or attention for a girl or another guy, even at the level of important friendship, hoping that his love stories will end soon or that they can leave him at least the time to stay with you.

Falling sexually in love with a guy means:

1) perceiving the pleasantness of the physical presence of that guy, being struck by his gaze, his voice, his handshake, his way of smiling, moving his hands, walking; seeing something perfect in some physical details of that guy, like the color of the skin, the hair, the harmony of his body, the shape of his

hands or face, the heat emanating from that guy, his smell.

2) experiencing the presence of that guy as sexually exciting; having an erection when you are close to him, especially when you are alone with him, even without any apparent sexual implication.

3) asking yourself if that boy too is sexually involved and trying to understand, for example, if he too has sometimes an erection in your presence.

4) spending a lot of time repeatedly fantasizing about what you would do with that guy imagining him sexually involved.

5) dreaming of that guy in situations of nudity or sexual involvement with you.

6) masturbating while thinking about that guy, dreaming and hoping that he can do the same thinking of you.

It is obvious that between the forms of affective involvement and those of strictly sexual involvement there are ample zones where affectivity and sexuality are mingled up in various ways and degrees, and, because of this, too analytical distinctions have a very relative meaning. A single concept must always be kept in mind, namely that to have a real falling in love, neither just sexual interest nor just affective interest is sufficient, the two components are both necessary.

#### UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU ARE GAY AND ACCEPTING YOUR BEING GAY

People can experience the situation of "being gay" without attributing to the objective falling in love that they live any consciously gay connotation, in this case we cannot talk of gay identity because the meaning of falling in love has not yet been correctly framed by the person who lives it. That's why the problem of identifying and accepting homosexuality for what it really is, sometimes emerges, it's a problem which, in environments strongly orientated towards heterosexuality, may not be easy to solve.

#### AWARENESS

The most typical mechanisms that delay the awareness of homosexuality are linked to the substitution of the terms that contain references to sexuality with others more neutral, which tend to validate alternative motivations for

the interest towards another guy, by using a language completely detached from sexuality. Let's try to synthesize the most typical mechanisms:

1) "I am not in love with a guy but I consider him an example to follow because he is beautiful, fulfilled and happy while I am not so". This is the so-called category of the "model" very in use in the past times to counteract the awareness of being gay by reading the interest in another guy in terms of pure emulation.

2) "I like him but it's just an aesthetic pleasure". In this classic statement you don't use the expression "I'm in love" but in its place the expression "I like", identifying the reason for the attraction outside of the sexual sphere in a purely aesthetic dimension. A guy can say: "I turn to look at him but only because he is beautiful" and the word "only" tends to exclude the idea of a sexual involvement.

3) "I feel physically attracted to him but I am not in love with him because I am heterosexual and therefore I fall in love with girls". In this regard, I note that the last statement reverses the logic of discourse and transforms what should be the conclusion in the premise. According to the logic one should say: "I fall in love only with girls (a matter of fact) so I am heterosexual (I meet the definition of heterosexual)", instead the guy says: "I am heterosexual (axiomatic statement assumed in abstract) so I fall in love with girls only (due behavior as a deduction from the axiom)". I emphasize that saying "I feel physically attracted to him but I am not in love with him because I am heterosexual and therefore I fall in love only with girls" means to make a separation between sexuality "being physically attracted" reserved for guys (I note that even here the guy doesn't use the expression "falling in love") and the affective love, that would be the "true falling in love", reserved for girls. Those who use this language are convinced to live for girls a "higher" love because without sex.

4) "It's just a transitory phase, when I'll find the right girl, all these fantasies will pass". This phrase expresses the so-called conception of transitory or evolutionary homosexuality. Here the homosexual attraction is not denied but is debased by confining it in a chronologically limited dimension, but it would be better to say attributing to it a dimension of substantial emotional and sexual immaturity that will be overcome by the advent of a mature heterosexual sexuality "when the right girl will arrive". I would say that the idea of the transitory phase is particularly subtle because it does not define any concrete temporal limit and allows an indefinite series of referrals of the

question to a hypothetical automatic resolution generated from the outside.

The point of view of homosexuality as an expression of an adolescence that has not yet been completed, that is, of a homosexuality that can be overcome, is that adopted by the Congregation for Catholic Education for the admission to the seminary of people with homosexual tendencies. The Church

”cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called ”gay culture”. Such persons, in fact, find themselves in a situation that gravely hinders them from relating correctly to men and women. One must in no way overlook the negative consequences that can derive from the ordination of persons with deep-seated homosexual tendencies.

Different, however, would be the case in which one were dealing with homosexual tendencies that were only the expression of a transitory problem - for example, that of an adolescence not yet superseded. Nevertheless, such tendencies must be clearly overcome at least three years before ordination to the diaconate.”<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1.10 Acceptance difficulties

Once you have reached the awareness of being gay, this awareness is not always accepted peacefully, because a number of very rooted preconceptions hinder acceptance. Many of these preconceptions are of religious derivation and are therefore intrinsically dogmatic. The mechanisms of non-acceptance always rely on the need for a belonging (familiar, religious or social) that would be incompatible with homosexuality. The most typical ideas that make the acceptance of homosexuality difficult can be summarized as follows:

1) ”These are things that everyone does, they are just forms of exploration of sexuality”. In this sentence two distinct denialist approaches are concentrated: a) ”everyone does it” (which is absolutely not true) so yours is not an authentically homosexual behavior. b) ”It’s not about homosexuality but about sexual exploration”, here the technique of changing names to things to deny them can be recognized.

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<sup>2</sup>Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders, n. 2, November 4th 2004.

2) "Gays are people who are addicted to sex and make things of all kinds and I have nothing to do with them". With statements of this kind guys try to generate in themselves a sense of disgust towards homosexuality by degrading it morally. Here one can speak properly of internalized homophobia.

3) "It is a vice from which I must free myself". This statement in a sense represents a step forward because homosexuality is fully aware but branded, even by those who live it, with the mark of immorality. In these situations, the iterate condemnations of homosexuality on the part of the Church have a great weight.

The catechism of the Catholic Church and the papal documents in the matter of homosexuality speak of "serious depravity"<sup>3</sup>, "fatal consequence of a rejection of God"<sup>4</sup>, "lack of normal sexual evolution",<sup>5</sup> "pathological constitution",<sup>6</sup> "intrinsically bad behavior from the moral point of view".<sup>7</sup> Saint Pius X, in his Catechism of 1910, classifies the "impure sin against nature" as second by gravity only to the voluntary homicide, among the sins that "cry out revenge in the presence of God".<sup>8</sup> And adds<sup>9</sup> "These sins are to cry out for vengeance in the sight of God, because the Holy Spirit says so, and because their iniquity is so grave and manifest that it causes God to punish them with more severe punishments". These statements do not need comment.

There is no doubt that a homosexual to be Catholic should consider homosexuality the worst of vices. The idea of homosexuality "against nature", which is of dogmatic derivation, is still very widespread even among people for other aspects of good cultural level.

4) "I must go to a psychologist because things don't work properly". Among the most widespread prejudices about homosexuality there is the fact that it is considered a psychiatric pathology or a mental disorder. It should be emphasized that the path to eliminate homosexuality from the catalog of psychiatric disorders has been very long and tortuous, has led to an infinity of controversy and still, despite the contrary positions of profes-

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<sup>3</sup>Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2357.

<sup>4</sup>Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Human person. Some questions of sexual ethics - 29 December 1975, n. 8 - Homosexual relationships.

<sup>5</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup>Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith - Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the pastoral care of homosexual persons, 3.

<sup>8</sup>Major Catechism, n. 966.

<sup>9</sup>n. 967.

sional orders, many psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists, who claim "the right of homosexuals to be cured", paradoxical expression, tend to apply therapies aimed at the modification of sexual orientation, the so called "reparative therapies of sexuality" sustained by Nicolosi in the United States and in Italy by Cantelmi with the support of strong religious groups. I must stress that even today some health workers, who should be reliable reference points, come to confuse sexual orientation and gender identity.

5) "If I were gay, I would give terrible displeasure to my parents who expect their grandchildren". This sentence represents in sublimated terms a reality that should be described in a more pertinent way as follows: "If my parents understood that I'm gay, my family life would become hell, and since I have no choice, I have to accept to sacrifice my sexuality". Strong and insistently heterosexual family environments are a very deep reason for concern for gay boys. I must stress that "coming out" in the family is still a fairly rare reality among gays.

6) "Maybe I like guys, but I don't really feel gay". Behind this sentence we see the substantial acceptance of homosexuality but not of homosexual identity. "I can also behave like a homosexual but I am not homosexual", as if being gay did not correspond to a set of tendencies and behaviors but had a further ontological connotation, that is as if there was a difference between behaving as gays do reasoning like them and being gay in itself.

7) "I don't want to be gay and nobody can impose it to me". Behind this sentence hides a further mystification that is to consider the fact of being gay a voluntary choice and not a reality to be accepted for what it is.

#### THE COURTING AND THE LOVING FRIENDSHIP

Being gay can manifest to the outside through behaviors that make clear the state of falling in love and tend to get an answer from another guy. These external behaviors constitute the gay courtship. It should be emphasized that gay courtship is often unaware in the sense that several guys, who implement forms of objective courtship towards other guys, read their behavior as a very strong friendship, at the limit of sexualized friendship between hetero guys, and tend anyway to exclude the classification in the category of homosexuality. If a guy falls unconsciously in love with another guy, courtship can be characterized by an extreme lightness that it is not even perceived as a form of courting by the guy to whom it is directed, because he is not even perceived as such neither by the guy who puts it into practice. In these situations,



courting often manifests in very soft ways, from the smile to prolonging the conversation more than usual, from the proposal aimed at taking a stretch of road together or to accompany the other at home, to the proposal to go out with other guys, and in some cases up to the proposal to go out together alone. Often these "amorous friendships" are experienced at the beginning in a gratifying way and are transformed into very close interpersonal relationships which however maintain all the apparent characteristics typical of a friendship. A girl often doesn't understand why her boyfriend prefers to go out with his best friend rather than with her. Sometimes it may happen that what seems a common friendships is in fact a love friendships, that is, at least one-sidedly, an unconscious form of homosexual love.

## 1.2 DOCUMENTS

### 1.2.1 How I understood I was gay

Understanding that I was gay ... My real problem that lasted at least three years was just that. Until 17 years old I felt straight, not very enthusiastic in running after girls, I had to stand such things, but I adapted myself and I didn't refuse girls, and sometimes girls courted me, I believe I'm a handsome guy, at least not so bad, and some girl sometimes wanted to be my friend.

At school all my classmates craved to go dancing, especially on Saturday evenings to a disco. Sometimes I went too, between 17 and 18 years old, but going to dance for me meant only going to dance and nothing else, for other guys things were very different, they went there to be able to hide somewhere with girls, even without doing anything wrong, or maybe not, who knows, perhaps I'm naive. I too used to go there, but didn't dance almost never. When I had to embrace some girl I tried to keep her at distance from "there". All these details, if we can call them so, could have made me understand how things were, but nothing like that happened and I understood later why. At that time I was a frequent Church goer (and now I'm in crisis from this point of view but then I changed my point of view and everything became different for me), at that time I didn't even think I was gay, that is, it's not that I was thinking about the problem deducing I was straight, being gay or hetero wasn't a problem at all for me; for me it was obvious that I was heterosexual. I didn't feel gay temptations at all, I know that it seems absurd, but it never happened, tot even a single time. I have read on your forum of guys who enjoy having it hard and masturbating thinking of a friend.

Today I know what it means but then at that time such things never

happened to me. That little amount of sexual fantasies that I used to do, were only about girls, because everybody used to do such things about girls. If we want to say so, then I used to sublimate everything, more or less, I masturbated, but thinking about girls even if it wasn't an exciting thing. But look, at that time, even showering with my friends in the pool was nothing at all for me. It was a pride for me having my sexuality reduced to a minimum. I used to go frequently to confess, and sometimes at least, I hadn't even to tell that I had masturbated because I wasn't addicted to that and I felt very proud of it. You can say: "Then, how did you live?" Practically I was totally absorbed by sports, school, volunteering and so on . . . In short I was a swimmer almost at national selections level, not exactly but very close to it and for me those things were important, I used to spend entire afternoons in the pool and my coach considered realistic the idea of sending me to the Italian championships and this was very gratifying for me. . . . Do you know what a training level for swimmers like me is? . . . . Then there was the study to add, because I was also very good at school and such things made me feel perfect. Teachers at school used to tell me that I was great, the coach that I could go to national championships, priests that I was doing very well avoiding masturbation . . . you can understand that I could be proud of myself, I was somehow the perfect guy model.

Only my father, sometimes, I think, was a little perplexed if not worried, but not that I was gay, but that I simply had set aside my sexuality to devote myself to other things. Dad tried to tell me that in life there are other things, certainly he meant to allude to the girls, without even mentioning them, I used to answer I had many other things to do and that I was thinking a lot about girls. And I was really convinced of thinking of girls.

In short, things went on like this up to 19 y. o. . . . Then I enrolled in the Engineering Faculty, I met Stephen and there our story began. After the first days of class I see that there is a serious guy, a little like me, always taking notes, who does not go out during the intervals and is always there studying his book, a guy who seemed not inclined to get acquainted with other guys or to lose time . . . I notice him, yes, but no more than that . . . then something unpredictable happens, the analysis professor explains Heine-Cantor theorem doing this premise: "It's an important theorem, I'm about to explain this theorem, but I think you, guys, won't understand anything at all!" For me, like I was at that time, such words were like a challenge.

I had to understand the Heine-Cantor theorem. I work with the utmost commitment; approximately, somehow I understand the general meaning of the theorem but I don't understand precisely why it is something important and how it could have a practical utility. The day after, Stephen approaches me (blessed be the Heine-Cantor theorem!) And tells me: "But did you un-

derstand the theorem that the professor explained yesterday?" Look, for me that question had not in any way the flavor of a personal approach; it was only a request for explanations about a theorem of analysis. I try to show him what I have understood but Stephen replies with objections to which I don't know how to answer and I end up smiling and enlarging my arms as to say: "Well ... perhaps I didn't understand anything at all!"

When the next lesson begins, he remains seating next to me, but I don't even notice. Then at the end of the lesson he tells me: "Do we try to understand how it works?" I say yes and we spend the whole afternoon on the Heine-Cantor theorem, slowly the meaning clarifies and at the end we feel the thing pretty simple. In the evening when we say bye we tell each other that next day we are going to ask the teacher whether or not what we understood is right. In the evening, at home, I newly studied the theorem and, the next morning, after class, we asked the professor and he told us that the meaning was exactly what we had understood. I felt radiant ... but only for the Heine-Cantor theorem!

In the following days, Stephen he proposed me to study together because we were serious guys who don't like waste time and we began immediately to study together. I would like to underline that we only studied, not even a word about other subjects, we were too taken with the idea of passing all examinations at the first session, and for us that was the first goal. In practice we have only studied until the end of examinations and we passed all exams and all with 30/30 and it wasn't easy at all. We felt in ecstasy, but once we finished the exams, we no longer had a reason to spend the days together and our collaboration was over. We heard each other on the phone every two or three days, but with short phone calls, for me it was a devastating situation, I missed Stephen's presence. ... and I think the same happened to him.

He called me and told me ... what do you do today? My answer: nothing! So we met in the early afternoon but we had nothing to do, we talked all the afternoon, I was "fully Catholic", he just the opposite but respectful. Our political ideas were not very different, then we talked about books, cinema, songs, teachers, high school and many other subjects, but never about girls or sex. I, at that time, wasn't at all able to notice such things but later I understood ... When we were about to say goodbye, I ask him about his plans for the next day, he proposes me an exhibition on Impressionists and I agree.

The next morning, after the exhibition, about which he knew everything, more than an art history teacher, we go to eat something at fast food restaurant and then we walk around the city. Together we are good. We are two friends walking in a beautiful July afternoon. In short, things went so for about a half of the summer.

My parents in August go to the mountains for three weeks; I usually go with them. I ask Stephen what he's going to do in August, he asks me: "And you?" I say, instinctively: "I'll stay here ..." and he tells me: "I too!" I feel happy. When I go back home I say to my parents that I have to stay at home. My father tells me only: "Don't go crazy about books!" At that moment for the first time I realize that I have skipped three weeks in the mountains to stay with Stephen. Several days after he told me he had done exactly the same to stay with me.

When my parents were away, Stephen used to come to my house, six was miles from us, we were happy to be together, talking, cooking, relaxing and telling each other prudently about our lives. In those afternoons we began also to talk about sex: two heterosexual friends who talk about sex. He tells me at the beginning of his two girls and I tell him of my adventures, so to say.

Then our mutual confidence slowly grew more and more and he told me that, however, he was not enthusiastic about sex, I told him that for me was just the same and then we discussed with a greater freedom. For me, but I think even for him, it was an incredible sense of liberation talking freely about sex, although in fact we spoke more through allusions than directly, but substantially our talking was concrete. Neither he nor I thought to be gay, we were two hetero not enthusiastic guys, that was all.

Then, strangely and abruptly, Stephen became entirely blocked, the fluency of conversation of the previous days seemed to disappear, he kept to come to my house but didn't like to stay at home but wanted to leave the house to go around the city, not talking about us but just about books and exhibitions. ... This new atmosphere worried me ... but I did not say anything.

One evening, when he left, he tried not to give me an appointment for the following day; he was formal, something that never had happened before. I wanted an answer, I needed it, I saw that he was embarrassed and he told me: "Come on, I'm not going to talk about it ... don't worry, I'm not down because of you ..." and he went away. I was there in all my discomfort, I didn't know what to think, I called him on the phone, he replied with very few words, closing the phone immediately after but I didn't let him go this way, at the end he told me: "Okay, I'll come tomorrow, you're right you have to know ..."

The next day, he came, he seemed very stressed, asked me not to interrupt him and in very few words told me that he thought he was in love with me but the situation seemed absurd to him because he never fell in love with a guy, but such a thing instead was happening. At that time I still thought I was heterosexual and I replied as I thought a good heterosexual guy should reply to a gay friend of his in such a situation: "I am sorry but I can't share

your feeling because I am heterosexual ... Yes, I like you but ...” He didn’t even let me end my phrase and he left saying that he was tired and wasn’t even able to bear staying there ...

When he left I felt a violent feeling of emptiness, I was a few minutes shocked ... then I went running at the bus stop where he had to take his bus, from a distance I saw him get on the bus, but I couldn’t reach him in time ... I felt finished, dead ... I said to myself: ”But I love this guy ... I don’t know about if it’s the sex factor, but I can’t live without him ...” I sent him a text message: ”I love you ... now I know, I understand it!” He called me and told me: ”Is it true?” I answered: ”I went running to the bus stop I saw you getting in and going away but I was not able to reach you in time and I was about to burst into tears ... I can’t do without you, without you I die ... don’t put me down this way ... I love you, Stephen ... I love you ...”, and he said: ”stay there at the bus stop I’ll arrive in minutes.” And he closed the phone ...

Ten minutes later I saw him arrive running and panting ... We embraced crying in the middle of the road. Do not think that we went home to have sex, to get there, it took more than a month. He wanted us, both, to undergo the HIV test and anyway our relationship was characterized by a form of hesitation and mutual shyness, a little as Project says.

We are together for a year now, we passed all examinations also of the second year ... I think that without Stephen I would never have understood to be gay. Now we have our whole sexuality but it’s too private and I’ll keep it private. I just wanted to say that there are many ways to feel gay and perhaps there are so many ways of being gay that it is difficult to understand them completely. I greet you all! See you on the forum!

### 1.2.2 I realized I was gay at 26

Hello Project, I don’t know who you are and to send you this e-mail I opened a new e-mail account that I will use only to write to you, if you answer me. I know that maybe it’s an excess of prudence but that’s what I did.

Call me Alex, although obviously it’s not my real name. I don’t deny that I don’t feel comfortable writing an email like this in which I tell things that nobody knows but I think it’s still worth writing them because Gay Project helped me a lot and my story can be useful to someone.

I am 27 years old, since some months I live on my own, far from my family of origin. I have a permanent job that I like and I am economically autonomous, in fact the others respect me and have a good opinion of me. Let’s say that from the outside I look like one who has achieved his goals and in a sense it’s

true but inside myself for many years I felt like a failure. I thought that in my life I would never have done what I wanted but always something else. I would have liked to study Physics but I studied Economics and it is thanks to that that I found a good job, I wanted to work in Milan where my parents live and instead I ended up living in Bologna where I found my personal autonomy, in a nutshell I always did the opposite of what I wanted but in the end I felt good so. In one thing only I felt like one who had failed to build anything and it was the emotional life. Reading your website made a lot of ideas clear to me.

I considered myself 100% heterosexual until I was 26 and I had no reason to think otherwise, no reason at all. I've never been with a woman but I did my fantasies on women even if they were never great things and sex for me has always been in a minor tone, I mean I have never had the mania of these things, I heard from others extraordinary things about sex that never happened to me. So sex for me was an unimportant thing and I did not understand what people could find so involving and overwhelming in making love (having sex) with a woman; but even the individual sex was something that didn't excite me so much. I had also tried with the hetero porn sites but they seemed to me absurd things. Up to 26 years I never thought of a guy, but really never, the broadcasts on gays seemed to me things from another planet.

Up to 25 years old I was practicing sports and with my team mates we took a shower together but the thing for me was completely indifferent. I really thought I did not have a sexuality. The girls used to tell me that I was a nice guy but no girl ever did fall in love with me, when I tried something, they moved away from me and I was very disappointed. I don't think I would ever be able to woo a girl and it certainly never happened.

Things have changed for me since September 2008. I started working in another city, where I rented a little apartment near my workplace and in the place where I worked I met also a guy who was a year younger than me, let's call him Max. He too lived in a mini-apartment, but far from where I was, about half an hour by car. We were hired on the same day and I met him waiting at the door of the CEO to know his destination. I was there for the same reason. We waited more than half an hour, both him and me very timid and normal, and then we were both fearful of the new work environment, the first job for me and also for him. He enters first, I wait, after half an hour he goes out and they call me. I enter the room, they give me the letters of assumption and tell me shortly that the next day I should take service, in practice, in a place very close to my house. I was happy.

I go out and see that Max is in the antechamber. He was waiting for me. I feel very gratified. He had no car. I ask him where they sent him, he tells

me that they had sent him to the other side of the city, near his house, or at least not far away. I'm sorry, a bit. I tell him about my destination. We exchange mobile numbers. It was eleven o'clock and he proposes to have lunch together, I say yes, but it's early. I invite him to my house but he prefers to take a walk, it's a beautiful day and I don't take it badly. We walk a lot, then lunch in a fast food restaurant. He asks me if I have anything to do. I say no. He asks me if the offer to go up to my house is still valid. We climb into my mini-apartment. There is a double bed. He takes off his shoes and lays on the bed, I sit on the only chair and we talk. In practice he always talks about the fact that he practices or better was practicing sport, about how much he loved his grandparents, who are no longer alive, about some songs he listens to, about what he expects from work and many other things. I listen to him with pleasure, he is nice, casual, then he says nonsense, he laughs, in short it is a pleasant company.

After some time I realized that we had never talked about sex or love, never, as if the subject didn't exist at all, but at that time I didn't notice such things. In the evening we ate something at the fast food and then I accompanied him to his house but I didn't go up. I was happy to have found Max. I didn't feel alone even though I was in a city that I didn't know at all. In short we have become like brothers.

Ten days later it had become normal that we were always together until the evening or on free days, but at night we stayed each at his own home. After a month we also started to sleep in the same house and in the same bed but without any sexual implication of any kind at any level, we were just like two brothers, no mutual embarrassment and no sexual thoughts neither on my part, nor, I think, on his part.

The first idea that the thing could have a different meaning arose in me when a girl, a colleague of ours began to court Max. It was something that I could not stand, it bothered me, not that she did it but that Max could spend time with her. He treated her politely, probably he was not interested but I was afraid he was. One evening he tells me that the colleague had proposed to him to go out with her. I ask him: "And what did you answer?" He tells me that he had said he didn't feel like it. At that point I breathe a sigh of relief and I must have made a face very happy. Max looks at me and says: "Don't worry, it will never happen!" I made the face of the one who understood and I changed the subject, but that phrase started to turn around in my head in an incredible way. In the evening he stayed to sleep with me (at my home), I tried to resume the speech but he was evasive, he limited himself to say: "Don't ask too many questions ...".

That's when I wondered if Max had fallen in love with me. I completely excluded that I could fall in love with him, but it seemed possible to me that

he could fall in love with me. I wondered what I should do, whether to cut off relations with him or simply not to sleep together anymore, even if between us nothing at all had ever happened. Anyway I did not tell him anything and everything, between us, went on exactly as before, we continued to sleep together in the same bed or at my home or at his and nothing strange has ever happened.

As the days passed I ended up putting away the idea that he was gay, it seemed absolutely impossible. I said to myself: if he's gay, why does he remain totally indifferent? In the end we are together in the same bed. Is it possible that a gay guy in such a situation doesn't dare anything, not even at a minimum level? However, judging by his behavior, it didn't seem to me that he could be gay. In practice months have passed in which we have lived together and from his part there has never been the slightest mention, not even vague, of issues relate do sex, nothing at all! A beautiful morning I wake up before the sound of the alarm clock, there was enough light in the room, he is asleep, I watch him carefully. He's nice or even handsome. I would like to caress his face but I don't, but he is just beautiful, serene, an image that I will never forget and that's where I had the first physical reaction looking at a man. It had never happened to me before, it was the first time ever. I was upset. I said to myself: what's happening to me? I got up and went to put myself under the frozen shower.

At first I was convinced that it had passed. When Max got up, everything went as usual and I was glad it hadn't happened again. I was looking for every possible motivation to justify what had happened: the heat, the fact that I had had no sex on my own for a few days and things like that and the fact that my reaction had manifested itself only once made me feel comfortable. For the whole working day nothing happened. In the evening I had to go to his house but I invented an excuse and I didn't go there, I was afraid it would happen again. He did not tell me anything, after all I had been alone at home other times. I spent the night alone with the idea that it could still happen, I saw the TV, I surfed a bit on the internet, then he called me in chat to ask if everything was fine and "it happened again" even if we were talking only about work. I greeted him quickly because I did not want "the upsetting situation" to continue.

I was really upset, I tried to distract myself but I could not and I did something I had never done before, I drank two cans of beer one after the other and, stunned as I was, I went to bed. I was beginning to think that I would have liked to find him next to me and at the same time that I would have to move away from him and that if I was at that point it was his fault, because his company had ruined me. In short, I hated him and loved him. Since then I started to remove him, probably for him it has been a tremendous



blow but he did not say anything and tried to do as if between us things had not changed. The more I walked away, the worse I felt, and then I began to desire him, that is even at sexual level, with everything this implies. I told myself that sooner or later it would be over but I knew it would not be like that. The phase of removal, let's say, lasted almost two months.

He was friendly with me when we met but it happened rarely and only when the company forced us to common activities, but at a private level we did not see each other anymore. The separation didn't make me overcome my feelings for Max but put them clearly on a sexual level. By now I had totally renounced the idea of being straight but I had to keep only for me the fact that I was in love with Max, we were now like two strangers, or at least I thought so. It was during those days that I started looking online for gay sites and, after seeing things of incredible squalor, that made me feel really bad, I discovered Gay Project and it was a fundamental discovery that really opened my eyes.

One day Max and I come together to a meeting, he asks me: "How are you?" But he asks me it in a very serious way, worried about me. I tell him that I have problems, he looks at me straight in the eyes and squeezes my hand, from outside only a greeting, for me much, very much more. I tell him: "Do you want to come to my place in the afternoon?" He says to me: "Sure!" He comes immediately after work. I feel a terrible embarrassment, his physical presence puts me in a very strange state of mind. I feel very excited, even sexually, but I'm afraid to say things out of place, to hurt him, to offend him. Result: after hours of conversation attempts I don't say anything.

He asks me if he can stay for the night to talk a little more, but I insist to take him back to his home. I take him back home, we don't say a word all along the journey, the embarrassment feels very strong. I come back home. He calls me on the phone, a few words and long silences. We close the phone with nothing done. The situation has been going on this way for more than a month, but I could not take it anymore. An afternoon he comes to me, I had never seen him like that before. He doesn't ask me questions, he only tells me: "Shut up and let me talk..." I listen. He only tells me: "Alex, I fell in love with you!" I don't know what I did at the time, I was happy but also upset, I did not expect such a thing, after several seconds I replied: "Maybe me too..." But I added that such a thing had never happened to me and that I felt strange.

It was the first time that we talked about us in a truly free way. Max and I had arrived at this point, now we knew each other's most intimate things and everything had been absolutely simple. It seemed incredible to me that such talk could be made in such a direct way, but really it happened. He told me that when I had left him he had felt very bad but he thought I had

left him because I had understood that he was gay from the speeches he had made and he didn't want to intrude into my life because basically even if he saw me as a straight guy he loved me all the same and he did not want to create me problems and so he had accepted to step aside. In short, he took for granted that I was straight, exactly as I took for granted that he was straight.

We have confessed our mutual sexual interest but also the embarrassment about the possibility of having sex between us. He too is rather inhibited. We decided to go very slowly. That night we just went to sleep holding hands. But even shaking his hand was beautiful, it too was a physical contact and transmitted a strong emotion. At a certain point I say to him: "Max, I feel excited" and he tells me: "Me too ... but does it embarrass you?" I answer him: "No... and what about you?" He says to me: "Not at all, but just the opposite... ". Max had never been in love with a guy in his life, just like me. It was March 29th 2009 a day I will never forget.

Project, Max and I consider Gay Project a bit like a second home, truly a unique thing on the internet, and in the way of living of Gay Project's guys, we, Max and I, find a lot of things we know very well because we experienced them personally. Nobody knows our story, not even our families know it, because they probably would not understand the true meaning of our relationship, but we want the guys who read your sites to know it. Neither I nor Max would ever have imagined a life like the one we are now living and yet we really are living it. It is not easy neither between us nor on a social level but we have passed hard tests and we are here to testify that, if two guys love each other, happiness for them is possible. Thank you for what you do, Project, and never give up!

### 1.2.3 Feeling gay and reborn

December 9th 2015 the day of my rebirth. And here I am, in spite of my shyness, to share my life with you all. Let's start from the beginning, my childhood. Well, my childhood, what to say, a period totally "black", a father with bad vices, who beats your mother and you look, 5/6 years old, and you are helpless, the worst thing is to look and not be able to do anything, and, despite all, my mother has always had a smile printed not to make me worry, to make me grow without hating my father or anyway to protect me in some way from everything that was going on.

But let's leave this problem, now it's an old story, even if sometimes when I least expect it, I think back to those images. At that time the only person with whom I could feel good, playing, was my cousin V., he was two years older than me, shortly he was like a brother, with whom I could play avoiding

to think about those moments. After that period has ended, one has started even worse.

At 11 years during the period of secondary school, I was overweight several pounds, because many times I used to take refuge in food when I was down. I have been a victim of bullying for 3 years, when I came home I had a sore body, they enjoyed pinching me where I had the "rolls", but the strongest pain was due to the nicknames that bothered me. Even now while I'm writing, if I think back to those moments, I feel a great sense of suffering. I've always been one that keeps everything inside, who never shows his emotions outside, and anyway at that time it was impossible for me to talk to anyone about those things.

The only one who had noticed my behavior was V., I felt better when he was talking to me, but then, one day, when I reached the peak of sadness, and I needed him, he gave me the *coup de grace*. We were in his room, you must keep in mind, Project, that, before, I had never looked at any kind of pornographic magazine or site, and even less I knew what masturbation was. He tells me "Undress, I want to give you a massage", I didn't see it as a strange thing because he used to massage me when I was stressed, but that day was different. While I was lying down, he slipped my panties off and abused me.

I know it may seem stupid to talk about abuse in this case, because you could tell me "Ok, you were there, you liked it maybe, so what do you want?", But at that time I needed a person to help me because I was mentally fragile, and at that moment I felt nothing, I felt useless, lost. Since that day I have no more been in contact with him and I have started to shut myself up.

And here we are at the beginning of high school, same story, shyness and closure due to my outward appearance, I could only relate to someone if someone spoke to me, otherwise I stood in the corner, in silence as if I were a shadow. I began to feel good when I saw people approaching and chatting with me, but after a few months I realized that they were guys/girls who approached me only to get help in some subject, because I was a nerd, then after getting a good grade in that subject they didn't consider me anymore. Good. Finally a positive period arrives in my life, so if you have suffered with me while you were reading the first part, I hope you can breathe a sigh of relief. In the third year of high school my class has been dismembered, and I ended up in another classroom. New classroom, new companions, new isolation. Within the classroom, most of them had a schoolmate with whom to share the double desk, before the desks were all occupied, I threw myself on the first empty desk I found. And N. comes to sit next to me, short red hair, fair complexion, smiling. He sits next to me and immediately introduces himself, and starts talking to me as if we had known each other for years.

At the beginning I started to feel strange sensations as if I was walking on eggshells, I said to myself "But he is probably the umpteenth guy who tries to cheat me with a little smile to use me in some way", as V. and the others had done. In the days to follow, however, I saw that he behaved like that with everyone, he was sincere, outgoing, he gave me attention and in the evening forced me to go out with him and his friends (since I had never left home until the age of 16).

I believed in him when during the trip to Budapest, in the fourth year, we had to go with the whole classroom to a spa. The world collapsed on me, had I to undress in front of the whole class? I would rather shoot myself. He shakes me, that day, looks at me and says: "Listen, now you have to prepare and come, do you think you are obese? That is, you weight 100 kg, is this for you to be obese? You are going to see people who are in the spa that weight about 200, I want to see what you'll think then. And, listen, if you don't go there, I don't go either."

So I went there, and in the locker room he tried to act as a barrier so that other classmates could not make fun of me in any way, and he was close to me for as long as we've been in the spa. After that trip, the doubts began, the questions, the malaise; because when he was absent from school or I became aware that he had a girlfriend, I was jealous. A morbid jealousy, so much to be angry and almost to quarrel heavily with him, and of course I realized that I was exaggerating. I spent sleepless nights wondering, "Why do I think of him? Why am I so jealous? Why do I go to school in the morning only to see him?" And I also started to get excited when I thought of him.

At that moment, the deepest part of me, perhaps, already understood that I was homosexual, but my mind refused to believe it, perhaps because I was thinking about the pain caused by obesity? I don't know. But my mind went into a self-defense mechanism, let's call it so, to find answers (excuses) to these questions. Anyway maybe I think because he was the first to consider me and therefore I considered him like a brother, and somehow like a part of me, our story went on.

The diploma arrives, for me the terror. Why? Because I knew I would never more see him every day, how would I have done? Luckily in the following months he had enrolled in the gym, and he invited me to register with him, so I could see him 3/4 times a week. Everything lasted until he found a girlfriend, after he got engaged our relationship was vanishing, and I've felt bad for months, because I knew I couldn't see him anymore, anyway, the year after, he left for the military service. So I slipped into a huge emptiness, yet another hope destroyed.

There were two girls among my classmates, and one of them had a crush on me, which I realized after quite a while since I didn't pay attention to her and

to the ways she used to tell me "Look, I like you!" At that moment I thought it was time to get engaged, after all I was 19, my best friend was engaged, so I took the opportunity on the fly to organize a couple of occasions to be with her.

In this period, further doubts and uncertainties have arisen in me, because I noticed that when I kissed my girlfriend I didn't get excited, I didn't think about sex, I didn't feel anything. As for sex, fortunately she didn't want to do it because she was a virgin, otherwise I don't know how I would have done it. After 8 months we broke up because she told me that she didn't see a shred of passion on my part towards her, but only affection. I felt sick, because, as those bullies had played with my feelings, at that moment I seemed to have played with the feelings of a friend of mine, having deluded her.

The University begins, new environment, new companions, on the one hand happiness, on the other, the umpteenth fear due to my appearance. Same behavior as in the high school, as if I hadn't matured in those years. As usual, I was kept at a distance from people who had already created small groups. After a few minutes M. sits next to me, an extrovert guy, solar, brown hair and with a little belly (eh eh!). In short, we begin to talk and somehow I see N. in him, but M. seems even better to me.

We became inseparable friends to the point that we met in the morning every day, we studied together in the afternoon or at my home or at his, and we used to go out together in the evening. Even with him there was a fraternal relationship, I managed to talk more, to believe in myself, and he also talked to me about his intimate problems, many times he asked me for advice and told me that I was a good listener.

Over time we managed to create a small group of friends, we spent our evenings in bars, discos, between alcohol, entertainment and, in "their" case, even girls, because they used to go to the disco with the intention of courting girls, I, instead, used to go there just to change my boring routine, prisoner of my shyness, I was just trying to have fun.

Last summer, summer 2014 (I will never forget it!), my parents go on vacation for a week and I send a message on the whatsapp group that we had in common: "Guys my house is available, if you want to come here to sleep, we organize some alcoholic evening or we give ourselves to meat cooked on the barbecue and wine, in short, you can use my home as a hotel!" M. took me seriously, got his suitcase and moved to me for a week. Woe to for having sent that message!

That week was overwhelming, we were walking around the house in our underwear, going out of the shower and staying naked for a half hour, we slept together and when we were in bed sexual talks were the rule. I had to go

continuously to the bathroom to lessen my excitement.

After two days I confessed to him that I was happy that he had come, because I never had brothers and with him I could talk about everything and I was fine. After those words he hugged me, and in the following five days when I least expected it, while watching TV, while I was on the couch, he came and hugged me. When the seven days ended and he went away, I felt like crying. Take me for crazy, but for two weeks I couldn't set foot in the room where we slept, I thought of him, it was something stronger than me. Perhaps at that moment the hidden part of me was about to come out. But a few days later, in addition to having engaged with a girl, he shoots a very ugly sentence. He has always been a bit racist, but I have never seen anything in his attitudes that was against gays. Sorry if I write to you this sentence, if you want you can jump it, because in my opinion it is really very aggressive, and at that time I considered myself hetero, you can figure out how I can take it now.

He said, I don't remember exactly in what context "But ... the fags? All sick people, they should get treatment, because it's a disease ... if it were up to me I would reopen the ovens of Auschwitz, just to burn them all." So, you know, when you put someone on a pedestal and then it collapses? Here it is. In February, this year, out of curiosity I get on the scales and see "130 Kg", I said to myself: "Well ... there are people I saw on TV who weigh 140/150/160, and cry, desperate because now that they have understood the gravity of the situation they can no longer make a movement and everything is much more difficult. Why do I too have to wait for that moment? It's very easy to get 20 kg more. Why do I have to be sick? I have to lift my ass and get busy."

I start the gym. Well, what about ... I noticed that in the locker room I had pleasure in seeing guys undress and take a shower. And I always tried to look at the guys in question in full, sometimes or better a lot of times, if I was about to start the last exercise and there was a guy I liked, I calculated the time it would take for him to go undress and get into the shower, in order to see him naked. All this just to masturbate later, thinking about the guys seen that day.

Obviously the time came for the "Why I do it?" And here again the twisted mind, with the self-defense system told me: "Anyway I definitely enjoy looking at the naked guys, because I'm obese and I like to see lean or athletic bodies." I think after reading these things, you smiled or said: "What problems does your brain have? Seriously!" Unfortunately it was so, I gave myself these stupid answers.

In November I reached 85 kg, obviously I was very happy, also because relatives or people around notice your change and your willpower and congratu-

late. Then, finally, I had destroyed the barrier that had prevented me from dealing with people for years. Everything seemed perfect. But instead ... in wasn't so. Mid-November, new feelings of emptiness, as if something were missing, and I was aware that I continued to be attracted by guys. "Has it become a habit?"

I made the decision to go to a psychologist, I told him a little bit about my life. I noticed that at every session he always asked me the same question "Are you okay with your sexuality?" And I, like a stupid: "Yes yes, I'm fine." After that question strangely he changed the subject. After 5/6 sessions he told me "I don't see anything unusual in you, because we talked for a long time, and you are convinced that everything is okay, I cannot do anything else."

Now don't ask me why and how, but 8 days ago, December 9th, I have been assailed by the umpteenth doubt and thought. I type on google "Test to understand if you are gay", and I come across Gay Project test (thankfully). I conclude the test and I have a positive result: I'm gay! I thought "Ok, it's just a test", and I started out of pure curiosity to read stories of guys who understood they were gay, right here on the forum. At one point while I was reading, I lift my head from the computer, I look out the window and in a loud voice I say, "I'm gay!" At that time I needed a test whose result would have come out of the computer! "Oh finally, and what the hell, and it took all this time?"

Overwhelmed by the thing, I turned the computer off and went to bed. At that moment I thought back to my whole life, from childhood. That's why I felt sick without N., I was in love with him. That's why I felt nothing for my girlfriend, not because she was like a sister to me, but because I didn't feel love for girls, but just deep affection. That's why I was fine with M., and I even felt like crying, and collapsed when he made that statement. That's why at the gym I was excited looking at the guys. The day after, I felt reborn!

December 9th 2015 is perhaps a day I will not easily forget. On the one hand a very happy day, on the other a little less. Because at first I said to myself: "But what the heck, after finally managing to throw down the wall of obesity, now I have to face this other situation!" I know that this will be a difficult path full of obstacles, but ok, I accept it. It took me 9/10 years to fight obesity. Ok, perhaps it will take years also to overcome this thing. Overcome? No! Accept!"

But who knows ..., as long as I'm quiet with myself ... basically I've discovered my real self, I'm reborn and I'm optimistic. Now I just want to create friendships, because unfortunately in my city people are strongly homophobic, they don't reach the level of M., but are nevertheless homophobic. So a

coming out would be destructive, at least for the moment. I hope to create many friendships here, and to find out more about this new "world", because I'm totally unaware of some terminologies or sexual behaviors among gays. I THANK YOU for the time you have spent reading my story, why should a person who doesn't know me devote me 5/10/15 minutes of his time? Doing it it's already a gift. So I thank you for your time. I hope my story can give some courage to all who are bullied, who are suffering, and who have suffered. I only tell you not to give up, be strong! Cannot you do it alone? I am at your disposal, from today on I will be in chat or here on the forum. Excuse me for any grammatical errors, it is 3.40 in the morning and I sincerely don't want to read all the papyrus I wrote, if anything, I'll make some changes later. I hope I have written things in an orderly manner, because sometimes I tend to go from one thing to another. Thanks again and have a nice day! Greetings from your Little Wolf!

#### **1.2.4 Gay only when I masturbate**

Hello Project, it is very difficult for me to write this letter but I having read many things you wrote I think you can give me a serious answer. I am a 22 years old guy, I feel realized under many profiles: study, friends, etc., people tell me I'm a nice guy, I think more or less an average guy, I have a girlfriend for three years and I have a sexual life with her, we make love more or less every week, things work in the sense that I've never had erection problems or anything like that. I don't take the initiative, I expect her to do it, this way I feel at ease, it has been happening this way for years now. At the beginning there was a lot of the curiosity about the sex as such or rather the letting himself go because in fact it had been she who fell in love with me, I felt at the center of her attention and her desires and the things went on without any problem even if I never felt a real sexual desire towards her, that is, when we were away from each other for a long time, I missed her company, I missed her intimacy, but not sex as such.

But after reading your posts, I confess that I have had several doubts because, even if in fact I never considered it an important thing, in practice since always, when I masturbate I imagine sexual situations involving "also" guys and lately it is as if that "also" had become essential. In my fantasies there are women but, let's say so, they are always less fundamental, it is as if they were an excuse that allows me to be in sexual situations with other guys and, in fact, the thing that excites me most in these fantasies is just that climate of complicity that is created with the other guys, a bit the idea of doing something sexual together, of doing it with a girl, but of doing it with other guys, as if the thing done only with the girl had lost its meaning.



It happened to me about a month ago to dream of a similar situation, that is to dream of being together with a guy talking about sex (sex with girls) but for me the important thing was to hear that guy talking about sex, it was an exciting thing up to orgasm and I noticed that orgasm arrived thinking of the guy and not of the girl.

In the days after the dream, which shocked me a lot, I started to masturbate thinking exclusively of guys and it was really spontaneous, it was not a test, but with my girlfriend nothing has changed, I haven't had sexual problems with her even if I didn't tell her anything about the dream or masturbation thinking about guys.

On the other hand, even before, in my fantasies there were some guys even though always, so to speak, the strictly sexual content was focused or at least seemed focused entirely on the girl. In short, with my girlfriend nothing has changed, but inside me something has changed, I cannot deny it, I told myself that in the end I could also be bisexual and that it wouldn't be a tragedy, but the fact remains that I have never fallen in love with a guy, at least until now, and I cannot imagine myself exchanging tenderness with a guy as I do with my girlfriend. That is, it is as if now I was bisexual, or rather gay but only when I masturbate.

I play sports since I was a kid, I often see other naked guys but this doesn't make me any effect, I see those things without any sexual halo and I'm fully indifferent to such things. I have many friends with whom I feel very free in behavior but they all are straight and basically I think I'm straight too and I never had sexual fantasies of any kind about my male friends (but not even about my female friends) sometimes I think that in sexual matters I need someone to take the initiative as it happened with my girlfriend and I think I would easily go after that person as I do with my girlfriend. I don't have the vocation of the conqueror but of the conquered, even if I'm 100% male. If I have an affective desire about guys, it is focused on being courted by a guy, on becoming the center of his attention, I think that in a similar situation I would also end up melting up completely ... or maybe not, I don't know. But can you be gay only in masturbation? It's important, of course, but I don't think it's enough, that is, in the end you have to fall in love with a guy. Maybe it has not happened to me yet and it's just a matter of time, but I don't know what to think, I don't know whether I want it to happen or not, because if it happens I would find myself in terrible embarrassment with my girlfriend who knows nothing about these things and maybe it is good that she doesn't know them. I absolutely don't think about looking for gay environments and sending you this email requires me to overcome a terrible embarrassment. I wait for your response. If you want, publish the email, because I have kept myself on the generic, therefor you can publish it.

Sando

**Comment by Telemachus**

Very interesting reflections by this guy. Let's say that all of us have asked ourselves these questions. But if there is something that has caught my attention is the tranquility with which this guy is facing his doubts and his questions. Usually the issues related to sexuality and affectivity are accompanied by a high and unhealthy load of anxiety and despair, combined with the rush to self-define in some way just to get out of the limbo of uncertainty. Here, however, this guy seems to have a solid and appreciable starting point, that is a considerable dose of serenity with which to relate to these reflections, combined with the awareness of having to look at sexuality as one, but not the only space of realization of the person. So the attitude of the guy in his email makes me a good impression, because apart from a bit of understandable amazement and fear of facing the thoughts and facts that affected him, he doesn't seem at all upset by drama or fear or substantial concerns that wouldn't do anything else but unnecessarily confuse his introspection and the fixed points to which he can arrive.

On the other hand, these reflections are important but also abstract: one can ask a thousand questions on how he can formally circumscribe his own feelings, but there will always be that gap between such reflections and the concrete relationships with others that prevent us to proclaim definitive rules on ourselves.

In my opinion, finally you can say "I'm gay" or "I'm hetero" or "I'm bisexual" or "I'm gay only when I masturbate" etc. etc., this is not so fundamental. As much as it can be rewarding to find a "frame" in which to insert your sexual orientation (and I admit that such an "introspective result" can actually be satisfactory because it allows you to file a doubt perhaps with relief but also with a lot of simplifications), we must not forget that all this reasoning, that is quite abstract, will have its own meaning only if it will be possible to put it aside in relation to a particular person who will become too special for us to allow us to take care of general and abstract reflections.

**Comment by Project.**

I start from what Telemachus says, which I basically agree with. I'm often in chat with guys who are approaching the idea of being gay step by step and who remain with a thousand doubts in mind until they have their first true gay love story. Many of them, like Sando, come to the awareness of being gay after passing through the awareness of not being wholly heterosexual, precisely through the dichotomy between the couple sexuality, that remains hetero even if it is not lived in a very engaging way, and the masturbation

that gradually assumes increasingly marked gay connotations.

I must say that this path involves the vast majority of that 30/35% of gays who have had a straight sex life and is essentially a rather typical awareness path. Actually, in the case of Sandó, none of the classic complications that accompany this process is present and here we have to open a parenthesis. Sexuality, all sexuality, even the hetero one, can really be experienced without problems only when there is an adequate solid background from the emotional point of view and a considerable measure of self-esteem. I had the opportunity to talk privately with Sandó and I can say that he has a very nice relationship with his parents and among other things he was lucky to have parents who love each other and has seen a serious emotional attitude between them since childhood.

Sandó grew up in a serene atmosphere, without absurd taboos and at 22 has a maturity that many don't even reach at 40. A bit it's his merit but in large part it's due to his family that created a favorable environment. Speaking with him I could understand that the family probably would not cause him any problem due to his being gay and that his father must have realized that the story with his girlfriend was not really an overwhelming love for Sandó, and made him understand that he and his wife would not have been surprised if the story was over. Probably the father doesn't suspect that his son can be gay, nevertheless he often repeats: "in those things you have to do always and only what you feel without caring about what others think!"

Starting from the assumption that there were no pressures of any kind on the part of family members or forms of parents' intrusion with attempts to institutionalize and channel the relationship with the girl towards a marriage solution, Sandó felt essentially free to follow his impulses and instincts, which is something of great value.

At the moment he is not able to evaluate, let's say so, the completeness of his being gay because he lacks the fundamental element of living a true gay relationship, and the fear, from what I can understand, is not that this relationship arrives, but it is precisely the fear that this relationship may "not arrive". And this is precisely why Sandó is uncertain about leaving the girl. I add one thing. Sandó tried to read a lot of things to understand very seriously what it means to be gay and has a very serious and realistic idea of homosexuality, in essence he feels it like something that belongs to him, but is afraid that the jump, that will lead him to a shared love story, cannot be realized at all, because the social environment in which he lives certainly does not favor it.

In practice in his being gay he would have the support of the family but only in private and for him to live a gay relationship with an absolutely minimal visibility would be very difficult and somehow risky. He is currently very

busy in his studies and is projected towards the idea of moving far away from his region and living and working in a big city, even if for all this it will take years. I think he is following the right path and I really hope he can find what he wants. Never give up! Sando!!

### **Comment by Pavloss**

The thoughts of the guy are interesting for me too. If on the one hand they remind me of my past, in which I began to understand myself, on the other they allow me to notice the differences between my story and his, because I understood, yes, but with a lot of anxiety, an anxiety from which I got rid only over time. Reflection suggests that there is a "given" nature in the human being, a psychological-affective-sexual nature that emerges slowly, in front of the environmental solicitations and the circumstances of life.

The guy tries to be fully himself but he don't succeed immediately; he needs time to discover the "design" that is written within himself, so that all vital centers can be activated and operating in the human consciousness. This implies something that in essence is evident: it is not the idea of oneself that prevails and precedes one's own nature, but it is the latter that can give us a rather precise idea of what we are, but slowly over time.

Often the idea of oneself with which one wants at all costs to conform one's nature, creates dramas, tensions, feelings of guilt: "I must be in a certain way and I am not as I would like!" These are things I have known and certainly I was not the only one to follow this twisted path that can be summarized in the (im)moral saying: "We must be as we think otherwise we end up thinking as we are." Idealism that violates nature. On the other hand, when nature is allowed to speak, things are different. The important thing is that this guy can find a way to positively expand his reality, building himself as a mature and responsible person in a true and rewarding relationship.

### **1.2.5 A difficult path to acceptance of my being gay**

Hello everyone,

I am a 20 year old guy from *Campania* (a Region of southern Italy of which Naples is the capital) and I attend the Computer Engineering course at the university. Nice to meet you! Why am I here? Obviously I didn't sign up for fun. I am a guy who has discovered his being gay about a year ago, and has spent most of this year to consider himself bisexual and to refuse at all costs to label himself gay, a guy who was afraid, but now, starting about a week ago, wants to put an end to the great inner problems experienced in these months, and to accept his homosexuality, because going further like this way was absolutely impossible. Inside I felt I was just trying to delude myself

in some way ... I decided to deeply analyze my situation and I understood that girls didn't interest me at all, and I'm also supported by the fact that I have had a gay relationship that lasted for eight months and I was fine, I had some small gay experiences and I felt good, I feel a strong gay desire and I'm fine, while on the other side I never felt really comfortable with girls and I realized recently that I didn't feel any kind of interest for them ...

I hope not to bore you, but at this moment I have some small doubts to which I want to find an answer, I try to accept myself for what I am, but unfortunately the doubts come back every now and then, much less than when I wanted to be bisexual at all costs ... In particular, I really don't understand why for 19 years I never thought I could be gay ... Now if I think back to what happened to me in the past, I understand better why, and I understand what I really want inside me. Certainly I feel much more confident of myself, I feel a fire inside me, that boils, but at the same time I feel small stabs that don't make me still be right with myself, and I would very much that this period passed quickly ... Moreover, I am visibly worried about how my future life will unfold, I am afraid of being marginalized for what I am doing, of being judged simply for my sexuality and even if I tell myself I should not care, I cannot do it serenely. I hate being so sensitive ... I hope that you, who are in this forum, can help me and comfort me, even if I have already been able to talk about myself with some of my close friends, I feel nevertheless that I need to talk about my story with someone far more expert, in particular to analyze my past, on which I still have some little doubts to which I am trying to give meaningful answers. Thank you so much to those who will read this post and who will help me. I would like to talk to you about my personal story, which is still being defined today. I will start from the beginning, for what I can remember ...

I think I was about 11-12 years old, maybe already about 13, when I discovered masturbation ... My father told me about it and as I had already experience it was something very nice to do ... In those days I didn't have a precise idea about what I was masturbating, I probably had no really exciting thoughts, but I did it simply because it was so relaxing and nice to do ... I discovered pornography soon after, at about 13-14 years of age, of course hetero type pornography... even if I vaguely remember I also used gay pornography, but on a marginal level, and it was not too clear that it was gay ... even because I have a quite special interest, I never really enjoyed watching videos or porn photos with humans in the flesh, but I soon turned to "hentai" and other forms of porn through drawings ... Then I used to masturbate in a way very ... strange: I imagined myself on the side of the woman, and I imagined that a guy had sex with me ... and I used to masturbate in different ways, using my fingers too, I don't know if you can understand ... I never

excited at the idea of myself having sex with a woman, but the idea of doing it with a man excited me a lot, but I didn't imagine myself as a man, but as a woman, or anyway with a vagina ... My personal idea is that I did it to hide my homosexuality in this "inverted role game" ... Anyway, according to my memories, at least initially I always did it this way, then less and less, but such a particularity has never disappeared ...

Returning back, around 13-14 years, while I felt very lightly sentimentally attracted towards girls, but nothing sexual (in short, my stories started as if for fun and ended very quickly without leaving a trace), I wanted to try something with a guy, a friend a year older than me ... I considered it as something very serious, I really wanted to do something, but he saw it as a simple game and it didn't satisfy me at all ... And then, back home, realizing what I had done, I felt guilty, dirty inside, and when this friend of mine asked me to do it again I opposed myself and said absolutely no. Slowly the memory of what had happened vanished. In the meantime, more or less in the same summer, I found myself vaguely talking in chat about my "particular" way to masturbate and I quickly realized that it was something seen as absolutely abnormal by other guys, and I understood that something in me was different from what the other guys felt ... They were excited thinking about girls, I felt much more satisfied imagining myself as a girl, and I didn't understand why ... but I began to repress myself and tried to conform to others, even if I was not very convinced, also because I was pushed by my father, who always reproached me that I didn't go with the girls ... In short, I behaved for a few years as an unconvinced heterosexual, a person who had no sexual desire and no interest in getting engaged with a girl ... And I didn't even have any crush on girls.

But then I didn't worry about the problem, I was fine as I was and I was happy, even if I didn't have many friends to be with, in fact I was a very lonely guy. At home, I continued to masturbate without thinking about someone male or female, I thought only of those images that I used to see online with that fixed idea, that often returned, of imagining me in the role of a woman having sex ... I want to clarify that it was an exclusively sexual thing, I never thought of having a wrong body, in short, I'm fine as a man. Of that period I only remember the occasional teasing by the scout friends, who jokingly teased me with words like "pansy", to highlight that I had never shown a real interest in girls and that I often tried in various ways to avoid them, as if I didn't want to confront them, first for fear, then for disinterest ... I remember that I was very angry because of such things ...

The years passed and I continued this way, until I had a last crush on a girl, in my last year of high school ... a friend pointed her out to me and pushed me to try with her, but I could never do it, perhaps out of fear, perhaps it was

something that I didn't feel inside, I didn't feel that absolute need to push me to try with a girl at all costs ... I tried to think of her in a sexual way, but then it didn't involve me at all ... So, I realized that the crush, as usual, had quickly disappeared as fast as it had arrived, and then, in the summer that followed (2013), I began to ask myself the first questions: why didn't girls attract me? Why didn't I feel a strong sense of attraction towards girls while my friends craved for them? Why didn't the female mentality interest me and I only had male friends? Why had I never tried with girls? Was it fear of being rejected and nothing else? I began to inform myself on the web, but above all I met someone who was decisive in my discovery: on the internet I met by chance an American gay friend on chat, to whom I exposed my doubts, my uncertainties, and talking to him, at least at the time, I thought I was straight. But my doubts were strong and I expressed them when, speaking of girls at a scout camp, they asked me if I was gay, and I replied "I don't know, I don't think I am, but boh ... I have to think about, really."

It was a symptom that something was changing, and informing me on the web I discovered something that I thought perfectly suited me: pansexuality. If you don't know what it is, it's like bisexuality, but a pansexual person, unlike bisexuals, is also attracted to people who don't fall into the classic gender dichotomy, such as transgender or intersexuals. I started to define myself pansexual, even though I was far from understanding myself: at the end I still behaved like an unconvinced hetero, and I made my American gay friend understand that I didn't think I was attracted to men ... This friend told me that if I was pansexual, I would start seeing gay porn too, to "balance the two parts of my sexuality", this happened at the beginning of 2014, when I began to see gay porn with increasing insistence, and to masturbate on those porn, and I quickly realized that my tastes were turning upside down, that I was going towards gay sexuality, and I really understood it when I had a crush very short but very intense for that American gay friend ... he was the first guy to whom I revealed my feelings, but my feelings were not reciprocated, and I felt uncomfortable ...

When I realized what was happening I began to think "but at this point ... it is not that I'm gay?" In saying so, I was very scared, I wanted to refuse it, and I did everything to do it, but over the months I felt a strong internal contrast within me: I said I was pansexual, but inside I felt a little voice that told me I was gay, and this little voice continued to make herself heard for a long time ... In the meantime, I fell in love with a guy for the first time. We got together and we have lived as a couple for eight months, during which, between highs and lows, we had a great time, even if the difficulty of seeing each other (we live 60 km from each other) made us suffer, especially me,

and at the end we realized that we were not compatible enough, and about a month ago we broke up ... in the meantime, my doubts and the contrast that I had tried continued ... And so, in this month, I thought about what happened, and a week ago, after having compared my experience that of with other guys who considered themselves bisexuals before and who had then accepted their being gay, I realized that I had to stop making fun of me, and I told myself what I had understood for months but I didn't want to accept because I was afraid: I'm gay!

These days, slowly I'm normalizing the thing inside of me, but I feel sometimes strange, sometimes desperate. I'm happy to be the way I am, happy to have understood who I am, but at the same time I have little doubts, even if I think I have understood a lot of myself in this year and a half. I also recently had my first gay experiences (in fact, with my ex, we never managed to do something in bed) and I liked it. Right now, as I said, I have little doubts, I still don't feel very well with myself, but in my heart I know I did the right thing for me. Now I'm trying to accept myself 100%. I hope someone has understood something ... I'm sorry if I messed up these things, but ordering ideas is not easy, especially when emotions are at stake ... What I'm saying is mainly due to an analysis of the facts, and looking at the facts I can say firmly that I am gay.

### 1.2.6 Affection for a girl and love for a gay guy

Hello everybody.

If I can, I'm going to write something to contribute to this topic even if in a very small part. An experience of mine, more recent and personal, concerns the "risk" I took when trying to attend a girl, a schoolmate of mine and now university mate. At that time I knew I was gay, I was aware of the attraction I felt towards guys. Although I've never had experiences in sexual chats, dating sites or anything like that, however, the temptation was always there, I cannot deny it. In short, the force of sexuality cannot be erased, I believe, especially at my age.

So, reflecting better, why did I try to start a story with a girl? Surely it happened because of an acceptance of my homosexuality not yet full and mature, (acceptance which perhaps is not yet perfect, but which I also believe does never materializes in a final point and rather consists of continuous changes, experiences and so on...) where being gay is not experienced as a natural condition, but as a burden to carry, or worse as a problem to be absolutely solved. And an engagement, in such a condition, easily seems to solve all the problems; finally you can show others that you are straight, that you have no difficulty, no frailty.



Suddenly the world seems to be the easier and safer place to live in: you get engaged, then once you finish your studies you get married, somehow you will go to live under a new roof, and you will become a father. Oh yes, this is the central point: the desire for paternity.

How much it weighs for a gay to know that you cannot become a father, not to be able to raise a child! Especially for those who dream of it since they were kids (I laugh at the thought, but for me it was so!) And then if you find a girlfriend you solve all the problems with your family. What I imagined in those moments was a less complicated relationship with my father (that unfortunately is very conflicting). A girl makes a man look stronger. I know it's cynical and petty, but thinking about, I implicitly thought so.

I liked that girl as a person, even if from a sexual point of view I didn't feel attracted at all. Nevertheless I "declared" to her all my "love", confessing to her that there was some tender affection if not love from me; in a sense it was true, but I didn't consider sexuality in the slightest. I was denying to myself that I was pretending to be bisexual, therefore I was keeping well hidden inside the desire to be "a little" gay anyway. We went out twice together, two half days, I would say two beautiful days. A few handshakes, some hugs. Must I be sincere? I have a happy memory of those moments. But false. False because it started from wrong, dishonest assumptions. I was constantly wondering how I could betray that girl from the beginning, founding a possible relationship on lies. I couldn't tell her I was bisexual, because I had already understood that she wouldn't accept it. I was about to imprison myself in a tunnel with no exit.

Looking back on it better, what attracted me most to her was her family. Yes, I'm not joking: two fantastic parents, fantastic from my point of view and also two older brothers who were really good people. I confess that I liked one of the two brothers. Here you can understand, what an idiot I was.

... After two or three weeks, in which she went through a stormy period with the guy she had been with before we first met, she sent me an SMS where she basically dumped me. I didn't take it very badly, it was perhaps mostly my wounded pride to hurt me. Now I can understand how lucky I have been, after all. I have not continued in the lie, I have not chained myself to a life that was not mine where I would have felt only trapped. I liked and still like this girl. But love is another thing; I didn't feel "butterflies in my stomach" with her; didn't feel a deep desire to caress her body, to "taste" every inch of her skin, to live completely, soul and body, together. All these things would mean being in love, not meet like friends, as it used to happen to me.

Love is totally another thing ... I realize now that I have a life to build fitting to me, neither society nor my family can or must do it in my place. I hope I have not said nonsense, and I also hope that my considerations are in no way

offensive towards the married gays who wrote here before me. I am aware of what it means to be gay practically thanks to Gay Project forum, so ... I don't have much left to add, except that I would, of course, read some of your considerations!

Thanks, see you soon.

### 1.2.7 How to understand that you are not gay

Hello project,

I am a 23 year old guy who doesn't know what to think about himself. For some time now the idea of being homosexual is wandering in my mind. I'm a bit effeminate and I must say that I cannot deny that I have some homosexual drive (and perhaps also a gay love) but the problem is that I'm not sure, if I have to mentally define the person that suits to me defining also his/her sex, I have many difficulties, I had a guy with whom there was an intense "friendship" (that also resulted in sex) ended up because he didn't accept what he felt for me (while I would have done everything to be with him in an official way, I mean shared), I was there ready to do my coming out when, however, reasoning on (although at the moment I had no obstacles in front of me) I decided that it was not the time and that I had to keep living in uncertainty.

But a year and a half ago, through a university friend of mine, I met a girl and more and more started to feel for her a new affection, an affection that grew to become love, a beautiful love, complete, sexually satisfying. But in me I felt that even though I was perfectly at ease with her, my past (the phantom of the story lived with the guy) could ruin everything, and furthermore I must add that when I felt anguish for that event I also experienced strong homosexual drives (I masturbated thinking alternately of my girlfriend and of that guy) I alternated moments of serenity with myself at times when I was (and am even now) restless. The restlessness became stronger and stronger when it was becoming increasingly possible that my girlfriend and I (she is still my girlfriend) went to live together in a new city, just she and I, and I still hadn't told her anything about my ghost.

So I started to think that it was time for me to tell her the truth also because the guilt was really distressing me, I tell her everything in tears with the fear of losing her (even now the idea of losing her makes me feel bad). Now it is time for me to put a point to my life and finish my limbo, but understanding is difficult, you tell me that masturbation is the strongest element to understand my tendency, well, now I can't have sexual fantasies and, believe me, the most frustrating thing is that even if I have an erection while I masturbate I have no erotic thoughts while I do it, I also try to focus on one

or the other sex but if I come it's practically by inertia. On the contrary I must say that I still make love with my girlfriend, it is one of the things that manage to calm my anxiety and not only because I feel less gay but because I am with her, her hug, and kisses, her caresses calm me down and make me feel loved and happy. With her I have reached for a year the ataraxy of the senses, I felt complete, satisfied, happy.

Now her presence makes me serene, quiet, I speak with her, I laugh with her, we exchange cuddles, make love (nice, tender), and nevertheless the fact of not being able to give me a "label", to put a dot to my sexual orientation makes me restless, on the one hand I would strongly like to be gay, selfishly and paradoxically I find it easier than being in my limbo. I would also like to be heterosexual, but also here for a mental process of acceptance of my homosexual part I try to leave out the hetero side focusing on the homo one, then there is the problem of the bond with my girlfriend, I really think I love her, I miss her when she's not there and when I'm sick she's the person I want most next to me.

The idea of leaving her hurts me and the idea of sharing her with others hurts me even more, I love her viscerally, possessively (even if I have to say not morbidly), she knows that there is a part of me that would strongly be gay, and yet at the very idea of having to lose her I could paradoxically feel more discomfort than if I discovered my being homosexual in itself, even if I was 100% gay I couldn't stand the idea of losing my girlfriend, because now we are no longer two bodies but just one, and we live almost in symbiosis. It is such a strong love, so visceral and sexual at the same time that, if I have to think about love with someone, she is certainly at the center of everything.

Apart from the emotional component (quite confused since always) because I have always been surrounded by so many girls and a just few male figures of reference (I lost my father at age 8) and because I have few male friends (not for fear of falling in love but because I can't stand the machismo of many guys), I feel my few male friends as really friends because they have a strong sensibility, very similar to mine. Things are even stranger on a physical level. Female breasts excite me, I touch them, lick them, grip them, etc. and I like to explore with my fingers the female genitals, I really like anal and oral sex, while I practice less the vaginal one for practical reasons (and here you will blame me for sure, I don't use condoms and I prefer to "come" inside) and also for reasons of sexual desire (I have the penis a bit short and not very big in diameter, and therefore I feel more excitement in the anal canal because it is smaller). As for the guys, instead, I have to say I somehow tried to experience passive anal sex (I tried only but I didn't really) and I have to say I didn't feel pleasure, I don't enjoy anal self-stimulation (the feeling of pleasure is very minimal, definitely less strong than the "normal" feeling),

the only pleasure I felt (and that comes close to the sensations I feel when I'm with my girlfriend) is to have fellatio practiced on my penis, I practiced fellatio to somebody else, but it didn't excite me much, the naked body of a man doesn't really excite me but the sex between two men excites me. In all this there is my difficulty in physically falling in love with a person or rather I am struck not by the beauty but by the sensitivity of people.

My sexual fantasies too, let's say, are very conditioned not so much by morality but by the fact that I don't have real erotic fantasies (it must be said that I generally have difficulty imagining anything), I practice sex frequently, but after having been cuddled for a while (at least when I'm with my girlfriend), with that guy I have to say that it was basically an outburst in response to the frustrations of the situation (because for me it was almost like betraying my girlfriend), sometimes mixed with the excitement of the forbidden. The partial repulsion, and the partial love I felt for that guy (because at the time I had no qualms), led me to live the thing with increased feelings.

I experience the same magnified sensations also with my girlfriend, but what I miss when I'm with her is the sense of complicity that arises between guys while exchanging male hugs (but here I must underline that I missed the fatter figure for all the years of adolescence and puberty and this increases the feeling of stress and the conditioning). Sorry if I was very long and very paranoiac, I'm one of those who think a lot even when not needed but who have the habit (unfortunately) of getting tired at some point, and of doing things rashly (and here I'm, afraid to declare myself homosexual, simply because I got tired of feeling bad).

p. s. Another important thing: my family and some friends of mine know my doubts and I had the impression that none of them accepted me, but they often tell me "I don't care what you are, but your being well", a very absurd statement!

I conclude by thanking you.

p.s. my email is also my msn contact, in case you want to talk to me live (and I would agree) you can add me. Thanks again.

### **The following is my answer.**

Hello, I read your email twice, but frankly I too would have doubts in considering you gay. You have built an affective relationship with your girlfriend that seems really deep and you live with her a satisfying sexuality, which would be almost impossible for a gay. You may have had gay instincts in the past, you can have them even now and you may have them in the future, but frankly assuming you are really bisexual, possible but not too likely hypothesis, the impression is that heterosexuality is still clearly prevalent.

You say you fell in love with a guy once and you would have done everything for him but when the thing was over, you didn't find another guy but a girl and with that girl you lived and live now a relationship of sexual tenderness, but as you describe it, it looks like a relationship that has a remarkable affective depth. I wouldn't even worry so much about the fact that masturbation sometimes has gay orientation because it doesn't seem related to a true emotional dimension but to other motivations.

I have some doubts because you say that you miss male hugs, which makes me think that you are not wholly heterosexual. But, let's be clear, a guy's sexuality cannot be pigeonholed but it's what it is. It is all about not considering it anxiously, living it in a true emotional dimension and, from what I read, your true emotional dimension is clearly hetero. Don't make too many problems in terms of sexual practices, when you are a couple and you get along there are never problems.

On one point, however, you absolutely must be careful, especially for the type of sexuality that you practice, I talk about prevention! I tell you for you and your girlfriend that doing the test is easy and then if it's negative and if you have not had intercourse with other people in the last six months you can be 100% free and serene. If you like, we can deepen the speech on msn, I added you on msn, however this is my contact [omissis] You can call me when you like "even if you don't see me online" because on msn, to be able to devote myself to chats with guys without receiving too many calls, I must set to "invisible" i.e. I never appear online even if I'm online almost from three in the afternoon to two in the night and often beyond. If by any chance you don't find me, because I had to go out, don't worry, the opportunity to meet in chat will not fail anyway.

A hug.

Project

## CHAT WITH MARK

Mark writes: hello Project are you there?

Project writes: Hello! Nice to meet you! I read your mail

Mark writes: my pleasure, first of all thank you for answering me so quickly

Project writes: don't mention it! In fact I was late because today there was a storm in chat

Mark writes: I guess, there are many people who have problems of this kind, sentimental I mean

Project writes: yes, look, even working 10 hours a day I can barely keep up with everything

Mark writes: anyway your email has been very important. It made me un-

derstand things that I wouldn't have understood by myself

Project writes: look, in the matter concerning sexuality the key things are three: first of all never letting anxiety dominate you, never testing yourself just to evaluate your reactions, never think that there are *a priori* definitions to which we must correspond, the fundamental thing is serenity, true sexuality has only one enemy: anxiety

Mark writes: well then I must struggle hard because I have always been anxious especially in emotional ties, I tie myself with very few people because the biggest fear for me is that of abandonment

Project writes: not only for you, I would say that for all serious guys it is so. Mark, as I told you in my email, what you write doesn't make me think you're gay

Mark writes: many people tell me so, but they also tell me that during this period I have accentuated my gay component, setting apart, at least partially, the straight one, and I admit that I did so, but in the email I sent you I collected and summarized all my doubts, while I didn't talk about my certainties, for example that while I was with that guy I felt the need for physical sex with a woman, and that the same happened even when I masturbated

Project writes: this fact only confirms that, if you are not 100% straight, the gay component is however clearly the minor share. But which gay guy who has a boyfriend would masturbate thinking of a girl?

Mark writes: or things such as the fact that I don't live anxiously the friendship with a gay, indeed I have to say that I don't feel anxiety at all because many of the gays I know are serious, I really like talking to them but I don't feel any sexual drive towards them.

Project writes: this is a further confirmation that there is very little gay component

Mark writes: then add, in the relationship I had with the guy, the component due to the lack of the male reference figure, that I had replaced with him

Project writes: how old was the guy?

Mark writes: he was my age but was much more mature than me

Project writes: I don't see him very much as a replacement male figure anyway, if he had been 10 years older, perhaps it could have been still possible.

Mark writes: the problem is that in him I saw first and foremost (and I strongly tried to save) the friendship that bound us because we began to talk and to get closer precisely when, after a friend of mine had lost his father, I relived what I had lived years before, namely the trauma of abandonment for the death of my father. I was clearly looking for a male figure that could somehow act also as a brother (I don't even have older brothers)

Project writes: if this guy, despite being your age, had a reassuring value for

you, at the limit ... as a brother, ok, it's possible.

Mark writes: I add that at that time I was coming out of a black period during which I felt emotionally quite alone and that the more I talked to him the more the desire to end up together came out. While the interest in him was growing up, at the beginning only at emotional level and then also at sexual one, I realized that he was becoming a reference model almost absolute for me in the sense that I wanted to be like him, I almost venerated him.

Project writes: you say that for this guy you have felt the emotional and even the sexual interest growing up, but how did you realize that for you he was not just a friend? Did it all come spontaneous or did you feel it strange and maybe you tried to reject it?

Mark writes: reject it no, I would say that I followed the evolution of my emotions, the desire to hug him or rather to make him embrace me, to be pampered by him, at first a bit like a loving father does with his child, only many weeks after, I unconsciously started to feel it as something sexual, when I realized that nobody mentally managed to get close to me as he did, I thought that he really had understood me, then even if I had strong male friendships, his friendship was linked to the fact that he had accepted me as I was (only later he tried to change me)

Project writes: what do you mean?

Mark writes: I have some skeletons in the closet, one of these is that I come from a family of those that are object of suspect and this for me was always a very big shame, when I told him this thing, he accepted me, he also accepted what I called diversity, a point of distance from the affection of the other people because, since always, even if my family is questionable, or rather doesn't have a good reputation, I have always been the guy who sees in the degree and in the education the goal to be achieved in order to get rid of the shame of being the son of questionable people. He accepted me, in fact he found me nice, interesting, sensitive and at the same time free from mental schemes, he considered me almost as a progressive. I felt accepted and somehow linked to this person who had managed to go beyond what many people unfortunately couldn't overcome. You can understand that having a person who finally made me feel good and with whom I felt at ease could only please me. For a guy who has always lived his sexuality related to affectivity, it was natural that the sincere affection I felt for him could turn into love

Project writes: it seems that really the thing was born in a true emotional climate

Mark writes: yes

Project writes : a question, but before this guy, how did you perceive your sexuality? That is, has the gay attraction began with him or there have been

previous episodes with other guys?

Mark writes: please, define what you mean by attraction

Project writes: did you try, before him, sexual urges and strong affective interest for other guys?

Mark writes: mmm ... no affective interest, sexual impulses like the desire to kiss or embrace or make love with a man ... yes ... or better no

Project writes: I didn't understand

Mark writes: affectively I have never felt bonded to other guys if not for normal friendship, and I not even felt sexual impulses such as wanting to hug, kiss, shake hands and so on for a guy, no ... never

Project writes: when you met that guy how old were you?

Mark writes: 22 or rather 21

Project writes: and up to 21/22 years your masturbation had been exclusively in hetero key?

Mark writes: yes

Project writes: this is a very important thing that still confirms the idea that there is a very little gay component

Mark writes: I must say that I also tried to masturbate thinking of a guy then, but I didn't get excited

Project writes: these are all elements that go in the same direction and at 22 sexuality is already well defined and was totally straight

Mark writes: but I must say that some think that I was a bit effeminate from the beginning and that's why I felt the anxiety of being gay, anyway never repressed, sometimes I tried to force myself concentrating on guys and trying to enjoy such fantasies but the only thing I achieved, at most, was that objectively the guy seemed nice to me, but as for sensations nothing at all

Project writes: very clear

Mark writes: that is, I started to doubt because in my kind ways and in my privacy some saw the characteristics of the gays

Project writes: yes, okay but the speech doesn't make sense

Mark writes: I know. But you know how it is, they tell it today and tell it tomorrow ...

Project writes: a gay is a guy who feels emotional and sexual attraction to guys, and being gay has nothing to do with the fact that people expect you to be so

Mark writes: I know

Project writes: it is something that strictly affects the emotional and sexual sphere and not the social one

Mark writes: then there is the fact that when they asked me if I was gay, a bit for challenge and a little because I didn't like to answer questions that I felt



too much intimate, I answered "for the moment no, maybe later, who knows", but this is not the important thing, anyway I have always experienced homosexuality as something that doesn't frighten me at all and prejudices frighten me even less.

Project writes: yes, ok, but not being afraid of homosexuality, having gay friends and so on doesn't mean being gay

Mark writes: among other things, to underline that homosexuality doesn't frighten me at all I have to say that I often find a serious gay guy much more like me than a macho but I don't want to fall into the gay-artist paradigm

Project writes: just like many gay guys get along well with some of their straight friends much more than with some gay friends of theirs

Mark writes: there are gay guys with whom I can talk freely about my true political interests, art and history

Project writes: ok, let's go back to the guy, so in such a serious emotional climate, you who were not afraid of homosexuality have come to a sexual contact with him, ok, and did such a contact create problems, feelings of guilt or things like that?

Mark writes: the feelings of guilt were born only because then I put myself with a girl and for more than a year I kept the story with that guy totally hidden.

Project writes: feelings of guilt towards the guy or the girl?

Mark writes: towards her, the girl, the guy is a demented born, damn him, excuse the outburst

Project writes: why did the relationship with that guy change?

Mark writes: I gave him so much, he didn't accept what he felt for me, but I was willing, at least I think so

Project writes: Do you mean he felt hetero?

Mark writes: yes and no

Project writes: I didn't understand

Mark writes: he said he was straight, I don't have the gay radar so I cannot tell if he was really gay, I just know that he felt much more repulsion than me towards gay intercourse, I have to say the truth, perhaps he instilled in me the feeling of disgust at that time for what was or seemed to be really inside me, because to convince himself that he wasn't gay, he needed to believe that I too wasn't gay

Project Writes: who of the two led the other slowly towards gay sexuality?

Mark writes: we got there together, I was the most uninhibited in the sense that I was not interested in the judgment of others nor I was afraid of doing something that I would have been blamed for, I wanted to live in serenity the affection I felt for him and that's why I had no longer moral problems

Project writes: in essence more than a real sexual interest it was a sexual

drift not foreseen but accepted, at least by you and less than him

Mark writes: then, since his frustration with what was happening had bothered me a bit, and anyway I felt that in our relationship I lacked the female physicality (I told you that even if I don't consider sex too much important, I'm not asexual and I live platonic love up to a certain point) I started having real relationships with girls, in particular with one, with whom, in addition to feeling physically attracted, I noticed a certain mental reciprocal understanding, but always thinking that if he had wanted to take the big step towards me I would have followed him then it must be said that a bond as strong as the one I had with him I didn't want it to end, so, after a soft *aut aut* (like "if you go with that girl our relationship will inevitably change, you will neglect me and I will have to turn away from you") I could not think of a life without his presence, I interrupted my search for "sexual" and "affective" pleasure with the girls, dedicating myself to him, accepting "toads" like: "Wait for me, I must first try with girls" or "We must stay only friends" and then in October he started to break away from me, he said I was sticky and stressed, so we decided only to stay friends, but in December, after he deceived me (in the sense that I wanted him to be present at my confirmation, he promised it but didn't do it), I asked him for explanations and he told me that he didn't want to be my best friend anymore, but that, if it had been good for me, we would have been friends within a group. I had sacrificed so much for him and also inhibited my hetero drives because of him and had started a psychological therapy of self-acceptance of being homosexual, nevertheless I decided to permanently break the relationship with him and now we still barely say goodbye to each other

Project writes: but also all this story seems rather an experience "to try" in a pleasant affectionate climate, at least at the beginning, of course, that then took "very relatively" a sexual meaning

Mark writes: later I started to deepen the friendship with the girl, until this afternoon when I told her that, even in my identity crises, even as a gay, I could never live without having her close to me as my girlfriend and that I was giving myself completely to her (always in the grip of my crisis) and she had the power to determine my life. I know I have exaggerated, life is mine and belongs to me only, but the simple idea that I can lose such a rare good (as she is) makes me live the tension of not having a future. Today I also said to myself out loud "I'm gay" just because she told me that in order to start our relationship again she wanted me to clarify what I am and because I'm too honest with her I said I am gay because I don't want to deceive myself in the sense that I don't want to be heterosexual if I'm not but at the same time I cannot tell you that I'm "gay convinced"

Project writes: I would say certainly you are not

Mark writes: believe me, sometimes these days, I wanted to be gay because, excuse my frankness, but I find being gay easier than being bisexual, and it's paradoxical, certainly this is because usually one tries to take refuge in bisexuality to hide his homosexuality, but I wanted to shelter my sexuality in homosexuality

Project writes: direct question: but now is your masturbation totally dedicated to your girlfriend?

Mark writes: mmm ... yes, I would say yes, when I masturbated thinking of him it was only because I wanted to recover the feelings I felt for him and if lately I tried to excite myself thinking of guys I did it only to understand what I was, but I have to say something, 70% of my masturbation I do it to relieve the anxiety, I consider it a good anti-stress

Project writes: you have said it in your email

Mark writes: what? Ah yes I remember, yes yes, not because I don't have a sexual desire, it is that masturbation is relaxing and often has no subject, it's just a mechanical act (degrading I know)

Project writes: can you find a motivation for your only physical masturbation and without fantasies?

Mark writes: it relaxes me, I've always lived it like that, you know some say an apple a day keeps the doctor away, for me masturbating every now and then is a release from stress that can be because of the university, problems with the girl, within the family, and I come to the absurd that I can even masturbate while I study for an exam, it's strange, I know

Project writes: well, in a similar situation there are few sexual fantasies

Mark writes: in fact, 70% of my masturbation is linked to the simple opportunity to do it even without a sexual desire, simply because handling my dick makes me feel more cheerful, after, and relaxed. 30% is instead related to what I do with my girlfriend and if you don't mind listening to descriptions, I tell you that often when I do it thinking of her in the end the prevailing idea is that it would have been more satisfying if she had been there. That's all. Anxiety is perhaps the element that pushes me more to think of labeling me and doesn't allow me to live my relationship serenely.

Project writes: I'd like to tell you something

Mark writes: tell me

Project writes: if before, only from the email, I had thought that you could be bisexual with a strong hetero propensity, after talking with you in chat I'm more and more convinced that you have nothing gay. That is, to date, you have a 70% neutral masturbation, and totally straight for the rest, so no trace of gay fantasies; before the story with the guy you were 100% hetero, and the story with the guy doesn't even seem a sexual story but only a friendly relationship, and maybe a need of affection that became sexualized,

but I don't find the typical way of reacting of the gay guys, your affectivity is now totally polarized on your girl and from what you say it seems just (and I see no reason to question it) that you are satisfied of the relationship even on the sexual level, in conclusion, apart from the anxiety, I see nothing real that leads me to think that you are homosexual not even at a minimum level  
Mark writes: well, yes

Project writes: you have just the way of behaving of a typical straight guy and a of straight guy not frustrated. I don't see doubts of sexual orientation in objective terms, I don't want to diminish things that may seem to you to be problematic but being gay with the things you live now but also with the story of the guy as you lived it, has very little to do

Mark writes: however there is another thing that I have always in mind about my sexuality since I lived the story with the guy and it is that I have gay friends, ok, and if I happen to see something sexual between two guys, the memory brings me to what I've done and I feel (now, after I engaged with my girlfriend) a bit strange, sometimes at least, maybe rarely, and it depends not so much on the gesture but on the sexual tension that I perceive between the two guys, I can also get hard, but it also happens if I see something sexual between two normal hetero partners or two lesbians, what excites me is not what I'm seeing but the feeling of sexual tension that I perceive between the two protagonists

Project writes: did you ever use pornography to masturbate?

Mark writes: yes, but it's not a very developed side.

Project writes: only straight porn?

Mark writes: to test what I felt with that guy I also saw some sequences of gay porn but for example the naked body of the man or the man who masturbates had no effect on me, I saw gay porn (keep in mind that curiosity is anyway a side that distinguishes me) mainly because those things seemed to me a little strange or better very strange. I also saw orgies and there I sincerely closed the porn video, feeling badly disgusted, not so much by the protagonists but because I don't think I'm the guy for the *ménage à trois* or even more

Project writes: but, you know, pornography with real sexuality has very little to do, anyway I'm more and more convinced that you have nothing to do with gays, in the things you say there is nothing that makes my bell ring.

Mark writes: yes, in fact, I am enough anti-pornography because the porn gives an image quite distorted of sex and love. I'm not a puritan and, I think you've got it, but I'm a bit romantic

Project writes: those gays who in practice don't have the opportunity to find a guy use a lot of pornography, it is a heavy conditioning and not perceived as such and leads them, especially the younger guys, to an imitative

sexuality and not at all emotional. in what you say there is one thing that strikes me a lot and I really appreciate a lot and it is the fact that in all cases, for you, sexuality and affection have come together, there was never dissociation, which is instead a very common feature. I mean that in what you say there is a serious way of conceiving sexuality, which is the right one, that is the affective one

Mark writes: I am not puritan, I have had sex without love, but now, after my first sexual experience made without love, I'll link indissolubly the emotional sphere to the sexual one. I have no doubts.

Project writes: Mark, I think that you can really live your heterosexuality without any problem

Mark writes: thank you very much

Project writes: I tell you and I am convinced of it

Mark writes: and thanks again for the chat

Project writes: sometimes I talk with guys who want to be told that they are straight, but in fact they are not, for you is precisely the objectivity that sets for a clear hetero orientation.

Mark writes: I needed this conversation

Project writes: so be quiet!

Mark writes: ok, I will be one of the few cases of guys who want to be told that they are gay ...

Project writes: don't see ghosts that are not there! ... let me say that this discourse didn't help you clarify things about sexual your orientation that were already clear but to put aside anxiety hearing a voice different from yours, basically a confirmation

Mark writes: well yes, I must admit, I wanted to hear from a gay (who better than him!) what I could be and in the choice I have chosen one of those who seemed to say things very directly

Project writes: I thank you, I'm glad you think so!

Mark writes: well, I must say that before I contacted you I read many of your posts and in many of them I saw that you used to speak strongly and I'll tell you that the fact that you don't use too much the category of bisexuality made me lean towards you, just because I knew that you would have been very direct and hard if necessary, or better, rather objective than hard, not politically correct.

Project writes: I tell you that the "real" bisexuals certainly exist but are not many, they are not as numerous as gays, there are bisexuals with periodic trend, i.e. people who for years have been perfect heterosexuals and who become perfect gays for years and then change again. "Contemporary or intermediate bisexuality" often exists at transitory level in the sense that you see it in the phases of increasing awareness of being gay, we can see

it even in full adult age, when a guy recognizes his being gay far beyond adolescence, but this bisexuality lasts six months, a year at most, and then sexuality polarizes. Except for very particular situations, at your age, sexuality it is already polarized for quite some time. Of course, being bisexual is much more complicated than being gay. I have seen bisexuals with periodic trend that in hetero phase got married and had children, then passed in the gay phase, they left the family and went with a man they liked, to go, years later, with another girl, these things are really destructive, but are very rare, but you have nothing to do with bisexuals.

Mark writes: yes, in fact, my fear was just that in being in the middle I would not have created a stability for me but above all I feared to hurt other people

Project writes: an intermediate bisexual is a perpetual dissatisfied and he would never say what you say about your girlfriend, at least not so convincingly. A bisexual with periodic trend lives very bad periods of transition and has long periods of stability lasting for years and in those periods he is or clearly straight or clearly gay. Frankly everything you say is typically hetero both at affective and sexual level, so, putting anxiety apart (anxiety leads to fear of ghosts that don't exist), you have absolutely no reason for uncertainty

Mark writes: thank you very much, you have been very helpful and if my experience can help someone else you can post this conversation on the forum

Project writes: tell me what I can publish and I will gladly do it

Mark writes: there are no names or places, neither in the email nor in the conversation, if you want to publish also this part, the important thing is that you change the name.

Project writes: of course!

Mark writes: after all, it is a beautiful love story with my girlfriend, and also a betrayed friendship.

Project writes: yes and I think it can have a value for several people.

Mark writes: in the end helping someone is always a good thing

Project writes: thanks for the permission, it will take a little time to rearrange everything but I will certainly do it shortly

Mark writes: and I especially appreciate you, you're really a great person

Project writes: this flatters me!

Mark writes: and if I knew you in person almost I would kneel in a sign of reverence

Project writes: but come on! Don't tease me!

Mark writes: believe me, I know how difficult it is for gay people to understand and accept their homosexuality I told you I have gay friends and I see them, and a person who can help to facilitate everything can only do well because the family can lack understanding, and it is quite common, I

thank my family, perhaps my parents have many faults but as soon as I have confessed my doubts they have only ascertained that I was acting well alone, without mental conditioning, the only thing I heard them repeating was that I should never be ashamed of what I was and whatever I had done if my conscience was clean; and I must also thank my girlfriend, she, with her love, waits patiently for me to escape from this impasse.

Project writes: a sign that really she loves you!

Mark writes: I found a jewel of rare beauty and my love is reciprocated, she is a great person that must take charge of these thoughts. Project, I know you have also other people and you have to help them too, so now I leave you

Project writes: then good luck and above all I wish you to be able to live your heterosexuality with your girlfriend in the most beautiful way possible!

A hug, Mark, happy to meet you!!

Mark writes: thank you very much, happy to meet you!

Project writes: thanks to you!

Mark writes: I will come every now and then to visit you on the forum

Project writes: it would be a very welcome thing! You're always very welcome!

Mark writes: yes also because I have to see if my story will be useful to someone

Project writes: I really think so!

Mark writes: Good night Project!

Project writes: Good night Mark!

### 1.2.8 Fear of being gay

I saw on the forum the section "understand to be gay" and I would like to ask Project to put this story in that section. I don't think my story is very common, now I know in person some gay guys but they have very different experiences from mine, in the sense that they have always felt gay. For me it was not like that. I grew up in full conviction of being straight and I brought this idea with me, in practice without any doubt, until the age of 21 and beyond.

I had my first sexual contact with a girl when I was about the age of 16, at 18 I had my first full intercourse with a girl and I liked it as it happens to all the straight guys. I loved sex with girls, and I also loved them on an emotional level. In short, they were the only real object of my sexual fantasies. At 19 I got engaged with Martina (the name is invented) the same girl with whom I had my first intercourse. Together we were very well, even on a sexual level. I felt really satisfied. I don't say it just to say, it was exactly like that. I

was born in September and then I was already 21 years old and was going to turn 22. Martina for my birthday gave me the best gift I could wish for. We went on vacation together for three days and those days have been dream days! This is the premise.

I come back from the three days with Martina on Sunday evening, the next day I go to university and I come to know that the professor of genetics with whom I had to do the thesis would no longer have been our teacher. This news bothered me. I wondered what would happen to me. All the students in my group would have been assigned to the genetics professor of the other channel who was not specifically a molecular geneticist. However there was not much to do.

The first lesson would have been the next day at 9.00 in the morning. The next day at 8.30 I was in front of the classroom and, according to my old habit, I looked around searching for the most beautiful colleague. I see a pretty good girl, I follow her, I sit next to her and I try to have a chat until the professor arrives, then, turning to look casually backwards, I cross the gaze of a guy I had never seen before, probably one of the other channel. I don't pay any attention to him at the moment, then the thing is repeated and I notice that the guy who is looking at me, as soon as I look at him immediately looks away. He is quite behind me so he can look at me carefully while I cannot easily turn around ... but I know he is there and he is looking at me. But why is he looking at me?

Then the lesson ends, I turn around but he is gone, I feel almost upset, then I turn to my pretty female colleague, but I'm distracted, significantly distracted. I'm not thinking of the guy ... but not even of the girl. I didn't know why, but the thought of that guy comes back to my mind from time to time, I wonder if I have already seen him elsewhere but if I had met him I certainly would remember him. I try to identify a credible and objective reason that could push him to look at me so often, I cannot find any but I keep thinking about the situation.

Then I forget these things, in the afternoon I go back to my usual things and don't think about that guy for a while ... then in the evening all the story comes back to my mind, I say to myself: "But what is he looking for?"

The next day I see him again, he is much more cautious, obviously he doesn't want me to catch his look while observing me. The game of looks distracts me even during the lesson. I don't know what to do, it bothers me that he looks at me like that ... I promise to myself to make him understand that I am bothered ... I turn a bit while the professor is writing on blackboard and I catch him looking at me, with my hand I wave him, as if to say. "What do you want?", He makes me understand that he will tell me everything during the interval ... and I wait for the interval without paying too much attention



to the lesson because I must understand what it is about ... the bell sounds the end of the lesson.

I go out, he approaches me, I ask him: "But we know each other?" And he answers me "Unfortunately no ...". I don't even understand the meaning of that "unfortunately" and ask him: "But why do you look at me during the lessons?" He replies: "Because you are a beautiful guy ..." and in saying so he blushes and turns his eyes to the other side. I certainly wasn't expecting at all an answer like that ... I just tell him: "What are you talking about?!" and I leave but all the situation disturbs me deeply. I feel a bit like a whore because the guy has approached me in such a direct way and anyway, according to my parameters of that time, no guy could be allowed in any case to tell another guy something like what he had said to me. What had happened seemed to me completely absurd ... I had never hated gays, for me they simply didn't exist, he was the first gay guy I met ... and he made me a half declaration ... I was upset, agitated, almost offended, I felt dirty because I had been desired by another guy, it seemed to me a strange thing, unnatural ...

In short, I thought about it all the afternoon ... then in the evening I saw Martina, I have said "I saw" her but I meant that we have withdrawn to save our privacy as we always used to do. Between us the confidence was total, I told her the story and she replied: "Well ... He's just a pansy!" And she said it in a tone that I didn't absolutely like. For a moment I have hated her, but, afterwards, the anger passed and we made love ... but while we were making it, occasionally I remembered that guy and this thought bothered me. I didn't say anything to Martina because I didn't like her previous reaction. How strange are things! ... With a girl you go to bed and then you don't tell her what you really think! But it was exactly what was happening to me.

I came home angry with myself ... it was the first time I didn't tell Martina all the truth and why? For an idiot who had told me something in a gay language ... I didn't understand why such a thing could happen, I couldn't be influenced by stupid things like that ... but in fact he had said only a few words, stupid as you want, but just a few words ... it was me the one who was going into crisis because of those stupid words. The next morning I saw him at the university, he didn't approach me but pretended nothing and I was sorry ... I said to myself: "No problem! This guy tells everyone what he told me!" But I was angry that he pretended not to see me and then I took the initiative, I approached him and greeted him with a hello, he replied with a smile, as if to say: "I'm here ... do not worry".

There was a kind of challenge between me and him. Martina is not in my faculty, but in my faculty there was a girl I liked very much, Anna, when I saw that guy approaching me I almost instinctively hugged her and she said to me: "What are you doing?" After a couple of weeks like this and after

some discomfort with Martina for stupid reasons, I decided to talk with that guy and tell him to leave me alone. One day at the end of classes I had to stop him because I wanted to get to some sort of agreement, I ask him if we can talk, we go to public gardens, given the time, there were few people.

I tell him he must leave me alone and he looks at me and tells me: "What have I done to you?" I don't know what to say ... I tell him: "You don't have to tease me! Do you understand?" He says to me: "I would never do it" ... I tell him: "And do you remember what you said to me that day?" He replies: "Ah, ok, that you're a nice guy ... ". I ask him: "Are you gay?" He replies: "Yes". I reply in turn with a lot of determination: "Not me! And I don't care about you! I've got a girlfriend and I'm fine with her!" He says, "So where's the problem?" while he was telling so I was looking at him.

He was not a flashy guy but he was sweet ... I wanted to touch him, he had very nice hands ... and an incredible smile. I smile at him in turn and say to him: "Do you think a gay and a hetero can be friends?" He replies yes with his head and smiles. We talked a bit, then we exchanged cell phone numbers and we said goodbye. I was happy with how things had gone. I liked that guy. I said to myself: "But it's really a nice guy ..." and immediately afterwards I thought: "What the hell am I thinking ...".

In the evening I thought to tell Martina everything, because otherwise I would have seemed to betray her trust. I told her everything and she replied: "What the hell have you done!?" I told her: "But look, I didn't go to bed with him ...", she looked at me with a sense of repulsion and said: "My God! Are you gay too? ... no! it's impossible!" At that time I felt 100% heterosexual, I hugged her, etc. etc. but I did it only to show that I was not gay, in the end she melted and I was happy: for me that was the first time I made love because I had to make it ... but she didn't notice it.

The next day I see Mark at the university, he accompanies me by car, I tell him that the night before I made love with my girlfriend and that it was beautiful, he looks at me and says: "I envy you ... nothing like this has ever happened to me ... ". I asked him some personal questions and he told me about himself. No sexual experiences! He says that he really tried to get in touch with me because I inspired him a lot, he says that I have not disappointed him and that having a real friend is beautiful, even if your friend is straight because maybe some straight guys understand you more than gays. The speech strikes me a lot and I decide to tell him the truth. I tell him: "What I told you is not true ... yesterday I made love with my girlfriend but I did it because I felt obliged to show her that I'm not gay. I told her about you and she reproached me and told me that if I want to be your friend I'm gay too ... .

Talking with Mark was reassuring because he tended to say that I could only

be straight, but I had several doubts on my mind and, no doubt, somehow I liked Mark physically, so, perhaps only on an aesthetic level. We say goodbye. In the evening I had to see Martina, I call her and tell her I'm not fine, she's perplexed and tells me: "But is it perhaps for the story of that guy?" I say "No!" Inside me I knew it was not true. The next day I see Mark who takes me back home by car.

When we are near my home he stops and we start talking. I get excited, it was the first time I had an erection just by being in the car near Mark. I was very embarrassed, using my raincoat as a shield to hide my erection, I went down the car ... he didn't notice anything. I said to myself: "Damn! So that's true! ... But I don't love him, I know almost nothing about him, this is just gay attraction without love and anyway I don't want to be gay, it makes no sense that I can be gay, I cannot psychologically depend on Mark ...".

But while I was doing all this reasoning, I had him always before my eyes and not only, the erection didn't show signs of decline ... in short, I masturbated thinking of him, then I thought I should have been worried, anguished ... but no! Not at all! None of this! In my mind there was only the idea that doing what I was doing was beautiful and that he would like being with me and that he had never said nonsense about my previous hetero life.

The next day I see him and I tell him how things are, I expect his enthusiastic response and instead he is very cautious, he is happy but tells me something that I never would have expected: "Luke, I love you, but it's not a game, you don't have to prove anything to me, I love you even if you're straight, I love you as a person because you treated me with respect and because, gay or straight, I fell in love with you, but you don't have to go wrong, you have to do always and only what you spontaneously feel. you have to ...". The only gesture he did was of tenderness he took my hand and hold it very tightly between his. Everything started this way.

### 1.2.9 Being aware of being gay in love and rediscovering sexuality

Hello Project,

I am a guy 19 years old, people tell me I'm handsome, I don't know if it is true, but certainly the girls buzz around me a lot and court me, we can say that I have always considered myself as a hetero, a bit just to say so, in the sense that it's the girls who run after me and not me the one who runs after them, however, I had never had the idea of being gay until a few months ago. All my friends see that girls come after me and that I joke a lot with them

and consider myself totally straight.

In reality, I have always been little interested in sex. I honestly don't think I have physical problems, but for me masturbation has always been just half a thing. I've never used gay porn, I really didn't even think about it, but I used straight porn a lot, looking at the girl and trying to see myself in the guy's place, and usually ended up getting an easy erection, very hard and lasting, I got also many times ejaculation without any problem, but, after, almost always, I was assailed by a strong melancholy and I repeated to myself almost obsessively that if sex is this, all in all, it is certainly not a great thing.

On the other hand, I liked very much to think of tenderness with a girl, of cuddling, but not of really sexual things, I thought that at the right time such things would come by themselves and in the end I didn't worry too much. With one of the girls I found myself in situations where you could get to have sex very easily because she would be there for sure, but I left with an excuse and, frankly, I didn't regret it.

This seems the story of a heterosexual disinterested in sex, who speaks clearly. I had succeeded to masturbate once a week and even less but not forcing myself, just spontaneously. Then, in January of last year, as the final exam was approaching, I began to study with a group of friends: two guys and a girl who all lived in my area. The girl had a boyfriend who had nothing to do with us and we can say that with the girl we were only fellow students, in the sense that when we didn't see each other to study she would go with her boyfriend, we three guys usually spent together also our free time.

In practice a beautiful friendship of us three guys: I (Joseph), John and Andrew (fantasy names). John often spoke of girls, Andrew never. At the time I didn't give any meaning to such things, for me they were just friends. We spent also three days together in the mountains and nothing happened. We studied together, we went out on Sunday and Saturday nights, but everything ended up there. One day, a girl who was not of our group had tried something with me but in a way a bit strange for our standards, in practice flirting a bit, which is something that I never endured, that's why I left with no regret at all. She was there in the street open-mouthed, I only said: "no thanks!", and I left. This fact, but above all the idea of being, if you like, "boarded" or better "accosted" so directly, had upset me a bit.

In the evening I call Andrew I tell him that there is something I would like to talk about with him but there are my parents at home and the speech is only vaguely mentioned then we pass on msn and we stay chatting until very late, well past two in the morning. Andrew didn't answer me in the usual banal way but tried to make me think, didn't advise me and didn't suggest anything but I knew he was listening to me. I was very happy and in

the end I told him very clear: "Talking to you tonight made me feel good, I really needed it!" He replied: "I was pleased too, it almost never happens to talk so!" Then we wished goodnight to each other. I felt in a very beautiful euphoric state, I had discovered that I had a real friend with whom I could talk about everything, one willing to listen to me for hours. In short, I began to think that friendship was really an important thing to get improve one's life.

In the following days I noticed that Andrew of our conversation hadn't said anything to anyone and I enjoyed it very much. Then we started to talk often on msn, I used to wait for him to arrive online, and if by chance someone else called me I wouldn't even answer, I felt very at ease with him.

One Sunday, when my parents were not home, I ask him if he wants to chat in voice on msn, he says "Yes, of course." I lie on the bed with the headphones on my head and we start talking and there something unexpected happens, that is, I begin to get an erection, I think it is because I have not masturbated for a long time and I don't give weight to the thing, the conversation proceeds and I wonder what Andrew would think if he knew I'm in that state, but at that time I didn't suspect at all that he had something to do with my getting an erection.

A few days later we are again in a voice-chat and I get another erection even if this time I had masturbated in the usual "poor-hetero" way just the day before. I like Andrew's voice, I like his breaks, I feel like I'm almost courted by Andrew, but very differently from how girls do, it's all extremely slow, then I think about Andrew's smile that is very sweet and while he talks I let myself go with the imagination, I think I would like to be in intimacy with him, who for me is becoming a very important person, I stay in erection all the time we are on msn but the thing seems natural to me, when we say goodbye it is very late and I go to bed, I masturbate thinking of Andrew leaving the fantasy completely free and there I discover a new world! I live masturbation with a total involvement, something that I never thought could happen to me and I say to myself: "So this is the true sexuality! Now it makes sense! I'm gay!"

Believe me, Project, a discovery like this has not in any way put me on a crisis, I told myself that was in love with Andrew and that I absolutely wanted to be with him. Fears came later, but not the fear of being gay, I didn't have this problem, but the fear of losing Andrew, of putting him in trouble, Project, I loved him at all levels. Since then he has become the only object of my masturbation fantasies and I have rediscovered the real meaning of sexuality, but there is a "but", what should I do with Andrew? How should I behave? And now, after two months, I'm still at this point. In Andrew's life, as far as I know, there have been no heterosexual adventures but neither

episodes that could lead to think he is gay, just nothing.

We continue to hear each other very often, I almost always call him, but if I don't call him, after two days he calls me and we are on msn for hours, often joking and talking about nothing or just exchanging smiles! Now I feel in a stalemate, now I know I'm gay and it makes me immensely pleased because I finally know that my affectivity and my sexual instincts are just those, but I want Andrew, if I had the impression that he was annoyed or maybe he didn't want to get too involved I would not insist but I don't have this impression, in some of his hesitations I see that he also is interested and is interested a lot, I don't know how, whether as a friend or because maybe he too fell in love with me, but I think if he had other people in mind he would not lose his evenings talking with me. Our (also his) behavior in a sense is that of lovers. What am I doing, Project? I would be led to bypass the deadlock and tell him exactly how things are, but I have a damn fear of losing him permanently, that is, I wouldn't want to lose him for any reason but I would also like him to be mine in every sense! I feel that there is something important between us!

If you want to publish this mail, you certainly can, the names have been changed, and then I think that things like those that happened to me may happened also to other guys.

Joseph

### 1.2.10 Sublimated hetero love and gay masturbation

Hi Project, how are you?

I'm writing to you after a few months to talk and update you a bit. I have read, as you suggested, the manual *Being Gay* that you published on the site. There are sections, especially in the first chapters, that are the photography of my experience. I really wish I'd read these things before! Sometimes I think that today being gay is, at least from a social point of view, extremely easier than a few years ago. When I was a teenager and everyone was homophobic, I underline it, all my friends and classmates were openly homophobic. Starting from the beginning of high school, perhaps because my way of doing wasn't so much macho, some of my classmates had begun to make fun of me. I was at school by the priests and this perhaps contributed to create an environment not very open, the fact is that I had been targeted by a classmate and within a short time all my classmates followed him and begun to make fun of me, calling me gay. You cannot imagine how much I suffered for this. On the one side inside me I knew I was a homosexual, because I had gay masturbation fantasies and because I already had had a homosexual episode with a friend in the eighth grade, on the other side I tried to look

heterosexual and take on more masculine attitudes. I also tried to please the girls, so much so that at the time I had fallen in love with some girls.

Reading your manual now I smile because there are things that I experienced in the first person. For example, the fact that I fell madly in love with a girl, I even idealized her, I fell in love with her in romantic terms, but I really wasn't interested in her and I didn't masturbate thinking of her. The most I could do was some petting and some caresses on her breasts or her sex. With a girl around 19, we masturbated each other, and I came to orgasm, but if I think about how we did these things I almost laugh: practically we remained dressed in the dark, and we masturbated up to orgasm. I didn't want to penetrate her, nor do oral sex, masturbation was even too much.

And all this was enough for me to think that I was straight! Yes, I wanted to be straight and I thought that all my jerking off thinking about guys was the result of a transitional situation, absolutely not of my true and primary sexuality, but just a passing thing, a kind of strange pastime. I came to think: "I just have to find the right girl and all gay thoughts will vanish like fog in the sun!" Then I found the right girl and, since gay thoughts didn't vanish at all, I thought, well, with a girl it's different, I cannot masturbate thinking about her, it's not fair, not polite, so I must keep thinking about the guys when I masturbate, but I'm straight anyway, because I'm in love with a girl! But then sex with this girl was neither uninhibited nor satisfying and I thought: it's the fault of this girl, or it's the fault of girls in general, they like sex less than us boys and I ended up masturbating always and only thinking of guys.

Then even if the sex was not satisfactory I thought that the love with capital L was for this girl and that I would never fall in love with a guy, because love was reserved for girls and for this I was straight! The process of rationalization (falsification) was very complex but basically identical to what you describe in the manual. You have to add that I didn't want to be teased by classmates!

But I certainly can't forget the crush on a schoolmate, a male schoolmate obviously, a year younger than me! I had begun to notice him for his body. We seated at desks, a lot of us, in the afternoon in a large classroom and this guy was sitting not far from me. The first time I noticed him, I was almost absent-minded, it had been because ... I had been impressed by his backside, very masculine. From that moment I began to observe him more and more often and the more I looked at him, the more I found him interesting, and I began to feel attraction towards him. Then almost unconsciously I started to masturbate thinking of him.

At the same time I was platonically in love with a girl I had met in the summer at sea and with whom I had started an idealized love story (with

a throbbing heart). With this girl, the maximum of sex had been a little petting a few days in the summer, and I never masturbated thinking of her. But we exchanged romantic letters and this was enough to reassure me that I was straight. But then at school I was always waiting for that guy because I had to go out with him and walk together with him a stretch of the road to the bus stop. And I used to find excuses to go to see the volleyball matches of that guy's team, to be able to see him in shorts; I liked to see him play, I liked his legs, his back, his chest.

For all the years of high school I have fought with myself. I understood and didn't accept. I understood and hoped it was not true, I pretended that it was because my school was a school of priests, because those were the wrong girls, or because I was in an all-male school. I was looking for all the excuses outside of me: it was the environment that diverted me from a straight (in both senses) behavior. But it was not the environment to be gay, nor girls to be the wrong ones, nor me to be unlucky nor me who was the one the girls didn't like. I would have had to look inside of me to understand that the environment, the priests, the girls, the gay episode at 14, had nothing to do with my homosexuality, but simply I was just like that, despite the environment and despite many girls who liked me and despite the girls who liked to have sex with me (I was the one who didn't like going beyond kisses and a few touches, on the contrary they would have liked to do everything). It was just me.

I would have certainly understood much earlier and much better, if I had had the opportunity to read the things written in the forum and in the manual. And yes, because I really wanted to believe that I was "a wrong heterosexual". I really liked girls, in the sense that I perceived the beauty and I know very well and I like the beauty of a girl. And so the beauty of a girl made me fall in love with that girl, idealizing her. I idealized her so much that sex passed into the background, but at the time I thought that sex ended up in the background because pure love prevailed on the materiality of the sexual act. So yes, I courted some girls and some stories are born, I really liked kissing them, I had very spontaneous erections, but such things were still unsatisfactory, neither I nor these girls took felt the reciprocity of real love.

But how I felt in love! And how many opportunities I have deliberately dropped. A girl had invited me to her house one afternoon (and we could have had sex, in my opinion), but once I got there I started talking about everything, without even touching her. Another girl had started to call me on the phone, we had even gone out together a few times, and there, too, no sex at all, I had not stepped forward, even guessing that she would have accepted, if only I had tried to do something.



One evening a male friend of mine wanted to go to the disco because there was a party and there were girls to meet; I had found an excuse not to go (the classic excuse: I have to study) and I went to a newsstand where with my heart in the throat and the salivation reduced to zero I bought my first gay porn magazine. I don't tell you the initial embarrassment with the newsagent, the fear, and then once at home the excitement, the excitement I had felt in flipping through that newspaper. Seeing those naked guys, seeing that I was not alone with my fantasies, seeing that there were other guys (and very beautiful too) who not only were gay, but were photographed while having sex with each other, literally stunned me. It was so big my desire to see a gay porn magazine, that I had challenged the fear, the shame and had taken courage. So the same night my friend was in the nightclub trying to catch girls and I was at home masturbating with a gay magazine.

And despite all this evidence, I wanted to continue to believe that I was straight and to believe I had gay fantasies just to masturbate, because masturbation thinking of a girl "gave me frustration, hurt me, because it made the girl object of my thoughts become just an object of sexual fantasies". And how is it that when I happened to have experiences of gay sex, certainly I was not inhibited and I didn't think so much? I just let myself go! How is it that when I perceived the possibility of having sex with a guy I was always looking for an opportunity to do it? How is it that I masturbated thinking about what I had done with a guy or even thinking about what I wanted to do with a guy (hetero)? Yeah, the usual rationalization: "masturbation is a thing in which girls don't enter, but I'm straight because I fall in love with girls and because if I see a beautiful girl I like her."

Yes, I liked girls, but when it was time to conclude, as I wrote before, I subtracted myself from my duty of heterosexual guy and took refuge in pretending a sublimated love, in strange forms of idealization, in beautiful speeches, but physical reaction lacked almost completely, and barely we touched each other or little more. You know, I came to think: "I like lesbians because there are no men around and I would like to be between those two women, so I'm a super straight!" Instead, seen with today's awareness, the reality is that I like lesbians as homosexuals and because for me homosexuality is a natural sexual condition. So for me it is natural to have sex guys with guys, and girls with girls. I'm not a super straight guy, I'm just a super gay! See you soon.

### 1.2.11 I discovered I was gay at the age of 30

Hi Project,  
First of all I have to thank you for last night, I can guarantee you that I was

very impressed, I didn't imagine similar things, I had understood that it was a serious thing and I also realized that it should have a true meaning, but I didn't think that things like the ones you made me read could really happen. It was not the first time I was trying to get closer to gay environments but I was very suspicious because my previous experiences had been disappointing. Of course it is almost unbelievable that one wakes up after having turned 30 and starts so late to understand things that are obvious, but the removal was so strong that, as I told you, I came a step away from the marriage, then, fortunately I asked myself what I was doing and the world collapsed on me. I have been considered mad by everyone, from my girlfriend to my parents, I don't tell how her parents reacted, but now the worst moment of the storm after the breakdown of the marriage hypothesis has passed. I couldn't, or maybe not wanted to explain anything to my ex-girlfriend, I've exploited her for years, it's true, but at that time I didn't realize it. She felt betrayed, I know, but I would never be able to explain to her how things really are, because it's ugly to say, but I often thought that she would marry me, although there was no real attraction between us, neither sexual nor emotional, just to find a social and economic accommodation, it could seem bad and perhaps I'm looking for a justification, but that's what I think.

When my parents understood that I would not marry, they thought everything but the right thing. Neither my father nor my mother have the slightest suspicion that I can be gay and I think this is good, because the atmosphere is already strange but if they knew that I'm gay it would be difficult to live together. I still live with them but I have a stable job not bad and I could also go to stay on my own, but we are in the same city, a small city, and going to live in another house would not give me more privacy, I should really change city, but this would mean also changing job.

It seems very strange to me, when I walk down the street, to turn around to look at a guy, because I'm not used to such things, I've always avoided doing it, almost on principle, I know it's a stupid thing but that's what happened for years and years, then I'm rediscovering the pleasures of sex (not yet the couple sex) and it begins to seem to me like a simple thing, I would say completely natural, which is done because it's pleasant and you leave the thoughts free to go where they want, and it seems strange to me that for many years I have had so many problems with these things.

When I visit porn sites I mostly look for photos of nice guys in very spontaneous attitudes and I think the guys are really a beautiful thing, maybe the most beautiful thing that nature has created and I imagine how it would be to know a guy exactly like I dream of him, how it would be to embrace him knowing that he wants it, in short, being with a guy like me, that is, who thinks the same things, who desires the same things, who immediately

understands what I want to say.

When I was with my girlfriend I didn't feel uncomfortable, even if she didn't love me in the true meaning of the word (and how could she?). Somehow she loved me but I felt that being with her was not what I really wanted and I was wondering how could so many other guys find sex so engaging and amusing, now finally I understand it and I too find it engaging, clearly the gay sex, but at that time I considered my gay impulses a kind of private perversion that had to be repressed because it's obvious that it's wrong.

I miss so much to know other gay guys, not those of the gay pride but those like me, who may have also passed through straight experiences or even not, but gay guys with whom I can talk freely. Last night I felt strange because we talked about sexuality, that is gay sexuality, and I thought I would never have succeeded. I don't hide that I was also affected by the fact of being too old to still have these problems, I told myself that at twenty, ok, it's possible, but at 30, it's impossible, I felt immature. There are many gay guys like me ... it's true, in fact it's obvious, but I had always removed the idea of making the big jump and trying to understand what is "really" on the other side of the wall. I begin to think that on the other side of the wall there is a very normal world of real guys who live or try to live as they can, that is, in the best way with respect to the situation around them, which unfortunately doesn't encourage gays.

The Gay Project environment is actually very different from the classic gay environments. I happened to be a bit on the chat, and a guy who had launched a sexual proposal has been immediately kicked, just in two seconds time. This fact struck me a lot, I didn't talk in the chat and I didn't respond to the greeting because I didn't want to talk but I followed the conversation and it was very far from those of other gay chats, then I decided to send you the mail, well, I didn't even expect an answer, but you answered less than half an hour later and after an hour we were on msn. I must say that I was impressed by the whole tone of the conversation, very simple and very direct. We talked all night and I apologize for it, but it was worth it. Now, if I think I'm gay, I feel less strange, it doesn't seem to me like a perversion, it really struck me when you said that being gay is a way of loving, it's true! But I never considered homosexuality this way.

You made me think about another fundamental thing, I mean prevention. Frankly such things can be easily underestimated because one is led to think that are very distant things that can happen only to others, I believe that I will treasure what I learned yesterday when I fall in love with a guy and I hope it would happen soon, because now I begin to see it as something that could also happen even if it still seems to me a distant thing. Can I really have a boyfriend? Well, such a thing a few months ago would have put me

in crisis, but now I think I would very much like it.

You insisted a lot on shared love and shared sexuality, on the need of mutual respect in order to get to share even sexual intimacy, and I did not expect such statements, I have always considered sex between two guys as something that a guy does especially for himself and not as a form of shared tenderness. Project, all right, I don't do it too long, I think I'll send you some more emails if you have the patience to answer me. The Project is truly a unique thing!

Andrew N.

### 1.2.12 Heterosexual experiences of a gay guy

Project, I wanted to ask you an opinion on something that happened to me and that put me quite upside down. I am 22 years old, I am rather clumsy with the things of sex, in practice I have never had sexual experiences with either girls or guys. I always thought I was gay because the girls never attracted me and my sexual fantasies were always about guys, except very rare cases, when I was 16, and deliberately forced myself to think about girls but, let's say so, with a minimal physiological reaction, practically almost nothing.

About a month ago I met a girl from my city (a small city in northern Italy) on the campsite, she is about my age, we were both with our friends, I was with three other guys and she with two guys and another girl. We met at the sea in the morning, spent the morning all together, we all took a bath together then there were those who sunbathed, in short, the usual things you do on the beach. My three friends were busy with the girls they found there, but a normal thing, that is talking, joking a little, the usual things you do among young people, I watched, with the usual attention not to get caught, one of the two guys of the other group, who was not bad, let's say who was not bad to look but was not really my type of guy, however my three friends, that is those of my group, have never attracted me from a sexual point of view and that guy was the "least worst" there.

Until here there is no story, the usual thing of the gay who has to be content to watch. But something unexpected happened. The girl I told you began to talk especially with me, to joke but in a very nice way, without the typical attitude of certain girls who are taking a crush, a little like a guy. Let's say that this girl was tall, very thin and with blonde hair cut very short and had a very small breast, basically it made me imagine her a little as a guy, but she was a girl. I was fine, let's say so, from a certain point onwards I began to treat this girl in a freer way, a little as I would have done if she had been a guy, playing even with a minimum of physical contact and it was really not

unpleasant. My friends have noticed all this, according to them I was aiming at her, I went on with the game because my friends didn't know about me. In practice so we arrived at the end of the holidays, I completely forgot to look at the guy of the other group and I always looked at the girl.

There is one thing to say though, in reality I didn't even think I fell in love with that girl because during the whole period that, let's say, I was with her, I continued to masturbate with my usual gay fantasies, that is she was very pretty, etc. etc. I saw her as a friend, but she didn't attract me sexually, and then she didn't even try anything with me neither at a minimum level, let's say it was just a nice and pleasant female friend. Then we came back in the city and things have taken another way.

My parents were out on vacation and I invited her to my house, she was not at all surprised and immediately said yes, for a while I have been happy then I felt a bit embarrassed, but the thing had already started and we can say that I wanted to see how it would end, but I was determined to avoid any form of sexual involvement.

She arrived at my house, I had bought some good things at the fry shop, we ate, the speech was embarrassed, there was something unsaid, that anyway still conditioned us, I was very cautious and she didn't know if to step further. At the end of the lunch we sat on the sofa, I felt the tension in the air. At a certain point she snuggles up close to me and tries to rest her head on my legs at the groin, I stop her, I take a pillow and I put it on my legs to avoid any genital contact, let's say. I don't think she understood the meaning of the maneuver, however things doesn't go further, I start talking about the campsite but just like I would have done with a guy, but she was a girl and rested her head on my legs and we were alone at home.

Here I began to get an erection but, if I have to be honest, I tried to imagine that she was a guy, or maybe I don't know, the fact is that I got an erection. We had been like this for an hour, she looked at me in a tender way every now and then, sometimes tenderly blowing on my face and smiled and I liked all of this. Then she told me: "Do you want ice cream?" I said yes, she got up and asked me where the bathroom was, so I had time to put myself in a condition that could let me to stand up without embarrassment, let's say I was a bit wet. If I have to be honest, I felt at ease. Then the ice cream and the walk, just as if I had been with a male friend. I take her back home, she tells me it was great and asks me what I have to do the next day, so we decide to repeat the experience the next day.

I go back home, I think about everything that happened, I don't mind but I think that if it happened with a guy I would have exploded with happiness and it would have been another and very different situation. In the evening I don't masturbate, which is rare for me.

The next day we repeat almost exactly the same script, but as was to be expected, she takes one more step, tells me that it's too hot and takes off her blouse and bra and lies down on my legs like the day before, she has actually small breasts, she is a beautiful girl but she is a girl, then she takes my hand, takes it to her mouth and kisses it in a very light way, then she begins to caress her breasts with my hand, I am in erection and a little wet, I let things go on, then I start to caress her by myself, it is a pleasant feeling but I realize that it is not what I really want, I start to feel embarrassed, somehow the situation is pleasant but I realize that we are going to things that I don't feel mine at all, then I begin to have doubts, i.e. I think that basically with her I could also have done something because I hadn't felt any sense of repulsion, I don't know what would have happened if we had switched to sexual genital things but I think I could even have sex with that girl.

Anyway she realizes that I am very much cautious and I don't tend spontaneously to go further, she blows on my face and tells me smiling: "ice cream?" This means that she is a clever girl who perceives immediately the situations of embarrassment. She goes to the bathroom, I arrange my clothes, even to hide the erection that was there anyway, I'm actually quite wet. When I leave her at her home she tells me that she will go out of the city for a few days because she will go to [omission] to visit her parents but immediately adds that she will call me back as soon as she comes back and that we will be in contact by cellphone. She greets me giving me a very light kiss on the mouth. She had never done such a thing before.

I come home a bit relieved that we will not see each other for a few days but a little I miss her. I begin to think back to the sensations I felt while caressing her breasts but the feeling is strange. In the evening I try to masturbate thinking about her and what we did, it does not come spontaneously, a half-thing, more forced on a physical level than really enjoyed with the imagination, I come to the end, but I feel so strange and I would say upset that I begin to ask myself what I'm doing.

In the morning I wake up in erection as almost always happens to me, I turn on the PC, I look for videos of guys and I masturbate on those videos. It is incomparably different, I realize it and I say to myself: "What the hell am I doing? I'm gay! I can also get an erection by playing with a girl (and then only with that girl, because she is a very particular girl), but I really don't see myself having sex with her, I want a guy!" Project, now I come to the questions, but from what I told you, do you think I'm straight (I don't think so) or at least bisexual? Maybe just a little? And then what should I do with that girl? Being close to her is pleasant for me, I cannot deny it, but it is that step by step you get slowly to sex and, at the limit, maybe I could even accept it but it is not really what I want. This is my problem! If you

want, publish the email as it is, but, please, change the names of places.  
A hug. Puzzled

### 1.2.13 From pretended straight to gay at age of 30

Hello Project,

31 years old, almost married, I say almost because in the end I did not get married, it would be impossible for me, my girlfriend and I had planned our wedding for six months later. I used to think that the idea of marrying would put an end to my problems, but I was beginning to feel trapped but hadn't said anything to my girlfriend. According to her, all things were going very well because I was able to have satisfactory sexual intercourse with her, but I imagined I was with a guy and that was the only way I could get excited. In practice I imagined her completely devoid of her femininity and also endowed with male sexual attributes. The more I realized that it was not so, the more I felt disappointed.

She wanted excite me and did everything to excite me, there was some physical response but she didn't really excite me at all. We have never had penetrative intercourse, I would not have really made it, in short I felt almost a sense of repulsion, I felt it quite as a violence on myself, and so six months before the final choice I told her, but also to her family and mine, that I didn't feel like getting married. My God! What happened! My mother thought I had another girl and my now ex-girlfriend thought it too, they bombarded me with questions of all kinds, they thought of everything, but the idea that I could be gay didn't even touch them, perhaps only my father had some doubt. With my ex-girlfriend and her family the breaking of the engagement could not be more traumatic than it was, with my parents things went differently, for my mother my ex was right to think that I betrayed her, from my father, the response was that if I didn't feel at ease I did well to break before the marriage.

Now they expect (my mother certainly) from me that I bring home another girl, according to them such a thing is obvious and necessary, but in reality I not only have no girl to bring home but I should bring home a guy and moreover much younger than me, ten years younger than me. I don't even imagine the reaction if I did something like that. They certainly don't suspect at all that I'm gay ("maybe" my father) and that I can be with a guy who is ten years younger than me, even if my father is 16 years older than my mother, but they are straight and for them this is considered normal.

I met my boyfriend a year ago. We met on the train, during a trip to Hungary. A good part of the trip was at night, on an almost deserted train, on the carriage there would have been no more than five or six people and we

had a compartment just for us. We talked a lot, then he fell asleep on the seats and it was just beautiful to be in front of him, by the way, he is also a handsome guy. Then he woke up and we started talking again, inevitably about girls (speech started by him) and he told me that "it was not his kind". I looked at him in amazement and he asked me: "And you?" And at that point I told him the truth.

The embarrassment but also the mutual interest was enormous, he asked me about my experiences on a sexual level and I told him that I had never been with anyone, except for a bit of petting, even pushed, but with girls, and he replied that he too had never been with anyone but that he wanted it to happen only if he really fell deeply in love with another guy. We exchanged cell phone numbers. He told me so many things about his family, in short, a nice climate has been created. We spoke until arrival. He got off the train before me.

That journey literally shocked my life. I was hoping with all my strength that he would call me and it happened, then we met often when he returned to Italy because he lives in a city that is 20 minutes by train from mine. So we always spent Sunday together. I felt for him an infinite tenderness and I wanted him and also on a sexual level but given what he had told me, I never took a step that could put him in trouble. At first I had not told him anything about my ex-girlfriend, but then I had to tell him and there I understood that he had fallen in love with me.

He reacted with panic, he was very worried, he told me that I should not get into trouble but he always talked about me and never about himself, in the end he told me clearly that his dream would be with me, because I had shamelessly tried to get in touch with him, and he kissed me for the first time. After two days I truncated with my ex-girlfriend. I really wanted to have sex with him but for months I didn't take initiatives because I felt like I was somehow going to do something wrong. We used to meet, to out, we were fine together, I was very tempted but I tried to avoid, then we finally got to sex. He took the initiative and I let him do.

It was not a thing of sex, it was a deep need both his and mine. When I hugged him, I felt a total transport, I never had the slightest doubt: my boyfriend could only be him. With me he is very tender but also very determined, has its ideas in mind and I really like this, we can say that I am also happy that in practice the choices are made especially by him, because in the end he does what I would do even if maybe I would not have the courage to say it. I'm fine with him and I think he's fine with me (he knows about this mail, I made him read it).

But what will we do now that we have arrived at this point? I think we are now a true couple but he is at university and will have to study for a



few more years. How can we think of a couple life? His parents don't know anything about us but wouldn't take well all the story, especially because I'm 10 years older than him. In practice we still need the support of our families for quite a few years. He doesn't seem worried about this, he says that what matters is that I am there and that the fact that others know can only be one more problem, not an extra freedom.

He does not even want to hear about a possible coming out or even about making too long plans. I would always like to have him with me and instead we see each other at most once a week. I don't complain, for heaven's sake, in fact I consider myself very lucky but I dream of being able to live with him, in a house of ours, of falling asleep in his arms, but now the situation is stalemate and will remain such for years. I feel inside bit of melancholy, because I found a wonderful guy but I cannot live with him the life that I would like and he too would like. And it could be so easy to experience total happiness!

If you want to publish the story, I agree. A hug, Project.

Former solitary traveler

### 1.2.14 A gay guy in love

Interview with Andrew (a student then twenty-two years old, who attended the third year of Engineering) recorded on October 26th 1985 by Project, at that time affectionately nicknamed "the Owl" by his friends.

My name is Andrew P., 22 years old, from a few months student of the third year of Engineering, up to now in good standing with the exams. I live with my parents in a very small town but along the railway line that goes to Rome. To get from home to University it takes exactly two hours. Leaving home at six in the morning (in the winter it's still night) I arrive at destination shortly after eight, I stay there until six in the afternoon, and at eight in the evening I'm back home, I take a shower and go to sleep because usually I can't even stand up on my foot because I'm very tired.

In practice I live on the train four hours every day, I bring books and study while the train runs. But the train – if you are a commuter you know it very well - creates a routine, all the acts are repetitive. I always sit in the same place, I always have the same people around and the same compartment mates. You can understand where I want to end up ... well, about ten days ago, to be precise on October 15th, because one can no more forget certain dates, at the train stop seven minutes after my stop, a guy, a bit unkempt and with a ruffled hair gets on the train. I've never seen him before.

There is a crowd, he must remain standing. I look at him very carefully, tall,

thin, light brown, with the hair cut like a helmet, dressed in clear. He leans on vertical support that is close to my seat, I see in detail the back of his hand and part of his forearm, he has beautiful hands, his body is absolutely regular. He is alone, without friends, has a backpack on his shoulder that seems almost empty. I look at his hand with the utmost attention, I would like to hold it, caress it, then I almost casually lift my eyes, meet his gaze for a moment, he does not look away and smiles at me.

I'm sitting on the inside seat, not the one next to the window, I would love him to get closer, he bends a little towards me but even if there is a lot of crowd he doesn't even touch me not even by mistake ... after the first few minutes it happens to me an embarrassing situation, in practice I get an uncontrollable erection. He stands on his foot a few inches from me. Before the thing becomes clear I put the folder on my knees, pull out a book and start reading, but in practice I pretend to read but I observe as much as possible that guy almost as if I could spy on his most intimate secrets just looking at his right hand, you can take me for a maniac, but I really liked that guy, here now I prefer to fly over, but the thoughts that came to my mind, if you ever wanted a guy you can understand them very well.

Station after station, Termini (the central railway station of Rome) approaches and my erection shows no signs of subsiding. I don't think I say something exceptional, but standing up with an erection in that situation is very embarrassing and I begin to worry ... I try to think about the exams, I bite my tongue, hold my breath as much as I can ... I try to put into practice all the techniques I know to get back to a normal condition ... but there's nothing to do. My coat lies on the net above the seats and to take it I should get up. When we get to the station, I take courage and, making a screen with the folder, I get up with a maneuver a bit funny and I take the coat ... it's already a step forward ...

We get down, the guy precedes me ... I don't overtake him, I let him to precede me for the pleasure of following him ... I'm willing not to go to class so as not to leave him alone even for a minute, but he goes right to the university ... then he takes Hippocrates avenue and goes on Scarpa street. You will not believe it but he was a freshman of Engineering ... I said to myself: "Wow! I'll see this guy every day!"

He was a little confused, he didn't know where to go ... so I introduced myself, with the excuse that we had seen each other on the train, I explained a lot of things to him about the faculty, he was listening and remembered everything I told him and then I had the opportunity to look at his face ... and it was of an incredible sweetness, I don't even know if he was handsome, but he was sweet, smiling, very direct. We went to the bar ... he was happy not to feel alone. I would have done everything not to break those moments

of enchantment. Obviously the problem that had worried me on the train was back to the assault but now I was wearing my enough long coat and there was no risk. I told him I used to go back home with the six o'clock train and that I was going to study at the central library.

He asked me where I used to eat and I told him that I would eat just a sandwich with a bottle of water and he told me: "If you like, we can eat the sandwiches together". Then I went to my class, but I kept thinking about that guy whose name I didn't even know. We ate our sandwiches together ... then I went to follow my other lessons in the afternoon and he went to study in the library, at five twenty we went back to the station and got on the train. I, for obvious reasons, didn't take my coat off, even though the heating was on and it was terribly hot, he told me: "But don't you feel hot?" I replied: "A little, but I prefer to keep the coat on ... ", he looked at me with a mischievous smile and I felt a terrible embarrassment ... probably he had noticed all the maneuver yet in the morning.

He took off his coat and actually had nothing to hide, I confess that I was sorry, I wanted so much him to try what I was feeling. Then the train left, in the evening there are very few people, there is no crowd like in the morning, we talked for almost an hour and a half, then he got down the train saying: "See you tomorrow!" I don't tell you what I did when I got home, but, despite all, in the night I could not get to sleep, I thought of him all the time, I saw him in front of me, I heard his voice and even his smell, a kind of obsession. The next day I shave with the utmost care and I put on the most beautiful shirt I have and, of course, the longest coat ... I get on the train and I feel excited at the thought of seeing him but when we come to the station where he's expected to take the train, he's non there, I feel frozen ... Why? We did not exchange phone numbers and I had no means to contact him and I only knew his name: Mark. I felt badly depressed ... but he was not there and I could not do anything. Things went on like this for another eight days, I felt very upset the first two or three days, but then I started to get used to the idea that Mark was not there e perhaps would not have been there any more ... but yesterday, Saturday, just when my hopes were fading, he was there again.

I must have greeted him with great enthusiasm and he flashed me a beautiful smile. He had only had chickenpox! The story of Andrew and Mark (our story) today is at this point. On the first day of Mark's disappearance, I had talked about it with the Owl and he had told me: "He will come back, certainly will come back! Don't worry!" and we had bet that if he came back I would have recorded the story ... The story? You will say, but it is a banality ... perhaps, I say, ... but I hope so much that you are wrong!

### 1.2.15 Gay games of straight guys

Hello Project,  
it's me again, George. I know very well that I'm bothering you every day, isn't it? I don't know, sometimes I have doubts, you never get angry. Oh well, but I would like you to at least get to understand what trouble you have thrown me into! We had a fight several times and I closed the chat in your face several times, because I thought you deserved such a treatment, but then I called you back and sometimes it costed me a lot.

But now, let's admit that all the things you tried to put into my head are right, all right, admitted and not granted that I'm gay, and look, admitting it to me is really a very difficult thing, because I cannot stand the gay word and then, let's say, seeing it associated with me makes me just upset, however, ok, ok, it may be as you say, in fact maybe it's just as you say, but why cannot I try to change direction? This is what I don't understand, I've felt I was hetero for years and this curse of being gay is a matter of only a few months. I don't know, perhaps I got a gay intoxication, but it is something that then passes, I sleep a bit over, then I wake up and I'm straight, it is not that it should last a lifetime, now it is as you say, ok, but now, but tomorrow it's another day. Do you understand what I mean?

What should I do? Should I look for a guy and all the trouble that comes with it, and why? To realize in a month that gay drunkenness has passed and that in the meantime I have been thrown into a huge mess? No! I say that passes, maybe not immediately, but according to me it will pass, because I don't feel such things so strongly every day, and we have talked a lot about. I look at guys, and that's fine, but I don't become crazy for them, I told you about the gym, but even straight guys do those things, that is a way to joke, to play. You see serious sex everywhere, I like gay games, ok, so what? It's nice, I have to say, yes even on a sexual level, but I think those things are nice even for straight guys, because you understand a lot of things about gays, but about straight guys you don't really understand anything, because straight guys are much freer with gay things than you think. At least the guys I know.

I told you about Alfred, a guy 100% heterosexual, but do you think that he never had fun with gay things? In my opinion, he has fun with gay sex exactly as I do but on someone like him what doubts can you have? Is he gay? Did you understand what I mean? You schematize too much, but the boundaries in these things are vague, instead you stick labels everywhere. I'm fine with Alfred, I know he's straight, but I'm fine with him, while I cannot stand at all pansy guys. That is, I think that a straight man (someone like me, because I still feel hetero in spite of your evidences) can also have some

gay fun. Why not? I don't know, but I think that with a man I would not feel at ease, I had the fantasy and more than once, but I know that I would not feel at ease, that I would not be able to live with a man, but because shouldn't I joke with friends? It's just a way to make fun, even on a sexual level, but why would I renounce all this? Straight guys don't do these things? But who said that? They do it a lot and they are straight!

Project, honestly I'm not too convinced that the things you say are all right, ok, most probably are, but basically, I don't say that I don't feel absolutely gay, maybe a little yes, let's say 70%, now as now, however, for me, it could be quite another thing. Shame on you! I would twist your neck! You started putting a lot of doubts in my head and those doubts are working on me and just put me in crisis. But I can't really read the things I do as strictly gay things. You can say that I don't want to accept such an explication, but it is not true, because I gave you reason to 70%, but you have to leave a 30% for different explications.

Then you put into my head all those stupid things about loneliness. I'm alone, ok! Yes, I don't have a girl and I don't care to find one but I don't care even to find a guy. But why? A guy my age cannot just think of having fun? Do you mean I have to put myself together forcibly with someone else? But who said it! I'm fine like that, I don't care about the dreams of others, I now want to enjoy my life! But, Project, apart from these things, the fact that straight guys have little fun with gay things is very true. You don't know these things because you talk only with gay guys but talking with straight guys you could realize that some behaviors that you consider gay, in fact, are not just gay! Straight people are much more uninhibited in gay things than you imagine. Perhaps such things are not things of love, maybe they are things of sex only, but nevertheless those guys they do those things, and they remain 100% hetero. It is not true that the two worlds are so divided. Woe to you if you tell me that this is a reasoning completely devoid of foundation, because it's a serious reasoning and I think it deserves the utmost attention. I'm not looking for a loophole anyway, if I have to adapt to the idea of being 100% gay, well, I will adapt! But I think that my reading of things has a very serious basis. I'll be waiting for you in the chat tonight and I want to see how you will handle it! Seriously, but is it possible that someone like me should end up 100% gay? No! In my opinion it is not like that!

G.

### 1.2.16 Anti-gay therapy

Hi Project,  
do you still remember me? Probably not, I have not called you for a long time, practically since the beginning of February. In February we chatted on skype a couple of times, I'm 23, from Lombardy. I remind you that we also talked about the fact that I was going to graduate in Engineering, but this does not tell you much. There is one thing that can help you remember: we only talked about girls, it was my fixed idea.

The second time you told me things that bothered me and I closed the chat and, I must say, I felt really bad. It seemed to me that you wanted to remind me that for me girls were just a way to escape reality. Your speech seemed to me very stupid. After I closed the chat I sent you loudly to hell and so I felt happy. What happened next? I told myself: Project is a fool and doesn't understand that I am 100% straight! And I didn't even know why you had given so much meaning to details that were a little scabrous, and of which, among other things, I had anyway spoken to you. It's not that we cannot talk about these topics, but it didn't seem to me such a decisive thing at all. What you were saying really bothered me. I didn't call you anymore, but not only, a bit for reaction, I put my own commitment to woo a girl, frankly I thought she wouldn't accept and that everything would end with just a little courtship so, just to do, but it has not been like that. She fell in love with me and I went ahead, we had sex and tot rarely, it become something pretty usual. I did it, no problem, erection ok, and everything. She was very happy, I much less. The first time I didn't even notice my lack of participation, after all it seemed exciting. We went ahead. One day she calls me and tells me she thinks she's pregnant.

I was a little excited, because, you know, the idea of a child at my age is beautiful, but I was a little frightened because I didn't love her. After two days waiting for the response of the test, I started to feel assaulted by the panic, and she didn't know what to do and was very nervous. Then the answer came and it was a false alarm! At that moment I felt a lot lighter, but also a little disappointed. Since then we have always made love using condoms, so there was no risk of pregnancy. We arrived at a pace that we did it even three times a week and even more, everything was always technically perfect, but I felt strange and I started to see it as a sort of duty. I told myself that I was tired, stressed, that it was becoming a habit. When we were in bed I had an erection, etc. etc. but on other occasions, thinking of her was something absolutely neutral to me.

Little by little, the situation has become such that she thought I was deeply in love with her and she wanted me to tell nice things every moment, things

that in reality didn't come spontaneously, and sometimes I couldn't stand her, especially when she made me proposals that, according to her, I would have liked a lot. Note that throughout this period I didn't have a boyfriend and I didn't even think about it and didn't even masturbate because the sex I was doing with her was enough for me. So I lived with her all my sexuality, but I couldn't tell her: look, when we are together there is something that doesn't work, because everything actually seemed to work.

In mid-May I go for an internship in a company and I know a 25-year-old guy. He strikes me, but I don't consider him as something too much important. My girlfriend offers me a weekend together and I say no, for the first time. The following week I'm looking for excuses and I don't make love with her, in fact I don't think of her, I think only of the 25 year old guy, and even just thinking of him, "it stands up" and I don't feel upset at all. In the week when I was not with my girlfriend, practically since Monday I started to masturbate thinking of the 25 year old guy.

So, dear Project, you came back to my mind, I thought maybe you were not really so stupid, but I thought also that if I had started making love with my girlfriend all the gay fantasies would have gone away. With a great effort of will I forced myself to return to make love with my girlfriend. She pampered me in all ways. Erection yes, but not convinced. She looks at me a little disappointed and begins the story: "But is it my fault? What have I done? But don't you like me anymore?" In short, a terrible situation, incredibly embarrassing. I could not stand her appreciation of my penis. At one point the annoyance became such that I dressed and I left. I thought that from certain situations, which are a bit like traps, you must also get out without thinking too much, since you enter into them as if you were playing.

She calls me on the phone, I don't answer, she calls me for the second time, in the end I have to answer, she tells me that there isn't any problem, that the next time will be better. But I said to myself: "I don't want any next time. And now how can I get rid of this girl?" I sent her to the devil without hesitation, but she had now entered the part of the girl who has to save her boyfriend and wanted to understand "why". But how can you tell the girl that you put almost pregnant that you don't really love her, that you don't want her and instead you think about a guy a thousand times a day? They were days of hell, I didn't know what to do, to get rid of her I could tell her I was gay, but with her mentality it would have been worse, because she was convinced that she would be able to induce any gay man to go to bed with her. In fact with me she was successful! But only because the idiot was me and also the asshole because in fact I used her as an anti-gay therapy.

But I did not want to tell her that I was gay, now it was a certainty for me, but to talk about it with her was really impossible! I know it's a bad thing

but it's like that. So I told her a huge lie, I told her that I had been with another girl that week and that I didn't feel like being with her anymore. I felt a monster in telling a similar lie, but I had to go out of the situation anyway. There were hours of recriminations, then dozens of text messages to which I never replied and then she sent me the definitive one: "If you don't answer me I will not call you anymore!" I didn't expect any better and it was a moment of enormous relief (I didn't hear her anymore).

My 25-year-old guy didn't have a girlfriend but, from the way he talked about women, he could not be more hetero than so. What does it mean when a 100% hetero guy does not stay with a girl? In my ingenuity of gay neophyte it meant that the hetero was not so hetero! And then, with a lot of discretion (it was the first time that I was courting a guy) I started going after him. The thing ended almost immediately, he used rude and substantially homophobic expressions against a supposedly gay guy. I didn't look for him anymore, he kept looking for me for a while, then he got tired, luckily! I don't want to fall in love with a straight guy!

In practice I was alone again, but better alone than with my girlfriend or with an idiot like the 25 year old guy. Project, it's ok that you have a certain practice of gay things, but how the hell did you understand that it would end this way? But let's come back to my story. So the next day I joined the gym and it's actually a place where I feel great, a bit because, well, you certainly understand, and a little because in an environment like that, all male, I feel just fine, the sexual temptations are there but it is also nice when we are together only on a generic level. They are very nice guys!

Now I can't understand how I have felt straight for years. If I think that practically a little more than a month ago I was making love with my girlfriend every other day, I feel absurd. But how didn't I realize it before? There were a lot of the so-called significant signals and we had talked about a lot, I thought: "if the sky is cloudy it may rain a little" and instead it was a storm. I gay !!! My God, but how is it possible? But it's like that! Project, if you want to publish this mail up to this point you can put it in the forum (by the way, congratulations for the forum! It's a smart thing! And has grown a lot!) But from here on the email is just for you, because I have other things to ask but they are too personal and on the other hand I cannot talk about it with anyone. [omissis]. And now I stop writing otherwise to read this email it will take three hours. If you forgot it, my contact is [omissis]. A hug, Project! I'll call you soon!



# Chapter 2

## BISEXUALITY

### 2.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

This chapter is dedicated to clarifying some basic concepts related to bisexuality. It is known that Kinsey, in his studies on sexuality, stressed that sexual orientation cannot be reduced within a schematic dualistic distinction between heterosexuals and gays. Kinsey postulates that between exclusive homosexuality and exclusive heterosexuality there is a continuous distribution of intermediate sexual orientations in which homosexuality and heterosexuality mingle in various ways. This idea finds ample evidence also in the experience gained in Gay Project.

#### 2.1.1 Dichotomy between affectivity and sexuality

Of course, on a statistical level, to define bisexuality, analogously to what happens for homosexuality, we can take as a basis two different criteria:

1) The objective sexual behaviors, that is the couple sexuality, in practice the fact of having relationships with both guys and girls.

2) The membership, that is "feeling bisexual", concept, this one, with very uncertain contours, as we will see soon.

In both cases we must assume however that to talk of bisexuality it is necessary to have the presence of both emotional and sexual interest towards people of both sexes. This means, for example, that when a guy's sexual interest is addressed exclusively to guys and his emotional interest is exclusively addressed to girls, that is when we face the "dichotomy between affectivity and sexuality", it is improper to talk of bisexuality. I emphasize

that the sexual dichotomy, among the guys, almost always presents the orientation of sexuality in the gay direction and the orientation of affectivity in the straight direction, the opposite is absolutely exceptional. Generally, in these cases, in order to identify sexual orientation, the sexual component is more indicative than the affective one, which often is not even a true affective component but is the product of a confusion of plans that induces to consider as a love relationship with a sublimated sexuality what is actually just a sympathy based more on a commonality of interests than on a deep emotional involvement. In essence, the sexual dichotomy with gay-oriented sexuality should be interpreted rather as a form of homosexuality that has not yet reached true affective maturity.

### 2.1.2 Hetero-curious men and sexuality of escape

Very different is the case of the so-called "hetero-curious", that is of people, generally not young, with a clearly heterosexual history behind them, who, at a certain point of their individual path, feel a clear "exclusively sexual" interest in men. Even this may seem like a case of sexual dichotomy, but the situation is, as we shall see, quite different. A guy who lives a form of sexual dichotomy which evolves towards forms of homosexuality that integrates affectivity and sexuality has a typical "gay sexuality", that is he considers the partner or the possible partner as a guy whom one can fall in love with, and in no way as a substitute for a girl, as it happens instead normally for a hetero-curious who is and remains heterosexual, even in his search for a sexuality with another man, because that sexuality, from his point of view, can only have a hetero type setting: fixed roles, in which the hetero-curious man takes always and only the active role, constant presence of anal penetration (that for gays, on the other hand, is a decidedly a minority practice), with minimal or no interest for the partner's penis. Basically a guy who has a dichotomy affectivity-sexuality, with sexuality oriented towards guys and affectivity oriented towards girls, is a person who is gradually becoming aware of his homosexuality, his sexuality is already typically homosexual, while his affectivity is not yet definitely oriented in the same direction. A "hetero-curious" adult man is instead a deeply frustrated heterosexual who seeks a "fleeing sexuality" with another man, but interprets the relationship with that man with the categories of a typically heterosexual relationship, basically without the equality of roles that distinguishes gay sexuality.

### **2.1.3 Bisexuality and masturbation**

A bisexual person experiences or can experience both emotional and sexual involvement towards both guys and girls and in both cases such involvements are true forms of love, that is, of love, both emotional and sexual. The most typical index of bisexuality is the presence, in the absence of conditioning, of a masturbation that is neither exclusively in a hetero key nor exclusively in a gay key. It should be emphasized that it is not uncommon for guys who live moments of uncertainty about their sexual orientation can feel forced to masturbate with straight fantasies to confirm to themselves the idea of not being gay, these guys, despite having a masturbation that is partly in hetero key, and that even when it is in a hetero key can be at least partially satisfactory, certainly are not heterosexual but they are not even bisexual because sexual spontaneity is lacking and the mechanisms that lead them to masturbation with hetero fantasies are heavily influenced by psychological factors of social and cultural origin.

### **2.1.4 False bisexuality in the obsessive compulsive disorder**

It also happens that guys who have been always spontaneously straight, from a certain moment on, try, sometimes compulsively, to masturbate with gay fantasies to evaluate their eventual homosexuality. In these cases the guys themselves don't use to say that they masturbate but that they "test" themselves, just to underline that it is essentially a test, sometimes repeated obsessively and compulsively. The results of this self-imposed masturbation may also appear not completely disappointing, but obviously, even in this case, despite the presence of a masturbation not exclusively in a straight key, we are not facing homosexual or even bisexual guys. The described behaviors don't have the characteristics of freedom typical of the true expression of profound sexuality and therefore not only are not indicative of bisexuality but are instead indicative of discomfort related to sexuality.

### **2.1.5 Degree of gay propensity of bisexuals**

The placement of a bisexual on a grading system that goes from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality can be operated on the basis of subjective perception, asking the subject himself to classify himself, but the classifications of this kind are precisely subjective and not very significant. More useful, even if schematic, is an objective criterion based on the frequency of gay oriented masturbation compared to the total, using this cri-

terion, for example, if a guy spontaneously masturbates 90% of the time with gay fantasies and 10% with hetero fantasies, he can be said to be bisexual with a 90% of gay propensity.

### 2.1.6 Bisexuality as transitory category

It is well known that about 30% of guys who end up considering themselves as exclusively gay have already experienced hetero relationships. In common language, especially in the period of emergence of homosexuality, these guys use to define themselves bisexual but in reality they are not bisexual, most of them, even when they live a heterosexual sexuality within the couple, still maintain an exclusive gay masturbation, and this excludes that they are bisexual, or sometimes they have a partially heterosexual masturbation or even an exclusively hetero masturbation but unsatisfactory and very conditioned from the outside and from preconceptions of various nature, which prevents to attribute to it a meaning as indicator of sexual orientation.

### 2.1.7 How many are bisexuals?

If we ask ourselves how many bisexuals are, we are faced with great difficulty in giving a clear answer, above all because the percentage of gay people who come from hetero experiences is high and these gays tend, even for quite long periods, to consider themselves bisexual.

Then there is another difficulty deriving from the fact that heterosexuals deeply frustrated by their heterosexual life (marriages lived as a trap, incompatibility of heterosexual couple, etc.), the so-called "hetero-curious", who take refuge in some form of homosexuality, exclusively sexual, are quite frequent. They are generally men with a typically hetero story who "consider themselves bisexual" but they are not because they don't fall in love with guys and live relationships with guys only on a sexual level. In these relationships, sometimes, rather rarely, we can find logics that have little to do with sexuality, as forms of domination/subordination, which highlight more complex relational problems.

In some cases, even this time rather rarely, with the passage of time emerges the so-called Mentor complex, that is the tendency to become a guardian and protector of another gay, generally younger. In this last case a true emotional relationship can lead to a stable homosexual couple life, and in this case it could also make sense to speak of bisexuality that has emerged late.

A final element of uncertainty is given by the fact that true bisexuals, in general, are not at ease neither in typically hetero environments nor in typically gay environments. The reasons for the discomfort of bisexuals in the gay

environment can be found in two different types of prejudices that gays and bisexuals wrongly assume for granted, each of them towards the other group. In general, gays consider the existence of bisexuals to be dubious and tend to consider bisexuals as gay men who have not yet reached full awareness of themselves, that is they consider bisexuality as a transitory, evolutionary phase which leads in any case to homosexuality, for their part the bisexuals are lead to think that everyone is radically bisexual and that orientation towards gay or straight direction is only the result of cultural pressures. After all, both gays and bisexuals, endorsing these prejudices, tend to absolutize their sexuality and make it a general rule. In both cases, however, it is only a matter of prejudices because bisexuals really exist and it is not at all true that all of us carry a basic bisexuality.

Based on what I noticed through Gay Project and its statistics, I am led to estimate that the true bisexuals, in the objective sense, are not really many and are more or less 2% of the general population, that is that there is on average about a bisexual every 4 gays. The estimate derives from the fact that even though the number of people who turned to Gay Project as bisexual was certainly not negligible, in fact, in many cases it could be found that they were not really bisexual. The estimate, again on the basis of the Gay Project statistics, obviously goes up a lot, up to about 8%, if the bisexual feeling, that is a subjective criterion, is adopted as a classification criterion. But while those who consider themselves gay go against the mainstream and if they consider themselves gay, certainly don't do so because of social pressure, those who consider themselves bisexuals often do so even because they consider the bisexual category more acceptable than the gay one in eyes of public opinion.

### 2.1.8 Polarization of bisexuality

If we now consider the objective distribution of the entire bisexual population on a grading system between hetero and gay, we observe that the distribution is strongly polarized towards the extremes and assumes a U shape, this means that there are decidedly more bisexuals strongly oriented towards heterosexuality, the so-called nearly heterosexual bisexuals, and this is foreseeable given that the great majority of the population is heterosexual, and then there is a less numerous group of bisexuals strongly oriented towards homosexuality, the so-called nearly gay bisexuals, while bisexuals with unclearly polarized sexuality, the so-called 50/50 homosexuals, are much rarer.

### **2.1.9 Bisexuality and problems arising from exclusivity**

We now come to the typical problems of bisexuals. It must be said right away that these problems vary greatly depending on the weight that the individual components of sexuality (gay and hetero) have in the specific case. A nearly heterosexual bisexual guy, that is a guy with a heterosexual masturbation at 95% and over, could very well adapt to a married life by limiting its gay sexual component to sporadic masturbation only. Here, in essence, the discomfort of limiting the couple sexuality to the heterosexual dimension is in fact very limited. In a similar way a nearly gay bisexual guy, that is a guy with a gay masturbation at 95% and over, could very well adapt to a gay couple's life. However, if we move away from nearly heterosexual or nearly gay situations and move towards really intermediate positions, the discomfort increases, because, for example, for a bisexual with a 50% of gay propensity both the idea of the exclusive hetero couple and the idea of the exclusive gay couple are in fact a violently restricting constraint.

### **2.1.10 Devaluation of bisexuality by partners**

Partners of bisexual men, in general, are either straight women or gay men. A heterosexual woman towards her bisexual partner very frequently commits the mistake of thinking that her bisexual partner is not bisexual but heterosexual because he has sex with a woman; a gay guy, on the other hand, is led to think that his bisexual partner is not bisexual but gay because he has sex with a guy. Both of these wrong ways of interpreting the behavior of a bisexual guy are wrong and produce expectations destined to remain disappointed and this fact often fuels misunderstanding and mutual distrust. For bisexuals 50/50 adapt to an exclusive sexuality, be it heterosexual or gay, is a restrictive limitation and in these cases, they realize just a half of their sexuality in the couple relationship, but it is difficult to reduce the other half just to masturbation because they actually feel a strong need also for a couple relationship of the other kind.

### **2.1.11 Problems of the heterosexual modeling of bisexual sexuality**

Generally a bisexual with a 50% of gay propensity, given the social environment in which he lives, will tend to orient himself more to form a heterosexual durable couple than a gay durable couple, that would be against the mainstream. In general, for a bisexual, precisely because it is much easier to

live a hetero couple sexuality, the typical models of the straight couple end up being dominant. A woman who marries a bisexual with a 50% of gay propensity may not notice her husband's bisexuality at all and, precisely for this reason, when she discovers it she has to face a not indifferent trauma. A gay man, on the other hand, when he lives a relationship with a bisexual, generally, realizes that his partner is not really gay because he keeps in his homosexual contacts characteristics and ways of doing that are not those common to those who are exclusively gay. A bisexual generally maintains the idea of sexual roles even when he lives a couple sexuality with a gay man, tends to always keep the active role and above all doesn't understand that the assumption of roles is not a spontaneous thing for a gay guy.

A bisexual, despite having a true gay component, tends to superimpose on that his hetero component his heterosexual component in which he has generally experienced most of his sexual relationships. This fact makes the gay-bisexual sexual relationships very problematic and causes bisexuals to be even more limited to hetero field. A bisexual, in a sexual contact with a gay man, easily perceives that something is not really symmetrical and this leads to objective situations of unease. A further complicating factor is that when a bisexual attempts a sexual approach, heterosexual or gay, he generally avoids saying he is bisexual and introduces himself to women as a heterosexual and to gays as a gay, such a behavior, compared with the real sexual behaviors of bisexuals, induces in the partners a lot of perplexities. Objectively, the problems of a bisexuals, at least those of bisexuals who are not almost gay nor almost straight, are more complex than those of a gay guy; correspondingly, even the discomfort experienced by a bisexual is generally more deep than that experienced by a gay.

### 2.1.12 Periodic bisexuality

There is also another form of bisexuality, of which I have found only one case with certainty and perhaps a second, in twelve years of activity of Gay Project, it is the so-called periodic bisexuality. To clarify the concept, I quote below the story of a man about 50 years old: after living a free youth with clearly gay behaviors, at 20 he discovers heterosexuality, marries with enthusiasm a 22-year-old girl and has a son, at 29 he meets a guy of 26, he separates from his wife, from whom he will divorce after a few months, and goes to live with the 26-year-old guy, he feels totally gay, becomes an activist of gay associations, after 7 years of gay living together, which he defines marvelous, at the age of 36, he meets a 30-year-old girl, falls madly in love with her, leaves his male lover, and marries the thirty-year-old girl, he is convinced that it will be his definitive choice, he has a daughter from this

second marriage, feels satisfied, but at 44 meets a handsome 29-year-old guy and falls in love, according to what he tells himself, he's madly in love, he separates from the second wife, from whom he divorces after a few months and goes to live with the handsome twenty-nine old guy. At 50 he feels lost, the love of the beautiful guy now thirty-five is not enough for him ... he meets a 24-year-old girl who is she too very beautiful, and falls in love with her. This is actually a limit case but it is useful to clarify the concept. A periodic bisexual alternates long periods of clearly hetero sexuality and hetero affectivity (hetero phase), with long periods of affectivity and sexuality clearly gay (gay phase).

The true problematic moments for periodic bisexuals correspond to the transition from one phase to the next and, in those moments, they must afford terrible crises in which family relationships that seemed to be very strong are destroyed and periodic bisexuals feel a kind of loss and disappointment very deep and difficult to manage. A periodic bisexual, especially if he has a family and goes through the first transition, can experience situations of extreme stress and discomfort. The periodic bisexuality, which is objectively very rare in its extreme forms, can present itself with a certain frequency in much more nuanced forms, together with other elements that complicate the overall picture quite a lot. An example can be found in the first of the attached documents.

## 2.2 DOCUMENTS

### 2.2.1 Maybe I'm gay but I love my former girlfriend

#### **Pratoditurno**

Hi Project,

I am 30 years old and I just discovered that I'm gay ... I almost always masturbated thinking of guys, even though having always had women and having been satisfied by them, I lived my homosexuality as a kind of private transgression and so I never realized that I was homosexual ... I had a long story with a girl and I loved her deeply, I masturbated thinking about her or our intercourse ... it excited me a lot and I wanted to have sex with her. I was thinking only of her, although often when I was alone I also masturbated with gay porn.

I must say that my gay masturbation has always been and is even now of a contemplative kind, in the sense that I don't ever feel in my fantasy the desire for sex with a guy but only the desire for images of naked guys.

When my ex-girlfriend left me, to my great regret because I was still in love



with her, I began to feel an increasingly strong attraction towards a friend of mine, and this attraction became a real crush: I used to quote him without a real reason, I followed him secretly, I was jealous ... but at that time I couldn't understand what was happening to me, so I kept going on for a couple of years pretending nothing or better misunderstanding what I felt ... until I decided to try an experience with a guy.

I made friends with this guy and we started to try a gay sexual experience. At the beginning, the excitement was very strong, I had never experienced such a thing with a woman, but then gradually it waned ... and finally I realized that sex with girls is much more engaging for me, even if female body doesn't excite me as strongly as the body of guys. In short, I didn't get clear answers ... rather I have to say that the male body also made me a little repulsion ... and I didn't like the penis in any way. But the strong instinct to go with a man is there and I cannot deny it.

After a few months I met again my ex-girlfriend and we had sex in a very engaging way. There was attraction and I even thought for a moment that I was in love with her again, but then the basic conditions to get back together lacked at all and we said goodbye.

After that time I had other meetings with some guys and at the end, apart from the initial excitement, as usual I came back to have doubts about the fact that I really liked guys. Until a few weeks ago ... when another friend, whom I liked very much, got engaged with a girl ... since then I realized that in practice only the guys attract me, even if girls have something that strikes me ... and sometimes I feel for them also sexual attraction, but less than that I experience for the guys. So I realized I was fundamentally gay ... maybe a flexible gay guy, who can even make love with girls if he's in love, but anyway gay. I realized that in the end I could very well fall in love with a guy and live a story with him, even if I don't like such things too much.

I don't want to be gay but I feel very strong pushes toward guys when I'm close to handsome guys. Then when I think back to the exciting moments with my ex-girlfriend I think I'm straight ... but actually my overwhelming sexuality is gay, even if I refuse to live it. I had tried to meet some guys in order to attend them seriously but then I changed my mind ... I mean I'm in a big confusion. I cannot think of anything else, I just came out a nervous breakdown. Please ... advise me what to do ... and tell me what you think of all this.

### **Alyosha**

I leave Project the honor of answering on the subject, he is a master in this kind of analysis. I immediately anticipate that from what you write I don't think there is any clear homosexuality, it is quite clear that a person who

feels for years an emotional and sexual drive toward girls certainly is not a gay. Instead, you belong to that gray area that is hard to define within categories that have lied to us for centuries: building a family relationship with a woman while having relationships with men was a much more common and "natural" habit than is believed, and it is common still now in many "masculine" contexts (of those of the "male as a male").

I don't think right now you need to define yourself in some way in order to understand what you have to do, I think that closing the circle too quickly now and hastening the conclusions could result in a damage, because now can you throw out of the door something that sooner or later will return from the window, because women attract you at least as gays do if not even much. What to do? Well, in the meantime, live your homosexual moment! You'll be a bit scared on the side of prevention, but it will not hurt you if you really learn to be cautious, you started as a rocket and you may find yourself very unprepared to manage a homosexual relationship. I tell you it from experience, since I have a story very similar to yours.

At the beginning, projecting hetero categories on the gay world is very simple but you risk remaining badly burned. The story with your ex-girlfriend is over, it's over after years, you met again, you've had sex and all this goes completely into the background, while it seems rather like the triggering event. You should first ask yourself if it's over for real since at the first useful opportunity you two make sparks when you meet again. If you decide it's over, close this relationship definitely before starting new stories with other people. From this point of view if it is a man rather than a woman, it only complicates matters, so you are even more obliged to close the relationship with your ex-girlfriend.

Try to stay alone just a little bit, a story like that isn't easy to digest right away. Only after some time I would return to the question of sexuality, otherwise the risk is that the impatience to leave your ex-girlfriend, pushes the accelerator on the issue of sexuality, not allowing you a clear evaluation. The drives and desires must be listened to, not incarcerated, and bisexuality is in many ways more disarming than homosexuality, because it conflicts with another dogma of western society, which is that of monogamy, dogma if possible more stringent than that according to which two guys cannot fit together. It is already difficult to manage the transition from heterosexual to homosexual life, you can imagine how difficult can be becoming aware of being bisexual. How do you manage it? How can you be labeled? You will be a hetero-curious for the straight people and a repressed gay for gays, in short it is not exactly like having a walk! : lol .

Don't worry, learn to understand what you are for yourself and later you will think about what you are for others. You will never be gay as gay people who

have never had relationships with women, I can anticipate this, because it is the feeling that I live. I lived a hetero life for 30 years and this famous gay world, including the forum from which you read me, I always watch it a little surprised and a bit shy. There are many things I don't understand at all, such as the obsessive tendency to reduce everything to the issue of sexuality. Which is a little what you're doing too. It seems that all the problems of gays are in the fact of being gay. Hetero people are all happy, because they have a woman and don't have any couple problem, neither problems relating to the other sex or tensions between strong sexuality and desire of monogamy, and so on, etc.. Suppose instead of the guy you flirted with, there is a girl, and ask yourself if there would be problems or not. There would still be problems, you can take it for granted, although certainly different.

Do you like more your ex-girlfriend or the new girl with whom you only have a sexual involvement? Don't you think that setting the question in this way in the meantime you would solve the problem of understanding what you really feel for your ex? If you also like males you don't have to decide how much you like them, but accept this fact and learn how to live with it in the right and healthiest way for you. Learn to know the gay world, taste it little by little, without getting burned or worse poisoned.

### **Project**

First of all, I welcome you to the Forum and I hope it can be useful for you. I thank Aliosha for his speech, which seems to clarify the essential points of the matter and which I share. I limit myself to an analysis from a strictly gay point of view.

You start with a statement: "I just discovered that I'm gay", but you conclude by saying "I'm in a big confusion."

You expose some arguments or seemingly proofs that should confirm your idea of being gay: "I almost always masturbated thinking of guys", where the "almost" means that even in the masturbation there is a hetero component. Speaking about the time you were with your girlfriend, you say, "when I was alone I also masturbated with gay porn ." You affirm that "the strong instinct to go with a man is there".

About gay affectivity, which is an essential component of being gay, you say: "I began to feel an increasingly strong attraction towards a friend of mine, and this attraction became a real crush: I used to quote him without a real reason, I followed him secretly, I was jealous ..." but you don't talk of love with this guy. The homosexual falling in love for you is not a real experience but a possible hypothesis, after all unwanted: "I could very well fall in love with a guy and live a story with him, even if I don't like such things too much ... I don't want to be gay but I feel very strong pushes toward guys

when I'm close to handsome guys."

When you talk about guys you don't talk about love but about friendship and the sexual contact with a guy is seen in strictly subjective terms and not as a couple, as an experience that you can "try": "I made friends with this guy and we started to try a gay sexual experience." From here you derived a partial and flexible idea of homosexuality: "So I realized I was fundamentally gay ... maybe a flexible gay guy, who can even make love with girls if he's in love, but anyway gay." "but actually my overwhelming sexuality is gay, even if I refuse to live it."

The element of which I feel the lack in your description of homosexuality is the affective one, it is the falling in love with a guy. I emphasize that a gay guy of your age generally has lived his experiences not only on a sexual level but especially on an emotional level, and often these experiences are not easy, because they involve the idea of going out of oneself and of "loving" a guy, a real guy, not the protagonist of a video, a true guy, with all his weaknesses and all his contradictions.

The experience of gay falling in love is not only and not even primarily a sexual experience, it is the experience of a deep affective relationship in which, as a rule, almost nothing goes as planned and in the end the relationship resists only if there it is at the base a deep feeling, with all its sexual values, of course, but in no case reducible only to a sexual experience.

For you, at 30, the idea of falling in love with a guy is just a hypothesis that has never happened. I often see young guys "madly" in love with their friends (maybe even straight friends), and totally transported by this feeling in which the idea of sexual experience is just the last of the thoughts. In the things you say the gay affective dimension is almost completely missing. You've experienced gay masturbation as a kind of "private transgression" but you've never experienced a gay falling in love and when you stop to reflect specifically on gay sexuality you say, "the male body also made me a little repulsion ... and I didn't like the penis in any way." These expressions are definitely irreconcilable with the idea of homosexuality even if taken at sexual level only.

But let's go on with the hetero side. You say you have "always had women and having been satisfied by them" and shortly after: "I had a long story with a girl and I loved her deeply, I masturbated thinking about her or our intercourse ... it excited me a lot and I wanted to have sex with her." Here you speak explicitly of love and the sexual element integrates perfectly with the affective one.

But there is more, a gay parenthesis did not remove you from heterosexual-ity: "When my ex-girlfriend left me, to my great regret because I was still in love with her ..."; "After a few months I met again my ex-girlfriend and we

had sex in a very engaging way. There was attraction and I even thought for a moment that I was in love with her again.” And here again you talk about falling in love and not just about sex. And when you limit yourself to just the sexual aspect, you write: ”when I think back to the exciting moments with my ex-girlfriend I think I’m straight.”

The picture is not that of a gay, or rather a 100% gay, who is not interested in girls and who ”falls in love” with guys.

The emotional dimension is essentially hetero. In such a situation, looking for a relationship of gay couple based only on sexual attraction means exposing yourself to the risk of big disappointments, because, beyond what people think, in the gay field (I speak of the vast majority of undeclared gays ) affectivity is absolutely fundamental. Both among gay and hetero people, couples who resist are those that have a deep emotional relationship. For a gay in the vast majority of cases, behind the sex there is a very strong emotional request.

Among other things, if you have no experience of the gay reality it is good to go there cautiously because the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and in particular of AIDS exists and so, therefore, always and in any case, please, use maximum caution!

Let’s try to narrow the field: it is obvious that the categories, like gay, hetero or bisexual, have a very relative value, but if in your case we have to use one, I would prefer bisexuality, even if with many doubts, because to speak properly of bisexuality we should find not only, even if in a different proportion, both gay and hetero masturbation, but also forms of falling in love both gay and hetero substantially similar to each other, that is, with similar affective involvements.

I add one thing: the guys who, like you, have had a non-superficial and gratifying experience of heterosexual sexuality, tend to transpose their heterosexual behaviors in a gay key, in an almost automatic way, creating this way misunderstandings and difficulties.

Just an example: a guy very familiar with heterosexual sexuality and comforted by the vision of gay porn, is led to think that anal penetration is the fundamental element of gay sexuality, what’s very far from reality. I wonder, then, how can you understand the meaning of gay sexuality, which is the sexuality of the ”same sexual identity” and not that of the ”sexual complementarity”. A guy who says: ”the male body also made me a little repulsion ... and I didn’t like the penis in any way” has nothing or at least has very little to do with homosexuality.

I add something, it also happens to 100% true gays to have relationships with girls, in the nineteenth century it was common, but I don’t believe that you are in this condition at all.

Raffalovich in 1896 described with these expressions the relationships of true homosexuals with women: "a forcing, something essentially "non-sexual", an effort of the will that is a true violence against the free will, in essence a form of onanism incapable of leaving memories."

It is clear that your point of view towards heterosexual sexuality is not the one typical of 100% gay guys. In essence I would go very cautious before "trying" a relationship with a guy (an expression that a true gay would never use).

I add another thing: the problem of bisexual guys is not in accepting their gay side, but in the fact that a couple's life, hetero or gay, requires a form of exclusivity. To form a stable gay couple can be deeply stabilizing and rewarding for a gay guy, but for a bisexual it means giving up the other half of the sky and the desire of the other half of the sky manifests itself very strongly when a couple relationship excludes it.

### **Pratoditurno**

I thank you for your very deep analysis ... You're right about everything, labels are not needed but if we really need to use one I'll be a predominantly straight bisexual. On the other hand, sexuality is a very complex thing consisting of several dimensions and we are not necessarily on the same position for each of these dimensions.

PROJECT: You really have a great gift. You understood exactly how I'm. In fact, when you say that my gay sexual experience was only "subjective" you tell the truth, because not only I see the male as a friend (and in fact my partners were first of all friends and then also partners) but the experience I build with them is unidirectional, in the sense that I like to get involved but never give pleasure to my partner. A bit as if the guy was just "a toy" and not a person ... and in fact this fits perfectly with all your speech. It's as if I wanted a kind of inflatable doll to use it as I want, ending up just masturbating only by looking at it. I say this because in all my gay experiences (if so we can call them), after an initial excitement, I immediately begin to feel bored and, in addition to a strong repulsion for what I have done, I cannot even ejaculate ... Sometimes or better usually I can ejaculate only forcing myself with a lot of good will. Or I don't ejaculate at all. On the other hand, I have always noticed that my partners manifested a strong interest in the penis and a great propensity to have an orgasm in the presence of another male. So I wondered if maybe I was having a problem or if I had to stop with the males ... because masturbating or doing a fellatio to a man it's something that not only I don't like, but provokes in me a feeling of repulsion ... and having an anal intercourse, for me, is like masturbating alone ... nothing as involving as with a woman.

Among other things, if I get excited thinking about a woman and after a little I think back to a man this one not only doesn't attract me anymore, but also makes me feel a little repulsion. In short, considering these things I have just written and adding, as you point out, that I feel guys only as friends and I never fell in love with them (for 27 years I have not even felt the "weight" of this masturbation in a gay key, as if it was nothing at all) I think that it makes no sense to delude a gay guy, to propose a date and then leave him after a while because it is not for me ... Indeed, as Alyosha says, I will stay good alone for a while, trying to calm me down. My real problem is that it's been a long time since I've been together with a woman, although I'm in constant search (during the last three years, I have heard dozens of women, but these days it's really difficult to find one and go out with her ... ). Let me know what you think of these last things. Thanks so much!!! I will always be grateful to you.

### **Alyosha**

"My real problem is that it's been a long time since I've been together with a woman, although I'm in constant search (during the last three years, I have heard dozens of women, but these days it's really difficult to find one and go out with her ...)".

Well you have to tell your gay friends such things! They are all convinced that the problem of finding a suitable partner is just theirs: lol: Ah how much would do well to compare their problems with those of hetero guys, they would find they have a lot more problems in common than they think ...

### **Project**

Well, frankly, I think your second post is so explicit that there's no need for any explanation. But I would like to draw attention to the fact that in a couple relationship, be it hetero or gay, what really matters it is not in having sex but in loving each other, and they are two different levels.

I recently followed the story of two guys, one with a job and the other unemployed, and this was an element of extreme stress for the unemployed guy. His partner was close to him from an operational point of view, they used to look for work together, even if one of them already had the job, and among them, despite the economic problems, because living in two with only one salary, and in addition even low, was objectively difficult, there are never been couple problems.

Then the unemployed guy found a job but in conditions of great discomfort, he had a boss who exploited him and paid him if and when he wanted. The guy used to return home humiliated and depressed and his companion encouraged him to resign and to try again.

Finally another work came out, not exciting at the economic level but quiet and in the midst of quiet people. The couple life of these two guys was the safety valve that allowed them to overcome a crisis that was in danger of being truly destructive.

The guy who was looking for work told me: "I felt calm, coming back home I knew that he was waiting for me and that he loved me and that once the door was closed, all the bad things would have remained outside and we were the only ones inside. You don't imagine the feeling of tenderness, in two on the sofa, closed in the blanket (at home there is a heating that doesn't work at all) watching TV, I was really happy!"

This story is the story of two guys but it could very well be the story of a straight couple. Among these guys there was also sex but there was not only sex and they tried to see themselves each one with the eyes of the other. I mean that sex is a component of the emotional life and it is not even the most important. The sex lived "with love" is a beautiful thing, lived without love is a form of selfishness that can never give a deep gratification.

### **Geographer**

Pratoditurno wrote: "You're right about everything, labels are not needed but if we really need to use one I'll be a predominantly straight bisexual. On the other hand, sexuality is a very complex thing consisting of several dimensions and we are not necessarily on the same position for each of these dimensions."

In this forum, many know what I think about bisexuality. Honestly, I don't believe in bisexuality. I have often heard of bisexual guys, who in the end had a preponderant interest in the same sex and were hiding behind the fact that sometimes they attended a girl or the women's body didn't disgust them. I am a homosexual, yet women don't disgust me, their body simply doesn't excite me. In fact, I often think of a charming, beautiful woman, I contemplate her as well but, I mean, it stops there. And the same could very well be said for a straight guy towards another guy (although this is in a sense banned because of social taboos).

Pratoditurno, if you had I been 20 years old maybe I would have been more understanding and less severe, on the other hand you would still have been a kid. But you're 30, you're a man now. You should have a clear idea of who you are. If you had been 60 years old, I would have avoided to point out the matter because probably you would have internalized some constructions of the past that absolutely forbid homosexuality, and every so often, men of a mature age, who tell how they have experienced badly their being gay, enter the forum . But in your case it's different, you're adult and vaccinated, young but not too much and I don't think that at 30 you can be loaded with the



same homophobic ideologies that have afflicted a sixty year old man or that you can have the same insecurity of a boy.

I looked at the Project's response, which I don't agree with. And here the risk is that maybe you can stay serene behind the word "bisexual", maybe in a sense deluding yourself that you can safely spend the rest of your life with a woman. Let me be clear that I have no hatred towards bisexuals, and I'm the first to think that it is really sad to have to hide behind labels that should, in a sense, regulate our lives according to certain criteria.

But you yourself tell how your sexual fantasies are predominantly gay, I think that once said this, everything is said. It is obvious that then, when we speak of real meetings (clearly homosexual), we detach ourselves from fantasies / abstractions, and we must clash with reality. So in that case the erection is less, maybe there is even a little less excitement or anything else simply because when you masturbate you are alone and you have complete knowledge of your body and you feel self-assured.

Having sex with another person means that two people have to relate to each other, and you understand that it is not easy. We are detached from that abstract sexuality and must relate to a guy who is concrete and with whom we are not so at ease as with masturbation, it is obvious that as a result the erection cannot last too long and partners are less close-knit.

Mutual harmony is something that is acquired gradually, something that needs the same gradualness that helped you to conquer the self-esteem you show when you tell yourself that you can make love with your ex-girlfriend. Then, Pratoditurno, let me say one thing: referring back to what I told you at the beginning, being homosexual doesn't mean that you cannot recognize a beautiful woman. A homosexual is not an impotent man with women, he can really make love with a woman. He simply doesn't like it because making love with a woman doesn't fit to his nature.

Then maybe you will be in love with your ex-girlfriend, I don't doubt this, but I would say that it is a love born according to the canons that society has built for you and to which you have adapted.

When I was a child (I think I was about 14), I fell in love with little girls too, then I gradually became aware and now I wouldn't be able to fall in love with a girl. The best thing for me would be to go out with a guy, without the meeting having any sexual end, just to get acquainted. Unfortunately I know it's difficult because the mud of these applications and chats (which I find really squalid, I wonder when they will make some cleaner applications) is full of people absolutely not recommendable, you need to do a great skimming and then maybe you could find someone, but this is possible only if you live in big cities.

But from what you write you don't have such problem, since you say that

you have had several opportunities to meet young people, so I assume that you don't live in a village outside the world. You yourself tell me that your prevalent sexuality is gay, I think you answered yourself. And do you know what I tell you? That a homosexual person can safely live a peaceful life, with friends, with job ambitions and so on. The fact that you are homosexual doesn't mean that you have to live a life different from that of a straight guy. There are no "gay lives" and "hetero lives" because it seems to me that this is your fear. A gay guy is simply a guy who falls in love emotionally and sexually with other guys, stop.

In any case, in my opinion, you can only do well a happy life as homosexual in cities that are not too small, absolutely out of the family, because if you still live at home with mom and dad then it is impossible (I still speak for me, I will never tell my parents about my homosexuality, then maybe there are more open parents but in short, it is not so frequent). But I think that here you are running too much, you still seem little accepted and I am talking about this too, but the essence of my speech is that having this fear of being homosexual nowadays is just anachronistic, especially if you are thirty and independent. Live your life without paranoia, and remember that life is only one.

### **Pratoditurno**

My dear Geographer, I thank you for your opinion, that I respect, but I don't agree with. I don't agree certainly not because I want to be heterosexual at all costs when it's clear that I'm not, but because, as you can read, I'm not even gay.

If you deny the existence of bisexuality, with all its nuances, you deny decades of studies and progress on human sexuality, which is an extremely complex subject.

Many gays, who shared your opinion, made me your own speech, but if you think about it, these are just speculations. You say that heterosexual love was suggested only by external conditioning and that I had sex just because I'm a man and therefore I'm not impotent. But how many of these gays, including you, have experienced a deep love for a woman? How many, for years, only wanted her, thought only of her and every day of their life at all hours had their cock hard while thinking of making love with her? How many have dreamed every day to marry her? How many have masturbated thinking about her or sex with her? To how many of them continually appeared images of her naked during masturbation? And then: how many of these gays have only contemplative fantasies about males, but then, in practice, don't like sex between men?

Here, as you can see, many gays use just a lot of words that are not justified

from practice. If these gays had tried these and many other things, they wouldn't think this way.

I am not saying that it is impossible that one day, after many attempts, I can find a gay love, nobody can say it. Nobody! But, given that everyone knows that bisexuality exists, I don't think that being as rigid as you are it's useful to something, and even less to reassure me. I'm not a homosexual like you, just as you're not like another gay, etc. etc., it is all subjective.

A greeting.

### 2.2.2 Periodic bisexuality?

Hello project, ... [omissis] .... I don't know why I'm writing to you, things such as those I have to tell you I have never told anyone, and for me it's a great burden that I discharge while telling you about it. It's been about a year since I realized I was bisexual, but it's not like I'm attracted both towards men and women at the same time, I can say I go back and forth, and this is a problem for me like I am, I mean for my mental constitution. I don't want to offend anyone, but I feel I must be honest, the fact is that I "cannot always feel gay", sometimes I would, I swear, but I cannot, all the stereotypes of gays don't fit me at all, and moreover when I step to my "hetero period" I cannot feel sexual desires for men and this disorients me even more, but when I enter the "gay period" I become (excuse the term) an animal, I think only of sex and I feel very strong attraction towards guys, I start to masturbate thinking of those I see in the gym and the desire grows more and more until the masturbation no longer satisfies me, I would go out and go to gay clubs and meet other guys and have sexual intercourse with them, very often I also thought of going to a sauna ... [omissis] ... I think the sauna is a place where you can easily find sex and I just want that and nothing else, but I know it's a place for experts, it's dangerous and filthy too, so I think I'm some kind of monster, I hear people saying that saunas are squalid places fit for those who seek sex just for an evening, sometimes I think they are horrible places, then I think about it and say: but this is exactly what I want!

I want a male body on which to vent myself, is all this wrong?! it's normal!? Then the only way to let my desire pass is to masturbate a lot (even 6 times a day) and after a while the desire not only dozes but disappears at all and I just start thinking about women while I masturbate automatically, it's not that I try to move my thoughts on women, I try to keep it on men but I cannot do it and automatically I end up thinking about women and all the rest, I think this is a nightmare, a hell, I don't know what to do, I thought that maybe I will be condemned to live like this: half gay and half straight

and this will lead me to live a double life that I cannot bear because I am a very sincere guy by nature, with myself and with others, I don't know how to do because sometimes I would like to have sex with a guy but I'm afraid, first I'm afraid of myself and then of my changing of "tastes" (by now I got used to it), I'm afraid of diseases if I go to a sauna or if I look for meetings on the internet and I'm afraid to be discovered because if it were so I would have to give up my life as a straight man and I often think it's the thing to do but I cannot!

Often I tried to delete or ignore my straight or gay part and the result was bad in both cases: in one case I was going to go with a girl (a prostitute) (you can understand that even my hetero life is torn by this situation) and in another case I met a man on the internet and I went to his house and he tried to make me accept an oral intercourse but I opposed and burst with violence.

I don't know what to do, give me some advice on how to manage this situation, please get in touch with me, I would like to know what to do, how to behave, I really take all the situation badly ... If you want, publish this email I don't care, but I doubt it will be useful to someone.

The following is Project's answer.

Hello, first of all thanks for this testimony that helps to shed light on the planet bisexuality, a planet that is still largely unexplored. You talk about a periodic bisexuality of which you became aware a year ago and you speak clearly of an alternation of phases that, however, in your case, must be rather short, we can say lasting a few months at most, if in the a year's time you could clearly notice the alternation. There is another thing that strikes me in your email and it is the fact that, while claiming that any attempt to put aside the gay or heterosexual dimension has brought bad results, which is more than understandable for a bisexual, you say that, in the end, giving up your straight life would be the thing to do. You insist a lot on gay masturbation and on the violent sexualization of the gay phase, which would suggest that the hetero phase is instead of a predominantly affective kind, what however seems to be disproved by the hypothesis of going with a prostitute. The idea of going with a prostitute, however, could be more than the search for a straight sexual outburst, the attempt to sexualize even the hetero phase that, from the general tone of the email, seems to be sexually far less involving than the gay one. It seems that your interest in guys is exclusively sexual, which is not typical of periodic homosexuality (whose periods moreover last usually for years).

In general, a bisexual with periodic bisexuality, when he is in the gay phase,

is gay both from a sexual and emotional point of view and, similarly, when he is in hetero phase he is hetero from all points of view. Even if I cannot deduce it with certainty from your email, I think you don't feel an emotional attraction towards guys, maybe you experience it towards girls, but it is not clear. In any case, you tend to seek, at least in the gay phase, an exclusively sexual satisfaction and you say it clearly. In your email you don't mention your age, which would be a very useful element to get a better idea of the situation. The possibility that you are really bisexual with periodic bisexuality is real but it is not so automatic because your periods are very short and because at least in the gay phase there seems to be no affective dimension. It would be essential to know how you live even the hetero phase, which you don't substantially talk about, seen as the center of the individual life, and also understand what your sexuality was before having a clear perception of a form of bisexuality, if only your perception of your sexuality has changed or also the way you live it, both at the level of couple and masturbation.

There are many open questions and, lacking essential elements, it is difficult to give an answer fitting to your situation. If you were really bisexual you should aim for at least the recovery of gay affectivity, so as to live the gay phase in a dimension that is not just of sexual frenzy. I emphasize that it is not rare the case of guys who identify themselves as bisexuals but in fact don't have authentic sexual hetero drives and live their so-called hetero part in an almost exclusively emotional or haltingly sexual dimension, while sexual attraction is almost totally oriented towards guys and is not accompanied by affection. At the base of these behaviors, which are not a sign of bisexuality, there is a mechanism of partial rejection of homosexuality based on the following reasoning: "I sexually desire guys but I don't love them, so I'm not gay but straight because I love girls, even if maybe I don't like them like guys". Those who experience a very strong gay sexual drive and reject the idea of being gay tend to consider themselves bisexuals because they love women, that is, because their affectivity is almost exclusively aimed at women.

At the moment I cannot give you a convinced answer because I lack essential elements, however, I suggest you to try to create real emotional relationships with gay guys, even when you are in hetero phase, that is completely without sexual involvement. However, this could benefit you, making you live the gay phase in a balanced way if you are really bisexual, or recover a gay affectivity in case you cannot accept you as a gay and end up accepting your being gay only as a sexual drive neglecting the emotional dimension. In case you were really bisexual with periodic bisexuality you would certainly live a situation of consistent emotional and sexual instability linked to the changing of phase and the insecurity that derives from it but after the transition period you

should find a stable balance for a long time. A true bisexual has undoubtedly more problems than a gay in building a long-term stable relationship. For a bisexual, however, there is generally another way to experience affectivity and sexuality, which is not to be underestimated, and it is sexualized or better episodically sexualized friendship. To realize a sexualized friendship, one must first of all live a profound friendship that induces the non-bisexual partner (a gay or a woman depending on the circumstances) to accept the idea of a sexual relationship with a friend, but without the characters of monogamy and stability. These things, although not easy to achieve, become real in a non-negligible percentage of cases. It is obvious, however, that in order to reach these levels of friendship, the emotional relationship must be particularly strong and stable. For the moment I conclude here. If you want to give me some additional element I will try to complete the picture. Thanks again for your email that I think can be useful for many guys. Project

### 2.2.3 Exchange of emails with a hetero-curious

Dear project,

I jump the pleasantries. I am 55 years old, I am married and have two children, two guys, 22 and 24 years old, who are my true pride, but they are 100% straight if not 200%. But there is a problem and I'm the problem, I got married at 28, because I had fell madly in love with my current wife.

My adolescence was that typical of a clearly straight guy: chasing girls, almost like a fixation, masturbation using only fantasy, thinking about those girls. But for me girls were not an interest just for sex, I liked everything about girls, from their smell, even the genital one, to their company, to their intellectual attitude.

Before getting to know my wife I had had two important stories with two girls, this stories had got me very involved. With neither of the two girls, however, I had a real sexual relation, because both were virgins and both insisted that without marriage they would not have complete sexual intercourse with anyone (anyway, both of them did what they had told they would never do, even if not with me). The first story was over because I refused to introduce myself to the girl's parents and she could not stand it, the second one, I think, because there was another guy, she always denied it, but I always thought it was so.

At the age of 25 I met my wife and with her everything has been different from the beginning. In practice, I had lived masturbation using fantasy up to 25 years, because I would never have had the courage to buy a porn magazine at the newsstand, and I expected that with her there would be the problem of virginity, like with the other girls, and therefore I felt rather slowed down,

then, slowly I saw that she didn't stop me, I slipped a hand under her skirt and she let me do, I touched her breasts and she let me do, and then in practice it was she who took the initiative to have true sex.

We started with mutual masturbation and then the rest came by itself. She was not only beautiful but intelligent and between us there was a perfect understanding. I was overjoyed, a beautiful and intelligent girl all mine and only mine. There was only the problem of the condom that I didn't like, but I could understand it and I accepted it to avoid her taking the pill. I think that there was nobody happier than me. When she told me about marriage, I hugged her lifting her off the floor. Everything went not only well but beautifully until the birth of our second child. Now there were the children, we had less sex but the complicity was still total.

After my second child turned 5 years, my wife, who is a lawyer, began to work as a lawyer. We decided together, because we would have had a lot more economic possibilities, because, before, I was the only one who was working. I was happy with the idea that she worked. But the thing created a lot of problems, the children were very young and I was the one who could take care of them, at least I thought so, but she chose for me and hired a nanny. I had my job that left me a lot of free time, I could go out on my own but I didn't want it and ended up staying home, locked in a room not to annoy the nanny.

When my wife came home in the evening (never before 10 pm) she was hydrophobic and was always on the phone discussing work until well past midnight. In short I realized that my wife was no longer the same person, she was completely disinterested in the family. She used to think a little of her children, but certainly not of me. Between us sex had become a regular event on a Saturday night, and was mainly for her an anti-stress exercise.

After doing everything to avoid, at 35, I started to masturbate, and this at first seemed frustrating in itself but then I got used to it, but it didn't end there, I was frustrated by the lack of a human relationship with my wife, I felt the passing of time, at 48 I started to use pornography, almost compulsively, and always in secret, and in practice my sexual life returned to that of the kids. I must point out that my sexual fantasies were all just hetero, I looked only straight porn, but I looked at them angrily, as if sex were more violence and domination than pleasure. I don't deny that this fact has worried me, because it had never been like that.

My wife was slowly coming out of my life, I even went to a lawyer for separation, but then I didn't talk with her and the marriage went on wearily. On the other hand I didn't want to put the children at risk, they still seemed too young. I tried to find another woman, with a woman I even tried the first approaches, but I treated her in an acidic way because I probably identified

her with my wife, she could not stand any more my jokes and so she gave me up.

In 2013, the year of the turning point, something happened that I would never have imagined, surfing porn sites, which sometimes just tired me, I ended up casually watching a gay video. I thought it I would have bothered and instead it was not like that, I saw all the porn while masturbating and I came very intensely. Then, you can understand it, so many doubts. "What's happening to me? It's not possible!" The next day it happened again.

In short I started to make a selection of gay videos even if I continued to see even the straight ones, I didn't like any kind of pampering, those stupid videos so typically gay, I wanted a video that went immediately to the point, without preliminaries. Seeing one of those guys while he penetrated the other, while they were having sex, I thought that if I had even simply hinted to my wife that I used to look at such things she would have taken me for a maniac and I told myself that women don't understand anything about sex. I also made fantasies about women, which I must emphasize, I have always liked and I still like, although perhaps less than men, for example with men I'm much more demanding and selective in terms of physical presence, for a woman in general I wouldn't have problems the same way.

Anyway, from there I started to fantasize about the handsome men of porn, then I took courage and I joined an erotic chat. I realized that while with the women I used to make a more psychological exploration, with the men I tended to immediately understand if they would accept to be penetrated by me, but I was only disinhibited in words and I was afraid to show myself on cam, so in the end I closed my account because it would have required a courage that I didn't have. But it has remained a fixed rule: porn (straight or gay, as I liked better that day, but I would say, especially gay) and masturbation every day and in practice always thinking of having sex with a guy, but always with me in an active role.

With a guy I think it's much easier than with a woman. I would not like to be a woman for another man, in fact I find the idea repellent, and even doing oral sex to a guy or masturbating him for me is unthinkable. I'm interested in the B-side of the guys and there are those who have it very hard and nice (excuse the language too much direct). I talk about guys, but please don't equivocate, I don't like boys, a man to have a sexual attractiveness, according to my standards, must be at least 40 years old, however not less than 35, the boys of the age of my sons don't interest me at all, they still seem immature to me. I also visited your site, and I have to be honest, there are things I can't understand at all, like a love story between two guys or all that typically gay victimization attitude.

Project, I don't know if I'm gay, but I don't think so, because I don't like the



idea of being gay, I could be bisexual, I think this is much more realistic. On the street I find myself turning my head to look at both men and women, but now above all men, even if the idea of falling in love with a man I consider it completely incompatible with my nature. In fact, I'm not gay, but I think I'm a bit bisexual. With my wife, now, sex is a rare thing (once a month or even less), not to mention the dialogue, she now has another world of which I know nothing and I don't want to know anything. I don't hate my wife, I don't care about her at all, she's the mother of my sons, but they are now grown up and if my marriage ended badly I don't think they would suffer too much and so the idea of separation (or, now even better, divorce!) comes to my mind.

Of one thing only I feel satisfied with and that is to have grown well my children who are the real satisfaction of my life. After all they didn't really have a mother, at the beginning they had a nanny and then they had me and they loved me as I loved them. Now I have older sons and I still masturbate and see gay porn and more! Well, I feel bored and I want to try something different and get it seriously. What do you recommend, Project?

Answer by Project

Hello. The categories of gay and bisexual (categories of "sexual orientation") today have a rather restrictive definition and other types of "behavior" rather than of sexual "orientation", have been introduced by common use and then have been effectively characterized through the systematic observation that has better defined them. In a situation like yours the category of "hetero curious" would be used. A bisexual falls in love with both men and women, has a masturbation dedicated both to men or women with whom he falls in love. Bisexuality, like homosexuality has a dominant affective aspect. Hetero-curious people are usually not very young men, are married and often have children, are deeply frustrated by heterosexual sexuality and oriented not to fall in love with men (otherwise they would be bisexual) but only to have sex with men, in addition to sex with women or in substitution of sex with women, but the relationship they imagine with a man, in addition to excluding the affective dimension, has characteristics that are significantly away from gay sexuality. I try to explain myself. In the gay sexuality, that of men who fall in love with men (a sexuality that cannot be reduced just to a sexual interest) sex is very far from how it is commonly represented, there are no sexual roles between two gays, even if it may sound strange. Heterosexual sexuality is dominated by complementarity, roles are defined by nature and sexual intercourse is truly such (hypothetically suitable for generation) only when there is vaginal penetration, otherwise it is said to

be incomplete. In homo-sexuality, which is the sexuality of identity, not of complementarity, roles are often felt as a category imported from the hetero world and not originally gay, and anal penetration, which should be the analog of vaginal penetration in the hetero field, is in fact a clearly minority practice. Anal penetration is much more practiced in the hetero field than in the gay one.

The sexuality that is seen in so-called gay porn has very little of gay and the users of that pornography are often either women or, in the vast majority of cases, hetero-curious people, this is the reason why so-called gay porn always ends with anal penetration. When I speak of "gay", I repeat, I don't speak of men having sex with other men without falling in love, but only of those who fall in love with other men. The hetero-curious people, who have or would like to have sex with men, are many, so as to bring the production of so-called gay porn videos (which are actually produced in the vast majority just for the hetero-curious people) to quantitative levels comparable if not higher than those of hetero pornography. If you keep in mind that gays (who fall in love with men) are about 8% of the population, you can understand well that hetero-curious people (users of so-called gay pornography) must be very numerous.

Among other things, the very extensive diffusion of so-called gay porn among the hetero-curious people is favored by the fact that, being married men and often with children and moreover not young, for them pornography and masturbation are the only way to find a satisfaction, so to say homosexual, to their frustrations in the hetero field, frustrations that are nevertheless very widespread. Today, in Italy, out of 100 marriages, 50 end up in divorce or separation and those who don't end up so are anyway in many cases marriages with a lot of problems. The percentage of hetero-frustrated is very high and pornography leads them to escape towards a hypothetical homosexuality, built with fantasy.

I've been working with gays for a long time, gays, as I said, are about 8% of the population, in Italy, considering together men and women of all ages, they are about 5 million. In a school with 1000 students there are about 80 gays and are really many, but the hetero-curious are many more. But they are not a percentage of the population that is always the same at all ages, because the curiosity for the other orientation usually emerges in mature age, which means that young hetero-curious are few, while hetero-curious mature people are many.

It's already very difficult to find a companion, not a sexual partner, for true gays without exposing themselves to great risks (note that the vast majority of gays are not publicly out and cannot be identified and that for every gay publicly out there are about 20 that are not out, this means that true

homosexuality is still practically invisible today) but finding a companion is certainly much more complicated for a hetero-curious, who however will hardly find a gay partner and most likely will find another hetero-curious (erotic chats and dating sites are full of them) but here is the point: sex with porn is objectively not risky, sex on cam involves a considerable risk of being recorded and of ending up increasing the material of porn sites, but there is even the risk of being identified, for example, if you are connected from professional studios with fixed IP, but it doesn't in any case involve health risks, while sex made in person and with partners found among the users of erotic chats and dating sites, who may have had hundreds of partners, is at high risk and, frankly, only perfect unconscious people can take risks of this magnitude for "a blow and away".

Sometimes I talk to hiv+ guys, well believe me, my heart is shaken, because "after" there is very little to do and life is no longer the same as before, while you could use the brain "before" avoiding to get into trouble and, let's understand each other, I still can understand a gay man who hopes or deludes himself to find the love of his life, but one who puts himself at risk just to try what effect it does ... well, I don't understand him at all. If you have an intercourse with your wife once a month it's obvious that you have to use daily masturbation, if you didn't, you'd really have to worry about your mental balance.

There is in everything that you wrote an element that strikes me a lot and it is the fact that you boast that you have well raised your children, in fact your marriage has an important sense because there are your children, and you know that this is a kind of affection that goes beyond everything else. They are grown, it's true, but I don't think that at that age they can be ready to understand what the real sexual life of their father is. They have to make their way and they should do it as freely as possible. In other terms, you have duties towards them that you cannot put apart in the name of any freedom.

You are a father, you have two children, while I'm gay, I have no children, but I swear to you that I consider my not having children as a vacuum, as something I miss and I miss a lot. You have children, well they are the absolute value, beyond any sexual curiosity. I got to know many gays married and also with children through the Project activity, but they were really gay and not hetero-curious, well those who had children considered the fact of having children the fundamental thing of their lives, they were not looking for gays to have sex with and not even to rebuild their love life, but they were looking for gay friendships, true gay friendships, that is, the chance to talk, to confront gay people, to be themselves and not to be marginalized for their particularity. I think that a serious friendship would do well to everyone,

and above all would help to have always our feet on the ground and to know what the gay world really is, the real one, which has nothing to do with porn. A hug. Project

#### 2.2.4 Exchange of emails with a bisexual almost gay

Hello Project,

it's a bit that I don't write to you. We exchanged some emails some time ago and the conclusion of our speeches concerned the fact that I had already made a path of awareness and acceptance of my homosexuality. Acceptance passed through ups and downs, rethinks and changes of ideas. Being single, the only possibility I have is to resort to masturbation (I cannot spend too much time on abstinence).

Lately, almost for fun and curiosity I started watching straight porn videos, and I must say that I don't dislike them. For a while, I thought maybe I could even like straight sex. Yesterday I also tried to masturbate watching a straight video, but it seemed so exaggerated and fake that I soon lost the desire. So I changed and opened a gay video and finally I saw something that really pleased me.

Looking at a straight video I really thought I saw mechanical gestures, with rough and almost animalistic guys and fake girls who shouted for a fake pleasure. And then, I don't know if you've noticed, never a kiss between guy and girl. Watching a gay video instead I saw two guys definitely excited and eager to please each other. Guys who almost always kiss each other. I saw sex, even if in a typical setting of a porn video, lived in a more spontaneous and passionate way. That's why yesterday, in order to masturbate, I chose to watch a gay video.

Hetero videos are always a mechanical representation of sex. Gay videos show at least complicity and are very realistic since the boys don't pretend orgasm, while in the straight movies the girls pretend orgasm, sometimes even absurdly and in a way so much exaggerated.

Why this difference in heterosexual sex? I think because heterosexual sex essentially fulfills the purpose of procreation. Gay sex, on the other hand, being an end in itself, is much more linked to pleasure (especially physical). A relationship is based on love, otherwise it doesn't work, but I believe that homosexual sexuality has a component both physical and of a search for physical pleasure that heterosexuality doesn't have. I believe that, in general, a heterosexual couple has a less intense sexual life than a homosexual one, precisely for this reason.

See you soon. Mark

Hello Mark, if you don't have a partner, resorting to masturbation is a necessity and you shouldn't try to do without it because masturbation is a practice that has a value even in terms of health. It is a known fact that those who practice daily masturbation are less exposed to prostate cancer in old age. So no limitation to masturbation, which is good for both the body and the mind. And then you are right when you say that gay sex has no procreative concerns and therefore is totally focused on the pursuit of pleasure. Physical pleasure is an important thing that favors psycho-physical balance and should never be devalued or neglected.

The talk about porn is actually very complicated. Today new types of pornography are spreading, let's say so, softer and more specifically gay, in which for example sexual meeting doesn't end necessarily with anal penetration or better never ends so, and cuddling is very important. The current porn videos so-called gay are built for a large mass of hetero-curious people and don't conform to true gay sexuality that is not an imitation of heterosexual sexuality. In practice, some gay porn sites have started producing videos specifically for gays, that is, basically, for a segment of the market far less important than that of the hetero-curious people. On one thing, however, I disagree, that is, that heterosexuality is less attentive to the pursuit of pleasure. I tell you this because I receive a lot of mail even from straight guys and in many cases at least I don't have the impression that the straight sexuality experienced by those guys is less attentive to the pursuit of pleasure, because the vast majority of heterosexual sex has not at all a procreative purpose, on the contrary, excludes it *a priori*, so heterosexuality assumes a dimension of research of the eros practically analogous to that typical of gay sexuality, even if the ways are different.

A hug! Project

Hello Project, do you know sites where you can see videos for gays and not for hetero-curious people? Can you give me some suggestions? In fact, often the videos follow the traditional scheme, which begins with short preliminaries, oral sex, anal sex, orgasm. It doesn't seem to me that true gay sex follows this mechanical scheme. In my experience gay sex was almost always an alternation of kisses, masturbation and oral sex, with orgasm achieved with mutual masturbation. Gay sex is so and this is not often seen in gay porn videos. That's why I would like to know if there are sites with videos of this type. On straight sex I understand what you say. Perhaps my thought is distorted by the fact that being a homosexual, I find it hard to understand how there can be genuine sexual pleasure outside of homosexuality.

Thanks and a hug. Mark

P.S. I didn't know that masturbation prevented prostate cancer. Then mas-

turbating at least once a day is good for health, as well as for mood!

Hi Mark, yes, perhaps something is changing or better it starts to change but very slowly. I have only seen some "typically gay" videos but it must be said that they are still a rarity because the ratio between hetero-curious and gay users, in so-called gay sites, is estimated at least at 5 or 6 hetero-curious people for every gay. The hetero-curious people lead the market and obviously they find or must find the so-called gay sites made especially for them, while gay people don't find exactly what they would like. Your experience of gay sex is the one most widespread and typical among gay guys but unfortunately the so-called gay porn puts the gay label on things that don't represent gay reality at all.

A hug. Project

Hello Project, clear, but ... so how can I tell if I'm gay or just hetero-curious? Let me explain: if I see a straight video I get excited, and I can masturbate and get to orgasm. But this doesn't mean that I'm straight. In fact it happens that if I see a gay video I get excited, and I understand from the physical reaction I experience, that it excites me more than a straight video, and this, with videos of equivalent content (i.e. the usual sequence: oral sex, penetration, orgasm). So I can masturbate and get to orgasm by watching a gay video. I add that even if I see a lesbian video I can feel excitement, etc. It follows that all forms of sexuality can induce excitement and lead me to masturbate. However, if I see a gay video the level of excitement is greater (the pre-ejaculatory fluid in the case of gay videos is very abundant, while it is almost absent in the case of hetero videos) and in some cases I reach orgasm without almost touching myself. Only with gay pornography I happened to masturbate several times in a row at a short distance. With hetero / lesbian videos once a day it's enough for me. From these facts (as well as from the fact that the few gay experiences I had were sexually more satisfying than my few hetero experiences) I deduced that I'm homosexual (or at most bisexual with a prevalent homosexual tendency).

Certainly pornography occupies a fundamental space in my sexual life. At the moment I have no partner and pornography and masturbation are my only outlet. Returning to the hetero-curious, I think the difference lies in the fact that for me a gay video is beautiful in its less rude parts, where you can see kisses, masturbation and oral sex. For me the beauty of the guys involved in the video is also crucial, so much so that I often see the usual videos because there are actors and scenes that I particularly like (I'm very selective!). And then I think that a hetero-curious sometimes masturbates watching gay videos, but normally masturbates watching straight videos. But I mastur-

bate from time to time watching straight videos and normally watching gay videos. Perhaps it could be said that I'm gay-curious. What do you think about it?

A hug. Mark

Hello Mark, the things you say are perfectly logical if you limit yourself only to the sexual plan, but the substantial differences between a gay and a hetero-curious are not limited to those strictly sexual you have described perfectly, there are also emotional differences. A gay falls in love with guys even on an emotional level, he seeks their company, even without sexual purposes and above all doesn't have a deeply frustrating heterosexual sexuality. A hetero-curious has a frustrated hetero affectivity and doesn't have a gay affectivity. His dominant form of sexuality is hetero, for him, a guy is only a substitute for a girl. A gay doesn't only like having sex with his boyfriend but loves everything about him, he falls in love with him. The gay couple is not a very common thing but it exists, in the perspective of hetero-curious people the prospect of a couple relationship with a guy is completely missing, there is no love story. From what you write more than an exclusive gay, you look like a polarized bisexual, also strongly polarized, in the gay direction. The real trouble of bisexuals not strongly polarized, that is, of the bisexuals for whom the couple's life exclusively hetero or exclusively gay is impossible, lies in the fact that both gays and girls, look for a guy to build a stable and exclusive relationship. And a big step forward towards civilization still must be done before thinking of less rigid couples in which even a bisexual is not forced to renounce the other half of the sky.

A hug. Project

Hello Project, thanks as always for the acute observations. A question: what do you mean when you write about a gay who doesn't have a deeply frustrating heterosexual sexuality? In which situation is a heterosexual who has a profoundly frustrating hetero sexuality? And how does he react? Perhaps a heterosexual can find himself in a frustrating heterosexual situation and then he takes refuge in gay sexuality as a fallback? Help me to understand.

Thanks, Mark

Hello Mark, the situation of the hetero-curious people can be classified very commonly as "homosexuality of escape". I try to clarify the concept starting from the other form of "homosexuality of escape" that typical of guys who have suffered sexual abuses.

Among the forms of sexual imprinting (first sexual or para-sexual experi-

ences) beyond the classical situations related to spying on the nudity of other people, to sexual exploring games with peers of the same or the other sex (all forms of imprinting experienced in a non-traumatic way), there is also, and it is not very rare, that linked to sexual abuse by adults. Imprinting can be either homosexual or heterosexual, and this has nothing to do with true sexuality.

Imprinting is very often pre-pubescent and is experienced more as a game, more or less forbidden, than as a form of sexuality, because for the sexuality in the true sense of the word the basic conditions are missing (sexual development is still incomplete).

Generally an imprinting that doesn't conform to true sexual orientation (which will begin to develop with puberty) creates an obstacle to the development of true sexuality. If a guy who has had a gay imprinting then finds himself heterosexual, the situation is not very traumatic because the evolution goes towards a socially accepted and encouraged dimension; if the emerging sexuality is gay there will be no detachment between the imprinting and the emerging sexuality. In the case where, instead, the imprinting has been of hetero type (socially accepted) and the development of emerging sexuality goes in gay direction, some acceptance problems may arise, because it is a matter of overcoming the habit of considering oneself hetero and also sometimes of masturbating with heterosexual fantasies, however, in the end, problems are usually overcome because the boy perceives that gay sexuality has for him a considerable weight, not comparable to that of straight sexuality, and this both on a physical and affective level.

The real problems, and these are things that must be taken very seriously, arise when the imprinting happened through sexual abuse and worse when it happened with violence. But let's go into detail.

If a boy has suffered sexual abuse by an adult man and then feels a heterosexual sexuality in him at the time of puberty, that sexuality for him is not only pleasant but also liberating and he will claim it as his sexuality as opposed to the sexuality of the abuser.

On the contrary, when the boy who has suffered sexual abuse by an adult man feels a homosexual desire at the time of puberty, he tries to reject it with all his strength, because he refers to the suffered abuse, in essence he is brought to think that his nascent gay sexuality is the result and consequence of that abuse.

It is in these cases that the so-called escape heterosexuality is manifested, the boy unconsciously forces himself to heterosexuality which he considers as a rebellion against abuse. Obviously the situation is very delicate and, if not well managed, can also lead to irreparable consequences. If the situation is well managed, one gets to overcome it, even if anyway traces of it remain



even when the first homosexual "love story" arrives, that is, the first profound "affective" relationship with another boy.

The period of "escape heterosexuality" of abused children who would have oriented spontaneously towards homosexuality is terrible, because they are homosexual guys who are trying to escape from their homosexuality, because they attribute it to abuse. Failures with girls are the rule and so are frustrations and depression at the limits of uncontrollable. This is one of the basic reasons for which pedophilia must be fought with every means, because it is objectively devastating.

Even for hetero-curious people there is a form of homosexuality of escape, clearly of escape towards the gay dimension, and not toward hetero dimension as in the case of boys with gay proclivity who are abused by men. A hetero-curious is basically a hetero, so for him the frustration of hetero sexuality is objectively heavy. It is that frustration that gives birth to the idea that "on a sexual level" and only on a sexual level a homosexual relationship can be gratifying and can respond appropriately to the frustration experienced in the hetero field.

The hetero-curious is not a gay man, he has not built a gay affectivity over the years, for him homosexuality is that of porn. When a hetero-curious really tries to get in touch with a gay guy he finds himself displaced, because as long as the gay guy has not realized that he is not really in front of a gay man, the gay guy will not only focus on sex but will also try to build a relationship on the emotional level. From a sexual point of view, anyway a gay guy doesn't take long to realize that his partner is not gay, sexual fantasies are different, sexual practices are different and it starts to become clear that creating a relationship doesn't make sense, and here the other dogma of the hetero-curious is broken, namely that dealing with a gay guy is easier than dealing with a woman.

The hetero-curious (who is a heterosexual searching for an escape sexuality) is not a married gay who is looking for a relationship outside of his marriage and is trying to realize his true sexuality. The hetero-curious men are and remain hetero, often changing homosexual partner, until they find a heterosexual availability, which for them is the natural way to sexuality, in practice, when the straight path becomes possible again, curiosity is put aside, maybe until to the next hetero frustration.

A hug. Project

Hello Project, your explanation is very interesting. But I still don't understand what makes you conclude that I'm bisexual and not hetero-curious. I try to explain myself better. Let's take for granted as a premise that for me (as for many) heterosexual sex is culturally acceptable while the gay sex

is not, and consequently having gay sex has given me guilt, while I never felt guilt having straight sex. My sexuality and my affectivity have the following characteristics:

Sexuality: masturbation: mostly (at 90% or 95% I would say) gay (both with the help of gay porn videos and using gay fantasies).

Sexual contacts: I had both gay and straight experiences (over time, the first gay experience when I was 14 years old, then I have alternated straight and gay contacts, and anyway very few).

Gay experiences on average were more satisfying and uninhibited, those with the girls were less instinctive and sometimes more problematic.

Physical preferences: I am not indifferent to female beauty. I immediately recognize a beautiful girl, but with a girl I feel shy and inadequate. I don't have a special preference for a particular type of girl. Boys, on the other hand, to please me sexually, must correspond to a very particular physical canon. I recognize if a guy is handsome, but that doesn't necessarily mean I like him. To please me, in the sense of attracting me sexually, a guy must be done in a certain way, as high as I say, with the face as I say, etc. With guys I'm much, much more selective than with girls.

Sexual preferences: I prefer male to female sex. An erected penis is much more exciting for me than a vagina. When I had experiences with guys, being able to touch their penises, it was very exciting, while touching a girl's sex was not bad, but it didn't drive me crazy the same way. Having oral sex with a girl tells me little (I don't like it), while I like to have oral sex with a guy. I like masturbating a girl but I like better masturbating a guy, I feel it as the most intimate and involving experience in the sexual field, I can have a complete intercourse with a girl, ok I can do it, I don't like and don't care to have a complete intercourse with a guy.

Affectivity: it is much easier for me to fall in love with a girl. For some guys I took a crush, but I have never fantasized about a lasting relationship or about sharing life as a couple with a guy as I did with girls. This means that I was fine with guys, I liked them, but I was especially interested in the sexual aspect. I was fine with the girls, but with them I was especially interested in the emotional aspect. Of course, as I have already told you, gay sexuality is for me much more involving and satisfying. And if sexuality (especially the freer one, that of masturbation) goes in that direction, I can only say that I'm bisexual / gay.

I must also say that the girls I met were not the best, sexually speaking, and this could have lead me to a distorted view of female sexuality, inducing me to prefer gay sexuality experienced as more uninhibited and immediate. This could be what made me a so-called hetero-curious. However, my strong preference for gay sex (fantasized and practiced), pleasant memories of gay

experiences, almost exclusively of gay masturbation, made me think (since adolescence) that I'm gay or bisexual. Only as a teenager I was convinced that I was a straight guy who let himself go to gay fantasies and practices, in the absence of right and available girls. Now, however, given that the right and available girls have never arrived (but did I ever really look for such girls?), I think I'm a gay who lets himself go to some incursion into the hetero world (only a few videos, however, no masturbatory fantasy). For this, joking, I say that maybe I'm a gay-curious.

A hug, Mark

Hello Mark, well, I try to respond articulately, but I'm convinced that you don't have anything to do with the hetero-curious. First of all, you don't have the typical age of hetero-curious people who are generally over 40/45 and even beyond, in the second place you never had a previous hetero story really important and exclusive, which is instead almost the rule for the hetero-curious people; in your story, because of the lack of deep heterosexual involvement there are not even strong or traumatic hetero experiences able to lead you to such a frustration as to induce you to the curiosity for the other orientation.

Indeed, your first gay experiences date back to when you were 14 years old. And then all your sexuality is clearly gay, but not only because it is about guys but because it is absolutely and typically gay as regards desires: what excites you is not at all what excites the hetero-curious people, who see guys as a substitute for girls and who tend with guys to have a sexual intercourse aimed at anal penetration with fixed roles. You write: "Sexual preferences: I prefer male to female sex. An erected penis is much more exciting for me than a vagina. When I had experiences with guys, being able to touch their penises, it was very exciting, while touching a girl's sex was not bad, but it didn't drive me crazy the same way. Having oral sex with a girl tells me little (I don't like it), while I like to have oral sex with a guy. I like masturbating a girl but I like better masturbating a guy, I feel it as the most intimate and involving experience in the sexual field, I can have a complete intercourse with a girl, ok I can do it, I don't like and don't care to have a complete intercourse with a guy." All these things for a hetero-curious are absolutely inconceivable.

A hetero-curious, who behaves with a guy as would do with a woman, will never touch the guy's penis, he would not even consider as a theoretical hypothesis the idea of masturbating another guy, he could have oral sex with the guy, but with roles clearly defined, the hetero-curious must be the one offering his own penis to the other guy's care but not the opposite, because this, in the behavior code of a hetero-curious, would mean taking on a pas-

sive role, which for him is unthinkable. For a hetero-curious the so-called complete intercourse (active anal sex) is the purpose of sexual contact with a guy. For a gay, such an idea is inconceivable, and in the vast majority of cases anal penetration does not even exist. So you certainly are not at all a hetero-curious!

And you are not even a gay-curious, because I don't think you're frustrated with your gay sexuality. And then your relationship with girls has a sexual component, which perhaps is not dominant, but exists and is not negligible. That you tend to create an affective relationship more easily with girls seems to me something more than possible, what I hardly can understand is the fact that you cannot find a gay affective relationship coordinated with the sexual interest. But the solution to this apparent strangeness, which is the only one that doesn't fit into the dimension of true bisexuality, emerges clearly in your premise when you say that a gay intercourse makes you feel guilty, while a heterosexual one doesn't create any problem. When you'll succeed to overcome this conditioning of a social origin, knowing a gay guy with whom to build a truly mutual and deep relationship, I think you would fall in love and also on an emotional level! It has not happened yet, but I think it will happen!

A hug. Project

Thanks Project, Your considerations are very logical. So, from what I understand, you don't see me at all as a hetero-curious, but rather as a bisexual who is strongly oriented towards homosexuality. I add to your considerations some clarifications: I had a couple of stories with girls, between 17 and 22 years old. Stories long enough (a couple of years each) and quite painful. The first because the girl lived in another city and my so called falling in love had been essentially an infatuation (sexually we didn't go beyond kisses); with the second one I had established a relationship based on competitiveness that did not last.

The strange thing is that this girl, very pretty I have to say, had a quite masculine behavior (she used to ride a motorcycle and practiced martial arts) and I didn't like all this because I wanted her to be much more feminine. Sexually there was enough harmony, even if we never went beyond mutual masturbation (practiced almost always in the dark or in the shade). In short, a relationship not really sexually uninhibited. I certainly wasn't looking for penetration (I never asked her for such a thing neither she even asked me) and we didn't even practice oral sex. As I told you before, having oral sex with a girl has never drove me crazy (I did it in a few cases, but really it didn't drive me crazy).

During the two years of relationship with this girl I could not help but mas-

turbate thinking ... about the gay experience I had had with a classmate when I was 17 years old. Here too nothing stratospheric, we masturbated each other, almost for fun, during a white week and then the year after, I had come forward and we had agreed to meet one evening at my house to repeat the experience. So we ended up meeting one night when my parents were outside, we completely undressed and masturbated (with the light on, I underline it). A unique episode, never repeated with this classmate, after this episode we always pretended that nothing had happened between us. And this was not the first guy I had sexual contact with.

The first time, as I wrote to you, it happened when I was 14 years old (we were both still in eighth grade). It probably happened because sex with these guys was uninhibited and satisfying while sex with the girls was inhibited and unsatisfying, but from those experiences I began to think, not without anguish and confusion, that I was gay. But my thought in those years was: if I found an uninhibited girl so that we can have satisfying sex, then everything would change. Perhaps this is a recurring thought of many gay or bisexual boys who don't accept their homosexuality.

Of course, with time, seeing that things didn't change (my masturbation became more polarized towards homosexuality and I couldn't find uninhibited girls (but was I looking for them?) I gradually became more aware that my homosexual tendency was not a temporary thing but a constant.

As for affectivity I agree with you. As I said, for some guys (two definitely), when I was between 15 and 20 years old, I took a crush (I often thought of them, I masturbated thinking of them, and I didn't think of them only in a sexual key, I loved them for their way of being), and this simultaneously with my hetero stories (but I never masturbated thinking about girls with whom I was "in love" ...).

Unfortunately, social, cultural and personal conditioning is still there or at least I didn't overcome it yet completely, that's why it is still impossible for me today to think of living with a guy in the sunlight. While with a girl I certainly don't have problems, affectivity works very well, even if I have to sacrifice full sexual satisfaction.

A hug, Mark

Hello Mark, the most striking thing in your email is the weight of conditioning that you suffered: "but from those experiences I began to think, not without anguish and confusion, that I was gay." But why with anguish and confusion? You didn't do anything to go to a straight life, which I think would have been completely unsustainable, because you say that the affection with girls was fine but you should have made some sacrifices regarding sexuality.

A person like you, bisexual with a 90% -95% of gay propensity (percentage based on the frequency of the masturbation fantasies) is in fact "almost gay" and if you had made a choice oriented towards heterosexual marriage, given that for you a straight sexuality is anyway possible, you would have behaved like many gay guys who, since they can get to have sex with a girl, they say: ok, then I'm straight and marriage for me is the ideal solution and it's okay with my family, it is what everyone expects from me, ... I should just make some small waivers on the sexual field! But married gays, as well as married bisexuals with 95% of gay propensity, underestimate the extent of that renunciation.

You yourself say that when you were with the girls you didn't masturbate thinking about them but thinking about your previous gay experiences, but when the sexuality of the couple goes in a different direction from that of masturbation, the real sexuality, the one by which you can feel gratified both sexually and emotionally, is not that of the couple sex, but the only one free from all expectations, that is that of masturbation.

Indeed it is typical of many married gays to practice masturbation with gay fantasies only, even when they live a straight sex life with their wives (early years of marriage), and this is enough, together with social pressure to keep those guys tight to their marriage, but when heterosexuality fades completely, because a woman feels that there is something wrong, even though she may not be able to understand what, the sexual and emotional attraction force of gay sexuality becomes more and more urgent with all its strength and the straight marriage definitely goes into crisis. A couple's life without a mutual strong sexual attraction, at least at the beginning, is destined to show all its limitations in the long run. In other words marriage without love both sexual and affective is a choice that is not instinctive but carefully mediated that is adopted for reasons of utility and convenience, in the name of those reasons one accepts to make "small sacrifices" on a sexual level, but these sacrifices are not at all small and are not at all on a sexual level only and in the end make the life of this strange heterosexual couple absolutely unsatisfactory.

The risk of a wrong choice such as marriage, in these conditions is high, because saying that a guy is bisexual doesn't mean at all that for him gay life or straight life are almost the same, but it means that, with rare exceptions, one of the two orientations is strongly prevalent.

Between the non-rejection of a woman and the "real" desire to live sexuality with that woman there is an infinite number of possible gradations and the problem of bisexuals is linked to the fact that a couple relationship, be it hetero or gay, starts with the assumption of being exclusive.

A bisexual with 95% of gay propensity will most likely give up without too many regrets a straight sexuality, which basically belongs to him in a

marginal way, but he will never willingly give up a gay identity that characterizes him in a strong way, driven only by reasons of social type or because he was conditioned to see the homosexuality as inherently wrong.

I think that beyond all theoretical reasoning, for you, despite the social pressures, the idea of marriage is now a hypothesis put aside in a definitive way and without regrets. Unfortunately for many bisexual guys strongly polarized in the gay direction, things are not like that, and marriage looks like a mirage, a lifeline, and this inevitably leads to very serious problems.

I add a question that seems important to me. This exchange of mails I think could be of considerable benefit to several guys. If you agree, these emails can be published on the forum, on blogs and could be inserted in the chapter about bisexuality of the manual "Being Gay", preceded by an exchange of emails between me and a hetero-curious. In this way it could be possible to give our readers the right coordinates to interpret many phenomena and to avoid wrong choices. Obviously, emails can be modified by you as you deem appropriate to avoid putting your privacy at risk, but I don't see how it could be put at risk since there are no specific references of any kind. Let me know what you think.

A hug. Project

Hello Project, thanks for your comment.

Excuse me, but I think it is practically impossible for a 14-year-old boy to have a homosexual experience, even if limited to mutual masturbation, without experiencing, afterwards, anguish and confusion.

Even though I had wanted that experience, I was aware that it was a homosexual experience and it was not something made for play (like: I close my eyes while you masturbate me and I think it's a girl I like a lot who is masturbating me). No, while with my partner we touched each other, I was interested in his sex, and in him just because he was a guy. After reaching orgasm, however, the excitement (which restrains inhibitory brakes and self-control) has disappeared and, therefore, having regained self-control, anxiety and anguish took over. That is, I began to think that what I just had done was gay sex, gay sex was considered ugly by parents, relatives and friends, therefore what I had done was ugly.

But another thought was becoming obsessive: "What I have done is an indication of what I am, that is that I am a homosexual!" Such a thought was disturbing and distressing me badly. And from here starts the whole attempt to rationalize the thing like: "It's an isolated case, it happened because I didn't have a girlfriend, when I will find a girl I will no longer think about such things", etc. etc..

If the 14-year-old boy had been really straight, problems wouldn't have

arisen, I think, because he would have really thought right away that it was the girl of his dreams who was masturbating him. And the next day maybe he would masturbate thinking about the girl of his dreams and not about what he had really done with his classmate.

I, 14 years old, instead, after that experience, in the following days had masturbated just thinking about what had happened with my mate. But I also rationalized gay masturbation, thinking that it was due to the fact that the only sexual experience to remember was that with my mate. As a rationalization it was really weak, but as you can understand the environmental pressure of parents, relatives and friends, wasn't weak at all. Here is the reason for anxiety and worry. But I don't understand one thing: why do you say that I have not done everything to go to a straight life?

A hug, Mark

P.S. If you want, you can publish everything, in full.

Hello Mark! First of all, thank you for permission to publish the emails, but I have to try to do an organic job with an exchange of emails with a true hetero-curious and I must also rewrite part of the chapter of Being Gay about bisexuality and it will take a few days.

Regarding the substance of your last email I totally agree, I don't think I could better describe the mechanisms that lead to feel gay sex as a fault and a wrong thing due to family and social pressures. But the problem lies precisely in those familiar and social pressures, sometimes so deeply internalized that they become almost components of the ego. In Italian environment, as it is, a 14 year old boy can really be full of complexes for a gay sexual experience with a mate of his, this is evident.

Things are like this, even if the upstream conditioning is only the result of a total ignorance and a lot of prejudices, this was what I meant when I told you that I didn't understand what you could be afraid of, because many problems that can upset a guy, when they are foreseen in advance, are really fake problems when you face them rationally. Unfortunately complexes towards gay sex really exist and gays too experience them, at least at the beginning, but I know that the problems are above all at the beginning ...

A hug. Project

Thanks Project. And what about my question about why you say I didn't do anything to go to a straight life?

Hello Mark. I mean that you have not forced yourself to get to an exclusive heterosexuality that you did not feel really yours, which means that, at least in adulthood, family and social conditioning have clearly been over-



come, there is perhaps some atmosphere of forbidden surrounding gay sex, but it is not an oppressive atmosphere that leads you to do what you don't want or to put aside what you want. You didn't force yourself because you had your substantial psychological independence, perhaps earned with difficulty, but now reached and consolidated.

Keep in mind that even today there are gays, that is, people who have no interest at all in girls, who, despite the fact that they think of guys while they masturbate, can also get to have a sexual intercourse with girls. These gays convince themselves of being heterosexual precisely because they can have sex with girls and force themselves to "behave like heterosexuals", in these cases the problems are big and they are not problems related to sexuality, that is to an uncertain sexual orientation, on the contrary here the gay orientation is very well defined, but there are problems of psychological dependence. In essence these guys cannot make themselves independent from a homophobia internalized at a very early age and now acquired.

This homophobia forces them to act against their very nature and deeply affects them making them insecure. Just in these days I'm exchanging emails with a straight guy who also had some gay experiences, very minimal for the truth, in early adolescence, but who continues to give a disproportionate weight to these things as if they could put in crisis the possibility of fully experiencing sexuality with his girlfriend, which instead goes objectively well, because the girl is intelligent and she really cares about him.

In that guy's childhood there was a terrible relationship with his father, including very frequent beatings and public humiliations, he felt like an unwanted child, this is probably the source of insecurity that leads that guy to think he is not trustworthy and he's not able to guarantee his girlfriend a satisfying married life when they will be married, and in this context the overestimation of a minimum of so called "gay" exploration in early adolescence fits perfectly, especially since those "gay" experiences were somehow also a way of doing something that his father thought execrable, that is, of reacting to his father's oppressive power. Note that the episodes of the so called "gay" exploration had been completely forgotten and that the masturbation of that guy had always been in a straight key, and this leaves no doubt about his total heterosexuality.

A hug. Project

### 2.2.5 A married bisexual

LGIAN: Hello everyone, I need some advice ... I am 34 years old, I've been married for five years and I've been with her for about 15 years. Fortunately, to date without children even if recently we decided to get more

engaged in order to have one!

Since I was very young I have always had a totally straight life, the first experiences in adolescence and then the meeting with the woman I chose as a life partner and I have never betrayed with any other woman; nevertheless, I have always understood and appreciated the beauty of the female body, as well as that of the masculine one, without ever thinking of being able to desire it physically (and mentally).

In the years of university, being distant from my girlfriend and despite living a heterosexual life with her, I often did some simple skype sessions with guys of my age, simple and fast experience! More a physical need than anything else, so I have always interpreted it!

About two years ago, at a time when I had moved abroad for 5 months, I re-experienced the experience of those video calls and I - almost inexplicably - discovered that I liked many of the straight-bisexual-gay guys with whom I chatted. I started to appreciate this thing and I continued to talk with some of these guys, leaving everything in the virtual sphere, but in some cases also creating friendships that still today, with great difficulty, I'm trying to carry on.

Only once I met a guy much younger than me (19) who had involved me more mentally than physically, but everything ended up rapidly because I had not considered such things particularly interesting until ... until two months ago, when on a boring morning of work I enter FB and I see a post of a gay friend of mine with a picture taken from a page of a well-known application for gay dating, I'm curious, I download the app and create an account.

Shortly thereafter messages from other users begin to arrive, they ask me to send them a picture of my body and face. After many requests and as many refusals, to the umpteenth request I reply a bit "annoyed" attaching the photo: after just a few seconds a guy asks me if by any chance I worked in the society in which I work. I feel my blood freezing, I hadn't realize that this application for mobile phones also indicated the distance between users! Seized with terror, but having already forwarded the picture of my body (full naked), I say yes and so we start to chat and get to know each other. He is my age, a deep look and above all a beautiful body, muscular and lean just as I like it: the male beauty canon that I always liked.

After about four days, I decide to meet him to have a coffee and tell him that I'm married and never had a relationship with a man neither had sex with a man. He initially seems a little perplexed, but then he says he likes me and wants to date me. So after a few days, we meet and spend a good afternoon together, made of tenderness and understanding, but for me also full of anxiety, so much anxiety.

I discover that in addition to having a beautiful body he also has a beautiful

soul, deep and sensitive, rich and generous! So for about two months now, this relationship goes on and I think I start feeling something - that is not love or at least it is not love in the form that I have already experienced with my wife - and if I, before, had thought that it was a sexual need only, I realized thanks to him that I miss being able to rely on a man, feel his body, his physical proximity, his physicality, I miss having a comparison from peer to peer. In short, I was looking for all those feelings of security and acceptance that I have always given my wife and all the people I love.

All this to tell you that ... I'm confused! I don't know how this relationship can evolve with him to whom I feel I cannot give 100% of myself - this hurts me because I feel that I am depriving him of the possibility of enjoying a true and total love - and very often I would want to make my wife participate in the happiness and feeling of completeness that I am reaching thanks to the happiness I am feeling with him.

I would like so much to confirm to her that I love her and that the life projects we have done together we will realize them together, but at the same time I would like to convince her of my need to have at my side a man who can reassure me and speak to me as only a man can do. I thought I'd tell her all this, but I know I would hurt her because I know the idea she has of bisexuals (if she tolerate gays, regarding bisexuals she says they are perverts because they do the "ndo cojo cojo" life ["ndo cojo cojo" is an expression of the Roman dialect which means "where I hit I hit"]) and she wouldn't deserve it; but above all I doubt she can understand. I desperately need advice, I want to evaluate the situation with your help so as to have more knowledge at hand and, if I had to change my life, I would like to have the most complete picture of the consequences. Thank you very much for helping!! R.

#### PROJECT:

Hi Lgian, first of all welcome to the forum!! And now let's move on to the specific question. Your email is "a classic" in the sense that it is very difficult to describe better what true bisexuality is, that is, to experience a deep sexual and emotional involvement both towards men and women. I mean that in some cases there is a dissociation of the affectivity that remains heterosexual from the sexuality that is markedly homosexual, and this implies that an emotional relationship with a man becomes particularly difficult or is at least quite problematic even for many bisexuals.

But in your case affectivity and sexuality are not at all dissociated and then you can experience a real falling in love with a man (which in case of dissociation is not realized). It must be said at once that the true bisexuality, the one like yours, is not a very common thing. There are a lot more gays than bisexuals and certainly a lot more people with a dissociated bisexuality

(hetero affectivity and gay sexuality) than not dissociated bisexual people. The situation of a bisexual dissociated, paradoxically, is less complicated, because his homosexual needs can be resolved on an occasional basis and usually put less in crisis the heterosexual life that tends at least at an emotional level to remain stable.

For a true bisexual (not dissociated), the presence of a male partner is first of all an emotional necessity and therefore the true bisexual tends to build stable and serious relationships with a man, exactly as he tends to do with a woman, but here arises the real problem, because a serious hetero relationship, especially if formalized in marriage, presupposes exclusivity; even a serious gay relationship presupposes exclusivity, although perhaps in a lesser degree than what happens in a marriage relationship, but for a bisexual, and even more for a non-dissociated bisexual, exclusivity is a very heavy forcing. A bisexual, in any case, is faced with a choice: either he leaves his emotional and sexual life very fluid, not only without getting married, but without demanding or trying to achieve stable relationships of any kind, or he must necessarily sacrifice half of his own affectivity-sexuality. In a situation like yours there is even a marriage and there is, behind, a heterosexual life that lasted several years and with the presupposition both implicit and explicit of stability. Since your life at the time of marriage had always been heterosexual, getting to marriage was almost automatic, I mean that those who know they are gay or bisexual should think about it very well before getting married, in your case it was impossible to predict the evolution of your affectivity-sexuality years later and then nobody can blame you for anything. You have no children, but you say that you are thinking about it, well, given the situation I would try to think about it very well in advance, especially because your wife doesn't know how things really are and very likely couldn't accept them at all.

If there are no children, with all the problems that this can entail, it's not too much difficult to get to the separation and then to the divorce, but if there are children, problems are likely to become very large, I don't mean just for you, but especially for children, who may be forced to live stressful situations that may have serious psychological implications even after years. Even with a wife aware and willing to have children, the fact of giving birth to a son, for a married bisexual is anyway problematic, but if the wife is unaware, she may think she has been deceived, not at the time of marriage, but when you yourself have come to the awareness of how things were.

Another observation: you are married, and a married man, for a gay is certainly not the best choice, a gay knows very well that getting together with a married man creates many complications and getting together with a married who has children is much more complicated. This means that for you

finding a mate to create a gay couple would not be easy anyway. Generally, when there are children, the only things "realistically" possible are the compromise choices, in which a relationship is created with a man, but let's say, low profile, more a relationship of amorous friendship than a real couple relationship, because the fundamental requirement is the protection of children. In such a situation even wives are much more cautious in choosing to separate, however it is essential to maintain a clear relationship with one's wife and try to make her understand how things really are, even at the risk of putting the marriage in crisis.

When there are no children, the choices may be freer and less conditioned by the need to reach a compromise, but the fact remains that even a stable gay relationship with a gay guy ends up not going well for a true bisexual, because in the end the gay partner doesn't see the bisexual as a bisexual but he sees him like a gay and expects from him an exclusivity of almost matrimonial type. Realistically one might think of a loving friendship, if the partner is willing to accept a relationship of this kind, what is even possible, if the relationship are very free and in any case the bisexual partner should make the effort to talk clearly to his wife, even at risk of undermining marriage, what is less disruptive when there are no children.

I know very well that many gay guys don't accept the fact that I tend to recommend compromise solutions in situations like yours, but they are gay not bisexual guys and above all don't have the prospect of a married life, because for them marriage is something unthinkable. But what I told you is honestly what I think and also the synthesis of the similar experiences that emerged from Gay Project. I would advise you to read the chapters on bisexuality and married gays in the manual "Being Gay", which contains several real examples of situations that might be of interest to you.

PUGSEY:

Hi Lgian, I'm 33, almost 34, so I can give you a very heartfelt opinion. I am gay, and I accepted myself as such at the age of 23, after a period of bisexual latency that lasted a few years. Live this story that has happened to you, as you like better, however things go, but I want to give you a very spontaneous and immediate advice: since only now you have doubts about your sexuality, avoid conceiving a child with your wife, before you have clarified yourself mentally. Even if a child is always a gift from God, given the situation everything could be emotionally to his detriment in the event of divorce. But in addition, imagine the legal consequences that the thing could have if you divorce from your wife when you have a child (consequences you wouldn't have if you don't procreate). If you want to have some advice, we are always ready to give you our opinion in chat. Indeed, I invite you just to enter the

chat so we can talk quietly about the confusion that you're living. Greetings.  
Pugsley

LGIAN:

Dear Project, Thank you first for providing me with very useful elements regarding my condition of - now I can say it more quietly - true bisexual. From the analysis you have made, it emerges, as usual, that clear and simple situations don't suit me; on the contrary, in spite of the evident difficulties I had and I will probably continue to have, I'm a bit relieved that you have recognized in me the "true" bisexuality. I spoke often about this condition with him - I will call him Enzo - and other chat friends who, and as you describe well in the volume "Being Gay", have always replied that bisexuality doesn't exist and that I had to admit that I'm gay: in short, It's like adding confusion and uncertainty to my already difficult situation! It is a very difficult moment, especially because in addition to my emotional problems in this case there are also the lives of two other people - my wife and Enzo - for whom, in a different way, I feel a strong and deep feeling. In me, the fear of losing my wife while confessing her my bisexuality is very great as it is very great even the fear of losing Enzo putting him in the face of certainty that up today I cannot guarantee him any relationship of exclusivity.

At the same time, I think I have to talk to my wife about myself, my situation and the fact that I have discovered today not to feel completely myself because a part of me requires something that she cannot give me and I look for in a man. Easy to say ... isn't it? I wonder at this point what the next step may be. How to tell her? Keep silent about the relationship I'm having with Enzo? And then what would happen if she thought that my so called problems were just transient follies without foundation, given that I have never felt a feeling for a man? Have I to tell her about Enzo? Making her feel even more betrayed? The confusion increases more and more and I'm even more confused about how to act because, reading the volume you have advised me, I understand that even if I found the courage to talk to her, my the situation wouldn't anyway know improvements destined to last. In particular, the passage in which you say:

"For bisexuals 50/50 adapt to an exclusive sexuality, be it heterosexual or gay, is a restrictive limitation and in these cases, they realize just a half of their sexuality in the couple relationship, but it is difficult to reduce the other half just to masturbation because they actually feel a strong need also for a couple relationship of the other kind. ... Generally a bisexual with a 50% of gay propensity, given the social environment in which he lives,

will tend to orient himself more to form a heterosexual durable couple than a gay durable couple, that would be against the mainstream. In general, for a bisexual, precisely because it is much easier to live a hetero couple sexuality, the typical models of the straight couple end up being dominant.”

It seems therefore more a condemnation rather than a road to seek happiness, now aware - and I always thought a little so - that if I had to decide whether to stay with my wife or follow Enzo I would always find myself ”not complete”, not adequate, not happy. And yet, it would be so nice to be able to share with people you love your own happiness, to actually be yourself and show that you can love - in different ways and with different intensities - people of the other and of the same sex.

Why does society force us to an exclusivity that means to sacrifice ourselves and our feelings? As for the child, we are in a phase of a bit of a deadlock. Regardless of the considerations on my personal and intimate situation, we are evaluating the thing well because our uncertainties don't only concern the ability to grow and give love to a possible child but also the fact that he can give us happiness as a couple and as individuals. Happiness is often what we all seek; I, unlike many, have always placed, in my life as a son, husband and friend, the happiness of others before mine and maybe that's why I have now reached the limit and I'm looking for happiness, I also want it for myself, although I'm aware of not being sure to reach it and having to undertake a difficult path. I don't know if I have the courage, I should find it, for myself ... Thanks again for the patience you have in listening to people who approach this forum and for the professionalism and grace with which you respond to their requests for help and explanation. A really good job! R.

LGIAN:

Dear Pugsley, thanks very much to you for your heartfelt opinion, but I think also very reasoned, that you wanted to give me. My intention, in this full and total confusion, is to avoid hurting the two people involved, one knowingly - Enzo - and the other without her knowledge - my wife - in this new situation that is upsetting my life. As I told Project, for now the child's project is a bit on stand-by for different reasons, we often talk about it but still we are not totally convinced and we are procrastinating, although the underlying intention remains, to date. I also gladly accept the advice to come and have a meet with people in Project's chat, even if it will be a bit difficult because the couple's life allows me to carve out only a few moments of intimacy. Any further advice you will want to give me, even on what I have answered to Project, will be welcome: I really need it!!!

Thanks again for the support, R.

PROJECT:

Hello Lgian, unfortunately, for bisexual people exclusivity is a condemnation and it is a condemnation substantially of social origin. Many things, which are commonly given for granted, as if they were basic laws of life or nature, are really conventions that have crystallized over the centuries and which "objectively" are pure preconceptions. We have a family model based on marriage that is an institution that starts from postulates that aren't obvious at all.

The presumption itself of being able to constrain feelings by creating legal obligations for affectivity and sexuality is absurd. One can be obliged for the future (and for short periods) to do a job or to pay an amount of money, but certainly not to love a person. The marriage failures in Italy are now the outcome of more than 50% of marriages, more than 50% of marriages end in separations and divorces, a sign that the institution is based on incongruous assumptions. The logic of marriage is "all or nothing", or there is 100% love lifelong or marriage doesn't exist, but reality is completely different, love can be 70% or 50% and even less but it is still love.

The speech is also valid in the gay field, all gay guys, at the beginning, dream of stories like that of charming prince and of an overwhelming and eternal love, then slowly learn to leave the world of fairy tales and keep the feet on the ground in the world of reality. Lots of gay people stop looking for a mate, because the life of a married couple can also be good but only if there are certain indispensable assumptions, that is, if the couple is a real "spontaneous" exclusive couple, which is however very rare.

The legal recognition of homosexual marriage is very important as a recognition of equal rights to all but, as happened in Spain, the number of homosexual marriages will certainly be anyway low, and it should be added that if this number were high due to social pressure, as happens among straight people, gay marriage would meet the same pathologies of heterosexual marriage and a similar proportion of divorces and separations would arrive.

In the hetero world, marriage, in theory, aims to protect children (as if to force parents to stay together by law were the best situation for children!), but in the gay world where the hypothesis of children is marginal, the legal obligation would be counterbalanced only by economic advantages such as the reversibility of the pension, which however could be linked, rather than to the marriage, to the assumption of obligations of mutual assistance, because often marriages, with the years, become only this. Today as today the claim of exclusivity exists and I think that things will remain so for many years.

But what can be done to make it clear to a wife who has grown up in the



marriage myth that a bisexual man can feel forced into an exclusive relationship? Is it possible to require that this woman reasons with a mentality that would be in radical disagreement with the age-old tradition of her family and society? Frankly it is hard to believe that it can work. I have also seen, very rarely, women who have adapted to a similar situation, but I must say that they have suffered a lot. On the other hand, putting one foot in two shoes is not even a viable solution because it is basically a deception towards the wife.

And there is also another complication because talking freely to one's own wife involves that, afterwards, she will talk "confidentially" with parents and other family members and they, always "confidentially" will talk with others, until everyone will know certainly not how things really are, but that you're a weird, you have strange ideas in mind, you do strange things, etc. etc..

On the other hand, the alternative is to close the other half of one's own affectivity and sexuality altogether into the closet, self-repressing oneself to try to save the marriage, what in the long run would make marriage itself oppressive and unbearable.

Last observation: between the discovery of one's own gay side and the possibility of creating a "stable but not exclusive" story with a man there is an abyss, seen from the outside it seems easy but the problems always appear later. In conclusion it is a very complicated situation that will still lead you to sacrifice something because, they can say or deny it, both your wife and the man you are interested in will not be satisfied with 50% of you.

TORALBA:

Hello Lgian, My horizon of experiences is essentially different from yours. Expressing an opinion on the situation, at least for me, would be at least risky. I fully agree with what they have highlighted both Project and Pugsley, and that is that the situation in which you find yourself deserves a deep reflection, especially about the possibility that you and your wife want to have children.

The only thing I can really tell you is to reflect on how you imagine your future life and how you would really feel. You could, it is true, live a double life, made of your wife's emotional response and, at the same time, of Enzo or any guy with whom you would possibly feel on the same wavelength. But could you really manage to endure and live such a complicated and anxiety-provoking relationship? I find it difficult to imagine a double life that is really satisfying and lived in a very peaceful way.

As you speak, it is clear that the feelings both towards your wife and Enzo are sincere, but you yourself felt the need to put yourself in their shoes: what is the life they want? Your wife wants an exclusive relationship with

the crowning of the children. Enzo, presumably, in the long run could he too demand a more exclusive relationship from you.

Their idea of life and their emotional needs must be respected as much as yours, for this reason the question related to which life you really desire arises as central question. In your situation, I sincerely wouldn't know how to behave. Personally I try to be always honest with people, so I would probably try to be clear with my wife. But it is a purely hypothetical and theoretical reasoning that, if I were to live it, I would not really know how to deal with. Life is always much more complicated than any theory. Obviously this is not the suggestion I give you. Taking a step like this involves real risks that are beyond our control. But at the same time, the relationship with your wife has already changed profoundly.

Best wishes.

ALYOSHA:

I share many of the things that those who preceded me wrote to you. As I see it personally, the discourse on your sexual orientation could however be reductive. Just a few days ago, an interesting email has been published on this forum, sent by a guy who had built an emotional relationship with two other guys and he was also faced with the dilemma of having to decide what to do and, like you, he seemed to experience feelings toward both guys who for different reasons satisfied different sides of him.

Even he, like you, fantasized about a possible unlikely relationship with three partners, unlikely not only for social problems but because of the evident difficulty that each of us feels having to accept that he is not enough. Of similar situations in hetero version then you can find as many as you like. I would therefore invite you to separate the moment of awareness of your sexuality from the concrete situation in which you are stuck and from which you can only go out only destroying something.

It is clear that your wife will never accept the situation and in this regard I invite you to read the many stories of girls who shared their experiences in this forum. These are confused women, who have difficulty with accepting their partner's homosexuality, and don't accept at all that they cannot help him. Such situations are certainly complicated by your condition that is already unclear in itself, because you seem inclined to communicate your wife that you are bisexual.

It is not even clear how much the guy in question is aware of your bisexuality and would seriously agree to share you with your wife and how much rather he is waiting for you to make a clear decision, perhaps hoping that saying it to her would interrupt the relationship with your wife, allowing him to start an exclusive relationship with you.

You dwell on the matter just a little, but from what you wrote it seems to me you have already found yourself in the condition of having to explain to him that the relationship with him don't make you feel 100% complete and I can suppose that he didn't take it well. Unfortunately you didn't introduce yourself as a bisexual to both of them, and they didn't have the chance to decide to deal with a bisexual, that is, they didn't realize that at any moment they could be called to share you with other people.

You have experienced asymmetrical relationships in which surely your wife has remained in the dark about everything, but even the guy could have hoped until the end that you were actually a confused homosexual. If in the meantime this confusion has disappeared, at least you could clarify your sexuality and, believe me, it is not a little thing. In my opinion the last thing you can hope for is a three-way relationship because in this way you should expect the situation to become explosive.

Only you can choose what to do, whether to say everything clearly or to aspire to some form of compromise with the situation. But you found yourself in this situation just while you and your wife were planning for a child, these two situations are irreconcilable. Any compromise solution seems unacceptable for both of you, and if you realize this it's better to interrupt the relationship now than later in the presence of children. I'm sorry because I realize that for a bisexual it is anyway much easier to hide one's sexuality but this does not simplify things at all.

LGIAN:

Last week when I tried to understand the situation that I was living, I was abroad for work. I and Enzo had met the preceding Friday for the last time, it had been a nice and long afternoon taken away from work - and partly from my wife - where we had made love and talked, intimately as we often do. It has been a long week, a week full of thoughts, many of which about the situation I am experiencing and full also of silences, many of Enzo. Since last Saturday I have perceived his distance; he was absent for the whole day, he didn't respond to my messages, he closed himself and he replied in an almost monosyllabic manner to my greetings: I understood that something had happened, that something had changed.

And the week went on a little like this, with me looking for him and with him that could be found, yes, but always with an infinite distance between us. Yesterday I returned to the city after this week of travel and I rushed to him in a state of evident tension; the reception was just like I expected it: not to see him waiting for me at the door made me realize in an instant how distant, how far away, but firm and decided was his soul.

We had tea, we talked and I found his speech consistent with what I had al-

ready perceived - and that you yourself had foreseen -. This situation made of his expectations and of the impossibility of living with me a normal relationship was hurting him and, for his own good, he had decided it would be better if the thing ended there. The words were different, the sense very clear and reasoned: so reasoned that I could not tell him anything, except that he was right, with an infinite sadness in the heart, and deep sense of emptiness that I tried and I'm trying still now.

He told me that he had come to this choice after our last conversations we had had last Friday when I would have told him that I certainly wouldn't be able to offer him what he wanted and that I would never leave my wife. When he reminded me of what I said, honestly, I was a bit upset because it's been weeks that on the contrary I'm questioning myself, about my marriage and my life; I don't remember so much firmness in my words and I'm really sorry my words hurt him and made him feel lonely. What I certainly told him on Friday is that the Enzo that I knew and I care so much deserves to live a beautiful love story without all the complications that I have brought with my life in his life. This yes, I said it, to my detriment but to his advantage: it was not his going away from me, but my awareness that he was not totally happy "thanks" to me, that has always made me feel sad and insecure.

He really is a special guy and deserves more, much more, than I can offer him today and have given him to this day. So I acknowledge my faults, but yesterday one of his affirmations hurt me: the meaning was "you never told me the truth, one day you said you wanted me, the other you could not assure me anything, I cannot believe a person like you." This, yes, hurts me, because if there is one thing that I have always put at the center of our relationship this is the full and total sincerity, certainly not lies: it is the confusion I am experiencing that, perhaps, doesn't lead me to always make firm decisions and to act accordingly, but I never wanted to make fun of him, take advantage of him and lie to him. I'm not that kind of person and I would never have behaved like that with someone I love.

He told me that each of us must take his time to think about himself, while remaining a friendly relationship, whose evolution I honestly don't know where it will lead. Speaking about me, he said that I must now think about how to solve the profound crisis I am experiencing with my wife; I'm not sure of this statement. I don't feel that I'm experiencing any couple crisis, but simply an internal and deeply intimate crisis of mine due to the necessity of having to complete myself sharing my life even with a man, not so much from a sexual point of view - that I like, it's obvious - but above all mental and sentimental.

To explain to him my strong need to have even a man next to me I told him something simple, and effective for me: I need to experience every now and

then the sense of "masculine" security that my hug gives my wife, lifting me at least for a few moments from the responsibility of having to always be the one who supports others.

But I think that here I would return to the talk about bisexuality and the difficulties that a bisexual like me lives and will have to live. I don't think that the relationship with my wife has changed in the years or in these months, the mental understanding is always alive like the sexual one; obviously in these months my mind has been occupied by the idea of taking care also of Enzo and of our relationship, I don't hide it, but I'm not sure that this could make my marriage a marriage in crisis.

I will need time to keep thinking about this too. Yesterday as I went down the stairs of his house, I felt a huge distance. I share his choice, his words, his motivations; I share them even though I know I have to face the existence of an emptiness inside me and the awareness of having to continue to look inside myself to try to understand how I imagine my future and what priorities I have to give myself. It will not be easy, because the choices are not easy, and at this point I'm not even convinced I'll ever be able to pursue my total happiness.

Now I have to take some time, silent, to think of myself and free my mind a little. Being able to love two people is a beautiful feeling and I, at this point, I can say I tried it, in different ways and forms, but I tried it and I'm happy with that. Too bad it is not possible to manage its evolution avoiding to harm others. Enzo will remain an important person who has passed through my life and who could continue to play an important role as a friend. I say it will be difficult because I don't know how I can actually react to this new situation and to the lack of his hugs and his smiles.

Today I will see him at work and we said that even today, as we did in the last two months, we will have breakfast together and I will try to show myself peaceful and quiet, and today this will be an embarrassing situation for both of us, but I have my wife, while he'll remain alone. I sincerely hope he returns shortly to his best states of mind. I'm sorry I hurt him, but the affection I have for him has always been very strong and will be so in the future, I'm almost certain. I have always told him: "it would have been better for both of us if in that app I had known someone interested only in a sexual meeting and not a beautiful person like you". In reality today I think exactly the opposite: it was nice to know him, meet him, make love with him, discover with a person like him a part of me that was always hidden. I will always bring a good memory of this experience and I am sure I will always be moved by thinking of him and the intimacy we have reached, more mental than physical.

Hi, R.

## PROJECT:

Hi Lgian, from what you write I understand that Enzo doesn't see you as a bisexual but as a gay man, something very common in situations of this kind. He expects from you the typical reactions of a married gay who at some point goes into crisis with his wife because he decides to give space to his homosexuality, but you are not in crisis with your wife, apart from the fact that you say it explicitly, you're not in crisis exactly because you're bisexual and for you an openness to gay affectivity certainly does not undermine a marriage. For you it is nice to love two people and that's why you tend to avoid considering the problem of the choice between Enzo and your wife as a real problem.

Will Enzo disappear completely from your life? Well ... first of all, as for you, whatever happens, you will not forget him, because you know very well that his going away is not a betrayal but an impossibility; as for him, over time, he might also realize that you also didn't betray him and you didn't lie to him and in this case he might very well try to recreate a relationship even if on other bases, I'm talking about a friendship that is never a trivial thing, but if he finds a possessive partner he can also end up moving away permanently.

In any case, from these experiences you can learn a lot on both sides, above all you can understand that the other is really another and that he has his dreams and his projects and sometimes it is difficult to reconcile different ways of seeing the affective life. I ask you to include this whole discussion (starting from your opening post) in the book "Being Gay", as a document attached to the chapter on bisexuality, because I think this discussion clarifies many concepts and can be extremely useful to several people. Let me know what you think. Obviously, if you don't agree, nothing will be done.

## LGIAN:

Dear Project, sorry if I answer you after such a long time, but I have had busy weeks, both from a business and sentimental point of view! The important thing is that I'm continuing to hear from Enzo and see him. Thanks to your forum, we have spoken more intensely about my / our situation and we are trying to carry on our relationship, even if both with the awareness of not being able to understand and hypothesize the evolution of our relationship. I'm very happy, I admit it, because the feeling I feel is strong and being able to talk to him, to feel his body, to love him, is a wonderful feeling that completes me! As for my story, I'm glad if it can help and support other guys in similar situations. So you can safely use it and publish it in the book "Being Gay". Greetings and thanks again for the support! R.

## PROJECT:

Hi Lgian! I am really pleased to know that your relationship with Enzo continues. This is an uncommon fact that suggests that at the base there was something that is still very strong. Certainly the prospects for the future are not at all obvious but your relationship has resisted the first shocks and this suggests that it could even last in spite of everything. Then there is a big question mark: very balanced bisexuality, yes, of course, but what you write about Enzo suggests that there is a gay prevalence and, if it's so, building a lasting relationship with him becomes a hypothesis much less unreal. Thank you for publishing permission, I will provide as soon as possible!

### 2.2.6 Bisexuality in an online interview

## 1) My age

Thirty years

## 2) My sexual orientation and its evolution

Three or four years ago, after my first gay relationship, I recognize that I'm bisexual, but it's a very difficult, distressing and wearing condition, I continue to live hetero sentimental stories, and strong, very beautiful hetero love, but at the time of getting to the point I block myself, come back to my gay side but after a more or less long period, I miss women in an incredible way. It's a profound restlessness, a desire to always be where one is not.

Of course I have always and only felt love for girls, and I had only sporadically sexual intercourse with guys. My relationships with women are always very gratifying, I like them, I feel a deep attraction towards women but I cannot undertake a love story with them with a capital A. I'm scared, I flee and go back to look for some gay sex adventure, one night and away. I'm afraid to isolate myself emotionally and I told myself that I could not throw myself into a gay love story, because I would miss women, but at the same time, and I stress at the same time, I'm afraid of frustrating this gay side of me that still comes up as soon as I pretend not to see it.

## 3) When and how I realized I was gay

Personally I always knew I had an attraction toward guys, but I never thought I was fully gay. The first episodes so to say a bit destabilizing were from sixth to eighth grade, I masturbated thinking of some of my male classmates, but I masturbated even thinking of some of my female classmates.

## 4) When and how I accepted to be gay

I accepted this gay side, but I would also call it movement, wave, dynamic, starting 4 years ago, but I still don't recognize myself as gay and at the same time I know I'm not straight.

5) The difficulties I have encountered in accepting my gay identity

I have had problems for several years, I live in this fluctuation in a very personal way, I have never told anyone about this emotional and sexual whirlwind, I don't know how it will end in the future I know that going in one direction rather than another would not make me happy.

6) The situations of hardship that I have faced and that I have to face as a gay

Well sometimes talking with gay friends or with people about sexuality, yes, I'm calm, but never having told anyone what I feel I'm always afraid that the person can discover me and therefore judge me badly, also because I'm openly hetero.

7) Who knows about me

Nobody precisely.

8) The relationship with my parents

An immense question. The relationship with my parents is difficult, it has been and will be. I come from a family that I would call poor psychologically, with many emotional problems and a myriad of depressive / frustrating dynamics. Only recently I was able to emotionally cut the umbilical cord and not by chance in coincidence with the affirmation at the rational and conscious level, therefore even at the practical one, of my gay side.

9) My relationship with my friends

Few friends, but with them I have good relationships. I tend to be very suspicious and this perhaps undermines the depth of certain friendships.

10) Where do my knowledge of gay reality come from?

Something from acquaintances, a lot from personal study and research, or simply from curiosity.

11) My relationship with my nakedness and that of others

Well, in a sporting environment I am extremely shy, I have always been very ashamed to take a shower with other guys. When I was a child I invented a thousand excuses not to do it. Of this shyness there is still something left today, for example in my intimate relationships with girls, I cannot sleep



naked. I always need the underpants, which I take off and then put on back after the intercourse.

12) My relationship with masturbation

I masturbate very much for the age that I have, mainly with gay fantasies, since I usually satisfy quite easily my hetero fantasies with girls, on the contrary when I happened to have satisfied those gay, I could not wait to see bare women.

13) My relationship with pornography

Pornography helped me to overcome many barriers, made me a little less modest. Now I satisfy my gay fantasies with pornography.

14) My relationship with meeting sites and erotic chats

Only and exclusively during the periods when the gay side re-emerges, in search of a gay sexual adventure.

15) How I tried to realize my affectivity / sexuality

I didn't try. I've been living for 4 years now my gay sexuality but very slowly, almost a relationship every 8 or 10 months, I don't feel affection for the guys, I live the emotional and sexual sphere instead normally with the female gender apart obviously when my gay side resurfaces.

16) My relationship with girls

Very particular, I never managed to live a love story with a capital A, I fell in love many times, some in an extremely involving way, completely forgetting for some periods my gay side, then when things and situations have required a lasting emotional commitment, I have somehow declared myself unprepared to live it, precisely because I couldn't start a deep relationship with a woman if before I hadn't really understood who I am, this thing is paradoxical, but I repeat, it is source of great suffering. Deep love relationships with women make me afraid, afraid of being abandoned and afraid of suffering. I also thought that the gay side of me, was actually an excuse that I give myself not to finally throw me to live a hetero love story in a full and deep way.

17) My relationship with straight guys

90% of my friends are straight guys, I feel great with them, talking about women, football etc. I've always been one of them.

18) My relationship with gay guys

Problematic, they make me a little afraid and reduce my already low self-

esteem. Only on rare occasions I was about to starting to cultivate some friendship, but in general I avoid them, if not for reserved sex.

19) What strikes me most in a guy  
The physique I think.

20) My previous affective life  
Before 4 years ago, I was searching to discover the female gender, then I experienced great love crashes but just a single true love story, but not deep just as stated previously.

21) My current affective situation  
Hard, I think I'm in love with a girl, physically and emotionally, but in the conditions of current emotional instability, the usual critical moment arrived, and I pulled back, you don't know how much I miss her!

22) My degree of emotional satisfaction  
Absolutely sacrificed by this emotional fluctuation in one sense and the other.

23) My degree of sexual satisfaction  
Satisfying with the female gender, but after a while elusive, the male side I have always lived it in an elusive way and every time I decide to live it, the desire for sex with women returns.

24) The weight of sex in my affective world  
With women, very present and connected with the affective sphere, but I don't always live it as an absolute necessity, just because I say I can do without it, having another type of sex available in which I can take refuge in times when things require a strong emotional investment.

25) What I would like from my boyfriend  
I never had a boyfriend, never thought of living in a gay couple situation.

26) What I think I can give to my boyfriend  
See above.

27) My desires in relation to my emotional / sexual life  
A little balance, the fear, the suffering of living a state of emotional and sexual precariousness wear me out. I am noticing that over the years I tend to be more and more closed in myself, renouncing the opportunity to live a deep love relationship.

28) My frustrations in relation to my emotional / sexual life  
Relate to my desires.

29) What I would like to know about the emotional / sexual life of other  
gay guys  
Experiences similar to mine, if someone experiences my own feelings and up-  
sets.

30) How I consider myself informed about sexual behavior at risk  
Very much.

### 2.2.7 From hetero to bisexual to gay

Hello Project,  
it is 4.40 in the morning of December 27th 2010, an absolutely unusual time  
to write an email, but after spending a few hours reading the forum I decided.  
Actually, the input is another. Last night I discovered the forum, I thought  
it was a very different thing from the usual, then I saw that there was a  
chat and I opened that chat. The guys welcomed me well, and above all it  
seemed to me a place of serious people, polite guys who talk about normal  
things for the pleasure of being together, a few minutes later a guy who had  
a nick that I remember well, gp000, contacted me and we talked a bit, he  
is 23 years old and told me he had talked with other guys in the chat and  
the place seemed really serious to him and he told me that he would contact  
you. Frankly I felt a little displaced but positively, it hardly seemed credible  
to me to be able to find a gay environment where a guy contacts you with no  
other purpose than exchanging a few words. Then we talked a bit, I thought  
he was a great guy. I went out of the chat and I started reading the forum  
and I was there until 4.40. I can say that I have never seen anything like this  
on the net and I like it a lot, so I decided to write to you.

I'm actually a newbie in the gay world and I need to clarify some ideas be-  
cause I confess that I'm a bit scared and finding a serious place for me is  
essential. But now I'll explain it better.

I'm a 25 year old guy and my real problem was my so-called bisexuality. I  
have read some of your articles that have clarified my ideas a lot and have  
confirmed me in a series of convictions to which I had already arrived alone,  
but let's start from the beginning.

In practice, up to 20-21 years old I never had doubts about my sexual ori-  
entation, I liked girls, only girls, I had many stories, and many also with  
sexual implications, I liked a lot such things, especially the idea of winning

the resistance of a girl, however, with hindsight, I think I never really fell in love with a girl. That is, I was living the relationship with a girl as something only mine, she was a bit a way to prove to myself that in those things I knew how to behave.

To let you understand, up to 21/22 years old I had sexual intercourse, it would be better to say I had sexual contacts with a dozen girls, with four I had complete intercourse, with the other ones just mutual masturbation, my fantasies were all straight.

Between 20 and 21 years old at a New Year party I met a girl, Emma (it's not her real name), who took me seriously and tried to build something different with me. At first it was fine, when I was talking about her I used to say "my girlfriend", what I had not done with any of the other girls, I felt grown up, gratified, we also had sexual intercourse and things went very well. It went on like this for a few months, in the meantime I met a guy, Mark (a fantasy name), who was a couple of years older than me, I liked him, we talked often on msn, then we started to go out together and sometimes we stayed talking until the morning. Summer came, Emma went on vacation with her parents and Mark proposed to me to spend a week with him, in a mountain house on the Apennines.

I state that Mark is straight and that at that time I was straight too but that week was certainly the most beautiful week of my life, I felt free, appreciated by Mark, in a sense cuddled, there was an incredible feeling of intimacy, we talked about our relationships with our girls and he was able to understand me.

The first night we stayed in separate rooms, from the second night we stayed in the same room to talk until late. I had a great time, I felt better than with Emma, with her at the end we had to get to sex, it was not bad but for her it was a fixed idea, for me no, with Mark I felt free, without obligations, and so I experienced that in fact with a guy I could have a great time, as with a girl if not even better. We also joked, played, pillow fought, made the fight, but without sexual implications, at least then I thought it was so, in fact, even if I didn't understand it, I was falling in love with Mark.

After the vacation, when Emma came back I came back to her and in practice her company began to be a weigh for me, I noted certain underlining that I didn't like. A lot of things didn't seem to me really mine, at least not 100% mine. With Emma my sexual intercourse continued but the thing for me had a strange taste, it was not like before, I was listless, I tried not to get involved and she realized it, she wanted to know if I had met other girls, but I hadn't met any girl at all. In short, I tried to please her and it was just while I was making love with her that for the first time Mark came to my mind in another way, a kind of substitution of a person, I imagined that

Mark was with me. In the evening I masturbated thinking of Mark. It was the first time that it happened to me while having my fantasy focused on a guy. The feeling was very strange, I had never done such a thing but at the same time I felt very well, I said to myself: I am bisexual, it is evident.

And here my madness began, I tried to contact Mark because I expected from him who knows what, I thought maybe he could fall in love with me, but the only thing I got was a dinner in four in a restaurant. He had eyes only for his girlfriend, Emma only for me and I only for him, a situation in which for the first time I found myself playing the part of the lover, but I recited it well and nobody noticed it. I didn't know who to talk to, it was obvious that I had to forget Mark, I hadn't even the courage to speak clearly with Emma and then I had always worked hard to look a good hetero guy, I had practically self-imposed this behavior. Every time I made love with Emma it seemed to me that I could be heterosexual, then I masturbated thinking of Mark and I thought I was bisexual, after the summer I no longer masturbated thinking of girls, for me there was only Mark.

I want to clarify something, for me there were no guys, there was only Mark and this led me to think that basically I was not gay or bisexual, because I wanted that guy only. I scrupulously avoided pornography because I would have ended up on gay pornography and it would have bothered me, what I felt for Mark I didn't want to confuse it with pornography. I imagined a beautiful love story with Mark, but with a gay Mark able to share it, I said with a gay Mark, not a bisexual Mark, just thinking about this I had the first doubts about the fact that I would never have accepted a bisexual Mark, gay would have been fine but bisexual no, I wouldn't have wanted to share him with anyone.

I imagined instead that I was able to have two loves, one with Emma and one with Mark and that both were in love with me in an exclusive way, I then I hypothesized that such a thing could make sense and anyway I saw myself as a bisexual, also because we can say so, I was doing my best to be bisexual, I considered it a more acceptable thing, closer to a correct behavior, you're in love with a girl and then just a bit with a guy, it seemed a less unusual thing. Sometimes I was tempted to masturbate thinking of Mark and to tell Emma that I didn't feel like having sex with her, but then I forced myself to do exactly the opposite, that is not to think of Mark and make love with Emma because "it's a normal thing".

The situation became more and more absurd and in the end she began to ask me a lot of questions. At the beginning I answered vague things, for example that I was tired, stressed and the like, then because I just couldn't go on and was thinking it would be better to break I made her understand that I felt bisexual and I could not stand some of her reaction, she wanted

to know who had put these ideas in my head, if I had met "some of those", I said no because first of all it was true and then I would never have brought Mark into that story because he had nothing to do with it. I was hoping it would be a good opportunity to close with Emma but it was not like that and the torture started, she wanted to know, she wanted to understand, but according to her what I told her was not true, those things were all things that "some of those" had put into my head.

I tried to make Emma understand that I didn't think it was a trivial thing at all, but she told me that I could not be gay and I told her that I didn't feel gay but bisexual and she insisted that it was just a nonsense and that she knew me well, she started to flirt with me in an absolutely unusual way, she had never done such things before, she started to change her voice as if it were that of a little girl and to show sexy attitudes. I couldn't absolutely stand such things that sounded strange and inappropriate to me, and I told her that I was tired of pretending things that I no longer felt, she went on for a while, then I made her understand that I didn't feel like going ahead and she screamed at me that I was just looking for excuses to dump her because I had found another girl, for her the idea that I couldn't be completely straight was in practice inconceivable.

All this happened between Christmas 2009 and New Year 2010. In practice since January 2010 I was alone again. I don't hide that the first weeks were very hard, I was missing her madly, but I was not missing her as a girl but as a person who could take a little care of me, I have been several times about to recall her because I really couldn't go on, note that at the time I still felt bisexual and I even thought about starting a relationship with another girl and I went close to it but when it came to really getting involved I told myself I was going to do another stupid thing and that I had to take my time to understand. So I did nothing at all. I was alone, totally alone, my parents didn't understand why I had left Emma and thought that I should go to a psychologist but nothing was done about it.

I didn't know where to bump my head but I needed to understand. I began to think that basically I could use dating sites. I surfed a bit on some of these sites but the reaction was of total rejection and I would also say of depression. I told myself that I had nothing to do with those people, it was a logic that I felt completely alien to. Then I put aside the internet for months and I thought I could go to a gay association, in my city there are some, I looked for the addresses, I passed nearby there several times. I left my house with the intention of entering, then I arrived at the destination and pulled straight. I don't feel safe, I need privacy, I understand those who make coming out but it's not for me and then they declare themselves openly gay I should have declared myself bisexual, at least it was what I thought then. I

was beginning to look at the guys on the street and they seemed beautiful, desirable.

This summer I was at the seaside in Puglia alone, I had proposed to look for opportunities to get experience, I was camping, I have known many guys but not even one gay. Now I say gay because I haven't thought of a girl for at least six months and the guys camping in Puglia for me had a very strong sexual appeal that I cannot deny, but it was just fantasy. But why trying with a girl is so easy and trying with a guy is so difficult? I know why, but the result is depressing. After the holidays I would say my bisexuality is over, that is, I have closed another phase of my life but in fact I haven't solved anything, I feel anyway a thousand fears, I'm attracted by the idea of getting to know gay guys, at least to understand how they are really, but I wouldn't want to end up into bad experiences. After a somewhat depressed period, yesterday I happened to arrive on Gay Project and you know the rest.

Bye. Uff25

### **2.2.8 A 36 years old guy between gay and bisexual**

Below you can read the online interview of a 36-year-old guy who lives an important hetero relationship and had experiences with both boys and girls but considers himself a gay "in the impossibility of being gay", who also lives an authentic hetero life but not entirely satisfactory.

1) My age

I'm 36 years old

2) My sexual orientation and its evolution

I lived relationships both sexual and amorous, with both women and men. I am currently with a woman for a few years now, but I am certainly physically attracted to men. So I think I'm gay. Yet even sex with women has always been good, I always sought it and felt it satisfying, but not entirely, in the sense that the attraction for my own sex has never been eliminated. My longest and most important stories have been hetero, but I have always felt the need for erotic fantasies and sex with guys, perhaps because sex with women has never failed me, as it happened for long periods with guys.

3) When and how I realized I was gay

I always knew that I was physically attracted to the guys. Maybe when I was 13-14 years old I still didn't understand if it was curiosity, or I was gay or bisexual, since I also liked going with girls (but I don't understand this

even now). But I think that if being gay means experience sexual attraction for people of the same sex, then I've always known I was gay since I remember.

4) When and how I accepted to be gay

When I met the guy whom I had felt in love with, I realized that it couldn't remain a hidden attraction, an erotic fantasy or a fleeting escapade, I needed that guy in order to feel myself realized with him. I would have accepted my homosexuality and I would have made sure that others would accept it if the story had progressed. He was my best friend (so I thought at the beginning). But he accepted his homosexuality even less than how I accepted mine, practically he didn't accept himself at all as a gay, so after some shy sexual contacts between us, at first a bit for fun, then in a painful back and forth, he wanted to deny everything and reaffirm his heterosexuality. He didn't even talk with me again, perhaps out of fear that I would let this story, that we had lived in the shadows, become public. Anyway it was a relationship that has tied us for about two years.

5) The difficulties I have encountered in accepting my gay identity

Not having a strong and clear sexual tendency (I don't feel neither gay nor heterosexual) has pushed me not to live my feelings and my relationships in the light of the sun. I never seriously thought about coming out, a little out of fear - as everyone, I think - but a little because I've never thought to give up a part of me, one of my sexual components (I had and I have important hetero stories). As for me, I have accepted myself well enough without excessive conflicts. Outside, with others it's another thing.

6) The situations of hardship that I have faced and that I have to face as a gay

The greatest difficulties and sufferings I experience are related to the fact that I live my being gay in the shadows, opening myself only with a few guys and fearing that someone may come to know.

7) Who knows about me

The guy of my second gay story, with whom I had really fell in love (also with a bit of sex), with whom, however, I don't talk anymore, a few gay friends (with them, however, there has always been a shallow friendship, with almost all of them I have had sex, almost all were adventures that lasted a little without too much involvement).

8) The relationship with my parents

Good. I no longer live with them for a long time. They never suspected



anything.

9) My relationship with my friends

Good. I tend to have few real friends, but I care a lot about them, and I attach great importance to the consideration they have of me.

10) Where do my knowledge of gay reality come from?

The knowledge of gay reality I gained is anyway very little, compared to what I would like, and derives minimally from the comparison of my experiences with those of other guys I know who live my same situation, most of my knowledge derives from internet sites like this.

11) My relationship with my nakedness and that of others

I have no problem showing me naked or being with other naked guys or girls.

12) My relationship with masturbation

I live it well. I consider it a healthy and normal satisfaction of our desire. Certainly it is something that stays in the background, something complementary, somehow marginal compared to couple relationships (I mean that I would feel marginally the need for masturbation if the sexual intercourse with a guy were frequent). But having predominantly heterosexual relationships, while I masturbate, homosexual erotic fantasies emerge in an exclusive way.

13) My relationship with pornography

Moderate. Also this can attract me more in periods of prolonged abstention from homosexual intercourse, similarly to the previous point.

14) My relationship with meeting sites and erotic chats

Sometimes I tried to meet guys on the internet (few times with satisfactory outcome), I was driven by the desire to meet people like me with whom to make friends (or maybe I was driven also or only by sex) without showing me in places in which I could risk being known. The erotic chats, on the other hand, don't attract me at all.

15) How I tried to realize my affectivity / sexuality

As for the realization of affectivity, I think I have had several significant stories, the most significant ones have been two with guys and two with girls; the last one is with the woman with whom I live, which emotionally allowed me to realize myself fully and that is the person I love most. The two guys I fell in love with in the past have made me live two stories equally affectively

important in which, however, there was no satisfactory sexuality (with the first almost nothing) most likely for their difficulty to accept themselves for what they were and for the will to self-impose a straight life. I do not know if I feel sexually fully realized. Homosexual relations attract me and I miss them, but they can only be clandestine betrayals of the person I love, with a consequent sense of guilt towards her and terror of being discovered. On the other hand, for me affectivity and sexuality have never been coincident, but the rest of the world does not seem to think so. Patience!

16) My relationship with girls

Great. I am friend of a lot of girls, and like them very much.

17) My relationship with straight guys

Great. I would like to have more time to spend with my friends.

18) My relationship with gay guys

Repressed. In the sense that I have some gay friends and I have no problem attending them. But with those of my circle I cannot declare myself gay and so the relationship remains much more superficial or distorted than I would like. With those I have known outside my circle of straight friends, with whom I can be more open, the relationships could be more free and less conditioned but are much more rare and therefore also unsatisfactory compared to what I would like.

19) What strikes me most in a guy

In addition to the physical appearance? Spontaneity and ease and freedom from any taboo or social convention on sex, nudity, etc. I would say the serenity and naturalness with which he addresses his own drives and relates to those of others.

20) My previous affective life

Always messed up: between falling in love with girls and falling in love with guys, the latter without being able to have full sexual satisfaction. And on the other hand, various sex stories without any emotional implication with girls and guys. I feel a constant tension due to the fact that I cannot fully and exclusively dedicate myself neither to heterosexual relationships nor to gay relationships, and therefore I live never making a choice here or there, having never been fully satisfied neither from one side or the other.

21) My current affective situation

Already for quite some time I have a female partner who emotionally gives

me everything I need. Sex also works well between us. I no longer fell in love with guys, although I almost constantly feel the lack of sexual relationships with other guys, in terms of pure erotic desire, while in the past there may have been a real love. Sometimes I wonder if I would miss sexual relations with women if I had a stable relationship with a guy. I don't know. But I know that with no guy I managed to combine sex and affectivity as with the girl I'm with. This makes me think that I'm fine, even if I miss something. You cannot have everything, life is made of compromises, and so on ...

22) My degree of emotional satisfaction

The story that I am living with my partner satisfies me emotionally, even if the phase of falling in love is now over. Sometimes I wonder if in a relationship between guys there could be a greater understanding or a greater complicity (so it seemed to me in my previous experiences). But maybe it's not like that; these are probably things that vary from person to person more than on the basis of being male or female.

23) My degree of sexual satisfaction

Needless to deny it, physically I miss gay sex, I feel the need for it and I find the way to satisfy it even if too rarely and clandestinely with occasional relationships often unsatisfactory because of the absence of the affective side.

24) The weight of sex in my affective world

Enough. But I feel the two things like on two different levels. When sex and love are mingled in a single person, we can be happy with that person, this is not a theoretical hypothesis, but something that can be realized, even if anyway it is not common.

25) What I would like from my boyfriend

To be able to accept each other for what we are, to be able to tell everything with naturalness and sincerity, to be able to do everything we like not caring about what people think.

26) What I think I can give to my boyfriend

If you love someone you give him spontaneously everything you can if he wants it. The most precious thing would be sincerity, but it is necessary that your partner wants it and can accept it. But I don't feel really sincere and spontaneous in my current relationship: could she really believe in our relationship if I told her that I miss sexual relationships with men?

27) My desires in relation to my emotional / sexual life

Sometimes I think it would be nice to have a friend in my same situation, to be able to have a gratifying sexual relationship without being afraid of being discovered or losing my female partner. So I could be able to satisfy both my sexual and affective impulses. A bit like in "The ignorant fairies" ...

28) My frustrations in relation to my emotional / sexual life

The need to give up on homosexual relationships a bit out of respect for my female partner and a little for fear of being discovered by her. Having unsatisfactory or non-serene homosexual relationships because they are lived in a clandestine manner with occasional and limping relationships on the affective side.

29) What I would like to know about the emotional / sexual life of other gay guys

I would like to know better their life (every life is a universe in itself), I miss it and I have always lacked sharing experiences with other gay guys.

30) How I consider myself informed about sexual behavior at risk

I know a lot (what guys need to know) about safe sex.

### 2.2.9 A gay between a straight and a bisexual

When I was a child, I believed in fairy tales, I believed that in order to obtain anything it was enough to want it deeply, as I grew up I learned on my skin that fairy tales are a way to prevent a child from getting too traumatic contact with reality. When I was a child, I was not a little charming prince and perhaps I looked more like a frog than a prince, but a chubby frog, because I was like that! I struggled to accept myself, but not as a gay (what came later and was not a problem at all) but as a fat boy. Now I see the photos of when I was a child: I was just a lard ball inexorably attracted to cakes and snacks of all kinds.

Of the period before adolescence I remember especially the talks with the psychologist and the dietician, the terror of when they took my blood for the analysis and the obsessive fear when I had to be weighed on a scales because I didn't understand at all why my mother considered it something so fundamental. I didn't give a damn about being fat and I didn't understand why the others were so worried. I hated my mother when she hid me things to eat, spied on me and locked the fridge. In primary school, in a school of nuns, the comrades were polite and nobody was making fun of me and so being fat didn't really give me any problem.

The trouble started in the sixth grade. As soon as I entered the school,

they gave me the first nickname: Ciccio! [something like "fatty"] At first I didn't understand why, then I slowly understood. The school environment was bad. The teachers struggled a lot to be respected, we teased them and laughed like crazy and they tried to keep us as calm as they could, the math teacher threatened to upload us with homework, and the teacher of Italian threatened us the same way to upload us with long written summaries to do at home. We had a young lady as a Gymnastics teacher, who showed us how to do the exercises, she was very good at doing exercises, but we were good for nothing!

Starting from the first gym classes I began to feel marginalized, it was the first time I felt so. In primary school we didn't do Gymnastics at all, but from the sixth grade the teacher didn't let us play and didn't allow us to waste time and the gym class started with a run that never ended. The teacher made me do two laps, then stopped me, while the others kept running, I and another boy had to stretch and relax while lying on the ground and the other boy was also chubby, not exactly like me but almost. The teacher didn't make us get tired, then I realized that since I was too fat I could have problems and that was why the teacher was careful with me. When my parents went to the interview with the teachers they asked if they would do better to ask for the exemption and the teacher said that asking for exemption would certainly be a mistake and that I would have to attend a gym regularly.

In the first week of the sixth grade I had learned a very long series of bad words of which I didn't even know the meaning. In practice in a very short time the mockery of the companions, but also the pushes and the blows, focused on two kids, I was one of them: "Ciccio" and the other was "Recchia" [derived from the Italian dialect word "Ricchione" or "Recchione" used vulgarly as a synonym of homosexual], a slim and blond boy who was systematically placed in the middle and beaten up. I didn't understand why they called him Recchia and I thought it was because he had big ears (in Italian "orecchie"), but in reality they were not big, it took me a couple of years to get to understand the real why.

In the seventh grade my classmates, or at least some of them, must have begun to understand something more about sex, the fact is that, even if I didn't understand why, they hugged Recchia from behind and held him tight and Recchia tried to wriggle to run away, if he could not, he reacted screaming and sometimes he would start crying, and then they mocked him heavily, they demanded that he sit down on the legs of the other companions and someone tried to put hands in the middle of his legs, it is at this point that I began to have a first vague idea of what sexuality was.

Recchia made me tenderness, I never made stupid jokes against him to put

him in trouble and if I saw someone who tried to mock him I defended him and the others stayed calm, because I was much bigger and stronger than them. In the middle of seventh grade, Recchia changed school (then I realized that he couldn't stand bullying of my classmates) but we continued to meet at least once a week, I was fine with him, he never mocked me and when I went to his house, his parents always prepared for me something to eat: pizza or sweets.

When I was in eighth grade, Recchia started to become a really nice guy and I started to fantasize about him, I liked him very much and practically I started to masturbate always thinking of Paul, that's his name. I imagined that he was gay and that he was in love with me, very unlikely thing because he was handsome while I was still fat, I had grown tall but I was still very heavy. We did the eighth grade examinations in two different schools and then we met together in the ninth grade, starting a scientific high school. He had told me he would attend the classic high school but then I found him in my classroom, I don't know if it happened by chance (I don't think so), but it happened like that.

We started to study together, the thing worked and then I did everything not to lose ground because spending all afternoons with Paul was like being in heaven. The school was difficult and we studied a lot but we didn't get scared. One day one of our female friends comes to me and tells me that Paul had told her that I'm a special boy; I feel very gratified by this. We arrive in the 11th grade, Paul is now the idol of the girls and also of the teachers and I feel proud that he considers me a friend. Obviously he is the center of all my sexual interests, but it seems to me not only too good for me but too interested in girls, however we continue to study together.

When we are almost at the end of the annual school trip we end up in the same hotel room, we talk all night long, even about sex, and he tells me about a girl that he likes very much, I listen and try to answer as I can, then he asks me about me and since I really trust him I tell him that I think I'm gay but not only, I also tell him that I'm in love with him, he looks at me puzzled, then makes a long sigh blowing out all the breath he has in his lungs and tells me: "Oh well, it happens! I'm sorry that I cannot share your sentiments, because for me there are only girls, if I ever fall in love with a boy, that boy will certainly be you! I know it's a small consolation ... All the same as before?" I reply: "Sure!" And actually nothing changed between us, or better our relationship has improved, I felt free and happy to have a friend like Paul.

Then in the middle of the 13th grade I made my metamorphosis and from the fatty boy I was I become a butterfly, I lost many kilos and according to what they tell me, I became a handsome guy, I would have hoped the guys

would follow me and instead only girls followed me. I often consulted with Paul on how to keep girls at a distance because he too had the same problem even if the situation was completely different.

After graduation Paul went to study in another city and in practice we lost almost all contacts. I enrolled in Engineering, dreaming of being able to meet another Paul, but this time gay, and to finally be able to live a love affair with him. For me Paul was a very important person at all levels, he was not gay, ok, but we were friends in the true sense of the word, he basically had known everything about me and nothing had changed and then he didn't talk about me to anyone. Let's say that being accustomed to him, was also somehow a little problem, he embodied all my dreams, he was not gay, but for me it was like he was gay, this way, thinking of him, I had built in my mind the myth of the gay who is always good, who respects his neighbor and seeks a serious emotional life.

In the faculty we are few, there is a fair percentage of girls, so the number of guys is quite low, I would say about twenty, apart from me, obviously gay, some others there should be but everyone keeps well perched in his privacy, except for heterosexuals, but they must think above all to study more than to stay with the girls. In short, I look around but there is not even the shadow of a gay. I make friends with a guy in my class, I immediately realize that he has nothing to do with Paul, he is a not bad boy, but for me he has never been an object, I don't say of erotic fantasies but not even of curiosity. I had not tried to get news about him like I did with another couple of my colleagues, just because I was not interested in him.

The friendship between us has begun by chance and I think that he too cared little about me, our friendship could perhaps have been useful in order to study together, but there was no real need to study together neither from his point of view nor from mine. Well, I didn't give importance to the thing, in a period before the "exemptions" [tests carried out periodically during the course, which, if passed with good grades allow to be exempt from the final written test.], we studied together just a few nights. Seen up close he was not so bad and I told myself that since certainly I would never find another Paul, it was worthwhile accepting what the convent passed, between us there was a little more confidence and he started talking about girls. He told me that he had a girlfriend but adding that she was "not enough" because he also needed "other".

I asked him if he was in love with his girl and tells me yes, the speech went on and after a long back and forth he told me that he was bisexual, I, given my total inexperience, faced the situation using a wrong equation: "bisexual = gay" and I was wrong another time. I had found a guy who would have been happy with me but he was not like Paul ... anyway I said to myself,

"This guy must really be gay." (gay or bisexual it was basically the same for me at that time) And I went on taking for granted that his world was exactly like mine. I didn't know what to do. Saying: "I'm gay" would be perhaps the right thing to do but, frankly, I didn't trust him too much and then I was also afraid he could take the lead of staying with me, what I was not at all convinced of wanting, I believe, more not than yes.

I continued to be a straight friend, but evidently he had a long eye and aimed far away, where I didn't think he was coming. He introduced me to his girl, what I would never have expected, and he made sure that we three would meet many times. I said to myself: "If you want to go out with me, ok, but what about the girl? Don't meddle me with things I have nothing to do with!" But there was a flaw in my reasoning, I had slowly begun to assume that he understood how things really were, even though I had never admitted anything. I said to myself: "If he is not an idiot he must have understood!" At a certain point I realized that the girl was beginning to consider me a confidant. She phoned me to tell me about his business and in practice to make me understand that she had problems with her boyfriend because she thought the guy was gay. I asked her what she deduced it from and she told me that the guy was never there on Wednesdays, I, perhaps naively, told her that on Wednesdays he never came to classes and she grimaced as if to say that she expected it, then asked me if I knew anything and I found myself in a terrible embarrassment, because I knew but I couldn't tell her anything so I had to lie, but I didn't like it at all. In short, I became the confidant of the girl, who called me almost every day and on Wednesday she came to the university canteen to have lunch with me.

I finally had to tell the guy how things were and he confessed to me that things were no longer going well with the girl and that maybe he was not really bisexual but gay and that he didn't feel like going along with the girl. In short, after a few days, a Tuesday night he tells me that he had left the girl because it is not something for him, on Wednesday at the table I see the girl who confirms the fact but the time is very short and we decide to meet again in the evening. We go to the pizzeria, then in the car she unleashes herself with me and starts crying and tells me a sentence that puts me in alarm: "I cannot stand any more gays! I need a real man, I'm just fine with you!" I said to myself: "Oh my God! But look what a rascal! He cut the rope and dumped the girl!" I had to appeal to all my creative spirit to explain to the girl that I was already busy and that my girlfriend called me every night on skype. She felt very bad, though obviously she couldn't take it out on me.

When I saw him the next day at the university, I asked him where he was going on Wednesday, because I thought he had found a guy, and he told me: "I see another girl!" I told him: "Girl? But didn't you feel gay?" And he



replied: "Not exactly 100% gay". In the evening I called Paul and I told him the whole story and he told me that he had been courting a girl for months but she kept him at a distance, then a female friend of the girl told him that the girl didn't want him because she thought he was gay! Paul gay? Only one who does not reason at all can think of such a thing. Then Paul told me laughing: "I think it would have been better if we had got together!" And it all ended with this joke: Paul!!! But why are the beautiful and intelligent guys always straight?!

### 2.2.10 Bisexuality without trauma

Hi Project,  
another summer is over, this blessed season in which I love to switch off from everything, especially from most of the technologies that necessarily accompany me throughout the rest of the year. Summer for me means peace, nature, tranquility. I surround myself with the closest friends with whom I share virtually every moment of the day in a sort of regenerating community experience. But now it is September 1, 2015, the summer is over and with the return to the internet I accidentally came across your site.

How did I? Like many, looking for erotic stories with a gay background, but inevitably I stopped to read many of the interesting articles and contributions of those who follow you. It was just after midnight and having left friends, returning home I decided to write to you for a number of reasons: first of all to express my appreciation for your cultural operation that is clearly distinguished by a certain carnival subculture so popular in the gay world, partly also to share my experience so as to make you participate in my perspective that is inevitably far away from yours, while I'm stressing anyway my respect for your conscientious approach to gay issues.

I would begin by talking a little about myself, my life and the evolution of my sexual sphere. My name is Mark, I'm 27, gay for 5 years. Indeed, as ironically I like to think more potential bisexual than gay. I was born in a small village in southern Italy in a large family, surrounded by four sisters of age very close to mine. My family, I would say, is traditionalist but without particular excesses beyond a bit of religious folklore that on the other hand I cannot criticize.

The discovery of the female world takes place about the end of the primary school, perhaps a little earlier. As for erections I distinctly remember having had them even when I was very young, before the age of six to let you understand. But it was some physical reaction that I couldn't explain. At the end of the primary school instead it became clear that they were the girls who provoked this mysterious phenomenon as I discovered by chance

watching some showgirls on television. Thus I entered the long period of healthy teenage masturbation. Every occasion was good to give me to the onanism defying any risk of being discovered by parents or sisters. The bathroom was monopolized for hours, I woke up at night to watch local TV porn channels and things of this kind. In short, that an adolescent masturbates may also be normal but certainly I should have taken a bit of precautions not to be caught in the act. Meanwhile, slowly, some of my friends began to break through the female world. I didn't consider myself beautiful, but seeing now the old photos of that period instead I would say that I was a pretty handsome guy. I used to talk to the girls, even joke and have fun but ... I wouldn't in no case have thought about to overcome a certain threshold. I could not really. I was just a handsome guy.

And while everyone grew, matured and got engaged, I until the end of the high school I didn't realize anything at all. Yet I liked a lot of girls and I think a lot of girls liked me! Patience, my character limits were those and I couldn't do anything about. I have to attend university, I transfer to Naples, the big city. I leave the placid village and enter a new dimension. My first years are very good, I dedicate myself body and soul to the study that I'm passionate about, but I have very few friends, mostly male students always horny but always inconclusive. At that time I have a small crush too but nothing goes to port, I talk, I just talk.

I proceed in my career as a talented wanker thanks to an internet connection that is always faster. I believe that pornography is one of the most underrated themes of recent years. Although I'm neither a psychologist nor a sociologist, I believe that its influence on the construction of the sexual sphere of an entire generation is colossal and monstrous. While really every taboo is overcome by our media society, we speak very little about this reality, which is everyday life for many guys, and I think even scientific studies don't care it at all.

But let's get back to me. I don't know exactly when I started but one fine day, when the end of the university was approaching, I began to realize that my attention during the porn movies moved from the female figures to the male ones. For a while I began to select videos with more attention to the actors than to the actresses. Soon I switched to bisexual porn and then I joined the gay one. Now, in my head I never had the fantasy of playing the role of women. But I was beginning to feel attracted to male beauty and after the discovery of gay pornography, in which I liked clearly to see the bodies of both guys, I projected my image more on the active partner than on the passive. In short, a substitution of the object of desire was essentially occurring in my head but with a continuity of my role during the sexual act. I have never given so much importance to the loss of virginity but gradually I was always more eager to have a real sexual experience. But how? One day

I decided to contact an ... escort. Because today they are called so. He was a handsome guy, a couple of years younger than me who welcomed me very happy in his apartment and probably was used to customers much older and wealthy (as well as unsightly), asked me a really ridiculous amount of money, I would say symbolic. It must be said that actually we didn't do much and I only stole a little time from him because, as I had planned, I didn't want to go all the way. When he started to take the condoms, I stopped him, kissed him and asked to continue our little games, almost foreplay until we both came at the same time. Perhaps I had some scruples of conscience, perhaps fear. I cannot say it.

At the end he asked me if we wanted to stay in touch like friends in the future but I told him what I thought, that I liked it but I had discovered this things just recently and I didn't feel like it. I had just had my first sexual experience and even homosexual. But I still felt something else. He was the exact stereotype of the gay guy you see on TV, I definitely not. Yet I had liked him and also a lot. The first experience somehow went well.

Time passes, even a lot. My pornographic tastes fluctuate while in everyday life I still suffer the great charm of women. For a long time, I don't know why, but I don't feel any attraction to guys I see. Sometimes I dwell on some nice guy, I think he is nice, maybe I'd like to know him maybe kiss him but nothing more. I don't really drool behind the guys like behind girls. Girls always give me erotic images, of a sexual nature while guys don't. It's a different thing, with guys it's still pornography stuff.

Above all my friends, the old and new ones, I see them as friends and that's it. I do not talk to them about my experience or about my new trend, I've never felt the need to tell the truth, perhaps because in any case, my way, I've always been a guy with great respect for everyone's privacy. I don't like being asked delicate questions and I do consequently with my friends. I appreciate when someone opens his soul with me but for this I don't think I have the right, even towards a friend, to subject him to an interrogation, even if I see that he is hiding something from me. If my friend hides something from me, he certainly has his reasons, and even more a friend should understand such things. Perhaps I'm strange but I still see things this way. However my life with women, apart from some small parenthesis, remains hanging on a nail. I have short relationships with some girls but at some point I always abandon the story.

Once I go to a prostitute, a beautiful girl but ... there are some problems during the act. With a girl with whom I had sex months ago all right, with her who was so beautiful, there is nothing to do, but she is not surprised at all and takes it lightly. However, such meetings, besides being sometimes a bad and sad thing it's also a luxury that I cannot afford anymore.

Let's say I'm a guy ... not a cool guy, but a nice guy, even joyful and easy-going, so I have some chance of getting guys in dating sites. I throw myself on the gay dating sites. In recent years I have had several occasional meetings, always with guys my age, clearly we had sex but only and always with condom and always with the utmost respect for each other. I have tried as much as possible in such a strange (and insane) situation to keep very strange characters away. I have rarely been more than once with the same guy. This has been my way for a long time to give a purely sexual dimension to these meetings, to build a cage around them to prevent them from ending up in friendship. Let me be clear, with every guy I meet, I relate from man to man, that is, with the maximum spontaneity and the maximum humanity as it comes natural to me. Even if it was always about sex and not about love, in the before and after (but also during) I always managed to ... how to say, to share spontaneously a nice moment avoiding to give life to absurd porn movie scenes of a very low category. In fact, at least sometimes I have tried the annoying feeling of being treated not as a person but as a sex toy or something similar.

Until this point nothing has been said about love.

On closer inspection I have always avoided it perhaps in the consciousness of being in the end a guy endowed with a certain sensitivity and fragility, for which I have always locked me up to protect myself from the danger of feeling love for another guy. A condition badly accepted perhaps more by myself than by the people who love me, thank God they are numerous, and I am sure that they would forgive me this stupid fault that is not to blame. After all, as I said at the beginning, I always have the impression of being a frustrated homosexual and a potential bisexual, simply unable to relate to people. Thinking about it, too often I find myself taking a crush indistinctly both for boys and girls.

The quality that I value most in a person is simplicity that is expressed with a sincere laugh and a calm heart. In fact, probably having gained my sexual experiences with guys through occasional meetings with people who often only seek sex, I reinforced in me the idea that it is possible to really build a relationship only with girls. A stupidly romantic idea and evidently deformed by my perspective.

This is what I think I understood by browsing the pages of your blog: there are gay people who are normal. It seems stupid to say so but I realize that probably if I had started my sexual adventures on dating sites for hetero people I would have made an equally negative idea of women, but in this case I would have been wrong.

So thanks, Project, and good work.

Mark

### 2.2.11 Bisexuality, prejudices and ostracism

What follows is a text posted by a gay guy on the Italian Gay Project Forum, it is a very important document because it clearly summarizes all the perplexities that a relationship with a bisexual raises in a homosexual guy. This is not a strictly individual reaction. As I have seen through talks with dozens of gay guys who have had relationships with bisexual guys, the post below shows the reactions of almost all gays (especially those not openly out).

Unfortunately, I feel compelled to face what is in my opinion one of the thorniest issues in the world of sexuality: bisexuality, from a viewpoint of prejudices and marginalization. I know that now I will have the whole bisexual community against me, but I beg you to at least appreciate my good will to overcome my fears and prejudices on this issue, because, we must be sincere, unfortunately there are many people who harbor stereotypes about bisexuals, and using the word "people" I mean the vast majority of heterosexuals and even homosexuals. I beg you to identify yourself first of all in my point of view, in the way of thinking of a gay guy who, in his experience, has seen many discrepancies between words and deeds. I listen to your words, but for me the facts are fundamental, without facts and demonstrations, the words are zero for me, this in any case.

I'm here to write because I've had a lot of contacts gone wrong with bisexual guys, who have deeply hurt me, and now I find it difficult to relate to other bisexual guys. Staying in couple with a bisexual for me means to be perpetually in competition with the other sex, with the awareness that, willy-nilly, a girl will always be privileged compared to me, because let's face it, a girl is able to give a guy much more than what I can give him. With me a guy would have to contend with the judgment of the people and could not have a family, because two guys cannot procreate. Being with a girl, for equal sexual pleasure, would be much easier: acceptance, approval from parents, marriage, children, happy old age etc..

Anyway I find scary the number of bisexual adults who, despite being engaged / married are looking for a "sex friend" on the most popular entertainment sites without any obligation and with "the maximum discretion". My first bisexual boyfriend had a female best friend who at the same time was his former girlfriend, and they often spent time together. This is something I didn't stand (you're thinking about a lack of trust, and maybe you're right, but I need to write everything down otherwise it would not make sense to stay here writing this post and wasting time that could be spent studying), and it was one of so many reasons why I decided to leave him.

The second bisexual guy I was with gave me several stab wounds from this

point of view: "Put your soul in peace, my family will never know you, or if you really want, you can introduce yourself as a friend." These are phrases that make you feel very bad, it is humiliating that your partner is ashamed to be with you up to the point of having to hide, it is humiliating to think that if in my place there had been a girl this sentence wouldn't even have crossed the antechamber of his brain.

It hurts when your partner tells you that if you were a girl he would have kept you by the hand quietly, and instead ...

Even the intimacy with a bisexual guy I didn't live it happily: all with the fixed idea of anal intercourse already from the first meetings, as if it were something essential, absolutely not negligible that, sooner or later, absolutely must be done: "This position sooner or later we will experiment it." I'm an anxious guy, I admit, but to hear these phrases in intimacy just makes me even more anxious and stressed, and of course leads also to the loss of desire on my part. Or it is I who see the anal intercourse as the antechamber of hell, sometimes I arrive to think that maybe I am not gay just for this reason. In any case I cannot stand that the other guy, bisexual, pours on me his straight sexual fantasies as if he were in bed with a woman, I am not a substitute or an imitation of a girl, so I don't want to be treated as such! Somehow it is as if I felt inferior in bed compared to a bisexual guy: if I think for example of his experience with me, and I think he could have done it with a girl, I feel somewhat less virile. I know that all these thoughts are probably only in my mind and are unfounded, but it is a torment that every time makes itself felt and I cannot get rid of it.

I think I have touched all the points roughly, I conclude by saying that I'm aware that the prejudices gay and straight people have towards bisexuals inevitably lead the latter to self-ghettoize, to create a little space located in the limbo between the two extremes and somehow apart from both the hemispheres, and this is what led me to write this post. I hope you don't attack me, because I needed to tell you my experiences to make you understand who I am, and I'm happy to hear from you because you can help me to go beyond my fears and insecurities.

Nico

# Chapter 3

## COMING OUT

### 3.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 3.1.1 Homophobia and conformism reaction

As we have already observed, guys who recognize their sexuality as homosexuality inevitably feel, in many countries over the world, that for others their sexuality is object of jokes or at least that to others it seems strange and that the judgment that others give it is negative. These guys, since very young are fully aware that in order not to incur reactions of intolerance or homophobia, both at the level of friendships and social ambitions, one must keep one's own homosexuality hidden. Since, generally, seeing the behavior of a gay guy it's not practically possible to understand his sexual orientation, and therefore gay guys can be identified as such only if they speak specifically of their own sexuality, in the great majority of cases these guys don't publicly declare themselves gay and don't show any behavior that could allow others to identify them as gays but rather tend to conform externally to generally shared hetero behaviors. Therefore, gay guys not only do not talk about guys with their friends or in the environments they attend but sometimes they act as heterosexuals so as not to be identified as gay and to be integrated into the peer group.

#### 3.1.2 Familial homophobia and defense strategies

As often the speeches heard in the family contain homophobic messages, a gay boy realizes the need not to reveal anything of his homosexuality even in the family or rather especially in the family. But since a gay boy lives and must continue to live within his family, he is somehow compelled to take the worry not to leave traces and therefore, for example, to erase the chronology

on the computer, not to buy books or newspapers that talk about homosexuality, to erase the memory of the phone or to memorize the numbers using acronyms and not the real names of his friends and to avoid watching TV broadcasts such as films or debates on the theme of homosexuality, together with his parents.

In the rare case in which parents exert an explicit pressure pushing towards heterosexuality with classic questions like: "Do you have a girlfriend?", A gay boy is led to elaborate a strategy that allows him to circumvent the question without attracting attention. Probably, however, for a gay boy the most serious discomfort resulting from the homophobia of his parents, consists in not being able to attend the boys he would like to know. To indicate the condition of gay boys who don't declare themselves gay, it's commonly used the expression "being in the closet", that is, being closed in the closet and well protected.

### 3.1.3 Coming out and outing

For a gay boy it is not easy to keep everything for himself and not to confide at all with anyone, in fact, a gay boy often perceives by intuition, right from the speeches made with friends, that a male friend or a female friend of his probably would not react badly after learning that their friend is gay. The gay boy then enters a difficult phase of transition in which the emotional and communicative needs, related to being able to talk freely about oneself, collide with the need to avoid becoming an object of ridicule and of other people's gossip. So he gradually matures the idea of being able to speak freely at least with a person he trusts a lot, that is he matures the idea of making what is commonly called "coming out".

Almost all gay boys, sooner or later, come to a coming out limited to one or a very few people chosen with the utmost caution. Obviously if a gay guy does not trust anyone and carefully monitors all his own behavior, no one can come to understand that he is gay, while if he speaks, even only with a person, he takes the risk that the person who is aware of his homosexuality can spread the news sometimes even without realizing it. When this happens, we are faced with what we call "outing" (which could be translated as "being pulled out" of course from the closet). A gay who comes out, even with only one person, therefore takes a risk of "outing", but if that person is a serious and reliable person the risk is minimal even if it is never completely null. A young person, therefore, carefully choosing the recipient or the recipients of his coming out, can minimize the risk of "outing" very effectively.



### 3.1.4 Declared and undeclared

It is quite common to use the distinction between "publicly declared" gays and "not publicly declared" gays, very often most synthetic expressions are used: "declared" and "undeclared", implying the adverb "publicly", because it is assumed that all gay guys, sooner or later, make a limited coming out with people they totally trust. As we have observed, the overwhelming majority of gay guys don't declare themselves gay publicly, it is estimated that in Italy gays publicly declared are about 4% of the gay population, in other countries the estimated percentages are very variable because of the social sanction against homosexuality. In countries where homosexuality entails the death penalty no one declares himself gay, in those in which gays are entitled to marriage with people of the same sex and to adoption of children, gays publicly declared are certainly a much larger fraction of the gay population.

In general, between a declared gay and an undeclared gay there are strong differences in the interpretation of the concept of "being gay". However, these great differences are largely due to the cultural environments that can be very different. In essence, declaring oneself or not is a choice strongly influenced by the social environment precisely because the level of riskiness connected to declaring oneself is enormously variable from situation to situation. Often, undeclared gays are led to think that the declared ones have declared themselves in order to have easier access to sex by attending gay-labeled environments, while declared gays are led to think that the undeclared ones are essentially cowards who don't have the courage of their actions. In both cases these are biases that have no basis, precisely because they don't not take into account that the environments around the guys can be and are in fact extremely different.

The family environments, even before the social ones, in which gays live are so radically different and so influential on the choice whether to "come out" or not that it makes no sense to compare individual situations related to non-comparable contexts. Today, in Italy, that is in a country where homophobia is still deeply rooted (the parliamentary path of the anti-homophobia law, which has not been approved, is enough to understand the right dimension of the problem), except for exceptionally favorable situations, the generalized "coming out" is not advisable. Many guys are led to think, and sometimes they are even led to think so by gay associations, that the generalized coming out is a moral duty, a demonstration of courage and in some way a due act. In reality we must never forget that coming out is in itself a risky act.

Homophobia at school, at university and in the workplace is evident from many episodes of chronicle and moreover many homophobic discriminations

are carefully hidden behind other motivations just to avoid them appearing as homophobic discrimination. It should never be forgotten that the generalized coming out is a gesture from which one cannot go back, no matter what consequence it may derive from it, and therefore it is essential to reflect very carefully on the risks the coming out entails, before declaring oneself publicly gay.

### 3.1.5 Coming out with parents

A very particular type of coming out is the coming out with parents. In this regard, many variables must be considered with the utmost care. It must be taken into account that, if and when it arrives, the coming out with parents is the last chronologically. Parents, however good parents they may be in other respects, can be absolutely unprepared for the coming out of a son and radically incapable of evaluating things in a realistic way because they are often influenced by various conditioning and preconceptions. Taking for granted the ability of parents to understand and accept the homosexuality of the son is very imprudent.

If a coming out with a friend is not taken in the right way, it is possible to interrupt relations with that friend, but when it is the coming out with the parents not to be taken in the right way, cohabitation must anyway almost always continue and can definitely become unpleasant. There are still situations in which parents come up to deny economic assistance to the son during his studies: two parents who had a gay son who was studying in another city, had rented a mini-apartment for the son and payed monthly the rent for him, once they knew that their son was gay, they stopped paying the rent and forced him to give up his studies. In some cases, an adult gay son has been moved away from home to separate him from the brothers because the parents thought it could be a danger for the brothers.

The situations of radical rejection are actually quite rare. In most cases, however, to the coming out with the parents follows the establishment of a cold climate, the homosexuality is censored and removed and parents pretend that nothing has happened or get behind the classic the tendency to deny with phrases like: "You will see that it will pass! It's just a phase" or "You just say it to provoke me!"

The medicalization reaction is quite common: "Tomorrow we'll look for a good doctor and we'll see if we can do something" It is also quite common to refer to the psychologist, usually a psychologist indicated by parents. In all these situations it is evident that parents are unable to understand and accept and that the coming out was a hasty choice. Often the parent feels guilty and attributes the homosexuality of the son to an educational error or

considers the homosexuality of the son as a kind of condemnation resulting from some fault of the parent himself.

Sometimes, over time, the situation improves and when the parents realize that their son's gay friends are boys like everyone else and that being gay is not synonymous with getting into trouble, they end up getting over their fears and accept the homosexuality of the son. It should be borne in mind that seeing parents talking quietly about homosexuality and maybe even seeing that they have gay friends, doesn't offer any guarantee in relation to their ability to accept their son's homosexuality. Speaking of homosexuality in general, considering homosexuality as something foreign and far away, and accept to have a gay son are two absolutely different situations.

Often gay boys, who have not explicitly declared themselves with their parents, think that parents have nevertheless come to understand that they have a gay son from some of behaviors of the son himself and from some of his speeches that the son himself considers as implicit declarations of homosexuality. These are generally presumptions that don't correspond to reality, because a parent, in front of his son's explicit discourses, puts the so-called "defensive interpretation" into play, that is, he interprets the implicit discourse according to the direction that minimizes the problems from his point of view. In this case the parent tends to avoid the interpretations that would lead to the hypothesis of the homosexuality of the son. Classical is the example of the interpretation of the fact that the son doesn't have a girlfriend:

"My son didn't have a girlfriend but he had some female friends and went out with them too, he had nothing against girls, girls frequently courted him but he was too much busy with studying, swimming, playing the guitar, organizing concertos given his interest in playing rock music in public with his friends, and moreover he has always been very serious and always put his studies in the first place.

He had to graduate and couldn't waste too much time. He studied every day with a friend and then they took their exams and passed them and I was happy. Those very rare times I tried talking to him about girls he told me that at the time he had a lot of other problems and that he wanted to finish his studies first. I didn't see anything strange in this whole speech.

Later when my son told me that he was gay I just fell from the clouds and he didn't know how to explain it because he thought I had already understood everything given that he had made me half a speech, but I hadn't understood anything from that speech."

### 3.1.6 Unintentional coming out

So far we have talked about a coming out as a result of a more or less meditated and conscious decision but anyway as a result of a decision. It happens, unfortunately quite frequently, that the strategies adopted by a gay boy to protect his own privacy don't work because of unforeseen events, in these cases the boy incurs, when he least expects it, in the unpleasant experience of an involuntary coming out, in which to the classic problems of the coming out must be added the fact that it is an absolutely unwanted event of which the guy becomes aware when the damage is already done. Common examples of involuntary coming out are:

- 1) leaving the computer open on a gay site
- 2) leaving a conversation in chat on a gay topic readable
- 3) not realizing that a gay-themed book has slipped under the bed.

In these situations the coming out results from factual data and denying it is something completely meaningless. The boy who has stumbled into an involuntary coming out (very often with his parents) can blame only his own carelessness.

### 3.1.7 Privacy violations and forced coming out

When a gay boy who does not want to declare himself publicly gay behaves imprudently, especially in the family, and gives no explanation of behaviors such as going out and returning late at night, neglecting old friends, spending a lot of time on the internet, parents can begin to suspect and cautiously investigate their son's behavior. In some cases, parents arrive up to secretly read the text messages of the son stored in the phone, but also to secretly listen to his conversations on the phone and even to enter their son's computer in order to read, without his knowledge, the chronology of the sites he usually opens, to read his e-mails and the texts of his dialogues in chat.

Sometimes from these investigations the homosexuality of the son clearly emerges and all his acquaintances also emerge. In these cases the situation runs rapidly toward a showdown in which the boy feels somehow forced to declare his own homosexuality, but in fact parents are already fully aware of it. Situations of this kind, precisely because they are preceded by an intrusive investigation in violation of the privacy of the son, lead to the definitive collapse of any possibility of dialogue between parents and sons and are very heavy for the boys.

However, if a boy foresees a possible investigation by his parents, he usually manages to take adequate measures, such as entering password protection,

calling friends on the phone only from outside the home and other similar measures. In these cases it often happens that the suspicion of the parents doesn't lead to anything concrete, but a parent, arrived at this point, after having become aware that the privacy of the son is really inviolable and protected with the utmost care, is not led to think of the possible homosexuality of the son but of objectively dangerous situations such as the use of drugs and the involvement of the son in unreliable friendships. In such situations, when it comes to the showdown, the gay boy must face the so-called forced coming out that, while being unpleasant, is generally welcomed by parents as a release from much larger fears.

### **3.1.8 Coverage relationships and defensive coming out**

When a gay boy, to avoid being identified as gay, comes, more or less consciously, to have a girl for reasons of coverage and slowly pushes himself to delude that girl, as if it were a real love story, it is not uncommon for the boy to end up being a victim of his own defensive game, that is to say he ends up feeling trapped in the story with the girl, a story that inevitably, sooner or later, families will come to know and almost always accept and that will start to fuel expectations of various kinds and therefore to create progressively tighter ties. This way a gay guy is very likely to go, step by step, towards an official engagement and a long-term marriage. When these situations become too tight, it sometimes happens, as an extreme choice, that the guy resorts to the so-called "defensive coming out", that is, to telling the girl that he is gay and that things cannot go on just exactly for this reason. Obviously, immediately after, the families, both of the girl and the guy, become somehow officially aware of the homosexuality of the son, but paradoxically, the outcome of the defensive coming out is very often incredulity, in this case the gay guy, who had managed very well to convince the others that he was hetero, will have to struggle hard to make them understand that his coming out is authentic and is not a vulgar pretext invented by a hetero to save himself from an unwelcome marriage.

### **3.1.9 Coming out to a guy with whom one is in love**

A very particular type of coming out is that addressed to a guy with whom one has fallen in love in the presumption that he too is gay and can respond with the desired phrase: "I'm gay too!" If in general it is difficult to evaluate in advance the possible consequences of a coming out with friends and family, it is much more difficult to evaluate the consequences of a coming out addressed to a guy with whom one has fallen in love because here the

judgment is easily distorted by the fact that there is a deep sexual and emotional involvement that leads us to see things as we would like them to be more than as they really are.

I would like to emphasize in this connection a very particular aspect, which is clarified by the following example.

”My boyfriend and I started dating only as friends, then everything came naturally, he never told me he was gay nor I told it him, there was absolutely no need, neither I nor he ever asked ourselves the classic embarrassing question : ”But is he gay?” or rather this question was always in our minds but none of us ever asked it the other. None of us ever had the idea of pushing things too much, up to forcing the spontaneity of the other in order to know immediately, or at least soon, how things were, and then there are two facts to take into account, first of all I didn’t want to lose him, even if he was just a friend, and then he is very shy and I didn’t want at all to put him in trouble, because he would have taken it as a ”if you’re not gay I don’t care of you” while it was not like that. I knew that he was gay from the fact that being together was fundamental both for him and for me, there was total reciprocity from the beginning.”

In practice the coming out addressed to a guy with whom one is in love, means forcing the other to come out in turn. Apart from the fact that the probability of being in front of a straight guy is anyway high even when you are actually in front of a supposed gay guy, in the context of a truly mutual relationship there is no need for any explicit coming out because in these situations a gay guy comes very easily to decode the behavior of the other that goes in the desired direction. I must stress, however, a concept: to assume that, if the other is gay, certainly a beautiful couple relationship will be born is quite unrealistic, because the well-known theorem ”gay + gay = love” has nothing to do with reality.

## 3.2 DOCUMENTS

### 3.2.1 Gay guys and girls as red cross nurses

Not infrequently it happens that a gay guy, who has lived for various reasons a hetero or pseudo-hetero life, finds himself, at some point, deeply embarrassed with his girlfriend, who notices something strange in the behavior of the guy and arrives to guess that her partner is gay. The girl demands

clarity and the guy, in one way, struggles to break the relationship and for the other is very reluctant to come out with his girlfriend. Some girls, once they realize that their partner is gay, think it's good to push him to come out to let him live his life more freely.

The issues related to the points of view of the guy and the girl are illustrated in the following document. On March 14th, 2008, a woman writes to Gay Project from an Islamic country, claiming that if a girl notices that her boyfriend is gay, she has the right to know how things really are and claiming also that if the guy doesn't speak clearly, he behaves dishonestly towards his partner. The girl would also like to "help" her partner causing him to come out at least partially. This is the text of the email:

"Anonymous said ... I just discovered this blog, I feel it's serious and I liked it. I write because of my boyfriend. I have serious doubts about whether he is gay but repressed, so he does not even admit it to himself, and I would like to understand it, I would really like to understand.

In your blog I didn't find any reference to this fact: how to help a man of extremely rigid and rational character, 37 years old, to let him find out if this (the homosexuality) is his true nature. That is, how to help him come out in the open. I have to underline that we live not in Italy but in an Islamic country, where the traditional family is sacred and many gays take refuge in marriage to save appearances, or hide in a hamam, or in bars reserved only for men.

I have read the comments of women in your blog and I appreciate their sensitivity, and also yours in reserving a space for their stories. A woman feels, perceives and understands when something is wrong ... And if she is in love, she will always try to help. But I do it also for another reason: if there is a lie, I want to know. In the blog you talk about gay morality/immorality, but in the end it is a question of clarity and honesty towards those who are close, both men and women, if they are no longer the person of our dreams. Forgive me if I remain in anonymity, but I think maybe my question is too difficult and perhaps will not find an answer. Thank you ... March 14, 2008 22.24"

ANSWER: Dear Friend, I try to answer what you ask. First of all I will divide the answer into two parts, one on the causes of gay repression and the other on the "what to do" in particular by a woman, towards her boyfriend.

## REPRESSION

## 1) PERSECUTION OF GAYS

Human sexuality is an expression of individual freedom and personal freedom in sexual matters can be repressed in many ways, some of them constitute real forms of systematic persecution and we can even go so far as to apply the death penalty even nowadays. Iranian President Ahmadinejad told speaking at a Columbia University conference that there are no gays in Iran while there are many in Western countries. A declaration of this kind doesn't deserve any comment. In those conditions the level of repression is such that no one declares himself homosexual and marriage for the gay guys is the rule.

Out of respect for people who are forced to live in similar situations I would never say that they are "repressed gays" but that they are "persecuted gays" and that any behavior that tends to hide their sexual identity is fully justified, even private behaviors with their wives. It is not about lies but about survival instinct.

## 2) SOCIAL INTOLERANCE TOWARDS GAYS

In many countries, even Islamic, however, there is a slow evolution that, if does not really promote the free expression of a gay culture, doesn't criminalize the very fact of being gay. In situations like this (like the one concerning the country from which you contacted me) there are no "legal persecutions of gays" but the public opinion is still a thousand miles far from showing tolerance towards them. In these cases we can speak of a real social intolerance towards homosexuality. Situations of social intolerance towards gays are not only manifested in Islamic countries but also in Europe, where social structures are still closed and linked to traditional values.

A push to attitudes of closure, if not homophobia, comes from the Catholic Church and there are still, even in Italy, many situations in which I would certainly not recommend a gay guy to speak openly about his sexual orientation. In Italy, in some rare cases, thanks to a very traditional family education, there are still gay guys repressed enough to marry, in the belief that they have overcome their homosexuality. The variability of the framework of social intolerance towards gays is such that it makes no real sense to try to classify the possible reactions against behaviors that prelude the coming out.

But I must stress that in some situations the cost of coming out can be very high. I have seen gay guys forced to emigrate because they would not have



found work in their countries and would have been hindered in the most varied ways. In any case, the coming out risk assessment is exclusively up to those who have to put it into practice. This is a very personal choice, like that of marriage, which cannot be conditioned by any request for clarity, from whoever it comes, for the simple fact that the consequences of coming out, under the regime of social intolerance, are all and only of the person who comes out. I answer directly to the specific question: "and the girlfriend of one of these guys (if there is one)?" The girlfriend (if there is one) can go her own way but must remember that the coming out is not a right of the girlfriend but it is an act very personal and risky on the part of the guy.

I saw with my own eyes situations of authentic moral lynching as a result of gossip unleashed by confidences thoughtlessly entrusted to friends by a girl who had received the coming out of her boyfriend. I emphasize another thing that may not be pleasing to women in love with gay guys, a gay guy can have a real interest in declaring himself to another guy he thinks is gay in order to create the conditions for a possible couple bond, in this case the risk has an objective justification, in the case of the coming out towards a girl, however, the risk does not correspond to any possible benefit, especially if the relationship with that girl was built exclusively for the purpose of saving appearances. It is up to the guy, after carefully assessing the risk levels, to choose if, possibly, to come out in front of his girlfriend, but I wouldn't absolutely consider this type of coming out as an obligation nor omitting it like a lie.

### 3) FAMILY INTOLERANCE TOWARDS GAYS

The most common and the most insidious form of repression of gays, both in Islamic countries and in Europe is the family one. Persecutory behaviors and social intolerance generally are clearly perceived and are recognized as such, while family intolerance is gradually absorbed step by step and is essentially a poison of freedom that tends to extinguish it from the beginning. The lack of freedom is clearly felt when moving from a regime of freedom to one of absence of freedom or when comparing scenarios of freedom and repression, but when one grows up in a repressive environment and when one receives information from a single source only, it is really impossible to gain awareness of the existence of a possible freedom and repression becomes a deeply internalized mental habit lived as a natural and spontaneous thing. Such models have also characterized European culture until the advent of the internet. Even today, in Europe, a guy will never receive a serious sex education at school and in particular will never receive the correct information about homosexuality (just think that sex education is often delegated

to priests and teachers of religion who, given the *a priori* condemnation of homosexuality on the part of the Church, are certainly not the best sources of information about gay life). Even today, in Europe, a guy will hardly have the opportunity to talk about sex with his parents and less than ever will have the opportunity to talk to them about homosexuality. Until a few decades ago, the only information on homosexuality could be found on a few serious books that a guy would have had difficulty buying and he would have to carefully hide.

The weight of family intolerance is progressively decreasing, especially among younger guys, thanks to the Internet, which in recent times has begun to spread a model of homosexuality as normality that is slowly gaining momentum. The word "gay" itself, that until twenty years ago practically a taboo for right-thinking guys, is now in common use and the implications of ridicule or irony are gradually disappearing. Where there is no internet, or internet is not free, however, the situation is still as it was in Italy 30 years ago. The cases in which family intolerance leads gay guys to feel themselves heterosexual, at least in Europe, today are limited to situations in which a guy is automatically induced to forms of uninhibited heterosexuality at an extremely early age, in such cases a very young guy can make the first hetero experiences, which can have an anesthetizing value for years but, I want to underline that these guys do not tell lies to their girls, they feel substantially straight. Also in this case, therefore, I would not speak of lies or deception.

#### THE GIRL HELPS THE GUY TO ACCEPT HIMSELF AS A GAY

The expression "Red Cross nurses" (in Italian *Crocerossine*) in the gay world is used with two distinct meanings:

- "*hetero Red Cross nurse*" to indicate a straight girl who, knowing that her boyfriend is gay, thinks she is able to make the guy straight just through the classic means of female seduction,
- "*gay Red Cross nurse*" to indicate a straight girl who, suspecting that her boyfriend is gay thinks she can "help" him to be gay, pushing him to the come out.

Several times on the Gay Project Forum the expression "Red Cross nurses" has been used very appropriately to define girls who want to help their boyfriends to accept themselves as gay.

I briefly summarize the situation. A girl who realizes that her boyfriend is gay, if she wants to do a good thing, has to let him go on his way. Every attempt to "help" is seen by the gay guy as an undue interference or even as a form of violence, while it's useful to the girl to feel like a good girl.

In the case of the e-mail from which this post has taken the cue, with a 37-

year-old guy, in conditions of strong environmental stress, demanding clarity is basically a form of violence. If there is something that girls emotionally involved with gay guys can do, it is always and in any case giving their partners the maximum freedom and not expecting anything.

Between accepting and understanding there is a huge difference. Love, at any level, is acceptance, those looking for an explanation are not able to accept unconditionally. To answer with the utmost clarity: if a girl realizes that her partner is gay, she has to leave him to himself avoiding to conceive any projects of any kind on him, because such projects, even under the appearance of the best intentions, risk hiding a predatory attitude. I realize that our reader will not like an answer like this but, for the experience that I have of the gay world, I know for sure that the gay guys don't like Red Cross nurses.

### 3.2.2 Coming out and physical attraction

My name is Mauro, I'm 24 years old, I would love to talk about homosexuality with someone in a serious way but I never succeeded, I never trusted anyone. With a psychologist who listens to me because I pay for it and who maybe gives me some useful advice, I don't even want to try, I wouldn't feel at ease staying in front of a stranger or even a female stranger to talk about my sexuality, I don't want to play the role of the patient, then there are the priests, I tried to talk about homosexuality with a priest but in a very generic way, without even referring to myself and the reaction was so schematic and inhuman that it left me stunned. I would like to talk about homosexuality but not with one who talks about it because he has studied it reading books. What can a woman psychologist know about male homosexuality? She knows it in theory. And for a priest it's the same, unless he's a gay too. I would like to talk about homosexuality with a gay but here there are a mountain of problems. First of all a gay man could consider me as a sexual object, I know that there is nothing wrong but it is something I don't like because it ruins the possibility of talking seriously, I wouldn't feel free and I would try to defend myself. But let's go to my story.

Now I don't remember well because these are very old things, but up to 14 years old I think I have been more or less gay, if such a thing makes sense, I masturbated thinking of boys and since my education had been very free, I hadn't at all feelings of guilt on the contrary it was something that had become so necessary that it was a real fixation and if I have to say all the truth it was the obsession of my adolescence, I did it too much, I almost come up to hurt myself, of course I couldn't talk about it with anyone. I tried to hold myself back so as not to arrive at paroxysmal levels.

My anguishes have begun in the ninth grade. We took a trip to Paris with the school. At night there were two of us in each room because the rooms were small. The first night I and Mark (let's call him so) start talking ... obviously about sex, but in a very serious way, nothing morbid, talking just to compare our experiences. Mark tells me about a girl, I'm careful not to tell him that I'm gay, he definitely takes for granted that I'm straight, then tells me that he masturbates thinking about that girl and I answer in general terms that it happens to me too, obviously neglecting to say that it happened to me thinking of guys. Then something absolutely unexpected comes, a kind of lightning out of the blue, Mark tells me that "however" he sometimes masturbated even thinking of a guy.

I tried to put him absolutely at ease to make him talk but he was very reticent, while he wasn't reticent at all about the girl. Then we changed the subject and I was very sorry but I couldn't insist. When we went to bed I was strongly recommended that I keep absolutely private the things he had told me. I told him that I felt happy that he had told me these things because it meant he trusted me and trusted me completely. I swear I had the strong temptation to tell him about me and I had to force myself almost physically to restrain my instinct and keep self-control.

The day after, Mark was embarrassed, he kept me at a distance, he stayed as much as possible with the other guys. I thought it was for the confession of his gay masturbation but then, after some time, it came to my head that Mark could be in love with me and that the mention of his gay masturbation was in essence a way to tell me it, but, even taking for granted such hypothesis, at that time I hadn't foreseen such a thing, but in front of him I had taken a defensive attitude and hadn't told him the truth just to keep my privacy. I know that it's incorrect but so I did.

The following days, for me, were a torture but I tried never to put him in trouble, when we were with the others I played the role of the fool to get his attention and he noticed it. The last night in the hotel the magical atmosphere of the first night has recreated, we talked a lot, or better he talked a lot, he told me clearly that he was gay and that he didn't ever have a girl, he was astonished at my reactions, I was listening to him with the utmost attention and asking him questions to make him talk, but always keeping myself out of the play. I asked him to tell me what it means to be gay and he told me so many things that I knew very well, but I didn't let go to confessions that seemed to me too dangerous and I let Mark speak without saying anything about me.

I was torn in my soul. I didn't know what to do, but there was a basic reason that pushed me to shut up and it was that I didn't like Mark physically. I liked hearing him talk about sex in such an intimate and direct way, and

I was also very excited, but I didn't intend to get involved in such things, maybe I felt a little desire to try (even more than a little!) But it was for the thing itself, I wasn't in love with Mark and so I didn't tell him anything. This time I was not recommended to keep the secret. When we came back to Italy, on the plane we were close to each other, I saw his hand resting on the arm of the chair that was attached to mine and I really wanted him to caress my hand at least for a moment but it didn't happen.

With Mark we have been very friends, like two brothers, all the time of high school. He told me that he was fine with me "as if I were gay" but he said it in a very serious way. Basically I don't think Mark ever questioned that I was straight and this made me feel like a worm on so many occasions. He trusted me and I didn't trust him, now I regret it but at that time it seemed to me the only thing to be done.

The relationship with Mark has become profound over the years, even though I have always kept my distance from any possible implication on a sexual level. When he started going to the gym, at 17, I didn't go there deliberately and avoiding to go there was very hard for me, he was the only gay guy I knew and he was a wonderful guy, not on a physical level, at least not for me, but he was an honest, generous guy, one whom you cannot help but love. At the age of 18, he fell madly in love with Luke, one of our beautiful companions who played basketball with him. Mark was always in crisis, Luke didn't even look at him and he came to seek comfort from me. Mark thought that Luke was gay but I had seen him with a girl in a such uninhibited attitude that a gay guy would never have shown, I told him: "Forget him, Luke is hetero! ... you must find a gay guy ... " and he told me: "But I don't know any gay guy ... ". That was the straw that broke the vase ... and I said to him: "It's not true, you know me ..." He looked at me with two eyes wide open that I will never be able to forget: "You? ... ". He asked me why I hadn't told him it before and I replied that I wasn't in love with him and I didn't want any complications, he was perplex, I feared his answer because I felt hypocritical, but he immediately reassured me. "Well ... maybe you did well because in fact I've always had a half crush for you ...".

After this conversation he stopped fantasizing about Luke and started thinking about me. We were friends, at last we were admittedly two gay friends, he was not a disco-maniac, no mania about clubs or strange things. We saw each other practically every afternoon. He no longer went to basketball ... and we talked a lot, when it happened one afternoon that I couldn't see him, I felt a sense of emptiness, of wasted time, a feeling of indescribable non-life. When he called me I felt immediately revived.

But there has never been sex between us. Now, to tell the truth, sometimes I think about it and sometimes I masturbate thinking of him, even if it is

not common and it sounds a little strange to me, and I think he does the same, however, concretely, there has never been sex between us. I didn't overcome the fact that he doesn't really attract me physically. If Mark had the physique of Luke, he would be my ideal guy, but it is not so, he's a great guy I don't like too much physically.

There are many guys who excite me when I just look at them, with him it doesn't happen to me, but I feel very impressed by his charm as a person. He knows that I'm not in love with him and he doesn't even try a little contact with me, this thing is a good thing for me, but in another sense I'd like him to try and break the ice. I think he is in love with me, he has not found another guy, he has not even looked for a guy. He told me that he is well, but I don't think it's the truth. In a sense I would like our relationship to develop but honestly I don't feel a real transport towards him. From the day we started, let's say so, our love story, I've known only another guy I really liked from the physical point of view but in front of Mark was a nothingness in every sense and in the end I let him go two weeks later, because I cannot start a story with someone I don't really value very much as a person, but on the other hand I think I couldn't even be with someone who doesn't physically attract me. I thought that maybe on a sexual level my interest in Mark could increase over time but until now it has not happened. My story stops at this point, I honestly don't know how to behave. I'd like to know what you think about.

### 3.2.3 Gay guys and family traps

Hello Project,

I send you this mail because I think it can be useful for many guys, if you want, you can publish it.

I'm a 24 year old guy, I grew up in a family that loved me, at least at the beginning. Since very young I have been routed in all ways towards heterosexuality. The idea of a girlfriend was one of my obsessions well before I started having any experience of what sex was like. I have a cousin, she is two years older than me and is an only child exactly like me. I have no male cousins, she is my only cousin. I have just one uncle, my father's brother and my cousin's father. Since I was very young my parents have tried everything to make me get together with my cousin, they reminded me to make her a little "gift" when it was her name-day or birthday and they paid the gift, but the little gifts, since I and my cousin were about 15/16 years old, had become very important gifts, valuable watches, gold brooches and even a ring, something like an engagement ring, even if nobody used this expression.

At first I didn't understand the meaning of all this and I felt a little flattered.

We always went on holiday together, my family and hers (the only close relatives of my parents), we took a single apartment and we were together at the sea for two months. My parents have also given me a beautiful rowing canoe, naturally two-seater, my cousin and I were always canoeing, from morning to late evening, everything seemed normal. Let's say that up to 16/17 years old the constant presence of my cousin had also made me think that basically I could fall in love with her, even though my private sexuality has always been exclusively gay.

The pressure of her parents on her produced the hoped effect, because I think she fell in love with me, but for me experiencing the pressure of my parents who assumed everything for granted was a real nightmare. Luckily my cousin is very Catholic and we can say that on the sexual side she always went on very slowly and, at least up to 19/20 years, she has never put me in great difficulty from that point of view. Then the problems started because it was clear that she was looking for a soft way to end up "there", a bit for fun and a bit seriously she hugged me, when it was something simple and direct even if pretending I was interested at least partially, I could also let her do, in practice she was pampering me, but then, step by step she began to provoke badly trying to touch me there. I stopped her once with an excuse, then another time with the thing of the religion and I began to distance myself. She insisted, I tried to thin out the situations in which we would be alone together, but sometimes it was inevitable and it happened and there I felt really aggressive, in other words I hated her. I'm not mad at my cousin who is also a beautiful and good girl, but I don't want to end up crushed by a perverse mechanism of family nature and I don't even want to tell my story to anyone, furthermore she is not a stranger but the daughter of my father's brother so, if she knew that I am gay, even all my more distant relatives would know it and for me such a thing is absolutely inconceivable. My business must be my own business. I know that if I don't make a clear speech, I must shortly interrupt the relationship and it's exactly what I want to do immediately and in the most radical way, at the cost of destroying family's harmony.

Last week, something happened that annoyed me extremely and made me realize how hypocritical are my parents. They invited my cousin for lunch at my house. Mom prepared everything and then she and dad came out with an excuse late in the morning. My cousin arrived, my parents had advised her by telephone that they would have arrived not before eight o'clock in the evening and "then" they communicated the same information to me too. In practice I was forced to stay alone at home with my cousin and no one takes away from my head that they did it on purpose because my cousin told me that she had told my mother that I never really tried to have sex with her.

But even if I were straight (and I am not at all), how could I imagine falling in love with a girl sponsored by my mother who goes to tell her what she and I did or didn't do in bed?

In short, my cousin, pretending to joke, this time tried in every way to start something sexual with me. I rejected her drastically, she acted a tragic movie scene and went away slamming the door, obviously immediately after she has called my parents to tell them everything adding also a lot of acid comments. They come home 10 minutes later (see the coincidence!), and they ask me what happened, I say screaming to my mother: "But do you know what did she want from me?" And my mother replies: "Well, and what's wrong?" My mother had always been an irreducible Catholic but according to her, the fact that I had to make love with my cousin (in a situation that my mother had combined!) was an obvious thing!

My cousin I haven't seen her for a few days now but I think they have convinced / forced her to apologize, This thing makes me consider my cousin like a puppet in the hands of parents and uncles and I think they will come back to the assault. My mother attacked me head-on and wanted to know the details, then insisted to know if I had another girl. For my parents the idea that one can be gay is absolutely inconceivable, because they think a gay goes around like a fagot. I had the naivety to insist that there wasn't any other girl and here I have been really stupid, because now going back and invent one is very difficult. However, in one way or another I absolutely have to get rid of all these things, because I have come to hate my family that I consider an aggregate of hypocrisy and economic management. They never wondered what I could think.

Project, you can understand what kind of gay life I can live! I have to be careful about everything, in practice sometimes I would have liked to start thinking about cultivating a serious friendship with two university guys. With them I tried to study together, maybe I would not have done anything anyway, but in practice I left the game before starting it because I couldn't go anywhere. Next summer I should graduate and cannot wait to leave home. I want to change city, if I can I will go abroad. I want to go away non in order to do who knows what but to no longer see my parents who have only tried to cage me.

I don't know if I'll ever find a guy, maybe I will not find one but I'm prepared for this but what I want first of all is to leave home, I would just need to find a friend to chat a bit, to be myself, to stop finally pretending. I also said that I could make a nice coming out in the family disregarding everything and everyone, but I would be able to do it only if I didn't live at home. If I did it now it would be hell. But how is it possible that some adult people and even culturally evolved, don't have the faintest idea of gays? I also thought



that many of my fears and worries could be meaningless and that maybe if I had told them everything they would have understood me, but I don't think it would have been that way. But now all these problems are still far away. Now I have to understand how to defend myself from the "apology" of my cousin. In the end I think the simplest solution would be to invent a girl or maybe take my parents to a concrete suspicion of this kind. I gave the phone number to several of my female friends who call me often and I went out with them in the evening several times in a row just to let my parents think that I have another girl. My mother may have the first suspicions.

Project, it seems a paradoxical situation, what would you do? But things like this happen to many other guys? I would very much like to know it. Sometimes I feel really in a cage and I don't have the courage to take a step and this, at 24, I think it's really crazy. Maybe I'm not up to the situation, but I prefer to think that my behavior derives from the need not to expose myself. I confess to you something else, it's the first time I've contacted a gay site and I'm a little worried because I don't know what I can expect. Let's say that I'm in total zero in the gay dimension. The address of the sender of this mail is also my msn contact (created for the occasion!). I warmly greet you, Project, I would like to know what you think about.

### 3.2.4 Coming out as a dangerous temptation

Hi Project, my name is F., I am 26 years old and I am Sicilian. I discovered your site a few months ago and immediately put it among my favorite sites, to be able to come back to read it when I have some time to read it calmly. After reading it today, I decided to write to you to tell you my story and to do something good even for myself ...

Project, the more I get older the more I realize that I always knew I was gay, even at an early age. The first memories that come to my mind date back to when I was about 6 years old, and I was fascinated by my brother's best friend, a beautiful boy who was almost 10 years older than me. I have in mind a flash of that period when he, my brother and other boys, were outside my house: he joked and cuddled a schoolmate of mine and I wanted to be in his place.

This guy (my brother's friend) has always embarrassed me (even today) when I looked at him but I never had any fantasies about him. Today he is father of 2 beautiful children, is a great person and in a sense I'm glad to think that since I was a child I had a great interest in the right people. Seriously, I don't really have a good nose in looking for guys but exactly the opposite. Puberty and adolescence have been two important crossroads for the knowl-

edge of myself. I discovered sex (the one concerning pornography) very early at the age of only 12, as soon as I began to feel the first sexual impulses, I discovered some of my brother's porn movies and then I began to look at them secretly. Right from the beginning the attraction was towards the male body while I acted with my friends as if the interest was towards girls and I pretended even with myself that it was really such, in hindsight I believe that inside me I never truly repressed my real nature even if with the rest of the world I did and keep doing the exact opposite.

There was a period, around 14/18 years old, in which I imagined and prospected a sentimental future with a hypothetical girl (or even real girls) then I began to imagine with some resistance, in the future, a relationship with a hypothetical guy. Step by step, year after year I stopped asking myself if there was something wrong with me, I stopped blaming myself, I stopped hating myself, I stopped feeling ashamed and I learned to understand myself and above all to love myself.

Basically, today I have no problem with myself and every day that passes I feel more and more the need to take off this mask and live my life freely. Yet I don't do it . . . with my family, my friends, even my business colleagues I pretend to be what I'm not, that is a "normal" straight guy with an overflowing sexual life, they consider me almost a womanizer for the crazy things I tell them. Anyway I have never had sex for the simple fact that I never had the balls to be myself to the end. Yet theoretically I've never had problems with sex, I often came close to have sex with girls, but my gay "conscience" has always held me back, while I have never had the opportunity to have a relationship with a guy, although I would like it more.

I wasted too much time, too many years in this stalemate, Project, I would bang my head against the wall for the remorse I feel for this reason, for having lost so much precious time. If I could, I would go back and change everything. I try the powerful temptation to change today and yet I cannot or simply I'm too cowardly to really want to succeed. I thought the problem were my parents, two wonderful people, but they would not understand and would suffer in an absurd way for my "confession" and the last thing I want is to make them suffer.

I am afraid that my friends can look at me with different eyes, and I have fought all my life for not being considered different and I would not stand it. I thought that changing city, being alone, could help me but now I cannot afford it, so what to do? Have I to stay that way and get to 40 years full of remorse and exhausted? No! I do not even think that it should end like this, I want to love, to be loved because I know that I have so much to give and I deserve it too.

I believe that the greatest sin that can be done in life is precisely that of

not living life to the full, not falling in love, not making love, not creating something that lasts and remains, otherwise what one has lived for? I'm afraid I can never try all this ... I know what it means to fall in love with someone, I tried it 20 years old with a friend of mine, I'm sure he too felt something for me, but we never deepened, he was engaged with a girl and I was very far from a possible coming out.

My city is a city that does not help homosexuals, in the sense that this reality is lived in private, totally repressed, everyone knows if "X" is gay and hides it, or at least he doesn't make it public pretending nothing. This is more or less the reality in which I live.

When I go out, if I'm having coffee at the bar or dancing etc., I happen to realize more and more often that a guy looks at me with insistence and then I think, well, maybe he is gay and I could try ... but no, I never dare to do it, also because I think the famous gay radar, as far as I'm concerned, can really work badly, maybe I made the right choice at most a couple of times. I am also afraid of not finding what I am looking for, that is, a guy who is male in the true sense of the word, not effeminate, or various things. In short, I'm afraid that what I actually am can never get out.

Project I wrote you this long email to understand something more, I need your help sincerely because it is neither in heaven nor on earth that I have to live all my life like a shadow, I don't want and I cannot think about it.

P.S. if you want, publish my mail, if you think it can be useful for someone, please just keep anonymity, my msn address is [omissis] if you want, add me. A hug, F., and forgive the excessive length of the mail, but I had a lot to say. M. P.

### 3.2.5 A coming out ended badly

It's a day like many, I know I'll meet him in the morning at work , perhaps I'll see him for five minutes, at most ten, and this already makes me uncomfortable, he's not working in my room and if he was there it would be embarrassing, if I could I'd like better avoid to see him at all and instead the torment will be repeated even today because he will have to pass in my room, if I'll can understand when, I will try not to be there, I feel uncomfortable if I have to stay there while he is there looking at me.

Let me explain immediately: I am a 31-year-old gay man and I carelessly made the declaration of love to a 26-year-old guy who works in my office and he took it very badly. At the beginning I was afraid that he would disgrace me but he didn't and now it's been two weeks, there is no longer any dialogue between us, he reacted very badly, he felt soiled by me, he tried to behave formally, but it was clear that he could not stand me anymore, I tried to

apologize but he didn't even hear me and he left. Before we used to say goodbye and go to have coffee together, but now he disappeared and even asked for a transfer to another office. As for me, I felt like a piece of shit ... I didn't expect such a reaction, it was a terrible moment, he grimaced with his face and then he made a gesture with his hand as if to say: "What have you put in your mind?" I fell from heaven to hell in a second and then, you know, in an office like ours the risk for these things is big, but he didn't say anything, it seems to me that with the others everything is exactly as before but maybe he didn't gossip not so much out of respect of me but mostly not to get involved he too.

I had waited months before declaring myself and everything seemed to be in order, I would have bet he was gay, it seemed to me that all reasoning led to the same conclusion, I seemed to have had some encouraging signals, but obviously everyone interprets signals as he likes better. We even exchanged presents, I gave him a pen drive for PC and he gave me the poems of Garcia Lorca, but when one gives you a similar book, what have you to understand? That the one who gives it to you is hetero?

Evidently he had never read the poetry of Lorca and I was screwed, but this is not enough, we went a couple of times to eat a pizza together and we talked about everything, it seemed absolutely obvious to me that he was gay, no talk of a girl but only of a person, he spoke of loneliness and so on ... I read on this blog of splendid gay-straight relationships, but why didn't it happen to me? If he had been heterosexual and had not taken it badly, it would have been all the same for me, less good but good the same. But no, he reacted just with a form of refusal, I would say rejection, just with a sense of disgust. What ugly adventures you must pass! If a woman fell in love with me I wouldn't treat her like that, I certainly wouldn't encourage her, but I wouldn't treat her with such a violent detachment, it's not right. But why should he treat me like that? Perhaps he's trying to make his moral prevalence weigh looking at me from up down, a bit like a worm you don't crush not to get your shoes dirty. Now when I see him from a distance I change road, twenty days ago I followed him at a distance, I wanted to know everything about him, now I do not care about him anymore, I feel humiliated, I had never felt so frustrated, I have to stay in my hole, when I try to go out even if in a very prudent way, because this time I had been very cautious, I realize that it is better not to go out from the hole. But how do they do those who live as a couple? Can you let me know how you found the right person? I would really like to understand if there are real possibilities, because it seems to me that there are not at all. I don't say just to say but where can you find serious guys just to chat a little with?

Where I live, in practice I don't see any real possibility, the environment

is very small and very gossipy. Here, if there are gay guys, they certainly cannot have a place to meet. At the age of 31 I'm still totally devoid of direct experience, not only sexual, but also emotional, I would love to have a gay friend just to be able to vent and to talk a little freely because it never happens to me and I begin to be fed up of dreams and fantasies.

Frankly I think I'm a good guy, I have no ulterior motives, I would never put in crisis a person who loved me, but life is passing by, now are 12/13 years that I know exactly what I want and are 12 / 13 years that I know I will never be able to get it, but why should I remain alone? I don't see any serious reason, but in the end it just happens so. There are many nice guys, but I risk repeating the story of my colleague and frankly a single experience like that is enough for me. I live in a small town in the north, not far from Milan, but I seem to live on the moon, here there is nothing, at least there is nothing I want, here the guys, on Saturday night, go to Milan and I stay here, so where can I go? You cannot go far if you are on your own.

### 3.2.6 A double coming out

Hello guys,

nice blog and nice posts. My name is Andrew, 24 y. o., central Italy. I tell you my experience of coming out. My parents didn't know anything about me until I was 19 years old, even though I at that age had had my experiences and had a boyfriend (of my own age), the same that I have now and that I think will be the partner of life for me because I don't think we could live one without the other (Hi Andrew!) [it's called Andrew exactly like me!].

We met at school, he was not my classmate. More precisely we met at a school trip. He was very timid, almost more than me, if it's ever possible. I omit the details: hesitation, uncertainty, gay or not gay, etc. etc., all during the tour, then one day he takes my hand, I feel like a thrill, we look into each other eyes ... Our story began this way.

On April 15, 2002, the last night of the school trip, we slept together (we had double rooms), we were not very convinced, neither he nor I, nevertheless the idea attracted us a lot but I thought that the day after I would have lost him, I don't know, as if sex could ruin everything between us, while he, who never had considered himself a handsome guy, was afraid he could disappoint me, and instead we were fine, hugging tight each other under blankets, now completely abandoned one in the arms of the other.

I think you know what I'm talking about, it's not just something related to sex, but also to tenderness, a very sweet thing. Later, we had a bit of trouble saying that such a thing could not remain a single experience, but we talked about it ... and there was no embarrassment. When we got home

we were very sad, it had been the first experience both for me and for him and now we were again separated. We had to find a way to meet and to be together, we certainly could not put aside the idea of staying together even afterwards.

We started studying together but we were in different classes and it was difficult. We used to meet in the afternoon once at my home and once at his, it was a nice thing, but at best we could exchange a caress, people could go in and there was not even a minimum of freedom and of privacy, and then being close, even just touching one the hand of the other, erection came, between us it wasn't certainly a problem, but when we had to get out of the room it was really a problem. We've spent nearly a month this way, we met every day but we could never embrace each other, and even less make love. But we wanted to make it.

I think you can understand, when you have been in bed with the guy you love and then you cannot make love anymore with him it's a torture, as far as the physiological problem is concerned you masturbate thinking about him, but you miss him badly, I mean that fantasy can be enough when with a guy you didn't really make love, but we knew what it meant to embrace hugging each other under the blankets. I mean that making love became an absolute necessity, we only thought of that, we had to find a way to realize our dreams.

Complicated things like going to a hotel were not conceivable because where we live, in a small town, it is dangerous to do such a thing, going to another town would have been too much complicated ... the only possible solution was going to a little house my parents had in the countryside (I obviously cannot tell exactly where), which was the house of my grandparents. Nearby there is a great forest and the pretense of a naturalistic walk was all in all plain. We could go there at most once a week, really too little for two guys like us who were (and are) inseparable, but we went on doing so for two months but it was complicated, the car ride of nearly 70 miles, the chilly home, the need to bring everything cooked, because on Sundays there is nothing there. One night together yes, it was great, but then at four in the afternoon we had to face all the hustle and bustle of the coming back.

Then he proposed the idea of telling our parents how exactly things were. For me, in fact, I had never had any particular problems and I thought they would accept it well. He was much hesitant. But at 19 years old, we were unaware of the consequences and we did that madness.

My parents seemingly did not react very badly ... they were a little cold, however, they didn't embrace me, nothing like that, but at least apparently it was not a disaster. But, unfortunately, for my friend things went badly wrong. Frost reigned supreme in his house, his parents wanted to send him

to the psychologist, he didn't want at all and as it was easily foreseeable a couple of days later, the bomb burst and the world collapsed. Andrew was desperate, when we met he kept weeping in anger all the time, and when the time to go back home arrived, for him it was like a real torture.

At some point I talked to my parents because there was the room of my older brother, and Andrew, in my opinion, could settle there. Probably I was terribly naive at that time. My parents absolutely didn't want to take Andrew in our house, and for me hell started. Andrew was exasperated, he came out of his house early in the morning, and returned very late in the night to not meet his father and mother. He didn't even come to my home because he felt rejected also by my parents and spent the day in the cold as a tramp. I used to bring him food to eat and he spent the day like that.

At school the exam period was approaching, he didn't do anything, he was convinced that they would reject him, nevertheless he continued to go to school, at least in the morning he was indoors and in a warm place. School was open until 6 pm and we spent our time there, but there were people, a lot of noise, you could not separate yourself from others, it would have seemed strange, and then you have to defend yourself even at school. It was a terrible period.

Then we took the examinations, the commission was very understanding and generous and everything went well. Andrew had applied for a job and I did the same even though I did not think about giving up at university, then found on the Internet that they had called us from the first of August near Bologna.

Andrew would have gone because he could not survive at his home, even at the cost of abandoning his studies. I did not know what to do, it was the first time I was in great trouble. I told myself that if I really loved Andrew, I could not leave him go alone, and I really loved him.

Meanwhile, my parents had already digested the bitter pill and they had found a place for me where I could stay (a mini apartment) in a city in Central Italy where I was supposed to go to study Engineering. After all, it was my project, because living where I live, to study Engineering you have to go out to another city, but I don't deny that I thought that my parents wanted to send me elsewhere, not to keep me far away from them, but from our town and especially from the gossip of Andrew's parents.

Then I went to my parents and said, "I'm not leaving Andrew ... I'm going to work with him." My dad stayed a bit puzzled then told me: "We can give you a maximum of 800 euros a month, we pay you the apartment ... then you can share it with whoever you want, you don't have to tell us ... ". And my father embraced me and then told me to make Andrew come home, he did not want to come but then he came and my father told him, "I know

you love him ... but you have to be cautious ... there more than here ...". That's all.

Andrew with his parents has had no more relationships and we now live together in a small apartment for students in a small city in Central Italy. In the coming year we should take the specialist degree. We didn't make just love, we even studied like crazy. Saying family does not mean anything, you have to see what that means in real life, but I and Andrew really feel we are a family.

### 3.2.7 From openly gay to hidden gay

Hello Project,

My name is D. I am 36 years old, I'm a guy openly gay or rather I should say a guy who has been openly gay, it seems strange, I know, because we all know that the "coming out" is irreversible. Basically I came out with my parents when I was 16. My parents reacted badly but then they somehow accepted my being gay and on the other hand they had no choice. I had fewer problems with friends than with family but the most part my friends (or former friends) put me into oblivion, and among those who have put me into oblivion there's one, let's call him Steven, who is also gay, and I can take it for granted, but I'll be talking to you later about Steven.

At age 16 I was already a spirit very independent and also rebellious, in the sense that I would never have done what others wanted me to do, or rather I liked to do only what I decided. Up to 22-23 years but also up to 24, that is when I started working, I had to avoid the excesses, anyway I made what fitted to me, but since I did not have any money there were objective limits. From the age of 24 I started to attend the gay scene, what you call "gay labeled" environments. This made me experience a lot of freedom, I felt liberated, I had money in my pocket and sometimes I tried also to have sex with guys at rent (for money), i.e. escorts like they call them today, I arrived up to bring guys in a hotel room and it did not happen once. The fear of diseases slowed me a little but let's say that between 24 and 34 y. o. I've done all sorts, a bit for inertia and a bit following the current. By then the gay environment was well known to me, they called me and involved me and I accepted very willingly their proposals.

At age 34, I began being to feel deeply unsatisfied as gay. Being identified as part of an environment and in practice having to feel more "gay" than "myself" began to bother me, I did not like that my gay friends called me and even fewer that insisted when I had said no, among other things I had been with so many guys, but I had never been in love, not only that, but I began to do discourses that I wouldn't have done a year before, I did count



how much money I had spent over ten years of that life, and it was really a huge amount of money, nevertheless I felt frustrated and dissatisfied, I was alone, I had had many adventures, but I had nothing left.

I decided to do a two years master's degree to get a little more qualification at work, something which would never have been interesting for me before, and there I met Steven. Obviously, or better strangely, he knew everything about me, that is he knew I was gay and openly gay, I did not know anything about him, for me he could also have wife and children. The first days he kept me at a distance, not wanting to be seen with me, I invited him to have coffee during breaks but he preferred not to come. The way he used to tell me "no" irritated me a lot and after a while I stopped inviting him.

Once, he came to classes in the morning with the subway but there was a strike in the afternoon and he could not come back home, I had the car and I took him home. While in route I told him that I was disappointed that he was keeping me at a distance due to the fact that I was gay because maybe a straight man can not realize the meaning of being gay and can think who knows what. He replied that he did not want to be seen with me because they would have stuck the gay label on him. I told him that I could understand, and he said that, there are also many gays who don't like "the gay label". The answer sounded a little strange but the discussion was over, then we talked about work and study planning.

Over the months, the relationship with Steven became more easy, it took him six months to tell me that he was gay and he told me a little of his story. He was still alone, he fell in love twice but always with straight guys, but had saved a little money and had bought a small apartment even though there was still the bank loan to pay. I told him about me and my stories and then he asked me if I felt satisfied and I told him the truth, not only I did not feel satisfied at all but I could not stand anymore staying in a gay environment. He replied: "And then what are you waiting for? Go anywhere else!"

I'll make it short. I'm not in love with Steven and I think he is not in love with me, among other things he's really obsessed by the idea of AIDS and he's right, now we're dating for a year and a half, always in secret because he doesn't want to be seen with me. He got with me a serious result because I quit smoking and I felt better and I also stopped drinking alcohol, not that it was a vice, but in fact it could become such. I'm fine with Steven and I think he's okay with me.

Between us there has never been physical contact and I don't know if there will ever be, but when he is there, I feel a kind of serenity background that I never felt before. Last week, I told him that I feel uncomfortable being openly gay (I restarted with this topic!) and we got the idea that we should change jobs and go to live in another city.

We did some calculations. It was possible to deal with the change of working with a financial sacrifice, and it was also possible to buy a small apartment. But Steven did not agree, and repeated that each of us had to have his own "little hole" because if things had not gone well as planned there should have been no obligations of an economic nature to make us stay together out of necessity. The economic problems were enormous and we knew it. In concrete terms, it was possible to realize our projects in two or three years, not before. I did not want to ask money from my parents, and he had the loan to pay.

In a weekend we went to another city where there is a large branch of our company where we could move. It is a very large office, with nearly 40 employees. If and when (because I do not know if it will happen) we will move, I think (I already decided) I will not tell anyone about my being gay. I don't know if it makes sense or not changing city in order to stay close to a friend I'm not in love with (at least it's what I think now), but I need quiet and with him I'm fine. I do not know if there will be anything between us but in fact I do not even consider it too much important. In practice, Steven is the only person who has really taken me seriously, I feel his attention. After all somehow we are alone both of us, it is paradoxical but true.

The idea of starting a new life attracts me a lot, I just want to change the environment. It is the relationship with Steven that makes me change my life, but even before I'd had enough of my gay life. But without Steven I'd probably be in the same situation as before but on the contrary now I'm looking with him to give concrete expression to the change project and he is willing to sell his apartment and get one in another city to follow me, and this seems to me more serious than any declarations of love (Project, I'm getting old!).

It may seem strange, but it's like sex no longer interested me; before knowing Steven it was an obsession, now I think that I could do without it, but I don't think I could do without Steven. At the beginning I used to think that hidden gays were "guys with no balls" (an expression that I read in your forum) [in Italian the word "*palle*", in English "balls", means testicles, "*essere senza palle*" in English "being without balls" means being without courage] but now I think that if I had used more my brain and less my balls (excuse the vulgarity) now I could feel better. I read on your forum all the discussions about the coming out and frankly I am of those who have considered it fundamental for years but in the end I changed my mind, I almost flipped my way of thinking, if at the beginning I thought that a hidden gay guy was "without balls" now I think that a guy openly gay might not have really made his choice by himself, somehow might have been guided by the circumstances, nevertheless, once done, the coming out becomes obviously a reason of pride.

I must add one thing though, that I was not only an openly gay guy but was fully integrated into the world labeled gay and that's why I cannot be aware of the condition of the openly gay guys who don't attend the gay environment and I think that it's probably a very different situation than mine. Project, I do not subscribe to the forum in order to avoid to be dragged, but if you want you can publish this email. This is just my point of view, does not express general theorems, but maybe it can serve a useful purpose.  
Bye.

### 3.2.8 Coming out at school - School diary 1976-77

Here below you can read a few pages from the 1976 school diary of Dario, a 16-year-old guy.

#### Monday

I would have preferred to be born ugly! ... Mom .... why did you make me so beautiful? If I was ugly I would have been better ... I cannot stand these (omissis) ... They cling to me, they make me an endless series of unwanted cuddles. Cynthia always sits on my legs and pretends nothing ... Paola even kisses me ... But do you realize that I also have to endure you when you flirt with me? ... but go away, go to Christian because for such a thing he melts like an ice cream in the sun, so you can make him happy and leave me quiet ..... but, luckily for him, he's ugly ... well ... but that's enough ... but how long have I to stand the preach of this whore? [the philosophy teacher] And then she always slips towards politics and she says that she teaches philosophy ... But what do you look at? ... I'm writing ... but what do you care about what I'm writing? ... I mind my own business ... see ... I am moving my head as if to say "yes, yes", as if I was listening to you ... are you satisfied? ... but I think you really look a lot like Madam Mim!

#### Wednesday

What a anger!! I cannot stand anymore this fool who pretends to be an athlete and to play sports? You're old, that's ok! you have a protruding belly, that's ok! you don't even have hair on your head, it's not your fault. But you're anyway an asshole! ... I wait for your two hours of physical education for the whole week because I have to see Emilio undressing ... and you? You stay at home because you're sick ... and they send us the witch to do another two hours of philosophy ... but fuck! .. I have to wait another week ...

#### Thursday

Today Madam Mim calls me ... "What are you writing? ... bring me the

diary!" ... I ... to you ... the diary ... but I don't bring you anything at all! I had to implore, I could not give it to her. Anyway she is a whore ... and then Paula, the gossipy girl by definition, she even told me that in her opinion Fabrizio is gay ... Fabrizio! But he's as ugly as hunger ... if she had said Emilio it would have been very different ... well ...

### **Friday**

Today we talked and he was the one who searched for me! ... Oh well ... there were only us because there was the assembly and there were just four cats ... but he says to me: "Do you want a coffee?" I certainly did not wait for him to repeat the proposal ... We have been talking from nine to noon. Emilio is fascinating ... he is a poet, he says beautiful things, a bit melancholy, however, he says they have never loved him ... but how is it possible? For almost all the time we talked about the school, but this is the first time we talk in two. He's athletic, he's almost 17 and it looks like he's got twenty! He shaves every day and has a beautiful facial skin. He's really nice and then he doesn't believe to be the charming prince ... he does not boast ... when he was there I would have (omissis) ... I say it just to say, but perhaps ... !

... then Madam Mim passes us by and makes me nervous: "What are you two doing there? ... go to the assembly! ... come on!" She put herself in front of the door of the classroom and waited for us to come out ... and when we left she looked at us with a little grin that I didn't really like. I told Emilio: "The witch thought who knows what..." and he told me something beautiful: "And let her think it!" Very good, Emilio, good answer!

The assembly is a deadly bore. There was a guy who was attending the fifth year who preached as if he had understood everything ... we of the fifth class here and we of the fifth class there ..." ... Oh! My beautiful guy! If the witch yells against you, you piss on yourself for fear!

Emilio and I went to a less visible place and we were chatting and at one point I leaned on Emilio's shoulder ... a dreamy feeling ... then a guy passed and he winked at me as to tell me to be careful, I turned around and the witch was just behind me ... she said only: "Eh! ..." and I looked at her and said to her: "Teacher, but here everyone is making out ... but tell it also the others! ... " And there the world has burst: "You are two rude guys!" ... "If anything, I'm the rude one ... he has nothing to do with it!" ... "Oh no! He has to do with it a lot ... but where do you think you are?" Emilio turned to me: "Let's go!" I was red with rage. Under the eyes of the witch Emilio takes my hand and we move hand in hand. It was one of the best moments of my life! Then I was afraid because the witch usually takes revenge, but Emilio said: "We cannot let us be influenced by Madam Mim! ..." I love

him, at the beginning it was only a matter of sex but now I love him, I love him indeed! Emilio!!!

### 3.2.9 Coming out in chat

- Mark writes: but you make a speech a bit strange
- Luke writes: why?
- Mark writes: ... I do not know ... this friend for you seems to me that really matters a lot ...
- Luke writes: yes indeed yes ... we have known each other for years, we tell each other everything ...
- Mark writes: but do you have a girlfriend?
- Luke writes: no ...
- Mark writes: and why not?
- Luke writes: well ...
- Mark writes: but what does it mean?
- Luke writes: ...
- Mark writes: oh my God, are you gay? ...
- Luke writes: ...
- Mark writes: damn it, I'm sorry
- Luke writes: what are you sorry for?
- Mark writes: well, I don't know, I was saying just to say...
- Luke writes: Come on, tell me what you really think
- Mark writes: ... what can I tell you? ... it's not that I feel embarrassed but it had never happened to me before and then I would not have expected it from you, I'm sorry, I don't know ... damn I do not know what to say ... but I feel embarrassed ... no, maybe not, anyway ... I do not know ...
- Luke writes: come on, speak clearly ...
- Mark writes: in short, I expected it, that is, I immediately understood it ...
- Luke writes: but a second ago you said exactly the opposite ...
- Mark writes: no, well ... how sensitive you are ... you don't forgive me anything ...
- Luke writes: oh ... Mark ... if you want, we can stop the chat here ...
- Mark writes: and why?
- Luke writes: well ...
- Mark writes: but what does it mean?
- Luke writes: ...
- Mark writes: but I have nothing against gays, we are civil per-

sons ... if you're like this ... I can tell you ... ok, ok ... just don't run too much ...

- Luke writes: but have I ever done it?

- Mark writes: no ... perhaps you think I'm a redfish, I mean ugly ...

- Luke writes: What?!

- Mark writes: well, I do not know, I said just to say ... a stupid joke ... but, seriously, what do you plan to do?

- Luke writes: in what sense?

- Mark writes: I don't know ... to go to a psychologist ... to see if you can do anything ...

- Luke writes: that is?

- Mark writes:... I do not know ... but do you want to remain like this? If you have problems with girls I have heard that something can be done, you can ask your doctor, perhaps with the viagra ...

- Luke writes: but do you know what a gay is?

- Mark writes: he is one that when he is with a girl his dick does not stand up, but you don't have to be affected by these things, I think that something can be done ... just find the right doctor to solve the problem and then we'll go together to look for prostitutes ... very nice, Luke!

- Luke writes: no ... I guess you didn't understand ... I'm not impotent ...

- Mark writes: so what is it? If your dick stands up with a woman what's the problem? ... and I think you're not even gay ... this thing you are now putting it in your head as a fixed idea and seems a big problem to you ... but I know it's a big bullshit. ..

- Luke writes: well ... no ... I want to be with the guys ... I fall in love with them ...

- Mark writes: what does this mean? But it's not possible! How can you do such a thing? It does not really make sense ... it would be like if I thought I'd fall in love with you but it's crazy ...

- Luke writes: ...

- Mark writes: oh my God, what happened? Did you get offended? ...

- Luke writes: no ... I'm used to the fact that no one understands anything ...

- Mark writes: but what should I understand? Come on! Don't say bullshit! ... I make you know a girl that when I see her I immediately get a hard-on ... when you are there you cannot resist

... you see her and all the stupid fantasies go immediately away  
... Luke, come on ... it's only bullshit ...  
- Luke writes: ... If we have to go on like this it is better I close  
...  
- Mark writes: but ... do you really think you're one of those? ...  
Luke!! Don't worry, with that shit of people you have nothing to  
share! But have you seen what funny types they are? They are  
pathetic ...  
- Luke writes: I leave you, I go ... it's better ... bye  
- Mark writes: wait! Damn! But where are you going! Stop  
there! I don't eat you ... damn when one wants to help a friend  
at the end gets only punches!  
- Luke writes: sorry, sorry, but I don't want to be helped ... I  
want to be what I'm, nothing else!  
- Mark writes: I think you don't even know what you say ... Oh  
well ... do you want to do it? Just do it! In the end it's just your  
problem! At the end of you I do not care at all! You want to be  
shit ... and then people treat you like shit ... it's right, isn't it?  
- Luke writes: Hi Mark

(and closes the chat. Mark reopens the chat immediately)

- Mark writes: Oh! Woe to you if you close another time the chat  
this way! You make me angry ... but you have just a temper ...  
You mean you're gay, all right, do as you please! You want to be  
an asshole ... Do it!  
- Luke writes: if you start again, I turn it off ... Mark, if you  
don't have a minimum of respect, go to hell and that's it!  
- Mark writes: Oh well, sorry, sorry ... but seriously why don't  
you go to a psychologist? A good psychologist in my opinion can  
get you out of this mess ...  
- Luke writes: what the hell do you say!  
- Mark writes: well, I don't know, I said so ... but what do you  
think you'll do?  
- Luke writes: what should I do? Anything!  
- Mark writes: but if you don't go to the psychologist this thing  
becomes a sort of fixation, while I think there are many things to  
do ...  
- Luke writes: do you have to continue this way?  
- Mark writes: okay ... you're right ... let's pretend that you're  
right ...

- Luke writes: Mark I'm tired of listening to nonsense ...
- Mark writes: oh! well I'm tired too ... and you said much more bullshit than me ...
- Luke writes: I cannot stand you anymore ... Mark that's enough! ... But why did I tell you about my business? ... I cannot stand it anymore ... leave me alone!
- Mark writes: No! Otherwise what are friends for? ... you've got a bullshit in your head and I have to wash your brain ... that's all ... But did you tell Sandro?
- Luke writes: no! ... but why? Did I have to tell him?
- Mark writes: no, but you know ... he also seems a bit strange ...
- Luke writes: what the hell do you say?
- Mark writes: well ... I told you ... anyway do what you want! ...
- Luke writes: I told you and I was wrong because you are treating me absurdly and you don't even understand what you say ...
- Mark writes: but, you know, Sandro thought he could take you too to that ... girl I told you before ... I had brought him there sometimes ...
- Luke writes: but was not he gay?
- Mark writes: well ... but he came to that girl ... if you had come too, she would have had the same effect on you too...

(Luke finally closes the chat.)

### 3.2.10 Gay love and coming out

Hello Project,

I'd want to tell you my story and I would like to know what you think, bellow there's my contact, if you like chatting with me just a little.

Call me Mark, it's not my real name, but everybody calls me this way, because I don't like my real name, I'm 21 y. o., live in a big city, and study physical education sciences, I study subjects related to sports because I practice sports and I'm an athlete at competitive level and also with excellent results. That is, even though I know that the career of a player and in particular in specialties I practice ends very soon, I'd like to remain in the world of sports because it is my real world and because I really feel at ease there. I sport since I was a young boy; the gym is my second home or even the first, because I spend more time in the gym than at home.

But I come to the point. Until last year I have not thought much about sex.



I had to attend school, then university and first of all I had competitions that for me were very important. In practice until last year, but I would say all last year if not beyond, even in January, February 2008, for me sport was only sporting activity. I never felt embarrassment in the locker room or showering with other guys and I did also some sexual joke and sometimes I was also the victim of such jokes but absolutely no problem, indeed I always liked a lot the free locker room environment because there we enjoy our being youth, we behave with no restraint and sometimes make fun madly, and I like well such things, but since the beginning of March, that is since a very short time, things have really changed. Don't ask me why, there is probably a good reason, or rather there is certainly a good reason, I looked for such a reason a lot, but I have not been able to discover one.

No doubt you have understood! I started to realize that in the locker room there were other naked guys and I began to worry about. I had never noticed that my mates were naked in the locker room or in the shower for me all that was always absolutely normal, but, let's say, since March I started to notice them. For them nothing had changed at all but for me it was very different, I was aware of that, I was interested, in short, I was studying my mates, I was beginning to think how would have been nice if those guys were in love with me.

Outside, I continued to behave more or less as before even if I was beginning to have problems controlling the erection, which in the locker room and showers is not a little taboo, because more or less it is the hallmark that you are gay. You do everything to avoid erection and you are worried because you don't understand how other guys could take such things. The result of all this is that I spend in the locker room just a minute and I try to be dressed as much as possible, but then the moment of truth arrives and anxiety comes. Virtually I'm at ease with my being gay, I have virtually no problem, I have never had a girl in the truest sense of the word, but just little stories, that I have never taken seriously, in practice I discovered that I was gay in a way absolutely non traumatic, I had only to take note of what I knew already. But when you're gay and live in places like those where I live, that is in the midst of athletes that are not as beautiful as people think even if among them there are really those very sexy, well, inside, you feel a certain agitation. I read that many young men seek meeting sites or gay chats, I never did such things, for me the gym is everything also from this point of view, I would have practically no need to seek sex photos on the net because I'm among guys when and how I like.

My real problem is another, that is to understand if among the guys I like there are gay guys because I'd never fall in love with a straight guy what could entail the risk of making a poor showing and being teased. I'm also

having problems about sport performances, my trainer says it often and asks me why, but I can't tell him how things really are.

Another thing. Do not laugh: I never had any gay experience; I've never had sex with anyone. Now I think I'm not really in love, because as Project says: in order to fall in love it's necessary to be two, and then I'm not missing sex at all because when I feel a real need for sex I do what every guy does with or without gay porn, mostly without because fantasy is more than enough for me. I don't like to get involved in troubles to make sex with a guy that I don't know and don't even know if he's healthy, I don't really feel like it. Now, I can say, I'm alone just in the sense that I don't have a boyfriend.

I premise I don't even have gay friends, I found the Project's gay blog on Google and I was amazed by the monstrous amount of material that it contains. I built my little knowledge on gay issues on that blog but not only by reading the posts but also the comments, then I discovered the forum, first I didn't notice it, the forum too is a real mine of stories and contributions. I read a lot of very interesting posts, but I have not had the courage to enroll. Now, speaking honestly, I think that sooner or later I will make some big poppycock in the gym, to tell the truth there is a guy who attracts me very much. I'm now his coach, he is in a group entrusted to me, 19 y. o., he's younger than me, but I'm 21, not 50. He's really beautiful and then we shower together every day, in short, you understand, I like everything of him. With him I behave in a casual and friendly manner, as I do with the other guys, but with others I am spontaneous, with him no, we talk so much, both before and after the shower, he trusts me completely and considers me like a brother.

He must take the exams in order to get his diploma in a few days, just a couple of weeks ago he was very sad, we waited to talk and he told me that the mathematics teacher called him unexpectedly and graded him badly and said that he could never pass the exam. He had studied a lot but that the teacher was just a piece of shit that would have done everything to put him in trouble, because he had it in for him, at some point his eyes became red and he was going to cry. I wanted to embrace him, I wanted to keep close to him, to tell him that I loved him but I felt frozen and I didn't move at all, I saw in his eyes just two tears that torn my soul, he was ashamed, then he dried the tears with hands. I told him that last year I had lost a very important medal for two hundredths of a second and later, when no one was able to see me, I had started crying like a fountain.

Then there has been training and I cuddled him a lot and he was happy for all this attention, then in the shower I had the impression that he almost looked for my eyes, that is he was trying to understand if I observed him and I think he understood, when we left he waited to talk to me but in another

way, at least I had the impression that it was in another way, he looked into my eyes more directly and smiled, I thought that he wanted an encouragement but I didn't anything.

It is true that with me he has talked about girls but this does not mean anything. My anxiety is now only about is being gay or not? To tell the truth it's as if I had the premonition to be on the verge of being involved in some ugly mess and that's why I try to treat him well, but without going beyond friendship and indeed I take care also of other guys, but I should say rather I pretend to take care of those guys in order to get rid of his image that is always in front of me.

I study all the ways to stay with him as long as possible, without looking too much interested and when it's possible, I do whatever I can, to avoid to meet him, in practice now we talk only when it is he who calls me but I never take the initiative. Anyway when he asks me, I show me very excited.

Today in the shower I looked and noticed he had an erection, but most likely one sees what he wants to see. Shit! I can't stand this stress anymore! But why should I fall in love with a guy and not have the courage to speak openly! What could happen? I don't know. In practice I think that he never got the suspicion that I'm gay, or perhaps yes, I don't know what to think, but it is an unbearable stress.

Do you want to laugh? Well I think he is heterosexual and that is fine with me because for him there are no implications of any kind regarding sex and he thinks that this is the case even for me. So I'm condemned to this eternal torment of not knowing how to behave. If things go on like that and he doesn't freeze me with something extraordinary, like seeing him kissing a girl or joking stupidly on gays, well, I believe that I will make the madness, I tried many times to prepare the speech but I think that at the end I would be trivial and very direct, such as: "I'm gay and you?" And at this point he jabs me in the face or he looks upset at me. Sometimes in the locker room I feel like a sex maniac and sometimes I even feel guilty over the guy whom I like best because in fact I am cheating him and I hate to cheat him, and that could well be one of the fundamental reasons for making the big step and tell him how things really are.

A hug. Mark

P. S. if you publish this mail, we'll see what guys think.

### 3.2.11 My father gay

Hello Project,

I write for a very special reason because from several days now there's a thing that causes me profound disturbance. I am a 19 years old guy and

no doubt I'm straight, the problem is not about me but about my father. I state that I respect my father very much, he is a father really as all fathers should be. He and my mother got married because I was about to be born. When I was born my father was 22 years old and now he's 41. I no longer have my mother since I was 11 years old and basically I live alone with my father who takes care of everything. I have a real dialogue with him, when I had problems (including sexual ones) I resorted to him and he has always helped me. My girlfriend loves him because he has always made sure that she would feel comfortable in our home like in her own.

I go to the fact: since about six months my father has a little changed habits, previously he never used to go out, now in practice he goes out every evening. "Out" means he stays away from home for two or three hours. The first few times I did not mind it, then I began to wonder: where is he going? But there were other strange things, sometimes his cell phone rang and he entered his room to answer and spoke softly and he never does so when speaking with people I know or even with relatives.

I had the curiosity to spy on him, but I never did because I would be ashamed to do such a thing. I began to think about what could induce my father to that behavior, the first thing was that he could see a woman, but I've never seen my father compliment a woman and I do not even remember the relationship he had with my mother. For mom and for the mom's things he has always had the greatest respect, as for me, but an intelligent respect, without fetishes of any kind. After all, if he intended to marry again no one could prevent him and for me it would not be shocking, on the contrary it would be pleasing to him, and for this I would accept it and he knows it. So I discarded the idea of a woman.

There was a fact that has alarmed me. About a month ago my father introduced me to a colleague of his aged 35. In practice it happened completely random, Dad and I were walking around and we met this guy. Dad stopped and introduced me to his colleague, however, I had the distinct impression that my father was embarrassed and that he had stopped walking to talk with his colleague a few seconds too long, and in a way a bit embarrassed. That's where the gay hypothesis flashed in my mind. Of course I didn't even mention it, but even later sometimes I felt the embarrassment of Dad. In the days after he had calmed down but I kept thinking about that thing and the more I was thinking the more the idea that Dad and his colleague were not just colleagues was becoming clear. I do not know what they can be for each other, but are not just colleagues. I want to clarify that I didn't feel upset when I thought that my father might be gay or that he and his colleague could be a couple (such things might also be real), what I do not like is that my father can be forced to pretend with me because maybe he is afraid to

tell me the truth.

I read on the forum many stories about the coming out of gay guys towards their parents, but never with inverted roles, that is stories about a coming out of a gay father towards his son, and I think that if the coming out is embarrassing for a gay guy it might be even more embarrassing for a father who has to confess to his son that he's gay. I have not sought evidence that my father is gay, I'm not going to search into his computer because he has never done so with mine, but I do not know what to do, that is, whether to tell him that I understood or to go on waiting for him to take the decision. I do everything to make my father feel at ease with me but I think on this specific point he will never feel comfortable.

I have read on the forum about gay married, so the situation that my father probably lives is not something so exceptional. I talk about it as if I had the certainty that things are indeed so, in fact I'm not sure, but the intuition takes me there. Project, from what I understand you are much older than my father, and perhaps such things have already happened to you and you could tell me what to do, because I love my father and the fact that he can be gay does not constitute any problem for me, I just want him to be happy and to feel free with me because I am proud that he is my father! I am already waiting for your response. If you want, you can post this message on the forum.

I am attaching my contact [omissis]  
G.R.

Tommy:

I really enjoyed reading this letter. The boy proves to be very intelligent and to want a lot of good to his dad, I think he should talk to his father; he should calmly confront the subject with him so as to put an end to his father's embarrassment.

Bakuman:

I think you should leave your father the time to face the thing alone and with serenity. It's not just a problem of how you can accept it, you must also think that maybe he's discovering only now a sexuality that he has repressed for years and that maybe the "partner" is ready for a stable relationship while your father is not yet ready, or instead he is ready but doesn't want to ruin the balance that has been established with you for many years. Declaring one's own homosexuality in certain situations is really complicated and this to be honest is the most complicated situation I've heard so far! Leave him time and pretend nothing, if then a lot of time passes, then you can also do some small allusion to a possible relationship of his, so, for now, stay on

the vague, or better go immediately to tell him! I'm curious to know how this story will end! Of course I'm joking! Really my best wishes to both of you and congratulations for the maturity and intelligence you demonstrate, it would be nice if people were all like you!

Jek70:

It is not easy to declare one's own homosexuality in a hetero-sexist society. It's a wonderful thing that for you it's not a problem accepting a gay person, but for many unfortunately it is not so and for homosexual people, who suddenly realize their nature almost in old age, this can really be a leap in the dark, as if they felt the world falling on their heads. Homophobia can also paradoxically be nested in the same homosexual individual because he is conditioned since childhood to think with "hetero" mental schemes. If you ask your father directly he could also deny everything. Instead, slowly try to make him understand that for you gay people are very normal people for which you have the highest esteem and respect exactly the same esteem and respect that you have for straight people. If you like, you can invent that you also have a gay friend with whom you get along very well and that you do not see anything strange if two men decide to live together for an affective bond. It could certainly help him to feel that the person he most certainly cares about is so mentally open. Create a peaceful environment where being gay is normal. I wish that everything will be resolved soon in the best way, for you and your dad.

Ferro:

Your father is lucky to have a son like you, he when you were born, he was perhaps still too young to fully understand his sexuality. Right now he's living a beautiful and tremendous situation at the same time, you by the way let him talk, maybe making it indirectly, let him understand that you care about his happiness. You will see that he will open with you when he will be ready, you meanwhile try to prepare because in general it is not easy to accept the "female partner" of your father and accepting his "male partner" can be much more complicated. The fact that you have come on the internet and you did some research on the subject denotes in you a great intelligence and sensitivity. Don't change! Because in the end, your father's situation is normal and beautiful.

Marcolino:

this is really a family, you must be proud of yourself, simply you and your father should be proud of your relationship. Don't be afraid to talk to him, stay on his side, in the end it doesn't matter that he has to tell you some-

thing, know that in the affection the differences cancel no matter if you have to get a clarification. Or gay or straight he is your father and as you say we must always respect ourselves, and I imagine that your father loves you more than anything else in the world, my friend. Talk to him and I'm sure everything will end with a smile and a hug between father and son. Your father must be proud of you and I'm sure it's so because you're a sensitive, sweet and intelligent boy, you've demonstrated and still demonstrate every day that intelligence has no sex. Good guy! I wish I had a brother like you, my friend, be happy!

Marcolino

Max:

To make such an emotional and sexual change in one's life is already difficult in itself, and if one then navigates the perilous sea of the 40s, the enterprise is even more difficult. I agree with Jek70 on the need to give your father, progressively and in general terms, continuous manifestations of that mental openness and sensitivity that transpires from your email. The time and affection between you two can do the rest, if you have prepared the ground properly. Your father is really lucky to have such a sympathetic and caring son beside him. Good luck.

Max Heath:

First of all I have to congratulate you, you really show that you understand your father. In my opinion you don't have to talk about it openly right away, because your father could close himself more, but you should talk about the matter slowly, maybe starting from homosexuality in general. Afterwards, if things go well, it will be him to open up with you, when and how he wants it. Act but wait, said someone.

Heath.

Mikhol:

Hi "G.R.", I'm Michael, father of two sons aged 13 and 15 and I'm gay. Precisely in this period I'm experiencing the opposite problem: it is I who am thinking about how to face my "coming out" towards my boys. From what you write it is clear that you have an excellent relationship with your father. And I would say that he really educated you with respect and understanding. Believe me, you don't have to worry about trying to talk to him. Certainly you are no longer a child and you are able to find the best way to "hook" the topic. In my opinion, if he understands that you don't judge him and that this choice doesn't affect your relationship, you will see a person who is reborn, as if you had taken away a boulder from his heart. Repressing oneself

and one's natural inclinations is always a mental and sentimental sterilization that never brings good fruit, it is like to deprive ourselves of that experience that unites all human beings: to love another human creature. The point is that each person should be free to give his soul, or his life to another person in the search for the mutual love that we all desire. And if your father has glimpsed this opportunity he's likely to be living with a great dilemma: persevere in his role of father without telling you anything, trying to live in secret, or face the speech with the fear of losing his son, something he could never forgive himself for. I can tell you that it's frustrating to live like this. It is tiring and exhausting. Don't be afraid, break the ice, maybe on the occasion of something that brings to light the topic and express your common sense: your dad has raised you with love and spirit of sacrifice. Now you can do something for him: meet him. We cheer for you. Go ahead tis way!

Nebium:

I think it is always difficult to give advice, because reading your email I didn't understand if your father had married just because your mother was pregnant or because anyway she wanted a child. It is a legitimate desire, which also homosexuals have and that cannot be achieved except in the classic way, at least here in our country. It could also be that your father is simply bisexual, and then both the marriage and your intuitions would be explained. But beyond everything he seems a smart person, since he has grown you very well and loves you. He's also lucky (or maybe he was just good at his role) because you look very smart too. I understand you and your discomfort, but to dispel any doubt the only way is to clear up. Of course I'm not suggesting you do it in a traumatic way, indeed, if you have the impression that he doesn't want to address the subject you have to respect his will, but clarify could make him understand that you love him and that his sexual orientation is something secondary in the relationship between you two. Rather, I would suggest addressing the subject facing it gradually and at the beginning only from a distance, perhaps with the complicity of your girlfriend (who in turn loves him, but by the way: did you tell her something about? What are her opinions on this?), starting from a similar story of hypothetical colleagues or friends of friends, or commenting on a book, a movie, to continue the conversation at another time, with the serenity and calm that your intimacy allows you. In my opinion it can only do good for both of you, I think it is disheartening at 40 to have to "hide" like a teenager from your son, and surely your approval (in the sense of reconfirmation of your affection) would allow him to feel more serene. I wish you two never lose the depth of the bond that unites you.



### 3.2.12 Openly gays and their relatives

Hello Project,

I read so many times on the forum stories of guys coming out and thinking that coming out can be the door to happiness, well, I too thought this way years ago, when I was totally in the closet, but now I would absolutely avoid advising a guy to come out in front of his family and this for a very different reason than one could imagine. If the family does not accept you, ok, the problems are huge, but if they accept you problems can be huge all the same, because a gay guy completely out and accepted in the family ends up experiencing a family conditioning completely overlapping that to which a hetero guy is subjected, that is: everyone knows, everyone comments, everyone gives advice and tries to combine relationships in their own way and in practice the privacy and the feeling of being couple, just like two and only two people, goes to hell, because social invasion becomes increasingly heavy and unpleasant.

A year ago I met a guy, Mirco, when I was on holiday in Puglia. At the time I was totally in the closet, while he was totally out. We spent 15 days of vacation together, a little sex (protected), then, for me everything was finished, I didn't feel in love with that guy, but he insisted and asked me to go and see him at home in Salerno, he insisted a lot and in the end I accepted but probably I didn't realize exactly what would have happened, I thought I would be introduced as a friend and that everything would end there, but he was out with his family and when you present yourself at home of a gay guy totally out and he says you're a friend, his family automatically identifies you as the lover, or as the lover of the moment, and that's exactly what happened to me.

I don't deny that the first day I was really uncomfortable, I couldn't stand the attentions of his relatives. In particular his mother and his aunts subjected me to a real police questioning and meddled with subjects that I had never shared with anyone, but all this is nothing in front of the behavior: they put us in the same room and not with two separate beds but with a double bed and his aunts began to make absurd speeches: that if I loved their nephew I should not be ashamed and so on, but I was not in love with their nephew and I did everything to make it clear and evident, but for them I was the guy of their nephew. After the 15 days I came back to my home in Milan, where nobody knew anything about me and I breathed a sigh of relief.

Then I received a postcard from Mirco that created me a lot of embarrassment, he sent me a postcard with the image of two guys kissing (at least it was not us!) But a postcard like that seemed to me quite inappropriate,

especially because Mirco knew I was yet closeted. But there's more: the postcard was signed "also" by Mirco but had not been written by him but by his aunt Carolina, and said: "Happiness exists!" Obviously I didn't respond to the postcard for the fear that another similar postcard could come, instead I received an email from Mirco telling me that it would be in Milan for the post graduate university training and that he would take a mini-flat near the university. I don't hide the fact that I panicked and tried to think how I could get rid of Mirco, because I expected that sooner or later he would create problems with my family.

I wrote to him that once back in the city I had reviewed my ex-boyfriend and we were back together, of course it was all invented but I hoped that it could serve to turn him away from the idea of coming to Milan, but he replied trying to make me have scruples of conscience, remembering the days and even more the nights spent together in Puglia. I replied in a way that seemed to me very cold and evasive and three days later his aunt Carolina called me on the phone even if I hadn't absolutely given her my phone number, and she told me that Mirco was spending the days thinking about me and crying, what seemed to me completely unlikely. I suspect that the idea of attending post graduate courses in Milan was not of Mirco but of aunt Carolina, who is very nosy; if she were my aunt ... I save you what I would do! Nothing sexual of course!

The academic year restarts and Mirco arrives in Milan, calls me every day and I do everything to avoid him, unplug the phone for hours ... however, sometimes I cannot avoid meeting him, but I do not have to spend more than a few minutes with him, because Mirco comments loudly about the guys he sees on the street and behaves as none of my friends would have ever done. I avoid with the utmost care to enter with him in a bar or in a restaurant because nothing is a problem for him and nothing holds him back, but he doesn't realize he is disturbing the privacy of others. Three days ago aunt Carolina calls me and tells me that Mirco feels much better "now that he is in Milan" I hope that he has found a guy, but aunt Carolina tells me: "The merit is all yours! Because you knew how to take him with such sweetness!" And here my arms fall to the ground! What did I do? The situation was getting really heavy, I told aunt Carolina that I was already with a guy and that Mirco knew it very well and she added that yes he knew but anyway he didn't believe it.

I decide to face Mirco explicitly and I do it. He looks at me and tells me: "But I had understood very well from the first day I arrived in Milan, I know that there is no tripe for cats with you [expression commonly used in Rome to say that there are no possibilities] and then I found another guy ... Be quiet, everything is ok. You know, aunt Carolina is a spinster and she must

always combine weddings ... staying here in Milan I realized that I probably created a lot of problems for you because nobody knows about you, I'm sorry, I thought you wanted to get rid of this thing, I mean of the forced privacy, perhaps in order to find gay friends, but maybe this is out of place for you. Be quiet, I'll stay away from you, I understood the lesson."

I thanked him and then he said to me: "Aunt Carolina ... you will not get rid of her so easily, but don't take her seriously if she tells you that I'm crying all day, because she said the same thing to all the guys I brought home ... she is like that!"



# Chapter 4

## GAY BOYS AND PARENTS

### 4.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 4.1.1 Family conflicts related to homosexuality

Speaking with gay guys of all ages, it's easy to realize that many of them think that often the homosexuality of sons is perceived, within the family, both by sons themselves and parents, as something disruptive and dangerous, capable of undermining even the most profound emotional relationships.

This fear, widespread at all ages, generates both for parents and boys attitudes of closure and defense. The boys, but also the adult men of 40 years, who live in their family of origin or who are still in close contact with the family of origin, not only generally avoid in any way any behavior that can push parents to consider them homosexual but, what is worse, they sometimes end up renouncing their sexuality altogether, even in the most sublimated forms: they don't invite friends home, don't go out at night, make a seemingly irreproachable life but totally unnatural and forced.

The fact that a boy should systematically renounce his sexuality to avoid family problems causes feelings of deep frustration and resentment towards parents who are seen as conditioning and castrating. There are gay boys who arrive at 40 years old not only without ever having had sexual contact with a boyfriend, but without ever having even experienced a serious falling in love. Such a thing cannot remain without significant psychological consequences. Gay boys living in this way feel defrauded of their own life and their deep identity by their more or less unconscious parents.

Such things create forms of family coexistence that hide profound recriminations and are merely formal. For gay guys, even at 25, 28 or 30 years, the problem of the relationship with the family is generally not yet solved. This means that these guys, who are now fully adults, are still suffering, often in a

heavy way, from the crisis of family relationships due to their being gay. The parents of these guys, who are even 60 years old or older, are unable to give them any support and often misunderstandings accumulate and consolidate, and come to produce a total separation between the sons and the family that is terrible both for sons and parents and leaves a sense of deep failure of emotional life.

But at 25, if it is true that one can go into crisis, it's also true that there are also resources to manage the situation, but at a very young age it is not at all said that it is so. I often notice, even in gay guys twenty-five years old, the deep desire to escape from home, not in order to get who knows what, but simply to find a privacy that for a guy 25 years old is absolutely necessary, especially if he is a gay guy.

That a gay boy can have good relations with the family it's not very common and often, after the coming out in front of the family, the ostentatious acceptance of the homosexuality of the son by his parents is only just a semblance and the son feels that "anyway" something has changed. In such a situation, the son is instinctively brought to consider his parents hypocritical.

Often the sons perceive that in the family the sex is intended like a taboo or something forbidden, this fact discourages from the beginning any form of dialogue of the guys with their parents and more generally with the adults on this topic, that is confined for class of age only to the peer group.

The idea that sex and sexual affectivity can be topics of which one can speak in a serious and open way, without taboos and without sensationalism, is unfortunately very far from being a common heritage. Often even talking about masturbation is a taboo. In such a climate, a gay guy experiences in fact a state of total isolation. Being gay becomes not a taboo like any other but the taboo par excellence.

### 4.1.2 Religious conditioning

The attitudes of the Church, which sees a serious sin even in the masturbation and condemns homosexuality *a priori*, moving away, in this, from the orientation now widely shared by the scientific community, contribute to the idea that being gay is something very negative that one must be ashamed of, a kind of disgrace, a stain, an outrage especially towards one's parents.

Parents reticent about sex, hyper-moralistic parents, parents who speak of sex only in a derogatory tone, spread the idea that sexuality is a negative thing rooted in their son's minds, and this is even more true for homosexuality.

### 4.1.3 Dialogue between parents and sons

In order to allow a form of mutual respect and genuine emotional contact between parents and sons, parents must put aside all the predetermined roles and must get involved without hiding behind attitudes of convenience that actually prevent sons from getting to know their parents.

Generally, for a gay guy, perceiving that his parents assume a role in front of him, even apparently positive, but nonetheless they are not themselves and are not sincere, is equivalent to feeling rejected. And that perception is objectively correct. In a serious dialogue, especially about sex or even better about homosexuality, there cannot be *a priori* presuppositions. If the answers to be given to the son already exist before any real confrontation of opinions, dialogue is only apparent.

Whenever a parent tries to talk to his gay son in order to try to convince him of something, taking for granted what he will say to his son, regardless of the dialogue with his son, the parent is offending the dignity of the son and is creating a false dialogue. With sons, and in particular with gay sons, it is essential to be 100% honest. In most cases the sons do not talk with their parents about their homosexuality and, I add, in most cases they are right not to talk about it. What I am saying comes from the fact that sons often are afraid of parents' reactions and when fear takes over the relationship, the relationship itself is heavily degraded.

The guys I met through Gay Project and with whom I often chat, want to hear from me the confirmation that being gay means having a dignity, a morality, a high human dimension, no less than that of any other condition of life. Often parents less informed or less seriously informed about the gay world, have an absolutely prejudicial vision of it, they identify it with the most screamed and most spectacular stereotypes that are seen on television ... but no! Gays, the real ones, have nothing to do with these things. I know so many gays of all ages and they are very serious people, who work, who try to believe in what they do and often live in conditions of non-freedom because in the world in which they live being gay is not accepted.

There are people hiding (the vast majority!), I call them "the invisible people", and they hide because they are afraid, not because they have something to hide. I have seen gays falling in deep forms of love, with or without sex, this doesn't matter, with those who gave them a serious emotional response. I have seen young boys literally destroyed by their parents' misunderstanding and a thousand times repentant of having got out in family. The coming out with parents, in general, arouses anxiety and big hesitations because very often the relationships between parents and sons are formalized and are reduced to relationships between roles rather than between people.

#### 4.1.4 Parents and role of support

What should a parent do when he realizes that his son is gay (no matter whether his son told him or not)? The answer may seem trivial but a parent who realizes that his son is gay, if he loves his son, must help him to be gay. A guy told me: "after all I had a lion's courage to talk about it with my parents ... but they took it well only in a sense and say that I have to cure myself". Such an attitude for a gay boy is equivalent to abandonment and non-acceptance.

Accepting does not mean trying to change the situation and or even hoping it will change, if there is an attempt to change things or the hope that things will change it means that there is no acceptance. Being gay is not a choice but a basic quality of a person about whom there is nothing to decide but everything to accept. Refusing the fact that one's son is gay means rejecting him from every point of view. Loving sons means loving them as they are!

#### 4.1.5 Parents and sex education of gay boys

The parents of gay boys, usually, even in good faith, believe they have nothing more to say about the emotional and sexual education of their sons. Nothing is more wrong. A gay boy must learn from parents to be seriously gay and to consider sexuality as a fundamental thing and to live it in an affective dimension characterized by honesty and respect for oneself and others. But beyond the moral principles, parents can have a great importance also in guiding the boys towards responsible sexual behavior in order to put aside any risky behavior. The parent's insistence on this point is generally considered by teenagers as a form of positive interest and, in essence, as something gratifying.

A twenty-three-year-old gay guy, who had a very good relationship with his family, told me about an episode that I report below through a passage of one of his emails.

"At one point I had a fight with my boyfriend or maybe I was just a little tired of him and even though I kept seeing him I started to go to clubs and look for guys in order to have fun with them without him knowing it and my father did something for which I will never stop thanking him. One evening he had waited for me until I returned home, practically until morning, and he told me clearly that between loving a guy and going to behave stupidly to have fun there was a huge difference but if I wanted to get along with him I had to do things seriously, he told me: you have to respect your boyfriend, because he's a guy like you and you're



cheating him now, and if you behave less respectfully towards the guy you say you love, you are lacking in dignity. And his speech ended up with this words: a gay guy must be a proper guy! I think I will never forget this anymore!”

With this example I mean that a parent can and must have a role towards a gay boy and that role consists in transmitting to the boy the sense of dignity and respect for others, which are fundamental values for all.

#### 4.1.6 Medicalization of homosexuality

Parents, who almost always act in good faith towards gay sons, in the vast majority of cases, not only don't have the faintest idea of what homosexuality really is but are totally unaware of their ignorance in the matter and therefore don't look for information, don't try to understand but only to protect their sons from what they a priori consider to be dangerous, assuming attitudes that can also violently condition sons, such attitudes are manifested in two main ways: the medicalization of homosexuality and the violation of privacy. The medicalization of homosexuality of the son is aimed at solving the problem with a psychological or even psychiatric treatment. A serious psychiatrist will never accept to take care of a boy just because he is gay. A serious psychologist can also take care of a gay boy but to help him to be gay, certainly not to try to change his sexual orientation.

A gay boy, forced or kindly forced to go to a psychologist when he doesn't want to, will perceive such a thing as a heavy violence against his person, because this way his parents don't show acceptance but rejection of his deep identity through an attempt to transform it. I add a very important observation: the medicalization of homosexuality of the son by the parents is, in fact, a total dumping of responsibility as well as an explicit renunciation to try to build a dialogue with the son on the affective level.

#### 4.1.7 Privacy of gay sons and parental intrusions

As to the violations of the son's privacy on the part of the parents in order to understand if the boy is gay, let us remember the most common ones:

- 1) reading the private diary or correspondence of the son,
- 2) entering his computer to check the contents,
- 3) attempting to control his friendships, and especially,
- 4) demanding from him the confession of his homosexuality as if it were a moral obligation of the boy towards his parents.

It is clear that parents are not easily aware of the seriousness of the violation of the son's privacy and often believe that their intrusive behavior is not only justified by good intentions but is dutiful and even represents a meritorious way of exercising the parental function.

For a parent it can be very difficult to understand that the son is an independent person, different from the parent, and that no presumed good intent can justify the violation the son's privacy. For a young boy, and even more for an adult, there is nothing more private than his sexual sphere. An invasion in this area by parents is rightly experienced by the son as an intolerable violence. If a boy wants to come out in front of his parents, this is and remains in any case an absolutely free and personal choice of his, not an obligation, because boys who prefer to save their privacy at any cost, avoid the coming out because they are afraid of the reactions from their parents.

I often speak with 25/30 year old guys who explicitly say that they will never come out in the family. If one of these boys felt somehow forced by his parents to talk about his homosexuality he would live it not as a simple lack of respect but as a very serious aggression to his dignity and his person.

#### **4.1.8 Affective education of gays and family homophobia**

The bad relationship of a gay boy with his parents, and worse the disapproval of them, radically prevents every form of dialogue. The model of affective life assimilated through the family life, that is through the observation of the behavior of the parents remains deeply imprinted in the mind of gay boys.

Gay guys who have experiences family relationships characterized by respect and affection between their parents certainly have much less relational problems in their emotional life. Unfortunately, the reasoning is also valid for the negative.

I spend my days, and very often my nights, talking to gay guys and many of them don't have clear relationships with their parents, this doesn't only mean that they are closeted gays who don't come out in family but even that between parents and sons there is no real dialogue and that parents don't have and often have never had emotional contacts with the sons: some boys are literally afraid of their parents and their judgment and others prefer not to put at risk the fragile family peace by addressing dangerous discourses without any useful prospect.

These boys have often felt a homophobic atmosphere in their family, have heard scornful judgments about gays and realized that parents are too much

conditioned by prejudices to be able to really understand what it means to be gay. In some cases, parents' comments on television broadcasts or journalistic news concerning gays have permanently removed their sons from the intention of speaking openly with their parents, in other cases the *a priori* moral condemnation of homosexuality, on the basis of the attitude of the Church, provoked similar reactions. In these situations, a boy clearly perceives that for his parents, what people say or what the Church says matters more than the son and that there is no effort on the part of parents to understand what it really means to be gay. Often even attitudes that may seem to be of acceptance, in reality, can hurt boys very heavily, when they understand that there is a discrepancy between the parents' words and their actual behavior, when they perceive the hypocrisy of the parents and their playing a role without getting really involved.

A single word out of place (I love you "even" so) can show anyway a profound non-acceptance, but often even the tone of the voice is sufficient or the fact that the topic is frozen in a definitive way. The boys would like to talk seriously with their parents, they would like to understand the difficulties of their parents and help them solve their problems. The real difficulties emerge when mutual trust is lacking, when parents and children don't esteem each other as persons. In such situations, the fact that the son is gay is not the real problem but highlights the misunderstandings and underlying problems of the parent-child relationship.

#### 4.1.9 Parental victimhood

Often a parent's interest in homosexuality, after the coming out of the son, is manifested through the search on the internet of sites deemed useful, but almost always the parent avoids serious sites dedicated to gay guys and instead seeks sites where a parent may have contacts with other parents of gay guys, this means that often the parent doesn't try to understand the point of view of gay boys but is just looking for someone willing to support him or to allow him to feel a victim. It is much easier to be welcomed by the thoughtful arms of a site "for parents" of gay sons than by those much more tough of a gay site dedicated to gay guys. The parent who prefers dialogue with other parents rather than with his son is not honestly trying to solve the problem of the son but only his own! These things are a clear sign of an immaturity on the part of the parent. The lack of dialogue between parents and children is not eliminated by making parents talk to each other, but by pushing them to talk with the boys and to get involved in the first person, without hypocrisy and without any prejudicial role assumption.

#### 4.1.10 Parental attitudes about masturbation

When a boy is 14/15 years old, and sometimes even before, begins to have a sexual life, discovers masturbation and, in the 21st century, he almost certainly begins to use online pornography. Simultaneously at the beginning of sexual activity, this boy feels two different needs, first of all the need for privacy, that is to have his own reserved spaces and times when he is sure not to be disturbed, just to devote himself to the exploration of sexuality, then the need to find serious information about sexuality, that can provide him answers without putting him in embarrassing situations. For a boy who has just begun to masturbate, an absolutely natural and necessary activity for the development of his sexuality, there is nothing more humiliating than being caught red-handed by his parents while masturbating or worse that his parents let him know that they know that he does it.

When a boy grows up, a parent must understand that it is absolutely inevitable that the boy has a "very private" sexual life in which "nobody" has the right to enter "for any reason". The first rule for a parent is to avoid the intrusion into the sexual life of the son and to know how to stand aside by maintaining a role of "possible" (and only possible) reference point for the son. A parent shouldn't ask the son questions about his sexuality, he should never embarrass him. And here, because we talk about boys and not girls, a fundamental role belongs to fathers rather than mothers. A mother doesn't fully know the development of male sexuality because she has not experienced it in the first person and, for a boy, talking about his own sexuality with a person of the opposite sex, especially if it is his mother, can be very embarrassing because the speech must be explicit.

A father, if he thinks it makes sense to mention masturbation by talking to his son, should not start from the son's sexuality but from his own, mentioning the topic as something obvious, which doesn't constitute a taboo, and accompanying the mention of the topic (which must remain only a mention if the son doesn't continue the speech) with a joke of lightening or with a winking smile.

Below is a fragment of a dialogue between a 45-year-old father and his 15-year-old son.

The father and the son have just seen together a television service on the approaches to sexuality on the part of the very young people.

Father: Anyways, they are so amazed that at 14/15 years the boys know what sex is, when I was a boy, maybe we didn't really have relationships as guys do nowadays but, in short, oh ... (looks at his son, smiling) ... what have you to laugh for? ... Yes... I did what everyone does when the sexual urges awaken! ... I'm

not a Martian!  
The son smiles.  
End of the speech.

This fragment is a non-invasive approach that plays down and doesn't create embarrassment but almost a form of complicity. I emphasize that in the father's sentence there is no reference to sexual orientation (he doesn't talk about girls, which would create alarm and embarrassment for a gay son).

#### **4.1.11 Mother's approach to gay son's sexuality**

The mother's approach to a son's sexuality is much more problematic, especially if he is a gay son. If a boy "explicitly" wants to talk to his mother about sexuality without involving his father, the mother's task is not to investigate and understand but to listen carefully and not anxiously, to give the son a certainty, avoiding to involve him in her anxieties. When a mother doesn't know what to say to her son or is embarrassed she can reassure him in a very simple way: when the discourse on sexuality is over, the mother doesn't have to resume it, which would be a sign of destabilizing anxiety, like an underlining that there is a "problem" to be solved, but must continue her relationship with the son as if nothing had happened, in order to give sexuality a dimension of naturalness and normality. I emphasize that naturalness and normality should always accompany any discourse concerning sexuality.

#### **4.1.12 Parents and sexual anxiety of the son**

A particularly delicate situation occurs when an adolescent boy experiences the approach to sexuality in an objectively problematic way. These are typically situations in which parents enter into anxiety states connected with their son's discomfort. A parent who sees his son's discomfort must ask himself whether it is more important for a parent to alleviate his son's distress or "to know" how things are in order to "help" his child. I state that, despite appearances, these are often irreconcilable situations. To help a son overcome discomfort, one has to put aside the will to know the real life of the son. If my son wants to talk to me about his sexuality he does it spontaneously, if he doesn't I don't have to force him in any way, I can stay close to him through normal family care: accompany him to his friends without asking too many questions, leave the dinner ready for him when he comes back late, welcome him with a smile.

### 4.1.13 "Helping" a gay son

A parent cannot claim to help a son if this one doesn't want to involve his parents because a boy is entitled to his privacy. There is much more meaning in a loving and constant presence that doesn't deal with sexual themes than in a harassing presence that aims to "know" and "understand" how things are, a behavior this latter that can lead to a sudden and abrupt blackout of communication with the son, followed by a reactive behavior on the part of the boy leading to his radical and irreversible detachment from the family. If a parent has doubts about the sexual orientation of the son he must avoid harassing him and must instead reassure him without involving him in an embarrassing way in direct speeches but through indirect hints of respect towards gays, hints that should not be too insistent, because otherwise they would sound fake.

A boy understands perfectly if parents have a true respect for gays or pretend, so for parents the key thing to not affectively destabilize their gay son is to arrive at a true respect for homosexuality. The parent should first question himself and his own preconceptions and, only after, he should think how to talk with the son about sexual matters.

### 4.1.14 Relationships of gay boys with the psychologist

Given for granted that it is always good to take care of sons in the first person, without delegating fundamental tasks to anyone, it sometimes happens that a parent, seeing the situation of discomfort of the boy, addresses him to a psychologist who could provide support. Here a very delicate point must be clarified: the relationship between a psychologist and his patient must be absolutely "confidential" i.e. "reserved", a serious professional, even in a relationship with a teenage patient, has the professional obligation of secrecy.

Unfortunately this obligation is not always respected and the psychologist "in the interest of the patient" or rather in the alleged interest of the patient but objectively adapting to direct or indirect pressures of the parents, arrives to communicate to the parents themselves the homosexuality of their son "without his knowledge", violently breaking a relationship of trust that could be important for the boy, such a thing has devastating consequences for the boy who feels betrayed in a dimension that should be completely confidential. In this way the psychologist, carefully chosen by the parents, becomes in substance a spy of the parents, and this behavior indicates not respect for the boy but the will of the parents themselves to "know at any cost", even violating the privacy of the son.

The parents don't have to choose the psychologist and they don't have to go to the psychologist's office before the interviews with the son and not even after, the relationship with the psychologist is not an appendix of the parent-child relationship, but a completely different and separate relationship in which parents must not enter, worse than ever if the psychologist is a family friend. It is a good rule to have the name of the psychologist from the general practitioner and never ask the psychologist "any" information about the son nor ask the son any judgment about the psychologist.

It happens to me several times to talk with guys who, sent by the psychologist from their parents, don't trust the psychologist. In these cases the psychologist's approach is not only emptied from the inside but is counterproductive. In full respect of the dimension of privacy of the son, we must keep in mind that if a parent has doubts about the sexuality of the boy, he must keep those doubts for himself, already talking about it with the spouse can be a negative fact, but talking about it with the separated spouse is anyway to be absolutely avoided, especially if he/she is a person who does not have a good relationship with the boy.

#### **4.1.15 Undue interferences in the lives of gay sons**

A parent must not interfere in the son's relationship with his classmates and friends, when the boy makes a party at home and invites his classmates, the parents, if not directly called into question by their son, must maintain a marginal position, of low profile, they must avoid to get into confidence with friends and classmates of the son and for no reason should try to obtain information about the son from his friends or his companions. Putting a son in a state of embarrassment with his schoolmates or friends creates a breaking in the parent-child relationship that is difficult to repair. Terrible and hateful, even if not very rare, are the situations in which a boy who has trusted in his parents in an absolute way realizes that his other relatives "know about his sexuality" and that the source of the news are precisely his parents, unable to maintain confidentiality.

#### **4.1.16 False acceptance**

I have often seen parents terrified by the fact that the son had made his coming out but not at all worried about creating or maintaining a substantial dialogue with their son, in these cases, the most typical reaction of false acceptance consists in saying that "It is only a transitory phase that will pass and then everything will return to normality", but there are also other typical non-acceptance reactions, such as the classic: "Go to the psychologist

and see what can be done”, or the most common: ”But are you really sure?”, Or even the unpleasant expression: ”But you’re not gay, you only say this to provoke me!” this latter statement highlights strong long-standing contrasts between parents and son. In these situations it is obvious that parents should solve their problems about the rejection of homosexuality before thinking of being able to ”help” their son. The verb ”to help”, used in relation to gay guys only emphasizes the problematic dimension of being gay, a problematic dimension that exists only to the extent to which being gay is seen as a problem. The difficulty of the problem of being gay is proportional to the ignorance of the issue and to levels of anxiety of the parents who want at all costs to ”help” the son to solve a ”problem” that doesn’t really exist and also want to ”save” him from an indefinite series of dangers of which parents nevertheless don’t have the faintest concrete idea.

#### **4.1.17 Education for prevention**

If there is one thing a parent has the sacrosanct duty to do, it is to make the son understand that his own health must be safeguarded also in sexual activity because it is an absolutely fundamental value. Prevention should not be approached in a generic way with a vague ”be careful” but in a competent way. Talking with the parent must help (this time it’s the right verb!) the son to obtain reliable and accurate information. If a parent doesn’t feel sufficiently informed, he can update himself specifically on the Ministry of Health website or on the Gay Project website which has re-published the most important ministerial reports on AIDS and prevention.

#### **4.1.18 Gay boys and family violence**

A growing boy, and in particular a gay boy, shouldn’t be involved for any reason in aggressive situations, especially if it comes to aggressive situations related to his being gay. Sometimes I still talk with worried mothers who don’t want their husbands to know about their son’s homosexuality because they would react violently. If a father makes a scene screaming against his son, or heavily insults him, and worse than ever, slaps him because of his being gay, this father should be aware that such behaviors entail a fully justified break-up of the relationship between father and son.

We are still amazed at how, even today, there are violent reactions of parents to the idea of the homosexuality of their sons, and this even when it comes to parents with high levels of education but who are obviously completely ignorant of sexuality and are not even able to restrain themselves from violence and to face a reasoning as civilized people. The essence of this speech



can be condensed into two principles that parents of a gay boys should never forget:

1) A parent, before addressing the issue of homosexuality with his son, should ask himself what his personal attitude is. He must ask himself seriously if he knows what homosexuality really is or he only presumes to know it, and if he realizes that he, in the first person, has no clear ideas, he must try to clarify them first. He must ask himself whether his attitude is really of acceptance or if behind seemingly conciliatory words are hiding homophobic conceptions (homosexuality as a pathology to treat, as a defect to be overcome, as a sin to be avoided).

2) A parent, even after reaching a full awareness of what homosexuality is, must respect "without exception" the privacy of the son, remaining present and available but never in invasive terms and understanding that the sexuality of the son belongs to the son and not to the parent and that the will to protect the son is likely to make him incapable to react autonomously or to bring him to a position of open break with the family.

#### **4.1.19 Relations between parents and gay sons**

What's a family? I don't ask myself this question to find arguments to argue that a gay couple is a family, because such a thing is obvious, if that couple is really a couple that wants to be a family; I ask myself that question only to understand what is the founding value of a family, I ask myself it above all because I see so many guys who don't have or never had a family or have had families in which conflict or even violence prevailed.

A gay guy already has enough social problems because homophobia is really widespread and he can hardly be himself with friends or in study or work environments. A "real" family should constitute a welcoming, affective, reassuring environment in which one can be oneself without fear, an environment that provides not "rules" but "examples" of high-profile human relationships, an environment in which, even if everybody is free, the problems are faced together because there is an important emotional bond among people.

From what I see, many families formally continue to exist even if in fact every emotional relationship, not only between spouses but also between parents and sons, has ceased for some time, these are families composed of people who stay together for necessity, in which there is not dialogue and not even a will to understand the point of view of others, families in which the ostentation of disinterestedness towards the other is perpetual and the underlining that "I don't care about you and I stay here just because I have to stay here

for necessity” is a daily tool of aggression.

I don't want to make a moralistic abstract speech claiming that the family should be the typical white mill family. No! Separations exist and even divorces and are a very common thing, but people could separate without hatred, without rancor, without the mental reserve of "You will pay dearly for all this!" But I don't want to enter into relations between spouses, I would rather stop on those between parents and sons. I have seen separated or divorced parents who have done everything to maintain a good relationship with their sons but I have seen also parents who have considered children as bargaining goods or worse as objects on which to haggle in quarrels between parents, I have seen parents who don't spend time with their children and who, in the name of liberty, abandon them totally to themselves in very delicate moments of their growth or marginalize them by limiting themselves to giving their children the minimum financial support due by law and often not even that, considering children an unwelcome appendix of a failed marriage. The relationship between parents and sons cannot be improvised and above all it is not objectively credible that a parent can change his relations with his son abruptly. A son knows his parent in depth and knows how the parent deals with him, every sudden change of course sounds at least strange to his son's ears.

When I talk about relations between parents and sons, people often tell me that I lack any experience in this field and that therefore I can only make rhetorical and necessarily very superficial speeches. In fact I have no children and I find it difficult to understand the position of a parent and, among other things, through Gay Project I usually get in contact with sons and only rarely with parents, so I hear only one bell. All this is true, but seeing guys who don't trust their parents and are afraid of parents' possible reactions because they have witnessed domestic violence since childhood, it's really disarming. I wonder if so many couples who go to the wedding and bring children into the world realize what they are doing and the responsibilities they assume in front of their sons. In a gay couple, where children are not brought into the world, the sense of responsibility develops only in a couple relationship, but the presence of children changes things completely. The behavior that a couple of parents has today, when their children are very young, will inevitably affect them decades later. The basic attitudes in front of life are essentially assimilated by the family environment and when the family doesn't exist in fact, the children grow up carrying serious emotional insecurities never resolved and tend to transmit them in turn. I have asked myself several times who can teach parents to be good parents, because in a sense this is learned and transmitted from generation to generation, but when you put children in the world you cannot invoke the excuse of having received in turn an in-

adequate affective education.

Adult people should be able to understand the consequences of their behaviors and should be able to correct themselves if those behaviors are not adequate. Very often It's exactly within families that are to be sought the deep reasons for the distress of the sons, who then inevitably go in search of other environments that constitute alternative quasi-families and end up harboring feelings of hatred and resentment towards their parents who, after having brought them into the world, have completely abandoned them to themselves.

Even now there are parents who, faced with the homosexuality of their children, don't think in the least to ask what is really homosexuality and to seek answers from those who experience it daily on their own skin. The vast majority believe they know enough but they rely on prejudices or react improperly and sometimes violently because they have learned that this is a parent's duty.

A parent should acquire the awareness that his period of life apprenticeship is now over and that he must start working for the next generation, putting aside the idea of thinking about himself and putting himself at the center of the scene, leaving space for the growing generation. A parent should agree to have a support function in the context of a cyclic process in which, after adolescence, there is maturity and then, inevitably, decay and death. Parents who try to remain eternally young demonstrate that they have not understood that that stage of life has passed for them and that it is up to them to prepare the next generation not only by putting children in the world, but by making young guys capable of managing their own freedom and to exercise their responsibilities when it will be their turn.

One can be a good parent only if he understands that his function is transitory and that children are not an appendix of parents but are autonomous people and therefore they can make mistakes and indeed have to make mistakes in order to learn by trials and errors the art of live. Parents who want to play a leading role have not understood what their role is. Of course it's not easy to have the sense of the measure and identify the boundary line between a discreet and useful presence and an intrusive and potentially harmful presence, so it is also up to the sons to understand the mistakes of the parents and help them get back on track. The dialogue between parents and sons has always been difficult but that one between parents and gay sons is likely to become critical when the preclusion and ideological assumptions, from both sides, have the upper hand on the affection and willingness to understand each other.

For a parent, having a gay child is not an easy thing, doubts about how to proceed can be many, also because a parent must try to overcome the pre-

conceptions learned over decades on a subject that is substantially foreign to him. Errors are committed in any case, but sons are able to distinguish true errors from aggression and lack of respect.

I have often thought that parents are basically alone in dealing with the problem of having a gay son, both because for reasons of privacy they avoid talking about it with relatives and known people, and they certainly do well, and because they have no specific knowledge of gay environments and cannot easily turn to really competent and disinterested people.

For several years, Gay Project has kept open a section of the Forum dedicated to parents, which however received on average a single annual intervention from parents, so in substance it was completely neglected. The section dedicated to parents is still standing, at least to collect documentations of relationships between parents and gay sons from the point of view of sons. In this way, parents who read that section can see how the parent-son relationship is experienced on the other side. I therefore invite all those who believe it appropriate, to report their experiences so that the usefulness of the section can increase.

## 4.2 DOCUMENTS

### 4.2.1 That thin rubber wall

Hello everybody, people of the forum, I am sorry for the long absence from the discussions, now that I have more free time I promise to participate more diligently. Here are some of my last year reflections; I would like to know what you think about it, or if someone of you have lived similar moments with his parents.

Let's start from this assumption: I did my coming out with my mother in June last year. I thought everything would be pretty smooth with her: she's an open person and has lots of homosexual friends and acquaintances. Before doing this great step I consulted with a cousin of mine, who has long known of my homosexuality, to ask him how he thought my mother could take it. He claimed that there would be no problems whatsoever; the same was told to me by a friend of my mother, a person whom I have always trusted a lot and to whom I had asked for advice in order to prepare my plan.

I still remember the scene: my mother had come to see me that day in the city where I was studying. I thought of telling her everything as soon as she arrived. For months I could not stand the silence, having to bypass certain questions, even when answering on a simple "how are you?" or "what do you do?" In a word, I couldn't stand anymore that I couldn't be myself in front

of her. The thing had become more acute after the previous month, May 2014, when I had begun the relationship with my current boyfriend. "So," I told myself that morning, "as soon as she gets here, I'll tell her." Obviously I didn't succeed. I waited for us to be in my house, to find the right moment. Since at such moments we are always kissed by the blindfolded goddess, what I never wanted to happen happened: by accidentally rummaging in a drawer, she found an old pornographic DVD (gay) of which I didn't even remember the existence (I thought I didn't have it anymore). I took it from her hands, I made a thousand improvised excuses and threw the DVD away within two seconds.

In the days when I had patiently prepared the ground for my coming out, this was naturally a mess. The height of misfortune was reached when, by chance, a backpack fell from the top of my closet, opening itself and letting go out a box of condoms carefully hidden by me there. As they say: so lucky! All this, as well as unexpected, also seemed tragicomic to me. On either occasion my mother didn't make a wrinkle; nevertheless my delicate and meticulously constructed plan to introduce the discourse had gone, to put it mildly, to hell. I remember that we went out, seemingly I was the same guy as in the morning, but inside I cursed myself, for having forgotten the DVD there and for the unfortunate coincidence of the backpack.

We went to eat out in a restaurant. And there I told her everything, between one course and another; I didn't use the word gay or homosexual, I didn't have time to speak clearly. I mentioned something I wanted to tell her and after a few tentative attempts she said to me: "Have you a boyfriend?" And I replied: "Yes", with the sensation of throwing myself headlong into a black chasm, where I hoped to find a soft surface that would have mitigated the fall, but it was not like that.

I still remember her gaze at that moment: it was as if a wasp had stung her; in her eyes I read for a moment her pain, an unexpected pain, never imagined. After about a second she came back to her usual way of doing, but there was a touch of coldness in her voice. I realized that my predictions were wrong, that I had thrown myself down and I had banged my head violently. "I would have never imagined ...", she told me. "I know how sensitive you are, but I never would have imagined." Then she resumed with an institutional, very cold tone. "it will take me a while to metabolize. It is not easy for us. No nephews (I am an only child). You did well to tell me. On the other hand we have a very close relationship. Many people never say these things, for a lifetime. Don't tell dad, he would never understand. Perhaps, with the good that he wants you, one day maybe yes... or maybe not ... it's better to avoid, I think. The soup is tasty, isn't it? We have to go back here, they make a nice home cooking." I swear to you that at that moment I wanted to die.

It had not gone well. I had hardly seen my mother, usually so warm with everyone, taking on such a cold attitude. At the exit she told me: "Well, hug me". But it was not a hug, or at least, not one of those I had always received, this one was certainly the coldest. Then nothing more. I was very upset.

Then in the evening I forced myself to stop thinking about it. It was my last night in the city where I had studied and lived for four years and a furious storm raged, I had seen similar rains only during the monsoons. I had greeted my mother as if nothing had happened. In the following days we talked on the phone; she seemed much quieter, even cheerful. She simply told me she wanted to talk a little better with me about the thing. Several times I threw the hook, while she and I were alone at home, when I was home for the summer. We didn't discuss a second time about it: every time I was about to start talking about it she stopped me saying that it was not the moment and nobody said anything more.

As you can imagine, the thing left me very melancholy. You must know that in the past I had a long relationship with a girl, which ended precisely when I decided to face reality and follow the true feelings that were in me. At that time my mother was always there to ask me how my girlfriend was, when I would visit her etc., she kept also giving me money, without my request, so I could go and see her, since we were both away from home and during the holidays we lived in different regions.

Given such attitudes in the past, I would have expected a quite similar attitude, at least I would have expected she would ask me how I can meet with my current boyfriend, since we are more than a thousand miles away, I expected that she would offer me help at least sometimes. For a year nothing. I am proud and, I have to admit, I have a tendency, lately, to shut myself up more than in other periods of my life, I have never asked her for anything. Result: economic efforts to save money and buy airline tickets, and so far no problem, there is much worse in life and this is certainly not the problem for which I write here; rather, I was grieved that I continued to take planes for a whole year, once every two months, without saying anything to her. Indeed, I lied every time. I was pretending to be in France (where I currently live) and actually I was in Italy.

In such cases you have to behave like you were a spy: you must be careful never to turn off the phone because, in the event of an unexpected call, the interlocutor should not hear the answering machine of an Italian operator rather than of one French; you must be careful never to use a credit card in Italy, because movements are traceable; you must call the landlady to avoid problems to rise in the days when you are away because she could call your parent's home in Italy; you must invent days never lived and, what is still

worse, and has always been unacceptable for me, you have to lie on the phone every night, inventing imaginary stages in radio astronomy that allow only a few minutes of phone calls a day due to radio shielding in proximity to the tools (yes, I also invented this). Is not it horrible to have to lie like that, moreover to your mother? And all this because I was afraid of the rubber wall that I had found in front of me, not hostile but not friendly, not contrary but not favorable. And I lived and I still live with terror that my father can discover the thing (in which case the catastrophe is assured).

Last April I had resigned myself to the painful idea that in my mother's eyes I was no longer the same guy; I felt less loved and, behind all the good speeches, I saw the sad truth that "the majority of parents would not want to have a gay son." No, they would accept a gay son "but" they would prefer avoid such an opportunity. Obviously if it happens, they show to accept it, or at least maybe they try, but ... And into this "but" the figure of my mother is drowned until recently. Then, in April, precisely during one of her visits to the foreign city where I currently live, she asked me for detailed information about my boyfriend, G., offering me the support that long ago would have been the norm.

I reassured myself, and in these months my hopes have increased. Of course, not everything goes well, in the sense that the subject is rather a taboo. I don't know if my mother will ever get to love me despite the fact that I'm homosexual, or better just because I am homosexual, it would be nice if she passed from "it is so and I'm not pleased, but I love you the same" to "I love you exactly because you are homosexual and you're happy to be what you really are, because you've had the courage to take the reins of your life and you have a wonderful love story with G." Perhaps I'm claiming for too much, indeed, almost certainly, but I wonder: is it so difficult for some parents to leave aside, even in lucky cases like mine, the irrational fear coming from years of backward education on the subject and consolidated with age? I don't know, have you had similar experiences? Or your coming out finished abruptly and unexpectedly before reaching the result? A great greeting to all. I promise from now on to write more on the forum!

### 4.2.2 Father policeman and gay son

Hello Project,

I am 56 years old, I've been separated from my wife for over twenty years, I have a 26 year old son, whom I'll call Andrew here, but it's not his name. As long as my son was 19-20 years old I had only a very conditioned relationship with him because of his mother's presence. In practice all his choices were directed by his mother, I felt in him a hostility towards me and I could not

find a credible reason for it. My son was formal with me, he kept me at a distance, he always answered me evasively and, in practice, I think he didn't even like spending time with me even if I did everything not to condition him.

With my wife, in the first months after the separation, the relationship was more difficult, then, over time, things changed, there was Andrew between us, and neither I nor my wife tried to build us a new life. As long as Andrew was 15- 16, it often happened that my wife and I talked about him, especially because it was not good at school and we didn't know what to do, then my wife gradually closed in a complete silence on Andrew, she gave me some news but only with the dropper and knowing something from Andrew was practically impossible because *a priori* he saw me as an enemy.

Things between us have changed only last summer for a reason related to my work and this fact has changed my life objectively. I work in the police, it is not the easiest and most rewarding job but it is what I had always wanted. Well, a few months ago, a very delicate investigation had brought me into contact with a group of gay guys, not people from strange circles, they were only gay boys. Two of these boys were suspected of a rather heavy crime and risked being involved in a criminal case that could have end up with a sentence of several years in prison. It seemed that all the clues focused on these two guys but I had talked to them and they didn't really have anything that could lead me to think they could commit a crime like that, which had the typical mark of criminal professionals.

I summarize the story avoiding too much particulars, even in order to leave things vague and don't put anyone's privacy at risk. In practice I didn't close the case because too much things seemed strange to me and I went deeper into the matter and at the end it turned out that those two boys had nothing to do with the crime but had been put in the middle by three real criminals. For those guys it ended well, because they hadn't done anything bad, but it is clear that for them it had been probably the worst adventure of their lives, they were adults but still very young and their parents had been involved and had come to know that the two boys were gay. No need to add that parents reacted in the worst way.

After the investigations were over, the real culprits were sent to court and the position of the two boys was closed because they were clearly unrelated to the facts. The two boys felt respected by me and, when things were over, they came to see me first in my office and then at home, I talked with them several times and we also went to dinner together. Well, on that occasion I understood more closely what are gays, not that before I had particular prejudices but objectively I didn't know too much.

Well, these facts, dating back to a few months before, had reached the ear of



my son who sometime after the end of the criminal misadventure of the two boys, had known them and had begun to frequent them.

Note, Project, although it seems paradoxical, that I didn't know that my son was attending them but they knew that Andrew was my son and they didn't tell me anything, it was my son the one who one day called me at office and invited me at dinner, something decidedly unusual, that had never happened, we arranged to meet at my usual pizzeria and he showed up with the two boys and sat down with them at my table.

On the first moment I was a bit perplexed and didn't know what to say, even if getting to the conclusion was actually very easy. Andrew told me: "Dad, well, there's no need to say anything, no need even to mention the hardest thing ... isn't it?" I replied: "Well, obviously no need ...".

Then Andrew told me that he had understood who I really was through those two guys, because my wife had always dissuaded him from the idea of speaking openly with me, telling him that I would never understand or accept him.

It is a year that I recovered the relationship with my son and it is a beautiful thing, we often hear each other and sometimes he comes to my house with his friends, I say my house, but in essence it is his house because he stays almost always by me.

Now I know several of his friends and they are guys like him, sometimes we all sit together in the living room and talk to each other, they are guys who fall in love with guys, I think that being gay is just that, but they fall in love really and then, even if they are guys around 25 years old (some already work) I see that they are happy to come to see me because it's a bit like they were discovering that welcoming family they've never had. Seeing these guys up close I just don't understand why so many people are angry with them, they are very good guys who should be understood and respected.

Now I break a spear in favor of my wife, she didn't try to turn away Andrew from me to keep him all for herself, but, before, she really thought I would have taken it very badly ... this is the sign of how little communication there can be between a husband and a wife. Now my relationship with my wife has improved precisely because she understood that I wouldn't in any way make life difficult for Andrew.

To think that my son trusts me, that he considers me a proper person with whom he can speak on equal terms, fills me with joy because I feel again that I have a role in his life. With me he doesn't act a comedy but says what he really thinks. By now he is no longer a boy but he is an adult man and he is a man who is proper, reliable, who has dignity and would never lower himself to petty things.

Many times we even talked about sex and we talked about it in a very direct

way. In those situations I tried to be as honest as possible with him, without acting the part of the father. I don't think that for a father there is anything more beautiful than feeling appreciated by his son and that is what for some months now begins to happen to me.

Project, I sent you this email because my son made me discover Gay Project and he told me about it very well. I tried to read as much as possible and I can only confirm what my son told me. Go ahead in doing what you are doing and don't give up for any reason because you are doing something that has a profound meaning, even if often not visible, you are sowing good wheat that will bear its fruit. Obviously I would like to see this email published and I think that reading it on your blog would also please my son! Good evening, Project, from today you have a friend more.

### 4.2.3 I have a gay son who does not even talk to me

Hello Project, it made me good to read the story of that separate father, waiting for divorce, who has rediscovered his son, it's a good story but unfortunately it will not happen like that to me. I am a 37-year-old mother, my son is only 19 years old and I have the impression that I'm losing him. It's been a year since he stopped talking to me. I feel alone.

When he was born I was very young, a poor deluded girl ready to give confidence to the first guy she could meet, I wanted to feel emancipated and you understood what happened. When I got pregnant he disappeared, I wanted to have an abortion and I told it my mother and she convinced me not to do it and told me that she would help me to move on.

Then Luca was born (let's call him this way but it's not his real name). I didn't want to study and I started doing chores where I could find work. I had my mother behind me who gave me confidence and helped me. Obviously when you have a son at 18 with someone who he is completely disinterested in the fact of having a child, after, nobody wants you, because nobody wants the son of another man, it would not be a nice traditional little family. My mother took me to think about many things and to understand that I had to blame myself and certainly not my son for everything that had happened. I confess I assumed my role as a mother more out of duty than because I felt it was something really mine.

I tried to work to make sure that Luca had everything that could be useful to him and even more, but of course my economic availability is quite limited even if I work as much as I can. Luca realized very early that he didn't have a father. I didn't tell him lies, but I told him right away how things were, maybe he was too young to understand and it hurt him a little. I know I've been impulsive and even stupid, but it happened many years ago. My son is

a good guy, certainly much better than his mother and also much less stupid. He studies, he is always busy and tries to do everything he can. My problem, the one that makes me feel bad is another.

Luca, until last year had a girlfriend and it seemed like things were going well, he had brought her home a couple of times because he wanted me to meet her, she was a very taciturn girl but she was cute and had very beautiful eyes. I was happy and he talked about her often, then at a certain point I noticed that something in my son's life had changed, he didn't talk anymore about the girl, when I asked him specifically news about the girl, he told me that it wasn't my business and so far I could think that maybe they were in crisis for some reason, but things became more complicated. It happens that he gets out in the afternoon while I'm going to do the shopping, the market is closed and I go somewhere else and while walking I see in front of me but at a certain distance, my son walking next to a man I didn't know, one dressed pretty well, who about 40-45 years old. I ask myself: who is this man? I begin to follow them from a distance. They go to the public villa. Obviously I'm there watching them from afar. They stay there for an hour, then they go to the bus stop and my son takes the bus. I continue to follow that man and then I approach to see him more closely and I print his image into my brain.

I go back home, I ask my son what he did in the afternoon and he replies that this is just his business, I don't know what to say, whether or not to tell him that I had followed him but in the end I don't tell him anything. I try to change the subject and talk about school. My son has always been good at school, he tells me it's all right and the speech ends there.

Then comes Christmas period and the time of talks between teachers and parents, I ask my son if he wants to come to the talks with me but he says no, and I go there alone. I know all the teachers, except for the math teacher who is new, I put myself in line, I go in, I look at him and I open my eyes in amazement: it's him! He doesn't wear wedding ring, it was the first thing I looked at. He speaks to me very well of Luca but in a strictly professional way. I don't know if he remembers that for a moment we looked at each other the day I followed my son but he didn't say anything, after five minutes he confirms that everything is fine and then the talk is over.

What was my son doing in the park with his math teacher? From there my paranoia began, I had to know it. I went to see my son's cell phone but the memory card had been cleared, what, I think, was not at all random. Then I went to see into his PC, I know it is an unworthy thing to behave like me but I was and still am very agitated. I go to the "favorite sites" and find gay sites and here the world collapsed on me: my son plagiarized by his teacher! I face him directly when he comes home, first I tell him about gay sites and

there he already answers me in a violent way that I never expected, then when I tell him that I had seen him at the villa with his teacher he tells me that I'm crazy and I invent everything and in practice he denies everything but I had seen him very well.

I tell him that I would go to the headmaster to report everything, because people like that man shouldn't be teaching in a school! He reacts like a viper and threatens me that if I had done such a thing I wouldn't have seen him anymore. Practically since then I have not talked to my son anymore.

I went to the headmaster, certainly it wasn't to accuse the teacher because in fact I had no proof but to request the transfer of my son to another Institute but the headmaster told me that since Luca was an adult the request had to come from him and hadn't to be addressed to her but to the school where he wanted to go, I got angry and lost patience with the headmaster and vented with her and told her the whole story but the answer left me stunned, she told me again that my son is an adult and that she had known the math teacher for years and he had never created problems of any kind. I raised my voice with the headmaster who didn't even answer me, rang the bell and called the janitor and ordered him to accompany me at the door of the school. My son was in the corridor, saw the scene and understood what had happened. That day he didn't come home and I got a terrible anguish, he didn't even come back at night, he disconnected the phone and I was very uncomfortable, I think I have never been worse in my life.

The next day I went to school, my son was there and I calmed down a bit. I waited for the teacher instead but I didn't see him, I thought the headmaster had called him and maybe he had taken a few days off. Then I see him coming up towards the gate, I stop him, he greets me warmly, he holds out his hand to me and smiles at me. It was evident that he didn't know anything about the whole scene with the headmaster, I don't know what to do, I tell him that for some days I have problems with my son and that it is as if the dialogue between us was broken, he invites me to follow him inside, while we go up we meet the headmaster who behaves as if nothing had happened and greets us cordially.

The teacher has a free hour and we talk, slowly I begin to realize that the he esteems my son very much and that he talks with me in a very direct manner, he worries about Luca's future. I realize that I have only built a huge house of cards in which the only thing certain were my fears. I ask the teacher to help me to recover the relationship with my son, he assures me that he will, then he calls Luca to speak in three. Luca comes down with a face full of hatred. If he could, he would have bitten me, then he realizes that with his teacher I had spoken only about school and he calms down.

The teacher tells my son that I asked him for help to recover the relationship

with my son and Luca replies: "Teacher, I know you have a lot of good will, but these are matters that I have to regulate in private with my mother!" The teacher nods as if to say that Luca is right, sends Luca back to class and greets me. I come home calmly.

The school problem was over but the gay problem, that kept me constantly agitated, remained. Since then, 10 months have passed but nothing has been resolved. Luca is at home in the sense that he sleeps there and not always and sometimes he just eats there. Almost never he talks to me. What should I do, Project? I know that I did a lot of nonsense, but what can I do to recover a relationship with my son? Now I resigned myself to the idea that he's gay, but at least I would like him not to consider me an enemy any more, even if I'm really afraid he can get into trouble.

#### 4.2.4 Gay son and absent father

Good morning, Project,

I've read some of your blog pages, those dedicated to gay parents and have opened my eyes on many things, but I would like to have a chance to talk to you a bit, because I think you can help me to find the right way. I summarize here my story, but I would prefer to go deeper in private.

I'm 46 and I've been married for 21, my wife is 44. We have only one son, I'll call him Luca, who is now 18 and will take his school-leaving examination the year that is about to begin. I would say that my family life has never been quiet. At the beginning my relationship with my wife was good, Luca was born and everything seemed to go the right way. I've never been too expansive, but I considered my relationship with my wife something very important for me. I and my wife got along well within our relationship, then my in-laws stepped in between us. They are of a social and economic level much higher than mine. They convinced my wife that the relationship she had with me was not the best, and that she deserved much more than that. etc.

The misunderstandings began, always amplified by the in-laws (I had already lost my parents at that time). My wife began to attend an old unmarried male friend of hers, this thing made me feel bad but she did not care about. When Luca was four, my wife asked for the separation as a first step towards divorce. I did not want it because there was my child and I did not want to separate from him. The apartment where we lived belonged to my in-laws. I told my wife I would not allow her to have a consensual separation because she only wanted to be with her friend and that was the only reason for the separation. I actually think that the real reason was that she felt frustrated by having married a man like me, who was clearly not at her level.

We still lived together but it was an unbearable thing. We ended up in court, she had the means to substantiate her reasons, I had never thought of searching for proofs of her relationship with her friend because doing such a thing repelled me, she shamelessly denied everything and I was considered as a psychopathic husband and father. In conclusion, Luca was entrusted to her, I had to get away from home and I also had to support economically my son. I went to live in an apartment far from the center and far from where I worked and was forced to spend hours and hours on trams and buses because I did not even have a car.

I was allowed to meet my son periodically, he used to spend with me some afternoons, and I had the impression that I would definitely lose him because he was acquiring the mindset of my wife and of my father-in-law. My son was always asking for things too expensive, perhaps when he was with me, he felt exiled from his golden paradise, let's say that this plagiarism went on as long as Luke was about 16, then I began to realize that something was changing.

When he turned sixteen, for his birthday, I gave him an old style leather football ball, it was the best I could do. He was happy and told me something I never imagined: he asked me to take him to my house. Since he never had come to my house, everything was in a disastrous situation as, I think, all the homes of men who have no free time. Luca, with my great embarrassment, saw that I had his pictures everywhere, then he said to me, "Dad, here we have to do some cleaning!" It was the first time he called me Dad! We did laundry twice, and then we laid it out, then he wanted us to go to the little football field near my home to try the ball, I had to be the goalkeeper and he had to kick penalty kicks and kicked them with great force. It was the first time I really felt the presence of my son.

Playing football with me had made him all dusty and his shoes were ruined but he said smiling, "Well! Better!" I brought him back to his mother but I did not go up as usual, we hugged (for the first time) under my wife's home. As time went on things got better and better, the fact that I did not have money was no more a problem, but somehow he considered it as a merit. About a year ago he began to tell things that I would never have expected, he told me that once he had turned 18 he would never more stay with his mother because there were misunderstandings between them and he thought they would never be exceeded, then, always avoiding too specific subjects, he told me that his mother thought he was a little neurotic and had sent him, practically by force, to a psychologist who was her friend, and he added, "but nobody can brainwashing me!"

Exactly the day of his eighteenth birthday, he called me and told me he'd be home at about 4 pm. I waited for him, I did not know exactly what would

happen, he came to my house with an enormous bag and in practice settled in my home. In the evening he told me, "I have to talk to you seriously" and there he told me that he was gay, that his mother had discovered it and that she had done a lot of absurd things to make him change sexual orientation, from economic blackmails to marginalization. I asked him if he had a boyfriend and he told me he had never had sex with anyone but that he had taken a "serious crush" for a friend of his, probably heterosexual. I told my son only (and I was crying) that I was so happy that he trusted me up to that point and I could not say a word. He was the one who hugged me very close, then took my head in his hands and said, "I know I'm really lucky!" The next day we went to Ikea and bought a sofa bed to put in the lobby, to let him have a bit of privacy. According to what I had thought he should have the room and I should settle in the lobby, but he did not want to hear reasons of any kind: I had to remain in the room.

My wife has already started divorce practices and this fact for me is liberating. When we were together by the lawyer, the lawyer himself insinuated that I had taken my son off to his mother playing on the fact that he is gay because I would have allowed him to have sex in my house with his friends! I swear on my head that I came to know that my son was gay only after he had turned 18 because he himself told me it. I swear on my head that something like the one I had heard from the lawyer would never have come to my mind, anyway my wife did not scruple to tell the lawyer private facts about her child, deforming them entirely, such a thing seems to me shameful and hateful.

Anyway, shortly, there will be no relationship of any kind with my wife. As for my son, now that we know each other well, I know he is a great guy and he has not been corrupted by money. Project, I need to seriously understand what it means to be gay because I have a gay son, who is now a grown-up guy, and I want to be a good dad, because my son loves me and this is for me the most beautiful time of my life.

Sincerely [signed email]

#### 4.2.5 If I had a gay son

Dear Project, I have been on the internet for days trying to understand something more about gays. I'm not gay, I'm a married man and I'm over fifty, I have two sons, a boy of 19 and a girl of 16. Frankly I don't think that neither my son nor daughter has anything to do with homosexuality. My son will soon get out of school, and exactly for this reason one of his classmates has been coming to our house for a few months. At the beginning, for me and my wife, he was just a school friend of Luke, then slowly this guy began

to feel good at my home and we too with him. He often stays for lunch at our home, he is a very polite guy and we like him.

Well, over time the relationship that has been created has become more important and in the end, one afternoon, he told us he was gay. I can assure you, Project, that I have nothing against gays but at the moment I was afraid, don't blame me for this because I didn't understand anything about these things. I thought that my son should know that his friend was gay and with some embarrassment I tried to prepare the speech, when we arrived at the moment I realized that he already knew everything, he looked at me puzzled and told me: "Ok! where is the problem?" I just replied that I thought he didn't know it, and then ideas of all kinds about my son and his relationship with that guy began to pass through my head.

My son has a girlfriend and it always seemed to me that he was in love with her, things with the girl were fine, at least as far as you could tell from outside, and moreover my son started a few weeks ago to leave his friend at our home to go with his girlfriend. In practice my wife and I (not my son, who in fact doesn't seem very involved) we ended up considering that guy a bit like a third child.

The feeling that has been created is very particular, Andrew (I will call him so, but it's not his name) stays much more time at our home than at his and above all he spends much more time with me and my wife than with my son. The embarrassment of knowing that he was gay didn't last long but other fears took over, in particular that of keeping him away from his family of which he never talks about but both my wife and I have the impression that he is much better with us than with his parents. In front of Andrew we feel full of complexes, the one who don't feel full of complexes at all is my son, who jokes with Andrew in a natural way but then when he has to do his things neglects Andrew without worrying about him at all.

I begin to have some fear that Andrew can trust a lot (too much) on us and that our role may be a bit too anomalous. You has to know that after his coming out we talked very little especially because we don't want him to feel under pressure. Basically he comes here at home, and if my son is at home, they study together for a while, at most for two hours, then when my son goes out, Andrew stays at home, goes to the computer (he has his laptop) and hears music or sees a bit of television and stays at dinner with us even if my son is not there. I noticed that my wife was cooking specially for him and I started looking for news about gays on the internet.

I must say that Gay Project has struck me a lot because the guys who write to you seem to me very similar to Andrew. I read a lot of the google site especially because it is more direct and even those who are not in the game begin to understand something. Project, what can I do good for Andrew? I



don't want at all to be intrusive but sometimes it makes me a bit of melancholy to think that my son in the evening goes to meet his girlfriend and Andrew must stay alone at home with us. I have asked myself many times how I would react if I saw him (Andrew) with another guy, but I think that in the end I would react well because I think he needs a guy who loves him and it's not fair that the road should be harder for him.

Here these are the facts, strange perhaps but strangely true. I would never have thought of such eventualities but they happened. If you want to publish the email, I don't think it would bother Andrew and even less my son.

With great esteem. Joseph

#### 4.2.6 Anguish of the father of a gay son

Hello Project, I am writing to you for a reason that for some years does not make me live well, my son is a homosexual. Believe me, for me and my wife it was a very difficult thing to accept and we did many things that you consider absurd, and rightly I mean, because we didn't know what to do. But I tell you the story from the beginning because you are a person who does a lot for the boys and you can give me a serious opinion.

I am almost 50 years old and my wife 47, our son is 24 and we also have a girl of 16, this just to make you understand. We are not rich but we work in two and thank God we don't miss anything. We don't have a dialogue with our son anymore, maybe we didn't even have it before. Until 14 years old he was a guy like everyone else, then, I don't know how it happened, but he changed completely, while before we used to talk with each other, after, the blackout has been total. We thought at first that they were teenagers things and we didn't worry. He developed early and at the age of 16 he was already a handsome guy, but he was on one side and we on the other. Everything we said was wrong for him. He used to shut himself up in his room and we didn't know anything about him, he went out of his room hardly to eat, but at school he was good, he never gave us any problems, in short, we thought it was all right.

But he always wanted money, always money, he said for the phone and we got a little suspicious. I told him: give me the number and I can recharge the money myself and he agreed, so the money was really for the phone, on one side we reassured, but on the other not. We said to ourselves: but who's he calling, spending so many money? We thought that there was a girl, because many of his attitudes made us think so, when he had to call he always called from his room and closed himself inside and nothing could be heard because he spoke very softly. Once we told him that he had to let us know the girl, but he replied that it was only his business and that we had to stay in our

place.

The thing that really ruined our life (I say truly ruined) happened one day when he was 17 years old. He had to stay at school and I had to go to work in Naples. I arrived in Naples, in the place where I had to go to work and I could not access there because the firemen were there and sent us home, I don't know why. I go back to my country by bus and pass near a place with wooden tables where people go to eat on Sundays and I see my son hugged with another guy I had never seen. It was a moment but it was really my son, because he wore a very particular jacket that I recognized immediately. So I asked the driver to make me get off right away and he stopped the bus, but the bus was already a long way ahead of where I had saw my son. I started running towards them and they were hugged in a way that you could not go wrong. As they saw me they got terribly scared. The one who was with my son was not a boy, he was about 40. I didn't restrain anymore and threw myself on him and my son defended him and told me such words that I would never have imagined coming by my son.

I screamed that my son was a minor and that I would have reported him to the police, but there was nobody, I'd want to kill him but he was stronger than me and it was he who was about to kill but finally he left leaving me on the ground in such a condition that I could not even move then he took the car and ran away but I saw the license plate number. I wanted to talk to my son but he left me and went away with no word.

When I came home and told my wife everything, she was dying. At first I thought that I had to beat up my son badly and that other one had I to report him to the police, but what can you do in a village like mine? You cannot go to the village lawyer. I made an appointment and went to Naples the same afternoon but the lawyer told me that at 17 years is not a crime if there is no violence and the judge about violence asks the victim, but my son before saying that it was violence, would have killed me. You can imagine what I was feeling inside myself.

I come home late at night and my son had not come back home. You cannot imagine what I went through that night, I thought that he had thrown himself into the river from the bridge and furthermore because of me. He didn't answer the cell phone. I didn't know whether to go to the police, I didn't know what to do. Then my wife thought about and said: you have to apologize otherwise he can make some inconsiderate gesture, if he haven't already done it, we thought of a message like this: "dad apologizes for what happened, it was a moment of madness forgive me!" I wrote it and we sent it, but you don't even imagine how much it cost me. After a night of terror like that, that my son was a homosexual it seemed almost acceptable to me, as long as he was not dead.

I prayed to Our Lady saying: "if you save him, it's enough for me, I'll accept him well even if he's a homosexual". He replied to the message by saying that I had ruined his life and that he would have hated me for life, but he had replied, we told him that he had to come back home that we had now understood and that we would not have hindered him anyway. The next evening he came back home but slamming the door and avoiding to look us in the face. He entered and closed himself inside.

In short, so began the hell in our house and everything under the eyes of his sister. When we were at home he was locked inside, with us he never ate, he took from the refrigerator what he wanted and brought it to his room. In the morning he went out for school and I didn't know anything about it. Then I went to talk with the teachers and they told me that he had been absent too many times, before I got into a fight with that guy but the teachers said that now luckily he had started going to school seriously because if he continued as before he would have risked the rejection. So he was going to school and studied as well. He didn't ask us for money, because he is also very proud and how he was able to move forward I don't know at all.

But we couldn't stand going on like this. In short, my wife and I took courage and we faced our son and understood something. The 40-year-old guy was gone and my son was angry. He told me he was homosexual because of us and then we got in the way to stop him. So we argued violently but at least we talked a bit. We didn't know what to do. Without him knowing, we went to a psychologist in Naples who told us that we had to go to him all together, I, my wife and my son, that he could help us to feel better but if my son was gay he would have remained gay and we said that we were resigned to this but at least we were looking for some peace. We tried to tell him about our son and all the story of the guy about 40, but he looked at us like two idiots and told us that we were not really interested in the well-being of our son but just wanted him to become heterosexual.

My wife tried to tell my son what the psychologist had said but he thought it was a trick and he didn't even listen to us. So even the story of the psychologist has ended in nothing. Our Lady! My wife and I talked a lot, we said, well, if you find a young boy of your age you can do it, if he is attentive to people, because here where we live if people find out that you are a homosexual you become the fable of the country and you can't live here anymore, to other boys it happened so. We tried to tell him it and he became a fury: that it was only his business and that's it. And, do you know what he did? He just turned 18 years old, and the day after he told the whole village everything, but with all the story that I had got into a fight with that guy. Our Lady! how much I was ashamed! Not of the fact that he was homosexual but of what people were saying, of how they considered

him and us. So we were put on the streets as a subject to chat about, but the first to end badly it was him, it was something that could not go on and he didn't want to go to school anymore and he had to pass the final exam. So we had to send him to a private school in Naples, we also took a little apartment, to let him feel free there and we went to live in the countryside but for me and my wife there were more hours of travel to go to work and for the sister to go to school. We were afraid that he didn't want to go to school in Naples because it was up to us to pay for it and also for the house, but then he didn't create any problems because even for him it was impossible to live in the village.

Our phone calls are limited to: How are you? All right, bye. We send him money via money order, we never ask for anything, at 22 he took his first degree but he didn't tell us and we didn't ask anything, we knew it from a guy who studies the same things that he studies. In practice we have no relationship with our son, he considers us enemies, probably, I don't know, but now he is 24 years old.

But why do things have to end this way? I tried to think how he can live all the situation and I think he feels uncomfortable too. But why do we have to keep going like this? It is seven years that this story goes on like this and I don't see light. He is homosexual, I understand it, I read so many things to understand better, even those that you wrote and that helped me a lot. Now I can say that my wife and I finally accepted it. If we made mistakes we didn't do it out of malice but because we didn't understand anything about these things. If you were now in my place, what would you do? Believe me, I tried many times to talk with my son but he did not want to know anything about it, but we love him, if he brings home a boy instead of a girl, for us it will be the same, but why should he consider us as enemies? I tell you with tears in my eyes, I would embrace him but I'm afraid it will not happen anymore! If you want to put this letter in the forum, put it, but answer me only privately. Now I come to understand that you do good things for the boys, but believe me it's difficult for a parent to get to understand it.

Sincerely. A. B.

(the original email shows full name and surname)

#### **4.2.7 A gay guy harassed by his parents**

Hello Project, I finally find some time to write to you. A lot of things have happened in these weeks, but now I have to tell you about my family. This e-mail is perhaps too long, a real novel, but don't worry, answer when you can. To endure the situation has become increasingly difficult, the fact that I live in a big city - despite coming home several times a month - keeps

my parents in a state of absolute frenzy for the simple fact that they cannot control me. They are pathetic and incredibly oppressive, they are absolutely convinced, for example, that I go to the pool for some kind of obscure sexual reason, maybe because I meet someone, so my father tells me: "It's not that you go there to make some crap?"

Repeatedly and continuously they both say they will come to break into the house without notifying me. If there was only this I wouldn't worry at all, the fact is that they are obsessed by the thought that I can be gay, so much to tell me constantly dirty things, which really so far I have never read in the e-mails of guys on Gay Project.

As soon as some girls appear on TV, my father comments disgustingly (in front of my mother) and then together they ask me questions like "Do you like them?" (Referring to half-naked girls' tits), or they ask me if I like their asses, they assail me with sexual questions of this kind!

I can also held back, but I cannot answer hypocritically, so I don't answer such questions at all. And my father continues to insist, and to asks the same questions four, five times in a row, saying that it matters to him a lot. In practice they forced me to do a half coming out simply making me say that I don't like female tits and asses.

My mother is not far behind my father in showing hatred. Watching a television service, in which was showed a manifestation of collective kisses, also gay kisses, she grimaced in front of a gay kiss, and his words were "What a disgusting thing, truly disgusting!" With an expression - that I know well - of such a disgust, that I felt like dying. The real core of this whole story is permanent, it existed years ago, exists still now, will exist in the future.

When we are together, I feel a sense of deep unease because they don't respond as they should, sometimes they flash strange looks at me, all this in a climate of apparent normality but in fact I feel a never ending sense of guilt. I feel treated like someone who commits, has committed and continues to commit mistakes and, even if they don't tell me, they are always there to remind me the same thing through the attitudes even if not through the words. I cannot live anymore as if I had committed something, they make me feel wrong. And sometimes I believe it, and I tell myself that if I really didn't have anything of myself to hide, I could very well tell the truth, but I never do.

I must add also my uncle who contributes to this picturesque picture of the mentality of my family. One day while we are talking, he says to me: "Oh my God, do you know what happened yesterday in the bus? I was sleeping, but behind me I heard the voices of two lovers, at one point I turned around and they were two gays! So much disgusting! They were sitting there on the seats of the bus side by side, kissing each other and showing public effusions.

Oh my God, too much disgusting! (And laughs amazed).

Even the driver could have seen them. Next to me on the left side of the bus, there were two old persons - a husband and a wife - who looked at them and laughed, they laughed like crazy! But I had checked that boy well, you could see that he was a bit poof, his behavior was strange and the hair very particular, and then waiting for him as if nothing had happened, there was his mother, as if it were all normal! Oh my God! Very disgusting!"

Needless to say what I felt inside, however, I smile and say: "Here we are very narrow-minded, already in the north it's something much more common." He answers me in an aggressive and amazed way: "No! Really! What rubbish, in public!" Conversation closed.

This is the mentality of 95% of the people of the lost little town in which I have the misfortune of living. Suffice it to say that my father - a man with a fixed idea (to have sex with women) - long ago, after all the psychic violence that I had to undergo by a psychologist to whom I was forcibly carried, he asked me: "So, are you healed? Are you sure you are healed?" For a man like him, the greatest divine punishment is a gay son. He doesn't care about the university as much as he cares about the girls. He would much rather see me as a bricklayer with a family than as a lawyer without a family.

Speaking of sexuality, one thing I've never told you about sexuality is the distorted view I had when I was a child. I soon began to realize that I felt attracted to the boys, but I even remember that as a child (about 8 years old) when my mother was absent, occasionally - it happened no more than 3-4 times in all - that I dressed up as a woman, with heels and wig, and I played the woman, acted like I was a woman. It happened that once he caught me dressed as a woman, and I remember he did a real tragedy, while I didn't give too much importance to the thing and I considered it simply a "forbidden game".

However, when I was 12 and realized I was gay, in my mind I didn't know the possibility of a love between man and man, I thought of the binomial man-woman as the only possible combination and so - as a boy falling in love with boys - I prayed all the evenings wondering why I had not been born a woman, why I was a boy and not a girl. Only with the passage of time I realized that I could love a man while being myself, that I didn't have to be a woman, but I could very well be myself and fall in love with guys, and I finally understood what was the "gay world", it was my world!

That said, it must be said that I'm absolutely not effeminate, indeed! Nobody who knows me superficially can think of me as a gay, so much so that people speak to me naturally about the various "pathetic scenes" that they see around, reiterating always the same thing just as a broken record: that "those" can be immediately detected.

The psychologist to whom I had been carried forcibly, do you know what he said to my parents? He told them that a boy is gay if in childhood he disguised himself, if he played with dolls (something that I never did), if he had more female than male friendships, and similar things. Immediately my mother pointed her finger and said: "Yes, I remember that he disguised himself and played a lot more with the girls!" Today I think with anger at that idiot, however, not yet permanently disappeared from my world. Paradoxically he represented the one and great opportunity to really explain the gay world to my parents and push them to accept me, although I always denied everything.

Instead, after those forced sessions that have raped me deeply, their behavior has deteriorated considerably, and "coincidentally" in the last meeting they saw each other just my parents and him, without me. I don't know what he can have said, I only know that he was very close to the Church and the result is this, even if he constantly told me: "I have many gay friends, please open yourself with me", I'm overjoyed not to have done it. To date I am increasingly convinced that it was a trap to make me "confess".

I tell you this because somehow it relates to a particular episode that happened. Well, I returned home and in small towns like mine every bullshit, that is every small event that takes place becomes an unmissable event, so it happened that a simple comedy (also of mediocre quality, made by boys of about my age) became one of those extraordinary events one cannot miss.

Sacrilege! I dared to refuse to follow the head of the family, the matron and the offspring, and for this reason, they did not spare their ruthless attacks when they returned. They told me things of all kinds, repeating many times the same phrase: "You don't go out because of fear! You are afraid of people, you are an asocial (sometimes abnormal) etc." It has been a long time since I refuse to go out and (almost always) they accuse me of having "fear of people".

I have good reasons for believing that it was the psychologist of that time who taught them this strange theory. It is precisely since then that they continue to say these things, but they have understood nothing. It is very true that I don't go out in my little town at all, except for the times when I am obliged, but this happens for a simple reason: I don't like going out with people who don't are interested in me, because these are not friends but at most good acquaintances, for the reasons you know well, in addition to the fact that I don't have a single topic in common with them, who run after gossip and grotesque events of the town like that of making an insipid comedy of poor quality.

But unfortunately I'm nothing short of isolated. On an entire town, everyone thinks that going out is sacrosanct and dutiful, everyone! It is a common

opinion, from children to the elderly, people thinks that those who don't go out at night have psychiatric problems and must be helped. The fact of preferring a film or a good book to a comedy of no value made by 15 years old boys or simply of preferring books and films to a simple exit in the evening in a village of 8 thousand souls, amazes them.

The theory of the psychologist that as I can deduce has been inculcated into the brains of my parents is this: "He doesn't come out because he feels uncomfortable among people and this happens because he knows he is gay and recognizes that he is wrong, so you (my parents) have to help him suppress this diseased part of him by forcing him or putting him in the condition of frequenting normal people and going out."

What happened? Just Sunday afternoon while I was back in Naples where I study, the daughter of a guy, friend of my father, (while his father was near her) calls me. Now, this girl I saw only once, before, asks me candidly: "Why don't you go out? I called you because I never see you. I wanted to tell you that I would like you to come out with us or with me."

Shocked! I was stunned, as well as deeply humiliated, and I was seriously tempted to send this silly girl to the hell, but then the kindness got the better and I explained to her calmly that Friday night I come home late, Saturday I'm busy with the sport and Sunday at 5 I go back to Naples, so I can't go out. I assume without any doubt that all this was agreed with my parents, coincidentally the day after the one when I missed the comedy. An episode, for a 21 year old guy treated like a child, very much humiliating as is easy to imagine.

Do you know what makes them infuriate more? It is the fact that every day more, as you have noticed, I raise my head and am more and more I'm proud of myself, of what I'm. And I make it understood in every way, in all possible and imaginable ways. I'm proud of myself and they don't accept it at all. In the past, however, I was ashamed, blushed in front of gay characters on TV and they enjoyed it, as if to say: "he realizes he's wrong, he's gaining awareness that he's in error".

They understood that I'm proud of myself, and they are making life impossible for me. I'm alone like never before, I thank God every day for the fact that at least I'm spending a lot of time in Naples, far away, without them. At home I don't even have a shred of freedom and dignity, since I cannot go not even in the bathroom without them spying me to see if I piss or do anything else.

I don't imagine how it will be tomorrow, I'm working hard but in this situation I don't know how long I will resist. I'm without friends and without - I don't say love but - at least a story, and this is making me hard like a stone towards life. Sometimes I cry, remembering what it was like once, when I was



11-14 years old, when everything had not yet started, when the simplicity of friendships was the only important thing in my life. Now I'm disillusioned, dead inside, without even a family in the true sense of the word, with an incredible hardness, unusual to find in a 21 year old guy.

I see them, my peers, running to clubs, fighting for true friendships, crying for the first love ended bad, rejoicing for the first kiss, the first time, and pursuing the dream of a life, a life possible. My path of life instead will be perhaps not foregone, but in the meantime I dream of being able to go to discos looking for people like me, I cannot fight for true friendships, I don't cry for the first loves ended, I don't rejoice for the first kiss or for the first time, and I chase the dream of an impossible life.

### 4.2.8 Gay guys between rejection and dialogue

Hi guys, my name is M., I'm a boy 16 and a half years old, I've always been very closed, with my parents I have practically no dialog from July 11th 2008, a day I will never forget, I practically hate them because my father caught me wanking in front of my computer while I was watching a gay site and he did something I will never forgive him for, before I had the chance to pull up my pants, he slapped me in the face and he left, and then he went to report everything to my mother, shouting like an obsessive man so as to be heard from all the neighbors. The windows were wide open because it was afternoon and it was hot but he was screaming: "My son is a fagot!" I hated him as I have never hated anyone and I was really upset, I thought I'd leave home, smash the windows of his car, spit in his face, because he is an asshole and he enjoys humiliating me!

My parents have always considered me like a piece of shit and now they think I'm an unrecoverable one who will not do anything in life but to they think also that I get it in the ass and my father tells me such things in the face, according to them I will never do a normal life but it's not true at school I'm quite good, not very good, but I can handle it even if I do the bare minimum and then I don't care about school. I have very few friends, if I can call them friends, because I prefer when I don't see them.

I'm gay, it's one of the few things I'm sure of, while wanking, I do think and always thought only about guys, but I have a fucking fear of sex, I would never enter a community, I don't know but I think that certain things would make me really sick. I have a fucking fear that someone can rape me, that can force me to do things I don't want. For my age I'm quite developed and I shouldn't be afraid of suffering things that I don't want because I'm strong and I can defend myself, but anyway I have this fear.

Till July 11th, I thought I was gay but I thought it was a relative thing, not

that it was a passing thing, but that it was not important for me, that I only needed it to masturbate, but from July 11th on I said to myself: "Fuck, I'm gay, it's not just any thing, I'm gay!" And I told myself I had to overcome my fears, I was afraid of going to the gay communities, even if I would do it just to spite my father.

Then I discovered the blog of Project, and then, from there, the forum. Reading gave me a feeling of a bit of fear but also a bit of strong curiosity. I didn't have the courage to register on the forum, so I wrote to Project and I sent him my contact, through the blog. After I did it I felt very strange, I didn't know what to think, I thought he would have answered me immediately, I have been waiting until two in the morning but he didn't answer. I was nervous and disappointed, I said to myself: "This Project is an asshole like everyone else!". Then I collapsed and I fell asleep.

Saturday morning I opened the computer at nine o'clock and Project had added me and was online. I didn't know what to do, I felt in total embarrassment, then I called him. The first few minutes I didn't know what to say, I was wrong to write, I just said stupid things and I wanted to close everything, I thought: "What am I doing here?" Then the thing changed and it was a strange thing, I told him the story of the slap that still burned me and not only on a psychological level, then I started talking about sex, masturbation, fantasies that pass through my head. That is, we talked about it freely, like normal things. I never experienced something like that.

Then I asked him so many things about sex that I didn't know and he started to explain everything to me but just trying to make me understand things but without haste. And then, for a wank my father gave me a slap and started screaming, it's okay that it was a gay wank but he reacted like that, with Project we talked a lot but just in another way. Then we also chatted in the following days. I like it so much when Project preaches to me about the meaning of life and tells me that I'm not at all a disgusting person, despite what my parents think and then it is not a preaching, he believes it and a little bit I too believe it. Anyway, that's all I wanted to say. Damn, it's short! But I send it the same.

# Chapter 5

## REASONING WITHOUT PANIC

### 5.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 5.1.1 Panic and rationality

When a boy, who comes to the awareness of being gay, lives in homophobic environments or has been accustomed to seeing homosexuality as a disease, as a perversion or as a sin, that boy will be led to consider homosexuality as a catastrophe looming over him, able to crush him and negatively affect his whole life. In such situations it is not uncommon for the discomfort to be so deep as to cause him to think even of suicide as the only way out. For a boy who recognizes himself as gay and lives in a homophobic environment, it is essential to keep in mind that the assessments must be given in cold blood, without being panicked and based on a realistic knowledge of what could derive from the decision one is about to take. One can also be terrified by the idea of being attacked by the ghosts but objectively ghosts don't exist.

#### 5.1.2 Objective data

First of all, a gay boy must try to know the reality of the gay world, I mean the real gay world and not that of jokes or urban legends, because it is from the confusion between urban legends and objective reality that comes most of the fears about homosexuality. There is therefore the need to always keep in mind some basic elements about homosexuality on which I will now focus.

First of all let's try to understand how many homosexuals are, restricting the

field to Italy. Homosexuals publicly declared, those who are openly gay both at workplace (or at school/university) and in the family are a statistically a very low fraction of the total. The vast majority of gays do not declare themselves publicly, due to homophobia which, beyond appearances, is still widespread and often dominant in society. To assess the real percentage of gays with respect to the total population, it is necessary first of all to define what a gay is, or better to define the exact object of the statistical survey, and in the same time assure survey conditions that can favor the most free and true response. As regards the definition of the object of the survey two different criteria can be adopted:

- 1) to consider as homosexuals those who have or have had homosexual relationships, or have had sex with a guy once or many times, or feel in love with a guy, the possible variants are many. This is the "behavior criterion", or better these are "behavior criteria".
- 2) to consider as homosexual those who consider themselves as such, regardless of whether they have or have had a gay couple sexuality. This is the "identity criterion".

Completely anonymous surveys have been made (and therefore potentially truthful), on even large samples of the population, using these two different criteria, and results are quite different.

Also Gay Project organized online surveys, obviously in conditions of absolute anonymity. The two surveys, conducted with the two different criteria, give results according to which those who feel homosexual, between 25 and 26 years, are about twice those who have or have had a homosexual relationship. According to Gay Project statistics, at the average age of 25.81, 45.02% of those who consider themselves gay have never had sexual relationships either hetero or gay. From the same survey we come to know that among guys who consider themselves gay, masturbation takes place with gay fantasies in over 99% of cases. This fact confirms that the fantasies that accompany masturbation are the fundamental index of sexual orientation.

The most reliable estimates of the percentage of "those who consider themselves gay" are about 8% of the general population. It is objectively a minority but certainly not a small minority. The findings give similar results both between men and women. Homosexuality is therefore a reality that involves men and women more or less in the same percentage.

Saying that homosexuals (those who consider themselves homosexual) are about 8% of the general population is not immediately significant, so it is worthwhile to present the same data through examples immediately understandable: in a class of 25 students, on average, there are two homosexual

guys, in one school with a thousand students there are, on average, 80 homosexual students, in Italy (about 61 million inhabitants) there are about 4,800,000 homosexuals, counting both men and women, roughly the population of the whole Veneto region, this number also includes children who statistically will recognize themselves as homosexuals during their lifetime. It is understood that, being however a minority, gays are anyway very many. Compared with the overall percentage estimated at about 4% of publicly declared gays on the total of the entire gay population, it is observed that the sample examined by Gay Project, of average age 25.81 years, has a percentage of publicly declared gays equal to 13.74%. Although the sample is not statistically significant, the indicated value is certainly higher than that of the general gay population, the fact remains that the younger generations have a greater propensity to declare themselves publicly. In all age groups, the percentage of gays that are not publicly declared remains, anyway, very higher than that of the declared ones. According to common experience, even if there are, on average, 80 gay boys out of a thousand students, it is practically impossible to detect even just one of them because homophobia exists and avoiding a coming out in public is considered as the only possible defense.

Summarizing what has been said until now we can conclude that gays, even if not recognizable, because environmental homophobia pushes them not to declare themselves, are everywhere around us and these guys, even if they are not publicly declared, are still looking for a dialogue and contact with other gay guys, because the first problem of gay guys is to feel alone.

### 5.1.3 Gays and myth of the charming prince

Before proceeding, it is good to dwell a bit on another kind of preconceptions, or rather, of fables related to the realization of the self. Gay guys, like all guys, grow up with myths induced by the cultural climate around them, one of these is the myth of the charming prince. It is a myth that was created for the girls, to induce them not to lose hope but to keep hoping for the arrival, sooner or later, of the classic charming prince capable of transforming Cinderella into a queen. In reality this myth pushes us not to act, waiting for someone to radically change our condition. A myth of this kind, with the necessary differences, can be easily transposed into a gay key, and among gays causes similar damages to those it causes in the hetero field, prompting guys to dreaming, instead of reasoning, and to expecting miraculous solutions coming from outside for their problems and their difficulties, instead of getting seriously busy engaging in the first person.

### 5.1.4 Autonomy and economic independence

For a gay guy, even more than for a straight guy, it is essential to gain his own autonomy because, in general, a gay guy cannot rely too much on the support that could come from his family or from the social context. Autonomy is not a myth analogous to that of the charming prince, but it is a concrete and essential reality. True autonomy exists only when there is a real economic independence, which is certainly not easy to achieve. Autonomy, intended as independence and therefore as substantial freedom of choice, must be the basic target of a gay guy.

Those who cannot take too much in consideration the help of others can react either with passivity and fatalism, letting themselves go to accept any imposition and any adaptation, or instead can look ahead with constructive attitude, planning their future step by step and orienting it first of all to the conquest of a full personal autonomy, that is, essentially, of the economic autonomy. There are only two concrete tools for achieving true autonomy: study and work.

Studying, for a gay guy, has at least two functions, the first is also common to straight guys and consists of broadening their general culture and dominating the ordinary tools of critical analysis and communication, and the other, specifically gay, consists in the discovery of the weight of homosexuality in culture, from Plato to Garcia Lorca, from Michelangelo to Pasolini, from Marsilio Ficino to Luchino Visconti. To understand the weight and the meaning that the homosexual culture had and has in history, despite the constant attempts to repress and the discriminate it, means to find also one's own roots and to recognize oneself in a tradition of high culture and great dignity.

Obviously the study also has an instrumental function and allows access to more qualified and paid jobs that can guarantee greater independence. It should never be forgotten that the search for couple life can in no case replace the construction of the self through substantial independence, that is, through economic independence. A guy has to stay in a couple because he feels at ease with his partner. When living in couple is instrumental to other aims, the couple relationship is built on very fragile bases. We are comfortable in a couple relationship when we are there by choose and not by necessity.

### 5.1.5 Equilibrium between affectivity and practical life

It often happens that gay guys come to realize through study and then through their professional activity, all this is highly positive but in some

cases hides the *a priori* giving up affective life. Being gay and trying to achieve first of all one's own independence does not mean having to give up emotional life, but that emotional life cannot and must not be identified with the totality of life, because well-being, which also has a very strong emotional component, it can in fact be impossible when its minimum requirements are lacking, which in an adult life are inevitably of an economic nature. Just as it makes no sense to focus exclusively on the pursuit of economic autonomy by putting affectivity aside, the same way, it makes no sense to be overwhelmed by affectivity neglecting the material needs of individual well-being.

That a young guy can be overwhelmed by affectivity and sexuality is somehow understandable, even if often inopportune, but an adult must keep his feet on the ground and must give the study and the work an adequate space to allow the effective achievement of the independence in normal times or anyway as soon as possible. A form of discouragement often arises here, the study appears very difficult, very long, you don't feel adequately prepared and the temptation to throw in the towel makes its way easily. It is at this point that the will must take over. The results derive essentially from work and personal commitment and, from whatever level you start, it is always possible to go ahead and improve your condition. It's not the so-called geniuses who go on, but people who want to commit themselves and who work hard to overcome difficulties.

### 5.1.6 Discouragement and commitment

Too often we are led to underestimate ourselves in order to avoid a serious commitment and in this way we tend to confuse the "I cannot" with the "I don't want". Here is useful the farmer's metaphor: if in a field there is a farmer who works and in the near field there is one that doesn't do anything, it is true that the one who works may also lose the harvest due to adverse weather conditions, but the fact remains that almost always the working farmer will have his crop for the winter and the other will be reduced to starvation.

Building, in any case, takes time and effort, which is why propagandists and sellers of easy solutions are almost always smoke vendors who point to roads that lead nowhere. What is served on a silver plate often hides pitfalls. I refer to dating sites and erotic chats. If it is true that it is possible to find friends and even a partner in these sites, it remains nevertheless the fact that the purpose of these sites is different and that most people don't visit them to find friendship or love but to look for disengaged sex.

### 5.1.7 Gay loneliness and gay friendships

The basic problem of a gay guy, the problem of loneliness, has two distinct solutions: the first is to find a boyfriend, the second is to find gay friends. It must be stressed immediately that none of these two things, alone, can lead to individual well-being. While it seems obvious that having gay friends without having a boyfriend should be considered unsatisfactory, it doesn't seem that having a boyfriend without having gay friends is in itself an impediment to achieving the individual well-being, because it is assumed that the boyfriend is simultaneously the lover, the beloved, the friend, the confidant, etc. etc.. Experience shows that, paradoxically, gay friendships contribute to individual well-being even more than having a boyfriend because friendships stabilize the emotional life while love affairs, especially at the beginning, destabilize or can destabilize it very strongly. The emotional dimension must necessarily find support on both the two foundations, that of the couple bond and that of the friendship, and while without a couple bond you can certainly be well for long periods (and at the limit even all lifelong), without friends you are definitely alone.

Friendship exorcises loneliness and at the same time takes away the fear of homosexuality because it allows a personal and not superficial knowledge of other gay guys, stimulates the comparison and shows us how our friends are setting up or have set up the problems that we are going to face. In friendship, analogously to what happens in love, the difference between the true friend and the one who is not such is not evidenced by the apparent initial powerful force of the relationship but by its articulation over time and by its ability to resist the moments of crisis and the misunderstandings that inevitably occur in any relationship.

### 5.1.8 Gays and possible happiness

When someone considers the fact of being gay as a calamity, he doesn't realize a basic truth whose denial is the foundation of every form of fear of being gay, that is, he doesn't realize that for a gay man today it is really possible to be happy, it is possible to have serious gay friends and it is not difficult either; it is a little more difficult to find a partner with whom to build a relationship that will last, but this is also difficult for hetero people for whom it is not at all obvious that marriage represents the incarnation of the myth of the ideal family.

Even gays must guard against the false myths in the name of which people and real situations are often devalued. Love and friendship are not fables but exercises of reality, that is true gyms in which day after day one learns



to love through trials and errors. To truly love means to love a real person and not a theoretical model, but truly love is possible and it is a reality that changes life from within because it involves the profound experience of being in two.

### 5.1.9 Correcting one's mistakes

I will dedicate the last part of this chapter to a fundamental issue that gay guys, over the years, have had to face many times, I intend to refer to the ability to recognize and correct one's mistakes. Gays, like all the people of this world, are subject to various kinds of temptations. There are young people who can make affective choices subordinate to calculations of social role, opportunism or economic utility, others can undermine established relationships that lasted for years because of a one-night adventure, others may end up adapting to social demands up to sacrifice their own sexuality. All these behaviors must be understood "in situation", that is, from the specific point of view of those who put them into practice and in relation to all previous experiences. These are often wrong choices, induced in large part by external factors, which can also cause very heavy consequences.

Let's start from a premise: one can be wrong, the weaknesses are many. The attraction for money, for the social role or for sex exists and is strong. It should be emphasized that the quality of a person is not found in his infallibility, what would not be human, but in the ability to correct mistakes and make choices. Often, however, to the objectively and subjectively wrong choices, for which one feels also a feeling of moral discomfort, it is added the idea that now one cannot go back and that a single failure is enough to undermine a person in a definitive way.

Let us ask ourselves: why is a "Word" program better than the classic pen and paper to write a letter? The answer is only one: because using the computer one can easily correct errors and improve the text progressively. Programmers are well aware that mistakes are inevitably made when writing a program of some complexity, and the search and correction of these errors is a fundamental phase of the work that leads to the creation and optimization of a program. This also happens in individual life: mistakes are inevitably made, but it is essential that when, to remain in the computer metaphor, the program doesn't run, one avoids the temptation to reset everything and destroy what has been built up to that point instead of commit oneself to correct mistakes and adjust the shot.

### 5.1.10 Reversible habits and choices

Some points must always be kept in mind: first of all the choices, all the choices, even the wrong ones, are reversible and are reversible at any time; secondly: the reversibility of choices is much easier if the correction is rapid because, with the passage of time habits are consolidated and one gets used to the very comfortable idea of irreversibility and therefore of moral irresponsibility. I add a metaphor: one doesn't become obese for having eaten one more pastry, but when the habit of transgression of the rules of the diet is rooted, it becomes particularly difficult to return to the observance of the correct eating rules.

The metaphor also helps from another point of view: eating one more pastry can be pleasant and the temptation is great but continuing without rules to eat pastries not only doesn't lead to individual satisfaction but leads to being sick and to be convinced of being naturally intended to obesity, which in the vast majority of cases is not true. The choices, all the choices, must be made with an eye to the future, trying to foresee responsibly the long-term consequences of what is being done. This discourse is primarily valid for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, but it also applies to couple fidelity and to the tendency to follow social rules at the expense of one's deep affectivity.

### 5.1.11 Usefulness of moral discomfort

The situation of moral hardship felt by the one who makes wrong choices shouldn't be buried and judged as a residual form of useless moralism, but must be seen as an alarm bell and as a signal to reflect on how to go back before making even worse mistakes.

The moral discomfort that one feels in front of wrong choices, which in any case are made in life, is precisely the basis of the self-regulating mechanism that allows us to correct errors. Expressions such as: "I cannot do anything about it", "it's my nature", "it's stronger than me" are the typical expressions that accompany acquiescence to moral surrender, that is, abdication to individual ability to choose. A classic example is related to disengagement in the study that is framed in the light of an inevitability "by nature", but the same can be said for the tendency to transgression in the couple life or for the passive adaptation to social rules that are not really shared.

The word "destiny" should be deleted from the dictionary because it is a convenient excuse for any form of disengagement and of perseverance in situations that are considered wrong. The moral lies in not abdicating one's ability to make choices and therefore in the ability to go back and change

one's condition through individual commitment.

I would like to point out that, among gays, it is not uncommon to find forms of moral relaxation which, I emphasize, don't consist of specific wrong behaviors in themselves, but precisely in abdication of one's capacity for choice and commitment in the name of the presumed unavoidability of a destiny or of a "wrong" individual nature. Morality lies in the ability to react and not to lose one's ability to choose. Below are two emails illustrating the situation, I have been authorized to publish them from those who sent them to me.

1st April 2012. Dear Project,

I am 27 years old, [- omissis-] Let's come to the reason that pushed me to write you: I spent a year with a girl because I couldn't stand the subtle pressure of my parents and also because if I had not done so, my friends sooner or later would have come to understand how things really were.

She is a very good girl and with her I don't feel too much uncomfortable, at the limit, I think there is also some sexual involvement, but when I see some guys and I imagine how it would be to stay with them, my blood starts to boil, it's absolutely another dimension, but with those guys I will never be able to stay and then I might as well try to stay with this girl, who is even in love with me.

I'm glad when she looks for me and I'm glad to see her, but it's not really what I want and I'm sure of that. In practice, when I find myself embracing her, I come to think of how beautiful it would be if in her place there was one of those guys who really attract me. I have the distinct feeling of cheating this girl, the courage to speak clearly with her I don't have it because I fear that I would end up to disgrace myself in front of the whole country, maybe it would not happen, but just thinking such a thing gives me the push to keep going on like this but I don't hide that sometimes I feel uncomfortable because I know I'm just using her. When we meet, which happens in practice every day, I see her happy to see me and I feel uncomfortable, but what can I do? In practice, I have no chance of choice and so I must go on like that. In the end I think it could also work, or at least I hope so. And then I cannot make radical decisions, it's just against my nature, I don't have the strength to make definitive choices, and that's why I let others make them for me. I cannot do anything, it is stronger than me. I was not born as a lion, I'm a sheep and I must follow the flock, I would never be able to go alone against

everything and everyone. Waiting for your response.

11th April 2012. Dear Project,  
(- omissis -) I managed to take the first step and I had thought I would never have succeeded. It was very difficult but I managed to talk to my now ex-girlfriend. The reaction has been initially freezing, she did not expect it at all, basically she hadn't understood anything, and there I felt really bad, then she called me in the early afternoon and asked me to meet because she wanted to give me back the gifts I had made her.

I didn't like it, but I couldn't do anything about, so I put together the presents she had given me and we met in the afternoon, but she told me that she wanted to keep the ring engraved on the inside with my name. So I gave a spontaneous smile and she started crying, she told me that she loved me but she had understood that my life would have been different and that she would not forget me. We shook hands for a few seconds.

I tried to explain things from my point of view but she said that there was no need and we said goodbye with a hug that I didn't expect. Actually, I think that I will not forget at all this girl. The next day I expected her to call me but she didn't and I was uncomfortable, the following Saturday we met with friends and it was a nice thing, with me she was sincere and affectionate, with friends she was as if nothing had changed, except for a somewhat more detached attitude, but probably only the two of us noticed it.

In short, I feel much better, more free and above all the fact that she has understood how things were, makes me feel good. The relationship that somehow exists still now is authentic and I think it will not be lost. This was probably the hardest step but there are still many left.

I will look for work away from here. I know it's not easy to find it but I have to commit myself to the maximum. If I'll remain here I'll never find the chance to be myself. I began to send curricula throughout Italy and even abroad, now I hope that some concrete proposal will come to me but, if it happens, the separation from my family and my friends would certainly be very hard. I want to try to take back my destiny, to make my choices and to build my life as I think I would like it.

We hope well, Project! [- omissis -].

## 5.2 DOCUMENTS

### 5.2.1 Ok, I'm gay but I do not know what to do

Hello Project, I wanted to thank you for last night, you have an infinite patience and above all you have the ability to make me feel less agitated. One like me, who at 25, after so many back and forth, comes to the conclusion that being with a girl is not for him, he feels quite destabilized: what to do with the girl? What to do with parents? And then, gay, ok, but this at the moment only means that I have fantasies about guys, but then how should I move? I don't know anything about it and you can understand that I'm so scared that sometimes I get the very strong temptation to say: well, I'm gay, but it's just a fantasy and it will never change, there will never be anything concrete, then I might as well go on acting the role of the straight guy, I did it for so many years!

In the end being gay is too complicated, I'm not used to all the things I read in the forum, prudence, acting, let's say that until now I did such things but unconsciously, basically up to a few months ago, I had a half idea of being really straight, but now should I just play a comedy moreover consciously? And then for what?

Admitted and not granted that I find a guy, I take him home and I say to my parents: "He is my boyfriend!", what should I expect? I believe they would call psychiatric service because they do not expect such a thing at all. And then, even assuming that I can solve calmly with the girl (obviously inventing false motivations, what gives me tremendous annoyance, because she has always been very transparent to me), what does it mean to find a boyfriend? Finding a girl I know what it means, or better, I know what it means being found by a girl, and the complications are not too many, but looking for a guy is probably something very different.

What do I say to a guy? "How beautiful you are! I would like to eat you with kisses!" But how do you woo a guy? I cannot even imagine it. In short, all these things we talked about last night, at the moment, reassured me, when we said goodbye I felt euphoric, then this morning I said to myself: I spoke with Project, it's true, but for me, in concrete, what has changed? Just nothing! I talk to Project but in the end It's me the one who have to deal with problems and that's what scares me, because I'm really afraid of not even knowing where I have to begin from. The guys who felt gay from the beginning, have slowly learned these things, but me? I read the forum to try to understand what it actually means to be gay and the result is that it seems a lot harder than I thought before. I'm still scared, I think we'll hear each other soon.

You did a very important thing, you took away from my mind a bit of crazy ideas that seemed to me absolutely obvious, you know, a green horn doesn't even know the a b c, for example about the coming out, I filled my brain with this idea, even if I couldn't really understand how to do something like that, but I liked the idea and I felt less than others because I unconsciously knew it was not for me. Now at least I feel less inept and more gay, so to speak, normal, after what you told me. Then the problems of prevention! Damn, Project, I was just about to throw in the towel. With my girlfriend practically at most a bit of petting, so zero risk, but with a guy I hoped to do a bit of sex. Well at certain times last night I said to myself: Project exaggerates! Maybe he does so for good, but for him this story of prevention is just a fixed idea. But then to think that maybe for a little sex one can really get into big trouble shows things in another light and I had never thought about it!

Anyway, let's say I think I would not have put myself at risk, but now I'm sure I'll be even more careful.

Another point, I need to understand how other guys live their homosexuality (what a horrible word!) Because I've never fallen in love with a guy and I think that my basic doubts are all coming from there. Sexual fantasies, yes and many, but I never fell in love with a guy! And how is it that if I'm really gay and I've never fallen in love with a guy? It seems to me that I could have a relationship of pampering with a girl but with a guy, I don't know how it could be. Maybe it's all about roles, maybe it's something that is much simpler than I think, but at the moment I don't really see myself cuddling another guy.

I often thought that I could make all my fantasies, I mean sexual fantasies, about a guy, but if I really knew him then I would be unable to live in reality that kind of sexuality, maybe that guy would be a friend, even the best friend, as it happened sometimes, but you know how it is when two guys are friends the relationship becomes almost familiar and sexuality has nothing to do with such things, at least I think so, I have never fallen in love with my friends, indeed I have never fallen in love with anyone.

And then there is a guy sweet like a girl? Maybe if such a guy existed I could also fall in love with him, but I see certain guys that make just fall my arms, no sweetness at all, just superficiality and pure stupid brutality. In short, well, a gay doesn't fall in love with all the guys but with only one, anyway the thing has just a statistical meaning, there are those who have had dozens of guys and those (like me) who have never had a guy, and probably will never have one.

And if I stay alone (what is very likely because in terms of courage I'm a rabbit), gay and lonely! What a nice mixture! Wouldn't it be better (fake)

straight guy and alone! I could always say that I didn't find the right woman, which is at least one thing that can be said. I am afraid, Project, to have put me on a path that will only bring me trouble. If I find a guy who loves me, ok, then it makes sense, but it's something that seems very unlikely. The last doubt that came to me last night: are there many guys in my condition? And generally how does it end? Thanks for the patience, Project, I'll contact you Friday night.

Italian Hamlet

p. s. If you think this email may make sense even for other people, post it in your blog.

### 5.2.2 Reflections of a gay over 30

Have you ever felt tired of everything? of having the impression that you will never have any real contact with the world outside of you? of realizing that you no longer have even dreams, not even desires because the youth is gone and now you are over 30 and that on the horizon there is only so much desert?

I feel the enormous difference between what my body would like and my real possibilities. I'm alone and I am aware that I will remain alone. I spent my life studying, then working and I think it will continue like this until I'm old, in practice I have not experienced any serious history, or maybe one, that now is over, it was a flash of light in my life and I had deluded myself, or rather I had done everything to delude myself, but I knew that it couldn't last, now I miss it but I know it is only a memory, the memory of a short period that is now over.

I always have on "skype" the contact of that guy, but he never enters, it is very rare that he is online, when it happens I send him a hello and he replies with a smiley face, but maybe it happens once in a month. I do a job that I don't like and that keeps me constantly anxious, at least I'd like to have friends but I have to dedicate the time left to me to my family who have big problems both economic and of people who must be assisted.

For me there are only the intervals that I pass at the PC, much time ago I used to chat, I had a blog, I wrote, now of all this there is nothing left, the blog is still there but I no more write there, I didn't chat for a long time, I'm not talking about erotic chats but about chats just to chat. I use the PC to read above all, to read scientific articles. No social network by choice, I don't want people to stick their nose into my business. I didn't even want to have sex, it happened in the past, now everything is pretty much anesthetized.

Sometimes I go to bed very tired and I don't sleep anyway, I begin to think how it would be nice to live a love story, have a guy who loves me, who

really cares about me, maybe I would be able to give that guy my soul, but I say maybe because I'm not so convinced, I think I would disappoint him in the end, I would not be able to really love him, but I indulge in daydreaming about how nice it would be to hug my boyfriend and see him smile, to understand that he's there for me, that he cares about me, that I'm important to him.

Then I think I would have a thousand doubts, that I would begin to make comparisons between that guy and my dreams and I would end up destroying everything. I am alone! This is a fact, I don't know why but I never had friends, a bit because having straight friends, for one who is not declared, it means playing a role, I never found a friend I could really trust.

Up to 24/25 years I had a few friends, I used to meet often one of them, but then I realized I was only the second choice for him, when he couldn't go out with the girl or other friends then he called me. In the end I haven't heard from him anymore and didn't even try to call him.

Where I work, there are some nice guys, but I see them too much distant, they have their dreams and also the chance to make them come true, but I don't envy them, I simply say that they belong to another species and live in another continent different from mine.

Sometimes, when I start thinking, I feel confused, I doubt everything, I don't believe in anything, I let time flow in my hands because what happens, objectively, doesn't depend on me. I look at things from the outside and, for example at work, I act like a machine without emotions, like a robot programmed to do certain things without asking any questions, like a robot that I turn on at the beginning of the working time and I turn off at the end. I'm alone in my family but partly, because they don't know I'm gay. With my parents there is a deep sharing of the troubles we have to face, sometimes I think that I could also tell them that I'm gay, but it would be like adding another reason for anguish to those who already exist and who are many and heavy, so I keep everything for myself. I cannot add another cross on the backs of my father and my mother just because I want to have someone who knows about me, it doesn't make any sense. I love my parents and they love me and I do not want to anguish them in any way because they have already too many problems.

I'm gay ... mh ... but I think that this is now over in the background, what I would like more than anything else is to rest, just sleep for many hours all in a row, I wish I could avoid to think of many things that occupy my brain, I would like a break free from worries, a few days to get away from the daily life and maybe go a day by the sea, even alone, towns on the sea are beautiful this season, the sea is so beautiful, as the oil, in the early morning with the sun rising on the horizon and slowly warming you up. How I would like to



share these things and I would like to share them with that guy with whom I may have lived my only love story, how happy I would be if such a thing could happen, but life is a terrible mechanism and we are carried by forces greater than us, each one towards his destiny, forces that in some periods bring us closer and then move us away permanently.

Being gay what has it to do with all this? There is the shadow of a desire and then there is a great melancholy. Yet I'm not depressed, I know that I have many things to do, not to crown my dreams but to help my family survive and it's precisely this that gives me the urge to move forward. When you're a guy you learn to dream as a gay, when you grow up you have to understand that it's just a dream. I hug you. Believe me, I'm not sad.



# Chapter 6

## GAYS AND FRUSTRATION

### 6.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 6.1.1 Frustration-inadequacy and frustration-rejection

This chapter is dedicated to the experience of frustration, I immediately clarify that I intend to speak specifically about frustration, not about anxiety or even more generally of discomfort, things that, however, can be linked to the frustration.

The etymology itself of the term frustration, derived from the Latin adverb *frustra* = in vain, with no avail, clearly indicates that frustration is a form of discomfort resulting from the impossibility or the failure to achieve an expected or desired result. Frustration is one of the possible outcomes of the wish.

The reduction of the sense of frustration can derive only from the containment of the need or the desire within the sphere of the possible and even better of the probable, in other words only an ability to assess *ex ante* [in advance] the greater or less feasibility of one's desire allows to limit its possible frustrating outcomes.

It's here where the radical distinction of purposes comes into play in relation to whether or not their realization depends only on us. I clarify the discourse with two classic examples:

- 1) Completing of studies (individual purpose).
- 2) Finding reciprocity in an emotional relationship (shared purpose).

These are two radically different purposes. The completion of the studies depends only on the more or less conditioned action of the individual who can find objective obstacles but who is aware that the achievement of the purpose (individual purpose), beyond the external conditioning, depends in an essential way from his commitment and his capacities, in this case frus-

tration is essentially perceived as a sense of inadequacy.

Finding reciprocity in an affective relationship is instead a fact substantially connected to an interpersonal relationship, this means that the achievement of the purpose doesn't depend only on the person who is focusing on that purpose but also, and in an essential way, on another person who should share that purpose (shared purpose). In this case frustration is perceived as rejection.

It is not uncommon, however, that a frustration-rejection is also experienced as a frustration-inadequacy on the basis of identifying the causes of rejection in one's own inadequacy: "He refused me because I am not up to the situation or because I have failed in something", at the basis of these arguments however, there is a non-genuinely relational view of affective relationships that are interpreted as a kind of chess game in which, if the moves are not wrong, you still get to win the game. In this way the other is seen as an object to be conquered with a strategy that, if adequate, necessarily leads to the result. This way of seeing things, even if in many cases it is completely incongruous, seems absolutely obvious to those who adopt it as their own interpretative model, up to the point of obscuring the objectivity of the facts. Let me explain with a concrete example.

### 6.1.2 Unattainable purposes

A gay guy who falls madly in love with an objectively heterosexual guy is induced to see his object of love as a repressed gay and not as a heterosexual and to think that with an appropriate strategy it will be possible to make him take note of his presumed repressed homosexuality. In such situations, the feeling of frustration-inadequacy can last for years and sometimes for the guy who fell in love it is very difficult to realize how things really are, even when the other gets married.

It is essential to realize that some things, however deeply desired, are objectively impossible. A heterosexual guy cannot fall in love with a gay guy, whatever strategy the gay guy uses, the thing will be anyway impossible, so we should put aside the idea of being inadequate (not handsome enough, not solar enough, not reliable enough, too neurotic etc. etc.) and realize that rejection is not a refusal of the person as such but a manifestation of the objective impossibility of sharing the purposes of the other. I pause for a moment to reflect on the feeling of being rejected.

The feeling of rejection that occurs when the other doesn't share our purpose is often experienced, especially by gay guys in love with straight guys, as a refusal not generically of the person but of the person as a gay, rather than

as an inability to share the purpose of the other, and this sometimes makes the process of accepting homosexuality more difficult.

Expecting a straight guy to fall in love with a gay guy makes no sense but expecting him to be a gay guy's friend is realistic. A gay guy in such situations is often brought to the "all or nothing", the thing is also understandable and a downsizing of the purpose that makes it a shared purpose is often difficult because even if the gay guy were to settle for a friendly relationship with the heterosexual guy he is in love with, he would still be frustrated in his "true, even if unrealistic, purpose" namely in building a shared love story.

However, metabolizing the feeling of refusal of an emotional and sexual involvement by a straight guy, for a gay guy is still, all in all, a process of awareness of reality not too traumatic, because difficulties are basically objective and objectively insurmountable.

### 6.1.3 Frustrations in relationships between two gays

The topic becomes much more delicate when the feeling of rejection intervenes in a relationship with another gay, here it is about a refusal on subjective ground that for the rejected person is much more difficult to accept and it is much more frequently accompanied by a feeling of inadequacy. In these situations, projective mechanisms typically come into play, for which one's own feelings and expectations are projected onto the other and it is very difficult to understand that the other is objectively another, with a different individual story, with other desires and with a completely autonomous experience.

Generally, when a gay guy falls in love, the first and insistent question that arises concerns the sexual orientation of the other, if the other is not gay there is nothing to do, but if the other is gay it seems that the problem is solved and that the reciprocity will be achieved in any case, it is the typical "gay + gay = love" theorem behind which very strong projective mechanisms are hidden that make us see in the other, identified as a gay, an individual identical to ourselves.

We must never forget that gays don't constitute a homogeneous category, there are gays of any political orientation, of any social level, of any religious creed or without any religious belief, there are gays who are excellent people and there are gays who aren't at all, exactly as it is in the general population. Gays are not a kind of Eden where everything is governed by good feelings, nor a kind of hell in which everything is dominated by individual interest and lower instincts. Gays are profoundly different from one another because they have behind them deeply different individual stories. So it is not at all obvious that a gay man can feel comfortable with another gay just because

they are both gay and, I stress it, If two gays can quite easily become friends because they have something in common, it is certainly unlikely that two gay guys can feel a mutual sexual and affective feeling just because they are both gay, exactly as a hetero guy doesn't fall in love with a woman just because she is a woman.

#### 6.1.4 Projective mechanisms and socialization

Mechanisms that make us to project onto the other, as a gay, our feelings and our ways of reasoning can move us away from an objective assessment of the facts and can create completely unrealistic expectations. What can protect us from these projective mechanisms that often lead us to frustration? The answer is almost obvious, it is the socialization. The more a guy has a rich social and affective life, I speak above all of friendships, the more he has direct experience of the variability of the individuals with whom he interacts and the less he is led to the projective mechanisms.

I give a concrete example. A gay guy, who was writing to me his first embarrassed mail, told me: "I've never met another gay guy" for him the "gay guy" category was still unified and, not having precise references, he completed it seeing the "gay guy" as another himself. That same guy, after a few nights spent chatting with other gay guys, said: "I realized that with many guys I can get along but with someone it's like there's a bigger distance, even if they are anyway very good guys, they have another way of reasoning, but there are some guys I feel really good with." These speeches are the typical sign of a progressive socialization and therefore of the progressive decrease of the projective tendency.

#### 6.1.5 Virtual relationships between gays

Let's now try to focus our attention on virtual couple relationships (chats, e-mails and forums) that can arise between gay guys. If we want to give the word love a connotation that is not excessively abstract, it must be assumed that love cannot be reduced to an intellectual affinity or a sharing of moral values but must necessarily presuppose a physical-physiological involvement, not necessarily experienced in couple, that deeply involves sexuality. At this point an observation is obligatory. When, in real life, a gay guy falls in love with another guy, falling in love doesn't start from the intellectual level or from possible elective affinities but from physical attraction, that is from a set of factors that depend on the physicality of the other: his smile, his phys-

ical presence, his voice, his bodily attitudes, his tendency to a more or less seductive behavior.

This is so true that very often gay guys fall in love with straight guys far from them in every respect, but able to physically embody their ideal guy. If a guy appears to us physically attractive, we start asking ourselves questions about him and want to find a closeness also in terms of dialogue, in practice we are interested in that guy.

This mechanism of falling in love, which is typical of real life, cannot be put into practice through the internet where everything remains detached from the physical dimension. In these situations intervenes a projective mechanism that makes us imagine the guy with whom we are talking in chat according to our categories.

### 6.1.6 Texts not sexually connoted

Years ago I administrated a website in Italian about couple relationships, the readers of the site were all or almost all heterosexual. I started there an experiment: I wrote and published a lot of stories (about 100) not sexually connoted, that is that reading the stories it was strictly impossible to detect from grammatical elements if the single character was male or female, because the text was in this sense radically neutral. In Italian usually it is not needed to express the subject of the verb, adjectives normally are different for the masculine and the feminine but there are many adjectives that are not differentiated by gender and are used for both the genders in the same form. Therefore It is quite simple in Italian to write stories non sexually connoted. In English things are a little more complicated because usually the subject must be expressed and the use of pronouns (he, she, him, her) can hardly be avoided, nevertheless even in English it's possible to write texts not sexually connoted. For example, to express quite similar contents I can use a "sexually connoted text" like this:

"I went to her last night, she told me she would come to see me,  
I love her because she is beautiful and then she is my girlfriend  
and I'll love her forever."

It's evident that I'm telling about a girl or a female character. But I could also use a not connoted text like this:

"We met last night. My friend told me "Don't worry, I'll come soon to see you", what I feel is love and then no one is more important for me . . . I just stuttered "My soul, you are the only object of my desires, and it will be so forever."

Here it's impossible to detect from grammatical elements if I'm talking about a man or a woman.

There is an American novel published in 1870 by Bayard Taylor, considered the first American gay novel, whose title "Joseph and his friend" sounded to the general public quite similar to "Joseph and his girlfriend" and the first chapters seem to justify this interpretation, but reading the subsequent chapters it's easy for gay readers to understand that the "friend" is a male friend, if not exactly a boyfriend.

Well, my experiments on my website, a site intended for heterosexuals, demonstrate that all the readers (heterosexuals) assumed that the character not sexually connoted was a woman, and this way, for them, all stories were just heterosexual stories. All comments were based on this assumption completely unjustified from the literal text. Clearly the brain of a single person goes straight to what is usual for that person.

Gay persons are used to find sexually connoted texts, clearly all in hetero sense, but they unlike hetero people, are extremely ready to detect a not sexually connoted text, because gays are accustomed to express their stories in public in a not sexually connoted way.

In conclusion: the heterosexuals do not recognize a not sexually connoted text, while homosexuals immediately notice that the text is not sexually connoted.

This conclusion is very useful to detect gays. The one who uses non sexually connoted expressions discovers somehow himself and gives occasion to the other to give in turn signals of recognition.

Many guys, when they notice more or less gay signals from another guy, begin a search for information about him worthy of the secret services, a search for his name and email on multiple search engines online, if that guy has a website or a blog that is not explicitly gay, they analyze it in depth with rigorous philological criteria and read with acute spirit the author's profile. They essentially seek to gather evidences to confirm the initial hypothesis. In some cases they end up finding explicit references to a girl or heterosexual experience and their research ends with archiving because "he's not gay". In other cases, however, the hypotheses are or seem confirmed and the guy who started the search gets to the final evaluation: "probably gay" or, rarely, "If the search is about guys still in the closet, to the evaluation: "certainly gay!" In the past decades, the finding of other gay guys was very difficult, today, using Internet, the opportunities for gay guys have enormously increased but also risks have increased because what is glittering is not all gold.

In the documents of this chapter you can read a story "not sexually connoted". Based on such stories it is possible to build projective tests for the determination of sexual orientation that have a real reliability.



The projective reading is basically the reason for the fascination of literature or cinema because we project ourselves into the events and interpret them according to our experience.

### 6.1.7 Online chats and projective mechanisms

An exchange of e-mails, a chat conversation or a dialogue on a forum create a text, or better they construct a four-handed text. That text has the characteristics of literature, even more accentuated by the fact that it is built in four hands, it is the most suitable context for the projective readings but while in the projective reading of a book one doesn't aim to build an interpersonal relationship and everything remains inside the reader's mind, in the relationships via internet the projective tendency must sooner or later take into account that on the other side there is another guy with his own projections on the same conversation.

There is basically the risk of misunderstanding, aggravated by the fact that many chat conversations remain at extremely sublimated and symbolic levels and are therefore extremely open to projective interpretations. The role of projective mechanisms in Internet contacts can be so decisive as to induce the two interlocutors even put aside the idea of a personal knowledge that could interrupt or destroy the projective mechanism which in itself is at least apparently gratifying.

### 6.1.8 The drift of the love language

I add that often in the dialogues in chat between gay guys it is common to find the mechanism of the drift of the love language that is the progressive and automatic indulging in a language that more and more resembles a love language, this means that it is not at all rare that two guys who have never met in person, end up talking like lovers.

The emotional investment in these mechanisms is often very high and the projective dimension is such that the risk that the conversation is reduced to being just the starting point for the construction of stories that exist only at the projective level is very concrete. Basically we create an interlocutor to our measure, projectively completing the real elements (often scarce and of uncertain meaning) that emerge from the dialogue. This is so true that a gay guy comes to fall in love with a straight guy, interpreting every little element that does not appear 100% hetero as the sign of a possible homosexuality, and at the same time devaluing all those elements that also very clearly show that that guy isn't at all a gay guy.

But I must stress that the mechanism also operates in relationships between

gay guys, that is, between guys who know with certainty that the other is gay. The projective mechanism reaches the point of attributing to the other a presumed physicality, that is, it comes to embody him in an image that represents our ideal guy.

Sometimes and not rarely the projective image of the other is also loaded with sexual values and we try a sexual transport that is not at all superficial for a guy we've never seen. In practice we fall in love even sexually with a guy that at 90% has been created by our projective imagination that also attributes a physicality to him according to what we want.

The drift of the love language then does the rest and gives the clear impression that one is building a true love story. But in all this there is a fundamental mistake, in practice the natural mechanism that leads from physical attraction to emotional love is completely distorted. It must be remembered that to fall in love in the true sense of the word, a physical-physiological involvement is essential but must be addressed to a real person, not to an image created by our projective fantasy.

Some surrogates of the physical presence, such as photos or videos cannot in any way replace the physical presence that is and remains the necessary element of a true falling in love, I mean that without the physical presence and without an authentic form of physical-physiological involvement, love doesn't exist at all.

I would like to warn youngsters who know each other in a chat against letting themselves go to the drift of love language, which only creates expectations that can then be completely destroyed even by a very brief meeting in which we realize that our projections don't have anything in common with reality and that the discourse (but only the discourse) has been going on freely, far beyond reality, because the need to build emotional relationships easily leads us to believe that such relationships exist even where the conditions are completely lacking.

It is generally very easy to let yourself go in a chat to big speeches, to say "I like you" and also "I love you" without a concrete foundation but it is very difficult to scale back these statements later, when these speeches have created and consolidated expectations that a direct personal knowledge can destroy in a sudden and traumatic way.

At this point, if when the two guys meet in person the disillusionment is mutual, all in all, the problem is easily solved because the expectations of both parties vanish at the same time but if one of them is disillusioned and the other on the contrary feels strongly attracted also physically, the dissymetries become very strong and the situations become difficult to manage.

### 6.1.9 Friendships in chat

In chat or via e-mail, that is without direct personal knowledge, it is certainly possible and, I would say, much less risky, to create friendships, which are much less conditioned by projective mechanisms than possible love stories. I notice that the spontaneous tendency of the guys is to look for a boyfriend, a lover, rather than for one or more real friends in chat, but the internet tools are much better suited to the creation and maintenance of friendships than to the creation of love stories.

As a good rule of prudence I would say that it would be good to reserve speeches with strong emotional connotation only to people we actually met even outside the chat or the forum, that is people we met in person. And here an important reflection intervenes. Meeting in two in real life after having met in chat, gives that meeting a very strong emotional connotation and makes it appear as a step towards the construction of an important and mutual story. This is why it is generally better to build relationships that start from friendship, from seeing each other in a group, that is, from relationships that don't create too many expectations that could turn into disillusionment. Friendship is always the first step, if the physical presence is engaging and encouraging then it may make sense to go a step further, otherwise friendship remains and is not compromised by the fact that no story with greater involvement derives from it because undeclared expectations have not been fed.

I would like to stress that the network (used with the utmost caution, for heaven's sake!) offers possibilities but can also lead to very heavy disillusionments. If you love someone, even just as a friend, you must avoid deluding him and leading him to cold showers that leave a deep sense of bitterness. So it is always good to maintain an attitude of responsibility and think in advance about the possible consequences of what you are going to do or to say. Closed this parenthesis on online meetings, let's go back to the topic of frustration.

### 6.1.10 The value of experience

The other key element, beyond socialization, to prevent the sense of frustration is experience. The first refusal can be really traumatic, the subsequent ones are certainly less traumatic, in essence our psyche considers the first traumas of rejection as a kind of vaccination that attenuates the virulence of the following ones. The rejection trauma often leads to behaviors that appear to be attempts to overcome rejection, as insistent requests for confirmation from the other, which obviously only amplify the feeling of re-

jection. All this, which appears as an inadequate and dysfunctional behavior, on the contrary, has a precise meaning and serves to define the situation (to put a boundary or a limit), that is, serves to its definitive overcoming, to its archiving.

It should be emphasized that those who after a first refusal insist on asking for further confirmation are judged to be inadequate just because of this behavior, but they are actually looking for a fracture mechanism that creates the conditions for going further. In this sense, unclear, implicit, said and denied refusals, do nothing but avoid this moment of fracture, preventing in fact the definition of the situation that remains perpetually unresolved.

Beyond the subjective perception, real situations of discomfort are realized where a state of constant uncertainty persists and time passes without the guys being able to ascertain or verify the presence or absence of the symmetrical dimension that is essential in an affective relationship.

### **6.1.11 Affective frustrations and other frustrations**

I would like to add that frustrations in the emotional field are often complicated by the presence of other frustrations, this time strictly individual, connected to the failure to achieve goals related to the work research and stabilization, or success in studies, especially when failures are perceived as deriving from a lack of individual commitment in solving a problem which seems to be somehow solvable.

In general, frustrations due to substantial disengagement at the individual level are masked by frustrations in emotional or couple relationships that are magnified to make them appear as the core of the state of discomfort, in this case failures in emotional life are motivated by a primary, original inability, that is impossible to overcome and that is almost incumbent as an ineluctable destiny, it is the moment of "I am so, there is something wrong in me, I can't do anything about it!"

Individual frustrations, not referred to their causes but seen as an expression of something uncontrollable, trigger ideas with vaguely depressive contents that risk pervading life on various levels and setting in motion vicious circles from which it is difficult to get out.

Experience teaches that problems must be faced and resolved one at a time. The most meaningful thing is to avoid giving your brain a way of always spinning on the usual contents, instead choosing short-term concrete objectives to be implemented by focusing seriously on them. The antidote against frustration and the fundamental way to break a series of frustrations that risk triggering a depressive mechanism is to achieve the first successes, to lay the foundations for looking at the concrete and at the goals that are really

achievable shortly with an effort of individual commitment, for example taking an exam, sending a curriculum to find a job, without letting time flow when there are problems to be tackled immediately.

In this perspective, being gay can also lead to emotional frustrations that are difficult to accept, but rather than insist in the search for what is wrong in oneself, it makes sense to focus on individual and concrete goals, the achievement of which can lead to a clear increase in self-esteem and therefore also in the ability to face the frustrations in the couple life with greater concreteness and serenity.

### 6.1.12 Coexisting with frustrations

Frustrations are an indispensable element in the life of everybody and therefore it is necessary to learn to live with them, always remembering that as we have been rejected we also, more or less consciously, rejected other people or other forms of involvement, all this has nothing pathological but is part of the normal administration of emotional life.

### 6.1.13 Aggressive frustration and passive frustration

Speaking via msn with several gay guys, I often find myself faced with manifestations of frustration which, although quite differentiated, certainly have very similar motivations behind them. The reactions are at various intermediate levels between those of aggressive frustration and those of total passivity. I try to give an idea of the most recurrent content:

AGGRESSIVE FRUSTRATION - "The world sucks", "I would break everything", "People are a shit", "To someone like that I would break his face", "They are deficient and immature", "I hate them all", "I cannot stand them", "I feel like I'm throwing away my time", "Another day ended and I haven't realized anything! I cannot stand anymore throwing away my time!"

PASSIVE FRUSTRATION - "The others can have fun not me", "What am I living for?", "So it's useless!", "I'll never be happy", "I don't care about studying, I will never succeed, my life is just a set of failures".

At the base of these forms of frustration there may be differently articulated motivations but all attributable to the real or presumed impossibility of living a satisfactory affective life and to the belief that "others" (hetero but also gay), instead, can fully experience their emotional life.

### 6.1.14 Different types of gay frustrations

The frustrations are found in different forms in different groups of people:

- Older guys, over 35 years old, who start feeling like they have "lost the train" because they arrived too late at the acceptance of themselves or at the idea that an emotional realization is possible even for a gay guy.
- Guys with a specific sexual orientation towards people much older than themselves, who realize the difficulty of achieving what they would like and become aware of the social condemnation (even among gays) of their preferences. These guys feel marginalized even among gays.
- Guys strongly selective, with rather rare or highly specific sexual orientations, that is, guys who are constantly looking for guys who have very specific characteristics, both in terms of physical structure and psychological attitudes, and sometimes also in terms of sexual behavior. These strongly selective guys fall in love very rarely and with guys with whom it is quite difficult to build a relationship, for them the guys who are strongly attractive for the majority of gay guys are just very weakly attractive and even for this reason they have the impression that the future, for them, will consist exclusively or in the acceptance of compromise solutions or in the emotional loneliness.
- Guys who consider themselves unsuitable to constitute a center of emotional and sexual interest for another guy both for physical and psychological reasons.

### 6.1.15 Frustration before and after the arrival of the Internet

I must add a reflection that often comes to my mind, while talking with guys and I compare their reactions with those that my peers had when they were twenty. Forty years ago, in objective terms, the reasons for the frustration of a gay guy could be even more serious because the isolation was total but anyway, for what I could see, talking to people of my generation, the sense of frustration was less deep and the tendency to seek substitute satisfactions in the study, in the career and in a social dimension, independent on the sexual orientation, was much stronger. In essence there was at the time the clear awareness of the impossibility of building a life according to one's own principles. Today, especially thanks to the internet, the possibilities of contact between gay guys have increased enormously, but expectations have increased proportionally, and the sense of frustration, far from being sublimated in productive activities, is very strong.

One of the risks associated with a reality such as Gay Project consists precisely in creating a sounding board that amplifies the sense of frustration and radicalizes it. Not only that, but the direct contact with other gay guys, which at the beginning looks extremely promising, then slowly dismantles the assumption that two gay guys necessarily have a common world and brings out the differences that are often very large. The discussion between gays is not easy because it highlights that even among gays there are mechanisms of marginalization and competitiveness. All this risks radicalizing frustration: "I feel marginalized even among other gays!"

### 6.1.16 The risks of frustration

But let's come to the specific risks of the sense of frustration, first of all to the depressive forms that sometimes accompany adolescence and youth of gay boys, depressive forms complicated by the fact that talking with parents is practically impossible and boys are forced to an endless acting.

Depression can come to manifest itself in crying, in the sense of abandonment and uselessness. It sometimes happens that some ideas related to depression become persistently recurrent and even dominant. It is the case of the guys who construct a rational discourse in support of their depressive idea, giving it an appearance of objectivity. This is the typical case of the so-called extrapolations, which are very frequent: "If I have not fallen in love in twenty years it will never happen to me!", "Everything I have done has always gone wrong and it will always be like that!" In these discourses we start from premises that can also be objective but we reach improper conclusions characterized by "always" or "never", that is, radically negative conclusions.

I learned from experience that talking with guys who live depressive phases is not easy and that the first thing that needs to be kept in mind is that talking to someone who listens to you quietly it is not enough to get out of the depressed mood. If on the one hand the depression should not be fed, on the other it must be respected and not trivialized. Seen from the outside depression looks like something almost trivial, surmountable with a little encouragement, but seen from the inside it causes deep suffering.

The respect towards a depressed guy must be shown by putting aside all aggressiveness towards him and every preaching attitude, all this is not easy at all because, for those who are not depressed, it is very difficult to realize the mechanisms of depression. The insistence is experienced by a depressed guy as a form of aggression. What instead really has a value is a presence that does not fade, which is constant but not harassing. But the subject is very complex and should be investigated.

The second typical risk of the frustration consists in trying to "solve the prob-

lem” through the ways that seem the easiest or perhaps the only ones that can be followed, namely the erotic chats and the meeting sites. Gay Project’s online interviews show that the percentage of guys who attend erotic chats and dating sites more or less habitually is absolutely not negligible. However, it is quite probable that a good percentage of those guys don’t really enter chats or dating sites to find easy sex, in many cases those guys are driven by the sense of frustration to look inside those sites for what they cannot find elsewhere, i.e. a true emotional life. From what I see on a daily basis, many youngsters come out profoundly disappointed by the experience of dating sites and erotic chats and this only adds to the sense of frustration.

Apart from the risk of HIV, the alternative between visiting dating sites and sadden in a depressive state may appear to be the only one possible, even if really it is not. What often creates conditioning is the rush to reach the solution. Among other things, the need to escape from the depressive loneliness can be so radically conditioning to take guys to underestimate the real risks of the chats and dating sites in terms of sexually transmitted diseases, and to consider in the same time sexual intercourse as indicative of a sure affective substrate also where it is unrealistic to expect anything like this.

There are guys who try to start couple relationships with guys met in chat or on the dating sites, who completely spend themselves in this attempt and bring back at the end, after many adventures, only deep frustrations. The idea that the realization of sexual contacts on the basis of physical pleasure doesn’t entail the affective well-being is difficult to accept, especially on the part of a guy fleeing from depression.

It would be essential to create true emotional relationships, of simple friendship, which could, if it is true friendship, allow an affective life less centered on the need for a couple’s life. The idea that the life of a person identifies with his life as a couple partner and only with it, in addition to being completely unrealistic, only amplifies the expectations, before, and the sense of frustration, after, since affective life can be built only in two and not as an answer to the demanding of only one, however profound it could be.

Frustration also involves a further type of risk and it is the risk connected to neglecting or abandoning all other activities that contribute to building the ordinary relationship life of a gay guy, I speak of study, work, the relationship with the family of origin and with the old friends.

When the idea of realizing a couple life becomes dominant, everything else gradually loses weight and becomes an object of contempt or explicit disinterest.

Neglecting the studies because there are ”more important problems” to be solved not only doesn’t solve those problems but adds others and distances the economic autonomy over time which may instead be one of the most



useful elements to reduce the sense of frustration that accompanies youth of so many gay guys.

Unfortunately, the idea that the life of an individual is not played on the only element "life of a couple" is difficult to accept for a guy who is accustomed and pushed to consider couple life as totalizing.

## 6.2 DOCUMENTS

### 6.2.1 Resist frustration

I think that what Project wrote as general presentation of the topic, and I fully share, clarifies some ideas on how to reach a balance in our emotional life. It's a way to show the path towards maturity, the path anyone must follow, not only heroes. His speech urged me to remember a composition by R. Kipling. I think many people know it and I hope it's not off topic. I report it below, because it made me think a lot and also encouraged me when I read it for the first time, long ago, in some moments of discouragement ...  
Nicomaco

#### "If"

by Rudyard Kipling, 1865 - 1936

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with triumph and disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
 And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
 And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
 And never breathe a word about your loss;  
 If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
 To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
 And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
 Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on";

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
 Or walk with kings nor lose the common touch;  
 If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;  
 If all men count with you, but none too much;  
 If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
 With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
 Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
 And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

### 6.2.2 Understanding the origin of frustration to go beyond

I think that frustrations, like all things, should have an origin, a development and an end: the origin is given by the facts and events of life from which the frustrations arise, development consists in the way in which they evolve, and the end coincides with the moment in which they are overcome. The problem is that frustrations don't always follow all these three phases and, even if this happens, not always each of them is easily perceived or easily understood by those who live them. I agree with Project that there are frustrations arising from the failure to achieve individual goals and others that instead refer to failure to achieve shared goals, not dependent solely on the will of the individual to meet his expectations.

Moreover, I think the second kind of frustration - the one linked to the desire to achieve shared goals - may have significantly more marked effects on a gay guy (but the same applies to a homosexual girl), at least as regards satisfying one's emotional needs, because there is no doubt that a gay guy will have much more difficulty than a straight guy in fulfilling the dream of a rewarding and happy emotional life, for a series of social and cultural reasons that we are all aware of and I will not list here.

Reflecting on the emotional frustrations of a gay guy, it seems to me that their origin often sinks its roots in the acquisition, on the part of that guy,

of the awareness of being gay. Reading the forum, I have noticed that frequently those who present themselves underline their disappointments with respect to the attainment of a satisfying affective life right from the moment when they began to accept their homosexuality. In other words, overcoming a frustration, namely the one concerning the acceptance of one's own homosexuality, paradoxically, opens the way to other frustrations, among which the disappointment of not being able to live life together with another guy is certainly one of the most significant.

After finally accepting to be what we are, that is after facing the internal dimension of homosexuality, we find ourselves face to face with its external dimension, desiring a serious and serene couple life. The fact of not being able to realize such kind of life results in the birth of frustration. On closer inspection, the awareness of the origin of a frustration is in itself a not indifferent goal, which is a good starting point for overcoming the frustration itself.

In fact, many youngsters seem to feel a sense of unease and inadequacy without even knowing what such unease springs from: for example, a guy unaware of his own homosexuality will suffer the frustration of not being able to live a fulfilling heterosexual relationship without knowing that the origin of that frustration lies in the fact that his nature could never allow him to fully live a relationship of that kind.

The knowledge of the origin from which frustrations spring, therefore, should be an indispensable starting point that must never be assumed for granted without a deep examination if one wants to really commit oneself to overcome them. As a soldier will be able to effectively fight against an enemy only by knowing him, so a gay guy will be able to face an emotional frustration only by understanding what it comes from and what it consists of.

Having this knowledge, which seems to me the only weapon available against emotional frustrations, it will then be possible to follow alternately two paths, to which correspond two different attitudes: one active and one passive. Active attitude is to fight one's frustration, putting in place a series of behaviors and situations that can help to overcome it, among which Project mentions socialization and experience, on which in principle I agree, although they are not simple to be realized concretely and a thousand obstacles make everything more complex.

The passive attitude, which I personally followed for some years, consists in ignoring one's emotional need, pretending that it is a temporary problem, and looking exclusively at other goals more realistically achievable, on the educational and university level or on the plan of working and professional life.

The fact is that this attitude, even if it manages to reduce the amount of

frustration in the short term, is not able to bring it down completely, on the contrary, it continues to evolve, and slowly becomes increasingly pressing and difficult to ignore, a bit like the ivy that emerges from the cracks of some stone buildings: if it is not eradicated, little by little it develops and, when we realize that perhaps it is appropriate to remedy it, it has already taken possession of the entire wall of the house. To try to break down an affective frustration, however, an active attitude is not sufficient, precisely because the affective frustration comes from the impossibility to satisfy a shared need that involves the sphere of external and interpersonal relationships, while the active attitude is something inner and individual that influences the emotional sphere only marginally.

An environment dominated by loneliness, ignorance or even worse homophobia is certainly not the ideal humus to try to make an affective relationship flourish; a stable job, economic independence and the time needed to build a relationship of love are elements that cannot be missing. Here, too, however, there is a clash with the reality of the facts, because it is not uncommon to find solutions that are difficult to implement, since the obstacles to their implementation are too high.

As for the last step of the path - the end of the frustration -, it is not always present, because a frustration sometimes cannot be overcome and then lasts indefinitely. I believe that this happens very often, because, on the one hand, in the evolution of a frustration we hardly find the right attitude and the right environment to achieve the desired goal and, on the other, even if our attitude is the most fitting and so is the environment too, such things may be insufficient if the person we love does not want to share the same goal with us.

Needless to say that the disappointment is around the corner and an emotional refusal can leave deep wounds and produce effects on the existential level with unpredictable results, especially for those who have used all their strength to try to create the perfect situation to build a life of happy couple. I don't know what the solution is: perhaps the search for an inner balance, like the one that effectively transpires from Nicomaco's quote, perhaps a more careful introspection, to understand what we can improve on our own, or perhaps a lowering of the level of one's expectations, because too high expectations lead often to the refusal of paths that could instead allow us to experience real, strong and happier emotions than the alternative of inner discomfort and loneliness.

Rayden

### 6.2.3 Frustration, fear and regret

The close connection between frustration, fear and regret is well illustrated by the following passage, taken from the Gay Project Forum.

In my experience, the feeling of frustration often goes hand in hand with that of fear. So there is an event that produces frustration, which causes suffering and a sense of inadequacy and at the end of all this creates the fear of being hurt again. There is a healthy form of fear, which comes from our instinct for conservation and which makes an alarm bell ring in front of dangerous situations. In this case, fear helps, for example, to be more aware that before going into a story it is better to understand the intentions of the other.

But if fear takes the reins of our life by leading us to avoid any emotional relationship in order to put ourselves away from rejection, then we are actually limiting our human experience, we are impoverishing ourselves in an attempt to defend ourselves from suffering that we believe is stronger than us, the less we face what we fear, the more fear will prevail.

We must also know that this choice, if lasting, opens the way to another feeling, which is that of regret. One day we could "forget" how scared we were and feel regret for not having lived. So, if you "before" have lived fearing a future of frustration, "after" you will live reproaching yourself for a past that could have been different.

In one case or another, what is missing is the fullness of the present moment. The "here and now", with its real, tangible, even if imperfect, occasions. We can cross the present without seeing it, without touching it, or we can be there, to the end. Living fully the present also means risking, of course. And to trust that our wisdom reduces the damage, rightfully means doing everything possible not to hurt us, but also to challenge our fear and discover that we are stronger than we believe. But above all it means to grasp at every moment everything that life offers us to be happy.

Barbara

### 6.2.4 The cry of pain of a young gay

Hello boys ... Since I joined the forum I attended it very little, although I stay most nights chatting. Often I just talk in chat and I feel a bit better,

because here I met really fantastic people who can accept me despite my quirks (which go well beyond my homosexuality, as those who know me a little know very well). However, tonight letting off steam in the chat didn't produce any effect because I felt bad as I haven't felt for a long time.

Tonight the ghosts of the past have come back as violent as a hurricane, ready to drag me away another time ... I don't know if I have already spoken about it on the forum before (in the chat definitely yes), however I live in a mountain village, not far from the city (which anyway is a town of only 60 thousand inhabitants ... can one call it city? ...) but my village is not well connected to the territory given the reduced number of bus rides and so it is often difficult for me, being a minor, to go to the city. This causes me a very strong feeling of unease.

Here everybody knows everything about everyone ... I hate being here, I feel completely out of place, I feel like those caged canaries that would fly and cannot escape. I also feel as a somehow silent tiger, which roars but no one hears the roar. I cry my suffering but it is not understood. I compare to too many things that I'm not, actually ... Here, as already mentioned, the Law of Jante, that collection of sociological maxims according to which those who are different from the community are excluded and ridiculed, is widely spread and dominant.

I've never been part of my country, nor even of the neighboring city. I've always been a case apart, lost in the Franco-German novels and in Japanese comics, while listening to English and Icelandic music. Jante's Law is also applied within the homosexual community. Given that there are very few gays here ... that is, there are very few gay people, and the mentality is so closed that many don't even accept themselves as gays, therefore ...

I don't exaggerate if I say that in my area don't exist more than 20 gays, and in any case I'm the only one in my village. About those 20 in any case now has been made a malevolent word-of-mouth, I don't know how or why but everyone knows me but I don't know them, they know absurd things about me - sometimes true, sometimes not, I wonder how, from what, from whom they came to know such things.

I cannot live here anymore ... relationships with the gay community don't exist at all because of the negative reputation that someone has created about me (such things really happen only in "terronia" [= "land of terroni". The Italians of the south use to call with contempt those of the north with the nickname "polentoni", that is, eaters of polenta, those of the north use similarly call those of the south "terroni" i.e. workers of the land, peasants.] ... this regardless of sexual orientation, if you are a little bit different you are anyway excluded and considered crazy), as for the relationships with heterosexuals ... with the guys I cannot tie.

I'm afraid of being judged, ah no ops... they judge me because I'm not visibly like them ... not that I'm very effeminate but I certainly don't have the interests of which hetero guys talk about here: pussy, motors and football. I point out, I don't have this opinion of all straight guys. Outside of my area, when I was lucky enough to live in France, but also in the north of Italy, I saw heterosexual guys very open (I point out it because I don't want to look like heterophobe). Regarding the straight girls, eh, there is something positive. With them I can tie, as long as they are not bitches or little geese [stupid persons] ... as a result, I only have a close female friend (which everyone calls alternately "Satan" or "Zoccola" [bitch] and this clearly demonstrate how the south of Italy is open ...) and three other female friends with whom I'm not as close but I feel at ease and I love them. Then I have a lesbian friend, but lately we meet rarely. In short, all women.

I don't even know what I'm writing and why I'm writing. Maybe to make sure that one day I'll remember these things. I had started with the intention of describing in detail the word-of-mouth aggression perpetrated against me, but I realize only now that I cannot do it, for the simple fact that I don't have the faintest idea about. And I have to say that I have been already the victim of another word-of-mouth, when in eighth grade someone called almost all the parents of my classmates to tell them that I was gay. I would like to know who did so just to say "I'm sorry for how much you are a piece of shit ..."

So, I'm angry with everyone tonight. I'm angry with Calabria that doesn't offer me opportunities, with the Calabrians who have a very narrow mind, with my mother who instead of helping me pushes deeper the knife into the wound with the acid jokes, stressing the fact that I don't know how to defend myself, but above all I'm angry with myself because I'm not able to send everything and everyone to hell and move on by myself. I'm proud of myself only because in all this I have never seriously thought about suicide, because I firmly believe that there is a better life outside of this hell. But I see this situation depressing, to put it mildly ... not committing suicide here is a demonstration that I give myself every day that elsewhere I could really be worth something ...

Here people don't have a minimum respect, I have been called "bog", "crazy", "Satanist", "poof" and many other cute nicknames since I was THREE years old, they already hated me in kindergarten. Do I have a face of cocks? Maybe, but is it my fault? With people who don't stop at the first impression I can bind so much to give them my soul ... but often it seems that people next to me don't realize it, they think I'm crazy and then I behave accordingly :/ What to say? How to conclude? I don't know. I'm disheartened. I'm depressed. I say lies every 3x2 [usually], just because I say lies I delude myself

to get away from this unsatisfactory reality. I've been doing it since I was 9 years old.

Sometimes I'm terrified that even if I'm going to attend university elsewhere, everything will be equally disgusting, because perhaps the world is really disgusting like Calabria (although I have tangible evidences that it is not). But my father with his fucking motto "the whole world is village" would make me want to swallow 50 pills of Valium and finish the games forever ... I don't do it because I want and I can resist ... because I know I'm worth something ... but believe me sometimes, for a few nanoseconds, suicide seems to me the only way out. I resist. I keep fighting and resisting. But for how long? How much do I still have to suffer before finding happiness? Does happiness exist for me?

What then my happiness is? ... A goodnight text message would be enough for me or something like "my love ... for me you are all" from a boy but this short message has never been sent to me. I would need a "I would like you next to me now", I would need a guy waiting for me in the room nearby ready to ... kiss me, hug me, tell me that no matter how I suffered and I will suffer but he will always be there for me. Because this is my greatest cause of suffering: the fear of never finding a boyfriend. I don't have particular passions, yes I like French, Icelandic, history and psychology. But I would never be able to make my work a reason for living, I'm rather "two hearts and a hut", so far I've only had almost exclusively online relationships (live, I've only have had stupid, without feeling and also few relationships) yet in those online relationships I gave my all, often I canceled myself to receive a little word of affection, sometimes things went better, sometimes worse (they have always lasted little, anyway).

If I think back to those few messages that I now remember BY HEART from those guys, it's enough for me to be less worse. I think of what they wrote to me and I repeat "Yes, Rox, you are strong ... you can overcome everything!" But then I think that even if, yes, I can do it, I wonder WHAT IS THE POINT OF DOING IT?... I feel lonely, terribly lonely, I don't know people to talk to about such things. I'm here to talk to you. I talk about it on other forums - even about other subjects - on which I'm writing. And I don't even want to end writing this post, because ending it would mean going to bed crying and listening to depressed music. I want to write here everything that passes through my mind. At the beginning I had titled this discussion "gay and in an isolated mountain area" but right now I have changed to "my cry of pain". I cannot take it anymore. Life goes on and I look at it from behind the glass of my window. Time runs and I spend time waiting for it to continue to pass as fast as possible. I leave you with the song I listen to the most when I feel so much down ... Everything passes, of the Huga Flame.



Everything happens, it's true, but when will all this happen even for me? Reading about 13, 14 year old boys who already have a boyfriend ... it makes me so angry and sad, also because they are all from Turin, Milan, Bologna, at most Rome ... I'm here ... I don't know what to write. I won poetry and philosophy contests, I think I'm a sweet, shy and sensitive guy ... but maybe this is not enough today to be liked, but I'm not going to change because of the others ... because I love to be exactly like I'm, and this is the most important thing. I have beautiful eyes (according to others ... otherwise I wouldn't even allow myself to say it) and anyway the rest of my face and my body although I'm not really a model wouldn't even arouse disgust, nevertheless this is what I arouse in many people, DISGUST. To them I suck. And although I try to ignore it, and in fact it is waning compared to a few years ago when I didn't reason based on ME but based on the OTHERS, anyway even today all this hurts me.

I feel lonely, damn, fucking alone! And I would just like someone who now, right now as I'm writing, would lock my hands and bring them around himself and to my slightest protest would give me a kiss so long as to cancel everything that is around me, around him, around us. I don't know what I expect as answer. The answers you'll give me will probably not change my situation, but I wait for them impatiently anyway, as a child waits for Santa. "Rise Against - Make It Stop" ... I feel a lot, too much, like in this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XP4c1bHc4Xg>

Oh, I add, since in the end I stayed at the computer even if it's 5.09 a.m. and I hear the birds chirp (but what does it matter to me, if the birds are chirping?), now more than resigned I'm pissed off. I always alternate those two states of mind ... a little I'm pissed off a bit I'm resigned. What a sadness! Right now I was thinking about the fact that so far, although I have had some (very few) relationships (mostly online) it's been me the one who did EVERYTHING. The others stayed passively with me (not in the sexual sense, but in the sense that they didn't consider it too much important if they were with me or not), except for a boy. I feel so different, different from anyone. It doesn't matter if gay or straight, If male or female, I feel different, almost on another planet. And this sensation it's not very cool, it's really distressing ... sorry for the strange expression. Feeling so different ... feeling that I can never really like someone ... makes me want to disappear ...

### 6.2.5 Acting a gay love

Hi Project, mine will perhaps be a voice very in contrast to the contents of the forum, perhaps because I am frustrated, perhaps because the negative things happen only to me ... forget it.

I read very beautiful stories, and I'm glad that these things exist, but how is it that I've never experienced such things? In my life (I have just turned 30) I have not met delinquents, this is true, but not even saints willing to sacrifice themselves for the neighbor, I found so many mediocre people, I think more or less like me, who made big altruistic speeches but in the end were interested only in their own business, many little men and little women, without a real personality, without a distorted personality precisely because without any personality, ready to sell themselves and sell you to realize the first stupid thing that comes to their mind. I did it too, and I'm not ashamed of it, because life works like that and fairy tales are much more dangerous than a stupid reality. I don't accuse anyone, but I never saw the gay paradise on earth, and, among the straights, things are more or less identical.

Everyone thinks only of themselves and if there is a wise thing it is to think of one's own business. Years ago I thought it was possible to fall in love, today I think it's the most stupid thing that can happen to us. Falling in love is not an altruistic thing, it just means expecting something from someone, expecting a correspondence of feelings that cannot be there and when one understands it, it's always too late. Falling in love is not part of being but of possessing.

I wonder if I really am the only loser who has always taken the wrong card and has also given it, or if there are others who continue to believe in the fantasies because they need to call love their sense of possession.

But wouldn't it be easier and even more honest to go to someone and say: "Do you want to have a little sex with me and then we stay friends as before?" And instead we falsify everything and invent a completely false novel. I can understand maybe the eighteen year old guy who has never experienced such things, but the 25-30 year old guys who did and suffered things of any kind should have passed the phase of the romance.

A few days ago it happened to me that someone tried to get along with me. So long as it is a little talk, ok, no small talk is denied to anyone. But later he started acting (clearly it was not a play for him) the part of the lover and then I felt a moment of rejection. I cannot stand sticky things, I cannot stand the big words behind which there is nothing. I reacted badly and sent him to hell. If one still needs to act like a child, well, he can do whatever he wants, but I have no time to waste behind such things.

Now I resumed attending my old straight friends, at least there is no risk that I make a declaration of love. My straight friends impersonate the role of the lover with girls! In short, wherever you go, the whole world is always the same. You say, Project, that being gay is a way of loving, if it were so, there would be very few gays, being gay has nothing noble, just like there is nothing noble in being straight. We're all poor clowns who need a script to

play!

### 6.2.6 Gays and school of prejudices

Hi Project,

I am a guy 19 years old, I will soon face my final exams and will leave the school. I cannot wait! Because for me it was a negative experience under too many points of view. I state that I have always had good results, not excellent but certainly good and I like studying, but at school I felt like I was in prison, in an environment where I had to pretend and be an acrobat not to end up in ridicule and marginalization.

I'm a normal guy, but I'm gay, I've never courted a girls and when some girl courts me I feel uncomfortable and I don't know how to get rid of her and she feels rejected and it's unpleasant for both of us.

Today I read the planning document of the school for the next year (fortunately I will not be here!), a series of films is expected to be shown on alcohol, drugs, homosexuality and violence among young people. They put homosexuality in among alcohol, drugs and violence! For them, no doubt, gays are deviant and are very similar to alcoholics and violent people. You can see the prejudices even in these things.

Then the lessons are a grotesque thing, the teacher of Italian who knows the book by heart and is passionate of D'Annunzio, exalted him in all the sauces, we did so much literature even recent but not Gadda, not Pasolini, not Bassani, (writers related to homosexuality) fortunately I had read them on my own and perhaps it's better that she didn't treat them, in Latin she's passionate of Ovid, mah! When she spoke of Petronius, she presented him as if Petronius were a sort of implicit moralist whipping homosexuality and the book, chosen by her, mentions homosexuality in Petronius in a single line and in terms of hypothesis! Or our teacher and the "scientist" who wrote the book have never read Petronius, what I don't believe, or the need to censor is such that they must come up to consciously falsify things for quiet living and to present Petronius as a half priest!

The teacher of Sciences, I say of Sciences not of Philosophy, takes for granted that being gay is a mental illness and that people become gay and therefore we must be careful! These are her words! It is almost unbelievable that a person who in many other things has his own serious competence, at least for what I can understand, on issues that touch homosexuality is completely dominated by absurd preconceptions.

The teacher of Mathematics, when it happened to talk about these things, used to put them aside immediately, saying that he had so much work to do with the program that he could not "waste time".

The teacher of Philosophy is a bit better but she too flies over certain topics, at least she doesn't say that gays are abnormal and, given the environment of my school, that's already something.

I also attend Religion lessons, above all to see how the priest turns the omelette over, the teacher is a young, slightly sticky priest, who always does the funny guy with the students, everybody's friend, but he gives me the impression of one who plays a part. With him it happened only once to talk about homosexuality, he said that the church cannot accept those who confuse the "sacrament of marriage" (obviously referring to hetero people) with "having fun" (referred to gays), that the church understands the problems of gays, doesn't judge them and respects them "as all the people must be respected", this specification has enraged me! Then he started talking about family and the gay theme was over!

At school there is a balance of fear on these things, everyone just says obvious things, things that can be accepted by everyone. It is the fair of the obvious, of the great principles that are so general and abstract that they no longer mean anything.

Politics is also a totally taboo subject and all taboo subjects are carefully avoided by everyone. The priest who teaches Religion does not talk about homosexuality and politics, there is no possibility of discussion, the others teachers have programs, exams, etc. etc., but if you read the papers provided by the school, they talk about "integral formation of the person", what is not only ridiculous but grotesque.

But basically I can even understand the point of view of teachers, nobody wants trouble, they only care about bringing their salary home! For them it makes no sense to open discussions on matters of principle to defend gays! Too risky and not really worth it! Because if someone tried to do otherwise students and parents would immediately stop them and they would end up in the ridicule.

But what makes me angry are mainly the students; I am absolutely certain that if some teacher would try to do a less stupid lesson speaking "even" of homosexuality in an honest way, he/she would immediately be labeled as gay by his/her own students with all that such a fact entails and I think it can be a real form of blackmailing and persecution, because I see some of my comrades and above all girls who make incredible comments, who are ready to lynch gays because for them it is only a game that affirms their superiority.

The teacher of Philosophy herself has repeatedly pretended not to hear such comments and this is shameful. But, I wonder, if she had intervened what would she have got? They would have considered her at best as a stupid woman who has time to waste.

School goes this way, at least my school. I want to leave my region, I don't say Italy, but I want to go to a civil country, where respect is something real, where a guy can be what he really is without having to resort to various tricks to avoid the gay label with everything that comes with it. I read about schools in the north where things are very different, obviously there are still two Italys and I find myself in the less civilized one. I read about guys who attend schools where they can even come out with classmates and find a boyfriend. For me these things are on the other side of the moon.

If you want, publish this email, but remove the last part.

An angry student!

### 6.2.7 Gay sex and hypocrisy

Hello Project, I see that the forum is almost abandoned and I don't like at all such a situation, because the forum helped me a lot, especially the reference text on homosexuality "Being Gay". It helped me to open my eyes and not believe the mountain of absurdities I had read around the internet. Because in fact, a boy finds himself disoriented above all by not knowing things or by having false information but is there really someone reliable who can answer questions about gay life and gay sex? Certainly there are not so many! If you get to the forum you can read and remain anonymous, what is not dangerous at all, you can take as long as you want reading and browsing, in short, it is something you need and its useful. But now I come to the point.

The respect for gays is a good thing, no problem, but you say and repeat that for a gay guy, today, finding another guy and live a true love story it's something really possible. And here I don't follow you, Project, I'm not very young, I'm 28 years old, and have had my experiences, I've had a lot of guys, at all levels, I mean, from stories that seemed the fundamental thing in life or even the incarnated fable, up to stories of sex only, without obligation, or a little more, if it happens.

I never found real dirty playboys or people who just wanted to play with me, everyone had his motivations, more or less as I had them, but then in the end, inevitably, the stories faded, just ended up in nothing or became friendships more or less washed out, and yet I passed from one story to another, less and less convinced that the next would be the definitive one. In the end it becomes a kind of game, you just lack the basic thrust to take things seriously and even on the other side you see that it's the same.

The guys I met, all in all, were good guys, everyone had their weaknesses and his fixed ideas and we never have been able to find a balance. I don't say perfect but not even approximate, and this also in sex I found very little

spontaneity, for the most it was about repeating a part, the same part already repeated several times with other guys.

Sometimes I felt that I was just the replacement for another guy who was not there, as if to say that my partner of the day was actually thinking of another, but since that other guy was not there then I was better than nothing. It's not that I'm scandalized, for heaven's sake, but it's not the best situation. If you don't think about me even when we have sex, it means that you never really think about it. I have also practically lost my spontaneity. I usually let my partners do, I don't take initiatives, I do so just to see how things go. Many are hypocrites, they come with me only to have sex but they don't want to admit it and so they start an endless rigamarole to make it look like they do it to please me and I cannot stand these things and so I enjoy provoking those guys.

But I have to tell you about the churchgoer guys. They are gay from the top of the hair to the tip of the feet, they run after me in a pitiful way, but for them to admit that what they are doing is just hunting for gay sex is not really possible. One stressed me with a ruthless and sticky courting for a long time. Once, in his house, he hugged me in a very sensual way, I told him: "Go ahead!" But he told me he was not gay and he was just confused and he apologized a thousand times, not even two hours later we did what we had to do and then he told me that he felt dirty and that he had done something he really didn't want to do and that he thought that what had happened would cause me a lot of trouble. I told him that he hadn't created problems of any kind because we had used a condom and my way of reasoning shocked him!

Note, Project, the ultra-catholic and full of scrupulous type, had bought a new pack of condoms on the very morning when he knew I would go to his house! But he didn't want to do it! I cannot stand the guys who do the dramas for a bit of sex, it's just a bit of sex, the world doesn't collapse at all, after sex, in fact, nothing changes for me or for you. What I cannot stand is the fact that some guys are just hunting for sex and instead they talk about love, they have learned by heart all a bla bla, that one of a fake guy in love, just movie stuff and they show it in front of you as if it were all true changing their face to suit the circumstances and modifying even their voice, they are just first class actors, but I cannot tell them that I understood it's all theater, otherwise they would attack me ... according to them they are serious guys and I'm the one who went crazy for sex! I have sex when I can, and I like it and I say it, they on the contrary have sex, but they have complexes and don't want to admit it and then for them I'm the one who went crazy for sex.

One also made me obscene proposals (about the ass), I agreed, we did what

he had proposed and afterwards, before saying goodbye, he added: "We have to continue to see each other but we don't have to have sex anymore!" I put him to the test, but the next time the whole script restarted from the beginning: the acting as a lover, then a bit of sex and in the end so many complexes and the usual proposal: "We don't have to have sex anymore!" So I ask myself, but are they really so hypocrite or they pretend? One had a girlfriend and, according to what he said, he also used to have sex with her, but he also went to Mass on Sundays, and this already sounds strange, but there's even more.

He was also my "friend" because to define the thing he used only this word, because he was "hetero", even if he didn't behave too much as a friend, he was always looking for moments of intimacy and stretching his hands over me, then I stopped him, because I like to play with these guys, and I said to him: "Ok, you're a nice guy and I like you too, but you have to admit that you want to have sex with me." And so he went into crisis, because he would never admit it, and so he remained dry mouth and unfortunately I too remained dry mouth, unfortunately.

The next time I didn't make any premise and things automatically slid into sex and, later, I said to him "You did it! Isn't it?" And he replied: "But you provoke me, and you don't have to, because so you put me in crisis, try to understand it!"

A guy once wanted me to have sex without a condom and I told him: "Nice guy! Do you think I drank my brain?" And he insisted he was HIV negative, and that it was his first time ... nothing less! The first time! At 30!

Now let's try to sum up: guys like that are good for a bit of sex but I cannot put myself with a deranged one like that. I need an honest guy, maybe or even better, crazy for sex like me, my way, but not fixed with other things and above all not used to telling people and telling himself nonsense, however, Project, until now I have not found any guy who matches this characteristics. I am not at all convinced that for a gay to be in couple is the best thing and I think that in essence there are many people who think so, even if they will never admit it because guys like very much the story of the charming prince, even at 30. If and when gays will be allowed to marry, well, I don't think I'll ever marry, because then it would end in a divorce soon. Maybe old men, at 50 and over, might think about getting married for the survivor's pension, but I don't think guys my generation will ever get a pension.

Project, but why is there so much hypocrisy on the part of gays? One should say, "I'm gay and I'm happy to be so, and I like sex too!" But no! The world is full of half-gays, I'm not talking about the closeted ones but about gay people who pretend they are not even gay when they're having sex with a guy!

I also come from a Catholic family, but then I said: No! That's enough! I cannot live on hypocrisy, I want a life my way, that maybe creaks from all sides but without acting, without fictions of any kind, well, I have not yet found guys who reason like me. I want a real gay guy who is happy to be so, and doesn't make fun of himself and me too.

### 6.2.8 Christmas Eve: a text not sexually connoted

The text that follows is devoid of connotations (masculine or feminine) that could let the reader understand if single characters are male or female. This story (like others with the same characteristics) can be used as a projective test. The heterosexual reader is led to read the story in a hetero key and generally doesn't realize that it is a "not sexually connoted text", on the contrary, the homosexual reader, who is accustomed to texts not sexually connoted, usually realizes that the text is not sexually connoted and, precisely for this reason, is less inclined to project himself into it.

#### CHRISTMAS EVE

My dear,  
this is a passage of my diary of "that year":

« We have been friends for long time now. It's a good feeling to have someone to call if sadness takes over, or just to talk with. Do you remember?

It was Christmas Eve. Neither of us was busy with friends and parties, total loneliness, and I called you to wish you a merry Christmas, I did it without any purpose, just as usual, but then it was different, we have been talking for over half an hour. It was nice to hear your voice. I didn't know what to do, I thought I was making you waste time and I said: "Well, it's better I go, otherwise perhaps you'll be late ... I think someone is already waiting for you somewhere ..." and you answered: "No problem, nobody is waiting for me."

I was perplexed, it seemed impossible to me, and that was the moment that the a fool idea flashed in my brain. I asked you: "Would you like to come here?" Your answer seemed to me very strange: "I would but I think I wouldn't feel at ease among your friends, I think perhaps it's better another time." But I was about to spend a Christmas Eve alone and I told you that I had no friends at home, I was completely alone. Everything started this



way.

No more than an hour later we were in front of each other chatting in a very embarrassed way. Everything sounded strange. We put on a CD of Christmas carols just to ease the conversation and to make the long silences shorter.

My fridge was empty because I hadn't programmed anything for that night: no wine, no sweets, in practice nothing but canned beans and rice and a bottle of tomato juice, salt and pepper. You told me: "Let's start, I'm a little starving and you?" In practice we have spent all the time before midnight cooking. You are very well at cooking like you were a cook very refined.

Sometimes you were singing following the King's College choir, like you were a chorister. You remembered by heart the text of those carols.

While shepherds watch'd their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around.

"Fear not!" said he, for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled mind.  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind."

There was a magic atmosphere, you seemed really exalted by that celestial joy, and I was there looking at you, looking at your flashing smile. I was happy, friendship seemed to me something wonderful. We were no more than two friends spending together Christmas Eve but it was wonderful. Or better it was normal, we were like a couple even if such a word was very far from our dictionary at that time, we were a family, with no children but just a family and the embarrassing feeling of the beginning vanished while a calm serenity took its place, as if time had stopped for a little to let us experience something new, something special, something that had been created abruptly, unexpectedly, but was nevertheless enjoyable, pleasant, I'd say absolutely particular.

The dinner was minimal, but the atmosphere was special. You had put aside every embarrassment and I was looking at you noticing for the first time how you are beautiful, your hands, your skin, your eyes, your hair. Not that I hadn't noticed such

things before, but in those magic moments I felt upset ... but no, it isn't the right word, I felt a certain restlessness, the need to be near you, to think less and stay close to you as much as possible.

But you kept yourself at a distance, you didn't move away from me but you didn't encourage me and I didn't know what to do. I wondered many times, on that Christmas Eve, what you were thinking, how you considered our strange relationship, our sharing good feelings while we were together. I expected a gesture from you that could take away all my doubts, but that gesture didn't come. Nevertheless you were extremely happy, you were playing, you were joking, but that gesture didn't come, and a certain discouragement began to make its way inside me.

Then the time has passed and even midnight has passed with all its emotions and best wishes and you asked me if you could stay and sleep at my house. I liked it, but at the same time I would have liked better a different epilogue. We didn't even talk about sleeping together, I made you a bed in the room where I usually work, and you went to sleep after hugging me. It was not a formal hug, no, it was a different thing, you hugged me tightly, in a way that is certainly not that of friends but it resembles the way of lovers. It's nice to hold the person you love in your arms, that's undeniable, but I wondered obsessively what that embrace meant to you.

The next morning you came out of the bathroom with your hair in the wind, a very beautiful image, and with your usual smile you said: "I really enjoyed everything, I don't think I could have spent better Christmas Eve."

I feel really comfortable when I'm with you, it's like I've always known you, it's really a very beautiful thing. When you greeted me I wanted to hold you back, but I knew I didn't have to do it. You hugged me again and for a few seconds more, that gesture contained a strong and clear message that didn't need words.

You left smiling and waving your hand as if to say hello, even if we didn't make an appointment. After five minutes I got your text message: "I love you!" >

Do you remember the first non-work mail you sent me? I kept it because I was really moved, here it is:

« How beautiful Christmas night was! The pleasure of being with a person who takes care of you, who transmits you serenity, calm,

peacefulness, you feel happy, you feel you are the object of special attention, of affection, I would say almost love. When I decided to come to your house I didn't know what to expect, in a sense I accepted the risk. My dreams could have shattered, but I also had to understand something more. I had to understand what I could be for you, what it means to you to love a person.

You have not reduced anything shattered, you have been there, I saw that you were fine but you never crossed the limit, you've never been intrusive, and I began to love you for this very reason. I am a person with many problems and I cannot promise you things that I could not keep, but I would like you to know that on Christmas night I was really free, in practice I felt happy and this almost never happens to me. I don't know if we will ever be a couple in the classic sense of the term, but I believe that there is already some form of love between us, I don't think this word is exaggerated.

You will have to be patient, I must learn what it means to feel loved, because I don't think it has ever happened to me, but this time things could really be different. In short, if you think it is appropriate to start believing in something better, well, then I too think that we can try. >

Now I greet you, I needed to feel you somehow present, and write this mail made me relive some very nice things! I'm waiting for you as soon as possible! When you're not here I miss you very much!

Bye.



# Chapter 7

## I'M GAY AND I'M GOOD ABOUT MYSELF

### 7.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 7.1.1 Being comfortable with yourself

This chapter is dedicated to the feeling good about yourself. When one is not comfortable with oneself, one feels a generalized sense of inadequacy, of inability to cope effectively, not to some specific difficulties but more generally to the problems of ordinary life or a sort of progressive disinterest towards very important sectors of social life or even of affective life or towards sexuality, these are the typical depressive manifestations of a malaise under which there is the belief that the situation can not in any way change. In these cases the malaise leads to closure and isolation. In some cases, however, not being well with oneself does not take depressive aspects but rather manifests itself in a frantic search for solutions and therefore in a marked availability to emotional and sometimes sexual contact, often without adequate rational control, all this entails the risk to get into situations that are not really wanted and can be difficult to manage.

#### 7.1.2 Self-esteem

The fundamental causes of not being comfortable with oneself are essentially two: the low self-esteem and the feelings of guilt. Self-esteem derives from the overall equilibrium of the personality and is undoubtedly related to many social, educational and family factors and, in particular, to the successes achieved as well as to the failures, and to the esteem we enjoy from other people.

Low self-esteem is often a dysfunctional response to states of social exclusion or to an education that tends to emphasize individual's insecurities.

Although the low self-esteem has in most cases external substantive motivations due to the environmental conditioning, the search for its motivations in almost all cases is addressed inward by the people who experience it. Those who experience discomfort tend to identify the cause of it in one or a few well-defined elements, physical or of the character, which we can consider centers of polarization of the low self-esteem. Some of these elements have nothing to do with sexuality, while others are explicitly affective or sexual. I try to list some, based on what emerges in the chats with the gay guys.

### **7.1.3 Low self-esteem linked to one's physicality**

First of all the elements linked to one's own non-sexual physicality must be mentioned: "I am too fat", an expression that is frequently heard; "I am too thin", a much rarer expression; "I am flabby, I have no muscles"; "I'm too short"; "I'm too tall"; "I'm too hairy"; "I'm really hairless". These expressions, which in themselves indicate only the perception of a presumed inadequacy become symptoms of being uncomfortable with oneself when they take on a fixed idea character that interferes considerably with ordinary life. When this happens, the perception of the inadequacy leads to a more or less consciously exasperated search for solutions to what begins to present itself as a problem and sometimes as the problem.

Often boys who call themselves too fat or too flaccid are not at all such and the perception of the inadequacy is completely subjective and unrealistic, it is the case of slender guys who feel too fat and follow a strict diet and of boys who, despite having a body sculpted by the daily or almost daily activity in the gym, resort to anabolic steroids to increase muscle mass. These elements indicate states of discomfort that should not be overlooked and may require specialized intervention.

The dimension of discomfort in the perception of the inadequacy manifests very frequently in the exasperation of the presumed problems and in the search for pseudo-solutions for those problems, even if it often happens that pseudo-solutions can be, and sometimes are, much more harmful than the presumed problems to which they should hypothetically remedy.

### **7.1.4 Low self-esteem linked to one's sexual physicality**

The elements linked to one's sexual physicality must also be stressed. A small number of gay guys end up putting aside the idea of living a couple sexuality for reasons related to the sense of inadequacy of their sexual physi-

cality. Even in these situations, as in the previous ones, the perception of the inadequacy can be absolutely subjective and not realistic and the search for solutions to alleged problems can also create serious drawbacks and sometimes, when a guy thinks that the solution to the alleged problem is not there or it is unattainable, the answer leads even to the renunciation of couple sexuality. This renunciation, in general, is not explicit but is manifested through continuous postponements or, when the situation can no longer be postponed, through the multiplication of hesitations and reservations that end up exasperating the partner, who is not aware of the real cause of those hesitations and those reservations.

Sometimes the renunciation of sexuality involves even the refusal of masturbation, the exercise of which, especially if carried out with reference to images coming from pornography, becomes an important although unaware, cause of sexual frustration.

It is not uncommon for the guys to subconsciously end up hiding the true motivation of the sense of inadequacy and covering it with other motivations in which the reference to sexuality is completely removed.

On the problem of the size of the penis has grown a thriving business of pseudo-remedies of a medical and surgical nature, which promise rapid and apparently non-dangerous solutions, with prices that fluctuate in relation to the social category object of the promotional messages.

### **7.1.5 Low self-esteem for character reasons**

Among the centers of polarization of low self-esteem must be considered also elements linked to the personal character that individuals identify as their weaknesses or fragility. I mention only some of the most common ones: "I am very weak and I have not character, I can never make a decision, I get carried away by what others say, I am listless and inert and I let others choose for me."

The elements linked to one's physicality (both sexual and non-sexual) and those linked to the personal character, recognized as individual weaknesses, are experienced as insurmountable impediments to the construction of social relationships and even more of affective and couple relationships.

### **7.1.6 The premises to recover self-esteem**

To feel good about oneself, one must accept one's physicality at all levels and, of course, first of all one's personality, and it is necessary to begin to understand that couple life is not just sexuality and that couple sexuality has a dimension essentially emotional rather than connected to the sexual

performances. It should never be forgotten that many deep affective relationships are not based on what we consider the strongest part of ourselves but on our weaknesses. It is from the integration of the weak sides of two people that a common dimension can be born, which is basically a form of mutual adaptation, that is, a renunciation of individual affirmation. In general, people who have a very strong "I" are not the best couple partners.

Talking often in a chat with guys who have never experienced the reality of couple life, I can observe how, for them, life as a couple is thinkable only as a total symbiosis in which everything is and must be common and the reciprocal dedication must be absolute at the limit of the identification: partners must have the same friends, must always go together to the cinema, to parties, on holiday and so on. But all this, which is only theory, and unfortunately it is a false theory, is anyway very difficult to realize even partially in a condition of real equality and mutual agreement and leads to the substantial re-proposition, in the real practice of the couple life, of the model of couple as the subordination of the other to oneself or of oneself to the other. One of the partners or even both of them claim the other to adapt at 100% completely renouncing his own dreams.

The life of a couple is seen, in essence, as the realization of a perfect communion of ideals but to this perfect communion of ideals we try to arrive not through a real balance of interests but through an attempt to bring the other into our world and to keep him in a condition of substantial dependence putting in practice more or less consciously a series of emotional blackmails, or accepting a role of dependence on the other, that is a form of substantial subordination motivated, in theory, by a feeling of love but in reality by a profound lack of self-esteem.

### 7.1.7 Parity and dependence within the couple

It should never be forgotten that couple life, and gay couple life in particular, finds its foundation in the equality of the two partners that leads to the construction of a "we" that is objectively a new reality and not the result of a radical sacrifice of the interests of one to those of the other. It makes no sense, and indeed causes great unease, to identify love with the total acquiescence and absolute obedience, that is, essentially with dependence on the other.

The mechanism that creates addiction is simple and is analogous to that which manifests in the relationship between a child and the parent, who ends up being dependent on the child: the child wants a certain thing, the parent says no, then the child cries and the parent says yes so as not to see him crying, the child is more gratified for having realized that he has



a power over the parent than for having achieved what he wanted. These mechanisms, however, are natural only when they act between subjects who are not on the same level but, between two gay guys, who should love each other on a much more solid and equal basis, such mechanisms are basically the sign of a strong asymmetry and couple suffering and, in essence, of a relationship of psychological dependence.

### 7.1.8 Formalization of relationships

Those who don't feel good about themselves tend to formalize relationships to make them clearer and more understandable, substituting an almost economic or quasi-contractual logic to an affective dimension that has largely failed. Typical, in these cases, is the tendency to dictate the rules that must define the relationship and to request the respect for them in any case.

The tendency to formalize the relationship and therefore to live the emotional life as a chess game with precise rules where one must always make the right move and can take advantage of the error of the other, reduces the spontaneity of behaviors that must be standardized in order to guarantee greater security.

Often those who don't feel good about themselves think that their spontaneity must in some way be substituted with more adequate behaviors and even that spontaneous discourses must be replaced by speeches that seem to be theoretically more adequate. Sometimes it happens in a chat to meet guys who strive to say only things that they think can give a positive image of themselves and can make them look like good guys.

The most typical element of these behaviors, on the sexual level, is the sublimation of sexuality and its total removal from the discourse. In this way a dialogue is created that has the evident flavor of the lack of spontaneity. When guys succeed in overcoming the wall of sublimation and managing to speak freely of sexuality they tend to emphasize the "strange" if not "pathological" dimension of certain behaviors, such as masturbation and sexual fantasies about their friends, as if these things were the clear sign of their inadequacy. In substance things that are perfectly normal are experienced as anomalous and strange, and here the weight of the educational conditioning is evident; I mean that guys try to give a personal motivation of their low self-esteem on the basis of behaviors that nothing to do with the low self-esteem.

After a finally serious talk, that is the result of a strenuous sincerity, I notice the amazement of the guys who expect some strong reactions and they only hear: "Ok, but where's the problem?" Basically these guys perceive their being gay as a strange thing and their sexuality as something unique and

very far from the sexuality of others, and in particular from the sexuality of other gay guys, that they don't know except through representations that are decidedly unrealistic if not even misleading.

Many times talking serenely about sexuality helps to scale back, to see things in more objective terms and makes us understand that sexuality is an ordinary dimension of everyone's life and that being gay essentially means simply falling in love with a guy instead of a girl.

### 7.1.9 Heterosexuals and (obsessive) fear of being gay

Particular attention should be paid to the discomfort deriving from the very idea of being gay or being about to become gay. It happened to me more than once that I was contacted by straight guys who had doubts about their sexual orientation, that is not from gay guys who had problems with acceptance. For some of these guys talking to me really had the sense of clearing up ideas to overcome doubts. With some of these guys, good relations have been maintained even after many years. For other guys objectively hetero, however, overcome doubts was much more difficult. Although in their sexuality there was absolutely nothing that could be considered gay, these guys couldn't reassure themselves and contacted me several times because for them the idea of being gay was a content basically obsessive that, even if objectively completely unfounded, deeply disturbing their sexuality.

A very significant example is that of a straight guy who has never had gay masturbation fantasies, but who cannot satisfactorily masturbate thinking of a girl because the idea of being, perhaps, a gay who doesn't accept his homosexuality always reappears, and this idea ruins his sex life, but it must be stressed that all this happens to a guy who has never had any emotional or sexual interests oriented towards other guys. Such cases, which present themselves as problems of sexual orientation, in fact, have nothing to do with gay sexuality but are triggered by states of distress often linked to heterosexuality or hetero-affectivity, family relationships, relationships of work, economic insecurity and many other factors, as well as obviously a certain predisposition to obsessiveness.

These situations can be at the border of true forms of OCD, that is obsessive compulsive disorder, and can also be the manifestation of the OCD itself.

### 7.1.10 Gays and discomfort of being gay

Even for gay guys, that is, for guys with exclusively gay masturbation fantasies, being gay can be a source of discomfort, sometimes even serious. Gay sexual identity can be unknowingly rejected or in some cases it can

become the object of a conscious and determined self-repression. In these cases, gay masturbation is experienced with feelings of guilt that are deep, such when someone gives in to evil or slips into a pathological dimension, and the hypothesis of emotional and sexual correspondence with another guy is systematically set aside, avoiding a priori all the occasions in which a minimum of intimacy could be created (traveling with other guys, sleeping at a friend's house, etc.). This is the case of the "I don't want to be gay!" These situations of discomfort are a sign of the dependence on the judgment of others and of the need to be accepted within a group (family, friends) to which one ends up sacrificing one's own sexuality.

The pressure exerted by the search for the approval can be so strong to push a gay guy to make the so-called choices according to nature (heterosexuality and marriage) that are radically against nature for a gay guy.

### **7.1.11 Pessimism, depressive attitudes and self-esteem**

They must also be considered the pessimistic and depressive psychological attitudes that manifest themselves as a symptom of low self-esteem in expressions like: "the others at my age have already achieved everything", or: "I will never do anything", or again: "I know that sooner or later I will give up everything".

Often the elements of a psychological nature that lead to discouragement and to the vision of oneself as a weak element are linked with elements of real or presumed physical inadequacy. The idea of disengagement or of the uselessness of commitment occupies in many cases the minds of young people who feel psychologically inadequate, the choices become problematic and the irresoluteness ends up prevailing.

These guys, in general, don't enter into love stories because, for them, making an important decision is difficult but they fall in love in a serious and essentially one-sided way with impossible guys or almost always straight guys or gay guys who don't give them any satisfactory response, in any case with guys with whom, in any case, a true couple relationship is in fact impossible.

### **7.1.12 Low self-esteem and search for the ideal partner**

Particular attention should be given to the tendency to involve others in solving one's own problems, or even to rely totally on others in an overly confident manner and without the support of adequate rational control, a tendency that manifests with expressions like: "But if I had met a boy, things would have gone another way", or: "With a guy near me, I would not be afraid of anything" and the like.

I often see undecided guys, with low self-esteem and easy to discourage, engaged in a frantic search for a partner to try to find an answer to their problems. These are guys who, in general, from this research end up getting further frustrations due to the fact that, because of their insecurity, they pay little attention to the choice of their partner and are willing to give too quickly confidence to the first guy who shows them some form of availability and with that guy they try to create very close relationships, which are seen on the other side as suffocating and for this reason are not welcome.

An insecure guy who tends to involve others in the solution of his problems, needs a constant reassurance, he asks, he requires, he reacts badly when he doesn't find such a reassurance, tends, unconsciously, to compel his companion to listen to him for hours, besieges him with a storm of SMS and e-mails demanding continuous confirmations without offering any.

### **7.1.13 Unilateral discourses and dependence**

A characteristic of such situations is the one-way speech, the insecure guy speaks and his companion must listen, if this doesn't happen the insecure guy feels victim and demonstrates it very clearly, in an attempt to recall the attention of his companion, but this mechanism only exasperates the situation.

In some cases things are more complex and the search for the solution to one's discomfort through the total entrusting to another person leads to the construction of true dependency relationships that have the appearance of affective relationships but are only dysfunctional responses to the low self-esteem, because they lack a true rational control. In these situations, the guy who experiences discomfort is willing to do anything to have an affective response or an alleged affective response on the part of the person to whom he is totally entrusted and from whom he is essentially dependent.

### **7.1.14 Frenetic phase and sexual embarrassment**

Often, especially for non-youngster guys, situations of discomfort are created when acceptance comes after 25/30 years (and even beyond). The guys who find themselves in these situations are in many cases obsessed with the idea of recover the lost time (frenetic phase) and they live belatedly the affective and sexual experiences typical of adolescence. In these circumstances, the first contacts with the couple sexuality can create embarrassment and not small conditioning, because the a priori models of gay sexuality interfere heavily with the search for the real balance typical of the specific sexuality of each couple. It is the so-called sexual embarrassment that comes from the

”myth of sexuality” and from inexperience.

There are older guys who are in crisis because of the lack of erection in situations where in theory there should be, or because they have difficulty in achieving orgasm even in individual masturbation practiced in the presence of their partner, even if they reach easily the orgasm in individual masturbation. In these cases the real fear is that embarrassment and inexperience can condition or even destroy extremely important emotional relationships. Sexuality doesn't get along with anxiety and getting used to talk about sexuality with one's own partner in a simple and direct way helps to reduce anxiety and thus promotes the free expression of sexuality.

### 7.1.15 A gay story of emotional addiction

I would like to proceed now to the exposition and analysis of a story of emotional addiction. I state that the story I'm about to tell and analyze is not a true story but an example of school to point out the concepts related to the most serious pathologies of a couple relationship. Nonetheless, the elements that I will take into consideration present themselves in real stories, the study of their meaning will therefore be useful to recognize in advance the elements that seriously discourage the continuation of a couple relationship or it would be better to say of a presumed couple relationship. But let's get to the story.

The characters are three, the first, Luke, is a 23-year-old guy who, treated by his parents as the weak link of the family chain, and frequently humiliated when compared to his married 35-year-old brother by now fully realized at a social and economic level. Luke has progressively lost self-esteem and is desperately looking for a guy to solve his problems in order to finally begin to feel loved.

The second character is John, a 26-year-old guy who has undergone periods of severe depression and has ended up in a relationship of substantial dependence on the third protagonist of our story, Richard, a 35 year-old man with a very determined and sometimes aggressive character that manages a small autonomous economic activity.

John doesn't study, doesn't work and doesn't look for a job because he would have great difficulty in entering a working environment. Richard is aware of all this and keeps him home at his own expense. John's family, which had always considered John as a pathological case, not because of his homosexuality, which was already known to his family, but because of his depression, favored the relationship between John and Richard, aware that this would probably have resulted in John's removal from the family, a fact considered highly desirable by his parents because of the frequent depressive crises of

John and the presence of two younger brothers of John, still adolescents. Luke meets John on a dating site, talks a lot with him, and is informed by John of his depression but not of the fact that John has lived with Richard for years.

Luke identifies himself with John and conceives the idea that no one better than him can assist John and that John, if properly supported by him, will be able to get out of depression and recover completely.

Between Luke and John a relationship develops slowly taking on all the characteristics of the love relationship. Luke feels in love. The relationship develops without any pathological characteristics, Luke is enthusiastic, then fully unexpected elements intervene that arouse some perplexities in Luke: during their conversations in chat, John is absent for long periods of time. One day John, speaking with Luke, attributes to Luke a sentence that Luke remembers never having said, Luke avoids emphasizing the thing, which remains only a sporadic fact.

Luke and John describe themselves physically to each other, John says he is slim and well proportioned, but a couple of days later he says that he eats too much and that maybe it is the medicines that make him gain weight, even this fact remains only an episode and Luke tries not to give it too much weight.

Another day John tells Luke not to call him the next morning because he will go to the doctor with his parents, Luke doesn't call him and, in the afternoon, when they newly hear each other on the phone, John asks Luke why he didn't call him in the morning as usual. Luke avoids to remind John of the visit to the doctor and tells him that he was busy with his family, John says only "Ah, ok! The important is that you're fine!" and seems not to remember at all to have told Luke that he would go to the doctor. This fact leaves Luke rather perplexed, but despite everything Luke avoids addressing the issue directly and tries not to give weight to the episode.

The speeches between Luke and John, slowly come to touch sexuality and the two decide to exchange photos. Luke passes to John his photos, but John passes to Luke the photos of Richard taken a few years before, when Richard was definitely a handsome guy, and tells him that those are his photos taken the previous summer. Luke likes Richard's pictures, and obviously he believes they are the photos of John and because of those photos Luke feels even more in love.

After a few weeks, one Friday, posing as John, Richard, in a very short conversation in chat, proposes to Luke to meet in person the following Sunday. Luke doesn't expect such a proposal, made so suddenly, but is very happy. He tries to contact John again, but he always gets only brief, interlocutory written answers. John (actually Richard) will take a trip of a few hours to

reach Luke in his city. Luke's expectations are many, when the day of the meeting finally arrives, at the station, Luke immediately recognizes the guy of the photos, who, however, looks a little older than his 26 years, but Luke judges the matter to be secondary.

Luke realizes that the voice of the guy in front of him is not very similar to John's voice he used to hear so many times via Skype. Luke tries to resume then the classic speeches he used to do with John and starts talking about the topic of depression but the guy answers him abruptly that it is not to talk about depression that he has taken such a long journey. Luke tries to insist and explain that he understood that the guy in front of him is not the one he talked to so often in chat. Richard attacks him almost violently, tells him that John is his boyfriend and that Luke must absolutely not even afford to mention him and concludes: "You are just a pig who is trying to put us against each other to ruin our lives because you you're out of your mind!" and goes away cursing. Luke is violently upset.

In the evening Luke calls John via the usual skype contact and doesn't know what to expect, but John replies as if nothing had happened, he seems absolutely calm and completely unaware of the facts, Luke avoids talking about what happened.

Weeks pass, the things between Luke and John proceed well and Luke forgets his perplexities. After a couple of months John asks Luke to meet him in person, Luke eventually accepts. On the day of the meeting, at the station, John immediately recognizes Luke but obviously Luke doesn't recognize John who is not the guy of the photos and moreover from the physical point of view Luke doesn't like John at all.

John behaves with Luke in a very casual way, and talks with him about the typical topics of the conversations they were accustomed to and this fact reassures Luke who nevertheless doesn't know what to do because the guy in front of him is not that of the photos, then tries to mention the fact in very vague way: "in person you don't look much like you are in photos" but John doesn't follow the speech, Luke insists "but are you sure you sent me your photos and not those of another guy?" John looks at Luke as if Luke was crazy: "What are you saying? But are you out of your mind?" (The same expression used by Richard) then John continues the speech smiling and tells Luke that now they can finally realize together all the promises that they made each other for months.

Luke tries to mention that he doesn't feel like having sex with John. He avoids anyway any further pointing out that the guy in the picture was another. John looks at him worried as if he didn't even realize what was happening and tells him that he doesn't understand, that he doesn't know why Luke is perplexed, because Luke looks to him different from how he had

always known him, and adds that he feels him distant, strange, that he is no longer the same Luke, then begins to cry, cries and repeats that in the end no one has ever really cared about him, that no one has ever believed in his feelings, that no one has ever loved him, that for him life makes no sense and it makes no sense even to go on living and says he wants to go away immediately and goes to the station without speaking a single word, Luke follows him and begs him to stay, he is worried that John can make insane gestures, tells him that he loves him, that loving him is too important and that he is willing to do anything to avoid losing him and that he desperately needs his presence.

After a couple of hours spent by Luke insisting on his feelings of love towards John, John guy appears less anxious. John and Luke go to the hotel together. John wants to be cuddled because he says he needs it, then cuddles are transformed into sex, Luke feels forced but doesn't have the courage to say no and up to a certain point the thing goes on, but John demands sexual performances that Luke doesn't like at all, John feels again frustrated and misunderstood and starts crying again but Luke this time doesn't give up. John resumes his things and goes away upset with the air of being able to do terrible things. Luke is assailed by anxiety, calls him and begs him to come back but John doesn't want to know reasons, stops the conversation and doesn't come back.

After a few hours Richard calls Luke and accuses him of having ruined John's life and also his own and threatens him of serious consequences if he will contact John again, but John, secretly, contacts Luke again and begs him not to disappear and free him from Richard who keeps him succubus.

In short, at the end, Luke wins his hesitations and takes his decision: to cut the bridges in a radical and definitive way with both, fortunately John and Richard live in a distant city and it is not easy for them come back to Luke. Luke is reassured by not having given them either the home address or the home phone number.

Result: Luke has lived about three years of life in illusions that then turned into violent anxiety because Luke entered into pathological mechanisms.

It is not even a problem of guilt, those two guys were not playing, for them what they did had the sense of reality, and this is precisely why guys must learn to open their eyes very well in advance to distinguish falling in love from addiction.

Let's now try to analyze the story from Luke's point of view. It can certainly happen that in the relationships between two guys there are different points of view and also profound misunderstandings but, attention, it's really another story if one of the two has behaviors that sometimes appear to lack even a simple and objective logic. I mean that even if one cannot follow the



logic of the other, in any case, in the absence of true pathologies, everyone recognizes that the things said or done by the other follow anyway a logic line, which may be not shareable but is anyway a logic line, that is, has intrinsically an understandable meaning.

When in a relationship you are faced with behaviors objectively illogical or inconsistent (example: I send you the photos of another guy stating that they are mine and then when you, seeing me in person, realize that those photos are not mine, I insist, against the evidence, in saying that they are really mine) the alarm bell must ring, the same applies when the dialogue systematically becomes a monologue, especially if it is a repetitive monologue, or when one is faced with too sudden and frequent changes of mood or subject. The excesses are always suspicious, so the frequent excess of tragic tones, the perpetually distracted tone of those who never go beyond the superficial chatting and the obsessive offer or request for affective confirmations should alarm and should awaken rationality.

The wrong attitude of Luke, in the story I just told, and which, I repeat, is not a real story but only an example of school, consists in not wanting to understand and systematically removing all the elements of alarm, abandoning himself to exclusively emotional reactions.

### 7.1.16 Gay mental narcissism

At the end of this chapter I will try to analyze what we could call "gay mental narcissism". Not that the phenomenon of mental narcissism is exclusively gay, I would just say that the field of analysis will be limited to gays. Sometimes talking in chat with gay guys, I happen to come across an attitude that consists in giving to one's own behaviors always and only motivations of the highest altruistic profile, motivations, if you want, very noble but often not very credible.

As an obvious completion of this way of proceeding (the gay mental narcissism) we note the total removal of sexual motivations that are considered less dignified than altruistic ones and are therefore automatically bypassed. I quote some typical example:

"I see him disappointed, I see he suffers and I would like to do something for him, I wish he was fine, I don't even care that he falls in love with me, I swear that I don't care, I do it for him, though I think if he opened up with me at the end he would feel satisfied and would be better off. I'm not jealous, I know that he's free and that he can do whatever he wants, but if he doesn't talk with me, he doesn't do it with anyone."

"Ok, he didn't want me, I understood, I suffered as a beaten dog but I didn't even tell him it, just to not make him feel bad, I also thought that if he felt

influenced by me, letting him go would be my duty, I was very hesitant but then I decided and I told him: - If there cannot be anything between us then it is better that we don't see each other anymore, it's better for you too. - But he reacted badly, he told me that I was blackmailing him and that I wanted to force him to say yes but it is not so, I did it only for him!"

"I fell in love with him, but when I fall in love it is not the physical attraction that matters, I see him so scared, that is, we talk a lot, I see that he needs me, look, I could find a hundred guys better than him, but he really needs me and I cannot leave him alone, it would really be an unjustifiable behavior!"

"I think nobody really understands me, I try to be sweet with everyone, to make me be loved, to always be cautious, not to be carried too much by my feelings not to offend those of others, but I have the impression that they don't give any importance to putting their feet on my feelings, they do it anyway!"

"When I fall in love, for me there are no half measures, but he too must be like that, and with friends it's just the same, I have very few friends, but for them I would be willing to give even my soul, but they calculate me no more than zero, for them I'm just one of many, sometimes when some of my friends are in a bad mood because maybe the girl has treated them badly I spend hours to console them, in those moments, yes, they look for me, but they rapidly forget me when they don't need me. I trust them and in doing so I waste my time, because they don't deserve it. I caught so many of those disappointments, so many of those slaps in the face that you can't even imagine. But why am I telling you such things? It seems you can't understand that for me things are different, I don't spend so many hours with him on the phone looking for sex, I don't care about those things! I do it for him, because I love him! It's a clean thing, sex has nothing to do with it!"

The exemplification could continue but these attitudes mask a certain underlying hypocrisy. I don't mean at all that it is a deliberate and conscious hypocrisy, but it's certainly hypocrisy, a hypocrisy that manifests in a spiritual narcissism for which "I'm good and THEY don't understand me and treat me badly." Or rather by enlarging the speech: "I'm good, unselfish, generous, shy, discreet, sensitive, careful not to hurt anyone and THEY don't understand me, THEY are gossipy, malignant, they treat me badly, they understand "whistles for flasks" [Italian expression for "confuse one thing with another" because In Italian "whistles for flasks" sounds "*fischi per fiaschi*" two words very similar in pronunciation but totally different in meaning], they attribute to me motivations to which I am completely extraneous etc. etc."

There is no doubt that these attitudes are quite widespread among gay guys,

they are disguises of the ego, idealizations of a self-image substantially narcissistic that aims to underline the dimension of the ego as a victim.

Often the guys who assume these attitudes feel victims of the guys who do not give them the expected answers in affective terms, they feel marginalized by friends on whom they projected very high expectations, they feel misunderstood and in good substance disappointed by life, but I think it is necessary to point out some things:

1) If a guy doesn't give you the expected answers on the affective level, this doesn't mean that he is disrespecting you or is treating you badly. What would you say if a guy, to which you are not interested, fell in love with you and tried to make you understand that your refusal is a wound for him? Would you change your mind? In all likelihood, you would feel a feeling of discomfort because of his discomfort.

2) If your friends don't give you the expected answers in terms of love they are not doing anything wrong, you can, if you want, keep with them a less binding relationship (given the lack of reciprocity) but their freedom of behavior (their indifference) has nothing aggressive towards you.

3) Why do you try to sublimate the motivations of your behavior by eliminating the sexual motivations that are not negative things at all and constitute the deepest and most common motivations of affectionate behavior? Telling a guy, "I do it for you!" Is an attempt to feel generous on his skin.

4) Emotional blackmail, like "I leave you for your own good", has the taste of hypocrisy.

5) It is difficult to learn to talk about sex in a serious way, but somehow we get there and, good or bad, we get also to overcome the hypocrisies in this field, but it is very difficult to learn to talk about feelings without hypocrisy, without spiritual narcissism, without sublimation.

We have always been used to disguising ourselves as those we are not, this can be beneficial in a society where human relationships are based on formality, on hypocrisy, and in common social relations it is almost always like that, but in affective relationships, and especially in those based on sincerity and strong and direct affective exchanges, narcissism and sublimation create major drawbacks.

Now try mentally to put yourself in the position of a guy who receives a declaration of love and imagine you receive two different e-mails, one from a

guy who deals with the matter like at n. 1 and the other from a guy who uses a different approach like at n. 2 and tell me what reactions come to your mind.

1) "I wanted to tell you something, but you don't have to understand me badly, I'm fine with you, that is when I talk with you, I feel comfortable, I'm really fine, sometimes I think you want to open up a little with me, but in the end you don't, I do everything to put you at ease but you run away, you don't even look at me, nevertheless I'll tell you it the same, I love you, I don't know what you'll think, but I want to be there always for you, I think you can like it, I don't know at what level, but I think it can please you. But behind my declaration you do not have to see strange things, here sex has nothing to do, I love you on another level, it's a serious thing, it's a deep thing, I'm not playing. But I would like a serious answer from you, that is, I would like to understand how you see it because I want to understand if it seems strange to you, all right, let's go on, we don't necessarily have to be friends if you don't like. I think you would be fine with me, we talked a lot, well, you understood what I wanted to say, but now give me an answer."

2)" I wanted to tell you something, but you've already understood, I fell in love 100% with you, I think of you a thousand times a day, that is, I really want you with everything that comes after, yes, you got it right! Come on, now I said it!! Wow, now I said it! "

The texts of the two declarations of love are both authentic and have actually been sent to the recipients by e-mail. I know very well that sincerity is often something not spontaneous. No one has sublimated and disguised his affectivity and sexuality more than I did in my youth.

My speech is not a moral judgment, what is a thousand miles away from my intentions, but it is only an invitation to reflect in order to avoid as much as possible the complications of victimization, spiritual narcissism and sublimation. How I would have been happy seeing my real dreams accomplished in my youth!

## 7.2 DOCUMENTS

### 7.2.1 Message from an old and sick gay

Dear Project, practically your forum is the only one that also speaks of old people with a bit of seriousness, but it lacks one thing: it only talks about old gays who are all in all in good health, Unfortunately I belong to those who are not in good health, I don't speak of psychological distress because at my age it is a category that has been outdated for decades, I speak of physical health and bad ills in the serious sense of the term.

I often think that my road will bring me to the end in quite short times but despite everything I don't feel anguished, I wonder what may be the best way to do something good and there are many uncertainties. I'm not afraid of death, perhaps of physical suffering yes, because what I've tried until now, after all, was relative, but then you become fatalist and you lose the desire to fight, in some way you accept your destiny. After all, I'm old and I lived my life, so other five or ten years don't make a big difference. I think that to the new generations we must first teach to live and then we must also teach them to die with a certain basic serenity, with the conscience of having done at least something good.

This is to make you understand the situation, but you don't imagine how comforting it can be for me to read the forum, read the emails that guys send you and see what the guys answer to the stories of others, it's like to open one's own mind to the meaning of life that continues, because these guys will also carry inside themselves something of us, especially if they feel loved and respected by us. After all we have to try, each one of us, to make the burden of others less heavy, this is the meaning of life.

Of course in these guys I see myself, they are lucky because they have at their disposal means and possibilities that didn't exist in our time, but I see that they still have their melancholy and such a melancholy derives largely from the absence of love, from families which became disinterested in them or have been so much interested to become oppressive.

I live alone, even if I still have relatives who in their way love me and don't abandon me and I feel lucky for this. In my life, of gay I had only the imagination and some fleeting adventure over fifty years ago. But it was my previous life, which is now very far away and it seems almost like a dream lost over the years. In recent years, when I was a little better than now and I could leave the house I also met young people, obviously, I think, always or almost straight, young couples with children and even guys who were working and I tried to be kind to everyone, especially with the guys who worked, sometimes there was some mutual sympathy, they treated me well,

maybe just for my age, but I don't think only for that, I think especially because they saw themselves as an object of attention and respect, what I don't think happens very often.

Now I'm happy to read the forum and it's not a small thing and I thank you very much for this. I would love to send a positive message to the guys of all ages: "put aside your fear and look inside and you will find the right push to do for others what you would have done for you."

And then we don't live for ourselves only, but to live all of us humans, and not only humans, a bit better. A spontaneous smile helps us live and makes us live better. I embrace you, Project, and thank you for what you're doing.  
Marino

(Publish the email, if you want, in fact I would like it.)

### 7.2.2 Gay experiences

Hello Project, I've known Gay Project blog for a long time and from a few days ago I started reading the forum too. I didn't think I would have written anything, but I have to say one thing, you give a very particular view of the gay world, when I read the posts of the guys in the forum I realize that they also think essentially like you, maybe they have been lucky and have known only the positive aspects of gays but there are many other things that a gay guy should consider very carefully to avoid getting into trouble.

I'm 26 years old and I have always lived in Milan but I can guarantee you that I have seen very different things from those you write. I tell it not in a polemical sense, because I like a lot the things you put in the blog, but for me they represent more a single side of the coin than the general rule, more what I would like than what I see or have seen so far.

I read your articles on homosexual prostitution and I would like to say that even when those levels aren't reached, often a young guy, absolutely without his fault, is likely to get in contact with people who have broken out and with situations that are quite pathological also in the conception of sex. But I don't want to make a generic speech. I'll tell you a true story, my story, I think it can serve to reflect.

I've always known that I was gay, at the age of 16 I feel lonely, I miss a physical contact. I don't even know what this expression means, if I miss a hug and a little pampering or I miss a real sexual contact, I probably miss both things and I feel bad, very bad, I fall in love with a heterosexual schoolmate and I spend a couple of years trying to hide my love for him, of course without any result, or better with the only result of being disgraced everywhere, even at home, and being attacked with a memorable scene, even if I hadn't done anything absurd, anything at all.

At 18 I fight every day with my parents who now tolerate me but have already completely downloaded me, I'm not good at school, in the twelfth grade I risk being rejected because I don't even go regularly to school, anyway my teachers close both their eyes and I arrive in the thirteenth grade.

I get the fixed idea of finding someone, I cannot say whether in order to be hugged or to have sex. I desperately need someone to take care of me, someone who makes me feel that he loves me, but there is no one and then I start to follow two paths, one is that of the gym and the other is that of the combined meetings on the internet.

As for the gym, after a week I find a guy 35-year-old who seems interested, a fine guy, a nice guy, a bit too old for me but a nice guy, courting me with looks, attentions, invitations to the bar of the gym but also with a bit of compliments, he tells me that I'm a nice guy, in short, I feel encouraged. I thought he would like to look at me in the locker room or in the showers ... no! It was just as if I were not there, but he continued to court me, then I take courage and I say "I'm gay" and he says: "Me too ... but here I am straight ..." I don't understand the meaning of such an answer, after a few days he says to me: "Would you come to my house tonight?" I feel taken aback, what I can expect I know it very well ... or better I don't know at all ... because one says: "I foresee just sex ..." Ok, but what does it mean? ... In short, I went there, I felt very excited, for me it was the first time. I was expecting a tender thing but it was not like that at all, I didn't even have the courage to react and he behaved just like a beast, he wanted only one thing from me, he didn't care about anything else, for him I was more or less like an inflatable doll.

When he did what he wanted (obviously with the condom otherwise I would have killed him), it was all over and for me there was not even a caress. He looked at me satisfied, but I felt like crying, I felt overwhelmed by disgust, I had thrown away my virginity for such a beast, I felt an unforgivable stupid. He noticed it and told me that I was a kid and if I didn't want to stay with him, I had to behave consistently with what I wanted, etc. etc. I dressed and left. Then it really came into my head that for me living would have made no sense and that gays were all disgusting people, one worse than the other.

A few days later I found another one on the internet, James, ... one with a body very muscular and well trained but with a sweet look ... We meet, he's not beautiful but he's not even ugly, he doesn't go right to the point, in short, he talks a bit, tells me he has never had sex with a guy, with girls yes. He's a very undecided guy who likes be courted, I buzz around him 15/20 days and then finally the first intercourse with him. It starts not bad ... I think this time I have found the good one. No forcing ... then at the best

part he kisses me and says: "Mark ... I love you!" ... but my name is Francis and he knows it very well ... I pretend not to have understood and he calls me Mark again. I tell him that my name is Francis and he tells me he wants to call me Mark. I ask him why and he tells me that he needs Mark because he is in love with Mark and not with me, that I would never be able to give him anything because only Mark can make him feel good.

I ask him who Mark is and he tells me the story, in practice he is madly in love with Mark, but Mark doesn't care at all about him. Mark too is gay, but Mark is beautiful and has as many guys as many as he wants ... in practice we spent all night talking about Mark. I was sorry for James, he demanded that I helped him to write an email to Mark, I said to him: "Don't get angry, but, excuse me, why do you want to send it to him ... if he doesn't care at all about you? ..." But he insisted: "No, come on, please, let's write it ... " and told me all the things that I had to put in the email. In the end we finished the email ... and he asked me to send it, I told him: "Read it before sending!" But he told me that he trusted me and I sent it.

The next day James calls me at five in the afternoon, I thought he wanted to see me, but no ... he starts an endless story blaming me for a hundred things ... Marco had thrown the phone in his face because an email like that just a fool like me could write it because I was too aggressive ... basically if Mark had sent him to the hell, the fault was only mine ... but he went further: "You took advantage of my moment of weakness to bring me to make love, but I didn't want to ... I feel like you had raped me ... but you don't even realize it ... " Consequently I sent him loudly to hell with no regret.

Ten days later, a 50-year-old man comes to the gym ... and what a ugly man he was! Bald, fat like a lard ball ... in short, this one starts to court me and it was very distasteful ... but hell, I was 18, he was 50 ... I say no! ... nothing, he insists! It makes me fucking embarrassed ... in front of everybody ... then an instructor asks me: "But you know who is that man?" I answer: "No! Who is he?" And the instructor tells me that he was a very rich builder who had enticed, so to say, all the guys in the area ... I close with the gym!

I have internet ... now I'm just looking for peers. Two brothers propose me to be the third ... no thanks! Finally I know another guy, quite nice ... the chats were very sweet ... he had also spoken about sex in a rather provocative way ... but with education ... we chat every day, I think he's a beautiful person, I talk to him willingly, I insist on getting to know him but he takes time, I think he is an adult man who says he is an eighteen year old and I ask him to see him on cam, we open a video call ... he is very young ... he is 15 years old beautiful as the sun ... but is a minor, we remained friends for a few months then he found a 29-year-old and we stop meeting in chat.

Two or three months later I meet Leo, 19, we have also some sex in chat with



the video camera. I like him a lot ... In the end we get to the appointment ... for me it's a fundamental thing. I wait for him ... but he doesn't come ... I go back home and open the chat where we used to chat but his contact has been deleted. His blog no longer exists. Disappeared into nothing!

I met a lot of strange people, especially people with the fixed idea of sex, both young and about 40/50 years and the thing that came to my head is that being gay doesn't have to be such easy if there is so much gay people out of mind ...

I have to say that I also met some good guys and some nice gay couples.

For the past four years I've been with my boyfriend, whose name is Laurence. When we first met I thought he was yet another hunter of easy sex, but with him it was different ... but Laurence arrived after a long series of unpleasant experiences ... not unpleasant, I would better say of experiences that ended up with the classic sentence: "But how did I end up in love with a moron like this?"

I want to say that what Project says is true and that in the end there are good things in the gay world, but we must also open our eyes well and distinguish the serious people from those who at 30/50 still play pretending they are kids. Hugs to all!

### 7.2.3 A gay guy looking for the best guy

Oh! Well ... I know how bad you felt about our relationship and I'm sorry ... but I can tell you, so, with open heart I'll tell you: I expected it ... but, excuse me, with me it's impossible, ok, I'm fine all the same, you have a thousand reasons, you haven't told me in the face brutally why, but I know very well what is that "why" ... I must be put aside because "there is something better!" After our story was over how many other guys did you meet? Six, seven, I don't know, I've lost count. Every time you broke up with some guy the speech was always the same: "There is something better ..." I believe that by reasoning this way you'll make such a collection of frustrations that you will eventually have to recognize that you have thrown away some golden occasions. I'm not saying with me, maybe it would not have worked with me, but with some of those guys you could have built a nice story.

Fabio was really in love with you and he was a wonderful guy, if he had fallen in love with me I would have felt like the richest man in the world, but he was in love with you and you didn't want him because you said there was something better and you made him feel bad like a beaten dog and then he came to me in order to lick quietly his wounds. But there is more, you fooled him you made him believe you would spend your life with him. I still

remember that time, we went out together, you cuddled him so tenderly, you kissed him so tenderly, you were hugged with him all evening and I said to myself inside: "Poor Fabio! He is deluding himself ..." and punctually, after a month, you broke up with Fabio and you went back to the search for the best guy without even telling him it... I, maybe, I'm be stupid ... maybe I cannot understand but you seem dominated by an irrepressible craving, for you sex is a drug, you use it just like drugs, you are addicted.

You run after a guy like just a lost lover would do, then he yields to your requests and you say he has no backbone, he cannot assert himself, and then you let yourself go up to pronounce sentences of any kind against that guy... coming so far as to say he's not good to make love and a lot of such things, and then at the end of the speech the usual sentence comes: "There's something better!" ... and the game starts again ... you make victims and destroy the lives of these guys, who will never forgive themselves for have paid attention to you, you don't even note such things because you think only of yourself ... you don't even know the damage you do ... but in the end the years pass and you throw them away like that. You don't look for love, you are looking for the "perfect guy", you are looking for things that don't exist, you are throwing away the real guys that I don't say are better than you but at least are definitely at your level ...

You once did a crazy speech that annoyed me a lot: you said you wanted the hands of a guy, another's eyes, a third's smile, and even the way of having sex of a fourth. But who put these stupid things in your head? Do you realize that you are almost 30 years old and you know absolutely nothing about what love is, you have made a collection of guys, like English lords who hang in the hall the hunting trophies, you still see love like that ... you, at 30, are still looking for the perfect guy. You could say to me: "Why are you telling me it?" ... well ... we're friends, aren't we?

In fact I think I'm one of the few friends that you still have, all others have broken up with you ... you are convinced that it's you the one who broke up with them but in reality they are the ones who gave up your friendship ... in a minor tone, but you have also applied to friends the story of "there is something better" you ... you have tried to apply it to me too ... and it's me the one who didn't want to give up your friendship despite everything. I kept telling you what I really think, that is that you are going towards a total dissipation of yourself, you're throwing yourself away due to a lot of nonsense you take for granted, because you, still now, 30 years old, live as if fantasies were real...

I think you're still conditioned by the myth ... right from the myth of the ideal guy ... at 30 you would like a sweet guy, good, affectionate, totally without experience because you think you can educate him, but you don't

even say to educate, you say to wean ... You? And what could you teach him? What could you teach a clean boy? Could you teach him how to pretend to be in love ... or how do you feel desperate when you pretend to continue playing but you realize that the castle is collapsing?

I don't know what you can foresee for your future because you in effect always seek this blessed ideal guy. And then if even this ideal guy existed, do you think he would fall in love with you? So you're the ideal guy! ... of course it's obvious ... look at yourself in the mirror ... in fact you're a nice guy but not so young, you bring with you so many manias and frenzies that a psychoanalyst could work on them a lifetime, when you start with your bla bla you don't stop anymore ... you always say the same things, do you think you are fascinating? But you are not and you don't even realize it, it was you the one who broke up with Mathew?

You are convinced, but it is not so and do you know how things are really? Mathew has left you ... it's he the one who has left you and you know why ... it's he who told me it: he left you "because there is something better ...". You don't believe it? How is it possible that there is someone better than you? ... Yet Mathew was perfectly convinced ... and do you know who taught him it this philosophy? You taught him it! Mathew a reasoning like this, before, he wouldn't have done ... I knew him very well before, he, before, was looking for a real guy ... but after he met you he started to look for the ideal guy.

Now I told you what I had to tell you ... wake up until you're in time ... don't run after butterflies. If a guy at 30 has not yet understood what it means to love, he must try to understand it quickly because the Mathew who dumped you because "there is something better ..." is likely not to be an exception but the first of a long series of guys who will dump you and then you will understand ... but then understanding will not make any sense. I tell you these things because I think that they are true ... don't worry, I'm not trying to get back with you ... I know that "there is something better!" ... but at least as a friend you can still go well.

#### 7.2.4 Gay dignity

Hi Project, I allow myself to call you so, as everybody do, as far as I see. Congratulations for your blog and for the forum, lately I have spent a lot of time on the forum because I wanted to understand the lives of other gay guys. And really I gained a correct knowledge about such arguments.

But now the thing that complicates my life more is not being gay, I know in practice that I'm so since I was little, my real problem (but maybe it's not even a problem) is that recently I gave a radical breakthrough to my life

because at my house, or better at my parent's house, I felt spied on. I turned 18 a few months ago and I thought I would be entitled to some privacy and instead I didn't have any privacy. My parents are relatively young 41 years my father and 39 my mother, so in theory a bit of dialogue there could also be, they are not bigots and in many things like going out at night or staying to sleep by friends they have never created problems, and then they are politically on the left, they always talk about freedom, about this and that but never about freedom of gays!

Once a couple of years ago I was with them and with a group of daddy's friends and the talk about gays came out, while the others really seemed people who think that between a gay and a hetero there is no difference, for my father it was not like that, with apparent indifference, as if it were an obvious thing, he sowed here and there some "ifs" and "buts" and such a thing gave me an enormous annoyance.

Such things happened two years ago and at that time it was just me the one who knew that I was gay, they certainly didn't suspect it in the least. In February of this year the usual speeches began to come out: "All your friends have a girlfriend" but so only mentioned, without even adding the rest, because the meaning was anyhow very clear, I was caught off guard and I reacted a little embarrassed. From this I believe the suspicions and the witch hunt began.

Apparently it was all like before, but I noticed something strange in the speeches and in the tone of the voices and I didn't like it at all. Do you have anything to say? Well, then come on! Do it openly! But hypocrisy I cannot stand it at all!

Project, you must understand that in my house I have never had anything gay except in the computer. Until a short time ago I didn't even have a computer of mine and I accessed the internet from that of dad and when they began to suspect I still used dad's computer, who, being administrator, could access all the files, even mine, as well if they were password protected. After the talk about my friends who have a girl, which had put me very alarmed, I immediately opened the computer and deleted all the gay files, even those most vaguely gay. I used to keep them all in a special folder where it was written "Exercises of Mathematics", but evidently sometimes, in a hurry to close everything (because when my parents arrive suddenly, they don't have to find me on gay sites), I must have left a file "vaguely gay" (then I'll tell you what it is, because it concerns you) out of the folder, so when I changed the contents of the folder and I actually put there the true math exercises that I had kept elsewhere, I forgot to delete the "vaguely gay" file that had been left out. What do I mean by "vaguely gay"? I mean no photos, no videos, and here I come to your forum, in fact I had made

a copy of the post "How I realized I was gay" because I liked it too much. I, after deleting the contents of the "Exercises of Mathematics" folder, felt calm since I thought there were no more gay files in the computer, and I had also cleared the "recent files" section on Word that resulted perfectly empty. I started using the computer even when there were my parents, as I had never done before. A little time after the speech about friends who have a girl, I open the computer (if you remember, before closing it the last time, I had obviously deleted all the chronology and the "recent files" on Word), the chronology is still empty, I think it is clear that no one has put his hands on the computer, but then I open Word and I click on "file" and on "recent files" I see "How I understood to be gay". But I had perfectly cleared that section ... it's a clear sign that my father opened that file and read it.

The world had literally fell on me, I felt a horrible feeling, just to be badly caught red-handed, the feeling of being spied on by my father who had come to understand. I swear to you, Project, a horrible feeling. If I want to tell you I'm gay, I have to be the one to tell you it! Spying on someone is a shameful thing! And even more if you spy on your son! You aren't allowed, such things are shameful! Anyway I felt really badly. I expected that in a few hours the showdown would have come, now I was determined and I would have told him everything anyway, I had been discovered and I had nothing to lose, it was March 21st (first day of spring and I had just turned 18), I will never forget that day because it marked my total divorce from my family.

Contrary to the predictions, my father, when he returned home, didn't say anything and I hated him even more for this and he did as if nothing had happened, practically from the March 21st between me and my parents there was no more a serious relationship, only hypocrisy.

Ah, I remember now an important thing, when I turned 18 (early March) and they were already suspecting something, they had proposed me to have a party at home and I had sent them to hell (Project, I had written another expression but I changed it out of respect for you!), I had sent them to hell with education, that is with hypocrisy because the party at home served to spy on me in situation and only for this.

My parents are in good economic condition and, perhaps unconsciously, but perhaps not, they thought they were very important to me at least from that point of view. Well, I didn't want to know anything about their money and their hypocrisy. I'm a gay guy, I'm alone and maybe I'll always be alone, my problem is not that of finding a guy, I live well alone, my problem is to be free, not dependent on anyone and less than ever on my father and my mother. I started doing some chores in the afternoon, I work from 15.00 to 20.00 in a pizzeria to prepare all the material for the chefs for the evening, they give me 500 euros a month, but it's my money.

My parents didn't know where I used to go in the afternoon, but I used to go to work, and to do a job that would have seemed absolutely unacceptable according to their way of reasoning, but for me it was a liberation, I used to come home dead of exhaustion, because I had to work hard, but I had also to study, at school I lost positions, before starting to work I was good at school, then I settled for the passable, but I felt free. I no longer asked for money for clothes or shoes, I paid for everything with my money, I bought only very cheap things, but they were mine! I got also to buy a laptop because I hadn't used anymore my father's computer and finally I put there everything I wanted, I activated many passwords and I always left it around.

My parents didn't understand who had given me the money to buy the computer and were worried, I don't know, they perhaps thought that I was selling myself (prostitution) or I had found a lover much older than me able to give me such expensive gifts, but I left them fry and I answered only: "It's my business". My father has been stupid enough to raise his voice and threaten: "As long as you stay here we must know what life you do!" I swallowed the bitter morsel because I could not reply but I was working hard to found a radical solution, I had insisted with the pizzeria and they hired me as a waiter, I had to work every night from 19.00 to 24.00 and on Sundays all day from 10.00 to 24.00, I take 900 euros of pay, but these are regular things, it's a terribly tiring job and sometimes in the evening I cannot even stand up, but I can survive alone.

Through the pizzeria I met a lady who rented me a little apartment in the suburbs for 300 euros a month, a rather shabby place, on the top floor, without a lift, with a piece of land in front of it that looks like a dump, but it's mine! When I signed the contract I went to my parents' house, packed up my things and left without saying anything to them. They didn't even call me on the cell phone, then I heard that they had known from some friends of theirs that I was working at the pizzeria because they didn't know it before, and that was enough for them to feel reassured.

Now, since the school is over, I also do other chores and I also do two shifts at the pizzeria and I have to put aside some money because the next year I have graduation exam and I will have to study more and therefore I will be able to work less. Now my apartment is very nice, I cleaned everything up so that it looks like a little gem. There's also a nice terrace, bigger than the house, and I've put there a few plants.

Project, I tell you something absurd, I would like so much that you could come and see "my house". I don't know if I'll ever find a guy, I think it will happen (and maybe it has already happened, but I'm going slowly), I want him serious, I want him with balls, I don't like people who complain themselves.

Now there is a guy I like in the pizzeria, he's one who works hard, he has just arrived, is a little older than me, 21, and is called Luke, I went to work for anger against my parents, he works for necessity because his family doesn't have much money. When we are at work, Luke and I cannot talk, but he lives not far from my house and when we finish the shift we take the night bus together and talk a bit.

He's very shy for a 21 years old but he's a very good guy, I don't know if he's gay or not, I swear, for me the important thing is not to take him to bed, but that he loves me. Well, I think he began to love me, I don't know how but I feel it and it's a magic feeling.

One morning he came to my house, he gave me many compliments and I was happy, and then he has a way of smiling, a kindness of soul, a sweetness that for me falling in love with him is the most natural thing in the world. I have a dream that in that little house we can also live in two. I know that he's working in order to support his family, once I went also to his home and they welcomed me very well and I'm happy for him because he has been lucky enough to have a family that loves him.

You know, Project, I don't think about sex, apart from the fact that I arrive at the end of the shift absolutely destroyed, I don't think about it because I'm fine, I have Luke nearby and that's enough for me, as a friend and not as my boyfriend but I don't really care about such a thing and he too is happy when he is with me, we talk a lot, he also told me about a story with a girl, two years ago, but added immediately that it was not something he really felt. I never say anything too demanding, I tell him that I'm happy to talk with him and that we are friends, once I mentioned that in the house it was also possible to stay in two and he told me that he would like it too and he flashed me a beautiful smile.

Project, now I feel happy, but right in the deep meaning of the term, I work until I burst but I started to live my life and undoubtedly the idea of life in two, of serious life in two would be the highest happiness, but it must be with Luke, if with him it will be impossible, well, I'll stay alone.

Project, do you know that I was pleased to write you? My msn contact is [omissis], add me, so we can talk a bit, basically I miss talking seriously with people your age and I think you could understand me and then, I told you, I would love you to see my little house, maybe having dinner with you and Luke! But we work every night until midnight, I think we had to settle for breakfast in the morning. What do you think? It could be done? I send you a picture of me and Luke, but don't publish it.

A hug. Your Albert

### 7.2.5 Gay sunset

Hello Project, I think you are about the same age as me, and then I think you can understand certain feelings I feel. When I was a boy nobody talked about gays, at least not as a normal thing, so, also because of the absolute isolation of gays at that time, I never had a partner, only in recent times, in practice as an old man, I met gay friends of all ages, they are quiet people and I'm fine with them, but obviously, except for the few afternoons we spend together, loneliness looms.

There are also relatives it's true, but with them it is as if I was living another life, totally formal. By now I'm the old uncle about whom nobody cares.

The health is what it is therefore I begin to get used to the idea that the future will not be very long for me and then I would like to achieve something before closing shop, but I have a thousand doubts, well it is in these moments that I would need a partner to decide, to give me an impulse in any direction, but over all to get me out of the continuous oscillations that lead me to never do anything.

Now I cannot procrastinate, there is a time for all things and now it's time to choose and to achieve, but basically there aren't things that have more charm to me than others, I don't have to share anything with anyone. Among my gay friends there are also guys 25/30 years old and they make me tenderness, they treat me with respect and also affectionately but for me they are like children, they have a future in front of them and have a concrete world to confront, I am at sunset.

What to do? Have I to avoid choosing, as I have always done, to postpone everything endlessly, or have I to throw myself, body and soul, somewhere to do something concrete? Project, I don't talk about sex or love stories, now I live in another dimension, I talk about going to live somewhere else, in another neighborhood, maybe, more than in another city, in a place suitable for elderly people, but it would still be going to live alone in another place and it does not make too much sense, maybe it would make sense to live in the countryside, but alone in the countryside at my age it's risky, having doctors and hospitals too far for me it's dangerous. I begin to see in front of me the years when I will not be self-sufficient, if I don't go away even before. It is strange how things are still indefinite and I irremediably continue to waste time, even when time is objectively short. At least I have gay friends who sometimes call me and luckily I'm not in the hands of a caregiver. I enjoy my liberty, I get up late, I only use plastic dishes and glasses to avoid washing them, I buy things already cooked to avoid cooking, I plan my visits to the post office in order to go there as little as possible, etc. etc..

What's left of gay in my life? In practice there are only my gay friends, it is



not a trivial thing and I'm happy that they are still with me, however, now life has gone and things ended up this way.



# Chapter 8

## GAY AFFECTIVITY

### 8.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 8.1.1 Gay affectivity

This chapter was built exclusively on the basis of the experience gained in Gay Project, it is an objectively limited point of view that focuses mainly on undeclared gay guys, the average age of these guys is around 26, starting from 16/17 up to 40 and over.

The object of the survey is the set of emotional relationships of a gay guy, from familiar relationships to those with friends and those related to the love life, in other words we will try to understand what can objectively contribute to the individual well-being and what are the factors that for this purpose have greater weight.

#### 8.1.2 Family affectivity and coming out

The awareness of being gay is not traumatic in itself but becomes such because guys commonly, on the base of what sometimes really happens, take for granted that the simple fact of being gay entails a condition of substantial separation, even if not always of objective exclusion, from the family and social environment.

A gay guy very often realizes that he is living in an environment with which he cannot have direct dialogue and clearly perceives environmental and family homophobia. In other words, a gay guy often feels himself out of the family environment and out of the peer group, right because of his being "a gay guy" and hence derives the importance that many gay guys attach to the coming out (more or less enlarged) that is supposed to be the keystone for a full integration into the social and family environment of a gay as a

gay.

All this is based on the often unrealistic assessment that the misunderstanding between a gay guy and his family or between a gay guy and his social environment derives from the lack of clarity on the part of the gay guy rather than from ignorance and environmental homophobia.

A gay guy blames himself for not declaring himself to his parents and to his friends and identifies the causes of his own marginalization precisely in the lack of clarity that he uses towards friends and family.

Not declaring themselves, especially in contexts that push towards coming out, is experienced with guilt, as a form of deception perpetrated against family and friends.

The push towards the coming out, which appears to be a push towards honesty and transparency, is greatly reinforced by the assumption, or rather we should say by the presumption *a priori*, that the family and friends are able to really understand and accept the situation.

In totally unprepared environments, the coming out can create situations of serious discomfort, barely tolerable, because usually the reaction is not a clear refusal but a disguised refusal often accompanied by the feeling of guilt of parents for not having been able to grow "well" the son. Parents often talk about premonitory signs that they might have overlooked and speak also of excessive laxity towards the first manifestations of behaviors that in their eyes could have allowed to foresee the tendency towards homosexuality of the growing son. In a sense, parents believe they are responsible for that laxity which, according to them, is the real cause of the homosexuality of the son. The punishment for this alleged fault consists in having to keep going on with the son as he is, trying to love him "in spite of everything".

Similar attitudes, for the guys who have come out in the family turn out to be more destructive than the sense of generic loneliness and non-inclusion that had preceded the coming out.

### 8.1.3 Friendship affectivity and coming out

Even with friends, with very few exceptions, gay guys soon realize that the coming out doesn't lead to their true integration but to an integration "as gay guys", because the identification tag, once attributed, doesn't create integration but objectively marks an unbridgeable difference. After the coming out, often, the situation becomes worse than before and the feeling of marginality and loneliness is exacerbated.

### 8.1.4 Affective research and gay sexual research

After the phase of the search for family and social integration, the search for solutions oriented towards the gay reality begins. It is realized that with other gay guys a dialogue of another level is really possible, but often the idea of a more direct and immediate dialogue is mixed up with the sexual research.

Every effort must be made to represent things in realistic terms, trying to avoid the mysticism of gay affectivity. I mean that not only sexual research should not be underestimated but it must be realized that it is a fundamental element for the growth and emotional stability of any person. The overlapping and integration of affective research and sexual research has nothing pathological and one should be amazed, if anything, by the excess of sublimation on one side and by the excess of affective aridity on the other.

For a gay guy, as for any guy, sexuality has a fundamental role that must be understood and valued. In the context of sexuality, given the difficulty for a gay guy to find the sexual availability of another guy, masturbation takes on a particularly important meaning, especially when any couple sexual experience is virtually precluded.

Even pornography, when it does not create real forms of addiction, should not be demonized. The discovery of online pornography occurs at a very early age and often in a period concomitant with that of the discovery of masturbation. The first contacts with the pornography of preadolescents are frenetic, pornography becomes in practice in many cases a reality that dominates, for a longer or shorter period, the whole horizon of sexuality, but in the late adolescence needs of affective character mature and gradually lead to a certain devaluation of pornography and even masturbation takes on a more typically affective dimension, that is, it is considered as an integral part, even if projective, of a love relationship.

It is a fact that guys and in particular gay guys are very selective in the use of pornography, they are looking for videos that have actors of a few and specific physical types and are especially attracted by videos that embody situations they would like to experience in the real life. In fact, masturbation with fantasies related to real experienced is much more engaging than that related to pornography exactly because the weight of reality, in emotional terms, is enormously greater than that of any kind of representation.

While masturbation keeps over time a fundamental role, pornography tends to lose importance over the years and, in a good percentage of cases, certainly not marginal, guys quickly move to the phase of the erotic chats and dating sites and here takes place a phenomenon similar to the one that happens at the time of the discovery of pornography: guys realize that having sex on

cam with strangers is easy as well as not risky in terms of disease prevention. Then begins a phase of frantic search for virtual sexual contacts. At the beginning thing is very engaging, even if often accompanied by feelings of guilt, then, over time, guys realize that all this is missing something that is easily identified with the physical presence of the other, the jump towards meeting sites inevitably follows. Meeting sites are objectively much more risky both at the social level and at the level of prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

But even the meetings organized in the sites, except for very rare exceptions, are unsatisfactory, often the reason is found in the fact that the other guy does not correspond exactly to the characteristics one was looking for, so the switch to a new experience follows with no delay and so the vicious circle of illusion and disillusionment is repeated over and over again. The dating sites are likely to be the arrival station for many people, but in many cases guys ask themselves what is missing in all this and they finally discover the correct answer: in such experiences there isn't any true affective dimension.

### 8.1.5 Economic model of gay affectivity

In what does gay affectivity materialize? The answer should be sought by keeping in mind the common overlap-confusion of two concepts: sex and love that often moves people away from a more complex conception of affectivity. I mean that affectivity can certainly be sexualized but in many cases it presents itself and is objectively completely independent of sexuality. A genuinely emotional relationship is born in a totally spontaneous way and above all it is not conditioned by anything, it exists, if it exists, only for its own strength, outside and often against any mechanism of control or self-control.

The economic view of affectivity is very common and manifests through the use of a language typical of trading and economy: many people speak usually of balance of giving and taking, or balance of losing and gaining, they speak of emotional investment, convenience, emotional failure, all these are expressions derived from the world of economics.

After all, the economic models dominate in many sectors, even very far from the economic sciences, and it is, or better it seems almost automatic to apply them also to emotional life, hence comes the idea of marriage and in general of emotional relationship as a "contract" in which one is bound to an exchange of services and offers certain guarantees, and also comes the idea of an emotional relationship based on the possession of the other. In reality, the economic reading of affectivity is the cause of the failure of many marriages and many couple relationships, that are just economic agreements very far

from any form of affectivity.

### 8.1.6 Weak and gratuitous affectivity, emotional affinity

The affectivity is not totally neither even essentially linked to the life of a couple, it is a much weaker concept, that is much less binding and contractual than the couple bond, but at the same time much more widespread and pervasive. Affectivity is the basis of any deep, spontaneous human relationship and responds to ancestral mechanisms aimed at the mutual gratification and at the creation of weak but lasting relationships on which the balance of individuals in themselves and among themselves is based.

Affectivity tends to be a weak but stable aggregative force because it is independent of external factors and in large part also of the behavioral responses of the other. This identifies the gratuitousness of the affective dimension that gives without asking, even if it is not addressed to everyone but to a quite small number of individuals that are perceived as emotionally similar.

Affectivity does not intervene towards people who are perceived as a potential danger for their unpredictability, but only when the behavior of the other is in some way predictable and judged honest, that is, driven only by affective categories and not by other aims. Affectivity comes into play when there is the recognition of a basic affinity in spontaneous reaction mechanisms of the other.

Where there is something dissonant, that is, stranger or not understandable, affectivity doesn't intervene and the unconscious and subliminal communication mechanisms don't work, where on the contrary affectivity intervenes, most of the communication doesn't need words or abstract conceptualizations and individuals get in touch with each other essentially through a subliminal communication that can be easily deciphered only if the communication code of two or more people is substantially the same.

The affective dimension creates a form of communion-communication for which defensive shields vanish and the learning of behaviors, of ways of doing, of saying, of physically posing of the other is much facilitated, but all this remains at the subliminal level.

Affective bonds have nothing to do with social roles and are far beyond them. Social relationships in presence of affective bonds are reduced to a merely formal play.

### 8.1.7 Free friendship and instrumental friendship

The typically affective relationship is friendship, it is a fundamental and spontaneous interpersonal relationship that does not create bonds but is able to minimize the feeling of marginality and non-inclusion that so many gay guys experience.

Unfortunately, friendships are often considered as a kind of technique for the satisfaction of other needs (mostly linked with sexuality), in this way friendship is subordinated to something else and loses its essential character of absolute gratuity. However, it cannot be taken for granted that the intervention of sexuality in a relationship of friendship is always conditioning and destructive, there are friendships that are substantially independent on the sexual involvement that anyhow accompany them, such friendships are not lost when the sexual interest that had been, at least partially, the glue of the friendship, vanishes. However, if the so-called friendship was exclusively instrumental for sexual purposes, when the sexual relationship ends, the friendship highlights all its weakness and vanishes in a short time.

### 8.1.8 Friendship between gays

Friendship does not constrain, does not limit, but opens up a way of communication between people who feel similar. Of course, the affinity can be of various degrees; if this affinity is truly profound, friendship is very firm. In this sense, sexual orientation plays an important role because in a friendly relationship the affinity of experience is a fundamental element. A gay guy uses a communication code that doesn't coincide with the one used by hetero guys, the messages are different and more cryptic, the unsaid is much more important than the said, but a code like that for another gay, and especially for another near and congenial gay, is instead understandable and the discourse develops in depth even in the absence of many words.

### 8.1.9 Affective equilibrium

The affective equilibrium is a psycho-physical state of well-being that gives the guys the perception of being inserted into a network of protection and therefore also of not being alone anymore. This protection network is not a constraint and above all it does not depend on any condition other than being oneself and triggers itself only when one really needs it.

The certainty of the existence of this network of protection derives from the fact that, between friends, the presence of the other is something that cannot be doubted, it may be missing for a period but neither of the partners thinks,



plans or even foresees the end of the friendship because friendship itself is not felt as an hard constraint or as a limitation. Friendships are not necessarily constant relationships, are often suspended but are anyway real because they reacquire their concreteness whenever the need of them arises. Just a few words, a smile, the availability that does not lack at all, the perception of the attention of the other are enough to prove that the relationship of friendship has not been broken.

The construction of true friendships with other gay guys turns out to be the keystone of individual well-being. When a couple relationship goes into crisis, there is a bad feeling of disappointment and abandonment, but if the protection network made up of friendships actually works, if they are true friendships, the crisis is overcome and is not in itself destructive; feeling deprived at the same time of all emotional relationships, lose all friendships and have to start everything from zero would be quite different. Such a trauma would actually be destructive and would compromise the emotional stability of an individual in a very heavy way.

There are no formal affinities of any kind that can constitute deep bonds like the spontaneous bonds emerging from affectivity. To be friends it is certainly not enough to be both gay or have in common a political ideal or a religious belief. There is no social aggregation that can replace the emotional relationships because such relationships that have their own motivations and their mechanisms cannot be assimilated to anything else. I add a last but fundamental observation: true emotional relationships, those who create a deep contact between persons, are always reciprocal, are not the result of an act of will and less than ever of an individual act of will. The lack of reciprocity is not a defect of the relationship but a sign of its non-existence. But reciprocity doesn't mean reciprocity of behavior, i.e. exchanging of favors, but reciprocity of affective dispositions, mutual interest, mutual respect, it means perceiving the other as a peer.

#### **8.1.10 Sexuality as a substitute for affectivity**

Talking with gay guys of all ages, I happened several times to realize how sexuality often becomes in reality a substitute value of affectivity and how this substitution proves to be inefficient and disappointing. I am not sexophobic, but I don't believe that sexuality by itself represents the basis of a person's well-being. If sexuality has also a strong emotional, communicative basis made of human warmth, then it becomes one of the most powerful stabilizing elements of the personality, but if it is detached from the emotional dimension it often ends up being absolutized and becoming in a sense a manifestation of unease.

I have seen many times sexually available guys systematically escaping the concrete opportunities to create an important emotional relationship and I asked myself why affectivity can look scary and from what I see the only credible answer lies in the fact that an important emotional relationship is seen as a constrictive bound imposed to freedom. Behind this way of seeing things there is often the memory of difficult family experiences, in which the affective dimension has been used as a means of restraining and controlling individual freedom, but beyond that there is also the model of couple linked to the traditional idea of marriage as the bond of a monogamous and essentially irreversible union.

When overprotective parents, who are unable to really get in touch with sons, experience with anxiety the freedom of their sons who move away from the family, they tend, even unconsciously, to make their sons feel the emotional relationship with them more as a bond than as a security. It is the typical educational model: "If you love me you have to do what I say".

The fear of falling in love is also linked to another concept, namely the idea of avoiding the "compromise" that is very often the basis of the couple life. I mean that guys who avoid building emotional relationships to safeguard their freedom, avoid in practice to enter into relationships of which they are not really convinced, that is, they are much more selective than the average in the search for a partner because they don't want to pursue the idea of the "couple for the couple" but want a couple that is not based on a compromise. It is often very easy to slip from relationships of superficial knowledge toward very tight and binding forms of involvement that don't have a really strong emotional basis. The guys who don't seem to like the couple life tend to follow a reasoning that seems strange from the outside, but that actually has a very precise meaning, they say that one thing is "to love a guy", even if it is the case, with a bit of sex, and a very different thing is finding a partner, because according to them, in order to consider a guy like the life partner it is necessary to put apart any compromise and feel madly in love with him. Typical is the expression: "I like him, but I'm not in love with him (staying with him would be a compromise), while I'm really madly in love with that other guy, and I would stay in couple with him!"

The discriminating element between considering a guy pleasant and falling in love with him is clearly of a sexual nature and this is certainly not a trivial thing. A guy who seems to be afraid of couple life and who generally tends much more than other guys to protect his freedom is willing to sacrifice this freedom "only" to build a stable relationship with a guy who involves him very strongly on a sexual level. The reasoning is absolutely straightforward: a basically definitive choice must have a strong motivation at its base and sexual interest is one of the components, if not the essential component, of a

really strong interest.

There are certainly other important components of the couple's bond, which contribute to the balance and stabilization of the couple, I refer to the fact of having similar individual stories, of coming from similar social environments, of having received a substantially similar education and of having a similar moral code, however if the stability of a couple was based only on these elements, the probability of facing a crisis would be objectively very high because without a strong and reciprocal sexual involvement there is no real couple bond.

### 8.1.11 Failure of couple life

If we look at the reasons for the failure of many couples, when there is a mutual esteem and affection in spite of everything, we find in the first place the fading of sexual interest, in most cases from only one part. A couple made of people all in all serious and balanced, doesn't work when the sexual drive towards the partner is missing even from only one side.

When this happens, one has to wonder if that sexual drive has ever been real or has been replaced by a fragile condescension due perhaps to the need not to be alone. Most likely the couple who goes into crisis after a few months, is couple born on a compromise, in which, on the one side at least, there was no real sexual drive.

A few decades ago, it was quite usual to find arranged marriages due to the intervention of the families. In such situations, the couple's true glue was given by the social approval that didn't propose but imposed on the spouses a life in which sexuality became a secondary variable aimed at the birth of children. In such situations, on the side of the husband, having a lover represented the tacitly tolerated answer to the enslavement of sexuality in marriage; on the part of the wife, obedience and submission were proposed as a religious and consoling value, taking the total frustration of female sexuality for granted and inevitable.

This model of couple life has inevitably been exported also to the gay field. Obviously, given the lack of sons and also the lack of formalization of the relationship in a union basically indissoluble as in marriage, the gay couple born on a compromise is characterized by a greater fragility than that of arranged marriages. It should be added that the low social visibility of gay couples greatly reduces the fear of social reactions (the scandal) that used to slow down the crisis of the marriage or at least to reduce its visibility.

### 8.1.12 Affectivity crisis and non-affective sexuality

So far we have analyzed the motivations that cause certain guys to avoid to get easily involved in affective relationships, it is a matter of strong motivations but, nevertheless, the renunciation of the uncertain and relative stability typical of the couples born on a compromise, especially when family relationships are in crisis and friendships remain superficial or conflictual, promotes a sense of emptiness, of suspended life, increases the perception of the passage of time and inevitably leads to the search for values substitutive of affectivity and the only answer that looks concrete is to try to replace affectivity with sexuality but, obviously, with a non-affective sexuality, with a result that seems to re-propose on the sexual level the idea of a couple based on a compromise that had already been excluded on the emotional level.

It is true, anyway, that these presumed compromise couples are almost never, objectively, real couples arose from a sexual compromise because the basic requirement of stability is lacking because the constraint and the exclusivity that are automatically excluded in the name of the protection of individual freedom obviously lack.

I would like to clear the field from moralistic prejudices. The only real risk of these behaviors is sexual promiscuity that, if not accompanied by the systematic use of appropriate forms of prevention, significantly increases the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

In terms of social relationships, guys who are not inclined to form couples based on a compromise often feel and are misunderstood, are considered in some way dependent on sex and, moreover, on a promiscuous sex, because the idea of a couple based on a compromise, on a social level, is considered, let me use the game of words, a good compromise between sexual needs and stability, where stability means adapting to compromise, which is the most condemned behavior in words, and nevertheless the most widespread in reality.

The real problem of guys who tend to substitute affection with promiscuous sexuality lies in the fact that the partners they relate to, in general, reason in the most common way, i.e. they tend to create compromise couples, without major problems, when they meet guys sexually available, because they take for granted that sexual availability automatically involves a similar affective availability, what in the situations we are talking about is not realistic.

So two very different mentalities meet and the misunderstandings can be profound and lacerating because both partners feel they are judged and misunderstood in things that seem fundamental and obvious to them. It is precisely this mechanism that prevents the consolidation of relationships that are born on the sexual level and fuels the promiscuity of young people who

don't want to create compromise couples.

## 8.2 DOCUMENTS

### 8.2.1 Gays and couple solidarity

Hello Project, I am a 54-year-old man, my name is very spread and for privacy I prefer not to use it, you can call me Francis. Reading the forum, which is really rich, I saw that messages related to young people and, let's say, to the early stages of life dominate. You also talk about mature men, but in fact I have never seen a post dedicated to mutual solidarity among posts dedicated to gay couples.

Ok, yes, sex, attraction, coming out, everything you want, but they are ways of seeing things very important when one is young, are issues for people who have to start their adult life, but one is gay non only when he's a boy, then guys become men and the meaning of a couple relationship changes for them and the need for a concrete solidarity and a stable presence becomes basic and cannot be ignored.

Why do I tell you these things? The answer is simple, I've seen what it means to live like a couple when you're sick, that is when you really need to have someone close to support you and literally help you live. My life as a young gay was practically all of fantasies and pornography, at least up to 45 years, then I met a guy 24 years old, yes, he was 21 years younger than me, I, according to the usual script, would have had to let such an opportunity pass and pretend nothing happened, because he was a bit too young and I thought it could not work, but he didn't give up and made me discover the couple sexuality and I will always thank him.

We have been together for three years, and those have been the best and most agitated years of my life, he is a bit neurotic but, in short, the result was very positive, then he found another guy, younger than me but with me he has nevertheless maintained a relationship, he has never disappeared and the level of our speeches has never descended towards banality.

I was not shocked by the fact that he had found another guy, in a sense I expected it, it was inevitable, and in fact our relationship continued to exist even if in another way. He has had his stories, has changed two or three guys, and then he ended up preferring to be alone, except for some adventure, if it happened, but without going to look for guys. When I was 52 I started to feel bad and it did not take long to realize that the situation was very serious. I felt a bit displaced because I had broken for years the relationship with my family and I was practically abandoned to myself. At the beginning,

I tried to do everything myself, without asking anyone for help, but it was very difficult, at the limit of the impossible.

When my ex-partner, let's say my only ex-partner (because I didn't have had any others) knew it, first he called me, then he came to see me and he realized the problem and then he did something that I never would have expected, that is, he moved to my house and now we have been living together for two years.

I would never have imagined such a thing, he is now 32 and could have a life of fun and instead he came to stay with me. Sometimes he helps me in an affectionate way and he works hard to alleviate my ordeal as much as possible.

My father and my mother (both 78 years old and both in good health) know of my health but have not come to see me, by phone they repeat that I must find "someone" who could help me, but they mean a caregiver or a nurse, on the other hand there has never been a dialogue with them if not for good manners. My parents would not have wanted a son like me, it happened, and they had to accept me with "Christian resignation" (my mother's words). But that son has a person who loves him and this makes him happy even if he has so many serious problems to deal with. I do not know if my relationship with my ex is a couple relationship, but I think it's a relationship of love anyway. In my misfortune I can say I am a lucky man. I just have to thank my ex who has given me back a dignity and is allowing me to look at the future with less anxiety. Thanks My cub! I love you so much!

### 8.2.2 Gay relationships without an end

Hello Project, I am writing to you because I am in a situation that makes me feel bad like a beaten dog. I am 46 years old, two years ago a 20 year old guy fell in love with me, or at least he did everything to build an engaging relationship with me: sex, but not only that, for us it was the first time, both for him and for me, you understood, Project, I had never been with a guy. I had the distinct feeling that it wouldn't work and I tried to do everything to stay away but he didn't give up and we came to build a relationship that lasted more than two years, then, what I feared has realized and he told me that he had found another guy, that he was sorry that I would have taken it badly but that he needed something else.

The speech put in these terms would anyway be simple and all in all clear but things were actually much more complex, because we had created a relationship that went beyond sex, I mean that we loved each other and when we broke up (and we broke up well, I mean in a sweet and affectionate way) we

actually both knew that something would have remained and that we would always be there for each other and so it was, in fact we never really left each other.

We no longer had sexual contacts as before because he had a boyfriend, but there was still a reciprocal love between us. Project, tell me what is good for this guy? To dedicate himself completely to his new boyfriend, who is a very good guy, and in this case I should completely disappear or in a sense dissolve myself and no longer contact him, or perhaps it makes sense that I exist, with a role that I don't even know how to define? However I feel moments of deep suffering because I miss him violently, I remember the days spent together, I dream of those moments almost every night, but I know that I have to leave him free, his happiness is another, there might even be a place for me, but I would want to be a secondary character in his horizon. What must a man my age do when a guy not yet 23 years old leaves him but tells him that he still loves him?

With his boyfriend he can now have a story if not in the light of the sun, at least not hiding carefully as he did during our story. I don't blame him for this, after all I did the same thing and then he would have been considered as a madman at his house not because he is gay but because he was in love with someone who was twice his age, something that, for him personally (not at the social or family level), has never created any problem.

Project, I read with great interest the chapter on intergenerational relationships on "Being gay" but frankly in my case there is not a real couple relationship, maybe there was, but maybe what brought him to stay with me was something else, that is was the need for affection, the need for reassurance, the need to be accepted. In fact this is not the basis of a typical couple relationship but represents the attempt to rebuild a family that no longer exists. I believe this was precisely the meaning of the bond between us. The sex lived together in a calm and without inhibitions way was just the sign of a mutual acceptance without reservation.

Ok, all this is true, but now he is not there and I feel really empty and destroyed. I know very well that my duty is not to complicate his life but to let him go or to allow him to manage what remains of our relationship exactly as he wants, even that is a sign of acceptance without reservation. But I feel really badly because of this, Project, and he doesn't realize it, and in a sense, I did everything to make sure he didn't. When we talk on the phone or on Skype, I act as if nothing has happened, but when we close the phone I feel like crying because those phone calls are not stupidities or formalities, they are a way to confirm that our relationship still exists.

Here, Project, what really destroys me: the fact that it is not a matter of a thing that is already over, it is not so for him and it is not so for me. At my

age, before I knew him, I had thought about definitively put aside the idea of having a boyfriend, then he arrived and he upset my plans and now he's leaving but he doesn't leave completely and I feel an anguish inside that I couldn't even describe: anxiety, fear that he might find himself in some trouble, desire to see him happy at all costs and at the same time a deep sense of emptiness, as if I were falling backwards, as if my life was sliding backwards irremediably at the level of two years ago, but after one has known love or at least sex lived with participation, after one has held in his arms a guy in love, well it is scary to think that all this is about to end.

Something remains, I know, but it's not enough for me, I know it should be enough but it's not enough for me. Sometimes I feel like a fool and I try to download all my faults on him but I know very well that he has no faults, that he has lived and is living even now his feelings with absolute simplicity. I don't know what to wish for, maybe it would be better if he forgets me soon but I don't think it would be easy and on the other hand he also loves his boyfriend and I don't have the slightest doubt about. I know very well that he will never come back with me and that I have to leave him completely free, but, Project, it's damned difficult. What can I do? I swear I'm completely confused.

### 8.2.3 Love stories of a gay eighteen year old

First of all, thanks for last night's chat. You will understand that at 18, for one who has always tried not to see, finding the courage to write to you was very difficult, but I'm glad I did. I expected a standard answer, let's say a schematic thing, and I was struck by the kind of response, very direct. When I asked you to chat, I didn't know what you would answer, but a minute later we were on Skype. Maybe the fears of a boy like me will make you smile, but I cannot talk to anyone seriously and for me to be able to talk about certain things means to understand that I must not be afraid.

I have always lacked a family from my childhood, I had a family but only in name, my father thinks only of his things and my mother cares about me and my sister just like a duty always puffing and making us notice (addressing especially me) that for her we are only a ball and chain. My mother is convinced that she is an excellent mother and that she has sacrificed herself for us from morning to night and in a sense it is true, but she is not a mother, she is a super-nanny.

My father, when I try to tell him two words, makes me point out that he has no time, that he has other things to do and that what I wanted to tell him can be said later, he always postpones my sister's things and mine, because he has to think about work, always and only about work.



How can I tell my parents that I'm gay? I think that, very simply, they wouldn't believe it, they are young, my father is 44 and my mother 42, but they are straight and for them the world ends there. When there is a program on television that also speaks about gays, they don't make homophobic comments, none of this, simply they change the channel, without even noticing, as if they had ended up by mistake on a channel that talks about how cucumbers are cultivated in Arizona.

Besides, I would not bear at all the idea of being sent by a psychologist, and what for? I don't have problems with my being gay, I feel great. One of my schoolmates is a gay, publicly declared, I don't like him at all, he is a very good guy, but I really don't like him physically, he is not effeminate at all but he isn't certainly the guy of my dreams. My classmates are not homophobic, my gay friend is not teased or bullied, the others simply consider him a bit like a Martian.

One day a friend of mine was talking to this gay guy and said to him: "I have nothing against gays, but I never understood how you, who are basically a boy like us, can do without girls and how you can run after guys". This is the attitude that I see around me. I know that there is much worse, but even this feeling someone like a Martian is not at all pleasant. You can well understand that coming out at school and being treated like my gay friend doesn't attract me at all.

As for love stories, my fantasies are enough for me. Two years ago I fell in love with a boy 18 years old, who was very handsome and fascinated me a lot because he was very calm, never aggressive and even though I was younger than him, the times that we talked, he considered me as a guy his age. Then he graduated and left and I didn't see him anymore, he was also a straight guy, I didn't have the slightest doubt about that.

There is a guy in my class who likes me, that is, compared to the handsome boy of two years ago ... no! There's no possible comparison, but among others he is the one I more look at, but then, when I speak with him, all my fantasies vanish, he is very full of himself, he tells me all the things he will do at university and later, but he seems to me a bit like an inflated balloon. Can you see him as a scientist? A guy who never takes a sufficient math grade? I don't believe him will become a scientist! So, let's say that as far as love stories I'm at zero.

There is a guy I like a lot in every sense but he is not in my class and I can exchange with him just a few words when there is the assembly, but I really like him a lot. He's tall, thin, smiling, blond, with light eyes, just like the guys I like and then he's smart, when he intervenes he amazes me for what he says, and he's one who talks little, he also has a very sexy voice and beautiful hands. On this guy I tried to gather information, first of all

to know if he has a girlfriend, and fortunately he has no girlfriend! Then to understand what he thinks about gays and I once heard one of his speeches in the assembly when he was talking about this and I noticed that he had a very particular way of expressing himself.

I'll give you an example. Another guy, to say that gays mustn't be marginalized, said that they should not be marginalized because "those are like us!" And therefore practically said that he was a straight guy who accepts gays, while the guy that I like never did a distinction between "us" and "they", he never said things that implied that he was straight, and this switched on a bulb in my brain ... he doesn't have a girlfriend, talking about gays he doesn't distinguish between us and them ... well, objectively they are not very strong arguments but it is clear that the speech needs to be deepened and that it makes sense to try to understand something more.

I don't think this guy has ever noticed me because I speak little, I don't intervene in the assembly and I'm afraid to say nonsense, so I don't show myself too much, however, with this guy some things have happened that I liked a lot. During the assembly many guys were in the yard to smoke and we were there too, even if we don't smoke, then the others came back to the assembly, I stayed out and I expected him to get into too, and instead he stayed out, sitting on the steps, to talk to me, it seemed to me like a dream. I don't want to overestimate the fact but he stayed there for me. We did not know what to say, neither he nor I, it was a moment of sweet embarrassment, but it ended immediately because a teacher passed and made us come back to the assembly.

Then there was another episode, there was a conference about the nuclear physics in the afternoon and there were very few people, there were no one of his classmates and he sat next to me in an almost empty room, I felt his warmth.

When it was over he offered me a coffee at the coffee machine and asked me what I had understood about everything they had said, and I told him that I was just thinking about something else and he replied: "Me too ..." and he flashed a beautiful smile to me, I asked him what he was thinking about and he replied: "I think you know, but let's change the subject, ok?" It was a very intense moment but then we talked about other things.

Is it possible that he too is interested in me? You don't have an idea of how such a thing would make me happy. I don't even care if he's gay (of course it would be ideal!). It would be enough for me to have him only as a friend. Here he's my dream of love: a handsome guy, intelligent and in love with me! Maybe it's too much to ask, but I will not give him up because there's some signals coming from him too. Now I leave you and wish you a good week.

Thanks for everything.

Mathew

### 8.2.4 Gays and heterosexual nostalgia

Hello Project, what's going on? I mean on the forum? Is there some agitation or am I wrong? Anyway, in the end it's not that the thing touches me a lot. I rather wanted to talk to you about an issue, I have your msn contact, because you gave it to me some time ago. I don't know if you remember, I found the date of the first email that I sent you on the msn blog and it is March 30th 2008, I was the 23 year old, now I am 24 year old, ex-hetero convinced, now gay not so convinced.

I tell you all, without fiction, when I met you I didn't even like you a bit, nothing was right for you of what I told you, you had always something to say and you talked above all about prudence, a word that I never liked too much. You didn't even seem to me a gay man but only one who is afraid of sex, who sublimates, who postpones, in short, excuses the expression, but you didn't seem up to what I was looking for. Oh well, I sent to hell you and your project and tried other ways, I met some guys on the chats, the ones you don't like, and I have been with those guys, that is with some of them I have also had sex.

When I was with these guys I was reminded of my last girlfriend, with whom I have never had sex. That girl loved me. I knew she was not for me, but that girl loved me. Excuse me if I speak explicitly, but then with those guys when I got to the point I had a feeling of disappointment, I said to myself: "But is that all?" That was just sex in the elementary sense of the term and it all ended up there. I read that you talk about gay love, but what love? At most sex. I had a serious relationship with my last girlfriend, we talked a lot, I saw that she cared about me, but the guys I met in the chat weren't at all interested in me or were fixed with sex much more than me or were depressed and frustrated to the limit and beyond the limit of the pathological, an incredible assortment of absurdities, or maybe I had been just unlucky.

In the things of sex I have always been cautious because I don't want to get in trouble for stupidity and to someone (or better to more than someone) I said "no thank you!" very firmly. I liked a lot two or three of them and they didn't even look like maniacs, but they didn't really care about me. I wanted to build a relationship with them similar to that I had had with my girlfriend but adding also some gay sex, instead we ended up just having sex and nothing more, it happened this way we used to meet once or twice, then we went to the point, we met, etc. etc. . . . The first times I had a lot of expectations, but we didn't see each other to talk, when I tried to talk they

looked dazed at me as if to say: "But what are you searching for?" Project, you don't know how I revalued my last girlfriend! It was quite another thing, something much more serious.

Sometimes I really regret not being straight. A guy then was the top of stupidity, basically it was evident that he was convinced that I was completely stupid but he ran after me because physically I'm quite a beautiful guy. Project, but are you sure you have the right ideas about gays? You always talk of them in a sublime way as if they were (or rather as if we were, because I'm there too) much better than straight guys but it's not like that. I know I'm gay, but after getting to know many gays up close I'm sorry I'm not straight because I tried what being straight means and it was basically another thing, the heterosexual love exists, perhaps also the gay love exists but it is not so obvious. If you want, publish this email. Send me two lines and tell me how I can talk a bit with you, lately I have revaluated you a lot. Kisses.

### 8.2.5 Non-sexual gay love and sublimation

Hello Project, I send you this e-mail because reading your site made me feel better and I found the courage to do something that I would never have done before, that is to send you this e-mail.

I am a 24-year-old guy who has always considered himself heterosexual and in a sense still considers himself heterosexual even now. I have a girlfriend and I have a good relationship with her, I don't know if we will get married because there are many problems linked to the need to finish our formation path at the university and to find a work, but we are fine together, I also have with her a good sexual understanding, better than that I had with other girls. I have never had the fixed idea of running after girls and even less of running after guys.

If I had to look at the things you value to understand the sexual orientation I should say that I am 100% hetero, except for something that I have always known, that is a form of aesthetic admiration for some guys I like, I like just their physicality and perhaps also the psychological attitude of the person. The guys I look at, I state it with no doubts, always without sexual involvement, are very few, not one in a hundred or maybe in a thousand, the others are totally indifferent for me, but I stop to look at those very few, because they seem beautiful, perfect from my point of sight. All this is a premise.

This morning, at the secretariat of my faculty, however, something happened that really messed me up a lot. I had taken the number and sat down to wait, at a certain point a guy entered who enchanted me. Very young, I think a freshman, because if there had been one like this the last years I would have

certainly noticed him, tall, dark blond, very light skin, with glasses, a bit scruffy, but as are people who are not obsessed with perfection, barely long hair. I tried to watch him without him noticing me. Our eyes met three times in all the waiting time, but just in passing, I think he didn't even notice it, but I experienced a very strong effect of it, I repeat, Project, nothing sexual, just a very strong sense of tenderness, I would have embraced, cuddled, defended him by everything and everyone, he seemed to me a piece of pure humanity, let's say perfect, in a place where everything is uncertain and strange, also because he was not only beautiful but had very tender attitudes and ways of doing, at least to me they seemed so.

I continued to watch him with the fear that he realized he was being watched, I was fascinated by the fact that he didn't seem aware of his beauty, he didn't smile, was very serious, almost absorbed in his thoughts and stranger to that environment. Then they called my number and I went to the counter, when I finished that guy was gone and I felt alone and even at home he came back to my mind many times, as usual nothing sexual, but he made me feel more tenderness than how my girlfriend does and I thought that falling in love with such a guy is not even linked to being gay, I don't feel gay but being close to that guy I think could give me some affectionate, intimate moments, more intense than those I experience with girls. Can I, at 24 years, be about to open my eyes in front of the fact that I'm not entirely heterosexual or at least I am not heterosexual from the affective point of view?

I read a lot of what you wrote about bisexuality and about the fact that guys usually fall in love with a girl and want a boyfriend sexually, the opposite happens to me, I feel attracted towards some guys but sex has nothing to do with it or I think it has nothing to do with it, but I thought about that guy a lot. I mean that if that guy would have fell in love with me and he was gay, in spite of the fact that I don't feel gay, with that guy I think I would be fine, with him, but only with him. For someone like me it is not obvious to come to a conclusion like this.

Could it be a first step towards homosexuality or do you think it has nothing to do with it? I'm not interested in guys but, if I had to say, to just in that one guy, I would like to be close to him, I don't really think about sex, I've said it many times, what does all this mean? There is another thing that embarrasses me: with my girlfriend, with whom I use to speak just about everything, I would never dare to make a speech like that, if I don't tell her anything I think I'm deceiving her, but if I tell her what happened probably I would make a mess and then what could I tell her? That I saw a charming guy? Because in fact this is precisely what happened. Is there a homosexuality without sex? Or is it a stupid question? What should I expect for my future? I greet you and I hope in your answer.

G.A.

Alyosha replies:

"That person is so special and there is a so particular affinity, that this is independent of sex and sexual orientation". Well, that's exactly what came to my mind when I read your story. I would like to add a couple of things that seem to me relevant to your situation. You say you have a girlfriend and that to some degree you are thinking about marriage. I would put this as the main thought beyond your orientation. I wonder if the things you've experienced at any level have shocked you in some way. The real problem would be to be gay and get married or otherwise find yourself not in love and being nevertheless oriented to the marriage all the same. I mean, do you really experience the same kind of transport towards your girlfriend that you felt for that guy? With the due differences would you say the same things about her? That is "she could also be a male but I would be fine with her anyway"? And again ... Is it necessary to try those things, that is, those that you have felt for the guy, in order to be considered in love? In short, if you reason already in view of marriage it makes more sense to ask these questions BEFORE and not after.

On your perplexities about sexual orientation I don't want to say much more. I am sure that if you already have had an exchange of e-mails with Project, he will have already made an objective picture of the situation and in these things he always has a reassuring style that helps a lot to clear up ideas. I conclude only by telling you that since staying here a bit with us doesn't cost you anything and you never have to decide in a hurry in such things, it remains that here you will notice quite easily if something moves you away or if you notice certain assonances between your story and those of other guys. A hug.

Telemaco replies:

To reply to this email I want to mention a small episode that has left me a bit perplexed but that perhaps has something to do with these issues. During lunchtime in a nice spring day a friend of mine invited me to eat a pizza: we went to a tavern that I didn't know and we approached the counter to ask for a table. While we were waiting for our shift a waiter passes by who is of an indescribable beauty; tall, slender, thin profile, little nose upturned, light eyes and very short and black hair a little unkempt. The service uniform was tight because he had a very well-defined body, even if probably not trained at the gym. He was preparing drinks at the counter.

My friend, (a straight guy, I've known him for a long time and I'm sure) very candidly tells me: "Did you see those pectorals? It's incredible, look at that shoulders, he's really well handsome! Oh yes he's really beautiful, look what a body!" I, surprised, I answered something like: "Um! Cough cough, what do you think he's pouring? Looking at the bottle I think Montenegro ... " I was stunned! Then I thought a bit about and I came to the conclusion that it makes no sense that sexual orientation must necessarily influence the idea of "beauty" that one has: if a heterosexual guy makes an impromptu appreciation on another male he does it simply to talk about his concept of beauty: it was I the one "with the straw tail" [who was wracked with guilt or hesitation] I had difficulty in sharing his judgment on the beauty of the waiter because of something sexual, because of the physical attraction that I instead can experience. It is clear, however, that the association "physical beauty" - "sexual interest" is an indestructible cliché of common thinking, in which, that time, in fact I too fell.

Felix replies:

I was struck by this email and I really liked the way G.A. exposed his reaction to the sight of that charming guy. I read answers and, even if I'm aware that I should read them more carefully, I would like to say what I think. I will try to be synthetic and clear.

Let's start from what happened: G.A. saw a nice guy, but the reaction was not simply that of admiration, so I think we can say that the reaction is of an emotional kind. This is the first point. If so, it is normal that G.A. reacted with a certain upsetting: he has always considered himself heterosexual, he has a relationship with a girl and with her he also has a good sexual partnership. Nevertheless he felt the need to search the internet for something that would help him shed light on that reaction. It does not surprise me. It was a bolt from the blue. But, since the reaction has been affective, and not of sexual-genital attraction, it seems to me that it was a signal launched from the heart and that it has found the free road to reach the level of awareness. A signal, however, does not indicate a certainty, just as a swallow is not enough to say that spring has arrived. It must certainly be taken into consideration and interpreted, but we must be very careful not to immediately jump to the easy conclusions. In this sense, remembering Pascal who says: "The heart has its reasons that the reason doesn't know", if it is right and legitimate to ask the questions necessary to read and interpret the fact, it is also necessary to pay attention to avoid falling into excessive rationalization with questions that demand answers that can easily risk not to take into account the emotional dimension. The heart takes a lot of time to talk and

be heard. If this were not so, why would many find it difficult to accept situations that are of obvious evidence?

For example, many homosexuals (I speak from experience) refuse for years the idea of accepting and defining themselves as such, despite the evidence and the signs that their interiority is constantly launching. But not only the repressed homosexuals react like that. Every man may have experienced similar situations of resistance in fields also very far from affectivity: the head says something and the heart rebels. And then? Then, one becomes aware of the fact that has happened and examines it but without too much reasoning about it. If you leave the space, the heart will find the way to launch other signals and with serenity the person will be able to understand if that episode was just an episode, or a strong jolt able to make him understand that perhaps his belief in sexual orientation requires a certain revision and a more careful observation.

G.A. stressed that the sexual sphere was inexistent in the whole affair. This does not upset me and it could even be a signal not to be underestimated. Lately in other posts we have discussed precisely the fact that being gay is not mainly connected with the genital attraction for people related only to their biological sex, but it concerns a higher emotional sphere that embraces even the sexual one. I think, for example, of the answer that Project gave to the topic that I have opened on erotic gestures over time and that clearly expresses this concept, or there is the discussion about what it really means to be gay. In both cases it is stressed that being gay means living a dimension that is mainly emotional. I conclude by encouraging G.A. not to enter the circle of those who want everything and immediately, and not to worry too much for his girlfriend when he feels that he is deceiving her.

Now he must stand before himself and to do so it takes patience and attention. Precisely because he is the first interested person. It is not necessary for others to enter your inner sphere too soon, even if it is your girlfriend. Sometimes speaking too soon about things not yet very well defined can create considerable inconvenience, as you have rightly noted. If she loves you and if the search for the truth about you takes a new direction accepted with respect and with the utmost sincerity by you, she will notice it and will also feel that you have absolutely hidden nothing. Good luck and a good journey. Whatever it is, I wish you to be happy!

### **8.2.6 Extended gay family**

This post comes from my heart and represents a very serious reflection even if, for those who have prejudices, that is for those who believe they know and doesn't really know, what I am about to say could sound very strange.



Gay family ... ok! Built on the model of the hetero family: a stable couple with the perspective of hypothetical children, etc. etc., yes, everything seems ok ... maybe it could also be all right in another world, in another social climate, with another level of civilization and awareness. In reality, at least as long as the situation doesn't radically change at the social level the hypotheses of a gay family consisting of a stable couple and hypothetical children is an idea that serves only as a symbol of an open road to the future. But what should be the underlying motivation that holds a gay family like that together? Sex ... yes when you are young it could also seem a sufficient motivation, couple's affectivity, mutual love and support in difficult situations? Of course this could be a good cement to keep the couple together, but then there is the problem of the children ... in test tubes, with mothers for rent they would still be biological children of only one of the couple's components. But I wonder, wouldn't it make more sense to think that a gay family should not be based on any preconceived model?

Well, I have an alternative model absolutely original of gay family. For me, the gay family should be a group of solidarity and should be built on the emotional experience of loving each other. Do you want to know what my gay family model is? My model is the group of guys that has set up around Gay Project. Tell me whatever you want but I think it's really a family. We love each other, we support each other, we are friends, we talk freely, we feel accepted and sometimes I would say pampered in a typically family affective dimension. Days ago I criticized the posts of Loki and Fabiomatteo who came out a bit from the limits in which this blog must be maintained. Well I had the fear that this fact could undermine my relationship with these guys, then I talked to Fabiomatteo and I explained my point of view and nothing has gone wrong, indeed we talked in a very serious way and we said goodbye in an authentically affectionate way, with a very heartfelt "I love you!" that was not a courtesy formula at all. Then I spoke with Loki and no problem has been posed. The relationships that I have with these guys cannot go into a crisis because of banalities, the reason is only one, because we love each other and we esteem each other on a human level in a profound way, for me they are part of my family.

I mention only them but the discourse involves all the guys in a varied way. With someone, very special habits of trust and mutual attention have been created spontaneously, we share our concerns, we commit ourselves to the same goals, we are in the same situations. I receive messages of such a seriousness and depth that I have never seen in any other situation. When I have doubts, what happens to me almost every day, I find an authentic listening, an advice, a comparison. I don't feel alone, I feel that some bonds have been created and that I'm happy with these bonds.

You can tell me that this is not a family because without a couple there is no family but in my opinion it is not true. When I go to work, often in the breaks I think about the guys I know and I feel them present, I know that they are not my fantasy, that they are real guys ... and guys of very height level! Sometimes I feel bad for someone. Sometimes, if I know that there is someone who is not well, I don't sleep the whole night, if in a situation like this I cannot get in touch with them, I experience a kind of anguish... but when the contact is re-established and I can get news I feel like I was in paradise and I experience an extraordinary sense of happiness.

And what enchants me is that among us there is a deep mutual respect and an extraordinary solidarity despite the points of view sometimes very different. The idea of feeling like a group, of feeling like a family is amazing. A few days ago some Gay Project's guys met and we spent a day together. One said: "It's incredible the feeling that we've always known each other!" Basically meeting in chat and talking for hours has made us a group, a group of friends who love each other ... but I would like to use another word: has made us a family, a family without ties of kinship, a family linked only by emotional ties but a real family in which solidarity and loving each other are the only necessary things ...

When I come home from work and I switch on the computer and I find a lot of calls in chat and I see so many messages and comments on the forums ... I wonder: what would I be if I didn't have this family that created itself? I would be a small little man, with no purpose in life, one who shouldn't worry about anything but himself ... but now I feel like a lion and when I realize that even the mistakes I make (and I make a lot of mistakes!) don't are actually destructive because at the bottom of this gay family there is a true emotional bond that doesn't even collapse in front of my stupidity or my naivety, when I realize that I'm not alone and where I don't arrive others can arrive, when I realize that these others can do things a hundred times better than I can do and they actually do ... well ... then I really feel like I have a family nearby, a family that doesn't judge my mistakes but understands me and loves me, a family that supports me and comforts me, makes me feel that there are some guys who really care about me beyond all possible imagination! Guys! I love you! I dedicate this post to one of us for whom I spent last night without closing my eyes. I don't know if he will read this message but I would like to tell him that I am worried about him and that I'm close to him.

### 8.2.7 Gay love stronger than despair

I call him, I try to talk with him, he doesn't even answer me, I try to ask him if he has did it to go on, he doesn't answer me ... it means that we are back to the beginning. I feel destroyed. That's enough! I cannot take it anymore ... it's a lost match ... but what can I tell you? ...

Whatever I tell you anyway nothing will change, I should check you 24 hours a day, I should physically prevent you from risks of any kind ... I can't take it anymore ... I can no more be the witness of the disaster pretending that it is not true ... now you're not even gay anymore, now you're nothing, and even for me you're nothing, when I speak I must pretend because I know how it will end. I would have to try? ... but to do what? To make you reason? But it's impossible ... now you have only one thing in mind and you don't even understand it ... then you tell me that you love me and you think you've solved everything so, that I put my soul in peace and that's okay ... but if you love me really, stop with that fucking ... stuff!

But no, you're talking just to talk but you don't move away from that fucking stuff ... you tell me such things just to say ... but why? I do not want to hear such stupid things anymore! ... I see how you are, damn it, I see it ... and I cannot do anything. Yesterday evening you were right outside your mind, there was a wall ten meters high between us, you said: "I'm tired ... I'm not ready ..." but you were not there, in the afternoon you said at most a hundred words and always repeating the same nonsense. I cannot see similar scenes, they make me feel too bad.

A year ago you were my idol, now I'm with you only because I pity you ... and then what's the use? Tell me! What's the use? The more time passes the more I think I will not be able to get you out ... but why, my God, why? It could all be so beautiful and then everything ended up in a ruin, I felt it was going up in ruin, you always said no, but I knew it would end this way ... new friends ... friends ... those killed you and they killed me too. Do you understand? Two guys like us who found themselves and who loved each other, but what could we have hoped for more ... and everything worked well, damn it ... ! Everything worked well ... and then a year later we are reduced at this point. What have I to do? I don't know ... What should I do?

I leave everything and come to you, I cannot stay here, I cannot think that you can die and I can only wait. You were a zombie, with watery eyes, completely melted. A house in total abandonment, mold and terrible smell. You were not even on the bed but just thrown on the ground, with a long beard, with black nails. I put you back on the bed and I started cleaning the house, you did not even notice. I collected two huge bags of rubbish, I

cleaned the dishes, I cleaned the bathroom which was an incredible crap. It took me three hours and it's a one-room house. The linen was all dirty, the sheets stained with blood, I put them in the washing machine ... I removed the dust, I washed the floors but you were always completely gone.

I prepared a nice heavy tea and I brought it to you, you drank it a little, then you gave it a tug and threw a half of it on yourself, I made you get up by force and I made you drink the cup of tea I had prepared for me ... you could not stand up ... you really stank, a guy like you used to take a shower twice a day, I took you to the bathroom, I undressed you and made you sit on the bottom of the shower box, then I undressed myself ... you were reduced to being unwatchable, skin and bones ... destroyed ... I washed you as one do with a child, then I dressed you with the only clean things I found at home, very old jeans and a white t-shirt. You were a little less stunned, I made you sit on the stool in the bathroom, I cut your fingernails and toenails, I washed your hands with the toothbrush again, I cut your hair with scissors, I shaved you, you were a bit more watchable but you were so skinny to be scary.

We came back to the room. I asked you: "Where is it?", you said to me: "No, please, no ...". I began to desperately search for it, after all in a house with only one room it is not difficult to look for something ... you were sure that I wouldn't have found it ... then it came to my head that one shoe was not close to the other but it was in the bathroom, I went to take that shoe back ... and it was there. You became fierce, as I had never seen you before, a sweet guy like you turned into a fury, a fury almost reduced to a skeleton but a fury ... but you couldn't do it, you couldn't stand up, and you started crying desperately, but I threw everything in the toilet, then I came back to you. You were crying out in despair. I tried to hug you, you rejected me ... you never did before ... in those moments you hated me, I know.

At home there was nothing to eat but I could not leave you in that state to go buy something ... we had to go together, you didn't want to show you like that, but I couldn't leave you at home, then you decided and we went out. The sun bothered you, you had a headache. We arrived to the baker and took the bare minimum ... I cooked two spaghetti at home, you have eaten yes and no 30 grams ... but you have drank a little fruit juice, over the hours you seemed less stunned, you said still things a bit strange and confused but less than before.

At about four o'clock, you had a cup of tea and you ate four biscuits, then you said you were tired and went to throw yourself on the bed, but I made you put to bed properly. I did a second washing machine, I washed your shirts, underwear, t-shirts, socks and hung everything on the balcony to dry. I prepared a bit of dinner. You slept until half past nine. I lay down next to you, I looked at you, when you woke up you turned to me and you said to

me: "Thanks Cub!" And I started crying like an idiot. I know it's not over and it will be very hard to manage, but now I feel like you're there again. I know that I must not delude myself but we did the first step and for me it is very much, it is a step towards life!

### 8.2.8 Love in a gay family

Hello Project, my name is Laurence and I live in a small town in the North East, we ought to be almost the same age. The idea of this email came to me because Andrew, a young guy who changed my life, told me about your forum and I went to read it with a huge curiosity. There is a section on older gays and it is not abandoned! In short, reading I had the impression that your way of seeing things is not very far from mine, something that among gays is not so easy to find.

I am 57 years old, Andrew is 31, but I have to say right away, we are two gays but there has never been sex between us, such a thing can have passed through my mind, ok, it is a fact, as it has also passed through his mind, but it never happened, because the fear of destroying what was consolidated between us held us back. I met Andrew when he was 16 and I 42. I have been always an undeclared gay and I didn't even have gay friends. There was no internet, and if it had been there it would not have been my passion. Regarding work, at 42 I had achieved my professional accomplishment. I was a lawyer and I was dealing with divorces. One day in February 1993 a gentleman introduces himself to me with the typical way of doing of people of rather high social class and tells me that he intends to separate from his wife, but what strikes me is not the attitude of that gentleman towards his wife but his insistence that his wife had had in an extramarital relationship for many years and that their son or their alleged son would actually be the son of his wife's lover. I asked him how old was the boy and he told me 16. I accepted the cause of separation "because of the lady" telling my client that the custody of the son, especially in a condition like the one he declared, would have been granted anyway to his mother, because he actually had denied paternity but my client didn't seem upset at all and on the contrary seemed almost happy.

A few days later I called the lady to understand her reasons and after a couple of days she showed up at my studio with her son, that is with Andrew. He was already a beautiful guy, he shook my hand without any hesitation. The lady was sure that the son was son of her husband because at the time she didn't even know her friend-lover, but she didn't intend to resist the possible disavowal of the paternity. All this was quite unusual, but one thing bothered me more than all the rest: the lady, also certainly wealthy, was not in the

least disturbed by the fact that her husband wanted to separate from her by blaming her for infidelity, but seemed worried by the idea of having to keep her son in the house where she lived with her partner, who certainly wouldn't have liked cohabitating with the son of the lady.

I asked the lady to talk separately with her son. The lady was a bit perplexed but finally said yes. When I found myself alone with Andrew, face to face, I asked him why neither his father nor his mother wanted to cohabit with him, and the answer baffled me: "They don't want me because I'm gay and so I'm not even a son for them". I smiled as if to say: "But is it possible?" He smiled too. Then he made a strange gesture, for a guy his age, he took from my desk a business card of the studio and told me: "Later I'll explain, now let mom in, otherwise she worries." I called his mother and we said hello.

I don't deny that what had just happened had disturbed me and not a little, the behavior of Andrew was absolutely free and spontaneous, after the exchange of smiles he was no longer afraid of me. I thought, however, that the thing would have had no following, if not on a professional level, but it was not so.

The same evening, very late, after midnight, Andrew called me on the cell phone and always calling me by name, he kept talking with me for a long time. I'm wary by nature, so I spoke in a formal way, because I was afraid of being registered, but here and there I let go out a few words of encouragement. We talked almost two hours. In the following days almost the same thing happened almost every day. I canceled all my commitments in the evening because I knew that Andrew would call me. It was nice to talk to him, step by step we came to talk about everything.

I did not know whether to tell him that I was gay too, it could be a very dangerous thing, but then I told him, he replied that he understood it from the beginning and that for this he had taken my business card. Slowly I too put aside all my perplexities. Andrew talked about everything, even about sex and in a very serious way and, what could seem incredible, I did the same with him, I talked about me, my desires, my dreams and he answered me as one who knows exactly what to say and how to say it.

The legal proceeding came to define the separation of the parents and Andrew was entrusted to his mother and he was yet 17 and a half years old and basically we were on the phone every night. The thing was absolutely normal, his mother didn't know it and when she saw him on the phone she thought he was talking to another guy. One day in March of 94 (I don't say the day), Andrew turns 18, I wish him well. I had told him I would have a little party at my house. He shows up at six in the evening with two huge suitcases and tells me: "What is my room?" I look at him puzzled and he says: "I don't want to stay at my mother's house a minute longer!" We prepare his room.

Needless to say, I was happy.

Andrew then attended the second classic (the twelfth class). I felt like I was about to embody a new role, that of Dad. He looks at me and says: "Why don't you adopt me?" I quickly take stock of the situation. I no longer had parents and I have no siblings, so what he was asking me for would not have undermined anything. I answer him: "Yes we can, yes!" He hugs me and messes up my hair, then crouches down on the couch cross-legged and tells me: "It will be not so bad! But in the meantime you have to start to assume such a role properly."

The next day there were the talks with the teachers, he urged me to go with him to the talks. I asked him if the professors knew his parents, but he said that neither his father nor his mother had ever gone to speak with the teachers. The night before he tells me about the school, the teachers, about what I had to say. The next afternoon I make my debut as a dad. Andrew was good at school, indeed very good, and I tried to do my part well. The professor of Mathematics told me that it was a pleasure to meet me and that I had to be proud of having a son like Andrew! I cannot deny that I felt in seventh heaven!

Over time, the relationship with Andrew has become very strong. When he had a boy I saw him happy and he talked to me about it. This, although it may seem strange, has never created any problem. Andrew was so moderate: he never drank alcohol, he never smoked, he didn't like going to parties. I already loved him then with all my soul. Sometimes with the guys he had bad experiences, that is, he deluded himself a lot, whenever he had to face the disappointment, he sat in an armchair and said to me: "What do you do when you're sad?" And we kept talking for hours.

In April of 98, our life changed. Andrew met Peter, a very good guy, also 21 years old. At the beginning it seemed like one of Andrew's usual stories, important but relative, then he told me that he wanted to try to live alone with Peter. That was the most difficult time for me. I was afraid of losing Andrew but not only I haven't lose him but I also found Peter. I had a studio, a kind of attic with a single room but very large. We furnished it and Andrew and Peter went to live there, on the fifth floor, I lived on the second, at the beginning they were a little on their own, then slowly they started coming to lunch every day at my house, then even at dinner, at the end, in practice they lived in my house and went to the fifth floor just to sleep.

We've been living like this for 10 years now. Now both Andrew and Peter work and they could very well buy a little house to live on their own, but they don't leave. We spend 15 days together in the summer all the three of us and we go around Europe. Even Peter is a very good guy, even he is an unwanted child. They treat me like a dad, for me it's a wonderful thing,

when they leave on their own they call me twice a day so as not to worry me. By now they are no longer two boys but they are two adult men. I have a little fear of old age because I could create problems for them, but they pamper me in an incredible way.

There is only one thing, stupid perhaps, that I miss a little, they always call me Laurence while I would like them to call me dad, but perhaps they didn't even think about it. Now we are basically a strange family: a man of 57 and two of thirty-one. If I look back to my past, my gay dream was another, I also wanted to live the couple life like Andrew and Peter, I wanted to have a sexual life, which I only had between 30 and 35 years old and with a person who has always told me a lot of lies and who then suddenly disappeared without even saying hello. As a young man I wanted a world like Andrew's and Peter's but I didn't have it, but in old age things have changed for me and I think I can say I have lived a full-blown fatherhood. I feel like a daddy, they treat me like a dad, so lovingly. There are people who say that the family is the so-called normal one formed by a straight couple and children, that is a family of blood, ok, it's a fact, but mine, that of Andrew and Peter, why should it not be considered a family? I don't say of myself, for heaven's sake, but these two guys, why don't they have any protection in the name of the protection of marriage? What's that got to do with it? They love each other and love me. But is it possible that all this doesn't have to count for anything? When they will need someone it will not be the family of origin to remember them, but they will have to help each other. If I didn't have these two guys I would be just an old man who would end up being looked after by a caregiver or some institution, if I have a future it's because they are there and because they love me, but all of this on a social level counts for nothing!

Now, Project, publish this story so that someone reads it because it is not a fantasy but it is a testimony to the truth, that truth that so many people don't want to hear, is a testimony to the seriousness of gay guys and to the things they are capable of, if only they find people willing to love them.

Laurence

### 8.2.9 A gay coach falls in love in the gym

Hello Project,

I am a 24 years old guy, I'm told to be a nice guy, at least the girls are convinced of it. I've always been a 360° sportsman, from football to athletics, swimming, volleyball. I should finish my studies quickly and start my professional activity that with sport has nothing to do and, to be honest, I don't like at all, but now I'm too far to change course. In short, a little



unexpectedly, just to have some money in my pocket, I started working as a trainer in a gym 24 hours a week. This is a serious job and sometimes even stressing, they put me in good standing with a good contract and regularly pay the contributions to the Social Security. I think that this work is very important for people like me who maybe could wait years before really starting earning.

The gym is large and also has a pool, in practice it is a sports center in all respect. Gym trainers are several, both men and women and then there are inspectors sent by the administration who come to see how you work and based on what you do you are moved from one course to another according to your professional skills. I started with the elderly, over 50, I originally had to deal with only those, not exactly the best for a gym trainer, because inspectors entrust groups of over 50 years old men and women to the last hired gym trainers, now I work 12 hours with over 50 men and 12 hours with a group 18 to 24 years old, practically my age, I spend a half of the 12 hours doing general gymnastics, girls and guys together, the other half is spent caring about strength improvement using training machines, obviously groups are divided into men and women. I also have the task of accompanying guys to external athletic fields when they go for races or for selections, and for such things they pay me apart, but it is usually a single morning per week or every 15 days.

All this would be commonplace, you work and you work very seriously and are checked and you earn well, doing something you like and so you come to the point that you start to think of slowing down the university's commitment, I don't like at all, to devote myself entirely to the gym training activity, even though for a gay guy the sports center environment is really rewording, I'm just fine with guys, there is a very warm and pleasant climate, and then non-competitive sporting environments or the competitive ones but at medium-low level, like this one, are quiet and I would say also clean from all points of view.

The nakedness in the locker room doesn't create any embarrassment neither that of others nor mine, I'm so used to these things that nakedness is something absolutely natural for me. The changing rooms are divided by gender but I'm only there for a short time because I have very well defined training times for each group, I happen to be in the locker room more frequently in the mornings when guys go to the stadium but there is no embarrassment at all.

What I would like to talk about is something different and refers to a guy 22 years old who comes to train with me in the gym and causes me a little embarrassment. I was his trainer from January to March, then the administration changed my working shifts and I went to another group with different

times.

He knew about my change of group and he too changed group and times and in order to have anyhow me as a trainer, or at least this is what I think. When I saw him I was pleased and he told me that he had changed because for him times of my group were the most comfortable, but I hadn't asked him for any explanation. I'm convinced that Daniel, let's call him Daniel, has changed his group to be with me. I don't mind at all because he's a very nice guy, but I don't know what to do, I do not know how to behave.

He's a little clumsy, not with training machines, nay he's well trained, but speaks very little, is very shy, when he is with others, sometimes he smiles but smiles just for politeness. In the gym usually guys form pairs of friends, but he tends to stand aside, even with me he speaks very little but when I congratulate him he smiles at me in a way that touches me strongly. This is a behavior that definitely has a meaning, he wants to communicate something but I don't know how to break the ice. For the rest everything is perfectly normal, he takes shower with other guys, because once I looked at him pretending it was casually, he talks with others about generic issues and maybe some talk goes deeper than those on technical issues referring to the training. Project, what can I do? With Daniel I feel embarrassed, I would like to talk with him but I'm always at the wrong place at the wrong time, on the contrary I'm very casual with others but never with him! This puts me in a crisis and I think he is aware of these things. Only once, at the stadium, I was able to exchange a few words with him, our talking was very slow and difficult, but very significant, the contents were vague, elusive, but you could see the desire to continue talking. The whole thing lasted no more than 15 minutes, a very long time for Daniel.

Who is Daniel? I don't know, I don't know anything about him. It seems like a great guy and I would like to know more about him. I tell you, Project, I don't care whether he's gay or straight but I would like to have a role in his life, even a minor role, but a real role. I don't know if I'm in love with Daniel, for other guys I took heavy crushes, Daniel is a different thing, how can I explain it to you? I wish he were happy, this is the center of the whole thing. If he changed group to be with me, as I think, there must be a reason. Lately here something else happened that made me feel happy. One day the administration had to close down the gym for technical checks and it was necessary to alert guys that the training session had been moved and obviously the administration asked coaches to call guys. When I called Daniel it was not like when I called the others, the call lasted a few seconds more and was not at all formal, the other usually say "oh, ok, thank you," and that's it, he said "... I'm pleased to hear you ... I understand, ok, bye!" The voice wanted to communicate something and I told him: "I'm pleased too! See

you tomorrow Danny!"

You can tell me that are just platitudes and that I'm building a castle on these things, but the feeling I have is that are not trivial things. How do you break the ice in such a situation? I feel embarrassed and at the same time I think that with this guy I could create a serious relationship, to what degree I don't know, but something tender, sweet, this causes me a feeling of immense tenderness, it's not a sexual interest in the sense that it's given usually to this expression, I would hug him, I'd like to let him know that I'm here, that I think about him, but I would not be intrusive, I would respect all his privacy.

I'm not used to this kind of relationships. With the guys I knew before, even those straight, for which I had lost my mind, in the end it wasn't difficult to get to an explicit talking, with Daniel everything is in a situation almost of stalemate, there are small movements or at least this is my impression: a smile a bit more casual, some exchange of glances (what a thrill when it happens!) and then his physical presence that began to be desired, I can't wait for the days when I work out with him. Usually others sometimes take some time off for themselves, he never does. When we do general gymnastics with the mixed group, he always chooses a location to the far left and in the moments before and after the training he does not talk to anyone neither girls nor guys. Some girl tried to exchange a few words with him, but were just a few words.

Now, when he is present, I feel less relaxed with other guys, as if I thought that maybe I would bother him and that's why I keep a more formal behavior also with other guys. Does this mean being in love? I do not know, of course it's all very different from other situations I experienced, it's all very slow but nonetheless I feel a strange sense of security, I don't know what to do but I have the idea or rather the clear feeling that it is a thing very important, a contact of another kind, perhaps, but anyhow something real, I know he is there, I have no doubt, I don't know what he could expect from me, but I know that for him I'm somehow important and perhaps more than just a little. I did not do anything to discourage him in any situation, on the contrary I let him know that I would like to create a stronger relationship. On the one hand he tends to escape, but for the other I have the distinct impression that he is very tempted to take a step forward.

But, Project, are there gay guys like Daniel? I didn't ever find one like this. Is it really possible that he is afraid? And then afraid of what? I try to show him first of all my absolute respect and my sympathy and maybe I'd take a step forward in terms of exchanging a few words or having a drink after workout, because in the end it could also be done, I don't see what he should be afraid of. And if, as I think, it was he the one to take the first step, that

is changing the group, why did he stop at the first step? Whatever he wants from me it would still make sense to try to get it. But I behave with him exactly the same way. I would hate to lose a great possibility only because of mutual, apparently relevant but totally unjustified fears.

Now I have his mobile number, because when I called to move training shifts I saved his mobile number, I'd like to call or send a text message, but I feel frozen, I'm afraid of being intrusive. Project, I have never behaved like that before, I've never been so hesitant. I think if nothing has changed until Christmas, I'll send a text message with my best wishes to all the guys of the group, but I'd send to him a different message, a little more personal, at least I think I can do that.

This guy is very important to me, Project, sometimes I dream that we have really broken the ice and how nice it would be staying close to each other, being able to cuddle him a bit and see that he is happy. I wonder if I'm raving but maybe in a year things will even go as I would like. What is certain is that I find myself thinking often of Daniel but with affection, tenderness, it's a very sweet thought, I remember his smile, the hesitation in his voice on the phone. With the other guys I never experienced such things, it was all much easier and much faster, and above all, I never felt the same sense of tenderness I feel for him and I start to think that in the end what I'm experiencing now is really love, something sweet that I had never felt before. Project, I'm writing this post because reading your blog I had the feeling that you could understand the real meaning of what I'm experiencing now, and then I want you to publish it, I think it would be nice if Daniel, reading your blog, could find our story! I dream that things can be that way!

A big hug.

### 8.2.10 Viscous gay relationships

Hello Project, I'm a 22-year-old guy, from Lombardy, who has felt gay from the beginning, no problem of acceptance. I call you because I think I got into trouble. I am in love for two years now with a beautiful guy I know very superficially, I don't know if he is gay or not, I tried to understand it, but only spying a bit on his behavior. This guy works in a bar near the university. Needless to say that I always go there to have breakfast, he was formal at the beginning, then he started to smile to me a bit and now when he sees me he says hello but we never talked neither a bit. It's been about two years since I see that guy and every time I see him I feel a knot in my stomach.

He's not just beautiful, it's sweet but sweet as only a guy can be sweet. I'm at the point that if in the morning he is not there or he doesn't tell me his

magical "hello" I feel bad, I miss him, I miss him just so damned. He has a beautiful, sexy voice in the most beautiful sense of the term. In practice it is now two years that I masturbate only thinking of him, the other fantasies have all passed away. I dream of being near him, of feeling his warmth of being able to hug him and then all the rest, I don't write it but you can imagine it. I think that with him I would be very sweet. I told myself a thousand times that it makes no sense but for me there is only him, that is, I don't think that any other guy could be able to make me experience what I experience with him. On him, unfortunately rarely, I make erotic dreams of an indescribable sweetness, just the sweetest things one could ever imagine. A smile and a hello coming from that guy make me happy.

But there is another part of my life that really keeps me in anguish. I have a cousin who is a year older than me and who attends my same faculty, let's call him Mark. Last summer our families went to the beach together and so we saw each other every day. I have known him from childhood because he is my cousin but we didn't see each other very much because he lived for many years in another city. Once, at the seaside, we started talking about sex. He began to say that he had never had a girlfriend, that he felt alone, that he was afraid that he would remain alone all life long and things like that, but he was very hesitant, he said that his life would never make sense, he was almost crying, I had never seen him like this.

The speech became very engaging I had the intuition that my cousin was gay and then I loosed my self-control and I made him guess that I was gay too. We hugged, at first it was instinctive but then that hug lasted a bit too much and was too tight and I began to feel not at ease and I turned Mark away and he felt very bad and got caught up in despair. I didn't I know what to do, and I embraced him again, but again I didn't like it but I couldn't move him away again and then I tolerated it, but I should say that I suffered it. He did nothing, he just hugged me, but there was something excessive that I didn't like.

Then we came home and that day ended so, everything seemed quite normal. But over time Mark began to get too much interested in me, he always wanted to be with me, when I went out with my friends he pouted and it seemed that he felt really bad and maybe he felt really bad and then I sometimes started to give up hanging out with my friends because of him. I had never done it! In practice I could never go out with anyone else, only with my cousin!

For a while he limited himself to this, then he began to feel guilty because he fell in love with me and I had to try to tell him that there was no fault in this, but it was not enough for him and he wanted me to tell him that I was in love with him, and so even unwillingly I ended up telling him it

because I couldn't resist and then he started to analyze the phrases that I had been forced to tell him, reflecting on every single word, he told me that I was holding myself back too much and that I had to dare a lot more with him.

One day he tells me that he must confess to me a terrible thing and after an endless story (I felt sorry for him) he tells me that he masturbated thinking of me. I tell him that more or less I expected it and that it didn't upset me too much, but it was not enough for him, he wanted to know if I had ever masturbated thinking of him, but I had in mind the guy of the bar and thinking of Mark as a sexual fantasy didn't even go through my mind.

He asks me who I think of when I do it and I tell him I think of the guy of the bar. He submits me to an interrogation, he wants to know what I did with that guy, I tell him: nothing! At the beginning he doesn't believe it, then he asks me if he's gay, I tell him I don't know and he gives me a whole sermon about the fact that it makes no sense to fall in love with a straight guy. I know that in theory it is so but in the first place the guy of the bar could also be gay and I think he is gay, and secondly, in every sense, an hetero like the guy of the bar is better than a gay like my cousin.

After this talk he got a bit detached from me but he started not to leave the house anymore, my aunt was worried, she told me: Mark feels really bad, but what happened to him? But do you know anything about it? I told my aunt that I didn't know anything, but in the end they forced me many times to go out with my cousin.

The embarrassment could be cut with a knife, I just didn't want him to get close to me and I kept him at a distance and he was very upset. In practice now he comes to class just to see me, not even to talk to me, because we don't speak at all, but he must let his presence weigh, it seems to me an emotional blackmailing. He's always distracted, I don't think he'll ever take an exam. He feels betrayed by me, but I never encouraged him, exactly never, he did everything by himself.

But the problem is not even the fact that he is nagging but the fact that I see him really bad, he seems one that really suffers. Now, tell me, what should I do? If it were for me maybe I would go close to him and I would try to maintain a relationship, but it would not be the relationship he wants. That is, if I keep him away from me it's bad for him, if I get close to him, it's all the same because it's not what he wants. So how should I behave? I would not be bad with Mark because after all with me he has always been honest and he never put me in really unpleasant situations, but I don't want to end up having to say (or, worse, to do) things I don't want to say (or to do). Perhaps my problem is a bit unusual but for the moment it is my real problem.

# Chapter 9

## GAY SEX EDUCATION

### 9.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 9.1.1 Acquisition of basic concepts: male, female, couple and family

This chapter is dedicated to sex education, with particular regard to the sex education of gay boys. All education, and therefore also sex education, aims to convey systems of values and to distinguish between right and wrong, moral and immoral, normal and not normal, basically, the sex education can be taken as a guide to distinguish what is to be accepted from what is to be rejected. Here I will use the categories of normal and non-normal.

Before sex education in the strict sense, there is a phase of acquisition of concepts that will be taken as fundamental postulates, as obvious, somehow natural and indisputable structures of society, and in this sense will be considered normal. This phase begins very early; the contents transmitted include the difference between boy and girl, the behaviors assumed as typical of the boy and those assumed as typical of the girl, the idea of the family, like father, mother and children, and also the idea of couple. And it is precisely through the acquisition of the concept of heterosexual couple as a normal thing or better as the normal thing that the discrimination of homosexuality begins because, even if subliminally, everything else is automatically put out of the boarder of normality.

The couples that appear in the comics of Walt Disney are always heterosexual: Donald Duck and Daisy, Mickey Mouse and Minnie, Horace and Clarabelle, etc. etc. and couples are presented by insisting on different attitudes of the male and female. Daisy is flirtatious and vain, Donald Duck is blunderer and clumsy. Minnie is attentive to beauty and self-care, Mickey Mouse is

concerned with investigating and solving police cases, but inevitably Donald Duck is in love with Daisy and Mickey Mouse with Minnie. The child, well before being able to understand what falling in love means, assumes that it is normal and obvious that a couple is made up of a boy and a girl. These messages, subliminal and pounding at the same time, constitute a substantial educational push not to heterosexuality in itself but to consider heterosexuality normal before knowing what it is about.

### 9.1.2 School books and heterosexual culture

The transmission of messages that underline the normality of heterosexuality continues to adulthood through many ways. Whoever has a school book in his hands that speaks of literature will notice that the point of view of the book, while having all the appearance of objectivity, is in all cases the typical hetero point of view. It is enough to say that the stories of love they talk about are, except for very rare exceptions, heterosexual stories and in the very rare cases in which stories with homosexual background are mentioned, which in the ancient world were not very rare and therefore cannot be omitted at 100%, the way to deal with the topic is substantially different from that used to describe heterosexual stories. Examples of couples of famous lovers, such as Paolo and Francesca, Abelard and Eloisa, Lancelot and Guinevere, and down to Renzo and Lucia and up to the contemporaries, are always made up of heterosexual couples.

### 9.1.3 Sex education through films and television

Even on television there are basically only stories of heterosexual love or passion. The appearance of television series centered on homosexuality, like the famous "Queer as folk", is something that is spoken about a lot, almost an event, because it is absolutely exceptional, and we must keep in mind that in these series, homosexuality is presented as a social phenomenon perfectly structured in itself and substantially separate from the ordinary hetero world, the normality of gay reality is not at all emphasized, just the stereotype is stressed, that is gay reality is presented not in its complexity and its ordinariness but through a particular gay reality very ritualized, that one represented by the mass media, which is objectively only a little section of gay reality but risks to be mistaken for the totality of the real gay world. Basically, given the general invisibility of the most relevant part of the gay world, i.e. of undeclared gays, the images of homosexuality that can be found in the cinema, on television or in comics (where they start timidly to appear), are only those of the gay visible world, with its collective rituals



and its stereotypes, they are images that are very far from the real life of the vast majority of gays and, moreover, for needs related to the show, they are presented with particular tones and with a particular underlining.

Gays almost never appear on TV as ordinary people who one can meet in everyday life. Except for very few exceptions, the idea of gay presence in society as a normal component of society itself still has no place in cinema and literature. The images used by advertising are often full of sexual allusions, even very explicit and they are almost always allusions to heterosexual sexuality. The very rare images that allude to gay couples or to contents referring to homosexuality are often the cause of scandal and are remembered above all for their exceptional nature and for the controversies they have provoked.

#### **9.1.4 Sex education and sport**

Also sport helps to underline the idea of heterosexuality as normality and therefore of homosexuality as deviance. Discussions on the presence or absence of gay players in the national teams or in other teams are very indicative of this trend. Coaches and players are quick to point out that there are no gays in their teams, which is like saying that there are no pathological cases and that everything is normal.

#### **9.1.5 Sex education and religion**

The attitudes of total closure of the Catholic Church with respect to homosexuality are well known. The Church doesn't limit itself to reaffirming the centrality of the heterosexual couple but states a prejudicial sentence and without appeal against homosexuality. The official documents of the Church, beyond impromptu interviews showing apparently conciliatory tones, are and remain among the manifestations of the more radical intolerance towards homosexuality.

It could be objected that the television series, the comics, the attitudes of the Church or those of the sports world are not true forms of sex education, it remains the fact that all or almost all the messages coming from those educational agencies and directed to the boys who are growing, expose them to messages endowed with a communicative power far superior to that of any form of classical sex education, such messages contain repeated and concordant underlining of the normality of heterosexuality and therefore of the non-normality of homosexuality. The condemnation of homosexuality is implicit but it is and is understood as very clear.

### **9.1.6 Parents and sex education**

It should be added that, in all this, the attitudes and expectations of the family have an enormous weight. Parents very rarely worry about the possibility that the boy can be gay and behave with him by taking absolutely for granted that they are dealing with a heterosexual boy and therefore they always believe they are legitimized to project their expectations into the boy and to direct him in the direction that, in good faith, they judge the most appropriate for the boy himself.

### **9.1.7 Sex education: taboo and scandal**

Sexuality, all sexuality, is still affected by a category of religious origin, that is, by the idea of taboo, of the forbidden, and therefore of the transgression. About sexuality one can also speak but always in general terms, by categories, never explicitly and with reference to oneself. Sexuality, in other words, is not considered a normal topic of conversation, it is something that should be omitted, at least for good education. The idea of the taboo implies that of the scandal, and the idea that one can create a scandal is very significant and also lucrative, because often scandal means publicity and also money, and consequently newspapers, magazines and gossip blogs put the sexuality of a person on the streets when that sexuality turns out to be not normal, especially when it comes to conjugal betrayals or homosexuality.

### **9.1.8 Building one's own concept of sexuality**

Naturally, the boys, with the maturity, gradually build their own idea of sexuality and, if they are gay, specifically of homosexuality, which progressively detaches from the concepts learned in a subliminal way in childhood and early adolescence. In other words, with the passing of the years boys open their eyes and realize that the reality of sexuality, in general, is very different from ideal models, and that the model of marriage as a natural love union of a man and a woman if it's considered for what it really is, shows all its fragility, so much so that in Italy the majority of marriages don't hold up over time and that, as regards homosexuality, in particular, reality is totally different from how it is represented. The weight of the internet in this path towards awareness is often decisive.

### 9.1.9 Repressive sex education

It is much easier to talk seriously and without sexual taboos with a 35/40-year-old man than with an 18/20 year-old boy who is still deeply conditioned by behavioral patterns and interpretation patterns of external origin. There are still many young people in their twenties who don't have a realistic idea of how others experience sexuality. I would add that there are twenty-year-old guys who are literally terrified by the idea that something of their sexuality can leak to their parents.

In some circles, even today, gay guys suffer real forms of violent repression that unfortunately leads them to make choices that over time will prove devastating for their emotional life and for their personal balance. I happen to talk to guys over 20 who have never before had any chance to talk seriously about their sexuality. Talking with these guys allows us to understand the depth of their discomfort and the need for them to be reassured in order to be able to look at the future with concrete hope.

To get out of certain environments and earn a true autonomy it takes a huge effort and guys are often completely abandoned to themselves and discouraged in their every attempt to emancipate themselves and to build a better perspective. Very often families are totally incapable of realizing the difficulties of their sons or are inclined to consider as a priority the traditional way of life in order to maintain a reputation at least apparent in front of people. In some circles, even today, a 20-year-old boy cannot afford not to have a girlfriend if he doesn't want to be substantially marginalized. The state of suffering caused by these situations is really heavy. Here not only is there no sexual education to freedom and responsibility but there is a real form of educational violence that doesn't propose but imposes coercive behavior patterns through very heavy forms of masked blackmailing. This imposition attitude is opposed to that of complete indifference which is instead characteristic of environments that are considered more open and free.

### 9.1.10 Risks of obscurantism and prohibition

It should be emphasized that, for the boys, talking seriously about sexuality and clarifying their doubts in this matter is fundamental and the absence of any form of comparison ends up inducing them to seek answers away from the daily dimension, in environments that seem the most suitable to acquire concrete knowledge on the subject of sexuality and in particular of homosexuality. I speak primarily of the pornography, which presents models, apparently gratifying and simple, endowed with a force of persuasion well beyond that of words.

Obscurantist or prohibitionist attitudes regarding sexuality have effects that are exactly opposite to those envisaged. If the parents, the school, the Church and the sports environment consider sexuality to be a taboo, boys will go in search of spaces where they can obtain information in a clear way and can even live their first experiences, through the internet, first of all through pornography and then through erotic chats and dating sites. The huge number of people who use these sites is largely due to the absence of any form of sex education at the family or school level, as well as, obviously, to the repression of sexual spontaneity.

### 9.1.11 Pornography on the net

In the past years pornography on the Internet was presented with criteria of strong aggression and in very stereotypical forms, the access to the sites was generally for a fee and the presence of dialers to charge the user very high telephone charges was a deterrent that helped to keep the vast majority of young boys out of those environments. Today things have changed, the free porn sites, which are financed exclusively by theme advertising, are many and recently the blogs created by individual users to collect photos from the web and to republish them, are widely spreading; this is the phenomenon of re-blogging, which has a particular meaning when it comes to erotic sites (these sites are not about explicit pornography but show content vaguely related to sexuality, such as nude photos or short movies taken by a candid camera, with some sexual implication). The re-blogging has led to the creation of sites that have nothing to do with the old heavy pornography, that was present on the Internet years ago, these sites are managed with good taste, sometimes they have no commercial purposes and it is not surprising that they have a public in progressive increase. Even these blogs with an erotic theme, however, inevitably present behavior patterns.

Pornography and today also the re-blogging of erotic content constitute for many gay guys the sexual model of reference, somehow a true sex education. It should be kept in mind that the boys' approach to pornography starts very early and that the first contact usually takes place between 13 and 14 years, if not even before, that is at an extremely receptive age regarding contents related to sexuality.

The use of pornography is closely connected with masturbation and is, above all for straight boys, even a topic of discussion with peers. For them, talking about these things with their friends is certainly possible and not risky, for gay boys it is easy to realize from the speeches of almost all the other boys that the sexuality of those boys is different and it is easy to come to the wrong conclusion that there is something wrong with gay sexuality.

For a straight boy the messages coming from pornography are filtered through the speeches made with friends and have a less important value than for a gay boy, who on those topics generally doesn't have the possibility of interpersonal comparison. I would add that the first sexual relationships of heterosexual boys are generally considerably more anticipated than those of gay boys and present themselves as a sort of recognition of a fully gained adulthood, for gay boys instead, masturbation on the basis of pornography replaces for very long periods any form of sexuality experienced with other guys and ends up consolidating the models offered by pornography.

### **9.1.12 Sex education delegated to Church and pornography**

In social contexts, such as the Italian one, in which moralism dominates and in which sex is the most widespread and rooted educational taboo, there is no serious form of sexual education given through institutional and lay channels, that is, not affected by prejudices of religious origin, which means that the sexual education of boys is almost totally delegated to the Church and pornography.

Although the conditioning weight of the education given by the Church is in many cases still significant, the element that really dominates the sexual education of boys in today's Italy is certainly pornography via the Internet. Given that in fact a very delicate educational task is up to the pornography, putting apart any consideration about the parents' awareness and the absolute inadequacy of such educational delegation, let us ask ourselves if it pornography really able to perform such a task at least by showing the true gay sexuality as it is actually experienced, or if pornography, for market purposes only, shows something substantially different from reality, in particular, let us ask ourselves if and how gay pornography influences the true sexuality of gays, beyond the fact that it represents gay sexuality more or less correctly.

### **9.1.13 Hetero-gay and gay-gay models of gay relationship**

Let's start from the definition of heterosexual male (hetero) as a male person who falls in love both on an emotional and sexual level with women or girls, and of homosexual male (or gay) as a male person who falls in love both on the emotional and sexual level with men or guys.

According to the common notion, a "male homosexual" or, briefly, a "homo-

sexual” relationship, emotional or sexual, is a relationship ”between two male persons”, but it is clear that, regarding the sexual orientation, in fact, the situations that can occur are two and are clearly different from each other. If the relationship is created between two gays we will talk about gay-gay relationship, if on the contrary it is created between a heterosexual and a gay we will talk about a hetero-gay relationship. It should not be surprising that hetero-gay relationships exist, because a heterosexual, who ”falls in love” affectionately and sexually only with women or girls, can nevertheless, for various reasons, build also sexual relationships, generally without a true affective component, with gay guys, the phenomenon, indeed, is quite common even today and has been even more common in the XIX century, as we will see in the section on gay sexuality. Historically, hetero-gay and gay-gay relationships were born in very different eras and have been structured according to very different models.

#### **9.1.14 Hetero-gay relationship**

In past times, heterosexual men of high social class, strongly frustrated in their heterosexual sexuality because of arranged marriages, were led to find an outlet for their sexuality in sexual adventures with prostitutes, or in true ancillary loves, socially denied but substantially tolerated because apparently they didn’t undermine the institution of marriage.

The heterosexuality of young people of high social rank was often frustrated by marriages in which the wife was objectively socially superior to her husband, who ended up orbiting her family and depending on her income and property. Basically a heterosexual man could feel himself as an object bought from his wife’s family. The tendency to escape from the grip of marriage was sometimes noticeable but there were certainly inhibitory brakes represented by religion and the feelings of guilt in sexual matters inspired by the religion, as well as by the fact that the crisis of a marriage could weigh negatively on the family budgets of the husband. Clearly, in these situations, the breakup of a marriage, seen objectively as a real trap, in which one had entered in total inexperience and on the basis of family pressures, could find a tolerable alternative in having a lover.

Looking for a lover, she too of a high social level, would have led to the possibility of recreating relationships of dependence substantially similar to those already experienced in the marriage and moreover the relationship with a lover would have been difficult to dissimulate due to the fact that wife and lover were from the same environment, it would have been be much easier to find a lover of low social level, whose loyalty would have been guaranteed by his own need for money, here too the logic of ”buying love” returns, but it is

not a form of brutal prostitution but something much more complex in which noble feelings also intervened, such as the tendency to protect the poor girl and to emancipate her from the risks of true prostitution, that would have been far more aggressive and humiliating.

Love stories of this kind have been common at the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth century and have fueled so much literature. If the heterosexual man of high society meets a poor but faithful girl who is objectively in love with him, the relationship can become stable and also very gratifying, it being understood that it could never be transformed into marriage because of the enormous difference in social level. The story of Cinderella represents, in a very ennobled form, a relationship of love between a poor girl and her noble and rich lover.

It should be emphasized that the relationships of hetero men with their lovers also had a not negligible component of power, the difference of social class played a fundamental role and was the basis of a completely asymmetrical relationship: the girl was totally dependent on her lover not only on an economic level but also on a cultural level, she was generally illiterate, while her lover was a man who had received a refined education and frequented high society circles. At the time, the condition of women of low social level, was of clear subordination and, in general, a poor girl who was aware of being courted by a wealthy gentleman, was very careful not to claim an impossible parity. On this basis the relationships between a rich heterosexual man and his lover could last for years and be basically gratifying for both.

It also happened that sometimes the escapes from marriage towards loves with other women of low social class were far from gratifying for the girl's venality, for her infidelity and, more rarely, for her reluctance to accept a relationship that however would have left her in a state of submission. In such situations, a rich heterosexual man ended up mixing a resentment towards his wife with a more general resentment towards the female universe, perceived as dominant and venal at all levels and felt himself for a verse dominated by his wife and for the another conditioned and almost blackmailed by the lover. In these cases, and not infrequently, it happened that rich heterosexual men developed important sympathies not towards girls but towards guys of lower social status: grooms, servants, but also peasants and economically independent workers.

Homosexual prostitution existed even then, but it was much more limited than heterosexual one; "heterosexual" men who fled from the female world, in general, didn't turn to male prostitution but tended to build stable relationships with some guys, such relationships were basically similar to those that, under more favorable conditions, they would have built with poor girls. The risks for the partner of the highest social level, in this type of rela-

tionship, consisted essentially in the possibility of being blackmailed by the partner of the lower social level, while the risks for the partner of the lower social level consisted in the possibility of being faced with some form of vulgar prostitution disguised as a long-term loving relationship.

In the "Maurice" of Forster, the wealthy bourgeois Maurice tends to show his deep respect for the gamekeeper Scudder, not only he never remarks the social difference that separates him from Scudder, as would do a rich heterosexual guy looking for a hetero-gay relationship but he tends to build up its relationship with Scudder from the first moment on a level of genuine equality, which is a sign of a true gay-gay relationship. Maurice, however, initially expresses the same fears of being blackmailed that would a rich heterosexual bourgeois in search of a hetero-gay relationship would have expressed. To make Scudder understand that he was in love with him as a true gay, Maurice must show Scudder his deep emotional interest, beyond the merely sexual interest. When Maurice fears that Scudder is about to emigrate, he doesn't limit himself to saying goodbye, giving him some money and that's it, as a rich bourgeois implied in a hetero-gay relationship would have done, starting from the idea that, once Scudder had left, it would not have been difficult to find a substitute; Maurice is genuinely upset by the idea of losing Scudder, which in his eyes is not replaceable, and looks for him anxiously, until he finds him again and the two reach the certainty that they will never leave each other anymore.

I emphasize one fundamental thing: from the point of view of the rich heterosexual man who builds an extra-matrimonial relationship, a heterosexual relationship and a homosexual one are very different things, in a heterosexual relationship, a heterosexual man finds a gratification that can be very deep, accompanied by a sense of total freedom and emotional and sexual reciprocity, in other words, a heterosexual man can fall in love with the poor girl, while nothing similar can happen in a story with a guy, who would always be seen as the "substitute for a woman" not worthy to particular attention. Having clarified the point of view of the rich hetero man in the hetero-gay relationship, we try to understand who the guys were to whom these men addressed. First of all, they were not male prostitutes able to go indifferently for money with both men and women, they were, in most cases, homosexual guys, i.e. guys who fell in love both sexually and emotionally with guys or men and who dreamed of a stable relationship.

I emphasize that in the lower social environments, male prostitution was somehow accepted and justified on the basis of an economic necessity, while homosexuality was tacitly tolerated but was not socially accepted. The cohabitation of two men was a fact deemed unacceptable, precisely because homosexuality was never considered as a normal and possible condition of



life. In such circumstances, homosexuals guys were extremely sensitive to any signal coming from other guys in terms of words or body attitudes, they were always looking for any element that could fuel the hope that, in their environment, there was another gay guy.

The expression of availability shown by some men of high social class, tired of their marriage and of the female world in general, made gay guys of lower social class believe that finally they had found another homosexual guy in love with them, and in this way gay guys were urged to show in turn availability.

It is in this climate that the so-called hetero-gay relations developed, on the one hand a rich heterosexual in a moment of rebellion towards the female world, who sought the "substitute of a girl" to vent its sexuality and exercise its sense of domination, and on the other a poor gay guy who dreamed of finding another gay guy with whom to create a stable relationship. These relationships, the so-called hetero-gay relationships, were totally modeled on hetero sexuality and considered the virile role as an exclusive prerogative of the dominant male, i.e. of the hetero male. By virile role we mean the role of one who is active in anal penetration and offers one's own sex to the attentions of the other in the oral intercourse. Obviously, the gays were assigned the complementary female roles.

Hetero-gay relationships have been a frequent reality until the 1960s of the twentieth century and beyond. In hetero-gay relationships, roles are fixed: hetero male is active and gay is passive. But I add another observation, in this conception of sexuality sexual intercourse is aimed at anal penetration that appears as the most important and conclusive element of the intercourse, the rest is only seen as a preparation. It is precisely for this reason that, even today, it is used to speak of "complete homosexual intercourse" to indicate an intercourse that also includes anal penetration, but it is a way of saying derived from the hetero world.

Normally as we have seen, the dominant male in a hetero-gay relationship was not only dominant from the sexual point of view but also from the social point of view, what underlined the radical asymmetry of the relationship, often experienced by both parties as a domain/submission relationship. These aspects of power legitimated even more in the eyes of heterosexual dominating males sexual relationships with gay guys.

It should be kept in mind that when heterosexual high-class males married exclusively for patrimonial and caste reasons with women not chosen by them and lived a frustrating marriage sexuality, relationships with prostitutes allowed them to forget their frustrations and to vent their desire of power and domination, sometimes more than of sex. The sense of superiority and power manifested as well through particular sexual practices, and over all through

money. Leaving money on the bedside table "pour vos beaux yeux!", as it was usual to say, was a very strong way of marking social difference and therefore of avoiding to get truly involved in the sexual relationship. Mechanisms of the same kind are also found in hetero-gay relationships in which normally the dominant male compensated the gay for his passive role with money or other gifts, thus remarking the role of subordination of the gay.

### 9.1.15 Hetero-gay relationships and feminization of the gay

Hetero-gay relationships, as were lived in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, precisely because in them the gay appeared to the dominant hetero male as the "substitute of a woman", induced the gay guy too, who in all probability would have preferred an equal relationship, to take on a more markedly feminine role, repressing his instincts that would have led him to claim parity at least on the sexual level.

The interest of hetero for the penis of the gay was normally non-existent and the idea that the gay could experience a form of pleasure not reducible to the passive role was not taken into consideration at all, ejaculation was an exclusive prerogative of the hetero partner, the gay one had to limit himself to reach orgasm through masturbation, but separately and out of sight of his partner, who didn't like having to remember that he had had a sexual intercourse with a guy and not with a girl.

For this reason the male characteristics of the gay guy had to be minimized or had to disappear, gay guys were encouraged not to cut their hair and to dress in vaguely feminine, to use perfumes or feminine underwear, but were also asked to hide their penis between the thighs so as not to show it to the partner and to shave the pubis; in the intimacy the gay guy was called with female nicknames analogous to those that would be used for a prostitute. The gay guy ended up convincing himself that in order not to lose his mate it was essential to please him as much as possible and was urged, for this, to assume languid attitudes, to hide his desires and, in essence, to pretend effeminacy, acting a female role.

### 9.1.16 The seduction in the hetero-gay relationship

To get a concrete idea of the techniques of seduction through which a wealthy heterosexual man was able to obtain the availability of a gay guy of low social status, we can refer to the ways of doing of Oscar Wilde. I don't aim in the slightest to face the issue concerning the homosexuality of Wilde, who was married anyway and had children, his relationships with the guys,

however, have several characteristics of the classic hetero-gay relationships. As it turned out during the trial, Wilde had an intimate friendship with a certain Wood, an eighteen-year-old singer, whom Wilde invited to dinner and to whom he lent money, Wilde had also a connection with a young shop assistant to whom he donated 200 francs, a huge amount of money, he paid also tailor's clothes for a young wanderer, a certain Alphonse Conwell, and spent with him one night in Brighton. Wilde was also a friend of a certain Taylor, a "getter" of guys, known to the police, had cohabited in Paris with the young Atkins, had dined in a luxury hotel with the domestic Scott and had given him as a present a silver cigarette case. The list could go on, I limit myself to referring to "The Oscar Wilde Trial" ("Gay and History", Gay Project Library) , in which the reader can find many useful details to illustrate the situation.

It could be argued, and not without reason, that Wilde's homosexual stories are much closer to simple prostitution stories than to the classic hetero-gay relationships and that the only truly important story of Wilde was that with Lord Alfred Douglas, that cannot certainly be interpreted in the light of the hetero-gay model, because of the social rank of Douglas, certainly not inferior to that of Wilde, but the reference to Wilde serves at least to get an idea of the means of seduction typical of hetero-gay relationships, where lacked the fee in money for the sexual performance, typical of prostitution, and everything was based on the fact that the young man who accompanied Wilde could taste the life of high society, from which otherwise he would have been completely excluded. The trips on luxury trains, the dinners in important hotels, and the entrances in exclusive environments were the real instruments of seduction of this type of relationship. In the case of Wilde they were relationships without any affective component, with the only exception, perhaps, of Alfred Douglas, and they were too numerous and superficial to have a minimum of continuity.

Raffalovich in the "Annals of Unisexuality" repeatedly and strongly accuses John Addigton Symonds of having used his prestige and his money to seduce some young people but from reading the diaries of Symonds things appear far from such hypothesis. Symonds, although he was also married, like Wilde, and had four daughters, was nevertheless deeply homosexual, he certainly felt the charm of the guys of the popular classes, not only gay but also heterosexual, but he built relationships with them trending to equality, what is typical of gays, he didn't deny the male identity of those guys, that was indeed the first cause of his interest in them and didn't even deny their heterosexuality, when they were heterosexual, and especially he really fell in love with them, wrote poignant poems for them and built with them friendships destined to last. With all due respect to Raffalovich, Symonds'

love stories were the typical stories of a gay falling in love, stories not always directed towards gay guys and with a very strong affective component.

### 9.1.17 Evolution of hetero-gay relationships

Hetero-gay relationships, as we have reconstructed them, represent a reality that is now outdated. During the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth one, for a hetero frustrated in his heterosexual relationships, it was certainly not easy to find a gay guy available, and when this happened, the relationship had, for this very reason, its intrinsic stability. Wilde's case is insignificant because his behavior was strongly eccentric and poorly aligned with the behavior of the average married man looking for guys.

With post-1968 sexual liberation and especially with the arrival of the Internet, that caused a substantial sociological revolution in the field of sexuality, the situation has rapidly changed, hetero-gay relationships, in the nineteenth-century sense of the expression, have always become more rare up to disappear almost completely, but the conditions of anonymity allowed by the network and the ease of finding available partners has led to the creation of new social phenomena, unimaginable before the internet.

We have been witnessing the increase in the number of heterosexual men, married or anyway with stable heterosexual relationships, who also practice homosexual sex. As we will see in the chapter dedicated specifically to gay sexuality, this is not a marginal phenomenon but a reality that involves absolutely non-negligible percentages of the heterosexual population. Instability and absence of an affective dimension are the main characteristics of hetero-gay relationships in this new sense.

### 9.1.18 Heterosexuals and gay sex

Since this manual devotes a specific chapter to sex in the hetero-gay relationship and another chapter to married gays I'll limit myself here to clarify some fundamental questions. Let us to reflect for a moment on the concepts of hetero and gay as we have defined them: the heterosexual male falls in love emotionally and sexually with women or girls while the homosexual male falls in love emotionally and sexually with men or boys.

It should be emphasized that we are talking about "falling in love" not about a couple's sexual activity and that if on the one hand masturbation is the sign of true sexual interest, on the other, to be considered heterosexual it is not essential to practice or have practiced sexual activities with women or girls and, similarly, to be considered homosexual it is not essential to practice or have practiced sexual activities with men or a boys. This concept is easily

accepted and corresponds to the common experience.

But if the definition of hetero does not necessarily require the concrete exercise of heterosexual sex, it does not even exclude the concrete exercise of homosexual sex, in a similar way, if the definition of gay does not necessarily require the concrete exercise of homosexual sex, it does not even exclude the concrete exercise of the heterosexual one. This in terms of definitions.

In the long experience of the Gay Project I have often met people who clearly considered themselves heterosexual and who nonetheless practiced, and even with a certain regularity, homosexual sex. I must say, however, that I have never seen people who clearly considered themselves homosexuals and nevertheless practiced also straight sex. We can conclude that there are a good number of heterosexuals (i.e. people who verify the definition of heterosexual) who also practice sexual activities with people of the same sex.

I emphasize that I did not say that they fall in love with people of the same sex, otherwise they would be bisexual, but only that they practice sexual activities with people of the same sex. There can certainly exist, even if these are very rare phenomena, homosexual people who also exercise straight sexual activities. We can summarize the speech with a very simple sentence: the definition of gay or straight sexual orientation does not exclude that a gay person may practice straight sexual activities or that a hetero person may practice gay sexual activities.

### 9.1.19 Motivations for the practice of sexuality

We talked very often about sex in the context of falling in love, that is, sex lived within a more or less real, more or less projective, affective relationship, but nevertheless of a sex lived and shared out of love, but sex can be lived for reasons very distant from affectivity: as a game, as a form of student spirit or camaraderie, but also as a form of violence, as a compensation for other frustrations, as a reminder of another situation or of another person or as an obsessive compulsion.

The meaning, subjectively more or less sexual, of a gesture or behavior cannot be found in the fact itself but in the interpretation of that gesture or behavior. Many gay guys take for granted that some of their mates are gay on the basis of behaviors that in the eyes of a gay are clearly gay, while in the eyes of a straight man look like a joke or a game without any sexual meaning. Sex practiced for non-affective reasons has nothing to do with falling in love and does not alter the perception of an individual's sexual orientation.

A hetero who has sex with a gay man for fun or even to rekindle his straight sexuality is really a hetero and does not question his heterosexuality for the mere fact that he practices homosexual sex. I have seen many times gay guys

in love with married straight men who had sex with them but with whom they lacked a true emotional relationship, those straight married men were not bisexuals but properly straight who practice gay sex without emotional involvement.

### 9.1.20 Married heterosexuals and gay sex

Gay Project archives contain many emails and many chats with married men, among them I have selected and analyzed those relating not to married gays or married bisexuals, but to true heterosexual people who nevertheless also practice homosexual sex.

Here are three excerpts from three particularly significant emails.

1) Mark, 41, married for 16 years and with two children (aged 14 and 10).

”I never betrayed my wife, I never went after another woman, for me my woman is her, but I also need something else, I like to look for other men like me to feel a bit free with each other, like when we were boys, and if it happens we also have a little sex, a wank, nothing more, but so, just to play, just to have fun with each other, we don’t do it like gays, no cuddling, no disgusting things, we are not gay guys. It can start with the typical “I bet you have it smaller than mine!” or asking a mate what would he do if I was a nice girl. And then maybe it goes on, but then ends there, a wank, sometimes even something more but no kisses, no cuddling at all, we’re not gay men. If my wife knew . . . she certainly would do the pandemonium, but she has nothing to complain about, sex for us is a very common thing and she never complains about my performances. Sometimes some friends of mine come to my house with whom I’m more in touch and also some of those with whom we have a little fun. My wife doesn’t even imagine what we do with each other but it is better this way, she wouldn’t understand anything, she would feel betrayed, but I never betrayed her.”

2) Alfred, 38, married for 13 years, with a 10 year old daughter.

”Hi Project, I would like to start by saying that I’m 100% straight, but sometimes I like to have some fun looking for some guy on the internet, but this just for sex or better for fun. Well I’m writing to you to understand what I can do in a very unpleasant situation that has happened to me. In practice in these meetings once I get a gay guy, I treat him well, because the guys I always treat them all well. Well I had told him before: I’m straight, if

you feel like having sex and only that, then ok, if you are looking for something else, you can go immediately somewhere else! I make it short, we had sex once and I liked it, then he called me back and we did it again and so did the third time, but at the fourth time I told him: No, beautiful guy! So I don't like it! You're having a crush on me and I really don't like it. I told you from the beginning: sex, yes, but only that! Here, Project, you understand the situation. Look, Project, I'm brutally telling you that about this guy I don't give a damn, I absolutely want to give him up, I can't go gay or pretend to be gay because I'm not gay. He even went as far as calling me home on the phone and made me take an incredible fright because my wife answered the call, she fortunately doesn't suspect anything. Anyway I have no intention of undermining my marriage for that fag!"

3) Matthew, 32, married for six years, no children.

"I can't stand it when they take me for a fag! I go to a chat, I find a guy, I tell him that I'm straight and that I'm looking for a bit of sex without commitment, so far I have spoken clearly! He tells me that it can be done, but then the usual old story comes out: "If you are here you can't be straight, etc." and this I can't stand it at all! You're accusing me of telling you lies because you think that, since you are gay, I have to be gay too, but today I go with you and tomorrow I go with a woman, you are gay, not me! But why don't they understand that you can have a little sex just for the sake of having a little sex? I must stop going to the gay chats, I don't have to go there anymore. I have a small group of straight guys like me, who have a girlfriend or who are married and want to have some fun with their male friends, and then there's even a paradoxical fact, after I had sex with a guy, with my girlfriend I feel like a lion, I rediscover all the pleasure of having sex with a woman, she only sees the effects and does not know where they come from, if she knew it would be a problem, because she would go into crisis suspecting that I'm gay and that sooner or later I could leave her, but I'm not gay and I wouldn't leave her for any reason."

The common element, practically in all situations of this type is the lack of awareness of wives, with very few exceptions. However, all these people, without exception, do not consider the homosexual relationship an alternative to marriage, which they absolutely do not want to undermine, for them

the homosexual relationship is only a sexual diversion, perhaps favored by the friendship with other people, they too married, who share the tendency to cultivate exclusively sexual contacts with people of the same sex, quite a way to look for a justification in the "everyone does it". Someone of those men comes as far as to say that having homosexual intercourse is quite a stimulus to rekindle heterosexual interest when it tends to fail, something useful to prevent marriage from cooling off and become boring.

It clearly emerges that the married life of these men is not gratifying, given that the dialogue with wives is in fact only formal e characterized by lies and given also the lack of mutual respect that comes from such a situation. Anyway, sexual contact with wives or companions is often daily, it seems apparently satisfactory and the family routine goes on in spite of all the substantial weaknesses of the hetero relationship.

But where does such a stability come from? The answer is quite obvious, it comes from the social environment, as can be deduced from the fact that these men tend to keep their homosexual acquaintances secret and to maintain a formal marriage relationship even when they keep wives unaware even of fundamental aspects of their sexuality as their need for homosexual intercourse.

These men are linked to marriage and heterosexuality, often for reasons of quiet living and comfort and they strongly emphasize that they by no means intend to become an "object" of the sexual desire for other men, because in their eyes this would diminish their virility, and that they do not see their sexual encounters with other men as love encounters, and consider the hypothesis of falling in love with a man as the greatest risk of their homosexual relationships, a risk that must be carefully avoided.

These men, despite their homosexual relationships, do not perceive themselves as gay, do not frequent gay environments, rather they are afraid of creating relationships with single gays and even more with openly declared gays, they tend to create closed circles with other married men who also practice homosexual sex, they can barely admit a bisexual tendency, but only on a sexual level, which means that they are not really bisexual. It is not rare that these men also show more or less markedly homophobic traits. About these phenomena we often speak of sexual fluidity.

It is interesting to note that the so-called sexual fluidity is strongly dependent on specific cultural contexts and for this reason, more than an anthropological phenomenon, it should be considered a cultural phenomenon, linked to the symbolic meanings that sexuality assumes in different contexts. In the chapter dedicated to gay sexuality we will be able to speak extensively about the hetero-curious men, a category in which married men who perceive themselves as hetero and have homosexual relationships can be included. As we



will see, this is a very large group.

### 9.1.21 Birth of pornography

It is commonly believed that pornography has always existed and has always been widely spread, as it happens today, but things are completely different.

At the end of the XIX century, Wilhelm von Gloeden, took and collected in Taormina (Sicily) a huge amount of photos, considered by many to be pornographic photos, They were actually nude photos, almost always male nude, even if there were female nude photos too, but there were also landscapes, photos of shepherds and farmers. The male nude was always represented in a Greek mythological frame and there was no picture taken by von Gloeden representing sexual intercourse or situations strongly sexually connoted. The photos of von Gloeden were certainly sought by homosexuals, but they were rare and precious material, always spread through very reserved channels. Famous were also the male nude photos took and collected in Rome by Wilhelm von Plüschow, these too distributed confidentially among high-level homosexuals, as evidenced by a fragment of a letter by John Addington Symonds to Charles Edward Sayle:

”If you care for extremely artistic studies from the nude, done mostly in the open air, go & see my friend G. Plüschow 34 Via Sardegna. He has made an immense collection which he will be delighted to show you. Very truly yours. J A Symonds]”<sup>1</sup>

Calling pornography the photos of Gloeden or Plüschow is obviously an exaggeration and in any case the spread of those photos was minimal. In the past, until the early 70s of the XX century, in many countries, as for example Italy, the spread of pornographic photos, hetero or gay, was considered an outrage to modesty and was prosecuted by law, the photos were expensive and absolutely not easy to find, and were directed especially to bourgeois heterosexuals who lived, at the level of transgression, hetero-gay relationships with gay guys of popular extraction. In an environment of this kind, the so-called gay pornography was in fact addressed not homosexuals but to heterosexual males and tended to emphasize the patterns of sexual behavior of the hetero-gay relationship. So, until the beginning of the 70s the typical hetero-gay model has been credited as the model of the homosexual relationship. That model, the only one sponsored by clandestine pornography and

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<sup>1</sup>Letter 1969 - John Addington Symonds, Letters, Wayne State University Press, 1969, vol. III.

for this the only "official" one, ended up affirming itself and being considered by the gays themselves as their model of sexual behavior.

Since the late 60s of the 20th century, with the sexual liberation of '68, gays began to have a minimum of visibility and, in some cases at least, as in university collectives, they had the opportunity to know and recognize each other, what was before completely impossible. Starting from the early 70s gays began to abandon the old hetero-gay model of relationship, in which they were inevitably destined for the passive role, to finally live gay-gay relationships.

Up until the beginning of the 70s, many gay men lived unidirectional love relationships, often not even declared, towards straight guys who considered them exclusively friends, obviously without sexual contacts. For some gay guys, sexual relationships, I mean the ones exclusively sexual, continued to be dominated by hetero-gay model. In a first phase, currently not completely ended, the hetero-gay model, imposed by pornography, has continued to dominate the scene by importing the active-passive binomial in the gay-gay relationship. In this case, however, also the active role was played by a gay.

It should be remembered that until the beginning of the 70s, there were no publications aimed at gays nor existed gay pornography. The first homosexual magazine in Italy, "Fuori!", Appeared in 1971, and the circulation of homosexual magazines was however very limited because the diffusion in bookstores or on newsstands discouraged buyers.

To understand how and when pornography, in Italy, comes to the large distribution, it must be borne in mind that the magazine "Le Ore", founded in 1953 as a magazine of cinema current affairs, distributed until 1967, from 1971 became a soft erotic magazine, with male genital organs covered and without explicit photos of sexual intercourse.

During the 70s the Italian legislation on public morality became much more elastic and in 1977 "Le Ore" became a hard magazine. From the early 80s, porn magazines have been gradually supplanted by videotapes. The first gay porn magazine, "Gay Italia", began publishing in 1983. "Babilonia" the most known Italian gay monthly magazine, with nude photos but never in bad taste, and with articles of interest for gays, began the publications in 1982 and continued until 2009.

### 9.1.22 Gay-gay relationships

In gay-gay relationships began to appear a novelty that marked a strong difference compared to the hetero-gay relationships: in the gay-gay relationship, although the categories of active and passive still existed, the roles were

not fixed, or at least were not rigid, even if the anal penetration continued to be considered the true purpose of the intercourse.

In recent years, between the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, after the advent of the internet, for many gays the opportunity to come into contact with other gays has become a reality and this has encouraged a dialogue and a comparison among gays and has slowly but inexorably eroded the solidity of the gay sexuality model inherited from the old hetero-gay model. Chat interviews with gay guys of different ages suggest that, as we move towards younger age groups, gay-gay sexuality is understood and lived in a way less and less tied to old models. I would like to add another observation: sexuality on the hetero-gay model resists especially among guys who have been strongly influenced by pornography and who have not had the opportunity to compare their sexuality with that of other gay guys, while for the guys who have had a freer sex education and have been able to talk about their sexuality with other guys, the sex life is in fact almost totally detached from the hetero-gay model and is tending towards a gay-gay model of sexuality based on the principle of equality.

I will now try to outline how young gays mean sexuality, let's say gays under 30. For a gay guy, anal penetration is absolutely the sexual behavior most at risk for the transmission of HIV. This fact, associated with reasons of general hygienic character, pushes the younger gays not to consider the anal penetration a desirable sexual behavior. I note, incidentally, that in the masturbation fantasies of all the gay guys there is the idea of masturbating the partner and of performing oral sex on him or getting oral sex performed by him, while the fantasies regarding anal penetration are decidedly less common. The sexuality of younger gay guys (I am talking above all about undeclared guys who are obviously less tied to the world of gay clubs) tends therefore to be a sexuality that ignores anal penetration, which is often perceived as a reality imported from the hetero world and not spontaneously gay. In cases where anal penetration is practiced, the roles are not fixed or are not fixed in an absolute way, this is a sign, despite the permanence of penetration, of a parity or a trend towards parity within the couple.

Having said that, and with all the reservations of the case, I try to clarify the sense of equality within a gay-gay relationship.

A heterosexual couple is characterized by the complementarity of sexual roles that are anatomically and biologically defined, they are roles that substantially characterize that type of relationship. Heterosexuality means to love the different from oneself. A gay couple is characterized by the identity of the roles of the two partners. A gay guy falls in love with another guy, not because he considers him a substitute for a woman, but just because he is a guy, that is, for his male identity.

The gay guy's interest in the penis of his partner is particularly strong and the sense of identity and almost personal fusion that is felt in sexual contact is linked to the fact that each one of the two partners knows perfectly the physiological responses of the other, because they are two guys.

Given these premises it is easy to understand that a relationship based on the concept of equality tends to be incompatible with the assumption of sexual roles and is absolutely incompatible with the assumption of fixed sexual roles. The sexuality of young gay couples tends to no longer be an imitation of pornography but to be realized through diluted sexual behaviors consisting of different elements mainly related to physical intimacy not immediately sexual, we synthetically call such behaviors pampering:

- 1) Habit to mutual nudity, being naked together, hugging naked with naked and holding each other for several minutes.
- 2) To caress, kiss, exchange tenderness.
- 3) To touch each other intimately, without immediate sexual goals.
- 4) To postpone the phase of the orgasm.
- 5) To talk a lot while hugging the partner.
- 6) To prolong the cuddling also in the post-orgasmic phase, falling asleep one in the arms of the other.

As we easily understand, this gay-gay model of sexuality has now nothing to do with models inherited from pornography. In part, the most recent pornography is trying to adapt to the new emerging sexuality models, which however are not compatible with the classic standards of porn movies. Despite these attempts at adaptation, pornography in the classic sense of the term is slowly losing ground among gays to the full advantage of the spontaneity of sexual behavior.

I realize that the description I gave of the couple sexuality of young gay couples, in particular formed by undeclared guys, may appear dogmatic and pretentious. Talking about a "principle of equality" in gay couple sexuality might seem like an attempt to surreptitiously introducing rules that are completely meaningless. I have been reminded several times that in couple relationships everything can happen and depends on what you want and on the people you know, in this sense, the more you get rid of categories and schemes the closer you are to reality. On this I can only agree, but I must stress that the "principle of equality" is not an invention of the one who wrote these pages but is the summary of what has emerged from hundreds of mails and hundreds of hours of interview in the course of several years. Obviously, the results certainly have a value limited to what is found by the

observation point of Gay Project and are not necessarily generalizable, but they have nevertheless a very serious objective basis.

### 9.1.23 Genetic-epigenetic basis of education

First of all it is necessary to define the concept of sexual education. We can start from a premise: the development of studies indicates that sexuality has a genetic-epigenetic basis which is substantially defined already in the uterus and at most in the perinatal period. This genetic-epigenetic imprint determines not only the sex, that is, gender belonging in anatomical and physiological terms, but also the gender identity, that is, the perception of gender, and also the sexual orientation.

The awareness of sexuality, its models, the more or less repressed manifestations of sexuality over the years, and the consequences on an individual psychological level, are instead largely determined by that familiar and social interaction, which we can call "sex education" and which is not limited to just a single part of life, but follows the evolution of the individual according to the progressing of age.

The fact that sexuality, understood in its most profound aspects, is closely connected with the affectivity induces to consider sex education as an integral part of affective education.

A concept, in the educational field, should never be forgotten: education acts on the basis of an individual biological genetic-epigenetic substratum but is also linked to the stages of development, to possible pathologies and many other factors. Education means to develop the potential of an individual "respecting first of all the biological identity". A good gardener knows that by placing an apple tree in the ideal conditions for the cultivation of an apricot tree, not only we will not be able to obtain apricots from the apple tree, but it will suffer a lot and may even die. Cultivating a tree means understanding first of all what kind of tree it is and then providing it with the appropriate care for that specific tree. This is also true for people.

### 9.1.24 Wrong family educational attitudes

Let's start from the family dimension, i.e. from emotional-sexual education inside the family.

The family is the first environment in which a child begins to build relationships. In order to begin to feel an affective gratification, the child must perceive the sense of acceptance and affectionate care from the parents. If the child is the subject of confrontation (unwanted children, doubtful parenthood, a child that has become an object of contention between parents and

grandparents or between the parents themselves), he easily becomes aware that he's not the center of family life and begins to experience the sensation of marginality and abandonment yet in tender age.

Perceiving the disagreement between the parents is inherently traumatic and transmits automatically, by imitation, a model of behavior that is not emotional but competitive, stimulates aggressiveness in one direction and sense of frustration in the other. The child also instinctively perceives the discrepancy between words and behavior. Cuddling a child for a while and then leaving him alone in the walker or in front of the television not only causes a sense of abandonment but also provides an initial model of falsehood: "I love you so much, but you must keep calm and stay aside because I have other things to do!" The speech is basically inconsistent and false because it brings together declarations of affection and behaviors that show disinterest. Often the frustrations of parents, their claiming attitudes, their blaming of this or that, their justifying only themselves, transmit to the child the feeling of unreliability of the parent who begins to be a faltering reference point. Nothing is worse than raising your voice to impose your point of view, and I don't even want to talk about the possible physical violence in the family, which is experienced by the child in a devastating way: a father who drives away violently his wife, who slaps her, a mother who plays hysterical scenes and screams at her husband, represent models that the child will certainly internalize, or by imitation or contrast, identifying himself, according to the situations, as an aggressive person or as a victim, and this will move the child away from the emotional contact, which is the true purpose of emotional education. There are several other behaviors, apparently neutral, which transmit a sense of insecurity to the child:

- 1) A parent who speaks in the singular setting himself against the other parent ("I ... while your mother ...") . The use of "we/us" conveys the idea of affective family, harmony and solidarity.
- 2) To talk too often about money or about who brings home money, or about social hierarchies that don't see parents at the same level.
- 3) To speak badly about other people the child knows.
- 4) To show that it is difficult or impossible to speak with the other parent, that he/she has defects, that doesn't care for the family and, worse of the worst, doesn't care for children.

### 9.1.25 Family conflicts

The presence of parents in the life of young children, up to preadolescence, should be constant, affectionate, dialoguing and never abstractly normative. A particular consideration must be given to managing family conflicts that may arise, and indeed inevitably arise in the family over the years. It can be the conflicts of the parents with other relatives, of between parents themselves and also of the conflicts between parents and children. The management of conflicts must always be discursive and shared, no form of violence, not even verbal, can be admitted for any reason. Recognizing the reasons of others and seeking conciliation doesn't indicate weakness but the exact opposite. The child must realize that the parent can see things in another way and nevertheless it's always possible and useful to talk to find a point of equilibrium avoiding deeper misunderstandings.

Affective education suffers a violent trauma when the parent-child relationship is dominated by the fear of the parent's violent reactions. Even worse is the idea that a parent invokes the presence of the other parent to induce fear in the child such in the classic expression: "I'll tell your father!" used as a threat.

### 9.1.26 Confidence and confidentiality

As one grows, one element takes on particular importance: confidence, which must be accompanied by confidentiality on the part of the parent. If a parent receives a confidence by the child, he must keep it for himself, if he doesn't, he would induce the child to immediately interrupt the relationship of confidence with the parent that will anymore be resumed. Any attitude that shows the tendency of the parent to abandon himself to gossip, devalues him in the eyes of his son and reduces the possibilities for dialogue.

A general criterion must always be kept in mind: education operates through the example, not through words: children tend to assimilate and imitate parents' behavior, not to put into practice what parents say in words but don't do themselves.

### 9.1.27 Inadequacy of parents

What has been said so far, as it is easy to understand, requires from parents a substantial affective maturity that too often is taken for granted, assuming that the parent is always substantially up to the task of education and that at most he needs a training aimed at the conscious rethinking of contents and methods of education. Sometimes however, and not very rarely,

these assumptions don't occur, in some cases because parents themselves have been in turn educated (assuming that this word can be used in these situations) with completely improper and substantially non-educational methods, and in other cases because one or both parents can be psychopathological subjects (for example paranoid or perverse narcissists).

While in the first case it is possible with regard to the parent a concrete action of reorientation or re-education of the adult, even if of long duration and with uncertain outcome, in the second case such action is essentially impossible and the parent-child educational relationship can turn into a framework of family violence and abuse, up to the most extreme consequences. It should be emphasized that violence and family abuse practiced by paranoid or perverse narcissists parents are often not visible from the outside and create very deep suffering in the children with unforeseeable consequences even in the long term.

### 9.1.28 Environmental sex education and social roles

Today, children are bombarded starting from an early age with images more or less erotic and very often begin to take an interest in sexuality in a very abstract way well before adolescence, so they assimilate, in a very tender age, banal visions of the sexuality as a "forbidden game". Educationalists have often been concerned with how to convey to children a more correct concept of sexuality: typical is the model of the flower, the pollination and the fruit, but in this way there is the risk, for gays far from being indifferent, to provide only the concept of sexuality aimed at reproduction, this will also convey the concept of sexual role, of the boy and girl as society conceives them, and of typically male and typically female behavior, taking for natural and obvious some cultural attitudes often very questionable.

Accustom a little girl to the idea that femininity involves high heels and makeup means distort the concept from the beginning, like to think that the boy should be interested necessarily in football and in certain types of games is in itself misleading. It is very easy to see that in a school class of children who are not yet pre-adolescent, boys tend to play "boyish" games with each other, and girls tend to play "girlish" games with each other and this is the result of an education oriented towards sexual roles, as how society hands them down, starting from an early age.

### 9.1.29 Basic homo-affectivity and basic hetero-affectivity

The child before puberty sometimes shows an embryonal hetero affectivity, which involves interest in being with little girls, speaking with them,



playing with them, or an embryonal gay affectivity, which involves interest in being with other boys, speaking with them and playing with them. These behaviors are the first manifestations of sexual orientation, they are not yet conscious, but are elements on which we should reflect a lot and to which we should pay the utmost attention, but, I must say very clearly, never a repressive attention. I would like to point out that the transmission of role models deforms and often stifles these spontaneous tendencies altogether and tends to let the tendency towards homologation prevail, based on the fear of marginality within the peer group.

In the memory of many gays, the recollection of the first affectionate friendships with other boys and often the worried attitudes of the parents in front of such manifestations remains well stamped. We are talking about friendships between children, not yet pre-adolescent who, if not totally conditioned by education, begin to show signs of homo-affinity or hetero-affectivity.

Parents, who often lack a broader horizon on sexuality, consider themselves as the only possible model for the sexuality of their children. The idea that children are not and cannot be a photocopy of parents is still struggling to get accepted. It is precisely for this reason that some children's behaviors alarm parents and trigger a communication short circuit that ends up disrupting trust and favoring habits founded on the suspicion.

The child who plays with dolls or puts on his mother's high heels or wig or dresses up as a woman generally raises questions in the parents, and this happens even more strongly if two children develop a very close friendship. Apart from the fact that these are completely different phenomena, because the first refers to gender identity and the second to sexual orientation, it is very probable that the child experiences in these situations the concern of the parent that manifests itself through limitations, prohibitions or simple removals.

The basic criterion of a good sex education is to promote the spontaneous development of affectivity and sexuality, avoiding a repressive sanctioning behaviors. The parent facing behaviors that are not those he would have expected believes that it is his duty to "correct", to "guide" the child's behavior, to "defend" him from dangerous influences, this attitude, which is perfectly understandable, is acceptable, positive and necessary, if "to correct" means to demonstrate by example how one can have affection and respect for friends, without demanding too much and without running away from one's duties towards those friends, if "to drive" means to explain, to make the child understand the meaning of affective relationships even in adult life, for example by receiving friends cordially and affectionately, if "defending" from dangerous influences means to accustom children not to trivialize, not to exploit friendship, but to take it seriously and to respond adequately when

the need arises, but “to correct” means for many parents only to repress, “to drive” means to remove freedom and “to defend” means to segregate.

I would like to stress that the signs of homo-affectivity are generally very precocious and repressing them means inducing guilt and submission feelings in the child who begins to consider himself wrong. The repression of infantile homo-affectivity sometimes manifests itself explicitly, and sometimes through a systematic attempt to remove the child from contexts in which that homo-affectivity tends to manifest: if the child has developed a strong friendship towards another child or even towards a boy a little older during the summer holidays at the sea, the next year instead of going to the sea the family will go to the mountains.

### 9.1.30 The prevention of sexual abuse

A very delicate subject in this area is the prevention of sexual violence and abuse. Clearly, the child’s segregation reaches the goal but at the cost of a total repression of the individual freedom. The real problem lies in avoiding the risks (which are not only fancy) leaving the child a freedom commensurate with his age.

Leaving a child (under 12-13 years) alone for the whole day together with his playmates exposes him to objective dangers, which he may not realize. But if sexual abuses perpetrated by external pedophile subjects are generally the most feared, experience teaches that abuses are practiced only exceptionally by strangers and for the most part they rise from a family environment. Parking children by relatives or friends from morning to night means abandoning them to situations that can be objectively risky.

Before 12-13 years it is good that the child finds its spaces for the most part with the presence of the parents: the parents speak in the living room, the children play in the next room. Parents in this way give their children an example of socializing and leave them freedom spaces according to their age. Beyond the age of 12-13, the risk of abuse doesn’t cease because abuse can also be committed towards adolescents or preadolescents both by family members and educators, priests or teachers, especially in contexts where the minor cohabits with other peers for education or care purposes.

### 9.1.31 Risks coming from the Internet

Particular attention should be dedicated to the education of responsible use of the web for the risks of enticement to which minors are exposed on the net. It is important to be vigilant in order to catch any signs of disturbance, alarm or exaltation in children, talk to them about it, if it is possible, and

contact the Post Department or the local Police Office to receive assistance when faced with dangerous situations. Obviously, the best prevention of enticement risks on the net is realized right through risk awareness, the habit of always thinking before acting, and the habit of protecting one's own privacy and that of others, and on these aspects education has a decisive influence.

### **9.1.32 Affection of parents and education by example**

When a child manifests the first forms of curiosity in relation to sexuality, he should be taken seriously, avoiding trivializing or manifesting evasive attitudes. It is essential that sexuality is never detached from its affective implications and is not reduced exclusively to procreative purposes. The child must become familiar with the idea of a sexuality that is not a forbidden game but a manifestation of affection for another person. Many parents never show explicit emotional behaviors in front of their children, for example, father and mother don't hug each other in front of children and avoid any physical contact with each other, even the simple caresses, when children are present, others instead let themselves go to forms of more or less sexual play in front of their children who, this way, feel themselves excluded from the relationship with their parents.

Of course, it's necessary to find a balance between these opposing attitudes: the spontaneous caresses and affection manifestations between parents, the cuddles, which end up with the involvement of the children in the affection of the parents themselves are extremely positive in stabilizing the mood and in developing a harmonious character in the children. The double bed must become a non-exclusive environment, reserved for the parents only, but must be an environment in which children can also be admitted. The physical contact with parents, commensurate with the age of children, must lead to the idea of the affectionate embrace between adults, which expresses participation and sympathy.

### **9.1.33 How to deal with the issue of homosexuality**

Let's come now to one of the key points of the speech: how to deal with the issue of homosexuality. The parent who is explicitly dealing such an argument with the child for the first time, must never forget that if one takes for granted that one's son is hetero, in 8 cases out of 100 he is mistaken. Sending positive messages about homosexuality certainly doesn't induce heterosexuals to become homosexuals, but can help homosexuals to grow accepting without complexes their homosexuality.

Many parents believe that the specifically sexual education of children is not

up to parents and should be delegated to school, church, doctors and other educational agencies, as if sexuality were an object of study or a question of faith or health protection. Obviously all these aspects are not foreign to sexuality, which, however, is a very complex reality that cannot be considered only under sectoral perspectives.

Sexuality is a component of the ordinary life of all of us and one of the essential contents of a serious educational relationship. I have been dealing with homosexuals for many years and I have often seen gay adult men, still deeply conditioned by the conflicting relationships with parents due to homosexuality. The vast majority of homosexuals not publicly declared, speak about their own homosexuality just with a few trustworthy friends, while those who talk about it openly in the family are very rare, perhaps today less than ten years ago, but they are still a narrow minority.

For a gay boy, talking to his parents and finding their respect and their affection in an atmosphere of clarity is absolutely essential and stabilizing. On the other hand, misunderstanding and rejection leave deep traces and greatly complicate the achievement of true autonomy on the part of the children.

I add a fundamental thing: a gay boy who feels accepted within the family will not need to go and look for other environments in which to find understanding and tends to develop his affective life without hiding and for this reason objectively also taking much less risks. When a gay guy presents his boyfriend to his parents (what was once unthinkable and now becomes more and more possible) he realizes at 100% the dimension of the normality of his affectivity-sexuality. Surprised, reticent, perplexed or hostile attitudes of parents severely undermine their children's self-esteem and create often irreparable fractures.

### 9.1.34 Pedophile fantasies

Sometimes the boys who grow up, whether they are heterosexual or gay, find themselves instinctively experiencing drives that alarm them, classic are the examples of sexual fantasies about much older people, pedophile fantasies, sadistic or masochistic fantasies and erotic drives addressed within their own family. It is objectively very difficult that topics of this kind enter explicitly in speeches between parents and children regarding sexuality, because for a growing up boy, if the fear of negative reactions to homosexuality is already strong, the fear of negative reactions to those contents can be much more alarming.

The issue of pedophilia can be responsibly tackled by highlighting the very serious objective damage that those behaviors can cause but stressing nevertheless the fact that those tendencies can exist even in very good people

who would never put them into practice. If there is an attitude that a parent must show in front of such things, it cannot but consist in dealing with the subject calmly and responsibility stressing always in front of the son that it is necessary to clearly distinguish the fantasies, that one cannot control, from the actions that can and must be kept under control. A similar approach can be used also regarding sadistic and incestuous fantasies.

With regard to intergenerational relationships it is necessary to avoid confusing them with disguised forms of pedophilia, because intergenerational relationships are relationships between consenting adults even if of very different ages.

A correct attitude in the face of all these things helps people feel understood and accepted and enhances their morality and their capacity for discernment and this is the basic premise to accept themselves and to be able to self-control. It should be emphasized, however, that pedophile fantasies, of which people almost never speak in a scientifically correct way, are a reality very complex and difficult to manage. In many cases these fantasies are found in adults who have in turn been victims of violence or sexual abuse. It should be clarified that, although fantasies and actions are distinct things, it happens that fantasies are or may be prodromal to actual or possible behaviors, which, even if only considered merely as hypotheses, can cause levels of profound suffering.

Slipping from fantasies to pedophile behaviors can sometimes become easy and almost obvious. The sex tourism, for example, can lead the adult to look for partners more and more young, of one or the other sex, producing a slow but effective slip towards pedophilia.

The use of Internet child pornography should be considered as a sign strongly indicative of a dangerous intensification and radicalization of pedophile fantasies now already substantially compulsive, prodromal to possible pedophile behaviors. According to what I learn from people who experience pedophile fantasies I'm led to believe that slipping into occasional pedophile behaviors, which can be the origin of recurring pedophile fantasies, sometimes of almost obsessive kind, is certainly possible even for people who have never experienced previously this kind of fantasies.

A person who experienced this kind of fantasies told me:

“I had never had such fantasies before, then it happened to me an experience in which it would have been easy to come to the action, but it didn't happen, but taking a step without return would have been very easy. And since then, such fantasies remained strongly stamped in my mind. I don't like them, that somehow compromised my sexuality for years because I think that I wouldn't even

talk about such things with my partner, because he would react badly.”

I will not analyze here the possible compulsive aspects of pedophilia but because many men who have pedophile fantasies are aware of it and are afraid of being able to practice pedophile behavior, in some countries (in Germany, in England and in the US) there are support services who deal with prevention by providing specialized psychological support to those who request it because they experience pedophile tendencies.

At the general educational level there is still an ancestral fear towards psychologists and psychiatrists that should be eliminated, leading people to understand that they are health workers who can provide psychological and even pharmacological support if necessary. Prevention education, which deserves a detailed examination, is not only carried out in providing information on sexually transmitted diseases, but also in the prevention of other risky behaviors for oneself and for others such as pedophile ones.

### 9.1.35 Dogmatic preconceptions about couple life

Certainly less sensitive are the themes related to the couple’s relationship structure: monogamy, indissolubility, socialization and formalization of the couple’s relationship, relationship between friendship and love. Insisting on the legitimacy of a single behavioral model collides with the reality of couple life which is often not monogamous, not stable neither reducible to a mere structure. The meaning of the couple relationship is usually assimilated through imitation already in childhood and, according to the general rule, it is transmitted through the behavior of adults and not through their speeches.

The relational aspect of sexuality should never be overlooked, due to this relational character the fundamental satisfaction in a sexual relationship derives from the realization that our partner is really involved and is in turn gratified by the relationship. Needless to say, these must be relationships that are actually wanted consciously and freely by both partners.

## 9.2 DOCUMENTS

### 9.2.1 Hell and heaven of a gay guy

Hello Project, I wanted to tell you that for three weeks now I feel much better and it seems to me that I can get out of the black mood. It seems incredible, but it’s happening. Project, what you did for me has never been

done by anyone and it seems incredible to me that you can create similar relationships even if you don't even know who I'm, but it happens. In the last period everything has changed for me, apparently nothing has changed but I'm the one who has changed, I feel that I have changed and I owe it to you. You know all my story and you told me that there are other guys who live and have lived similar things and then I want to tell my story to those guys because not being alone and understanding that we are not alone, for those like me, is fundamental. Project, the story is long and I took so long to write it but I think it makes sense, because in the end I'm finding my way and so I finally feel free. Project, I tell you something true: I adopted you as a father! It's something that I missed so much and I'm discovering beautiful things! (Thanks for the good wishes, you're the only one who has remembered it!)

#### THE STORY OF PAUL

My name is Paul, I was born in Milan almost 28 years ago. If I look back at my childhood and adolescence I find no time in which I can say I was I don't say happy but not even serene. My parents never got along, from the date of their marriage and from my date of birth I deduced that I was already arriving when they got married, this would not be a problem, but I don't look at all like "my father" under any point of view, just as far as genetic factors are concerned, and I think I'm not even a son of the man who married my mother, but I don't know for sure and I cannot ask questions about such things.

My parents (if they really are my parents), I remember that they often screamed against each other and openly showed contemptuous attitudes against each other. They had no other children and I was the object of contention, and many times, even as a child, I felt the very clear feeling that "my father" didn't want me because he knew I was not his son. My mother literally considered me a mess and tried to entrust me to relatives and to various campsites. From when I was eight, that is, since they divorced, they put me in a boarding school for rich people. My parents are economically wealthy. But the choice to send me to boarding school was just a way to disguise the fact that they wanted to get rid of me in order to continue living their lives without me. I was just one that had nothing to do with them.

The college was in a very nice place in the [omissis] area. They came to see me once in a while, usually once every three months, once he and once she alternately. When the teachers told me that the next day my father or my mother would come, I felt really bad and I hated them with all my soul. I think I never hated someone else so violently.

When I was a kid I did not understand these things well and felt guilty because I hated my parents while teachers told me I had to love them. In practice I grew up totally alone, both during the school months and during the holidays. I specify that my college was totally male and managed by priests. A hateful place where with the excuse of letting me learn the discipline I was practically relegated as in prison. You learned hypocrisy, falsehood, and even the relationships with schoolmates were just of competition and constant acting, even in private.

My schoolmates waited at least for the summer holidays, I didn't, because I would have ended up somewhere else like a parcel post. When my mother came to my boarding school, she took me to lunch outside and this way she thought she had done her duty. We only talked about school and she tortured me for hours because she thought it was her duty to pay me a long visit. My father at least stayed very little.

Both he and she gave me expensive gifts that systematically ended up in the garbage or were gave away to someone soon after they left.

Since I turned 15 they have not given me any more presents but they have thought to give me money and many. I never took that money and they considered me an imbecile for this too. So I was in a boarding school and I didn't have any money in my pocket.

The school was a real torture for me. In the fifth gymnasium (15th grade) I was rejected which meant another year in prison, I would have gone out of college only after have turned 20! Repeating the fifth gymnasium I met a guy that I liked a lot, I didn't even understand why.

We were in a religious college and we had a spiritual father. So I started to masturbate thinking about that guy and I felt tremendous guilt. I told the priest that I was masturbating and he didn't take it as a tragic thing, he always made the same speech and stopped there, but I didn't say to the priest that I felt homosexual. Once I went badly into crisis and told him that I was gay. It was a terribly wrong choice! College life has become a torture. They kept me under visual inspection as the rotten apple. I always had a priest nearby during my free time. In a first moment I tried to repress and control myself, that is, not to masturbate anymore and even to stop thinking about that guy, but it was a real torture. I resisted even three weeks by self-imposing not to even think about sex but then I didn't do it anymore and I masturbated again and I said: "Enough with these absurdities! Go to the hell!"

Since then I began to tell the spiritual father only false things: that I no longer thought of the boys and that I didn't even masturbate anymore, but I presented it step by step to make it seem credible, I was 16 and a half years old. Naturally I went to church every day, confessed false things and made



communion every day. It was a sacrilegious thing, I know, religion should be a free choice, while for me it was just an instrument of torture and frankly I didn't feel guilty, I knew I was expected to behave differently but it would have been like to surrender without fighting. In our college there were never any common moments with other guys in a state of freedom.

At school we did physical education but in the afternoon, there was the gym, also very nice, but there were no locker rooms, no showers. We arrived wearing sports uniform and went away wearing sports uniform. Among other things, it was generally very cold there. Each one of us had a single room with a private bathroom and shower. So I had no chance to see the boy I was interested in if not perfectly dressed, jacket and tie of the college.

I started masturbating since I was 16 and a half, but in a place like that, without the internet (considered as the devil!) and without any chance to read an uncensored book or buy a newspaper, in practice, I did everything using fantasy. I selected some of my classmates and built on them all my fantasies. The first times, this new regime seemed acceptable and even pleasant, then I began to realize that I was throwing my best years this way. The year of the final examination, in November, I also escaped from the college, I was of age, in fact I was almost 20 years old but I didn't have a penny in my pocket. I arrived at the station after having walked for about ten kilometers and I got on a train without paying the ticket and I locked myself in the bathroom until the arrival in Milan so that they could not find me.

In the college room I had left a letter saying that I would be back in the evening. In Milan I realized for the first time, at almost 20, that the world existed, something that was shocking for me, I was years late. In the afternoon I newly got the train with the same technique and I came back to the boarding school. Result: they kicked me out of the college! Finally! Of course they warned my parents, who were very careful to avoid problems so that they didn't even come and see in person what had happened. My mother sent me some money (a telegraphic order) and I have been in a hotel since then in the town near the college.

Then my mother found me a tiny apartment there and I was transferred me to the state high school. There were the girls! I had never seen one before, but I wasn't interested in girls. But the world of the state school was completely different. The professors sometimes talked even about sex, no one forced us to go to mass, there was no spiritual father and we did physical education in a gym with locker room and showers, I couldn't even imagine a trauma bigger than that.

You might think that in a situation like this I felt good, but it was not like that at all. I felt desperately alone, full of complexes, I had entered the locker room just once for a moment, but after I saw my naked mates I didn't enter

there anymore. They were all there joking and having fun but I just felt the heart beating at 180. The feeling of loneliness and isolation was total. I had a mini-apartment all of my own and fortunately the feeling of solitude sometimes seemed a feeling of freedom.

To prepare the exam I bought a computer and there a new world opened in front of me. Avalanches of free gay sex, but those things sickened me. A few years ago, even in porn, things were different, they were more vulgar, more aggressive and I didn't like them at all. When I masturbated thinking about my schoolmates I was fine but when I tried to imagine myself in scenes like the ones I had seen on porn sites I was nauseated. In practice I saw that gay content on the net was all sex but in the most vulgar sense of the term.

I studied very little that year because I had to grow up in many other things. In the end I passed the final examination with a very low rating. But at least the school's torture was over. I was sorry because the following year there would be no more chance to see my schoolmates naked in the locker room, what, by the way, had almost never happened, but at least there was the possibility.

I leave my apartment and I move to Milan in another apartment paid by my parents. A minimal thing. My parents lived in Milan but I would never have gone to their home, now we no longer called each other not even by phone, after my escape from the college I was considered just a blockhead and the low rating of my diploma was a further proof of this.

I enrolled in the faculty of Engineering of the Polytechnic shortly after I turned 20. So many guys and beautiful, but I was totally unable to keep contact with them not even at the minimum level, I felt embarrassed, I felt them more grown up than me in every sense, even if my classmates were a year younger than me. I had tried everything: I enrolled in the gym and then I never went there, I tried to see if it was possible to study with some of my colleagues but always went wrong, they were real geniuses, and I understood little or nothing at all.

The first year I passed a single exam with 19 [18/30 is the minimum score to pass an exam]. At least it was not 18! The second year I newly attended the same courses of the first and I passed a single exam again but with 20! I was 22 years old and I was basically a failure from all points of view. Bad university results, practically between university and school, three years lost. I tried to repeat again the first year, but I could not endure it anymore.

My colleagues were now three years younger than me and they understood everything, I didn't understand anything and I didn't study anything, I felt essentially a failure. I sent everything to ruin, I bought things to eat that went bad in the fridge, sometimes I didn't get up from bed all day, I ate very little and lose weight dramatically. I have arrived to weigh 55 kilos, even

though I am not very tall it's anyway very few.

At the age of 23 I changed faculty and moved to Economics. The thing was more human and at the end of the year, working at terrible rhythms, I managed to pass almost all the exams of the first year. At least from that point of view things started working again. I took my first level degree at the age of 27! After too many years lost! I did the first year of the Master Degree but of the exams that were planned I passed little more than a half because I started working and I finally cut the economic relations with my family. From this point of view, let's say, I managed to return to the surface, but my emotional life, in practice, until recently didn't exist at all.

I discovered Gay Project last year and I must say that for me it was an important thing. I read the forum every day and the guys who write there, it seems to me that I know them almost in person, a little I feel them as friends, because I don't have gay friends. So basically until this year my sexuality was only fancy and I thought that a real contact with a guy, that is, something that gives you a strong sexual emotion I would never have tried it.

I had practically resigned myself to such a thing, resigned badly, let's say so, because when sometimes I saw some nice guys, I wanted at least to try to talk with them but I couldn't really and I felt a sense of extreme despair. Now I work as an accountant, in practice I verify the "form 730" and other compiled tax forms, and things like that, it's a low level work, but all in all I can live of my own.

At work, a 26-year-old guy arrived, rather nice, that is, I like him and he also attracts me sexually. Since I met him, he has been my only sexual fixed idea. I think all of you have gone through things like that. First you start to masturbate thinking of that guy, then it comes to your mind that you don't know if he's gay, well, I've overcome all these things, it was he the one who told me he's gay because I would never have had such a courage and he also said that he likes me.

He had tried a minimum of physical contact with me but I rejected him badly, I did a kind of hysterical scene and then I ended up crying, a true attack of despair, he was in a tremendous embarrassment and I was sorry very much because in the end I wanted him but I rejected him so violently that he got really scared and started to keep me at a distance. I could not understand why if I wanted him, and I wanted him madly, in the end I had attacked him like that.

The story was at this point when I happened to meet Gay Project and I said to myself: I try! What have I to lose? And I sent my first mail, then finally I called Project by phone. At first a tremendous embarrassment. From what I've read many guys talk about sex in a very casual way but I just couldn't.

The first time, we talked for hours but always in a very vague, and never about sex, I thought that Project was tired but no. Then I called him back, but still without talking about sex, the third time, he called me, I was not expecting it and I was very happy but even the third time we didn't talk about sex. In fact I had called Project just to talk about sex and instead a very strange relationship was created which I was not really used to. A man who could be my father was talking with me for hours, he listened to me, a very strange feeling. I asked him why he was listening to me and he told me that he was at ease and in fact I was fine too, so I found the courage and told him about me, telling him a little about the story you read up to now. I also told him about the anxiety that takes me when I'm with my friend and that I thought I would never be able to have a sexual contact with him.

One thing struck me: his downplaying the drama. Project took it for granted that it would not be a big problem and that it would be resolved soon and well. We talked about sexuality very freely. Well it was remarkable: I had no inhibitions, something that had never happened to me before when dealing with topics related to sex. I had never thought I could talk freely with a man of that age and instead it had happened. Then in the following days, we talked often. If I have to tell the truth I felt the affection of Project, the attention to what I said and what I am.

Why did I write all this post? Well, the reason is one, yesterday, for the first time, I managed to kiss that guy. I had never experienced anything like this, just a feeling of total mutual abandonment. The time that stops and you end up to merge with another guy, a wonderful thing, let's tell it, because of these things I'm not ashamed anymore, the excitement was such that I came to orgasm for a kiss! When I told this to Project, he told me some beautiful things. It's true Project, being gay is a beautiful thing and makes you forget so many bad things you've been through. Now I consider that guy as my boyfriend, and he thinks the same! Guys! Never let anyone throw you down! I now feel like another person!

### **9.2.2 Are my sexual fantasies gay?**

Hello Project, I'm a twenty-two years old gay guy in practice I have always felt gay since I was a little boy, so to say, and in a conscious and fairly accepted only for a few months now. I have had (so to speak) two girls, I haven't even tried to have sex with them, I have been with them because everyone had a girl and basically if it is about going around, cinema and pizza with friends, I don't mind having a girl, but some guys have a very strong appeal for me, talking without hairs on the tongue, I have an erection even if they are only close to me, with girls nothing like this has

ever happened. Ok, even if I know that being gay will make scorched ground around me, both in the family and with friends, in the end I cannot renounce sex to please my parents, and then the very idea of having sex with a woman I cannot even to conceive it, for me it is completely unnatural.

I think about guys very much in terms of sex, I masturbate only thinking about them, however, and here my concerns begin, I don't have the courage to go further and try to fall in love, if it happens. I like sex and a lot, I imagine it, I work on sex with my imagination but I'm afraid of the guys. It's obvious that they are almost all heterosexual and this hampers me very much because being put in public would put me in difficult situations and then there are diseases, and then, basically, I only have in mind my idea of sex, which doesn't coincide with what I think most gays go looking for.

Here, this is the problem. I'm gay but the sex I find on gay porn sites is isn't at all like the one I want and would experience, so I tell myself that maybe I'm not really gay because gays live sex in another way. If I can be clearer, for me the maximum of the sex with a guy is being together naked, being able to touch and masturbate each other, but spontaneously I cannot think of taking anything in the mouth (you understand) I think in the end I could do it but I've never had a fixed idea of such things, and then anal sex I don't conceive it at all. Nothing ideological against those who practice it but it is something that not only doesn't attract me but I think I would never get to do, neither as active nor as passive.

I collected a lot of porn videos (i.e. I stored the links) in which sexuality was exactly that one I like, but they are few, some videos are beautiful and I would like to relive them in reality, but the vast majority of gay videos are of a very different type and don't excite me at all but I think they excite many other gay guys. Not having concrete experiences I don't know how I would react in reality but I think I would need a guy who also resembled me from the point of view of sexual fantasies and I think I would not be able to have a relationship in which sexuality doesn't match my fantasies. Do my fantasies have something unusual? I mean, do you think I'm not really gay? Please tell me it very clearly. Am I the classic white fly (or the classic black sheep) among gays? Do you think I have any chance of finding a gay guy with whom to build something really important? Sometimes I really fear that it will never happen and that my fantasies will remain only fantasies. If you want, publish this email, because I would like to know what the guys think about it.



# Chapter 10

## GAYS AND RELIGION

### 10.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 10.1.1 Religious prescriptions

It is a fact that religions propose to the believers the respect of some norms, some of which belong to moral codes widely shared even by non-believers (for example: not to kill and not to say false testimony, etc.) and don't need any justification because they are considered pillars of civil life, others don't find any objective justification, so much so that precepts such as monogamy that are considered fundamental by some religions are not at all so for others. Some of these precepts derive from traditions and may have very remote historical justifications that have been lost over the centuries even if, anyway, the observance of those precepts has remained obligatory.

It is precisely the absolute and non-historical dimension of religions that makes them, at least theoretically, unable to adapt to the present historical situation. Many prescriptions regarding food and sex, seen from a secular point of view, are completely formal and apparently unmotivated. The prohibition on eating particular types of meat or fish, which for others constitutes commonly used food, finds no reason other than the fact that so it is prescribed; such precepts are accepted only on the basis of a principle of authority and therefore their violation constitutes formally a sin.

We speak of sins in the sense that they are considered as such by those who follow that religion, because for others they are completely indifferent. Some prescriptions such as that of not eating meat on Fridays, in spite of their being exclusively formal, have created nevertheless considerable feelings of guilt in not very distant times.

But I would like here to deal mainly with the prohibitions on sexuality, which still today, and presumably still for very long periods, will continue to con-

dition human behavior and create suffering.

### 10.1.2 Religious prescriptions and morality

Morality, as the historical religions conceive it, doesn't look at the moral substance of the facts but stops at presumptions and formal categories, and this happens above all in the sexual field. The preconception turns into precept and presents itself with the force of the authority in the name of which certain behaviors or omissions are required, which in themselves are completely meaningless or even harmful.

Nobody tries to explain the meaning of these precepts, because they derive only from the principle of authority. A rational analysis would weaken these precepts by pointing out that they are not necessary, that sometimes they are inappropriate and even harmful. Obedience is already presented to children as the greatest virtue. The good boy does what his parents want, if he behaves like that, he is gratified, if he doesn't, he lives more or less serious feelings of guilt. The feeling of guilt creates a psychological subjection and therefore an addiction that confirms the principle of authority through the need to be forgiven.

### 10.1.3 Chastity

Let's go down to more concrete contents. Chastity, seen as abstention from sex, is considered a virtue and the exercise of sexuality is considered a vice, which is transformed into virtue only when sexuality is exercised in order to procreate in the context of a legitimate marriage. These statements, which are at least theoretically shared by many people, are pure preconceptions. Psychology teaches that sexuality at least when it is lived in a serene and spontaneous way, without taboos, and therefore in a non-transgressive way, is a fundamental condition of well-being, nevertheless chastity is considered a virtue and the exercise of sexuality, if not for legitimate procreative purposes, is considered a vice. Why does all this happen?

### 10.1.4 Prohibition-transgression-guilt

The rational explanation (obviously for those who believe that these prohibitions are devoid of any real usefulness for the one restricted by the prohibitions themselves) lies in the mechanism of prohibition / transgression / guilt / need for forgiveness which strengthens the authority of those who prescribe the prohibition and administer pardon. If the ban were easy to respect the sense of guilt would be rare and the authority would not come



out stronger, but if the prohibition or condemnation concerns sexuality and it is an absolute ban and basically against nature (for example the ban to masturbate), transgression is inevitable and through the mechanism of forgiveness the strengthening of the authority that imposes the prohibition is very evident.

### 10.1.5 Religion and self-repression

The idea that religions lead to the repression of sexuality is widely shared and the speech would seem realistic. It could be summarized as follows: a guy who would have a free sexuality, if he enters the orbit of a religion, is conditioned and begins to repress his sexuality. Religion would be the cause and the repression of sexuality would be the effect. But why of the many guys who approach the religions only some end up repressing themselves sexually remaining in those religions while others, after having approached those religions, turn away without many problems?

The answer is easily found if, instead of saying that the adherence to a religion is the cause of sexual repression, we exchange the terms of the speech and realize that it is instead the guys who are sexually repressed those who end up adhering to certain religions because within those religions their sexual self-repression is considered a merit if not a form of holiness.

### 10.1.6 The religion from "doing" to "not doing"

It is amazing that Christianity, which at the evangelical level is the religion of love of neighbor, that is, the religion of "concretely doing" good for others (giving food to the hungry, giving to drink to the thirsty, etc., etc.), is instead widely felt like the religion of "not doing", of abstinence, of not contaminating oneself.

Basically, unfortunately, instead of perceiving with feelings of guilt the not doing the good that could be done, one ends up perceiving with feelings of guilt the doing something what is forbidden for the mere fact that it is forbidden, even if the prohibition has no other motivation beyond the strengthening of the authority of the person managing it.

If religion were to be lived within the personal conscience, considered the supreme judge of the morality of actions and not instead formalized through subordination to an external authority, how many prohibitions would continue to exist? Would the level of morality decrease? Frankly, I don't think so.

Why delegate the choices of one's own conscience to an external authority?

Why we are so afraid of being simply men? Why give up the freedom to think?

### 10.1.7 Catholic Church and masturbation

The condemnation of masturbation as a serious sin on the part of the Catholic Church deserves here a particular reflection.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, art. 2396 *"Among the sins gravely contrary to chastity are masturbation, fornication, pornography, and homosexual practices."*

The formula used by the Catechism is without appeal.

The boys who attend the Church, regularly tell the priest in confession of having masturbated, using fixed formulas, for example the classic: "I have sinned against purity". The priest proceeds (often in a very mechanical way) asking how many times, whether alone or with others, then he repeats the usual formulas of condemnation of masturbation and asks the penitent (or presumed such) a commitment to avoid masturbating. The penitent shows himself repented and is acquitted.

In reality it is a false repentance, because in a short time the boy will return to masturbate and even to repeat masturbation as much as possible before the next confession (because now the purity is lost). Then the boy goes back to confession and the cycle repeats. The result is a strong push to hypocrisy on the part of the Church which, of course, knows very well how things are, that repentance is not repentance and that the mechanism only serves to surreptitiously induce feelings of guilt that keep the boy in a state of subjection.

Many priests do not even consider masturbation as a sin, and this way they get the result of keeping the boys linked to the Church. Others operate real crusades creating in the most sensitive youngsters situations of stress, deep feelings of guilt and conditioning inhibitions towards sexuality.

For many boys, the Church's position on masturbation is a cause of profound suffering.

### 10.1.8 Catholic Church and homosexuality

The above, when it comes to gay boys, takes very different contours because the Church condemns not only masturbation but directly and without appeal the homosexuality itself.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, art. 2357 *"Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved."*

A wider collection of condemnations of homosexuality on the part of the Catholic Church can be found in this manual, page 15.

### 10.1.9 Gay guys and confession

A gay boy at the time of confession has two problems, one is that of masturbation (shared with the straight boys) and the other is that of homosexuality. The overwhelming majority of gay boys feel their homosexuality as something so natural that they simply and sincerely doesn't consider it as sin and continue to confess only impure acts without any specification. When, in a casual way, the issue of homosexuality emerges in confession, the answers from the priests, even if in theory are always aimed to condemnation, are actually very various and variously open. Even here, probably the idea that a drastic attitude would definitely detach a gay boy from the Church has in many cases a non-negligible part.

The real moment of crisis between a gay boy and the Church occurs when the boy comes to discover that the Church demands total chastity from him [art. 2359 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: *"Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection."*]. In other words, a homosexual to remain in the Church must radically deny what he is because the Church considers homosexuality "serious depravity", "fatal consequence of a rejection of God", "lack of normal sexual evolution", "pathological constitution", "intrinsically bad behavior from the moral point of view" (see the cited texts on pane 15).

### 10.1.10 Gay guys and Catholic Church: possible options

Which options are possible for a gay? He may repress himself or may seriously try to repress himself in order to totally conform to what the Church asks of him, with long-term destructive results, or else he may enter the vicious circle of an infinite series of false repentances and relapses as in the case of masturbation, or as the third option he may stop trying to reconcile what by definition it is irreconcilable. Often the boys try the first road, they feel it impassable, they reject the hypocrisy of the second and finally they enter the third, moving away from the Church definitively and completely overcoming guilt feelings.

### 10.1.11 Reparative therapies

I conclude this chapter by addressing a very delicate topic that has repeatedly created doubts and perplexities in gay guys, I refer to the so-called "reparative therapies". On December 23, 2007, a long article by Davide Vari appeared on "Liberazione": "The story of a reporter who for months attended a course organized by an ultra-Catholic group" "I told him: "I'm gay". They replied: "Your disease is a mild disease, we can treat it well ..." "Are you gay? Come to us, we'll take care of you" "Diary of six months in therapy ..." "The road to my presumed salvation begins with a meeting to define times and ways of my entry into a therapeutic group to recover from homosexuality" "The story of a reporter who was infiltrated for months into a course organized by a ultra-Catholic group".

Below is a link to the text of the article, now almost unobtainable but extremely interesting: <http://gayprojectforum.altervista.org/T-reparative-therapy-to-cure-hom>

In this article, the author doesn't speak in the abstract of reparative therapies but tells in detail his experience. Pretending to be homosexual, is put in contact by a priest with prof. Tonino Cantelmi, president and founder of the Italian Association of Catholic Psychologists and Psychiatrists and professor of psychology at the Gregorian University, who directs him to a reparative therapy for homosexuality. The article doesn't stop, however, to describe the practical experience of the journalist in contact with the team of Prof. Cantelmi, but goes in search of the roots of reparative therapies by analyzing the contents of the book "Beyond homosexuality" by Joseph Nicolosi who is commonly considered the father of reparative therapies of homosexuality.

### 10.1.12 World health organization and reparative therapies

To avoid sterile polemics and to give a clear and authoritative answer to the supporters of these therapies, I report below, a fundamental document of the World Health Organization [<https://www.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2012/Conversion-Therapies-EN.pdf>] where some points of extreme importance for homosexual people are synthesized. This document of the highest scientific level is the synthesis of the work of many specialists in all parts of the world. I invite you to observe how the contents of this document accurately reflect what Gay Project has always supported. I believe that there is no need to compare this document with other well-known documents of confessional origin.

Pan American Health Organization  
Regional Office of the  
World Health Organization

#### **”CURES” FOR AN ILLNESS THAT DOES NOT EXIST**

Purported therapies aimed at changing sexual orientation  
lack medical justification and are ethically unacceptable

#### **Introduction**

Countless human beings live their lives surrounded by rejection, maltreatment, and violence for being perceived as ”different.” Among them, millions are victims of attitudes of mistrust, disdain and hatred because of their sexual orientation. These expressions of homophobia are based on intolerance resulting from blind fanaticism as well as pseudoscientific views that regard non-heterosexual and non-procreative sexual behavior as ”deviation” or the result of a ”developmental defect.”

Whatever its origins and manifestations, any form of homophobia has negative effects on the affected people, their families and friends, and society at large. There is an abundance of accounts and testimonies of suffering; feelings of guilt and shame; social exclusion; threats and injuries; and persons who have been brutalized and tortured to the point of causing injuries, permanent scars and even death. As a consequence, homophobia represents a public health problem that needs to be addressed energetically.

While every expression of homophobia is regrettable, harms caused by health professionals as a result of ignorance, prejudice, or intolerance are absolutely unacceptable and must be avoided by all means. Not only is it fundamentally important that every person who uses health services be treated with

dignity and respect; it is also critical to prevent the application of theories and models that view homosexuality as a "deviation" or a choice that can be modified through "will power" or supposed "therapeutic support". In several countries of the Americas, there has been evidence of the continued promotion, through supposed "clinics" or individual "therapists," of services aimed at "curing" non-heterosexual orientation, an approach known as "reparative" or "conversion therapy."<sup>1</sup> Worryingly, these services are often provided not just outside the sphere of public attention but in a clandestine manner. From the perspective of professional ethics and human rights protected by regional and universal treaties and conventions such as the American Convention on Human Rights and its Additional Protocol ("Protocol of San Salvador"),<sup>2</sup> they represent unjustifiable practices that should be denounced and subject to corresponding sanctions.

### **Homosexuality as a natural and non-pathological variation**

Efforts aimed at changing non-heterosexual sexual orientations lack medical justification since homosexuality cannot be considered a pathological condition.<sup>3</sup> There is a professional consensus that homosexuality represents a natural variation of human sexuality without any intrinsically harmful effect on the health of those concerned or those close to them. In none of its individual manifestations does homosexuality constitute a disorder or an illness, and therefore it requires no cure. For this reason homosexuality was removed from the relevant systems of classification of diseases several decades

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<sup>1</sup>Human Rights Committee (2008). Concluding Observations on Ecuador (CCPR/C/ECU/CO/5), paragraph 12. Human Rights Council (2011). Discriminatory Laws and Practices and Acts of Violence Against Individuals Based on Their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (A/HRC/19/41), paragraph 56. Human Rights Council (2011). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health (A/HRC/14/20), paragraph 23. United Nations General Assembly (2001). Note by the Secretary-General on the Question of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (A/56/156), paragraph 24.

<sup>2</sup>The human rights that can be affected by these practices include, among others, the right to life, to personal integrity, to privacy, to equality before the law, to personal liberty, to health, and to benefit from scientific progress.

<sup>3</sup>American Psychiatric Association (2000). Therapies Focused on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation (Reparative or Conversion Therapies): Position Statement. Anton, B. S. (2010). "Proceedings of the American Psychological Association for the Legislative Year 2009: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives and Minutes of the Meetings of the Board of Directors". *American Psychologist*, 65, 385–475. Just the Facts Coalition (2008). *Just the Facts about Sexual Orientation and Youth: A Primer for Principals, Educators, and School Personnel*. Washington, DC.

ago.<sup>4</sup>

### **The ineffectiveness and harmfulness of "conversion therapies"**

Besides the lack of medical indication, there is no scientific evidence for the effectiveness of sexual reorientation efforts. While some persons manage to limit the expression of their sexual orientation in terms of conduct, the orientation itself generally appears as an integral personal characteristic that cannot be changed. At the same time, testimonies abound about harms to mental and physical health resulting from the repression of a person's sexual orientation. In 2009, the American Psychological Association conducted a review of 83 cases of people who had been subject to "conversion" interventions.<sup>5</sup> Not only was it impossible to demonstrate changes in subjects' sexual orientation, in addition the study found that the intention to change sexual orientation was linked to depression, anxiety, insomnia, feelings of guilt and shame, and even suicidal ideation and behaviors. In light of this evidence, suggesting to patients that they suffer from a "defect" and that they ought to change constitutes a violation of the first principle of medical ethics: "first, do no harm." It affects the right to personal integrity as well as the right to health, especially in its psychological and moral dimensions.

### **Reported violations of personal integrity and other human rights**

As an aggravating factor, "conversion therapies" have to be considered threats to the right to personal autonomy and to personal integrity. There are several testimonies from adolescents who have been subject to "reparative" interventions against their will, many times at their families' initiative. In some cases, the victims were interned and deprived of their liberty, sometimes to the extent of being kept in isolation during several months.<sup>6</sup> The testimonies provide accounts of degrading treatment, extreme humiliation, physical violence, aversive conditioning through electric shock or emetic substances, and even sexual harassment and attempts of "reparative rape",

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<sup>4</sup>World Health Organization (1994). *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (10th Revision)*. Geneva, Switzerland. American Psychiatric Association (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed., text revision)*. Washington, DC.

<sup>5</sup>APA Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation (2009). *Report of the Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation*. Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup>Taller de Comunicación Mujer (2008). *Pacto Internacional de Derechos Civiles y Políticos: Informe Sombra*. Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales (2005). *Tribunal por los Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales de las Mujeres*.

especially in the case of lesbian women. Such interventions violate the dignity and human rights of the affected persons, independently of the fact that their "therapeutic" effect is nil or even counterproductive. In these cases, the right to health has not been protected as demanded by the regional and international obligations established through the Protocol of San Salvador and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

### **Conclusion**

Health professionals who offer "reparative therapies" align themselves with social prejudices and reflect a stark ignorance in matters of sexuality and sexual health. Contrary to what many people believe or assume, there is no reason – with the exception of the stigma resulting from those very prejudices – why homosexual persons should be unable to enjoy a full and satisfying life. The task of health professionals is to not cause harm and to offer support to patients to alleviate their complaints and problems, not to make these more severe. A therapist who classifies non-heterosexual patients as "deviant" not only offends them but also contributes to the aggravation of their problems. "Reparative" or "conversion therapies" have no medical indication and represent a severe threat to the health and human rights of the affected persons. They constitute unjustifiable practices that should be denounced and subject to adequate sanctions and penalties.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **To governments:**

- Homophobic ill-treatment on the part of health professionals or other members of health care teams violates human rights obligations established through universal and regional treaties. Such treatment is unacceptable and should not be tolerated.
- "Reparative" or "conversion therapies" and the clinics offering them should be reported and subject to adequate sanctions.
- Institutions offering such "treatment" at the margin of the health sector should be viewed as infringing the right to health by assuming a role properly pertaining to the health sector and by causing harm to individual and community well-being.<sup>7</sup>
- Victims of homophobic ill-treatment must be treated in accordance with

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<sup>7</sup>See General Comment No. 14 by the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights with regards to the obligation to respect, protect and comply with human rights obligations on the part of States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.



protocols that support them in the recovery of their dignity and self-esteem. This includes providing them treatment for physical and emotional harm and protecting their human rights, especially the right to life, personal integrity, health, and equality before the law.

**To academic institutions:**

- Public institutions responsible for training health professionals should include courses on human sexuality and sexual health in their curricula, with a particular focus on respect for diversity and the elimination of attitudes of pathologization, rejection, and hate toward non-heterosexual persons. The participation of the latter in teaching activities contributes to the development of positive role models and to the elimination of common stereotypes about non-heterosexual communities and persons.
- The formation of support groups among faculty and within the student community contributes to reducing isolation and promoting solidarity and relationships of friendship and respect between members of these groups. Better still is the formation of sexual diversity alliances that include heterosexual persons.
- Homophobic harassment or maltreatment on the part of members of the faculty or students is unacceptable and should not be tolerated.

**To professional associations:**

- Professional associations should disseminate documents and resolutions by national and international institutions and agencies that call for the de-psychopathologization of sexual diversity and the prevention of interventions aimed at changing sexual orientation.
- Professional associations should adopt clear and defined positions regarding the protection of human dignity and should define necessary actions for the prevention and control of homophobia as a public health problem that negatively impacts the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.
- The application of so-called "reparative" or "conversion therapies" should be considered fraudulent and as violating the basic principles of medical ethics. Individuals or institutions offering these treatments should be subject to adequate sanctions.

**To the media:**

- The representation of non-heterosexual groups, populations, or individuals in the media should be based on personal respect, avoiding stereotypes or humor based on mockery, ill-treatment, or violations of dignity or individual or collective well-being.

- Homophobia, in any of its manifestations and expressed by any person, should be exposed as a public health problem and a threat to human dignity and human rights.
- The use of positive images of non-heterosexual persons or groups, far from promoting homosexuality (in virtue of the fact that sexual orientation cannot be changed), contributes to creating a more humane and diversity-friendly outlook, dispelling unfounded fears and promoting feelings of solidarity.
- Publicity that incites homophobic intolerance should be denounced for contributing to the aggravation of a public health problem and threats to the right to life, particularly as it contributes to chronic emotional suffering, physical violence, and hate crimes.
- Advertising by "therapists," "care centers," or any other agent offering services aimed at changing sexual orientation should be considered illegal and should be reported to the relevant authorities.

**To civil society organizations:**

- Civil society organizations can develop mechanisms of civil vigilance to detect violations of the human rights of non-heterosexual persons and report them to the relevant authorities. They can also help to identify and report persons and institutions involved in the administration of so-called "reparative" or "conversion therapies".
- Existing or emerging self-help groups of relatives or friends of non-heterosexual persons can facilitate the connection to health and social services with the goal of protecting the physical and emotional integrity of ill-treated individuals, in addition to reporting abuse and violence.
- Fostering respectful daily interactions between persons of different sexual orientations is enriching for everyone and promotes harmonic, constructive, salutary, and peaceful ways of living together.

## 10.2 DOCUMENTS

### 10.2.1 Misunderstandings between gay guys and Christian parents

Hello Project,

I read so many of those things you've posted that sending you an e-mail seems natural to me as writing an email to a friend, and maybe even more. I am a 22 y. o. guy, who grew up in a very religious environment but religious in a very special way, I want to say that my parents apparently have never been prudish, they are believers, as they say themselves, but at the same

time have a very specific vision of religion.

I always went to church but mostly I attended the environments of the Catholic more active laity and I think even the most advanced. Since I was 14 I went with my parents to lend a hand to organize soup kitchens and services for people in need, both my parents are still volunteering and they do seriously, in the sense that they spend there at least two afternoons a week and often more.

I, in the past, always thought that my parents were people conforming to what Christians should be, with them I always had a great relationship, however, in spite of everything, since I did come out with them, about six months ago, things are a little changed. They accepted the fact that I was gay, in the sense that they have never created obstacles and I have not been asked too many questions, anyway, even if they have not done anything to prove it, nevertheless, I realized that something had changed for them.

Before my coming out, every now and then, it happened that there was talk also about sex, but now it doesn't happen anymore. On TV they follow more or less always the same channels, except when there are programs that touch issues related to sexuality, when it comes to sex they change channel but they do unobtrusively, as it was by chance, but it happens systematically.

Once, I used to see sometimes mom and dad around the house not completely dressed, mom in panties and bra and dad in underwear, but now such things doesn't happen anymore. I believe that they feel embarrassed and do not know what to do.

Months ago they insisted to take me with them when they were volunteering, now they don't even ask me to go with them anymore and that's why I'm not going to volunteer anymore. And then there is the mass, sometimes I was jumping the mass even before my coming out, they months ago tried to insist, now no longer do so. Once, every now and then, they invited house some of the priests of the parish or of the volunteers but now no longer do so.

For everything else, they have been, even recently, parents formally perfect, they left me free to do what I wanted, they never interfered but the few times I tried to resume the subject of homosexuality, I noticed that they tended to escape and change the subject.

Last Sunday I accompanied them to Mass without them asking me, the priest, incidentally, was speaking about homosexuality and said some things that were so absurd that I have been there just to see how far he would come.

The priest could have been more or less 40 years old, and left me fully upset and angry because of the things he said disguising a subtle violence that looked from outside as a kind of false pity for gays. Apart from the fact that he said things objectively false, his way of taking everything for granted

amazed me.

We were at church and I had to pretend nothing happened, my parents went to confession because they do it every Sunday, then they took communion and we left the church to come back home.

I would have expected at least a comment on what the priest had said, but there was no comment, they pretended absolutely nothing had happened, as if they had not heard the priest at all. After a few minutes of chatting about issues like the weather and other such things I asked if they had heard what the priest had said, and my father told me what I would have never expected: "The church must defend the great values! Church cannot equate marriage and the things you think about. Such a thing will never happen." Then mom too entered the discussion with a speech even more absurd: "We do not want to hinder you because it would be counterproductive but it's you that should realize that your path is not the right one."

I did not want to continue the conversation, I made a gesture of greeting, and quickly went home, I took my things, at least the basic ones, and I went away. I have been three days by a friend of mine who hosted me. My parents didn't even call me on the phone, because they knew that sooner or later I had to get back home perforce because I don't work, I have no money and cannot live hosted by friends. You can imagine how I was in a black mood when I returned home. Now I do not know what to do, the options are two:

- 1) To deal with my parents with no fear, at the cost of coming to blows, because I think we would arrive there, at least on my part.
  
- 2) To pretend that nothing happened and go back to the nice guy who plays a part because he cannot be economically independent.

I thought about looking for a job, but to quit school seems like a crazy thing and risky that after I would pay too much. Now I have to get to a solution quickly. Personally, I am inclined to the first hypothesis, though I think it could be destructive. But how is it possible for two adult persons, educated, socially engaged, to be quite unable to think with their own brains? I now don't go to church for a long time and I don't miss it. Am I a Christian? Yes! But I think that the message of Christ was deeply upset. Frankly, I'm not a believer in the sense that the church gives to this word, that is, I see a lot of things that religion teaches me like mythical interpretations and I think that the essence of Christianity is love your neighbor, in this sense I feel certainly Christian. If once I had any doubts about whether to try to remain in the church, now I don't have those doubts anymore, I don't want to end up like my parents for whom I feel more compassion than anger.

### 10.2.2 A gay in love

Hello Project, I'm 22 years old, I think I have always felt gay, even if in practice it's only three months now that I have definitively put aside the idea of being heterosexual. In this, your forum has played an important role in helping me overcoming fears, because my refusal came from the negative idea I had of homosexuality. In fact, gay project is a unique thing on the web and reading it every day I realized that I feel very close to the guys who write there and there is another thing, that I see that being gay in the end doesn't mean being condemned to loneliness, that is to say it doesn't necessarily mean to remain without friends, I speak of gay friends, or even without love. My life, if I put aside the sex, it would not be so bad, in June I'll take the first degree in a scientific discipline and then I'll have to do the masterly degree but it seems a quite quiet road, maybe, afterwards, finding work will be much more complicated but, for a few years more, I just have to go on my way that is already defined.

I have two parents who love me and I think they are smart people. I never thought about coming out with them because until a few months ago I was not even totally convinced that I was gay and I didn't like the word at all, then I got used to it and now it feels like a common word or even a nice word, at the limit, also a good thing because, I cannot hide it, I like guys, I don't look at girls, it doesn't come naturally to me, while a nice guy, especially a sweet guy, with a beautiful smile, sends me into ecstasy. As for sex my interests have always been directed towards guys even if until now in practice there has been no chance because I don't even know how to behave, shortly, if about a guy you don't even know if he's gay or not, you have to be very careful about how you behave. Now, frankly, I don't think I will speak about my sexuality with my parents and not out of fear or anything but because I think that such things are only my own things and that I must find my way alone.

Reading the forum I discovered that there are a lot of guys like me, I'm gay, of course, but I'm above all myself, I don't identify with my being gay, or at least I don't think that life can be reduced to a single common denominator. I'm a believer, but this is another story that creates many problems because I don't like to keep a foot in both camps, but then, maybe, about religion we will speak in private (if you want to give me your msn). At the moment I still cannot think of sex in a totally positive way, that is, without feeling upset and without feelings of guilt, it's a bit, I think, the consequence of my religious education and I don't hide that reading what you write I thought that about this issue I'm still far behind and that I try to sublimate a lot, to take things a lot on an emotional level, eliminating as far as possible the

most direct sexual implications.

Will I ever be able to love a boyfriend sexually? I really don't know and I have to say that it is probably this that curbs me, I feel bound, inhibited, still very conditioned. With my parents, even as a child, I have never had an opportunity to talk about sex, I have never seen them in an attitude of tenderness, they are very rational and at least apparently detached from these things, even with me no effusions, i.e. our family behavior has always been a bit cold. And then there are many other problems, that is I don't know if I'm up to it and how to behave with a guy, I cannot even imagine such things but at the moment I avoid to find myself concretely in front of the problem.

I have been never able to live masturbation without problems and religion has a lot to do with this, I have already said that I don't like to keep one foot in both camps but I don't want to throw away all my previous life because I feel it as a value but I don't want to talk about such things now. In practice I'm a bit in struggle with myself: have I to be 100% gay? I'm not talking about strange things but just having a guy and living a real couple life, or perhaps my being gay must be just a matter of fantasy? Because, if, at the end, I don't feel like at all of really throwing myself into a relationship that I don't feel really mine, what can I do? And if it goes wrong? If I then find a guy who seems a nice guy but then the reality is totally different? If I didn't want to stay with him feeling myself pressed by him, then wouldn't it be better to be alone? Apart from the fact that I'm terrified of the diseases and even if you do the tests, as you say, in the end you would never be sure that he doesn't behave with the utmost care to avoid risks with others, and anyway it is not even a thing of risky behavior, I wouldn't be able to stand to be betrayed and instead I think that something similar sometimes really happens.

At the university there is a beautiful guy, I have no doubt that he is straight because when he comes close to some girl he behaves tenderly, smiles, pampers her (what's also beautiful to see) but for this reason I'm quite angry, when he talks to me (because we speak a little), he takes on another tone, a loose tone, yes, but deliberately distracted, and he does it also with other guys. He's not the guy of my dreams, even if he's beautiful and also sexy, but sexy in a natural way, the guy of my dreams is another that I had met in the parish but now he's lives far away, occasionally we meet outside, unfortunately he left his studies, I think more for economic reasons than anything else.

When we talk, I always try to insist on the fact that he should try to go back to university, where he also was fine and in a very difficult faculty. I would feel happy if this guy would resume his studies, within a single year he could

finish the triennial course, he is very tempted and I think the family would do anything to let him go on. Unfortunately he doesn't attend my faculty, otherwise I could have been useful in another way but he attends one of those very hard, he has a very strong attitude for studying and is also very smart. Now he is working but he told me that he has not completely left the study and that anyway he is preparing a very important exam that he would like to take if he ever resumes his studies. This sentence made me immensely pleased because it means that he has in mind to actually restart attending university.

We live in a country 40 km from the city where there is the university and I told him that I would accompany him, both on the outward and on the return journey, and that we could have lunch together at the cafeteria. I had the impression that this speech pleased him. We meet on average once a week but when it happens, we are talking more than an hour and I think it pleases him, of course I'm pleased, there is an exchange of smiles that I like very much, apparently the speech is disengaged because we speak only about university and prospects for the future, yet I'm fine with him.

I don't know how much he feels involved, but I feel him as the guy of my dreams, I feel like we're already building something together and it could even be true! What does sex have to do with all this? Well, for me sex has to do with it, I cannot deny it, being close to him makes me feel a very strong sexual involvement. When we meet, I always fear that he has other things to do but it doesn't happen and we usually talk for a while in a very serious way. I want to say that he tells me what he thinks even if we are talking only about things of study and of the future, I believe that a serious relationship has been created. Is he gay? I don't know, I cannot even say whether I would rather he was gay or not, now I feel good this way, he's a special friend, and he really is, I'm not imagining everything by myself.

Time will make me understand where we are going. Can you fall in love with someone you only see for an hour a week without even know if he's gay? It happens to me and then so I can sublimate this thing just as I like it, I don't feel forced to make decisions or do things that I don't feel ready to do yet, or rather I hope that slowly with this guy things change both for him and for me and that we can get to discover slowly and together that we love each other and that what we want is just to be close one another. I must say, however, that all this reasoning so many times puts me in crisis because there is no objective basis, there are only some impressions that could be completely misleading. Am I sublimating too much? That is, am I running away from reality and trying to take refuge in the world of fairy tales that are beautiful but have nothing real?

Frankly I don't know, now my mood is this, I feel in love, it is the first time

that the life of another guy interests me in a deep sense, I feel like to love him. I know that you say that serious stories always begin reciprocally, but could not his reactions hide a reality very similar to mine? He never talks about girls, he is happy to talk to me, he feels encouraged and above all he smiles at me like no one else has ever done. Project, if you want to have a chat with me my msn is [omissis], I feel a bit stalled, I'm happy but I would like so much an explicit answer even if I'm the first who doesn't speak clearly, I even thought of coming out with him, to tell him everything even if I felt totally uncertain. Thank you for your patience in reading this whole novel up to here. I'm waiting for your response. A hug.

Laurence

### 10.2.3 How a gay guy confronts religion

The blog is nice and definitely not standard, so I think I will continue to read it, I think it misses something, a topic that I think has affected the lives of many gay guys, me at the first place. I know that I'm about to throw a stone into the pond and I could raise a high wave, but I don't think we should have any taboos. What are the relationships between gays and religion? Mh, pay attention, I don't want to talk about gay priests and the like, a problem that deserves a serious investigation even by the gay world, which instead withdraws in good order, I want to talk about the relationship between the majority of gay guys and religion, the thing from my point of view is fundamental but the taboo is so strong that people avoid getting involved in similar issues. I don't know about you, but I have lived it with a real anxiety.

When I was a young boy I didn't realize it, then between 13 and 14 years old, I discovered two new things together: one is religion and the other is that I was gay. I say immediately that religion seemed to me a beautiful thing for some of its contents, such as universal brotherhood, the idea of winning death, the idea of giving a deep meaning to life, and there is no denying that these things have a charm very strong, but from other points of view religion seemed very formal, legalistic, somehow the opposite of what it should have been.

On the other hand the discovery of sexuality and of being gay, which was not at all a trauma for me, had other attractions, if we want less metaphysical and decidedly more concrete, especially for a growing boy. The other boys were also a sexual attraction for me and I could not hide it to myself. At that time I used to go the parish church which, all in all, had their own dignity. There was a priest, regular meetings were held to talk about morals and even about sex. The priest was prudent, for example he followed a precise rule:



not to confess the boys, a very smart thing to avoid creating embarrassment. For more where I used to go girls were very few, were not excluded but they almost excluded themselves.

For a guy like me, going to a place like that meant going to a place that was good in the opinion of my parents and at the same time meant being able to be in direct contact with many other guys, it was good, we played table football, we chatted, we talked to the priest, yes, yes, we talked to the priest and here I was beginning to feel out of place. We all saw each other in a room and then we began to chat and ask questions, even about sex and not too general, but the thing sounded strange to me, we were all boys and we spoke only about girls, in practice the priest was enough able to talk about straight sex and morals, but he never spoke about gays (sex or not sex), total taboo. Basically the taboo subject was not sex but homosexuality. I didn't like such an attitude.

And then there was another topic that was my real obsession a few years ago: masturbation. [Note for project. If you want, this part you can cut it, but I would like to insert it.] I say obsession because I did everything to avoid it, but since mother nature is stronger than us, even after confession and communion, I inevitably happened to masturbate another time and I had to go to confession another time and so on, practically indefinitely.

The story of masturbation actually represented in a very clear way the continuous oscillation of my interests between religion and sex, be careful, "gay" sex, detail that I omitted systematically. Sometimes I have self-imposed forms of almost violent self-discipline to try to resist, for a while I succeeded, to the limit, with titanic efforts, even for a month, but then it was impossible to go on that way.

Then, over the years, I began to ask myself the meaning of all this and honestly I didn't find any serious reason for this, and then certain things of the religion seemed to me like a superstructure invented just to keep people under check more easily. For a few years I have still fluctuated so to say between heaven and hell, then I said to myself: but I have a conscience, the eternal Father gave it to me and not to use it would be a blasphemy, since then I began to reason in a different way, before acting I wondered if I was really honest up to the end, but if the answer of my conscience was yes I didn't pay any more attention to anyone and in terms of gay feelings the answer was almost always yes.

I would like to explain myself better. When I fell in love with a guy and I had to understand how to behave towards him, I followed two criteria, the first was that of spontaneity, I wondered: if I hadn't thought too much and had behaved just instinctively, what would I have done? And then I wondered if that instinctive choice could be wrong for that guy, that is, I wondered if I

had some hidden purposes towards him, sometimes I thought I had unconfessed purposes and therefore I felt urged by my own morality to a choice that was very hard for me, I had to do what I thought "honestly" was the best for that guy and not for me, but most of the times the instinctive choices seemed to me even the most radically moral: in practice I had always to tell the truth unless there was the risk of hurting the other, anyway I felt like I had never to choose for my own sake but for the sake of that guy. This is not a stupid logic and it is not even a difficult moral to apply because if you love a guy you really want his good. So you understand how I think.

As for religion after certain positions taken by the Church, I honestly think that being gay without hypocrisies is irreconcilable with what the Church says. I have read the official documents on "homosexual persons" and also those to forbid homosexuality in the seminaries, I read these things with great regret because they will only create more suffering, for example to the homosexual priests who surely are there and will be so further crushed. I wonder, and even here I ask you honestly: but do they understand what they are doing?

I heard a priest saying that those who make gay propaganda (what is absurd because being gay is not an ideological question and the propaganda in these things doesn't make sense) has a "cauterized" conscience, which in the language of ecclesiastical moralists means that he has the conscience so burned that he can't even realize his mistake. There is no need to say that "in all honesty" the thing seems grotesque. I could excuse these people if I thought they really don't know what they are doing, but unfortunately I think they know it very well.

#### 10.2.4 Or Christian or gay

I am very reluctant to write this story because it touches very delicate issues. The facts are told in a very short diary of which a person I know made me have photocopies, I asked the phone number of the author of that diary and they gave it to me, I called him, he knew me only by interposed persons, because he had heard about me and my blogs, but he said I could use that material but he asked me to do it with extreme caution, and that's what I will do.

The diary in some places presents true dramatic tones. I rewrote the story, (in the first person) summarizing it and, as usual, trying to respect its spirit. I emphasize that what you will find below is absolutely not my personal point of view.

"My story is a very particular story, it is the story of a very intense and

very short but essentially impossible gay love, impossible because denied, suffocated in the bud. All this took place over 25 days, I counted them one by one.

I am 23 years old and he, Mark, 19, we met at university, he was enrolled in the first year, I was about to finish the faculty of letters. It was late afternoon, after classes, he asked me about the institute of Glottology, I tried to explain him everything and our story started like that, then we kept talking and he was fine, he was hesitant but he was happy to be with me. I didn't know him at all, he was a handsome guy, but I also liked him from other points of view, he was straightforward, authentic, he did not play a role, that evening I would never go away. I didn't even think to tell him I was just fine, I had no second purposes, in fact I often talk to some guy, but just because I'm there and I must spend five minutes. I felt older than Mark, more mature, somewhat protective.

The next day he looked for me in my classroom and I accompanied him home, a very long and pleasant trip. In the following days I noticed that between us a strong relationship was developing and I didn't know how to behave, with me Mark talked about everything but never of girls or sex. If I wanted to be honest, at the cost of losing him, I had to tell him exactly how things were. I did it. Marco was deeply troubled because he wanted to be my friend, but not that way, he told me it right away, but he didn't know if he would ever succeed.

At first I simply thought that being an object of love for another gay guy was not an acceptable for him, but the problem was not that. I understood it a minute later because he himself told me in an effort of sincerity that must have cost him blood, he told me: "I cannot share your feeling because I am Christian", but from this sentence I still couldn't understand what he was really telling me, I simply told him: "I didn't understand ...". And he replied, winning a very strong embarrassment and without looking at me: "I am gay but I am a Christian and I want to live chastely ... and while being close to you it would be much more difficult."

I was shocked by this explicit statement, but he is like that, he is not really capable of cheating anyone! Then he told me: "it's a battle with myself but I have to win it, it may seem absurd to you but for me it's essential." I didn't know how to behave, whether to do all my usual talk about religion or avoid. I said nothing, he took it as a form of respect and he didn't run away, when we saw each other he was happy but always with a sense of underlying guilt. I let him talk about it, I was hoping very much that he could also understand things from my point of view when we were talking about religion. For him it was an essential thing, He tried in every way and with the utmost commitment to do things honestly. He was not bigoted, he

was not invasive, no! He had taken it 100% seriously.

I stopped going to church since I realized I was gay, in practice since I was a kid, but I read some gospel pages willingly, the closures that the Pope has on gays seem to me absolutely immoral but I don't think at all that religion is a stupid thing.

Mark realized that I had a certain respect for these things and he was happy with it, but he never spoke to me about the problem of religion and gays. The twenty-fourth day, one Saturday, he asked me something very strange, he asked me to accompany him to church the next day ... I told him that I would certainly come. Sunday was a particular Sunday and there was a bishop who was supposed to confirm more or less twenty guys.

Mark and I entered. I would have stopped at the bottom, but Mark wanted me to go further with him and we went to a bench about halfway up the church. The bishop entered for the mass, a thin, tall, old man. The guys were singing, the church was full of people, there was a nice atmosphere. Then the bishop made his speech and he said some very beautiful things, which moved me, on the fact that we are all brothers and that loving our neighbor is difficult. In practice there was not a single word of the bishop's preaching that I would not have said identical. They seemed like beautiful things, 100% shareable, then we exchanged peace, but it did not have the ritual flavor it usually has, it was serious.

He got up and went to confession on the way back he knelt right next to me, then he went to make communion, he was happy as I had never seen him. When we left the church we talked for a quarter of an hour and he told me that he wanted to become a priest but that now he would have problems in the seminary, before deciding, he had to be sure he could take his commitment without hesitation, he explained to me that he would first have to solve the problem of homosexuality and that if I loved him I really had to help him by not looking for him anymore.

I think nobody can imagine what I felt in those moments, I was upset, I didn't know what to say, he asked me to say goodbye to him forever and I respected his decision, I told him that I would love him always, he replied that he knew this and that he too would not forget me but that his path was different.

It's been a week now and I have not heard from him. Now I feel sick inside, I feel lonely and I think I have been a coward, I didn't do what I should, I think I only respected his words and not his soul, that I had let him follow a path he had told me was his path, but that maybe it's not really his path, because he made that choice in a dramatic way, he was split in two, in order to save his soul he had to destroy himself.

What makes me feel bad is that if he had to repent of his choice he would

have no one willing to listen to him. I absurdly followed him in choosing the path that led him permanently away from me, but if he wanted to go back, no one would help him and I think that sooner or later he can go into crisis. I feel a sense of despair not only for me but above all for him and I feel guilty and I think that my behavior has been hypocritical because respecting a guy means always telling him everything you think and I didn't do it with him."

### 10.2.5 Church, freedom and secular morality

Secular morality is not a set of precepts and prohibitions, it is not a moral code destined to replace another moral code but it is a method that aims to guarantee coexistence, freedom and equality of individuals in social relationships, starting from the idea that freedom is the fundamental social value on which a society of free men must be founded and that the limitations of freedom are justifiable only in terms of the protection of the freedom of others.

The secular morality has nothing to do with particular morals, it is not justified on the basis of any authority but derives from the free acceptance of its founding principle, i.e. the idea that freedom is the fundamental and unconditional right of everyone. In a secular view, on a social level, there are no true morals, according to nature or according to reason and there are no moral authorities, these concepts are typical of particular morals.

The secular morality is by its own nature relativistic in the sense that, if it is left to the individual the maximum freedom of conscience and full responsibility for his moral action, provided that one remains in the context of respect for the freedom of others, the choice of the individual is only his, cannot be normative for anyone else and is not subject to the judgment of anyone. Relativism is a non-dogmatic view of morality, it is not a principle for which any moral code can be equally valid, it is rather a way of dealing with moral content and behavior with an eye to the only social aspect relevant, that is, to the dimension of freedom. Not every moral code or behavior can be admitted in a free society, that is in a secular society, but only the moral codes and behaviors that fully respect the freedom of others can be accepted.

No preaching of discrimination, violence, homophobia or racial hatred, no *a priori* condemnation of facts or deriving from facts that are not objectively detrimental to the freedom of others, no privilege in any manner justified is compatible with a secular morality because these things are not respectful of freedom of others. No power to limit the freedom of other people, even within the same family, can morally be recognized to anyone for reasons other than those that the law recognizes on the basis of a collective objective interest.

No mutilation (circumcision, infibulation) can be practiced for any reason on a minor. No imposition (to marry / not to marry, choice of spouse, choice of having children, choice to severely restrict pregnancies) can be imposed on anyone for any reason. These are just some examples of moral content absolutely incompatible with the freedom of all, which is the only value that a secular state must guarantee.

In a secular view of society, for all the conditions affecting the private sphere of individuals, must be guaranteed maximum freedom: adhere to a religion or abandon it freely without any prejudice, to join a political party and leave it freely without any prejudice, follow one's own sexual orientation, marry or not get married, have or not have children, etc. ...

Some issues deserve clarification. Can Law allow restrictions of freedom such those characteristics of members of one or another religious confession (perpetual vows)? The answer is obviously yes, with the condition that from that religious confession you can go out freely, without any formality and without any prejudice. The temporary sacrifice of the freedom of the individual, consciously and freely wanted, doesn't violate the freedom of that individual if the sacrifice can end in every moment, without formality and without damage, it is rather an exercise of individual freedom. On the other hand, it is not morally acceptable to allow a definitive and irreversible choice, such as that of pronouncing perpetual vows, definitively renouncing some of one's own rights, without the possibility of going back when the need of it is felt. The renunciations to freedom cannot be admitted if irrevocable.

Does this mean that it is not possible to pronounce perpetual vows renouncing definitively some of one's own rights? No. This only means that the law cannot continue to attach legal value to acts performed as a result of the vows if they are revoked. If a person pronounces the vows and as a result of the vows his assets pass to others, the revocation of the vows must determine, by law, the return of the assets in the sphere of the original owner. This means that the property transferred following the pronounce of the vows must remain inalienable as long as the person who pronounced the vows is alive and that until then only the right of usufruct is transferred temporarily. Otherwise, the renounce of vows would become an act of potentially highly restriction of individual freedom in the future, which is morally unacceptable, that is, it would be a trap from which it is impossible to escape if not by suffering a severe damage.

The legislation of a secular state cannot enter into questions relating to the private moral sphere of the individual except to ensure that the behaviors resulting from individual convictions are in any case compatible with the freedom of others. The legislation of a secular state must completely ignore individual morals and must be limited to guaranteeing the freedom of all.

The rules must be essential, must not have moralizing purposes but must be a general guarantee of freedom. Precisely because the law cannot enter into moral issues, no conscientious objection can be admitted, because the restrictions on the freedom of individuals imposed by the law are aimed exclusively at protecting the freedom of all and therefore conscientious objection would be in fact, a limitation of the freedom of others, which is the fundamental value against which, in a secular society, no objection can be admitted.

Whoever does not accept this principle can come out of the secular society, from which he doesn't feel represented, and adhere to systems that subordinate freedom to other values. In a secular state the external signs of a religious, political or any other belonging are not allowed in public places, obviously they are always legitimate in private places or open to the public. A secular state doesn't sign agreements with any religious confession for any reason and doesn't enter at any level in matters related to religion or individual morality, it must instead actively protect the freedom to adhere to all confessions and to withdraw without any conditions and without any damage.

The principle of state secularism manifests itself in a peculiar way in avoiding any overlap between the concept of crime, which is a legal concept, and the concept of sin, which is a moral concept. Crimes are repressed and punished by a secular society because they violate the sphere of freedom of others by depriving others of their rights. The punishment of a crime is not a consequence of any moral prescription but is motivated by profound social reasons related to freedom and equality. The typical example of crime is the murder. Sins are violations of a particular moral code to which a value of sacred origin is attached to the individual or religious level. The typical example of sin is the violation of the commandment "Don't desire the woman of others" that condemns even the desire, that is, something that in itself is not in any way detrimental to the freedom of others and therefore not only is not a crime but belongs to the freedom of the individual and is completely indifferent to the community.

No one is allowed to forgive a crime, not even to the victim of the crime itself, because a crime is an aggressive behavior towards the basic principles of social life, so one cannot be forgiven or absolved by one's own crimes by any reason. One can instead be forgiven or absolved by sins in the name of the authority that has set the particular moral principle that has been violated. Obviously these are realities that have nothing in common. The category of crime is valid for all the members of a secular society, that of sin is valid exclusively for persons who adhere to a particular religious confession and to its particular morality.

The reflections so far made on the idea of freedom as the foundation of civil

life and on the distinction between crime and sin are masterly summarized by Gaetano Salvemini:<sup>8</sup> "Everyone in Italy seems to have forgot that freedom is not my freedom, but the freedom of those who don't think like me. A clerical person will never understand this point, neither in Italy, nor in any other country in the world. The clerical will never come to understand the distinction between sin and crime, between what someone believes to be sinful and what the secular law has the duty to condemn as a crime. The clerical punishes the sin as if it were a crime and forgives the crime as if it were a sin. The clerical has never left the atmosphere of the 10 commandments, in which stealing and killing (crimes) are put on the same level as the desire of the woman of others (sin)."

An extremely delicate issue is religious freedom, on which the attention of Pope Benedict XVI focused in particular in the Discourse to the Diplomatic Corps on Monday, January 10th 2011: "are not there many situations in which, unfortunately, the right to religious freedom is harmed or denied? This human right, which in reality is the first of the rights, because, historically, it has been affirmed first, and, on the other hand, has as its object the constitutive dimension of man, that is, its relationship with the Creator, is perhaps not too often questioned or violated? It seems to me that society, its leaders and public opinion are more aware today, even if not always exactly, of this serious wound inflicted against the dignity and freedom of the "*homo religiosus*" [religious man], on which I wanted, many times to attract everyone's attention". "Christians are original and authentic citizens, loyal to their homeland and faithful to all their national duties. It is natural that they can enjoy all the rights of citizenship, freedom of conscience and worship, freedom in the field of teaching and education and in the use of the media". "Moving our gaze from the East to the West, we are faced with other types of threats against the full exercise of religious freedom. I think, in the first place, of countries in which great importance is accorded to pluralism and tolerance, but where religion is subject to growing marginalization. People tend to consider religion, every religion, as an unimportant factor, alien to modern society or even destabilizing, and they try with various means to prevent any influence of it in social life.

Thus people arrive to demand that Christians act in the exercise of their profession without reference to their religious and moral convictions, and even in contradiction with them, as, for example, where laws are in force that limit the right to conscientious objection of health workers or of certain legal operators". "Continuing my reflection, I cannot pass over in silence another threat to the religious freedom of families in some European countries, where

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<sup>8</sup>Letter from America 1947-1949 (epistolary with Ernesto Rossi)



it is imposed the participation in courses of sexual or civil education that transmit conceptions of the person and life presumed neutral, but which in reality reflect an anthropology contrary to faith and right reason.”

If we analyze the concept of religious freedom as it emerges from the words of Benedict XVI, we can note that the right to religious freedom is considered “the first of rights” but, as clarified by Salvemini, it is neither Freedom without adjectives nor religious freedom, secularly understood, in other words, the equal freedom of all religions, but rather the freedom to be Catholics, it should be emphasized that the freedom of conscience and of worship, freedom in the field of teaching, education and use of the means of communication are claimed for the Catholics. In reality, these are very delicate freedoms because the recognition of total freedom of conscience involves in practice recognizing the right of the Catholics not to obey the law when their conscience, in this case the particular moral code of their religious confession, is in contrast with the law, that means to guarantee the primacy of a particular confessional morality on the law.

I remember that Benedict XVI himself urged Catholics to commit themselves to preventing access to teaching to homosexuals and to feel engaged in fighting against the approval of the legal recognition of homosexual unions. If particularist morals of the individual religious confessions were entitled decision on matters that affect all the population, freedom would be quietly subjected to principles incompatible with the exercise of the freedom of all. But the Pope demands full freedom of action also on the level of teaching, education and the media, areas in which the state cannot and should not delegate anything to anyone.

Confessional education can under no circumstances replace a lay and pluralist education. Educating means first of all providing non-dogmatic views of reality, it means putting people in contact with reality so that they can learn and judge for themselves by overcoming prejudices. Precisely because education has an enormous value in the formation of the person, it must take place in a pluralist context, and in this sense lay, in which the fundamental rule is the confrontation with reality beyond the ideologies and the prejudices of value.

It is significant that the Pope considers the obligation of participation in courses in sexual or civil education to be an attack on religious freedom, mind you, not of people but of families, because it is through sexual confessional education that religions perpetuate their power, effectively preventing children from accessing secular or otherwise different views of sexuality. A completely similar reasoning applies to the mass media. It is up to the state the primary task of the fight against ignorance and subcultures, against the superficiality and the absence of critical spirit. In this context religious con-

fessions have freedom of expression but in no case can an education uniformly permeated of values of a confessional type can be allowed, such an education would constitute a real brainwashing and an attack on individual liberty in the name of religious freedom. Kids who are growing must be able to compare different messages and different interpretations of reality to form their own point of view. It should be emphasized that freedom of religion cannot become the freedom to create structures of power that are alternative to those with institutional aims and ways of proceeding that are not respectful of the freedom of others, and that to the freedom of religion corresponds a secular freedom of criticism of religious confessions that cannot enjoy special protections or immunities, because in a truly secular society, no particular group can enjoy such benefits.

The Constitution of the French Republic, which came into force in 1958, begins as follows: Article 1 - France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social republic. It ensures equality before the law to all citizens without distinction of origin, race or religion. It respects all beliefs. Its organization is decentralized.” As can be seen, the secular nature of the state is explicitly stated in art. 1 of the Constitution. In the Italian Constitution, laicity is never named, and article 7 constitutionalizes the Concordat with the Holy See: Article 7 - ”The State and the Catholic Church are, each in its own order, independent and sovereign. Their relations are regulated by the Lateran Pacts. The modifications of the Pacts accepted by the two parties don’t require a constitutional revision procedure.”

The Italian Constitutional Court has been working to recognize in an interpretative way a principle of secularity of the state in whose name the state ends up limiting its own *de facto* sovereignty even in realities that are objectively very far from secularism. For a careful examination of the issue I refer to the essay ” “Il principio di laicità nella costituzione italiana ed in quella europea” (The principle of secularism in the Italian and European constitution)”<sup>9</sup>.

I conclude with a quote. So Ernesto Rossi writes: ”I belong to the very small group of those who still believe it is the duty of every civilized man to take the defense of the secular State against the interference of the Church in Parliament, in school, in the public administration, and believe that in our country, this is more important than any other goal - political, legal or economic - since its attainment would be the indispensable premise for any serious structural reform.” [E. Rossi, from ”Il sillabo e dopo”]

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<sup>9</sup><http://rivista.ssef.it/site.php?Page=20050502135352251&edition=2010-02-01>

### 10.2.6 A gay guy saved from reparative therapies

I'm 31 years old and, after a long struggle with myself, I started to live again, I have been destroying myself for several years and I think I have found happiness just a couple of years ago. I often hear people exalting family as if it were a beautiful thing, that is, as if it were the ideal place for a boy to grow up serenely but for me, and I'm only realizing it now, the family has been a terrible place. From outside my family seems a family like many others, a father who has a good job (very good), a mother who worked but then left the job after my birth to devote herself completely to me (unfortunately she did!). Both my parents are of a good cultural level.

I have no memories of any of my grandparents, but I think that my grandparents have been the ruin of my parents, just as my parents have been my ruin and maybe even worse. Both my father and my mother are only children exactly like me. I have never once seen my father and mother exchange a gesture of tenderness so as I have never seen my father tired or unkempt or my mother not perfectly settled. My mother has always been a freak of order, cleanliness, etc. etc. . . . The fundamental value that has always dominated my family is social prestige. My parents are wealthy, we can say it, but they are not rich in the true sense of the word, certainly, for them, not feeling up to their world would be a great suffering. I grew up being alone or with people much older than me.

The school was an obsession for me since elementary school, I couldn't be the second in my class, I had to be the first one and this cost me a lot. My mother sometimes asked me questions, questions like those the teachers ask at school, just to see if I was able to answer. My parents were very attached to the church, today I think it was more for reasons of opportunity and politics than for religion itself. In particular since I was seven or eight years old I often saw a priest in my house who could have been about forty years old, I will call him Don Luigi here. Today I say a "prete", but then I said "sacerdote",<sup>10</sup> because my mother was convinced that, under the word priest, said by me, there could be something quite derogatory. He was an important priest, very respected and then he struck me because he was a bit my father's ecclesiastical version, wearing always a perfectly ironed clergyman, always shiny shoes, short hair German style, etc. ...

I understood only many years later how much this priest has influenced my life since I was very young. It was Don Luigi who, in practice, decided that I had to attend elementary school in an institute of nuns, but I don't have a bad memory of the school or of the nuns, except for the fact that the envi-

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<sup>10</sup>In Italian the two words mean "priest" but while "prete" in a common word, "sacerdote" is the official word, used by the Church itself.

ronment was almost military and the study was really a torment for me. But that school had two big flaws that I didn't see at the time, in the first place it was totally out of the world, that is it was all muffled, muted, the children grew up and didn't realize they lived in a world completely separate from reality and then there was the fact that the children were directed towards religion beginning from 6-7 year old through a substantial brainwashing of which they could not absolutely realize the consequences because they lacked any possibility of comparison with the lives of other boys.

At the age of seven the sisters prepared us for the first confession, but a seven-year-old boy has very little to confess, so I assimilated all external attitudes; clasped hands, kneeling, reciting penance, etc. etc., What the priest told me in confession at that age was always that I had to obey my father and my mother like I had to obey Jesus, who loves us if we do what he commands us.

More or less towards the end of the fifth grade I made my first communion, but I still didn't understand anything about what I was doing. The sisters taught us catechism and I studied it like any school subject and I was also proud to know why God had created the world, etc. etc. . . . The choice of middle school, even this in a religious institution, was warmly sponsored by Don Luigi who said that for me a "serious school" was needed, serious for him was the same as religious, that would prepare me well for what life would have presented to me, implying that the public school was a very bad environment in which I could only have ruined myself. In the seventh and eighth grade the environment was quite similar to that of the nuns, even though there were no nuns but priests. The school sometimes, I would say quite frequently, organized a camping or a stay in the country for three days and I liked it a lot. They called them "retreats" and were aimed at preparing boys for the confirmation I received at age 12.

My life was completely quiet, confession and communion every Sunday, which for me was obvious but also very mechanical thing, for the rest I had to study and to try to be the first in the class, at home I had to obey dad and mom, that was all.

Then, suddenly, at the beginning of the eighth grade, my safe world as a child goes into crisis. One night, for the first time I have a wet dream and I remember perfectly that I had dreamed that I was spying on one of my classmates in the shower, or rather, before he undressed to get a shower, when I imagined that his underwear was going down I had my first orgasm. The dream, I still remember, was really exciting and the physical sensation of my first orgasm was very intense and even the impression, vaguely embarrassing, that I felt later, feeling all wet and sticky, was very strong. I didn't know what had happened because I knew why God had created the world but I

didn't know that sexuality existed, or at least I couldn't connect what had happened to me with that minimum of concepts about sex that I had been able to steal from the external world, in practice only from TV because the internet in my house had never existed except as a working tool for dad.

In short, it was the first time I felt embarrassed for sexuality. I didn't know what to do: talk with dad or with mom? And then tell them everything? Even that I dreamed of spying on a friend of mine in order to see him naked? Or would I have to go immediately to confess because dreaming of such a thing is surely not a good thing? And then what was all that sticky substance that I had found on myself. I decided to avoid my mother, because I thought she would not understand, I went to talk to my father who immediately understood what had happened, but I didn't tell him that I had dreamed of seeing a naked boy. He told me that now I was growing up and that what had happened was the awakening of my sexuality and that it was not a dangerous thing but in order to have a serious advice on how I would have to deal with these things I had to talk to the priest.

I understood only many years later the absurdity of a similar speech, at that time the answer seemed to me clear and comprehensive. I went to confession in the afternoon with a priest I didn't know because I was very ashamed, I found an old man who told me that those things are useful when you get married and have children and that until then you have to keep purity, that is you have to preserve absolutely a gift so great that can make you a collaborator of God in spreading the gift of life. Then I told him, almost as if it were a trivial thing, what I had dreamed of and he stopped and told me: "This is a serious sin because men are made for women and women for men", and added that I had to pray much Jesus to help me go back to the right path, etc. etc., then he gave me the absolution. For me it was a tremendous shock. What had I done wrong? I really could not understand it.

Nevertheless, I decided not to say anything to my father about what had happened in confession and to commit myself to the maximum so as not to think any more about those things that I had been said were a serious sin. Since then, maybe I was still 12 years old or I had just turned 13, my life became a continuous struggle against myself. I discovered masturbation after a few days, but with serious feelings of guilt and with even greater guilt feelings, I continued in my gay sexual fantasies. I went to confession every Sunday with a different priest telling him just that I had masturbated because for me the sin was that. From the priests I heard things of all the colors, always on the negative, clearly, but with many different degrees of negativity.

After the intermediate school, my fate was already decided, and, obviously, for the intervention of Don Luigi I ended up for the third time in a religious school, always of priests, like the middle school, even if of another order,

there is no need to say that I was sent to the classic high school, the thing was obvious *a priori*. A mixed class with a predominance of girls, however, the guys were a dozen, not very few. Of course I had attended also elementary and intermediate school in mixed classes of boys and girls together, at the time such a thing seemed quite secondary to me, but entering the ninth grade I saw things in another way, that is I had begun to look at the boys, clearly with the maximum circumspection and with a thousand scruples of conscience, but I had begun to look at them. I knew I should not have looked at them but I couldn't help looking at them.

At school there was very little to do, surveillance was very strict and at most you could have seen smiles between a boy and a girl and also this with a lot of sense of limit. In practice, I experienced anguish all the years of gymnasium-Lyceum, not for school, where I was definitely not the first, with great disappointment of my mother, but for sex. Attempts to repress myself have been really absurd because when I entered the Gymnasium I received as a gift my first computer and my first internet access with the warning on the part of my parents that "this must be switched on only for school and when we are at home". But as facts didn't follow the words, I almost immediately started to go on the internet to look for gay photos and videos (which at that time were still few and very short). With internet the frequency of masturbation has increased exponentially, once a day and even more.

To my very private sexual life corresponded the confessions in which I had begun to tell the priest that I had gay fantasies and in confession I was told by the priest, and starting from the first time, that in order to definitively solve this problem and to have a normal life one could resort to a psychologist, because there are very good psychologists who can help the boys to "get back on track", I was then 16 years. That's how I made the most absurd decision of my life, as if it were a heroic choice of which I had to feel proud: I would have gone to a psychologist to get out of this story of masturbation and homosexuality, but how? My parents should have known it. I thought foolishly to tell my parents that I didn't sleep at night, that I felt very agitated and that I wanted to talk to a psychologist, in response I was told that Don Luigi was precisely a psychologist and that I could talk with him. Against such a proposal my refusal has been categorical. My mother tried to insist and I ended up convinced not to talk to Don Luigi but to contact a "serious psychologist" indicated by him. I knew that there was professional secrecy and I tended to trust.

After a few days I went to the first appointment with the psychologist, he must have been between 35 and 40 years old, everything was very ritual, bed, notebook, low light, etc. etc., I was a little frightened, I tell him of my problem: "compulsive masturbation and homosexuality, etc. etc.". He tells

me that a lot can be done but that my commitment must be total.

After the first sessions he makes me compile some tests and gives me a book to read about reparative therapies where there are terrible stories of homosexuals ended badly, I bring the book home and hide it because I don't want my parents to find it, I read the book but it makes me sick, the psychologist tells me that my doctor should prescribe me anxiolytics but I don't want to take medicines, then he sends me to a religious group that deals with these things and tells me that "operating on two fronts" things are much easier.

The group used to meet in the evening, going there for me was an experience of a terrible self-inflicted violence. I resisted only the first two meetings, then I told the psychologist that I couldn't take it anymore, he tried to insist on getting me back to the religious group saying it was for my own good. But I had no intention of going back there, so he proposed a more gradual way ... In the meantime, I had practically stopped studying for school and I found myself with a debt in Greek that made my mother go on a rampage. I turn seventeen and I feel truly destroyed, a nothingness destined for failure. I spend a whole night crying, I cannot do it any more, I'm tired even of my live, I'm truly at the limit.

Talking to a female classmate of mine, I come to know that she goes to a psychologist and that she is well with him. I tell my mother that I want to change the psychologist, she sees me right on the edge and does not object. I wait for the day of the first date.

The environment is Spartan, just reduced to the minimum, the psychologist is old, about sixty or more, white hair, sweater. We shake hands and he tells me to sit down in an armchair, he sits in front of me, I tell him my problem: "compulsive masturbation and homosexuality", he asks me: "masturbation how often?" I tell him "Even once a day" that seemed to me very much, he smiles, opens his arms and says, "And with this? This is the norm!" I insist: "But with homosexual fantasies ..." And he answers me: "So what? If one is gay it's obvious that he thinks about guys and not about girls, these are normal things!" I told him: "I do not know what to do anymore, I can't go on, I'm just at the limit ...". Then he let me tell a little about my life and he told me: "We must simplify things, you don't have to do the things that others tell you but what you want, you don't have to live struggling against yourself, because otherwise later you'll have a thousand regrets, you're a very young boy, a gay boy, so what? What's the problem? The maximum of absurdity, for a gay guy, is to force himself to desire to be no longer gay or, worse, to commit forcedly to not being gay anymore! You must begin to become autonomous, to do what you think is right, the problem lies in the fact that you are worried for things that don't concern you, for things that others want from you, but you must do only what you want. You will prob-

ably have problems because your family will not easily accept your freedom of doing what you want, but your autonomy you have to earn it day after day.”

When I got home I felt free, the feeling was very strange but I knew that the things that this psychologist had told me were basically those I didn't have the courage to say to myself. It was not easy to build a real autonomy because actually my parents did everything to create obstacles of all kinds, and here the psychologist was really useful. Now I have a boyfriend for two years and I love him deeply, he also helped me a lot and had an enormous patience with me. Now we live together! One day we were walking on the road and I told him: "Take me by the hand!" He looked at me questioningly as asking why, and I added: "There is Don Luigi!" And then he hugged me and kissed me in the street, that's why I love him!

### 10.2.7 The true story of a gay priest

Newspapers write many times stories of gay priests and gay prelates who give themselves to the good life taking advantage of their prestige and their social position and combining meetings with male prostitutes or with guys who for some reason cannot subtract themselves. Although managing a gay site for years and despite having met several times priests and religious through that site, I must say that what I saw is completely different from what can be read in the newspapers. For the sake of honesty and with the consent of the person of whom I speak, which unfortunately is no more alive, I would like to tell here the true story of a gay priest I met through Gay Project chat. I think it is proper to make people understand the real extent of the problem, which is not in the scandalous behavior of someone, scandalous especially for the gays themselves as well as of course for the Church, but in the deep suffering of many, according to what I can see, of the great majority of gay priests.

Several years ago, I was in chat with a priest who was fifty years old at the time. The dialogue between us was characterized, at the beginning, by a certain mutual distrust. It seemed strange to me to be contacted by a priest, it was a rather rare event and I thought it could be the usual fake user who just aims to have fun abusing a gay chat (and unfortunately there are several fake users who do such things), then, over the weeks dialogue between us became particularly serious, I will quote below some passages (I call the priest who speaks to me Paul, fictitious name, I'm Project):

Paul writes: Don't be surprised, Project, there are many gay priests but I really feel a priest, I cannot tell you if when I made the choice to enter



the seminary, it was really my vocation or under what seemed my vocation there was the inability to be what I was or maybe the desire to spend my life anyway for my neighbor, doing something good, since I could not live as I wanted. I grew up in the parish environment and I felt it as my natural environment starting as a child. Faith for me was always a great value, of course I understood that there was a contrast between my faith and what I was and when I made my choice I consciously chose to put aside what I was and to follow the Lord because I too hoped to find some consolation. When you're young you react emotionally and you don't know that over time many things change and that making choices that are "forever" is much more difficult than it seems.

I have had several parishes, now I'm at [omissis], it's a nice place and it's good people, almost all old, there's so much misery but above all economic, there's no moral misery, there's no criminality, there's no violence, there is no drug, they do not cheat the neighbor and there is also a lot of dignity even if they are poor and perhaps exactly because of their being poor, a dignity that I don't have or I no longer have because sometimes I feel like the wrong man in the wrong place.

The parishioners love me and I love them, many are farmers but they are really good people. But I feel in the wrong place because in a sense I'm lying to them, but I don't even know if things are just like that. I thought that maybe I should leave the Church because I'm not worthy to be there but it's an idea that scares me, I don't think I could live if I had to leave the Church and then I would feel as a had thrown in the garbage things in which, despite everything, I believe deeply.

When I can pray, I have the feeling that the Lord is near me and helps me to move forward. Understand me well, I have never betrayed my vows but not only, when I happened to come into contact with young men I always behaved like a priest must behave and then it was not even a sacrifice because those people for me were sacred, I tell you as if in confession, if I had put in trouble one of those guys I would have felt as a worm.

The result of all this was that I have always avoided contacts with young men and boys, who might need a real priest. I put in the first place above all poor, old and sick people. When I happened to provide religious assistance to people who were dying I prayed with a very strong intensity that God could help them by giving them so much faith to face the moment of the passing. In those moments I had no doubts and I felt I was a priest in the most beautiful and profound sense because I was bringing the Lord to people who needed comfort.

But sometimes I really think that I should leave the Church because so many things I have to say are things that I don't really feel, I have tried to follow

the teaching of the Church but sometimes it seems to me in full consciousness that I'm not able to adhere to those things.

Project writes: But if you left the Church, what prospects would you have?

Paul writes: In practice none, I don't have a qualification that can serve in civil life, I don't know how to survive, I'm not able to do anything, I can only be a priest and certainly I'm not a good priest and I go on like that because for my family it would be destructive and unexpected if I came out of the Church.

My mother and my father are old, they are happy with the idea of having a son priest, for them to have a misguided son would be terrible and then my parents live with a very small pension and even if they wanted to help me, because I think they wouldn't abandon me anyway, they couldn't even feed me.

Then if I think of the idea of having a partner, well it's just tragic. But who would put himself with a 50-year-old ex-priest who dies of hunger? Nobody at all and I wouldn't go with anyone, apart from the fact that I'm old they would anyway feel me distant because I come from an environment very different from theirs. And then that world has not only been mine but it is still now mine and it would still remain mine even if I left the Church. It is not only the fear of the outside that doesn't make me take a step like that, but it is also the fact that the Church is my real world, a world in which I feel useful. When someone comes to confession, something very rare apart from the old ladies who should be sanctified because they are incapable of doing anything wrong, when someone comes to confession, I always ask him/her to pray for me because sometimes I don't know how to manage my relationship with the Lord, I cannot understand what He wants from me. In fact I know very well that I have no choices and that I can only go on like now and over the years I will perhaps end up putting aside even the doubts that still exist, but I wonder why the Lord asks me such a big sacrifice, I mean big for me because there are people who bear much worse things with so much faith, it is not that I want who knows what, but it is this state of dissatisfaction that I feel inside that overwhelms me, I wonder how it is possible that the Lord wants me priest, and even more how is it possible that He wants a priest like me, with this half faith, with all these if and but. Sometimes I think I'm not a priest but that I "act" as a priest a bit like one who deals with any other job, and then I think I'm cheating on the Lord.

The dialogue with Paul went on for several months, even if with long intervals, and the relationship of esteem and mutual respect has consolidated.

One day he told me that he was not well and that he would have to make some investigations, he made them and it resulted that he had a tumor in an advanced state. He had to undergo surgery. After the surgery, which failed to stem the problem but weakened even more his body, he called me for the last time. The conversation was very short.

Paul writes: it went wrong, they told me that I will be subjected only to palliative care. Do you remember? We thought the problem was one and instead the real problem was another. I am very tired, I go to rest, I ask you only one thing: pray for me.

Project writes: I will certainly do it. A big hug.

Paul writes: You have done a lot for me. Hello Friend.

This was our last chat conversation. I can say that I keep inside me the memory of this priest and of his suffering humanity, that's why when I hear about gay priests in a scandal-mongering way I get angry, what I saw in these people is neither stupidity nor arrogance but silent suffering and torn conscience. The topic of gay priests should be treated with the utmost respect and I say this as a deeply lay person.



# Chapter 11

## GAY SEXUALITY

### 11.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 11.1.1 Contents of the chapter

This chapter will deal with gay sexuality at various levels of emotional involvement, we will start from the difference between sex and love, we will stop on the concept of possessiveness, then we will try to clarify what is meant by gay sexuality lived lightly and, after a brief analysis of the relationship between gay sexuality and play, we will carefully consider the role of masturbation in the structuring of gay sexuality by examining the problems of guys who for various reasons have not practiced masturbation in adolescence and of those who have suffered harassment or sexual violence. We will then deal with anal sex in the gay field, highlighting the substantial falsity of many things taken for granted in this area.

#### 11.1.2 Gay love and gay sex

Let's start from the first point. To the classic question: "When a guy is gay?" I always answer that "A guy is gay if he falls in love with other guys", this definition, that seems obvious, contrasts another widespread definition, according to which "a guy is gay if he has sex with other guys", which is the most common definition of gay. The two concepts seem similar but in reality they differ as much as love differs from sex. It is not a question of terminology and has important implications in people's lives.

It is a fact that there are many guys who have sex with other guys without falling in love with them, these are gay only according to the common definition, but according to the conventions I follow, I should simply call them guys who have sex with other guys, the pornography market for the great major-

ity is addressed to them. I don't mean that guys who fall in love with other guys don't use pornography, such a statement would be ridiculous, I mean instead that the masturbation of guys who fall in love with other guys, very often is not related to pornography but to fantasy and to the re-elaboration of experiences and desires, linked to real people, in which affectivity plays a substantial role.

It often happens that guys who have sex with other guys without falling in love are people who also have a more or less satisfying hetero sex life. It is not really a question of bisexuals, precisely because towards guys there is no real emotional component, which is instead turned towards women and is often strongly frustrated. For these guys who have sex with guys, sex with a guy is essentially an adventure, a diversion, an escape from the frustration of hetero affectivity. These people naturally tend to bring into a gay relationship with a guy behavior patterns typically hetero, far from the spontaneous sexuality of guys who fall in love with other guys, that is, far from the parity that is typical of gay sex. When I talk about gay sexuality, I'm not referring, of course, to pornography or to what people believe to be typically gay but to what most of the guys who fall in love with guys, i.e. most of the gays in this sense, live and above all want.

To explain the difference between this true gay sexuality and that of guys who have sex with other guys but don't fall in love with them, I will use a concrete example taken from the "Maurice", a wonderful novel by Edward Morgan Forster. When I read this novel for the first time I felt the thrill of having in my hands a book that would always remain on my bedside table. The book is extraordinarily addictive.

Maurice and Clive, one of his college mates, start a homosexual relationship, it seems a love story destined to be lasting and deep but Clive is a young ambitious aristocrat and chooses to sacrifice love on the altar of the political career. Not marrying and being considered homosexual would marginalize him, so he comes to pretend to fall in love with a girl and marries her. Maurice and Clive will continue to meet in a formal way but the first love story of the book is over.

Maurice, invited by Clive to his estate, meets Clive's wife, but above all meets another guy, a gamekeeper from Clive's estate, named Scudder, more or less the same age as Maurice and Clive.

While Clive's aristocratic friends treat Scudder as a servant and humiliate him by giving him orders and tips in money, Maurice treats him on an equal footing from the first moment and both of them understand that something new and important is beginning for them. I would like to strongly emphasize the fact that Maurice treats Scudder at par because this is the basic condition of a true gay love. When, during a heavy rain, dripping water

comes down from the ceiling of a salon, the aristocrats call Scudder to clean everything and move the furniture to prevent it from getting wet and they go to another room, but Maurice takes off his jacket and stays with Scudder to clean up the room where it had rained. This and other similar behaviors by Maurice are spontaneous and are indicative of Maurice's respect for Scudder and of the fact that Maurice tries to do something that Scudder would like and that is an opportunity to initiate a minimum of direct dialogue, without the concern of social ritual and of caste to be respected, and above all in a more direct and private dimension of human sympathy.

In a dark night, Scudder climbs with a ladder from the garden in Maurice's room and the two live together their first sexual contact, the moment is exciting but in the morning Maurice is assailed by the doubt that Scudder wants to blackmail him. Maurice and Scudder will end up explaining each other and realizing that they cannot do without one another. Scudder, pushed by his family, decides anyway to leave for America as an emigrant because he thinks that what happened between him and Maurice should not affect Maurice's life, which could have a future in politics and in high society. Maurice is assailed by despair, he would like to see Scudder, he would like to talk to him, but he cannot, he goes to the pier where the steamer is about to leave but Scudder is not there, then he remembers that they had talked about the possibility of meeting in the boathouse of the estate of Clive, he goes there and Scudder is there, he did not leave for America, that is, Scudder eventually made an act of faith in Maurice, he believed in Maurice's love and in the fact that Maurice would not have abandoned him in the name of political career or of the social position.

When Maurice sees Scudder in the boathouse he is so happy he cannot even speak and the chapter ends like this: "And since Maurice did not speak, indeed could not, he added, "And now we shan't be parted no more, and that's finished." "

One last chapter concludes the novel, if you want a chapter that has the bitterness of Dante's *contrappasso*:<sup>1</sup> Clive realizes that Maurice is happy, knows that Maurice has made the right choice and that he will love Scudder for life, loved in turn by him, while he, aristocrat and social climber, will have to go to bed with a beautiful girl he doesn't love and to which he will ruin life to follow his ambitions.

The novel presents two characters, one of them embodies the gay morality, Maurice, who is a guy who falls in love with other guys, while the other em-

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<sup>1</sup>The law of "*contrappasso*" (retaliation), from the Latin *contra* and *patior*, "to suffer the opposite", is a principle that regulates the punishment that strikes the offenders using ways related to the fault by analogy or opposition. It is present in numerous historical and literary contexts of religious influence, such as the Divine Comedy.

bodies the gay immorality, Clive, who is a guy who only has sex with other guys but doesn't fall in love with them. Maurice is the honest gay who, when he falls in love, falls in love without reservation and is not willing to trade his love in exchange for anything, his love for Scudder leads him to expose himself and to risk himself by putting aside any privilege of caste. Clive is the dishonest gay man who agrees to put aside his sexuality, behind which there are evidently no strong feelings, selling it in exchange for social prestige and political career. There is no possible dialectic between these two characters who are the embodiment of good and evil under the gay perspective.

As for Scudder, who is certainly not a secondary character, I would be inclined to say that he represents for Maurice the opportunity, the unique opportunity to get out of the limbo of sublimations and enter the real world of sexuality lived with passion. Scudder takes the first steps explicitly sexual and in doing so he risks a lot. Even Scudder has a high morality, a vulgar man could have used the weapon of blackmail to take advantage of Maurice's feelings but this thought doesn't even touch him and when he realizes that this is just what Maurice is thinking of him, he gives him a lesson of morality reproaching him for having nourished even the simple suspicion of being the object of such a low action on his part. Maurice will understand.

Maurice and Scudder experience sexuality as an expression of their deep love, and it is precisely in this way that sexuality acquires its highest meaning, because love is total transport towards the other. The gay sexuality of Maurice and Scudder on one side and that of the aristocratic Clive on the other are apparently superimposable but for the first two, sex is really love, for the last one it is just a game that has to give way to more important interests.

### 11.1.3 Non-possessive gay love

We come now to the second concept, that of non-possessive love. Also in this case I will resort to a literary quotation and precisely to "Another country" by James Baldwin, one of the most beautiful gay-themed books I have ever read. It is a masterpiece of American literature, but it is the gay side of the book that has always enchanted me. For Baldwin, homosexuality is a high value, it is a form of love with a capital A. The book has tragic implications in the initial part, which seems to follow a rather common direction in the previous gay literature: homosexuality as a tragedy. But the second part, which is the preponderant one, completely overturns things and homosexual love ends up imposing itself as a value capable of giving meaning to a life.

The characters are many but the story that makes up the central part of the book is a wonderful gay love story born by chance between Eric, a young



American writer, and Yves, a French boy younger than him. Their story is not a tragedy, it is not a story of loneliness, no! It's a true love story and it's a love story that ends well. Eric meets Yves shortly after the second world war, they both know very well that their life will no longer be the same as before. The atmosphere is of tenderness, of mutual respect, of profound love. Eric returns to America and Yves sends him a sweet letter and after a while follows him to the United States. Yves arrives at the Los Angeles airport and Eric waits for him. When the boy crosses the gates with the agitation in his heart, he knows that he has arrived in the city (Los Angeles) in which the inhabitants of paradise (the Angels) had set their home! And with this metaphor the book ends. But this love story is not a fairy tale, Yves loves Eric but knows that sooner or later he will need to feel free even from Eric, to be himself; also Eric is aware of all this, he knows that sooner or later, in a more or less distant future, Yves will leave, he will have to leave to follow his path, but this fact will not lead Eric to abandon Yves to his destiny to look for another boy, Eric will love him in a total way even knowing that at some point he will lose him, because, as Baldwin says, in love there is nothing to decide but everything to accept. This consideration has always seemed sublime to me.

In practice, the relationship between Eric and Yves is an example of true non-possessive gay love. I would like to point out that very often gays have in mind a gay couple model derived from heterosexual marriage. In the case of the gay couple, since the law in Italy like in many other countries, doesn't contemplate gay marriage, there are no strong legal guarantees of the stability, at least formal, of the relationship, nevertheless the double assumption remains that the couple must be destined to last forever and it must necessarily be exclusive, that is, in essence, it must stand on a real pact between two guys who are bound by mutual fidelity and by the indissolubility of the relationship. This at least seems *a priori* to be the most desirable model for a gay couple.

The story told by Baldwin is, instead, an example of a spontaneous relationship of love at the basis of which there are no explicit or tacit agreements of any kind, in essence the story of Eick and Yves is an example of a true non-possessive love, without any external constraint. Demanding a guarantee of fidelity and duration means not realizing that at the base of every relationship of love there are feelings and feelings are not coercible, cannot be repressed and are also changeable and consequently cannot be binding to the future in any way.

Let us ask ourselves now what are the most typical manifestations of sexuality, which are based on a true affective dimension. Here the problem becomes complex and we come to the conclusion that in reality an affective

dimension, however tenuous, always exists at the base of sexuality. It can be an absolutely equal love without compromises, like that of Maurice and Scudder, and even without any prerequisite of durability or exclusivity like that of Eric and Yves, but basically even the half-love of Clive for Maurice was born in a spontaneous way and implied, at least at the beginning, a real emotional involvement of Clive towards Maurice. Love, in itself, when it is born, is born with an enormous emotional potential, but sometimes on this basis, the reasoning, which is no longer emotional transport, takes over and so the logic of giving and having, the convenience, the balance of risks and benefits start to become the substitute for love and the emotional dimension goes into the background or ends up being completely canceled.

Gay love absolutely equal and unconditional exists in the novels, as an archetype, as an inspiring principle, but when you compare yourself with reality you understand that nobody is perfectly Maurice or perfectly Eric and that in all of us, in various ways and degrees, we hide a bit of Clive, and that true feelings always coexist, at various levels, with other motivations.

I would like to immediately say that the other motivations are not necessarily utilitarian and opportunistic as those of Clive and are often spontaneous and totally unconscious. Speaking with the guys, sometimes I hear expressions like "I want to try to stay with a guy", this expression is a sign of emotional immaturity, that is, of not being ready to understand the meaning of couple life. The speech needs to be deepened. A guy's sexuality develops and structures through individual masturbation well before a couple's relationship is reached. Masturbation, through the fantasies that accompany it, allows a guy to prefigure the future couple sexuality, but masturbation has the intrinsic limit of being a substantially individual activity even if projective, in which a guy confronts himself only with his imagination, it is precisely for this reason that masturbation is generally very gratifying, because one must compare with himself only.

A boy who arrives at the first experiences of falling in love can easily find himself in traumatic situations in which his sexual fantasy has to deal with the reality of confrontation with the other. The experience of falling in love is in itself completely different from that of masturbation, contains in itself the risk of a real emotional contact with another guy, which involves a whole series of problems that in masturbation are solved at the level of fantastic projections; whereas when the guy falls in love these problems must be dealt with on a real level. It is about declaring or not declaring one's feelings, about uncertainty on the other guy's sexual orientation, about the type of relationship that can be created, about the way to proceed, about the times and the limits of the relationship.

However, one thing remains clear, when one falls in love with another, the

relationship is essential beyond any *a priori* conception of the couple life. Falling in love has a deep emotional dimension and, for a young boy, it has a fundamental formative value, it is an emotional involvement that touches all aspects of personality and brings a boy into a truly new dimension. For some elements, such as having an erection when you are close to the guy you love or simply when you think of him or masturbating thinking about that guy, falling in love develops in continuity with the feelings previously experienced in masturbation, and the masturbation itself is now used by the guy in love mostly to relive experiences and to project in his mind images all focused on the figure of the beloved guy, but falling in love also has an absolutely new and determining dimension non-strictly sexual: the presence of the beloved one is strongly felt and a strongly altruistic affective component begins to manifest, which is the essential component of falling in love.

You realize that you love another guy, that you want his good, that a single smile can be precious and that ultimately the affective interest is addressed to the person of the other as a whole. This type of experience greatly favors the maturation of a guy and makes him try, beyond the strict sexuality, what love is and indeed makes him see sexuality not as a purpose but as a means for the realization of the good of the other, respecting the times and the real needs of the other.

What does it mean to fall in love? Falling in love means finding in another guy some true deep consonances, not always and not only in the sense of finding similar interests or analogous ways of thinking but often, even if unconsciously, in finding analogous ways of suffering, analogous reasons of unease, similar attempts to escape difficulties, I would say analogous forms of despair when that level is reached. At the base of love there is essentially the sharing of discomfort and the possibility of finding a dialogue, even non-verbal, precisely on discomfort. If this dialogue is honest and we realize that it is equally important for the other, the prejudices fall and we question our ways of being, we are willing to change ideas, to follow the other on his way, to recognize the superficiality of our way of seeing things. The speeches of principle, the assumptions taken for granted, the presuppositions that seemed obvious to us, leave the field to the idea of making the other feel good, beyond any condition and any assumption, we realize that the other has a his intimate coherence, that his reasons have a meaning that goes beyond our assumptions and even beyond our assumptions of principle, that his weaknesses are very similar to ours and that a serious comparison between people who love each other is not a comparison between ideologies or between abstract positions, it is not a comparison of presuppositions but a trying to understand the reasons of the other by accepting to put aside one's own reasons or those that seem to be one's own reasons.

Falling in love means understanding the reasons of the other, that is, going out of our own strictly individual dimension. Falling in love one must recognize the profound dignity of the other behind his behavior, that is he must understand the dignity and meaning of those behaviors beyond appearances. Understanding the other is not a question of intelligence but a question of love, because love leads to recognize the profound consonance between two people, which often manifests itself in their common way of suffering. If there is something in the other that you do not understand, it means that you are not in love with him.

When you fall in love, the other person's way of being is transparent before your eyes so that you can understand its deep motivations and share them, you also feel them as they were yours and don't judge them anymore. What does sex have to do with all this? Sex, by itself, can express a deep love, when even sex becomes a profound way of communicating. A hug communicates more than a thousand words. But sex is a form of love when it is really lived together, in conditions of perfect equality, I insist on this idea, I mean that the presence of attitudes of closure, of misunderstanding of the reasons and moods of the other, the attitudes of instrumentalization of the other, at any level, prevent one from experiencing a sexuality that is truly a form of love. Having other reasons, besides those that are founded on the other, means having prejudices, mental reservations, means trying to impose conditions on an interpersonal exchange that should be free from any conditions. The basic presupposition of every form of love is the recognition of the authentic human dimension and at the same time of the "fragility" that characterizes the loved one, because only in the context of this authentic human dimension and at the same time "fragile" the apparent inconsistencies in the behavior of the other find a meaning and a positive value beyond any assumption and any theoretical model.

#### 11.1.4 Obstacles to love relationships

One of the most hindering obstacles to the creation of true love relationships is the considerable difference in social rank between the partners. In order to open up completely to the other, you must consider him at the same level as you, if this doesn't happen a true love relationship cannot be established. The mental reservation linked to the difference in social rank are among the most difficult to overcome.

Sex can also be a terrible means of blackmail or violence and I speak of both the imposed and the denied one. Saying no, sometimes flaunting moralistic excuses for one's refusal can hurt deeply, because it implies a negative moral judgment. Shared sex is not an indispensable component in a relationship of

love.

The distinction between friendship and love based on the absence or on the presence of sexual involvement starts from a completely different concept of love that seems to presuppose that behind sex there is always a true affective dimension, but things are usually very different. The presence of a sexual component can be completely disconnected from a deep human contact with the other and can respond to needs of a strictly individual type, not therefore of communication and couple, in this case sex has nothing to do with being in love. It is not the presence or absence of sexuality in a relationship that identifies it as a relationship of love, but the ability to deeply understand the reasons and dignity of the other. There are situations in which, unconsciously, one believes he is in love, but one does not understand the real needs of the other and this happens because the acceptance of the other is subordinated to preconceptions of various kinds, to issues of social role, to the desire to find a sexual satisfaction that ends up making the other only an instrument and ultimately to the idea of not spending completely oneself maintaining in any case one's own mental reservations, that is the long series of "but and if" that accompany a choice that shouldn't be conditioned.

What does individual satisfaction has to do with all this? In a relationship of love individual satisfaction lies in the smile of the other, in feeling capable of making the other person feel good, in diminishing his suffering, in seeing that the relationship is not lost over time but rather progressively strengthens, and when this happens, in understanding that you are really important for the other person.

### 11.1.5 Fake falling in love and sexual exploration

Love doesn't create bonds, doesn't create implicit pacts of fidelity, doesn't set limits to the other, doesn't require exclusive or definitive choices, has an intimate fragility that doesn't make it in any way similar to a contract, that's why it has a very high human value, because it allows two people to understand each other deeply and to feel deeply close.

All the mechanism described above, which can lead a guy to live the most beautiful experiences of his life, can nevertheless easily get stuck and can lead to very embarrassing situations that can be summed up in the concept of false falling in love. It happens unfortunately that many guys, often because they do not have under their eyes real examples of emotional life, especially in the family, are led to consider as a "falling in love" what is really a "false falling in love", that is, essentially an emotional state that is not caused by the establishment of a deep personal relationship with another guy but by the push to experiment sexuality.

Basically in a false falling in love we see in the other not an end but an instrument that allows us to experience the couple sexuality, therefore a selfish dimension prevails, a dimension that in true falling in love totally gives way to the love for the other and to his centrality.

The instrumental dimension of the other manifests itself in the immediate sexualization of the relationship, which often also intervenes at the first meeting. It should be noted that for guys the confusion between a true falling in love and a false falling in love is determined by almost unconscious factors, but the false falling in love, which always expresses in the same language as the true one, can mislead the other guy, in terms of affective evaluation of the seriousness of the relationship, which presents itself as a love relationship but has basically egoistic motivations and hides a vision of the other as an instrument of sexual exploration.

A very characteristic aspect of the explorative will that characterizes the false falling in love lies in the fact that very often between two guys the exploratory will is clearly reciprocal, in other words the unconscious attempt to instrumentalize the other is reciprocal. When this happens, and it is a fairly common thing, between two very young and even not so young guys, there is nevertheless a sense of an affective complementarity that, anyway, doesn't reach the level of depth of a true love.

The true discrimination lies in the altruistic or selfish dimension of the relationship. When a very young gay guy falls in love with another very young guy he must ask himself many questions that may be typically summarized as follows.

A) Am I really in love with him? That is, am I willing to put him, as a person, in the first place, putting apart my ideas and my sexual fantasies to always do what is best for him? B) Are his person and his sexuality object of absolute respect for me?

If the answers to these questions, which are the fundamental ones concerning "me", are positive, that is, if I feel in love with him, I must ask myself many other questions concerning "him":

a) Is he aware that I'm in love with him? Or rather he lives our story as a beautiful friendship? (as it happens frequently when you fall in love with straight guys and not only). b) Is he gay or not gay? Typical question that always anguishes gay guys in real life when they fall in love with guys of whom they don't know the sexual orientation. c) To what extent can I talk to him about me? Is he ready to accept the idea that a guy can fall in love with him? Can I tell him that when I'm on the phone with him I'm in

erection all the time and that I masturbate fantasizing about him, or would such a confession disturb him? d) How can I get to understand what is really good for him?

A fundamental observation: if a guy masturbates thinking of another guy and this second guy doesn't know it, the first guy doesn't do anything wrong, but between masturbating fantasizing about a guy and building a serious emotional relationship with him there is really an abyss.

Especially when it comes to very young boys, it is absolutely essential that emotional contact develops gradually, over a long period of time, in order to allow really conscious choices. Never upset the soul of the guy you love with the request of continuous confirmations of his feelings towards you or with the request to go further, on the contrary, let him feel free, don't create anxiety, don't put him in anguish. If you love him, accept him for what he is, any attempt to change him to bring him to be more in accordance with your desires is a symptom of possessiveness and selfishness, in essence of false falling in love.

Behaviors that are not dictated by love but by the desire for sexual experimentation can deeply hurt the soul of a very young boy who may have invested all himself in the construction of a love story or of what seemed like a love story. Such behaviors, truly deplorable, often leave indelible marks both in the boy who feels the sensation of being used by his partner and who could convert his love into hate and remain deeply conditioned by this experience (even more if it is the first), and in the boy who has realized later that he had created a trauma to his partner.

### 11.1.6 Gay sex with lightness

So far I have tried to summarize the meaning of gay sexuality lived in a relationship of love. Obviously gay sexuality also exists outside a relationship of love. Sexuality can also be taken lightly, I mean with lightness, not with superficiality, that is, it can be lived consciously, on both sides, without a real emotional involvement, the thing can present some risk but it happens quite frequently. To try to explain what is meant by the expression "live sexuality lightly" I will start from an email I received on 21/3/2009.

"Hello project, I thought back to our chat last night and, perhaps there are things you didn't come to understand, that is, for you something is white or is black, but I think in what you say there are still many prejudices, especially about sex without love. Maybe you've forgotten how you feel when you're 20, because

in the things you say, I perceive some moralism and detachment from reality, at least from my reality.

It's a fact that guys love sex and it's not that they only like it when they are living an engaging love story that they think will be the one that will mark their life, no, guys always like sex, and even forty-year-old guys are inclined to have sex whenever it's possible, certainly not with everyone, because we are not attracted sexually by everyone, but when I see a guy I like, I fantasize about that guy and not only fantasize, then maybe I don't do anything because he is straight or because I'm not too much interested in him, but if, for example, I go on vacation this summer and find a nice guy at the beach, why should I say no to him? And why should I say no to myself? Of course with all the prudence in terms of prevention, on this you are completely right, but why should I miss such an opportunity? What would I have done wrong if I really had had sex with that guy? Of course if it is possible and always saving health.

I feel the sexual drive very strong and it is not necessarily something that must lead me to eternal love. When it comes to heterosexuals there is a complication: the girl can get pregnant and there the thing of not looking just for sex makes sense, but between two guys? Anyway, let's say that if I was engaged or if he was engaged, then also for the sake of my boyfriend or his boyfriend ... ok, avoiding having sex could be justified, but when we are two guys who don't have a boyfriend why sex must be put aside? Maybe I misunderstood what you said, but from your words I understood this. But why can we not take things lightly? Okay sex, let's say, as a form of love, but why not say yes to sex even as fun, as a game? Then when I'll have a guy, he will probably be enough for me, but now I don't have anybody and I don't understand why I cannot have fun with a bit of sex, and then, according to what I hear, the guys have sex whenever they can, even if they do many beautiful speeches about love etc. etc.. But guys on the porn sites what are they looking for? Are they looking for the true love? For the love that should last a lifetime? They only go there to look for a bit of fun and then when you're with a guy you like, there is no serious reason to put the idea aside! And then sex is a healthy fun, it's not like drugs or alcohol, it does not ruin your health. It seems to me that you still consider sex as a thing that can only be done in the context of a kind of marriage between two guys that follows very



much the classical model of heterosexual marriage, a promise of eternal love and fidelity, etc. etc.. I want to add an underlining, in everything you said last night this is the only thing on which I don't agree and I feel more free than you, maybe I could say younger than you, for the rest I can just say that it made me enormously pleased to meet you because you made me reflect on many things, let's say, on the most serious ones, and I thank you for this.

Fabio”

This e-mail was published on the Forum and received a very significant comment from another guy, I quote below this comment.

”Personally I didn't notice any irritation in the guy's email, but just an attempt to explain his personal point of view and a different hierarchy of values, in which sex has an almost physiological role, regardless of falling in love, or, at least, so it seemed to me to understand.

Having fun, as people say, and also experiencing have importance in themselves. Personally I think that the phase of sexual experimentation is inevitable and is almost physiological. Already as a child, each of us begins to experience one's own instincts, in the sense of starting to live them and have to deal with them. This phase is inevitable and in my opinion we only need to equip ourselves to live it in the best way. The damages that a blind experimentation can cause are not only those related to health. In a person's instability, these blind and repeated attempts to satisfy sexual and emotional drives can have devastating effects on the construction of self.

I add an issue that seemed to me a little neglected in all these discussions. Fabio rightly points out that certain things are also made by straight people. Of course, yes, among other things, this doesn't mean that straight people do well. But there is a very interesting point on which I'd like to reflect and it is the night life. I find very appropriate this metaphor of day and night, of light understood as transparency and linearity and of night as hiding and imprisonment.

Relying on the chats and clubs, beyond everything, means to relegate one's sexuality to a nocturnal dimension, sometimes physically nocturnal, other times metaphorically. In this way it is easy to have almost a double life, to become people who in the daytime are, so to speak, very respectable, serious and who go

to the clubs at night or meet "chat people" and so on. What I'm talking about is obviously not an axiom: "since you frequent discotheques and nightclubs, you are split within yourself", but it is a risk that I see very concrete.

This sort of schizophrenia is somehow a problem in itself, certainly it calms down the stress induced by the homophobic context in which we live, but causes a sort of internal split between day and night. A heterosexual doesn't have this problem or rather it is not said that he has it or better for him it is easier to solve it, if it occurs."

Sexuality experienced with lightness represents a real possibility and in itself not at all absurd but, first of all, it should really be lived lightly, I mean that it should not have only an appearance of lightness concealing anyway beneath itself affective valences more or less frustrated at the individual level and, above all, it should be shared with people who are fully aware that they are precisely in front of a sexuality lived lightly and that therefore the possible expectations should be appropriately reduced. With these premises, that is, with full awareness on both sides that it is a sexuality lived lightly, the light gay sexuality is a possible and feasible hypothesis.

### 11.1.7 Gay sex and sexual play

Let's now consider, precisely in terms of lightness, the proximity between sexuality and play.

A large number of guys, if not all, sooner or later take part in or attend to episodes of play with a more or less evident sexual background, that is, episodes of play which involve more or less overtly sexual content or content concerning nudity.

The play at the beginning is usually limited only to a verbal content, for example playing "truth or dare" when it comes to "truths" related to sexual contents; the next step involves a light form of physical contact not specifically genital, as in wrestling for fun, that, for example, when you are on the beach and wrestle with only the swimsuit on, involves a very direct physical contact, sometimes also embarrassing; the third and last step leads to sexually explicit play that also includes the possibility of touching the genitals, or implicates that one of the participants is expected to remain naked at the end of the play (like in the "strip poker").

The sexual play can be simple, that is it can arise without any explicit sexual purposes, but can also be programmed precisely in order to create a sexual involvement. In some cases, the sexual play verges on the edge of

violence, when it comes to group play imposed on an not consenting victim. This is the case of "panting/de-panting", a play that sometimes involves also behaviors of sexual violence and was practiced, and sometimes is still practiced nowadays in schools or universities against freshmen or in military environments. The "panting" usually consists in yanking down quickly and unexpectedly the underwear of a guy in order to leave him exposed in front of everyone, but sometimes the "panting" means stripping a guy in group, obviously against his will, blocking him and preventing him from defending himself, often the others may touch the genitals of the victim even if in a playful way.

The violent meaning of this play is considerably reduced because the rite is performed as if it was a joke and those who have been "panted" can change role the next time. It should be emphasized that this sexual play is characteristic of environments dominated by men (male barracks and male classrooms). Today, with the obligation of mixed classes (male and female together) and also of mixed teams of physical education, the "panting" has almost disappeared even if episodically reappears in college dorms only for guys.

Among the games that are on the border between play and sexuality there is the tickling, that starts trivially as a play but allows two guys to familiarize each with physicality of the other and especially lowers the threshold of the defenses and makes the behavior less controlled. When the laugh becomes uncontrollable, physical contact is accepted in a dimension of play and fun. It is not unlikely that a gay guy may have an erection while being in a similar situation, which doesn't happen so easily not even in explicit sexual contexts. The laugh is the Trojan horse of sexuality that allows a guy to accept in this way, what explicitly he would not accept. Through the tickling and through sexual play sometimes occur early signs of gay sexuality in young people who have always considered themselves homosexuals.

However, the participation in sexual games between persons of the same sex does not imply being gay. In an all guys class "panting" was a typical straight play. I emphasize that it is not the participation in the game that determines sexual orientation but, according to sexual orientation, participation in sexual play is experienced in different ways. The straight guys, participating in a sexual play with friends of the same sex, see it as a game, as the most uninhibited game, but not as a sexual activity, on the contrary gay guys, participating in a sexual play with other guys, consider it precisely as a sexual activity.

The difference in the way to participate is reflected in the fact that a straight guy who is involved in a sexual play with other guys will not load the memory of that episode with sexual meanings, what on the contrary a gay guy will

certainly do. The gay guy will transform the memory of that episode, which for him is clearly a sexual experience, into a strong masturbatory fantasy and that episode will remain printed indelibly in his mind.

The difference in experiencing the participation in the sexual game between a straight guy and a gay guy can create big problems in the event that the gay guy falls in love with the straight guy and between the two guys the atmosphere is so uninhibited to actually allow sexual plays, what is quite common.

Each of the two guys projects his own personal view of the sexual play on the other guy, so the straight guy thinks that for his friend the sexual game is just a game with no real sexual significance, therefore he feels uninhibited because assumes that the other guy is also straight. The gay guy sees the participation in sexual play by his straight friend as if it were a real gay sexual activity and begins to fantasize about the hypothesis that his friend is not really straight but in reality is a latent gay guy who sooner or later will realize that he is really gay because "if a guy participates in sexual activities with another guy clearly he cannot be straight."

Understandably, these types of projections can create sexual expectations, hopes and, later, bitter disappointments. Sexual play is often used by gay men, consciously or unconsciously, as an attempt to involve their friends in a sexual dimension. For a gay guy it is actually very difficult to understand that a straight guy is going through a sexual play in a completely different way. In this sense, trying to involve a friend in a sexual play is definitely not a sensible system to verify his possible being gay. To find out if a guy is really gay there is only one way, that is, talk to him explicitly, what is often very difficult, if not impossible. To use various substitutes for the explicit direct speech means to choose unreliable methods.

There is a particular feature typical of the intentional and planned sexual play through which a gay guy tries to involve his friend in order to test his homosexuality or to lead him to homosexuality (what is absolutely meaningless because or you're gay or you're not), this feature is the "gradualness". Clearly in this case the asymmetries are very strong and the game resembles a hunt in which the predator chases the prey with well-studied stalking. In this situation, a gay guy who does not know the sexual orientation of his partner, at the beginning tries to involve him in forms of sexual play in which the sexual dimension is hardly visible, if the participatory response of his friend is spontaneous, after a while the gay guy switches to a sex play in which sexual contents are more explicit, only if also in this case the participation of the friend is spontaneous it becomes possible to program another step towards an even more explicit sexuality.

From the point of view of the gay guy, when his friend has accepted an openly

sexual play, doing so he has clearly shown his homosexuality. This strategy of small steps moves further and further the border that separates the play from sexuality.

There are rare cases of straight guys who are willing even to be masturbated by their friends supposed to be straight. Such a thing is automatically interpreted by a gay guy as a manifested admission of homosexuality on the part of his friend. This conclusion derives from the assumption that what matters to identify a gay guy are external behaviors, or in other words that there are "behaviors" typically gay that a straight guy would "never" put into practice. In fact, experience shows that to identify a gay guy you must know his own interpretation of his own behaviors and of those of others. In other words, it is not the behavior itself that identifies a gay guy but the interpretation he gives of that behavior.

### 11.1.8 Gay sexuality and hetero affectivity

To face the topic starting from a concrete exemplification, I report here, with the permission of those involved, some traits of e-mails and some sections of a conversation in chat on the subject. Obviously the names are fictitious. Immediately after, you can read the text of the article "Gay sexuality and hetero affectivity". I must underline that the situations reported here below are objectively free of anxiety. The situations characterized by anxiety and compulsiveness will be treated later in a specific chapter of this book.

#### **Mail by Albert (Repression of heterosexual sexuality)**

"[omissis] I grew up in a strange family, my parents think that homosexuality is a psychiatric illness that feminizes you, basically they don't have the faintest idea of these things, a gay man, so to speak, normal in external behaviors, according to them, cannot even exist, that's why they not only have never thought about the fact that I can be gay but they consider it radically impossible, because I don't have anything of effeminate.

The absurd thing of my family is instead the fixed idea, of my mother in particular, that guys have always and only sexual fixed ideas on the girls, it could also be true, but nevertheless, for my mother the fact that her son can have sex with a girl before marriage is really inconceivable, is monstrous.

They think I have a girlfriend. When I talk about a girl who is a colleague of mine at university, my mother surely assumes that I

have for that girl some kind of sexual interest. Even now she tells me that I have to be careful and that "I don't have to do stupid things! (sex)" But for her to do stupid things means always and only getting a girl pregnant.

My mother still behaves like that now and thinks that I didn't bring home a girl so as not to give my parents the opportunity to intervene in order to give me advice on an aspect of my life that she considers so important. Obviously she always takes for granted that I can only be heterosexual. Even when I was younger, 14/15/16 years old, my mother was heavily involved in my female friendships, she invited my female friends to my house and subjected them to a kind of scrutiny, it was something I could not stand. As for the guys, on the other hand, my parents never got involved in anything, they only warned me, but rarely, to pay attention to those who talk too much about girls, because, according to my parents, they could make me enter a bad road. In practice between the ages of 14 and 16, the girls who had or could have something to do with me had to undergo the scrutiny of my mother while male friends were not subjected to such procedures. At 14 I had a crush on a girl, a schoolmate of mine, that is, I would have better to say I felt very good with her, we were friends but I didn't feel sexually attracted to her. A few months later I discovered masturbation, just after I turned 15, a bit late, I know. Anyway at the time of my first crush with a girl I can say that I felt it above all as a beautiful thing, I liked being with that girl even if I didn't know how to give it an explanation. Then my mother understood what, according to her, was happening and she interfered heavily: "Who is she? Do you know her parents? Why you don't invite her here at home?" etc. etc., in practice they made me hate her. She was a very pretty girl, but when she realized that I wanted or had to bring her to my house to let my parents know her, she absolutely didn't want to hear reasons and she looked at me as if my way of doing was strange. Such a thing bothered me a lot because I thought I had done everything as it had to be done, that is, as my mother had told me. Then I realized that I was perhaps succubus of my mother and that my, so to say, girlfriend had realized it.

Let's say that after that story with the girl I didn't have any more fantasies about girls and my discovery of homosexuality took place. It happened in the summer, when I turned 15, at the seaside. I was camping with my parents and with my sister.

We stopped for almost a month in a camping and after a few days I could get to know other guys. I had met another guy who was 16 years old and my parents left me very free because I was with him and they trusted him. Actually he was a very good guy who seemed older than his age. I spent all day with him, from morning to late evening, I was fine, I felt comfortable, he made me feel older but he never talked about girls. He was modest to the incredible, a bit the opposite of me, I had no problem at that time to show me naked, perhaps because in the nudity I saw nothing sexual. For him probably it was exactly the opposite. I think it was just this that made the spring trigger that made me enter the gay world.

We took a bath and then we into a thicket near the beach in order to get dressed. There I started to tease him because otherwise he would never have took off his swimsuit, he pretended not to hear and then I threw myself on him and ripped his swimsuit away by force, then he reacted badly and ripped away mine, then we compared our equipment and he got an erection, I remember everything like it were now, he was red like a pepper, then began to masturbate and I imitated him, in practice I discovered masturbation like that.

Then for a few days the thing went on great, so we masturbated each other, but then something happened that I didn't like at all, he wanted to kiss me and I remember very well that I replied: "I'm not a fagot!" He pretended not to have heard and didn't insist but our relationship changed radically, we continued to have sex but he was not at ease.

After three days in this way we quarreled furiously and we went as far as beating each other. I realized that he was gay, even if he hadn't told me it and I disliked very much being pampered by him, such a ting almost made me feel dirty, or at least I told him so, even though I continued to masturbate in practice until now on the memory of what I had lived with him that summer. The point is this, I have never fallen in love with a guy. When I see a guy I like him, I would never be able to kiss him or to be pampered by him. I read in the forum that many guys like these things even more than sex, but for me it is not so, I don't see myself spending my life next to a guy, it seems to me an unnatural thing absolutely not mine.

In very recent times something important happened, I met a girl and for the first time I think I feel something for her, I like to

stay close to her, to flood her of text messages and call her on the phone three or four times a day (I cannot more because we are hours on the phone), for me she is an excellent companion but there is a very important fact, for her I feel tenderness and a lot, but not really a sexual desire like what I feel for guys. Even if, after what happened at the camping beach, I no longer have had physical relationships with guys, I would like to explore the sexuality of a guy, it's a kind of fixed idea, but for a girl I don't feel the same things, I don't know at all the sexuality of girls and I would feel a tremendous embarrassment if I had to have a sexual intercourse with a girl. I tried to masturbate thinking about that girl but it was just a forced thing, I came also to the ejaculation but just mechanically, in practice I didn't feel any sexual drive. What I think is that I stopped in the middle of the ford, I don't feel gay because I don't fall in love with guys and I don't feel heterosexual because girls sexually don't tell me anything. I think that I could also stay with a girl but passively, that is, I would accept it but I would let her do everything, admitted and not granted that there can be results. I feel strange, Project, in a great uncertainty, very unstable. Obviously sooner or later I'll have to make choices but I don't know where to go."

### **Chat with Nicolas (Repression of homosexuality)**

Nicolas writes: ok, now I go to the point, in short, I think I'm straight, you may ask me then why I'm here, if you give me some time I'll explain, but I would like to start from the fact that I think I'm straight. "I think" it means that in practice I am convinced or almost convinced of it. Accordingly, I've always had girlfriends since I was a young boy, at 16 I had my first real sexual intercourse with a girl, my first girlfriend.

I have had three girlfriends and with all of them I have had sexual intercourses and from that point of view things have always been all right, even auto-eroticism was all about girls. Now it's almost a year since I've had my last girlfriend. Until recently, having sex with a girl was something I missed when having sex wasn't really possible, but now things are changing. I practice sports, I see a lot of naked guys every day but gay fantasies never went through my mind, this at least up to a month ago, then a strange thing happened, in the gym came a new guy who is 23 years old, I'm 24, and I began to fantasize about this guy, just on a sexual level, something that had never happened to me before. In the evening I lie down on the bed and I think of him, that is, I think of him and me in a sexual situation and it excites



me a lot. In practice I don't masturbate any more thinking about girls, or very little, while I'm fine even just staying in erection when I think of him without even needing to get to orgasm, it happens sometimes but it's just thinking sexually of him that makes me feel good, I think that we are in the gym alone and we undress each other and then we masturbate each other, rarely I fantasize of oral sex. I tell you, Project, I never imagined I could think of a guy in these terms.

Project writes: but did you talk to this guy?

Nicolas writes: if "talking" means talking seriously, no, because I'm afraid, in fact I have almost the certainty that he is straight, it sounds so strange that it's me the one who writes such a thing, I think that in practice my interest in him is only sexual, I don't know, but I have this impression.

Project writes: Let's assume that this guy wants to get really in touch with you, that is if he was interested in talking to you, how would you react?

Nicolas writes: I would be very happy but I think it's a very remote possibility, practically evanescent, and then, look, I think of him just in terms of sex, this is true, even if hetero fantasies are not 100% finished, but I also think that I would like to embrace him, maybe fall asleep next to him, but in order to create something emotional two persons are needed and I'm alone and that's why I settle for a bit of sex. If I imagine a couple relationship with him, I think of it more or less like what happens with a girl, sex, all right, it's another thing, but I think the affection would be the same, but I don't know because I've never tried and then I think that if I happen to meet a girl who falls in love with me at the end I would always be straight, maybe straight with some gay fantasies but essentially straight. And then with a guy how would I do? My parents would kill me, they always saw me 100% straight and in fact I still think it's more or less like that. For them the word gay is like saying depraved. Frankly I have never felt homophobic like my parents, but I didn't even feel gay until a month ago and I don't even feel gay now, even if I feel something strange but I'm not afraid of these things, if I find out that I'm gay it's okay, what I don't like is uncertainty but still I don't think I'm really gay.

### **Mail of Federico (Gay sex as a sexual diversion)**

I read everything you wrote about the weight of affectivity in the relationship between two guys, frankly it is very nice even if I don't know how realistic it can be. That is, understand me, I speak from my point of view, that is from the point of view of a married 33-year-old man who is going into crisis because he has

sexual fixed ideas for a 25-year-old known at work.

I underline that I'm and I feel heterosexual, I love my wife and I also desire her sexually, but now it's more than a year that there is this new fact and it's something that destabilizes me a lot. I masturbate thinking of a guy. It's crazy that a married man does these things and yet it happens.

At first I felt guilty towards my wife, but now it doesn't happen to me anymore, I live two parallel lives or better a life and a half, because my being gay is only halfway, there's the sexual part, the rest doesn't exist at all.

I never considered my 25 year old like a guy I could fall in love with, it's just that female sexuality is not enough anymore for me, I like it very much but in my horizon there is not only that, in fact I see my 25 year old a bit like a porn actor (he is a very serious guy! Indeed even too serious) that excites me.

Is all this pathological? At first I thought about it but now slowly I got to the point that if I masturbate thinking of him I don't do anything wrong, he doesn't know it and will never know it and also my wife will never know it. So where is the problem? What am I doing wrong? Anything!

On the other hand, I would never abandon my wife, it doesn't even pass through the antechamber of my brain that I could put myself with a man. I don't know how such a thing can evolve over time, maybe in one year I will have abandoned my wife and will have escaped with him, but it doesn't seem to me even thinkable! And then, one like me what is he? Is he gay? But, from what you say, it doesn't seem realistic. Is he bisex? Frankly I don't believe it and I don't feel like to be bisex. I think someone like me is straight even if he has some small interest in gay sex, and I stress it: only sex, perhaps I had better to say only at the level of masturbation because I would never go with a man apart from the risk of HIV, it's not really something that seems possible to me. What do you think about, Project?

### **Gay sexuality and hetero affectivity**

It happens to me quite frequently, in my conversations with the guys, to find myself faced with real forms of splitting between affectivity and sexuality. It is not uncommon for guys who experience sexual drives that are strongly or even exclusively oriented in a gay sense, to feel an affective attraction towards girls, for whom, however, sometimes they feel also forms

of attenuated or strongly sublimated sexual interest. This phenomenon is found many times also in forum posts and is confirmed by the statistics on sexual orientation of Gay Project. The 23.72% of the guys who took the test on sexual orientation of Project Gay (a sample of several hundred guys, but not representative of the general population and with high concentration of gays) claim to have a masturbation oriented exclusively in the gay sense, while only 15.22% claim to fall in love only with guys, but what amazes even more is that compared to a 11.68% of guys who claim to have a masturbation oriented exclusively in straight sense, 27,26% claim to fall in love only with girls. From the statistics of sexual orientation by age we can deduce that in the same sample the percentage of gay masturbation varies little with age while the percentage of hetero masturbation tends to increase and, at the same time, bisexual masturbation (with sometimes hetero and sometimes gay fantasies) decreases.

Sexuality becomes polarized with the years and tends to follow not the masturbatory gay tendency but the affective hetero one. I mean that a percentage of younger guys tend to experience hetero affectivity despite gay masturbation, for them the homosexual dimension has only strictly sexual contents while the affective ones are reserved entirely or almost entirely to girls. The sexuality of these guys tends to evolve over time, the heterosexual affective tendency slowly becomes sexualized and the tendency towards heterosexual masturbation increases. While hetero affectivity is also enriched with explicit sexual content, the gay orientation on the strictly sexual level tends to be recessive. This is the reason for which, to consider gay a guy, masturbation is indicative but doesn't solve the problem definitively and it's necessary to say that a guy is gay if he has both a gay masturbatory sexuality, and also a gay affectivity, that is, he falls in love with guys.

As if to talk of gay sexual orientation it's necessary to find together an exclusive tendency to masturbation with gay fantasies and also an affective tendency equally exclusive to fall in love with guys, so to talk about real bisexuality it is necessary that a guy has a masturbation that contemplates both heterosexual fantasies and gay fantasies, even in different proportions, and that he falls in love with both boys and girls. I mean that in a defined sexual orientation, that is stable, gay or heterosexual or bisexual in different degrees, strictly sexual drives are always associated with the tendency to fall in love with the same persons for whom sexual drives are felt.

Bisexuality is not a phenomenon analogous to the dissociation between affectivity and sexuality. Basically, a hetero guy falls in love emotionally and sexually only with girls, a gay guy falls in love emotionally and sexually only with guys, a bisexual guy falls in love emotionally and sexually with both boys and girls. In these situations affectivity and sexuality interact in an

organic way and tend to direct a guy in a global way, both affective and sexual, towards other people.

The dissociation between affectivity and sexuality is not a form of bisexuality but is a completely different reality. I would like to underline that it's not a matter of pathological phenomena but of normal realities that touch significant percentages of population. As it also happens for homosexuality and for bisexuality, the dissociation between affectivity and sexuality can lead to states of suffering, sometimes very heavy, if the social environment is constrictive and adopts rigid sexuality models, but suffering doesn't come from the split between affectivity and sexuality but precisely from the sexually repressive climate.

Statistically, the dissociation between affectivity and sexuality is a relevant phenomenon, as it's evident from the Gay Project statistics. The discrepancy between orientation of masturbation and affective orientation is noticeable but tends to decrease with the passing of the years and several guys who despite falling in love with girls had a gay masturbation, tend slowly to orientate even sexually in the straight direction. Approximately 5% of guys between the ages of 14 and 18 who took part in the Gay Project survey on sexual orientation tend over time to orient themselves definitively in straight direction. I must underline that the guys generally consider the split between affectivity and sexuality as a form of bisexuality and tend to consider themselves bisexual or even gay, above all due to the gay masturbation. Interpreting these phenomena is not easy because they are things that start with guys who consider themselves essentially gay and then slowly, not realizing their emotional world in a gay dimension, experience affective attraction to girls and slowly also discover a straight sexuality that is rewarding for them.

In the conversations with the guys, elements have emerged that lead me to try to give an interpretation of the facts that could at least in a good percentage of cases be realistic, clearly all of it should be taken with due caution.

In several situations of dissociation between affectivity and sexuality, in the background can be found the presence of a very rigid family in the sexual field and of children who have felt hyper-controlled during adolescence. Their female friendships were evaluated and judged by the family that tended to exercise a control over the sexuality of the sons, that was presupposed exclusively hetero.

Sermons on the way to behave with girls, attempts to know how the son behaves with girls, tendential intrusiveness in the relationships of the son with the opposite sex, and on the other hand no interest in the male friendships of the son since early adolescence, are quite common attitudes that can be found in the families of guys who experience the splitting between sexuality and affectivity. If you go out with male friends, all right, if you go out with

a girl you have to tell your parents who she is, where you go, when you come back, etc. etc.. The lack of freedom in the sexual field sometimes leads hetero guys to try to realize their freedom from the family in the environment of male friendships. While for a guy who can have a heterosexual emotional and sexual life basically free from family control, friendships are only a part of actual life, and not the one that polarizes sexuality, for guys who have no freedom in their emotional and sexual hetero behaviors, the friendships with other guys constitute an extremely gratifying environment because it is completely foreign to the family.

It often happens that, even in groups of substantially heterosexual guys, forms of special and very close affection are created that are not necessarily sexualized, the so-called special friendships (the best friend). For a guy who has no other sexual release valves, particular friendships easily take a sexual coloring. Pretty common episodes in the environment of heterosexual teenagers, such as masturbating together watching a straight porn, become, for a guy who feels forced by the family in his sexuality, a way to have his own private in which the family cannot enter, a sexuality which is finally subtracted from family control.

Sexual fantasies about friends and masturbation in a homosexual key end up dominating the scene and for a long time the guy can consider himself really gay, but since this sexual tendency cannot be declared nor shared and it is only experienced at the level of masturbation, the guy clearly perceives the difference between his way of living the para-sexual experiences with his friends, such as the nakedness in the showers of the gym, and the way of living those same experiences on the part of his friends, and this tends to reinforce in him the idea of being gay.

However, the sexual morality of the family makes it practically impossible for the guy to accept the idea of an emotional couple relationship with another guy that would involve bringing homosexuality from the level of masturbation to the level of sharing and conscious and courageous choice. Sometimes guys also come to real sexual experiments with other guys but in situations that are not in any way accessible to the family and only with contacts for sexual purposes. From this phase that is from the greater awareness that non-affective homosexuality is not really gratifying, derives a sense of deep dissatisfaction or devaluation of sexuality, which is finally considered just as a technique. These are the most acute phases of the dissociation between affectivity and sexuality. In these situations the guys become again (now they are fully adults, 22, 23, but also 25 years old or more) particularly sensitive to a hetero affective contact. It's obvious that after having become accustomed through years of gay masturbation to having homosexual fantasies, the approach with hetero sexuality is experienced as problematic, but

that approach has a deep and satisfying affective dimension that the guy had not known in the gay environment. Thus begins a path of reunification of sexuality and affection that can last even two or three years, during which slowly but gradually the gay fantasies give way and heterosexual sexuality, combined with the effectivity gains ground.

We must immediately say that the process is delicate and, for example, a traumatic experience in an hetero environment can interrupt it, as can do also a true and profound gay falling in love. These are important transitional phases of the definition of the individual sexuality in which, even if, statistically, evolution takes place mainly towards heterosexuality, it is not at all certain that the opposite cannot happen. From what has been said it follows that we must keep in mind a principle: sexuality must never be forced!

The dissociation between affectivity and sexuality represents an evolutionary phase which, I repeat, has nothing pathological and must be experienced for what it is by following one's own affectivity and spontaneous sexuality, avoiding to create too many problems and on the contrary setting aside any abstract and preconceived vision of oneself in both straight or gay key. Anxiety is the worst enemy of sexuality, so those who find themselves in such a situation must not consider it as a problem to be solved. Sexual orientation issues are problems only to the extent that they are considered as such.

### 11.1.9 Late masturbation and delayed adolescence

Let's come to the problems of those guys who for various reasons have never had the experience of masturbation.

Sometimes I happen, even actually rather rarely, to talk in chat with guys who never experienced voluntary physical sexuality, i.e. never masturbated, but know the physiological manifestations of sexuality exclusively through nocturnal emissions lived also as something unseemly and dirt. These guys appear on a personal level as characterized by a substantial indifference to physical sexuality and are oriented to consider physical sexuality like the expression of a defect, or of a lack of control over themselves.

For these guys the distinction between heterosexuality and homosexuality, in fact, is not very significant because upstream lacks a realistic perception of sexuality. It should be pointed out that often these guys are not teens but young adults between 20 and 30 which seem at first sight entirely refractory to sexual impulses that their peers consider essential. Clearly, when these guys try to build relationships with other guys or girls, their conception only theoretical and potentially negative of the sexuality makes them look strange in the eyes of others, they are considered as dreamers far from reality, romantic or less politely as people outside the world. Clearly, the lack of a

real dialogue on content related to sexual life puts these guys in a state of isolation and marginalization.

Their emotional life without real sexual involvement can be adapted to a life of formal relationships but prevents them from establishing contacts in which affectivity and sexuality are both present in an essential way. In general, these guys do not feel embarrassed to talk about sexual content because for them this is something entirely theoretical. The impossibility of living a substantial physical sexuality in the first person is associated with a very strong emotional dimension, made of tenderness, requests for attention and looking for an important loving presence. Masturbation is considered by these guys as something very negative in terms of vice and the same goes for the couple sexuality in all its forms. It lacks, at least in appearance, any sexual desire.

What is needed here is a reflection on a fundamental moment of adolescence that is the discovery of masturbation. Too often the role of masturbation is trivializes and the masturbation is considered no more than a kind of erotic game, in reality there is nothing trivial because the masturbation leads to connect physical sexual instincts to a series of sexual fantasies. The association of mental sexual fantasies and physical sexuality is gradually achieved and reinforced over the years through masturbation that progressively builds up the "psycho-physical" dimension of sexuality, leading it to its maturity. Adult sexuality cannot be reduced to a purely physiological phenomenon, it is instead structured as a complex psycho-physiological phenomenon, in which at the first appearance of a "specific" sexual fantasy, a physiological reaction follows. The "specificity" of the psycho-physiological connection comes from masturbation; that's why people react very differently to the same fantasies, and thoughts that are very exciting for someone aren't exciting at all for others.

The dimension of the sexual pleasure experienced through masturbation, gives a very strong psychic weight to erection and orgasm because connects them with a projective fantasy directed towards other people. The masturbatory fantasies are usually so fundamental and independent of social conditionings that, beyond the couple behavior, a guy is considered gay if he masturbates fantasizing constantly about other guys.

Masturbation creates and consolidates the so-called sexual archetypes, that is, defines during the adolescence the physical characteristics of the guys or girls and the typical contents of the situations that for a guy will be sexually highly engaging all lifelong.

A guy doesn't fall in love with a generic girl just because he's a guy neither with a generic girl just because she's a girl, but only with those who correspond significantly to his archetypes and we must stress that certain

situations that are sexually exciting for someone are not such for others because do not correspond to their archetypes.

Years ago, when it was very difficult for guys to access information about sexuality and masturbation was a taboo that was never discussed, the discovery of masturbation occurred independently and randomly in the great majority of cases, today, with the fall of many sexual taboos and the spread of pornography even among the youngest boys, the discovery of masturbation is very often the result of an experiment by imitation induced from outside. The fact is that masturbation plays certainly a key role in the structuring of adult sexuality.

I should add that, contrary to what is said, masturbation is not something that purely or predominantly belongs to adolescent guys but accompanies a person throughout life and coexists normally with the couple sexuality, indeed many diseases of couple relationships are made evident from the fact that one partner masturbates with fantasies addressed to the outside the couple or if the couple is heterosexual, with homosexual fantasies.

When for any reason there is no masturbation the perception of sexuality is often altered and reductive, and this fact causes significant consequences.

What can prevent a boy from discovering masturbation? The possible answers to this question are two: first of all, the physical impediments, such as the hypersensitivity of the glans, which makes penis handling particularly painful and therefore discourages or prevents from the beginning any form of sexual exploration, secondly, the psychological barriers strongly internalized. It should be kept in mind that usually some type of physical impediments, like the hypersensitivity of the glans, tend over time to be less limiting. For example, the hypersensitivity of the glans generally decreases with age and this implies that some guys may arrive anyway even if late to discover masturbation.

We must add that since in general the hypersensitivity of the glans tends to decrease very gradually, in these cases the discovery of masturbation is not entirely without problems because masturbation can cause pain or however require techniques that avoid the rubbing of the glans. In these cases, in general, the first impressions that the boys derive from the new experience are not entirely pleasant and usually masturbation is considered an exclusively physical experience, completely independent from any emotional involvement exactly because upstream there are no experiences of falling in love sexually, lived through masturbation, which are the fundamental element of adolescence.

In practice, during adolescence guys learn to associate sexuality and affectivity through masturbation linked to falling in love, the so-called emotional masturbation. For guys now over 20 who never practiced masturbation, since



they haven't lived the typical experiences of adolescence, the association between affectivity and sexuality is not automatic, but looks like something absolutely not obvious. We can say that the belated discovery of masturbation leads to a delayed adolescence, that is to live through masturbation the experiences of association of sex and affection in a fully adult age.

It is a delicate moment of the emotional and sexual evolution of a guy but if he doesn't experience forms of rejection of sexuality, the so-called delayed adolescence is resolved in about 12/18 months in which the frequency of masturbation increases progressively and the first spontaneous associations between sexual fantasies and masturbation occur. For a while affectivity and sexuality can seem still separate realities but over months affectivity and sexuality are integrated more and more and eventually reach the full integration of the two spheres and the guy overcomes the delayed adolescence reaching a typical adult sexuality, that is, a sexuality on affective base.

Very different and I would say also more complex is the situation of the guys who don't have physical impediments to masturbation but have never practiced it for other reasons. I emphasize that I don't intend to refer to the guys who had begun to practice masturbation but then voluntarily refrained from it, but just to the guys who have never practiced it.

Talking about the hypersensitivity of the glans we basically took into consideration only issues related to mechanical physical problems. Obviously there are many other possible causes that can refrain a boy from discovering and practicing masturbation, like for example the hormonal problems. Let's put aside these very complicated issues that would deserve a multidisciplinary study and let's focus on the guys who have had a normal sexual development, and have nocturnal periodic emissions, sign of normal physiological functioning of the reproductive organs and let's focus in particular on the situations in which the non-discovery of masturbation has psychological or environmental reasons. In these situations it's certainly impossible to assume that the obstacles will disappear by themselves. Some things should be kept in mind: these guys live in a situation of hardship and tend to close up more and more. The rejection of physical sexuality is felt almost as a personal characteristic and a moral value to which they should not give up but on the other hand these guys live a form of very strong emotional feeling as a substitute of sexuality.

It is from this last item, taken into account as something conscious, that can begin the discovery of physical sexuality in adulthood. In reality, these guys would need a very gradual approach to sexuality, starting from their strong emotional dimension, but this gradual approach is certainly not easy to get. When these guys get courage and approach a guy or a girl, they have to face a whole set of expectations and behaviors that are incomprehensible

to them and even morally negative because in those behaviors they read a sexual purpose of which they don't understand the meaning. I quote here a passage from an e-mail where a guy explains the situation:

"There was a guy who looked like a nice guy, not one who says only stupid jokes and ambiguous, I tried to talk to him, but in the end I realized that he was like all the others, for him the meaning of the fact that we were friends was to tell me about his girl and he also wanted me to tell him about mine, which I never had, I did not know what to say and he was perplexed, I asked why he had given all this emphasis to sex and he told me that it was obvious, I told him that it was not obvious at all for me, then he asked me if I liked girls and I said that I liked them but just as friends, and then he told me that I was certainly gay but for him there was no problem, but I told him that I had never had sexual gay fantasies, I liked being with a guy, but just as a friend, nothing more, a friend just like he was, then he began to look at me strangely and then he asked me what my fantasies were during masturbation, if about guys or girls but I told him that I don't masturbate at all nor I did before and I don't understand why people are obsessed by such things, and he was appalled. Then it was over with this guy obviously he was scared but I did not understand why."

In another passage the same guy describes his first contact with a girl:

"I also tried with a girl, I was fine with her and she with me, We told each other many things, all on msn, we talked so much, she was very sweet and affectionate, at one point she asked me for a picture but I did not send it and at that point I think she was astonished but she said I had done well. We talked a lot, she told me that I was not like the other guys, that I was sweet and she was fine with me and that she wanted to be with me as long as possible. At a certain point, but after a long time, I asked her if she wanted to meet me and she was happy, I thought I had found a true "friend" as I wanted. We met, we talked, and then in the car she took me by the hand, it was a pleasant thing, I liked it, then we kissed, at first I liked it, it was a sweet thing but then I didn't like it any more, it seemed almost something acted, like what you see in the movies, so I told her that I didn't feel at ease and she said, "Why? What have I done?" I told her that I was not sexually interested in her because I don't like girls who try

to seduce me sexually. She started to cry, got out of the car and went away, then she blocked my contact on msn and we haven't talked anymore."

These examples give an idea of the difficulties that these guys have to face. The guys or the girls who relate with them take it for granted that the vision of sexuality is just the same for everybody but it is a wrong assumption. There would need a much softer approach in which the sexual dimension can be put aside for long periods so as to never appear aggressive.

I reproduce below an excerpt from an email sent by a guy who has discovered masturbation at 23 and with whom I had occasion to speak very often. That guy arrived at Gay Project on the presumption that his lack of interest in girls might arise from some sort of homosexuality. In reality it was a guy who had never had the experience of masturbation because of a very strict upbringing strongly internalized. After a few attempts, similar to those reported in the previous examples, he met a girl who was really in love with him, after much hesitation, he decided to talk clearly to the girl, he was afraid of getting another rejection but things went another way.

The relationship absolutely non-aggressive went on for months in an exclusively affective way but very seriously. The guy lost his job and she always supported him. After about a year and a half, things have changed, the girl had to leave for another city for work reasons, but somehow they were still together. They could meet only on Saturdays and Sundays. I reproduce below an extract of the email in which the guy tells me that he has solved the problem and has begun to understand the meaning of masturbation and sexuality.

"Hello Project, I think I got there, I think so. So tonight I have a dream about her, something tender, sweet, nice, I missed her like crazy, but it was a beautiful dream, this is the first time I make a sexual dream, nothing strange only sweet, caresses, kisses, things like that, but the fact is that I ejaculated in my dream and it was beautiful. It is the first time that a pollution seems to me a good thing.

This would be a lot in itself but at this point you can imagine what follows, I did it! Somehow it seems to me a bit strange, however, is not at all repellent, in reality it is true that it is a way of loving a person! Project, you cannot imagine how happy I feel! I sent her a text message and told her the news, and she said she feels happier than me. What do you think? Will it last? I sure hope so. Honestly I feel a bit weird. Project, I might as well have a family, maybe my fantasy is running fast, I guess I'll have to

understand a lot of things, I feel like a little boy who discovers a new world!"

Unfortunately situations similar to the one just described are not common. In essence, the sexuality in these situations must be born and fueled within a profound emotional dimension. However, it is evident that when a guy living these situations puts apart the discouragement and accepts the risk to tell the truth the chances increase. Being overcome by fear leads to the rejection of social contact and to the refusal of deep emotional experiences. Overcoming fear is crucial.

### 11.1.10 Sexual violence and sexual abuse

To try to address the problem of sexual violence and sexual abuse in the homosexual field, I will start with the Italian Criminal Code, which presents a very clear formulation of the matter widely shared by the criminal codes of Western Europe.

Let's start with three notions used in the criminal code:

- 1) Sexual violence
- 2) Sexual acts with minors
- 3) Corruption of a minor

#### **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

(from 5 to 10 years of imprisonment) To configure sexual violence it is required that the offended person is compelled to perform or to be subjected to sexual acts with the use of violence or threat or abuse of authority or of the conditions of physical or mental inferiority. The sexual violence is aggravated (from 6 to 12 years of imprisonment) when it is committed against a person who has not yet turned 14, or with the use of weapons or alcoholic or narcotic substances or drugs or other instruments or substances seriously dangerous for the health of the offended person, or by disguised person, or who simulates the quality of a public official or public service officer, or on a person subject to limitations of personal freedom or on a person who has not yet turned 16, of which the culprit is the ascendant, the adoptive parent, the guardian. Sexual violence is further aggravated (from 7 to 14 years of imprisonment) if the offense is committed against a person who has not yet turned 10.

#### **SEXUAL ACTS WITH A MINOR**

Are punished with the same punishment as sexual violence, even in the absence of violence or threats or abuse of authority or of the physical or mental

inferiority of the offended person, sexual acts with a person who, at the moment of the fact, did not turn 14 or 16, when the culprit is the ascendant, the adoptive parent, the guardian, or other person to whom, for reasons of care, education, supervision or custody, the minor is entrusted or has, with the latter, a relationship of cohabitation. The minor who, in the absence of violence or threat or abuse of the physical or mental inferiority of the offended person, performs sexual acts with a minor who has turned 13, is not punishable if the age difference between the subjects is no higher at three years. The punishment is aggravated if the offended person has not yet turned 10.

**CORRUPTION OF A MINOR** (6 months to three years of imprisonment) There is corruption of a minor when sexual acts are performed in the presence of a person under the age of fourteen in order to make him/her watch.

If you consider that rapine is punished with imprisonment from 3 to 10 years and that sexual violence is punished with imprisonment from a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 14, if aggravated, it is understood that the criminal code aims to sanction very strongly sexual violence. The reasons are not only to be seen in the social alarm that these crimes (these are crimes in the strict sense) involve but also and above all in the actual and serious damage caused to the victim, which is not patrimonial but can often condition very heavily all the life. It is evident that group sex violence or sexual harassment through physical constraint can create a profound trauma in those who suffer such behaviors for the intrinsically violent element that characterizes them. Less obvious, at first glance, it seems to equate sexual violence with sexual acts with a minor, even in the absence of violence or threat, when it comes to a minor who has not yet turned 14 or 16 when the abuse is performed by family members or tutors. But the legislator intended to protect the child not only by sexual violence, but more specifically by any form of abuse even if not realized through violence or threats.

Sexual acts between adults do not constitute a crime when there is the consent of the participants, only if that consent is aware and free. The criminal legislator assumed "*ex lege*" (by law) that the consent expressed by a minor who has not yet turned 14 (or 16 towards the family member) cannot be considered valid because of the lack of full awareness and freedom. The choice of the legislator is the only one compatible with a substantial protection of the child that cannot depend on the subjective assessment of his alleged consent. But let's put aside the criminal code. Sexual violence can be considered:

1) from the point of view of the author

## 2) From the point of view of the victim

As far as the author's point of view is concerned, there are the issues related to pedophilia, to its criminal and psychological evaluation and also to the problems about how to prevent and overcome it. I limit myself to two observations only:

1) Most pedophile sexual acts (addressed to minors who non yet turned 14) occur in a family environment and are performed by parents, uncles and family friends, and this fact makes them very difficult to pursue because culprits are the people who should take care of the child.

2) Most people who show pedophile tendencies have in turn been subjected to sexual violence or pedophilia.

But let's analyze issues related to sexual violence or sexual acts on minors from the point of view of the victim, and especially on boys who will then manifest a gay sexual orientation.

Sexual acts on minors are much more common than true sexual violence. Talking with guys in chat it is not uncommon to meet guys who have experienced a real sexual violence but it is even quite common to meet guys who, well before 14 years, have been involved in sexual activities with adults or with guys far older than them. These are therefore criminal cases, but often these things are performed by family members or by older guys with which sometimes a playful atmosphere is created, in such an environment sexual activities are experienced by the child just as a game and awareness of what happened arrives long after the facts. These facts, however, remain etched in the brains of the boys who have suffered them and constitute their true sexual imprinting. If a boy has been compelled to undergo sexual acts through violence, or, worse, through group violence, the consequent trauma can be very serious. Children who have repeatedly suffered sexual assault and, what is worst, who have suffered it by many people end up associating very closely sex and violence, and this association creates enormous complications in the acceptance of their sexuality. A boy who has participated in sexual activities with an adult man at a very young age, if he comes to live a true exclusive heterosexuality, will also live that heterosexuality as an overcoming of the memory of the suffered abuse, and in essence, adult heterosexuality will not be conditioned in a really heavily way.

If, on the other hand, a boy who, when he was very young, has had sexual experiences with an adult man, growing up, ends up feeling homosexual impulses, he will live them badly because he will interpret them not as his

spontaneous need but as something that introduced itself into his mind just as a consequence of the abuse.

Boys who have been sexually abused by adult men or by guys far older, if it happens that they feel homosexual drives, will generally experience a strong rejection towards their gay identity. Guys who in the absence of violence or homosexual abuse would have been spontaneously identified as gays, as a result of abuses develop forms of "heterosexuality of escape". Boys who have been sexually abused tend spontaneously to keep themselves away as far as possible from the remembrance of violence or abuse and, consequently for a boy who has been abused by men, the escape towards heterosexuality is the main road. Essentially sexual imprinting related to abuse (imprinting of removal) ends up acting in the opposite direction to the common sexual imprinting. Sexual imprinting generally leads to imitative sexuality, the one associated with an abuse triggers a true removal of forms of sexuality that are somehow considered similar to those of the suffered abuse. In general, the deep sexual orientation emerges even if there is a imprinting of removal, but emerges in a much more problematic and conflicting way and later.

This is where the problem of masturbation fits. As it is well known, masturbatory fantasies are the main index of sexual orientation, beyond the behaviors in couple relationships. As a rule, if there are no heavy external interferences, sexual orientation is clearly evident since the first masturbations, does not change over the course of life and in the vast majority of cases is basically univocal: or heterosexual or homosexual. In the presence of strong environmental pressures towards heterosexuality or of an heterosexual imprinting, gay sexual orientation emerges later, even at 18/19 years and gradually. In a short period of 2/3 years, sexual orientation stabilizes.

For boys who have suffered abuses by men things are less easy. They have a gay sexual imprinting but connected with the abuse, of which they try to remove the memory and, on the other hand, they detect the impulses of their emerging gay sexuality and try to sublimate them. These phenomena, that affect the free development of sexuality, are manifested through masturbation that is not related to exclusively heterosexual or to exclusively gay fantasies and leaves the boys in the uncertainty about their sexual orientation, sometimes the boys identify themselves as bisexuals. In this case, not even time can solve the problem, it is necessary to disconnect gay sexuality from the negative memory of the abuse and to attach it to a positive experience. The event that leads to the overcoming of the conflict is the falling in love, especially when love is deep and with both affective and sexual involvement. If the boy falls in love, his gay masturbation breaks away from the memory of abuses and binds itself to the new love object and loses or relieves its problematic meaning related to the abuse.

For a boy to masturbate thinking about his love object is absolutely spontaneous and this makes the refusal of gay identity fall slowly. If the affection meets a serious, even non-sexual, affective response, the trauma of abuse can be considered overcome because gay identity begins to be felt as a value.

I would like to make a remark, I have met several gay guys who have been abused, I'm talking about repeated abuses or real violence, well this guys have achieved great social positions. In essence, the removal of gay sexuality, which in the worst cases may last after the age of 30, and the fact that it is impossible for them to participate deeply in an heterosexual escape-relationship causes these guys to sublimate sexuality and to devote themselves very seriously to the study and to professional activities that are a real compensatory value. Sexuality is reduced to episodic and essentially physical masturbation, which undoubtedly creates less trouble than couple sexuality.

The sublimation of sexual energies into professional activities, if on the one hand complicates and slows down the psycho-affective maturation of these guys, on the other rewards them and compensates them in a non-trivial way. However, this is still a positive and concrete reaction to the idea that having suffered abuses can affect life up to almost destroy it. Social self-esteem increases sharply even if sexual-affection remains in these cases the great "removed" that has sooner or later to be faced.

However, since the adolescent's psycho-affective maturation is lacking, the guy faces its stages at another age, even over 30, and must learn everything by himself: he must understand what he really wants and that sexuality is not a choice but a fact with precise psycho-physiological bases, he must understand that, for a gay guy, a relationship with a woman at the sexual level could be sometimes possible but certainly it is not fully gratifying and sometimes it is not even partially gratifying, he must understand that sexuality and affectivity are things complementary but different. The more the abuse is subjectively felt severe, the more stronger will be the push towards the heterosexuality of escape and therefore towards the sublimation of sexuality into professional activity, exactly because heterosexuality isn't truly satisfactory.

In essence, gay boys who have been sexually abused or have been subjected very bad sexual experiences live in adulthood what is usually characteristic of gay adolescence, such as attempts to escape into heterosexuality or frustrating feelings for having fallen in love with a hetero friend. These things can go on for years, but then, inevitably, the awareness of the true sexual orientation emerges. Of course, if it is difficult for a gay boy to accept his identity, it is certainly much more difficult for a gay boy who has been abused. Psychological support, in these cases, can greatly facilitate overcoming discomfort.



### FROM THE ABUSE TO PEDOPHILIA

The evolution of sexuality of sexually abused boys, who do not develop escape-heterosexuality, must be considered with the utmost attention. Sexual abuse can occur because it is planned and realized by the adult in the boy's unconsciousness, but sometimes the adult himself, who has not planned anything, does not even understand the meaning of his own actions when, in the form of a game, he allows the minor to keep behaviors that lead to the sexual exploration. An adult should assume responsibly his adult role and should not get involved in things that start as a game but then are no longer governable. The minor, of course, takes things as a game and as a forbidden game, and promotes it, also pushing the game further and making it a real sexual game. It seems that the adult and the younger are gambling companions as in the exploratory games of sexuality that sometimes occur during adolescence, but in this case the disparity of age and maturity should push the adult to stop the game before it can assume a markedly sexual character.

However, the fact remains that these sexual abuses (because they are such, according to the criminal code) are not experienced by the boy as abuses, do not give rise to repulsion but ultimately constitute an imprinting that starting from puberty turns into masturbatory fantasy, accompanied by guilt feelings and by the idea of transgression. In these situations, if the boy experiences in growing up homosexual feelings, and doesn't fight against these feelings, for example sublimating them, but associates them with the memories of the abuse, with an exchange of roles he can see himself no longer as a minor abused but as an adult who accepts and shares a sexual game with a minor, that is, can slip into fantasies related to pedophilia.

It should be emphasized that sexual fantasies are a thing and sexual behaviors are a very different thing. Abused children who develop fantasies on minors experience their condition very badly with terrible psychological suffering states.

It is essential that young people express their thoughts on such subjects and talk with people who can support them. The real problems arrive when these guys feel absolutely alone and devoid of any chance of dialog that could allow them to see things rationally.

The criminal law aims at the repression of abuses, and it is an indispensable thing, but, before the criminal law, there is and there must be the attention to those who, not by their own fault, are likely to come to criminal behavior. I close my considerations with one observation. Sexual interest for minors, arising from sexual abuse with the mechanism just illustrated, is not exclusive. If a boy has an affective life really satisfying (friendships, love, and sexual life) the impulses addressed to minors diminish sharply or even tend

to disappear.

### 11.1.11 Sex addiction

Let's try to clarify what is sex addition, especially in the homosexual field, what is the dimension of the problem and what levels of suffering this type of addiction can cause.

#### THE INCIDENCE OF SEX ADDICTION

The incidence of sex addiction is great. In Italy, according to data collected by Franco Avenia and Annalisa Pistuddi, chairman and secretary of the Italian Association for Sexual Research, the prevalence of sex addiction, is 5.8%. The National Council on Sexual Addiction Compulsivity estimates in the United States a prevalence between 6 and 8% of the population. Patrick Carnes believes that 8% of the male population and 3% of the female population are sex-addicted. These are objectively huge numbers. Certainly more than a guy out of twenty is sex addicted, although the problem does not present any perceptible external evidence. Sex addiction, among all forms of addiction, is that which has been studied later than any other.

#### CONCEPT OF SEX ADDICTION

Let's start with a simple analogical speech. Drinking a glass of wine is a pleasure for many people, but to talk of alcohol addiction, many other elements are required:

1) First, the compulsiveness, the irreversible urgency of drinking, and the inability to control the behavior in the face of alcohol, that is, the inability to keep a moderate behavior, the inability to restrict themselves to drinking moderately or not to drink at all in certain circumstances. A need can be controlled, an actual addiction can't at all.

2) secondly the pervasiveness of the need of drinking. In alcohol addiction, drinking becomes the center of life, in the name of alcohol the addicted ends up sacrificing everything. The world of interpersonal relations narrows and the relationship with alcohol ends up dominating the scene.

3) Third, the increasingly clearer awareness of becoming addicted. Alcohol is no longer lived as a source of pleasure but as a slavery of which you cannot get rid. You feel guilty and at the same time you feel unable to get out of addiction.

A more or less similar picture defines sex addiction.

### **THE CYCLE OF THE SEX ADDICTION**

Sex addiction, similarly to other forms of addiction, manifests in a compulsive and cyclical repetition of behaviors.

1) Craving (longing, desire) is the first stage of the cycle. The craving for sex becomes strong, impelling, uncontrollable, presents itself as an absolute requirement that one cannot fail to satisfy. The momentary physical gratification that comes from sex is perceived, before its realization, as liberating and tranquilizing, as if it were a means for attaining happiness, or at least an ephemeral happiness. The sex craving is completely analogous to drugs craving, and it can lead to risky behaviors like endanger your own health and that of others (HIV), attend prostitution, spend a lot of money to find satisfaction.

2) The realization of the sexual act is the second phase of the cycle. It must be made clear now that what the sex addicted guy tends to realize is not love in the affective sense but only sex in which the partner is seen as an instrument. Sex is something to be consumed, not a way to begin, live and improve interpersonal relationships. It does not matter the partner in himself but only his genitals and his sexual reactions. The choice of partners is determined by the ease of finding them and by the availability of the partners themselves to sexual contact "without affective implications". Relationships usually are or become exasperated, transgressive, and exclude completely or almost completely any kind of preliminaries and dialogue, before, during or after sex.

3) Reactions after sex intercourse form the third and last stage of the cycle. Sexual intercourse often ends with a deep sense of dissatisfaction with guilt feelings and a collapse of self-esteem. After sex, it often happens that nervousness, aggressiveness, depressive sensations and sense of defeat appear. Depression levels associated with sexual addiction at this stage can be very deep with all the risks that this entails.

### **THE CAUSES OF THE SEX ADDICTION**

One can wonder how can a guy get into this vicious circle and it's really trivial and not respectful the idea that he gets into it by choice, because it does not happen that way. Book<sup>2</sup> has found that 60% of those who are sex

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<sup>2</sup>Book, Praeger. (1997). *Sex & Love Addiction, Treatment & Recovery*. New York: Lucerne Publishing.

addicted have been sexually abused in childhood. This terrible statement must push us to reflect on the risks of pedophilia and the necessity of not abandoning the people who have been abused and risk becoming pedophiles in turn. Having been abused during the childhood can come to condition so heavily the sexuality of a guy to induce him, and certainly not because of his fault, to risky behaviors for himself and for other persons, and also to criminal behaviors.

The important statistical correlation that exists between sexual abuse and sex addiction must make it clear that pedophilia can actually get to deprive a guy of his sexual freedom and put him into the vicious circle of addiction with devastating effects on his personality. Sex experienced in addiction situations is in fact the result of a compulsion and has not the rewarding affective character that usually accompanies non-compulsive sexuality.

The fundamental sign of the progression of a sex addiction is represented by the more and more net detachment from affectivity or by the difficulty in falling in love, that becomes progressively impossible. The sex addicted guy, initially at least, tries to build a stable affective relationship but then realizes that he is incapable of falling in love and of living a monogamous sexuality and an affective life rewarding for himself and his partner, and this causes feelings of guilt towards the partner, weakens the relationship and in the long run causes its break.

It should be noted, however, that partners and ex-partners of sex addicted guys, even though they have been technically betrayed, realize that that betrayal is actually very particular. Generally, sooner or later, the sex addicted guy confesses to his partners, or at least to some of them, his betrayal, but tends not to cut ties with his ex-partners and almost always succeeds in this. Behind this attitude, on the one hand, there is a tendency to maintain a relationship with a person who might be again at least an episodic partner of a sexual relationship, but on the other hand there is also a tendency, not declared and explicitly unacceptable, to maintain some affective contact with the ex-partner. The sex addicted guy's relationship with his ex-partners is complex, seemingly contradictory, if it is considered to be without any affectivity but understandable in the context of a relationship that still maintains some affective dimension.

### **SEX ABUSE, SEX ADDICTION, PEDOPHILIA**

First of all, we have to keep in mind that sexual abuse does not always have the character of violence.

Violence, if not premeditated, is anyway always at least put into practice against the will of the victim by the use of physical or psychological coercion and precisely because of this explicit violent character becomes for the victim an "imprinting of removal", that is, a first sexual experience to be removed.

For example, for male boys who will recognize themselves as homosexuals and who have been abused by men during childhood, the "imprinting of removal" leads to the so called "heterosexuality of escape".

Abuse, as I have many times underlined, very often, at least at the beginning, is not planned by the adult and has no violent character. The child can enter, out of pure curiosity, a game with sexual implications with the adult, in this "game" the child sometimes takes the initiative, finds in the game something forbidden and transgressive and is pushed to continue until the "game" does assume a distinct sexual character.

An adult responsible and aware of the consequences of his or her behaviors should immediately get away from such "games" but sometimes this does not happen and the situation comes to the sexual acts with minors, behavior that is punished by criminal law, such acts in many cases do not occur just once but become habitual. The child, in these cases, experiences the abuse in a very ambiguous condition, he does not feel himself a passive victim but a supporting actor if not a promoter of that behavior, if traumatic phenomena do not intervene to awaken feelings of guilt over the years, the abuse does not result in an "imprinting of removal" but in an "imprinting of imitation", in other words it becomes a model of sexuality which, in adolescence, constitutes the dominant masturbatory fantasy, but during adolescence the boy, just because he has gained a greater awareness of the facts and of their meaning, begins to associate with fantasies about sexual abuse also negative feelings of shame and rejection, because he perceives the discredit that society attributes to those behaviors. On the one hand the boy feels himself bound to his sexual imprinting of imitation and on the other he would like to erase and overcome it, and so, starting from masturbation, begins the vicious circle that leads to sex addiction.

But there may be truly alarming developments; the sexual fantasies related to the abuse can easily lead the boy to imagine a changing of roles and the boy may begin to see himself no longer in the role of the victim of abuse but in the role of an adult who indulges in a sexual game with a child, that is, the victim of abuse can begin to develop pedophile fantasies. The appearance of pedophile fantasies is taken badly by the boys, in practice as if it were a condemnation or a curse, they feel unsuitable for life, dangerous for themselves and for others, their guilty feelings are very strong because the boys consider themselves at list co-responsible if not promoters of the abuse they have suffered. In this situation, heavy depressive elements can appear, especially if the children have no way of dialogue on sexual abuse and pedophilia, with people who can support them.

The man who has been victim of abuse in childhood, sometimes, is unable to stop to the fantasies related to the abuse, which have now become pedophile

fantasies, and so ends up to try to relive the experience in adulthood or at least he begins to think obsessively about such a thing, clearly assuming the role of the adult, and at the same time he feels uncomfortable about his own inability to break away from addiction to ideas and memories that seem to become almost true obsessive-compulsive contents, but nevertheless, or better, just because of this, the former victim continues to fuel his memories and his fantasies, in order to reduce anxiety and avoid thinking rationally about those experiences. The guy who is sex addicted is perfectly aware that there is something wrong, he sometimes tries to break the cycle of the incessant coming back of the obsessive fantasies, as it happens in all dependencies, but the craving is so strong that his attempts become rapidly frustrating.

### **CHOICE OF PARTNERS AND MODALITIES OF THE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE**

People who have suffered sexual abuse during childhood and have lived it as an "imprinting of imitation" tend to reproduce in their sexual relationships situations similar to those of the abuse, they prefer to repeat the same sexual practices and combine encounters with their partners in situations more or less similar to those of the abuse, seek and read stories with a sexual background in which situations analogous to those of the abuse are described. The dependence on the memory of the abuse goes as far as choosing a partner who has an age similar to that of the abuser and also physical characteristics similar to those of the abuser.

The sense of frustration and defeat of a sex addicted guy is also complicated by the sense of guilt, linked to the fact that abuse is often considered as caused, at least partially, by the victim: "I am the one who led him to do those things". In the mind of the victim that memory is interpreted (misinterpreted) as a kind of predestination to sex addiction: "At that age I was yet sex addicted." The victim doesn't consider at all obvious that responsibility can only be attributed to the adult abuser. It should be emphasized that we are not talking about vague memories lost in the past but about vivid memories that accompany the development of sexuality up to adulthood and for the sex addicted guy there is a complete awareness of the suffered abuse, although interpreted in a self-blaming key, and also a complete awareness of addiction. One of the worst situations that sex-addicted guys can face is the total isolation when guys cannot talk to anyone about the abuse or sex addiction.

It should be pointed out that, despite the strong internal resistance, sometimes it is possible to get to a clear speech, but the real risk is that the interlocutor, unless he is a professional one, ends up being considered by the sex addicted guy as one of the possible partners and more or less consciously

takes this role. The experience that comes from this hypothesis is, however, stressful and depressing for both of them. The sex addicted guy makes the partner aware that it is "only sex". This premise, from his point of view, is essential to prevent the partner from creating expectations, but things go on anyway.

However, after the intercourse, the sex addicted guy recognizes that the partner's participation was only mechanical and is amazed that there was no real involvement ("how can you not be excited by these things?") Actually, the sex addicted guy is moved from the craving without any affective involvement. The partner, who would expect a minimum of affective involvement, acknowledges that this involvement doesn't exist at all and comes out of the experience substantially disappointed. Often, the meeting ends with a brief discussion, even with strong tones, in which the two guys promise to each other never to meet again, because both partners understand that it is a matter of addiction.

For the sex addicted guy then becomes a state of irritation, disappointment, collapse of self-esteem and for some time the craving is not felt and depressive elements prevail, but then the craving inevitably comes back powerfully and the sex addicted guy resumes the search for sexual partners to relieve anxiety, not facing the many real (social or economic) problems that in the meantime become ever more serious, this way the guy risks being marginalized by friends and family. The result of all this, on a psychological level, is a further fall in self-esteem, but the socio-economic consequences can be very serious (job loss, study abandonment, loss of social relations). Those who experience a sex addiction end up believing that their fate is now marked and they will not come out of the addiction anymore.

Addiction is not related to one or another particular behavior or sexual content, however in sex addiction can be encountered uncommon, rare, or not accepted sexual behaviors. I try to list some, only at indicative level:

- 1) Incestuous sex fantasies and incestuous relationships.
- 2) Sexual fantasies about minors and consequent acts.
- 3) Sexual fantasies about much older people and consequent acts.
- 4) Voyeuristic sexual fantasies and voyeurism acts.

### **AFFECTIVITY OF SEX ADDICTED GUYS**

Speaking to guys who experience forms of sex addiction, it is noticed that sex addiction is accompanied by an affective deprivation, often manifested even before the sex addiction arises, this affective deprivation is likely to be the cause of the addiction itself. I add that generally the guys who do not have friends and who are largely marginalized make extensive use of pornography that, if for others is often the only source of sexual education, for them is

even the only source of affective education, with the result that both levels, affective and sexual, tend to become confused and identify. In other words, I think that at the origin of the mechanisms of sex addiction there are deep and unheard affective needs, which are sexualized. A guy who is not accustomed to serious affective contacts translates his need for affection in terms that are more familiar to him and, if he has been educated on the patterns of pornography, he translates his affective needs into sexual terms. This means that the sexual needs of a guy who is in a state of sex addiction are actually affective. They are guys who, although they tend to see themselves as depraved, interested only in sex, in fact, are hungry for affection, try to be understood and accepted, are afraid of negative judgments, and especially of the indifference of others. Talking in chat with these guys gives a concrete measure of their degree of despair and of the depth of their affective need.

After the first few minutes of chat, I am astonished at the level of the conversation, which is not dispersed in digressions. The guys who are experiencing forms of sex addiction are totally sincere and aim at immediately emphasize the darker dimensions of their behavior, or at least those that appear such to them, for them to be accepted in a generic way, that is, not for what they really are but on the basis of reticence and misunderstanding is absolutely unacceptable. They expect substantially negative judgments. The chat, which at first could hypothetically support the hypothesis of a sexual contact, when this hypothesis is lost, does not end at all, but continues on another more typically affective register. For these guys, being told "you are a good guy" is extremely important, to feel appreciated despite all that they see as negative in their behaviors is gratifying for them precisely because it responds to a deep emotional hunger. A serious response to this affective hunger is the real precondition for getting out of sexual addiction.

I've read a very interesting book these days, which I recommend to deepen the subject of sex addiction: Carnes, Patrick. (1991). "Do not call it love: Recovery from sexual addiction". New York: Bantam Books. I basically agree with what the author says, and I'm pleasantly surprised that a clinical scientific inquiry comes to the same conclusions that come from Gay Project activity. Obviously the point is different. Carnes deals with diagnosis and therapies from a clinical point of view. The Project's interest is essentially centered on what friends or people close to the sex addicted guy can do, this is a minor support but can also sometimes be of enormous importance.

### 11.1.12 Sexual discomfort and transgressive sexuality

Let's now develop some reflections on sexual discomfort and in particular on the relationship between discomfort and transgressive sexuality. From the



experience of Gay Project we can deduce two very useful synthesis observations in the interpretation of the discomfort connected to sexuality.

1) The split between sexual orientation of married life (both in terms of affectivity and physical sexuality) and the orientation of masturbation is an indication of discomfort.

A straight guy who lives his sexuality without any discomfort connected to sexual orientation is a guy who falls in love only with girls who has a sexual activity as a couple partner only with girls, who has sexual fantasies only on girls and masturbates just thinking of girls.

The speech for a gay boy is exactly specular. It should be emphasized that bisexual guys can fall in love with both boys and girls, which is not an indication of discomfort if a falling in love, directed both to boys and girls, both emotionally and sexually, also corresponds to masturbation with fantasies both on guys and girls. Basically the balancing of sexuality is realized when the same orientation presents itself in all the manifestations of sexuality, from affective ones to sexual ones as a couple partner and to masturbation. When among these elements (falling in love, couple sexuality, sexual fantasies and orientation of masturbation) there is no congruence, a guy experiences a situation of unease.

2) The fact that masturbation fantasies don't focus on the guy with whom one is in love, that masturbation is not emotional, but systematically and exclusively focuses on a particular sexual practice to which is attributed a strongly transgressive connotation are all indications of discomfort.

It sometimes happens that some guys who have a typically heterosexual and fully satisfying emotional and sexual couple life don't ever masturbate thinking of a girl but they do it thinking exclusively of guys with whom they don't feel emotionally involved, but their sexual fantasies are concentrated only on a particular sexual behavior, considered very transgressive.

In such situations, the classic principle of free sexuality, according to which sexual orientation emerges in masturbation (free sexuality) and not in couple sexuality, cannot be applied precisely because in these situations masturbation is not really free and the fact of masturbating with "transgressive" gay fantasies (or considered such) indicates that masturbation is experienced not as a kind of sexuality but as an act of rebellion against taboos. The more transgressive the fantasies that accompany masturbation are the greater is the gratification that is obtained by overcoming the taboo.

I mean that for these guys masturbation is not really a sexual experience but an act of self-assertion as a person released from taboos. This mechanism of overcoming taboos through transgressive masturbation can in some cases

evolve into forms of transgressive couple sexuality. I had occasion elsewhere to present the case of a very young guy who lived a gay sexuality not only subjectively transgressive but objectively at risk, with men much older than him. This guy, who not only considered himself 100% gay but the most transgressive of gays because of what he was doing, ended up years later to give up completely the idea of being gay because in a very gradual way he fell in love, at the beginning only unconsciously, with a girl who really loved him and led him to understand his true sexual orientation.

That guy, in fact, had ended up making a life that he considered transgressive as an act of rebellion against his father who tried to control and repress him. His gay sexuality, or rather his gay sexual activity, gratified him not because it was the completion of an emotional relationship with another guy but because it was an act of transgression, that is, an affirmation of his will against that of his father.

If such mechanisms are indeed rare in couple sexuality, they are much less rare in masturbation that may actually be not a sexual experience but only an unconscious act of rebellion. It is evident that in this case masturbation is not at all a form of free sexuality and, I would say, it is not even a form of true sexuality. It often happens that the transgressive masturbation in a gay key of a boy who is really straight is accompanied by the temptation to put into practice the masturbation fantasies. It should be noted that in these cases the affective dimension is totally lacking and the problem is reduced to bringing the overcoming of taboos from the masturbatory dimension that appears reductive to a far more transgressive couple sex. I emphasize that the guys who have a transgressive gay masturbation generally have a rather distorted view of gay sexuality that for them, even if they say the opposite, is basically something anomalous that becomes interesting precisely because it is transgressive, the idea that gay sexuality and gay affectivity are normal things for these guys is difficult to accept, in a sense, if they considered gay sexuality normal they would end up no longer interested in it. It must be said that these guys in the vast majority have never fallen in love with a guy and consider at least unnatural that two guys can live a deep and mutual love. All this with being gay has clearly nothing to do.

### **11.1.13 Ego-dystonic homosexuality**

In the classification of mental and behavioral disorders contained in the 10th formulation of the World Health Organization (WHO) document for the classification of diseases (ICD-10), homosexuality is no longer considered an illness in itself and is recognized the existence of dystonic forms of all sexual orientations. Ego-dystonic homosexuality is a homosexuality recognized by

the subject but not accepted. If a homosexual, fully conscious of being homosexual, comes into conflict with his sexual orientation for religious, moral or social reasons and wishes to change his sexual orientation, his homosexuality is called ego-dystonic. This category is now outdated and ego-dystonic homosexuality is no longer classified as a mental disorder, but as a simple discomfort due to cultural or social reasons.

The ICD-10 was approved by the 43th WHO Assembly in May 1990 and has been in use in the WHO member States since 1994. The release date for ICD-11 is 2018, and any reference to homosexuality, even the ego-dystonic one, is expected to be completely eliminated. Two points must be underlined:

1) the excess of psychiatrization has arrived to overcome the limits of the ridiculous (and really of the pathological) with the description, in the XIX century, of a presumed disease, the drapetomania, a "disorder of slaves who have the tendency to escape from their owner due to an innate propensity for the desire to travel". Psychiatry, starting from the assumption that slavery was a normal thing, has come to consider pathological the tendency of slaves to flee!

2) maintaining the category of "ego-dystonic homosexuality" has fueled the thriving market of conversion therapies aimed at bringing back homosexuals to heterosexuality, because these aberrant practices were officially considered forms of treatment for a "disease" and therefore were repayable by health insurances or national health services, if any.

Homosexuality had been deleted from the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (APA)) since 1973, after a very tortuous path in which ideological resistance, political opportunism and economic interests were intertwined in various ways, in a border territory in which science (psychiatry) risked losing even the appearance of objectivity. In this regard, I refer to a fine article by Jack Drescher: *Out of DSM: Depathologizing Homosexuality* which illustrates the path that led to the de-pathologisation of homosexuality by the APA.

Let's leave aside, with all the reservations of the case, the category of ego-dystonic homosexuality, and let's come to the dysfunctional gay sexuality which is something profoundly different.

### 11.1.14 Gays and dysfunctional sex

The cultural tradition has accustomed us to the association of sex and pleasure, endorsing the identification of sexuality with the gratification that can derive from it, but the experience teaches that in some cases sexuality, far from being associated with pleasure and gratification, becomes an expression and sometimes a non-secondary cause of depressive states that are inconspicuous but subtle and even dangerous.

The association of sexuality and sense of gratification is not a necessary constant but is induced by sexual imprinting and the first approaches to adult sexuality that act in a varied and complex way on the components of the personality in formation and mold it. A guy can get to experience sexuality as a real obsession, that is, as an invasive and pervasive dependence that deeply affects the whole personality, he can get to experience sexuality as self-punishment, as a self-imposed form of moral degradation or as constantly accompanied by feelings of guilt associated with an unstoppable impulse to repeat. In other words, sexuality can be a dysfunctional response to the discomfort that not only does not relieve it but can weigh it down in a conditioning way.

When there is a spasmodic exercise of sexuality, particularly when sexuality is divorced from the affective component, the legitimate suspicion arises that this is a dysfunctional sexuality.

I give a very simple but very meaningful example: when a guy lives a very active sexuality but accompanied by a sense of satisfaction and gratification, there is no reason to suspect any form of discomfort, if instead the overactive sexuality is accompanied by depressive feelings, or by a drop in self-esteem or by the perception of a sense of dependence, it is legitimate to ask oneself if there is or not a form of unease behind it.

Sexuality as a manifestation and component of discomfort is more easily encountered in homosexuals and in particular in those homosexuals who, for reasons of social conformity or for facts linked to individual story, live in conditions of repression or are interested in forms of sexuality that are not easily accepted, not even in contexts otherwise welcoming, for example intergenerational relationships.

As it's obvious, and as I have stressed in several occasions, having suffered in childhood or even in early adolescence forms of sexual abuse predisposes to dysfunctional sexuality but does not determine it in a necessary way.

At the base of dysfunctional sexuality we often find the idea of transgression and of involving others in transgressive behaviors, such an attitude often means trying to get out of isolation and share an intimate and at the same time anxiogenic aspect of one's personality.

I would like to point out that dysfunctional sexuality often has its roots in areas of individual experience that have nothing to do with sexuality but which have strong effects on self-esteem and are often linked to the context of the family the individual comes from.

The patrimony of sexual intimacy represents one of the most important and at the same time most fragile dimensions of the personality, an invisible but always present dimension. On the sharing of this sexual intimacy each person measures his/her social integration at the deepest level. Of course sexual intimacy can be related to many feelings of guilt, linked to the tendency to invade the sexual intimacy of others or to dispel one's own with abnormal or excessive behaviors.

From what I have been able to see the dichotomy between affectivity and sexuality, which many times seems original, is often strongly accentuated by experiences of rejection, that is, stories with an emotional-sexual background begin with enthusiasm and end by manifest incompatibility.

The repeated experience of affective incompatibility leads to the shift of emotional investment towards non-affective sexuality. The archetypes emerged from sexual imprinting thus become models to be repeated continuously and progressively less gratifying. The idea of transgression begins to weigh more than that of sharing, behaviors become ritual and stereotyped and a sort of script is formed that must be recited more or less identical regardless of the personality of the partner.

This mechanism, which in fact creates an obsessive dependence, is initially experienced as a mere unease but tends gradually to become compulsive. The emotional components are withdrawn from sexuality but don't disappear at all from the individual horizon, they remain only in a dimension separate from sexuality. Guys who live in conditions of sexual dysfunctionality have a very deep affectivity that can manifest as such in all its potential, which can be enormous, I mean that those guys can live important friendships, can have, on aspects that don't touch sexuality, a very rigid moral code, but when it comes to sexuality they will end up feeling dominated by the compulsion to repeat the same behaviors and to try to involve others in behaviors that they consider transgressive and in any case to dissociate affectivity and sexuality. I must observe that many of the behaviors considered by those guys to be transgressive, are in reality quite common variants of sexual behaviors that, when they are not accompanied by a sense of dependence and compulsion to repeat or by the tendency to focus only on them, don't express and don't create discomfort at all.

I report a significant example: intergenerational relationships created on an emotional basis are not expressions of discomfort but those relationships, lived without affection and almost self-imposed, manifest an unease that can

be profound, the same is true for example for anal penetration that has nothing to do with discomfort, when it is experienced as a rewarding and spontaneous sexual practice, but instead is a sign of a discomfort that can be profound when it is experienced as a self-imposed humiliation by people who in their sexual fantasies have never considered that particular sexual practice. The same could be said for the use of a particularly provocative, vulgar or aggressive language during the sexual intercourse and so on. It happens in these cases a little what happens in the OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder), a behavior that in itself would not have anything transgressive, if lived in an emotional, playful and otherwise collaborative dimension and without fixed roles, i.e. with criteria of parity and in a light way, is instead considered transgressive and is experienced as compulsive, but the reason is not in the objective transgressive character of that behavior or in its intrinsic compulsiveness but only in the mind of the subject that associates those behaviors with a situation of discomfort.

Some criteria tend to prevent dysfunctional sexuality as far as possible:

- 1) Absolute respect for the privacy of the child or adolescent in matters related to sexuality
- 2) To try to prevent sexual abuse of minors, which have a profound effect on adult life
- 3) To create an environment that tends to promote self-esteem and develop an affective climate, in particular by providing examples of the association between affectivity and sexuality.

Let us now analyze synthetically each of these points.

I understand very well that in the age of the internet, where children and adolescents have easy access to the network and all its contents, parents may be worried about the child's access to pornography, which in some ways is inevitable; it is however opportune that this access takes place at an age in which there is already a substantially adult sexuality (14-15 years), so that models of behavior are not exclusively imitative, because a model of exclusively imitative sexuality is substantially devoid of affectivity.

Parents are often afraid more than of pornography, of special friendships of their children, that instead have the undeniable merit of encouraging the growth of affectivity and the integration of affectivity and sexuality. Parents can and must talk about sexuality with their child but only avoiding calling him directly into question. Attitudes of an inquisitorial type or of real espionage, like looking through the child's private cards or tampering

with his computer are perceived as invasive and violent and break the trust relationship between parents and children.

The prevention of child abuse is a very delicate subject because the overwhelming majority of abuses are perpetrated precisely by the persons to whom the child is entrusted or in any case by family members or by those who habitually frequent the child's home. It is obvious that under these conditions the repressive intervention of the penal law risks being completely circumvented. The golden rule to reduce the possibility of abuse is to never "entrust" the child to others and, if necessary, to entrust him to grandparents or to other family members whose behavior can be certain, and never in a systematic way or for long periods.

Creating an environment that tends to promote self-esteem and develop an affective climate means in practice creating a family life in the full sense of the term, spending a lot of time with children, playing with them from an early age, gratifying them with an open dialog with adults and showing them concrete examples of affection between adults. There is nothing that can promote self-esteem and development of the child's affectivity, better than the example of parents experiencing an emotional and collaborative atmosphere among them. I mean that the child's discomfort is very often the expression of a family hardship.

I have often asked myself about what can be done when a form of dysfunctional sexuality has been rooted for years and here I can only expose my thoughts that are far from indicating a concrete way of proceeding. Naturally I didn't ask myself what a psychologist can do, because a psychologist takes on a determined role that has its own rules, but I just asked myself what a friend can do. The variables involved are many and it is very difficult to arrive at a synthesis, I will therefore limit myself to explain the most recurring problems. I will indicate with the letter "A" the guy who experiences a condition of sexual dysfunction and with the letter "B" his friend.

A typical situation: A has a fairly frank dialogue with B and slowly gets to talk with B about his own sexuality, manifesting also the aspects that he considers transgressive. In this way A intends to evaluate above all the fidelity of B and his reactions. If B will be annoyed by those speeches or if he will go away not to come back anymore, A will live the thing as another refusal towards him and this will confirm him in the idea of marginality and social isolation. If B will listen to A's speeches in a patient way without reactions of amazement and will try to underline that the transgressive aspects are actually minimal, admitted and not granted that they exist, A will go on to a later phase, he will try to involve B beyond the level of dialogue, he will try to provoke him, to convince him to try some sexual contact, even very superficial, even by telephone, but it will be a sexual contact with those char-

acteristics of transgression that B had considered little or non-transgressive at all and here B will have the problem of accepting or not accepting to take this step forward, because if B will accept, almost certainly A will try to take another step forward to involve B more and more, but if B refuses, A will take the opportunity to further get depressed and to further decrease his self-esteem. At the end of this process, which may take months, B will ask himself whether it is appropriate to give in to the insistence of A and here the answer is not at all obvious, B would not however have the prospect of starting a romance with A, since A is interested in B only on a sexual level, while B could feel a deep emotional involvement for A. B, however, is now aware that the relationship with A is played at another level and that, even if A is not involved at an affective level, or better in terms of couple relationships, B's answer can be very important precisely for A's personal balance, or better for his self-esteem and for overcoming depressive attitudes. B, on the other hand, knows very well that yielding to A once means inducing A to repeat that sexual experience an infinite number of times but always without couple affectivity.

Among the one-way answers: always accept the proposals of A, or say no clearly even if in the least aggressive way, there is a third way, that of an agreement limited especially to periods of maximum stress of A. The purpose of B cannot consist in trying to create a relationship with A, but must be identified in allowing A to achieve greater serenity and greater self-esteem and therefore to live, even towards B an emotional dimension "without couple relationship" but anyway strongly stabilizing. As it's obvious in this path there are many possible variations and decisions don't belong to B but must be taken together by A and B not with agreements made of words but through significant behaviors, as it happens in every important interpersonal relationship.

I would like to end my discussion on dysfunctional sexuality with a clarification: dysfunctional sexuality is often found in people in other respects realized despite their low self-esteem and, I would add, in people who are forced to live lives very different from what they wished, even if they have achieved, in these unwished lives, notable social and economic successes.

With these people it is certainly possible to build affective relationships sometimes very important, that their characteristic non-aggressiveness and their tendency to maintain stable relationships, even if not close, make in fact often very pleasant and gratifying.

If there is one thing from which in any case, it is necessary to refrain it is from judging, because this would further decrease self-esteem and lead these people to more deep depressive states.

Speaking both with people with dysfunctional sexuality and with their friends,



I noticed that respect and affection subsist between them. I have also noted that some problematic situations tend to resolve when, on a general and not specifically sexual level, self-esteem rises and with it rises also the substantial level of socialization. The real danger is the state of abandonment in which the individual is absolutely alone with his depression because then the incentives to reevaluate oneself and to understand that one is really important at least for someone else are completely lacking.

### 11.1.15 Homosexuality and paraphilias

This post is dedicated to the paraphilias in the homosexual field. As it is well known, the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the Mental Disorders - Fifth Edition" (DSM-5) contains some useful definitions for circumscribing the field, first of all the distinction between paraphilia and paraphilic disorder, and then establishes the criteria for defining a diagnosis for some types of paraphilia. As it is obvious, DSM-5 is a fundamental indication of principle, aimed primarily at psychiatrists and takes into consideration many different situations that psychiatrists can encounter in the daily practice of the profession. The manual also has an indicative value for the knowledge of paraphilic phenomena that do not necessarily lead to paraphilic disorders but which are decidedly more common and are also found outside the areas of intervention typical of psychiatry. As there is a psychopathology of daily life so there is a widespread paraphilia of daily life that in some cases can move towards the borderline with true paraphilic disorders.

Obviously I will try to address the issue based on the experiences gained in Gay Project.

Some fundamental methodological observations must be kept in mind.

1) To get to talk about one's own paraphilias, it is necessary to have the greatest guarantees of confidentiality, not just because it's about matters related to sexuality but because certain behaviors can be criminally relevant, as it happens with pedophilia. It happened to me several times to talk with people who had pedophile fantasies, but not exclusive and, what is more important, never put into practice. Fantasies are an individual question, while behaviors are criminally relevant, so it is not surprising that only fantasies emerge.

2) Some paraphilias may involve forms of sexual contact with non-consenting persons (frotteurism) or forms of violence (sadism) or deception (voyeurism) and therefore are difficult to admit because they may involve moral discredit, if they remain at the level of fantasies, or even sanctions if they produce con-

crete behaviors.

3) Some paraphilias (coprophilia, pissing, spermatophagia) can be very difficult to admit because they can generate repulsion.

4) It should be emphasized that, precisely for the above, only non-episodic paraphilias emerge in the interviews and often characterized by concomitant serious anxious states, more or less connected with the paraphilia itself, so they are true paraphilic disorders.

5) Often more paraphilias manifest themselves together and a very complex picture emerges, closely related to the individual's personal history.

6) From the talks some constant correlations emerge that seem to indicate causal links more than probable, as for example the fact that "all, without exception," the people I met who had pedophile fantasies reported having suffered sexual abuse in childhood.

So, I think it is essential to emphasize an aspect of the paraphilias: the person who is affected by paraphilic disorders often experiences the difficulty of relating "sexually" with another person because the presence of the paraphilia and the tendency to put it into practice in a sometimes obsessive manner arouse perplexities in the partner who sooner or later inevitably leaves the relationship because he has the impression that sexuality is literally dominated by the paraphilia or even reduced to it.

The feeling of rejection and abandonment almost always accompanies the life of the person who manifests paraphilias. The tendency to project one's own paraphilias on other subjects is often observed in the subject carrying paraphilias, assuming that others can react to those stimuli with a similar sexual excitement, but this is not realized at all and this is one of the reasons that make particularly difficult a sexual relationship with a person affected by paraphilic disorders.

I would like to add to the paraphilias listed in the DSM-5 another paraphilia related to the unconscious involvement of another person in sexual intercourse: it is about having sex while talking about something else on the phone with another person with whom you have sexual relations. In this behavior the central element is the "betrayal" of the trust of the person with whom you talk about something else. It should be emphasized that when the sexual transgressive behavior loses its transgressive meaning because somehow it is accepted and justified by the partner and especially by the third person, it quickly loses also its sexual meaning.

I have often observed boys with paraphilias who tended not to blame themselves or to try to change things but to consider themselves elements socially excluded and almost condemned to live a life without affections, now definitively prey to a sexuality that cannot be shared with others. Often the reaction to the feeling of marginalization does not lead to depression but to forms of rationalization and critical examination of one's sexuality. In practice, the person acts on two distinct levels, a rational one, in which solitude is accepted as something to live with and a sexual one, characterized by the loss of rational control and total abandonment to emotionality and inevitably to the paraphilia.

The real problem lies in building an affective relationship "compatible with sexuality", because the person with paraphilic disorder generally has no problems in building a friendly relationship, if that relationship is born and keeps completely devoid of sexual values, the problems arise instead in relationships in which sexuality is explicitly involved. I have been able to observe several times as in such cases, in order to preserve at least the friendship, the person with paraphilic disorders has deliberately and rationally tried to avoid any chance of sexual involvement.

Who is involved in a relationship with a paraphilic guy, at the beginning, may not even realize it or can only perceive a polarization of his partner on the strictly sexual aspects of the relationship, then, over time, and with the development of the relationship, the paraphilic will come to talk about his problem with his partner for whom a period of doubts about the behavior to be held will start, with continuous oscillations between a minimization of the problem and a greater awareness.

As I have already said, some paraphilias do not undermine affective relationships, but they heavily condition their possible sexual developments. The paraphilic needs love, is generally a pleasant person and tends to keep the paraphilia only at the level of fantasies or of talks with a reliable partner and often gives a value of transgression to behaviors that have very little transgressive content and tends to emphasize some of his transgressive behaviors as if they were habitual even if they occurred only once. Boys who have paraphilias need first of all respect and feel hurt by preconceived reactions and discriminatory behavior. Their need to integrate makes them generally pleasing to their friends and also to their sexual partners with whom they usually have a very honest interview and do not tolerate hypocritical behavior. I have often been able to notice how many paraphilias are connected to particular childhood experiences and tend reproduce situations related to those childhood experiences that remains very present in children's memories and which can be considered to be the basis of paraphilias.

The re-elaboration of childhood experience and its rationalization are in-

dispensable conditions for getting out of the addiction to the paraphilias. Generally I am rather reluctant to the idea of an easy resort to a psychologist, but in front of the paraphilias the presence of a psychologist cannot be replaced by that of a friend or worse of the partner, because a friend or the partner can be involved very deeply on an affective level and not only, and they are certainly not the most suitable people to help their friend in the recovery of rationality and above all in the elaboration of childhood experience.

The difficulty of the paraphilic to create a shared emotional-sexual relationship is due to the obsessive mechanism of the paraphilia, not to the paraphilia itself. If the paraphilia does not present itself obsessively, it would be only a temporary variant of sexual behavior that probably would not generate problems within the couple, but the paraphilias always present with an obsessive mechanism, are a kind of fixed idea that the person must realize on the basis of a real addiction relationship, there can be periods of abstinence more or less long, relatively free from the paraphilia, which then however ends up reappearing and makes the rational mechanism of abstinence collapse.

Often periods of abstinence are interrupted when the attempt to build a sexual relationship detached from the paraphilia meets unexpected difficulties, that is when the person experiences for the umpteenth time the mechanism of rejection. The return to the paraphilia through a sexual contact with a partner who accepts it, even if only episodically, provokes a feeling of security and control over that partner and is therefore at least relatively reassuring, but these are experiences that do not involve a real sharing of sexuality and that also leave a strong feeling of precariousness and non-genuine correspondence at the level of the couple.

I have seen people subject to paraphilias who more than once, after a series of failures in the creation of emotional-sexual relationships, have ended up putting aside the idea of having a partner with whom to build a relationship and have operated a kind of splitting between affectivity and sexuality, reserving the affectivity to friends with whom they maintain a stable relationship without sexual implications and experiencing sexuality, with some occasional partners, usually always the same, with which however any implication of affection is excluded *a priori*.

When I speak of occasional partners I do not intend to refer to unknown people found on the internet through dating sites or with particular applications, but almost always to ex-boyfriends, and this because while ex-boyfriends are more or less aware of the existence of the paraphilia and somehow accept it, strangers completely unaware of it would almost certainly be negatively affected and would not comply with the needs of the paraphilic, thus accentuating his sensation of impossibility and rejection.

Guys affected by paraphilias are not the only victims of paraphilia, because even the guys who try to build emotional-sexual relations with them live complex and contradictory experiences and they often go into crisis because seeing that things do not go on, they try to understand who is responsible for it, and in this way or they blame the person affected by paraphilias who seems strange to them, complicated and in some way pathological, or they blame themselves, because they have not been able to bear everything in the presumption that loving a person means accepting that person and sharing everything with that person, even pathologies.

The most wrong attitude towards a person with paraphilias consists in considering the paraphilias a kind of game made to experiment. This attitude manifests a radical misunderstanding of the seriousness of the problem and causes those who experience it to live a profound suffering, while they deserve the utmost respect. I add an obvious observation, but particularly important in these cases: people who come to talk about their own paraphilias have the right to maximum confidentiality and any violation of this confidentiality is a real wound to those who, seriously speaking about problems that are not at all easy to talk about, are actually asking for help.

### 11.1.16 Gay anal sex: false myths and pornography

#### GAY SEXUALITY BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY

If we take into consideration the epithets that were and are still now commonly attributed to homosexual males, we realize that the most common and widespread representation of the homosexual world is dominated by the idea that homosexuality is a kind of sexuality devoted to promiscuity and anal sex, dominated by active-passive roles, a kind of substitute of male-female roles, that is, in practice, a grotesque copy of heterosexuality, in which a man assumes a passive role, typically considered feminine, in a penetrative anal intercourse. Such a concept of homosexuality, clearly deforming, derives from the old idea of homosexuality as the vice of the only possible sexuality, the hetero one, or as a pathology and not as a normal variant of human sexuality as defined by the World Health Organization. This deforming vision of homosexuality is unfortunately still a serious obstacle to the recognition of their homosexuality by younger boys. It is awesome to see how many pseudo-scientific studies still today, especially in the United States, associate homosexuality with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, in particular AIDS, and focus on analyzing the most degraded conditions in which homosexuality can manifest itself, accrediting more or less directly the association between homosexuality and social degradation, drugs, violence and mental illness.

But besides the studies spoiled in the root by ideological assumptions, there is also a serious sociology. In 2007, for the editions "Il Mulino", come out a book by Marzio Barbagli and Asher Colombo, entitled "Modern Homosexuals – Gays and Lesbians in Italy".<sup>3</sup> The book offers a picture of homosexuality in Italy and, on the basis of a scientific research, comes to dispel old myths and new metropolitan legends that paint the homosexual world with the lively colors of promiscuity and free sex, dominated by sexual roles (active/passive).

In November 2011, has been published a study jointly conducted by researchers of Indiana University and George Mason University, on the Journal of Sexual Medicine, titled "Sexual behaviors and situational characteristics of most recent male-partnered sexual event among gay and bisexually identified men in the United States" by Rosenberger JG, Reece M, Schick V, Herbenick D, Novak DS, Van Der Pol B, and Fortenberry JD,<sup>4</sup> the study has been conducted using forms compiled and collected through the internet from a representative sample of the homosexual-bisexual population of 24,787 men identified as gays or bisexuals (of course they are only openly gay or openly bisexuals), between 18 and 87 years old. The sample respects the distribution of the general population by age classes and by ethnic composition. The average age is 39.2 years. 79.9% of the sample consists of homosexuals and 20.1% by bisexuals. The sample is white for 84.6%, Latin American for 6.4%, and African-American for 3.6%. The people involved in the research had been asked to indicate what sexual behaviors they have put into practice in the last sexual intercourse. The most common sexual behavior was kiss on the mouth (74.5%), followed by oral sex (72.7%) and mutual masturbation (68.4%). The anal penetration was present only in 37.2% of the cases and was found to be most common in the 18-24 age group (42.7%). It is important to keep in mind that these data are only about openly gays or openly bisexuals.

The study, in agreement with other recent studies that examined sexual behavior among heterosexual men and women, shows that gay and bisexual men have a repertoire of sexual behaviors that is very different from that of heterosexuals. Joshua G. Rosenberger, professor of the Department of Global and Community Health at the George Mason University, Fairfax, said that "Of all sexual behaviors that men reported occurring during their last sexual event, those involving the anus were the least common," Rosenberger concluded:

"There is certainly a misguided belief that 'gay sex equals anal

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<sup>3</sup>"Omosessuali moderni – Gay e lesbiche in Italia"

<sup>4</sup>Journal of Sexual Medicine (J Sex Med) 2011;8:3040–3050

sex,' which is simply untrue much of the time."<sup>5</sup>

These conclusions, which refer to the United States, are essentially confirmed for Italy by a study: "The Sexuality of Italians" by Marzio Barbagli, Gianpiero Dalla Zuanna and Franco Garelli published in 2010, for "Il Mulino" editions. This study states about anal sex:<sup>6</sup>

"The spread of anal practices in the Italian population caused the difference between hetero and homosexuals progressively vanish, even in this respect. The vulgar expressions that are still used today in the common language to indicate gays remind us that, since time immemorial, it is believed that they practice exclusively or mainly anal intercourse. It is likely that in the male homosexual population the use of this practice has decreased in the course of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> It is certain, however, that for some time now, in Italy, this is the less widely used erotic technique in this population.<sup>8</sup> It is equally certain that today there are few differences between homo and heterosexuals in our country [Italy]. 49% of the former had at least one anal intercourse with a man versus 44% of the last who experienced it with a woman."

It is to be underlined the survey don't state that 49% of homosexuals "practice" anal sex, but only that 49% have had at least one anal intercourse with a man over their lifetime, which is completely different.

The US study to which I referred also points out other elements that allow to overcome false myths about the promiscuity of sexual relations between homosexuals and bisexuals and their alleged affective deficiency.

"We found it particularly interesting that the vast majority of men reported sex with someone they felt 'matched' with in terms of love, meaning that most people who were in love had sex with the person they loved, but that there were also a number of men who had sex in the absence of love,"

Debby Herbenick<sup>9</sup> said, and added:

<sup>5</sup><http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news-archive/19977.html>

<sup>6</sup>Marzio Barbagli, Gianpiero Dalla Zuanna e Franco Garelli; "La sessualità degli italiani"; 2010, "Il Mulino" editions, p. 192.

<sup>7</sup>Shorter [2005, 129-131]

<sup>8</sup>Barbagli e Colombo [2007-2, 118-119]

<sup>9</sup>Co-director of the Sexual Health Promotion Center and of the Public Health School at the University of Indiana-Bloomington, and co-author of the essay on Sexual behavior of homosexuals and bisexuals

”Very few people had sex with someone they loved if that person didn’t love them back.” ”This ’matching’ aspect of love - she said - has not been well explored in previous research, regardless of sexual orientation.”<sup>10</sup>

”Given the recent political shifts around the Defense of Marriage Act and same-sex marriage in the United States, these findings highlight the prevalence and value of loving feelings within same-sex relationships,”

said lead investigator Joshua G. Rosenberger.<sup>11</sup>

The study about sexual behavior of openly gays and openly bisexuals, just because it refers to openly gays and openly bisexuals, that is, to the emerging tip of gay iceberg, is unfortunately affected by an inherent limitation because its results cannot be automatically extended to the vast majority of gays and bisexuals who are closeted.

From the experience of Gay Project, as I have said many times, from what I can point out through a direct dialog with homosexuals of all ages, almost always closeted, I find that about 20% of homosexual couples, including of course couples made up of closeted gays, usually practice anal sex, in most cases with interchangeable roles, these couples are almost always stable and monogamous, so they are less afraid of sexually transmitted diseases. Another 20% practice anal sex because one of the partners requires it and the other does not subtract himself, even if for him the performance is indifferent or really slightly unpleasant. About 60% of homosexual couples (obviously including undisclosed homosexual couples) do not practice anal sex.

I have found that even among gays and bisexuals there is a big difference in the repertoire of sexual behaviors. Bisexuals have a repertoire much closer to that of heterosexuals, because, regardless of their degree of heterosexual propensity, they in most cases practice much more the heterosexual sex than the gay one. An experienced gay man can figure out whether his partner is gay or bisexual on the basis of his sexual behavior, even if the bisexual partner, in an occasional intercourse with a gay, generally does not qualify himself as bisexual but as a gay.

Elements emerging from Gay Project, extended to closeted gays, are not far from the data coming from the aforementioned study about sexual behaviors of gays and bisexuals in the US, and from those reported by Barbagli and

<sup>10</sup><https://info.publichealth.indiana.edu/releases/iu/2014/01/gay-sex-love.shtml>

<sup>11</sup><https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-02-unique-tied-sex-gay-bisexual.html>



others, related to Italy. The US study shows that 62.8% of the gay-bisexual not closeted group don't practice anal sex, while 37.2% practice it. From the Gay Project surveys, the percentages were around 60% and 40%, respectively, but in a half of that 40% of homosexual couples practicing anal sex, only one of the two partners really likes this practice. In conclusion, outside the couple, for example in individual masturbation, fantasies related to anal penetration concern about 30% of gays, for the other 70% anal penetration is not a subject of masturbation fantasies. As it's obvious, the values measured in the surveys and the values obtained through Gay Project do not define rules without exception, but only tend to provide an undistorted image of the phenomena in their entirety, even though local variability can be considerable.

It should be pointed out that at the beginning of the twentieth century there was yet a clear understanding among scholars of the idea that sodomy was not a prevalent dimension among homosexuals. Albert Moll,<sup>12</sup> speaking of the act so often accredited to homosexuals, says:

"It is commonly assumed that the sexual intercourse between Urnings<sup>13</sup> is this. But it is a big mistake to suppose that this act is so frequent among them."<sup>14</sup>

Krafft-Ebing<sup>15</sup> treats sodomy as a rare thing between the true Urnings, albeit quite common among the old vicious men and debauched ones of more normal temperament, who are not really homosexual.<sup>16</sup> Edward Carpenter<sup>17</sup> cites Moll and Krafft-Ebing's views in appendix to his "Intermediate Sex" and shows that he shares their ideas.<sup>18</sup>

Havelock Ellis, in the third edition (1927) of his treatise "Sexual Inversion"

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<sup>12</sup>Author of "Conträre Sexualempfindung" published in 1891, a fundamental work on sexual inversion. The title itself became an expression to indicate homosexuality.

<sup>13</sup>The German term "Urning" corresponding to the English "uranist" with which homosexuals were indicated. The term "Urning" was created in 1864 by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, supporter of the thesis that homosexuals were a true third sex. The term "homosexual" is introduced by Karl-Maria Benkert (1824-1882), who was a proud supporter of the full masculinity of homosexuals, and to point out that this is not a third sex, he prefers not to use the word Urning at all but to create a word entirely new.

<sup>14</sup>A. Moll, of "Conträre Sexualempfindung", 139.

<sup>15</sup>Author in 1886 of "Psychopathia sexualis", a work that has had vast resonance for decades, in which he identifies various degenerations of sexuality such as sadism, masochism, fetishism, voyeurism, exhibitionism, frottage, nymphomania, zoophilia, necrophilia, gerontophilia, compulsive masturbation and pedophilia, in particular, emphasizing the risks that the latter entails for the victims. It should be noted that Krafft-Ebing does not include homosexuality among the degenerations of sexuality.

<sup>16</sup>"Psychopathia Sexualis", Seventh Edition p. 258.

<sup>17</sup>One of the fathers of the homosexual liberation movement.

<sup>18</sup>Mitchell Kennerly, New York and London, p. 151-152.

After clarifying that the Latin term "pedicatio" (or pædicatio) is the most widely accepted technical term for the sodomy, intrusion of the penis into the anus, underlines that this term is usually intended as derived from the Greek "παῖς" (boy), but some authors assume that it comes from Latin "pedex" or "podex" (anus). Ellis adds that the terms "pederastia" and "pederasta" are sometimes used to indicate the act itself and its agent, but considers this an undesirable use and recommends limiting the use of the word "pederastia" according to its proper meaning as a name of the special institution of Greek love for boys.

In Chapter V of his treatise, in the section dedicated to "Methods of Sexual relationship", Ellis writes:<sup>19</sup>

"Taking 57 inverted men of whom I have definite knowledge, I find that 12, restrained by moral or other considerations, have never had any physical relationship with their own sex. In some 22 cases the sexual relationship rarely goes beyond close physical contact and fondling, or at most mutual masturbation and intercrural intercourse. In 10 or 11 cases fellatio (oral excitation)—frequently in addition to some form of mutual masturbation, and usually, though not always, as the active agency—is the form preferred. In 14 cases, actual *pedicatio* — usually active, not passive — has been exercised. In these cases, however, *pedicatio* is by no means always the habitual or even the preferred method of gratification. It seems to be the preferred method in about 7 cases. Several who have never experienced it, including some who have never practised any form of physical relationship, state that they feel no objection to *pedicatio*; some have this feeling in regard to active, others in regard to passive, *pedicatio*. The proportion of inverts who practise or have at some time experienced *pedicatio* thus revealed (nearly 25 per cent.) is large; in Germany Hirschfeld finds it to be only 8 per cent., and Merzbach only 6. I believe, however, that a wider induction from a larger number of English and American cases would yield a proportion much nearer to that found in Germany."

From what Ellis found in the cases he examined, about 25% of homosexuals practiced anal penetration at least once in the life but only 7 out of 57 (just over 12%) considered it the preferred method of sexual satisfaction.

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<sup>19</sup>Studies in the Psychology of sex, vol. 2 "Sexual Inversion" by Havelock Ellis, third edition, revised and enlarged – 1927, cap. V, Methods of Sexual Relationship.

**HETEROSEXUALS AND ANAL SEX** Sexual behavior of openly gays and openly bisexuals, despite its limitations, is somehow easy to analyze, because it is highly unlikely for an openly gay to have hesitancy to admit to have had anal sex. A search of the same kind, with direct questions, aimed at groups of less disinhibited people, such as closeted gays or heterosexuals sampled by the general population, would face significant levels of reticence. Since anal sex is a classic taboo, the data found in this field are certainly underestimated. Women participating in a survey on sexuality admit more easily abortion rather than anal sex.<sup>20</sup> Voeller (1991) noted that in the context of direct interview surveys, anal sex aspects never emerged at the first interview, but only later, when the interviewee manages to set aside the reticence. In the heterosexual sphere it is noted that the incidence of anal sex, which is definitely limited in the less recent surveys, tends to increase over the years, the opposite of what happens in the homosexual population. A study by Mosher, Chandra and Jones (2005), conducted on the basis of large-scale surveys, found that 38.2% of men between the ages of 20 and 39 and 32.6% of women of between 18 and 44 experienced heterosexual anal sex in the course of life. It should be noted that since 2005<sup>21</sup> to 2011<sup>22</sup>, percentages for men have increased considerably. An analysis of the state of the research on heterosexual anal sex can be found in Kimberly R. Mc Bride's *Heterosexual Anal Sexuality and Anal Sex Behaviors: A Review* and J. Dennis Fortenberry of the University of Indiana. Men who have had stories with partners of the same sex relate more easily about anal intercourse.<sup>23</sup> But I have to underline that here we are talking about anal sex practiced on a female partner by men who have also had homosexual partners, in other words this means that men who feel heterosexual but also have male partners are significantly more likely to anal sex, more likely than the average of heterosexuals, but because the gay propensity towards anal sex is similar to that of the heterosexuals, more likely than the average of gays. These "heterosexuals" who also have gay experiences form the category of so-called bi-curious. So far, the bi-curious category has been introduced in relation to concrete homosexual gay experiences, but the vast majority of bi-curious people do not come to have sexual intercourse with men and are content with the use of pornography, that is, with male nude, male masturbation or sexual intercourse between men.

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<sup>20</sup>Smith, Adler, and Tschann, 1999.

<sup>21</sup>Mosher, Chandra, and Jones, 2005.

<sup>22</sup>Rosenberg and others, 2011.

<sup>23</sup>Foxman, Aral, and Holmes, 1998a, 1998b.

### SO-CALLED GAY PORNOGRAPHY

When it comes to pornography, we have to distinguish between heterosexual pornography, or rather pornography with heterosexual content which shows intercourses between a man and a woman, gay pornography, or rather pornography with gay content, which shows intercourses between men, male nude and male masturbation, and lesbian pornography or rather pornography with lesbian content, which shows intercourses between women, female nude and female masturbation.

This distinction, which concerns the content, is fairly clear, in principle, although there are certainly situations that cannot be exclusively classified in any of the three categories. This distinction is overlapped by another, based on the users of pornography. Generally people uses the expression "hetero pornography" to denote pornography enjoyed by men and women, uses the expression "gay pornography" to indicate pornography enjoyed by homosexual men and uses the expression "lesbian pornography" to indicate pornography enjoyed by homosexual women.

The two classifications, the one on the basis of the content and the other on the basis of the users, make use of the same synthetic terminology (hetero porn, gay porn, lesbian porn) and this leads to wrong convictions, that is, it implies that pornography with hetero content is only to be enjoyed by hetero men and hetero women, that pornography with gay content is only to be enjoyed by male homosexuals and pornography with lesbian content is to be enjoyed only by homosexual women.

Let us now consider only the pornography with gay content. Different interesting facts emerge from Yahoo Answers. First of all, many women declare that they normally access sites with gay content rather than sites with heterosexual content, because pornography with hetero content, enjoyed essentially by heterosexual men, focuses on women neglecting the male element, and also because in pornography with gay content there are no women. Thus, a certain percentage of gay content traffic is represented by heterosexual women, for whom penetrative sex is the rule.

In Yahoo Answers, especially in the section in English, there are thousands of questions proposed by heterosexual guys who see gay porn and ask if this is normal. The question is put in all possible ways, but it is always essentially the same. There are also a lot of messages from hetero girls who are very worried about finding out gay material in the computers of their boyfriends. From these messages we can understand that men who consider themselves heterosexual but use gay pornography are not bisexuals in the specific sense, because they do not fall in love with guys but only with girls; these guys are the so-called bi-curious.

Obviously, bi-curious guys may stop at the level of pornography with gay

content but may also have more or less frequent homosexual intercourse but without real affective engagement, otherwise they would be bisexual.

Let us now consider some aspects of pornography with gay content and compare them with similar aspects of pornography with hetero content. Searching on Google for "straight site" it is noted that the related results are 506,000,000; looking for "gay site" the related results are 420,000,000; the gay/hetero ratio is about 0.83.

Looking for "straight porn" the related results are 55,100,000; looking for "gay porn" e 43.9 million, the gay/hetero ratio is about 0.8. Looking for "straight porn video" the related results are 45,400,000; looking for "gay porn videos" are 59,600,000, the gay/hetero ratio is about 1.31.

These data indicate that the frequency of pornography with gay content on the web is more or less equivalent to that of pornography with hetero content. It is objectively impossible to access first-hand data on the use of pornography that belong to the managers of these sites, and in this area you can only get approximate estimates but it is commonplace that the gay-themed pornography business equals or even exceeds that of hetero-themed pornography.

And here comes the first apparent inconsistency. If male homosexuals are about 4% of the general population and male heterosexuals are about 46%, that is, if there is on average a single gay male every 11.2 heterosexual males, and hetero-themed pornography is more or less quantitatively equivalent to gay-themed pornography, assuming that gay-themed pornography is to be enjoyed only by gays and that of hetero-themed pornography is to be enjoyed only by heterosexual people, mostly males (about 72%), it would come to the paradoxical conclusion that gays uses pornography 11.2 times more than male heterosexuals, which is not very credible.

If, on the other hand, an equal propensity to use pornography for gay and hetero people was assumed, we should ask who are the consumers of gay-themed pornography not consumed by gays. And here the answer is spontaneous: they are the bi-curious and they are really many.

The fact that bi-curious are the main gay-themed porn consumers is confirmed by the fact that gay-themed websites, when they represent sexual intercourse, end up almost always with anal penetration, which, as seen, is not a dominant interest in the gay world while it is very common among the bi-curious. Many gays wonder why gay porn sites give so much room to the anal intercourse, and the answer is that the main users of gay-themed pornography are mostly not gay guys but bi-curious guys and secondly heterosexual women.

In this sense, for a gay young guy, the image of gay sexuality offered by gay-themed pornography is misleading because it is a pornography created

essentially for the needs of a not gay but bi-curious audience. A bit of pornography does not hurt anyone, but if pornography shows an hypothetical gay sexuality that is very different from reality, it becomes deeply harmful. The representation of true gay sexuality would be far less spectacular and therefore less suited to the pornographic market but would allow so many homosexuals to identify themselves in that representation rather than be tempted to imitate behaviors that have nothing to do with gay reality.

## 11.2 DOCUMENTS

### 11.2.1 Reconstruct a gay sexuality

Hello Project, it's about a month that I discovered Gay Project. I come back there every day and even several times a day. I had thought about writing to you but I didn't. I ended just now reading your post about unconscious conditioning and I thought I had to break the ice. I am young but not so young guy, I am 28 years old and I feel deeply conditioned, up to my soul. Let's say I'm a former straight, in the sense that up to 24 years I did everything to make myself able to like the girls (a psychologist had told me that it depended on I don't know what block, but let's forget such things), I seemed to like total voluntary isolation from the other guys, but really I avoided them in order not to think about them sexually, and tried to experience even clumsy attempts to excite me with straight porn. I had (so to speak) even a girl, chosen among the less aggressive ones, I tried to caress her, to hold her hand, to do a little petting, I on her, but it was completely unnatural for me. I've never had any straight fantasies, absolutely never. As to masturbation, at the beginning, 13/14 years, I lived it very well because I didn't understand what it was and then it was essentially physical, when I realized at the age of 15 that I could actually be gay, and even that masturbating thinking of guys meant exactly being gay, total repression has begun also in that field. I went to church every day to try to make me the obligation not to think about sex and here what I'm about to write may seem strange because in the end I managed it, I stopped masturbating practically up to 25 years.

I read the things you wrote about masturbation and now I begin to understand, but until three years ago I was so conditioned, or rather I was so self-conditioned that I had even gone so far as to not have a sex life, and I was proud of it, it seemed to me that I had accomplished something very important, at school I was fine and also at the university. I understand in hindsight that it was all nonsense but at that time I felt like a superman.

It went on like that until 24/25 years, when I took my Master Degree in a scientific subject and in a brilliant way, now I work in the university and the prospects are good, indeed very good. I don't say this to boast but to emphasize that, let's say, the total repression of sexuality has also brought me some advantages, but I'm beginning to pay a very high price for it. I explain to you. After graduating, the professor asked me to follow a student who was preparing his thesis on a subject very close to the one I had studied for my thesis, and that guy was expected to graduate after six months, he was 24 and I 25, do you understand where the story is about to end up?

He had to work on the thesis and I had to follow him, in a sense I had a power over him, we spent the days together in the laboratory because of the thesis and in the end we created a strange relationship between us, played only on the unsaid. I tried to keep myself as professional as possible and he treated me with a lot of respect, then he melted a bit. Being close to this guy was hell for me. I made sure to meet him only when there were people in the institute and I tried to keep at a distance in every possible way, I felt him as a danger to my stability, he was fascinating me day after day and sometimes embarrassing situations were created, don't believe who knows what, just we exchanged looks, eyes in the eyes or smiles that you don't explain. It was then that I tried with the girl and the experience was depressing.

Finally he graduated and for me it was just like a liberation, but it didn't last long. Three days after graduation he called me back and told me that he would have liked to invite me to dinner, I said yes, before, then I tried an excuse and I didn't go and the same evening he sent me a text message: "Come on, don't be afraid, don't run away ...". This text has put on me a terrible state of agitation, I thought that he had misunderstood (understood) those moments of embarrassment and I couldn't stand the idea that he could understand something of my sexual sphere. I didn't answer him and the next day he came back with another text message: "I'll go to university tomorrow when you go out. Don't run away!" This message unnerved me but to tell the truth also awakened in me other feelings that I had never experienced. Nobody had ever been interested in me before for things that were not of work or study, but I knew very well that he was looking for me as a person, something beautiful, yes, but also shocking for me.

In short, it's time to meet him, he asks me for a ride to his house, it never happened before, but I say yes, he gets in the car, I'm afraid he asks me embarrassing questions but he does everything by himself, basically he tells me that he's gay and he thinks he has fallen in love with me. I react badly and I beg him to come down, to let me go and never to call me again, he doesn't seem to believe my words but I raise my voice and make him go down, he looks at me, raises his hands and doesn't say a word. But I was

upset because I had gone into erection while I was speaking with him. Back home I threw myself under a frozen shower, then I thought about him and I didn't know what to do but the erection came back and for the first time I didn't try not to think about him, actually I thought about him with tenderness and sexual tenderness. I took the phone, I wanted to text him but I called him and we talked. I apologized and tried to prolong the conversation and so we were talking for almost two hours and I was always in erection. I had told him nothing about my sexuality. We said goodbye with the promise that the following week we would go to have a pizza together. Closed the phone I masturbated thinking of him. At the moment it was beautiful, then I felt very bad because I had interrupted my way of being that had lasted for many years and I had done it thinking of a guy, but on the other hand I was also aware that now there were no more doubts, I was gay, even though I knew it very well even before.

We then went to have that blessed pizza and since then we meet systematically and have lunch together twice a week, now it has become a consolidated tradition. He told me about his life as a gay guy and I felt his life dangerously similar to mine, for several months I didn't tell him anything about me then something happened that was quite a declaration, he took my hand and held it between his and for a long time, after this gesture there was no need for anything else, according to him. We had known each other for almost two years, it was now at least time to kiss each other. I wanted it, but I feared I could lose control and then other thoughts came to my mind that are really absurd and unworthy of a person who thinks he's intelligent. I wondered how it would have been to stay with him sexually, I tried to imagine how he had it and I told myself that then maybe in practice it would have been quite different from what I imagined and I thought that something like this could have put everything in crisis.

Before reading your forum I had some strange ideas about gays, I thought maybe that I would have felt compelled by him to do things that I didn't want to do. I told him no, that is that I didn't want to have sex with him and I asked him to do the HIV test, we did it together and it was negative and I didn't know what else to invent and I told him everything. He hugged me and told me that he loved me and that, for him, sex is not the most important thing.

Even if here I felt a moment of relief, soon after the disappointment took over because I would have wanted a sexual insistence on his part, and I told him and now we are at this point that I feel completely stuck, I masturbate every day thinking of him but I don't think I could ever have sex with him. I told him I would not like the penetration and he told me that these are things he never thought about. We talked about our sexual fantasies and they are very



similar but for him the possibility of living his fantasies in couple evidently exists, for me it's like thinking of overcoming a mountain, I feel stuck and I don't even know what to do. I feel gay, yes, I took a step forward, I think, and I want to make love with the guy I now consider my boyfriend and I love because he is really a wonderful guy, but I still have a damn fear of sex.

Let's say that we are making small progress and that he has an infinite patience and I will probably be able to unlock myself, in fact now I think and do things that even six months ago I would never have done or thought of. But if I hadn't found him, for me sexuality would have been an uncharted territory in a definitive way and I still feel inside me so many resistances to live sexuality as you say.

The thing that I regret most is to make my boyfriend suffer because sometimes, in my opinion, he thinks that I don't love him enough or perhaps that he is not able to involve me adequately. But just when I see him discouraged, I can take a few steps forward with sex and are things of an incredible sweetness. Project, if I had found Gay Project five years ago I probably would have lived in another way, better or worse I don't know, but in another way, but now I want to regain my sexuality because a world that I would have never imagined is opening up in front of me. Project, I have reread this email and it is generic enough to save privacy, so if you think it can serve something, publish it. Thank you for what you unconsciously did for me too. A hug. A.D.

### 11.2.2 Gay sex on cam

What follows is a discussion started on 27/8/2012 on the Italian Gay Project forum.

Hello Project, I am 18 years old, for some days I'm of age but I feel terribly stupid, I know that I did something very stupid and now I feel disgusted. Project, I have always had a good idea of sex, I always thought it was an important thing to live with my boyfriend, if I had one, and in a true love relationship. I know that the right things are these, I know it very well, I always thought this way until about twenty days ago, then different ideas started to come up my mind, that I don't have to be alone, that it's not fair that I don't have a partner, that I cannot settle for videos, because there is also this, that in words I have a very nice concept of sex but then, you know how it works, and in the end you adapt, and it is just depressing because if maybe it was with a guy that I really like and that I fell in love with, well, that's ok, I say because you really feel the desire for sex, but that's not what happens to me, because in practice I have nothing to do, I sprawl on the bed

and just out of boredom, because there is nothing else to do and the hand goes there, but let's say that I go forward (and I arrive at the end) only with the imagination because the imagination of those things doesn't miss me at all, I don't even look for porn, it's rare, I start to imagine how it would be with a guy I like.

It's a painful thing, I know, but what else can I do? And this doesn't even involve me too much, in short, it's like doing something just to do something, now there is nothing left of what one expects from sex, it's a thing like another, then when I finished, I think, well I did even this, at least I fall asleep more easily. This is what happened in practice up to 15 days ago, then I told myself that I had to change system because I am no more stupid than others, that a guy my age also has the right to do what he wants and so I registered on a dating site.

I have not really thought about it when I did then I have been glued to the screen for three days. I don't tell you what a kind of people, I told myself that they should be hospitalized because they are not aware of themselves. Then I happened to meet a guy not so bad, he said that he was 25 years old, perhaps he was even older but he wasn't an old man like some others who seemed horrible to me just looking at their pictures (enormous bellies!). I speak a bit with that twenty-five, so, writing in the chat he tells me that he feels alone, that he joined that site in despair because he seeks an honest guy like him just for friendship, in short things were such. We chat writing for two hours, he is from my city, it happened by chance because I didn't put the city in my profile, then he tells me that he wants a picture and sends me one of his own.

Nice, he was nice, maybe the photo was not his, but the photo was nice, but I didn't know what I had to send him, I didn't want send him a photo of mine but I had to give him something. I made one picture with the camera, very blurred, so that he couldn't understand anything and I sent it to him, he told me that I was a nice guy and other such things, he wanted to speak in voice but I had my parents at home and couldn't talk at all and I told him it, and then he told me that we could hear each other after midnight, to talk a bit, but I told him again that I couldn't talk at all. He didn't insist, he told me: "somehow we'll talk at midnight" and we said goodbye.

I then went to dinner but I felt very excited and the thought was always there. My parents were seeing the TV and in my room I was waiting for them to go to bed but they were there to talk and they seemed to have no intention of going to bed and it made me angry. When they closed their bedroom door and turned off the light it was a quarter past midnight and I thought I'd lost the appointment for a quarter of an hour. I turn on the PC, I go and contact that guy, after two minutes he sends me the call for the video

chat, I say no but he insists, he tells me we had at least to say hello looking at each other, I say: let's try! If maybe he is naked I close immediately, and so I accept.

He was sitting quietly wearing a tank top, we cannot talk and we only write, he tells me that he must go for a moment to drink, when he gets up I see him in shorts, those used on the beach, but I too was wearing tank top and shorts exactly like him because even at night the heat was terrible. Then he comes back. I quote here for you the log of the conversation. He is "Nice Mouse", I'm Nic (as usually my nick is Nic and I tell him that my name is Nicholas but it's not true).

- Nice Mouse writes - thank you for accepting, I'm really happy
- Nic writes - It was not an easy choice, you never know what you can expect
- Nice Mouse writes - in what sense?
- Nic writes - that you may find a naked guy who wants only sex from you eh eh eh
- Nice Mouse writes - but I'm a nice guy. Don't be worried!
- Nic writes - I'm glad that now I can see you, because, you know, you said 25 years, but they could have been even 60
- Nice Mouse writes - No, come on, I don't want to cheat you! However ... damn if you're a nice guy! You're not just nice, you're beautiful!
- Nic writes - Who? I? You're the one beautiful! You're really strong, a nice chest and two iron biceps.
- Nice Mouse writes - Wait for me to take off the tank top, because I like the compliments
- Nic writes - Wow! But you're really cool! I would love to have a body like yours!
- Nice Mouse writes - I think you don't miss anything, come on! Let me see a little! Stand up and make muscles like bodybuilders, right so, very good! Damn if you're beautiful! You don't have a thread of fat! Come on! Get out of that tank top ... damn! A body to go crazy for! Really! But are you going to the gym?
- Nic writes - yes but twice a week, something like that, not at a competitive level, but I think that instead you do training at the gym at a serious level.
- Nice Mouse writes - I try, then, you know, by dint of insisting, you reach a result.

Project, now you know how it started, basically we went on slowly, then we saw each other only in briefs and then without and then we masturbated

together. At the end he tells me it was beautiful and he never thought that sex could be like that, I congratulate him because I too was very well and tells me (I quote here the piece of conversation, I had told him that my name was Nicholas, I think I already told you this very important particular)

- Nice Mouse writes - Nic, if you want, tomorrow we do it in person, eh, what do you think?
- Nic writes - well now I'm a little embarrassed, I don't feel prepared for something like this
- Nice Mouse writes - Nic, but if it is for the fear of diseases we do it with condoms, what's the problem?
- Nic writes - well it's not just for that
- Nice Mouse writes - come on! Let's have some fun!
- Nic writes - no, please, don't insist, I don't really feel like it.
- Nice Mouse writes - Come on! That in person the effect is much more involving, So do you agree for tomorrow?
- Nic writes - No, let's leave things as they are.
- Nice Mouse writes - but you're just a kid! You saw it, I don't eat you!
- Nic writes - No, come on, don't insist.

We go on like that for a few minutes with this back and forth and he tries everything to convince me, but the more he insists the more I convince myself that I don't want. Before closing I say to him: "Tomorrow we meet again on cam?" And he replies "Now for a week I work outside the city, but when I come back I make myself heard."

If I said I didn't like what happened I would say a huge lie. I went to sleep at half past two but I was all upset, practically my first experience of this kind. He was beautiful, sexy, not aggressive, it was the first time he had entered the chat, at least I thought it was so, and we had met by chance. Ok, he was several years older than me but anyway he wasn't an old man and then I also liked him from certain points of view we can say anatomical. So I was in orbit.

The speech of seeing each other in person was the only thing that I didn't like, it seemed to me too much premature but the rest had seemed really exciting. I had a week off in front of me, but I didn't want to go to the dating site because I wanted to stay true to him! I was at that point! I know it's stupid but it's just what I thought. So for a week no dating site and no porn, just fantasy and fantasy, about him obviously! So you can imagine that in practice I didn't think of anything else. I spend Sunday, I expect that Monday he calls me but he doesn't, I start to fall into paranoia, I look for him but he is never on msn neither on the dating site. We had not exchanged

cell phone numbers so I couldn't contact him. I only had his e-mail but he didn't answer. On Wednesday I receive this email.

"Nicole, it was a dream of a week, I hadn't thought about anything else for months, I could finally kiss you and hold you to me. You are my little she mouse, the puppy that can send me into raptures! only a woman like you knows what's sex and I live for you, you're my fixed idea, I don't think about anything else, I've never looked at another woman, I have eyes (and not just eyes) only for you, my sweet little she mouse. With your brother we talked a lot, don't worry that everything will be fine, I will try to put things right, don't worry about it. You are half of my soul and you know that I would do anything for you. [*omissis*] (explicit and detailed sexual references follow, that I omit.) Your Nice Mouse who always thinks of you!"

This e-mail left me stunned not to say like a piece of shit! He sent it to me by mistake because the mail program after Nic has completed my (fake) name (Nicholas) and not Nicole and he did not notice it! Project that there were sons of a whore on the net I knew it and he had not actually been such, but maybe it would have been if we had seen each other in person, I don't know, but what upsets me is that this guy was straight, at least straight his way, if such a guy can be considered straight. He obviously has a girlfriend and from what he says, he has great sex with her, but a guy who does with another guy what he did with me (and now I think he did the same so many other times) how can he completely forget about the other guy, telling him a lot of lies to go away to have sex with the girl?

Project, you can understand that I felt a total imbecile, ok, there are men who have a girlfriend or even married who spend nights on cam having sex with guys! But for me, such a thing is incredible! Are they bisexual? I don't know, but of course with these guys I feel I have nothing in common. I had sex with him on cam, ok, but then I avoided using a porn, while he wasn't at all interested in me because the next day he had to go with his beloved pussy! But what were you looking for? I felt treated just like a piece of shit. But is this guy a gay? If he's gay, well I swear I'll cut my dick!

Nic

Other users of the forum respond to Nic's post.

ANSWER N. 1

There are married men who go on the sites to get sex on cam with guys .. they say they are curious heterosexual guys or even 100% straight but they like that stuff. You're not stupid, you trusted him. In those sites, unfortunately you have to go with the knowledge that 90% of people want to have sex and among these there are those who want to get there by any means. You live your sexuality as you like it better, casual sex is not the absolute evil but you have to be careful.

#### ANSWER N. 2

Dear Nicholas, premised that there is nothing squalid in masturbating thinking about guys you like, even better without the support of porn. I have nothing against porn, it is simply a sexual model that is neither in heaven nor on earth, especially if referring to gay sexuality. Unfortunately there are a lot of guys like the one you're talking about. My first adventure eleven years ago was with a guy engaged with a girl, who used to answer his girlfriend on the phone right in front of me. At that time I didn't want anything else anyway.

I would like to tell you only two things related to what you are telling, the first is that something really important happened. You put yourself in the game, you met a guy you liked and you had the chance to experience a sexual involvement, which for sure was for you the premise for a much stronger feeling. This experience in itself is beautiful, there were new energies and the ability to feel alive, you do not have to give up these things. In this respect, only he has made the figure of the perfect fool, not you. You are consistent with what you like, he obviously has very confused ideas and has no real intention to investigate the matter.

He is twenty-five years old and chooses a chat to experience his homosexuality and according to what you told us he is a picker, both of women and guys, and of the well-trained ones. In short, it is his problem not to really want to understand how things are, not wanting to accept it and live a life full of falsehood, with this huge compromise behind. He made fun of you, of his girlfriend, but above all he makes fun of himself and this causes me a huge sadness. On the second point I'll be a little more generic, I have already said my opinion million times. The problem of chat rooms and dating sites is that there is no kind of naivety allowed there. One can also be there, but must have in mind the place where he is and how he intends to move. He must be clear with himself even on what he wants. Do you understand what the point is?

And even if he were a gay man absolutely not interested in girls, do you think that he would only ask you to have sex on cam and meet him in person? You

have to think about these things, a guy who asks you right at beginning to see you naked and who feels so comfortable with this proposal as to put even you at ease, is clearly one accustomed to such things. Sometimes there is in us the conviction of being special and we think that what happened to us happened only to us. Of course we are or better can be somehow special, but in front of the other we become special over time, at the beginning we are like everyone else. Now your story with this guy is over, but if you hadn't read that mail what would you have done with the guy? What level of anxiety would you have experienced if you had noticed how things really were only after deluding yourself that you had built a wonderful love story with that guy? Do you know what I think? You were lucky to find out soon how he really was and especially to have never met him in person.

#### ANSWER N.3

I'm not at all surprised, nothing new about this world eh eh! The first thing I would do, if I were you, is to cancel me immediately from the dating site before having to face other probable disappointments, which you absolutely don't deserve. If you want a relationship of love, you certainly will not find it in such places, you would be forced to look for the needle in the haystack and, even if you find that blessed needle, you could still receive yet another disappointment. I have received confirmation of it from a person I know and who has tried to deepen the knowledge with one of these so called guys who claim to be good and serious. I can tell you that it was over with "Let's stay at least .. friends" For some, these meeting sites are like a drug that they cannot get rid of, they can cancel themselves from the dating site many times to register again the following day. But again, I certainly didn't reveal the discovery of the year. Good luck!

#### ANSWER N.4

If you look for friendships in those sites I tell you that it is very difficult to meet someone worthy, almost impossible. You must be able to skim the users and maybe you could also find at most a 2% of guys like you in there, since most feel as if they were on a pedestal, they feel powerful, for the simple fact that they can do whatever they want, having sex with the guys they want in that particular world, only to come back to reality, with their tails between their legs, at home, by their wives or their girlfriends. You wrote: "Project, you can understand that I felt a total imbecile, ok, there are men who have a girlfriend or even married who spend nights on cam having sex with guys! But for me, such a thing is incredible! Are they bisexual?"

This question is legitimate and could further support my personal thinking

that those attracted to men are much more than that ridiculous 10% of which we write. Meanwhile, see it as an experience that will help you to mature, while he, who goes on with the double life, is the one who should come down from the pedestal, he is the coward who doesn't have the courage to admit to himself that he is doing this bullshit. I wonder how long his marriage with "Nicole" can last if the premises are these! A hug!

#### ANSWER N.5

Ah ah! Nicholas, please don't take my laughter as offensive, but it makes me laugh so much that that stupid "two-way guy" has been disgraced by the automatic completion of the mail program! Try not to get angry! Let's say that, taken by boredom and discouragement, you have sought a little adventure and you had your fun, but the downside is that you had your fun inside some kind of sewer-site, in which, rightly, as well as mice, rats and sewer rats, you cannot expect to find anything else! Don't feel frustrated and stupid, it happens to virtually everyone and it happens extremely often to do bad meetings, both in the real world and even more on the Internet where anonymity and distance free the rabble from any inhibitory brake. It is certainly not your fault if you came across such a guy, indeed it is practically the rule in those places. Of course, the signals all in all were quite clear; now you will think twice before taking off your T-shirt on request. Remember this unfortunate event as a small warning that you cannot really trust appearances and that in certain environments the iron logic of sex hunter does not yield to anything, certainly not to the need for a minimum of consistency, nor even less in front of a boy who desperately desires a serious and authentic communication with others.

#### ANSWER N. 6

Damn, what a disappointment, and what an anger! We make many fantasies because rarely, compared to the hetero world, we have opportunities to approach guys, but there is always the guy who is looking for sex only for fun and curiosity, having anyway hetero inclinations, and we delude ourselves. I suggest you to unsubscribe from that site, the adventures in the dating sites, not by hearsay, but because of for facts more or less like those you told us and I too have personally experienced, almost all (99,5%) end up badly. I certainly don't want this, not even sex, but maybe my sexual desire is less than yours, since you are older than me, but now that I know this forum my needs are much more sentimental than sexual and then goodbye ... because I'm not knowing new people and I'm in the situation of not being



able to know them, in a reality that crushes me, I come back perpetually to the starting point, because I'm shy, because my physical self-esteem is very poor, because it is said that to find someone and create a relationship you must have self-esteem from the point of view of "sentimental relationship and physical appearance" and I have none of this, because they say it's too early to have a story because I've understood myself recently and I have to recognize that, at 16, I have to shut up since there are people who have three times my years, but also four times, and they feel the need much more than me, so I understand that I have to repress even my sadness because I find myself in a vicious circle made of fear of being exposed, low self-esteem about my being able to get engaged, awareness of being better placed than others in situations of family etc. As a result of this I look at these things head down and I focus on study, sports and my friendships that, for me, probably, if they were complicated by my confessions may no longer be such. However I tell you to be quiet and to live with this disappointment. Wait and seize the opportunities when they peek from your door, focus on something else, the only thing that can help in this case it is to think that we are many, sitting on the same train.

### 11.2.3 Tenderness and gay sexuality

Hello Project, I read the last posts of the forum and I decided to send you this email. I read about sexual indecision and also about the lack of a real sexual drive and it is actually something that happens to me (not the indecision but the weak sexual drive), particularly in this last period. I'm 28 years old, and already I feel old, I think that at my age, sexuality should still be able to produce very strong involvements and instead I don't live it like that. The strangest thing is that I'm absolutely not repressed, I have a steady partner who is four years younger than me and we've been together for almost five years. I love him deeply. Nobody knows about us, we meet how we can and we go to the country where my parents have a little house that has been uninhabited for years. He (let's call him Mark) is a very sweet guy and I feel happy and lucky to have met him.

We met at university, I graduated a little late and he was just starting. I had talked to him just to exchange a few words, and that he was gay it had not even come to my mind. Then we exchanged msn and from there everything started. I was fine with him but I considered him as a brother. At that time I didn't have particular sexual interests, porn videos and masturbation were enough for me, I never masturbated thinking about him, I started to love him but sex had nothing to do with all this, at least as I intended it.

He was very careful with me not to exceed and, at the time, I didn't even

realize that he was in love with me. In short, one afternoon he calls me and proposes me to see each other. It's about six o'clock and it's practically night, we drive to a parking lot and he takes my hand and kisses it with an intensity that had just the strength of despair, I stroke his head and he hugs me and puts his head on my chest, I held him very tight. I think that this was one of the most intense moments of my life. It was evident that he wanted to go further but he was scared and he didn't, I stupidly thought I wouldn't have to encourage him, because I was afraid of showing myself as someone looking just for sex, and things stopped there.

Then we also arrived at sex but the thing had above all the substance of a total tenderness, without limits. Sometimes when we went to the countryside, if it was cold, he crouched under the covers, tight to me, naked, and remained like that, I also caressed him intimately, sometimes we had sex, sometimes not, he fell asleep leaning on me and I felt his warmth and his breath. Frankly, these contacts were more important to me than sex. I felt that we were (and are) in love. We needed intimacy, tenderness rather than technical sexuality. During certain evenings, hugging naked in bed, we talked a lot, really freely, and sex seemed like it was just a marginal thing. Keep in mind that in practice since I met Mark I masturbated thinking about him very few times, I don't know how to say, it's a bit as if being together had turned off sexuality, not that sex is missing between us, but really it is not the first thing in our relationship. When I talk to him and especially when we embrace, I feel him very close. For us, getting to sex was like telling each other that there were no limits between us and that there was an identification almost on a physical level.

He has a sexuality I think much stronger than mine but our meetings are not really dominated by sex. It will seem paradoxical but even if I think that our relationship can last a lifetime, and I wish it with all my soul, and I'm not really afraid of losing him, I almost feel a sense of insufficiency in front of him, as if my sexuality was a bit too sleepy, as if I devoted him so much tenderness but not a true sexuality that instead I dedicate to porn, I'm not addicted, but when needed I go there, while masturbating thinking of him isn't so spontaneous for me and reading what you write about emotional masturbation I worried a little.

Look, I love him and I think I could not love anyone else but it's as if my sexuality were removed from the extreme tenderness I feel for him. Apart from the porn that have a practical purpose because we meet once every 15 days, in these five years I have never even remotely thought sexually about another guy. For me he is really everything even if I struggle to set him in a serious sense in a real sexual dimension, or at least this is what I think. I tell you, Project, I'm happy this way, even if maybe I'm a little too much

worried about such things, I don't know. I also talked to him about it and he tells me that he doesn't miss anything and that he feels happy like that. I don't really have any reason to think otherwise, but the doubt that maybe he might need something else is always with me. When I stand next to him I feel totally serene, I don't perceive body and sex as a drive, except marginally. When we are together in practice it often happens that after maybe a more exciting first contact we lose the erection even if we are hugging each other. I don't think there is anything pathological in this. I hear, however, from other people, that they instead live an overwhelming sexuality and feel very strong sexual drive. Things like that have never happened to us, perhaps we are strange! Project, I had Mark read this email and he too is curious to know what you think. If you think it is useful, publish it, obviously without personal data. I add my msn [omissis] for you and I hope to hear from you soon! Hello Project, and good luck for everything you do!

#### 11.2.4 A gay in the gym

[Interview with a 24-year-old boy, registered on April 16th 2003]

Do you want to know why I go there? ... Yes, yes ... but have I to explain it to you? With this fucking microphone ... I feel uncomfortable, you're there to record but it's me the one who has to do the speech, come on, let's go further ... I'm ashamed ... No, wait ... ok ok ... now I try ... I go there for several reasons, the usual ones, health, sports, all these reasons ... and come on! ... don't make all those grimaces! ... good! ... I come to the point! ok ok ... but in fact I go there to see the naked guys ... it's like that, there's nothing to do, it's like that, because today you can find everywhere a lot of stuff not only of naked but also of porn at all levels but that is not sex, are only movies, in short are false things, apart from that there is all a false mental attitude, however, those who do those things just are actors, in those things there is very little of natural.

I have seen a lot of films of a certain kind but these things have nothing to do with being in front of real naked guys. Anyway, guys unlike the actors, don't act, they are really happy to stay with other real guys who are not actors, they are there with the utmost naturalness, they joke a little, have fun, that is, they are what they really are, it's just a wonderful climate, for them that is not a sexual climate, it's normal, this is what strikes me the most: the absolute naturalness of these guys' behaviors, the affectionate, casual climate despite the nudity. In general, when I go to the locker room, I stay there a lot of time, but not just to look around, even to wait for them all to go away, because I have to wait in order to get dressed, because when I'm in there,

I'm in erection all the time, but if I'm almost fully clothed, no one notices it. Once, two or three weeks ago, I went there on Monday, when there are very few people, and I found a guy I had met a couple of months before, a straight guy eh ... so there was no place for strange ideas I could have, straight means straight! He's called George, a guy 22 years old, just a nice guy, but so straight that you cannot be more straight ... who only talks to you about his girlfriend, in short you have understood the type... and you should hear the voice ... a very sexy thing.

I was sitting on the bench pretending to put things right in the bag, he was coming out of the shower, practically we were just us. He puts himself in front of me, as his mother did him, and begins a conversation based entirely on girls. The show was unique, he was just beautiful. That is, now, it is obvious, for a gay guy to see a naked guy is also a sexual attraction, however, apart from this, a beautiful naked guy is just beautiful, that is, he's a work of art. He has been there chatting without dressing for at least twenty minutes, I think he also had the pleasure of being seen ... because if you're ugly you do well if you cover yourself, but if you're a nice guy you have nothing to cover. I was always shocked by the immediacy and the absence of inhibitions of the guys like George, for them it is obvious, for me it is absolutely unthinkable. Then he greeted me and left ... as if nothing had happened, I had to recover from the emotion, because in the state in which I was not I was not able to go out, after a few minutes I went out, I found him at the bar and he offered me a tonic water, then he left but before leaving, we shook hands very cordially, he with his beautiful smile and a beautiful warm, strong hand ...

Something like this is not very common, you can usually see many naked guys, all together, but the scene doesn't imprint on your brain, while with George, a very different situation had been created. It is clear that it happens once in a while, sometimes such a thing doesn't happen for several weeks, but when it happens, even just once, you don't forget it anymore and, there is no need to say it, when you come home you have an erection just thinking about it, with everything that comes after. In a way I know George intimately, even if these are frustrating things, anyway ... a few days later I see George, he greets me, asks me if I remember him ... damn if I remember! I remember every little detail of him, well, you understood. He smiles at me ... if he knew that I not only remember him but that I think about him very, very intensely, every night ... Well, I don't know what he would do ... I think he would choose another gym ... or not? ... Boh!

The story of George has been a bit exceptional, in general it is a far more trivial thing ... but for a gay guy my age it's anyway a great temptation. Then there is a fact, I never go to the gym with friends, I always go there alone. I don't know If there are any other gay guys, I've never notices

anything that concretely credited this hypothesis. In there, it seems that I'm the only one inhibited, or other gays are perfectly integrated, I don't know, but the feeling is as if there are no inhibited guys. That they are all true hetero it would seem strange to me, but, at least, according to the appearances, it's what seems most likely.

Ah ... one thing, and it's something that I've always noticed and has always struck me, the guys who go to the gym tend to make friends and it works well, while I feel out of the group, I feel somehow not to be part of the group and sometimes it also comes into my mind that becoming a voyeur, because I actually it's what I'm, it is also not very respectful to these guys, I feel a bit like a thief, I really don't like to steal these moments of intimacy, but you can get these thing only this way ... and then I don't see a real reason to be ashamed for ... I feel like a thief, it's true, but basically I don't steal anything from these guys, they are completely unaware, it's true ... but they don't remain traumatized and then everything is so natural.

In the gym I've never seen bad jokes, that is sexual ones, I've heard of them, but I've never seen these things. When there is someone new, it is usually introduced to the other guys by a friend who already attends the gym and I never saw situations of embarrassment. Ah, another thing, many, who don't feel any embarrassment in being naked, are anyway not naked all the time but put a towel on their hips, but not to hide something, because then they take it off without any embarrassment. It's all a ritual, it's all coded, they all behave more or less the same way, it's just a sort of masculine collective ritual.

At my gym showers are closed by plastic blinds and there is a little privacy, in fact I almost never go there. When guys come out, they usually come out with a towel around their hips ... but then they remove it to dry well. That of the locker room is really a special environment, there is a climate of total freedom that there is never in any other situation. When there is a new guy I've never seen before I try to fix things so that I enter the locker room just when he too is there, I study very well all the strategy that has to look totally random, but not only, first of all I greet him, I go by him when he does the weights or when he is at the machines, I explain how the machines work, that is, I try to create a minimum of relationship but then the brain goes always there.

I mean that I have not really known a guy until I have seen him naked, that is, I have to get there, I have to know how he's made, it's very important. When it happens I have a complete picture that guy, it's not a stupid thing, it's just like that ... and when it happens like with George that a familiarity is formed such that the guy stays there talking to you when he comes out of the shower without dressing ... well, what can I say to you, it seems to me

that a very special intimacy has been created. But now it's enough, don't make me talk too much, I can't go into details ... but if a climate like that created with George was created with a gay guy, it would be a dream came true ...

I know very well that a similar climate with a gay guy would never exist ... but I understand those who fall in love with heterosexuals, because I think of George a thousand times a day. I saw his schedules and I set mine just as his, perhaps something interesting could come out! A scene like that of three weeks ago could be repeated, but till now it didn't happen. When he arrives he greets me and smiles as well, I always try to catch him in the locker room both before and after the shower, but I cannot insist too much. I have a dream, I'd like it if one day he stays to talk to me, but not naked as it happened three weeks ago, I would like him to ask me for a ride at the exit, I would accompany him home and I would like him to look into my eyes and say: "I don't have the courage to tell you ... but I'm gay and I'm in love with you!" ... But no! He's just a beautiful hetero! ... but does it seem right to you?

### 11.2.5 Nakedness and gay sexuality

[Below you can read is a discussion on the relationship between nakedness and gay sexuality, appeared on Gay Project Forum.]

Hi, I would like to tell you a little about the story of my sexuality, at least summarily. In short, the point is that I don't feel all this craving to do certain things with a guy. I read everywhere that there are guys who in order to have sex with a friend, would do who knows what and up to this point I can even agree, but can you explain to me what does it mean to have sex with a guy? I have seen a lot of porn videos and now I'm immunized and in practice porn no longer makes me any effect, I have been also with some guys (i.e. I have not had sex, I only went close to it) but it seemed very stupid and repetitive, more a thing of transgression for the transgression than else. Guys attract me, all right, but I don't have the fixed idea of doing something in particular.

For example, I like some porn videos at the beginning, and especially if guys are beautiful, but then these videos seem to me really stupid, I mean false, if things had gone on with a guy like I see in some porn, making love would have been a very stupid thing. So I have talked about this with my friends, with those who are also gay, obviously, but they don't see it like me and they find themselves in the porn. I, if I have to think of something that involves me as I would, I would also like to play with my boyfriend, I would like an

atmosphere not only sexual, I would like to feel good together, let's say, not just sex and, for example once with a guy that I liked we were at the beach, that is, in practice we were alone in the cabin all day naked, then we even masturbated, he said he was straight and I didn't tell him anything about me, but it was nice that there was no embarrassment at all, that is, I was with him as if he were not there, but he was there.

I don't know how to say but it was nice that my friend did not mind being naked in front of me or even masturbating, we also had a lot of fun, we laughed a lot of time. I don't know if this is sex, but it was beautiful, I want something like that. I almost don't even care if he's gay or straight, that guy said he was straight but I had a great time anyway.

I have been also with guys I found in a site, in practice only for sex but I didn't do anything, when we saw each other they were rough and had a single fixed idea, I sent them immediately to hell ... and they even wanted to have an intercourse without a condom!

When I have erotic dreams in practice my model is what we did in the cabin on the beach, this way I feel at ease. Friends tell me that I'm still too young (16) and that I have to grow up to learn to understand certain things but I think I will not change at all.

Then there is something that excites me to the maximum and it is when I go to the beach with some school friends who are not gay, there are showers without divisions, in practice we take a shower all together, that for me is a beautiful thing that involves me too much, I make a huge effort to avoid erection and most times self-control works well, but then the memory of certain situations remains in my brain and I masturbate a lot of times thinking of that, but not thinking of doing stuff with those guys but just of being together in the locker room all naked, it's beautiful and I like it a lot.

Do you think I still have to grow up to think about things that others think? But such things don't really involve me. For me the maximum is being naked together and play a bit. In the showers, I always behave like an idiot and they let me do because they think that I'm straight, therefore we can also have a fun between us "all straight guys" we can experience a bit of freedom, and I take advantage of that but I play just behaving as a stupid but it's not a sexual thing it's just that I enjoy it because I'm fine naked with my naked friends.

A fantasy that I have in mind is to go to a nudist beach, just to see the naked guys without the thing that you have to do necessarily something sexual, I'd like to see them because a naked guy is nice to see even if he is straight. I don't know if only gay guys go to the nudist beaches but I don't believe so and then for me, just to see and no more, gay or straight doesn't make any difference at all. I never went to a nudist beach because I'm a little scared,

even though I look older than I'm.

Project, but has all this something to do with gays or are just my own things that maybe are out of the gay field? But I'm gay, I have no problems with my being gay, or at least I think so.

Project answers

In fact, collective nudity is a subject of which we speak very little but that for gay guys it is a very strong interest and also a cause for anxiety. In general, the question is underestimated precisely because the problem of collective nudity is a typical gay problem. In Italy, showers and changing rooms are divided by gender, precisely because, assuming that the whole population is heterosexual, separating the environments by gender, it is possible to prevent sexual involvement in the locker rooms.

The premise that everyone is hetero, however, is wrong and, while for the straight guys, locker rooms and showers remain an environment substantially neutral from the sexual point of view, for gay guys the same environments are at the same time particularly stimulating and even sometimes strongly anxiogenic because it is true that you can see your friends naked but it is equally true that you too have to be naked in front of them and for a gay guy being naked together with other naked guys can cause problems of erection and considerable embarrassment.

Many gay guys practice sports in a systematic way and now they are so used to the locker rooms and showers that it doesn't create them any problem but doesn't even create any sexual stimulation. Everything depends on education and acquired habits. The habit takes away the sexual halo to situations of collective nudity. You may be embarrassed by the possible feelings of inferiority that you can feel, both for the size of the penis and for the general physical state, but with the habit these things are usually minimized. It's obvious that those who attend sports environments can find a lot of really beautiful guys, but the first rule is to accept oneself for what one is. It is obvious that being 20 years old or 40 or 60, are things very different, just as being athletic and toned by physical constitution or having the belly, having flaccid muscles and losing hair. In short, one is what he is.

The same goes for the nudist beaches too. In Italy the word "nudist" is enough to evoke scenes of an erotic tale, but, let's understand each other, in many countries, particularly in northern Europe, nudism is practiced at the family level and no one gets surprised because there is a different culture of nakedness.

Alessandro answers



Project, this time I don't agree with what you write! I have been practicing sport in the gym more or less all my life and even before I started practicing sport I used to go to the locker rooms to accompany my older brother to the gym for his training! I don't hide that I'm really fed up with this sentence "shame in the locker room = gay". When I was a little boy, when we caught someone in the locker room who was ashamed or who took a shower at home or even worse wearing briefs (well there are those who do it!) automatically he was teased with nicknames that we can imagine, but over time these guys proved to be 100% heterosexual. It is absolutely not true that the topic "locker room" is a purely homosexual topic! It is a false myth!

The same goes for the erection story! Who said erection in the locker room is something only for gays? It's never happened to me, and yet I'm gay!! But I have seen guys and even people over 40 engaged or married in a "not really relaxed" state! But nobody has ever made problems! Growing up we understand that they are quite normal things, that in a male environment are not even noticed! If we talk about locker rooms for boys aged 14-17, well, there are real "little contests" for those who are more gifted!! And I assure you it's not a strangeness!

When I was on the team and I used to talk with friends from other teams, we told each other lots of stories and jokes about our performances and the thing was also recurring, because you understand that it was like an added value, in short, it was something that involved our male reputation. I think that gay guys who go into paranoia thinking of entering locker rooms or of taking a shower with other guys or similar things do it because they think that everyone is there to look at them as if they had the cameras pointed at them and it is perhaps this that amplifies fears and pushes (gay) guys to be afraid of things that doesn't exist at all!!

#### Roadbike answers

Exactly, and I can testify it, being a naturist / nudist. The discomfort of the nude is a taboo only here in Italy, while in other countries collective nudity is normal, both in sports and in family environments, as Project has rightly written.

Unfortunately, the Italian mentality on the nude is very archaic, showing oneself is still seen as something forbidden or inherent in sex, and it is a wrong and distorted image. According to this mentality the nude is to be forbidden or to be restricted only to certain appropriate environments. It also depends on the family environment in which a boy grows, of course if

parents or other relatives instill in children an extreme sense of modesty and shame, and insist on the fact that it is "sin" to be naked or simply to see the nakedness of others, with the growing up the boy in question will have problems in showing himself naked in the locker rooms or in other places.

The first thing that prevents someone from undressing is the usual problem of the comparison of bodies and genitals with other boys, but if a guy over time acquires an open mind on the nude, also gaining confidence in himself, certainly will not have the problem of how others can see him.

We are born with physical characteristics transmitted by our parents, and I see no reason (unlike ignorant and stupid people), to make fun of boys if they are lean or obese or do not have adequate physical shape. Being naturist always made me feel comfortable in the collective nudity simply because naturists / nudists saw the nude as an expression of a person's soul, and not as a way of showing off the physical "faults" boys should be ashamed of, hiding themselves with clothes for fear of being criticized, mocked and judged.

Giorgino answers

I have been doing sport for over 20 years, I have been a soldier, I'm a nudist convinced. Having said this, I must say that I have seen hundreds of naked males aged between 14 and 70 years old. When we were in the locker room just me and a friend of mine, he was walking happily "in joy" without problems, and it happened to me too, I don't deny it.

It's not the locker room that make you feel the sense and the pleasure of the nude, considering that if you get an erection you're forced to think about the most horrible things in the world to send it down.

The pleasure of naturism and naked living is precisely the freedom of the body. Which doesn't mean sex or sexuality but only freedom. We are all like one another, we are made in the same way and if you cannot find yourself at ease doing naturism ... well ... I consider it a problem. I believe that the pleasure of naturism and being naked produces very positive effects on the well-being of the body and the knowledge of one's own body. Me and my partner's brother (who is straight but knows everything) usually take a bath together talking and drinking our beers. It is beautiful, loose and extremely natural behavior. And, probably you will not believe it, but we started doing so when he knew I was gay. So, enjoy the freedom of your body without problems and you will be quieter in your mind, in your body and towards society.

### 11.2.6 Gay themed OCD and nakedness at the gym

The following email is a particularly important document, it is not about a gay guy, but about a straight guy with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) characterized by the obsessive fear of being gay. Guys with gay-themed OCD submit compulsively to tests of erection in environments or situations of gay interest, and/or to tests of masturbation with gay fantasies, in order to determine their sexual orientation. Obviously for these guys the climate of the locker room of a gym is generally strongly anxiety-inducing. The hetero guy who wrote the email, very well followed at a psychological level and now about to exit OCD, has begun to attend the gym and the relative locker room and has managed to have, even in that environment, an excellent control of anxiety.

”Hello everyone! I have not written for some time, lately I have been quite absent from the forum, even if I’m in chat almost every night. Many times, in recent years, I happened to feel bad and I came to the forum to open a topic and ask for help and some advice on how to get out of the black moments. This time, however, the situation is opposite, I’m writing to you because I’m finally beginning to understand and accept myself for what I’m, a straight guy, without asking myself too many questions, without making too many problems. My self-esteem has greatly increased, both thanks to psychotherapy, where I put into practice with all my will the therapeutic strategies of my psychologist (I must thank him too, because without him I would never understood the mechanisms and automatisms of thought that had almost taken control of my mind, settling themselves within me), and thanks to my openness to experiences, where I also made many mistakes, but I learned from those mistakes.

Unfortunately, today I still suffer from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and I don’t deny that when I’m anxious, negative thoughts start to emerge and this sometimes makes me very nervous. But the positive thing is that I finally recognized this automatism, and when the thoughts arrive I try to accept them for what they are, that is ”thoughts”, as the word just says, which are images, words that are not real in that moment. The fact is that the thoughts provoke emotions, positive, if the thought concerns a beautiful thing and obviously, they cause negative emotions if the thought is negative. I now try to tolerate them, because I’m aware that a thought is a just a thought, and cannot represent reality.

I take my life as it comes, with the positive and negative sides, and I try not to make a drama if someone tells me something rude. The negative thoughts are for me (but I think for everyone) a wake-up call, for example if I’m doing

something and I start to feel anxious and negative thoughts appear it means that I don't really want to do it. I must thank these thoughts, I must thank the anxiety, which on one hand made me suffer like a beaten dog, but on the other made me understand that the life I did until a few months ago, didn't belong to me, I acted a character that I was not, and I did things I didn't really want to do.

My life is changing, and positively, of course I have my black moments (like everyone) but I'm beginning to manage them effectively, and above all I try not to emphasize certain situations, which in reality are nonsense. I'm becoming more elastic mentally, I accept my parents for what they are, I don't judge them, even if they have judged me in the past, but in my heart I have forgiven them.

I am beginning to listen to myself, my real needs, my body, my sexual drives, I accept all this as normal things. When I'm among the people, I feel like them, neither superior nor inferior. In the past I tended to feel inferior, I judged myself as an incapable, a clumsy. Today when I talk to a person I look at that person straight in the eyes, sure of myself, I pronounce the words well, when I speak, I feel at the same level. I don't judge myself negatively if I don't have any real friend yet, with whom I could go out on Saturday night.

I always say to myself that everything has its own time and that I must not be in a hurry. Already the fact that I can interact with people and especially with my peers (before I was afraid of my peers), is a big step forward for me and I'm happy for it. I'm sure that if I keep going on this way, showing myself for what I am (and I'm not just talking about my sexual orientation, but I mean everything), I'll finally be able to find people who have the same sensitivity and with whom I can share good moments. I can finally see the positive aspects of life and I dwell on them, and when I can overcome my fears, I congratulate myself.

A month ago I joined the gym to improve my body and my mood. When I'm there I feel at home, it's a beautiful environment, there are many quiet guys (and also very nice!) And sometimes I exchange a few words with them. The first few times, I didn't want to take a shower there, I preferred to do it at home, because I was afraid of having an erection watching other naked guys, then a few weeks ago I decided to overcome this other fear of mine. This morning after the training, I took a shower there, before entering the locker room I had a little anxiety, then I took courage and I entered. I started to undress, I took the bathrobe and the bubble bath and went in the shower. After the shower I went to put the underwear clean, to dress, dry my hair etc. etc., in short, all things that normally people do after physical exercises. But all this (apart from the initial anxiety) was accompanied by a sense of

absolute freedom, I saw other naked guys and I felt a bit of sexual excitement, but only psychological, in the sense that physically I didn't have erections. But if I had had an erection, of course, I would have felt embarrassed, but just because I'm accepting sexuality for what it is, probably having an erection would not have made many problems. While I was taking a shower and soaping my body and hair, I felt free from all fear, I felt the warm water on my body sliding slowly, the perfume of the bubble bath, the steam that surrounded me. I really relaxed and felt so natural, I was naked along with other naked guys, doing normal things, free from any negative thinking and from any worries. I was so at ease that I stayed a lot of time in the locker room, I did everything calmly, because there were only a few guys, sometimes with the corner of the eye I looked at some penises but I'm very prudent and no one noticed it!

Then, when I was almost completely dressed, a gentleman of about 40 (maybe even less) entered, a sculpted and attractive physique. Even before, when I was doing the exercises in the gym, he had glanced at me and I had returned the glance, then in the locker room he started chatting: "and even today we trained ..." and so we talked for a couple of minutes. Then, I finished dressing, I put the jacket on, we said goodbye and went away. When I got into the car, before starting the engine, I said to myself "very good, it went very well!" and I came back home happy! Often, many of our fears are completely unfounded. The human mind is often a double-edged sword because (as said before) we listen to our thoughts and the famous "anxiety" arrives. For example, this morning I was very worried about the shower in the gym, I even imagined scenes in which I had an erection in the locker room and someone made fun of me. Instead I experienced the exact opposite, but then I know I could have an erection in the future, but I will not make a problem of it because it is not. Living well with oneself and with one's own sexuality is a wonderful thing, feeling one's own instincts and having one's own erotic imagery as a sort of private garden where only we can access with our imagination (this applies to everyone, gay or not) means knowing yourself and feeling good about yourself. I conclude with two thoughts I wrote these days in moments of serenity:

1) "I feel good, but not because I'm all right, but because I accept the things that don't go well without making a drama."

2) "The charm of life is characterized by the mystery and uncertainty of every day, which are scary to each of us, but at the same time make life more beautiful and intriguing. I am convinced that if each of us knew his own future at the beginning, he would not even taste every little moment

of life. Doubt and uncertainty are and **MUST ABSOLUTELY BE PART** of life, without them we couldn't open ourselves to experiences and we couldn't afford to make mistakes. In my opinion, a man who is not wrong, or doesn't admit to having made a mistake at least once in his life, cannot be called a man."

I wish all of you a good evening and happy Christmas holidays! A hug!"

### 11.2.7 Gay sex and many doubts

Hello Project,

It's been a long time since I have stopped sending you e-mails, but last year we have been often in contact and talking to you has been very useful. Today I am sending you this email because new things have happened and I think I could talk seriously with you about those things.

I signed up on a dating site, I know you disagree but I saw almost no other opportunity to get in touch with gay guys. I tried before without putting any photos, but no one sent me messages and then I decided to put a picture of me, a real photo, not the face, in practice a naked torso up to just below the waist. You know that I have been training in the gym for years and you also know well of my adventures, or I should better say of my unilateral infatuations for a guy I had met at the gym, but now this is an old story.

At 22 years old, now I'm pretty proud of myself and I think that people can enjoy very much one of my photos. Ok, I know I'm a bit too proud of my body, but I worked hard in my exercises. After I put the picture, things changed, I received many messages, most of them only sexual and very vulgar. I did not even answer, I was just waiting for something different. Is it possible that there isn't another guy like me on the dating site? Is it possible that they are all old and crazy for sex?

Then I received a message witty, ironic that joked on my body. Obviously the message intrigued me, it came from a guy 23 y. o. who lived in twenty-five miles from my home town. He also put photos on the site but much more explicit than mine. Project, I'd say a false thing if I told you that those photos haven't caught my attention, they have drawn me a lot! And then belonged to a guy who had sent me a message. I responded trying to keep a playful and ironic tone but, I confess, in my response, I also included a small reference to his photos.

He responded by sending me his msn and asked me to join him there. I was hoping that we could do something on cam, but when I tried to start a video call, msn told me that his cam was not connected, I asked him to plug it in and he answered me that really he hadn't any cam. We talked a little. I

quote here a part of the conversation:

**gay elf wrote:** Andrew, you wanted the cam in order to have a little sex?

**Andrew wrote:** no ... well ... I feel embarrassed ... yes, ok, even for that, however, you too, why did you put those pictures on the site?

**gay elf wrote:** I put them because for me sex is a very important thing in a relationship, if there isn't a strong push of this kind you cannot go anywhere.

**Andrew wrote:** but did you meet many guys through the dating site?

**gay elf wrote:** more than someone

**Andrew wrote:** and did you have sex with them?

**gay elf wrote:** yes, with someone I did, and you?

**Andrew wrote:** I have just joined but I do not look for sex, I would like to find a serious guy to build something together

**gay elf wrote:** ... and the first thing you ask him is if he has a cam?

**Andrew wrote:** but you always have to put me in trouble?

**gay elf wrote:** however I have a cam, if you want to connect let's go but don't tell me I'm the one who goes searching for sex, okay?

**Andrew wrote:** quiet! I'm not telling it!

**gay elf wrote:** That's it! This is me! (he stood up to be seen, but was fully clothed)

**Andrew wrote:** What a beautiful show! You're a really nice guy! (I too stood up to show me)

**gay elf wrote:** you really are very muscular! Congratulations! But now, come on, turn off the cam!

**Andrew wrote:** Why? No, come on! Leave it on!

I expected it would come immediately to masturbate on cam but it did not happen. He was playing with me like a cat plays with a mouse, wanted to be prayed, he wanted me to insist but I didn't want to listen to him and we went on for almost an hour one to wait for the moves of the other, to see who would make the first false step, then he relented.

**gay elf wrote:** ok, I begin to show me! (He stood up and took off his sweater, shirt and undershirt)

**Andrew wrote:** Nice!

**gay elf wrote:** What are you waiting for?

**Andrew wrote:** Ok ok! (I'm also shirtless)

**gay elf wrote:** Damn if you're a nice guy!

Project, I'll spare you the rest, but you can understand how it ended up. After something like that I was literally in orbit, I felt happy, I had won my taboo and I had found a guy I really liked and I started to fantasize about that guy. We said goodbye, I felt really light, flying in a fantastic and beautiful dimension.

In the evening I try to look back on msn but he is not online, I feel upset, then I calm down, try again later at night, but he isn't there and not even the next morning and all the next day. I feel badly frustrated and disappointed, in the following days he was unavailable.

Eleven days after, finally, he sends me a message through the dating site. He doesn't even respond to messages that I send him, but writes directly: "Do you want to be with me tonight?" I feel upset, I try to answer: "But where have you been all this time? I tried to contact you in any way, but where have you been? You made me feel anxious for so many days!" He doesn't even respond to my questions but insists: "So, do you want or not?" The temptation is great, and I say yes, in practice it is my first time with a guy. We go to a motel at the first exit of the highway, a neutral place, neither his nor mine. In the car I try to ask him again why he disappeared that way, but he tells me I'm whining and I do not have to be jealous like girls do. I ask him if he ever had a girlfriend and he says that he currently has a girlfriend but that she is not enough for him. I ask if she knows about me, he answers: "Are you kidding?" The situation embarrasses me a lot.

When we enter the room, he is tender with me, not aggressive at all. In short, Project, it was a night I will never forget, I felt pampered, surrounded by all his attention. Everything happened so very sweet. I told him that I did not like anal penetration neither one way nor the other and he said, "Ok, no problem! You have to be perfectly at ease. I told him that I was afraid of the diseases and in practice we limited ourselves to mutual masturbation without oral sex. This fact didn't create problems at all. We were embraced a lot of time touching each other freely, in short, for me it was a bit like going into a trance, then in the morning we separated and I started having many doubts.

This time too he disappeared for about two weeks and I spent all that time asking myself a thousand questions without being able to find any answer, I'm afraid that he goes with many other guys, I'd say I'm almost sure, and then the girl! I cannot understand how it is possible to have a girlfriend and have sex also with guys and then it was not even stupid sex, having sex with him was a really nice thing. Project, should I worry about all these things?



Until now it happened three times (his disappearing). Sexually I'm fine with him, it is clear that he doesn't want performances from me, for him I'm not an object, at least at the level of sex, but a guy who has to be comfortable and to be happy with what he does. But with this guy I don't even have a minimum of dialogue, I don't know anything about him, I don't know where he goes when he disappears and don't know what he thinks. I'd say that at sexual level he would be more or less the guy of my dreams but I'm afraid to wake up from these dreams and find myself in front of a total stranger. What am I for this guy?

Andrew

p. s. If you want, you can post this mail on your blog.

Below you can read a very interesting reply from Alyosha, published on the Gay Project Forum.

"Andrew, you see, this guy is not entirely wrong. Dating sites, ok, but it's not even true that if you don't put a picture, no one contacts you, if anything, the ones who contact you may be not beautiful people. The substance is that you want one that is physically at your height and if you are well placed I don't see why not. In the end, if it is about sex, everyone arrives where he can and stops where he likes better. I think the important thing is to tell oneself these things clearly, to recognize in front of themselves certain forms of vanity and one's own real intentions, if the initial analysis is mistaken it's possible to come to certain meetings absolutely unprepared and the consequences can be very harmful.

See, if you claim that you only want to fall in love and at the same time you go to look inside a dating site, you only behave as a hypocrite with yourself. Do you know what the consequence of this hypocrisy is? That you have to be careful, and when you feel involved, it's even worse that when you feel not such. He's right, dear Andrew, you want a story and ask for the cam? And yet I know what the real reason why you asked for it was, it was not to have sex, but to seduce him.

Of course the body is important, it is the temple of our soul and the more you treat it well the more you are satisfied. But what goes through the physical only is a type of short term seduction, that ignites easily but unfortunately just as easily turns off.

Clearly, you immediately attracted his attention, this is clear, but after a while he can get tired of you. Assuming you'll keep staying in that dating site, because you're doing like a mouse with the cheese, keep in mind two things, the chances of meeting a handsome guy who is still in good faith are practically 1 / infinite, because that one is you and also just for a while,

since after a couple of meetings you will be exactly like everyone else and soon you'll smile sighing when you will hear of a newbie who tells you that he is not looking for sex, but in the same time asks you for the cam.

The second thing to keep in mind is that a person who comes to bed with you at first blow, does exactly the same with everyone else, because as far as our ego can be naive and childish, you cannot avoid to think and understand that you are exactly like everyone else for him.

In short, make your experiences if you like and protect yourself (first of all be careful about your health!), but don't expect much more from certain types of meetings, at least, avoid certain disappointments that are frankly written in the premises.

It is better for you to be clearly aware that you too, down there, are looking for sex only, and that the only thing that makes you different from the others is that you are in the first experiences and you only look for gentle and patient people. Try to be careful and smart when you select people, it could end up even worse than that, if your ability of selection stops at the type of requirements you refer to."

### 11.2.8 Gay polygamy

Hello Project, I jump the pleasantries, if I write to you it means that for me you are ok. I'm 24 years old, I cannot say if I'm single or multiple. I mean I don't have a boyfriend, or rather I don't have a boyfriend in the traditional sense of the term, but I have more than one. I don't go looking for meeting chats or similar things, my boyfriends, if I can call them so, are guys I met in real life, for me it's not just a sexual interest, I love these guys (I would say that they are currently three, or maybe four) and I am convinced that they would do anything for me just as I would do for them.

I read the email you posted about ex-boyfriends that is: "Beyond the gay couple", but for me it is different, there are no ex-boyfriends, I may not have seen one of my boys for a long time, even months, but finally when we see each other we can also have a bit of sex. Sex for me is very important but also because it gives me a little certainty that the guy doesn't say no, doesn't refuse me, I think the point is this. If I like a guy, he attracts me because he is a good and nice guy, then, when I fall in love with him, I want him to have sex with me, it becomes a kind of fixed idea for me, I court him with the utmost commitment, that is, I make it clear in every way that I'm in love with him, but if he refuses me, I keep him at a distance definitively.

I want guys who want me even from that (sex) point of view, then, when it happened, the frenzy goes away and let's say that that guy remains as a real interest for me, sex and affection together, I know that I can trust him,

in a sense I don't even care if he's faithful because I probably wouldn't be faithful to him, but I have to know I can trust him. With the guys I always make a clear speech, I don't look for close bonds, I don't like such things, with someone a similar speech is possible, with some other really not and all ends immediately, unless they pretend to be able to change things.

I don't consider myself a stray of sex in the sense that I don't go with the first one I meet, I have to love a guy to think about sex with him, somehow I'm polygamist, in the sense that I have more guys at the same time, but they are always and only the same, maybe over time someone will go away and I will know some new guy, but my boys are few.

I like serious guys but not moralists, I don't like those who preach all the time because they want to manage you as if you were a thing. Then, of course, it happens that I, for some periods, have a quasi-boyfriend, that is a guy who in practice attracts me very strongly on a sexual level and not only, and at that time I think only of him. But it doesn't happen that it becomes a definitive and exclusive thing. My boys know that I'm like that and I think that at the beginning they suffer a lot because they think that the fact that I dedicate myself to another guy means that I forget them but it is not so and when they understand it they are perplexed and then amazed in the positive sense.

That is, if just to say, I belonged to one guy only, I would feel forced, I would feel it as something not spontaneous, and then who says that you cannot really love three or four guys but that it should be only one? The general rules don't make much sense. If for someone it works so good for him, it does not work like that for me. Some friends, not "my boys", tell me that going on like this will leave me nothing because I will never have an emotional stability, but I feel good this way. I tried several times to have only one boyfriend but eventually it became a routine, an obligation, while I want things to be spontaneous. I'm not a person who comes crazy for sex, I like it and a lot, but I don't have to be in bed with someone every night, in fact sometimes I spend very long periods without sex and then sometimes the imagination is enough and I can do it myself. One thing to remark: I'm very careful, on a maniacal level, about prevention but now my boys know it.

Project, I don't feel strange for my way of living sex, it's the others (not my boys) who do everything to make it seem strange. My boys, for me, are not just friends and not even friends with whom you can also have sex, for me they are really important. Losing one of them would make me feel bad, but, saying "loosing", I don't mean "loosing" him in the sense that he has found another boy but in the sense that he does not think about me anymore, that he doesn't look for me anymore and also that he refuses my proposal

when I ask him to have a bit of sex. Please note, Project, if he says no out of respect to his boyfriend, I accept it without problems, but if he doesn't have a boyfriend and doesn't want to make love with me, well, I really don't accept it. If he has a boyfriend, no problem, I would still like to continue to believe that he is there to me too and that he will be there to me too even in the future, no matter whether or not he has a boyfriend. I know it sounds strange, it sounds strange even to me when I read it, but in fact it is so. I think that gay polygamy, like mine, exists and that it is not such a rare thing. It took me a long time to understand that this works for me, but in the end my spontaneity is just that. What do you think, Project?

### 11.2.9 One hundred percent Gay

Hello Project, I am writing to encourage you to go on with "gay project" because I'm convinced, and I know it because I have experienced it in first person, that it is a fundamental tool of sex education, in practice the only tool on the net that allows gay boys to have serious answers on many things that they couldn't face anywhere else.

I'll tell you my story (I wrote you a long time ago and we talked through msn), if you want, publish this email, I think it would make sense because I believe that many guys have gone through things similar to those I experienced.

I am 25 years old, I'm not really young but I can tell you that I'm only now learning to appreciate the fact that I'm gay and to live homosexuality in another way. I'm from the computer generation and I'm an only child, among other things a child of elderly parents, my father is almost 70 years old and my mother is a bit under 60. Of my parents I can only say well. In my house I've always felt at ease.

My parents worried about me but they always left me substantial freedom. At 19 I was traveling around Europe in a tent with my friends, they never anguished me with the classic questions like "do you have a girlfriend?" or similar, with them the topic of sex was always a taboo, it's like if they had in mind that they had to stay apart from those things and up to a certain point I agree with them.

I had already my pc when I was 14 and I fiddled around a lot. My parents a little because of their mentality, according to which they would never go rummaging through my things, and a little because they don't understand anything about computers, they would certainly never enter my computer and I used it at the beginning only for school and I didn't even put a password on it, then, driven mainly by the stories of my classmates, I started to search, on google, words like sex, pussy, and the like. What comes after you

can imagine it.

I saved the sites and then I thought it was risky and I studied how to put the password, I spent two hours to understand how to do but then I succeeded. I had just turned 14. I waited for dad and mom to go to bed and then: sex without brakes! Endless masturbations on straight photos and videos, that is with a boy and a girl, up to high night, but all apparently strictly in a straight key.

I say this because now I know it very well, a straight porn can be very interesting also for a gay boy, because there is not only the girl, but at that time I hadn't arrived yet to this kind of subtle reasoning, for me if there was a girl on the video, the video was straight and therefore I was fine and I felt allowed to use it.

For a few days it went on like this, I felt like a "man" because I was thinking about sex, in the morning, at school, I was so dazed that I fell asleep in class. I arrived to masturbate three or four times a day. In practice, pornography monopolized me completely, I had reached the point that my penis hurt and I thought I had created problems only by insisting too much, but fortunately it was not so.

I was a bit succubus of these things and a little I began to think that it was too much and it could compromise my health and then I began to reduce the number of masturbations but at the same time I wanted them to be a powerful things and then I chose with care the photos or the porn to use, even if at that time the porn was very short.

A lot of times I ended up in sites that became impossible to close and I had to close everything turning off the computer, there was no ADSL, and there was the risk of the dialer, that loaded the bill with very heavy costs, but fortunately I have never stumbled on such things, then since I knew that with the ADSL there was no risk of the dialer, I did change my subscription and I put the ADSL, at least from that point of view I was safe.

I had just turned 15 and I had noticed one thing, that is, that even if I masturbated using hetero porn sites, in fact, I wasn't interested at all in girls, and without internet, when I tried to go only with my fantasy on the girls, I didn't even get a hard-on. I remember that at the time I was very worried, I went to read articles on impotence and I seemed to have all the ills of the world.

Then something happened that really upset me. At school, my class was almost entirely male, we did gymnastics without girls at the first two hours, the girls did it with the other girls in the afternoon.

At the end of the second year, at the beginning of May, the teacher tells us that the following Monday he would have taken us to the municipal stadium of athletics and tells us "Bring everything with you, even soap, shampoo and

towel because at the stadium there are the showers". At school, on the other hand, there was nothing but a football pitch and a gym, but still with all the wooden tools attached to the walls, like many years ago.

The following Monday arrives, well let's say that it really changed my life. There were not only my classmates but also the older boys of the twelfth and thirteenth grade (18-19 y. o.).

The showers were huge and in the locker room there was a go and come of naked guys, and immediately I had an erection that I couldn't hold back. Obviously I didn't take a shower, I was not really in a possible condition, I was the first one to enter the locker room and the last one to get out of it, then at the end of the morning, when I saw someone who went back to the showers, I rushed there and came out after the last of my classmates. Luckily I had the shoulder bag, and instead of putting it on my shoulders I put it on my neck so that it would fall on the front to cover the erection. In practice I had no more doubts, I had not yet turned 16.

Since that day I no longer used straight porn sites, now I felt completely gay. I have to say that I had no problem accepting it, because it was absolutely natural for me and, even without porn, I masturbated easily using fancy, I was fine because the memory of the morning at the stadium was and still is one of my fixed sexual fantasies.

Here begins the second part of the story and perhaps the most unpleasant. I had just started to surf gay sites, and many things seemed to fit perfectly with my way of fantasizing about the guys: caressing, hugging, kissing, and wanting to see and touch the other boy's intimate parts and also let him do exactly the same, all this didn't create any problems, and spontaneously I had already thought many times even about mutual masturbation, after the famous morning at the stadium.

As for the oral sex, ok, it was never a spontaneous thing, but in a sense I told myself that in fact I would have done it on both sides, but many porn videos, practically all, went on with the penetration and frankly it was something that not only had never crossed my mind but sincerely seemed repellent to me, not for a matter of moralism but I just could not conceive of it.

The idea of oral sex was a different thing, not spontaneous, but in the end it was possible also for me, but I considered the penetration something extra-neous, both on one side or the other. From here I began to wonder if I was really gay, so many jokes about gays alluded to that thing, in porn it was a frequent thing, not really always present but very present (99%). I began to make a selection of videos by eliminating all those that ended up with the penetration and saving everyone else, and then I saw only those that I had saved because I felt them more suitable for me. Then I began to reflect almost obsessively about the fact that I was immature, because I read that

when gay guys say "complete intercourse" they allude to anal penetration and I told myself that if there is to be forced, I don't like it, it is a sign that I'm not really gay, but so what am I?

I am one who prefers to stop at an incomplete thing and therefore am I afraid of true gay sex? I tried to masturbate forcing myself to fantasies on the anal penetration but I felt it just like something completely extraneous. This fact for me was very conditioning, in practice even if I had friends who I thought were gay I had never even tried to break the ice and to every attempt on their part I replied in a very cold way because I didn't feel fully gay and I thought that it would not work anyway, that maybe I would have to adapt, what I did not like at all. Then I ended up on your blog, and there was a link to the novel "Andy". I was intrigued and I started to read and the more I went on the more I liked it, the text was censored but nevertheless was still understandable. I said to myself: "You have just to wait and these guys too will end up there! (I meant to anal penetration)". I arrive at the end of chapter 3 and read this passage:

- Mark, but you stay with me just to look me in the eyes and to prepare breakfast for me?
- No, not just for that.
- And what else? Say that! Don't feel conditioned!
- Well, also because I'd like to have sex with you!
- Oh! Finally! And what does it mean for you to have sex with me?
- Well, you know!
- No, I do not know, you must tell me!
- Come on, don't embarrass me!
- But if you feel embarrassed for this, tonight, I think, we will have very little sex! Come on! Tell me what you'd like to do!
- Come on, do not make a fuss!

[... omissis ... (Andy tries in any way to induce Mark to confess what his sexual fantasies are, what he would like to do with Andy.) Mark reticent, at first, then, always using a language that is not directly sexual, talks about his fantasies, but the list of sexual fantasies of Mark is very short.)]

- And then? -
- That's all!
- No, tell it all without hypocrisy!
- No! That's really all!
- No! It's not true, tell all the story!

- No! it's totally true!
- What did you say?
- Nothing else! finished! There is nothing more!
- Don't be ashamed, Mark, and the rest?
- There is nothing to add!
- What does nothing mean?
- It means that I don't like sex from behind ... how have I to tell you?
- Are you teasing me?
- No! That's exactly so, if it's not fit for you I'm sorry, I could also try to adapt but it doesn't come naturally to me, it would seem to me a forced thing, in my fantasies these things have never existed.

Andy became more serious.

- Are you sure, Puppy?
- Certainly, keep calm! I know my fantasies well, but why are you grimacing that way?
- Because it never even crossed my brain.
- Don't make me worry, Andy, tell me the truth!
- I swear, I never thought of making love that way, it's an idea that has never even touched me.
- Andy, don't make fun of me on these things, they're too important!
- No, Puppy, it's all true! When I looked at porn movies and arrived at that point I closed the video ...
- Damn! Is it possible? We are similar also from this point of view!

Project, I swear to you that the reading of this passage has really accelerated my heart to a thousand. So I told myself: "There's a gay novel about two gay guys who have the same idea of gay sex that I have! And they are gay, they are the protagonists of a novel where there is written: "gay novel"". So I wrote to you, maybe you'll still remember it, I was "Maybegay", we talked through msn and you told me that the story of "Andy" is a true story. I didn't even tell you why I was so interested, maybe you'll remember, I asked you if you think Andy and Mark are really 100% gay and you were puzzled and you told me: "But why? Can you be more gay than that?" By now I had understood that gays "my way" not only exist but maybe they are not rare, but I had the idea that I would never have found a guy like me, with my way of seeing the things of sex, I thought that gays of this type



could also exist but I would never have found one.

After some time I met a guy at university, we studied together, he didn't have a girlfriend, he didn't talk about girls and I saw that he really cared about me, but I didn't have the courage to break the ice. Fortunately it was he the one who did it, I, on the contrary, with my usual doubts, avoided doing even the slightest step forward, at the end we explicitly said to each other that we were gay and that we liked each other. I told him though that to have sex with me he would have to do two things, I told him: "The first is the HIV test" and he told me: "Ok! No problem, I've never been with anyone! And the second?" I replied: "You must first read a novel and you must tell me what you think about it, ok?" He said to me: "Of course! Which one?" And I gave him the link to "Andy", he read it in two days and then we met again. I was very anxious and I asked him: "What do you think of the novel?" He told me: "It's beautiful! One of the most beautiful things I have read!" I asked him: "But do you think Mark and Andy are really gay?" He replied: "If they are not, I don't know who could be gay!"

And I told him : "But they do not have sex from behind." He looked at me puzzled and told me: "But for you it is so fundamental?" I replied "No, and for you?" He didn't know what to say, then he said: "If I must be honest I never understood what people find there. I see it as something forced, it's something that never came to my mind." I told him he had relieved me from a heavy weight and that now we just lacked the test, then I asked him if he felt 100% gay or maybe he felt gay only up to a certain point. He looked at me right in eyes and said: "But who put all these stupid things in your head? Of course I feel 100% gay! Who considers anal penetration as a fundamental thing can do what he wants, it's his business, do you think perhaps that I have to feel less gay for this? But it would be just absurd!"

Well, he's been my boyfriend for quite a few months now, sex with him is wonderful, but we don't really think too much about it. We have to finish our studies and find a job in order to live together, because our dream is that. Now, Project, of this email, do whatever you want, but you must know that "Andy" made me and my boyfriend happy. I'm very grateful to Gay Project. Even my boyfriend has read this mail and we send it to you together. There are many people who love you even if they don't know you in person.

### **11.2.10 Gay guys in the pool between tenderness and sexuality**

Hello Project,  
I opened by chance "gay project" and I started to read, it's really amazing

for me to find myself at ease here, nothing is too much or too little, there are just the lives of gay guys as they are. I never thought to write to someone to talk about myself so intimately but since there is the anonymity I opened a new email and I am determined. I thought of writing to ask for an opinion, or just to speak about my mind, on an issue that now is buzzing in my head a lot and namely the relationship between sex and affection, in other words the meaning of the sex when you fall in love with a boy.

I start from the beginning. I am 21 years old, studying at university, I never had a real social life, friends or anything like that, at school I played the role of others, I pretended to be straight, as I think it's almost mandatory to do, I had my little falling in love with a mate, a straight guy, I've suffered at the beginning, then I accepted everything. At University you can find a lot of hot guys you like but it's like at school, all straight. We study and in practice we have nothing better to do, even during the breaks, when teachers change, I never go out of the classroom and spend my time re-ordering notes.

At home, then full comedy, I'm an only child, shamelessly pampered by my mom and two aunts living at my home, not by my father who at least doesn't asphyxiate me. At home I haven't any gay book or gay film. I never speak about girls, this is obvious, but not even about guys, I can only speak about study and exams. No one asks me too many questions. I never heard at home the classic question: "Do you have a girlfriend?". In such an environment, guarded practically on sight and without any kind of occasions, for me, sexuality has always been a problem.

I cannot talk to anyone at any level and I have to be careful not to even be in front of my TV when they broadcast some news about gays. My parents are not homophobic, just believe that gay people live on other planets and that "we, normal people, have nothing to do with those" exact words of my aunt.

I discovered masturbation quite late, at 15, because since that time these topics have been regularly set aside as if total ignorance could prevent who knows what. I was so far away from sexual things that when I masturbated for the first time and I got a very strong ejaculation I was worried because I had not really understood what it was and I thought there was something wrong and that the white stuff was perhaps due to the fact that I had insisted too much and that I had broken something inside, maybe in the kidneys.

And then I could not talk to anyone, I was really afraid of being hurt, that I measured the fever many times because I thought that something inside me was broken. At the time I could not even imagine what the internet was because I did not have a computer of mine and searching sex on my father's computer seemed very strange to me.

You have to keep in mind that my parents are Catholic and, at least to a

certain point, I'm Catholic myself. We used to go to the church on Sunday, mom and my aunts always took communion and I as well. In practice when I was 15 I went to confess every Sunday that I masturbated, I promised myself to stop but then inevitably fell back to it, in practice it was the same story every week. I never told the priest that I was gay because that, according to me, the sin was not that, at least so I had understood. In essence, a depressing thing, a struggle with myself that was repeated every week.

Then when I turned 16 my parents gave me my first computer of my own and my genius sharpened, I studied with great care how to put the password so no one could access my computer, I think my father would never have done such things for reasons of principle (and I respect him because he respects me) but my mother would have laid her hands on it, and I'm sure she thinks it is the duty of a good mother to meddle in the affairs of the son, but finally, once the password is set, I felt more comfortable.

I could have locked myself in my room, but this would not have been tolerated, but I had my computer with the password set, so that no one could be in the way of my business. I rearranged the furniture in my room and oriented my desk toward the door, so that no one could enter without me noticing him and I positioned my computer so I could have time to change the page if someone had entered my room.

Internet for me meant especially pornography. At first it was just an obsession, I was always looking forward to put myself in front of the computer in the late evening because I had to wait until all were gone to bed. At first it was really a frenetic free porn sites hunt, but I was and I'm still very selective, porn, yes, but there must be something sweet, affectionate, otherwise I change. I put together a huge collection of photos, while videos were not so many, I was always looking for my ideal physical model of boy, and then I worked mentally on my collection trying to build my fantasy movie about the story of a boy, a tender love story with clear emotional and sexual implications, all mixed together. All my sexuality was reduced to masturbation and these fantasies, but I liked these things a lot. I was not frustrated or thinking that I was really missing something, or at least I didn't think so until recently.

And here begins the second part of the story. I'm pretty tall and very thin, and after a disturbing flue, the family doctor insisted that I had to practice sports. At first I just didn't want to because I had never done such things, even as a child, then my parents insisted and I started to think that in fact it could also have a purpose somehow sexual, so I accepted. I agreed with the pool for three times a week in a swimming pool close to my home (I go there on foot in 20 minutes). I go there in the afternoon at 18.00 in order to have a little free time to devote to other things.

The first time I went there to register and pay the fee I was amazed: a nice place, very clean and very well equipped, I joined the beginners course and I knew the coach, a guy about 25/30 maximum, beautiful, with a beautiful smile and an athletic handshake. However it was a very short conversation. In the afternoon I bought swimsuit, bathrobe, towel and bag, I choose the swimsuit the less compromising and the most useful to contain and hide you know what, in case of erection and then the erection became a true paranoia: what if it happens to me? And I started going back and forth: to go or not to go? This is the problem!

And then I wondered if the showers had partitions and many other such things, however I decided to go swimming wearing my swimsuit under my trousers to overcome at least the first embarrassment, then, if necessary, I could get away 10 minutes before the others and go in the locker room when no one was there. I was very uncertain, however, my parents had paid money in order to let me practice sports and then I was expected to do so, in short, at 17.45 o'clock, the day after, I made my entrance into the pool, the coach was there, we shook hands also with the other guys.

The guys more or less my age where many, in all about a dozen out of 15 in total. The coach told us to sit on the benches poolside waiting for "those" of the previous course to come out of the locker room, "a course for girls, so you cannot get in the dressing room until they have finished", the coach told us in a very spontaneous mischievous smile, I could say typically straight, which led me to exclude him from the number of interesting guys.

Meanwhile, I eyed three guys pretty good and in particular one of the three who had reacted in an embarrassed way to the coach's speech. Then after minutes we entered the locker room I took a seat on the bench right next to that guy, I do not know if he realized he was embarrassed but he really was. I had already my swimsuit on and I was pretty quiet, but he put on the swimsuit there, but in a special way. He had a very long shirt (I think he had it chosen just for that reason), first he pulled out the edges of the shirt that practically covered the entire "x area" then he lowered his trousers pulling them from the bottom, without raising flaps of the shirt, then he pulled down pants with a very similar maneuver, and put on the swimsuit and to bring it up took it form over his shirt, in practice it all lasted no more than 10 seconds and, of course, I saw nothing at all, then he took off his shirt and I saw him with only the swimsuit on. He was beautiful! A hundred times better than me!

In the meantime I had taken off my trousers and shirt and I was in my swimsuit too. I searched his x zone and in practice I didn't see anything, obviously he was so embarrassed that the situation didn't allow him to be aroused, for me it was not exactly so, but my swimsuit was pretty adequate

and contained me fine, however I tried to distract me to lower that principle of erection. During the lesson there were other people, there was the coach and then I got distracted. However, the guy threw furtive glances to me every now and then, and sometimes I even caught him looking at me. In practice, I wondered what he would do at the end of the lesson, if I could see him naked and what I should do with showers.

Then the time came. We went into the locker room and he repeated the same maneuver he had done when he had put on the swimsuit, exactly on the contrary, in practice he dried his chest, put the "drop down" shirt and then took off the swimsuit, dried himself and put on his briefs, and always under the flap of the shirt, this time too everything was very fast and as usually I did not see anything. I put on the bathrobe, dried and got dressed under my bathrobe, but I can say right in the most beautiful moment my bathrobe opened and I saw him throwing the eye over there, suddenly he turned away and apologized. A very unusual thing in a locker room of a swimming pool.

I finished in a few seconds to get dressed, red-faced with embarrassment, but I did not want to lose contact with him, even if, instead of seeing him, he had been the one who had seen me. While he was putting things in the bag I thought to ask him why he had apologized but probably it would create embarrassment so I just asked if it was the first time he was in the pool (stupid question), and from there we started talking a little, he was relieved that I had not given weight to the episode of the bathrobe.

We went to the bar, had a drink then I asked if he had a car, he said no and I offered to accompany him home because, despite my habit of walking, I had come by car. I took him home, rather distant, about 20 minutes by car, we spoke only of sport and training, when he left, he greeted me with a nice handshake, very strong and I would say masculine. I'll call him Mark, but actually he has an unusual name that inspires me very gently.

My parents at home noticed that I had considered very positive the experience in the pool and they were happy. I know Mark has completely changed my life, not that apparent, of course, but the sexual life. In practice it is almost completely eclipsed the era of pornography and started the era of Mark. I'm in an immense tenderness and this is the point, it is a sexual tenderness, practically all of my sexuality is dedicated only to him and all my mental films have a single protagonist. I love him because he's a good guy, if possible even more clumsy than me, but I also want him sexually, and I'm not ashamed to say so.

They were the early days of embarrassing situations in which I felt guilty because I had not spoken to him so clearly, for example, sometimes in the evening I called him on the phone, I told him that I could not say too much

because my parents were at home and I did not have the privacy I wanted, but he called me a lot, usually half an hour and more and it was the same for me, and those calls have a strong erotic value even now. When I know he's going to call me I go to bed and I talk to him on the phone while masturbating, under the covers. Of all this I feel a bit guilty, because he doesn't know, but I would have liked him to do the same.

Over time, at the pool, things are a little changed, and we became real friends, I used to go to wait for him in the car under his house and brought him back home after the gym three times a week and we talked about a lot of things but never about things related to sex. In the locker room the embarrassment of the first time had slowly passed, he used no more his "drop down" shirt and changed by my side remaining naked for a second, my behavior was substantially symmetrical, and he used to give me a look at that moment, just as I used to do with him, but we pretended nothing happened. At the end between us it was a kind of sexual contact accepted. I had noticed that, as Americans would say, he is well endowed in that department and I cannot deny that when I think about that my blood is boiling. Then an event occurred that changed things completely. One evening, after I accompanied him home, we have been talking for a long time in the car and in practice we have declared each other.

He began with a long preamble that could mean only one thing, then I asked if I could hold his hand and he said yes, it was an emotional, intense moment that seemed never end, I told him: "Do I embarrass you if I tell you that I'm sexually aroused?" He said: "It happens to me too." It had been more than five months since our first meeting. After embracing Mark, I can finally kiss him, touch him even intimately knowing that he's fine with that and I see that there really is an experiencing sexuality in unison, with practically identical reactions, I see a guy who "wants" to stay with me, I think we are a couple and this probably will not collapse, such things make me feel great. Now we've been together many months and my life changed. My sexuality belongs to Mark.

Unfortunately we cannot live our feelings in the light of the sun, but there is nothing in the world that I would change for the joy of being near him, because he's a sweet guy, a bit as I think I'm, but he is also much sensual. When we are in our intimacy it seems to me to dream. Unfortunately we attend different faculties and probably would have very different tasks, we live our story in secret, and can meet once a week and spend together Saturday afternoon and Sunday in a small house outside of town in the Apennines, the last few months it was very cold and staying embraced under the covers was just something very tender. It's great to live together sex and tenderness. Sometimes I'm afraid it's only a dream and that it could end at any mo-

ment, when he's out traveling by car I make him send me a text message every time he arrives at destination, and I do the same with him. We must save our happiness. That's why I wanted to tell the boys of gay project that sex and tenderness are one thing, and happiness is possible! So brave! An affectionate greeting to you, Project, who put on this project. Of course you can publish my mail.

A hug to all the boys.

Michael

### 11.2.11 Gay sexual behaviors

I apologize to Daniel who has probably felt neglect, what is absolutely far from my intentions.

Hello Daniel, because of the breakup of my computer (and the fact that I don't open too much frequently my email account on the msn site), I read only today your message of April 7th. I sent you an email to apologize. I published your email with the whole post you sent to me so kindly. I thank you very much for your trust.

Hello Project, finally I decided! After thinking about a lot, I was leaving everything go for the umpteenth time but instead I'm here and now I'll try to write even if it makes a very strange impression to me, if nothing else because I don't know you in person even if things you are doing seem to me serious, and I would also say very serious. That's why I'm writing to you. I didn't write a post for you to post on the forum or on your gay sites, I send you instead a few pages of my diary instead. I have always wondered if there are other guys who have lived the same experiences I have lived, it is obvious that they are there, but I wonder if they reacted the same way I have reacted. Maybe I'm not able to give things the right value. I would pray you to publish these pages (if they don't seem a bit 'too rough) on the site msn, even on others and on the forum if you like, but on the site msn I would particularly like. I greet you and hug you! Daniel (my contact is: [omissis])

#### DIARY

##### Wednesday

A nightmare day! They sent me around the city all day: do this, do that! Go up, go down! In short, I am the servant of all. I'm a worthless guy, all

right, but a bit of education is needed in any case, if you need to clean your shoes why do you want to use me as a doormat? There is a lot of people that just suck, I have to keep good relationships with them because if not, where do I go? The boss shows at least a bit of respect, but the others are really squalid people.

This morning a strange thing happened at the post office, they changed the employee of the packages and put there a young guy, he looked like a kid and today he has been very kind with me. Anyway it's a little consolation on a shitty day.

### **Thursday**

I worked little today. I'm tired of doing anything. There is a new guy who works with me, but he is not even passable, he would not be ugly but is clumsy, you tell him one thing and he understands another, sometimes I cannot even understand exactly what he says, he talks strange, I don't know, anyway he wouldn't be really bad, but he doesn't really attract me, let's say he's not unpleasant, he tries to talk with me but he wears something similar to a wedding ring, so I think he has a girl.

### **Friday**

What a stress! Today the boss came, or better the owner, but I have not even seen him. The manager was in total agitation, he's probably more than 40 years old but behaves like a kid with the owner, from what I saw, if the boss asked him to go to bed with him, he would say: "ok, boss!"

Then I saw for a moment the guy at the post office counter, who's really a nice guy, not anything exceptional but very nice, he perhaps attracts me at least a little bit, but we have only exchanged a smile.

At home I quarreled badly with mum, she's too much interested in my business and I cannot stand it! My father doesn't do such things, it would not pass by his head, but she is nosy and then what is she looking for? And it makes me angry when she says it's not true. I put things in a certain order and I always find them another way.

Anyway for her part any rummaging is useless, my important things are all in the computer under passwords and nobody can spy, nobody! Today I had to go and get a pizza with Laurence and Luke, but obviously they didn't remember it, because they have other things to do, they can't give up the girl to be with me! All right, they say we're friends! But friends of what?

### **Saturday**



What a horror Saturday and Sunday. I can only wait for Monday. Friends have a lot of things to do, I don't! I'm here at home, and what am I doing? Luckily there is internet, but internet is also boring at the end, yes, at least a bit of sex, but it's all false, I don't say that it disgusts me, indeed! But at the end beyond a good wank you don't go anyway, at least as I see it, because I don't want to be involved in problems of any kind, not even on a psychological level, I hate all that chitchatting, I think, because I don't know how does it work. A beautiful site is [omissis] indeed it is really nice, but even this website I don't say that it's boring, a little I look at it (and more than a bit) but in the end what do I need when I go there? I download a little bit, yes, just on a physiological level, damn but it's not enough for me, it's not enough for me anymore! I want a real guy, I want to devote myself to him with all my strength, I can really make a guy happy, but I don't have a real guy!

### **Sunday**

Lunch at my uncle's home. At least I ate well. My uncle, in my opinion, thinks that I can get together with Martina [his daughter]. But I think that such a thing didn't even cross Martina's head! Luckily! Otherwise I would have to keep at a distance! I had been proposed to enroll in a gym, you know how many beautiful guys I would be able to see! But I will never go there! Tomorrow I have to go to work. Ugh! I'm very tired of my job! Now I'm going a bit on the usual site, so my eyes can enjoy.

### **Monday**

Today a very strange thing happened, that is not so strange, but is something that came to my mind and doesn't go away, the guy from the post office smiled at me in a way that could only have a particular meaning. Now I know his name: "Mauro M." because it's written on the identification tag he wears around his neck. He started looking for a package sent from my company that was lost and it took more than half an hour to find it but at the end he managed to find it, I followed the whole operation and I was able to observe him closely. It's really cute, not beautiful but sweet, in short, I would not have gone away anymore. When he found what happened to the package he looked at me straight in the eyes and smiled at me, as if to say: I did it for you! I've been thinking about it all day, I guess I'm falling in love.

### **Tuesday**

I talked Mauro for a few minutes, he gave me the cell phone number and I gave him mine, we're going to have a pizza tonight. Who knows what can come out of it? I have to take a nice shower and I have to shave well. Nothing will happen, I know, but if it happens I want to be ready. He's gay!!! How beautiful! How beautiful! How beautiful! What a beautiful evening, how sweet, how much I would cuddle him, damn I would have eaten him with kisses and then I really like him because he has not the fixed idea of sex, we were talking in the car, just talking, two gays in the car who keep just talking, it means that he is not one of the usual ones, he has caressed my hand and I was about to die looking at him in the eyes. I felt charged to the nth degree, I thought he would take a step further but it didn't happen. He told me that he only had had two boys but they both got rid of him because in sex they wanted to do just what they wanted and he felt instrumentalized and tried to make them understand it but they didn't want to know reasons of any kind. But I say: you find a guy like Mauro, but how do you get stuck on things of sex? If you love each other at the end a balance can be found. Poor fellow! I think he felt really bad. With me nothing like that would have happened, I told him so, and he just smiled and kissed me, but slightly. Mauro! How can I not jump on you?

- omissis -

The following week.

### **Tuesday**

With Mauro we have made so much progress, now we kiss just as it should be done, in short, an involving thing on a sexual level, but he also made me a speech a bit strange. He told me what he would like to do with me. Up until a certain point I found myself in his words, but then he asked me if I would have accepted to be passive and said that "that is a great test of love". This thing gave me a bit annoyance. I told him that I never had had such fantasies and he told me that he felt completely active, then he downplayed and tried to change the subject.

Okay that he can also have different fantasies from mine, but now he puts me in crisis, I don't want to lose him, but I don't even want to do things I don't like. And then I don't understand one thing: Marcello, who was gay at the highest level, didn't have these fantasies, that didn't even passed through the antechamber of his brain. He had his particularities on many other things, but in things of sex I found myself quite well with him. Mah! This creates

problems for me. But why should I do things that I don't like in order to make Mauro happy? And then there is also the problem of the risk, because in those things there is a risk of AIDS, all right, with condoms it is much less, but it is not even that, mah! But maybe he said so just to say and perhaps he will not even insist, because in fact it could all be fake problems and maybe for him it's not even an important thing, but from what he said it didn't seem so.

### **Wednesday**

Damn, tonight he was so cuddly, sweet, but also a bit too insistent. One thing leaves me a bit perplexed: we just kiss, I tried to go further but he stopped me and told me that with me he wants a "complete" thing, i.e. in practice he wants to penetrate me, otherwise nothing! In a sense, for a while, it seemed to me like an emotional blackmail, as if to say to me: either you do as I say or you go away. In the end he ripped off me a half-positive reply. Saturday night we go to his house by the sea. I wonder if I'm doing well. It is true that he calls me ten times a day and tells me very tender things, he tells me that he only thinks of me from morning to night and that he masturbates thinking of me but he has not asked me if I do the same. But he insists too much on that other thing. Mah ! And then what can I do? I cannot talk with anyone about anything like this.

### **Sunday morning**

Today I didn't like Mauro too much. When I made love with Marcello, it was all in par, there were no roles of any kind, with Mauro (who is also a nice guy and naked is much better than dressed) I feel like if between us there was nothing really shared. He thinks only of his wishes and I have just to undergo his wishes. I endured everything, but the idea that having sex that way was really disgusting for me didn't even touch him, he didn't understand it, or maybe he was interested in his fantasies only and I was just the tool he had to use in order to get his satisfaction.

I suffered everything and I thought that, later, perhaps we would have exchanged the roles because the thing for me was completely unnatural and repellent, I was hoping there would be a bit of sex like the one I used to have with Marcello, that was true sex really shared and lived in two, at par, a thing in which you think about how to make him feel good and don't even think about yourself, and instead nothing, when he ended doing what he wanted, he didn't really care about anything else.

I say, I'm there too! But how can you not notice it? He used me; he didn't

even notice that I'm a guy like him, I was just his inflatable doll. Mah! Thinking about these things I also have scruples because maybe from his point of view everything is different and I'm making the problem too big for things that in the end are not even a tragedy in the sense that one, at the limit ... but then why? I don't know what to think. Tomorrow I will try to talk to him.

I send him a text message a bit affectionate, but yes, like those he always sends me. He doesn't answer, I send him three text messages and he doesn't answer me, he never did that, I don't know what to think. Mauro calls me and tells me that I treated him badly, that I don't love him because I tried in every way to make him uncomfortable for the fact that he had asked me to be passive and I ended up consoling him and telling him that I love him madly. Not to madness, but that I love him it's true.

After a week.

### **Monday**

He definitely dumped me. We ended up in bed five times in six days, I ended up doing what he wanted, but he also wanted me to pretend to have fun, no! This seemed too much to me and I tried to talk seriously with him about it. I told him that at least I would have wanted a little attention on his part because after all I'm a guy too, he told me that he doesn't act as a passive because he doesn't like it, I told him that I was not referring to such things, he replied that if I wanted to be masturbated I could do it alone, he got angry and started to raise his voice, then he calmed down and apologized but I left. Now, somehow, I'm missing him but I finally feel free again. Anyway I miss him very much.

### **Tuesday**

Yesterday I saw Marcello and told him the story. He knows Mauro. Mauro also tried with him with the same technique, but he sent him to hell. Great Marcello! (But why am I always the most stupid of the situation?) He told me that Mauro always does this and that he has already done it with a lot of guys. At least now I have clear ideas. But how did I listen to such a fellow? And now whom do I think of when I masturbate? Well, there is always internet, luckily at least in front of the screen I can be myself!

### 11.2.12 Gay love forever

Falling in love with a guy? What does it really mean to fall in love with a guy? If I look back on my life I would not even know if I ever really fell in love with a guy. Several times, at the time, I believed yes, there was a very strong sexual interest, I felt strongly attracted to this boy or that one, I wanted to build a life together with him, then over time things diminished, the sexual attraction diminished and the emotional relationship disappeared because that guy took other paths. The basic question remains: "was it love?" A temporary love, born without a deadline but which over time inevitably meets a deadline, but is it really love a temporary love?

At most it was love, but it is not anymore. Yet I think I have lived a true love story, only one, but at least for me, it is something I don't consider it's over, I say for me because he told me in a thousand ways that I was one of many, He told me that he loves me but that he is not in love with me, which in his language means that I am not worth anything to him, but between what he says and what he feels inside himself the difference can be enormous.

Sometimes I thought he might fear my return to assault, but such a thing will never be because he wouldn't consider such a thing good, or at least he says so, and I think there is also another way of loving each other for which there is no need to see each other or to talk, I think that believing that the other respects you and trusts you may be enough, even if he is not there, even if he goes his own way.

I noticed that the moments in which there was a deeper relationship between us were those in which he was in crisis for some other reason, but I don't want him to feel bad, even if feeling bad gets him back to me. We seldom hear each other, but when it happens, for me it's a special thing, it's the only guy for whom I felt the anxiety of not knowing how to behave. With me he has always been straightforward, sometimes to the limit of the brutal, at other times he treated me with his rough sweetness but he never made fun of me. He is the only guy for whom, even now, I would be willing to do anything, he is not my boyfriend and he will never be, but when I see him sad I would hug him tightly, to get a smile from him, I would behave like a fool in front of him to let him smile, at the cost of being taken for an idiot by others because he would understand.

I told myself that perhaps I'm in love with this guy but that he is not in love with me and that then we lack the essential, which is reciprocity. But between us some reciprocity really exists, I fancy it is so, I hope so, I know that at least he treats me with respect.

They told me many times: "Don't waste time! Find another guy!" I have not even tried, every time I know a guy a little more closely I begin to make

comparisons with him, which for me is another thing. They tell me to look ahead, not to waste time on him, because I'm young and I cannot remain tied to a story that has never existed, yet I'm convinced that a story existed, and still exists, in another way, of course, but it's not over.

I lived with him nights of love that I will never forget, it was a beautiful thing and above all true, willed, a way to feel totally free. I've never experienced anything like this with any other guy. In practice it is with him that I understood how true sexuality can make you feel good. With him I could overcome all my complexes and live sex in total spontaneity. I keep deep in my heart the memories of those nights of love that give me the certainty of having known true love or better what love really is. I loved and I was loved, of this I have no doubts. I don't want another guy, I would never be able to fall in love with another guy because, for me, he is there, he never really went away. Now, if I think of a guy, I think only of him, I see him in front of me, the eyes, the smile, the embrace, the sexual warmth, the absolute spontaneity and the hours spent on the phone talking about melancholy without having the courage to say hello on my part and with a greeting, on his part, that should include a small sign of affection, but said in a minor tone.

Where are you now? Will I hear you again? How I wish you were happy! I say it with all my soul, because I love you, maybe I'm no longer in love, I no longer feel the sexual drive of a time but I keep thinking about you every day and hope you can be happy. When I see a guy dressed like you or a body similar to yours I feel a jolt, because I would like you near me. I know that loving a guy does not give me any right, because the happiness that the guy has to pursue is only his, not mine, but I know that just as something of him has remained inside me, the same way something that belongs to me will accompany him forever, because, no matter how fragile and even ephemeral it may have been, it was anyway love.

### **11.2.13 Sexual abuse and gay sexuality**

Hello Project, I read your manual *Being Gay*, especially the chapter on sexual violence and sexual harassment. You insist a lot on the problems that the guys who have been subjected to violence or harassment can have in recognizing their sexual orientation, this is clearly very important, I don't deny it, but you don't deal at all with another point namely the long term effects of violence or harassment on the sexuality of the boy who grows up and then becomes an adult. I would like to tell you about my experience, which I think could be useful to those who have lived or are living similar experiences.

Currently I am 31 years old (almost), when I was a child, I was eight years

old, I repeatedly suffered harassment by an uncle, a married man, with children, a quite old man, dead for several years now. Even though I've thought many times about those things, I can't even tell how it started. At that time, me and my family (only my father and my mother) went on holiday in the mountains in a small village in central Italy where my mother was born and where my maternal grandparents and my uncle lived with his family (wife and two children, my cousins, a lot older than me, at that time 16 and 18). My uncle seemed to me very good-natured, quite big/fat, he had always treated me well, I played a lot with him, I climbed on his shoulders and he carried me on a horseback on his neck, I tormented him a bit, I pinched him and he laughed and let me do, he didn't keep me at a distance. I don't really remember how it happened, I thought about it so many times and I tried to reconstruct the scene, let's say that the reconstruction, with all the limits it can have, is that we were alone and I touched him "there" and he let me do as he always did and then I continued and then I got the curiosity and I didn't stop and I provoked him, he started to laugh and I teased him, then

...

I don't go into details, but we did oral sex, of course I to him, on the other hand he was not interested in me in that other sense, he just wanted me to do it to him. In the end he didn't intimidate me to prevent me from telling other people what had happened, he knew I would never do it. The following day he avoided meeting me and I was very sad, nevertheless the following days what had happened the first time happened again and since then it happened every time we were alone together. I never said anything to anyone. At the time, perhaps I was already attracted to prohibited games or maybe I didn't even understand what it was. I had not taken it as too important, it was a kind of game. I didn't have a real trauma from this thing, which lasted more or less for a month.

I started to masturbate very early, at the beginning of the sixth grade, about 11 years old, and I had clearly gay fantasies, in my fantasies there were also, but not only, scenes similar to those that I had lived with my uncle, I made fantasies about guys well in flesh and on the kind of sexual practices I had experimented with him. Slowly I began to realize what it was what we had done, I asked myself a thousand questions, for example if I had to consider my uncle a delinquent who had taken advantage of me, or maybe I had so provoked him up to induce him to something like that, my brain often worked on these contents that always resurfaced in masturbation.

I've had several guys with whom I've had sex, I've been with men much older than me, I don't know if this happened because I wanted to relive the situation that I had lived with my uncle, but now that I'm an adult it's completely different, even if it is with a man much older than me, there is a substantial

parity, I like that they leave me free to do what I want even sexually, but we also speak, in short, it's really another thing, we are two adults anyway.

I noticed that I don't fall in love with men much older than me, I can have sex with them (a bit repeating the famous scene) but I lose my mind especially for guys more or less my age and when I lose my mind I feel very bad because then maintaining a true relationship with peers is very difficult, with much older men, on the contrary it is much easier, generally (with some exceptions) they are not jealous and, contrary to what is thought, they don't go mad for sex, they seek above all companionship and affection, but these things unfortunately cannot involve me too much.

I've never lost my mind for kids, and I've turned 30, I was afraid of losing my mind for some very young kids, but it never happened. The youngest boy for whom I lost my mind was 18 and I was 19, but sometimes I think of watching videos that play something similar to the famous scene with my uncle. But anyway I would not see myself in the part of the adult but in that of the boy.

I talked about these things with one of the adult men I have been with, but he told me that a pedophile looking for much older men is unthinkable and that all my talk on this point was nothing but the search for reassurance, that is the search for a moral approval or for some sharing or accepting and told me that fantasies are one thing and behaviors are a very different thing and that according to him, after what I had suffered as a child, the fact that I could make those fantasies was something almost inevitable.

It seems absurd that I am still looking for reassurance at the age of 30, but I think that's exactly what I'm doing. I talked about these things even with young friends, about my age, but the reaction was much unpleasant, they turned up their noses, because what they had heard didn't fit their principles, one told me that I had to report my uncle to the police, another, after this speech, disappeared at all.

I notice that I tend to test the men I know by asking them what they would do if they were in a situation like that of the famous scene, on the part of the adult man, at what point they would stop, how they judge the whole thing. I always find a lot of embarrassment in these things on the part of the people I try to involve, but I need to understand how they judge those situations, namely how they judge me.

When my uncle died I had just turned 17, I felt a sense of terrible discomfort, not of liberation or similar things, I was just uncomfortable and for a very special reason, when my fantasy returned to what we had done I felt dirty, not for the thing in itself but for having done it with someone who was dead, a bit like putting sex and death together.

With regard to my uncle I always felt very ambiguous feelings, on one side,



I cannot deny it, he abused me, and it was an unpardonable thing that had many consequences, but for the other, after many years, it also made me feel bad and sorry for him, because I think this thing oppressed him as a guilt till to the end.

I also feel a little guilty because, without giving any explanation to anyone, I avoided seeing him even when he was ill and I think if I had seen him again and had told him that I didn't hate him for what he had done, he would have died more serene.

There is also another fact that gives me to think, sex is too important for me, at least I think it is so, and it bothers me when I call one of the guys or of the older men I know in order to have a little sex and they are reluctant and always wait for me to make the first step, a bit like sex is less important to them.

Sometimes with much older men I notice a reluctance with respect to immediate sexual approaches, generally they don't say no to me but I don't find a real enthusiasm and then they have some attitudes as a teacher, as a father, that give me a little annoyance, I don't speak of sermons or similar things, they don't do such things, but attempt to always tell me that I'm right when I'm wrong, they attempt to find in me a lot of good sentiments and inclinations that there aren't at all, as if they wanted to encourage or to console me. I do not know if all this rant has a logical thread, I send you this mail because I read what you wrote about intergenerational relationships. Those are certainly well-balanced things, but reality is often much more convoluted than theory and finding there a logic is not really possible.

Of my life, all in all, I feel quite happy, I don't have a boyfriend and I miss him a lot, I only had one for a couple of years, then he became unbearable (jealous) and I didn't bear him anymore, but I have some real friends (three) and with them there is also a bit of sex (one at a time), now I think that all three know this and it seems that it does not create problems, at least with two of them, with the third I don't know, pity that he is the one I care more. I have long since stopped believing in the white mill gay family, there is only one value that I believe is very important in gay relationships and it is clear talking, honesty, not pretending. Until now I felt quite comfortable. Returning to the point, well the famous scene certainly produced consequences in my life but I think it went to me much better than it went to many others. Let me know.

### 11.2.14 Homosexuality and sexual violence in a boarding school

Hi Project,

I don't know if you are a real person or a group of people, I will do as if you were a person. Meanwhile, thank you for creating the blog, but I must tell you now that gay things for me have a strange taste, I'm quite full of complexes about these things and even now, as an old man, I'm upset by a lot of strange and absurd thoughts. I don't know if I'm really gay, I don't even know if I want to be gay, I'm sure that in the things of sex I lived the life of a pathological case, a neurotic man who never managed to find his balance. That said, you certainly didn't understand anything, so it's worth it to tell you what happened. I would like you to put my story on the blog, but if you don't want it I can understand you. In any case I would like to receive your answer.

I was born in Northern Italy, near Venice, and at that time there was really hunger in those places. My parents were farmers and I was the only surviving child. My older brother had died in the war and after the elementary school in the country, my parents had to decide whether to send me to the middle school (with Latin and aimed at the continuation of studies) or to the job placement school (allowing immediate access to work without further studies). My parents had little money but they made a huge effort to send me to the middle school, to make me study and give me more possibilities. I thank them for this because my economic tranquility today is the result of their choice.

I attended the first and second class of the middle school in a town near my country. I had to get up very early in the morning to take the bus, my mother washed and ironed my shirt every day, because I only had two shirts and at school I had to go well dressed, she also polished my shoes, dad used to bind and cover my books and made me find good things to eat, which were chestnuts or figs, according to the season. There was the Latin in the middle school and for me it was a big obstacle, but there was the parish priest, Don Antony, who gave me lessons in the afternoon and had me do all my homework. The other guys in my classroom were all from wealthy or at least middle-class families, but at that time I wasn't able to understand such things and at least I didn't experience them as humiliating. When there were talks with teachers Don Antony went there instead of my parents, and I didn't understand why. My parents didn't show up for fear of making me look bad, because they didn't speak Italian well and their hands were ruined by the work in the country side. My dad had only finished elementary school and my mother hadn't even finished it.

Despite everything, at school I did not have serious problems of adaptation, the professors were very demanding but I had a certain desire to study and with the help of Don Antony, who had half a mind to send me, later, in the seminar, I managed to pass quite well.

In the summer of 57 I lost both my parents because of a typhoid fever that the doctor couldn't cure and I found myself, at 13, practically alone in the world. I was entrusted to a brother of my mother, Uncle Battista, who lived in a small village in the mountains and had the animals in a mountain pasture. If I went to stay with Uncle Battista, who was also old, widower, and had no children, I could not continue to study. The uncle told me that I could either go to the seminary in Vicenza or go to boarding school in Rome, in a school that Don Antony knew. I didn't want to go to the seminary absolutely and chose to go to Rome, where I had never been. They signed me to school and Uncle Battista took charge of paying the fee, which should not have been so low, because I would have eaten and slept in that boarding school.

Don Antony accompanied me to Rome and introduced me to the Rector of the school, to tell the truth a little shabby, but clean, it was a convent of friars, there was the church, but there were few friars, no more than seven or eight, all old. The boarding school was run by the prefect friar, who was hardly ever seen, all the internal organization was entrusted to young people, university students, whom we called little prefects, they were guys who were hosted in the boarding school without paying the fee because in practice they were working with us, paying attention to us, they were the ones who followed us during the hours of study and they made us do our homework, they watched us in the afternoon, during meals, and at night they slept in their small rooms, one next to each dormitory, to control the discipline. In general, they didn't care so much about us because they had a lot to study for their university exams.

I was new in the boarding school, my comrades had known each other for two years. The school was not bad, all professors were laymen, basically retired teachers of state schools, they were all old but good and they spent their souls to make us learn things. I still remember some professors. The professor of mathematics to which I owe my interest in this subject, in which I was very good, the professor of Italian and Latin who told us the stories of Iliad and Odyssey reciting as in the theater and also the gym teacher who practically made us do pre-military gymnastics, as at the time of fascism. The first days I was fine and I wrote it to Don Antony, who used to send me a letter every week, but as early as mid-October I began to see strange things.

There were some boys who disappeared from the study hall and no one knew

where they ended up and then they came back half an hour later, I was totally naive at that time, I didn't know anything about sex, I had not yet discovered masturbation and they could tell me whatever they liked and I would have believed it. The other boys, who didn't know me, tended to put me aside and keep me out of their secrets, but it did not take me long to realize that in the boarding school there was an invisible, underground life. For an internal rule, the dorms were divided according to the school class of the boys, so as to keep the boys of different ages separate. We were allowed to get in touch with the students of the sixth and seventh grade only at breakfast, at lunch, at dinner and on special occasions, for example in church, but the recreation was done for separate groups, so in practice I could only get familiar with the boys of the eighth grade.

At the time I was a nice guy for my age, but I was very delicate and very polite. After the first weeks of school one of the boys, one of the most respected little bosses, began to call me "man-woman" and to make jokes that at first I didn't even understand, like; "You are a man, not your sister!" Then the idea that I was the man-woman began to spread among all my comrades.

One day, during the hours of study, one of the boys approached the little prefect for an explanation of mathematics, the little prefect told him that he was studying literature and that if he wanted to, he could go to another little prefect who was studying engineering in his room. The boy came back to the study room after about half an hour, blushed and disheveled, it was there that I had the first suspicion that the half hours of absence of some boys were not dedicated to receive school explanations. But it was only an impression, I said nothing and everything went on as before.

One evening, before going to sleep, when the little prefect was not there, the little bully boss, who was called Sylvan, approached me and gave me a caress and then put his hands in the middle of my legs and said: "it's just to see if you're a man or a woman!" I felt my face burn, I wanted to go to the little prefect to report it but Sylvan told me: "Go go! So he also will give you a good check!" And laughed.

Over time they told me that one of the little prefects, the one of engineering, in practice the one of our dorm, had sex with the boys of the eighth grade. With me he never tried such things because I didn't give him confidence, but according to the stories of others, with those who gave him rope he let himself go quite freely. He was a nice guy, I wanted, maybe, that it happened with me, but at the same time I was afraid and nothing happened.

The first really bad things happened to me just before Christmas holidays. The boys were abandoned to themselves, the little prefects were almost all gone for Christmas holidays, except our little prefect, the one of engineering. I make it short because, even if so many years have passed, such things cause

me a little repulsion. In short, four guys block me on the bed, they lower my trousers and underpants, and Sylvan tries to penetrate me, let's say he makes the move, I scream, but they put a handkerchief in my mouth and then they are four guys and I don't have the strength to oppose. There was no penetration but the humiliation was terrible. Sylvan told me: "Now you understand what will happen to you if you don't do everything we want!" At that moment, if I could I would have killed him.

After that I keep them at a distance, I show myself as little as possible, but things cannot go on like this. If I had not done anything I would have become the laughing stock of Sivan and his gang and the violence would have been repeated.

I think about it a lot, but in the end I have no other solutions, I take the courage in my hands and I go to talk with our little prefect (the one of engineering), who listens to me, he's frightened above all by the idea that I go to speak with the Rector, and it's evident, he tries to reassure me and then we come to a compromise that I never would have expected from him but that, at the same time, put me safe and exposed me to the worst insults from my classmates. In practice, the prefect would have slept in my dormitory bed and I in his, in his locked room. This whole thing happened, obviously without the true prefect of the college knowing anything about it and the boys had to tolerate everything, if they had not done so, what they had done to me would come out. Then, to keep quiet my comrades, who would kill me, I ended up accepting that the little prefect would come to sleep in his little room too. Of course, afterwards, my comrades considered me just as a whore.

About the engineering little prefect I heard the worst things: that he undressed the boys, was competing with them to see who had the biggest dick and used to beat them to get sexual performances and similar things and some guys swore it was true and that it had happened to them, but the little prefect, with me had never tried such things.

One day, while I was in his room I start to rummage and between the mattress and the bed base I find a package with some letters, I read them, they are directed to a guy but they are love letters and also hot. I think then that everything my comrades say about him is true and I start to be afraid.

And here I did something I'm still ashamed of today, I told one of my comrades about the little prefect's letters, and he tried to push me to steal the letters in order to have the little prefect in hand and maybe to give them secretly to the Rector. I didn't do this thing, it seemed infamous and then I liked the little prefect and I didn't want him to be fired or maybe I wanted to have him in my hand. But now another boy knew about the letters and soon everyone would know and the letters would have been stolen by others, then

I entered the little prefect's room, I took them, and I hid them somewhere else (in church).

When the little prefect came back I said I had to talk to him and I told him that the boys knew about his letters, I saw him paling at that thought, but I also told him that I had made the letters disappear and that they were hidden in a safe place, where no one would find them. He wanted them back but I didn't give them to him and I told him I had read them. He looked at me petrified but I told him that he had nothing to fear because he had behaved well with me, then I told him about all the things I had heard about him and asked him if they were true. He admitted having done some sex games with the boys but only consensual things and he swore it to me. I told him about what Sylvan and his gang had done to me and he told me that they didn't do it for sex but only to inflict a terrible humiliation on another boy, and then he asked me if I liked guys, I thought about it and I honestly replied that I didn't know it and he told me: What a pity! Then he realized that he had said something stupid and apologized and after many hesitations asked me where the letters were and I told him but I asked him to leave them there because they were safe, maybe he could go and see that there they really were, but I wanted him to leave them there and he did so.

The story of the little prefect however ended badly and perhaps it was my fault. The boy to whom I had talked about the letters, went to report the matter to the Rector. The little prefect denied everything, I was called as a witness, I swore the false and said that my comrade had invented everything. The facts were not proven, but the Rector didn't want to know reasons and the little prefect was kicked out, or rather removed for reasons of opportunity, a few months before his graduation exams. Before he left, he secretly took up the letters and warned me that he had taken them.

The new prefect was an emeritus imbecile. In the last months before the exams I suffered from the gang of Sylvan harassment and violence of all kinds, and this time, since they had to avenge on me that I had been the "favorite of the fag" I really suffered sexual violence by Sylvan and another boy. [-omission -] The feeling of repulsion was total, I will not tell you how I felt after, I still carry inside myself the memory of that scene because that was not sex but only violence like the beasts and even worse. My classmates were 14 years old and in the end I cannot hate them or wish them death, because they didn't even understand what they were doing.

In short, afterwards I was obsessed with those memories for decades and my sex life was ruined. The memory of the little prefect instead was positive, then I understood: he was really a gay guy, and I liked him well, he had not behaved like an asshole, but the idea that I could be gay just because of the violent initiation I suffered, ruined my life. I'm not married and I don't have

a partner, I'm alone, and absurd as it seems, gay sex seems repugnant to me, but I don't know, don't really know, if this happens because of the violence suffered, but I think so.

Anyone who uses sexual violence on another person kills that person inside, kills the dignity, the certainties of that person, dirties his/her sexuality forever. The boys should receive a serious education and learn the true respect for others, but unfortunately, even if fifty years have passed, we are still very far from all this.

Thanks Project, at least I vented a bit.

### 11.2.15 Gay sex and sense of domination and intrusion

Hello Project, I am a 26 year old guy and I live in a big city in the northern Italy, I'm writing to you because for some time now, let's say about three years, I'm starting to think that I will never have a life with a guy, because I don't feel suitable for a married life. I tried, but practically in all cases I ended up betraying my boyfriend of the time. I was engaged with one but then I arrived to have sex with other guys and at the end I felt very bad. The very few times I fell in love, or maybe I should say the only time, I felt just a shit, for me it was a very important thing and instead I was treated like a punching bag and now, after several attempts, all ended badly for my fault, I am beginning to look for easy sex even with strangers and sometimes even at risk, rather it is as if the risk attracted me and made me forget any prudence, a kind of challenge with myself. I know very well that the risk is real but I end up taking it as a bet and I have to say I'm not scared.

Don't tell me that this is a stupid behavior, I know it by myself, but it is that when I am there, in the end I don't hold back. It happened several times, especially a few years ago, now much less because maybe if it is a question of meeting them in person I prefer guys I think I can trust, maybe they would tell me if they have behaved at risk, even if they trust me too, and doing so they are deceiving themselves, because I have taken my risks many times. Now, let's say that I risk less because I use a lot of sex on cam, in practice we masturbate in chat with guys I catch in the chat, first of all it is not dangerous for health, and it is not a trivial matter, but there is other. Many people have sex on cam, it is at zero risk, and all in all it would not create particular problems, but for me things are different because I use sex in chat to feel a sense of domination over the guys I meet, to bring them to doing things that they wouldn't like to do and are things that I'm very ashamed of.

I'll give you an example, I almost always choose guys who are in pairs, I contact a guy, then I propose to him a masturbation on cam, he agrees and

then I ask him to tell me, before starting, about his boyfriend, to tell me how he has it, what they do together etc. etc. and then I ask him for a picture of his boyfriend and in general, at this point the guys make a lot of stories at the beginning, but then they give me the pictures and they also send me videos of when they have sex with their boyfriends. Other times when we are chatting, I want the guy to call his boyfriend on the phone so that I can see him while having sex on the phone with his boyfriend, while he sees me masturbating.

This is more or less the picture, Project, I understand by myself that there is something that does not work. It excites me a lot to slowly bring the guys to surrender and do things that at first they don't want to do, it's like I have a power over them and then there's something that scares me a lot, I do not have sex with these guys because I fell in love or I got a crush on them, I don't care about them, I like having sex and especially knowing that I can have a power over them.

At other times it is as if I wanted to intrude in the intimate affairs of the guys I contact, as if I wanted to put myself between them and their boyfriends, as if I wanted to take advantage of my charm to put them in crisis. I also have some friends with whom I have had and I still have sex sometimes, I don't know if they know me deeply but I don't believe so, that is, they wouldn't expect me to behave like I really behave.

Project, I read in the forum about sex as tenderness, well, I just cannot think of such a thing, for me sex is just sex and it's very important because it gives me power over other guys and makes me feel dominator. I talked about these things with a friend of mine with whom I had a story, according to my opinion just a sex story or a story mostly sexual, and according to his one, perhaps, even a story with a real feeling.

With him I had never arrived to do the filth that I did and still I do with others, but I had led him get used to living sex freely and I thought I had really dominated him, in the sense that he never said no to me. Well, now I talked with him about these things, that is, about sex as a way of dominating people, and he told me that he never felt dominated and didn't even think that he was the dominator, these ideas of power over the partner never crossed his mind, talking to me he put me in crisis, because I cannot fall in love with anyone and I think that a guy would never be enough for me.

With this friend of mine I talk about everything, especially about sex, about what I do with the other guys, let's say I would like to be able to excite him this way, especially because I would feel like I have a power over him, but he tells me that he always assumed that I had my sex life and he loves me as I am, because I'm a fundamental person for him. When he says these things on the phone I close the conversation because I don't want to build



something that has a true emotional basis, I'm worried about these things, and to be honest to the end, this friend of mine, for me, is not really the maximum of the sexual attraction.

What should I do to have a normal sex life? First of all in order to put aside the idea of accepting the risk that instead fascinates me, I don't know, perhaps for some self-destructive drive, and then in order to live sex in a normal way, without the idea of domination, without having to enter the intimate life of the guys who masturbate on cam with me. They are tempted by me because they are quite nice guys, and they end up doing what they don't want by putting their boyfriends in crisis and then, when they feel the guilt, finally I unload them. Why cannot I fall in love with anyone? Why cannot I have a "normal" wank on cam? Sometimes I hate myself but I don't know how to get out of it. What do you think, Project?

Below you can read my answer.

After reading your email carefully I sent you my skype contact, I had sketched an answer and waited to finish it before posting. Then last night you added me on skype and we talked for a long time. Well, I deleted the response I had prepared and I began to prepare a new answer, not because there was something to add to what we said on Skype, but because it could also be useful to many other guys.

As I told you yesterday, talking to you directly I found many elements of reflection that don't emerge from the email. First of all, you have an attention towards your friends that leads you to not have sex with them if you are not sure, by the response of the test, that you cannot infect them with HIV. Now you don't have 100% certainty and therefore no sex with them, because you don't want to expose to any risk people who love you. A reasoning of this kind is high-profile and suggests that you have a rational control of your actions. But the fact remains that you tend to postpone the test over time, which doesn't make sense, because you have to think about your health and if you have even the slightest doubt you don't have to postpone the test for any reason.

I noticed that you tend to devalue yourself and say that your fate doesn't matter at all because all those with whom you have been, finally kicked you out, but things are not like that at all, from what you told me, you have friends who are very interested in you and make you understand it and on the other hand you too love these friends to the point of not having sex with them when you feel like it, if you think there can be even a minimum risk.

It seems as if you are looking for sex as a substitute for affectivity and at the same time that you try to consider sex as something that is as far away as

possible from affectivity. You are afraid to build a stable couple life, it is as if you were trying to exorcise this eventuality looking for guys with whom to have very superficial contacts and above all trying to see in the sex a means of domination, as if it were a compensation to the lack of affection.

Speaking with you last night made sense and it was evident, it was a very serious and very real dialogue, nothing to do with the talks that I do with guys who have actually created a real dependence on sex. You accuse yourself of treason, ok, it happened, so what? Is it established that because it happened, maybe more than once, it will always be so? And then, from what you said, I had the impression that you put yourself in couple with another guy almost always to exorcise the emotional loneliness. At the beginning it worked but later it didn't work anymore and then it is difficult to remain faithful to a relationship in which you can no longer believe, it is difficult and it is also difficult to interrupt that relationship.

I think you have enormous propensity for emotional life, which doesn't necessarily end up in a stable pair, for example with your friends you live non-superficial affective relationships, with a little sex when it happens, but these are not banalities and it can be seen from the fact that such relationships last over the years and from the fact that these guys feel esteem and affection for you and you also feel affection for them.

Sex attracts you, well, it seems obvious to me, it is one of the most powerful forces of life, in all this there is nothing absurd. In all this there is nothing strange or bad, the evil is no more than real evil that is done to another person, for example putting in crisis guys in the chat, pushing them to do things they don't want to do. However, I repeat it, it happened, and now we need to look forward. I believe you can have a happy life and I think your friends really care about you. You have no boyfriend? Well, it doesn't do anything, you can live well anyway, however, I beg you especially of one thing: take the test without postponing it, so you can eliminate the worm of doubt that works in your brain, and then always use a condom, it must become a mental automatism because you don't have to put yourself at risk. You say that oral sex with condom makes no sense, I understand that it may seem very strange but taking serious risks for not using condoms would be a real folly and then, if you're with a guy and you think of having a moment of intimacy, well, mutual masturbation is not dangerous if there is no contact between the sperm or the pre-spermatid liquid of one guy and the other guy's mucous membranes. I mean that also this is really sex and can be very rewarding, if lived in an emotional atmosphere, so it is not really worth taking risks with oral sex without protection. In short, it is not by making fatalistic speeches that you can avoid substantial risks but by using the brain first. Don't throw yourself off because of guilt, and look ahead, you are a person

of value who did something that he didn't have to do, but don't feel like a black sheep, in the closed closet of many people there are memories of much heavier episodes than those to whom you refer, then: turn the page and look forward with optimism!

### 11.2.16 Gay guys and compulsory military service

Compulsory military service in Italy was suspended, in practice abolished, in 2004. Prior to that, all the guys, at the end of the eighteenth year, had to undergo the physical medical examination for military conscription. There were many legends related to collective nakedness and to the presence of homosexual doctors, with all that this could entail. The embarrassment for the physical examination, the first medical check that included genital examination, was common among the guys who were preparing for the fateful moment. Of course, for gay guys the embarrassment was much greater, for many of them this was the first moment of collective nakedness and hard-ons could become uncontrollable.

On May 3, 2008, I received and published on the blogs of Gay Project the email I quote below translated into English.

I was born in March 1986, so in January 2004 I received, last among the last ones, the terrible postcard that called me for the military medical examination. Compulsory military service reform was a highly debated issue in those days, the suspension of the mandatory enlistment seemed a probable hypothesis, but a lot of things were not yet well defined. I had hoped until the last moment to get rid of it, but my precept postcard summoned me for military physical at the beginning of August 2004. From September 30, 2004, military medical examination has been abolished. In essence, I would have been in the very last contingents for the compulsory military service before the abolition of it.

At school I was a year ahead, just in time for not being able to get a postponement for study reasons, I could enroll at the university and I would have escaped military service with the postponement, and instead my parents did not want to hear reasons and I hated them for that, but in fact this was my luck, even though I realized it later on. My father always told me that in the army they would make me a man and said: "Who is not good for the king is not good for the queen either!" An old way to say that those who didn't do military service aren't good for marriage. I had the terror of military service, of hazing and of all I had heard about these things. I could not say to my dad that I was gay and that if I stated it during the medical examination I

would have avoided the military service, so for me there was no escape.

I think all the guys have read a lot of porn stories on the military physical medical examination, well, I assure you that if you read this kind of stories when other guys have to undergo the examination, it can be fun, but when you are the one you have to undergo this experience it makes you feel uncomfortable.

It was not even for the thing in itself, because I had passed some sports medical physical examinations and also with some embarrassing situations because having to lower your underpants in front of the doctor is embarrassing for anyone, but the thing I was very worried about was not that one, I was worried by the idea of getting a hard-on in front of other guys, because for a gay guy, in a situation like that, being naked in front of so many other guys and in front of the doctors who can do with the guys whatever they like with the excuse of the medical examination (and someone really exaggerates) well, it makes a certain effect and, wanting or not wanting, when a gay guy sees things like that it's very easy that he can get a hard-on, but if it happens in such a situation there is not only the embarrassment but they brand you, that is, you cannot really lose control there.

I didn't know exactly how it would have been, it was very probably a common fear to all the other guys who had to undergo the military physical medical examination, but I didn't know guys who had already passed the medical examination. Those older than me had fun telling me terrible things, in short, things similar to that of porn movies. The last week before the medical examination I did a lot of yoga exercises up to the incredible: checking my breath, posture, standing on one foot, holding my breath for a long time, pulling my belly back and so on because I had read that such things decrease hard-ons, etc. etc..

The terrible day arrives, I was uncomfortable from the morning. They send us to a waiting room and, and we stay there waiting for hours, it's almost noon; chatting with others, one tells me: "There is one doctor with a beard, if you happen to get examined by him you are in trouble! That doctor is gay and you'll be subjected to a very special physical examination!" At a certain point a sergeant comes and calls ten guys and me among them, and he gets us into the locker room and tells us to hold on just the underpants and to deposit everything else in the lockers. We undress. My heart beats violently, they get us one by one into the medical room and they let us in one at a time into a large room where there are two examination tables. I see a very nice blond guy just in front of me.

Two doctors come in, they both wear beards, the doctor who comes to me has only a goatee, the guy in front of me is now completely naked and the

doctor checks all that can be checked: feels the testicles, pulls back the foreskin, and I'm there to see, so I get a hard-on and I cannot hold it back. My doctor makes me lower my underpants and immediately realizes what's happening, feels the testicles for half a second, pulls on my underpants and sends me rapidly away making me understand with a move of the eyes that I had to get out of the medical room immediately before the other doctor may be interested in me, all this while the other doctor humiliates the blond guy even making comments loudly.

When I went out of the medical room I had a terrible tachycardia, 120 and beyond, then the blond guy explained to me that the pansy ("finocchio") doctor was not the one who had visited me but the one who had visited him. I was absolutely certain of the opposite but I could not explain why. Of course, for a gay doctor, doing military physical medical examinations should be the best, the doctor who had happened to me, however, did not humiliate me at all and did not take advantage of the situation while he could have done so putting me into a terrible embarrassment, but he, in my opinion, understood how things were, that is, that I was gay, and allowed me to escape the humiliation. The following days there were psychological tests, but they were all shit. At the end: I resulted skilled and enrolled!

The first of November they send me to the regiment. There was the atmosphere of a total disarmament, it was the last contingent of compulsory enrollment. I arrive, they incorporate me, then they give me the uniforms, the equipment and all the rest, and then they send me to the department. The usual embarrassment in the showers (no partitions) but as there were no fixed times, I ate very little at lunch and I was showering in the early afternoon when there was no one. I would very much like to take a shower in crowded hours, along with so many other guys, but it was too dangerous. Every now and then I entered the showers at rush hour, but that's all another talk.

Hazing? I did not see it, I repeat, perhaps because it was the last contingent, and even the officers treated us very elastically. In the early months there was a real discipline, later they realized that we were quite calm and we would not have created any problems and this was enough for them, discipline was really rather bland. With the other guys things got loose quickly enough. Of course I could not say I was gay but I never felt in trouble because I was always on my own. One of the guys, Bruno, coming from Trentino was a very handsome blond guy, though he was called Bruno (in Italian Bruno sounds like "with brown hair") (I have a weakness for the blonds!), I was always with him, we did everything together except the shower, he was polite, not intrusive, not conceited, a pretty guy but quiet.

In short I took a crush for Bruno. Seeing him, talking to him, staying with

him so long caused me sexual reactions and sometimes I was embarrassed because I thought he would notice it and so happened, he smiled and said to me, "But what are you doing?" I became red like a pepper, but nothing changed between us, we kept going all the time together, then came the talk of the military medical physical examination and I told him what happened to me, which in practice meant to make it clear that I was gay, going further on with such subject I was afraid of a negative reaction and I felt very embarrassed, but he was smiling amused by my story, then the unexpected thing, he looks firmly in my eyes and says, "You don't know what happened to me, I had a huge hard-on in front of the doctor, the one with the goatee, he told me to leave as soon as possible." So Bruno was gay too! This was his coming out.

We joked about all the stories of the medical examination, and then I said, "It's great to be in the army! Or am I wrong?" Now you are likely to expect an evolution, maybe so much sex but no, there was some kind of total incertitude, both on my side and on his, I dreamed of him every night and when I could, that is when there was a little privacy, I masturbated thinking of him and he certainly did the same but we never spoke about. Once we camped together, near Udine, for military training, we were in the tent together but there were six other soldiers in the tent that we didn't know and we couldn't even have a little privacy. When we got to have free exit we were always together, same pizzeria, same walk. We sat on the benches and talked for hours, he told me all his fantasies, even sexual things but just a little, then I asked him if he had a boyfriend in civil life and he told me no, I told him that the same was for me, but even after these confessions nothing happened.

One day I told him I had fallen in love with him and he said to me: "I'm in love with you too, but I don't feel like I'm starting a story that cannot last long." He made me realize that he wanted me but he was saying it only with words, no gesture, not even the least one, not even a caress, we used to go deliberately to the showers at different hours, but we wanted each other. He was convinced that since we lived 400 km away we could never have built a serious thing together, but to stay with him I would have done a thousand miles. I tried to insist, it was evident that he was tempted and was fighting against himself to hold back the idea, he was anxious, I knew that he was working on his choice, that he was basically trying to resist himself but wanted to surrender.

Day after day I saw his defenses fall and I hoped that the next day he would tell me yes, then I got discouraged and I stopped insisting on saying that I wanted to have sex with him, reluctantly I put apart my thoughts, so day after day I adapted to more generic speeches, that is sexless, at the beginning he seemed very reassured by my decision to lower the tones, then two days

after, he comes to me in the morning and tells me, "When are you going to the showers?" I light up a smile at 34 teeth and say, "At two and a half, and you can be sure there is no one!" He answers: "I come, but look, we just have a shower!" We were in the square and there were people around and so I could not embrace him and I could not even shriek for happiness because they would think I was crazy, I just made the gesture with my mouth to send him a little kiss and he said to me: "Remember you promised, just the shower!"

Well, we arrived both at showers a quarter of an hour in advance. I was expecting that our meeting would easily turn into a very strong and direct sexual contact, but nothing like that happened and objectively it was something absolutely unlikely or rather unthinkable. He told me that he was very embarrassed and that he didn't feel like doing such things, I told him that I could understand it and that I would not take it badly. He hesitated a bit, then said to me, "But at a distance and together, did you understand?" And he walked away from me several meters, placed himself right on the opposite side of the showers' room. We undressed together and went to the showers not only without touching each other but staying far away, but I could see him naked and it was not a fortuitous thing, he was there for me and on the other hand I was there for him. Everything lasted at most three minutes, I think the three most intense minutes of my life, then he said to me: "It's enough!" We went back to the dressing room and we dressed. It was a very exciting experience.

After getting dressed, we put our heads under the jet of frozen water because otherwise we were not in a proper state to leave the showers and go around the barracks. In the following days the shower rite at two and a half in the afternoon became the rule, he was less embarrassed and I too, but we never touched each other for about two months, then we were discharged and when they gave us the leave sheet and told us we could finally leave because everything was over, well, I went through a moment of profound discomfort, I felt agitated, I was really sad because leaving Bruno seemed to me a terrible thing. He realized it and said, "Do you think it will work?" I answered him as a desperate guy. We left the barracks and began to speak like a couple, now it was obvious that we would not separate anymore, that we would have fought against everything and against everyone to live our lives. It was November 1st, 2005. We have been together for two and a half years now and I hope to grow old with Bruno at my side.





# Chapter 12

## GAYS AND ANXIETY

### 12.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 12.1.1 Reactive anxiety

Anxiety, that is, the feeling that something dangerous and uncontrollable but at the same time indefinable is looming, presents itself in the most varied ways in the life of all people, in practice no one can say he is immune from it at 100%. Often the perception of anxiety is marked by feelings of emptiness, irritability, widespread impatience, by the feeling of the useless passing of time as a progressive loss of possibilities. Anxiety is often accompanied by somatization at cardiac level, or by insomnia or inconclusive agitation. Anxiety often compromises the normal activities of life or makes them more stressing and difficult to deal with, takes you away from an objective and rational assessment of things and emphasizes the difficulties and risks, up to almost completely block the activities of a person and force him to seek support at the psychotherapeutic and pharmacological level.

In the following I will stop to speak only of reactive anxiety, that is of those anxious syndromes in which a triggering and often determining factor can be identified at the environmental level, leaving aside the primary anxiety for which it doesn't seem easy to identify determinant or triggering causes at an environmental level. To clarify, here you have some examples of reactive anxiety:

- 1) A student, inserted in a school class, shows frequent signs of anxiety: insomnia, episodic tachycardia, unmotivated fear, easy irritability, difficulty in concentration, environmental maladjustment. That same student, after changing class, no longer shows the same anxious syndrome, appears calm and well inserted into

the new class.

2) A married man who has difficult relationships with his wife's family shows signs of anxiety, when he moves to another city, away from his wife's family, he no longer shows signs of anxiety.

3) An elderly man who finds problems at work has tachycardia, feels overwhelmed by work and expects to be in trouble at any moment for some reason that he cannot even identify clearly, after retiring, regains his serenity and no longer has anxious manifestations.

### 12.1.2 Anxiety and homophobia

As we can see, the causes of reactive anxiety are not related only or essentially to the subject who experiences it but basically to his difficult interaction with the environment in particular situations called precisely anxiogenic. It is quite evident that homosexuality must also be included among anxiogenic situations, but not homosexuality itself but homosexuality in a homophobic environment. I would like to emphasize that I don't mean here as homophobia the activities of more or less violent repression of homosexuality but precisely the phobia of homosexuality, that is the tendency to exclude it and to marginalize it. Homophobia is a subtle reality that often hides itself even under the appearance of tolerance and respect.

The root of homophobia consists in perceiving the homosexual as different and as something else from yourself, well beyond the sexual orientation, as if the sexual orientation constituted a barrier between human groups. Homophobia can't be assessed in the abstract, can't be overcome just through reasoning when this reasoning is abstract and far from experience, homophobic people often don't even perceive their homophobic attitudes. Naturally, the perception of environmental homophobia by those who suffer it and live it daily as a limitation of one's own freedom is very different.

Homosexuals are very sensitive to the homophobic implications of the behavior of their family members, their friends and the social environment in which they live. For a gay guy, it is a question of having the attention always focused on "reactively" determining one's behavior in such a way as to reduce the risk that environmental homophobia will unleash against him.

### 12.1.3 Anxiogenous situations for a gay

Some particular situations may be particularly anxiogenic for gays:

- 1) Being submitted to the questions of parents and relatives like "Do you have a girlfriend?"
- 2) Discovering that at school you are became object of the attention of a serious girl, who is lived as a danger in relation to the group.
- 3) Finding yourself in very narrow and very gossipy work environments where you cannot stay by yourself and maintain your privacy.
- 4) Being temporarily in situations of close cohabitation with other people with whom one inevitably comes to talk about emotional relationships and sexuality.

I would add to these situations a fifth and a sixth situation that for gays can be really strongly anxiogenic:

- 5) Falling in love with a guy whose sexual orientation is unknown and enter an endless path of indecisions, fears and postponements.
- 6) Having to hide your sexual orientation, a situation that can occur on many levels, from the anxiety of coming out with a trusted friend to the embarrassment of lying to your wife if you are a married gay man.

So far we have only talked about anxiety in general terms, but for gays, anxiety often manifests itself in dimensions closely related to sexuality.

### 12.1.4 Taxonomic categories and interpretative categories

Before addressing the concept of internalized homophobia, it is necessary to make a methodological premise.

The categories commonly used in psychology essentially belong to two distinct groups at least abstractly well identifiable:

- 1) Taxonomic categories, aimed at describing and classifying behaviors.
- 2) Interpretative categories, aimed at defining causality and connection relationships.

The most classic example of a taxonomic category is the concept of gay (in its possible definitions).

The most classic example of an interpretative category is that of internalized homophobia.

Clearly the concept of internalized homophobia does not describe a behavior but interprets it by postulating a cause.

The history of psychology is full of interpretative categories, just think of psychoanalysis, which is certainly not a taxonomy, but attempts to explain phenomena through concepts such as the Unconscious, the Id, the Ego, the Super-ego, and other interpretative categories.

The definition of taxonomic categories serves to avoid slipping into the generic and to understand what we are talking about, it being understood that taxonomic categories have an essentially conventional value.

The interpretative categories offer explanations that have at least the appearance of credibility, but precisely for this reason they must be used with the utmost prudence, to prevent them from becoming interpretative dogmas based on the "verisimilitude" that can legitimize these categories beyond their real scope.

I try to explain myself with an example.

It is known that according to a very widespread and apparently likely interpretative model, in a family with a gay son the figure of the father is absent and that of the mother is dominant. Behind this way of looking at things lies an assumption very difficult to eradicate, that is, that the homosexual guy is in some way a little manly guy and also feminized in many ways. In essence, it is exactly this assumption that seems to legitimize the idea that a gay guy should have an absent father and a dominant mother. A completely arbitrary and substantially false assumption has turned into a widely diffused and improperly generalized interpretative category, accrediting decidedly unfounded concepts.

The study of reality, through the contact with many homosexual guys, shows that there are homosexual boys in families of all kinds, with very present fathers and with very feminine mothers. However, this doesn't mean that there are no families with gay sons, absent fathers and dominant mothers.

Direct observation leads us to conclude, on objective grounds, that the statistical association between a boy's homosexuality and the fact of having a family with an absent father and a dominant mother not only is it not common but it is even rare, and for this reason the absence of the father and the dominant character of the mother cannot be considered as "causes" of the homosexuality of the son.

Having said this, let us move on to analyze the concept of internalized homophobia in relation to the non-acceptance of homosexuality by a homosexual

boy, i.e. the idea that non-acceptance is attributable to internalized homophobia. The concept, in the abstract, shows at least a "plausibility", it seems credible that a gay boy who lives in a strongly homophobic environment can internalize environmental homophobia and be negatively affected by it in the process of accepting his own homosexuality.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to specify a concept used in this reasoning, namely the concept of "non-acceptance", taking for granted the concept of social homophobia, although it too has not well-defined contours. Let's start by defining the fundamental premise for talking about non-acceptance of homosexuality.

One can speak of non-acceptance or difficult acceptance of homosexuality "only with reference to an objectively homosexual subject". It is therefore absolutely improper to talk, for example, of non-acceptance of homosexuality by boys suffering from gay obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) (see below), because these are not homosexual boys. In this case they are indeed radically heterosexual boys for whom it is absolutely obvious that the idea of being or becoming gay (a clearly unrealistic idea) is strongly anxiogenic and disturbing. But, I repeat, the discomfort with homosexuality experienced by boys (always strictly hetero) with a gay-themed OCD has nothing to do with the problems of acceptance of homosexuality by gay boys.

Some behaviors are commonly associated with discomfort in the acceptance of homosexuality:

- 1) The fact of not participating in public events like the gay pride.
- 2) The fact of not declaring oneself gay publicly and not going to gay circles.
- 3) The fact of not talking about one's homosexuality to parents and friends.

These behaviors are very common among homosexuals and cannot under any circumstances be considered as symptoms of discomfort.

The so-called social unease connected to homosexuality does not presuppose any reaction of rejection with respect to homosexuality itself but is a consequence of environmental homophobia common to the vast majority of gays, especially those not publicly declared.

Even the fact that a gay boy cultivates a special friendship with a girl, more or less consciously creating a "hedging relationship", has nothing to do with any difficulty in accepting homosexuality, because it is still an external behavior. It would be different if the boy came to have or forced himself to have sexual contacts with that girl, but even in this case it is not at all said that there is a real difficulty in accepting homosexuality. If the boy, despite

some sporadic sexual intercourse with the girl continues to have a masturbation exclusively in a gay key, it would be legitimate to believe that his gay sexuality hasn't objectively put into question.

The real difficulties of acceptance are encountered when a boy tries to force his masturbatory sexuality by "systematically" forcing himself to masturbate in a straight key or by renouncing radically and deliberately masturbation in order to avoid any gay fantasy.

The concept of "non-acceptance" of homosexuality, limited exclusively to truly gay subjects and limited to the only cases of actual refusal of gay sexuality, appears to be greatly reduced and applicable to a very small number of cases.

It should also be emphasized that certain interpretative categories are well suited to particular epochs or to particular situations but cannot be generalized. If the concept of internalized homophobia can be useful in interpreting the behavior of a boy who entered the seminary at the end of the nineteenth century and grew up in a substantially homophobic monoculture, it is certainly much less adequate to explain the behaviors of 21st century boys, accustomed since most tender to use the internet and therefore also pornography, and growing up in non-monolithic educational systems.

The improper, generic or superficial use of the concept of internalized homophobia can induce young people with a gay-themed OCD to refer that concept to themselves and thereby to reinforce the obsessive tendency that drives them to give credit to the hypothesis (completely unrealistic) of being gay.

With these premises we can move on to more analytically deal with internalized homophobia.

### 12.1.5 Internalized homophobia and gay discomfort

Even if it is a rather rare phenomenon, the internalization of environmental homophobia can lead gays to non-acceptance of self and often leads them unconsciously to attempt the path of hetero sexuality. This is a real self-impositions that manifests through so-called "sexual experiments": I try to stay with a girl, if I succeed, it means that I am straight.

It is actually a neurotic mechanism in which anxiety dominates. The sexual experiment is deeply desired but not as a form of sexuality but as a test that can confirm a presumed heterosexual identity. I will never get tired of pointing out the absolute absurdity of the advice that even some psychologists give to their patients when they see them not too convinced of their heterosexual sexuality, pushing them to "try gay sex".

It makes no sense to "try" gay sex to evaluate one's own reactions, it makes

no sense to go with a girl to verify one's being straight. Sexual orientation is not related to behavior but to sexual desires. There are gays who get married, their married life is 100% heterosexual but their sexual fantasies are not straight and their masturbation is gay. To understand one's orientation, therefore, it makes no sense to "try a particular sexual behavior" gay or straight, which, among other things, can be risky for health, but you have to put aside "gradually" your conditioning to conquer, first of all, a true freedom in terms of sexual fantasies and masturbation.

Among other things, anxiety deriving from sexual orientation issues intended as a problem, very often, causes consequences, even heavy ones, in matters that have nothing to do with sexuality and in particular in studies. When the mind concentrates on the research at all costs of an answer to a problem connected to sexuality, it ends up neglecting and minimizing other fundamental aspects of social and relational life. In some cases the abandonment of the study, as a consequence of an anxious way of experiencing sexuality, provokes further insecurities and anxious sensations that slowly extend far beyond sexuality.

In these situations it does not make any sense to search incessantly for certain and definitive answers following a neurotic push, but we must remember that certain and definitive answers don't even exist for a lot of questions and that anxiety can be overcome only by realizing it, definitely putting aside the idea of being framed in this or that category, but I add one thing, resuming studies, if the studies have been neglected or put aside, it does not just mean avoiding to create further problems for the future in terms of work and of economic prospects but also means moving away from the idea of having a problem that must be resolved soon and definitively.

In practice, the return to normal study or work is the most significant symptom of overcoming anxiety and the most useful therapy in that sense. I would add that the anxiety that is often perceived as arising from uncertainties of sexual orientation actually has other origins because gay sexual orientation in itself, in a serene environment, does not give rise to anxious reactions.

We must begin by understanding that the problem we don't bring it inside us, we don't create it, but it is a reaction to a difficult environmental situation. An external problem mustn't become an internal one and the negative mythology of homosexuality spread in a homophobic climate mustn't be internalized.

The feeling of loneliness must be considered a momentary consequence of a difficult environmental situation because it really is so and these situations can radically change. What has just been said is useful as an indication for the overcoming of anxiety by those who experience firsthand that anxiety, but we must keep in mind that the main way to overcome anxiety is

emotional socialization, that is, having around a network of true emotional relationships that convey feelings of security and stability.

### 12.1.6 Interacting with an anxious subject

But how can people who are next to a person who is strongly anxious contribute to relieving the burden of anxious syndrome? Often when one realizes that one has anxious friends, there are scruples about talking to them in a clear way about everything because they might feel uncomfortable and it is easy to assume in face of an anxious friend reticent or blatantly false attitudes "for goodness".

As in all relationships between people, the most wrong thing is playing a role, taking on a role "for the sake of another person". One thing to avoid with regard to very anxious people it is the attempt to convince them by reasoning and examples that anxiety must and can be overcome.

With regard to anxiety, it is very helpful to feel involved in a true emotional climate, while every form of abstract reasoning is even counterproductive.

It often happens that issues that are not in themselves problems at all are instead experienced anxiously as problems. In these situations the comparison and dialogue with people who have a similar experience is essential to realize how others react to situations similar to those we live and to minimize anxiety.

Feeling as the only person in the world who has to face an urgent and difficult problem is stressful and anxiogenic, on the contrary realizing that the alleged problem is actually a problem only to the extent that it is considered such and that many other people have been facing or are facing now very similar situations is reassuring and above all makes us be aware that what seems terrible when you are alone, when it is shared it becomes much less scary.

### 12.1.7 Gay Sexuality and anxiety

We come now specifically to the relationship between gay sexuality and anxiety, limiting the field to the sexual dimension in the strict sense. It happens to me several times in the chat to talk with guys anxious for issues related to gay sexuality. The causes of these anxiety states can be various, by way of example only, I quote the most recurrent:

- 1) Anxiety resulting from moments of uncertainty about sexual orientation



- 2) Anxiety from presumed inadequacy
- 3) Anxiety from problematisation of sexuality

These are three conceptually different realities that can however present a lot of connections.

Before proceeding in detail it should be remembered that anxiety arises from situations experienced with feelings of danger, uncertainty or inability to manage the possible occurrences. Anxiety can also present psychosomatic manifestations, sometimes very evident such as tachycardia, tremor and high blood pressure, sometimes less evident, such as insomnia, sleep disorders, nightmares. Anxiety can also have typically sexual manifestations such as impotence, premature ejaculation and various disorders of masturbation. However, rather than dealing with the sexual manifestations of anxiety focusing on the effects, we will talk about anxiogenic situations in the field of sexuality focusing on the causes, through the examination of some typical situations.

### **12.1.8 Anxiety arising from moments of uncertainty about sexual orientation**

I have spoken several times about the discovery of homosexuality by a guy who was previously considered hetero (somehow even if partially also by himself) and about how much this discovery generates anxiety derived mainly from a wrong representation of being gay.

Here I intend to consider a different situation. A guy who thinks he's gay, who has exclusively gay erotic fantasies, who masturbates exclusively thinking about guys, happens to experiment a sexual contact with a girl. Against his hypothesis, according to which, for a gay guy, in similar situations, any form of involvement should be impossible, that guy experiences a physiological reaction that he doesn't know how to interpret: when he was with the girl not only he wasn't uncomfortable but had an erection and considered it quite exciting. That guy, while continuing in almost all the cases to masturbate thinking about the guys, sometimes masturbates also recalling the sexual contact with the girl. As long as these behaviors are not the object of reflection they are rewarding, but when the guy becomes fully aware of them and of their possible meaning, a state of anxiety comes up that disturbs the previous structure of personality and creates uncertainty and insecurity.

Generally, when the heterosexual contact is the first sexual contact of a gay guy, it significantly affects the balance of masturbatory sexuality achieved earlier, but in this case the new hetero experience has not supplanted the gay sexuality of the guy. That guy continues to masturbate thinking about

guys in almost all cases and will almost certainly end up returning to sexual fantasies exclusively gay in more or less long times.

Anxiety derives from an incorrect perception of the whole experience as a change in one's sexual orientation, this mistaken perception is dramatized and produces a sense of insecurity. We must realize that these things happen and that, in the vast majority of cases, they have only temporally circumscribed influences. And even if what happened with the girl was a spy of the emergence of a heterosexual identity or of a form of bisexuality, it would not be a problem anyway because nobody must be necessarily gay, but people must be free to be gay if and only if they really are.

As he deserves the utmost respect the guy who after having considered himself hetero for years recognizes himself gay, so deserves the utmost respect the guy who after having considered himself gay for years, discovers his own heterosexuality. This last is certainly a very rare event, however, because social pressure pushes gay guys very much to believe themselves hetero but certainly it doesn't push the straight guys to believe themselves gay.

Only in a couple of cases in many years of activity (events, I repeat, very rare) I happened to talk to guys who considered themselves gay because they had had sex with guys but they had very deep affective relationships with a girls. I noticed how for these guys, the acceptance of their heterosexuality, after considering themselves gay for years, was much more difficult than the acceptance of homosexuality for a guy who had believed to be hetero for years.

Essentially for those guys, who had made a considerable effort to accept themselves as gay, the gay prospects collapse and it is a question of rebuilding everything from the beginning in a straight key. The phenomenon is similar to the traumatic one that bisexuals must face in the periods when their sexual orientation changes.

### **12.1.9 Anxiety from presumed inadequacy**

The anxiety coming from presumed inadequacy can arise in reference to concrete situations and above all in the immediacy of them, and also at general and preventive level. These are rather different situations. The anxiety that manifests itself in the immediacy of encounters that can also involve sexual contact intervenes when a serious, already structured emotional relationship can also lead to sexual involvement. Often this type of anxiety is linked to the fact that sexuality is seen as something further and different from the emotional contact to which one is accustomed, a kind of second stage that can compromise the former.

Anxiety manifests itself in a very significant way on the occasion of the first

gay sexual contact and consists in the fear connected to the inexperience ("I don't know how to behave"), to the fear of making mistakes and to upsetting the partner to the point of losing his affection because of inexperience in managing sexual intercourse. Classic, in these cases, are the expressions like this: "I don't know how I will react but I wouldn't want to disappoint him, he is so sweet but I feel so clumsy".

In fact, the anxiety coming from presumed inadequacy is a component constantly present at the beginning of a sexual relationship and especially in the first sexual intercourse. Rather than real anxiety, it is inability to foresee the reactions of the partner in a sexually involving situation when there aren't at all previous experiences.

In general, the anxiety of the first gay sexual contact is practically nonexistent when the sexual contact arrives unexpectedly while it tends to be more strong if the expectation connected to that contact is deeply felt and the wait before it becomes concrete becomes long.

The worst way to deal with anxiety coming from inadequacy in a concrete situation is to resort to external behavioral patterns. A couple intended as a real unity must be able to find its own harmony in its autonomy. The anxiety coming from presumed inadequacy, which manifests itself at a general level without reference to actual and concrete situations, is, in general, the result of a weak self-esteem and sometimes the manifestation of moments of depression, very often not originated by issues related to sexuality, like seeing themselves ugly or having previously been rejected many times, on this substratum of weak self-esteem can insert specific fears, often unfounded or amplified precisely by the anxious component, such as the erectile weakness, the perception of the small penis and the premature ejaculation. In such situations, a gay guy tends to avoid any dialogue with other guys, is uncomfortable when he hears that other guys talk about sex and tends to socialize very little.

### 12.1.10 Friendship and sexual confidence

I would like to underline that the word friendship, especially among heterosexual guys, besides the generic contents of pleasantness, respect and mutual attention, has another very important component which is sexual confidence.

When two straight guys become friends in the serious sense of the term, it is not at all strange, but it is quite obvious that they compare their sexual experiences. This fact greatly decreases the anxious tension concentrated on specifically sexual content and contributes to giving sexuality a less mythical dimension, in other words, one can speak about his own sexuality among

peers without fear of censorship, in a free climate, in which the mutual attention is the rule.

A straight guy who tells another straight guy that he masturbates while thinking about his girlfriend doesn't do it for a stupid exhibitionism but because talking to another straight guy of these things melts the anxiety and helps to find a comparison on issues in which the direct comparison is rarely achievable.

Among gay guys, even if there is always in the background the idea that any friendship between two gay guys can turn into a loving friendship, the mechanism is exactly the same and for this reason not having gay friends with whom to compare sexual experiences, limiting the dialogue with other gay guys only to non-specifically sexual content, deprives a gay guy of a fundamental mechanism for the reduction of anxiety related to sexuality. I cite just one example.

A straight boy, educated a century ago with a strongly repressive education, generally felt strong anxieties and strong feelings of guilt about masturbation. Today, in a free environment, where a guy can talk quietly about these things with friends and can understand how his friends live it, the anxiety-producing potential connected to masturbation has clearly decreased. Of course, for a gay guy, things are more complicated but the mechanism of anxiety reduction is basically the same.

### 12.1.11 Anxiety and problematisation of sexuality

For some guys sexuality is not a spontaneous activity, the rational dimension, particularly strong, often compresses or represses sexuality. This is the typical case of young people who want to understand everything about sexuality, who, rather than experiencing it immediately, try to analyze it, to vivisection it to understand it rationally through a strictly linked and logical explanation in terms of causes and effects.

It often happens to me that some guys ask me in relation to some specific fact that they observed in their sexuality: "But what does it mean?" As if it were possible to give a serious answer to all the questions of this kind. These guys generally stay away from sexuality, because sexuality is not rationally controllable, and they want to program affective life, they are extremely selective in the search for partners but based on abstract categories. It is difficult for them to understand that sexuality means abandoning themselves to a level of deep emotional life linked to fundamental physiological needs and that reasoning too much on sexuality means losing the essential.

### **12.1.12 How to overcome the anxieties connected to sexuality**

A preliminary observation: everyone, more or less, live or have lived anxieties related to sexuality. If a guy didn't feel anxieties related to sexuality there would be serious reasons for concern. Anxiety, to a certain very variable extent, accompanies sex life in an ordinary way. Problems arise when this anxiety is paralyzing, when it leads to isolation and to sexual phobia. In order to overcome anxiety some advices can be useful:

- 1) Understanding that you are in an anxiety-provoking situation.
- 2) Trying to see things in a more serene perspective and evaluate the so-called problems for what they are in reality and then resize them.
- 3) Keeping always open the dialogue and the comparison with people who live in similar situations.
- 4) Getting used to considering sexuality as an ordinary theme of serious conversation and to talk about it in a free way with people who have similar experiences.

If I had to summarize in a single word the basic elements to overcome the anxieties connected to sexuality, I would use the word socialization: having friends, talking and discussing is the basis for being able to resize problems and to bring sexuality back to the level it deserves as an ordinary component of everyone's life.

## **12.2 DOCUMENTS**

### **12.2.1 Gay sexuality and anxiety**

What follows is aimed at defining the relationship between gay sexuality and anxiety on the basis of the concrete experience gained through Gay Project.

The issues related to sexuality are dealt in general with specific categories different from that used for all other issues. The first reaction or rather the first public reaction to the emergence of sexual content is manifested through smiles, winks, jokes, all attitudes based on the apparent "uniformity" of the points of view, which is equivalent to saying that "everybody knows how these things go!"

It is difficult, in public, to go beyond the level of a theoretical uniformity. Sexuality is almost always conceived as a private matter, or in public, as a

matter of ideology. Precisely for this reason the serious comparison of experiences beyond the limits of theoretical uniformity takes place in practice only between two people or in very restricted groups. There is still a fear of being judged when it comes to sexuality and that's why speech is kept, in public, on a very general level, and only in private it is possible to start a serious and useful dialog.

I would say that sexuality is the area in which the theoretical uniformity is experienced at the highest level. In a group of one hundred people chosen at random, political and cultural elements of all kinds emerge through discussion, but when it comes to sexuality the group seems made up of uniformly heterosexual persons, you may question some external behaviors but not heterosexuality in itself. I cite a concrete example: in a school with a thousand students there are on average eighty gay guys but no one of them can be identified.

The heterosexuality "seems" to dominate the horizon, but in reality, when you start knowing each individual member of the group, you realize that things are not so, that homosexuality exists and that it is not a phenomenon related to very restricted minorities. If, going into the specifics, we talk exclusively with that 8% of homosexual population, we realize that those people are actually not only very far from sharing the general idea to be straight, but also that sexuality is considered by them as a typical public taboo to be lived only in private if not even in secret if the environment is really homophobic, in essence, we realize that gay sexuality is often experienced with anxiety.

While 67.97% of heterosexual guys responded to the survey of Gay Project that they had never lived with anxiety the issues related to their sexual orientation, only 20.45% of gay guys gave the same answer.

Which points of reference can have a gay guy in terms of sexuality? The answers seem obvious, first the parents, then the peer group, then the educational system, etc. etc.. In fact it is already difficult for a straight guy to talk about sexuality with his parents, but for a gay guy the problem is often insuperable, not only he wouldn't probably find on the other side a competent answer but he would face a significant risk of being rejected by his own family. The same could happen with the peer group (classmates, friends, etc.).

The education system in most cases is totally unprepared to provide serious answers in these areas. There are notable exceptions in the countries of Northern Europe but in southern European countries, in many states of the United States and in almost all other states, not only there is no form of sex education that includes seriously also homosexuality, but in practice projects about sex education are reduced to convey some notion of repro-

ductive physiology leaving entirely aside the emotional dimension and the psychological problems related to sexuality. I had to consider some of the projects of sexual education presented in Italy, aimed at young people aged 16 to 18 years, and I found not only the total absence of any reference to homosexuality, but even the total absence of any reference to masturbation, which is then, today, still a taboo also in the straight field.

To get a detailed picture of the situation we can use the statistics of Gay Project.

The following table compares the percentage of gay guys and straight guys who have never used sex chats or have never used dating sites.

	hetero	gay
Never sex chats	80.47%	61.14%
Never dating sites	84.38%	53.14%

It is clear that gay guys do more use of gay sex chats and dating sites than straight guys but the reason does not lie in a greater propensity toward sex as fun or toward quick sex, it is instead a reaction entirely predictable to the marginalization to which gays are forced.

Another significant difference is in the reaction of gay guys and straight guys to the discovery of masturbation:

	hetero	gay
I didn't tell anyone	58.59%	80.57%
I told friends	35.94%	15.43%

It is clear that for a gay guy to talk about sexuality is much more problematic. The confidence in the group of peers for a gay guy, on average, is less than half of that of a straight guy.

A similar situation is found with the question "Have you ever told anyone that you used pornography?"

	hetero	gay
I didn't tell anyone	36.72%	64.00%
I told friends	56.25%	25.15%

Very significant is the comparison of the number of those who have never had sexual intercourse

	hetero	gay
I've never had sex	32.03%	46.29%
Average age	26.23	26.25

The overall picture shows that a gay guy has a lot more problems than a straight guy in talking about sexuality with his parents, with peers and at school, and then turns to sex chats and dating sites much more than a straight guy the same age, and also that a gay guy has much less chance to have sexual experiences compared to a straight guy.

Unfortunately, even though it is disheartening, the first source of information on sexuality, for gay guys, is the internet, and especially pornography and the environments of erotic chats and dating sites, which provide images that are often very far from the reality of the life of the vast majority of gay guys. Internet affects gay guys much more than it affects the straight guys. All this makes sexuality a taboo subject for gay guys much more than for straight guys.

I often talk in chat with gay guys having a picture of reality derived entirely from the internet, which means almost exclusively from pornography, sex chats and dating sites. Often these guys are not absolutely at ease with the models they have learned from pornography or chats and end up considering their attitude as something abnormal and deviant to be corrected and for this reason they strive to change their point of view. But if they knew the reality of the lives of other gay guys, they would realize that there's nothing to correct.

About issues related to sexual performances, anxiety is still common among gay guys and erectile deficit is often considered by the guys themselves as their own personal problem to be solved through the complete acceptance of a pattern of behavior that wrongly they consider as the rule of the gay world, while it is far away from reality and derives almost exclusively from pornography.

There are guys with excellent level of culture and remarkable intellectual gifts that are dominated by anxiety related to the idea of having a small penis or of having problems with sexual response, things that doesn't exist at all, except as a result of an attempt to integrate at any cost, that is forcedly, in a particular gay scene that they consider or better are induced by pornography to consider the typical expression of homosexuality.

There are guys who never use the word gay and avoid all matters relating to physical sexuality. The idea that gay guys can talk seriously even about oral sex or masturbation is still very scarcely spread. In reality, these things should not be considered in any way as a taboo because sexuality is an essential part of life for all guys. A good guy is not just a good student who will make his way in life but to be a good guy must refrain from having sex, repressing if not suppressing his sexuality, no! A good guy is obviously (and it would be absurd to think otherwise) a guy who has his sexuality and has every right to live it in any way he likes, with the only limit of



the respect of the freedom of others. A good guy lives his masturbation and couple sex when he has a partner, and it is essential that he lives these things with confidence and in a relaxed manner, without any stupid conditioning, because sexuality is one of the pillars of well-being. In sexuality, more than in any other issue, the restriction of freedom has an impact heavily negative. The idea that sexuality is a normal reality of life for all of us, that is nothing to be ashamed of and that we can speak seriously of sexuality as we speak of all other issues, is still very far from being universally shared.

In situations of isolation, that is in a condition where it is not possible or is very difficult to talk about contents related to sexuality, the anxious reaction prevails and behaviors can become dysfunctional and sometimes risky. The self-esteem itself of a gay guy is often heavily influenced by the perception of his own sexuality as something that he can't even speak about.

Addressing seriously the issues related to sexuality, putting aside the anxiety, means regaining self-esteem, reducing problems and maintaining a peaceful contact with reality, that is, in short, feeling better about themselves and others.

### 12.2.2 Gay anxiety and socialization

Following the publication of a post on anxiety<sup>1</sup> on Gay Project Forum, a user (Serpy) added in the following comment.

"Thanks, Project, for this post whose topic really touches me very deeply. Above all lately it happens that the agitation catches me even at night; this involves waking up and turning very often in the bed, feeling very tired in the morning. Reading what you wrote, I came to doubt that the very strong homophobia in the environment in which I live is the cause (if it is not the only one, certainly the most important) that brings me to this state of constant anxiety. You wrote:

1) Being submitted to the questions of parents and relatives like "Do you have a girlfriend?"

Here, this situation happens to me frequently, all family members ask me such questions; practically every night that we meet together by my grandmother comes out the name of a girl who could fit me, according to them, and I inside gnaw my liver because I cannot be honest. Then you wrote:

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<sup>1</sup>Whose content is shown in 12.1.3 and 12.1.5.

4) Being temporarily in situations of close cohabitation with other people with whom one inevitably comes to talk about emotional relationships and sexuality.

This happened to me last year with my ex-housemates (all homophobic) and just this is why I could not feel at ease with them at all. Regarding the fifth and the sixth situation, well, even those have done their part in the past. You wrote also:

”When the mind concentrates on the research at all costs of an answer to a problem connected to sexuality, it ends up neglecting and minimizing other fundamental aspects of social and relational life”

Project, how true this thing is! I still have to get out of this stalemate, but I just cannot! Also because what I miss is a sincere affective relationship, which I have never had either with friends or especially in the family. According to you and according to the other users of the forum it is I who don't really have the will to get out of this whole situation by myself, despite the advices, or maybe there are cases as desperate like mine of guys who, like me, to come out of this, really need an emotional support without which even the best psychologist in the world can't do anything for them?”

I responded so to this email:

”I would like to try to tell Serpy what I think about the possibility of going out of anxiety by yourself. I am deeply convinced, because I see it every day, that everyone needs important affective relationships and I don't speak of love stories, but above all of family relationships and friendships that, despite being lived in a not fully aware way, form the basis of the interior serenity of a person.

Precisely in relation to Gay Project it happens to me practically every day to talk in chat with some guys and keep up exchanges of emails that last over time, even for years, with other guys.

I have often wondered why I spend my days on the Project and the answer is simple, because, through the Project, relationships are created that have a serious emotional value, it is not a professional activity but authentic human relationships come from Project's activity, mediated by mail or msn, but authentic, all this gives me a basic tranquility, allows me to feel useful and I happen to think that just as I enjoy receiving an email from those who write to me, the same way, those who write to me can feel happy to receive a serious answer, I say serious but I mean not technical.

Sometimes I have the impression that even exchanging an email can have a stabilizing value and can move us away from an anxious vision of things. In fact, what I do in the Project does not consist in finding solutions to real problems but mostly in dissipating the anxiety that is often created around issues that are objectively not problems but that become problems because are lived with fear.

I received an email today from a guy I had not heard for some time, I felt him serene, even proud to be gay, well, I've never met this guy in person and probably I'll never meet him but I cannot deny that the email made me immensely pleased. If even an email can create certain effects, it is obvious that feeling the emotional warmth of others has enormous value. I give an example.

On the day of his birthday a guy receives a gift from his classmates, a group gift, but made with the heart, it matters little whether they are gay or straight, what matters is that they are sincere in giving a friend their gift. Such a thing has an enormous value in terms of self-esteem and is a natural anxiolytic with no side effects. You don't live well alone, you can accept loneliness as a temporary situation because we all need others, or better than others, we need those who love us, at all ages. My dream about the Project is that it can contribute a little to reducing the sense of loneliness and to putting finally aside anxiety in the prospect of a future considered with greater serenity.

### 12.2.3 Homosexuality, anxiety and sexual experiments

With the author's permission, I publish below a rather interesting email in which it is very clear what "sexual experiments" are and how they have only the appearance of sexuality and are instead expression of a more or less clear compulsiveness resulting from anxiety states.

"Dear Project, allow me to use the word dear as I'm a loyal user of the site and the various articles published. This is not the first email that I send you, we have had already some long talk, about a year ago, just this period. This said, I try to summarize again my experience in the shortest but still satisfactory way so that you can have a clear idea of my story.

I'm a guy 21 and a half year old, [-omissis-]. I have always been very shy and reserved, but at the same time also sociable. I started to masturbate very early, at about 8 or 9 years, always thinking about girls, I remember, digging in my memory, that at that time I tried to masturbate thinking about a friend of mine, but it happened just once, an isolated case that I have never repeated. Very often we masturbated in groups, two or even three of us,

in front of a porn, but always each on his own, and touching each his own genitals.

I distinctly remember that at that time I was not taken by any kind of curiosity and / or desire to touch my friends or to do things with them, but the only curiosity that pushed me was the fact that my classmates showed an already quite developed endowment in that department, even with dimensions quite larger than mine, and I envied them a bit and wanted to be like them. So up to 16 years and a half, about 17 years, everything went smoothly for me, with fantasies related exclusively to the other sex, desire exclusively oriented towards the other sex and so on.

However, despite my strong desire for women, at that age I still had not managed to have a girlfriend nor to give even the first kiss, and such things were somehow discouraging for me, also because despite my commitment every my courtship inexorably failed.

I was very fat, insecure, introverted, my best friends had already had sexual experiences, while I was practically at zero and this depressed me a lot. It was at a time when this thing began to weigh heavily on me that I began to think "I'm probably gay", "I'm gay, if I'm not good with girls, then I'm gay". From this moment on, my mind has always been monopolized by this thought, I began to test myself by looking at other men, trying to masturbate thinking about guys, in parallel I continued satisfactorily my frequent masturbatory activity dedicated to girls, and at the same time I began to lose weight, to become pleasant, to have the first girls, the first kisses, the first sexual activities (not exactly sex, but petting, foreplay, in short, everything that goes from the kiss to the mutual masturbation, avoiding in any case the penetration of the vagina).

Meanwhile there were long periods, even 5 or 6 months, in which I could put aside my anxieties and my fixations about the possibility of being gay, and with this also all the forms of test I had devised etc. . . . The situation changed last summer, period when I began to contact you, because my experiments, performed during another fixation period, began to give positive result, i.e. I began to reach orgasm even trying to masturbate thinking of guys, perhaps the satisfaction was not the best, but I reached orgasm.

Nonetheless, even during this period my attentions, both emotional and visual, remained linked to the girls, their appearance, their behavior towards me, etc., in short, I never went looking for guys and when I met some guys I didn't experience any excitement or erection, however, if I tried, I could reach the orgasm by masturbating thinking of any guy.

To this I have to add a dream, made one night, in which I dreamed of kissing a man and I had an erection. This convinced me of my homosexual orientation, however I continued to masturbate on girls, without absolutely being

able to do without. Days later I also made the same dream about a girl, and when in October I started again to attend university and started again to work, my fixation completely vanished, and my heterosexuality was until May / June complete and satisfactory. In January and February I also had a very beautiful girl, with which unfortunately I went not beyond petting. However, in this summer period these doubts, these fixations have resumed and I have resumed my experiments, up to masturbate completely (not exclusively) on guys, with a relative satisfaction, sometimes yes, sometimes completely no, sometimes partial, during these masturbations my erection is not complete, but only partial, anyway I can masturbate all the same and the feeling of pleasure is quite strong.

At the same time I continue to enjoy a masturbation linked to the girls, which anyway, at least for the moment, gives me greater satisfaction. At present, however, when walking around the street, etc., I don't find guys who attract me or who spontaneously cause me fantasies about them, or make it get erect, and at present I don't have any spontaneous fantasies about guys, my masturbation about guys is currently just something I do to see if that side of me is there, or is not there, I do not know, I cannot explain it, but I don't know, I have the feeling that I could do without it, if I had not this fixation about discovering that I'm gay.

On all this, the awareness of a lot of things, I gained lately, has a strong influence, such as for example the fact of not getting along very well with my father (although I love him anyway), or the fact that he is not really my model as a masculine figure, and that in my life I feel more inspired by my mother than by my father. I believe that anyway the male figure of reference of my life was my maternal grandfather I lost when I was still a child, I have to keep in mind also some good teaching by my father, but my relationship with my mother is much stronger, and this leads me to think that I may be gay, because my model is still a woman, and with my father I don't get along so well. In some things I see myself in my mother and this thing makes me think that I'm gay.

Well I think I told you everything possible, although I was not very synthetic. I hope you remembered me, since we got in contact last year, however, I keep a good memory of you and your availability. I would like you to answer me as soon as possible, as I am leaving in a few days, and I would like to leave with a slightly clearer mind, I would like to get your answers, and being able to have a nice chat with you on messenger. What I seek is clarity in order to understand myself, thanks for the attention you'll reserve to me, I am infinitely grateful for this.

F.D.”

The following is my answer.

Hello, I will try to answer you as directly as possible. From what you say it is quite clear that you have very little to do with homosexuality, I would be led to say that in practice there is nothing that makes me think you are homosexual.

Let's start with a fundamental concept: masturbation is a sexual act in the true sense of the term, not when it ends up to ejaculation but when it is experienced in a sexually involving way, that is when it causes pleasure and when it is accompanied by projective sexual fantasies that anticipate strongly desired situations or recall to memory situations actually lived and authentically rewarding.

I specify one thing: sexuality does not have as its object "men" or "women" as such but only a few, very few women and / or some very few men. In other words, every sexual activity is essentially dedicated to a single person or at most to a very small number of people. The guys who masturbate do it having in their mind the image, in general, of a single real person who arouses a concrete sexual interest. You say:

"I never went looking for guys and when I met some guys I didn't experience any excitement or erection, however, if I tried, I could reach the orgasm by masturbating thinking of any guy."

Such masturbation "on any guy" and without a true previous sexual involvement, is not in fact a sexual act but has all the characteristics of a sexual experiment, typical of neuroses of anxious origin. If you have a true straight sexuality, which from what you write seems absolutely dominant and I would say spontaneous and exclusive, there is no reason other than compulsivity coming from anxiety, up to test yourself to the point of masturbating without a real sexual desire but only to check your hypothetical homosexual reactivity.

Behind these behaviors an anxiety disorder can be hidden. The fact that experiments of gay sexuality are not always present but are limited to some periods would suggest that they may be motivated by tensions in heterosexual sexuality, as if you were trying to find another way, a way of escape, but it is clear that you are not gay. It makes sense to say that these things are the result of an anxious disorder if and only if your challenge with yourself about gay masturbation, aimed at discovering your theoretically possible but very unrealistic gay sexuality, is for you a source of anguish, despair, unpleasant feelings, all things that don't seem really happen in your case. Gay masturbation as a test certainly has a compulsive component but it seems a rather weak compulsion that doesn't undermine the dominant heterosexual

sexuality.

I don't even think you are bisexual, but if there was a real gay component more or less weak, however, it would not be objectively a real problem and a little common sense would be enough to go on well anyway.

It does not seem to me that objectively this so-called compulsive disorder that leads you to test your sexuality through gay masturbation is really disturbing. I add that in you the emotional dimension of homosexuality is completely missing and the physical dimension of masturbation doesn't really have anything sexual, you have a very theoretical and stereotypical vision of homosexuality and tend to read your relationships with your parents as a proof of your hypothetical homosexuality, but this reasoning doesn't make sense from any point of view. Summing up, what's really gay about you? Basically nothing!

The compulsions that lead you to gay masturbation as a test actually you don't even live them as real compulsions, you're used to living with them, and are things that don't make you objectively feel bad. Could you do without gay masturbation? Frankly, I think so and this in fact empties the concept itself of compulsiveness. Compulsion means feeling forced to do something, but if you can safely do without it, compulsiveness does not even exist. Frankly, I think this attempt to explore gay sexuality is an attempt to escape from a straight sexuality that sometimes must not have been fully satisfactory. As for the possibility of talking through msn, I think you already have my contact. You can call me whenever you want, even if you don't see me online.  
Project

#### 12.2.4 Gay obsessive jealousy

Hi Project, I have to vent myself a little and since I don't know with whom to do it, this time it's up to you to listen to me, I speak for myself, then if you answer me it's better, otherwise peace, you are not obliged at all. I am melancholic, but I should say rather disappointed (not too much) and anxious because my umpteenth story is over for a few weeks now. I had deluded myself that he could be different from the others and I had committed myself to him.

I've never cheated on my boyfriend, I think he did it, I'm not sure but I fear it happened. In practice for two months we no longer had sexual intercourse, the doubt that he had betrayed me has become a fixation but he has not admitted it and has always sworn the opposite. I didn't trust him and I did the HIV test, it's negative, fortunately, so I have escaped the biggest risk, but I still have the idea that he could have been with another guy when he was with me and this makes me consider him hateful.

Perhaps I gave too much space to the doubt, I don't even know, since I began to think that he betrayed me, almost six months ago, I obsessed him and maybe he felt oppressed. But I can't accept that he can be with me and in the same time have sex with another guy, it is something that raises accesses of violent rage in me.

I never surprised him and even when I checked his PC I didn't find anything compromising, but when we went out with friends he was very casual with some of them, too casual. For almost a year I have been with him and only with him. At the beginning everything was beautiful, at least for a few months, there was complicity, there was just will to be together and a lot of sex, but spontaneous, in short, I deluded myself that my dreams were becoming reality, then the worm of doubt entered my head and also the fear that he could infect me with the HIV and I demanded that the condom should always be used between us, something absolutely unusual for us.

At the beginning we took the HIV test and in the early days it certainly didn't occur to me that he could betray me, but, after, the idea slipped into my brain and didn't come out anymore. And then even if he hadn't had sex with others, I thought I was not enough anymore for him, he treated me in a colder, more standard way, I had to ask him for sex and he told me that he kept away because I seemed obsessed with idea that I betrayed him, he wanted at least me don't have the idea of having caught an illness from him. The first times he tried to convince me that he had never betrayed me, I believed him for a while, but then the idea that he could really betray me came back to me more and more strongly. I stalked him, I checked his phone several times while he was in the bathroom but I never caught him red-handed, but the doubt was always with me. In short, slowly our relationships became colder, I wanted him to convince me that he had done nothing strange, but then in the end he got tired and didn't even want to listen to me.

One evening he saw that I wanted to talk to him and went to close himself in his room and I was always in my room mulling alone. I thought we would come to an explanation but nothing happened, by now we had become two strangers even if we continued to live in the same house and so I was more and more convinced that he had a second life, because he tended not to stay at home when I was there. And why was he never jealous? He never asked me if I had betrayed him, perhaps because he was certain that it had not happened, or maybe just because I no longer had any importance for him. He always told me not to be jealous, but if one is not jealous he is not in love.

This is the last letter he wrote to tell me that he would go away (I changed only the names):



Dear Matthew, I break my heart to write this letter but I have to do it for your good and for mine. I believe we can no longer live together. Maybe you need something else. You are not as quiet as you were the early days, when being with you was beautiful, now I see that you're not at ease, I don't know where to bang my head, I thought about it a lot. I wanted to find a way to make you feel better, and I tried anything, but slowly between us the dialogue has reduced.

This idea that I have betrayed you has become a real obsession, I told you and swore it in every way: I have never betrayed you and I swear it once again on my head, but you don't listen to me, it was as if you were closed behind a concrete wall and you go back obsessively on the idea of betrayal. I asked you with whom, in your opinion, I would have betrayed you and you replied that you didn't know. Of course you didn't know, because it never happened! And with whom I could have betrayed you? With John? With Matthew? With Max? But do you realize that it is ridiculous? Or would I betray you with people found in some dating site? Can you imagine me there? In practice it has become an obsession, you don't listen to me at all, you don't trust what I tell you, you make hypotheses lacking any meaning and those hypothesis seem you serious things to you, you get angry because I don't "admit" I betrayed you ... but what should I admit? Something that exists only in your brain? Slowly it has become a destructive play and you don't even notice it, now you're another person who has nothing more of the sweetness and tenderness of a year ago, now you're just obsessed with a totally absurd doubt. What can I do for you? At the point where we are, since you think I'm a faithless and a hypocrite guy (you have repeated it in all possible ways) I cannot help but go away, at least this obsession will end up abandoning you. Believe me I made every possible effort but I cannot go on this way because I love you. Obviously I will always be available for you, but if you don't trust me, staying together no longer makes any sense. I embrace you and I wish you from the bottom of my heart to find again serenity."

Project, each time I reread this letter I get the doubt that I have done everything wrong and I have destroyed everything and I feel bad, because I destroyed everything both for myself and for him, who might not even deserve it.



# Chapter 13

## HOMOSEXUALITY AND FEELINGS OF GUILT

### 13.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 13.1.1 Concept of feeling of guilt

This chapter is dedicated to a reflection on the relationship between homosexuality and feelings of guilt. When a person has profoundly assimilated a code of behavior and performs actions that according to that code of behavior are reprehensible, that person experiences feelings of guilt. The feelings of guilt are the sign of the irreconcilability of "having to be" (behavioral code) and of "actually being" (actual behavior).

#### 13.1.2 Function of the sense of guilt

It must be emphasized that the sense of guilt has a very important function in the maintenance of individual morality because its fundamental function consists in reorienting behaviors, leading them towards the compliance with the rules.

An example can help to understand the concrete meaning of these concepts. A guy receives a secret from a friend, then, with extreme lightness, he talks with other guys violating his friend's privacy, gossip follows. The guy realizes that he has failed in the duty of confidentiality towards a friend who trusted him, he feels guilty for this, and also feels the need to tell his friend to have stupidly told things he should have been silent about. The friend, seeing the real repentance of the guy forgives him. The story seems to end here, but in reality the guy who had transgressed the rule of confidentiality has learned a lesson in morality and when he will happen to be in similar situations he will

behave correctly. This is concretely the "physiological" function of the feeling of guilt and, as we can see, it is a fundamental psychological mechanism of self-correction of one own behaviors.

### **13.1.3 Codes of behavior and individual well-being**

In the example we have just seen, a condition has been taken for granted, that is that the violated code of behavior is a deeply assimilated and consciously shared code of behavior on the part of the guy who violated it. It is precisely this condition that leads to "physiological" feeling of guilt, that is, functional not only to restore respect for the behavioral code but also to improve the individual well-being of those who have transgressed it.

The respect for the code of behavior and the individual well-being are often things very difficult to be implemented jointly or even irreconcilable and this mainly happens when the code of behavior is not really assimilated and shared by the one who should put it into practice.

Let's consider another example.

A guy had been induced, not to say forced, to tell his parents what his brother was doing because his parents wanted to know with whom the brother was usually talking on the phone or chatting. That guy, the first times, had adapted to the demands of his parents but then he began not to tell anything about what his brother was doing and this way he also felt the pleasure of transgressing what had been ordered by his parents. In reality the sense of guilt, anyway very relative, consequent to the transgression, was amply compensated by the conscience of having fulfilled a duty of solidarity which was considered to be of a much higher moral level than blind obedience to the parents.

It is precisely on the basis of mechanisms of this kind that soldiers feel allowed to disobey orders sometimes also performing authentic acts of heroism justified and motivated in their eyes in the name of respect for fundamental moral rules.

There is therefore a hierarchy of codes of conduct for which the violation of lower-level code provisions generate feeling of guilt only if the lower-level rules are compatible with higher-level moral principles, otherwise the lower-level rules are understood as substantially immoral and therefore the transgression to those norms is lived not only without feelings of guilt but even with the gratification that results from the transgression of an unjust norm.

#### **13.1.4 Moral freedom and feelings of guilt**

To judge a behavioral standard assimilated from the outside it is necessary to have a criterion of judgment that resides in a moral principle of a higher level, that is, to judge a norm of behavior assimilated from outside, a true free individual moral conscience is needed.

The freedom of the individual moral conscience is conquered over time and following a sometimes tortuous and difficult path.

Let us now try to take particular account of what a lot of gay guys experience every day. From a very early age hetero-centric education presents to children a well-defined code of behavior for which heterosexual sexuality is the norm and gay sexuality is a deviance, heterosexual sexuality is physiology and gay sexuality is pathology. The result of this constant and subliminal process is the assimilation by all boys of a code of sexual behavior substantially heterosexual, this code will be functional for guys who will actually develop a straight sexuality but will inevitably be dysfunctional for the guys who will develop a gay sexuality.

The code of heterosexual sexual behavior, deeply assimilated by gay boys, in a phase in which there is not yet a real moral autonomy, ends up creating feelings of guilt, since a gay boy can't however adhere to a behavioral code that is born for other needs.

Here comes out very clearly the discrepancy between the hetero norm and the individual good of the gay boy, that is not compatible with that norm. I would add that at an age in which individual moral autonomy has not yet been consolidated the rules of the hetero code will prove to be totally incontestable for the gay boy and in substance will be the only parameter of his moral judgment. Obviously the feelings of guilt will be deep and the frustrations arising from the impossibility of conforming to a code of behavior considered indisputable will produce environmental maladjustment and anxiety.

#### **13.1.5 Dysfunctional attempts to overcome feelings of guilt**

The mechanism mentioned above is not an abstraction and is observed systematically in younger gay boys who grew up in very religious settings. The code of behavior that is proposed to them begins to be perceived, slowly and over time, as incompatible with the development of individual sexuality. This results in frustrating attempts to align oneself with a sexuality that is not one's own and, at sometimes, in real attempts to put all sexuality aside, which in turn result in heavy feelings of guilt and discouragement. Classics

are attempts by gay boys to avoid masturbation or to focus their sexual fantasies on girls.

### **13.1.6 The conquest of moral freedom**

Over time, however, the individual moral conscience gradually gains strength and the guys come to question the rules received from the outside and begin to feel them in contrast with other principles and above all with the principle of freedom and with the idea that "evil" is what causes real suffering in other people and not a generic transgression to a moral code supposed indisputable.

As the individual moral sense matures, guys begin to feel no more guilt related to the transgression of norms that are not compatible with their own individual moral principles. The feelings of guilt continue to exist but only in the presence of transgressions with respect to the moral principles of the guy himself, in this way the sense of guilt return to assume its physiological function as a mechanism of self-correction of individual action, which guarantees observance of the principles of a free individual morality.

### **13.1.7 Self-degradation**

Let's come to consider an attitude that is not very common but not rare either among gay guys, the self-degradation, the conviction of having big problems to solve and being unable to solve them, but I don't intend here to refer to the problems arising from shyness or self-repression, I intend instead to refer to the self-degrading attitudes experienced by guys with a rather free sexual behavior.

I am aware that what follows may cause perplexity and that someone will consider it an objective overturn of the most common way of thinking on the subject, but I think it is worth taking this risk.

### **13.1.8 Dangers of behavior patterns**

Let's start from a premise: we all tend to follow models of integration between affectivity and sexuality and models of couple relationships, these models can be points of reference but can also be the cause of a discomfort perceived by the guys in terms of impossibility or presumed impossibility to adapt to those models. It should be emphasized very clearly that the models of affection-sexuality integration, such as the models of couple life, represent precisely models which are often very difficult, if not impossible, to follow, i.e. models that are purely theoretical and substantially far from reality.

I try to present the concept through a concrete example. It is obvious that, at least in theory, the perfect integration of affectivity and sexuality is highly desirable, and similarly it is desirable a couple's life in which fidelity is absolute but, in fact, achieving full integration between affectivity and sexuality is very difficult and similarly it is very difficult maintaining an absolute couple fidelity, in particular when the couple's life presents some tensions or when the choices at the base of the couple relationship have not been done completely freely and consciously or when the emotional sharing with the partner is not really deep. I mean that in order to achieve a perfect integration between affectivity and sexuality and a total mutual fidelity in a couple relationship, some preconditions must be verified, that often are not verified. A relationship born with some original flaw will not realize the ideal models of couple life and this is not anyone's fault but it is implicit in the premises. Often, however, gay guys are very negatively evaluated on the basis of the failure to achieve those goals and according to such evaluations they make a further logical leap, originally recognizing themselves inadequate.

### 13.1.9 Feelings of guilt induced by theoretical models

Even and especially for the most uninhibited guys, there is the idea of being somehow obsessed with sex and of being unable to live it in an affective dimension according to the commonly accepted theoretical models. Here it is necessary to define clear reference points. Sexuality is a fundamental interest for all guys, thinking about sex is a natural thing, not a pathological fixation. There are also true addictions to sex but this category should be used with great caution to avoid a too easy psychiatrization of behaviors that originally have nothing pathological but are experienced as pathological because of the fact that they are presented as such.

Homosexuality itself was considered pathological until a few decades ago and still today certain behaviors are often considered as pathological paraphilias. Exhibitionism and voyeurism have been considered pathological behaviors but, let's understand each other well, a guy who is pleased with his own sex and shows it off online to another guy, in a sexually involving situation, has nothing to do with people who go around compulsively to show themselves in the nude to people completely unaware, and the same way a guy who spies on his friend (no matter if male or female) who takes a shower has nothing to do with pathological voyeurism.

Extrapolating these two examples, many behaviors in the field of sexuality, even if they don't fall within the typical models of sexuality-affectivity integration and in the typical models of couple relationships, don't however have anything pathological. I add an observation. We all grew up in a cli-

mate where the sexual dimension is clearly overestimated, both positively and negatively, there are sexual behaviors from which happiness is expected, but from which happiness doesn't follow practically under any circumstances, and there are other behaviors to which we are brought to theoretically attribute a power destructive of the emotional life, even if such destructive power is not at all said to manifest actually.

### **13.1.10 Infidelity: the roots of betrayal**

The spontaneous sexual fidelity is undoubtedly a symptom of the couple's well-being. When a guy betrays, and even more when he repeatedly betrays, he becomes more and more inclined to give about himself strongly negative judgments, to feel guilty for having gone to look for sex outside the couple. Rather than being dominated by feelings of guilt it would be useful for him to re-examine his couple life in search of what is wrong.

Betrayal very often does not result in a better psychological condition than the previous one, it doesn't lead to building a new relationship but above all, if not only, manifests the intolerance towards the old one. And, I add, betrayal is not an unreasonable act or worse an act born of a pathological tendency to infidelity, but has roots and motivations in real life, which should be understood before thinking of being able to give any assessment of the betrayal in itself.

The real problem of the self-degradation of gay guys lies in hypothesizing their own original and somehow pathological inability to react according to the theoretical models commonly adopted and deemed indisputable, thus giving an ontological evaluation of themselves as incapable, unreliable, traitorous, etc. etc..

### **13.1.11 Frantic sexuality and emotional needs**

Often the restless search for sexual contact cannot be understood limiting the speech to sexuality in the technical sense because it is the transposition on the sexual level of other needs of a widely affective type. The sexualization of affectivity on the part of a guy, especially in an environment where it is difficult if not impossible to find affective contacts, is a common reality and a guy who frequently seeks sexual contact is almost never dependent on sex but instead shows in that way his desire for affection and it is often a desire that has been frustrated for years.

The behavior of these guys appears to themselves as completely centered on sexuality but in reality, when the conditions for creating or maintaining sexual relations are not met, the emotional relationships that these guys have



built up starting from sex, continue anyway, what would not happen if sexual interest were in fact the only drive to keep the relationship going. It often happens that a guy who has lived a difficult life is judged only on the basis of his formal behavior, completely neglecting all the facts that led him to those behaviors. In this way, seeing things exclusively from the outside, one can pronounce on that guy many judgements substantially unjust using abstract and moralistic categories completely inadequate to understand the substance of the problems underlying those behaviors.

Often, for a guy, the search for sexual contact isn't at all a form of superficial fun, instead is felt as a way, if not the only way to get involved altogether, asking the other guy for a real effort of understanding and participation, that is, asking him to get out of the abstract categories of moralism.

What may appear to be a trivial sexual approach is sometimes a request for help, for understanding, a way to ask not to be classified with formal and superficial categories. A guy who, exasperatedly and I would say very emotionally and anxiously, looks for a sexual contact, certainly doesn't want to be misjudged, he wants us to identify ourselves with his own point of view and to get to share something deeper with him.

Often, however, these guys get reactions of refusal or, worse, contemptuous judgments on the verge of immorality or even of mental illness. The discomfort in these cases can become very deep because it is experienced as a refusal of the person as a whole, generally follows from it a sense of inadequacy, ineptitude, inability to respect the rules that leads to self-degradation.

### **13.1.12 Internalization of the prejudice of others**

A guy who feels his sexual behavior as not in line with the models of sexuality-affection integration and with the typical models of couple life, who lives a couple life in which the so-called betrayal is frequent and unsatisfactory, tends to react by blaming himself and feeling somehow unrecoverable, but the feelings of guilt are certainly not the best way to react.

One should ask oneself what is there upstream that does not satisfy, drawing the right conclusions. If the couple relationship is really lived as a value, it is possible to exit the chain of repeated betrayals, if on the contrary the couple relationship is radically unsatisfactory it is good to avoid carrying forward situations that generate more worries than gratifications. In a completely similar way a guy who tends to sexualize affectivity can feel deeply hurt by the judgment of others and can end up applying pathological categories to himself by introjecting the judgment of others, a judgment that in reality has nothing to do with the real motivations that guided that guy's actions. Having betrayed your boyfriend or seeking sexual contact as a substitute for

emotional contact is not considered in itself a good thing, but such facts cannot and should not be considered superficially and above all cannot and must not permanently destroy, from within, the self-esteem of the guy who has betrayed (often inappropriate word) or who tends to sexualize affectivity. Any situation can be changed profoundly if you really want it. Often, however, one gets the impression that the easiest choice is to abandon oneself to a basically passive and fatalistic position like: "I'm like that, I'm not trustworthy, I'm not worth anything!" Having betrayed your partner, even repeatedly, or having repeatedly sought sexual contact outside the couple doesn't necessarily mean that you don't feel affection for that guy or that you don't have a deep affective life, it could also be so, but it could also be exactly the opposite. One thing should never be forgotten: that for a guy, before sexuality there is the need to be loved in the family, to be respected and sought by friends and to find around him a dimension of understanding and constant attention.

### **13.1.13    Moralism and inability to understand the betrayal**

People often show very biased and moralistic attitudes with regard to betrayal, but such attitudes are also very schematic and superficial and certainly don't aim to understand what there can be behind betrayal. These attitudes are generally deeply internalized by the guys who have betrayed the partner and thus produce self-condemnations without appeal, sometimes followed by depressive states that could be avoided by seeing betrayal as a sign of the couple's discomfort and not as something that definitely brands the person who betrays with a kind of indelible stamp. Something very similar happens with the tendency to sexualize the affectivity that is too easily judged with completely inappropriate moralistic categories that are internalized and create deep suffering.

### **13.1.14    Self-esteem and feelings of guilt**

Self-esteem is one of the pillars of individual well-being, but it is a pillar whose strength depends strongly on individual experience. One of the worst things that can be done is lower the self-esteem of a guy and paste on him a label of unreliable, sexual maniac or serial traitor. The reality is often completely different from how it is represented through these appellations.

### 13.1.15 Masturbation according to the Catholic Church and feelings of guilt

What follows is dedicated to a comparison between the positions of the Catholic Church on the masturbation and the reality of the phenomenon, as it appears through a simple analysis of the facts.

The definition of masturbation given by the Catechism of the Catholic Church<sup>1</sup> is: *"deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure"*<sup>2</sup>, is indebted to Thomas Aquinas, who, in the *"quaestio"* of *Summa Theologica* dedicated to lust,<sup>3</sup> frequently uses expressions that refer to *"venereal lust (ἀφροδισιαστικός)"* such as *"delectationes venereae"*, *"voluptates venereas"*, *"actus venereus"*, *"usus venereorum"*.

The Catechism is limited to a mere reference to the Declaration *"Persona Humana"* of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (end of 1975) that however treats the subject in a very structured way.

The point n. 9 of the Declaration *Persona Humana* on masturbation is one of the most typical examples of closed dogmatic structure of Catholic morality. The Declaration *Persona Humana* approaches the topic "masturbation" recalling that: *"The traditional Catholic doctrine that masturbation constitutes a grave moral disorder is often called into doubt or expressly denied today. It is said that psychology and sociology show that it is a normal phenomenon of sexual development, especially among the young."* The Church opposes these psychological or sociological theories only with its authority stating that "according to someone", that the Church considers certainly in error, in masturbation *"there is real and serious fault only in the measure that the subject deliberately indulges in solitary pleasure closed in on self ("ipsation"), because in this case the act would indeed be radically opposed to the loving communion between persons of different sex which some hold is what is principally sought in the use of the sexual faculty."* Beyond the fact that the text expressly speaks of "persons of different sex", it introduces a distinction, in the context of masturbation, between "heterosexual" affective masturbation and "ipsation".

The term "ipsation" (from the Latin *"ipse"* = self) was coined by Mag-

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<sup>1</sup>Part Three, Section Two, Chapter Two, art. 6, n. 2352) ([http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_\\_\\_P85.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___P85.HTM))

<sup>2</sup>The English text uses "sexual pleasure", but the Latin one uses *"veneream voluptatem"* (venereal lust). The use of the adjective venereal, now obsolete in everyday language and even in medical terminology where the expression "venereal diseases" has been replaced by the more accurate expression "sexually transmitted diseases".

<sup>3</sup>Summa Theologica II<sup>a</sup> IIae, q. 153.

nus Hirschfeld and was used in the psycho-biological questionnaire to be filled from patients of the Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin founded by Hirschfeld himself in 1919.

The question. 35 of the questionnaire was as follows: *"Do you ever let yourself go to ipsation, i.e. to the satisfaction achieved through onanism? When did you start masturbating? How did you contract this habit? Have you been encouraged by people of your age or of different ages? From people of your same sex or different sex? Up to what age? With what intervals and what mental representations and how did you masturbate? If you are a woman, by external caresses or through the introduction of foreign objects in your body? Have you ever struggled against this trend? If so, by what means (vows, prayers, etc.)"*

The document *Persona Humana* uses the term ipsation (now very rarely used by sexologists) to indicate a "solitary pleasure closed in itself" that would be the reason for the immorality of this "only" kind of masturbation. Obviously the Declaration does not consider any psycho-sexual topic and merely judges morally irrelevant the distinction between "heterosexual" affective masturbation, which implies at least a projective couple dimension, and ipsation i.e. the non-affective masturbation, admitted and not granted that it can exist a border line between the two situations, and as if the question of the moral legitimacy of masturbation could be reduced to this. The document points out that masturbation is still and in any case condemned by the Church for constant tradition and that and that whatever the motivation which induces some to indulgence towards affective masturbation: "This opinion is contrary to the doctrine and pastoral practice of the Catholic Church.

*"This opinion is contradictory to the teaching and pastoral practice of the Catholic Church. Whatever the force of certain arguments of a biological and philosophical nature, which have sometimes been used by theologians, in fact both the Magisterium of the Church – in the course of a constant tradition – and the moral sense of the faithful have declared without hesitation that masturbation is an intrinsically and seriously disordered act."*

The Document specifies the reason behind this judgment:

*"The main reason is that, whatever the motive for acting this way, the deliberate use of the sexual faculty outside normal conjugal relations essentially contradicts the finality of the faculty. For it lacks the sexual relationship called for by the moral order, namely the relationship which realizes "the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love". All deliberate exercise of sexuality must be reserved to this regular relationship."*

Whatever the value, the arguments to the contrary, the sentence bases its unfailing motivation on the teaching and tradition of the Church that legitimizes the use of the sexual faculty only in "normal conjugal relations."

Very interesting is the evaluation of the significance of sociological research on the topic of masturbation, as proposed by the Vatican document: *"Sociological surveys are able to show the frequency of this disorder according to the places, populations or circumstances studied. In this way facts are discovered, but facts do not constitute a criterion for judging the moral value of human acts."*

The Congregation in practice only paraphrases a document of Pope Paul VI, *"If sociological surveys are useful to know the mentality of the environment and the concerns and needs of those to whom we proclaim the word of God, as well as the resistance that human reason could oppose in the modern age, with the widespread notion that does not exist outside of science, any legitimate form of knowledge, the findings of such investigations could never constitute in themselves a determinant criterion of truth."*<sup>4</sup>

The Congregation goes to the identification of the causes of the frequency of masturbation as follows:

*"The frequency of the phenomenon in question is certainly to be linked with man's innate weakness following original sin; but it is also to be linked with the loss of a sense of God, with the corruption of morals engendered by the commercialization of vice, with the unrestrained licentiousness of so many public entertainments and publications, as well as with the neglect of modesty, which is the guardian of chastity."*

Then the document mentions the *"modern psychology"* although it is not clear to what it refers specifically:

*"On the subject of masturbation modern psychology provides much valid and useful information for formulating a more equitable judgment on moral responsibility and for orienting pastoral action. Psychology helps one to see how the immaturity of adolescence (which can sometimes persist after that age), psychological imbalance or habit can influence behavior, diminishing the deliberate character of the act and bringing about a situation whereby subjectively there may not always be serious fault. But in general, the absence of serious responsibility must not be presumed; this would be to misunderstand people's moral capacity."*

It follows that masturbation is always objectively a serious fault but not always subjectively and it is for this reason that modern psychology can be useful to discern case by case. Clearly, modern psychology is regarded as legitimate as instrumental and compatible with Catholic morality. The Congregation provides also other criteria that go beyond the *"modern psychology"*:

*"In the pastoral ministry, in order to form an adequate judgment in concrete*

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<sup>4</sup>Paolo VI, Esort. apost. *Quinque iam anni*.

*cases, the habitual behavior of people will be considered in its totality, not only with regard to the individual's practice of charity and of justice but also with regard to the individual's care in observing the particular precepts of chastity. In particular, one will have to examine whether the individual is using the necessary means, both natural and supernatural, which Christian asceticism from its long experience recommends for overcoming the passions and progressing in virtue."*

But let's consider only the facts leaving aside moral prejudices.

The fact that masturbation concerns basically all guys in adolescence is generally known and confirmed by all serious surveys carried out in this field. Masturbation in adolescence is very important: it gradually leads guys to the consciousness of their sexual orientation, determines the sexual archetypes, i.e. physical types of the people who induce in us a clear sexual response and also determines sexual behaviors that will be considered to be the more exciting all life long, creates and stabilizes the association between masturbatory fantasies and physiological reactions of erection and ejaculation. Inducing feelings of guilt related to masturbation in adolescents through moral prejudices means:

- 1) severely and negatively interfere with the maturation of their sexuality and with the formation of their moral sense,
- 2) push them to neurotically react (with a completely unnatural rejection of the masturbation), to consider masturbation as a vice they must get rid of,
- 3) build a morality based on repression rather than freedom.

### **13.1.16 Sexual pleasure in a document of the World Health Organization**

I reproduce below, a part of a major study that you can read on the website of the World Health Organization: "Sexual Health for the Millennium. A Declaration and Technical Document" a publication of the World Association for Sexual Health.<sup>5</sup>

The passage is taken from Chapter 8 "Achieve Recognition of Sexual Pleasure as a Component of Well-being" pp.135-138.

#### **SEXUAL PLEASURE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Throughout much of human history, passionate love and sexual desire have been viewed as dangerous, a threat to the social, political and religious or-

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<sup>5</sup><http://www2.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2010/Sexual\%20Health\%20for\%20the\%20Millennium.pdf>

der.<sup>6</sup> During the current historical period, religion and medicine have had powerful influences on societal norms for sexual health and sexual behavior<sup>7</sup> and in some important respects these institutions have inherited and continued the tradition of viewing sexual desire, and by extension, pleasure with varying degrees of suspicion.

It is not possible to make tidy generalizations about the extent to which the major religions have held either "sex negative" or "sex positive" perspectives toward pleasure and sexuality. However, it may be said that in various historical periods, many religions, including Christianity and Islam have focused on the reproductive aspects and function of sexuality. Consequently, they have sought strict controls on sexual behavior particularly outside of marriage between a man and a woman, behavior that does not lead to reproduction (e.g., masturbation) and viewed sexual pleasure, particularly that of women and homosexual men and women, with contempt.<sup>8</sup> Numerous scholars have documented the disdain for sexual pleasure expressed by Christian theologians and institutions throughout much of the church's history.<sup>9</sup> Masturbation, in particular, has been a contentious topic as its primary purpose is to produce pleasure.<sup>10</sup> Research on masturbation has indicated that contrary to traditional beliefs, masturbation has been found to be a common sexual behavior and linked to indicators of sexual health. While there are no general indicators of ill health associated with masturbation, it can generate powerfully negative or positive emotions for many individuals. It can be powerfully negative or positive, depending on the interaction between the prevailing societal attitudes and individual attitudes and behaviors.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, research has indicated that masturbation begins early and is an important part of healthy sexual development.<sup>12</sup> It is often a marker of sexual development.<sup>13</sup> Many young people learn about their bodies and sexual responsiveness through masturbation.<sup>14</sup> Masturbation also continues throughout the life span. For example, many adults continue to masturbate even though they are married and have ready access to sexual intercourse.<sup>15</sup> Masturbation can also help older people who do not have an available partner

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<sup>6</sup>Hatfield & Rapson, 1993.

<sup>7</sup>Hart & Wellings, 2002.

<sup>8</sup>For extensive documentation and analysis of religious perspectives toward sexuality throughout history see Bullough, 1980, Hawkes, 2004.

<sup>9</sup>e.g., Pagels, 1988.

<sup>10</sup>Coleman, 2002.

<sup>11</sup>Coleman, 2002.

<sup>12</sup>Langfeldt, 1981.

<sup>13</sup>Bancroft, Herbenick, D., & Reynolds, 2002.

<sup>14</sup>Atwood & Gagnon, 1987.

<sup>15</sup>Laumann et al., 1994.

to maintain sexual functioning and expression.<sup>16</sup> It is also a safe alternative to behaviors that carry a risk of a sexually transmitted infection, including HIV. The benefits of masturbation are illustrated by its wide acceptance in sex therapy as a means of improving the sexual health of the individual and/or couple.<sup>17</sup>

Addressing masturbation within sexual health promotion programming can be controversial. However the available evidence suggests that including masturbation as a topic within comprehensive sexual health promotion is important and necessary.

There is a need for more research, including theory development and hypothesis testing, on the impact of masturbation on self-esteem, body image, sexual functioning and sexual satisfaction and the effective incorporation of education about masturbation within sexual health promotion programs.

It must be noted that positive and progressive perspectives toward pleasure and sexuality are emerging from groups from a variety of religious faiths.

Nevertheless, it must also be acknowledged that the legacy of a largely negative interpretation of sexual pleasure, particularly if it is experienced in a context contrary to particular religious norms for sexual conduct, by many religious institutions is still with us today and continues to hinder the recognition of pleasure in sexual health promotion efforts in many parts of the world. With respect to international efforts to promote sexual health, the alliance of the United States, the Vatican and conservative Muslim and Catholic states in opposing the recognition of diverse sexual rights, including those related to pleasure, is testimony to the continued influence of conservative religious forces in shaping policies related to sexual health.<sup>18</sup>

Since the latter half of the 19th century, medicine and medical science has, particularly in the Western world, exercised considerable authority over sexuality and here too we find that sexual pleasure was often seen as pathology. As Hart and Wellings (2002) suggest "The long tradition of representing illness as a punishment for sin was continued when sexual behavior was medicalized and transformed into morbidity" (p. 896). For example, masturbation, homosexual desire and overt sexual interest, particularly if expressed by women was until quite recently seen by medicine as symptomatic of psychiatric illness and perversion.

Although contemporary medicine and some religious institutions have turned the corner in recognizing the positive and beneficial aspects of sexual expression, many remnants of the propensity to focus on the negative outcomes of

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<sup>16</sup>Leiblum & Bachmann, 1988.

<sup>17</sup>Heiman & Lo Piccolo, 1988; Leiblum & Rosen, 1989; Zilbergeld, 1992.

<sup>18</sup>Ilkcaracan, 2005.



sexual expression remains with us. "Today's public discourse about sexuality is almost exclusively about risks and dangers: abuse, addiction, dysfunction, infection, pedophilia, teen pregnancy, and the struggle of sexual minorities for their civil rights."<sup>19</sup>

Although, in most cultures, sexual desire and pleasure receive their widest endorsement within the context of a relationship, sexual desire and pleasure are increasingly coming to be seen as intrinsically positive and rewarding aspects of human experience. While a concern with pleasure is sometimes thought of as a decadent preoccupation of a secular Western culture, it is important to note that many diverse cultures have strong traditions of affirming sexual pleasure. For example, within Brazilian culture the concept of "*tudo*" or "Everything" refers to the world of erotic experiences and pleasures.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, a contemporary discourse of pleasure can be found in many non-western cultures. For example, in Turkey, a country not known for its affirmation of women's sexual pleasure, a grassroots program that emphasized sexual pleasure as a women's human right was conducted.<sup>21</sup> Organizations such as the South and Southeast Asian Resource Centre on Sexuality (Patel, online) are raising the issue of pleasure in the context of sexual health. From their review of historical and cross-cultural perspectives on passionate love and sexual desire, Hatfield and Rapson (1993) conclude that the tide of history is in the direction of "... an increasing acceptance of passionate love and sexual desire as legitimate, expressible feelings."<sup>22</sup>

### **Sexual pleasure is necessary and contributes to well-being, happiness and health**

Romantic love is a primary feature of couple relationships and is expressed through sexuality and sexual passion for the partner.<sup>23</sup> Although social, political and economic differences across time and place can markedly impact upon sexual attitudes and behavior, cross-cultural research has found that people in all societies place a high value on being with a partner for whom there is "mutual attraction-love".<sup>24</sup> Sexual desire and pleasure are embedded in and a fundamental aspect of the mutual attraction between partners. The mutual sharing of sexual pleasure has been shown to increase bonding within relationships (Weeks, 2002). As Tepper (2000) writes with respect

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<sup>19</sup>Planned Parenthood Federation of America [PPFA], 2003. p. 1.

<sup>20</sup>de Freitas, de Oliveira, & Rega, 2004.

<sup>21</sup>Ilkharacan & Seral, 2000.

<sup>22</sup>p. 91.

<sup>23</sup>Esch & Stefano, 2005.

<sup>24</sup>Buss et al., 1990.

to the neglected rights of people with disabilities to enjoy their sexuality, "Pleasure is an affirmation of life . . . It can add a sense of connectedness to the world or to each other. It can heal a sense of emotional isolation so many of us feel even though we are socially integrated."<sup>25</sup>

In sum, the enjoyment of sexual pleasure plays an important role in contributing to the establishment, maintenance and stability of couple relationships and, without doubt, the quality of couple relationships is fundamental to the health and well-being of individuals and families. While sexual pleasure can be seen as an end in-of-itself, for many, if not most people, sexual pleasure is intertwined with feelings of intimacy and affection for their partner. Sexual desire and pleasure not only facilitate reproduction, they function as a mechanism of social attachment for the couple relationship, an essential kinship structure in all cultures of the world.<sup>26</sup>

At the most foundational level, sexual pleasure is rooted in the most basic of human functions as has been recognized by evolutionary psychology. In the context of adaptive behavior and its necessity in evolution, it would appear that the pleasure generated by sexual stimulation, orgasm or intercourse would be selected-for evolutionarily. Consequently, pleasure can be seen as an effective and important adaptive mechanism, the function of which is to ensure the procreation and survival of the species.<sup>27</sup>

To the extent that a society is concerned with the well-being and stability of families generally, and couples specifically, it is in the interests of policy makers to recognize the importance of sexual pleasure and to implement sexual health promotion programs that address sexual pleasure as fundamental to individual and couple health and well-being.

The recent Global Study of Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors that examined various aspects of sexual health among a sample of 27,500 men and women aged 40 to 80 from 29 culturally diverse countries around the world offers strong evidence of the importance of pleasure and sexual satisfaction for the happiness and well-being of individuals and couples.<sup>28</sup> The survey asked participants, among other things, questions about the degree to which they found their relationships to be physically pleasurable and how important sex is to their overall happiness. Over three quarters of men (82%) and women (76%) agreed that satisfactory sex is essential to maintain a relationship and the authors concluded from their findings that despite substantial cultural variation in sexual norms and values, subjective sexual well-being was associated with overall happiness in both men and women.

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<sup>25</sup>p. 288.

<sup>26</sup>Fisher, 2002.

<sup>27</sup>Esch & Stefano, 2005, p. 182.

<sup>28</sup>Laumann et al., 2006; Nicolosi et al., 2004.

A White Paper published by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America<sup>29</sup> in cooperation with the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality extensively catalogues the scientific evidence demonstrating the health benefits of sexual expression. Taken together, the studies cited suggest that partnered sexual activity and/or masturbation can be associated with improved longevity, immunity, pain management, self-esteem and a reduction in stress.

In sum, sexual pleasure helps to cement the primary kinship structure of the couple relationship, contributes to the overall happiness in life of both men and women (whether they are in partnerships or not) and is associated with various aspects of good health. Seen in this way sexual pleasure is not frivolous or unnecessary: it is essential.

## 13.2 DOCUMENTS

### 13.2.1 Birth of a gay couple

Hello Project,  
we already know each other and I have a very positive memory of you that dates back more or less to two years ago, at that time I used the nickname "ilovemusic", we exchanged some emails, not very few, and for me it was an important experience, even if I understood the meaning of it only later.

At that time I felt weak and hesitant, today, luckily for me, things have changed and in a sense I think I have understood the true meaning of the things you told me in the emails two years ago.

It is now a year and a half that I'm with a guy, who is six years younger than me, it's a lot of time, it is true, but since we've been together my life has changed, it has changed for me the meaning of the word "love", my way of being gay has strongly changed. For the first time at the age of 29 I realized how they can be strong the feelings between two guys and for the first time I discovered the meaning of a deep human contact.

We both attended our church, I mostly out of habit, he probably because sincerely believer. We met because we both accompanied a group of young people (14-16 years old) to a summer camp, he was 21 and I 27. We had already known by sight and a little more even before camping but at the campsite we got to talk a lot and our love story basically started there. I was enchanted by the charm he had on the boys. I was older and the boys with me didn't familiarize too much, but they joked with him as if he was 15 y.o., and he was perfectly at home in their midst.

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<sup>29</sup>PPFA, 2003.

We started talking a bit in the evening when the boys went to sleep and we stayed with the other two guides to rearrange the common areas. Then I thought that John was straight, because everything made me think so. He didn't have a girlfriend, as far as I knew, but in the end he was very young and had many female friends with whom he was extremely casual. John is a handsome guy, I liked him, but I considered him like so many other straight guys I had known, in practice a separate world with which I would never have any contact.

The first few days we talked a lot about the church, the boys in the group, the study, the work, but not about the emotional life. I saw that he liked to stay and talk to me and I was always the one who had to stop the conversation because it was too late and we had to go to bed. The camp lasted for around ten days.

Eventually we became friends. I thought that for him, our relationship was a friendship but nothing more. With me he was casual but nothing gave the impression that he could nourish strong feelings for me.

Back in town we started dating, first only through the group linked to our church and then also for our business. In our conversations, only two subjects were completely absent: love and sex. At first I thought it was a sign that we were no more than friends but it did not make sense because in general two friends who already know each other talk a lot about these things. I could observe, however, that slowly our relationship had taken a dimension of everyday life and extraordinary spontaneity, things were developing on their own, we did not even need to talk to agree, any proposal from one of us would automatically be accepted by the other. The smiles and the looking in the eyes had become common things and there was a minimum of physical contact: the hug when we said goodbye was not just a greeting, to invite me to go somewhere he took me by the hand, and sometimes he leaned his head on my shoulder or winked as if to say that he knew what I was about to say or do. I tried to be very careful not to expose me, he fascinated me but I tried to prevent him from understanding it but he must have realized it anyway.

At one point he began to indulge in forms of physical contact more meaningful, for example long hugs, sudden and for no apparent reason, accompanied by expressions of happiness when he hugged me. The more I tried to pull back and get things back to usual level, the more John gave sign of feeling frustrated by my behavior. At one point, to overcome a moment of embarrassment that had been created, he took the initiative and kissed me, I tried to say no but he replied: "Shut up!" And we remained kissing for 10 minutes. The next day I felt guilty, as if I had taken advantage of him, I told him but I read in his eyes the need to move on, that's why I put apart every hesitation

and hugged him strongly, that night we had our first timid sexual contact. I do not think there's anything more exciting than being in love with a guy and seeing that that guy wants you deeply. I basically understood what is the true sexuality. He hugged me very strong and had no inhibition, his spontaneity was total and, strangely for me, even my spontaneity was total. Things went on like this for a few days, then I returned to the usual scruples and started to keep him at a distance. I believe that John has felt totally rejected and it was terrible, he insisted that he loved me but I did not want that between us there was sex anymore and I kept him at a distance for a while, then we restarted our meetings, but we made a pact between us, we decided that we would meet without physical contact. We spent long evenings talking and I began to learn more about John. I was amazed that he acted that way with me even if I wanted to distance. Then I was no longer able to tolerate to see him suffer and we newly began to have sex but the expression is not adequate because in reality, it was true love. For him, sex was a bit a response to his need for affection, was like to realize that his need for affection was much more important than my inhibitions and that in the end I could understand how he truly felt. I had never thought that sex could have such an ability to soothe, to reassure, that it could have an affective so deep meaning.

When I was with him I felt no guilt, it was all so natural, so beautiful, so full of feeling that the idea that it was not a good thing never crossed my mind. But sometimes later, when I was alone, I remembered that religion condemns these things and therefore beyond appearances, what we were doing was not a way to be good, but was actually a bad thing, was a way to hurt him for some reason I couldn't even understand, because however gay he was, he was anyway a believer. I tried to tell John these things and he listened, puzzled. I knew that he was a believer, but while I lived religion through a thousand scruples, he lived it as something liberating. He looked at me with a strong sense of concern and asked me: "Do you really think that we are doing something bad?" And I did not know what to answer, and in those moments I saw him again alone in his solitude, the solitude to which I had forced him, then I took his hand and felt all his hesitation and in that moment it seemed terribly unfair to keep him away from me and then I hugged him strongly. I knew the weakness of John, his need for love, I felt him close to me as I haven't felt any other person and slowly I began to put aside my scruples, and I came to understand that our love was true.

Sometimes, when I read things that people say about gays, it takes me a sense of despair, because now for me it is clear that those people do not understand at all what is the gay love, the love between two men. Me too, for a long time indeed, I had strong doubts that between two men could exist

a real love, I've probably learned this kind of mistrust by the environment in which I lived and for me to go over it was not easy. I started to put aside certain forms of psychological addiction to religion and I began to wonder what for me was good or bad, beyond any preconception and now I have no doubt, and I think that only love has the power to free us from our fears and gives us the courage to finally be ourselves.

It remains only one fear that is the fear that my relationship with John can finish. Objectively there is nothing on which to base this fear, but the fact is that the love of John effectively became the cornerstone of my life and think that living without him would not make sense.

In our relationship there have been also moments of misunderstanding but when it happened I never had the fear that our relationship would end. We repeated to each other this thing a thousand times. Today, after a year and a half, I'm a happy man. We do not live together because our families do not know that we are gay and by mutual agreement we decided not to say anything, not for reasons of selfishness or distrust but because we both think that our parents would not understand and every day we receive confirmation of this from the speeches we hear at home. In addition to putting in enormous difficulties our parents, we could also expose our relationship to strong tensions but we want to live as a couple in peace of mind. Now I have a job, but it is a job with fixed-term contract and John still studies, if things go on like this, in a few years (I hope) we could be truly independent and we could go and live together.

The relationship with religion, in the sense of our community, went into crisis. Obviously in that environment nobody knows about us, therefore nobody can marginalize us but since we know what is the way to see things for people who live in that environment, we prefer staying outside in order to avoid having to pretend a communion of thought that no longer exists. But we kept a set of values related to religion and also a great hope that God is better than men and has reserved for us a place in heaven. It is not a figure of speech, it's a form of faith, that I think we'll never lose.

Project, now I understand the meaning of many things that you told me and I realize that they were true!

Matthew

# Chapter 14

## AFFECTIVITY AND SEXUALITY MODELS

### 14.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 14.1.1 Models of affectivity and sexuality

It often happens that people totally alien to gay reality talk about gay marriage or gay couples, simply extrapolating to the gay field models of affection and sexuality typical of the hetero world. It also happens that even gays themselves are often led to more or less consciously conform their behaviors to heterosexual behaviors in situations more or less similar. In reality the models of hetero-affectivity and hetero-sexuality are not easily exportable to the gay world because while in the hetero reality dominate categories such as sexual complementarity, procreative purpose of sexuality in itself, and social dimension of the couple relationship, in the gay reality dominate categories such as sexual equality, non-procreative orientation of sexuality and in most cases privacy.

This chapter aims to point out the originality of models of gay affection and gay sexuality compared to hetero models.

#### 14.1.2 Sex-centric models and models with widespread sexuality

The different conceptions of the emotional life can be classified according to the role that sexuality assumes in them. There are models in which reproductive sexuality dominates to such a point that choosing one partner or another becomes secondary, in other cases sexuality, considered fundamen-

tal, even beyond the reproductive purpose, remains at the center of affective life, which means that an interpersonal relationship acquires an important meaning only when it results in sexual intercourse, fidelity is identified exclusively with sexual fidelity and the relationship goes into crisis when sexual intercourse is no longer gratifying.

Some statements typical of certain models of hetero sexuality such as: "the essential purpose of sexuality is the birth of children", "masturbation is inadmissible because it means wasting the semen", "the relationship between two people of the same sex cannot be a true relationship of love because it cannot transmit life", "virginity is a very important virtue" and similar, are indices of sex-centric models.

Similarly, a sex-centric view of affectivity leads to believe that a heterosexual sexual contact cannot be truly gratifying when penetration is lacking, and also to consider all that precedes penetration, and more generally any other sexual practice, only as a preliminary.

The underlining of masculinity and femininity as well-defined roles at a social level springs also from a sex-centric dimension. The sex-centric dimension of affective life can lead to use a particular emphasis about sexual intercourse and, precisely for this reason, it can induce performance anxiety.

In spreading sex-centric models, a particular role is played by pornography that identifies sexuality with sexual intercourse and spreads, by imitation, non-spontaneous behavior patterns that can be profoundly conditioning. I often talk with guys, who are no longer very young, grown up with a sexual education or better with a sexual miseducation entrusted exclusively to pornography, the real damage caused to these guys by pornography is to prevent or delay the development of true affective sexuality. Many characteristics of hetero sex-centric models are uncritically assimilated even by gays who only transcribe those models in a gay key.

A powerful antidote against the damage of pornography is represented by "non-sex-centric" affective models derived from examples of family life. Gay guys who grew up in families where models of widespread sexuality are dominant between their parents (pampering, affectionate cuddling and so on) are, in a sense, vaccinated against the sex-centric visions of pornography.

The mechanical transcription in a gay key of hetero sex-centric models induces gay guys not to pay too much attention to their feelings but to consider only strictly sexual reactions as fundamental. I often talk with young people who attribute fundamental importance to technical sexuality as a center of affective life, typical in this sense are the situations of guys who focus totally on their sexual response, in these cases the hyper-valuation of technical sexuality leads sometimes to neurotic reactions such as sexual testing (sexual experiments), which can also occur in a repetitive and disturbing manner at



the limit of the obsessive content.

In these situations it would be necessary a real emotional re-education or better a re-education to affective sexuality, which anyway is only possible with a partner who doesn't have a sex-centric view of affectivity. However, affectivity can also be "widespread", with characteristics that are not sex-centric at all. This doesn't mean that in this case there is no sexuality in the strict sense of the term but only that this sexuality is a component of the emotional relationship but it is not its essence.

The substantial difference between sex-centric affectivity and widespread sexuality consists in the fact that a widespread sexuality permeates all the emotional behavior of a person and is not limited to technically sexual moments. Obviously the widespread sexuality is not, in itself, neither heterosexual nor gay but it is a way of conceiving sexuality. It remains anyway that, from what I see, for a gay couple made up of guys who have lived a peaceful adolescence in a family climate authentically affective, widespread sexuality, in the absence of the conditioning of pornography, is a spontaneous dimension, not induced from the outside by imitation of pornography, but learned within the family, from real life.

The deeply affective and fulfilling meaning that a hug can have for a gay guy is not linked to the fact that the hug can be a prelude to a sexual intercourse but derives from the dimension of warmth and intimacy that the hug assumes in a dimension of widespread sexuality.

A significant consequence of widespread gay sexuality is found in a more labile border between friendship and love. This is a very important fact both because it stabilizes the gay couple when the mutual sexual interest tends to fade, and because it leads to a vision of betrayal that is much more elastic than the typically rigid vision of sex-centric conceptions.

For a gay, thinking of a possible sexualized dimension of friendship, outside the couple, is not necessarily equivalent to putting the couple relationship in crisis, precisely because often sexuality is not seen as the essence of the couple relationship, in this sense episodic infidelity becomes tolerable because it is understood as a sexualized way of showing one's affection to a friend rather than as an attempt to build an alternative couple.

### 14.1.3 The possible gay couple

I would like to deep now the concept of possible gay couple. Using this expression I mean to point out that for a gay the possibility of achieving 100% of his desires in terms of couple life represents an event that is anything but common. A hetero has much more choice and a lot more freedom of action, for a gay the realization of a couple's life is linked to the *a priori*

unlikely eventuality that the guy he falls in love with is gay.

When a gay guy falls in love with a straight guy, that is he is strongly attracted to him at a global level, both emotional and sexual, sooner or later he must acknowledge that his wishes will not come true, the same gay guy can then find also concrete opportunities to get to know other gay guys and to be able to create a really possible couple relationship with them, this dimension of couple is often apparently weakened by the fact that there are other guys, also hetero, and, I would say, often hetero, towards whom the gay guy is decidedly more sexually attracted than he is towards his possible gay partner. On this basis one could automatically think of a fragility of relationship. In reality it is not so, if the possible couple doesn't fully satisfy one of the two partners in terms of sexual desire, which can remain concentrated also on other guys (desired but impossible partners), it remains however that on one side there is a "possible relationship" and on the other there are desires that are unattainable. The couple relationship in these terms cannot be sex-centric and changes, while maintaining a sexual dimension, placing at the center a diffused affectivity-sexuality.

It is the classic case of loving one's own boyfriend in a deep way, considering him as a life partner in the most serious sense of the word, even without experiencing a strong sexual attraction towards him. In these situations sexuality is lived as a completion of the emotional relationship and not as a value in itself decisive, one lives an "affective" couple sexuality and at the same time a masturbation not dedicated to the partner but to an impossible guy towards whom one feels sexually attracted in a strong way. The mechanism that I have described is much more common than is believed and has an enormous value in the process of growth of the person because it takes guys away from very schematic vistas of the sexuality.

I must underline that these couple relationships are not of lesser value with respect to relationships in which sexual desire and affection are perfectly in agreement, but are with those in the same relation in which the possible reality is with the theoretical hypotheses.

The biggest fear for a gay guy is certainly not that of lacking of a partner with whom to have sex but not to be loved and the "possible couple" responds to this emotional need in a serious way and that is precisely why guys who live a relationship of "possible couple" are usually not frustrated, as one might think from the outside. It is evident that the sex-centric view of affectivity is incompatible with these situations.

Let us stop now to examine the role that sexuality plays in conditioning the relationships between gay guys in two different situations:

- 1) An attempt to put into practice an abstract model of a gay

couple.

2) A search for a balance without assuming prejudicially couple models of any kind.

#### 14.1.4 An attempt to put in practice an abstract model of a gay couple

According to the common way of seeing, a gay guy can better realize his sexuality in a couple relationship when that relationship starts from a mutual and strong sexual attraction. On this basis it is assumed that it is easier to build even a stable emotional relationship, in a sense the emotional needs appear here subordinated to sexual needs. To enter the specific through more immediate speeches, here is a passage from a mail of a 26 year old guy, that I will call Andrew.

"I think that if one becomes conditioned in life, in the end he does not accomplish anything and that never deciding is worse than decide wrong things and I, on the other hand, didn't want to watch the passing train. Project, if one doesn't endeavor and doesn't commit himself, afterwards can't complain. I was tired of the half things that were mired in a back and forth without an end, If you want to stay with me ok, otherwise each one must go on his own way.

So I see him the first time, I'm almost stunned, so sexy that I had never seen one like that. Guys, I'm really dazed. We met absolutely by chance, I had attended chats and even clubs, but I met him by chance at a business dinner of the company where I work. He was with a girl but he wasn't absolutely interested in her, so I decided to play my cards and told him: "You're beautiful!" He smiled at me and said: "You too!" Oh, I'm not ugly, before I had always around a lot of girls interested in me, but I wasn't absolutely interested in them (I always kept them at a distance!), but now that someone knows about me I also find some guys who are interested in me, but some, poor guys, not to brag, but I would never fall in love with them.

In short, he smiles at me. We part from people a bit, you know how these things go, you see that he is there and you feel encouraged, we touched a bit (in the intimate sense) and he agreed. I really exploded. I was single and I had never been with a guy, he had made his experiences, but in the end I didn't care. In short, the fact is that I went to him the same evening and everything

happened that could happen, I was so much upset so that I had not even thought about condoms but he had them. It made me think that he was not one who puts himself at risk easily. In short, after 15 days I went to live at his house. In practice it was a dream, a guy, "that guy" all for me. I had a terrible fear that he could betray me, that he could get tired of me but it did not seem so.

He was a little older than me (31) and already had an enviable position in the company, he could have everything he wanted but he wanted to stay with me. In short, everything is fine for a couple of months, then I begin to understand that something is wrong. He doesn't want to have sex with me anymore. I feel desperate, I beg him but he doesn't want to hear me, he tells me he has met a girl but he doesn't want to talk about her. He with a girl? It seems to me absurd. One afternoon he tells me that he has to go to the company and he goes out but he doesn't go really to the company. Where he went I didn't know and I don't even know it now but he started telling me lies and keeping me out of his life.

We had sex every night, at least at the beginning, because I didn't know anything at first, then I asked him how things were and he got very angry, he told me that he was not anyone's servant, and that if I was tired of him, I had to go. I didn't want to leave, it seemed to me that my dream had fallen apart and I didn't even understand why. I stayed at his house almost as a challenge. He didn't have the courage to drive me out of the house but he started behaving just like I was not there.

He started to come home with his friends who stayed until late at night and such things were unbearable for me then I reached the point of no return and solemnly sent him to hell and left his home. After three weeks I ended up in hospital for a bad accident and he didn't even bother to visit me. Anything! And he was very well aware that I was at the hospital. Here this is a sort of summary of the story. It is definitely better to be alone than with one like that! But I only understood it at the end."

### 14.1.5 A search for a balance without models of couple life

Too often as a model of a relationship between gay guys is adopted a model in which sexuality represents the maximum, as well as the remote cause of the relationship on both sides, i.e. it is assumed that two gay guys are brought together to satisfy a primary emotional-sexual need, and that once the affective conditions that guarantee the seriousness are realized, couple's desire of the guys is perfectly fulfilled.

This model, even if attractive, in many cases is not really applicable because the motivations that push two guys to be together can also be significantly different from a mutual sexual interest, that is, they can appear under the appearance of a sexual drive and be in substance general affective needs.

The affective-sexual education of gay guys pushes them to emphasize the strictly sexual dimension as a fundamental if not exclusive cause of their relationship, in other words, the emphasis is essentially on the sexual dimension and not on the emotional one. The consequence of all this is a progressive sexualization of affectivity. Below is a passage from a mail of a 23-year-old guy (I'll later call him Laurence) that clarifies the concept:

"I loved him, that is, I was fine with him, I was happy when he was there, when he was not there I felt strongly his absence, I waited for his cell phone calls or msn, I liked him so much when he came to me and we talked a lot, and he took off her shoes and stretched out on my bed, he felt free and I with him, I know that if I needed him he would do anything for me, he's a nice guy but he's not my type, some sexual thoughts about him I did too, after all why not, but not only he has never been a fixation for me but let's say that on him I had few fantasies of that kind while It happened more on some other guys, perhaps those impossible that I could never have, but intrigued me more. I loved him but I didn't really feel sexually attracted to him."

The situation described here (the relationship between the two guys), from the point of view of the author of the email, has a primary matrix of affective and not typically sexual character. It is, in other words, the typical situation that predisposes to a strong gay friendship. The point of view of the other guy is so summarized by the author of the mail:

"For him it is different, it has always been different from the beginning, he has had just the typical way of doing the sweetheart, for me he has so many attentions, he respects me a lot, is attentive to my mood, he cuddles me a lot, hugs me, kisses me, is in

physical contact with me, but I see that he brakes, I understand it, he brakes because even if he would keep going beyond, he does it only when he thinks it's me to want it (maybe it's not like that), for the rest he doesn't even try, he tells me he dreams me, that I'm his guy, that when we cannot see each other he masturbates thinking of me, that he bring my photo always with him, I feel that he is in love.

With him I also feel good when we have sex but it's a different thing, I feel good as for a form of tenderness, he uses all his self-control not to let his fantasy go too much further and he probably represses himself, I instead let him decide and I try to follow him as I can, as it's possible for me, but I feel the asymmetry and I'm sorry because maybe he could deserve someone better than me.

We have been together for more than two years now but we cannot live together, I don't even know if it would be better. I love him, I would never betray him, I would feel bad, I did all the controls for the HIV and it's all right but it's not just because of the fear of HIV that I would not betray him, it's first of all because a guy like him doesn't really deserves it. In recent months I have seen many guys who physically like me more than him but I think that with them it would not be better than with him, that in the end they attract me from the sexual point of view and that's all, while with him it's different. Of course, I don't feel at all an overwhelming love, it's another thing, an important thing, very important for me, but it's another thing."

The function of sexuality in these relationships is a guarantee function, in the sense that guarantees the exclusivity of the emotional relationship precisely because it is connected to a relationship also sexual. On this exclusivity are grafted on one side the expectations of an almost matrimonial relationship and on the other some attempts, anyway not too much strong, to safeguard one's own autonomy.

"Then there is a further problem, he works and I don't, I think he is starting to make plans on buying a small apartment. He didn't tell me it explicitly, but from a few little particulars I understood that he was looking for deals in the magazines of real estate agencies and especially on the internet. When we pass near a real estate agency he stops to take a look, and he had never done so before. I think he doesn't talk about it because he's afraid I may consider it as a trap and it's a bit like that, but not because I don't want to be with him but because I'd like to be on equal

footing, I'd also like an apartment in rent paid at 50%, but living in a house, with the expenses paid only by him, would make me uncomfortable. I must be free to leave if by chance I don't feel at ease with him, otherwise I would feel forced, and anyway I could never tell my parents that I'm going to live with him.

Honestly, I think that it could also work just because a cohabitation is not made of sex but also and especially of many other things, I wouldn't give up easily, as I didn't give up in these two years and maybe I could go on for so many years, we should stay together because we are really well, and now I'm fine with him, and certainly not because I don't have a place where I can live."

In these situations, sexuality ends up slowly acquiring a recessive dimension, the need for not turning it into a routine pushes to thin out opportunities and transforms sexual drive into a form of mutual sexual tenderness that can be more easily shared. These relationships have an apparent fragility but tend to consolidate over time and become substantially resistant, even in front of situations that at the beginning might have put them in crisis.

"About three months ago I met, through my ex, a guy who is very nice and I really like him, let's call him Paul. I don't deny that he put me in crisis and not a little.

I think Paul fell in love with me even though I didn't show him any enthusiasm. The first few times I didn't talk about it to my boyfriend, I was very ashamed, then I told him everything and there I understood the value of my boyfriend, we talked a lot and in a serious way, even if it was obvious that he felt bad he didn't in the least let his presence become heavy for me and almost tried to put me at ease telling me that I had to feel free because he will love me anyway.

Frankly I understood very well that he wasn't at ease and that for him to stay away from me would have been a very heavy sacrifice and there I understood to what extent he loves me. In the meantime Paul has really tried everything to have me, I had the temptation but it would have been just like giving a stab to my boyfriend and so I put aside Paul's speeches. Frankly I had no regrets even at the time, then I came back to my boyfriend and I told him I loved him. We made love and it was a very nice thing. Making love with a guy who really loves you is an indescribable thing, it's not even a matter of sex, you think mostly of him, you make him understand that you love him, you make

him understand through sex that you love him and you feel that he is happy and exactly for this you feel happy too.”

A relationship like the one described in the email mentioned above doesn't start from an eminently sexual thrust but gradually comes to the conquest of a different affective sexuality, which has the appearance of uncertainty but has the solidity of things the real extent of which can be understood only through direct experience. In essence, it is a matter of slowly constructing the meaning of a relationship.

## 14.2 DOCUMENTS

### 14.2.1 Gay sex for not thinking

Hello Project, thanks for last Monday's chat, it helped me to recover a bit of courage and also to scale back a lot of things. How much it would be easier if there was no sex! Perhaps without sex all this would not exist, the fact is that sex still weighs like a boulder. It is not easy for a forty-year-old to try to build an affective life, I know that very well, but anyway it is certainly discouraging.

Whenever I can create a good friendship, inevitably, when one begins to put sex in the middle, I can no longer manage anything. It only happened once to me to live a story that had little to do with sex, but now also that story is over, perhaps, because there was no real sexual attraction.

As long as we stayed on the level of friendship, with that minimum of sex that came spontaneously, but just like tenderness, it still worked, then we said that it is not so that it should work, that ultimately we ended up being a heavy weight one for the other and then we stopped contacting each other, because if there is no sex a story is useless! It is paradoxical that I am the one who says it, and I say it with bitterness, because I have never had fixations on sex.

I need to begin from loving each other, and then maybe the rest would come, but obviously it doesn't work that way. And then all my stories have been a follow-up not of failures, because my stories were not true stories but attempts, half stories, stories started with a long string of ifs and buts.

I have nothing to reproach the guys I've been with, they never cheated on me, they told me from the beginning that they didn't know if it would last. I still love the guys I fell in love with, they're poor guys like me who go above all in search of attention, small moments of happiness to make up for what they've never had from the family. If there is a constant element in the stories of all my guys is the bad relationship with the families and for me too



it works like that.

Then, of course, if you have not been accustomed to caresses, to the small attentions of those who love you and have always thought to save yourself, not to be crushed by a family that doesn't do anything to understand you, then it is obvious that you grow up bad, that you grow up with a kind of anxiety of revenge inside. In some way you must also revenge! But you cannot love, no one has taught you it, sex is for you just a way of saying that you exist because you do what others do, but this is a crazy thing.

Then obviously on sex you end up betting everything. If you're not beautiful you go into a crisis because you think you'll always be alone because you're not beautiful, because you don't even know that feelings exist. And what did you learn in the family? You have learned only the desperate egoism of those who try to survive and not to be annihilated.

Project, there may also be families who accept you and love you even if you are gay, I read the stories you publish, but I think that those are exceptions and that the family life of a gay boy is actually much more squalid. One of the guys I had, felt almost poisoned by his family, he said the most terrible things about it, I don't even know if they were real things but his reaction when I tried to talk about family was exacerbated, almost furious. I've always wondered why sex ends up having such a huge meaning for us and I think it's at least partly a way to fill a void, an emotional void, a kind of inability to create real interpersonal relationships. When my stories ended I always tried to maintain a minimum of relationship and, if possible, to remain friends, and I almost always succeeded. I've never hated my ex boyfriends, I'm an ex too. I see them a bit like guys who, like me, don't even know what they want. Sometimes I find myself cheering for them when they enter into stories that they think are finally good. The logic is a bit to think that "at least he can build a piece of happiness".

Who teaches us to love each other? I believe nobody does it, and you spend the years making mistakes, falling in love, if this word makes sense, with other desperate people like you who don't know what to do with their life, you fall in love just because they are desperate like you, you feel it above all when they are taken by melancholy and discouragement. You realize that sex is useful not to think, you realize that you are not able to give anything these guys because you can't change their life, as you can't even change your own life.

Why should sex be a kind of drug not to think? When you turn 40, you start budgeting. I learned a lot from my love stories and now of the melancholy and the angry reactions of the guys I understand many things that before I hadn't understood at all, now I see things with the disenchanted eye of the mature man, but I still carry inside myself a huge desire for love, the more

that desire grows the more I realize that it will end up unfulfilled.  
 Gil

### 14.2.2 Gay love without gay couple

Dear Project,

I got to talk to you several times via msn but I think you cannot easily remember me without a more precise reference. Twenty-eight y. o. madly in love with a guy twenty-three with whom I believed to have built a great relationship, then I was abandoned by this guy last summer but in a way that I could not explain. I talked to you for a whole night in the month of September (Nick name: sad). I called you because I needed to vent but talking to you instead gave me a strange feeling, I realized that your way of reasoning and seeing things was extremely different from mine or maybe different from how I had tried to figure out my relationship with that guy. The thing that struck me most was your vision of couple's life. I have kept logs of conversations:

Sad wrote: Hello Project, are you busy?

Project wrote: Hello Sad, nice to meet you!

Sad wrote: Maybe you remember, I had sent you an email at the end of June. Twenty-eight-year-old guy madly in love with a twenty-three-year-old guy, (he and I had been together in the mountains for Christmas)... do you remember?

Project wrote: Ah yes ... and he had lost his wallet at the hotel and they had given it back to him?

Sad wrote: yes yes exactly! You remember perfectly!

Project wrote: Yes, I remember now! A good story, a story that struck me very much. And now, how are you now?

Sad wrote: now I'm single again, the story is over!

Project wrote: but what happened? It seemed that everything was fine ...

Sad wrote: he behaved with me in an unworthy manner, treated me with no respect, I had tried to do everything for him and make sure he was okay but he left me as if I had no value for him

Project wrote: but now he's got another guy?

Sad wrote: no, I don't think

Project wrote: and then why did he leave you?

Sad wrote: I don't know, I did not understand, he told me that he felt too bonded, that he did not feel able to make choices by himself, I asked him to meet me but he said no and there was

nothing I could do to make him change his opinion, then we had a fight badly and I sent him to hell and I also think that he took it very badly, but with me, if you want to do something serious it is fine, but if it's all a back and forth without an end, it's not at all good for me. Somehow he used me when he needed me and left me alone when I needed him most. I thought that between us there was a consolidated relationship, I thought I could to rely on him but things were different.

Project wrote: but when it happened?

Sad wrote: more or less a month and a half ago

Project wrote: and after you broke up did you meet again or he disappeared altogether?

Sad wrote: yes he called me, he seemed to want to go back, he told me he loved me but when I asked him if he wanted to go back with me he told me that he did not feel so and that he had not called for it but to know how I was and then I lost my temper and told him to go to hell.

Project wrote: and everything was over this way?

Sad wrote: no, sometimes we also talked on msn but I cannot be on a roller coaster this way, I cannot be exposed to his mood swings, because he basically does not want to be with me and this seems clear to me, I need stability and to him this is not good, that is, the stability seems to him to be a way to give up other things, like if he was closing himself in a trap, and so things cannot go on. I know he is younger than me and maybe he wants to make his experiences but at some point he must also make a clear choice, the fact that now he is alone depends only on him, and I don't care at all about such things, I cannot ruin my life running after him and after everything that comes to his mind. He has a vision of life too different from mine

Project wrote: but is it really true that you don't care about?

Sad wrote: however I cannot tolerate the fact that I have been treated with no respect, let's face it, Project, now I'm really bad, for me it's a failure, I need stability, if he doesn't care at all about me, I will try to find another guy in order to build something stable, quiet, with him it would not be so in any case, what do you think about, Project?

Project wrote: are you sure that he wants to break the relationship??

Sad wrote: No, but now I want to close the matter, I cannot go on like this! I'm tired, Project, and I'm disappointed, I had over-

rated him, I thought that he really cared and instead he proved to be selfish. When he needed me I was there all the time but when I needed him, he didn't care at all

Project wrote: things you told me long ago about this guy were very positive, just at the level of person, and forgive me if I tell you it, but at that time I had the impression you had a very rigid way of seeing things.

Sad wrote: I don't understand.

Project wrote: wait, I'll try to explain, you had in mind a model of close couple and probably the mentality of this guy is not compatible with that model. When you are in love with a person, there is always the risk of actually seeing only some aspects and to complete other aspects according to our desires, but falling really in love means to love a guy for what he is, that is love him even in the aspects that we cannot understand, that usually have deep motivations and are not stupid attitudes, couple's life may not be suitable for that boy, or may not be suitable the way you imagine it, that is as a closed couple.

Sad wrote: it means that he really doesn't love me! Because he is not willing to give up anything for me.

Project wrote: no! Do not say so, really love each other does not mean having to give up something necessarily neither to accept a model of closed couple; it's a whole different thing. I think you could find yourself choosing between the model of closed couple and this guy. I would not give for granted that you should give up on this guy and even that the story is over, maybe it's over the possibility of living with him a story in the way you imagined it and on the other hand does not make sense to think that one must adapt to another, it is possible to find a balance for both but if I have to say what I think, I do not think the story is really over and anyway you don't seem really disappointed.

Sad wrote: I don't know what to tell you, Project, but now at least for a while, I don't want any more to know anything about him, then what does it mean to love one another if not feeling comfortable as a component of a couple?

Project wrote: I do not know, it's all to be verified; sometimes we pretend that people adapt to our models, but people and not our models are the absolute value. It is true that this argument should also apply from his point of view, but I think he too may have felt very uncomfortable. Maybe he thought he was accepted as he really was, with all his uncertainties, his contradictions and

his need for freedom and not as a guy who had to adapt to what his partner wanted, I will say, however, not to keep rigid positions with him. A relationship doesn't exist when there is no affection, not when things don't go according to our plans and here I don't think that there is no affection and, more than affection I would say love.

Sad wrote: well . . . basically I love him, but it is too difficult for me, no, Project, for me this is not good. I need a minimum of security.

This was our conversation of September and since then many things have happened, I tried to be with other guys, but practically it was impossible because I always had him in mind. Our contacts were not interrupted, he called me several times and was talking to me very seriously, but never wanted us to get back together not to deceive me, he said, not to let me think that things could come back as before. He treated me with respect and affection, what I did not expect, even if he did not want to go back to a couple's relationship with me as before. I do not know if he is in love with another guy, but I don't think so. With me he is very clear, as he always has been, never explicit statements of love, but only positions always very clear, we have also met in person and more than a single time.

Undoubtedly when I see him I'm taken back to the idea of living with him as a couple, and sometimes it was difficult to accept that it would not happen. He tells me that he needs freedom, to try to live his life, whatever it could be, but that he loves me and I begin to think that it is true, indeed I do. Sometimes we hug and this causes me a strange feeling but it's a positive feeling, I feel that I have not lost him; however, certainly I have to resize my dreams. It's a bit as you said, Project, I find myself deciding between this guy and the kind of life that I had imagined with him. It still seems very difficult to me to accept that he could be free loving me even though he fell in love with another guy.

This summer it seemed to me quite inconceivable, now I find it difficult to accept but I do not see it as an absurd hypothesis. In fact, if a guy loves another guy and therefore he doesn't love you at all because he only thinks of the other guy, then certainly you cannot maintain any relationship, but if the guy could as well continue to love you, even though he is in love with another guy, it would make sense to say that it is better to send everything to hell? I really don't know, Project.

Evidently, they put us in mind behavior models according to which love must be exclusive, i.e. either with me or with another, but perhaps these models are complications that are not needed at all to love one another. Maybe now

it seems to me that I could adapt because in fact now he has not another guy, probably if he had one I could not accept it. In practice, I hope to be everything for him, so he would not need anything else and I would find my peace of mind, in practice a bit as before. That is, now, even if he went away from me, he is still in love with me because really there is not anyone else. Or maybe it could work well even if he really was in love with another guy? I really don't know.

With me he was always sincere and I feel that we are really good together. Probably I'm not really everything for him, I'm not enough for him but not in the sense that he devalues me but in the sense that he also needs other things that I cannot give him, I cannot because maybe they are things that I do not understand or just because he also needs the affection of others.

In recent times I have the impression that he wants to be close to me, that he cares what I say and what I think and especially that he cares to show me that he loves me but avoiding deluding me. But how can I, Project, think that maybe we go back together, because it probably will happen, or at least somehow will happen, but how do I then think that he might even have another guy? I'm not saying he could not love me, because I do not think this will happen, but how could I accept not to be everything for him anyway? This thing upsets me. Project, and if, after accepting such a thing, I felt worse? And if maybe I'm the one who deceives him because I'm not able to comply with his rules and then I expect our relationship go on as usual? I think I can find another guy, but it is not what I want.

When I tried to approach other guys I expected from them his reactions, his answers, and instead I found myself in front of quite different things, things from which I was barely involved, in practice I was not involved at all because I thought those guys were not like him. When he's around I feel his presence very strong and it is not a matter of sex, even arguing with him is another thing. He never tells me I'm right when he thinks that I'm wrong and discussing with him it's a true discussion, both of us are at the same level. After all he has not kept pace but loved me anyway and I have no doubt, but he loved me in his own way. I do not know if we would be back together, it's probably something else that does not involve the classical concept of couple.

Project, do you understand in what kind of problems I'm involved? It is a situation that previously I would never have accepted for any reason, I would have rejected on principle, but I do not want to be without that guy, certainly the situation in these terms will make me live in anxiety, and I think that the sense of uncertainty will be unavoidable in the future. You really think that it's possible to find stability this way? That I can be happy even so? If you want you can publish this e-mail.

Editor replies:

Given that for me there may be different types of relationship between two people – it's enough to clarify, from the beginning, towards which kind of relationship one is oriented and also its possible evolution - if both the partners agree on a classical couple relationship, however, there cannot be perpetually third parties (other guys): I think it is natural (indeed human) that guys tend, in the long run, to orient a relationship, whatever it could be, towards a classical couple relationship, because it is able to give more stability and emotional reward for the emotional investment that basically it is done in every relationship worthy of this name. In short, I don't think that "seeing oneself in the prospect of couple life" is only the product of a millennial process of inculturation, but I think it is a natural (and legitimate) expectation when you "invest" so much emotionally on a person.

Alyosha replies:

"Sometimes we expect people to adapt to our models, but people, not models, are the absolute value" I take note of this statement and I will recycle it at the next opportunity! The speech made by Project seems to me to be very meaningful and in fact, many couple problems derive from considering models as an absolute value. If I can be sincere, overall, with respect to the first discussion, when Sad was still furious, I had the impression that his external attitude was more of "blackmail" than objective, of the series "if you don't change I leave you", but I had also the impression that the intention was not at all to leave him, but to let him make a decision, to let him make change his attitude.

The fact that the other kept his positions, led to a downward compromise. If after some time Sad assumes that the other has not yet a guy, probably the problem is not having another guy, but living one's own life without feeling conditioned or suffocated by the presence of the other, especially if the other has a conditioning attitude, that is tends to pour his expectations on the other, expecting the other to adapt. I see in the 28-year-old the attitude of the "all or nothing": either the two guys form a really tight couple or better are glued to one another, or the 23-year-old certainly goes away with another guy, as if to prevent the younger from escaping from a suffocating situation it was necessary never loosen your grip on him, when it is clear that he didn't go away even when the relationship seemed finished. As I see it, you should not get used to the idea that he is with another guy, on the contrary you should get used to the idea that loosening the grip on him nothing would really happen, maybe he can just relax and you could avoid the ride in the roller coaster.

Watchermat replies:

"He tells me he needs freedom, to try and make his life". When I hear such speeches, I struggle to hold back my anger. It is true that to hug too tightly around one's own partner is likely to suffocate him but it is equally true that it can be the partner who feels suffocated a little too easily.

Now I'm no longer talking about Sad's case, but more generally. I'll explain. A person may come to think that cultivating a romantic relationship with someone it is not possible to evolve with one's own life, individually. And so? Does this mean that you cannot have a partner and concurrently live a life even as a single person? I don't think so. The explication lies in "what makes me feel suffocated?" My personal experience has led me to meet many people who are objectively frustrated by being single but at the same time are unable to change a bit of their life, all in the name of their freedom as singles. The simple understanding that the thing is becoming more intimate (and this can also mean that the attendance has gone beyond the 3 meetings) triggers the feeling that their freedom and individuality are in danger. Hence an intolerance and a discomfort that lead to the termination of the relationship (every time) in the space of more or less time (from weeks to months). I wonder if sometimes even the simple idea of a relationship is not enough to put someone in confusion even without the actual suffocating behavior of the partner. The blessed "middle ways" exist, and it is possible to find a balance of spaces, proximities and distances, within the couple life. When there is the possibility of being an individual within a couple it means that things are going well, that the couple is fine. Reaching such a balance requires exposing oneself and getting to know each other more deeply. If, knowing each other more deeply, one understands that it is not possible to continue the relationship one has the sacrosanct right / duty to tell it his partner. But it is not something that concerns the risk of losing one's personal freedom. What do you think?

Blackout replies:

Fine answers by Project, which above all allow us to evaluate a situation outside of our experience. I state that I don't have the least experience of a relationship, so at most I can express my opinion from outside. I grew up, I too, with the idea that relationship meant to be two, no more, and the couple was the only concept admitted. But when I started thinking by myself, I realized that this idea doesn't belong to me, or rather I don't have to necessarily think that this is the only way to have a relationship, because the situations that can occur will always have peculiar characteristics and I'm not here to give you examples, you can understand it better than me. Watcher speaks of "a sense of suffocation" especially for singles. And I un-



derstand it well because when you are single you build your good habits and the relationship that could possibly occur, selfishly considered, seems to remove rather than add something. And it is perhaps true (often I think it is so) that the only idea that that initial feeling can become something of more significant, often makes people run away. Well, for me those people are numb sentimentally, I don't know how to explain it but I think they have developed an inability to certain types of relationships and tend only to close themselves in a safe and muffled world that is that of the single. Time and patience to understand how to build a relationship have been lost. This is just an opinion, as I said, I don't know anything about relationships.

Totoro replies:

Having always been a guy who "runs away", I'm better inclined to share the positions of the one who has distanced his partner rather than of the one who has written this email, I would be much more inclined to support his reasons than the moral blackmail and reasoning of the guy of twenty-eight, or so I imagine. I confirm that not always when one goes away he does so because he no longer feels affection for the person he leaves. In the past I happened to be with people who expected me (note the "expected") to lean on them from the emotional point of view.

Given that even this simple attitude is something suffocating for me who was accustomed to lick my wounds alone and find it rewarding, the moral blackmail "if you don't lean on me it means that you don't love me or that you don't need me anyway" had the only effect of bringing me to seriously turn off any kind of affection, because often, if not always, people tend to think about things starting from their own way of thinking, that is reasoning this way: "for me it is so, therefore it must be so absolutely for everybody". Frankly I don't know if they are wrong or not, if the root of my taking distance was that I then identified over time or if the past things have led me to my conclusions but ultimately I never really wanted a relationship.

Even less I can say if others are frustrated by not having a relationship but at the same time are too used to being alone to embark on such a thing, certainly situations are very different and complicated. And it is not even said that when a guy says he wants to live his life he intends to "try to have relationships with others", maybe he can only mean that he needs to be independent and to learn to rely only on his own commitment.

Whoknows answers:

Watchermat, I fully agree with you! I really cannot stand those types of relationships in which jealousy takes over and everyone's freedom is greatly limited, but I don't think I could tolerate the open couple ... but I should

try, before judging. In this email, however, one thing is not clear: the guy in question loves his guy, but doesn't want the couple. And the sex in their relationship what role does it occupy? In fact, if it doesn't occupy any role, it can simply mean that this guy loves him as a friend, but that he is not attracted to him. Or he can also be attracted to him, but maybe he realizes that on some aspects their point of view is too far away to allow the creation of a lasting relationship (maybe due to life projects, like for example if one wants to go to foreign and the other not, or one wants to live as a gay out of the closet and the other doesn't want renounce privacy). In reality, we know the story from a single perspective and it is not even clear what kind of relationship exists between the two guys.

Barbara answers:

The difficult thing about living as a couple or having an affective relationship is precisely the search for this balance that Totoro describes. In a closed relationship the need to mediate is continuous and takes place at all levels. To mediate means to come to find a point of agreement. Often it is not a real middle ground, in the sense that maybe one of them adapts much more than the other. Each of us is more or less inclined by character to make his own needs prevail or to let his partner prevail. Many balances remain unbalanced for a long time, until maybe they explode. It seems to me that this email is also about this. One of them was satisfied with how things were going and the other was not. Maybe they didn't want or couldn't face reality. The other guy had sent messages that perhaps should have been taken into consideration. Maybe nothing would have changed because their needs were too far away or maybe they could have found a solution before closing their relationship. In any case it is very true what Totoro says, that relationships with others and above all conflicts also force us to question ourselves. They lead us to ask ourselves if we expected too much from the other or if our request was legitimate and was therefore the other was guilty of not having accepted it. I think relationships help us get out of ourselves and grow, regardless of how things go. For example, relationships that have gone wrong can teach us to check in time if there are the minimum conditions to find a compromise. If I was a person who needs to have his own spaces without feeling invaded by the other, it would be very difficult for me for example to hold a relationship with someone who continually needs confirmations. I would miss the air and the other would feel abandoned. Sometimes we stay together even when it would be wise to separate and sometimes we prefer to truncate everything even before we have seriously tried to recover the situation. This is also a good dilemma to be dissolved.

### 14.2.3 Gays and sexual fidelity

Hello Project,

I have to ask you a question: but do you think that to love each other, sexual fidelity is indispensable? Now you will think that I'm looking for excuses, but it is not so, I have not betrayed my boyfriend, it is he who betrayed me, but I have to explain well, speaking of betrayal does not make sense, because he didn't cheat me at all, he told me it before in a sense he wanted a permit from me and I gave it to him, I only hammered him on one point, that is, that he had to be careful about health.

Project, maybe it will seem strange to you, but at the moment I thought that he needed something else, if I had told him no he would not have done it, but he would have felt forced, so instead he felt free and I frankly didn't I felt upset because I was not afraid of losing him and in fact I didn't lose him, with that guy the story lasted a month and then it was over. Of my boyfriend I love the sincerity, he doesn't cheat me, I never doubted that he could hide anything from me

Among us there is also sex, of course, but there is esteem, there is affection, we love each other. For me he's like the sun, I could not do without him and he has no secrets for me. We've been together for five years, and in the last five years he has had two short adventures, or maybe I should say two short love stories, but in the end he could not adapt to the mentality of those guys who were very possessive and did not at all accept that he continued to meet me.

So he closed the stories with those guys, and one of them remained his friend and mine too. After his adventures we waited the necessary time and we took the test before having sex again between us, even if I was sure that he had put into practice all the criteria of prevention, after the test, however, the sexuality between us came back very strong after a long period of abstinence or at least of very controlled behavior.

I am in love with my boyfriend and I think we are really a couple destined to last. Speaking with other guys anyway I feel their extreme distrust of me and of my boyfriend, they consider us strange, almost heretical, they tend to see him as a traitor and me as a cuckold and such a thing, if on the one hand amuses me on the other worries me a lot, because in order to integrate ourselves among our gay friends we have to recite a script, basically we have to pretend.

Even among gays there are fixed patterns of behavior and there are very strong prejudices, they don't understand that we love each other without preconceived schemes. It particularly annoys me when they see us as an open couple, that is, like two who want to have fun and who in practice

pretend to be together. Perhaps we are strange, Project, but I would not give up my boyfriend, as he is, for all the gold in the world, he has no schemes in his head and is honest at all.

# Chapter 15

## GAYS AND GAY NORMALITY

### 15.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

This chapter aims to clarify the effects of the preconceived schematisms on the way of living of gays and their perception of sexuality. Talking in chat to gay guys of all ages I often meet situations that are quite typical of discomfort, these situation can be grouped into two distinct categories. On one side the uneasiness of uncertainty is noted and for the other the discomfort of certainty. I try to explain it better, with the expression "uneasiness of uncertainty" I intend to refer to situations in which a guy does not find convincing answers to questions he considers fundamental, such as "Am I gay?" Or "Am I really in love with that guy?" With the expression "uneasiness of certainty" I mean what manifests itself through absolute statements like: "I feel anafective, I never fall in love with anyone" or "I think I'm addicted to sex, I think I'm a maniac".

Each of these forms of discomfort has its symptomatic elements, in the uneasiness of uncertainty are recurring expressions such as "I don't know", "I don't understand", in the uneasiness of certainty are quite common the classic adverbs "always" and "never".

Where do these forms of discomfort come from? Often the origin can be found in the idea that it is necessary to conform to an abstract model of normality that obviously involves also schematizations and categories (labels) that end up being considered parameters of normality. Even in the gay world there is a need for normality, the so-called gay normality: it is normal for a gay guy to have a sexual activity as a couple partner, so if a guy does not have a couple sex life, he is not normal. I underline that the "normal / non-normal"

category passes from the behavior to the person. It is considered normal that a gay guy has "normal" levels of attraction to sex, if a guy feels attracted to sex less or more than what is considered normal, that guy is not normal. Masturbation is considered normal during adolescence and not normal in adulthood, so a 25-year-old guy who masturbates may feel abnormal. The list of presumed normalities could extend to sexual practices, monogamy and a lot of other things. Then there are other categories of presumed normality that have been introduced through concepts that have received some media success and that have become consolidated as an accredited interpretative model, it is the case of the "internalized homophobia" that seems to be the normal motivation of the non-acceptance of gay identity; or of the "absent father" who seems to be the normal determining cause of homosexuality. All these pseudo criteria of normality and pseudo points of reference are often accepted uncritically and, like all the criteria of presumed normality, create marginalization or self-marginalization.

Obviously, the criterion for verifying the normality of one's own behavior, for a gay guy, is not based on a direct comparison with a large number of other more or less young guys, as it happens between straight guys but, if ever, on comparisons with a restricted or very small number of gay friends if not even with what is found on the internet. The myths of normality are paradoxically more common among gays than among straight people, basically because in the hetero field the comparisons can be extended to a much wider audience of peers. The discomfort deriving from the comparison of one's own behaviors with the presumed normality risks to induce guys to consider as pathological some behaviors that are not pathological at all. In the past the sense of non-normality referred essentially to the fact of not being straight, the problems connected to the acceptance of the gay identity have diminished compared to a few decades ago, but other ways have been created to feel non-normal, this time it is about modalities within the gay dimension.

A gay guy can feel like a gay who doesn't fall in love with guys considered predominantly handsome by other gay guys, he can feel too much or too little interested in sex, he can be attracted to sexual practices that don't seem to be the most popular for the gays, he may have behavior patterns too much or too little aggressive, submissive or somehow unusual compared to the more accredited models, but in any case that guy will feel a form of discomfort that will make him feel not normal, beyond any rational evaluation.

The homologation can get to involve also the way of dressing, the language, the cut of hair and similar things, as if there was a gay language or a gay fashion and being gay outside of these things was in fact a situation not normal. The feeling of exceptionality of their condition is typical of gay guys and accentuates the feeling of loneliness, of marginality even compared to

other gays and also the tendency to feel victim precisely because exception with respect to the rules of a presumed gay normality.

I often happen in chat to see resigned, almost fatalistic, attitudes of some guys about their alleged impossibility to integrate even among gays and often it is the condition of supposed non-normality that puts these guys in difficulty, then, during the interview they face all the issues that cause marginalization and understand that in reality there is no condition of non-normality except in relation to a hypothetical normality that is often very far from reality (often true metropolitan legends) and that, when it has an objective foundation, represents, at most, a trend line but in no way a rule valid for everyone. I often happen to hear these words: "So you think there is nothing absurd?" and to see the amazement of not feeling treated as a non-normal gay.

The perception of discomfort is often associated with the self-pathologisation of gays which leads to the strengthening of the socially widespread idea of a pathological or pathogenic dimension of being gay. I would like to point out that the framing of homosexual discomfort in terms of pathology rather than discomfort of homologation has a subtle dimension so that the gays themselves unconsciously tend to assimilate it, indulging in attitudes of self-pity. What criteria can be used to avoid the effect of the false models of normality? "Always saying how things really are" is a moral duty but doesn't solve the problem because with the spread and plurality of the media and in particular through the Internet, the flow of information is in fact uncontrollable. The only means that can be effective is the dialogue and the serious confrontation with an audience as wide as possible not only of peers but of gays of all ages on issues related to sexuality and how to live gay identity.

All this is not only possible, but where it has been achieved, it has had a remarkable response in terms of convinced participation. Not referring to models of presumed gay normality doesn't mean that for gays the various behaviors are indifferent or equivalent, there are behaviors that although not having anything anomalous, are, nonetheless, uncommon, are niche behaviors and, if we want, can easily become the object of criticism and misunderstanding by those who don't share them or simply don't know them. In the context of a couple relationship, where a two-way correspondence is supposed between the two partners, some behaviors, even if not anomalous, are dysfunctional, that is, they don't are useful and sometimes create problems to the establishment and maintenance of the couple relationship.

At least theoretically, the maximum probability of being functional to the couple's relationship must be recognized to the most widespread attitudes that can obviously be more easily shared with the other partner. It is essential to keep in mind that falling in love with a homosexual partner is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the creation of a couple relation-

ship, this means that, if the other is not gay, a relationship is impossible, but for the realization of a true couple relationship it is not enough that the two partners share the same sexual orientation but it is necessary that they share also some fundamental opinions about some aspects of life well beyond sexuality, i.e. that they have a profound couple affinity.

Homosexuality does not have an exclusively sexual dimension but interacts with several aspects of the personality, for example in determining the greater or lesser level of privacy of the couple life, the relationship with the families of origin or with the circles of friendships of origin of each of the two partners. In these fields it makes no sense to ask what is normal and what is not because it is about cultural elements largely inherited from the environment of origin.

The representation of the gay world that each gay has formed and that, through presumed canons of normality can help to guide his behavior, is deeply conditioned by the quality and quantity of information available. The quality of information is linked to two fundamental conditions, namely the information must be not instrumental for other purposes and must be first hand, that is, must be provided by subjects who speak of themselves in the first person and are not therefore subject to external censorship.

The weight of the models and even stereotypes related to the gay reality is clearly perceived talking to boys affected by gay themed OCD, or obsessive compulsive disorder characterized by the intrusive idea of being gay. This is a typical disorder of 100% straight guys whose life is disturbed by the insistent and invasive presence of the fear of being gay. These guys, who are not gay, focus their fear of homosexuality on what they believe to be typically gay but after an appropriately detailed interview, to an eye accustomed to see the gay reality, it is evident that all what these guys consider proof of being gay, in reality, has absolutely nothing to do with homosexuality but derives solely from the stereotypical image of homosexuality conveyed on a social level.

It is certainly less easy to evaluate the weight of the presumed normality models within the gay world in determining states of individual distress of gay guys, but it is evident that the lack of these normality models would allow a process of acceptance of gay identity much simpler and a faster social integration of gay guys with other gay guys. In a nutshell, we can say that accrediting behavior patterns as normal only increases discrimination and the state of discomfort.



## 15.2 DOCUMENTS

### 15.2.1 A normal gay

Hello Project.

I was intrigued by your forum that seems to play a different music from the usual music that I find in the chats and on the dating sites. I'm over 45 and I have had my experiences. Fortunately I didn't compromise my health, but it is not a coincidence because I have been always very careful. I cannot even say whether I'm declared or not, I know a lot of people but not all of them know about me, for example at work I think that nobody knows and the same in my family, because I live on my own.

At my age I got tired of the gay world. A little it is for the fact that when you're not young you realize that things are changing but not so much because the younger guys steal you the scene but because you reaches saturation. The gay world, as far as I know it, is made of chats, clubs, evenings and you can imagine of what else. At the beginning there is a lot of curiosity, you meet a gay guy, get to have sex with this guy, then you realize that this guy sooner or later will go his way and that there is nothing stable, that you are only one of a long series and you're not the one who really matters to anyone's life.

Then another guy arrives and more or less the script repeats, then another and so on, these are stories that last a few months, when it's all right, and then end and you realize that in these things at the end there is very little spontaneous behavior and that everything is in some way preordained. A friend with whom I complained about these things told me: "but it is normal that it is so", that word "normal" applied to the life of a gay man, sounds to me very strange. I don't want a normal life in which a routine is repeated for which it is normal to know a guy and have sex with him the same evening but it is equally normal that everything ends up in a few weeks.

I thought that basically it is considered normal even that someone takes HIV and unfortunately I have seen them. I was really shocked but I realized that my friends assumed that these things should happen, for them it was normal. So many times I felt stupid when I wanted to try to understand something more without taking everything for granted. For me, being gay had to be transgressive, even risky, but it certainly didn't have to involve classification into other boxes of normality. If I'm looking for a guy and I hope it's for more than a few weeks, I feel not normal, because it's normal that things should not last long and it's stupid to expect the opposite. It's terrible to think how much gays get caught up in the usual routine, gay life becomes a play in which the roles are already written.

One day, I remember it well, in a club where I used to go often I was introduced to a guy who was considered there as the best, the most handsome, we talked a bit then finally he made me the usual proposal and I said no, he looked at me as if I were a moron who was throwing away a rare pearl. Project, you can't even imagine the reactions of the guys who contacted me for sex when I asked them to always use a condom. Well, they took me for stupid without any remedy and when someone insisted and I said no, they grimaced as to say that I was completely out of my brain. I have often felt very heavily influenced by so many rituals and cliches whose meaning was absolutely obscure for me, as if the manual of young gay marmots existed. I will not tell you about the question of sexual preferences for this or that practice, all ritualized as if sexuality were that, all divided by categories: bear, sado, etc. etc. ... There was some guys, we can say normal, but they couldn't last long there, in a short time they turned into standard gays of this or that category, or disappeared at all and didn't show anymore.

Personally I think I have attended the most stereotypical gay environments, there were certainly different environments and, let's say, more free, but I have seen above all conformism, or rather homologation and then fatalistic abandonment to life as it comes.

On your forum I see different things, I suspected that there were, but reading I could understand that they are in places where I have never gone and that I naively considered less free than those I attended. I think that today I wouldn't be able to live a non-stereotyped life or maybe yes but I think I would limit myself to a few friendships to talk a bit. I realize that I am too old to change the road and frankly I wouldn't even try, but I'm pleased to know that what I have tried to consider as gay normality is, in practice, a very niche reality.

I would like a gay life on the model of the person not on the model of the stereotype. Project, What's the meaning of having so many guys if shortly they all go away? It's not their fault, they do exactly what I did, they integrate into what they identify as the gay world and they assimilate a way of being, because being what you are it's bloody hard.

Project, in the environments I attended I didn't find bad people but only people, so many people, who desperately tried to fill the solitude with a little sex. In many of the guys I've had, I've really mirrored myself, when one doesn't find love, when one doesn't find respect, feels no loved by anyone, he looks for something that fills the void and begins an endless race to chase a dream of love embracing a guy he will lose after a few days.

I saw so many times the despair of the guys with whom I have been and sometimes I even tried to go further with them looking for a deeper dialog but I ended up not being understood anymore, they looked at me as if I wanted to

invade their lives while they were there just for a moment. I felt very often the lack of communication and the desperation of many guys, who in the end were experiencing what I was experiencing. How much better would be even a simple friendship that lasts, that accompanies us for a longer stretch of road. I don't want to be a normal gay anymore, I just want to be myself.



# Chapter 16

## GAYS AND DIVERGENT THINKING

### 16.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

It is not rare to meet gay guys in chat who are experiencing situations of discomfort arising from the difficulty of creating a deep personal relationship with another gay for the persistence of prejudices linked to the traditional vision of emotional life.

The topic deserves a lot of attention because often the misunderstandings, the tendency to dramatize and the exasperation of the tones, deriving from the prejudicial assumption of positions considered uncritically intangible and, even worse, the tendency to invasive interventions not respectful of the person of the other, contribute to increase the problematic dimension of certain facts, which could instead be easily understood by putting preconceptions aside. The standard psychological analysis of the meanings of behaviors, i.e. the analysis conducted on the basis of standard models, should be reduced to the advantage of a more genuine and human understanding, that is less tied to prejudices and models, more respectful of the other and at the same time deeper of being gay and of emotional relationships that can be created in this area.

If on the one hand the emotional dimension is fundamental and distinguishes us from the machines, on the other the emotionality, according to the standard vision, should be controlled to avoid giving rise to anxious phenomena that create discomfort and uselessly complicate life. It is difficult for everyone to maintain a true balance between rationality and affectivity but for gay guys it is not uncommon to get to the extremes of reasoning and to see things either in total white or in total black without any intermediate nuance.

Expressions such as "love doesn't exist, there is only selfishness", or: "everyone tells me to love me but they are just looking for something for themselves, because they are all selfish", are complementary to expressions like: "I will never be able to fall in love with anyone because I'm radically selfish and I think only of myself". In all these phrases a radical extremism dominates: either all or nothing, and since the existence of affects is considered only a fable, the apparently rational vision consists in taking note of universal selfishness as a rule of life.

At the base of all these reasoning there are very likely emotional disappointments or emotional needs that are not easy to satisfy with ordinary interpersonal relationships, not even with ordinary love relationships, because cohabitation in a couple has rules, requires forms of adaptation to the reality of the other, which is never the faithful mirror, moment by moment, of our desires, but the adaptation, for a guy who reasons in radical terms, who excludes any kind of compromise in principle, is a very difficult reality to accept. It should be added that for some guys the tendency to an abstract analysis of facts is dominant and proceeds relentlessly towards the demolition of the meaning of affective relationships, which are seen in abstract terms as forms of weakness and dependence on the other, things to which one must get used to resist.

Beyond these radical arguments, in these guys there is however a deep affective need, which manifests in behaviors that are in sharp contradiction with the logical certainties so strongly affirmed, but this need is fought as a form of weakness and slavery. Depending on the prevalence of the strongly repressed affective dimension or of the abstract rational one, there are strong swings in the mood that give those who experience them the sense of their unreliability and therefore of ineptitude to the couple life.

Often sexuality takes the place of affectivity and becomes almost a form of affirmation of one's own freedom to act outside affective involvements. It should be clarified that situations such as the one described typically occur in moments of crisis in the emotional life, when a stable bond, lasting for years, is lost, the mechanism that leads to the end of the couple bond, that is the perception of the dissatisfaction, is lived almost with feelings of guilt but also with strong hesitations: on one side the guy want to close the couple relationship because it represents a constraint and a limitation of one's own freedom and on the other side he perceives, even if in an oscillating way, the importance of that relationship that, theoretically, he wants to close and it is precisely on these oscillations that thought concentrates and suffering becomes more acute.

I omit the fact that emotional states so disturbed can create difficulties in studies, in relationships with friends and family and can start a series of

chain reactions that can significantly worsen things. What can be done in practice? Frankly I asked it myself several times and I didn't find 100% convincing answers. Given the coincidence of these emotional states with the moments of the couple crisis (the emotional states can be the cause but also the effect of the couple crisis), it would be spontaneous to think that the beginning of new emotional relationships can be able to catalyze a return to a less extreme affectivity. But it remains that the new relationships, which could start on the sexual level, could hardly take on an emotional dimension, given the strong resistance to affectivity.

I add that when sexuality becomes a way to make up for an affectivity that is hard to accept, sexuality is charged with valences that for the new partner are extremely difficult to understand and this doesn't facilitate the new couple relationships. For a guy who tends to replace the affectivity, too often frustrated, with a sexuality at least abstractly non-affective, taking the initiative towards a new partner limiting himself to sexuality and avoiding true emotional involvements means being assertive, and leaving the other at the first appearing of the possibility that the relationship also assumes an affective value becomes a vindication of autonomy and affective independence, even if anyway such a autonomy and such an independence are only theoretical and in fact don't alleviate the pain of detachment.

Here then the value of simplicity returns to emerge. Those close to guys who live in these situations, that are not rare at all, cannot attempt to reason, because in strictly logical terms the abstract reasoning "aut aut" has all the appearance of absolute plainness, such as: "absolute determinism is a physical datum, so we are rigidly programmed!" To rebut this statement in abstractly logical terms makes no sense but the weakness of this statement lies in the fact that it is abstractly logical, if determinism was or rather was perceived as absolute, the products of the human mind would lose all moral value.

So, putting aside the logical tools, which on the other hand are just those who in these guys tend to devalue the emotional life, the only thing that really makes sense remains just a "weak" affective presence, that is a presence that doesn't question the absolute freedom of the other, that doesn't oblige him to any choice or to any coherence.

It should be clarified that these guys, who at least in certain phases, present real problems of social maladjustment, are however carriers of an autonomous and divergent thought that is often absolutely original and coherent, in other words, maladjustment derives from the fact that emotional relationships and affectivity of these guys don't conform to the standards, this on one side causes suffering but on the other, when a serious human contact is established, allows to discover completely new and unprecedented horizons of af-

fective life, not reducible to the common denominators that generally govern affectivity. In other words, the suffering of these guys coincides with the effort to create their own autonomous and original system of thought, much less conditioned by standards and preconceptions.

It is a very difficult work of self-preservation, which impinges upon preconceptions and standard models of behavior and which tends to avoid caging the guy in those standards. Talking with these guys destabilizes the interlocutor because it puts him in front of an affectivity and a thought truly autonomous and rational.

Maintaining these levels of autonomy is difficult because socialization, which tends to stabilize affectivity, also tends to standardize it and to bring it back to accepted behavior models. The effort to give birth to a thought and affectivity really independent without superstructures produces suffering and a sense of isolation, but allows, when it allows it, unique forms of exchange and dialogue. There is an attitude that generally infuriates these guys and it is the paternalism of those who think they have understood everything and as a result of this think that they are also entitled to give more or less absurd advice to everyone in every possible situation. Paternalism means substantial misunderstanding and underestimation and even a pathological evaluation of the efforts that these guys put in place to remain themselves and not end up being standardized, losing their individuality which is an absolute value.

With these guys, dialogue can only exist on an equal footing, that is, only if the interlocutor honestly accepts to confront himself trying to open himself to things that at first he doesn't understand at all. Simplicity, that is the ability to get involved without reserve, is then the first necessary condition to create a profitable dialogue. Who has in mind to solve the problems of the other without understanding his effort, the suffering and the research work that is in the mind of the other, will deny the other the contribution of a constructive confrontation and himself a very important possibility of human growth.

## 16.2 DOCUMENTS

### 16.2.1 Gays and family

What are the relationships between us? In my opinion, things that make sense and not at all trivial ... so, now, just to say, maybe you think: you have the boyfriend ... and you don't miss anything! ... but life is not just that with the boyfriend ... there are also other things. Now chatting so abstract



about these things is strange but in the life of each of us many things are valuable and also important, maybe such things don't appear, they seem stupid things but really exist.

The people who are important to you, all have different roles and roles that don't overlap, I have the boyfriend ... and this is important, I know ... but I need also different things ... for example there are many types of cuddles, some of them only your boyfriend can do, all right, but not others, but for example, I don't know, an encouragement, or the fact that two guys stay to talk together even starting from different points of view, the fact that maybe he knows about you and doesn't judge you, that accepts you as you are.

Now, in my life I missed so many things since I was a kid, at a family level, I say, I would have wanted cuddles, I wanted them desperately and instead for me cuddles there have never been. When I did something, as soon as I had done it, it was necessarily judged a stupid thing ... well ... allow me it, I like being told that I'm worth something. We talk, yes, we talk a lot, especially when my boyfriend is not there ... and for me it makes sense, it's not just something to waste time ... that is, if someone is listening and talking to you for hours ... well, it means something ... but sometimes we get to a real clash too, sometimes I also say bad things against him ... yes, on the things he does ... in short, no malice, I don't come to that point, but I speak very clear and he too gets angry with me ... always, you know, in a very calm, but decided ... he preaches to me ... but no one has ever done the preach to me that way.

At my house they have never worried about me or what I was doing, they only stated judgements and made me feel bad, I always looked for the affection of my parents ... I told you ... and sometimes desperately but I never got it. My family was not really a family, I was the black sheep ... you know, a gay guy ... in short, the family's honor was at risk and they made me feel it in every way ...

In short, I would have liked so much living in a real family ... because for a gay guy the family is fundamental, if it doesn't support you so much or it even hinders you, your family can destroy you inside ... because freedom is good but real life is not only that ... being alone make you feel really bad ... With him, you know, there is a bit of a "family love" ... I don't know how to explain myself, I'm glad when I find his messages, that is not that I don't survive if I don't find them, but if they are there, I am pleased and I go often to see if there is a message from him.

For example ... about my boyfriend, he only says positive things. I told Mark so many times: "One day or another I'll introduce him to you ..." Mark was wary, he didn't really want to know him but I insisted and at the end I convinced him.

I didn't know what would happen and a bit I was anxious, then we saw all three of us ... I thought we would talk, but no ... we just said hello, then he said that the afternoon was beautiful and that I and Mark had to spend it together, not together with him, together just me and Mark ... Mark liked him, he said that it was evident that he was inclined to smiling and that he was a positive person ... At least we had met once! Then we dropped the subject but the mistrust was overcome.

In some periods I don't hear him for several days, sometimes even for ten days, but I know that he has not forgotten me, when you feel so it is as if you had talked with him the day before ... that is really something like what happens in the family ... or better something like what should happen in the family, because my family was not like that at all. ... a bit he is a substitute for a family environment and then there is one thing that strikes me a lot, in the end we reason more or less in the same way, if something for me has an important meaning he understands it, i.e. about many things he reasons a bit like me ... it is not a trivial fact, it is not a discussion between deaf or between different worlds ... we are of the same world and I'm very interested in knowing what he thinks of me ...

I don't see him as a competitor of Mark and he too doesn't see himself this way, he has nothing to do with such roles ... ah, another thing, he never really gets angry ... at least with me ... maybe we don't agree on everything ... but we discuss and don't destroy anything and a bit I feel important and I think he feels the same. It seems strange eh? Mark is not jealous of him at all and often asks me: "What did he tell you?" And I tell him what we talked about.

Now I have not heard from him for a week and I miss him a little, but tonight I'm looking for him, he almost never calls me but it's not out of disinterest, I know that. It's a friend yes, yes, a true friend, maybe something more, a kind of brother and I know he thinks of me ... but no, look, not stupidly or for some reason ... just because we love each other, even if another way.

I feel better now because he is there ... if he were not there I would miss him, he resizes me, in the sense that makes me see things for what they are, a little I'm sorry when he shoots against my dreams, but maybe I need even that, but I like it very much when it breaks down my worries and tells me that everything is fine and that I have no serious reasons to worry, so far he has always been right, more or less, and he has really a certain reassuring effect on me, he sees things from afar, he has other perspectives, this is evident, but for me at the end, it is important all the same, that is he can give me things that other people cannot give me. I know it's hard to believe but it's so ... and he says that I'm important to him and I know it's true ... and Mark knows that too ... but there has never been any problem. .. are

different planes, parallel planes that don't touch, a little I have my family reconstituted this way ...

### 16.2.2 Non-possessive gay couple

- Virgil: hello Project!
- Project: Hello !! Nice to hear you! How are you now that you're home?
- Virgil: eh eh, the appearance is of tranquility
- Project: Wow !!! So it must be ... But why appearance?
- Virgil: staying here makes me a rather strange effect
- Project: well, you stay at home, with your traditional friends, with people you should know better, or at least you attended for a longer time
- Virgil: yes, but I have the feeling of not knowing them, in reality ... it's like a farce ... it's really weird
- Project: oh oh, I can understand, in fact that's your virtual world
- Virgil: what do you mean?
- Project: that even at home and perhaps especially at home you cannot feel free as you would like, maybe you're more free when you're away
- Virgil: I talk about those I've known for a long time ... the feeling is that of not having (almost) ever had real conversations with them
- Project: Mh ...
- Virgil: yes, indeed ... that's what I told you the other night ... that with the few that I knew outside I actually had conversations really more free than those I had with the guys I had considered friends from the beginning
- Project: I understand it well, I'm old but my real world is just Gay Project
- Virgil: even about my friends of outside I have some doubts, I'm afraid of not being able to rely on them at the moment of need ... but maybe I'm wrong
- Project: even where you live now there are guys ok!
- Virgil: I wanted to ask you something more about the couple freedom and possessiveness, if you have 5 minutes ... you told me that it's not feasible to ask for 100% of a person, a couple relationship this way could not work ... and that often relations with third parties based on exchanges of looks or even words can

be deeper than those in which there is sex

- Project: they are different things, certainly if there is a TRUE sexual and also emotional involvement, we are at another level but it is not so common, often people try to live in couple just to try something new or to experience how such things work.

- Virgil: of course ... I totally agree ... what I wanted to ask you is about a possible relationship with true emotional and sexual involvement ... premise: in the context of such a relationship, afternoons spent chatting with other people with whom another true emotional relationship has been established should be totally normal, I mean in the context of the speech about the impossibility of asking for 100% of a person ... question: what if these relationships with other people (both true relationships, these and that with the first person) were to be configured as a betrayal according to the common conception (i.e. they entailed pampering and, in the extreme case, sex)? Do they become wrong relationships? And if so, how does the sex element be determinant in making a true relationship with a third person more wrong than the true relationship with the first?

- Project: everything is in people's brains, there are guys who "if it is not really a betrayal" don't get upset but they must first understand that their relationship is not in crisis, it is not easy for them to understand it, but if there is a true emotional relationship and it is understood that the needs of the other are not superficial, it is also possible that the thing is not considered a betrayal and doesn't undermine anything. The possessiveness is dangerous but it is the common way of seeing

- Virgil: I agree with you, but if it is the common way of seeing, it doesn't mean that it is the best one ...

- Project: I don't think it's the best one, I mean that if you really love a guy and you realize, talking to him explicitly, that he loves a third guy, possibly even with sexual involvement, if you understand that this fact doesn't destroy your relationship, in the end you don't stay bad and accept it. This way of looking at things is not the common way of seeing but is founded on a very deep affective relationship, more important than prejudices

- Virgil: Ok, I try to go on, what do you think of the case in which the two relationships, both true and sincere, naturally evolve towards the dissolution of the former and the strengthening of that with the third person? Should the true relationship with the third person be avoided? Should it have to be undertaken only after

interrupting the one with the first person? I don't share all the traditional conclusions that anyway put me to the test as they represent the commonly accepted view and, to bring the discussion to its extreme, is it possible that these true relationships can coexist?

- Project: the fact that the second relationship can become more important than the first is possible but it is not automatically destructive of the former, about the coexistence of the two relationships, I think they can coexist, I have seen situations like these that lasted long, but over time then social and cultural pressure easily leads to a break of balance

- Virgil: How nice to read it from you! It a little calms me. . .

- Project: why?

- Virgil: because you have my own vision of couple life and because thinking that I'm the only one who thinks so it makes me feel wrong, a bit it happens still now but happened even more previously when I was thinking I was the only one to feel affection for the guys!

- Project: affectivity has no rules and is instinctive, true betrayal consists in hiding and not saying how things really are. But if a guy who loves you tells you that he loves also another guy, what do you do? Do you drive him away because you have no more the exclusive? On the contrary you make sure that he can realize his wishes at the higher level and you don't abandon him, if you really love him, to avoid him live as a negative thing the feelings he feels for the other guy

- Virgil: since I feel a deep esteem towards you, reading you somehow makes me feel in good company

- Project: slowly this way of seeing things is spreading and it will be more and more shared, especially in the gay field

- Virgil: Really! That attitude towards affection for another guy is what I feel too!

- Project: if you love a guy, you want him to feel good not only with you but that he is well according to his way of feeling

- Virgil: I would almost say Holy Words !! Or maybe not, not words of saints of the near future. . .

- Project: love is not a contract, there are no conditions, there are no obligations

- Virgil: why you don't publish this chat? (changing my name obviously) I think it can be a useful food for thought! (and also for possible moral battles)

- Project: ok, and I'll also put it in the manual
- Virgil: I would love to know how guys will take it but I think they will not take it well
- Project: it undermines the traditional ways of reasoning, those inherited from the concept of marriage. Possessiveness is a very ingrained thing, but let's see what happens!
- Virgil: ok, Project, thanks and see you next time, I'm going to sleep because it's very late. A hug and goodnight!
- Project: Goodnight and see you soon!

### 16.2.3 A non-standard gay couple

Hello Project, this morning I'm happy! It doesn't happen often, but today I'm happy and this is because I made love with my puppy! A love that could seem made out more of cuddles than sex, if we want, because my puppy is a bit free with his behavior and then we have to be careful, but he knows it and tries to adapt, but it was beautiful anyway. I didn't really expect it, in fact the last time I had heard him on the phone, he had seemed a bit chilly to me and then it had been almost three weeks.

When I feel him cold, when I feel that he cuts short, I feel uncomfortable and then I distance myself, the first days I'm glad not to hear him, because I think I would have nothing to say but then I start to miss him and then I start thinking about him a thousand times a day, it is a sort of abstinence syndrome, but not from sex, but from his presence that is able to make me feel good. I know that he has his life, that he sees other guys, whom I also know, that he makes love with them, but this doesn't upset me, I think it is also right because the relationship he can have with me, after all, cannot be truly able to satisfying all his needs.

In recent days he came to my mind on many occasions: places where we had been together, a way of smiling, a joke, in short, I really needed him. This morning I go to have breakfast at the bar and I see him in front of the front door of my house. He asks me if I'm busy, I answer him with a toothy smile, we go home and he wants to be cuddled, I hug him tight and I can see he's happy, he says, "Do you still want me?" I answer than I loved only one guy all my life long and then he looks at me puzzled and tells me: "Only me? Never with anyone else? Has nobody ever tried something with you?" I say to him: "Only you! Never anyone else!" It almost seems like he does not believe it, but I really fell in love just once in my life. With him I lived the most beautiful experiences of my life, for almost three years, then, in a sense it is over, but I think that in reality it never ended, he has had other guys, but he kept anyway a relationship with me and very seriously, he never

archived me.

Every now and then he came to me, more than to have sex because after all it's a bit different, just to be together in intimacy, we cuddled: dinner together, then cuddling endlessly, he curled up tight to me like a cat, I hugged him tightly, there was also a bit of sex, of that not dangerous, and it was just fine like that. I'm still in love with him. His way of looking for affection melts me inside, I don't think I would ever be able to stay with another guy, also because, despite the different behaviors, his sexuality feels very similar to mine. If I see a guy I like in the street, it's because he has some detail that reminds me of him. He is the best for me and then, what has always struck me is that he doesn't forget me, he doesn't archive me and when he is with me he is happy to stay there and I see it. I would like to live with him but I would suffocate him and he needs freedom. Deep down he knows that I love him and that this will not change, it's something certain, so he feels desired and when we're together he is 100% himself, he doesn't play a role. Today we were embraced for more than an hour and he fell asleep in my arms. I felt like I was in heaven, I stroked his hair and he opened his eyes every now and then, smiled at me a little and then hugged me again.

Now he's gone and maybe I will not hear him for two or three weeks but I know he's there and then sooner or later, he will contact me. I feel in love and I think it's important for him too. He trusts me, he knows he is safe with me and on the other hand I trust him too. Sometimes he got angry with me and seemed much colder and more detached but usually such things didn't last long, he apologized and everything was over. I'm so happy, he's the guy I want, only him! And he is there, in his way, but he is there and he has never cheated me. In short, Project, today I'm happy! I don't know if this way of living is more or less classic among gays, but that's what happens and it's beautiful! If you want, publish the email.

Carlo

I add a second email from Carlo, that arrived in the evening.

Today I have been thinking about my boyfriend for hours, I know that he is not my boyfriend and that he will probably never be the boyfriend of anyone, because a guy like him cannot be caged even out of love. I never understood what love was, the real one, the one that makes you suffer, until I met him and entered a totally new dimension and the novelty consisted in the fact that our love was mutual, but mutual in the true sense of the word, as never happened to me before, it was true love but it was not exclusive and even on this we understood each other very quickly and without any problem.

We are not a family, we will never be a family, to be a family it is a common opinion that an essentially exclusive relationship with another person is needed, but we have never felt this need, and then it is not true that the exclusivity of the relationship is necessary to provide mutual assistance if needed. I would do anything for my puppy and I think he would do the same for me too. Sometimes it has already happened. I call him puppy and he calls me exactly the same way ... no roles at all! Our strength is reciprocity. He knows that when he looks for me he makes me happy and I know he loves me, that in his world I have a place that is somehow important. I don't care if it's the first place, I know it's not, I'm interested in the fact that I have my place inside his heart and he will continue to be there over the years and so far it has been like that.

My boyfriend fascinates me because he is not only a handsome guy but he represents the incarnation of my ideal guy and then because he understands me without needing me to speak and respects me. On the other hand, I recognize his great dignity, his great basic honesty, his true morality. Not what people mean by morality but morality understood as the ability to not subordinate emotional relationships to anything else. The emotional relationships for him are in the first place and must be managed without compromises.

We like to speak clearly, always, even when the discourse becomes unpleasant, but even in the less pleasant discourses respect was never lacking, his reproaches were not reproaches made out of hate but out of love. So many times he put me in front of my hypocrisies, unmasked before my eyes so many of my little falsehoods, so many my inability to be sincere to the end. So many times I must have made him really angry, he must have considered me a mediocre guy, ready for any compromise, and basically he told me it explicitly, but he told me it just to make me think, to take away the classic slice of ham from of my eyes. Above all, he has never made me miss his presence, sometimes I don't see him for weeks and if we greeted each other affectionately I'm calm and I know that I will hear him sooner or later and that it is only a matter of time, but if we have greeted badly, then he gets soon in touch with me or sends me a smiley face by sms, and he does it to free my head from the idea that something between us has gone into crisis.

I discovered sexuality with him. I used to think that I would at most be able to want a guy and that maybe that guy would not have said no, but anyway I saw myself in the role of the lover and the other as someone who in the end doesn't say no. I didn't really consider the idea of being able to be sexually desired by another guy and instead it is precisely what happened with him. That we loved each other I had understood it for quite some time, but he wanted me at least as much as I wanted him. It was exactly this that amazed me, and it was a real and very strong sexual desire that not only



didn't undermine our emotional relationship but made it much more complete and profound. For me it was not obvious to put together the categories of sex and of love and it was my puppy who taught me how to do it. Let it be clear that I call him puppy because he makes me feel a huge tenderness (as I think it's for him too) but I know very well that he is a man, an adult who makes his choices and that several times has put me in crisis by opening my eyes on many aspects of reality that I had not very clear.

I really like his way of living sex: it is not hypocritical, it is extremely direct and sometimes I see that he is just pushed by an irresistible enthusiasm but always with sweetness, with a smile, with self-irony. When we embrace, he abandons himself completely in my arms and yet he has an enormous strength when he takes me in his arms. The best thing is to stay hugged naked, the feeling of intimacy and mutual trust is very strong and heady. In his way of having sex there is never anything schematic and prefabricated, he is totally spontaneous and then he is very attentive to my reactions, tries to make me feel as happy as possible, sometimes, when we are a bit tired, I follow him less, and he says to me: "Come on, come here!" and he smiles at me, squinting and I melt completely.

So many times in our evenings of pampering we stop to talk and I'm delighted to listen to him. He reasons in a very different way from mine, but, in my opinion, more linear, more direct and even more profound way. Sometimes he has days of profound melancholy and we remain embraced to caress each other in silence and slowly he becomes calm and for me it is as if I saw the sun rise. We are not a couple, I think that for us a model of matrimonial type would not work at all, we have no bonds of any kind beyond the fact that we love each other. Between us there is a loyalty, which is that of continuing to love each other, even if each of us has his way. Would I like to live with him? Of course, but it is something that would not work and that would risk undermining the substance of our relationship, which has its time and its ways to be realized and which cannot be reduced to schemes of any kind. I spent many hours thinking about my puppy and I feel happy, I know that he is there and will not go away, I had never experienced such a beautiful and above all such a true thing!



# Chapter 17

## GAY LOVE AND SOCIAL CONDITIONING

### 17.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

Gay guys in their relationships usually experience various kinds of conditioning coming which are the consequence of their different backgrounds and different social conditions, this chapter aims to be a reflection on these kinds of conditioning. Generally, when a gay guy falls in love with a guy, whose he doesn't know the sexual orientation, the question that immediately arises is "is he gay or not?" If on the one hand it is true that this is a fundamental question which automatically conditions all the rest, it is also true that this is not the only question. Often, once a gay guy has ascertained that the guy he is in love with is gay too, after the first moments of enthusiasm the first perplexities arise, but not deriving from a lack of mutual sexual attraction but from the objective difficulty in building a deep relationship because of very distant starting points. Building a relationship between two gay guys is not something essentially sexual, it is necessary to build a relationship between two people that is made of mutual trust, affection and respect. Two variables intervene at this point, which in general are often neglected in the initial phase:

- 1) The difference in education
- 2) The difference in social condition

In order to build a relationship of serious love, a condition of equality is indispensable and forms the basis for the subsequent building together. The greater the differences in education and social condition are, the more difficult it is to start something really shared on an equal footing. In any case it

is possible to do so but on the basis of a renunciation of one's role and habits on the part of one of the two guys, made in order to avoid to condition the other, but these sacrifices often hide mental reservations that sooner or later come to the surface with all their disruptive power.

Let's start from the differences in education between guys who live more or less the same social condition. Among them the differences are manifested in the habits of life, in greater or lesser freedom in behavior and in discourses, in the greater or lesser inhibition in facing sexuality. It is a question of conditioning but the awareness of one's homosexuality almost always leads to overcoming educational constraints or to devalue them from within, in the name of the possibility of living an emotional life as a couple. A classic example: the guys who have had a religious education. These guys, when they overcome the problem of religious conditioning, either go beyond radically or remain in that environment in a formal way, and in this choice the education has a fundamental meaning. Differences in the social level are a real and powerful barrier that can arise between two gay guys and can prevent them from living a real life as a couple.

Below are some of the typical symptoms of social distress through very indicative phrases:

- 1) When I go out with his friends I don't feel at ease, it's another world
- 2) He with my friends is not at ease, I don't know what takes him, he seems clumsy
- 3) My friends don't like him, he talks about things from another planet
- 4) He has a concept of fun that I don't understand, for him it's a ritual, according to me he just acts a role.

Social unease manifests first in external things and then gradually into the others:

- a) What was the need for sunglasses of 300 euros?
- b) We don't see each other for a month because he has to go on holiday with his parents, but I think he prefers so
- c) But what do I care to see the photos he did in New York!
- d) When I propose to go to take a pizza somewhere that I like, he always distorts the mouth
- e) At his home? With his mother talking with her sibilant "s"?  
But come on!
- f) He tells me that I have the southern accent
- g) He talks too much about things that don't interest me

- h) He tells me that he would be willing to do anything for me, but he went on vacation with his family
- i) Is an engineer, ok, but why does he have to repeat it a thousand times?
- j) He tells me that I should get back to school but he's not telling it for my sake, it's because he's ashamed of me

Very often in the conversation there are misunderstandings related to the fact that the two communication codes are different. Just an example: a guy can say anything about his parents but he will not tolerate the negative opinion of his partner on them. The first guy speaks badly of his father: "My father has always done his thing, he says that it is obvious because he is the one who pays. I cannot stand him, since he knows I'm gay he's really hateful."

The second guy adds his critique: "Actually, even Monday he behaved just like an asshole"

The first guy starts to defend his father: "But if didn't do so people would put him under their feet!"

The true sign of social unease manifests through the absence of a design of a common life, through the underlining that the relationship will go on "as long as it lasts", "as long as we want", but also and over all through the absence of total mutual sincerity, as if the other guy were a person with which we share, and only partially, only sexuality. This is the so-called false couple, that is, the couple who shares only a few moments in life and keeps all the rest separate. Often the false couple on the sexual level works well, its weakness emerges only in long term when in moments of eclipse of the sexual interest it is understood that there is not a real community of life.

A characteristic of false couples is the declared idea of maintaining an "open and free" relationship, an idea behind which there is an affective emptiness and a substantial willingness not to be bound.

Often, during the discussions, the guys who find themselves in a false couple tend to maintain their positions and not to give in, the discussion becomes harsh and in principle and it is not rare that even bitter quarrels arise because there is no mutual esteem that is the basic element of a couple's life.

The rupture of the false couple is in the great majority of cases definitive and not remediable, while in true couples who share deep levels of affection the crisis is overcome and is in fact an element far from negative for the growth of common life.

Lads of high social level are generally unwilling to sacrifice their social position or put it in brackets in the name of homosexuality. There are significant exceptions but, despite everything, what matters most is not how A feels the

problem but how B believes that A feels it and often misunderstandings are inevitable.

The real problem is to be two at a substantial level, to have the same perspectives, to behave like an "we" putting aside the individualistic dimension. Particular attention must be paid to the problem, typical of the couple, of constructing a common sexual world by also putting aside one's own needs in order to let the other feel more at ease. Shared sexuality means shared sexual fantasies, it means living a sexuality built together, discovered together, in conditions of absolute parity. It is not a question of bringing the other into your orbit or even simply entering into his, it is instead a matter of constructing a binary system in which it is impossible to identify who is at the center and who at the periphery

I happened to see guys who have been living together for years for whom sexuality is in the most evident way an emotional exchange that is aimed at showing the other guy that you want to share his life with him in the deepest sense. It must be said, however, that those guys had realized a real project of common life and that the difficulties linked to misunderstandings by families and by the social environment had only put their relationship to the test substantially stabilizing it.

The sexuality experienced in these terms is really a way of loving that has realized a true community of couple. Getting to these results is not easy and when there are problems of very different education or very different social level overcoming the difficulties requires very strong feelings and very determined choices.

## 17.2 DOCUMENTS

### 17.2.1 Gays and social status

Hello Project, it does not seem true to me to have found a vent, perhaps for someone it would be a banality but for me it is very important, I was just bursting, I could not take it anymore. Talking to you made me think a lot. At 29, I already threw in the towel. You say well that life has something in store for me, but the reality that I live is another. I saw the guys always and only from a distance, I spent the best of life to masturbate in front of the computer but not because I got out of my mind but because there was just nothing else! Because I've always been alone and will remain alone. What do you think? Perhaps that I have not experienced a crazy attraction for some guys? I tried it and how strong! But it could not have any following. I know there are so many gay guys alone who feel worse than me! I know

very well, we are devoured by fear, but in a country like the one where I live, what can I hope for the future? Project, let's be clear, I will never be able to leave here! But where do I go? I don't have a job and I can do what I can. First they told me that I had to finish my studies, and I finished them, that I would surely find a job later, but I didn't find anything, so what am I doing? I don't live, I survive.

Now a friend of mine who I think is gay, went to live in Rome with another guy to share the expenses of the apartment, so they say, but I know that the reason is not that. That guy is rich and my friend has found him because he is not a starving man like me, because his family gives him the money to live in Rome, and if you have a house and a certain economic autonomy then you will also find a guy.

Project! Do you know up to what point gays are assholes? I know it very well! They run after you if you have money, otherwise they spit in your face. Then you say that I have no courage! But dare of what? To make me spit in the face even by gays? And I've seen things like that!

If I earn 500 euros a month it is runny fat. And I'm not even nice or passable, a girl talking about me with her friends said I'm crude and ordinary. And someone like me what has he to wait for? Here in the village not even the "sons of dad" can afford to say that they are gay, you can figure out if I can afford it!

And then my father and my mother? I have to stay here and what a life I have to do you don't even dream of it. Here they say that there is a small group of gay guys, but they are those badly drug addicts who in all likelihood gay are not at all, but if you're drug addicted you must be also gay. Here it works like this. And then what do I do? Work zero! Zero economic possibilities! At the level of starvation! Then they tell me that I should be more careful "in the care of my person" (!). I don't have a car, I have a computer that breaks a lot of times, I have a connection because I use illegally that of the school that is beyond the wall of my house, because otherwise I couldn't even have internet. And you tell me about the future and about hopes, but what have I to hope for?

And you tell me that I have to get rid of the "crazy ideas". Anyway, in a sense you are right, but those "crazy ideas", when you live like I live come inevitably to you! Have I to find a boyfriend? Project, don't make me preachings, I do not believe in miraculous things. They don't even want me as a friend when they realize I don't have a penny. At 29, I have to go and ask my mother for 10 euros, she would give me them, but she doesn't have them either! But what hope do you want to have a guy like me! Do you understand the sense of frustration I feel?

Sometimes I step in front of a pizzeria and there are dozens of guys who have

fun, but I cannot go there because I cannot afford it. It's okay not to mix affective matters with money matters, I know, but do you understand how I live? Now excuse me if I vented a little bit, I absolutely don't have it with you, the things you say, you say them for a good purpose, but you probably cannot really realize what life is for me.

And then even chatting with you at the end I felt free, because I can never say such things. I don't go to gay places nor meet gay people, but if I went there I would not be like the others. My problem is not to be gay, but to be gay without hope, without work, without a penny, without future, and it's not the same thing. Project, it is not a reproach, you are used to talking with many good guys but, luckily they have only one problem, to be gay. I wish I only had the problem of being gay! In practice I would have no problem! I have the problem of survival and end up hating gays who are not like me, those who think that the biggest problem in life is just being gay. Those guys look stupid to me! They are lucky but they don't even realize it! They cry for fearful bullshit and feel like victims! But victims of what? When I was attending university I struggled to work, often even the whole night, to get money to pay my taxes, and I worked hard. Well there were two gay guys dressed in the latest fashion, but something, look, very disgusting!

People who spat in your face the money they had and you had to have it very clear in your brain that you were just a starving man! But how can I feel close to people like that? At that time I had a straight friend, but a guy like me, he was not gay but he was someone whom I felt very close to and who loved me, fuck if he loved me! He was a true friend! What do I care if you're gay or straight! It is the quality of the person that matters! Project, damn it, I feel also stupid to complain this way. It seems that I want to be pitied. Yesterday at the beginning you made me lose my patience. You said a lot of nonsense. Then you began to understand and you changed tone. Frankly I didn't expect it. You have a dignity, which is something I really appreciate. But, put it in your head, gays are not better than others, for gays of high social level, what matters is not that you are gay or straight, but first of all that you too are of high social level, otherwise they don't even take you into consideration.

Then, of course, the fact that you're gay is also important, but that's not the main thing. There is no gay solidarity, if you are not of their social level even gays kick you in the ass. I experienced it. Try to enter a gay club in the city, dressed as I'm dressed, perhaps they don't put you out, but they make you feel a worm, one who is not at their level. And do you want these people to care about the fact that I'm gay too? But for them such problems don't exist at all! Here, now I vented with you! At this point an asshole would not even answer me, but I know you will do it. I'll make myself heard tonight on



msn. Come on, don't get mad! I'm like that.  
Salvatore

### 17.2.2 Gay couples and money

Hello Project, I need to vent my discomfort and maybe I need even an advice. At the moment I'm a bit out of my mind because I broke up with my partner (life partner) and I don't know what to do, we had, fortunately only rented, a shared apartment but the contract is registered only under my name. At the beginning we paid it dividing the expenses, but now I'll have to pay for it only of my own, and so the world has fallen on me, but I cannot stay with him anymore. We have not broken for problems of betrayals or for various jealousies but for money matters, do you understand, Project? Just for money matters!

I am 34 years old, he one less, we both work, he earns more than me, not much more than me, but more than me. Our families have never sailed in gold, neither his family nor mine. As a kid I was used to not throwing money and I know how much effort it takes to earn it. We live together in the same apartment for years, we share the expenses, I try to save money because I don't want to find myself in problems and even worse to ask my parents for money, for him instead to ask for money is not a problem, but has become a habit, but I don't mean asking for money to do something concrete, like furnishing the kitchen, but to throw them away in the most incredible ways. For the last Christmas I had made some savings "with maximum effort" and I had put aside 500 euros to make him a gift, since he is always chasing money.

I gave him the 500 euros, he came out and spent all of them in less than an hour, he bought two shirts of 100 euros each and 300 euros of books, which of course are still in the bookshop package. I was very upset, then he went to ask his parents for money for Christmas. Recently "for two months in a row" he spent all his salary in 15 days and then came to me because he didn't even have the money for the bus. Frankly, I cannot stand anymore such a situation. We have filled home with absurd things, bronze samovars, books written in who knows which language and expensive furnishings that are completely out of context. When I tried to reason with him about these things he remained very upset, he looked like a beaten dog but then he didn't change attitude and at the first opportunity he was ready to throw away all his salary out the window. I really loved this guy and I tried for years to underestimate his ways of doing but sometimes I just cannot stand them anymore.

Last year we took a new car, I would have taken the cheaper basic model,

not him, because a bigger engine has more recovery, because with the alloy wheels security is greater, etc. etc. and we ended up increasing the price by almost 30% adding options that are absolutely useless. Last week he began to say that the house is small and that he would rent a bigger apartment and this made me nervous: but who gives us the money to pay for a bigger house? He began to talk about asking for a loan but he said it "seriously", therefore I began "seriously" to worry and to think that in his brain some mechanisms are jammed and that maybe he just tries to keep his feet on the ground without succeeding.

I tell you, I really experienced moments of panic, I said to myself: how can I go on with a guy like this? It's better that I go my way because with him a real dialogue is not possible, but he doesn't realize it, I sent him back to his parents and I told him that I wanted to be alone "for a while", he then called me on the phone with the usual abandoned dog air and this has aroused in me a tide of scruples and I don't know what to do, I would like to be with an adult who is able to control himself but he is not so, he is a very good guy but in some things he doesn't have a minimum of self-control, it's like a child who doesn't understand the value of money.

What should I do Project? Have I to pretend nothing happened, at least in words, this time, and then go on always the same way? I love him but the idea of getting back together doesn't excite me, it would still be a compromise choice. I could even pretend that everything is fine, hoping that something will change but I already know that nothing would change. What do I have to do?

konigdernacht writes:

I can only laugh, rather than cry bitterly, reading this post! The situation is very particular and focuses on some issues of a couple's relationship:

- 1) home economy;
- 2) respect for money;
- 3) respect for the partner;
- 4) respect for the parents (of the partner of the guy who writes).

That said, I would have two dispassionate tips to give you:

- a) if the two really love each other and if this money story is the only stain in the relationship, the two could continue to live together and the guy with his feet on the ground could register expenses and make the partner understand that according to one of the basic principles of the home economy, if TOT enters and

TOT is spent, there is a budget balance; if TOT enters, and 2 TOT is spent, a debt accumulates; if 2 TOT enters, and TOT is spent, there is a gain! It is certainly not high finance! Obviously, this registration serves to educate the partner and, once educated (in a short time hopefully), it should end up because registering all expenses is not really nice!

b) if the two love each other but the situation is truly unsustainable - I imagine that the guy with his feet on the ground has a lot of anxiety and tachycardia about this absolutely unnerving situation - the road to follow can only be one: leave, remaining just friends, but following everyone his own road! On the other hand, one considers himself as a life partner, not as a nanny. A wish you true happiness, dear writer.

Alyosha writes:

In my opinion the money has little to do with all the story or better the money management has in some way just something to do with the management of feelings. In southern matriarchal families it is quite usual that it's the woman who collects the money of all the family members and then decides how to spend it. Unfortunately I realize that some automatisms, right or wrong they are, in a gay couple don't exist, because the roles are not so obvious, among other things I cannot even say if it is bad in itself. The point is that those who control the money that a person can spend control the movements of that person, affect their way of thinking and reasoning. And in a gay couple there are two different ways of doing, well beyond the mere problem of money. Right or wrong, his positions and his attitudes towards the world are radically different from yours, dear thrifty.

He lives more for today and with less thoughts on his mind. I state that about cohabitation I don't have any experience, but as for money, in short, his money is only his and your money is only yours. Once you have split your expenses in half, with his money he can do whatever he wants, if he then asks you for money after having spent everything, don't give him it. So I don't understand why you should keep his money. If then when he has finished his money he asks his parents, it's not your problem. His relationship with his money is not your business, he manages it as he wants. In short, behind this money business, I see more an attempt to influence his way of thinking, doing and behaving, and I also see some frustration and a sense of betrayal that you feel if he doesn't do what you think should be done.

Saving money, being moderate in spending etc. etc. they are not values in

themselves, they are not right behaviors in themselves, I would say, but are right only for you. In short, it isn't said at all that despite the fact that you and your boyfriend are two different persons you aren't able to stay together, but my dear writer, you should give up your attempt to change him and you shouldn't even let him change you. In short, I repeat, divide the expenses as you were two simple roommates and when he is in trouble don't help him. Sooner or later he will get rid of his bad habit if he realizes that when he needs money he has to earn it by himself. But if there is more, in short ... you will reason on your own, I feel seriously too little expert to give advice on such long stories ...

Gianni writes:

Sorry if I intrude in the discussion, I read carefully the first post and the answers of Konig and Alyosha, given that it is not only a problem of gay couples, even heterosexual couples face financial obstacles day by day in order to move forward, there can be discussions, clarifications of ideas, none of us is perfect, Someone can buy too many books, CDs, shoes, shirts, home furnishings for the bedroom or kitchen, whatever you want, but, and I say it with full knowledge of the facts, if you decide to be a couple, you do it after you know thoroughly the mate, because it is not possible, after attending each other for a long time, to discover things that were not seen before or you did not want to see, it is too easy to create a couple and then destroy it for reasons that can be overcome with a serious and responsible speech. When you are more than 30 years old, you should already know how expensive life is (in every sense). If the financial problem is an excuse to want to download the partner, then it is another matter ...

pavloss writes:

I am very perplexed. I don't think that the guy who writes wants to "download" his partner for reasons of money, I think, rather, that he loves him and feels very upset in front of the irresponsible behavior of the one close to him. The fact is that the problem he throws on the carpet is true and undoubtedly goes beyond money. When a person takes into account that he doesn't exist only for himself but for another one with which he makes a family, all the possible problems, even if they may appear very difficult to overcome, are considerably dampened. The ability to adapt as a couple must not come from one side only. If it comes from only one part, sooner or later the equilibrium is lost and a "no return" process starts, as seems to be the case described by this guy. I have the impression that the spendthrift guy

is rather closed in himself, willing to see only his reasons, is quite spoiled (asking frequently one's parents or family for money when you have a job and earn money it is not decent in my opinion!). If he is willing to get out of this vicious circle he can very well recover the couple relationship with his partner, otherwise he will compromise it forever (and this seems very likely) but he will also lose his true balance in relation to life.

The man who sees his partner unbalance this way, rightly dreads because he also feels himself dragged into a paradoxical situation that he would never want. I would simply put him in front of an *aut aut*: "Either you change or I go my way". In fact, what kind of "love" is what forces the other to humiliation and indigence for your total inability to have a relationship with money? Here on the part of the spendthrift there is a hermetic closure on himself that is to absolutely avoid, if you want to live as a couple. Otherwise it is better that everyone stays on his own. I met a similar case in the heterosexual world. An uncle of a friend of mine, long ago, married a woman who wanted luxury and forced him to do crazy shopping, far beyond his financial capacity. At one point, the indebted man saw that his life partner was never happy: obtained 100, she wanted 1000, obtained 1000, she wanted 10,000 and so on. They ended up divorcing and, by law, because they had a son, he had to help her keep the son. The son, became an adult, for years went to his father asking for money, saying "Dad I'm used to living in luxury, I cannot do without it". Meanwhile, his father entered an acute depressive crisis of which his ex-wife and son were responsible. Recently he committed suicide. This shows how a deranged relationship can also lead to extreme situations.

konigdernacht writes:

pavloss wrote: "I don't think that the guy who writes wants to "download" his partner for reasons of money, I think, rather, that he loves him and feels very upset in front of the irresponsible behavior of the one close to him. ... When a person takes into account that he doesn't exist only for himself but for another one with which he makes a family, all the possible problems, even if they may appear very difficult to overcome, are considerably dampened. ... what kind of "love" is the one that forces the partner to humiliation and indigence for your total inability to have a relationship with money?"

I absolutely agree with you, pavloss: the two are a couple, a family, so the debts of one are also debts of the other, and this in my opinion escapes the reading of Alyosha, which sees the two as entities absolutely detached, each extension of himself. Not to mention that as long as there are parents of the spendthrift, all is well. Once they disappeared, where does he go to ask for cash? He would end up charging himself and the couple of debts, cre-

ating many problems! If then there are assets to be seized for breaches or lack of finances by the spendthrift (and maybe also after involving parents), since the two reside in the same place, the creditors will go into the couple's house and take furniture and whatever belongs to THEM, not only to the spendthrift but to the couple!

project writes:

Pavlos and Konig say things that I also feel mine. I state that soon (as far as possible) I would like to organize a themed evening in chat entitled "what does it mean to have a guy" because I think that the concept of couple is still seen in a very vague, while, in the couples who go on, there are inevitably shared economic balances and shared responsibilities that guarantee the stability. Indeed, Gianni is right when he says that before creating couple you should know your partner very, very well, to evaluate not only the reliability in terms of emotional stability and fidelity of the couple, but also in terms of respecting the commitments undertaken and also of objectively adult behavior. In gay couples there are no legal obligations and there are no children and the couple, if it goes on, it's only for its internal cohesion, such a couple certainly has emotional and sexual components and whatever component you want, but also depends on the reliability of each of the partners.

I will only give you an example. How do you see a couple in which one of the guys is systematically one hour late for appointments and never warns if he doesn't come back home or if he's late, etc. etc.? You can tell me that such things are trivial but basically they are forms of disrespect and disaffection. A couple is a small company that has its own resilience and resistance, but has also its limits. Without reaching the extremes of which pavloss speaks, for a guy, seeing in the partner an irresponsible behavior, that despite the work doesn't make him economically autonomous, it is really worrying, and seeing that speeches are useless and that the partner thinks about everything but the couple and his mate, is truly discouraging. If an older guy behaves like a kid it's difficult to avoid the conclusion that he's immature, and feeling in couple with an immature guy is frankly depressing.

Editor writes:

Alyosha wrote: "I state that about cohabitation I don't have any experience, but as for money, in short, his money is only his and your money is only yours."

Well, living as a couple, being a couple, doesn't mean being  $1 + 1$ , that is,

two small singularities, but exactly a couple, a family in short, in which you have to keep under control your defects for the good of the whole family.

Barbara writes:

When two persons stay together for so many years, money management becomes an important issue. Money establishes lifestyle, values, priorities, even serenity, as the story of this guy demonstrates. The use of money tells us a lot about what we are. Now it is obvious that this story underlines anyway a point of view, but there are objective data that make us reflect. The excesses create real problems. Living with a person whose behaviors border on compulsive shopping or, at the opposite end, with a person with an unexpected stinginess is a fatigue that can be intolerable. In the first case you risk to get involved in debts that your partner is likely to contract, because if you cohabit with another guy, it is difficult, as Alyosha would like, to stay out of the consequences. In the second case, referring for example to heterosexual couples, one also comes to speak of economic maltreatment when one of the two partners limits the other in expenses that are actually necessary. We should find a meeting point. But in some cases it is not easy to reach it, because the use of money refers to important life choices. Could the author of the email renounce the serenity and dignity that derive from the savings? Perhaps in the same way the partner cannot give up many objects, which represent something fundamental for him. There are people who don't go out if they don't wear a signed garment: this is a sad reality, but anyway very real. What's the meanings of objects for many people? They are something that defines them, guarantees them a status, increases their self-esteem. I think this guy has tried to change things and that his putting himself apart can also be, from his point of view, an extreme attempt to make the person he loves sober.

Alyosha writes:

Thanks for the underlining, Editor. I hope that things are better for you, What have I to tell you? Next time you will tell us how your relationship is working, at least I was honest. The life of a couple is something that for me doesn't exist at the moment, I would like it, as all of us, I think, but I don't crucify myself for the fact that there is not and I try not to think about it! I can only say what I think in the abstract, because anyway I think something (don't worry, I have this flaw and many others) and for fairness I have to premise that my ideas are only ideas and not real experiences. Inheriting the heterosexual model in my opinion it's a mistake, being in two but not

sharing the management of children is not a detail.

The heterosexual family remains focused on offspring, the gay one definitely not. Sharing spaces, times, emotions, ways of reasoning is one thing, merging one into the other, "complementing one another" is another one. Among other things, it is not said that heterosexual couples working like this, go well. The idea that everyone should have his own things, however, seems fundamental to me, this is the premise for every possible sharing. If the division of goods is already done in heterosexual couples, I don't see why the idea that everyone manages his money as he wants, once the common expenses are covered, cannot be a solution. I repeat there are no children to grow and this is not a detail. It doesn't just mean not having the responsibility of a third party in the couple, but also have no one to whom we can leave our savings, so the fundamental question is: what do you save money for?

I'm not saying that spending everything is a right lifestyle, but I don't think it's wrong either. Not having children as a common project, requires a shared project of another nature, that is to have an idea of a solid common future. I repeat, in my opinion, it is not bad either, the children cover too many times the total absence of common background visions, so I repeat: the fact that many hetero couples simply go on like this, doesn't mean that they go well. If a "φιλία" is missing, first of all in the sense of thread that connects, even before that in the sense of bond and love, if a son is missing who could be somehow like a thread, as I see him, a gay couple in the long run does not have many possibilities, but I can be wrong, I have premised on purpose not to have great experiences in this regard. If, as usual, here there were no basic preconceptions, to push to stigmatize the "spendthrifts", we would immediately realize that the reasoning also works in reverse.

In short, everyone for what I read, would like to pull in his direction and this is not possible, the thread if too much pulled, breaks. The problem I see is definitely another: this guy is spoiled. When the money ends he asks his parents or his boyfriend, here is the mistake in my opinion. Everyone is free to do what he wants, but he must assume responsibility for his decisions. If every time he's in trouble someone helps him, this guy will never grow up. Hence the advice not to help him, the ideal would be that even the family would not help him, but on this you cannot do much. But on one thing I would like to be frank, if people are continually treated as irresponsible, there is nothing to complain if they become really irresponsible.

And the idea that my boyfriend has to deal with my money, would make me irresponsible and would be in essence the exact equivalent of what my parents do when they give me the money. If this is the situation I can only share the choice made by the guy who wrote, that is let him go, I simply didn't want to reduce him to an economic issue. I read Barbara's comment



now and it's what I mean: on the surface we see the management of money, underneath there's a world. In Italy there is not even the recognition of gay couples, if a guy asks for a loan for a house he puts it on his paycheck crying alone the legal consequences if any. One could very well find an agreement whereby the other pays half of the mortgage payments exactly as he now pays half of the rent. I know that if the differences in the vision of things are too many, you cannot continue to be together and that's exactly what I'm trying to say.

But if I had to make the decision to leave my partner it would not be only for an economic question because, sorry if I repeat all the time, under the economic issues there are other things, perhaps more important. Everything we do in modern society needs money and if someone claims to come to manage for me the money that I make on my own, in reality he claims to manage my person, I just wanted to emphasize this. Having said that, I remove the trouble, I leave the field to the experts of the couple. Experts not in a polemical sense, but in the sense of having had experiences, which I personally don't think I have. Forgive me Editor if I allow myself, but the sum has been taught to me in primary school, the next time tell me something that I don't know already. Good continuation.

Barbara writes:

It is very interesting what you say about the fact that it is not said that gay couples should follow the same rules as the other couples. This reminded me that there are also heterosexual couples in which the use of money is separate. It would be interesting to understand which solution is better. In a heterosexual couple, a good percentage of women contribute by working at home, but it is true that many women feel a discomfort in feeling "maintained" by their husbands. The fact remains that it is difficult, especially in a "lean time" like this, to apply the rule of separation of money, if for example one of the two loses the job. Here the situation is different. The guy's companion makes consciously (I don't know how much ...) choices that go beyond his own economic possibilities. And rightly, as Alyosha points out, to see that your partner puts you regularly in front of the *fait accompli*, assuming that you have to cover his budget holes, asks you a few questions about the relationship: does this partner respect me? Do he respect my freedom, my values, my efforts? Does this partner want an equal relationship or does he want to turn me into an acquiescent parent? a relationship like this corresponds to my needs?

Alyosha writes:

Barbara wrote: Does this companion want an equal relationship or does he want to turn me into an acquiescent parent? I thought exactly this. In reality I dared even more in my reasoning, because I fear that the person who wrote the post can take slowly the role of parent but he has probably in mind a different parenting. When a relationship begins behind each of the two partners there is always the fabric of our fundamental relationships. In my opinion it would be decisive if, in the meantime, the guy who wrote would took off this role of a quasi-parent. One partner evidently gives it to the other and the other takes it. Surely from this point of view to loosen a little bit the stress it can be useful to entrust each one his own money once the common expenses have been covered.

As usual I can be wrong, but that: "I sent him back to his parents" a little made me think of the idea of a package to send back to the sender and helped me to reinforce the idea that this guy is considered not only an irresponsible, but almost like an inert object to displace from one place to another. Even the idea of maneuvering his money for him is very reminiscent of the idea of moving him, as if he were inanimate. Behind the reactions of the parsimonious guy there is also the attitude for which his ideas are all right and the other is a kid. What's absurd about wanting a mortgage to buy a more beautiful home? Ok, maybe materially it will not be feasible, but it's not an absurd thought. And what's absurd about the idea of wanting a car with a big displacement? So you understand that the guy who writes is not fascinated by cars, unlike his partner. Why are the more relaxed behaviors all considered weird? And in spending all the money on the books? What's there really wrong?!?!?

They are not "strange" ideas as they are represented, but only other visions of the world. As I see it, one can and must seek agreement, but only if the other is placed at our same level (and therefore is not helped when he makes mistakes, in the sense that has emerged) and if his vision of the world, however different from ours it may be, has in our eyes equal dignity compared to ours. If there is not this condition of substantial parity, but one is more "high" for some reason than the other, higher up with his moral code, with his judging gaze, no agreements are possible, because agreement by definition presupposes that we are all on the same level. If there is a difference in the relationship, there are more or less peaceful forms of bargaining on things to do, but it still remains the idea that one of the two guys has the responsibility to do for both while the other should simply take in loan in his behaving the code of values of the first.

There remain only different forms of control over people, however frustrating for those who exercise this control, because given the situation described,

it seems clear to me that the other doesn't prove a performer so reliable of the will of the first (even if the first keeps saying that his mate understood the lesson). It is also clear that the parents of the spendthrift still retain a power, which they will exploit if necessary. For parents, treating a guy as a capricious child who must be satisfied is a sure way to keep him connected to them and not make him develop mature relationships and according to what I read in the conclusions it is a method that works great!

However, the division of expenses I thought of it as an initial phase, I repeat, as I see it, letting both partners have their spaces of autonomy is the indispensable step for every possible sharing. Slowly, as agreements on things are found, the number of expenses faced together would grow in a spontaneous and progressive way. But it is only a hypothesis, I cannot say how much in fact it can be concretized.

konigdernacht writes:

You, Alyosha, wrote:

"As usual I can be wrong, but that: "I sent him back to his parents" a little made me think of the idea of a package to send back to the sender and helped me to reinforce the idea that this guy is considered not only an irresponsible, but almost like an inert object to displace from one place to another."

Come on, Alyosha, we are not doing the exegesis of a passage by an author, the writer has simply used an ironic hyperbole to say that his prodigal boyfriend went back home to his parents, or that he asked him to come home to his parents for the moment.

About the fact that his boyfriend is an irresponsible, I don't think there is any doubt at all: it is absolutely evident! But you also say: "And what's absurd about the idea of wanting a car with a big displacement? So you understand that the guy who writes is not fascinated by cars, unlike his partner. Why are the more relaxed behaviors all considered weird? And in spending all the money on the books? What's there really wrong?!?!?" There's really nothing wrong ... in the fantasy world or if you're a "maintained". We can reason clearly in the abstract, but in my opinion a fact that often escapes your reasoning is that of practicality: that is, one can spend all his money in books, ok! But then what do you eat? The pages of the book? How do you pay your bills? Certainly not with the sheets of the book! So if one cannot distinguish his primary needs (eat and pay bills first of all) from secondary ones and unnecessary (if you buy a utility car instead of a big car, it's always

a car that you buy), he should really do an accelerated course of life!

FreedomTower writes:

I quote pavloss: "Either you change or I go my way", the effort must be of both of them not of just one, otherwise the relationship becomes a form of repression of one's own frustration, there are things that are only discovered during cohabitation and it is precisely for this that the cohabitation in a relationship is the litmus test, because one experiences things like being together and living side by side day by day and one can see all the moods and attitudes of the partner through the everyday life. Returning to the beginning of the post, I think you have to give him an ultimatum, after all it's for years that you tolerate this continuous wasting money, if he really loves you, he will try to change, in the end, you're not asking him a self-control in matters related to who knows what a field, but just to save some money because even if it's not your money it's also for his good that he has to change, because even if he doesn't ask you for money, he will continue to ask his parents (who spoil him so, even if I don't know anything about the situation) and also to ask friends, maybe untrustworthy and dishonest friends ...

Alyosha writes:

My speech wanted to go somewhere else, what to tell you? Keep on thinking it's just a matter of money and practicality, for what I gain from it, I don't care at all. A minimum effort to go a little bit beyond the surface of things could be done sometimes, maybe it's useful or maybe it's perfectly useless. My text is not an exegesis, but the impression I received from the complex of things I read. And I repeat, I have very much the idea that behind the claim to manage the money of the other there is a desire to condition his movements. The idea of sending him back like a parcel post confirms the impression I had of it. In a country submerged in debt I would not be surprised if someone bought a car in debt with a safe income. It is the other who sees his boyfriend's ideas as weird and doesn't give him any basic legitimacy, that instead they should recognize each other!

Now I stop in fact, not being able to interact with the direct interested, this discussion seems to me basically a school case, because all the arguments and all the possibilities are in principle possible. In general, however, if it should make sense to ask for advice, it is good to help to reflect on what one is doing, not just to say that it is right or wrong. Right and wrong, in my opinion, don't even exist, therefore it sounds very strange to argue that in a relationship one of the partners is completely right and the other

is completely wrong, I couldn't even conceive a similar thing.

salvettino writes:

Hello everyone, I joined recently and I found this very interesting exchange of views, as many issues discussed in this blog. That's why I would like to respond to this message, I have to premise that I'm 28 years old and I too, years ago, had a story that came to an end because of the money that my boyfriend was spending without any self-control. I point out that I bought a house while he has a flat in his mother's cottage. I paid and still pay a mortgage, while we would have to theoretically divide the rest of the expenses. But it was never like that, because I saw that he was always without money already in the middle of the month and then he asked me for money on loan, so what would I have had to do? In addition to my first job, every night I went to work in a take away pizzeria to earn only a few pennies. When I had a little bigger expenses, I could never count on him because he never had any money.

So, do you still say that money has nothing to do with the relationship between two guys? In my opinion, money certainly have something to do with the end of my relationship: why did I have to go and do a second job in order to be financially quiet while he, instead, was at home playing in front of the PC? He was missing money more than me. Perhaps the fault was only mine because at first I didn't remark the thing, but unfortunately, when you persevere, you end up with an inevitable rupture of the relationship. I cannot say that I still don't like him very much, but going back and put me together with him, another time together would be useless. In fact, now I'm only working based only on my first job, if I had to change my mind about restoring the relationship, maybe I would ruin my existence, I would be condemned to a second job forever to maintain him. But who makes me do it? And furthermore, I also ask you: who makes you do it? At some point in life, people is no more able to change, if they have been accustomed since children in a way, they will always remain the same. At 40, we cannot change anymore.

kingoftheworld writes:

I report my experience: I started working a few months after we met, he started working roughly 5 years later. I immediately opened a bank account in my name. After some time we decided to open a joint bank account and I gave him an ATM and a credit card. It was normal for me that he could use all the money we had if he needed it, and I didn't go to check expenses.

I didn't "lend" him money. I usually lend money but just for work in the bank, but I gave money to my love only in custody and administration. Now we both contribute to our finances, we have the same attitude with respect to money. An attitude antithetical to that of my mother, who burns whole her money (it is she who pays practically all the household expenses - the two of us contribute just to maintenance) but she throws away from the window thousands of euros a year in stupid things.

Now I remember my poor father crying, while he was dealing with bank statements, now I'm an adult and I understand him, seeing how upsetting me is that my mother is unable to keep money when she has some in her hand. My love and I are really afraid to find the house mortgaged because my mother had to buy a new handbag or a woman dress. if you have not understood yet, I live with my love and my mother happily under one roof. In the case of the guy with a boyfriend prodigal, on my opinion he should make the matter very clear, since the recklessness of his boyfriend's expenses is very difficult for him to bear, he should impose an ultimatum: fixed a sum of tolerable monthly expenditure, he should make his friend to allow him to save the rest, to put it on a savings account, in a glass jar above the fridge, under to the mattress, or wherever you like.

The boyfriend is not able to manage himself, so he has to be managed if he doesn't want to be single again. Now if this is an impassable wall, not wanting to accept the condition can become the yardstick of the love, not so much for the money itself, but for the lack of capacity for sacrifice. Sometimes he seems to behave like would a child. I notice that in gay couples one of the two partners behaves often like to a capricious child, so it is right to pose as a kindergarten teacher. No kidding. As for the money that he is given by his parents, nothing wrong, let's see it as an anticipation of inheritance

Telemachus writes:

Interesting this thread, I had missed it. I wonder if the guy of the email has tested the hypothesis that his boyfriend may have some pathological type of obsessive-compulsive disorder, which causes him to arise the urge to buy large quantities of things even perfectly useless or even completely outside of his economic scope. And in fact there are also "accumulators", i.e. people who feel the need to fill the house of the most unimaginable and disproportionate amount of strange things (whether expensive or not). When between two guys the gap starts to become so excessive, unfortunately, saying simply that "he's a flawed person" may no longer be enough to explain the situation. After all, by analogy, a compulsive addiction disorder, perhaps more disastrous but not dissimilar, is that of gamblers, who fail to realize what

they are doing and are unable to stop.

Alyosha writes:

Telemachus, in fact the pathology exists, the "shopping addiction", more widespread among women, and difficult to identify among men, for a whole series of social conventions to which you refer. Buying a car with a disproportionate cost, as well as spending dizzying amounts to cultivate a hobby is something that has a certain social recognition and above all it's not normally considered "shopping". A friend of mine studied such problems for the thesis. In general, the nomenclature has never impressed me much, but it is only my personal point of view.

salvettino writes:

Hello, now I have solved the problem convincing myself that I will stay alone, without a boyfriend. In fact, I stay with the payments for the car I bought thanks to a loan in my name and I'm still paying. I am waiting in vain for the slow return of the sums I have lent him. Especially now that he's jobless I don't even know what I have to do. Here's what it means to trust. I think my eyes were totally closed when I persuaded myself to do something like that. Mah!

Lokiluk writes:

I find myself in the same situation as the writer ... but with the opposite role. I'm a little younger than my partner and I like going out with friends, I like beautiful things ... My partner is very thrifty, he has defined an annual budget within which the expenses of our couple must be limited. I recognize that being told that we cannot afford the restaurant or the cinema every weekend is frustrating and that experiencing that we are not rich is very unnerving (I know, I have no absurd claims, sometimes just some "I'd like", but never a "I must have It"). But I also know that my boyfriend is right. At first I was offended by his reproaches. Then I realized that being part of a couple, I didn't have to think about myself, but about us. My partner, it must be said, is not an inveterate prohibitionist or a fervent supporter of Zwinglian rigorism. He also likes to spend money sometimes. But when money is scarce and work is uncertain, I admit it's fair to take some responsibility. If the writer's boyfriend is able to understand what it means speaking about a "we", then perhaps there is hope of fixing things. Anyway, however ... the thing seems to me a bit pathological.





# Chapter 18

## GAYS AND COUPLE STABILITY

### 18.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 18.1.1 Statistics on gay wedding

In this chapter I intend to analyze the stability of the couple life of gay guys. The issue is complex and cannot be reduced to the social problems that gay couples have to face. We start with some ISTAT (Italian institute of Statistics) data.

In Italy, in 2007 occurred a total of 81.359 separations (+ 1.2% compared to 2006) and 50.669 divorces (+ 2.3% compared to 2006), equal respectively to 273.7 separations and 165.4 divorces for every 1.000 new marriages, this means that for every 1.000 new marriages celebrated 439.1 end with separation or divorce. The children involved are 100.252 in separations and 49.087 in divorces.

These data are absolutely objective and show how the life of a couple, despite the exaltation of it that is made by many parts, is actually very fragile even for married hetero couples, that is, for couples who, in theory, at least because of the presence of the children, should have the maximum stability. In Spain, according to data published by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística and the Ministerio de Justicia (quoted by Spanish daily La Razón), in four years the law on the marriage of gays allowed the celebration of 13.116 homosexual unions, 8.898 marriages between gays and 4.218 marriages between lesbians. In all occurred 159 divorces and 6 separations between homosexual persons. The divorce between homosexual persons in Spain is equal to 1.26% while among the heterosexuals it is around 66%, i.e. every three marriages two couples separate or divorce. The data are not comparable to each other

for many reasons but over time and with the spread of gay marriage it is to be expected that the differences between gay and straight couples, in terms of divorce, tend to decrease.

A fundamental concept must be emphasized: the so-called gay marriage presents, even after 4 years, an extremely marginal percentage of incidence because it is in fact an institution that can only be used by a minimum percentage of the homosexual population, i.e. by the publicly declared homosexuals, around 4% of homosexuals, or approximately 0.32% of the general population. For gays not publicly declared, which make up about 96% of all homosexuals and about 7.7% of the general population, the introduction of same-sex marriage has not changed anything.

In interpreting statistical data, it must be borne in mind that a heterosexual guy is led by the family and the social environment to the idea of forming a couple and getting married. Parents encourage him in this sense. The fact of having a girl is considered as a license of adult life, that not only must not be hidden but that can be exhibited in all environments without any risk. At least theoretically, hetero sexuality is connected with the idea of having children and behaving "according to nature". If these factors don't determine the heterosexuals at the wedding, certainly favor the path towards marriage, very often even when the premises for a marriage are in fact lacking. The results of this social pressure towards marriage are easily detected in legal systems rather elastic in terms of separations and divorces, as it happens in Spain, where two out of three marriages break up and the presence of children is not sufficient to prevent their dissolution.

One wonders how many heterosexual couples would exist if social conditions were adverse as it happens in the case of homosexual couples, that is, if there was not the incentive to put children in the world, if heterosexual unions were considered unacceptable on a social level and they had to be lived very often secretly. Living as a stable couple, between hetero people, would be an exception, as it is among gays.

The population of Spain amounts to approximately 46.5 million inhabitants. By admitting a percentage of homosexuals equal to 8% we reach the amount of 3.720.000 gay people, and the percentage of married homosexuals amounts to 0.70% of the homosexual population, a minimum percentage. This means that, beyond the fundamental legal recognition, in Spain, the condition of gays, on a social level, has not really changed except marginally with the introduction of homosexual marriage.

If from the world of gays publicly declared, who arrive to the gay marriage, we go to the world of undeclared gays the situation however, at first glance, doesn't seem to change much. In this case, of course, we will not talk about married gays but about stable gay couples. However, the number of stable

couples appears to be rather low, even if the statistics are much more difficult in this case. Among undeclared gays it is widespread the ideal of the stable gay couple that represents the dream of the vast majority of undeclared gay guys, but anyway you can see few stable gay couples. I emphasize that I don't say "there are few couples" but "you can see few couples".

Also the phenomenon "gay couple" is greatly affected by the non-visibility of undeclared gays that are about 96% of the total. Only the gays publicly declared can access the marriage and only they affect the official statistics, the rest is submerged.

### 18.1.2 What results from Gay Project

Based on what emerges from the chats with guys, I note that, after the introduction of the internet, the condition of undeclared gays has changed significantly. Until the early 1990s, for an undeclared guy, there was no possibility of meeting other undeclared guys. There were even at that time gay associations, but obviously they were frequented exclusively by publicly declared gays. For the others, the overwhelming majority, in fact, associations were completely impracticable and isolation was the rule. Things have changed in recent years. For an undeclared gay, there is today the possibility of starting a dialogue with another gay not declared in conditions of total anonymity.

Adopting a quite prudent behavior it is however possible, with moderate risks, for an undeclared gay guy, to know other undeclared gay guys and it is also possible, and even not uncommon, that two gay guys not declared know each other in person, which it is the basic condition for the formation of a couple between undeclared gay guys.

From the privileged observatory of Gay Project several interesting facts can be observed:

- 1) Gay people not publicly declared put first in the ranking of the values of their life the possibility of living in couple with another guy. I asked myself if this is only by analogy with what happens in the hetero world. It is clear that for a gay couple there isn't any incentive relate to children and social pressure, the latter on the contrary strongly discourages the gay guys from constituting a couple. Can, then, only the imitation of the hetero world lead gay guys to consider living as a couple as the first value of life? Frankly I think that for gay guys, and especially for those not declared, the realization of a life as a couple is not just a response to an emotional thrust towards another guy but also a way of taking a revenge on life, represented by the overcoming of a solitude often problematic if not distressing, sometimes much

more radical, especially in the past decades, for a gay guy, in particular not declared, than for a heterosexual one who does not live in a couple.

Basically, for an undeclared gay, living in couple also means overcoming a situation of unease.

2) When creating a couple is possible but not easy and represents a liberation from a state of unease, the life of a couple, which is born against the social judgment, is nevertheless intrinsically strong, so strong as to overcome social obstacles, even by means of a non-visibility accepted as a normal condition. In these cases the couple stability is high.

If creating a gay couple was not only possible but also very easy, the gay couple would intrinsically be born with the same basic fragility of the heterosexual couple, i.e. it would not be born as a realization of a single (or almost) possibility to create a couple, but as a result of a choice among many possible choices and the idea of modifying the choice already made would also appear in the gay field, as it increasingly appears in hetero field.

3) The number of gay couples among undeclared guys tends to progressively increase and especially among younger guys. There are more couples made up of guys between the ages of 20 and 30 than couples of guys between the ages of 30 and 40. Younger gay guys already start with the idea of a possible couple life, the thirty-year-olds are much more skeptical and forty-year-olds consider the life of a gay couple almost unachievable. However, there are stable couples that have formed between guys well over 30 years, but they are guys who have lived long periods of sexual repression, who have not had previous sexual experiences and have preserved well beyond 30 years an affectivity and a sexuality typical of much more younger guys.

4) The stable gay couples are formed much more easily among guys who have not been conditioned by pornography, who have not tried sexual relations with people known in chat rooms or in so-called gay clubs. Many stable couples are formed between guys who live together their first and only affective and sexual experience.

5) Sexuality within a gay couple of undeclared guys, although important, is framed in a couple dimension, for which if two guys constitute a couple they also have a common sexual life, but those guys don't constitute a couple essentially in order to have a common sex life.

6) The sexuality of gay guys who live permanently in couple is much less mythical and theoretical than that of guys who don't live in couple. The

concrete experience of the sexual life of a couple contributes to demystify it and to give it a sense of reality, of non-absoluteness, of the necessary mingling with thousands of other aspects of the shared daily living.

7) Gay guys who live in stable couples generally do not have anxiety disorders and have a more positive outlook on life. One might think they had no anxiety disorders even before living as a couple and that just because of this they were predisposed for married life, but in reality many guys who had experienced anxiety disorders, completely overcame them only after they managed to reach a stable coexistence with their partners. I note that in general these are not visible couples. In essence it is not the fact of being a couple on the outside that produces an affective stabilization but the fact of being couple in two, of having in fact overcome the solitude.

8) The couple life restrains individual protagonism, accustoms to mediation, to come to terms with the other and to find shared solutions to problems, induces to not dramatize potentially breaking situations and feel happy to be able to gratify the other by giving in to him in the moment of the confrontation.

The life of the couple is not really such until it has faced and overcome the difficulties of mutual adaptation, that is the moments of risk for the stability of the couple that occur when the initial phase of falling in love, which is still one-sided, is over and guys are switching to a couple logic. What factors undermine the stability of a couple? Here too the answers come from the experience of Gay Project.

1) In absolute the first cause of couple instability is the so-called original instability that occurs when a couple is constituted for reasons that have little to do with a deep and reciprocal affective relationship. Classic is the case of the couple that was established because one of the two guys wanted to "experience" the couple life putting himself to the test. This is an extension of the concept of sexual experiment to the more global dimension of couple life. Just as sexual experiments have little to do with sexuality and are very much linked to the desire to find experimental confirmations of one's own sexual orientation, so the couple's life started "to try" has little to do with deep affective motivations and responds to a substantially immature exploratory logic.

Anyone who wants to try a couple life aims at sexuality and the couple in themselves, largely disregarding the person of the other guy, completely neglecting the basis of the couple's life which is founded on the authentic and

reciprocated love for another guy. Substantially what is formed on this basis is not a couple but an image of a couple that lacks the strength of cohesion that a gay couple born on a relationship of love really has.

2) Gay couples built on weak foundations can last in spite of their fragility because the occurrence that determines their dissolution may not realize. A fragile couple, without external shocks, resists but at the slightest impact it shatters. Often the fracture element is constituted by the presence of alternatives. If the reason that caused the fragility is this, to the dissolution of the couple follows, at least for one of the guys, the almost immediate constitution of a new couple, the so-called alternative couple.

A few years ago, when gay couples among undeclared guys were very rare, they were also very stable, now they are much less rare and begin to present aspects of fragility, it is believed that with the increase in the number of couples made of not declared gay guys, their fragility will also increase. If for an undeclared guy it is more difficult to establish a couple relationship than it is for a publicly declared guy, the relationship between two undeclared guys is ultimately more stable also because the realization of an alternative appears much more improbable.

3) There are some situations in which the break, usually non-traumatic, of a relationship between undeclared gays is not followed by the establishment of a new couple relationship. Often non-traumatic breaks of this type occur among men no longer young, even well over 40 years, who have a relationship of cohabitation of several years behind them. In these cases it is not the will to create an alternative couple that leads to the dissolution of the first couple, but a slow and progressive de-sexualization of the relationship that can also be due to external factors linked to work or other contingent situations. In these cases, the couple's relationship becomes a friendship that becomes gradually narrower and ends up dissolving within a few years. Guys come back this way to status of single.

4) Sexuality is one of the fundamental elements of the life of the couple, and couple sexual compatibility is only one element, even if very important and delicate and often critical, which contributes to the stability of the couple, but it should be emphasized that life as a couple should not be considered as an individual objective but, in fact, as a couple goal and should not be understood as a completion of the self but as a creation of a "we". A concept that must always be kept in mind when observing the phenomenon of the fragility of the couple, and of course also of the gay couple, deserves a specific reflection, it is the relative dimension of the truth.

In essence, beyond the purely formal dimensions, such as cohabitation, which is an objective fact, all that truly animates the life of a couple remains in the domain of the subjective, because the subjectivity of the evaluations of the same facts affects so radically their interpretation that the facts themselves, in their objective consistency, are completely distorted to the point of losing meaning.

The two partners of a couple can read the same fact in radically different and even opposite ways and on this basis they can feed tensions and conflicts. The couple dialogue, even if it is very useful to prevent and resolve possible differences, can in no case avoid subjective interpretations. Since what matters in the couple relationships, rather than the facts, are the interpretations, it remains that the diversity of the interpretations on the part of the two partners represents a factor of original and unavoidable fragility of the couple relationship. Basically, the couple, even in the best of cases, i.e. even when it is really interpreted as a "we", remains formed by two individuals with different characters, with different experiences and also with different objectives.

The consequence of all this is the concrete possibility that the interpretations of the facts can become so divergent that they endanger the life itself as a couple.

Listening separately to the two partners of a relationship that has gone into crisis, we realize that the behaviors that to one of the two appeared irrelevant or almost, were interpreted by the other as signs of betrayal, lack of love or selfishness. Most of the couple crises derive from a set of interpretations that gradually become more divergent over time.

Often at the basis of these differences of interpretation there is an idea that constitutes for one or both partners an unspoken assumption given almost for granted of the couple relationship, this assumption can be summarized as follows: "Now he does not represent what I would like because he has some flaws (he has no will, he has the fixed idea of sex, he is rather indifferent to sex, he wants to include me in his world without giving up anything, he is touchy, selfish, etc. etc.) but I will change him and I will make him exactly as I wish him to be." A similar premise is often the real cause of the failure of a couple relationship. Usually, such reasoning remain in the "unsaid" and can conflict, on the other side, with other unsaid assumptions, of a different sign.

There remains another fundamental question related to the fact that over time people change their points of view and their ways of reacting and that what seems possible and even opportune today could appear completely incongruous after a few years if not even months. Couples built quickly, giving

too many things for granted, couples who have elements of original weakness (strong differences in social status, very different previous experiences, strong differences in age) are characterized by a high potential risk.

At the individual level, common sense and prudence discourage the rush to build a couple and above all to sexualize a relationship born on an emotional level. The sexualization of the relationship makes guys lose sight of many elements that should be understood before making more engaging choices, and sexual contact, which may seem desired today and consciously desired by both, can easily, over time, be interpreted by one of the two in a negative key. The couple life is not the heaven but it is a complex and often difficult reality usually very hard to build, which could, and one must be aware of it, bring more anxiety and worries than serenity and well-being, this is why living as a couple is a difficult choice whose outcome is never *a priori* predictable.

## 18.2 DOCUMENTS

### 18.2.1 A gay guy who wants to come back single

Hello Project, I recently discovered the forum and I liked it, it seems well done and I find many times in myself what you say, but there is one thing on which I feel a long way away. Not that I don't like what you write, only that it doesn't seem realistic at all to me. I try to explain myself better. You talk about gay love, or rather about Gay Love with the capital letters, and it feels good to me, only that they are abstract concepts that I ended up putting aside.

I'm not so young, I turned 35 and I have had my experiences, some important, other less, but they are all over and I don't regret them, at least I don't regret them for what they really were, maybe I could regret them how they could have been, but here too we are always in the realm of fantasy. Will I fall in love again? I really don't think it!

I leave a "serious" story because it was so, a story that lasted 5 years. Years of anxiety, expectations, illusions and disappointments and then substantial disillusion. I don't blame my ex, who was, after all, a good guy, maybe too different from me, or maybe we were not a well-matched couple. He was not so much interested in sex, maybe I was more interested in it, but the point is not even that. I would have liked to go and live together, and we could do it, but he didn't want it because "it would have been like show ourselves in the streets", he said. But at a some point, if you're gay, if you feel at ease, or at least relatively at ease with your boyfriend, you'll have to take a step



forward!

We always saw each other secretly, he never wanted to take me to his house. He had no plans for our future, he could go on like this forever, but I wanted something else, I wanted to build something that was a bit like a family, just the two of us, but in one place of our own, in short, one has his needs also of privacy, even of intimacy.

I would have been willing to put myself at risk, but he didn't want to because he said he would get into trouble at work. He has an important job and is also a character in sight. Well, he did his calculations, I was on one side of the scales and on the other there was his job and all the rest, and he decided he had to sacrifice me. For him everything had to continue as before, I could be the "evening" side dish of his main course that was his job. As a side dish I could go well, as a single dish no! And so, without too many compliments, he presented me his alternative: or so or we end it here. In recent times I had understood that it would end like this and I didn't have much trouble saying: "Ok, then I go, bye!"

My previous stories, if I have to tell the truth, have left me very little, both in good and in bad. After many years, there is nothing left. For only one guy I felt and still feel some regrets. It was I the one who cut ties with him and I think I hurt both him and me, because maybe he was really different from the others. In practice he is the only one I have seen again, sometimes even when our story was already over. Now he has a story of his own for years but I don't know much about it.

But does it make sense to look for a boyfriend? Apart from the fact that gays are few, even among those few it is very difficult to find one who can be good. I have some friends, but only friends, in fact my friends are guys that I don't like physically, so no fear of impossible love. They tell me: but for sex, how are you doing? But there are porn videos, which at least don't fuel illusions, and compared to the adventures like "a blow and go" at least are not dangerous for health. And then at almost 36 years. . . Well, what should I do? Should I break my head for someone? To crash into a wall of selfishness and stupidity? No! I gladly do without such things. I don't close the doors to anything, if anything should happen to me, well, I'm ready, but certainly I will not chase guys anymore. That phase is over.

Pornography is an alternative to real life, a non-binding, lighter thing, in which you are alone with yourself, which, after one has experienced many other things, eventually proves to be nothing stupid at all.

As a boy, I got used to thinking that a gay man should just hide, and I avoided those who wanted to come out into the open, then slowly I started to think that sooner or later a gay man or a gay couple must come out, at least going to live together and then I ended up avoiding those who thought

as I thought before. In practice, these problems have been very important for me.

Life is disgusting, Project, no more than being deceived and also deceiving others, day after day, without a moment of real dialogue. Everyone has in mind his own project to achieve and doesn't worry about others, I too behaved like that, but now I'm tired of going on like this. I want to go back to being alone, at least without a more or less stable partner. I would not go looking for partners for a one evening adventure, I don't care at all such things, maybe I would be interested, but I'm too afraid of AIDS to throw myself into things like that, the old, healthy pornography, taken even in small doses, is much better.

Yesterday a friend of mine asked me what I think of gay couples and I answered him with a skeptical smile, he looked at me and said: "Ah! I understood!" He wanted to be encouraged by me! He was not making his declaration of love to me, he just wanted to be encouraged to throw himself with all his shoes in a new adventure, but he didn't seem to be too enthusiastic about it.

And then it's not even a gay problem, for hetero people it's even worse. I don't understand the meaning of wanting to be together anyway. I understand it when it comes to bring children into the world and, to the limit, to raise them, but if there are no children, why this mania to get together? Each one to his own home, even a home suitable for a single person, but nothing more, so that when two guys meet, there is a bit more enthusiasm, but I don't like the gay parody of the family of the white mill!

### 18.2.2 Gay holidays

Hello Project, I read on your blog the story of Fredrik and David, I cannot deny that it is something that moved me and reminded me, even if a bit from a distance, of some atmospheres that I too lived. Frederik and David are undoubtedly two exceptional people and have managed to cope with the difficulties, but things have never happened to me that way even when I worked hard with all my strength.

I am 29 years old, I don't feel very young and I didn't even feel so in March, last year. I came out of an impossible story, I had fallen in love with a twenty-four heterosexual guy, everything went well until I told him the truth, we were close friends but when he heard it he answered me more or less as if I wanted to rape him and then he disappeared.

With the tattered spirit I started to surf the chats. I say immediately that I have never looked for people too much older than me, in fact, I think that after 24/25 years the beautiful of a guy begins to fade, for me the ideal are

the guys about 22/23 years. In the chats I always look for guys of that age. So, I'm attending chats and I'm looking for this kind of guys... but things don't excite me. At some point I get an email from a 40-year-old man (40 just turned), I don't answer, he sends me a second email very relaxed, that is something quite enjoyable ... I answer with a little camaraderie, as it's usually happens on the net but without affectation ... this way the story starts.

At first I was very hesitant, if he had been ten years younger, I would not have had any qualms but he seemed too old for me ... at the end of April I met him in person and he made me a positive effect, a handsome man who did not show at all his 40 years. There was complicity, I was fine with him even because we rarely were able to see each other more than once every two weeks, because he lives 250 km away from me, the second time I went to him we made love and it was nice, different from how I imagined it but beautiful, and a little I began to really fall in love.

At the end of June he proposes me to go on vacation with him for 15 days in the first half of August. I tell him yes right away but I tell him that I would prefer to stay in the room alone, this without any prejudice about the fact that I could make love with him, what indeed seemed obvious to me, as well as desirable, he tells me that there isn't any problem, then I ask how we would do for the costs, because I work and I'm economically independent, and here began the first note out of tune: he tells me that he will think of everything, in fact he thinks that I should be grateful for this, but I tell him that I don't like it and that we must be on a par, he makes a scene but then accepts, but says it in a way that I don't like at all, I point it out, he responds seriously and reassures me ... I'm calm ... and I start the countdown.

For all of July we didn't see each other because he was not in Italy. He sends me an email and tells me that we'll take the plane from Maplesna for Canada on August 2nd. I get ready ... I cannot wait for it to arrive on August 2nd. August 2nd arrives, he comes to get me, we go to the airport. It seems like a fairy tale. Super comfortable travel. We arrive in Toronto ... fabulous places. We start a tour of Canada of 15 days, every evening in a different place. The first night I find myself with him in a double room ... I ask him why, he replies that single bed rooms were not available, I don't argue, we make love at night. Beautiful, undoubtedly. In the morning we get ready, he calls the taxi, we go down, I ask him to settle the bill to 50% as agreed, he only answers that the accounts we would have them all done at the end.

Great day, Canada is one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen. In the evening at the hotel we end up again in a double room, I ask him why, he tells me again that there were no single bed rooms ... I go down to the reception desk and ask: there were more than 20 single bed rooms available!

I feel angry, I go back to my room and I tell him it, he answers me with a half fake smirk as if he were in a porn movie. I look at him and say to him: "No! I'm not your toy!" He raises his voice, he reproaches me stressing that it was he the one who paid the bill and the plane ticket and he even tells me: "You can also repay it in nature!" A joke so stupid made me just explode and I jumped on him and beat him with all the strength I had. I took my bags and left in a single room.

He called me on the phone and apologizing, started begging me. I stupidly returned to him. He had a black eye and cried like a cut vine, he begged me, I felt sorry, he seemed inconsolable ... in short, I let myself go to make love with him another time ... I was making love with a forty year old I didn't want anymore but that had made me feel sorry! At what point I had arrived!

...

During the night I thought of every possibility: to leave him alone there and go back to Italy, but then he would have felt betrayed and his reactions were unpredictable; or to finish the trip with him, then speak clearly and close the relationship ... in short, there was only one hypothesis that I didn't even take into consideration, that is to stay in contact with him. I didn't leave him there, the next day we were in separate rooms and we didn't make love anymore. I saw him humiliated, I felt sorry, but if I had appeared even a minimum condescending, things would have started again as before.

I go to the heart of the matter. Since we came back to Italy I was absolutely determined not to see him anymore, he texted me many times and I changed the card, I had to change e-mail, in a sense I was also sorry, in fact he did nothing terrible against me, but we would never get along, the main fact is that we didn't really love each other, we were two desperate people trying to solve each one his own problems... but this way a couple relationship makes no sense. He wrote me at least 10 letters with traditional mail. He sent me the last one to wish me merry Christmas, you can read it below: "Hello, all right, I'll leave you alone, I did a lot of nonsense, but I think in the end I really would succeed to love you. Good luck!". This mail has put on me a great sadness. I have not heard him for more than 30 days now. The story is over this way.

### 18.2.3 Beware of good gay guys!

Hello Project, I am a 27-year-old guy, I don't know why I'm writing to you, perhaps because I'm disappointed and pissed off and I need to blow off steam.

A friend told me about this gay place a few nights ago and I was very excited about the fact that it is a different place from the others, a clean and sincere

place, where write guys who have little to do with the usual guys addicted to chats, dating sites or clubs, sensitive guys, with a sense of morality, who make beautiful speeches etc. etc..

He knows what I have in mind, or better he knows what I had in mind a year ago about some things and he thought to be nice to me giving me this indication not knowing that in the meantime I had changed my opinion.

So I'll explain, I've never had problems in understanding that I was gay and in accepting it. And at 16 I had already started going out with other gay guys like me. I also had my sexual experiences, and had several gay friends with whom I went out, we talked, we had fun but among us there was also sex, but nevertheless we just stayed just friends.

At school I was fine, with my parents no problem at all, I had made my coming out with the closest friends. Then at about 20 years old, I began to have the desire to build something totally mine with a guy, to fall in love and really love someone, but it seemed very difficult to me and now I'll explain why. I did not want to find a guy publicly declared as were my friends or who attended some particular environments and had had many sex experiences because I thought things would never work, starting like this, and that there would be betrayals and no real interest in making things last long. Briefly, I wanted a well-meaning and undeclared guy who didn't attend gay-labeled clubs. But finding a guy like that is certainly not easy and I've never had this famous gay-radar that's probably just bullshit.

I was studying physics at university and I had the idea that not a single student of physics could be gay except me. Instead I was wrong. Maurice was a year older than me and we met in the classroom by chance. We immediately bonded and became very close friends, I found myself in love with him in less than a month. He was the perfect guy for me, as I imagined him, that is very sweet, serious, thoughtful and likeable, a little shy and also very nice.

Luckily I knew by chance that he too was gay, I'm not going to explain how, otherwise I would do it too long, and knowing it I started to unbalance me and make him understand that I was in love with him. Maurice was resisting because he was not declared to anyone and had no experience and was ashamed of it, but in the end the problems were overcome and we got together.

I was in seventh heaven, I really loved him and I did everything to make him feel good and at ease. Regarding sex he was a bit clumsy and always afraid to make mistakes but I reassured him and gave him all the time he needed. I thought that things with him could only get better and better, after two years we were very close as a couple and with sex everything was fine.

Then a friend of mine tells me that Maurice betrayed me, I didn't want to

believe it but there was evidence. At the beginning, Maurice has denied everything and only when he was already embarrassed and he didn't know what else to invent, he said that it was true and he even started crying, he begged me to forgive him, that it was a mistake, a sort of stupidity etc.

At the beginning I also sent the toad down, I was pissed off and not so much for the betrayal as for the lies but I thought to believe him and give him confidence, but it didn't last long.

However, he used to look around, to try to meet new people, in short, it was evident that our couple wasn't really satisfying for him. When I confronted him he also accused me by saying: "Thank you very much! You have had your sexual experiences, I on the contrary didn't have any, and to judge if one is really at ease in a situation, comparisons with different situations are needed." We broke up. I thought: "I found the rotten apple, what a misfortune!" But, despite all this, I still believed in love.

But Maurice was not the only rotten apple at all but was just a prototype of the good guy, because later I met many other guys and even older men more or less like him. Guys who believed in love, who wanted to find a guy to love, with whom to build a future, guys who wanted sex only with the right people or out of love. Serious and good guys! And then? Always the same stories! There are those who after a while have to look around. There are those who would like to cheat but are also afraid to stay alone again and therefore they don't cheat but only for this fear, not for you. There are those who have spent years dreaming of having a boyfriend, of falling in love with a guy who lives just for them, of living together and then in reality they do not know what to do, they are idealists, they don't give in to the normal compromises of a normal story with a normal guy and they prefer return to dreams rather than live reality and they easily send everything to ruin for bullshit.

There are those who seem to love you in a total way after not even a week together, who seem willing to any action for you, but seem perplexed when you try to make them understand that there are expressions that mustn't be used lightly as "I love you" and that it is difficult to love a person and it's not something you learn in two minutes. In such situations it seems that it is precisely you the one who doesn't feel anything for them and breaks their heart, while they, at 35, maybe are still in the stage of not being able to distinguish a crush from a real falling in love.

You could say: "Meeting all these guys, I mean the rotten apples, happened to you only!" I too thought about it but then talking to other gay guys I realized that in the end one should not look for those "good gay guys" but one should just avoid them! That in the end it is only a prejudice thinking that they are the only ones with which you can build something serious, and

that the guys who have a freer and more uninhibited life are the ones who are not very serious ... No it doesn't work at all like that.

I add something more, one of my longtime friends has been with a guy for eight years and they are a couple like the one I dreamed of. Yet they started as an open couple, they were all right together as people, they loved each other but sex they could do it with those they liked, in sincerity, without subterfuge and betrayal and many words of love and promises in the wind. But in the end they slowly built their relationship, they understood that they loved each other and that sex was more beautiful between them than with others. They took time, the "right-thinking" people could only judge them and attack them saying that it was just for convenience, that they didn't respect each other, etc., but now they are, I repeat, a beautiful, close couple, a strong couple full of projects and enthusiasm and I, with all my fantasies about good guys, I'm alone and so disappointed that I don't really care about being in couple anymore. That's all, Project.

Thomas

P.S. if you want, you can publish this email maybe it could be useful for someone who has the same beliefs that I once had. Better a cold shower now than years lost to chase the wrong people.

#### 18.2.4 My story - Crisis of a gay couple

Let's come to the topic, the one that is closest to my heart. You will be scandalized by what you are going to read, everything that is written is the pure truth, I never told anyone, but now I'm really tired, I'm already sufficiently disgusted by myself, and I think I touched a point of no return, because I don't deserve all this at all. I firmly believe that my story has really come to an end but I still cannot decide what to do.

My partner and I have been together for 9 years, until two years ago things between us were very different, I felt loved, courted, desired and well-liked. What I cannot feel now. I have loved my partner for a very long time, I loved him with an authentic and unconditional love, accepting his faults, his paranoia, his anxieties.

In July of 2002, however, everything changes. I find out that he frequents chats and apps such as grindr, planet romeo and so on. I find out that he has met a guy. I'm very upset, my odyssey begins here. We talk about, I have to get the truth out of him with my teeth, he sees me suffer, he don't seem to care so much about it. I want to save the relationship, he says he is so by nature. In the meantime, he loses his job. I see him becoming colder and more and more distant. In order to keep him with me, I lowered myself to doing things that otherwise I would never have done, because they go

against my nature, for example three-way relationships, I did it because I loved him so much and I thought that not hindering him in these threesome games would have made him understand the scope of my love for him and so the good days for us would start again.

It was not so but quite the contrary. Although I asked him to be honest with me, to tell me if he was dating other people, that I didn't care and I could understand him after so many years together, he always hid everything from me. Two months ago, for because of an episode that has nothing to do with all the story, we have had a very strong confrontation in which I slammed in his face all his indifference, the fact that I feel like a person unwelcome and hardly endured in his house, that I don't feel loved at all, that I feel deeply lonely and sad. Something clicks inside me, however, in the meantime. From that moment on he starts telling me that he's not sure he's in love with me, he wants some time to think about it. These have been the most terrible days and at the same time the most beneficial and healthy of my life. In those days when he was clarifying his ideas I examined many times my conscience, I understood many things and above all I realized that I was wrong. I was wrong to base my happiness on another person, I was wrong to base my world on another person, I was wrong to lower myself to similar compromises just to be loved by him. And I understood a lot of other things.

I realized that I don't like the cold and false person that he is now in my regard, that all this love that I feel for him is wasted and that he doesn't deserve it. Once I was a happy person, always cheerful, sunny, optimistic. I had very few reasons 10 years ago to be happy but I was happy all the same. Now I'm not anymore. Controlling his phone I discover continuous betrayals while we almost didn't have sex for three weeks and even more, he was detached and cold with me the very few times we did it.

I find condoms all over the place, hidden in the bedroom. Yesterday afternoon he even came out with a box of condoms, thinking that I didn't know that they were there. I could not resist anymore and I sent him a message where I told him to have fun wherever he was. Naturally, he closed himself even more, but something changed in me. Whereas before I felt anxious and terrified at the idea of losing him, now I would like him to tell me that everything is over between us, and that I have to leave.

I'm literally disgusted of what I did and accepted just to stay with him. In all this chaos there is another person, known by me on the same chats on which he is registered, a person I had met two years ago and who spoke to me about feelings, about what I would have wanted to build with my boyfriend and this person now contacted me. He told me again things that made me think if it is really worthwhile to still be tied to a man who says he loves me and who attributes all his shortcomings to the loss of the job but instead



proves to be more than active sexually and more than available for a possible story with others.

Perhaps it would be better to turn definitely page, leave him, since he doesn't want to take the first step. I feel that the feeling I felt for him is going away and that disgust and anger are replacing love. I told him that for how I am, for my way of being, I need to be loved both physically and psychologically. I also need sex, I admit it candidly, I have never betrayed him but I cannot go on like this anymore. In this relationship I see only mistrust, anger, disgust and indifference and at the same time I realize that two years ago I met this other guy who instead deserved everything that I could give him and if in two years I never managed to get him out of my head, it means that I felt something for him and now I'm hoping I can get in touch with him again.

Why all this? Has anyone been in such situations before? What should I do? Leave him with the risk of repenting of having done it? Have I to meet and attend this other guy? Doing so in spite of what my partner thinks and giving him back the favor? Have I to wait and hope that this phase passes and that he finally realizes all that happened? But how can he not notice it? I'm 35 years old, I am beautiful, physically and inside, I'm a profound, intelligent and sensitive person, I'm sweet. I am one who doesn't hold back, when I love I manifest my love, I give so much in a relationship. I'm determined and reliable, a cornerstone in a history. If he has not yet noticed all this, it means that he doesn't care at all.

Three or four people have already told me that they don't understand how a man can get tired of a handsome and young and intelligent, sensitive and sensual man and what is worse, they don't understand why I want to remain attached to a man who so clearly treats me badly and despises me. I don't know, I don't understand it either. I only know that I'm full of doubts and fears.

### **18.2.5 Gay couples: illusions and disappointments**

Hello Project, I would like to ask you something. But why has the section dedicated to the elderly of your forum remained empty? I follow you from the days of the first forum and at that time there were some man my age, rare but there were, but now nobody at all. So if you want to use this e-mail you can open a new section dedicated to elderly. I am a 61-year-old man (I wanted to write that I'm an old man, but I didn't).

Project, you know very well what it meant to be gay when we were young, it was a bit like living in the catacombs, but even then and with all the complications that were there, I did my life. I started late, practically at the age of 40, before that age I had never had the courage to approach a

guy but from the age of 40 up to the age of 55 I did my experiences. Let's say, Project, that perhaps all the spirituality and all the things that you see I could not see them, I was much less refined in some things, I don't even know if I ever loved a guy in the sense that you say.

My first guy, when I was aged 40, or I was about to turn 40, he was just 30, I felt I had finally reached the world of dreams. I had been with him for 5 years, he had always told me that he was straight, we talked a lot but he was sexually completely blocked. I was insisting because I wanted to make him relax and also because he was a damn sexy guy. In the end I became more audacious and he gave in, said that with me it was just sex and that he didn't love me, he always repeated it, but when I put him in a position from which he could not escape, he left the girl to stay with me. Sexual happiness with him lasted yes and no for a month and maybe it would have gone on, our problem was not that, but the fact that he kept repeating to me obsessively that he was straight and that he didn't love me but with me he only had sex.

At the beginning I thought things would change because I saw him sexually involved, but then the misunderstandings started for very stupid reasons and when we met, instead of having sex, there were endless discussions about the fact that I didn't understand him and that I expected from him an involvement that there would never be.

At one point he told me he wanted to try with a girl, I don't know if he did, but, from what I discovered later, he went to put himself in the worst gay environments. When we met he only repeated that it was all my fault. I had loved him but he never wanted to understand it and I think he left because I was too old for him.

Then I had two stories with men more or less my age but they lasted very little. The first was afraid of everything and in terms of sex, and I couldn't stand this attitude. The second would not have been bad from that point of view but I say "it would not have been" only in the abstract because physically I didn't like him, it was I the one he liked.

It's been a few years now that I'm alone and I don't mind at all. The experiences I have done helped me only to understand that once an experience is over I've lost nothing at all. I had infatuations, but never falling in love according to your style, I never had the idea of living for a guy. You can tell me that I used them, this is perhaps true, but that's what everyone does, because those who say the opposite also do so. And then where is the concept of a couple? These guys, or better these men, because they were adult men, they were not boys, yet they dumped on me on a lot of complexes that you cannot even imagine, they felt as pathological cases, somehow they denied all what they were and a lot of times behaved in a childish way, men more

than forty years old who thought they were 20 and felt at the center of the world, men who hadn't grown up.

There can be also others, it's possible, but where? The three that I knew were the best I found, you can imagine the rest. Maybe living in a state of continuous repression complicates life to such an extent that you end up like that, but surely you finally ask yourself if it's worth it, I don't say to try to live in a couple but just to have a serious story, maybe short. The comrades I had were good people, but after many years I feel very happy that those relationships are over and not because I had to replace them with who knows what but because in the long run those relationship didn't make sense anymore. I also put myself among the pathological cases in several ways. Well, if you put two pathological cases together, they don't become normal people just because they're together.

Project, one thing I must tell you. Reading the forum and the other sites, I have the impression that you paint the gay world with colors a bit false, I mean too positive, the values there will be, ok, but frankly there are so many complexes and so much stupidity that one ask himself how can one think of a couple life. Now with these things I have closed, but if I was 40 years younger with the experience I have today, in life I would think of doing something else and not of looking for a partner. Now I'm alone but honestly I think if I had a partner it would be worse.

I would like to tell the guys that the first thing is to learn how to feel good on your own and not to depend on anyone. Don't dream of finding the guy who lives for you, who makes your life easy and happy, these things don't exist, a gay guy who stays alone lives much better than one who lives in couple and who must also take care of solving problems of the other, to listen to his complaints, to accept his complexes. One doesn't have to believe that life as a couple is a paradise, because it is not at all.

Now gays want marriage, when they will have obtained it, they will want a divorce because it is a couple's life that doesn't make sense in itself. Hetero people have children. Without children, heterosexual couples would not resist much. Gays have no children and for them the concept of a couple is just a more or less absurd attempt to resist their depressions and their individual incapacities. Think about it before you dream of things that are too sublime. Keeping your feet well on the ground prevents ruinous falls. Project, I realize that perhaps it would be better to put this email in the part relating to couples, in fact it is the right place, but it's your choice.

Henry48



# Chapter 19

## GAY INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

### 19.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

This chapter is dedicated to gay intergenerational relationships. By this term I refer not to the relationship between gays of different ages within the limits of 10/15 years, but just to the relationship between gays who could be father and son, that is with age differences of the order of 25/30 years and over. The issue is very serious and not marginal and is often addressed on the basis of prejudice.

If a father finds out that his twenty years old son is gay and has a companion more or less the same age, even today, he needs to make a great effort to accept the situation, but if a father finds out that his twenty years old son is gay and has a "boyfriend" fifty five years old the reaction is very different and the interpretation of the relationship between a guy twenty years old and a man fifty five years old is conducted entirely on parameters arising from prejudice, this is excusable because the father lacks the experience and all the categories necessary for evaluating such a situation "from within" but anyway an intergenerational relationship misinterpreted can create and actually creates many problems.

The interpretation usually follows this pattern:

"My son is a weak boy, it is true, he is gay, but he might find at least a guy his age, but this man deceived him and took advantage of him and my son is now no longer able to get out of this situation. I don't know how can a grown man take advantage of

a boy who could be his son, such things are pathological. That man ruined my son.”

All the reading of the facts is centered on the idea that the older man “takes advantage” of the younger for sexual purposes and that the younger cannot resist and ends up “to collapse”.

This interpretive scheme is widespread, even among gays, who tend to read intergenerational relationships in this way because (as the parent in the quoted example) they completely lack realistic categories to correctly interpret the situation.

But let’s go to what emerges from interviews with gay guys. It is obviously easier to meet in chat the youngest members of the intergenerational couples, but when I’m contacted by guys who live intergenerational relationships I’m never asked for help and I never hear expressions of discomfort. It never happened. I find on the contrary a desire of the guy to be accepted and to be understood without prejudices for what he is. In practice, in almost all cases, the guys realize that they could very easily get out of the intergenerational relationship, that perhaps such a relationship creates more problems to their older partners than to them and that their being “a couple” is a deep disvalue in the eyes of society and also of the gays themselves.

These guys don’t feel at all haunted by their partners who often tend rather to let them go because of fear of heavily affecting their lives. In these relationships, if you look at them closely, there is no plagiarism, there is no taking advantage of the possible weakness on the part of the younger guys, who anyway know very well that entering into relationships of this type they are going sharply against the most widespread way of seeing sexuality.

These guys do not “collapse” but are rather looking for a relationship with older people, a relationship that is consciously wanted and above all has for them a profound significance not only generally affective but explicitly sexual.

A gay guy, in general, takes for granted that a guy can be gay, and doesn’t understand why this thing seems unnatural to a hetero guy and is inclined to think that straight people are dominated by prejudices which can be summarized in a simple reasoning: “I have my own sexuality which is the right one, who has a sexuality different from mine is a degenerate”, but the same gay guy unconsciously uses the same reasoning to evaluate gay intergenerational relationships.

I often hear comments like this: “But it happens because he doesn’t know guys his age, if he knew gay guys his age he would come out easily of this situation.” In this view of things intergenerational relationships are a symptom of a disorder of sexuality (homosexuality, in particular) and the attendance

of young guys is the medicine. But these arguments don't take into account the fact that these guys have deliberately chosen the more difficult path and they did not it because they didn't know guys their age but because their sexual orientation was really another.

I try to explain. These guys have lived like all other gay guys many moments of social nudity (changing rooms, showers, gyms, swimming pools), but their reactions, in those situations, were not those of other gay guys in analogous situations. A gay guy if not well accustomed to such situations actually experiences sexual arousal in moments of social nudity, but to guys interested in mature men nothing similar happens because for them the peers don't constitute a sexual interest.

These guys usually are not labeled at all as gay because, in a completely spontaneous way and without any forcing, they do not objectively show any behavior that others can somehow reconnect to homosexuality, apart from not being interested in girls, but also from a subjective point of view, their behavior towards their peers is very similar to that of a straight guy, but they feel sexual arousal in situations where usually a gay guy is totally indifferent. A classic example: a gay guy in a school environment, finds in his mates a cause to get excited and make sexual fantasies, but there are gay guys who make their sexual fantasies about their teachers and not about the younger ones.

A category of pornography, the pornography so-called "mature", is not addressed to mature men who want to get aroused using images of other mature men but mostly to young guys who are interested in mature men. I emphasize that it is a true primary sexual interest, that is not an attempt to resolve a difficult sexuality with the peers. The guys interested in mature men have developed this interest from the beginning and have not noticed any change in their sexuality over time. Debate about the reason of this sexual orientation is essentially like asking why there are gays and this is the battleground of a thousand possible theories all apparently rational.

From what I can see, guys interested in older men are very often guys who don't have friends, who live in a very intolerant family environment and have therefore a strong emotional hunger. I have often heard comment intergenerational relationships in a way that "seems" realistic in the abstract, that is, as a kind of sacrifice of one's sexuality to deep emotional needs.

Basically a very lonely guy, finds an adult partner who gratifies him at the emotional level and would sacrifice his sexuality to the affective need, in practice "accepting" a relationship with someone much older, up to the sharing of sexuality.

This reasoning, however, is radically contradicted by the evidence of the facts: these guys are really sexually satisfied in relationships with mature men and

have no desire to change anything, rather they want to build with their partners long-term relationships and generally it is here that they encounter the first major problems both socially and at the level of very hesitant psychological reactions by their partners, reactions of which they can't even find any reason. The guys involved in gay intergenerational relationships often feel misunderstood and are really considered in terms of perversion and often, though aware of their sexuality, they live with great suffering their relationships

When a gay guy sexually interested in mature men makes his declaration of love to a mature gay, he knows to be exposed to dangers and bad experiences, but the sense of loneliness and alienation that he experiences is such that makes him able to overcome the hesitations. They have probably to face a negative response, that in these cases is almost the rule, because a mature gay man, even though he may be sexually interested in a young man has a thousand impediments that keep him back, not least the sense of fatherhood that almost automatically takes over and that is experienced in conflict with sexual involvement.

In any case, it only makes sense to tell the truth by putting aside any preconceptions and keep in mind that say no in such a situation means deeply hurt a guy and send him back in his substantial emotional loneliness.

Let's now analyze the point of view of mature man who says "no". Usually, a mature man who says "no" tries, at least in front of himself, to give moral value to his saying "no", justifying his refusal in various ways for example like this: "I say "no" because I'm not a pervert like that guy" or "I say "no" because even though I'd like to be with him I don't want to ruin his life." In fact, saying "no" is dictated by much more trivial motives. In essence, the older man says "no" because he's afraid that the young guy would sooner or later find his own way or because, even more brutally, such relationships are not socially accepted. In general, those who say "no" avoid getting involved at any level, in other words they escape trying to cut ties and "save themselves" because in reality they consider the situation essentially pathological or too much risky and therefore unmanageable with the normal rules of prudence.

For a senior or a mature man, feeling involved at the affective level in an intergenerational relationship can be an opportunity for an experience similar to that of fatherhood and can have, even putting aside all sexuality, important aspects of gratification. And it's possible to love each other deeply even without mutual sexual involvement or setting deliberately limits, if the sincerity and mutual acceptance is total.

To love means first of all to understand and accept.

But for a mature man, in general, it is objectively difficult to manage a rela-



tionship with a young guy that also implies a true couple sexuality, scruples can be very strong brakes and the strongest brake is not even the different way of considering sexuality but the predictable evolution of the relationship over time, because the younger man goes towards the mature age but the older one inevitably goes towards the decadence of old age and towards death.

Talking with young people who live intergenerational relationships, I have often seen in them the fear of the future and the appearance of the idea of a widowhood that they will be called to face in the very central part of their lives. Despite all this, I have often seen profound intergenerational relationships in which mutual acceptance was truly unreserved and which were true and profound stories of love.

What we have just said about intergenerational relationships can leave the impression that, beyond the common prejudices on the subject, such relationships are always and in any case true stories of love destined to last and indefinitely preserve their positive value but it is not always the case. Precisely because both the young guys and the mature men involved in intergenerational relationships are immersed in environments that are certainly not favorable to this type of relationship, both the ones and the others are subject to very violent tensions that can radically condition spontaneity and can undermine the relationship.

A young guy will inevitably be pushed to create relationships with other young guys and when this happens he can be induced to revisit the meaning of the intergenerational relationship interpreting it according to the most common criteria as a form of instrumentalization of the young guy, for sexual purposes, perpetrated by the mature man, on the other hand, the elder man may feel upset by this attitude of the younger, or even more simply, by the fact that the younger can also seek other emotional and sexual contacts, and so the older man may be induced to abandon the relationship strengthening in the young guy the feeling of having been used.

But the elder could also, quite regardless of the behavior of the younger, get caught up in the fear of negative social judgment on that type of relationship and could, precisely for this reason, behave in an undecided and hesitant way, putting in deep crisis the younger who would like from his partner much more courage and much more ability to react.

Precisely on the basis of these mechanisms that provoke mutual disappointments, an intergenerational relationship can weaken up to going into crisis and when this happens the consequences can be heavy on both sides with the sharp fall of self-esteem on the part of the younger and with the emersion of heavy feelings of guilt on the part of the elder. It is precisely for this reason that intergenerational relationships must be considered with the utmost

prudence.

Social prejudice is not only an external issue but ends up being internalized and becoming an obstacle very difficult and sometimes impossible to overcome. But I would like to insist on one point, namely the risk of confusing a momentary reaction, sometimes exasperated by the circumstances, with the substance of a feeling that is often not destroyed not even by moments of crisis.

What one says is not always the exact representation of what one carries within and words can go far beyond what one actually feels. I mean that in an important affective relationship, and therefore also in an intergenerational relationship, and I would say *a fortiori* in an intergenerational relationship, there can be misunderstandings, moments of discouragement and disappointment, in a word there may be phases of crisis in the relationship, but the underlying sense of an emotional relationship is not necessarily destroyed by moments of crisis. Even when at first sight we arrive at the irreparable and at the moment when we say "goodbye", we must keep in mind that in every "goodbye" there is always at least in power the seed of return.

Affective relationships are not governed by words but by feelings and feelings don't change quickly. If there has been a true emotional relationship between two people for years it is not easy to believe that this relationship can easily change its meaning or can be trivially forgotten.

This means that even behind a "goodbye" there can be a feeling of love that continues, which needs to find its place, which needs space to grow but which is not necessarily finished.

In an intergenerational relationship it happens quite often that moments of crisis come when the relationship between the two partners risks becoming a form of mutual dependence, that is, risks becoming a hug so tight that can suffocate. In these situations it is physiological that both partners feel the need for greater autonomy, which doesn't mean the loss of intergenerational relationship but simply the need to feel it as a form of love without obligations and dependencies.

I conclude with a quote from James Baldwin: "There's nothing here to decide, there's everything to accept."

## 19.2 DOCUMENTS

### 19.2.1 A gay couple with 40 years of age difference

Hello Project, I read some of the emails that you publish and also your answers and I think you can be the right person to whom tell my story,

also because I think we are more or less the same age and therefore you can understand things better. I don't think that my story is such a special story, but it has aspects that I don't understand and I would like to talk about it with you, if you like, also through the chat.

At almost 65 years I was about to put an end to my emotional life. I have lived my life, I had felt in love, sometimes even deeply, between 40 and 50 years old, I had also lived for a few years with a man, but I had never found a match as I would have liked. In practice, in all the stories the impression that things couldn't last long for the most varied reasons prevailed, but in any case they could not really last long: different mentality, different desires, different personal stories, etc. etc.. So I had come to the serene conclusion that I would have finished my years together with my brother and his family, because they are good people, younger than me of several years and in the end I would have been fine with them, at least within the limits of possible. Then suddenly a big meteorite fell on my head. Last year I met a guy 24 years old and, even if it may seem absurd, this guy has fallen in love with me, and I just cannot understand why, given that a nice guy like him, if only he wanted to, could very easily find a partner. But no, he fell in love with me because he's not interested in young guys. I don't know if I'm in love with him, but when I'm close to him I'm fine, I'm fine as I've never been in any situation before, I love him, I cannot deny it, but there's an abyss between us: 40 years! What can I offer this guy? I'm an old man and I'm not even healthy, I wouldn't in any way force him, not even for love, to be a caregiver, I may not be a burden to him for one or two years, but then old age is an inexorable biological condition that doesn't depend on the will but on the physical decay that arrives anyway with the years. I've never had sexual intercourse nor generic contacts that could have some sexual meaning with this guy.

Project, at our age sexuality is above all a myth and a memory, I could also be with him but I think that in the end doubts would be so many and so strong as to be insuperable, anyway from his point of view it seems that problems don't exist at all, I have the clear impression that he wants to bring our relationship even on a sexual level.

And then, after some time, when I'm gone, what will remain to this guy as a memory of our relationship? I'm afraid he can judge it negatively if by chance it should really come to sex. What should I do? Frankly, I don't know. He is not a boy, he is an adult man and he is very determined, he has a dignity that I have admired from the first moment, but I'm an old man and he doesn't seem to realize that.

He told me that, in adolescence, he has fallen in love with adult men only, let's say 50 years old and over. He never had sexual intercourse with anyone,

those with his peers didn't interest him, he would have found easily those with men over 50, but certainly not in a relationship as he would have liked, that is, a relationship that also had an emotional involvement. With me he knows that this involvement really exist because I think of him at least a thousand times a day and our relationship is particularly intense, because we love each other and he tells me that it's the best thing he has ever lived and I think it's true, but I have a terrible fear of making mistakes because you can make a mistake saying yes, but you can also make a mistake saying no, because he would feel abandoned, betrayed, and I wouldn't want this to happen for any reason.

I feel very insecure, Project, it is not a falling in love as in the days of youth, I only know that I don't want him to suffer, but it seems almost inevitable whatever I do. Instinctively I would embrace him, I don't even know if I would get to sex because ... who knows why, I thought that all these brakes that I feel could have a motivation of much lower league, that is, in practice that of not giving scandal to anyone (because 40 years of difference are objectively an abyss) and to continue to live quietly and it may be that these things weigh a lot in keeping him at a distance.

Sunday morning we were together at the sea. He was beautiful, smiling, he was happy to be with me. I love him but I don't know whether it is really the love of a sweetheart or rather that of a father, because he is my ideal son, the one I always wanted and never had. This is now the center of my thoughts, I try to understand what is best for him and therefore also for me, but I cannot find convincing answers. I would appreciate your opinion.

### **19.2.2    A gay different from other gays**

Hello Project, I apologize for Saturday night (the other Saturday, if you remember) but I had to close suddenly, even though we had just started to talk, because people came. You probably thought I was rude, I'm sorry, but I just couldn't do otherwise. The things that I couldn't tell you in the chat I tell you here so that when we will be able to get in touch you will already know what it is about. Unfortunately I'm not very young, I'm 25 years old, almost 26 and I feel them all, and anyway I don't feel young, I feel now almost lost.

Reading the forum I found your posts on intergenerational relationships and I read them with great interest. You talk about these things with respect and it strikes me a lot. Before I thought you were a thirty-year-old or so, then, reading I understood that you are much older and then it is just to you that I address and I hope you can understand me because generally I found only contempt and ridicule, also and perhaps especially on the side of gays.

At my age, not only I have never had sexual intercourse with anyone but I feel inside a solitude and an infinite despair. For me it doesn't even make sense to say that I'm gay because with gays I feel I don't have much in common and gays, except maybe someone, despise those like me. I cannot tell you why, but since I remember I have always been attracted by men much older than me. I have tried many times to understand the reason, but as far as I dig in my past, I find absolutely nothing that can explain such a thing. I have never been harassed by anyone, rather they have always kept me on the sidelines and I think that my parents love me even if they don't know anything about me.

If the coming out for a gay guy is already difficult, think what must be for me the idea of talking to my parents about my sexuality. In short, I don't know why I cannot stay with the guys my age. I'm not even gay with them, not because I'm attracted by women, but because I'm not interested in guys my age, that is, I attend some peers but they are very superficial things. These guys would never take me for gay and I would have nothing to say to them. With them I don't feel at all inhibited and I don't have to repress anything, they are for me simply and only friends, but in a rather superficial sense, because with them I cannot talk about myself and in the end I don't feel absolutely any sexual interest in them. Perhaps it could be because we have been friends for a long time, but in my opinion the reason is that I'm interested only in mature men, in an exclusive way. And this is the thing that worries me the most.

When I was 18 and already I had it very clear in mind this story of mature men, I tried to create opportunities to have some intimacy with my friends, we went on vacation together for a week and in practice I saw them naked all four of them but my reaction was of total indifference. I don't hide that I got scared of this and not a little. My friends were not gay and I thought the problem was that, and obviously my lack of involvement had nothing to do with it.

At the age of 20 I experienced an adventure that marked me very much. I met by chance a nice guy at a party, I say nice because he really was but this fact was totally indifferent for me. We talked a bit, he was serious, almost shy, he was my age, talking with him was pleasant and we talked, we talked a lot in the following days even on msn even though I couldn't say anything about me, the guy after a few weeks confessed to me that he was gay and was in love with me, I also have the misfortune of being a cute guy, even if saying something like that is paradoxical, I live it like that.

He was anxious and you understand very well why, after he told me he was gay I told him that nothing would change for me but he asked me in turn explicitly if I was gay too, my answer was very important to him and I un-

derstood him very well. I reluctantly told him: yes. His eyes were bright, he took my hands and held them and I let him do, then he tried to kiss me but I pushed him away. He told me that I should not be afraid of anything because for him it was the first time and he said it with an encouraging smile. I told him: "Look, I like mature men", but he seemed not to give weight to the thing. Then I said to him: "Look, I've never experienced sexual attraction for a boy, I've never made erotic fantasies about a boy, I'm gay but in another way, I feel 100% straight towards you".

He was incredulous, it seemed inconceivable for him, because we were two gay guys who had nothing in common, our ways of experiencing sexuality were very different. He asked me some questions and from there I realized he had not understood anything. He asked me if I had been raped as a child or if any uncle of mine had ever done sexual games with me, I told him no, but he was perplexed, then advised me to see a good psychiatrist, not a psychologist, exactly a psychiatrist and told me that according to him, these are transitional phases due to the fact that I've never had a boyfriend before. In the following days he returned to the attack in various ways, he tried to be more seductive, to let me speak, to recognize all the possible and imaginable mitigating circumstances but it was clear that for him there was something deeply pathological, in the end he disappeared completely and I breathed a sigh of relief.

But I go back to the main question. I had the first clear sign of my sexual preferences at the age of 14, in ninth grade. There was an old teacher who always encouraged me and I fell in love with him who was maybe 50 years older than me but he seemed still a handsome man, not properly an old man, he gave me so much confidence. I think he never noticed anything and if he had noticed something I would have buried myself in shame. With the story of the teacher, at 14, I passed terrible moments, I realized I was different from my classmates in every sense, I was alone and I knew very well that I would be alone and that I never would have had a person who loved me

At the age of 16 I was already a handsome guy, and when my female classmates began to come forward and I kept them at a distance, someone made the joke: "But, by chance, aren't you gay?" And I replied: "I wish I liked guys!" but the joke was always taken as an underlining of heterosexuality, but basically I thought that if I had been gay in a classical way, that is if I had liked my peers, I would have had a much easier life and at least some chance to live as I wanted.

Many times between 21/22 years old I have experienced moments of deep anguish. After all, I wanted to be loved by a mature man, even sexually, but I don't even think that it was my first priority. I wanted first of all to be able to talk to an adult man without being taken for a madman, if he then

had treated me with a little sweetness I would have felt in heaven but I knew that all this would not happen.

Sometimes I visited gay sites with adult men but they were all sex-oriented, like a porn site, but I don't like such things. I say it with all sincerity, I'm used to do without sex from the beginning or to live it only on the level of fantasies and masturbation and maybe if it happened to me in reality to get involved with a man, I would feel a deep embarrassment.

But I dream of a real love, I dream of it even if without any hope, but deep down I know that I will never find it, and I will never find neither affection nor respect, I feel like the last of the last, with a feeling of marginalization that I fear I cannot bear any longer but I think I will have to endure all my life. The reaction to all this was the fact that I threw myself headlong into my studies, I set myself goals and I achieved them. Let's say that as long as I was involved with the university and with the problem of finding work, I was completely absorbed by these things that were for me a sort of antidote to my despair. Now I finished my studies and I found a decent job and everything I had repressed and sublimated returns to the surface.

At work I have practically no contact with my colleagues and I feel them a thousand miles away from me. They talk about girls, the older ones about family and children. I don't know if there are gays and frankly I don't care to know it, because I don't want to repeat what I already experienced with that gay guy. What will my life be? I think now I have understood it, I will always be totally alone. This e-mail has remained in the drafts for days and as you have noticed I have not called you anymore. I had already had a thousand hesitations before and I arrived at the Saturday call forcing myself in an incredible way, then it was over in two minutes and I didn't have the courage to call another time and I thought to send you an email.

But basically what do I write for? To talk to you about things that maybe you cannot really understand. What do I expect? Anything! I tell you right away, don't be scared, or maybe I'd just like a little respect. If you want to put this e-mail in the forum put it. I don't expect anything even from the guys because I didn't like some of the answers they gave when you talked about these things, those answers are the typical answers of those who think they have understood everything and look at you from top to bottom, but I'm used to it. Hi Project. I feel moments of deep despair, if you can, dedicate to me two lines, I don't ask for more.

### 19.2.3 Gay guys and intergenerational sexual fantasies

Hi Project, I wanted to thank you for everything you do, now I feel really better. I made you spend the night chatting but I understood many things.

You're right, being gay is not just about sex and looking for a guy doesn't have to become a fixed idea, many other things are needed to build and live a balanced life.

I had never talked about intimate things as we talked yesterday but it was all very easy. For a guy it can be embarrassing because it is customary to think of a certain types of content only in terms of pornography, in short, as something that shouldn't be done, and that if you do it, you must be ashamed of and you don't have to talk about it with anyone, you are afraid of being judged badly, to be considered one who doesn't want to grow up. And then I could not talk about these things with anyone. My mother . . . I never heard her talk about sex under any circumstances and my father all the same.

Talking with a priest, maybe in confession, but they don't even listen to you. With a doctor who is also family friend obviously it is unthinkable. With friends it ends up in ironic smiles and stupid jokes. At 21 I never had, and I say never, the opportunity to talk about these things seriously.

I've always had a lot of complexes with a word that was a bit my torture from sixteen years old onwards, the word is "normal". Is it normal what I'm doing? If I react like this is it normal? Etc. etc.. Then the idea of having a guy even if I'm not in love with anyone, having a boyfriend just to have sex with him, because this is normal while masturbate is not normal, it's a young boys thing, . . . stuff of this kind. And I think if I hadn't arrived on your blog I would have ended up looking for a guy anyway just to try to be normal or at least normal according to a gay normality criterion.

I never asked myself whether being gay was or wasn't normal, let's say that for me it was not, but it was my way of being and I ended up accepting it, also because the idea of going with a girl for me doesn't really exist, I couldn't do it at any level. I never thought of a girl in terms of sex and not even as a friend, perhaps, superficially, it could be okay, but as a true friendship, that you can tell her everything, with a girl for me it's impossible, because a girl understands certain things her way, maybe even a straight guy understands the same things from outside but it's anyway more acceptable.

I've always seen the fact of being gay as a sexual only matter, or rather, I tried to devalue to the maximum the feelings towards other guys or, better, towards male people no longer boys, because my obsession of not being normal, you made me understand it last night, it's really related to the fact that I fall in love with adult men and I never considered normal such inclination. You don't know how many times I told myself that I would have been alone all lifelong because the men I like would never be interested in me. First of all, they're all heterosexual, they're married, and then they would consider me a guy who must grow up.



I tried in every way to get interested in my peers but they seem superficial to me, even gays, for what I know, because I don't know them in person. I fall in love with adult men, even sexually, and this is not normal, I think that maybe if an adult man falls in love with a young guy at the end it can be normal but the opposite just I can't see it as a normal thing and instead that's exactly what happens to me.

With my peers I can't create a real relationship and I don't even try. Last night for the first time, talking with you about the fact that I fall in love with men much older than me, it seemed to me that it was not abnormal, at least in a sense, that it was something of which I shouldn't be ashamed, in the end that my sexuality has a dignity, a value even if it's strange, at the base there are real feelings and not perversions. You don't know how much it puts me in difficulty the fact that I consider myself a non-normal guy, that is, not even normal as gay.

I think a normal gay guy if he falls in love with another guy and makes his fantasies and masturbates thinking of that guy doesn't feel guilty about it, but when I make sexual fantasies about adult men (in practice all my fantasies are about adult men) and I let myself go to masturbate thinking about these things I feel disgusted, it is as if it were the confirmation of the fact that I'm not normal and that I will never share my life with another person. These things dig you deeply. Above all I feel that while other gay guys can look for a guy, they can somehow think about their wishes and put them into practice, I cannot think about it, there will never be anything for me.

An adult man would just go with me searching for sex or he wouldn't take me seriously, while I need a serious affection, that is, I need not someone who pity me or who considers me a sexual toy but someone who takes me seriously and I would be willing to do anything for a man like that. Talking about these contents is not easy and in practice I'm used to keep them closed inside me. Last night, talking with you, I felt respected, treated as I didn't think it was possible. Yesterday, in fact, we started talking about things related to sexuality but then we ended up talking about something else, about my family, about the relationships I have with my parents and about how I would like them to be and I really broke the ice, we have been talking almost until dawn, time has passed and I haven't noticed it. I need to talk, to throw out whatever I have kept inside for years.

You say that often from situations like mine one can come out and that over time also sometimes comes a sexual interest towards peers, or at least that so could happen, but on this I have my doubts and I think you told me it a little as a consolation, but I'm glad you told me it because you know these things and you might even be right. Sometimes I think that I'm coming out

of my mind and that my sexuality is turning into a real neurosis, but for me sexuality is that.

Last night I felt at ease, thinking and seeing concretely that talking about myself in a very direct way is possible and that it is also possible to be heard and understood and this transmits so much serenity.

And you told me then so many things that I felt that I wasn't alone on earth, I didn't feel as the only "abnormal". It is wonderful to think that my life can really be lived! I don't know if it will really be like that, but I feel less trapped, it's as if the future could bring me positive things too. Thanks, Project, for setting up the project, you don't know how such a thing is important. I hope to hear from you when I'll have a little more peace of mind, now I'm also very busy for the exams that are coming but also this period of overwork will pass. See you soon.

p. s. If you want to publish this email, do it, I don't know what effect it will do to those who read it but what I wrote to you is all true.

#### 19.2.4 Different among those who are different

Project, tonight I'm writing this email not to ask you for advice but just to tell you the story of a guy who called himself different even among those who are different ... I landed on Gay Project long time ago. I contacted you asking a lot of things about intergenerational relationships, asking you many explanations on the psychological factors that push a guy to feel attraction towards a man much older than him. You helped me overcome the wall of cliches, for which a boy who is attracted towards a man with a great age difference is a guy who looks for a kind of surrogate dad, who suffers from emotional lacks, who has / had an absent father.

Definitely I have to thank you for the time you have spent chatting with me! After the initial relief of being freed from guilt that arises from having as object of my sexual fantasies and my falling in love some of my teachers close to retirement, I soon began to feel different again.

In chat, I have often dealt with issues about sexuality and namely about couple sexuality, exposing the problem of how to meet a person and how to notice the homosexuality of another person. Obviously, the participants "always" were divided into two "factions", those who supported the use of chat that facilitate the knowledge of other gays, advised to attend places notoriously gay, or proposed to rely on an imaginary gay-radar innate within us, and those who instead, like me, in a clear minority, claimed that if something someday must occur ... it will happen with the utmost naturalness, in the elevator, at the bus stop, in the subway, wherever it will be! They told me that the knowledge should not be aimed at sex as it happens in the

chats but that maybe could start from common interests, also in virtue of the fact that if there is really a personal gay-radar, many gay-radars are to be checked and calibrated much better, and in particular mine!

Many people told me that if everyone had my same behavior, the world would be full of singles because nobody would have the courage to take the initiative! Actually taking the initiative is not easy, especially if we take into account the distrust that people have towards each other. Maybe it's easier among guys ... Common topics are found: sports, music, movies! But if you want to "start chatting" with a significantly older man ... Well ... everything becomes much more difficult ... But I don't give up!

I tried to create some cultural interest that could bring me in contact with some "mature" person if I can say so. But it was not for me ... I didn't feel like it! I didn't want a mate, but nevertheless I wanted something similar, but despite my desire, I didn't want to do anything to find one. I didn't want to move in traditional gay channels, much less in non-traditional "casual" ones!

The fact is that one day I met a man, a nice distinguished gentleman, nice smiling, a professor!! At the subway exit!! I never thought it would be the right opportunity ... We chatted a bit. He told me about the subject he was teaching, and about what he was currently studying and invited me to follow some of his lessons. Now it's almost a year that we're mates! It has happened ... I, with all my fears and my hesitations, now I have a partner!! Certainly the difficulties are many ... Above all in a relationship with the great difference in age.

The older person has a very strong fear of influencing the choices of the youngest and of inducing him to a sort of sacrifice. But, Project, I guarantee you that after some inevitable bickering at the beginning, once the right balance has been reached, things can work and work just fine!! Now I'm happy, we talked about many things, and so many fears have passed !! I'm no longer the different one among those who feel different!

In fact when we walk downtown and I meet friends, I introduce him to my friends without any shame and without any justification! After all I'm free to go out with whomever I want ... he does exactly the same if he meets some acquaintance / colleague ... The thing that struck me most was the unfolding of events and that neither of us told the other "I'm gay!" or similar statements, how things have followed their path without any forcing ...

Project, if you want to post this email in your forum, maybe it could even serve as an encouragement for those like me who spent hours in the section "gay and intergenerational relationships". Maybe, reading, they could understand that gay sites and chats are not the only way to meet other people, even if that is certainly the easiest way!! And maybe those who believe that

a young gay is looking for an older man just to become a maintained or that an old man is looking for a young boy to find help in old age, has a reason to change his mind!

I hug you strongly, Project, and if you decide to publish the email, please don't mention my nick!

Thank you again!

### 19.2.5 Appearance and reality of a gay life

Hello Project,

I don't even know why I'm writing to you, in fact I don't have big problems, however, come on, perhaps I'm writing just to chat a little.

I'm 29 years old, I don't have a boyfriend and in practice I never had one, but I don't mind: I think I have experienced all the typical gay problems, which before seemed to me to be only mine or almost only, but then, reading the forum, I understood that they are much more common than I thought them to be at the beginning. In practice I considered myself heterosexual up to 25 years, although for me girls were basically just friends, I didn't understand or tried not to understand why, but I didn't give weight to the fact that they didn't attract me sexually, with girls I was fine anyway and I felt heterosexual, in some posts of the forum on the discovery of sexual orientation I found myself quite well represented, that is, the phases were more or less those but I didn't have any anguish, it was something almost normal, because basically, one way or another, I knew it, so I would say I was lucky.

Now it is more than 4 years that I have clear ideas, even if in the end I had already such ideas more or less well defined, even before. I didn't say anything to my parents. I live with them and I'm an only child and honestly I have no reason to tell it people who at best would tolerate me.

And then, the coming out I could even conceive of it but if I had a true story, then, at least it could be worth it, if such a story was real, I'd see what to do. For the moment I'm alone, in fact I've been single for 4 years, and I don't even feel the need to have a guy close, who would also be a very big complication. I have many friends. Saturday night I go out with them, we go to have a pizza, we're fine, they all are straight, I'm the only one who is not in couple and then the guys of the group (which are three), I'm not attracted towards them at all under the physical point of view, so they are "only" friends and to me such a thing is fine because It doesn't create complications of any kind. I don't have gay friends and I don't want to have such friends. I met a gay guy for work reasons, but I didn't like him at all because he had something excessive. I know that not all the gay guys are like him but

I don't want to be embarrassed. At this point you will ask yourself why I'm writing to you. Well, let's say that I just want to know what you think about it, but I'm fine this way, I've reached a right balance. If you like, answer me. I don't give you my contact because I feel a little embarrassed. I'm waiting to read what you'll tell me. I have to put you to the test a bit. I think I'll give you my contact the next round, but I have first to understand what you think.

A hug.

Peter

Hello Peter,

I have finished reading your email right now. The idea of feeling under scrutiny should condition me a little but in the end I can only say what I think and I have to do it absolutely explicitly. You're 29, not 19, you're gay and you know that, but what are you running from? I cannot enter your head but if I try to remember how I was at 29 and the things that went through my head I must say that they had nothing to do with the idea of accepting solitude in a calm way and not to meddle in complicated situations. At 29, for me, the idea of having an emotional and even sexually strong relationship with a guy was absolutely fundamental. External situations constituted very serious impediments, but the underlying push was extremely clear.

The things you write seem to me to be an attempt to convince yourself that the renunciation of your emotional and sexual life in the name of tranquility and quiet living is an intelligent thing. I cannot afford to judge the underlying motivations that push you towards a reasoning like that because I don't know them, but the reasoning abstract as it is doesn't work at all. It is a pure reasoning or better a pure fantasizing that completely ignores what I sincerely believe you bring inside yourself and you are trying to repress using a very deceptive logic.

I would never push you to come out for no reason and without pondering attentively the pros and cons, but this is a secondary problem. What matters is to recognize your feelings and not repress them. Gay friends? But have you read the forum? Did you understand who are the guys behind the forum? I too don't like gay guys who play a role. But what do you know about gay guys? I think you have very rough ideas, as if you had kept a certain homophobia in spite of your being gay, what is paradoxical. And then, I'm sorry, but there's a little too much insistence that you're okay and you don't need anything or anyone. Frankly, I think it's exactly the opposite because repressing one's own feelings costs so much effort! Excuse me if I tell you it in too direct terms but I think you have to wake up if you want to avoid discovering a few years from now that you have spent the best of your life

in waiting and postponing or, even worst, in a heroically absurd behavior. Don't deny yourself! Try to live because it's worth it and never forget that the true gay world is a serious matter. Don't get out of the chorus to hide yourself into an ivory tower that risks becoming a golden trap. I apologize if I have marked the tones too much. I would very much like to have a chat with you, my contact msn is [omissis], I send it to you, without expecting you to send it to me!

Project

Dear Project,

ok, ok, you passed the examination, you have understood everything but nevertheless the things I told you are those that I tell everyone and have little to do with reality, that's why I have to tell you an unofficial piece of my story.

At 25 I'm in a crazy crush for a guy 22 years old. I met him in the chat, then we met in person, don't be scandalized, but we ended up in bed that same evening. It was an overwhelming thing, I never thought that such a thing could happen to me. I was convinced that that guy (Luke) was to be my boyfriend for life. Luke lived 100 km from my house, but in a place where there was a railway station. I made the subscription and I was always with him. At first he liked it, but over time he probably began to feel tight. I wanted him to tell me that he loved me madly but he never did, we went to bed together, but when I needed a gesture of tenderness, even trivial, for example a caress, he did not understand it and sometimes he froze me. We quarreled several times, I sent him to hell many times, perhaps a little to see if he would come back to look for me, what he never did, so I was the one who went looking for him and I started making incredible pitiful scenes to win him back.

He never told me anything definitive, always half-way, like: "Now I want to be with you". But hell, why "now"? Or when he did something nice to me he always added that I didn't have to give his behave "too much meaning". When I pressed him to give me a clear answer he answered me. "Maybe", "I have to think about it" and I could not bear such things.

I said to myself: "Hell, this guy comes to bed with me, but to do what?" I loved him but also hated him because he made me suffer like a dog. We had sworn to tell us everything, that is to tell always the truth, but he didn't do it, even if to be honest I didn't do it either, because when you are living a similar relationship what have you to do? Satisfactory it is not at all and then you start looking for someone else.

Well, both of us we did so, and at the end without telling each other anything, both he and I found another guy. What kind of couple was ours? A

play, with lots of sex, but he had another guy in his head, and I could not reproach him for anything because I did the same. About the coming out, if everything had gone as I wanted at the beginning, i.e. if it had been a normal story, I would have come out with my parents, that is everything in the light of the sun (more or less). I would have introduced him to my parents etc. etc. but apart from the fact that he didn't even want to hear an idea like that because he said that he didn't like to be a "little mouse in a trap", there was also the whole story of keeping a foot in both camps, both on his part and mine. So there were a lot of problems far beyond the coming out!

A month before, one day I just had put him under pressure and he had confessed that he was in love with another guy, I had made a scene of jealousy but I didn't tell him that I too had found another guy, but I'm not slimy up to this point and then I told him everything and he replied "At least you're honest!" And he said it with sincerity. The story is over. My alternative story, the one with that other guy ended up in a soap bubble after 10 days and I found myself just like an imbecile. I was 26 years old. Then I got another brilliant idea, that of going to a gay club, I told myself: "just to take a look".

There I met a 52-year-old man, a distinguished and not even sex-loving man, a bit of sex, of course, but it was not a fixed idea for him. I confess I fell in love with him, I know it sounds strange but it is so. He treated me like a prince, but not only on a material level, he treated me with tenderness. A strange thing, a bit like an uncle, but we also went to bed together, but even there he respected me, it was not unpleasant and the fact of age I never felt it like a problem. He made strange speeches, he told me that he knew very well that he was so much older than me and that I would end up falling in love with a young guy, he said that such a thing would not have been a problem for him and that we would have been friends anyway, I didn't think such a thing would happen, but I liked it a lot the fact that he was telling me so because I felt free.

Anyway, in short, one good day, what seemed to me quite impossible eventually happened and I told him it, but he didn't react at all as he had said, indeed, quite the opposite, a bit with threatening tone, but not really aggressive: "You have to be careful!" "You don't know where you are going!" "But who is that guy?" So, to make it short I had the distinct impression that he would not give up and I came to think that he could also hurt the guy I had fallen in love with. Nothing like that happened, but I felt trapped, He gave me terrible sermons, that I would repent of it, that I was not grateful to him and things like that, things that bothered me a lot. I was really anguished but then, I don't know whether to say thankfully because it seems an absurd expression, the thing ended up by itself because he had a small heart attack

and was very bad for a while. I was sorry, because he was not bad and seeing him in that state was not indifferent for me, I went several times to visit him in hospital and our relationship has changed, indeed it has changed a lot. When he was in the hospital he told me that if I had a guy I had to stay with him and I had to try and live my life without doing like him who had thought only of a lot of other things. The story I wrote in the first email is not mine but is the story of my mature friend. After doctors released him from the hospital he invited me to lunch at his house and he gave me 20,000 euros in cash because I was about to move to another city for work (he had never given me presents before!) And he told me he wanted us to stay friends, but the friendship could only be via skype because the city where I went to work was almost a thousand kilometers away. Every so often I hear him on msn, he's a very nice person and I love him. The story with the other guy continued a bit via the internet but was over after a while because I continued to think with tenderness of my mature friend, infarcted and entangled in many problems, who, all in all, was "my Friend", with a capital F and it is still so even if at a distance.

Project, now I don't know if this story seems more absurd than the story I told you before, but this is my true story. When I say that now I'm fine with myself and I don't miss anything I want to say that I'm fine with my Friend, even at a distance. I don't know if this is a sop but I'm really fine. - omissis - A hug Project. (thanks for the contact! Unfortunately I can only be online on Friday and Saturday night, but I'll call you for sure! Publish what you want. Just remove the last passage, which is too recognizable.)

Peter

### 19.2.6 Gay love between a twenty-year-old and a forty-year-old

Chat of June 24th 2008, 3.00 pm

- MaxMi wrote: Hi Project, are you there?
- project wrote: Hi Max !!! How are you?
- MaxMi wrote: Do you have some time for me?
- project wrote: Of course, everything you want
- MaxMi wrote: Meanwhile, thank you for sending me your contact, I often read the forum and for me it was very useful
- project wrote: Thanks! You're telling me something very rewarding!
- MaxMi wrote: But that's right! Project, wait, if you agree, I go straight to the point because I need to talk to someone about what's happening to me.



In short, I fell in love, this is the problem!

- project wrote: I wish all the problems were so!

- MaxMi wrote: well, wait, there is some problem, he is 20 and I'm 41, almost 42!

- project wrote: Well, from what you say I see that you are anxious and that you see it as a problem. If you want to make me understand things a little more from the inside, you can try to tell me how it happened.

- MaxMi wrote: In fact, that's why I called you. If you want, I start.

- project wrote: Sure, go! But, please, start from the assumption that I don't know anything about it and that I don't know you at all.

- MaxMi wrote: Yes of course. Then if there are things you don't understand and you want to know, stop me and ask me whatever you want. But before you start, I have just a question to ask you, do you also talk with people my age? Because I feel a bit anxious.

- project wrote: Max, look, most of the guys who contact me are from 16 to 30 years old. In general, with guys between 22/23 and over, we face less simple problems. Let's say the 40-year-olds are quite rare, but I've known dozens of them anyway.

- MaxMi wrote: And about what did they talk to you? I mean, were there any who had fallen in love with young guys?

- project wrote: Of course there were, it happened and not so rarely

- MaxMi wrote: And how did you behave? I mean, what did you tell them?

- project wrote: Max, it's not me the one who finds answers to the problems, only the guys can find them - if they find them - the guys who contact me.

- MaxMi wrote: In a sense it is true, but one sometimes doesn't know how to behave, and it happens that a guy does terrible messes and I know that I have already made terrible messes. But I need to know what you think about it because I have made a decision and I know that I made a mess even worse.

- project wrote: However, Max, now try to make me understand because I don't even vaguely know what we're talking about.

- MaxMi wrote: Ok, I start. His name is Mark. I have a blog about motorcycles, my fixed idea since I was a boy. The blog is nice and many guys visit it, so let's say that I keep it for motorcycles and a bit also because some guys interested in motorcycles contact me and with the excuse of motorcycles I can maybe spend an afternoon close to a nice guy. But don't think badly, it's not a bait at all! It can have happened in the space of 5 years no more than 30 times. An afternoon spent chatting and that's it.

- project wrote: But do you have a partner?

- MaxMi wrote: No, and I've never had one. Wait, don't be scared, I had never made love with anyone until I was 41. There is internet and it was

enough for me, I don't know if you understand me.

- project wrote: Yes, but do you live alone?

- MaxMi wrote: yes, but I never took those guys to my house, only at the bar to have an aperitif, then at most in the car to talk, but rarely. I feel really clumsy with sex.

- project wrote: Ok, but we'll talk about this later, now go ahead with the story.

- MaxMi wrote: At the end of February, in practice it is 4 months today, I found a comment on my blog and as a avatar there was a photo of a guy. I looked at the picture and I thought that guy was really beautiful. I clicked the photo and opened his blog, there too a lot of motorcycles! He was a fan like me! The comment he had written was very competent and, let's face it, he was beautiful. I go to see his photos. I don't tell you how I felt! He was a bit the guy I had always dreamed of, not only beautiful but very sweet. I thought that if he had been gay, it would have been very interesting. Are you there Project?

- project wrote: Sure, go ahead.

- MaxMi wrote: I read the blog from top to bottom, and what a beautiful pictures: he alone and not only, in some photos he embraced some girls, but not always the same girl. You know, the clinical eye! Reading his blog I was looking for items to understand if he was gay or not. There were no gay elements but there were not even clearly straight elements. I decided to write him an email. Can I send it to you?

- project wrote: Yes, of course.

ATTACHMENT: Hi Marco, I'm Max. You have a beautiful motorcycle site and you are really an expert (I think a lot more than me). If you want to have a chat, I give you my contact [omissis]. And again congratulations for the site! Max

- MaxMi wrote: I sent the message, but in general, no one replays to such messages. But he replied and after a few minutes. I pass you the text.

- project wrote: Ok

ATTACHMENT: Hi Max, I added you, you too have a beautiful site! And I'd like to have a chat with you. If you go to my blog and look around a bit, you can find a picture of an H. D. of 1952, it is my grandfather's motorcycle. Now I keep it like an heirloom. Look at it a bit and tell me what you think! Oh! I added you, if you like I'm online!

- MaxMi wrote: In short, we got in touch immediately, after half an hour

of written chat he asked me if we could switch to a video call and we did it. It was him! He was amazing beautiful and had a beautiful voice. We have been talking about motorcycles for two hours, then he told me that he had to go and that he would call me. In the following days we got in touch several times, we did not talk more about motorcycles, but about everything. And it was fine. Damn if it was fine! I told him directly that I was 41 years old but he did not make a wrinkle. So for a fortnight we only chatted via msn. I was clumsy, full of complexes and he must have noticed it. Then one day he proposes me to go for a ride on a motorcycle out of town, and I don't wait a second to accept enthusiastically! Project, you do not know how I felt, I was falling madly in love and at the same time I didn't want it to happen. Are you still there?

- project wrote: Yes, go on, quiet!

- MaxMi wrote: On Sunday we have been around all day. The speeches we did were very prudent, but slowly, even if we didn't explicitly say anything, we understood that we were both gay. Then he was he the first one who broke the ice and I replied "me too!". We sat on the ground talking all the afternoon, I spoke to him as I had never thought I would do with anyone, he listened to me and remembered everything, even in the smallest details. Then he told me about himself and he even started crying. I would have hugged him, but I didn't. In short, we have not even touched each other. Then we came back to Milan. In the days that followed, the chat was something that belonged only to us, a very private way of talking about us. I now loved him madly. I would have been willing to do anything to stay close to him. I wanted him madly, I had not told him it, but he had told me that he had understood it very well because I had not tried anything and that if one doesn't try to have sex with you it's a sign that he really loves you. Project, I loved him, it's true, that is, I wanted him, but I also loved him as a son. I know it's strange but it's like that. You too say that you feel like a daddy for the guys of the forum. Of course I was madly in love with Mark, it is true, but I also loved him as a person and I would have been willing to put myself aside completely, I swear that it is so!

- project wrote: I believe it, I have no reason to think otherwise. Come on, don't look for justifications, you don't need any!

- MaxMi wrote: Ok, thank you! Now everything was clear between us but I thought that a 20 year old guy could not really think of me, and then a guy like him could have any guy he wanted, and instead one day he says to me: "I fell in love with you". I feel like dying inside. I know that I have to say no and that I have to do it for him even at the cost of destroying myself. I started the speech from far away and begin to give him a kind of lecture to get to the conclusion that it couldn't be done. He tells me: "Please don't

disappoint me. I want my first time to be with you!" The thing falls on my head like a boulder. I think he needs a dad, because his father didn't care about him and I begin to preach just like a priest. It stops me and tells me: "Max! It will happen! I want it to happen." I don't want to waste my first time, I want it to be with you, you know it, sooner or later it will happen". I tried to postpone, to take time, but I madly wanted him.

He played with me as he a child would do, it was a wonderful thing, I should have been happy but I suffered like a dog, I knew that I had to refuse him but I also understood that doing so meant really hurt him.

I was educated in a serious Catholic family, people who tried to do something good and who gave me some principles and I knew that if I said yes to Mark I would have conditioned him anyway and it seemed immoral to me. Are you there Project?

- project wrote: yes

- MaxMi wrote: The first of June he came to my house (he had already been there before) and he took the initiative. I was happy but terrified. Upset up to the incredible. He undressed and lay down on the bed, I was frozen, my heart was beating at 200 beats per minute, then he said to me "Come here near me!" I undressed and was extremely embarrassed. I had never been in a situation like that with a guy and staying with him really upset me, a bit for my erection and a bit because I didn't know what to do. We hugged each other and we stayed like that for 10 minutes. Then he told me. "Now we know each other better and I'm happy it happened with you". We stayed so naked on the bed talking for a long time and it seemed almost normal, we were happy and there were no need of sexual intercourse. The following Saturday he came to sleep with me, we slept in the same bed but we just hugged each other naked. For me Mark is sacred, I don't know how to say. So what do you think? tell me and then I'll tell you the rest.

- project wrote: Well, it's a beautiful story and I think a lot of guys would see a story like this as the best dream

- MaxMi wrote: But you don't see anything wrong in it?

- project wrote: well, he is 20 years old, not 12, so he is able to understand what he does and, from what you say, he really wanted it.

- MaxMi wrote: Indeed, yes. But then things have changed. I thought I was ruining a young guy's life and that something like that was a bit like taking advantage of the situation. I don't know how to explain it, maybe they are stupid things, but when I hugged him I felt guilty, I thought that Mark would not have forgotten anymore the memory of those things, a bit as if I were dirtying a clean guy a guy too much clean for me. So I did not feel like going any further and I left him.

- project wrote: But why?

- MaxMi wrote: But I don't even know, I made myself a lot of complexes, the fact is that I told him that I didn't feel like it anymore. For him it must have been like a stab, like a treacherous thing. In fact, he didn't really expect it. He reacted with the utmost dignity, but it was clear that he was struggling hard not to cry. He told me that I was hurting him badly and that I didn't understand that he needed me, he said "a desperate need" of me. I would have come back but I didn't and I held on. We greeted each other formally and it all ended up like that. He sent me messages and there was only written: "I miss you desperately!" What should I do Project?
- project wrote: Max, but what would you do, just following your heart spontaneously?
- MaxMi wrote: I would call him right away, but I know I don't have to call him.
- project wrote: Max, call him right away, don't make him suffer, it's not fair!
- MaxMi wrote: Ok, I'll call you later.
- project wrote: I wait for you

#### **Chat of June 24th 2008, 10 pm**

- MaxMi wrote: Are you there?
- project wrote: Yes
- MaxMi wrote: Project, I love him madly, now I feel happy again, he must have suffered like a dog too. He was very sweet, just happy. He told me that if sex scares me he is willing to stay with me without sex, but he wants to be with me, damn, how he seems in love! Project, but is it possible?
- project wrote: Of course it's possible, in fact I think it's exactly like that
- MaxMi wrote: I love you Project and I love the world! It doesn't seem true to me to live like this. At 41 I had let my life completely go as if everything was already defined, and instead at 41 I was born again! I also told Mark about you and he wrote you two lines, what do I do? I send them to you?
- project wrote: Yes, of course!

ATTACHMENT: Hello Project, thanks for what you did for me! Now I feel happy.  
Mark

- MaxMi wrote: Now I'm going out, I'm going to meet him, because tonight he'll come to my house, if you're there, we'll have a chat in three!
- project wrote: For me it would be great, but I think you have better things to do! A tight hug, Max, to you and to Mark. And let's stay friends! Ah,

sorry, can I ask you something?

- MaxMi wrote: Yes, whatever you like!

- project wrote: Can the text of our Chat be published?

- MaxMi wrote: Of course! If there are identifiable personal things, delete them, but I don't think there are such things. So, shortly, I can reread my story on the forum, wow! I know it's not something for forty years old, almost 42, but the fact is that I don't feel like a forty-one, I don't feel so anymore. Mark also greets you! A hug Project and see you soon!

- project wrote: A hug to you! Bye!

### 19.2.7 A gay couple 27 years together

Dear Project,

I read the discussion "Do the ideas change?" and I think I have to say something about the relationship between people of very different ages. I write to you, Project, then you see what to do with my mail, if you think it's appropriate, include it in the discussion because I would like to know what the guys think. Naturally, I'm especially interested in what you think about it, because, from the chapter of "Being gay" that you have dedicated to this topic, I think it is not the first time you are faced with situations of this kind. So, let's get to the point.

I'm 49 years old, at 20 I fell in love with a man much older than me, who was 57, although of youthful appearance. My "he" (I will call him Renzo) died two years ago and I miss him terribly. We have been together for 27 years, we have had so many problems, especially due to the fact that people don't accept this type of relationship and don't understand that they can be relationships of love in the true sense of the word.

We also had our misunderstandings and in 27 years it happened several times, but then we always came back together because we were well together. I loved Renzo but I didn't look for a father, at least I never saw him like that, there was a real complicity between us, a way of understanding each other that I think was unique. At the beginning it was difficult because he wanted to keep a certain distance, he felt old and didn't want to make me any kind of obligations and he didn't understand that he didn't create anything of that kind.

We were a couple in the most beautiful sense of the term, even if at the beginning we had to hide because my family would never have accepted a story like ours. For me it was a total reference point, first he taught me to live and then he also taught me to die with dignity and, I would say, with serenity. In the last period he often told me that his life had been a happy life because he had met me, he also told me that he was not afraid of death,

that it is a natural thing and that an old man can prepare himself to this event slowly. He never complained, it was he who gave courage to me.

For us there were no civil marriages and for this reason he thought in advance to leave me his assets before they ended up in the hands of distant relatives who had never dealt with him. He did these things with the utmost commitment, I tried to remove the idea of his death but he treated it with clarity, preparing everything with the utmost care. The last days I stayed with him at the hospital even in the night, he was very weak but he always tried to smile at me and I used to hold his hand. Unfortunately I was not close to him at the end because they brought him to intensive care and when they let me in he was already dead.

I did everything according to his instructions. At the funeral there were no relatives, he had only distant cousins who hadn't even been informed, at the funeral there were only a few common friends, among the very few who knew everything about us. He explicitly forbade me from mourning and told me that in my life nothing had to change, he also forbade me to go to the cemetery more than once a year.

After the funeral I felt very bad, right on the verge of deep depression and bad ideas started to go through my head, but he had warned me and had insisted very much in order to push me to do something "good" and I remembered it and started to volunteer during my free time. I would have devoted myself to the elderly but I have been assigned to manage a small clinic (I'm a doctor), for those who cannot even pay the ticket. When we met, Renzo was doing something similar (he too was a doctor) and it seemed strange to me at that time, but then I started to understand the value of these things. Sometimes they called him the night for an emergency and we used to go together.

He did not spare himself, and if he understood that people could not pay, he did his duty completely free. He didn't go to church, but if anyone needed him, he didn't hold back and did his best to help him. He was a good man, he thought more of others than himself. I miss Renzo badly, I feel a vacuum inside and I never fell in love with anyone else. I remember he knew how to reassure me, how he could make me reason when doubts about a thousand things invaded me, especially about the profession. I felt unsuitable, too inadequate to be a doctor and he told me that I was a very serious and competent doctor.

In short, today, two years later, I still feel close to him. I lived the life I wanted. At first he was reluctant, he could hardly believe it, then he saw that I really loved him and he felt completely free. Among us there was also sex, of course, and even in the sex I felt that he tried to make me feel comfortable and make me feel good. He was a profoundly good man, a little

like I wanted to be, and this has me pushed to fall in love with him. We loved each other and I think I would never have found happiness if I had not met him. I know very well that for many people what I wrote is pathological but for me it was the true happiness of life.

Vale

### 19.2.8 Regrets and gay morality

Hello Project, I think I have more or less your age, I'm 61. It's a while I read the forum and I'm fond of it but also it makes me feel a huge melancholy. My story is simple because in practice, at the beginning in a less conscious way, but then from 14 years more clearly, I no longer had any doubt, 47 years ago, in 1963! Almost half a century of gay life, so to speak, in practice half a century of dreams and nothing else. I have always wondered why we cannot live our lives, because others are afraid of us, but I have never been able to understand it, why couldn't I fall in love with another guy? What would I have done wrong? Of ignorance you can even die, but it simply happened to me not to live my life but to live another one.

At 23 I had also found a serious girl who loved me and I was about to take the step of marriage. Today I cannot say if it would have been right or wrong, maybe I would have children now, I would have children of 36/37 years and maybe even grandchildren but I would have had to live a life not mine, maybe now I wouldn't have a life of loneliness but I would have had a false life, in fact, not mine. Not that I had a life of mine, but at least I was not forced to accept a role that doesn't belong to me.

Now I'm alone. I have relatives but I don't see them except on occasions, at some wedding or funeral, at Easter and at Christmas. If I look back I don't know what to think, could I have done another life? But which one? Years ago it was almost impossible and now I'm almost at the finish line. If I take stock of my life it has been a failure, a bit from all points of view. Even now, in fact, I survive with a thousand ailments and with little money, it's enough, for charity, but in short, I arrived at sunset and I did not finish anything. I've never had a story, just once I happened to be close to such a thing.

I had just turned 50 and a guy 20 years old fell in love with me (and I with him) but I was scared and I pretended nothing but I should say that I did it by choice, in order not to hurt him, because he was a really good guy and he loved me in an incredible way.

Our story has never begun and this is the only serious regret of my life. I asked myself a thousand times if I did well and frankly I cannot give an answer, so, rationally, in the abstract I should say yes and be proud of what I did or rather I didn't do, but frankly I thought many times (although 10



years have passed) of having committed a serious mistake, both for him and for me. I saw another time this guy last year, now in his thirties, we talked a few minutes at the station and I was totally upset, he didn't want to talk about himself but it was clear that he wasn't happy.

With me he was very affectionate, almost on the verge of crying. I asked him for his cell phone number but he didn't want to give it to me and he told me that he didn't want to put me in trouble and then he hugged me almost violently, very intensely, and got on the train. We stayed to say hello until the train left. I came home with a terrible melancholy inside me.

I go back to the station whenever I can, at the same hour to see if he is there, if he takes the same train, but I've never seen him. I think I made the biggest mistake of my life with him because I didn't act instinctively, but I got carried away by moralism. Of course, the difference in age between us would have been enormous but I think I would have loved him and about the fact that he would have loved me I have no doubt.

Certain choices that look like the right ones in the abstract cannot only be wrong for us, but they can also be very bad for others. I came to the conclusion that I imposed my moralism on that guy and that I ruined his life, and he's a guy who hugged me like no one had ever done before. I think if I could go back, I would behave in another way. I would still like to tell him that I love him! Even if it makes no sense because I have already ruined his life. Project, publish this email, if you consider it appropriate. I'd like him to read it.

I know that the guys of the forum might not like this email but what I say is absolutely true and I have experienced it and I experience it every day on my skin, true love cannot be reconciled with moralism, it's absolutely something else.

Thanks, Project, and best wishes for your project!

### 19.2.9 Doubts of a gay 40-year-old

Hello Project, I feel a bit strange to write to you certain things but I don't know what to do and I would like to have the ideas a little clearer. I am 40 years old, I am gay and I have always been gay but only in the sense that my sexual fantasies have always been about guys. In practice with the female universe I don't have and never had any relationship not even of superficial significance. Nothing against women, for heaven's sake, but they are not my thing. But my being gay never, and I repeat never, went beyond individual fantasy. I spent periods during adolescence when I repressed myself heavily, a little conditioned by the family, a bit by religion and a bit by complexes of various kinds, I basically removed the idea of having a true relationship (I

don't even tell sexual) with another guy. Already from the time of the school it was all a flee and put the idea aside. Maybe it was also good.

My first falling in love, if I had declared it, would surely have put me in great difficulty. My last year of school I fell in love with a new guy who arrived in my class and getting rid of him cost me dear, now this guy is married and has two children and I'm happy to have kept my feelings for me.

The university was a succession of love affairs blossomed and then finished before beginning. My faculty was predominantly attended by guys and for me that period could, in theory, be wonderful, but it was not. Of course there were gay guys but it was impossible to find them, when I thought I understood that a guy was gay, the obvious proof of the contrary came to me. In practice I focused on the study, I graduated very well and I immediately found work, among other things a job that I like, well paid even if very demanding. My work environment is predominantly made of guys, they are all young engineers, mostly under 30, I belong to the seniors.

My colleagues at work only talk about work, here professionalism is mandatory and letting yourself go to personal speeches is considered a dangerous weakness for the career. When we do our business dinners it's a real liturgy, there are the great bosses and my colleagues are all present with wives or girls in a long dress. So here what is worthy of consideration is just the image and to make a career you have to be formal and that's it, there is no room for friendship at any level but only for the competition. Among other things, my colleagues, even those who are objectively handsome, seem to me well programmed puppets, among other things with a critical spirit only at the technical level and aimed only at the career and otherwise stereotyped up to the incredible. So let's say that for me the working environment is completely neutral, and now I come to the central question.

This year I was, like every year, at the beach with my parents. If I told my colleagues something like that I would disqualify because it's just a piece of beach, nothing extraordinary. My parents have a little house near the sea, you just leave the house and in practice you're on the beach. There are few people on weekdays but on Sundays there are groups with cars and there are a lot of people. One Sunday I stood there under the umbrella reading some papers looking for some clever ideas to spend at work, when a group of young people, 20/21 years, arrives, they take off their shirts and start playing volleyball a few meters from me, so far there is little to say, it often happens. One of these guys immediately strikes me: tall, blond, smiling, I remain to observe him because he exerts a powerful attraction on me. I tell myself: what a beautiful guy! Lucky him! Apart from my 40 years, I don't have and I have never had anything to be considered a beautiful guy or even an average one. I could not stare at that guy for too long because I didn't want

him to notice it, but he enchanted me, even the voice seemed beautiful to me. I went back to reading my papers but my ear was fixed on the voices of those guys. At one point I got a ball in the head that made my book fly.

That guy told me, some days after, that the throw of the ball was not accidental. He approaches, apologizes amicably as if we had known each other forever, and takes back the ball. The match ends, his friends go to take a bath, he doesn't go, as he doesn't have an umbrella and asks if he can put himself under mine, I say "Sure!" He smiles at me, then asks me what I'm reading, in short at the end of that Sunday we exchanged the cell phones and the msn contacts. He was a guy so radically different from my colleagues that he left his mark, apart from the fact that he was very young and didn't feel conditioned at all for this. I knew I would see him at most another time on the following Sunday, then I would have resumed work and it would all end there. I come back home at night, add his contact on msn, he's online and we talk for three hours. In practice for the first time in my life I talk to someone who listens to me for non-professional reasons. The conversation is serious, not intrusive, it also intrigues me from this point of view.

He's terribly direct, he says what he thinks even brutally and doesn't forgive me any banality. I'm amazed at his intelligence and his ability to go all the way. He takes no more than a week to tell me that he's gay, but he doesn't make me the usual speech, like: "Now if you want, I can disappear from your life!", no! Instead, he takes it for granted that I'm gay and tells me: "But I see that you threw it all on study and career". No need to tell him that I was gay, he had understood it perfectly and also several other things. We chatted for hours and hours all week, he didn't come to the sea the following Sunday but he had told me it before.

Seeing the group of his friends without him made me feel a terrible melancholy and I also told him and, as usual, he was not surprised, he just replied: "Well, I had expected it, but if you want we can meet tomorrow afternoon." I told him that I leave work at 5.15 pm and then I go to a big supermarket outside the city to do some shopping. We went to the supermarket together. It was a beautiful afternoon, I was falling in love with that guy and he was not pulling back. The next week we went shopping again, but this time in the car he took my hand and for me it was something upsetting. He held my hand tight to make me feel that he was there and that he wanted to be there. Project, that's how I started going into crisis.

I took him home without saying a word. Before getting out of the car he asked me: "Are you angry?" I replied: "No, but I'm worried!" And he: "Well that's natural!" Then he pinched my cheek and went down. I was happy but a bit dazed, I would have never expected something like that.

In the following days he tells me about his impossible love stories and about

the tremendous frustrations he had to endure and wants me to tell him about my impossible stories, then, as if it were obvious (maybe it was) he tells me he had masturbated thinking of me and he wants to know my reactions about this fact. I tell him I'm a little surprised, because I think he certainly has a lot of better fantasies to think about, but he asks me in a very direct way: "And you, did you masturbate thinking of me?" I try to digress but he says seemingly angry: "Answer me!" I tell him yes, and he tells me he cannot stand my hypocritical attitudes. I feel a little uncomfortable but he doesn't give me respite and tells me: "Do not pose as a victim! If you like it you like it!" I begin to be afraid that the relationship with this guy can be something that goes out of control. I tell him that he needs something else and that I don't want to bind anyone, he gets angry, he tells me that I'm just a hypocrite and that he has thought about age, he's not in love with me but he loves me, but for him I'm also an important person on a sexual level. I try to run away, I start to be really afraid of not understanding where the story is going to end.

In the following days we meet several times, I tell him a thousand times that I'm perplexed, that I'm too old but little by little we also create a minimum of physical contact, which if on one side sends me into ecstasy, for the other upsets me. He told me that it cannot end this way and that he wants to be with me and I think it's true. He told me and repeated that he had never been with anyone and wanted to know if it was the same for me, he concluded that there were no risk of any kind and that then in practice even a behavior at zero risk would be enough for him. He tells me that when he is near me he feels very strong physical attraction.

Now we are at this point. What have I to do, Project? I cannot deny that I'm totally in love but the complications are many, he is very young, I don't say it because I'm afraid that one day or the other he can go away, but because I don't want to affect his life. I love him deeply because he is as I wanted to be and I have never been.

Project, I'm afraid of embarking on a business too big for me, which I think I cannot handle. If he were one of my peers, maybe in a slightly disengaged story I would have felt more at ease, but so, with a 20-year-old guy who is terribly smarter than I was at his age, I feel displaced. And if in two or three months I don't feel like it? I cannot leave him half way. I really, now at least, don't feel the age difference too much as an obstacle, we have both reflected, then there is that speech of "I'm not in love with you but I love you" which means that I'm not really what he is looking for. Then that phrase he tried to dilute it, to devalue it, but he told me that he is not in love with me, but deep down I too don't feel in love with him overwhelmingly and the fact is that I love him anyway.

That I can be infatuated with a handsome guy 20 years old is already quite strange, but perhaps it is something that can be understood, but what can he find in someone like me? He can find as many guys as he wants a hundred times better than me, when he tried he got only refusals, but in the future he will know many guys. I wonder what he wants from me, that is exactly from me, because it seems to me that he cares a lot. Among other things, he has a dignity in his abrupt manner that so many of my colleagues would not even be able to conceive, they would call it naivety, because in our environment guys don't even know what dignity is. But how does a 40-year-old take a crush like that for a 20-year-old guy? I feel really split in two but I know that I will have to decide. Project, but if I give in to him and also to myself, is not that I'm really doing something bad? I don't say this on a moralistic level, but I have many doubts.

Alyosha writes:

But what a very simple question! ... As if you could do anything else. He told you that you were an hypocrite, but he used the wrong adjective, he would have had to say incoherent, because it's clear that your reasoning goes in one direction and your whole body and your spirit in the other and the more your spirit comes close to him the more your reasoning becomes evanescent. I could also waste time giving you a thousand good reasons why you should say yes, but I'm intimately persuaded that while you wonder whether it is right or not, the main decision has already been made.

A good old friend of mine said that the owl of Minerva begins its flight on the twilight, he meant that the reflection and awareness of the movements that happen comes only at the end, when in fact those movements have concluded their work in the underground and the things that incubated in their womb are about to sprout. In short, the blooming, although it is the beginning of something completely new, is only seen at the end.

See, you've already answered a thousand times. You answered yes when you stared intensely at him without literally being able to take your eyes off him, you said yes when he asked you to get under your umbrella, yes when he asked if he could give you his number, yes when his hand has begun to tighten yours and you will continue to say yes all the other times, for the simple reason that there is not even an alternative for you. So that's why it's worth turning the question to the contrary ... Why not? So enjoy the moment, it couldn't happen anything better. He has already colored your gray life full of mannequins with starched collars.

Nicomaco writes: I don't think I'm the most suitable to give advice or make profound evaluations, because, despite having an age similar to yours,

I have always lived among peers and I fell in love (when I fell in love) with peers or almost ... (they are things that happen). Let me be clear: I'm not at all opposed to relationships of love between people so distant in age. Beautiful stories can be read in the Project. It seems to me, however, that some greater difficulties such relationships can create at the level of social acceptance (even in this forum, sometimes they have been mentioned). But I believe that the only way to overcome these difficulties depends on the awareness, the serenity and the determination with which a relationship of this kind is lived and the difficulties are faced together. And here is an element that struck me in your story. It seems to me that there is not much symmetry between feelings, emotions, desires and projects between you. On the other hand, symmetry seems essential to building a relationship of love. You are faced with an unexpected and disturbing situation, also because your life is very "structured". You're not in love with him, but you say you still loves him. He seems a lot smarter, less problematic, he told you that he is not in love with you, but that he loves you and that he is attracted physically. I can easily believe it because at 20 (if I think of my life) the "physical" (and hormonal) element has a considerable weight (as it should be). You wonder how he feels attracted to you but I would say that the question is a bit naive. There is no model of physical beauty that has in itself the magnet of attraction. Personally in the past I was struck (even from the point of view, so to say, "erotic") by guys who you could consider nice, clever, whatever you want, but who weren't beautiful according to widespread models. My impression is that if you really care about that guy, you and he still have to work on it for a while. And then I think a lot depends on what you want to do with this relationship. It may be that the situation become rebalanced and allows you to build a deep love relationship. But I think it takes time and you need a lot of patience. Or it may be that the balance could not be achieved and then I would say that maybe you should be making a decision for him too.

pavloss writes: I will be short. If you, in the grip of your doubts and in order to return to your tasteless and odorless world, will say to that guy: "no, go away!", You will spend the rest of your days repenting. When love knocks on our door, it can also be that we are not ready. But if we wait to be ready before it knocks, it will never knock.

ignis writes: Given that he is "terribly smart", I think he would not have exposed himself if he hadn't well evaluated all the situation. To encourage him to look for someone else seems to me the worst conclusion.

Yin-Yang writes: Hello! I read your post several times to understand all the mechanisms that haunt you, first of all the fear of falling and hurting you badly when the story will come to an end. Don't forget, however, that it may even go differently and that the story could last longer than you hope or fear. At 40 you have a more mature vision of life but certainly more pessimistic because being gay at that age and not having a steady partner is equivalent to being alone forever ... However you were lucky and you met someone who saw inside you better than you've ever done before. I don't have much to say about it but my motto has always been "*carpe diem*" for this I dedicate to you this poem by Pablo Neruda:

"Dies slowly

He who becomes the slave of habit,  
who follows the same routes every day,  
who never changes pace,  
who does not risk and change the color of his clothes,  
who does not speak and does not experience,  
dies slowly.

He or she who shuns passion,  
who prefers black on white,  
and put the dot on "i" rather than a bundle of emotions, those  
that make your eyes glimmer,  
that turn a yawn into a smile,  
that make the heart pound in the face of mistakes and feelings,  
dies slowly.

He or she who does not turn the table topsy-turvy,  
who is unhappy at work,  
who does not risk certainty for uncertainty,  
to thus follow a dream,  
those who do not forego sound advice at least once in their lives,  
die slowly.

He who does not travel, who does not read,  
who does not listen to music,  
who does not find grace in himself,  
she who does not find grace in herself,

dies slowly.

He who slowly destroys his own self-esteem,  
who does not allow himself to be helped,  
who spends days complaining about his own bad luck, about the  
rain that never stops,  
dies slowly.

He or she who abandons a project before starting it, who fail to  
ask questions on subjects he doesn't know,  
he or she who don't reply when they are asked something they  
do know,  
die slowly.

Let's try and avoid death in small doses,  
reminding oneself that being alive requires an effort far greater  
than the simple fact of breathing.

Only a burning patience will lead  
to the attainment of a splendid happiness.”

Good luck!!



# Chapter 20

## GAYS AND PREVENTION

### 20.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 20.1.1 Statistics on sexually transmitted diseases

It has been rightly pointed out that sex education cannot be reduced to alerting young people to the risks associated with sexuality (unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases) but must take the fundamental task of contributing to individual well-being through the enhancement of sexual pleasure as a means of improving the quality of life. I think I cannot disagree with this statement, but it remains, however, that in particular about gay sexual education, the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases plays an absolutely fundamental role. Let's try to understand why.

We start from data updated to 2012, which come from the Italian "Higher Health Institute" (Istituto Superiore di Sanità). In Italy in 2011, there were 94.146 cases of HIV infections treated (HIV-positive and AIDS), adding the estimated share of unaware HIV-positive people, the number rises to 156.910. The causes of transmission of the virus are divided as follows: 37,2% heterosexual relationships, 28,5% injective drug users, 27,7% homosexual relationships between males

At first sight it seems that heterosexual intercours are now even more dangerous than homosexual ones but it should be kept in mind that heterosexuals are about 92% of the population, while male homosexuals are about 4%, so 92% of the population, composed of heterosexuals, contributes 37,2% to the total number of infections, while 4% of the population, composed of homosexual males, contributes with 27,7%. As a result, male homosexuals have a statistical probability of becoming infected with HIV, which is 17,3 times higher than that of heterosexuals. The number 17,13 represents the risk ratio "gay on hetero" for male subjects in Italy in 2012, but if we look at Europe,

the risk ratio goes well beyond this number. In essence, statistically the risk of contracting HIV for gay males is much higher than for heterosexual males. This is why, for gays, education for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases is absolutely essential.

Obviously it is the doctors' competence to explain in detail the techniques of disease prevention and therefore it is right to refer to the site of the Ministry of Health which contains updated information, shared by the scientific community. The Internet addresses of the site of the Ministry of Health and of the most accredited associations that deal with the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases can be very easily found on the web.

### 20.1.2 Risky approaches to sexuality by younger guys

I would like to proceed now, on the basis of the experience gained in Gay Project, to analyze three different documents pertaining to the issue of prevention related to different age groups and different personal situations. The first document, very brief regards the younger boys and their approach to sexuality and prevention, the second is a testimony of how one can move from a substantially dissipated life, spent in the search for false satisfactions, to a life lived with a very solid moral commitment. The third document concerns the fear of being HIV-positive that hangs over a guy 19 years old but also witnesses a beautiful friendship born between two gay guys with no other purpose than that to do together a stretch of their own road with the certainty of not being alone.

So let's start from the approach to sexuality of very young guys. It happens to me, even if not frequently, to chat with very young guys who are becoming aware of their being gay. The contents of these chats are often very different from the typical chat content with older guys. With the younger guys I often find myself faced with the need to make them understand that:

- 1) being gay has nothing to do with "doing this or that" in terms of sexual practices, but it means in the first place to love another guy,
- 2) that the exasperated research for sexuality in too early age is not a sign of affective maturity but exactly the opposite,
- 3) that sexuality is not a game,
- 4) that the couple sexuality is substantially different from masturbation because it is not essentially related to personal fantasies but to a real guy and to his psychological reality, and aims at creating serious emotional relationships,
- 5) that the feelings need time to grow and that people, just known

in chat, who say they have fallen in love with you, don't are really looking for you but just a for a bit of sex,  
6) that sex can involve serious health risks and that condom use is always and absolutely needed and mandatory,  
7) that on the internet contacts must be prudent, we must avoid in the most absolute way to give unknown people cell phone numbers, landline numbers, home addresses or other elements suitable for personal identification.

If on one side it's natural that very young guys tend to explore sexuality, on the other side there is the risk that the "curiosity" dimension becomes the only or the main motivation that leads towards sexuality.

From the interviews it is clear that the youngest gay guys have virtually no dialog with reliable adults on the subject of sexuality and homosexuality in particular. A lot of guys are very shy and embarrassed and when a dialogue (i.e. talking in two) is in fact impossible, I usually speak only trying to expose the contents that seem to me of greater interest for those guys on the basis of the few words exchanged with my interlocutors. In some cases, about 50%, it's possible to come to an open dialogue but not immediately, and it is clear that the guys are not used to talk about sexuality in a serious way. In some cases a climate of trust is created and the discourse becomes less theoretical and much more personal.

When the very young guys, who start setting up all the talk on matters of sexual techniques, feel stopped and brought back to a more serious dimension, or they run away or radically change their tone. Those who run away probably don't have the maturity needed to understand that being gay is something that involves the deep emotional life of a guy or perhaps of that deep emotional life they don't feel yet the need and are yet in the purely exploratory phase of sexuality. Those who don't run away but change their tone come to a serious and personalized dialogue.

These guys, who certainly have a gay affective dimension already quite well defined, don't try to enhance it spontaneously, but instinctively prefer the sexual dimension by considering it more adult, for them sexuality is still subordinated to the anxiety of growing and sometimes they are amazed by the fact that I give so much importance to the affective dimension and consider it fundamental; they instead consider strange this reasoning, at least at the beginning.

Many guys, even very young, in their anxiety of experimentation with sexuality go far beyond masturbation and begin to mentally build the idea that they must "try with a guy".

The experiment idea is sometimes dominant. The couple sexual experience

is considered a kind of recognition of having reached a fully adult personal dimension. The "experiment", however, limits itself to trying a technique, and the emotional dimension is completely marginalized.

In some situations I found myself in front of very young guys who boasted a certain sexual experience and showed techniques and numbers of relationships they had had (more or less credible) as a real curriculum to present to a competition. Stopped by me in a drastic way, however, they showed an unexpected willingness to dialogue. Basically they were facing, probably for the first time, an adult vision of sexuality that in some way fascinated them. Faced with expressions such as "my friends have done it", or "why not?", Or "gays do it" I often reacted strongly and then tried to calmly resume the conversation. The key thing in chats with very young guys is to listen and make sure they come to their conclusions.

Very often, with young boys, I tackle the issue of prudence, both in terms of the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, and in terms of prudence on the web. It is clear that no one has ever talked to these guys in any way even minimally serious about these things and that they have absolutely no perception of risk.

My insistence on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases has sometimes been the cause of the interruption of dialogue with some young guys who didn't want to hear such things at all and considered it a form of moralism aimed only at terrorizing boys in order to put in their mind that sex is a bad thing.

In some cases, following my speech on the use of condoms, I found myself faced with paradoxical answers followed by the abandonment of the chat, as in the following dialogue between me and a sixteen year old guy (Without fear).

- Project writes: but always protected?
- Without fear writes: that is?
- Project writes: with a condom
- Without fear writes: condom? I don't like those things, you miss the best
- Project writes: do you realize what you say? Without condom it's dangerous
- Without fear writes: those who don't risk don't gain!
- Project writes: wait ... let's try to reason
- Without fear writes: if you want to preach, you can preach for some other guy. Bye!

In essence from the chats with the very young guys it can be deduced that they are completely abandoned by the adult world and that their sexual

education, intended as a comparison with responsible adults on issues related to sexuality, homosexuality, and in particular to the prevention of sexual transmitted diseases is practically non-existent.

### 20.1.3 From gay dissipation to gay commitment

Now we come to the second document, it is an email I received from a gay doctor on November 27th 2011.

”Dear Project, reading your blog I had a jolt of pride and it happens very rarely. I’m 43 years old and I have behind me a life that you would not appreciate. I have been publicly declared for a very long time, we can say that as a gay publicly declared I have gone through everything you define, with a sort of detachment, things labeled gay. Fortunately for me I managed to save my health and this comforts me because there are people who have gone much worse than me.

When I was 18/20 years old internet practically didn’t exist, and I had my own ideas, a little as you say, the frenzy of trying, I believed that entering the circle would have facilitated things and in a sense it was true but from other points of view it was destructive, first of all the news that I was gay quickly spread everywhere in the city, a small city in the northern Italy where gossip and hypocrisy are always the masters.

Fortunately, I was studying in another city and I finished my studies, but when I started the profession I had huge problems because everyone ran away from me (I’m a doctor) and I had to change city, I had to start all over again, not to mention the terrible recriminations on the part of my family that treated me like an idiot without remedy, which pushed me even more to leave.

In the new city, after a while I started going to clubs again, because it had almost become an addiction. I met people out of mind that in some cases made me really scared and after five years I had to go again to a different, smaller city, where there were no gay clubs, but the chats started and even there it was a torment, an obsession, I knew some guys in the chat, we met, did a bit of sex and then they disappeared and were reckless guys who, when I talked about condoms, took me for crazy.

I had the frenzy of sex, I was more than 30 years old, even more than 35, but I spent all my free time looking for contacts. I felt alone, and I was alone, the relations with my family were completely inexistent. My father and mother no longer made themselves heard after I left home, I called them but they didn’t answer me deliberately. The only points of reference were the guys I knew only for sex, one in particular I had fallen in love with, he told me

so many sweet things and was a very nice guy but he wanted to come to live with me, but it was impossible to realize because I would have ended up not to work anymore and to create a mess of problems with all the people I had around, then he disappeared, but before disappearing he vomited all the possible insults against me, that I was a worm, one who doesn't have the courage to be what he is and above all that I was a starving man, because he liked to make the good life and with me he could not do it for sure.

This story lasted three years and left me with a sense of rejection and strong bitterness. Over the years, young guys became progressively less interested in me and only the fifty years old were looking for me but they were sex-addicted people even worse than me or depressed to be hospitalized, who thought they were boys and tried to give themselves a tone, even straight married, even people with diseases with a religious background, a variety of humanity that I didn't even think could exist. They even arrived to offer me money in exchange for sex. One was sick, had a strong asthma and I convinced him to be hospitalized because he was at high risk.

In August of 2009 I said: "It's enough!" I deleted all the gay contacts I had. I changed my mobile phone number and I threw myself completely into my work, practically I went back to university to do a very demanding and very long specialization school that leads me to deal with AIDS, I finished the first two years and just started the third, it's a thing very serious and I feel completely committed, now I work part time and I earn very little money and all I earn goes for specialization school. I'm really interested in my studies and I think for the first time that I have made the right choice.

I don't tell you what I see in the hospital, there is a really desperate need for people to take care of these things, I have been reborn and I have found my way. There is a lot to do and not so much in Italy or in Europe but especially in Africa where AIDS, without medicines and in the midst of total ignorance, is a real scourge.

Days ago I found Gay Project, I was just looking for sites that deal with prevention and then I started to read the rest. Don't let the guard down, Project! What you do makes sense. Life has a meaning that doesn't consist in seeking sex but in giving love without conditions, I understood it late but fortunately I understood it. Being gay makes sense, I think being gay and experience all that I have experienced is the real spring of my underlying motivation. I told you my story in short, publish it if you want, I would like it.

Permit me a professional notation, never abandon the discourse on prevention because very few speaks about prevention today, and there is a huge need of such persons. I add here the link to the HIV and AIDS page of the Ministry of health <http://www.salute.gov.it/hiv/hiv.jsp> which re-

mains a fundamental reference point for finding serious information, even for doctors (see the update of the guidelines). I'd like to spend some time on the forum but now I have other goals, that's why I ask you to save my privacy. [signed letter]

#### 20.1.4 Gay love and HIV test

The third document is particularly touching and, beyond the theme centered on the fear of HIV, it allows us to understand the spiritual depths of gay guys and what it means to love each other. It's an email I received on July 4, 2007 and published the same day on the old Gay Project forum.

"I first met him through words. For me they were important, they made me feel good and I didn't even understand why, I only read and reread them. I got a little courage and asked his msn even if with an incredible difficulty because for the things that I really care about I'm of an extreme shyness and perhaps also of an extreme cowardice.

Talking with him gave me so much! He has his own way of seeing things, maybe strange and difficult to understand but he always managed to get me out of my depression, in one way or another gave me a deep sense of serenity. I had a boulder inside me, something that I had to endure for years and that took everything away from me. I never thought I'd ever have the strength to tell it anyone. Instead, with X it came spontaneous to tell it and it made me feel good.

Being gay for me has always been an unacceptable and monstrous thing, but not the feelings but just the idea of sex. I have a lousy family. They are not interested in me, I have always been the classic useless baggage, after their divorce I have been continually tossed about here and there. No affection, no attention, no dialogue. In reality it is as if I'm not there, if I'm away from home, they don't even notice it and when I'm taken into consideration it is only to impose, order, claim, offend or worse to be beaten. For years I have been depressed and for two years now worse and worse, so much so that I have no more friends, I dropped them all, I have been rejected, I'm always home alone. No, they don't even notice it. I've always felt lonely, since I realized that maybe I was also gay, it was a crescendo. But now I'm also used to it, because you know when you live without hope, loneliness is not so bad anymore. But this is not the boulder I had to endure.

What I confided to X is another thing: that when I was 14 a guy much older than me, who sometimes attended the company of my cousin and that everyone knew to be gay has abused me. That's why I hate gay sex. When I fell in love for the first time two years ago with a guy I thought it was for

that abuse. I suffered too much. I felt as if something impure had crept into me. For me it was like a contagion. A curse that clung to me. But this is not the worst thing.

The fact is that one year and a half after what he had done to me I found out from my cousin that that guy was HIV-positive and I knew he had not used any precautions with me. I have never seen him after and I have never been able to speak to him to know if I could have become positive too, but I don't know if I would have had the courage to do it. I still remember perfectly what I felt at the moment of finding it out. It's a bit like dying. I had in my hands the form for enrolling in a creative writing course I was very interested in and it was the first time I had fought so hard to get something at my house, I started ripping the form into smaller and smaller pieces and it was a bit like to tear up my future.

Since then, the ice has not left me anymore. I continued to live but only on the margins because everything made me suffer too much. I kept the doubt buried inside me, as deep as possible, it was something I never thought of but that anyway stood there and poisoned everything. Since then I have always been inconclusive, defeatist and submissive in anything. I heard the others talk about what they wanted to do and I did not say anything, I did not think about anything. Lately I have let myself be dragged by someone. I thought about what I really wanted to do, I did some programs, to a guy with whom I talked on msn one day I also said that I would go to see him this summer. A little I believed it, I hoped it but my hopes vanished. Yes, in my heart it was like being already dead.

Talking with X was good for me. He has a boyfriend and they are deeply in love with each other, he is happy and fulfilled. He didn't know me at all and talking to me was always so difficult and painful, nevertheless, I think he was somehow looking for me. Despite the fact that he didn't find me, or better despite the fact that I avoided being found because I was too depressed, he used to write to me every day anyway, even just a few words that made me feel that at least one person was really interested in me.

Yes, X always gave me so much time and attention, a constant and sincere thought, he was the only one to really do it and in the most disinterested way possible, to give me a little bit of himself and without receiving or wanting anything in return. I thought a thousand times that it was very strange that a person could be like that and even more with someone like me. But he is special and UNIQUE. In the end he also managed to convince me that I had to go and take the test. He made me accept it simply telling me that he would accompany me.

I waited for my graduation exam to finish and immediately, the next day, via msn we arranged to meet and he picked me up in the city where I live. When



I saw him I couldn't believe that it was really him even if, yes, that he was beautiful it was also evident through the avatar. Because X is beautiful, but the point is that there can be guys, I don't say so beautiful but beautiful, but X is a something different. He has incredible eyes, which one would think there couldn't be two eyes like his. Nobody after looking at them, even the most materialistic person, could ever be able to think that soul doesn't exist. I fell immediately in love with him. It's incredible, but as soon as I saw him, I no longer thought I was going to take the HIV test, that is, yes, I thought it but it was a secondary thing. I was too busy with him. I immediately felt beautiful feelings, and for me to feel them was a natural and right thing. And yes, he also attracted me physically and a lot, for me this was really too embarrassing but I managed to hide it well and for the first time it didn't disgust me, it was beautiful and natural, and it was fine that way.

To take the test we went to a rather far city, because I wanted it so, a stupid thing, I know, but it made me feel more anonymous and sure, he brought me there. I thought I had to go fasted for blood collection, when he knew it, X smiled and because I was very pale because of the anxiety, he said "It's not that you go down?" And while we were waiting he kept my hand tight all the time, under a newspaper folded to the side so nobody could see and I was not embarrassed.

As soon as I got out of the surgery he put his arm around my shoulders and took me to breakfast. After eating, instead of feeling better I felt very bad. I was struck by the harsh image of the nurse who was taking my blood, the latex gloves, the way he sat with his torso all the way back and how he barely touched me, just the indispensable, but above all the vision of my blood. From the day when I knew I was at risk, the thought of my blood has always obsessed me, I had a recurring nightmare that sometimes bothered me at night: my blood suddenly splashed on my schoolmates while I was in class. The terror of their gaze used to remain on my mind all day long and I thought to see it in their eyes. I was afraid of my blood and was disgusted it. And now that I had seen it go out I felt like crazy.

At that point I broke out inside. I began to think only of the one thing that felt real to me, of what I could have inside me, of the fact that I had to accompany myself to this foreign and enemy thing for as long as was left to me, that I would have been a danger, that I would continue to be alone and stay so until the end, that I would be kept at a distance but above all that I would have kept everything and everyone at a distance from me not to suffer even more, and all this at 19 years only.

Nothing behind and nothing in front. One passes graduation exams and should start planning his long-distance future. In my case, I felt it made no sense, it never had made sense for me.

X stared at me but I didn't say anything to him and as we walked I moved away and moved further and further. At one point he stopped me and hugged me without speaking and hugged me so tightly! I just said "You know I always knew I was already dead." X shook me vigorously up to hurt me and said "Don't be silly !! Even if it were, life doesn't end for this, it only changes." I don't know how long he hugged me, I wanted to cry but I could not and it's bizarre because for too many years I cried every damn day, but at that moment I wasn't able to cry and this made me feel too bad.

But at a certain point I began to feel X's body, his breath against me, his warmth, his smell. I held my breath and focused on the beating of his heart to hear it with my ear but also with my skin. I felt an inexpressible yearning that rose from my stomach, something so beautiful and intense that it almost hurt and then, in short, I had an erection. Even if I continued to feel that I was HIV-positive, I felt even more strongly that I wanted X with all of myself and I felt that I was willing to do anything to have him close to me, even accepting to be HIV-positive. I know it seems absurd but in these three months I have discovered that it is real life that is absurd, not the imagined one.

I tried to move away, it was too embarrassing and then I thought that rightly he could take it badly. But he didn't let me and told me "Do you see it? Your body knows that you are alive and you want to stay alive." We stayed still embraced. Someone looked at us badly, someone must have said something. I didn't care at all, I would have liked to stay that way forever. X at some point broke away from me and I felt a great emptiness inside, so I spontaneously told him that his boyfriend is the luckiest person on earth, he blushed, smiled and said "Believe me it's me the one who is lucky to have him." I thought he would take me back home, in the end what I had to do had been done, instead X still wanted to stay with me.

We walked around the city, we didn't talk much but we simply walked, sometimes we sat somewhere. We went for lunch but my stomach was closed because of him even though I lied to him and said it was still because of the test. X is so beautiful that you will never stop to look at him, has a smile of continuous light in his eyes and then he's sweet and affectionate in words but also in the gestures in a way that makes you feel protected and warm inside.

While we were around, he often showed me things that I would never have seen on my own and surprised me and moved me with this way of looking at the world and be happy for certain things that never interest anyone. Every now and then he had a gesture toward me very sweet as touching my arm or a light squeeze of my hand, a separate communication with which he made me understand that he was there. In the evening he took me back to the

place where we had met in the morning. I was all upset, X told me that we would go together to take the test result, because they give it to you after a few days and you have to go and pick it up in person. I felt very sad with that sense of emptiness that grew bigger and bigger. X looked at me, was tense, worried and said "All right?"

Then I thought how badly that day could have hurt him. I had charged on him weeks and weeks of anguish and depression, mine, and he had never subtracted, but a wonderful creature like him didn't even deserve the billionth part of all that. I felt petty and selfish in the worst way. I tried to tell him that everything was fine, that I was better but I could see that he didn't believe it at all.

We greeted each other and in doing so he gave me a light kiss on the mouth. It was a kiss of a beautiful sweetness, it had no sexual meaning, it just said what no words could explain, that he was not afraid of me even though I could be HIV positive and that the availability, affection and warmth of a true friendship from him I would have had it anyway. Nobody has ever given me something more beautiful. That kiss completely filled my soul, I think I will always carry that feeling inside me. At that moment as it happens now I thought that I have at least one beautiful thing and nobody can take it away from me, it will be mine until the end."

At the end of this beautiful document, which I'm particularly attached to because I knew the protagonists, I'm happy to let you know that the analysis confirmed that the guy who wrote the email quoted above was HIV-negative.

## 20.2 DOCUMENTS

### 20.2.1 About unprotected gay sexual intercourse

I quote here below a part of a discussion that appeared in the Gay Project Forum.

« I begin underlying that this topic has no moral aims, but is only the result of some reflections. Avoiding unnecessary discourses on the morality of those who practice sexual intercourse with strangers, I would like to draw attention to the fact that many times having unprotected sex is a bit like playing Russian roulette with one's own health.

Reflecting on this topic, it occurred to me that, not only through the chats, you can have meetings with perfect strangers, but also in special rooms. I bring you an extreme case, the "dark rooms". For those who don't know what

they are, I refer you to the definition that there is on Wikipedia.<sup>1</sup> What I ask is: "How is it possible to have sex with a perfect stranger whose face you cannot even see?" or rather: "What respect you can have of yourself if you have sex with a perfect stranger whose face you cannot even see?"

Apart from the fact that I think that people in these places hardly use a condom, anyway ... I'm honest ... but I cannot understand these things ... and I sincerely find all this at the limit of madness ... the thing that leaves me speechless is that even the stones know that by not using protections the risk of ruining one's own health is high, nevertheless many times people use more what they have between their legs that what is located much higher ... The question I ask myself, and ask you too is: "Why people don't use protections when they have sex with perfect strangers?"

I found some answers on the net, reading an article, dated 2009,<sup>2</sup> I quote some excerpts that really make my arms fall. "They say that using them is difficult, complicated, not very sexy. They explain that love should be grasped, taken where and when it arrives, if we can "protect ourselves" it's better, otherwise patience, we will try to be careful." ... "three young people out of four don't use any protection during sexual intercourse, because "the partner is against" (22%), or because "they don't have them at hand". Some things make us reflect on how we are arranged in Italy. "For almost a decade now, campaigns on contraception have disappeared from the media and from the priorities of the Ministry of Health. Guys who today have between thirteen to seventeen years didn't live the years of the emergency linked to HIV, from which sprung widespread information campaigns on safe sexuality, with the consequent spread of condom use."

The problem is that these answers are not enough for me, because I cannot conceive how it's possible to have so little consideration of oneself, because if you decide to take your health so little seriously, it means that you believe your life is worth less than zero ... Reflecting on these things, it occurred to me that perhaps having an intercourse without a condom is a "distorted form" of self-harm. Self-harm:<sup>3</sup> "is an act that involves procuring, consciously or not, damage to one's own person, both physically and in the abstract sense." Having intercourse without protection with strangers can cause harm to you, in "physical sense" because there is the risk of taking diseases.

After these searches on the net I feel emptied, despite the article I read, I cannot find a logic behind this type of behavior. But is there a logic behind?

<sup>1</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark\\_room\\_\(sexuality\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_room_(sexuality))

<sup>2</sup><http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2009/10/06/niente-condom-siamo-teenager-tre-su-quattro.html>

<sup>3</sup>Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-harm>

It seems absurd to me that one can be indifferent to one's own health and that of others, because if you have an illness and if your casual partner has no protection there is a risk of infecting him too.

Isabel »

Project writes:

”Well, understanding why it is not easy and there are many reasons for it, and they are very intertwined with each other. We must bear in mind that sexuality exists and that its importance is constantly stressed. The problem lies in how sexuality can be experienced. For someone it is possible to live sexuality in the context of an important emotional relationship, or at least in the context of a relationship characterized by mutual respect, it is clear that sexuality in these situations doesn't create problems because it integrates deeply into the life of the person, who demystifies it and makes it a mode of emotional exchange.

Unfortunately there are situations in which sexuality doesn't really have a way of integrating into a person's life and then takes on the characteristics of the necessarily invisible, underground activity and in these cases it often happens that we turn to unknown people only for a sexual contact that seems being a liberation with respect to the compression of sexuality to which we are subjected.

Sexuality perceived as separate from the complex of the person must find a way to be realized with modalities completely separate from those of ordinary life. It must be kept in mind that the impossibility of living one's own sexuality for what it is creates deep suffering and pushes to solve the problem even in dangerous ways. I try to explain myself with an example. A guy coming from the middle-class family of the late nineteenth century had to bow to a combined marriage, in which the sexual component was considered little more than a duty. It is obvious that in such situations, despite the risk of syphilis, that guy tried to have sex with a prostitute. But let's get to gays. Before the Internet age, a gay man, in order to live even at the minimum level a form of couple sexuality, had in practice only one choice, that is to frequent the places of male prostitution with all the risks connected to sexually transmitted diseases. Today there is the Internet and this means that male prostitution in the traditional sense tends to decrease, because, to have sex without commitment there are the dating sites that have at least the advantage of safeguarding the public image of people, clearly, even meeting people just known on the net there is the risk of sexually transmitted diseases.

For some people, I talk about those who have uncommon sexual preferences, finding a real satisfaction is difficult even in dating sites and for this reason

the propensity to accept a higher risk tends to increase. I could say that in general the more difficult it is for a person to find a way to live his sexuality, the higher is the dose of risk that that person is willing to accept. You are willing to accept high risks to achieve forms of sexual satisfaction that it is almost impossible to get without taking those risks.

It should be considered that sexuality experienced in this way is associated with low levels of self-esteem, element, this, correlated with the idea that it makes no sense to invest in your future and that you have to play everything for everything like when you play roulette.

Beyond these sociological and psychological motivations that can weaken the instinct of conservation, it remains however the fundamental reason for the dangerous behaviors, that is the ignorance or the underestimation of the risk. We are not even accustomed to food hygiene and we often abuse food because we don't realize the damage we produce to our body and, even more so in sexuality, given the complete absence of a sexual education, we expose ourselves to risks because we are not informed and we don't realize the dangers related to our behavior. People very often discuss sexuality and morality, but it would be essential, before discussing such things, to seriously inquire about the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

Sex education not only helps you live better but can literally save your life. Health is too important a thing to expose it to useless risks. A condom can save your life!"

Riverdog writes:

"Hello Isabel, I wanted to reflect on your post ... First of all, I think the topic is very important, so thank you for having dealt with this topic ... but, in my opinion, there is a basic concept that should be clarified. I find the title more than suitable: "UNPROTECTED sexual intercourse" ... unexceptionable I would say! Only that during the post, you "mix" this topic with another: "sexual intercourse with UNKNOWN people" ... in short words it can be inferred that the risk of playing Russian roulette, comes from the combination of these two elements: 1) having unprotected sex; 2) having sex with a stranger. I don't doubt that this represents the possible most risky combination among those obtainable, be clear.

But the underlying message that can be drawn from it is that if I "know" the guy, the threshold of perception of danger can change and one can lower the guard, translated: one can lightly assume risky behaviors. I think that the protections should always be used, regardless of the knowledge of the partner, because that person can so far have had a sober sex life, but you never know ... maybe he had a single intercourse, but with a partner who

occasionally allowed himself some escapades ... or who perhaps become infected through behaviors not related to sexuality and maybe not even aware of his condition (fortunately nowadays it's a rare thing, but years ago ...). What I want to be clear on is that no one is 100% sure. But this doesn't mean that you have to get caught up in the paranoia, otherwise, hell, you don't live anymore.

The use of condoms is of vital importance if you have intercourse with strangers, but it is good to use it also with well-known people. At least until a relationship blooms, and at that point we can resort to some analysis and then can be quiet (... hoping that the partner is a person with a bit of brain, but having behaved in that way previously makes me hope that then he avoids risky behaviors with other guys ... at least for the protection of the usual partner ...).

Actually, if the person is well known, and inspires you some security, in certain situations a little more elastic behavior can be allowed ... but I avoid publicizing behaviors not 100% safe. Although 100% security doesn't exist, and even the degree of fatalism of the individual affects his behavior. That said, in my opinion, you have to do things right, with rationality and information ... at that point the fears must be put aside, otherwise you live badly ... you can die even going to see your dad who crosses the finish line of a marathon, and in millions of other ways, also because this world is full of unbalanced persons ... blessed the one who at least trusts in the afterlife ...”





# Chapter 21

## OCCASIONAL GAY SEX

### 21.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

This chapter is dedicated to occasional gay sex. Gay sexuality, in its highest expression, that is the affective gay sexuality, is a particularly intense form of interpersonal communication that takes place when two guys (I call them boys, whatever their age) come to share their sexual intimacy. This expression, "sharing one's sexual intimacy", indicates that gay sexuality, at the couple level, is fully realized only when it is the expression and completion of a deep affective proximity, it is in fact a wanted and also desired sharing of a dimension very delicate of life like sexuality. In order to overcome the inhibitions and ritualisms learned from the outside and to put aside the individualistic vision of sexuality to move to a vision of sexuality as sharing on a deep emotional basis it is necessary that between the two guys there is a true emotional relationship and that their mutual trust is without reservations.

When two guys love each other so much that the happiness of one is also the happiness of the other, then the sexual contact between those two guys has a really profound sense of sharing. The sexual satisfaction of two boys who love each other doesn't derive from particular sexual practices, but from perceiving that the reciprocal communication is total and that the experience of the other, even in physical terms, no longer meets any obstacle, which means that mutual availability is total and without reservations.

In other words, sexual satisfaction enhances the sense of communication and reciprocity. Gay sexuality, at a high level, that is, affective sexuality, has an essentially altruistic dimension and is absolutely incompatible with selfish and predatory attitudes or with the exploitation of the other that represents the most radical negation of the affective dimension.

Starting from this conception of affective sexuality it's easy to understand how occasional sexual practices are a reality that cannot, in itself, be fully satisfying, precisely because occasional sex is devoid of that deep affective dimension that characterizes and makes genuinely satisfying the highest expressions of gay sexuality. No gay guy would spontaneously prefer casual sex to a serious relationship in which sexuality has a deep emotional basis. Why then is casual sex still a common reality and the search for casual sex absorbs a lot of time and lots of mental energy from gay guys?

The answer is provided by gay guys themselves, who are looking for casual sex. These guys say: "I can only have sex like that! I would love to live a sexuality as a result of a deep and mutual love, but that is only a utopia that will never be realized, while occasional sex is a common reality and basically easy to realize."

In this answer there is some truth, in the sense that the search for casual sex is easy, but there is also something false, in the sense that the search for a sexuality that is the expression of a deep affective life is not at all a utopia although it is certainly not a simple thing to achieve. In other words, the road to casual sex presents itself without obstacles and indeed seems the obvious solution to all affective problems, while the possibility of going towards a deeply emotional sexuality appears only as a very remote eventuality, at the limits of utopia. For this reason, many guys renounce to seek an affective sexuality and are content with the occasional sex, experiencing casual sex as a surrogate of actual life, i.e., often unconsciously seeking, in the occasional sex, the affective content of which the occasional sex is intrinsically lacking. Precisely for this reason occasional sex is almost always accompanied by a sense of frustration.

People who have casual sex do in fact give up a satisfactory life, because they consider it unattainable, and they invest all their energies in technical sexuality, for them sex is not a contact between people but a thing to do, in which however, they seek at least a partial emotional correspondence.

Often the search for occasional sex is theoretically accepted as a possible although very rare occurrence, even by guys who at least in theory are looking for an affective sexuality. Classical is the expression: "If it were to happen I would not say no." Apart from the health risks that in the exercise of sexual practices with strangers are definitely higher than in the sexuality of a couple who lives a strict monogamy, occasional sex tends to create a real form of dependence, somewhat similar to that created by use of drugs. The mechanism of illusion and subsequent disappointment are repeated with an exasperating continuity and frustration ends up being the obvious result of every meeting. The sense of frustration doesn't derive from the inadequacy of this or that sexual practice or from the fact that the partner of the day is

not the right one but from realizing that no sexual practice can make up for the lack of an effective and mature interpersonal relationship.

I would like to emphasize that in what I say there is no moral judgment on people, even on people who are no longer young, who seek and practice occasional gay sex. They are often victims of social prejudices and moralism who are deprived of the possibility of living a true emotional life. Evidently for these people the feeling of emotional deprivation is so profound and the prospect of creating a genuine emotional contact is so remote that they feel they can search through casual gay sex for something that at least resembles an emotional life.

I want to clarify that I got to know many gay guys and even no more young who resort to casual sex and; talking to them, I noticed that they are guys who want to talk, to confront, to create real human contacts. I'm speaking about a non-negligible percentage of gay guys and no more guys and even more numerous are the gays who in their lives cross at least once a period dominated by the search for occasional gay sex that can replace and fill an emotional life that doesn't become real. In the face of these things, which exist and influence the lives of many people, because the search for occasional substitute sex often ends up being the main center of interest of a gay guy, the answers of a moralistic nature constitute the most common reaction but also the more deleterious. The phenomenon of the search for casual sex is the effect of emotional deprivation to which many gay guys are already subjected in their family.

Moralism, which presupposes a rooted prejudice, is profoundly immoral because it accentuates isolation and favors the spread of behavioral models derived from pornography that remain the only models proposed to gay guys in relation to their sexuality. Speaking in chat with gay guys I see almost every day the damage that moralism produces and I realize how the models derived from pornography end up taking root in the consciousness of many guys who struggle to break away from a typically pornographic representation of gay sexuality.

I often give many young people answers that are very far from what they expect in terms of casual sex trying to show them the real possibilities of building a true emotional life. About a third of those guys react nervously and then disappear at all but with the other two thirds a real confrontation opens up and it is incredible how much availability and seriousness can be found in these guys who are not used to the idea of being respected and of being able to talk about matters relating to sexuality in a serious way. For these guys, breaking away from the frantic search for casual sex is not easy anyway and requires a remarkable effort of will, which however becomes bearable when the concrete perspective of an authentic and gratifying emo-

tional relationship is presented.

I must underline that when I speak of an authentic and gratifying emotional relationship, I don't mean to refer necessarily or even essentially to a couple relationship, because the frustrated emotional needs of guys who seek casual sex go well beyond the couple relationship. The rediscovery of the authentic and gratifying affectivity of serious friendships in itself has a profound meaning in these cases precisely because it is the rediscovery of an authentic emotional dimension. The construction of true friendships, in general, has the power to revive even the most frustrated guys and to make much easier their exit from the addiction to occasional sex . Gay guys need above all affection and hope, however paradoxical it may seem, occasional sex is one of the most common responses to lack of affection and hope.

# Chapter 22

## DANGEROUS GAY DATING

### 22.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

This chapter is dedicated to dangerous gay dating and is aimed primarily at younger guys but also at older guys who have no real knowledge of environments and potentially dangerous situations.

Among gays, as among heterosexuals, there are people who are looking for easy sex taking advantage of all the opportunities that the network can offer that are very many, some classic and well known like sex chats and dating sites, whose declared aim, in a more or less explicit way, is to combine sexual encounters, there are also other people far more subtle, that capture young guys often completely unprepared.

I try to explain with an example. A gay guy has a blog or facebook profile in which people can find his personal data that enable the identification. That guy publishes on his blog or on his profile contents that allow an experienced eye to identify him as gay (it is not necessary that the content is explicit). With a quick search via google for the sex hunter it is easy to identify similar situations. Identified the target, typically through a photo, which allows to immediately discard uninteresting people, the sex hunter adds a "serious" comment on the Blog of the guy or in his profile in order to stimulate the interest of the victim. I emphasize that, in principle, the comment added tends to respond to the expectations of the potential victim or to emphasize the similarity with the victim: same language, very similar age, very similar emotional attitudes. I quote here three authentic messages left by sex hunters (by people who later have been clearly identified as sex hunters) on blogs and profiles of guys identified as gay:

"Hello, I read your post and I felt like crying, but why do we feel so bad? It's not fair! You are a guy so sensitive and you must stay that way. I have

happened the same thing. Relationships with my parents were terrible, traumatic, relationships with friends were nothing at all, now I'm alone and I don't know whom can I trust. If you want to talk a little, this is my contact [omitted]."

"I do not know if it happens to you, but I really need physically to be near a guy and no one is near me, I never had a guy but I miss a guy so much. You're right when you say that masturbation is not enough anymore. I also want a real guy near me! Please, contact me."

"What a beautiful post! I'm tired, I always tell lies, I would like to be able to speak with a guy in my real life, I would like to understand how he lives, I would fall in love, I can't stand no more to be alone! If you want to talk I'm here."

Inside these messages you can identify some subliminal contents which can be summarized as follows:

- 1) I'm a guy like you, more or less your age and with problems similar to yours
- 2) I have never had a boyfriend (encouraging message that tends to exorcise the risk of aids)

If the first message is followed by a response from the recipient, in the reply of the guy who is searching for sex appears immediately or very soon the question: "Where are you from?" (If the information is not deductible from the blog or from the profile of the victim) and the request for the exchange of pictures. Both the questions "where are you from?" and the exchange of photos are used to make a selection: if the victim doesn't look pleasing to the sex hunter or lives in places far away the exchange of messages is destined to fade quickly, on the contrary in case the victim's residence is in the same city of the sex hunter and the guy has a pleasing appearance starts a "short" period of contact in chat, a period that usually does not exceed a week. If the sex hunter sees the other guy showing very reserved attitudes he may decide to let him go in order not to waste too much time, if he sees instead a real interest (if he is called on the phone by the victim, if the conversation comes early to touch explicit sexual contents, though moderately) the inevitable invitation will arrive to meet in person. Of course, the invitation is offered officially to "talk" "drink", or to "know each other better."

I emphasize that the sex hunter does not make references of a sexual nature, he puts things in terms of friendship, tends to create affectionate intimacy with the victim but also tends to "shorten the time of the contacts in chat" and goes as soon as possible to a face to face meeting.

I reproduce below an excerpt from a chat between a 32 y. o. sex hunter and a 16 y. o. guy (names have been changed).

32 y. o. writes – Hello Mark, are you okay?  
16 y. o. writes – I was waiting for your call!  
32 y. o. writes – Well, I enjoy very much chatting with you, in fact just as much ...  
16 y. o. writes – I'm happy! In practice last night I was up all night ... and I don't tell you why  
32 y. o. writes – Come on, why?  
16 y. o. writes – Well I thought about everything you said to me yesterday, about your story and the fact that really that guy did not deserved you, basically he just deluded you  
32 y. o. writes – And yes in a way it is just that, but I do not care so much about sex, however, I felt betrayed, mocked, for me to fall in love is a serious thing, I don't like at all the guys who take sex as a game.  
16 y. o. writes – But, you know, people are not all like you and there are also guys who only think about sex and a little I can understand them, because in the end a guy thinks a lot about sex, not only that, but certainly he does.  
32 y. o. writes – Well, yes, ok, but in the end taking care of yourself is another thing, maybe you think I'm too traditional but if you fall in love with a guy you have to do it seriously  
16 y. o. writes – I agree, but in the end there is also sex  
32 y. o. writes – But where are you from? Because we talked about everything but this, I'm in Milan  
16 y. o. writes – Really? I'm from Milan too! And where exactly?  
32 y. o. writes – San Siro and you?  
16 y. o. writes – I Niguarda. At the end we live very close!  
32 y. o. writes – What do you think if we were to see in person, for a drink or something  
16 y. o. writes – Actually, I'd like to but I'm not used to go to the gay clubs  
32 y. o. writes – No gay clubs at all! I don't like such things. No, I'm talking about a coffee shop with a tea room. I would never go to a gay bar.  
16 y. o. writes – Ah, ok, that's fine by me  
32 y. o. writes – This evening?  
16 y. o. writes – Yes, but not too late because my parents expect me to be home before eleven  
32 y. o. writes – At eleven o'clock you'll get back home safe, I'll take you back  
16 y. o. writes – Then what time and where?

32 y. o. writes – If you tell me where, I'll come and get you at home  
 16 y. o. writes – I am at [omissis]  
 32 y. o. writes – Well I'll be there at six, is it possible for you?  
 16 y. o. writes – Perfect!  
 32 y. o. writes – My phone is [omitted], if you give me yours, in case of need I can call  
 16 y. o. writes – Ok here it is [omissis], then I'll wait for you at six THANK YOU!  
 32 y. o. writer – Thank you! See you at six. Bye!  
 16 y. o. writes – Bye!

This way the 32 y. o. came to know where the 16 y. o. lives and even his phone number [always pay attention before giving other people addresses or phone numbers, including cell phone, allowing your identification!]. Up to this point theoretically nothing would suggest that the 32-year-old is a sex hunter. It should be emphasized that when a sex hunter realizes that he has to do with a guy who has already had a lot of experiences in general he's more cautious because the other knows how things develop and also because the fear of AIDS sometimes holds the sex hunters back, especially when he feels that the guy he's interested in is in potentially dangerous situations. I emphasize that the chat which I quoted above does not end with an invitation to the 16-year-old by the 32-year-old to meet at the home of the 32-year-old, because it would sound strange and the invitation would be refused, but with an invitation that apparently has nothing to do with a sex meeting.

The 32-year-old of the chat above arrives really at 18.00 o'clock to the meeting place with a nice car cleaned and polished for the occasion, and elegantly dressed, but without excess. The cafe chosen is an average cafe but the table is quite separate and apart. The real conversation develops more or less like this (the text was reconstructed from the 16-year-old after about two weeks):

32 y. o. writes – Do you know you're a really a handsome guy?  
 16 y. o. writes – Come on!  
 32 y. o. writes – You have two beautiful eyes!

At this time, taking advantage of the embarrassment of the 16 y. o., the 32 y. o. starts the first physical contact, rests his leg on the boy's leg, as if it were random, the guy responds with a sheepish grin.

32 y. o. writes – If it bothers you I'll take it off ...  
 16 y. o. writes – No, come on, no problem ...



32 y. o. writes – What a beautiful smile you have! You have a very sweet face of a male, a rare thing ...

16 y. o. writes – Come on ...

32 y. o. writes – You are high, just to look good, you look older than your age and you have also beautiful hands

16 y. o. writes – Come on ... you're embarrassing me ...

32 y. o. writes – You have beautiful lips ... look into my eyes, you know that you can see the soul in the eyes and yours is beautiful ... Can I hold your hand? Come on please ... under the table, so no one can see us ... here ... how nice! ... sit down here next to me, well ... I feel your heat ... I want to kiss you, I miss your lips, ... it will be beautiful

The 32-year-old brings the hand of the guy to stop on his hard penis, the guy doesn't move the hand from there, what authorizes the 32-year-old to feel the penis of the 16-year-old which of course is totally rigid. Now the sexual contact is established, and the 16-year-old has expressed clearly his consent. The 32-year-old does not dare the proposal to go to his house, but proposes to go in the car to feel more confident and comfortable.

32 y. o. writes – I'd eat you with kisses, I'd hug you tight up to hurt you! By now we have to stay a little quiet so we calm down and we can go a little in the car. You are not only beautiful you are also sexy! Eh eh! Oh, if you feel uncomfortable I'll take you home, you just have to say ...

16 y. o. writes – Come on, no problem, a little embarrassment because it is my first time, however, it is nice, I feel a very strong sex drive, when you touched me I was about to come.

32 y. o. writes – now I think I'm in condition to go out ...

16 y. o. writes – But I'm not! Wait a bit, now I just cannot.

32 y. o. writes – But you're really beautiful!

16 y. o. writes – Look, if you go on this way we'll have to wait until tomorrow ..., wait ... I'll use the jacket, I don't think people will notice it ...

32 y. o. writes – No, not at all ... these are the keys, go in the car, I pay the bill and join you

16 y. o. writes – Ok ...

When they are in the car sexual contact becomes more explicit. The sex hunter does not exaggerate to consolidate slowly the consent of the 16-year-old, they arrive at mutual masturbation, and do not go any further, but the sexual involvement of the 16-year-old is now complete and the 16-year-old

suggests oral sex, the 32-year-old seems reluctant "I don't know if it's right ... but probably it's too much ..." but then, of course, he accepts and the 16-year-old feels as the one who is leading the game.

At this point appear the assurances of the absence of the AIDS risk:

32 y. o. writes – Don't worry! No problem for the AIDS, I'm a blood donor and I'm very careful and moreover I never had a boyfriend and I've never had sex with anyone, so you can feel comfortable.

Obviously he is NOT a blood donor, because a 32-year-old who has sex at the first encounter with a 16-year-old is certainly not at his first sexual experience and it is extremely unlikely that a guy who has a promiscuous sex life is a blood donor, because on this point transfusion centers are very careful to avoid taking blood from people who may be infected with HIV.

Therefore or the 32-year-old says the false at the interview of the blood transfusion center, what really is criminal not only stupid, or he cannot become a donor. The only serious reassurance about AIDS you can get consists in taking the HIV test together with your boyfriend and repeat the test after the window period (6 months or less with the latest and more sensitive tests). Only this way you can be sure that the test has been actually done and that the results prove the absence of risk. Trusting the claims of a 32-year-old who when he first meets a 16-year-old guy has sex with him is get heavily at risk. The "LOW AIDS RISK" of certain sexual practices considered less dangerous does not mean that instead of AIDS, since the risk is low, you get a cold, but that is less likely to become infected, but if you become infected you'll become certainly HIV positive with all that this entails. **USE YOUR BRAIN BEFORE ANY SEXUAL CONTACT. IT'S TO SAVE YOUR LIFE!** The 16-year-old, at the end of his first experience with the 32-year-old does not feel depressed or victim, but feels great, he is quite convinced of being able to have a power over an older guy, to be free to do whatever he wants and is also pleased with himself, he considers what he did as an experience of love and passion and sees the older gay as his 32-year-old boyfriend, and would like to become the center of the life of that guy, knowing everything about his life, in practice, would like to build a partnership with him, but this is where dreams break down. The 32-year-old has his life in which the 16-year-old cannot and must not enter, the 32-year-old is not available when the 16-year-old wants him to be there but the 16-year-old must to be always available when the 32-year-old calls him. It's impossible to talk about the HIV test because the answer is always the same: "I told you that there is no risk!" It's absolutely impossible to see the blood donor card, you can instead see the results of an HIV not recent test, according to which the 32-year-old

is HIV-negative. But this means only one thing, that is that the 32-year-old had in other situations, the fear of being HIV-positive and for this reason took the test, what is not reassuring at all. The guys who have never had sexual intercourse have obviously never been tested for HIV, on the contrary the guys who have been tested must have had some concern related to sex or more precisely to sex at risk.

I add one more consideration, after an unprotected intercourse and even after a low risk behavior (low risk does not mean no risk) generally occurs the fear of AIDS, fear that UNFORTUNATELY OCCURS ALWAYS AFTER AND NOT BEFORE, and then guys take the test that must be repeated after a few months. All this, however, deprives them of their tranquility for a long time, even though, fortunately, are not so frequent the cases where you end up HIV-positive because of an intercourse with a person you don't know with certainty whether or not is HIV-negative.

The relationship between the 16-year-old and 32-year-old ends when the 16-year-old becomes aware of being just a sexual diversion and nothing more, then occurs the sense of frustration and confusion and the younger guy has the impression of having thrown away his sexuality with a person who was nothing but a sex hunter, and if the younger guy was at his first sexual experience, an experience like this will affect for a while the sexuality of the 16-year-old. But one thing must be said: EVEN IF IT'S BETTER TO USE YOUR BRAIN BEFORE THAN AFTER, IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO START USING IT!

### CONCLUSIONS

Stories like the one shown in this article HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH GAY LOVE, are squalid stories of unscrupulous boarding and ingenuity, two ingredients that when put together become very dangerous. The gay love is a serious matter and needs to grow on a true affective base, it is not an experience but it's a way to love a person.

## 22.2 DOCUMENTS

### 22.2.1 Violence and gay sex

Hello Project, last night I told you in the chat something of my story and I liked the attitude you had, you have not shot judgments and you've been listening and in the end you also told me things that I didn't expect, so I have rewritten my story, if you believe it can be useful for something, publish it, but I would still like you to read it and let me know by e-mail,

privately, what you think about it, put it on the blog, on the forum, where you like, but don't comment it, then I'll explain to you why. Don't get angry if I didn't give you my contact, but I don't know you well yet and I prefer to go slowly, but I thank you for giving me yours. Last night I felt more relieved. I think I will contact you again. If you want to publish this mail do it but anonymously. Please, before publishing it, correct the mistakes that I have certainly made. Thank you.

Letter signed with name and surname.

I'm a guy 22 years old, call me Julius, it's not my name but I like it. I've always been gay, since I remember something, let's say 13-14 years old. I don't have a good relationship with my parents, they are good people and they think that I'm only a rebel, someone who will end up badly anyway, they really think so. My father at the beginning got angry with me a lot of times, now he doesn't do it anymore because he thinks it's completely useless. I feel like a rebel, sometimes I would like to break everything, I cannot stand hypocrisy and instead I have to live in the middle of hypocrisy. My parents know nothing about me, I've always been very aggressive with them, but I've never talked about my private facts.

Already at the age of 16 I left home for a while without my parents know, I got some money from my parents (I stole them practically) and hitchhiked around. Then I came back home after spending all the money to have fun, to drink and more. When I got home, my father stayed there like an imbecile, I expected him to beat me but he didn't, he was afraid, he behaved like a coward. At school it was a disaster, they sent me to an absurd school but I didn't give a damn and I almost never went there, but at the age 20 I was able to take and pass my final exams.

Even if I smashed everything and I was also violent I always dreamed that someone would take me with sweetness in spite of everything, to one of this kind I would have given the soul, but I found only people who screamed against me and chased me away badly. I used to assume the worst possible behaviors, just to provoke people.

I've dreamed of having a boy since I was 14 but I've never had one, I fell in love with somebody but they got scared and they were not able to understand what I'm under the peel, because I think I can really love a guy in a very strong way. I live in a seaside area and not far from my house there is a campsite, they opened it four years ago and access in practice is free for anyone. I used to go there for a walk several times because there are often young guys at the campsite and I dreamed that some of them could fall in love with me. And then, I say it clear, I used to go there because I liked being among those people, a half were foreigners and at sea site they

disrobed outdoors in an absolute natural way. These things made my blood boil.

I didn't have any chance with foreigners because I don't speak any foreign language, with the Italians sometimes I was brave and tried to approach. I am from the south, but between those of the south and those of the north I prefer those of the north, they are less nosy, they are really guys I like a lot physically. I'm dark haired and a little dark of general complexion but I like very much the guys from the north.

Going to the campsite and the beach, sometimes I happened to have interesting meetings. Three or four times they invited me to eat with them, usually we swam in the sea together, even without swimsuit, and then we used to entertain ourselves singing on the beach until late at night. These guys told me that I was very sweet and I liked it very much. I have dreamed so many times to be able to have sex with some of these guys but it never happened, with me they were casual, friendly, but maybe they were not even gay, even if I always put myself in groups where there were no girls.

Once I found a gay man and I thought that something could be done. I did something I had never done, I told him I was gay and he told me he was gay too, then I tried a very hesitant physical approach, but he told me he didn't want to do that, he had a boyfriend in Mantua and that was the guy he loved. I told him that this guy was really lucky.

He gave me only a small kiss, then he left the next day, now we are still in contact on msn. It was the best thing that has happened to me in my life, even if it was a refusal. I admire the guys like him.

In the village people knew that I was doing only what I liked better, that I didn't come home in the evening, and slowly a kind of legend of the monster was created. If you add that they had never seen me with a girl, I became the gay monster of the country, to the point that they really avoided me, the mothers thought I used to go around to rape the kids and when they saw me they ran away. I went on like this until I was 21. At the age of 21, they gave me a job in a warehouse of building materials, with a salary to die of hunger, but for me it was very much, I never had had any money.

The owner was a gentleman whom you could hardly see, he had a nice car and when he came he was very respected, he was about 45 years old, married with two sons, a 18-year-old boy, who was very handsome, and a girl 10 y. o.. The owner's son's name was Salvatore, I had seen him a couple of times, but he was the son of the owner while I was the last of the keepers, so there was little to do. We exchanged a few glances and maybe that guy wasn't absolutely at ease with his father, we even exchanged a few words but only a couple of times.

The first time the father had left and we talked more, Salvatore was respect-

ful to me, he treated me on a par, he told me that he was very uncomfortable with his father. I told him that I was gay and I saw that he had a flash in his eyes, he didn't say he was gay too but I perceived clearly that he was interested. Then they called me to send me to unload a truck and we broke up.

The second time, when he saw me he smiled at me, then his father came and called his son in such a violent way that I felt uncomfortable for him. The owner didn't say anything to me but later I didn't see any more either the father or the son.

For me, no love at all, not even sex, nothing at all, now there was no longer even the campsite, I had just to work as a slave from morning to night.

Once in the village a man began to tell false things against me offending and threatening me, one got in the middle and defended me. I really didn't expect it. After a few days I saw him again, we talked a little, he's married, he's 41, but he was nice to me, he treated me well, on a Sunday he invited me to lunch outside. It seemed strange on his part to leave his wife at home to go out with me but I was glad, nobody had ever done such a thing. I told him I was gay and he replied that he knew it but that it didn't cause him any problems. In short, it was not my type and I didn't feel really attracted to him, after all, I knew where we were going to end up and basically I accepted it.

With me he was kind, I felt loved. I do it shortly, because where it ends up it's clear. One day he tells me if I want to spend with him Saturday and Sunday, two day with the night between the two days. Spending Saturday and Sunday together means to spend the night together, I had understood very well, but for me it was the first time and the idea that maybe such an occasion would not have been created any more I had it. So I went there. He took me for dinner to a restaurant very far from where we live and then we went to his house in the country, a nice place very well arranged. It was obvious that we had to have sex there, we went there on purpose.

He starts to come forward but in a way that I don't like at all, seeing him in that situation really makes me sick. I tried to tell him in every way that I didn't feel like it. First he tried to insist with the good manners but given that I tried to avoid him in every way at the end he really beat me violently and forced me to stay there anyway, in practice I was raped by this man. It is true that I had somehow pushed him in every way but he didn't have to behave like that. A couple of days after, I thought back to a detail that seemed to me very important to calm me down because I was terrified of the fear of diseases, when he decided to do what he did he told me in dialect: "You are a fagot of shit and you made the worst filth with all those like you, but I don't want to take your ills ... " and he wore a condom.

It was a terrible experience, something I wouldn't even wish on my worst enemy. When he finished he reloaded me into the car with violence and dumped me under my house.

I still carry inside me the sense of deep disgust I felt and I think I will never forget it. This was my first sexual experience with a man. For me it is like a kind of nightmare that always accompanies me. The man, after, has stayed away and did well, because if I had found myself in front of him I don't know what level of violent reaction I could have put into practice, but surely I would react violently. Of this fact I spoke only to three people: to the guy I had met at the campsite, to a straight friend who has always respected me and to Project, and Project had the dignity of being quiet and not making comments. I feel like a fool because it was I the one who entered that mess without foreseeing where it would end up or, what is even worst, the one who accepted it as a fool, but when everybody leaves you and you don't know where to bang your head you can do the most crazy things. I don't know if I can ever accept gay sex as a positive thing but I think it will take me years and even when I'll find a guy who really loves me, I'll will be heavily influenced by the nightmare I experienced that made feel worse than a worm, and has deeply humiliated me, also because I'm a fool, it's true, but everybody left me completely alone. That's all.

### 22.2.2 Power and gay prostitution

Hello Project, my name is *Ciro* I'm 31, I looked at the blog and I liked it but it lacks one thing that instead in reality exists, and if you don't tell it, you give the guys the idea that the gay world is the world of fairy tales, while things are not at all so. You gave so much space to clean stories, to young guys ... and you did well, but don't forget that the gays you're talking about are only a part of reality, and it's not even a matter of living sex in a way or in the other. It's a question of real delinquency. It's all masked, of course you'll never be able to understand how things really are. Generally there is no physical violence but I have seen boys who have come out into pieces of the violence of the bosses because they have suffered a form of violence in one way or another that I have suffered too.

It is not true at all that gays are supportive and that they love each other, maybe it happens to the guys you know but what I see is completely different. It is not a matter of gay and straight but of servants and masters. This is the reality. If people are stronger than you, they crush you. Who has money is the master, if the master is straight he buys the girls, if he's gay he buys the guys but not to love them, not to do a little sex with them ... no! But only to dominate them, only to put them under their feet, to blackmail them, to

play with their ingenuity ... because there are 20-year-olds who think they are smart, they are handsome guys and they think they are smarter than others and have found the key to get everywhere. But be sure, they never use the word "prostitution", this will never happen. Those guys, about their boss, say only: "He likes me" and they tell you it with an air that makes you sorry, because they are not at all cleverer than others and they don't even imagine where they are going to get bogged down. And bosses blackmail them. They did it with me too, and when it happens you really hate them, you come to the verge of taking a pair of scissors and stick them into their belly.

I was working at the age of 18, I was a bartender in Naples and I never had a penny while those around the bar had a lot of money. Then the owner of the bar tried something sexual with me, I defended myself and he let me go but I will never forget the feeling of disgust that I felt, and then he chased me away. I didn't have a penny, and when you don't have a penny what can you do? Where can you go and ask for money? At the bank? There was a guy who knew a lot of people and I asked him what I could do and he told me that I could make money and a lot of money ... but I didn't have to be stupid ... I said: and how? And then he told me that there were important people who were looking for good guys to be a waiter at parties of rich people and, he told me, if you want make money you can make them ... those give you 100 euros of tip. I then didn't understand anything and I said yes ... and then they gave me the good dress, but not the waiter's uniform, just a dress and beautiful as well, they took me to the barber and they got my hair cut short. Then they took me to the house of one of them and they told me I had to take a shower, because in my house there was no shower or even bathtub. But those didn't leave and I had to take a shower in front of them who were looking at me a bit strangely ... those were not gays were just criminals and were thinking if I could go well for their boss ... I had just turned 18.

I got dressed and they took me out of Naples on a BMW, a car that looked like an ocean liner, we arrive at a villa outside Naples, of those that you see only at the cinema and I find myself in front of a guy of about twenty years, a beautiful guy, the others are gone and I stayed with that guy. I asked him how I could go back to Naples, but he told me that I would sleep there because the party would last all night and I was on duty all night. I asked him how much they would give me, he said 200 euros, and I'm not used to such amounts of money, I don't earn 200 euros even in a full week, but he said I could earn a lot more ... He asked me how old I was and also the date of birth and told me: if you are underage here you cannot work.

In the evening there was a party. One thing that I had never seen anything similar. At the beginning I had just to be a waiter, there were about a dozen



guys, all handsome guys. In short, it seemed like a good thing. Then they said they had to have some fun ... they put the tables next to each other and they made the waiters do the beauty parade ... at the beginning it seemed like something to laugh, then they started: "if you make the catwalk without a jacket, 100 euros for you ... if you take off your shirt, it's 200 euros". In short, you understood how it was going to end, but I couldn't accept such things and ruined the party, I screamed that they were a mass of pigs, but those of the order service took hold of me and two others and threw us out and threatened us showing their guns. When we found ourselves outside, the other two guys beat me to death because they didn't take a penny while the others would have taken away more than 1000 euros each one.

I don't know if those guys were gay, the two who beat me or those who stayed at the party. But I say, straight or gay that you are, but how do you accept such a thing ?! I know that I will spend my life as a bartender but I have a dignity, the dignity of a starving guy but I never sold myself to anyone. I would spit in the face of people just like people at the party, they're not people, they're bags of shit.

### 22.2.3 University gay prostitution

I once happened to touch the reality of prostitution ... it was during the first year of university ... near the faculty of biology I attended, there is a street where notoriously there is male prostitution. ... once I was going back towards the center with some faculty fellow friends, at about seven in the evening and we went through a piece of that street ... I remember when we saw him .. his terrible embarrassment, and our ... he was a guy who used to attend university with us .. one that you never would have said ... that he was gay, certainly not ... we knew that he had a girlfriend .. or at least so it was said ... a very nice guy, nice and always very cared in ways, in dressing ... we pulled away fast ... he was about to get into a car ... meeting him another time at the University has renewed on both sides the embarrassment ... he couldn't even look at us .. I didn't have much intimacy with him, there was some talk sometimes just because we were sitting close to each other waiting for the lessons to start ... I finally tried to approach him ... I didn't even know what to say, but pretending nothing had happened was certainly the worst thing ... he cut it short, said it was not my business ... that each one finds the way he wants to make money, and he had found his own ... an easy way to make money ... and then one must have sex anyway, one cannot stay fasting, and he liked to have sex even that way ... I just told him to be careful .. and then that for me he was losing precious time ... he then offended me and turned away ... then I don't know ... the year after I have

not seen him anymore ... But there is also another form of prostitution ... something really disgusting, which then cuts you in two and there is perhaps never more cure or if there is a cure it's too long and you must be lucky enough to find the right people ... and it's not easy ... I'm talking about the affective blackmailing ... people who trick guys in general very young, who feel alone, who need love, esteem, affection ... and these people eventually manage to exploit these requests to get sex in exchange and maybe then to cede those guys to others ... in short young guys are treated like mere objects of fun by authentic criminals who make them enter a club from which it is really difficult to go out especially if they are fragile ... making them lose all confidence in others .. turning them off, freezing them ... these people are authentic delinquents ... men can be killed even this way.

#### **22.2.4 Gays and risks in chat**

I received this email:

"I send you this email because I need a real help and I don't know what to do. I am a 25 year old guy who has always lived a lot of isolation, normal family, no coming out at home but passable relationships with parents, they don't ask too many questions, I don't know if they understood something but the point is not this.

So, a couple of months ago, a bit to try to give vent to the sense of loneliness that I have always taken within me, I signed up on a gay site, no dating sites or anything like that, just a gay site and I would say a very good gay site. I talked to the administrator and some staff guys and I had a very good impression. The site also has a chat, a simple thing, an IRC chat, which I often attended, sometimes it's possible to do there some serious discussion, other times the chatting is very casual, even on the trivial, but always polite and then there are the operators who intervene in case of need, in short, it's an environment that I like a lot.

In the forum of the group, at a certain point joined a guy whom I will call Mark, and he sent a presentation post that I liked a lot, let's say simple but very pleasant, I answered his message and he answered mine, he seemed to me just a nice person and so I asked him if we could get in touch in chat to talk with less complications. We got in touch in chat, he gave me a lot of compliments for the things I wrote him. The first few times we kept the conversation on general subjects, then the conversation become a lot more free and he told me that he is not Italian but Californian and that he will stay in Italy only for a short time because his friends are all there and often chat with him.

I graduated in languages and at work I speak only English, I was wary happy

to be able to chat in English with a native English speaker but he told me that he was perfecting Italian in Italy and preferred to talk with me in Italian. Our dialogue, however, seemed strange to me, in some way different from the dialogues with the other guys I met in chat, he asked me questions apparently generic but in reality tried to make me interested in him, I would almost say that I worried about him. He told me that he had experienced so many frustrations, that he had had many family problems and that he had never talked about gay things with anyone because in the family they would have killed him. Before closing the chat there was a very long exchange of greetings and smiley faces. After the first week a good relationship had been created between us and I was beginning to be happy with his friendship.

Then another gay joined the forum, a very young guy, who had just turned 18, and with him it happened something very similar to what had happened with Mark and also with him slowly I created a good relationship but he too made me feel anxiety, when we talked, he behaved as if I neglected him, he always greeted me with very ambiguous messages that made it clear that I had been rude to him and he had felt uncomfortable.

Now in practice I spend all my time chatting with these two guys but I start to feel the thing a little unpleasant. If I don't call them, they call me but almost obsessively and reproach me for not having called them, they complain that they have been neglected, etc. etc.. In short, for me they are becoming a real concern, because not to meet them I should abandon completely the site and the chat that I like a lot and where I have real friends, but if I go in chat I find myself in front of one or both of them too and they don't give up. What should I do?"

I quote my answer below.

"The attitude of the two individuals is quite characteristic and there is reason to think that they are not two but one and then there is one thing that seems strange: a guy raised in the US doesn't speak with you in English? The thing doesn't make sense, he can also be in Italy to perfect Italian but everything raises big doubts. I would advise you to do some basic things:

- 1) Immediately notify the chat operators of your doubts, because what happened to you may have happened to others. So ask the operators if those users are really known. It often happens that in a IRC chat a user who is trusted may receive the "voice" this means that this user enters the chat as a registered user enrolled in a particular list and this enables him to get some skills. If the users you're talking about are not operators or "voice", you have to be careful because the chats are public and you never know who's behind

them. There are also the thefts of nicks, because the IRC chat nicknames expire after 30 days of non-use and if one registers a nickname just expired he can be mistaken for the user whose nick has expired, but nick theft are rare because they require a very careful environmental monitoring and laborious procedures. Anyway, typically, a "voice" user is a real user.

2) In IRC chats there is a particular command called "Whois" with which you can know the connection IP of another user. Not all IRC chat clients allow the "Whois" without writing the appropriate command i.e. directly using client support, but making the login to the chat from a client where it is possible (there are several clients of this kind and the chat operators can give you all the indications) you easily get to know the IP of a user. Once the IPs of the two suspicious users are detected, if they are identical or very similar, i.e. with the first and second group of digits identical, you must immediately alert the operators because it's (certainly, if the IPs are identical, and most likely if the IPs are very similar) a single person who uses two different identities, a sign that it's good to be on guard.

3) Through an IP locator you can easily know with good approximation from where a user calls, unless he uses a proxy, but this is unlikely for ordinary users. If one has told you that he's in a city and calls from another, that is, has an IP of another, it means that he lies and you must immediately notify the operators.

4) Keep in mind that using two different browsers on the same computer you can appear in chat with two different identities but always with the same IP. So seeing two characters together in the same chat does not rule out that they are actually the same person.

5) If you meet the American guy in chat, make sure that "he" has to write using accented words, like "perché", or "può" or "così" because in the US keyboard there are no accented vowels, so if in a guy's messages you see accented words it means that he uses an Italian keyboard and it is not at all likely that an American guy accustomed to the US keyboard may use the Italian keyboard.

6) When you are chatting with these characters keep all the logs of conversations, absolutely avoid to put at risk your privacy, never go in voice and less than ever on cam because you could be registered.

7) Keep in mind that the first interest of the Administrator and the Chat

Operators is that the chat is not polluted, so eliminating fakes from the chat is very important to them even more than it is to you. Let me know how it ends up.”

Two days later I received the following answer.

”You were right! But how did you understand that? The IPs used by the two guys were identical! And yet the thing of the accents worked, the accents were there. I tried to talk to the ”Californian” guy in English but he always answered me in Italian! I spoke with the operators and they thanked me a lot, they told me that they would deepen things with their means so as to take discrete and effective measures. I never imagined that such things could happen, you opened my eyes! The operators with me were very kind and they told me that if everyone collaborated, there would be no strange characters in the chat!”

### 22.2.5 Learning from gay experiences

Hello Project, I am a 22 years old guy and I want to tell you my story, then, if you like, I would like to exchange a few words with you (my msn contact is *omissis*). As a child I was the classic good child. My father and especially my mother made me do what they wanted using only praises and half-perplexed faces. When I did what they wanted: hugs and kisses and pampering to no end, I think in an excessive way; when instead I was doing something my own way came the reproaches: ”but why didn’t you tell your mother?” ”you always want to do everything on your own, dad and mom are here for this!” I was a puppet in their hands, and I didn’t realize it. Maybe at that age it’s normal and something like that happens to everyone but for me that stadium had lasted for too many years. The other boys at 11/12 years seek their autonomy, I was only looking for the approval of my parents. The same was for the parish. There was an old priest who was a bit like a guide for the guys, for me it was an oracle, I did anything to hear his ”Good boy!” Same thing at school with the teachers (I did the middle School by priests). At school I was good but I didn’t understand practically anything of what I was studying, when I saw that someone thought differently from my teacher I thought that he was a total ignorant or just an idiot. It went on like this up to 13 years. I didn’t understand anything, I didn’t have even a minimum of autonomy but I was happy so. Until I turned 13, I thought only that sex was a dirty thing made by the depraved guys who didn’t want to study and who would have been very uncomfortable in life because they didn’t do what their parents said.

Shortly after I turned 13 I discovered masturbation by chance. It was something I liked, at the beginning I was worried because it was a new thing, but then it was a pleasant thing and I had had no negative consequences as a result of it. The idea that masturbation had something to do with sex didn't even touch me, the models of sexuality that I had at that time were those a bit in gloomy tones that I received from my parents who never deepened the subject but branded everything related to sex simply saying: "It's people who have the brain ruined!" In short, it had also occurred to me to think that I could have told my mother that "sometimes" I masturbated, just because I thought that sex had nothing to do with what I was doing, and fortunately I didn't. So I never told it the priest in confession or anyone else but not to avoid saying it but because it seemed to me like an obvious and trivial thing. For all the rest I continued to be the classic good child who obeys parents, goes to church, etc. etc. In the church at that time I spontaneously recited the part of the mystic. I had so well assimilated the priest's way of doing that I even thought I could become a priest. I was a perfect believer, the parish priest always praised me and I felt proud of myself, it wasn't a recital, I wasn't aware of playing a role that didn't belong to me to which I had only perfectly adapted. In the end, so, everything was fine and I didn't ask myself any questions.

It went on like this up to 14 years. I started middle School in a state school, shortly after I turned 14, and there I realized I was completely out of this world. I didn't understand anything about the sexual discourses of my classmates, I just pretended to understand simply not to let my mates make fun of me. Then, slowly, over time, more interpreting the gestures they made than the words they said I began to understand something, two things actually: that what I did every day was masturbation and that it was exactly that sexual activity that I had heard condemned by the parish priest, and then I realized for the first time that my comrades used to masturbate thinking about the girls that for me were completely indifferent and moreover my companions used, for those who had fantasies like mine, forms of radical contempt, marking those guys with epithets of which I was barely beginning to understand the meaning and above all I understood that such epithets were directed towards those like me.

What could I do? It wasn't a problem related to my class or my school, I realized that in another class or in another school it would have been exactly the same. And then I couldn't change school. I should have taken note of reality and should have told myself: I'm gay! And I should have been aware of all the consequences, understanding that being gay, in my case, could be reconciled with family peace only at the cost of a total fiction destined to last a lifetime, the same speech more or less for religion.

But at that time I didn't know anything about either my parents or the church and I thought that in the end a conciliation was possible. I was so used to receiving the encouragement of my parents and of the parish priest, that I couldn't do without it even if I understood that as a gay I could get those things only pretending, but instead of getting the straight way, I took a cross street trying to reconcile the irreconcilable. Instead of accepting a game of explicit hypocrisy towards the outside, I preferred to be hypocritical with myself and pretend to maintain a true relationship with my parents and with the church.

I proposed to myself to tell my parents everything, then, when I really had to do so I made vague speeches, of malaise, of disgust of the world and similar things but I never managed to spit out the frog. Then something happened that changed my relationship with my parents, that is, it made me change the point of view I had on them. On the bottom of a drawer I found a pack of condoms, now I knew what they were. My parents seemed to me completely hypocritical. Why did they never speak to me honestly? But they didn't, and relationships with them became even more ambiguous.

With the priest, in confession, I managed to say how things were (at least there was the confessional secrecy) but he told me that if the thing went on without control I would have to tell my parents in order to allow them to help me. My attempts or fake attempts to solve the problem went on until I turned 18.

Through the internet I met a gay guy two years older than me (let's call him Mark) and I talked a lot with him. Mark is a very good guy. A couple of times we met but we only talked, he wanted me to understand a lot of things but at the time I thought he was telling me such things only because he wanted to take me to bed with him. We had met on a very serious and non-gay site but then I was still afraid that gays could assault guys.

In short, Mark put me in a bit of a crisis, he was the first gay guy I knew and was in fact very different from what I thought gay people were. The first time we went out I thought he would try something with me, I tried to reject the idea a bit, but I wanted it very much. We had been talking for hours and I enjoyed answering him by rebutting his arguments with things that now seem to me incredibly stupid but at that time seemed to me very intelligent. At the end of the evening I was a bit disoriented by the things he had told me and a little by the fact that he had not tried anything with me. The following Sunday we went together to the sea, I put the swimsuit underneath because I thought we were going to swim and I also thought it would be the right time for my first sexual experience and instead nothing, he didn't even think about going to swim, he remained in jeans and we only talked. I was nervous, at the end of the evening I said to him: "But why didn't you

try anything with me today? But are you gay or not?" He looked at me with a questioning face as if to ask me if I was mad, then he shook his head and said: "Excuse me, I guess we don't understand each other." During the whole return journey I harassed him with questions that now I understand how stupid they were, and he didn't answer. He left me at my house very coldly.

The next day I called him a thousand times until he answered me. He was newly talking to me but I felt that things were not like before. I hated him, I thought he would act the part of the proud gay who looks down on the naive friend, I thought he wanted to give a lot of weight to some stupid things that I had told him, among other things I was also a fool who tried to use with him an attitude that aimed to catching his sexual interest, the result was exactly the opposite. He told me that he didn't feel like going ahead and that his way of being gay was completely different from mine and that trying to build something starting from too distant points of view would have been a useless effort. I called him a couple of times but then he told me he had nothing to say to me.

Now, after three and a half years, I understood what he meant. I cannot reproach him for anything. He left and I was alone. At least for a year I tried to destroy his memory and devalue it in every possible way telling me that he was a hypocrite, then I threw myself on the chats but always telling myself that I was not looking for sex but I just wanted to understand what it was about. When I entered a chat, I entered in theory as an explorer who enters an unknown terrain, but at the base there was certainly the sex, I wanted to try, now I wanted to try at any cost, I also put in my profile some explicit photos in theory to see people's reactions but basically to attract handsome guys.

In the early days I was cautious, I had read many things about AIDS and I didn't want to take risks, but the temptation was so great. In the end I arranged an appointment with a 32 year old. At first he was well disposed and courted me, even too much, he wanted to take me to his house but I didn't go there. We said goodbye after two hours of mutual discomfort, at the end he told me: "But why did you look for me?" I told him "To talk a little." He looked at me with an ironic face and just said: "Ah!" And has gone.

The second I met was 26 years old, well dressed, but of a unique rudeness, three words out of four were bad words. With him I was afraid because I entered stupidly in his car and he started as a rocket and took me to a country site outside the city in a place where I had never been. I really thought it could end badly, maybe just because of my absurd fantasies but I was afraid it could rape me.



And while we were going, I thought about how to escape this situation. When I got out of the car I did not follow him and I ran away and he chased me, screaming terrible words, when he saw people running he shouted that I was a thief and someone started to chase me, I escaped through the fields, they lost sight of me and gave up. It was also evening, it was dark and it was very cold, but I started walking along the provincial road, I heard the dogs barking and I was scared, then I saw a train passing by and I understood more or less where I was, I spent almost an hour to get to the station and waited two hours for the next train.

So I came home after midnight all dirty with mud and my parents asked me a thousand questions. My computer has the password and they couldn't know anything about me. I said that I had gone for a ride outside the city and that I had slipped into the mud but they didn't believe it and our relationships became very difficult.

I come to the conclusion. Three weeks ago I saw Mark, I begged him to listen to me, he told me that he now had a boyfriend but I told him that it was fine but that I was only in a desperate need to speak with a serious person who could listen to me and he stopped to talk to me, he listened to me very carefully and he even smiled, then he called his boyfriend and it was evident that Mark was happy (how much I wish I had been in the place of that guy!) In the following days we met another time. Three days ago he introduced me to his boyfriend who is 25 years old and we went in three to have a pizza. Mark's boyfriend is very sweet, even with me, he treats me well, it seems almost incredible. In other times I would not have endured being together with two gay guys who were in couple, now it seems to me a beautiful thing. I have two gay friends, two real friends, I felt never better than that. I am learning so many things from them and I realize that I didn't understand anything at all. They told me about Gay Project. If it's a forum that they like it cannot be a stupid thing. In practice I have been reading a little the forum only a few days before Christmas. Now I understand the things I'm reading but even only a month ago they would have seemed stupid to me, I have to thank Mark and his boyfriend who are slowly helping me to open my eyes. In short, I think it's worth talking to you a little bit!



## Chapter 23

# SEX IN GAY-STRAIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

### 23.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

Many gay guys, before being fully aware of being gay or before totally accepting themselves as gays, have had heterosexual experiences, and sometimes have continued to have relationships with girls even after they became fully aware of being gay. Very often the awareness of one's own homosexuality is acquired by reflecting on the fact that spontaneous sexuality of masturbation is oriented towards guys even if the couple sexuality is hetero. The mere fact that a guy has straight sex intercourse is therefore certainly not enough to qualify that guy as a heterosexual. I would add that when a guy, who will ultimately accept his exclusive homosexuality but is not yet fully aware of it, looks for a girl, due to an unconscious defense mechanism, tends to choose her not very motivated towards sexuality and devoid of sexual experiences, so that she cannot make comparisons between his sexual behavior and that of other guys.

Let's get now on the side of the girl. It is evident that in a sexual relationship with a guy, who behaves like a hetero but is not heterosexual, a girl who has a minimum of experience of heterosexual sexuality feels something uncertain, hesitant, feels a reluctance of the guy to her insistence more than a primary sexual desire on the part of the guy. Here is the point. A gay man can also, in certain very special situations, experience sexual interest and even excitement for a woman to the point of having satisfactory sexual intercourse with her, but that is not his primary choice, his sexual fantasies remain gay, his masturbation remains gay almost always one hundred percent even during the heterosexual relationship.

For a gay, this reasoning, applied to sexual intercourse with a girl, is flawless: the guy is and remains gay, has more or less satisfactory heterosexual intercourse, the girl if she is not very interested in sex can also accept the things in these terms, but a discourse that is in many ways symmetrical to the one just done can also be applied to sexual relations between a straight guy and a gay guy. I mean that assuming that a guy who has sex with another guy is necessarily gay is just like assuming that a guy who has sex with a girl is necessarily straight, both these things don't hold up. As a gay guy under certain circumstances can experience sexual interest in a girl, a heterosexual guy, under certain circumstances, can experience sexual interest in a guy. That hetero guy will remain heterosexual even if he will have sexual contact with another guy, his primary sexuality, his masturbation and his sexual fantasies will remain directed towards girls almost always one hundred percent even in the period in which the sexual contacts are sometimes realized with another guy.

In the case just described of a heterosexual guy who has sexual intercourse with a gay guy, let's put on the side of the gay guy, it is obvious that the gay guy will feel that the sexual interest that the hetero guy shows towards him is not symmetrical to his, because the sexuality of the straight guy has been structured over the years on other sexual fantasies that are now extrapolated to the gay field but are not originally gay. I'm saying that while it is quite peaceful that a gay guy can have sex with a girl, it is not as peaceful that a heterosexual guy can have sex with a guy, and it is almost assumed as granted that a guy who has sex with another guy is really gay.

But heterosexuals who have sex even with guys exist and are not very few. To gays they seem gay but they are not, their primary sexuality and their masturbation is and remains oriented towards girls. Exactly like a guy who has sex with a girl can seem straight to that girl just because he has sex with her but it's not at all said that he is.

Having premised this. I come to the central topic of the chapter. It sometimes happens that a gay guy falls in love with a friend who declares himself straight and, slowly, by insistence, manages to induce him to have some sexual contact with him. This thing that appears to the gay guy an exalting moment, when it happens, shows all its weak sides. The gay feels something unusual, originally not gay, not corresponding to the sexual fantasies typical of a gay guy, that is to his own sexual fantasies. The first element that sounds out of tune for a gay is the lack of interest of one partner in the other partner's penis, or a weak interest, more manifested than felt, induced only by not wanting to appear disinterested and often perceived by the gay guy as unnatural and recited.

The hetero guy doesn't usually masturbate the gay guy, but on the contrary

likes being masturbated by him, the straight guy is available for oral sex but only if practiced on his penis while he is extremely reluctant to swap roles. But there is more, sexual intercourse focuses on what the gay guy has of less masculine, in practice the gay guy realizes not to embody the primary sexual interest of his partner and to be for him only the "substitute of a girl", however, he continues to consider his partner a strange gay rather than a straight guy.

I add that often, after contacts of this kind, gay guys try to insist on creating other occasions for meeting while hetero guys show strong reluctance if not resistance and certainly don't take initiatives. It follows that it would be appropriate to remember that as there are gays who, in particular situations, sometimes go also with the girls, remaining anyway gay in all respects, there are also hetero guys who, in particular situations, sometimes go also with the guys remaining nevertheless straight in all respects.

When a gay guy is faced with a guy who is clearly heterosexual but available to have a sexual contact with him, I'm saying available, which doesn't mean interested, that is, when a gay guy meets a guy who eventually accepts a sexual contact but doesn't take initiatives, he thinks automatically of being in front of a gay guy who is becoming aware of his sexual orientation; he should instead understand that in all likelihood he is in front of a heterosexual guy available to have also gay sexual contacts, in very special circumstances, obviously remaining hetero one hundred percent.

In situations like these, to build a serious relationship something misses, there is a lack of basic reciprocity because the primary sexual interests are different and the hypothesis that you can create a truly important emotional world that can turn into a true couple relationship is objectively baseless. For a gay guy, it's often very difficult and painful to realize it, because he is forced to understand that a story that seemed to have reached its peak isn't even a story and that fantasy led him to get away from reality.

Sexuality to be really satisfying must be authentically shared. The sexual balance of a gay couple is based on sexual affinities, that is on a set of sexual desires and fantasies common to the two partners. In general, gay guys are clearly aware of how sexual archetypes of straight guys are different from theirs own and they perceive it simply talking with their straight friends. But when a gay guy glimpses in one of his friends clearly hetero some glimpse that suggests that this friend could also be available to a gay sexual contact, the gay guy's mind goes haywire and the projections and increasing expectations dominate the field.

Then when some sexual contact is realized, the gay guy, who hadn't wanted to take note of the heterosexuality of the other, finally awakens from his illusions and realizes that there is something that doesn't work.

The tendency to project oneself far away in order to satisfy one's own desires ends up legitimizing completely unrealistic expectations. Often, in gay-hetero relationships that also involve sexual contacts between the two guys, the gay guy tends not to see reality and literally stops thinking. The expression: "we had sex together therefore he cannot be straight, even if he always repeats it" is completely superimposable to similar phrases that girls fallen in love with gay guys use to claim that their boyfriend is straight. The mechanisms through which a gay-hetero relationship between two guys is born are completely analogous to those that lead a gay guy to stay with a girl. The story starts from friendship, often sexualized on one side only (the gay guy masturbates while thinking of his friend, but the straight guy continues to masturbate thinking about girls), then there are increasingly intense occasions for intimacy that to the gay guy appear as a clear sign that the other is gay while to the hetero guy appear only as forms of close friendship and nothing more.

It's easy to get to para-sexual situations, as shared showers in sports environments, casual nudity without embarrassment and the like, to which the gay guy attributes much meaning and that for the hetero are completely insignificant things, and so sometimes it's also possible to get to a sexual intercourse that is acceptable for a hetero just because he doesn't see it as a gay conversion (and it is not in fact) but as a trivial thing to which no particular significance is attached, maybe as a form of generosity towards a friend who needs it.

To build a serious gay story it is not enough that the two guys are gay, that is just a necessary condition, certainly not sufficient, but it is a necessary condition, they must really be two gay guys but the fact that between two guys some sexual contacts took place absolutely doesn't allow to conclude that they are both really gay. Sexual orientation is not a question of behavior but of drives and desires. In the e-mails I receive and in the chats with the guys, it often emerges not only the idea that a guy is automatically considered gay only for the fact that he accepts an explicit sexual contact with another guy, but even that "if he accepts a sexual contact with me he is in love with me." Behind this statement there is a tendency to read explicit sex as an "essential part" of a gay relationship and at the same time there is the underestimation of the typically affective dimension.

Whoever says "if he has sex with me is in love with me" takes for granted the identity between sex and love. If on one hand it is understandable that a gay guy in love with a friend tries to get to a sexual contact with him, it is necessary that the guy in love understands that his friend may not be in love with him, and may not even be gay even if he can end up accepting sexual contact with another guy.

Sexual costume is changing and behaviors that were unthinkable 40 years ago now begin to spread and many taboos collapse, worn down by the passage of time. Today the embarrassment in talking about masturbation practically doesn't exist anymore and the taboo of nudity is largely reduced. From the straight guys the taboo related to sexual contacts with other guys is often exceeded, both at the level of gay games among straight guys and also at the level of sexual couple contacts that are undoubtedly much more similar to a real gay relationship than to simple sexual games. In other words, today for a straight guy the idea of being able to have a contact, even sexual, with another guy, even an explicitly gay guy, is no longer an insurmountable taboo. I met via chat straight guys who loved a gay friend of theirs and ended up accepting sexual contact with their gay friend. It was often about sexual contacts deeply wanted and desired only on the side of the gay guy and accepted by the straight guy as a kind of gratification to give to his gay friend. In these relationships there is no real sexual reciprocity not even at the minimum level. This fact allows the hetero guy to participate in a homosexual contact in some way safeguarding his hetero identity through altruistic motivations.

The essence of these discourses is that a straight guy may very well be involved in sexual contacts with another guy, but the straight guy remains anyway a straight guy, his sexuality doesn't change because he participated sometimes to some gay sexual contacts.

Basically a straight guy can accept a sexual contact with another guy for two reasons that are substantially different but that are not mutually exclusive and even sometimes integrate:

- 1) For play.
- 2) For emotional reasons.

But why does a straight guy tend to form a strong friendship with a boy more or less explicitly gay? The answers can be many:

- 1) Because he feels the affection of his gay friend and is gratified, he feels loved and desired and perceives the attention of the other.
- 2) Because he has nothing better to do or feels a sense of loneliness that is relieved by the presence of a gay friend.
- 3) Because the gay friend is insistent and courts wildly the straight guy.
- 4) Because, apart from sexual orientation, between the two guys there is a close affinity of views.
- 5) Because the friendship between the two guys goes back to early adolescence.

- 6) Because the gay guy is interested in listening and the straight guy needs to talk.

Too often gay guys tend to divide the world into gay and straight as if this division would mark a clear border line between the two groups and especially between the social behaviors of the two groups. In reality, if this border line exists objectively in terms of sexual orientation, even if not one hundred percent in terms of sexual behavior, as we have seen, it certainly has no reason to exist in many other fields that don't involve sexuality. It is precisely for this reason that gay-hetero friendships exist and are often very tight; even if they are not symmetrical these relationships can find deep motivations on both sides.

It should be borne in mind that the development of a gay relationship is never the outcome of a one-sided strategy, it is not a chess game and there is no winning strategy. To see a story of love as the story of a conquest means to read it as an unequal relationship in which there is a conqueror and there is a conquered and this is a typical legacy of a culture that is not only heterosexual but properly male chauvinist.

In the gay world, where two guys start on an equal footing, the relationship is built in two, I mean that if you are not really two to cooperate in building a serious emotional relationship, the relationship, admitted and not granted that it can be born, however, is born on very fragile bases. Many gay guys cannot conceive true friendships with a guy and they intend the friendship with a guy exclusively as a necessary step of a strategy of conquest that has as its target the realization of a sexual contact.

Starting from this point of view the emotional dimension is automatically subordinated to the realization of a sexual contact and the sexual intercourse is seen as a necessary condition for the construction of a serious emotional relationship. In this way the natural order of things is reversed, the construction of a serious emotional relationship is postponed and subordinated to sexuality. Obviously these attitudes heavily affect the relationships of gay-hetero friendship and tend to forcibly transform them into something that resembles a couple relationship.

The inability to accept the friendship with another guy if not as a first step of the attempt to involve that guy from a sexual point of view, deprives many gay guys of male friendships, in the great majority of cases with straight guys but also with gay guys, and it must be kept in mind that this type of friendship is absolutely essential for the emotional balance of a gay guy.

In a gay-hetero relationship, the attempt to sexualize the relationship of friendship starts from the gay guy who tends to read the behavior of his partner as a path towards the awareness of being gay, that is, he tends to



apply his interpretive canons to another guy. Here are some typical ways of reasoning:

- 1) He's a latent gay, he's still not aware of being gay but I'll help him on his way and I'll let him discover his true nature.
- 2) After all, he's gay but he doesn't want to accept it, a straight guy would never do so many of the things he does.
- 3) He's at least bisexual because he has never approached a girl in a serious way and this means something.

It is evident that the attempt to sexualize the relationship presupposes the identification of the friend at least as a potential gay, otherwise the attempt would be *a priori* condemned to failure.

The point of view of the heterosexual guy who deliberately accepts a sexual contact with a gay friend of his can be roughly summarized as follows:

- 1) My friend is gay but he is a good guy and I love him. He is in love with me, I don't feel seriously involved in this fact but don't feel even rejected by it. If I can make love with a girls I'm not interested in, then I can make love also with him, I'm not interest in him sexually but I feel him very similar from many other points of view.
- 2) I do it for him, as far as I am concerned, I can only be involved on a physical level, but my sexuality is really another. I don't feel less hetero for the fact that I can make a friend happy in a way that costs me nothing.
- 3) With my gay friend in the end there is clarity, he knows I'm straight, I don't think he can feel tied to me in a morbid way.

I report below with some minor changes a mail that was sent to me on June 21st 2009.

"Hello Project, I'm a straight guy 20 years old, I have a gay friend of mine (let's call him Mark) and I'd like to tell you what happened between us. I state that I have never had doubts about my sexuality. For reasons that you will understand by reading the following I found your project and I read a lot of what you wrote and I saw my idea of being heterosexual even more strengthened. In short, I don't have anything gay, this to avoid misunderstandings, sorry if I do this remark, I have nothing against gays but I'm not gay.

When we were 19, my friend Mark clearly told me he was gay. This didn't upset me at all, we were always very close, gym together since we were 14

years old, school mates on the same faculty, we studied together to take the same exams. I didn't realize then that Mark in confessing that he was gay had tried to make me understand that he had fallen in love with me.

I didn't understand it at that time and continued to treat him as usual. Things between us, however, were no longer as before. When he was with me he was embarrassed, he was not looking at me, he was much more formal. One day I saw him really bad and I tried to make him talk. I had thought he had an emotional life at least minimal, but it was not like that. We were in the car and when I saw him uncomfortable I took his hand and I held it, he was biting his lips to the point of making them bleed, then he started crying and told me about himself (and me) open heart. It was a very intense moment, he tended to move away from me and to tell me that I had to go my way, he told me that since I'm not gay, there would never be anything between us, but I loved Mark, like a brother, but anyway I loved him, and I tried to make him understand, but he tended to interpret every affectionate gesture as an element to question my heterosexuality.

In short, it was not easy and it went on like this for months. Then it came to his mind the idea that if I had sex with him I would have realized that I was gay because he told me that only a gay guy could love him as I did. He insisted a lot. I told him that nothing would have changed between us and that I was straight and straight I would stay. He literally begged me to try and I finally said yes.

I had thought, at least at the beginning, that from the sexual point of view our intercourse wouldn't create big embarrassments. I didn't know how things would have gone, but in fact I felt that it was not my world and he felt it too. So it ended with a mutual masturbation a bit clumsy then he looked at me and told me that he had understood. The story of the sexual intercourse was over.

Why do I write you this email? The reason is that after that day our relationship is fading, he doesn't look for me anymore, when I look for him, he escapes me. Once he met me while I was walking with my girlfriend and he changed the road and I was very sorry. I love Mark but I think that what I can offer him doesn't interest him, when I talk to him he smiles ironically as if to say that it is not what he wants from me, but I can give him only that. Project, but why do gay guys bring everything back to the common denominator of sex? I don't want to lose Mark, for me he's important, what can I do to make him understand that having a friend like him is important to me? Among other things, I think he was very ashamed of having insisted so much to do a little sex with me, he feels guilty and I see it very well, as if he had raped me or something like that, but I never considered this way what happened between us, I would like him to understand it but he doesn't

listen to me. Why cannot he understand that sex is not everything in life? Project, let me know what you think. It is almost absurd that I write to you for this reason but for me Mark is important and I know that you can understand me without misunderstandings.

Andrew”

## 23.2 DOCUMENTS

### 23.2.1 Sex between a gay and a straight

Hello Project, I am a 17 years old guy, almost 18, and I think I'm gay or better I'm gay because girls leave me completely indifferent. Let me tell you my story, I don't know if such a thing has happened to other guys but in practice it has occupied my brain for more than two years. When I was in ninth grade, I had already an interest in guys and I only masturbated thinking of guys I liked but I never really fell in love with a boy and even less with a girl. Let's say that my interest was just sexual, or maybe it was because it could not be otherwise.

So, in April 2010, tenth grade, the school trip comes, I clearly slip right in because I think that maybe something could also happen, staying a long time with other boys something could really happen, I don't say sex, but perhaps to see them naked, or at least in underwear, which for me would have been a great deal.

We had to be out four nights, the first we did very late, because of disco and we returned to the hotel at about three in the night, so we collapsed to sleep, the second night they were too drunk, they vomited on the floor, a very stupid behavior. The good thing came the third night. We were in room, three guys, and three other guys came, so we were six, all male, and they started to talk about sex, but seriously. I wondered how they could speak so casually, just without any problems.

Basically I was just listening to them, they were talking about everything they felt for girls, how they were trying to touch girls and be touched when they could, how they masturbated thinking about girls. I would never have been able to talk like that. They were talking for more than three hours, they were just happy, you could see that it was something that put them at their ease.

One of my roommates was erect and stayed there this way all the time, laughing with them and hearing them talk, I too was hard but even if it they had realized it, in a situation like that, it would not be a problem because we were talking about girls. I'm gay, and no one knows it but if I dared to say it,

nobody would believe me. I've never had the problem that someone thinks I'm gay and now I begin to have the opposite problem, that some girls might think that I'm courting them. Girls run behind me and this embarrasses me a lot. So that night for me was a great night even if I realized that my intimacy with my friends was all based on a misunderstanding, but nevertheless I tried an almost sexual intimacy with my friends I loved. The last night I was in a two bed room and it happened what you can imagine, my friend started talking about girls then the conversation slipped on sex, just a little more on physical sex, and it ended up that we masturbated mutually. For me it was the most exciting thing that had ever happened to me. It lasted little more than 10 minutes. I was just upset that I could do a similar thing with my companion and I had begun to think that in the end he was gay, because he said it had been very lovely. Then we went to sleep.

I didn't sleep at all, I mentally went over all the sensations of a few minutes before, I was convinced that my partner was gay and I was extremely happy because he was the guy that I liked best of all my companions. I wanted to let him know that I loved him, that I was in love with him and so on.

The morning he was quiet as if nothing had happened, I try to give him a smile, but he is quite busy with other things like the last hike of the trip, camera etc.. etc.. and not even looks at me, but not deliberately, just as it was natural, then he answers me in a friendly way but, let's say, banally friendly.

The tour ends, school starts, all is regular as if nothing had happened between us, I am careful not to make speeches. In practice, for two years we have not talked about such things, but this year we went on a trip together and we ended up in the same room, now he's in love with a girl, or rather he is in love with a girl who doesn't even look at him and he feels really bad, we have also talked seriously during the trip and one night he was just about to start crying, that girl is now practically his fixation, but the trouble is that she is not his girlfriend.

I tried to comfort him as a "straight" good friend who can give advice to his friend on how to deal women. At one point I took all the courage I had and I said, "Do you remember two years ago?" He told me that he remembered that night six of us in a room talking about girls and that was beautiful. But he did not seem to remember what had happened between us, then he smiled and made it clear that he remembered but concluded: "Anyways, at that time we were kids!" I nodded with a smile as if to say "Yes It is true.", however his statement to devalue the thing for me has been a stab in the heart, I was hoping that the trip this year was an opportunity to clarify and instead it was an opportunity for me to realize that if I do not know that a guy is gay, it's better not have any illusion. I realized that the same fact

for me and for him had two completely different meanings, it seemed to me the beginning of a love story, for him it was something stupid suitable for kids. But, remembering that night, I lived two intense years, daydreaming, waiting for a sign from him, interpreting everything he said assuming he was gay. At least now I opened my eyes.

If you want to, well, publish this e-mail. Thank you for everything you do! Aldo (invented name but I like it because I'm high! Ih ih!) [In Italian "high" = "Alto" sounds something like "Aldo" (a personal name)]

### 23.2.2 Temptations of a gay guy in vacation

Project,

I have to try to understand what to do because if I don't I go crazy, my name is Marco, a simple but true name and I'm not ashamed to use it here because it is very common, so at zero risk. I'm 20, almost 21, I live in a city in central Italy. I have always had two strong passions, since I was a little boy, one are guys and the other is the sea.

Nobody knows about me, no one at home, no friends, no one at all. I do not pretend to be straight and my friends, who have all a girlfriend, never meddled into my affairs. Since the high school till now at university I have three friends, Luca, Carlo and Enzo, we all study at the same faculty and we study together, there are no stupid jealousies for questions of school grades or things of this sort even if we have to pass the same examinations.

They are good guys and I trust them except on a single point that I do not even want to consider with them. We spend a lot of time together both in the morning and in the afternoon to study, for the rest each one has his own life and practically we never talk about it. This year, for the first time, my parents allowed me to leave on holiday on my own and so I and my three friends rented a little apartment, just a single room and kitchen in front of the see, near [omissis].

The place is gorgeous, for a sea lover like me it's the best. The house was cheap, indeed I would say very cheap, and that's why we got it immediately, it had some problems, but at the end we had to stay there for only 5 days and so it didn't even make sense to look for another. It had only one room and we were four, then it was exposed to the south, the sun warmed it in full from dawn to sunset, in the evening, the temperature reached 33 C and there was only a single window that had a dense mosquito net, so it could be opened only in a very relative way.

All this should give the impression of an unbearable torture but for me it was not like that at all. In the center of the room, there was a dining table, because the kitchen was so little that two persons standing couldn't even

get into. In the evening we moved the table in one corner and added two camp beds because there were just two single sofa beds one on each side of the room. There was not even a ventilator, nothing at all! The heat was so strong that the sweat continually flowed in drops on our faces.

The first day we arrived at eleven o'clock in the morning, we only thought about getting ready to go to the sea, we didn't even have the problem of cooking because we had brought lunch from home. We spent our time in the water, between low water and swimming, practically until eight and a half in the evening and we were fine there, or better divinely, there were very few people although it was the week before August 15th, we were sitting in the low water to talk, then we engaged in swimming races, then in little racing competitions between the four of us, in short, it was fine and the time was flying, then sunset came and with it clouds of mosquito (there was a cane thicket nearby) and we had to run into the house, we told each-other that fortunately there was the mosquito net.

When we entered, we had the impression of getting into a furnace, a disagreeable feeling, we opened the single true window and the two half windows in the bathroom and in the kitchen, but the three windows were all on the same wall and had dense mosquito nets, and no air stream was moving. First instinctive solution: the cold shower, 5 minutes each one. The bathroom was small and there was no key to the door, there was just shower in a corner without shower box and without curtain, but this did not create the least problem. In turn, each of us entered the shower for no more than for 5 minutes, then the others knocked on the door because they couldn't wait to cool off.

We were all bare-chested after the shower, but after ten minutes, the heat again became newly unbearable and another shower was needed. We ate that little bit of dinner we had brought from home, a dinner that was somehow overcooked because it had been for so many hours in a room where the temperature was unbearable, and, needless to say, there was not even a fridge! Then Luca tried to turn on his PC but there was no internet connection, so no PC was available.

There was no TV, just a half-broken radio, we listened to it for a while but it was an old archaeological device that warmed up like a stove and that could not stay switched on for more than a minute because it croaked a lot. Luca and Carlo at one point said that they could no longer resist within their shorts, they pulled them off and remained in their underwear, or rather in their classic white briefs. Enzo resisted for a while, then he too followed them. I didn't know what to do, I kept my Bermuda shorts on and it was a real torture because they were all wet and glued to the skin.

I had in front of me in a few square feet my friends in briefs who were still

sweating like fountains. We opened the camp beds. From left to right we were: Enzo, I, Luca and Carlo, this allocation of the beds was really the best for me because Carlo is a bit overweight and frankly does not attract me. Enzo is not so bad, a handsome guy, but he is not exactly my type, but Luca has always been my secret dream. Project, I'm still one of those gays, so to say, stupid, who fall in love with their straight friend even though they know very well that he is straight.

In short, we went to bed and turned off the light. Near the window there was a street lamp and the light filtered through the window and once you were used to seeing in that weak light, you could see everything quite distinctly. Carlo noticed the rather strong light of the street lamp and said, "Guys, I close the window because there is too much light", but I stopped him right away and said, "No! Come on! There is already an unbearable heat here!" And Carlo left the window wide open. After about ten minutes he collapsed like a stone, Enzo turned over several times in the bed, but then he too collapsed. Luca went to pee, then threw himself on the camp bed, he seemed very agitated, pulled his briefs down without saying anything, put himself belly down on the bed and slowly fell asleep.

I frankly did not really sleep at all. I had Luca sleeping completely naked at 30 cm from me. In practice, I did not take my eyes off him the whole night long. Of course he did not sleep all night belly down and for me it has been a show absolutely unique and amazing, he had also the morning erection, while in practice I was in constant erection from the evening before. At about seven o'clock in the morning, when Carlo rolled over a little, before getting up, Luca put on back his briefs in front of me, but with the utmost naturalness, as if it were the most obvious thing in the world, then he took the phone and went out to call the girl because there was no signal inside the house. Sometimes I think that his girl is really lucky! Wow, let's go on! I was shocked by the fact that for Luca to sleep naked in the room with his friends was a very normal thing. That's why for a straight guy the locker room is neutral and does not produce any effect. In practice for a straight guy being naked with friends is not something that has to do with sex neither has something to do with the idea of being naked with a girl. In the following days, he came out naked twice from the shower and wiped out in front of us and no one did a wrinkle, of course neither did I! Eh eh! He is a sportsman and he doesn't have any conditioning in these things.

In fact we stayed in that house for only four nights and for four nights Luca slept close to me completely naked without any embarrassment. You can't even imagine what a shocking effect this thing did to me, or perhaps you can, rather . . . certainly you can. But how can a straight guy be so uninhibited? It's just something I can't understand. But why all the straight guys take it

for granted that all their friends are straight? In the days we've been there I've never heard a joke about gays, nothing at all.

We were friends, we were well with each other, we didn't even talk about girls. I can't imagine what a meaning it can have for them a holiday like that completely without girls! Maybe every five minutes they thought of their girls, but it seemed to me that they were fine without having to think about their girls. I was fine, certainly, because I was with Luca and "that way", but they also, in my opinion, were all fine. I think, although without sexual intercourse, because such things were absolutely impossible there, in my opinion straight guys, or at least the great majority of them certainly appreciate a short "only male" vacation.

Every day we stayed there I pretended to be totally disinterested in these things, by day, "but not by night!" To use Arbore's [an Italian showman] words. Since I did not sleep in the night; in the morning I was completely upset and my friends told me I looked really upset, but I said I had not slept because of the heat, although the reason was Luke.

Now the white-nights period is over, we're back in town, for them nothing happened, did you understand, Project? Nothing happened! But for me it happened in a shocking way! Project! I'm really upset! Perhaps now for me he will be a fixed idea! But even though I found him sleeping naked near me for four nights one behind the other, I know very well that he is straight, and now I know it much better than before! What a desperation! What happened to me has really upset me! Before this vacation, I fantasized about Luca, you understand when, but now it has become my total obsession!

Project, what have I to do? I cannot avoid thinking about Luca! I have him in my blood! If you want, you can post this mail on your forum, because my friends will never open a gay site!

### 23.2.3 Gays and repressed instincts

The following is a discussion coming from the Gay Project forum.

"Hello Project, I've been reading your site for a long time, it's a serious matter, an absolute exception on the net, and it is comforting to know that there are such sites, for me it was really useful and I feel at ease there. I'm 23 years old, practically I'm not out with anyone but let's say I've often been on the verge of doing things that would seem completely wrong to you. I read in the forum stories of guys who know how to control themselves, who can live waiting for a serious occasion, but I feel that I'm going to explode and I won't be able to do what they do for a long time yet.

It's about three years that my life has completely changed, I can say that



up to 20 years I was totally repressed, a thousand complexes to the limits of the absurd: I never went to the sea, never on the beach, never in swimsuit, absolutely never, I could not sleep with another person in the room, I could not stand the idea of physical proximity, I don't say the contact but just to be 50 cm away, and this happened both with guys and girls, I always felt uncomfortable with people, as if they could be able to read inside me and understand my secret and above all I tried to repress myself in the most ruthless way, even not eating or drinking to make my body feel not well because this way, according to my opinion, things related to sex wouldn't have come through my head.

All this more or less until three years ago, then I met a guy and I got a crush on him and I threw away all my taboos and I changed my attitude radically, not in public because I'm afraid of people's reactions, but I don't repress myself anymore, I feel very strong sexual impulses and I don't fight them anymore, on the contrary I try to cultivate them.

Before I knew that guy, there was pornography, I liked it but it seemed to me like a false thing and I wanted a real thing. I made a thousand films inside my mind to understand how it would be with a guy, but then they were only films in my imagination. I never said anything to that guy and I will not do it because I think he is straight and I can see that he doesn't care about me, but I feel attracted to him just like by a strong magnetic force. I knew everything about him by looking for information around, I even took pictures of him from a distance and he didn't notice it. You can imagine what I do with his photos. The porn photos don't excite me, but the photos of that guy fully dressed send me into orbit, apart from the physiological reactions, I live dreaming of being with him in every sense, I try to imagine (all fancy) how he would react if I put into practice what comes to my mind. Sometimes when I'm close to him I feel the irrepressible instinct to embrace him and not only, I think you understand what I mean.

Project, I cannot take it anymore, I know he's probably straight, I know that I could ruin my reputation and that mine is a homophobic country, but staying close to this guy and stop myself it's too difficult for me, I cannot handle it anymore. But basically why can't I tell him that I fell in love with him? A smile would suffice me, it would be enough for me to understand that he doesn't feel offended. But why do I have to repress myself like that? What if I told him? What would happen If I committed this madness? I asked him if he likes sports, you know, perhaps, if he had attended the gym I could have gone there too, you know, almost casually, but no! He doesn't go anywhere: study and church, or rather, study, church and girl, but about the girl he's not enthusiastic, he talks about it as an obvious thing but I've seen other guys that, when they talk about their girl, their eyes shine, but he

is not so, he seems almost neutral. But how does this guy live sex? Between the church and a girl whom he doesn't love?

I tried to do some little experiments to see how he reacts but he doesn't react, maybe he doesn't give a damn about it, but how does a guy like him let opportunities go by without catching them on the fly? I'm not talking about who knows what opportunities but just to talk to me. With me he speaks, he answers me, but he never takes an initiative. But why does such a handsome guy choose to sacrifice his sexuality? And what for? I would do anything for him. Once I saw him with the girl, she scolded him, gave him orders as if she were the mistress and he the servant and he let her do, and I felt an anger that I don't tell you. But good heavens! You could enjoy your life and instead nothing! You act like a codfish under a girl who has taken you for her servant and you don't even notice that I am melting for you! Am I a fool, Project? But why did I fall in love with this codfish? He has a very sweet smile, but he's a real codfish and I go on dreaming and throw away my life like that. I've been doing this for almost three years, and maybe I'd do well to tell him, so if he sends me to hell, at least I break my addiction to him because I cannot take it anymore.

A straight guy declares himself and things go how they must go, but I cannot do it. Well that's enough, but what have I gained from not repressing me anymore? I understood that anyway nothing will change! I'm very nearly to jump on him and let things go their way. If I think that he could also answer me that he loves me my blood boils. I cannot go on like this! Bye Bye!"

Alyosha writes:

I read in your post a beautiful transport that really involved me. First of all, I think it's nice to allow yourself to live certain things, stimulating and somewhat overwhelming. I write it this way, of course the author of the post will not agree, because the post, when one reads it attentively, seems even too much rational. But maybe you've following you beautiful codfish, as you call him, for so long just because you know he's straight. I go to explain.

For what I think, or better I see, starting from the things you write, this guy has helped you so much. But maybe you let him help you, maybe you were the one you needed to find, so to say, a "container" into which to pour those impulses, desires and falling in love that were born. The fact that he's straight can certainly depend on the obvious randomness because there are more straight guys than gays in this world, but I think that's what allowed you to start to loosen yourself, to let yourself go, at least at the beginning, knowing that a physical contact with him anyway could never have happened. Perhaps this basically relaxed you and put you in the right position to experience new things with serenity and sufficient spontaneity.

I wrote all my reasoning just to tell you that falling in love is a fantastic thing and certainly the driving force for any relationship. But the relationships, so to say, unilateral are one thing, the couple life is another. Maybe it happens that the story seen from the outside, it appears just as you see it: he is repressed and she is omnivorous and despot. But it is you who see things like this. In relationships there is always a balance at the end and the balances are never perfect as you would expect, but they work.

In short, I wonder how much you feel ready to live a real relationship with all that this entails. Maybe in this path in stages you should try to take the next step that is then to know those like you, because with a straight guy and moreover engaged, I think there is nothing to do, neither in terms of relationship, nor in terms of escapade. On the rest then it's up to you to choose how to live your things, and this has a lot to do with what one is and what he wants from life and I think that homosexuality has little to do with this.

On the initial problem that I read, instead, I want to speak only according to my experience and I answer "yes" to your implicit statement that: behind this "waiting for a serious opportunity" as you say, there is a fear of being seriously involved. So, in this regard, I say what I think. It is not so much a matter of waiting for a serious story in my opinion. Stories cannot be born serious and expecting that they are serious from the beginning leads in fact to not living anything.

I think that there are not "wrong" things but rather "dangerous" things. And finally that we should rather have a serious way of doing things. I certainly cannot tell you how much all this enchains, forces the sexual drive and the objective desire of the desired person. I don't even know what remains after, when that absolute transport, binding, deaf to whatever, has faded. What happens next when that passionate bond tries to transform into a couple's life with his daily life, I certainly cannot tell you. And so I conclude like this, with things I don't know yet.

Nicomaco writes:

I read with interest this new post and the first answer of Alyosha, very shareable. The protagonist of this story has nothing to reproach himself for: he realized he had a crush, he tried to do some little experiments to check how his friend reacts and these have failed. Peace. We need to live with it. It's not easy. But you have to do it (it happened even to me at least a couple of times). There is no symmetrical relationship and therefore it is necessary to desist. What I too would feel to discourage is to raise the bar and do nonsense (for example: declaring to be hopelessly in love with him), because this would be equivalent to making a jump in the dark without a parachute.

Is there anything good as a result of this experience? In my opinion, something good remains! And it is to have lived consciously the falling in love, even if unrequited, after a period of strong repression. And then it doesn't seem to me that a straight guy declares himself always and in any case (and even less to already engaged girls). A straight friend of mine told me that it was much more beautiful for him to be in love even if he didn't show it, than declaring it, that it was more beautiful to love that be loved ... it sounds strange, I know! That's not all, but it's already something! And then life is long!

Pavloss writes:

Hello, first of all it's good that you let yourself go writing about how you feel and how you live your affection and sex. It's good because at least you're out of a certain isolation that hurts too much. Secondly, I think that what you live is a kind of reaction to a long period of compression and denial. When you open a pressure cooker, after it has been boiling for a while, it could actually burst and that's what's happening to you. The strong risk is to project into a person all your desires and your expectations. No, this is not good, especially because you end up obeying your wishes rather than reading reality for what it is. Reality is NOT very much as we want it and maturity consists in knowing how to take note of it without suffering too much. I'm sure you can find a friend, a companion, maybe not under your house, but certainly more open than this guy you talk to, who, most likely, doesn't care too much about you.

It is true that the hetero life, in some respects, is much easier but this should not depress you. You must find your balance in which you love life and you love yourself, in which you can build a network of relationships that make you feel good. I think two opposites are to be avoided: closing yourself up until you get hurt (as happened to you), opening yourself up to the point of projecting unattainable expectations into others.

Finding a good guy as a friend or as lover is not impossible but he is certainly not around the corner of the street and perhaps not even in your own city. Conquering what is worth requires some effort and it is difficult but it is normal and is part of life. Courage, therefore, and be proud of the fact that you live authentically, despite the many difficulties we all know, don't get depressed and go on !!

An important detail: you say you've been following him for three years ... three? If in three years he has not realized practically anything it's certain and sure that he is not interested in you from that point of view. I too have "lost" years behind beautiful, good, sweet people but with whom I have never combined anything. Don't make this mistake. One thing is friendship,

but you want more, it's obvious. If you want more, then, don't insist in a direction that only makes you feel bad. At best you would do well to tell him everything in order to get a clear answer from him and finally get away from him.

Nicomaco writes:

Even the last posts seem to me very shareable and balanced. Of course, talking about it in a forum is not like talking about it in real life, what is much more complex. However, if I were in your shoes, I would be prudent to express certain feelings to a friend who most likely has other tastes. You can know only by yourself if this is the right thing and above all if your friend doesn't have any prejudices about gay affectivity. I say this only to suggest you avoid other suffering, given that for the first time you have experienced a very beautiful moment of falling in love. Instead I would look at the positive aspect of the story. Falling in love means finally opening up to others and being a little more confident. And this should not be wasted, but should be cultivated in other directions.

pavese30 writes:

Hello, to be out of the isolation created by you is already a lot, since in reality then you have to deal with the isolation created by the rest of the world that does not accept you much, even if today it's fashionable to show at least a little bit of openness, I see anyway a growing intolerance in the facts. We must add also the lack of commitment of the youngest people towards the Gay Cause and towards the sexual freedom in general, many of them rely on the successes acquired by assuming that they are definitive. Regarding the guy, I would say that manifesting sympathy is one thing, to be gay inside is another. You yourself know the self-defense mechanisms, which can also become self-destruction mechanisms: until the spark is born, even if he is gay, he doesn't open. I would say keep him as a friend and don't expose yourself to gossip of the stupid people of the country, don't try to get everything by risking everything with the first who made you lose your mind! If the opportunity comes, get it, don't let it escape, meanwhile look at the rest of the world.

Bye Bye!

### **23.2.4 Gay guys who see straight friends as gay lovers**

Hello Project, I was pleased to talk with you in the chat, last night, it was an unexpected thing but very positive for me. In practice, the first time that I could talk freely about myself and my sexuality. I was struck by your

answers, always very calm, that is, answers that tended to calm me down and make me notice the normality of so many things that seemed strange to me. I decided to send you this email to go even more specifically. I changed the references of the places and the names of the people, but the facts are exactly those that happened to me, so if you want you can post the email on the forum. And now let's start the story following the chronological order.

I've always been gay in an exclusive way, that is, I have wanted for years, since I was eleven or twelve, to be in sexual intimacy with males, with young peers or a little older. The fantasies of masturbation were always and exclusively gay, but I also had a girlfriend, I even had sex with this girl, we masturbated each other and about ten times we have also had complete intercourse, but I never felt heterosexual. I was able sometimes to have sex with a girl, but that was not what I wanted. If I could have chosen whether to do it with a girl or a guy I wouldn't have had the slightest doubt, but the girls wanted me and courted me ruthlessly, practically they offered "what they had to offer" on a silver plate, while of guys I couldn't even see the shadow.

Even when I was with my girlfriend my masturbation was always and only with gay fantasies, I tried to force myself to use hetero fantasies but it was just a way to rape me, and then honestly I was not in love with my girlfriend, it bothered me when she would send me text messages or when she phoned me and started to chat endlessly about this and that for hours.

When I was with my girlfriend I was 18-19 and it started because I could not say no but, I must say it, also because she a little (but very little) intrigued me. The first times we had sex, just masturbation, I studied on the internet what to do (I know it's absurd but it is so), then when it came to having complete intercourse, my tool ... refused to do its work, but in the end I succeeded, but, you know, it was a very poor thing. I think that for a straight guy who penetrates a girl, especially the first times, ejaculation arrives early and is powerful, at least that's what I've always heard, for me it was not so, I didn't have a spontaneous orgasm and the orgasm came only later when she was masturbating me. And I must say that many times I asked myself what I was doing there, anyway we had sex not too much rarely. And it happened about ten times. She was happy and just didn't realize that the thing had a very poor meaning for me, I could say that for me it wasn't even a real sex experience.

Now I'm 27 years old, I graduated and I found a job. Towards that girl I didn't feel repulsion but I felt that having sex with her wasn't something that belonged to me, and anyhow I would never have gone with another girl, not even at that time, with that girl the opportunity had been created and it has been however unpleasant to break the relationships, because there were resentments, but I was already very determined to do everything to never

find myself in a similar situation again.

However, now it's been over for eight years. And then, once the story was closed with that girl, I didn't want to know any other girl just because I wanted a guy. I spent the night chatting in search of the right guy, but frankly there was no one who seemed to me the right one. That was my nightlife, the day life was that of the classic straight guy or rather the classic guy without sexual interests at least apparently, dedicated only to study and friends.

And here I begin to get to the heart of the matter. At university I got to know a lot of guys. First we talk a bit about the university, then we start studying together, then we get to know each other better, there's pizza together, the sport, which is fundamental for us, then we start going on holiday together, or at least start going out together on Sunday, in short, we become friends and, let's say, the selection of friends is something automatic. It starts with a small group that becomes increasingly smaller and more tied. Let's say that when I was twenty I had many friends, but weren't real friends, while at 23 or 24 I had less friends but between us the relationships were much more serious and affective. Let's say that around the age of 25 a group of 4 guys was formed, who seemed inseparable.

We used to have lunch one day at parents' house of one of us and another day at the parents' house of another. Our friendship was a public fact and was accepted by our families. We had known each other and had built our group for study purposes and so we had been able to help each other during the university. One day it occurred that Laurence (obviously I changed the name) told us that we could go to the gym together, in one amateur group of volleyball, it was a sport that all four of us liked and we enrolled in the local volleyball association. Here I have to open a parenthesis. The four of us were fine together, none of us four had a girlfriend at the moment, but all four of us (including myself) had had a girlfriend, but none of us spoke of girls or discos.

It was then that I began to wonder what was common among us that made us feel so good together and I began to get the idea that it was really the fact that we didn't talk about girls and that we were very often among us. But among us the atmosphere was very loose, we were not four gruff types but four funny guys who have fun acting like crazy and saying bullshit.

With others, or if others there were, we never did so, but between us yes. From time to time we ended up (always among us) talking about sexually, but not about girls but only about masturbation. But let's go on with the story.

We begin to attend the gym, for me a real shock, I had never been in a gym and seeing all those naked guys walking around so casually, as if it were the

most normal thing in the world, led my heart to 120 pulses per minute, and then there were my three friends and I could see them naked, even if for obvious reasons I had to be careful not to check them too much. There were also jokes about our attributes, but jokes just to laugh.

Over time, going to training had become a habitual thing for me, or almost habitual, because sometimes new guys arrived and some of them were really beautiful and I had to force myself not to look at them. One day when a particularly handsome new guy came, I saw one of my friends watching him and I too was caught by my friends while I was looking at him. And there began the jokes, but also this time, very simple things, without malice, just for fun.

Now, my friend Mark (false name), the one who had turned to look at the beautiful guy, was also the one of the three whom I liked best: tall, blond, with an intelligent smile. So I started putting together the mosaic tiles: he doesn't talk about girls, he jokes about masturbation but not about girls, and he turns to look at a beautiful naked guy ... what does it mean? There were enough arguments to reach the conclusion: Mark is gay! It seemed to me that having seen him peek at the beautiful guy in the locker room was equivalent to a full coming out. And that's how I began to lose my head for Mark. I tried to put together everything I could know about him (I had never done it before) I explored his facebook, that of his friends, I did all the possible research but there wasn't even the shadow of a girl.

The idea that he was gay became more and more a certainty and at the same time grew in me the idea to try something with him, to tell him that I had fallen in love with him and that he had become my fixed idea. Making a speech like that, however, was not easy, indeed it was practically impossible. In a short holiday of us four friends in the mountains, Mark and I happened (not casually) in the same room, I was anxious at the higher level but I wasn't able to start to put in practice my projects. One day that we had to go out for an excursion we woke up late and we had a shower together, with a lot of reciprocal touchings, I was going in bad erection but he told me that we had to prepare in a hurry and with a mischievous smile, added: "We'll talk about it tonight!" That sentence hammered my brain all day. I was telling myself that I had seen right and that he was gay and that I could not go wrong, because I saw him as a gay just looking at him.

Finally the excursion ends, in the evening we go to dinner and I cannot wait for the dinner to end to be able to go to the room with Mark, but another of my friends proposes the disco and Mark enthusiastically accepts. I was uncomfortable: he evidently didn't even remember what had happened in the morning. We go to the disco, the other two friends start dancing like crazy but not in pairs, simply in a group, but Mark remains close to me, it



is the usual Mark: smart, nice, maybe gay, on the other hand, how can you think that a guy is straight if he goes to the disco and doesn't even dance with a girl?

At a certain point he looks at me in the eyes and tells me: "What is it? Something wrong?" I say no and he replies: "Do you want us to go back to the hotel?" Of course I tell him no, but he looks at me again and tells me: "I didn't forget!" That sentence puts my brain in motion. After twenty minutes we were back at the hotel. We go up to the room, lock the door and he throws me on the bed and start to tickle me. We played like two kids: tickling, cushions, doing the fight, obviously all for fun, then I realize that he's excited. I throw him on the bed and start touching him and he lets me do.

Now I don't want to go into details as it is usual in red light movies but in short we arrive to masturbate each other and I don't think at all that this created problems for him. I would have kissed him but I didn't take the initiative nor did he. Later we have been talking but not about sex, but about when we were children and how we spent our holidays. I was happy, it was one of the most exciting moments of my life, and yet, in the following days I realized that for him the sense of what we had done was very relative. He never returned to the subject, but not because it had been removed, simply because it had been just a moment, and that moment had passed. We remained friends, even best friends, but two years have passed and that episode has never been repeated. Even now he doesn't have a girlfriend nor I have a boyfriend. The courage to ask him if he was gay I didn't have it at that time nor I would have it now, and on the other hand he didn't ask me questions.

Why is it so damn hard to speak clearly? If he were gay, would he have done it again? I think yes, but he didn't and nevertheless now I still feel attracted to him very strongly, he's the sexiest guy I ever met, is my ideal boyfriend, but this is not enough to make him really my boyfriend. Many of my illusions are completely faded or are being fading over time, in short he is a good guy, I love him, but I don't think he is gay, and to get to this conclusion it took me years. Today I believe and fear that our strange half-way relationship will continue over time preventing us from living our lives as we would have liked.

### 23.2.5 Gay-hetero relationship and sexual embarrassment

Hello Project,

my name is Jake, it's not a pseudonym, I'm the son of an American father and an Italian mother, my mother was from Milan (unfortunately she died three years ago), my father is from Baltimore. I studied in a Catholic boarding school in Baltimore until I was 13 years old, living practically always there. My father is even now a manager and he never had time to spend with me. My parents never went over well then, when I was 13 years old they divorced and I have been entrusted to my mother and I went to live in Milan. I went also to high school in Milan and graduated there. Now I am 34 years old. I recovered a little my relationship with my father when I was 30 years old when my mother became ill. He did everything to help her, he took her to the U.S. and made the best specialists visit her. He has been close to her until the end even though they were divorced. Not only he had a dignity, but he behaved with me unexpectedly, he was then 62 years old and I think he realized what it means to have a child. I told him openly that I was gay and he was going to cry, he was glad that I trusted him to the point of saying such a thing. Now he is 66 years old and is going to retire, he will leave his job in July. He has no one in U.S. and I think he will come to live in Milan because my mother has bequeathed to him her apartment in Milan (the divorce of my parents was really a bit strange!).

I understood I was gay in my last year in Baltimore, between 13 and 14 years, when I fell in love with another guy who was in college with me, but then I came to Italy. My first months in Italy have been terrible, my Italian was terrible and at school my friends were saying things I was not able to understand exactly and I did not dare to ask in order to get more explications. Physically I was not like others. I am kind of very English, not a Californian guy, I'm very tall and very thin and not at all muscular. At school I had problems because I was not accustomed to the Italian environment and did not do well. My mother tried to do everything but it was not easy. Obviously I was good in English and bad in Italian. Then, slowly, reading a lot and being with my schoolmates I began to understand the language better and my problems became more and more easier to overcome.

I was about 16 years old and was attending the third year of high school when I took my first strong crush for a guy who had arrived that year and was clearly straight, but nevertheless I was in love with him. From then until the end of high school and over, I thought that that guy would become gay due to the fact that I loved him. He was very friendly with me and treated me very well, but for him girls were too much important. We studied together

often. Spending an afternoon beside him, shoulder to shoulder and do the math homework together, for me, was both a torture and the thing I wanted most. I longed to see him naked but it never happened, not because it was impossible, but because I was convinced that such things would have soiled the love I felt for him. Maybe I was too idealistic, but at that time I reasoned that way. After high school I saw him only a couple of times, then he got married at the age of 24 and I went to his wedding, with a bit of strange feelings but I went there.

Then came the Polytechnic. I'm now a civil engineer but I've never been too good in sciences. The engineering degree was certainly not my biggest dream, but my mother worked in that area and I would find an excellent accommodation. The problem was to get a degree. At first I sat down to cry of despair on the exercises of analysis and geometry. I learned things mechanically but understanding very little.

Then, coincidentally, just before Christmas, a guy asked me to take the place also for him in the morning for classes, which were very crowded, I did so and from there was born a story, the most important story of my life and at the same time the most conditioning. His name was Henry, an average guy, not beautiful, but at 20 also an average guy looks beautiful! We started studying together. He was a monster of brain! He was able to understand things that I could never understand. So in the morning we attended classes together until 14.00, then lunch together and then study together until ten o'clock in the night and beyond.

He pulled like a tractor, he would not let me lose a second, I struggled a lot at the beginning, but I knew that if I had not worked hard to be at his height I would have lost him, because he could not waste time without taking exams. Well, I got 24/30 in analysis, my first exam, he got 30/30, but, I confess, I was not jealous, then, after the first exam came the second. I was recuperating. My grades were always lower than his, but the difference decreased. Then, after a long time, at an examination of topography, I got more than him and I loved his reaction: he was happy for me, he was not envious.

To realize that I was in love with him it took me two years and a half. At first I was too stressed out by the university and the hamletic doubt "Is he gay or he's not?" always came back to my mind. I'll make it short. We graduated in the same session, for two years we went on holiday together, we continued seeing each other even after we had found a job, often spending Sundays together. He never, never, talked about girls! I do not tell you about ruminations I did on these signals. The relationship between us was excellent, just like two brothers, but even more. I went back and forth a thousand times between the idea of telling him explicitly that I was in love

with him and the idea of leaving it all up.

One day he came to me with an air of mystery and sentimental confession and told me that he was going to tell me a very important thing that I absolutely had to know. I thought it would finally come to the point, instead he told me he was about to get married because his girlfriend was pregnant. I passed from riches to rags, but I had to prove my enthusiasm and hugged him so tight that rose him from the ground, he was beaming really, I was pretending to be happy, but world works this way. I have been also the best man at his wedding.

Inside of me I thought I was doomed to fall in love just with straight guys. That's enough! No more hetero guys! So I decided at about 26 or 27, to throw myself completely into the gay world: gay chats, gay dating sites, communities and so on, I filled out all my profiles. I was determined to try. I thought, but hey, guys my age have a love life (and even a sex life) and what do I do? It's not fair! I'm wasting the best years of my life! I began to get responses to my ads, Project, what a squalor! People who put fake photos, boys who only know how to say ass and cock, men aged 50 who think they are 20, people broken out which are quite crazy. I've met some fifty of these people in a couple of years, I found only one of them quite normal but I think he was a minor pretending to be an adult, I asked him to show me his identity card but he did not want to let me see it. I said: but you're a young boy, but what are you doing on these sites? And he answered me one thing that put me in crisis, he said: and you then, what are you doing here? Then I invited him to dinner. He thought that we would go to bed, but I told him that maybe I was not on those sites for the reason that he had thought, and I took him back to his house, when he got out he gave me a very strong handshake. Now, after so long, occasionally he sends me short messages. Let's say it was the most beautiful story I have experienced in recent years. So we arrived between my 28 and 29. I was a virgin, and so I'm now and I'm not afraid of that because having sex with shabby people just to see what it is, it's not really something I want. In practice, until this year I have continued to live the sex as I lived it when I was 16, after all it is not too bad and at least you certainly don't get in trouble catching diseases. And now I come to the last part of the story. In my project group of Civil Engineering, three months ago, arrives Mark (let's call him this way) a young 31 years old engineer beautiful as the sun, I can just use this expression, and I start to go back in trouble. In practice Mark, for me, at the official level, is just a work colleague, our relationship is strange, halfway between formal (shy) behavior and subliminal messages. Mark has invaded my brain and dominates even the smallest spaces. I think of him all day long, I feel very strong feelings for him as I have never felt for anyone else. I have to wear

always very wide clothes because just thinking of him makes me to get a hard-on, I don't tell you when I'm close to him. Project, now I'm really in trouble. Mark will be the third straight guy I fall in love with? I would not for no reason that it was so, because I think that for me this is the last train. Or Mark or no one at all! He has nothing to do with guys of gay sites, he's very careful about what he does and what he says to never pass the border but has some hesitation, some breaks, certain ways of sighing just a little while talking, some small facial movements and in some very special moments that can only be gay.

Apart from the trivial. No wedding rings, no engagement rings of any kind, no familiarity with the office girls, no private problems at work, but he flashes you (accidentally?) certain looks that make you shudder, and steal your soul. Project, it's about three months that I'm newly in trouble. I don't know what to do, have I to invite him to my house, alone or with other people? I'd invite him to come to the pool with me, I'd certainly do, but then I don't do so at all and when I'm in front of him I feel totally embarrassed and I treat him in a formal way and I wouldn't absolutely treat him like that if I were fully in control of myself.

Then there's just a very private matter I'd like to talk about to you, about me and this guy because something sexual happened between us and I felt a terrible embarrassment for what he may have felt, I really wanted to disappear. Now he behaves as if nothing had happened and this worries me even more, but about such things I would like to talk in private. My contact is [omitted]. Just add me and I'll call you.



# Chapter 24

## LATENT HOMOSEXUALITY

### 24.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 24.1.1 Latent homosexuality and marriage

This paragraph is the re-elaboration of a response to a message that appeared on the Gay Project guest book and you can read here below.

”Hi, I would like to understand more about latent homosexuality and how it can be revealed. My husband, 43, would have recently discovered his bisexuality but the constant mutability and uncertainty of his cultural and professional choices, his attachment to me (also sexual, for years, and passionate) the involuntary and occasional aesthetic interest for other women, the concomitance, moreover, of his coming out with the obvious need to take on more mature commitments compared to a past in which only I took charge of the common life project always involving him, his chasing me when I walked away, make me feel a lot puzzled. I would painfully respect his choice, if I could believe that it is unavoidable but I suspect a semiconscious pretext. Our environment has always been free and open, we have always frequented gay friends, our dialogue was profound and he had no reason to hide for almost twenty years. I would be very grateful if I could have your opinion.”

I will try to answer on the basis of the experience gained in Gay Project, using an authentic documentation, consisting of pieces of e-mails that I have been authorized to publish. Let’s start with a premise: with the expression ”latent homosexuality” we mean a homosexuality of which there is no awareness. It is not a matter of consciously repressed homosexuality but of a reality that operates below the levels of consciousness and manifests itself through a series of phenomena that are interpreted by those who observe

them in themselves on the basis of categories totally alien to homosexuality. Let's move on to the examination of the first e-mail I received from a 43-year-old whom we will call Mark.

"Hello Project, I would like to ask you an opinion on some issues that gave me a lot of problems. I must make a necessary premise, I'm a married man and I have a daughter almost 19 years old, I have always been heterosexual, the girls have always looked for me and I liked them very much, unfortunately sometimes I'm really stressed and maybe there is a bit of performance anxiety, so sometimes I live sexuality in a way not quite serene, but with my wife I'm fine, she cares about me very much, with her I feel at ease and then it is not something essentially sexual we really love each other. Since I started being with her I don't feel anymore the need to masturbate because I have sex with her quite often, on the other hand masturbation has never been a fixed idea for me, I was able to do without it even before.

When I started my story with my wife I would never have believed I could live sexuality with her, that is, the thrust I felt towards her was not that, then things came slowly by themselves, I had a little fear that vanished over time and now things are going well.

As for friends, I also have gay friends and I have no preclusion of principle against them. I still do sports, not competitive, I have the opportunity to see my teammates naked a lot of times but I'm completely indifferent, I never thought I could have sex with a guy. I have a friend with whom I feel great, a straight friend, a teammate, we often talk and the dialogue between us is very nice, he tells me about his emotions and I talk to him about everything, including sexual problems, it happens that we often go out in four, I, he and our wives, I often talk to this friend but for me his presence has not and has never had any other meaning, he is a friend and that's it. I told you at the beginning that sometimes I feel a bit tired and I think that this compromises a bit my relationship with my wife, sometimes when I'm with her I remember the problems of work and I don't like this, because this makes me lose the best moments, but it will pass, I'm sure of it."

Let's move on to the analysis of the contents of this passage which is the beginning of the first e-mail I received from Mark.

### **Heterosexual phenomenology (weakness of hetero sexuality)**

Mark has or may sometimes have problems with erection when he has sex with his wife, tends to get distracted during hetero sexual intercourse, he lives heterosexual sexuality as a response to his wife's initiatives, from



the beginning of his relationship with the girl who then became his wife he was not used to masturbate, or didn't do it often thinking of his wife even when he hadn't frequent intercourse with her, he tends to spend more time with his friends or with a friend of his than with his wife. For him, heterosexual sexuality doesn't have the value of a primary instinct but plays the role of a complement of an emotional relationship, that is, sexual interest is not the first push to create an affective contact, but, on the contrary, sexual availability derives from the primary emotional choice. Mark does not have in mind a physical type of girl who arouses an immediate sexual interest in him, that is, he does not have a female sexual archetype. In adolescence he was always looked for by girls (he doesn't say he was looking for them) with whom he had some form of sexual contact but didn't take the initiative. Adolescent masturbation was not frequent.

### **Homosexual phenomenology (absence of gay sexuality)**

Mark has never had sexual reactions related to the presence of another guy, he attends gyms, swimming pools or changing rooms and takes the shower together with others guys without any sexual arousal, he doesn't feel any embarrassment in addressing topics that deal with homosexuality, he also has gay friends with whom he has a relationship very similar to that he has with his straight friends, he was never even remotely touched by the idea of being able to masturbate thinking of a boy.

We continue now with the text of Mark's e-mail.

### **Elements of crisis of the hetero identity and acceptance of bisexuality**

"Project, you will tell me, then where is the problem? And here I start not to understand well. I love my wife, I've shared everything with her, she's a notable woman and did a lot for me, she even went against her family to marry me, because the family wanted her to marry another guy (whom her parents knew) but she imposed herself and we got married. I want to emphasize that it was not a choice of opportunism at all but a marriage of love, especially in the early days, I shared wonderful years with her, I needed nothing else, when we got married I was 23 and she was 21, the following year our daughter was born and I could not have been happier than so. I've been married for 20 years and for 19 of these 20 years I've had only my wife in mind, I've never cheated on my wife, such a thought never crossed my mind, then suddenly a situation presented itself that upset me.

We hosted in our house a nephew of my wife, a guy 22 years old, let's call him Luke, a nice guy, I think my daughter fell in love with him, and so far there would be no problem. The fact is that one night when my wife was not there because she went to her mother, I did one of the rare erotic dreams (a wet dream) of my life and I dreamed of Luke, I dreamed that he wanted to be hugged by me, and we ended up to the intimate caresses and I have arrived to the orgasm. In the dream it was all very nice, but when I woke up and I remembered what I had dreamed of, the world collapsed on me, I felt dirty both because it was a homosexual dream and because Luke is 22, almost my daughter's age. And then I was thinking of my wife, I was wondering if I should talk to her or not about such a thing and I felt really bad. Then I told myself that dreams don't mean anything but this was not enough for me, because in the dream I had experienced violent sexual emotions that I had never felt before, as a kind of super sexuality.

In the morning I saw Luke, who called me uncle, I felt like a traitor to the trust of that guy, even a kind of pedophile, I felt very bad but I forced myself not to show anything of what I carried within. In the evening my wife returned and we made love, it was beautiful, I would say that I seemed to be back in the early days of our marriage, I felt comforted because between me and my wife nothing had changed and if it had changed had changed for the better. I felt the nightmare of being homosexual less looming. When Luke came back to his house I felt relieved, as if the danger was over. However, I didn't say anything to my wife because I didn't want to shake her and also because I thought it was a passing thing. For two months I returned to my usual life.

Then, during the summer, on vacation, I found myself with a guy slightly older than Luke and I realized that I was led to observe him, he seemed beautiful, smiling, with a smile that I never saw in a girl, I remembered his voice, his gestures, his big, beautiful hands, with perfect skin. This guy, whom I will call Silvio, became fond of me, he came to our house by the sea, my wife thought he was interested in our daughter but it was not like that. Silvio came to stay with me and I was fine with him, I looked for different ways to spend some time with him, for a while it was very pleasant but then I started to be afraid to push myself too far. There has never been anything between us and Silvio treated me like a father but for me things were not exactly like that. I didn't think of him in sexual terms and this made me feel comfortable, I tried to put aside the idea of being in love with Silvio but in fact it was so, but I repeat, no sexual fantasy about him, never, I don't know, maybe I was repressing myself, but Silvio made me feel good. Also this time I didn't say anything to my wife and basically I had nothing to say to her, there had never been anything between me and him, not even in

a dream. But with Silvio I was less afraid of being able to discover that I was bisexual, let's say that I took it into account at least in the abstract. I don't speak of being homosexual but bisexual because with my wife sexual intercourse were still going well or at least passably.

In the fall a new practitioner about 25 years old came to my studio. I started doing sexual thoughts on him and my terror has begun again. I ended up to ask to be transferred to another office, but then I needed to see him and I went back where he was but he never noticed anything, even with this guy there has never been anything but he was the first guy on whom I made erotic fantasies, in one way I was scared, but for the other I said to myself: why not? After all, such a thing doesn't destroy my marriage, these guys don't even know anything about it, so why deprive me of something that basically doesn't hurt anyone? I'm bisexual, ok, I take note of it. And in the end these things are all in my imagination because it doesn't come to my mind that I could put in crisis my marriage and the relationship with my daughter for a sexual fantasy.

Let's say that this is the stage where I'm now, my real fear is that of escalation, that these things, which didn't exist before and that I have gradually accepted, can then evolve presenting me the bill and maybe pushing me in some adventure that could put me in great difficulty. Until here I feel like accepting what is happening to me but I'm terrified that it does not stop here. My wife does not know anything about this and among other things I don't know how to make her understand something like that."

Beyond the example I have reported, situations occur in which the maintenance of the balance as it was before the emergence of homosexuality is objectively impossible. The evolution in those cases doesn't go towards a bisexuality predominantly heterosexual, in which it is possible to contain homosexuality in the limit of an episodic gay masturbation, but towards forms of exclusive homosexuality that undermine marriage and inevitably lead to separation.

In the case of Mark (the one cited above) the wife is completely unaware, but in cases where latent homosexuality evolves into exclusive homosexuality the role of the wife becomes critical because in these situations the husband intends marriage as a trap and the conjugal relationship keeps only negative aspects.

In general, husbands who come out of situations of latent homosexuality speak with their wives only if they feel the impossibility of continuing the marriage bond and in these cases, even if the husbands qualify themselves as bisexuals, it is to be believed that they are instead exclusive homosexuals. It must be said that generally the wives consider the behavior of the husband

as a result of a choice, but this doesn't correspond to truth, it is instead the emergence of a latent sexuality, which often entails, for those who live these situations, states of deep discomfort.

### 24.1.2 Gays and available guys with latent homosexuality

It often happens that a gay guy creates a strong emotional relationship, sometimes with sexual implications, with guys who present themselves as straight, but don't have the typical behavior of heterosexuals, i.e. with guys who demonstrate a certain sexual disposition towards gays; I refer to the hetero-curious guys, bisexuals, latent gays and repressed gays.

The order of these four categories is not accidental: the hetero-curious guys, who are very numerous, are properly hetero, but because of strong frustrations in their straight sexuality, they go in search of exclusively sexual adventures in the gay field; the bisexuals, much less numerous than gays, have a true gay sexuality and a true gay affectivity, well integrated, but also present a true hetero sexuality and a true hetero affectivity, bisexuality can present the two components, hetero and gay, in all the possible proportions; latent gays, who are very less numerous even than bisexuals, consider themselves exclusively hetero and behave in all respects as 100% hetero guys, even in masturbation, which is always hetero oriented, their homosexual tendencies are manifested in behaviors of considerable disinhibition with other guys, and also with other gay guys, the freedom of behavior reaches the point that a latent gay, considering himself 100% hetero, doesn't feel any discomfort in getting involved in openly sexual games with gay friends, up to be masturbated by them, and this happens because these behaviors are not seen by latent gays as gay behavior but as sexual camaraderie; the gays repressed are instead fully gay on a conscious level, with a masturbation exclusively in gay key, who have adapted to live also relationships with girls, including sex, because pressed by families and the social environment, these guys are essentially forced to play the part of hetero guys.

When for a guy sexuality is split from affectivity or when sexual orientation is not univocal, signs of discomfort may appear. We must bear in mind that the union of affectivity and sexuality in a relationship in which there is emotional and sexual reciprocity between two guys leads to psycho-sexual well-being and satisfaction in sexuality. When there is no real reciprocity in a couple relationship, there is the typical sense of frustration that gay guys who fall in love with straight guys know very well. In that case the discomfort comes from an objective "couple impossibility". When the complementarity of af-

fectivity and sexuality is lacking in one of the two partners, the discomfort is not originally interpersonal but is created in the first instance inside a single subject, a clearly unresolved subject.

There are guys who, because of the heavy influences suffered through education, which has conveyed to them profound sexual taboos, despite experiencing occasionally some homosexual drives, unconsciously devalue this occurrence and continue to live a straight sexual life. If for these guys, homosexuality remains under the limit of conscious thought, in these cases we speak of "latent homosexuality".

Let us dwell now in particular on guys with latent homosexuality; they generally have characteristic traits:

1) They have a frenzied heterosexual life, they have many girls and they change them often, and this increases the fame of these guys as heterosexuals, but they have never had a steady girl for long periods (years), what is typical of heterosexuals. In other words, they live a frenetic sexuality with the girls but without constructing truly meaningful emotional relationships. Their affectivity is addressed elsewhere. Heterosexual sexuality experienced by guys with latent homosexuality is often unsatisfactory due to erectile impotence or difficulty in achieving orgasm. It should be emphasized that guys with latent homosexuality masturbate thinking about girls, which confirms them in their presumption of heterosexuality. These guys don't have usually, not even partially, gay masturbatory fantasies, and their homosexuality is totally latent. That is, it is not lived on a conscious level.

2) They have an emotional life focused on a very small number of friends, all or almost male, and often have only one long-standing friend who is their real point of reference on an emotional level. This decisive friendship has such a weight that the same sexual choices of the guy with latent homosexuality, despite being in a hetero direction, are closely linked to the dominant friendship in the sense that the guy tends to choose the girl in the group frequented by the best friend, in this way on the occasions in which he meets the girl in public he doesn't lose contact with his friend anyway. It should be emphasized that guys who are latent homosexuals often choose girls who are very friendly to their special friend. These guys sometimes fall in love with the girlfriends or the ex-girlfriends of their special friend.

3) The friendship between a guy with latent homosexuality and his special "hetero" friend often goes far beyond the boundaries of a common friendship between two straight guys. It is an emotional or even a loving friendship whose limits are dictated essentially by the hetero guy and are easily ac-

cepted by the guy with latent homosexuality. If the limits are narrow, the relationship, even seen from the outside, has no sexual meaning, that is, homosexuality remains totally latent.

4) A friendship between a guy with latent homosexuality and his special "gay" friend instead presents a completely different dynamic and this is what I intend to deal with later.

Let's consider now two typical non-infrequent situations.

#### Case A

Two friends (whose friendship dated 30 years ago) were both used to have heterosexual and only heterosexual intercourse, both had been considered heterosexual for years and had always lived forms of emotional complicity only in a heterosexual key. Let's say that one of them, let's call him Mark, arrives at the awareness of his homosexuality through the most natural way, that is, falling in love with his friend, let's call him Andrew, who continues to show only a straight sexuality (latent homosexuality). In this case, the old relationship of friendship, on the side of the gay guy, acquires a new value and is experienced as a relationship of love and all the moments of intimacy that can occur between two straight friends, like the nudity in the showers of the gym, or sleeping in the same bed, will have for Mark a sexual value that they will not have for Andrew. The dimension of intimacy can still increase at least within certain limits because Andrew's emotional attachment to Mark will lead Andrew to accept Mark's particularly free behavior without too many difficulties, and this is a sign of the explicit though unconscious sexual interest of Andrew towards Mark. In real situations of this type it is possible to come to true sexual games in which Andrew will accept "in the form of the game" even Mark's openly sexual behaviors. Andrew and Mark can take a shower together even going into erection and laughing at this fact, can cuddle themselves for hours on the couch or even in bed without openly sexual gestures, can live substantially the life of a gay couple with only a limitation: sexuality, that must remain latent.

#### Case B

Two young guys (18/20 years old), friends from childhood, one (Mark) comes to recognize himself gay, while the other (Andrew) remains in a state of latent homosexuality. Mark falls in love with Andrew, the mutual disinhibition is stronger at the level of gestures than at the level of words. Mark and Andrew never talk about sex explicitly. Mark perceives Andrew's resistance to admit that the relationship that has established can have some homo-

sexual meanings, on the other hand Andrew shows himself always available towards Mark, seeks him, sends him text messages, spends evenings with him in chat, tells him affectionate phrases that are formally in the limit of a tender friendship but that that Mark tends to interpret in another key. It happens in a completely unexpected way that Andrew lets himself go to a drift of situation increasingly gay, up to even accepting sexual contacts (intimate caresses) without any embarrassment, but without any attempt at reciprocity. Sexual intimacy can even become habitual and in these terms doesn't create particular problems for Andrew who accepts it as something now normal (sexualized friendship). Andrew falls in love with girls who are Mark's friends, tries to create a group in which Mark is always involved and combines without apparent contradiction a straight couple sexuality with the sexual friendship towards Mark. Andrew's heterosexual sexuality is an assumption of principle and Andrew, while living daily sexual contacts with Mark, masturbates only thinking about girls.

In the case A there is no homosexual behavior of Andrew, in the case B Andrew is involved in real sexual activities with Mark but framed in the dimension of sexualized friendship and not of homosexuality. In both cases the guy conscious of his homosexuality (Mark) finds himself in situations of deep affective contact with his friend and of partial sexual contact. What pushes Mark (a gay guy) to continue his relationship with Andrew (a guy with latent homosexuality)? The possible answers are many:

- 1) Mark hopes that Andrew reaches autonomously an awareness of the situation, which in Mark's eyes is unequivocal.
- 2) Mark hopes to be able to take, in small steps, Andrew towards an explicitly gay sexuality.
- 3) Mark is in love with Andrew and is willing to sacrifice his own sexuality in order to remain close to Andrew, whose emotional heat he cannot do without.

In this regard, experience teaches some things which it is always good to take into account :

a) Latent homosexuality is generally not necessarily a stage that is a prelude to conscious homosexuality. Latent homosexuality can last and often lasts a lifetime. The exit from the latency is linked in most cases to absolutely new and unexpected factors that pose a guy quickly in front of reality, it is usually a meeting with people not previously known or are unexpected episodes with a homosexual background that begin to be the object of masturbatory fantasies. This is often the first spark that leads to the exit

from latent homosexuality. Generally the gay guy who falls in love with a guy in a state of latent homosexuality is extremely cautious for fear of losing him and this makes it more unlikely that the other guy can get out of latency.

b) Gay guys who fall in love with guys with latent homosexuality often say they are totally satisfied with the relationship they live but, going deeper, they realize that frustrations are many in the first place because a gay guy, in this situation, is forced to curb his own sexuality and then because there is no possibility of addressing the discourse explicitly. A guy with latent homosexuality reasons in all respects as a straight guy, in other words his homosexuality is unknown even to him and manifests only in the amorous friendship that he interprets exclusively as a simple and deep friendship. The frustrations of gay guys involved in relationships of this kind last for years, they are forced to sublimate sexuality and to make a constant effort of self-control.

c) Within a couple consisting of a gay guy and a guy with latent homosexuality, precisely because it is impossible to get to an explicit dialogue on the subject of sexuality, the possibilities of misunderstanding and false interpretations are enormous. Basically the two guys decode the sexual gestures and behaviors in completely different ways, but the situation is much more complicated than that which is created between a gay and a heterosexual because the guy with latent homosexuality shows a very wide emotional availability and somehow even a certain sexual availability that confuses the gay guy. These relationships, precisely because of the availability of the guy with latent homosexuality, are initially very inviting and rewarding for a gay guy who expects his friend to show a clearly gay sexuality in short terms, however very rarely the expectations of the gay guy follow the evolution that the gay guy would like. For the above it is good to take into account the time factor, considering that many gay guys have waited for many years and needlessly for their friend to come out of latent homosexuality.

## 24.2 DOCUMENTS

### 24.2.1 Is he a latent gay?

Hello Project, I just read your article about gay guys who have a sexual friendship with guys with latent homosexuality who will never admit that they are gay. I found what you wrote quite similar to what I experienced, in the sense that I have this friend, even engaged (with a girl), I meet each



summer on vacation, and it is thanks to him that I came out of my latency, even if I've been trying to find a definition of my sexuality for three years and I cannot find one that fits me, I called myself bisex, but only because I happened to have feelings towards girls, despite my masturbations are in a gay key and just a little hetero. That is, during masturbation I tend to spontaneously have hetero fantasies, but I need to conclude in a gay key.

However I said that I found myself in the article because it is three summers that I end up sleeping with this friend of mine, in crescendo, it started with mutual masturbation and every summer we add something more, but the kisses are forbidden, and cuddling etc. Every time after having behaved the usual way he starts to denigrate me and begins to say phrases like, "it is getting too pleasant", "it takes me a lot of time to come", "I came too little, with my girlfriend it is more pleasant, you're dangerous, we don't have to do such things anymore" ... but in the meantime we do it every time, he says he is straight, but by texting he asks me if I'm active or passive, he probes the ground, he asks me to come and visit him in his university residence where he lives alone. And every time we do it he pretends nothing has happened and tries to make me understand that he is just a friend, he shows off with his girlfriend, not calculating me at all if I look at him, as if nothing had happened between us, because for him it's just a thing without meaning. Because he cannot afford to be gay.

This September I chose not to call him, and he complained that I never call him. I told him that I needed to think, and he was strangely understanding and told me: okay, when you want, call me. After two months I decided to contact him again but because I love him and I would really like to be his friend, now I no longer expect him to wake up and stay with me, because now I have lost hope.

Also this time the same problem, if I try to be a friend, he starts talking about sex and asks me questions to probe the ground, even flirting. Every time we meet, he shows himself half naked, and I see him bare-chested and cannot resist, I don't understand anything anymore and I always fall back on it.

It's a friendship that has lasted for more than 10 years, cutting off relationships with him keeping him at a distance would certainly be wrong on my part. And I no longer know what to do, because I don't like anymore this relationship, where there are no cuddles but only denigration; I prefer a normal friendship at this point. What do you advise me to do?

A hug. Richard

Hi Richard. The first question that arises is whether we are really facing a guy with latent homosexuality, what is possible, or a guy who is really

aware of his homosexuality or at least bisexuality, perhaps with a strong hetero prevalence. The discriminating element (of which only the person concerned is aware) are the masturbation fantasies: if that guy was really a latent homosexual, his masturbation would be exclusively hetero, if instead there were "also", perhaps episodically, gay fantasies, then the category of latent homosexual should be totally put aside, because, in practice, the latency of homosexuality means that the subject himself is not aware of it; and in essence in all cases the consciousness of one's sexual orientation is obtained precisely from masturbation and, paradoxically, not from the couple sexuality.

I add a corollary to the basic theorem: if the sex he did with you has not become the object of his masturbation fantasies then there is in practice the certainty that he is a latent homosexual but, I have to stress it, latent homosexuality is a rare thing. In the other hypothesis, if the memory of what he lived with you is instead the object of his masturbation fantasies, perhaps episodically, then you can think that you are facing a guy who is at least partially bisexual and who is in a situation of strong sexual repression. If this guy is really a latent homosexual, well, either he wakes up by himself (something unlikely and in any case not predictable or controllable) or there is little to do, the situation will remain that of a friendship, perhaps episodically sexualized.

If instead a conscious homosexual component really exists, well, then it would make sense, more for his own sake than for yours, to arrive at a clear discourse, because marriage for a bisexual means having to give up the other half of the sky, what isn't certainly a simple thing, unless it is an almost straight bisexuality; if then his gay component was important (and the fact of having a girl, in conditions of social obligation is really not significant), i.e. if he was bisexual with a strong gay component or even a gay that has adapted to have a relationship with a girl (what is not so infrequent), then the marriage would be really to be avoided, because it would be like being shut up in a cage with the prospect of remaining there for a lifetime.

Then there is a third hypothesis, not to be neglected at all, that is he could be a hetero-curious (and there are many), it is about men or guys, usually frustrated in their straight sexuality, who seek a gay contact exclusively on the sexual level, excluding any emotional implication, because their affectivity is fully dedicated to women. The hetero-curious are the main users of so-called gay pornography. The hypothesis that this guy is just a hetero-curious (who will always consider himself heterosexual and will consider his own gay sexual adventures only as adventures) finds support in the fact that, in your relationship, on his part, it is systematically underlined that his true sexuality is straight, and also in the fact, anything but marginal, that he asked you if

you are active or passive, a question that is typical of the hetero-curious (of whom erotic chats are full) and that a true gay would not ask because gay sexuality is not an imitation of the straight one.

I summarize here for you a story I have seen closely and that best configures the relationship between a gay and a latent homosexual. We'll call "G" the gay and "L" the latent gay.

L knows that G is gay. G has had several girls, and is known to be able to do a lot with women, girls themselves who have been with him say it, but he is not engaged and has never had a stable girlfriend. All his girls come from the same group as G. G and L go to the mountain sites together with the girls of the group. G and L are usually in the same room together. L is very uninhibited, when he is in the room with G he wears only the briefs, physical contact with G is frequent, tests of strength, fighting, etc., but also cuddles in the same bed. Over the days G becomes more enterprising and L lets him do and gets to get masturbated by G (but L doesn't masturbate G).

G thinks that L is gay and after many uncertainties comes to the idea of making him explicitly understand it. G speaks clearly and the whole story ends, L leaves before the end of the holidays and disappears at all. For him, being masturbated by his friend was just an uninhibited game because on a conscious level his sexuality was radically hetero and it was precisely this that allowed him to behave so freely with his friend without particular problems. Therefore, maximum caution and above all, keep your feet on the ground! Be cautious with flights of fantasy!

So let's sum up. Maybe my answer may seem strange to you, but I would stay away from him, because if he's just a repressed gay, and in particular a repressed gay, then ok, it makes sense, but if he's a repressed bisexual who wants to stay straight, well, even taking away the repression there is not much to be satisfied, because a bisexual will never build a strong and above all exclusive relationship with you.

The hypothesis that he is a repressed gay is the only one that could give you an adequate motivation to go on, but in that case he should also have the courage to overcome the things that repress him, perhaps not in public, but at least in private, and should begin to understand that going on with girls means enter a road that leads straight to marriage, which for a gay is the worst trap. If you stay away and he really cares about you, he will not let you go, but I wouldn't follow him, because to build something as a couple you have to want it in two!

A hug. Project



# Chapter 25

## GAY SEX FANTASIES AND OBSESSIVE CONTENTS

### 25.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 25.1.1 Gay sex fantasies and obsessive contents

This chapter is dedicated to take stock of some delicate situations that have arisen with some frequency recently talking in chat about issues related to sexual orientation with guys who, after a longer or shorter period of heterosexuality, began to feel, especially during masturbation, the presence of unexpected and intrusive gay content. If it is true that the masturbatory fantasies are the first indicator of sexual orientation, it's also true that not all homosexual contents that may emerge, even during masturbation, are really masturbatory fantasies. Keep in mind that the masturbatory fantasies should not be confused with two other typical categories of homosexual content, i.e. with abstract thoughts and phobic-obsessive contents. Let's try to characterize these categories to make easier to distinguish and identify them.

1) A sexual fantasy is a fantasy, normally associated with sexual arousal, i.e. erection, or which would lead to the erection if there wasn't a rational control to repress it. Sexual fantasies are experienced as rewarding, both at physiological (erection) and a psychological level. Sexual fantasies are induced by specific situations experienced as sexually exciting, or by the memory of similar situations or events that make memories resurface. Sexual fantasies are grown by the person who fuels them spontaneously and voluntarily because lives them as rewarding.

2) Masturbation fantasies are sexual fantasies that accompany masturbation, therefore are sexual fantasies particularly exciting, in function of which is maintained for a long time an erection in the act of masturbation. Even gay guys who don't accept themselves nevertheless perceive sexually at physiological and psychological level their gay sexual fantasies as pleasant fantasies against which they "must" resist but against which there is no evidence of any deep feeling of repulsion or spontaneous rejection. I mean that as a rule a guy who doesn't accept himself as a gay or finds his being gay hard to accept not only doesn't feel any rejection of the gay sexuality but is attracted towards it. Somehow he tries to rationally resist the temptation of gay fantasies that anyhow are for him remarkably attractive. The emergence of gay sexuality is seen as the realization of something new with which to confront but never really as something repellent or disgusting and even less as an extraneous reality becoming invasive and pervasive.

3) Abstract fantasies are representations of situations which could theoretically lead to a sexual involvement, that for other persons would constitute a real sexual fantasy or even a masturbatory fantasy, but which in this case is not accompanied by any form of sexual arousal. The abstract fantasies are the manifestation of non-repellency to some sexual content, but doesn't represent in any case an index of sexual involvement or of sexual orientation. The abstract fantasies are not produced by really sexually involving episodes or by the memory of such episodes, are a figment purely rational and do not involve the physiological sexuality. It often happens that the gay guys who don't accept themselves try to validate their hypothetical heterosexual identity on the basis of abstract fantasies. It should be noted that the abstract fantasies, even if they relate to situations potentially involving at sexual level, don't have for the person who feeds them any actual sexual value. It is clear that the abstract fantasies are not experienced by the person as rewarding nor as disturbing, can only be reassuring but only at rational level, generally, at emotional level, don't solve the anxiety.

4) The phobic-obsessive sexual contents are contents that appear automatically and in uncontrollable situations, usually mingled with sexual fantasies which are not directly related to them. These are contents that cause concern, rightly or wrongly. Persons are afraid of these thoughts that tend to recur in an obsessive and deeply disturbing way. The phobic-obsessive contents are not the subject of sexual fantasies, in the sense that the person does not dwell on them deliberately seeking gratification, on the contrary perceives them as a foreign element whose presence tends to slowly invade all areas of affective and relational life. Sexual fantasies have deep roots in

previous experience, on the contrary phobic-obsessive contents emerge unexpectedly and tend to stabilize creating considerable mental suffering. It has to be underlined that the meaning of obsessive phobic contents is often linked not to real individual experience but to archetypes coming from educational approach, which have been consolidated over time as prejudices deeply assimilated. It should be emphasized that the negativity of such contents when the person relates them to himself, doesn't mean intolerance or rejection of similar situations related to other persons. For example, a straight guy, very open to gay people and having gay friends, who therefore does not present any kind of homophobia or social intolerance toward gay people, may as well develop phobic-obsessive gay content.

To clarify the issue I'll give two examples:

Situation n. 1

A 25 year old guy, with a totally straight past both at emotional and sexual level, writes: "I'm afraid to be gay because from a little time now I have gay sexual fantasies, I would imagine that a man takes me with violence but I consider just repellent I the idea of having sex with a man. Maybe I'm repressing my homosexuality, but when I start to think of a girl I like, inevitably returns to my head the idea that someone comes along and takes me by force and I cannot even masturbate thinking about a girl because the idea of being gay haunts me, but I never thought about a man with any sexual interest, at any level."

Analysis of Situation n. 1

- a) The guy is afraid, afraid of being gay.
- b) Those which he calls sexual fantasies are actually phobic-obsessive contents, absolutely not rewarding and deeply disturbing and experienced as foreign thoughts invading the field.
- c) In conclusion, the picture seems to rule out the possibility of a gay man who struggles to accept himself.

Situation n. 2

A 21 year old guy wrote: "I've always been straight, but is a bit of time that I look at the guys with another eye, it is becoming almost an obsession, if I think about it, it excites me, I try to repress myself in every way but sometimes I just cannot, and I masturbate thinking about a guy and then I feel bad because I don't feel gay and when I think about my future I see it in my own family. And then thinking about my life with a girl makes me feel good, that's exactly what I want."

Analysis of Situation n. 2

- a) Those which he calls obsessions are actually true masturbatory fantasies against which the guy tries to resist rationally in the name of a presumed heterosexuality.
- b) Heterosexuality is present only through abstract fantasies like seeing himself into the future in a family or through the abstract feel of being comforted by the thought of living with a girl.
- c) In conclusion, the picture seems to indicate that this is a gay guy who doesn't accept himself.

Among the most frequent causes of the presence of phobic-obsessive gay content in the sexuality of young heterosexuals can be mentioned:

- a) The prevalence of the sexual dimension with respect to the affective one in the context of a heterosexual relationship, which makes the relationship unsatisfactory and feeds performance anxieties.
- b) The refusal-rejection opposed by some girls to whom the straight guy was very interested. The rejection depresses self-esteem.
- c) Having spent his childhood and adolescence experiencing the discomfort of being pointed out as gay, in a totally wrong way, not being such.

In both cases analyzed we can find the obsessive suspicion that failure may result from some form of latent homosexuality that is beginning to manifest through gay fantasies. The guy before going to a sexual contact with a girl or before masturbating, is fully aware that phobic-obsessive contents are there lurking, and this fact implies that the sexual experience itself is heavily affected by forms of conditioning anxiety which are a prelude to an unsatisfactory erection and to a low emotional involvement that contributes in turn to consolidate the phobic-obsessive contents.

Also common in these situations is the sexual experimentation. The guy tests himself to evaluate the response of his sexuality in straight and gay similar situations, trying for example to masturbate with similar fantasies in both gay and straight field. Since it is not true sexuality, because it lacks the spontaneity that is the backbone of sexuality, these experiments are also disappointing and are sometimes a prelude to a complete denial of sexuality both gay and straight. In such situations it is counterproductive to push a guy to examine himself thoroughly looking for reasons.

It happens very often that sexuality is the target and not the cause of phobic-obsessive thoughts. If the phobic-obsessive disorders are reactive that is they were born in reaction to very stressful anxiety-provoking situations, they will



weaken when the situations that have produced them will be over. Typical examples are those of guys who have disorders of this kind when they live in family and overcome them when they are in a university college. Often, the cause must be sought in areas not related to sexuality: loss of job, fear of losing his girlfriend and so on.

As in many situations of psychological distress, it is advisable to encourage socialization, so that the obsessive thoughts have less space in order to avoid so the feeling that obsessive thoughts can affect the entire relational sphere. Basically, the way to deal with phobic-obsessive content can be summarized as follows: many are afraid of ghosts, and so don't leave the house. Ghosts do not exist, but the fear of ghosts can be crippling. How must you deal with the obsessive fear of ghosts in order to overcome it? Becoming aware that ghosts do not exist! Referring the reasoning to the obsessive idea of being gay experienced by straight guys, how can you overcome it? There is only one way, you must become more and more aware that thoughts that return several times in your mind and make you feel anxious are not sexual fantasies that suggest homosexuality but are just obsessive thoughts in which homosexuality is not present as such, but only as fear of homosexuality. And where homosexuality is not present as such in objective terms it makes no sense to be afraid of it.

### **25.1.2 A real case of gay-themed obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)**

We are going now to deal with homophobia in the OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder), something that has nothing to do with attitudes of social homophobia, i.e. with the episodes of intolerance towards gays that we read in the press (phobia "against gays") determined by the ignorance and the incitement to the aggression towards gays, we are properly going to deal with the phobia, but it would be better to say the obsessive idea "of being gay" that manifests itself in the OCD. It is in a disorder that can create states of deep suffering and that must be acknowledged and dealt with by adequate means, sometimes and not rarely with the help of a specialist.

Recognizing an OCD with an obsessive idea of being gay is not easy because we are often brought to see all the homophobia, even the apparent homophobia, that as "obsessive idea of being gay" characterizes the DOC, as it were a phenomenon of social or cultural origin neglecting the fact that it can be a real pathology that should not be underestimated and that has causes that are not only related to social and cultural environment. As part of the activity of Gay Project, I have often had discussions with young people af-

ected by the OCD with the obsessive idea of being gay. In the context of this particular activity, in particular, I exchanged a series of e-mails with a 22-year-old guy, whom I'll call here Mark, which allowed me to clarify a lot my ideas about the gay-themed OCD because he showed me the situation from his point of view, that is from the inside.

What follows is a passage from one of his e-mails.

"If you want to transcribe or publish my story for the sake of other guys, feel free to do it without any problem, the more this evil is known by people, the more genuinely homosexual people understand that "I'm the sick" and not they, the better it will be, I think."

I would say that this statement is the sign of the human and as well cultural maturity of this guy whom I thank heartily. I have explicitly requested and obtained permission from my interlocutor to publish the contents of our correspondence. In approaching the core of the problem step by step, always in full respect of privacy, I followed the same path that he followed in his emails. I apologize to the reader if the path will be long, but clarifying these things also requires the reader to pay a little attention.

Mark, a university student, begins his first email like this:

"I am writing to you with an anxiety and a terror on me that are almost indescribable but I need to have a confrontation".

He then tells about his family situation, certainly not easy, strongly conflicting relationships with his parents, an early adolescence disbanded and without reference points, bad moments characterized by rebellion, school failures, dyed hair, fights, light drugs, vandalism, escapes, etc., subsequently the contact with other people gives him confidence and puts him back in a livable environment.

He enters a path of very deep growth that leads him to build a "personality at least partially independent from everything and everyone" that anyhow summarizes, in his opinion, the best of all those who made him grow up "in good faith and with love" and he feels himself in a good part the result of their commitment.

From the point of view of sexuality Mark's adolescence was rather complex. From an early age he had a passion for the feet and didn't make too much distinction between man and woman but the female foot for him remained an object of a special pleasure. Growing up, because of the unleashing of hormones, masturbation focused on all the women he knew, including teachers, "to bloom in the middle school with real opportunities to deep the subject"

but before he experienced heterosexual intercourse, as sometimes happens, Mark with his friends discovers and experiences the group masturbation on straight porn, "logically doing each for himself".

One day, however, a friend "a bit effeminate" wants to go further and Mark follows him "doing tests several times, even coming to penetration but always thinking of women, and especially dreaming it to happen with a girl as quickly as possible."

At about 12-13 years, both Mark and his partner of sexual explorations start to look for "a girlfriend" and the moments of experimentation and sexual curiosity between them become rarer but don't stop.

"I and this effeminate friend had not yet found a woman and sometimes, not yet knowing how it was this intercourse with women, but we were nevertheless very intrigued, we dreamed of having sex with women, and nevertheless we continued those experiences of reciprocal sexual exploration between us without ever having any emotional relationship between us that would have disgusted us very much, and indeed we avoided certain contacts because they were annoying and sometimes could have caused even real forms of disgust."

It should be noted that Mark underlines the "effeminacy" of his friend. After these experiences, always considered pure curiosity, Mark and his friend find both a girlfriend. Mark emphasizes that, even during the experiences with his friend, the masturbation was 99% in heterosexual key and very desired and satisfying but sometimes, as a makeshift, not having the opportunity to have real girls, fantasies "fell somehow on a male dimension, in practice we fantasized about what we could have done to women, but doing it among us, nothing more."

"Returning to the girls, the experiences with them began, the blows of lightning (I always had even at kindergarten so much interest in girls that I was often put in a punishment because surprised while touching my female peers or anyway I remember dreams about my female friends and the deep desire to have them and smell them), the desire was fierce and uncontrollable, up to make me feel bad, I started living in another world in a way so engaging that I thought with disgust to the things I had done with my male friend and I had some personal problems because of this part of my story I now tried to forget.

To make it short, my adolescence broke out with an very strong addiction and hunger for the woman that led me to neglect the

study and to fall in love often and always wanting to have a girl, smell her, touch her, lick her, and so on. I had the first serious 4-year history, previously I had had some experiences but tortuous because I often changed targets because I was interested in several girls at the same time and with a continuous and almost uncontrollable masturbation because it was my maximum daily desire.”

I would say, Mark’s adolescence, however agitated, does not present objectively pathological elements, but a few lines later he himself describes the first appearance of the obsessive idea.

”Among engagements, cuddles, kisses, the desire to be loved by a girl, to be his, to feel his jealousy, to feel myself as her property, to make love, etc. etc., I never noticed, however, one of my emerging behaviors: I tended to obsess me several times on various things, on touching things a precise number of times, on getting up the stairs running otherwise I would felt wrong, on putting in order, on cleaning, on talking saying well determined things, on apologizing to objects, on suffering from absurd things, etc. etc. and from here it began, at the age of 14, my obsessive identity, calm but present, which reached his maximum one day during a holiday in the mountains, while I was hearing a story of a family friend, who spoke of the coming out of an colleague of his, a colleague beyond any suspicion.

I was terrified and afraid that I could become gay and that I would be obliged to go with men and I immediately connected all this to the things I had done years ago, without fear and without any meaning, with my friends, and I began to ruminate: ”but perhaps are you gay”, ”are you sure?” Anyway, unpredictably, over years the thing became more aggressive in some periods and faded in others. In the meantime I started to meet new friends, to go to the gym and to attend people much more beautiful and mature than me for whom I felt envy and even submission because I was not able to compete with them.

My confident and strong personality almost bully went down until I felt myself practically only as a sheep that believes to be a lion, I realized that I was just an inflated balloon and that those qualities I saw as mine were just what I wanted to have but I didn’t have, so I had to ”build” everything, brick by brick, physique, mind, sex appeal etc. etc.. So sometimes, I happened to admire some people for their beauty and I felt myself as a slave

in front of them: "I'm inferior, they are beautiful, it is not that I'm gay?" And there I began to obsess myself more and more and my mind was playing switching things, all the things that (forgive the frankness) made me sick and bothered me. The homosexual relationships, started to appear more and more as an "obligation" because guys were or, at least, looked beautiful and if I was able to notice and appreciate their beauty (always with envy) I had to let myself go and enjoy them and so things went on until this fear became recurrent and automatic, leading me to an anxiety at the limit of panic, and almost to an anorexic crisis.

Before getting to this, I was full of fear but occasionally and in the meantime I kept falling easily in love with female friends and I wanted to find love, have sex, etc. etc. until I met my current girlfriend, whom I met through friends we had in common. It did not snap like lightning but slowly so, over time, we broke up and I, when she got engaged again, felt bad as if someone had taken away something from my heart and I wrote to her that I needed her and that if she had broken up with her new boyfriend, she would have found me there, ready, to wait for her ... in the meanwhile the obsessive thoughts that at that time were quite rare and much less aggressive were almost no longer present."

I have to underline that when the obsessive idea recedes Mark lives a fully heterosexual sexuality. Mark continues.

"One day, when by now I had almost built my new world and had begun to feel good on my own, she writes to me, she had really broken up with her boyfriend because she was not well with him and because my message had made her think, but, as you know, the heart follows only his own way, and so we threw ourselves into this relationship that lasts even now and is very solid so much so that we strongly depend on each other, in the meantime I have continued to change, to grow, to become mentally independent: I understood that I don't believe in God and I recognized myself as an atheist, I started to love science and to analyze many aspects of life from a logical point of view and no longer following mysterious or transcendent meanings, I put aside my homophobia and made friendships with homosexual people, friendships that persist even now and are excellent.

In this last year I have made friends with a guy through a common friend of ours, immediately we were in tune as two brothers separated at birth, he was one of those friends who can be counted

with the fingers of a single hand, one of the few friends I had, with whom to share profound topics of life, such as God, science, the meaning of life, etc. etc..

A few months ago, however, this friend of mine beyond suspicion (in the meantime I had become more obsessed about homosexuality, I was afraid that someone wanted to rape me or that a man forced me to do certain things, I feared and eschewed affectionate manifestations among male friends) reveals to me that he is gay, I calmly tell him that everything is ok and that he must be calm, must be what he is and that I hope I have not behaved badly with some typical joke about homosexuals, everything turns into an even more solid friendship so much so that he tells me his pains of love as if such a thing were obvious, but there in a few days my obsession reappears more violent, resulting in an attack of panic, anxiety and deep anorexia, I was not able to sleep and eat for weeks, and then I went on the internet looking "can you become gay?", "fear of being gay?" etc. etc. and I found a forum that talked about a disorder called "Obsessive-compulsive disorder related to the fear of becoming homosexual" like those behaviors of washing your hands or always checking the gas and I fully recognized myself in the gay themed OCD.

I have been in drug therapy for two months, in psychoanalysis and was a bit depressed, I have completely lost myself and the search for reassurances led me to distort and ruin my natural attraction towards women with intrusive images of sexual acts and fake feelings of pleasure, as if I had to follow that path, as if I was forced to that, this made me feel very bad, drugs already take away my libido and therefore I struggle to make love with my girlfriend (while, up to a month before, it was hard to me to leave my house because the desire to have sex was uncontrollable) and the intrusive ideas in my head become more and more frequent and reading on your site of repressed homosexuality, latent homosexuality and so on, I felt more and more terrified until to have real crises of identity; now I feel very down, I have a very strong crisis that doesn't let me breath, so I wanted to ask you what you can draw from my story according to your opinion and your experience.

I add that I was diagnosed with a OCD, by both a psychiatrist and a psychologist and also by professional friends, the disease that I told you above. I suffer from anxiety and obsessiveness from an early age but the characteristic of this evil is that it

tends to make you feel what you are not, to cover other problems, according to the psychologist related to my father and / or very painful experiences of my life. I feel really bad because I'm losing myself and I feel like I can no longer love women and their sex that I need, but this obsession blocks me with thoughts and reasoning that lead me to believe that I became gay.

I conclude by saying that I have erased homophobia because I have understood that it is natural and normal to be gay, I have found interesting people among my gay friends and I'm pleased that they live their lives serenely and I deeply hate all those who condemn these things, so I don't have according to the definition of my disease, any problems with homosexuality nor with my personal sexual orientation, but my disease has given me a thousand doubts about my whole life and I'm afraid of not being able to be myself."

At his first email I answered Mark:

"I read your email very carefully. From all you write it emerges quite clearly the picture of the OCD that manifests itself through the fear of being gay. It seems clear enough to me that this fear is unfounded, none of the things you say, neither pre-teen nor teenage experiences with other boys, nor recurring ideas related to the fear of being gay, are indicative of gay sexual orientation. I see you very worried, and the OCD can do this, but I would like to say to you that it happened to me more than once to meet guys with this type of disorder connected to the obsessive idea of being gay, in some cases the disorder made those guys feel bad, however, those guys, followed by experienced people, both at the pharmacological level, when necessary, and at a psychological level of support, have seen things change very clearly, gradually and in not very short times, but the weight of obsessive ideas became progressively less, so much so that their relationship life has not really been conditioned.

These guys are not homosexuals and they live homosexuality only as a phobia and as a conditioning. Some observations should be kept in mind, even if I realize that for a guy with the OCD these are arguments that cannot be decisive, in the first place I don't think you are gay, but admitted and not granted that you were gay, this would not really affect your life. I know a lot of guys who are happy to be gay and feel fulfilled this way. But, I stress it again, I don't think you have anything to do with gays, and

indeed I really enjoy the fact that you can have gay friends and that you give good judgments about them.

You can have obsessive ideas, of course, you can have them and you must try to realize that the situation of discomfort can be greatly alleviated by behavioral therapies that aim to prevent obsessive responses through a rational awareness. Until not many years ago these disorders in fact were not treated except with non-specific forms of psychotherapy, today there is the possibility of resorting to highly specific drugs that help a lot to contain the problem. Unfortunately, situations are complicated for those guys who are left to themselves up to 35/40 years and over, then an effective approach becomes more difficult, but at your age the combination of supportive therapy and drug therapy can really change things that is, it can allow you to live a normal life.

I add one thing, the guys with OCD are usually guys with IQs higher than normal. You are a student of a scientific faculty and the study can help you a lot to find a basic serenity, through the learning of a scientific method of analysis of reality. In the starting of the OCD certainly also counts the family atmosphere and in particular the emotional stress in relationships with parents and you certainly have not experienced from this point of view an ideal situation, you reacted, it is true, but you have also suffered. If I can be useful in something, I will do it willingly.”

Mark replies:

”Thanks, Project, for the email and especially for the afternoon’s chat that helped me to see things from the outside, if I can still steal you some time, I would like to talk with you because, even if you already know that my disorder leads me to seek reassurance, information, to make self-tests and so on until I get exhausted (and people who are worried about me say that it is like taking drugs and I should try to stop informing me, test me and seek reassurance ... but it’s really hard). I cannot study and my thinking is practically centered almost exclusively on this problem, I would like to remind you again that I have great respect for homosexual people and I don’t even consider them ”homosexual” because I start from the concept of personal freedom and therefore, telling frankly, I don’t care what you do in bed, who you love or if you like red or blue, I’m interested in people for what they are and if they are ”different” from me, it’s even better, we will have more to tell each other.



Already now, while I'm writing to you my mind is bringing me images and feelings that give me anxiety, fear and terror, all because I'm afraid of not being able to love my girlfriend anymore, of not being able to make love as I once used to do with her, because, I'm afraid that one day all this can end and that I can no longer fall in love with other women, enjoy painful loves or transitory affection (not to say escapades) with any girl who attracts me, and this because of all these questions that I'm asking myself, for the crisis I have and for the consequences that day by day I pay".

Then Mark focuses on drug therapy and it is clear that he has acquired a remarkable ability to interpret the therapeutic meaning of the drugs that have been prescribed to him.

"You have to know that my therapy has been changed, now I take an extra drug in addition to the two of the initial therapy: [omission] a tranquillizer that "should" keep at bay the anxiety caused by the thoughts and intrusive images, a drug that does (very poor thing) its meager effect, in the long run, I already notice it. [omission] this is the novelty that should block the ideation or should help me not to fall into the traps of "asking questions" continuously with the consequent effect of self-conviction and feeling of being what is feared (homosexual, dirty, sick with AIDS), or of having done or being about to do what you really didn't do and absolutely wouldn't do as for example to open the gas, not to love one's own partner, etc., etc.. This new drug should limit the emergence of images and intrusive thoughts".

Then Mark continues:

"Let's come back to us, I wanted to expose to you my doubts given what I read on your site, I scanned it accurately, as a true OCDed, as they say in jargon, I read also on the Internet that often they talk about "acceptance", "latent homosexuality", to give you an example, please, consider an excerpt of an interview with Tiziano Ferro [well known Italian gay singer], he declares that he liked women, before, that he was engaged, etc. etc. I have read sometimes of these stories ... people who live "rewarding" hetero lives, who then "discover" that they are gays (this makes me feel an anxiety and a panic you don't even imagine). I see it a bit strange, let's try to see the matter on the contrary: a

heterosexual who is born in a homosexual society will feel "unfit" to the social context and the typical relationships that he likes and morally accepts will be different from those of his peers because he will not be able to do the same experiences that others do, or, perhaps, he will try but he will remain very discontented and scalded (not to say traumatized) so he will soon understand that his happiness depends on some factors very different from those on which depends the happiness of most of the others, that others may not like these things that therefore may not be accepted.

I think this is the path that a person with a certain sexual orientation accomplishes in "understanding who he is" in front of the society, I certainly don't believe in respect to himself, I try to explain myself better: I never understood that I liked women since I was born until the first crush that gravitated around them, then the nocturnal emissions, the falling in love with girls, the first kiss desired so much (and soon arrives the intrusive image with attached thought "and if I had wanted a first kiss from a man?" ... pain, anxiety and panic), the sexual experiences (removing that small and short experience of self-knowledge in which there was curiosity and inability to resolve it with the other sex, as I told you) became something more and more uncontrollable, so much craved and wanted almost more than anything else.

My spontaneous behavior, for family reasons, had no brakes and / or feedback because my family "was not there" and therefore I didn't have to be ashamed of anything, I went freely to wander up where the my natural tendency pushed me, and it pushed really strongly, and I believe it is the same even for those who have a different trend than mine, it is not that you look in the mirror and you notice a new "pimple" that you had not seen before, and you say: "Wow, I 'm gay!" or "Wow, I'm straight!" I think it is the fear of the label, as I read very often, that upsets people who know they have desires different from those of others, but not the relationship with their own pleasure, that I think is indisputable and not subject to doubt, something like this: "I know that I like guys, I'm happy with what I feel but I'm afraid to show myself" or for the most sensitive people: "I like to go with men, but society says it is a disorder, how disgusting I behave!" But the pleasure and desire remains, does not fall from the sky as a drop of rain or I'm wrong here too? In this period I'm studying a subject in which there is much talk about order and laws, about how living

"things" don't respond to chaos but to an order, that in reality, in my opinion, is a different form of chaos, the chaos has the purpose of making an equation nonsensical, the order, the opposite, is a bit like the oracle and the architect, do you agree?

Returning to the doubts, when the OCD attacks furiously, as in these two days, I spend my time asking at each kiss of my girlfriend what I felt, what I wanted, what I was experiencing, why I did it, "but are you sure?", "I don't feel anything", "if I close my eyes I don't feel the pleasure I felt when I was in love with her or when I kissed her 4 evenings ago" and so on, until my brain breaks out.

I feel really that I'm sinking in the ground below, I want to be with her as I have done so far, I'll tell you more, dear project (dear because you listen to me and I wonder how much stuff you have to read every day!) Yesterday evening at my dearest gay friend's house while seeing a film among friends in addition to the obsessive thoughts and a bit of doc, but controlled enough, I got with my great pleasure even sexual thoughts with relative relentless desire for oral intercourse with a dear girl, friend of mine sitting next to my girlfriend (because of this I felt myself also a traitor, but this has encouraged me a lot) but it happened really with desire, while I felt that the rest was, always with the doubt that gripped my mind, a forced thing, mean, sadistic, intended only to the make me feel hurt.

I conclude this email with two other little things, I believe, project, that we all always know what really makes us happy and what pleases us, love is the undeniable testimony (if you can say) of such things, falling in love, adolescents or of adult age, it is something of which we aren't usually fully aware but that will be anyhow in the future our guide, so as to allow us to define ourselves, to understand in which "group" we are. Logically it should end there in a really free society, but this is another matter.

I do not think there are "calls" to gay sexuality, similar to the call for the religious vocation or other calls, that sprout from one day to the next, born after years and years of marriage or deep heterosexual relationships, amorous and also with painful desire, I allow myself, without quoting a precise source, to bring to your attention also the casuistry that no one has ever thought to draw but that I mentally did on how many homosexuals have ever discovered that they were instead heterosexuals, I don't think there is anyone like that, a homosexual is very proud of his homosexual-

ity he is born this way and will die this way, and for a heterosexual it is just the same, and so I believe my problem, my doubts like those of many others in my condition (project, you don't imagine how many we are and how many suicides come from this evil) are based on a great misinformation made by the gay "partisans" and by the hunchbacked and secular homophobia of some "sophists" who have very personal and distorted beliefs about a very natural condition that they are unable to accept in their minds, they are the only example of those who don't accept, who are a bit like Islamic fundamentalists, Nazis, etc. etc., the xenophobes par excellence, but speaking among us, between those who are not afraid neither of homo nor of hetero, acceptance means only finding the courage in "a world like this" to behave freely, but has nothing to do with "discovering" something that has always been there but has never been seen, but it is only what has always been there and has never been seen, admitted and not granted that it exists, what makes me terrorize, what has destroyed in these two days the desire to kiss and make love with my girlfriend (in this the drugs give a deadly blow).

When I hear people saying "I used to go out looking for women and now I just realized I'm gay" I feel upset by the triviality of such a statement, as if they had said: "I just found out now that I had that mole there." How can you find out that you like men, after having turned 50? And masturbation where do you put it? The falling in love? The erotic dreams? The fantasies in the classroom or at work? And there would be a lot to add to what has just been said, if you have time, desire and without any obligation I would like to compare myself with you. I thank you in advance and I ask you again if I can write you other times so as to have a good liberating and perhaps curative comparison for the problem I have now."

This was my answer:

"You certainly can write to me whenever you want and I will try to read your e-mails with the utmost care and to answer without filters, step by step. Beyond the things that people tell and that are very little realistic, it is absolutely obvious that in the vast majority of cases when it is said that a guy "discovered that he was gay at age 25" it means only that that guy has accepted his homosexuality at 25.

Sexual orientation has very distant origins and its first manifestations are very precocious, then it matures slowly through masturbation during adolescence, but in substance it is clearly defined as early as 13/14 years. When it comes to latent homosexuality, the speech is a bit different, but I have to premise a very clear concept that certainly puts you out of this category. Latent homosexuality means that a person who ends up recognizing himself as gay can live for years as perfect hetero, but that person through all those years will not be "minimally touched by any doubt" about his sexual orientation. I would like to say that a guy with latent homosexuality lives the emergence of his gay orientation in a problematic way "only when he is fully aware of it", something that can also be waited for life. I'm not even speaking about doubts on sexual orientation, that when emerge, come out without oscillations, but essentially about social and behavioral disorientation, when it emerges.

Doubts are a feature that is substantially absent in cases of latent homosexuality both before and after (see "perhaps" by Tiziano Ferro [an Italian gay singer]).

The sensations that you feel, manifest, if ever, the awareness of a problem that objectively doesn't exist, then the exact opposite of what happens to a latent gay for whom "there is no problem". Put aside the idea of latent homosexuality, which is also something objectively rare (I think I met no more than a couple of such cases in last ten years), it remains that people improperly use the expression latent homosexuality as a synonym of repressed homosexuality, denied, but anyway objectively aware.

The orientation of masturbation is fundamental and a guy knows very well where his spontaneous sexual desires are oriented. The speeches that I hear very often by the repressed gay guys (because repressed guys are many) manifestly show their "effort" present and past to adapt to a straight sexuality that doesn't belong to them, to force themselves to "love" a girl. The things you write are really different and frankly the idea that you can be gay doesn't seem really credible.

I don't tell you such things to give you a sop (which with the OCD couldn't anyway reassure you) but because it is clearly what I think. You talk about your girlfriend as a guy deeply in love even if distressed by a thousand doubts, but those doubts basically you know that they have nothing to do with the sexual orientation but are coming from the OCD.

It happened to me years ago to talk with a guy then 19-year-old who had made a dangerously gay life, he lived with a 40-year-old man, he went around gay clubs and also behaving in a way quite risky, then he met a girl and with this girl he began to feel good. He told me the story and asked me if it was strange that a gay guy could have a straight girl as a better friend. I replied: "A gay guy? But you are not gay!" He insisted that he was gay, but in fact what he told me about his 40-year-old partner and what he told about the girl were very different things, referring to the partner, he was only talking about sex without a real affective involvement, while referring to the girl, with whom he didn't then have any sexual partnership, he used the language typical of true lovers.

After a few months he left the 40-year-old and went with the girl, with whom I also talked several times, and it went very well. I told you this story to emphasize that your talk about your girlfriend is just like that one of that guy. Yours are the typical speeches of a heterosexual guy in love, put in crisis by the OCD. You have changed therapy and this will inevitably make you a little uncomfortable but in the medium term you will feel the benefits. Among other things some drugs [omissis] often have side effects on the sexual sphere. The typical problem of the use of these drugs is linked to the definition of the equilibrium dosage, because the side effects depend considerably on the doses and the individual variability are considerable. It certainly makes sense that you also have the support of a psychological therapy that can help you in the most problematic moments related to therapy and above all can give you some kind of quasi-affective certainty that will allow you to have firm points on which to rely. From what I understand by reading, your girlfriend really loves you and this is very important. You are not left to yourself, you have around people who love you. It is true that you have also lived under the familiar profile very difficult years but now you are fully aware of it, even if you cannot easily go further, with a bundle of memories like yours.

If you have doubts and you think I can tell you something useful about them, I'm here, for whatever I can do, but I'm here also, if you want, to exchange emails on other subjects also not related to sexuality. For the moment I embrace you and send you this e-mail."

Mark replies:

"Hello Project, Happy New Year first of all. I wanted to chat with you again, my obsession became more independent and I just "saw" it, I feel it coming to hit what is very important for me, but from this situation it takes a lot to get out of it, especially since they told me that it is based on a mental problem and that I must learn to live with it. If I can bore you another time, I wanted to update you on my current condition and have a little moment of comparison with you.

I broke up with my girlfriend, under the impulse of a tremendous desire for new experiences, I wrote to new girls, all of them attract me and since the beginning of the new year I fell in love with a girl who is wonderful, I couldn't even take my eyes away off her!!! I had the hormones so much high that I tried to kiss all the girls, making also some stupid things, fortunately they know me, being my work colleagues and some of them are in faculty with me and so they know how I'm actually, I cannot hide anyway that I really would have liked to have sex with all of them, but it's obvious and natural, isn't it? ha ha ha.

The fact is that I don't know what to do with my (ex) girlfriend, who was so close to my heart, sometimes I think of her and I miss her, but I think that the desire for adventure and the fact of having felt these feelings can't coexist with a really exclusive desire towards one single person, isn't it? So I think it's over but the idea of losing her forever is something I still struggle to accept. Perhaps the trouble had a bit gone, it was a little calmed down or anyway it was controllable even if it hit hurting, today I returned to the routine, and I started again going to do tests, self-tests, readings etc. etc., and, of course, I happened on your forum. I reread for the umpteenth time the article about guys who find themselves gay after a heterosexual life, who find it hard to accept: "For guys who have experienced a previous heterosexual phase, identifying themselves as gays doesn't obviously coincide with sexual maturation but it follows puberty even at a distance of several years, the great majority of these guys get to identify themselves as gay between 20 and 25/26 years but for some the age is moved even further." But then one can BECOME gay? I don't say it with disdain, you know what I think, but are there really people who don't realize their sexuality? I was clearly and sharply aware of it until yesterday with some peaks of obsessive-

ness but are there really people who take "conscience" of it only at 20-25? I'm 22 years old and I'm a bit afraid of this thing, I don't want to miss the opportunities with the girls who still attract me, I want the attention of a woman! You have to know that for me it's a period a bit so, the drugs that I take have destroyed my sex life as I struggle to do everything ... masturbation is very rare and I'm afraid of having a relationship with a girl because maybe I wouldn't be able to get to the end."

I answered in my turn:

"Hello Mark, reading your last email only confirms that you have nothing to do with gays and that the search for information on discovering themselves gay after adolescence is the result of disorders that unfortunately don't allow you feel good.

Not only in your email are missing gay elements but there are plenty of clearly hetero elements that don't leave open glimpses to the idea that you can be gay. But here I would stop for a moment, because the ability to transform the possibility of being gay into an obsessive idea derives largely from the negative idea that you have assimilated from the environment about homosexuality.

The OCD induces fears always related to elements seen as negative and intrinsically disturbing, but while the fear of diseases is a fear of things that really scare, the fear of being gay is the fear of a condition (being gay) to which one can attribute a negative meaning only because this meaning has been assimilated by the environment, in which we grew up, I'm talking clearly about the idea that being gay is a calamity and a terrible thing, an idea that objectively makes no sense.

It would be useful to try to debunk the negative myth of being gay. know many gays and they are very respectable people and in many cases really good people and not at all obsessed or upset by the idea of being what they really are. They're gay, and that's it, they live their lives, they have their affections, they don't even look like what people thinks gays to be, they're ordinary people who fall in love with people of the same sex. Please note that if a gay is not afraid of being what he is and doesn't feel upset at all, the simple fear of being gay shouldn't even exist, in practice it is as if a blond was afraid to become brown, apart from the fact that it is not really possible, it is not clear what he would have to fear, it wouldn't be an upheaval from any point of view except



for the habit of being blond.

The only thing about your mail that gives me some perplexity is the fact that you are putting aside the relationship with your girlfriend, to which you seemed and probably were very close. On the one hand you say that the therapies limit your sex life even at the level of masturbation but for the other you talk about strong sexual involvement, I stress it, always and only towards girls. But you talk about this strong sexual desire in the straight direction just at a time when the disturbance due to the OCD had decreased significantly, which only confirms that, beyond the OCD, gay sexuality is not really part of your horizons. What you say about girls for a gay guy would be absolutely inconceivable. The OCD conditions you at certain moments, but you know that you see the idea of looking for information on gays more as a temptation than as a really compulsive element. This fact, combined with the fact that you have spent periods substantially without the conditioning of the OCD bodes well because the OCD looks controllable and is not violently intrusive to the point of canceling your spontaneous hetero drives, which are there and strongly show themselves. I can tell you that all this seems to me a step forward and even your email doesn't taste at all like something written under heavy compulsive conditioning because you talk a lot about heterosexual sexuality, what if you were under a strong influence of the OCD would not happen because you would be totally dominated by intrusive ideas.

Basically it seems that the therapies have an effect and all this is very important. I'll point out one last thing and then I'll send you this email. You write me very freely and look for a comparison with me through a gay site and all this doesn't terrify you at all, indeed, this manifests a form of deep respect for me and for what I represent, and all this would not happen if you had also just a thread of homophobia. You are not homophobic not even at minimal levels and yet you see homosexuality as something foreign that can attack you. The weight of the education received, in the deep, remains. These are issues that are in any case under control and it is to be believed that they will not ruin your life because you already have an attitude that doesn't seem to be dominated by a really obsessive idea. The help of drugs is important, it is true, but becoming aware of the objective groundlessness of one's own fears is certainly not a negligible element. A hug and still a sincere wish of a lot a serenity for this 2012 just begun."

The next email from Mark is probably the most interesting because it points out and clarifies the fundamental aspects of the OCD.

"Hey Project, I'm glad you answered me, I was afraid that you could consider my email like the result of the usual "compulsion", thank you!! You say: "Because the ability to transform the possibility of being gay into an obsessive idea derives largely from the negative idea that you have assimilated from the environment about homosexuality." What you say certainly happened long time ago, but then I understood that homosexuality is a natural thing, obvious and even worthy of esteem because it's love exactly as that one between man and woman, I understood all this long before my problem broke out.

I'm a bit obsessive from birth and this came out with the psychiatrist. I'm not afraid of homosexuality as of an evil, ugly and undesirable thing but as something I don't want because I don't like it and it doesn't belong to me! It's like the poor man who was born in a mountain village where homosexuality is considered as a crime and he feels obliged not to be what he feels, to be with a woman, to do things that make him sick. I'm becoming crazy because my brain speaks to me whispering these things, things that are not part of me, that I don't like, offers me strange images about anyone, even about my loved ones, it distorts the feelings towards girls (the girl with whom I fell in love has a brother well quiet, well, while I admired her and drooled, my brain told me "Is it not that you are undecided and you might like both?" And I felt bad for a moment and I tried not to think of what my brain had just suggested to me and concentrate on my heart and my feelings pleasantly satisfied by the girl); the problem is right here, it is something that wants to change me, that mockingly, even if I don't have problems with homosexuality, and respect it, and even if I'm interested in understanding its world and its problems, turns it into an enemy very aggressive against me, making me assume my peacefulness as an unconscious will, and therefore making me think that I'm hiding something to myself and here is the trigger of obsession.

You gave me the example of blond and brown but it is a bit too simplistic, if you take the sexuality, it focuses the individual in a dimension that touches the being in points really at the root: nature and "spirit", that feel in danger, because there is a force (the obsession or the forcing, in the case of the guy of the country

who is obliged) that take control of the guy triggering automatic mechanisms of defense, not because it is bad being blond or brown but because I'M NOT BROWN and becoming it would be a big problem.

Can you, Project, imagine for you a life with a woman, who touches you, has sex with you, kisses you, her smell, her presence? I think would be horrible FOR YOU not in itself, as an objective thing, but FOR YOU it would not be desirable, for me it's the same thing but on the contrary, it's a beautiful thing that two people love each other, no doubt and, as I tell you, I'm for the free love and I hope everyone is in a condition that allows him to do what he likes better, but I don't feel gay, I have a problem, a pathology diagnosed to me that cannot be deleted with the abatement of the preconceptions about "homosexuality" which for me is no longer something unhealthy in itself, on the contrary, I reiterate that I have friendships and deep esteem with many homosexual people and as you have said I respect you very much and I consider you a person to whom I wanted to tell my story of which I am ashamed and you don't imagine how much! I speak alone, I hit myself, I scream, tremble, I have nightmares, I have been anorexic, all because inside me something is wrong, my sexuality is intact, my relationship with people who love people of the same sex is accepted and indeed profitable and I'm also proud of it so much so that in my family environment in which the thing is not well seen I defend you with a sword because nobody is in the right to criticize, denigrate another person for his sexual or love behavior, nobody.

As I cannot stand this and I easily infuriate having a very rational view of things and having put the sentimental / instinctive dimension under control, the same I do towards myself and this kills me because I cannot serenely live the crush on a woman because the OCD hides problems much deeper so much so that the first thing that they told me the ones who have had my problem for a long time and my psychiatrist has reaffirmed is the fact that my disease has nothing to do with the conception of homosexuality and indeed the advanced research in this field has shown that homophobia is not part of the disorder but is sometimes a fictitious consequence of it due only to reasons of psychosis and neurosis that lead to wrong defense mechanisms, but this is another story.

I, Project, am in a crisis that I had never faced before because I'm

free to think as I want, I'm independent and open to everyone, wishing everyone's good, but my heart and my sexuality, having only one propensity, the hetero one, cannot in any case bend to those things, to gay things, I mean, because it would be a problem, I feel bad thinking of having to go with a man and imagine it makes me feel dirty, raped and many other bad feelings, this upsets me, so it's not a good thing for me to think of myself in those conditions.

For me it's a happy hope to think that, in the future if tot in present, two people who love the same sex can do it freely in the light of the sun, that can be friends with heterosexual people, that labels related to sexual orientation sooner or later will lose their meaning and sexuality, every sexuality, will be considered as normal as having a mole on your back.

My mind is so open that the only case in which the collapse occurs is when something is imposed on me and goes against my health, against my being, against my nature. Here's everything. This has destroyed my image, my strength and my confidence in sexuality, has led me to have strange behaviors and to close a love that was good but was not right at that time, to go wrong at university etc. etc. ...

Now I end up with the shopping list, because you probably cannot take it anymore, I'm sorry if I went on too much but I wanted the argument to be clear: my primary care physician was the first to not understand the thing and is written in the DSM that my pathology is often difficult to diagnose because it is confused with non-acceptance, internalized homophobia, etc. etc. but really it has nothing to do with such things, unfortunately it is not a cultural question; you don't know how much I feel guilty about the gay world for the things that I think because I know they are ordinary people, good and without anything to be ashamed of, but a mind that has problems, like mine, you don't imagine what brings you to think and to do, I sometimes cannot understand if what I have around is fiction or reality, I have chest pains and I cry endlessly, because something wants to kill me inside, because I cannot love women anymore, I cannot be loved by them, I can no longer be myself. I know who I am but I feel lost and it's hard. Thanks for listening, I'm sorry to have insisted maybe a little too much, it was not my purpose. A hug."

I answered Mark in my turn:

”Hi Mark, I read your last email very carefully and it’s as if my brain had opened up, in practice I began to really understand what you’re talking about and I put aside the idea, objectively very superficial, that your ailments could have a dimension so to say cultural or environmental. Now I also came to understand much more precisely the meaning ”for you” of an impossible involvement in a sexuality that is not yours and the general picture is much clearer to me.

I tried to tell you what I thought starting from totally wrong assumptions, now I realize it, but you have corrected me with great clarity and extreme tact, thing of which I thank you very much, because you made me enter more seriously into your world. What I learned from your last email will be very useful in the future to evaluate similar situations less superficially. If you think that I can be useful in any way, I’m at your disposal. You are truly a guy of great human dignity and I feel honored to have met you, I tell you it in all sincerity.”

And Mark answered me in turn:

”Hey Project, I’m happy to have given you an opportunity to get a clearer idea of my problem and maybe a useful testimony for your future in helping people. If you want to transcribe or publish my story for the sake of other guys, feel free to do it without any problem, the more this evil is known by people, the more genuinely homosexual people understand that ”I’m the sick” and not they, the better it will be, I think. If you like, we can still chat, I find a good response in you. I thank you as always.”

### **25.1.3 Sexual abuse and obsessive contents**

The connection between sexual abuse and obsessive content related to sexuality deserves further study. I will consider two different situations, non in abstract but considering true experiences of two real guys who contacted me through Gay Project:

- 1) the first concerning a gay guy who has been abused in childhood and who presents a gay sexuality deeply conditioned by the experience of the abuse,
- 2) the second concerning a straight guy who has been abused in adolescence and has developed a gay-themed OCD (I will only deal with the case of a OCD that had already manifested before the abuse).

The two situations, despite their substantial differences, have a fundamental aspect in common: the tendential identification of the victim with the

abuser. Let's start with the first situation.

1) A gay guy, who has been sexually abused in childhood, has a gay sexuality that in the first meetings with his partners does not present particular problems but, if the relationship deepens, the guy gets to confess to his partner that he has been sexually abused, nevertheless he does not tend to feel as the victim but almost as the co-responsible if not as the promoter of the abuse, he tries anyhow to involve his partner in his obsessive fantasies concerning the abuse with insistently (obsessively) repeated questions about the circumstances of the abuse, asking him what he would do if he found himself in similar situations; faced with evasive or patently disinterested responses, the guy seems incredulous and attributes the lack of interest in sharing that particular sexual fantasies on the part of his partner to an alleged moralism of the partner himself, however the insistence does not cease even in the face of an obvious lack of interest but becomes even more pressing, as if the guy wanted to obtain a confession on the part of his partner of situations or experiences analogous to those he had lived in first person. The obsessive insistence on the partner goes as far as to induce him, in more or less long time, to stay away and interrupt the relationship.

It is evident that the memory of the abuse has become a sexual archetype from which it is difficult to get free, and here a mechanism characteristic of the abuse is triggered: the victim imagines himself in the role of the abuser, situations of discomfort even very strong are created this way, because the victim sees himself as a potential pedophile and develops pedophile fantasies in which he assumes, in an oscillating manner, both the role of victim and abuser.

Basically the projective identification with the abuser and his behaviors favors guilt feelings and strongly weakens the possibility of rationalizing the memory of the abuse and of living a sexuality not deeply conditioned by the abuse itself.

2) In the case of a straight guy with a pre-existing gay themed OCD, the abuse in adolescence creates objective complications that cannot be ignored because they do nothing but feed the OCD, even though it cannot actually destroy the guy's straight sexuality. The mechanism of identification with the abuser, in this case, cannot lead to true gay sexual fantasies (because the guy is a straight guy) but only to obsessions and gay compulsions which, as is usually the case in the OCD, remain, at most, at the level of masturbation and, in almost all cases, never materialize in real sexual relationships. The gay-themed compulsions and obsessions are perceived as deeply disturbing compared to the true sexuality that is and anyway remains straight.

The identification with the abuser can however be more complex when the abuser is not really a gay man but he is a married man or a man who has children, that is when the abuser is or appears to be a straight adult, with whom the straight guy with OCD can easily identify on the basis of the following projective mechanism: "He is straight because he is married and has children, but if he abused me it means he also had gay fantasies and could not refrain from putting them into practice, but I am straight too, because I have a girlfriend and I have sex with her, but I also have gay fantasies, so in the end I won't be able to stop myself and I'll end up needing to have sex with a man. How can I be with a girl if I already desire men and know that sooner or later I will betray her with a man? I am fooling my girlfriend into believing that I am straight, but it is not so!"

In this case the identification mechanism acts through different paths but it is no less disruptive than in the case of the gay guy and creates the risk, sometimes lived obsessively, but objectively not very concrete, to lead to the breakdown the relationship with the girl.

The deeper identification with the abuser leads to two closely related consequences:

- 1) the responsibility of the abuser appears to be much lighter;
- 2) even if in such situations it's evident that in any case no responsibility can be charged on the victim, the victim himself overestimates his own presumed responsibility up to the point to consider his own behavior decisive, and consequently to experience guilt feelings objectively unjustified.

In the two cases presented, the most suitable conditions to overcome obsessive thinking are realized when the guys have their "real" emotional life, that is:

1) in the first case, when the gay guy lives not a unilateral falling in love but an authentic love story with a guy with whom a relationship is created that is completely independent of the fantasies related to abuse, fantasies which can also remain but marginalized and spontaneously not shared, fantasies that are not considered as a taboo but are very rarely argument of conversation. In essence the stories that materialize or tend to materialize only or mainly in terms of more or less spontaneous sharing of fantasies linked to abuse are not true love stories and therefore do not contribute to the overcoming of obsessive thinking;

2) in the second case, when the straight guy lives a love story in which the girl knows that the guy has been abused and realizes that the obsessive

thought linked to the OCD can cause the guy to question his heterosexuality. The OCD has a strong conditioning capacity in two cases:

- a) when the girl tries to ignore obsessive contents, pretending that they do not exist;
- b) when the girl emphasizes the obsessive contents and offers them a sound box that amplifies their effect.

OCD must be tackled with awareness but without dramatization.



# Chapter 26

## MARRIED GAYS

### 26.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

#### 26.1.1 Homosexuality as guilt-pathology and marriage as a remedy

This chapter is dedicated to married gays, so I will leave aside all the considerations related to sexual orientation of guys who have a straight sex life at the couple level and having nevertheless a sex life typically gay at the level of masturbation, because these considerations have an important sense only before the marriage.

I will start here from the situation of married gays, as I see it through the chats with people living in this condition. In my dialogues with married gay guys of all ages, the idea that when we are young, we are very often led to underestimate homosexuality and to consider it a choice and, even worse, a reversible choice, is always present. Too many times one hears people telling that one chooses to be gay and this totally false statement creeps into the brains of the guys who, forgive me the desecrating but instructive example, consider homosexuality not as their nature, i.e. as a personal fundamental characteristic but as a kind of drug that is a bad thing in itself but that can be taken in the end, in small doses, because it is taken for granted that one can come out of it when and how one wants.

Homosexuality has nothing negative and it is not a habit that leads to addiction, such as the use of drugs but it is a reality about which it makes no sense to say: "I go out of it when I want" exactly because being gay is not a choice. The idea coming from a religious matrix of the homosexuality as a vice that if rooted leads to an addiction, that is to a vice no longer eradicable, is still widespread and continues to produce incalculable damages, inducing

gays to marriage in the belief that, in the end, with an act of will, they can also choose to be straight.

The married gays know very well how much this wrong vision of things is deleterious. Very often, in socially backward reality in which homophobia dominates, children learn from an early age to see homosexuality as a dis-value, all traditional education presupposes the heterosexuality of guys and, where there are gay guys, who are eight percent of the guys and therefore are practically everywhere, causes them to repress any gay drive through feelings of guilt.

The Catholic Church still officially has attitudes that are objectively homophobic and, in substance even if not in words, incites hatred against homosexuals. With Pope Francis the tone, at the top, has changed, but eradicating homophobia from the Catholic Church is a something that seems to be destined for failure, admitted and not granted that someone really intends to attempt such a thing.

The attitudes of the family are often backwarded and violently repressive. I invite those who have not seen it to see a very significant French film: "*Juste une question d'amour*" in which parents who embody two different attitudes have to face the homosexuality of the sons. When the repression of homosexuality is so strong as to induce the guys not only to eliminate external behaviors that may make people suspect their homosexuality but even to fight against their own homosexual instincts at a very private level by repressing spontaneous masturbation in a gay key, it becomes unfortunately possible and concrete the possibility that a guy can think not only of forcing himself not to be gay but even to be straight.

These are forms of profound violence that completely alter and I would say completely distort the affectivity and sexuality of a gay guy, who is encouraged to create a heterosexual relationships and to cultivate it by "imitating" the attitudes of other guys; in these cases the removal of homosexuality is seen as a moral merit and heterosexual sexuality is accepted as "medicine of homosexuality".

Behind all this, the idea of sexuality as a vice and therefore as a fault is evident. On closer inspection, it is easy to understand that where very elementary and dogmatic conceptions of nature dominate, the complexity of reality is compressed into schemes derived from pure prejudices. To think that sexuality is aimed only at procreation is an assumption of principle that is systematically contradicted at the social level and in individual behavior. The expression "against nature" has been and is still used systematically with regard to behaviors and to the homosexual libido itself. Instead of understand what variants of human sexuality are, it is much easier to consider them as deviations "against nature" or as acquired vices, or cultural choices,

more or less induced from the outside. To consider homosexuality a vice rather than a variant of human sexuality means to base the whole approach to homosexuality on totally wrong grounds.

When a guy evaluates his homosexuality as a vice against which one must resist to return to true sexuality according to nature, in fact, he takes an attempt of self-repression that results in an attempt to avoid or contain masturbation, to escape from the occasions in which homosexual instincts can be more easily reawakened, to sublimate homosexuality in affectionate friendship, and, at the end, to choose a way without return like marriage. I report here (with the consent of the author) an email I received.

### 26.1.2 Email from a gay guy about to marry

"I am writing to you with great fear because I don't know who you are, and the fact that you are gay embarrasses me. I'm 25 years old, I have distinctly felt an interest in guys for a few years, but I don't feel repulsed by girls, now I have a girlfriend for a few months and all in all I feel quite at ease with her, she's very sweet and she's not obsessed with sex like some girls that I had before, we love each other, she is not at the top of my thoughts, I sometimes let myself go to pornography and in particular gay pornography, but with my girlfriend I think that a serious relationship could also be built. I want to say that if I work hard I can do without gay porn and even without masturbation for several days and I think if I had a family I could put all these things aside to dedicate myself to my family. I feel that I'm at a turning point, because if I wanted, I could arrive to the wedding and even in a short time and my girlfriend would be very happy and even our parents, and in the end, it would be good for me, but honestly for me it's very hard to decide because then I could not go back. I would love to get married and do away with pornography once and for all. etc., but I'm afraid of doing the biggest stupid thing in my life. There is something that makes me reflect and it is the fact that I talk with my girlfriend about everything but I could not talk about my homosexual fantasies because I think that she wouldn't really understand the meaning of such a thing, she's fine with me, we pamper each other with a minimum of petting but she would never understand that for me there is something else, she is convinced that homosexuality is a vice that can be overcome with good will and perhaps with the help of a good psychologist. I too, years ago, tended to give for granted all these things but lately I started to think that things are much less easy than people make them look. I asked myself many questions about my future and what I really want. Recently I met a guy at university and I started to look at him with interest, but not only for reasons of sex, as I did before, but to look at him

with emotional interest, he made me feel tenderness, I wanted to stay next to him, there was also sex, but not just sex, and for the first time I began to think that for me a love story could be possible even with a guy and maybe even more with a guy than with a girl. I don't know anything about the gay reality, which objectively scares me but I'm not at all sure that I want to give up my private and tiny gay world to go to a wedding that honestly scares me a little because in the end it could be a real trap. But now what have I to do? My girlfriend expects the wedding, like our parents and friends, etc. etc .. I think I need someone who forces me to admit things that I now see even by myself, even if then transforming the clarity of ideas that I'm gaining into concrete actions is really difficult."

### **26.1.3 Underestimation of gay sexuality and overvaluation of that hetero one**

The totality (or almost totality) of married gays arrives at the wedding with the full awareness of being gay. These are guys who have been masturbating for years exclusively with gay fantasies, that is, thinking about guys, who often have lived sexual experiences with other guys even after 15/16 years of age and even in adulthood, after 20 years of age, and have considered these experiences as "something that everyone does" (including hetero guys) and therefore not indicative of a gay orientation, even if in reality the involvement of a gay guy in a group masturbation session is very different from that of a straight guy. All this, ignoring seemingly minor episodes, such as experiencing erection in the presence of certain guys or the desire to see them naked in the locker rooms of gyms or swimming pools.

The pressure towards heterosexuality (conscious or unconscious) exerted by the environment on these guys has been so strong as to bring them to stop their gay instincts at the level of masturbation and to orient themselves at the same time towards couple heterosexual sex.

Generally when a guy who suffered a strong social pressure towards heterosexuality, despite his being gay, that is even though oriented in his free sexuality (which manifests itself in masturbation) towards other guys, experiences for the first time a sexual intercourse with a girl his reaction is not necessarily bad at all and, whatever the level of sexual involvement in the contact with the girl (even minimal), that sexual intercourse becomes the typical sign that "the gay problem is overcome". A gay man is a gay man, not an impotent and, especially when he has lived for years in a situation of substantial sexual deprivation, if he is close to a girl in love with him, in a situation that pushes him to a heterosexual intercourse that has at least some

features of intimacy and non-superficial warmth, can very well get to have a heterosexual intercourse somehow satisfying. It is clear that such a intercourse has nothing to do with the expression of the free sexuality of that guy who, even feeling terribly guilty, will continue "episodically" to masturbate thinking about guys, or will eventually completely repress his free sexuality forcing himself to put aside masturbation altogether in the belief that masturbation itself is the cause of the homosexuality.

The first straight intercourse of a gay guy leads him to the idea of having finally overcome the "gay phase" and to have found a "mature sexuality". Often, for these guys, the fear that gay impulses will forcefully return to be felt is a push to intensify heterosexual intercourse and to go to marriage quickly. It's the typical idea: "You saved me from homosexuality", or: "If I get married and can have sex with her every day I will not think about masturbation and my gay impulses will disappear". Often, therefore, gay guys who go to the marriage, experience periods of intense heterosexual activity, which however are characterized by a deep sense of ambiguity because in almost all cases, these guys, even making love every day with their girls (or with their young wives, if they have already married them) never talk with them about their sexual orientation problems. With wives, in principle, at least for some years after marriage, gay husbands do not even mention the problem of homosexuality, there is therefore no real interpersonal communication between husband and wife, who have daily sexual contacts but without an adequate level of trust and mutual communication.

#### **26.1.4 The reactions of the girls**

In a percentage of cases around 10%, the guys talk to the girls openly about their doubts of being homosexuals, doubts that are automatically underestimated by girls, who having a straight sexuality are led to think that their boyfriends, by the simple fact that they have sex with them, can only be straight. Generally, a girl is more afraid of her boyfriend's infidelity with another girl than of the fact that her boyfriend is gay. In some cases the girl thinks she can sexually reorient her boyfriend towards an exclusive heterosexuality by "sexually cuddling" her boyfriend exasperatedly, what results usually in a very quick and clear reaction of rejection. These attitudes as "Red Cross nurse of love" are lived by the guys as aggressive and not respectful towards them.

In the situations described above, the girl still remains convinced of the substantial heterosexuality of the guy but, in some cases at least (rare but not sporadic) the girl has instead full awareness of the fact that her partner is gay and she accepts him as such, that is, the girl, who is really in love with

her boyfriend, consciously agrees to stay close to him without any sexual contact or with a sexual contact limited only to the purpose of conception of children, children who may also be explicitly desired by the guy. These attitudes that have something heroic (in a sense at least) are linked to the fact that the solitude of each of the two spouses with respect to the outside is so strong that they must bind each other with a kind of very close symbiosis in order to survive.

It should be emphasized that when a hug is too tight and too long-lasting it risks taking your breath away. In situations like the one described, mutual dependence is very strong and is felt as a bond that sooner or later ends up becoming constrictive. There are couples, and I have known some, who consciously married only to have children, and there are cases (and I have seen some examples) in which a heterosexual wife helps her gay husband to live like a gay man, an attitude in which the boundaries between pleasure and suffering are very fragile. In all these cases, however (about 15-20% of the total married gays) between husband and wife there is still a frank dialog and at least a relationship of friendship and mutual respect. When a gay guy marries a straight girl and they have no children the problems connected to the possible separation are above all of social and patrimonial nature.

Often a gay guy agrees to be with a girl by excluding in his mind the hypothesis of having children and when he realizes that this hypothesis for his wife is essential, the marriage becomes a kind of imposition for him. When there are children the problem of the relationship of a gay married with his homosexuality is extremely more delicate. The emergence of a homosexual tendency is experienced by a gay man who has children as something that can jeopardize the relationship with the children and the feelings of guilt can be very deep. I met a 49-year-old gentleman a few months ago, who had never had a conscious perception of his homosexuality (an exception in the field of married gays), he had a son more than 20 years old, but nevertheless he realized that he had a sexual interest for a work colleague. When this gentleman contacted me in his words I felt a deep anguish, due to the fact that he had never suspected he could be gay and was scared of such idea, because his knowledge of gays derived only from reading newspapers and from attitudes typical of the mass media. This gentleman, whom I had the opportunity to hear several times, sincerely loved his wife and son and came to speak openly with both his wife and his son who accepted it and, paradoxically, this form of sincerity has strengthened family ties. That gentleman agreed to live his sexuality as a very private thing exclusively in terms of masturbation and fantasy, totally giving up the idea of looking for a mate or as people say in such situations of "making a new life".

The solution may seem like a compromise solution to gays who have not been

married and who have never had a heterosexual satisfactory family life, but for that gentleman radical choices would have involved a violent cut with the previous life and would have had very little prospect of leading to realization of a new life with another man.

### 26.1.5 Gay husbands and conflictive marriage

In most cases, however, the family situations of married gays are quite different and much heavier. The lack of sincerity on the problem of homosexuality involves the establishment of a series of formal relationships and, under them, of a series of conflicts, affective life becomes over time a sort of recitation or due act. With his wife, if she requires a frequent sexual intimacy, a married gay ends up pretending, which usually involves many problems, such as the lack of erection that can worry the wife but doesn't worry the husband who knows that, during masturbation with gay fantasies, erection is all right. These problems touch the sphere of sexual intimacy of the couple and can be disruptive. Generally, at first a married gay guy tries to repress his homosexuality but over time this attempt becomes useless and the illusion of heterosexuality turns into a fiction of heterosexuality. The gay impulses are strengthened while the relationship with the wife deteriorates. It is right that I explicitly break a spear in favor of the wives who are often completely unaware of the true motivation of the deterioration of the relationship with their husbands and who live, also themselves, really difficult moments.

Basically, even if we assume that their husbands acted playing a heterosexual role in good faith not even understanding that omitting to talk clearly about their sexual orientation they objectively deceived their girls, nevertheless these women have been anyway deceived and misled, more or less consciously, by their husbands, about their true sexual identity. The fact remains that at a certain point, a woman who has married a gay man without being aware of it, understands that relations with her husband are substantially frozen, sexual intercourse becomes rare up to disappear completely, dialogue is completely lacking, at least on important issues, and marriage is in crisis. When there are children the problem becomes difficult to manage, because in case of separation there is the problem of the entrustment that creates further conflicts between husband and wife which are often resolved in court.

### 26.1.6 How married gays live their gay sexuality

How does he live his sexuality a married gay who has passed the phase (which in many cases doesn't even exist) of the illusion of being heterosexual? Here the answers are the most varied:

1) The husband accustomed to sexual repression up to play the part of the heterosexual, limits himself to live a gay sexuality in terms of masturbation and porn sites found on the Internet. Such situations are, at most, compatible with the preservation of marriage, at least on a formal level, where there are children, because the external aspect of the family doesn't change. Often this is the state of affairs to which things stop. The husbands can get to forums like Gay Project or other serious gay sites and simply look for friendships with other gays, often married too, in chat and at a distance. This solution allows a married gay to find a safety valve that puts him in a position that allows him to talk openly about his problems and also to find serious answers. It is obviously a compromise solution, but in situations such as those in which a gay married and with children lives it is a situation that is in many respects acceptable, since in most cases we are speaking about men who are no longer young, totally lacking the knowledge about the true life of gays. It should be borne in mind that for a non-young man the chances of finding a "serious" companion (that is, not the one-night experience [risk of aids!]) are not very high and moreover few gay men would be available to build an affective, stable and serious relationship with a man who has a family, has children and therefore has other very strong emotional bonds.

2) If the husband thinks he has to regain lost time looking for a companion with whom to live his affectivity and his sexuality, and the husband is still thirty years old or so, he can experience situations similar to those of the so-called "frenetic phase" of sexuality of those who discover themselves gay or finally release their gay sexuality at a fully adult age. These guys are not content to masturbate looking at a porn site but sign up for erotic chats and dating sites, giving credit to the idea that the problem of finding a partner is actually a problem that can be solved easily "with a little effort". Through the chat they get to sexual encounters, often even at risk of AIDS, because a user of dating sites can also have over 100 different partners in a year! Apart from the risk of AIDS, occasional sexual encounters generate feelings of disgust and frustration after the first times. However, after the first meetings it doesn't follow a rationalization of the behaviors but only the repetition of other attempts with other partners. I emphasize that in these situations the emotional dimension, which is essential in a gay's emotional and sexual life,



is practically completely absent. After a little practice of erotic chats and dating sites, a usually depressive phase takes place that depending on age can be more or less heavy.

3) There is however a third path followed by married gays towards their gay identity, and it is a path that can only be done in two. I state that the concrete realization of this third way, which is that of "loving friendship", is not the result of an individual initiative, but is connected to the idea of being already really in two, that there is an "original affective couple reciprocity" and that a real relationship of affectionate friendship already exists, on which an explicit sexual dimension can also be inserted. Given that married gays who end up in a marriage crisis are not very young and are not only undeclared as gay but are declared as hetero, for them the idea of living their sexuality and their affectivity in a strictly private dimension is fundamental. In dating sites and erotic chats there are often people who don't have too many problems to declare themselves gay, to go to gay clubs and to be seen around with mates clearly gay. Such things are very embarrassing for a married gay, for whom therefore the option of the amorous friendship remains substantially the most desirable. If that friendship is lived with great discretion, it allows the marriage to be maintained at least on a formal level and in some cases even the wives are not in principle opposed to such solutions that allow a stable relationship between the gay father and the children, avoiding putting their emotional growth at risk. I saw, in about 30% of cases, the development of a loving friendship between a married gay and a friend of his, also gay and undeclared. These relationships, even if they occur between fully adult men, have the freshness and genuineness of the first affective contacts between adolescents, allow the two partners to live a deep affective dimension and to integrate sexuality with moments of non-sexual intimacy, linked to totally sincere dialogue and openness and to mutual trust without restrictions, all things that have an enormous value and help not to trivialize sexual intercourse.

### **26.1.7 Critical points of a gay's journey towards marriage**

I would like to point out that the statistical sites of Gay Project show the constant presence on Gay Project of readers who access to Gay Project through Google search engine using keys as "married gays". The problem exists and it is not statistically irrelevant as usually believed. I try to summarize here some of the fundamental elements that emerged from

the Gay Project experience with regard to married gays. Among the absolutely fundamental elements in determining the path that leads gay guys to marriage, we must remember:

1) The idea that being gay is a "choice" that is somehow modifiable or a "vice" that can be prevented or corrected.

2) The idea that sexuality is a marginal reality that, for a heterosexual, must be exclusively instrumental to the creation of a family and procreation and, for a gay guy, must in any case be sacrificed in the name of the family and children.

3) The idea that a gay guy can be fully realized, that is can be realized at the family level, because the true realization is only that, exclusively through the denial of his sexuality and that this denial will be, after all, painless because compensated by the family affection. In essence, the instinctive affectivity, connected with sexuality, is radically denied in this way. Cardinal Lajolo, in an interview in March 2014, declared, as if it were obvious, that "Gay marriages cannot fail to disappoint those who make them", in reality, if we consider the constant decrease in the propensity to marriage, the exponential increase in "femicides" and the constantly increasing percentages of divorces and separations (in Italy 50% of marriages end up in divorce or separation), what emerges is the substantial separation of society from the Catholic model of marriage and family.

4) Proposing to a young heterosexual the traditional family as a condition of happiness means to deceive him, on the contrary, it would be useful to induce him to reflect on the problems and uncertainties that marriage can bring and actually brings with itself, given that 50% of marriages end up in court. Proposing heterosexual marriage as the only possible option for a homosexual means even laying the foundation not only for the failure of an entirely artificial family union, which will inevitably weigh on children, but also means condemning a gay to a life entirely against nature, i.e. against his nature, and condemning a woman, who would have every right to have a husband really in love with her, to live in a state of great uncertainty and total dissatisfaction not only sexual but, in almost all cases, even emotional.

5) The idea that the "sacrifice" is a value in itself. Too often guys tend to see the renunciation of their spontaneous sexuality as a merit in the name of the ideal of the family. In reality, when a gay gets married he is convinced that accepting the sacrifice of his sexuality is something high and noble, but

in no case self-repression leads, in the long run, to positive outcomes, and the "sacrifice" accepted by the gay, it actually ends up being a violent conditioning imposed on the life of a wife who often isn't even aware.

6) The idea that conformism to traditional values is always positive, even for those who with certain traditional institutions, such as marriage, have nothing at all to do. Families rarely appreciate freedom and often tend to believe that what is socially accepted is, for this only reason, the best path to follow for everyone and in every situation.

7) The idea that obedience is always a virtue and the freedom of the single person must be systematically sacrificed in the name of socially accepted general rules.

### **26.1.8 Non-possessive women in love with gay men**

I would like now to try to illustrate how women fallen in love with gay guys can try to cope with the situation.

Below, with the author's approval, I quote an email of a woman who has realized that her boyfriend had behaviors that were not typically straight.

"I'm writing to you because I need to clarify my ideas a bit, or maybe because I need to talk to someone.

I am a 25 year old girl and I fell in love with a guy a year older. He is a very nice and very sweet guy. I had previously been with other guys but a bit snooty and full of self and sometimes I was nervous, I thought that with such guys I would never reach a balance, then I found him and it was a completely different thing, he listened to me, talked a lot with me, behaving differently from other guys, being a friend, not hitting on me, and even if it seems absurd, I liked this behavior a lot. We have become intimate friends, let's say so, so much cuddle some kissing but of tenderness, not of passion, it almost didn't seam real to me.

He never talked about himself, but made me talk, I did not mind this at first. We met every day but I didn't know if he had a girl (obviously he hadn't any) or had had one before, it seemed that these topics didn't exist. Then I tried to make the first step to loosen him up a bit, I don't like the expression but, in short, it was not just a friendship for me, and there I saw his fear, I did my accounts based on what I knew about him and I thought that he could be gay but I didn't say anything to him.

Over months we have known each other better and I even offered him to go live together, and in the end he told me that he was gay. I told him stupidly

that it would not make any difference to me and that we had to live together, because I wanted to stay with him anyway, but he looked at me and said, "Silvia, don't get angry, but a gay guy can only feel good with another guy." After this talk I felt very ridiculed, I wanted to get away from him because I interpreted what he had told me as a rejection, but I could not, I continued to see him, to console him when he was melancholic but he began to keep more and more things to himself. I knew from other people that he probably had found a guy but I had not seen him for a long time and I had resigned to the idea of not hearing him anymore. After experiencing the story with him, I think I will not fall in love with another guy, I'm stupid, I know, it makes no sense to fall in love with someone who doesn't want you because he's gay, but that's exactly what happened to me.

Do you think that I can recover some relationship with him, I say just like a friend, of course, or do you think that he prefers to stay away? For me, if he has a boyfriend, is fine anyway, that would not create any problems, but maybe I'm still dreaming like a stupid woman, I think I don't understand what kind of relationship a gay guy can have with a woman, that is, I understand it, but I don't want to understand it, I know that I still see him too much in the straight way to get along with him."

This is a typical mail of a woman in love with a gay guy but of a woman really aware of reality. The story with the gay guy is over and she realizes that this guy will never be her boyfriend. She still loves him, but she understands that in the name of this loving there is no sense in claiming a role that doesn't follow in a spontaneous and shared way. If the guy goes away it means he has to go his way and it makes no sense to try to hold him. After all, in this story, the guy never "deludes" the girl, does not objectively cross the boundaries of a simple but profound friendship, which means that his behavior doesn't cause misunderstandings.

### **26.1.9 Women exploited by gay guys**

The following mail is of a completely different content, but it is perhaps more interesting especially for the different way of acting of the guy who, voluntarily and culpably, causes the girl to misunderstand and eventually causes her reaction to resentment.

"Gays ... nice people! I say it very ironically! But why I tell you so? You're convinced they're all good guys. It is not true that just straight guys tease girls, gays do much worse, and I, unfortunately, run into their behavior. I came from a bad story with a piece of (you know what) ... I liked very

much physically but he was just gross and at the same time immature, in short, a real little prat! I was really angry.

I go to the disco once with my friends and there they introduce Mark to me, I don't like him, Mark seems to me a little bit without character, the other one was rough but Mark seemed even slippery, he didn't even inspire me at the sex level, and when it comes to guys I'm not very picky. In practice, I don't care about him at all, but I notice he keeps an eye on me, when I try to look into his eyes, he turns his gaze, but keeps looking. I wonder, "But what is he searching for?" I decide and ask him. He only answers me: "You are cute!"

You know how it is, girls like such things, and then I say, "You are cute too!" But so, just for compliment, because he didn't attract me at all, then we danced and in practice I lost my group and spent the evening with him who stayed in the disco alone! Yes he was there just alone, without friends! With my usual generic logic I thought that if one goes to the disco alone he goes there just hunting for girls and he, in fact, was courting me. The following week we continued to exchange messages.

Seen by day, in the sunlight he was less slippery than he seemed in the dark of the disco, he was not a great deal, a bit too plump, chubby, but, in short, he could still make his work. After a few days I got bored of this guy and I didn't call him anymore, but he kept sending me messages as he was half in love, and provoked me saying that he was impressed and often thought of me and he added many other things, but I was not really interested and I didn't answer, or maybe only rarely, and only for education, but I was trying to keep myself in the neutral.

One night he calls me and tells me he is very bad and absolutely needs to talk to me about something very important. I tell him that if he has to vent he can do it with a friend or with a psychologist, but he insists, as if it were a very important thing, but he doesn't tell me what it is, in the end I can't stand him anymore, I'm stressed by his insistence and I'll tell him, "Okay, see you tomorrow." He insists that it must be immediately, but I tell him it's late and I don't know what to tell my mother and then he says it's okay for the next day. The next night we meet and go to talk in the car.

I expect a clear and direct speech but it starts talking about generic things, I cannot figure out where all this going to end up, I ask him explicitly why he wanted to talk to me, but instead of answering he insists on generic chatting. I ask him, "But are you kidding me?"

I confess that I thought he could be one with some mental problem, maybe a maniac. I was just angry, I asked him, "What do you want from me?" And he took my hand, then I said, "I know, I understand! But you are not my type ..." but he, instead of going away as I expected him to do, embraced

me and there the contact between us took another way and we kissed, that is it was he the one who kissed me, I did not like it too much but I was there anyway.

When we separated he said to me, "Do you think we could get together?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "You are the first girl I really fell in love with" I took it as a compliment. After a couple of days we went ahead up to the point of having some sex, that is just to touching each other because he proceeded very slowly in these things. He had a way of doing all his own, I would say above all contemplative. He told me that I was beautiful what is not true because I'm a very ordinary girl but he looked at me with admiration, caressed me, but did not take the initiatives that usually guys take.

Anyway, we got together. Typically, guys tend to stay away from the girl's family, he does not! He wanted to know my mother, my father, wanted to come to my house, a bit like a long time ago when there was the official engagement. He came to my house several times, my parents often invited him to lunch and his parents did the same, in a few months we become engaged in the classic way. All in all, it was all pretty nice, he was serious, he didn't bother with the other girls, he was finishing his studies, and he would have found a good social position, even though these things were more interesting to my dad than to me. After a year of this kind of engagement in which we had also arrived to have sexual intercourse, always and only on my own initiative and insistence, finally we began to talk about marriage. My parents were happy and all in all I was happy too. We were always going around with friends on a Saturday afternoon and we were now an ironclad couple.

One day he tells me that he must unfortunately leave because he has an aunt who is very bad and cannot come with me the next Saturday, I tell him that it is fine and I don't mind. On Saturday, because there was a gay guy among our friends, this one proposes to go to a gay disco but where everybody can go for some fun, we decide and go. I feel like a fish out of water in that environment and I'm not going to dance but I sit a little defiled with two old friends. At some point I have the impression of seeing Mark on the dance floor, dancing with another guy, the lights are hellish and it's hard to recognize people, but in the middle of the flashes I guess that it's he, I'm upset, but I'm not sure and on the other hand there are too many people and too much smoke to see well if you stay away, and certainly I would never get close to him enough to be recognized. I say to my friends that it is too hot and I have to go out a bit.

The disco is practically in the countryside and around there is a large parking lot for customers. I leave, I run into the parking lot and Mark's car is there.

I felt like breaking out for anger! I came back, I told my friends that I was sick and I wanted to go and we went home. They didn't see anything and had absolutely no idea that Mark was there.

The next morning Mark sends me the usual good sms, I ask him how his aunt is and he tells me she is "better". Well, I was furious! I replied, "I saw where you were really last night. Get out of my sight because if I see you again I'll poke your eyeballs out!" Despite all he continued to lie and accuse me of homophobia! I didn't answer him anymore and the story was over. I don't tell you about the problems and the misunderstandings caused by all this story, I could not tell my parents what really happened, otherwise I would have been considered stupid all life long, so my parents gave me all the blame "because he was a very good guy", and so on. That's what a gay guy did to me!

Let's see if you have the courage to publish such a mail! However I'm not angry with you, it's obvious, but you don't imagine how slippery can be a gay guy who wants to use you as a fake girlfriend just to save face, it's something hateful."

## 26.2 DOCUMENTS

### 26.2.1 A girl in love with a gay guy

I too have been with a guy who has literally destroyed my life, finally after years of profound solitude (many have consoled me but no one really understood me, not having lived the same things in first person), only in this forum finally I found someone who knows how these situations can be painful. Even my ex, while never having loved me, obsessively sought me when I left him, and I came back with him many times, he had declared his feeling to me too early, he used to kiss me mechanically ... it's all so familiar, so similar to what I had read many times on the forum!

My ex is also very misogynist. He writes very angry postings on Facebook in which he says that in his life he has been only with some bitches, for him a woman is worth the other, and when I asked him reassurance about us he seemed amused not giving me any answer, he was sorry for my "affective rants", he said I was stupid because I was a girl, a girl who doesn't like being contradicted, and he would have liked me to be more military, harder, a real shitty woman, solar and strong. Moreover, he compared me to all the women he had known, even to my friends, to my sister, letting me understand that they were better than me.

Then when I tried to leave him he threw himself at my feet and said he

had a sickness inside, which led him to treat people badly ... then when I "got back" with him, he immediately became another time the usual asshole. When we had sex it seemed like a funeral march, it was something that he did without joy, and I didn't know what he was thinking about, but he never hugged me warmly, never pampered if not with embarrassment and a sort of disgust, superficial caresses, then he immediately used to snort saying I was a person accustomed to ask for too much. He liked, however, to receive cuddles, like a child, with the excuse that he was sick. I felt like I was his mother or a whore to be despised, depending on the moments. You cannot understand, or perhaps only you who are reading this email can understand what suffering, what absurdity I have experienced.

But I do not think I'm a victim because I partly knew he was gay. I was aware of some things, the relationship he had with his best friend and his lack of affectivity, the relationship he had with his mother (this is perhaps a common place), the total disinterest he had for intimacy with me ... It was as if he was missing *\*that thing\**, and I don't want to say the penis, but the instinct to be close to me emotionally and physically, which then becomes a body in the sexual act. He is fixed with girls, he always speaks with this tone of ... I don't know, of blame, horror, it is not clear why he runs behind them, according to what he tells about it, and in general girls refuse even his friendship because he is not able to enter their sympathies, treating them badly as he does as a rule.

All this is despite his being a handsome guy, that pushes initially all girls to speak to him and become curious about him (he is also clever and witty, original and creative) ... Looking back I know that he loves me very much, he simply doesn't accept me for what I'm: a woman. He used to say that I was playing the role of the female while I behaved in an absolutely natural way. He used to watch me cry in silence as if he could not connect with my pain. Sometimes he was kind, he was not a monster, let's be clear. But he couldn't be a loving guy. He used to show me affection only in the scene in which he was ill and I took care of him as a mother-nurse, and he in the grip of his "depression" (which I suspect is his repression) pretended to be dying and asked me to soothe his pain with my magical power or something, he asked me to feel the beat his heart, to stay near him ... all things he missed in normal moments, only that they were totally disconnected from the sexual dimension. His sexuality was all sadism in practice.

I talked a lot about him because what we lived still hurts. We were very close, symbiotic, and we really loved each other, even if we hurt ourselves and it is better for both of us to stay away (these situations are so absurd and contradictory) ...

Up to this point I didn't say anything about me because somehow I had



chosen to stay with him even though I felt he was gay. But I want to say something more because other people can enter this forum and they could benefit from my experience as it happened to me reading posts of other people.

So, first of all, I could not be sure that he was gay. He used to throw me many clues but he never told me it clearly and openly. Nor could he do it, because the problem between us was just that, he could not open up with me, there was place only to hurt me to vent his pain and to lie (even to himself), tell me stories, sell me his fictitious personality ... there was no space neither to listen to me nor to truly express himself. If he is really gay, I don't think he has accepted it at all, and if he has accepted it he denies it with all his strength.

Second: having a guy probably homosexual but who can have sex with women and has really sex with you from a certain point of view is a good move if you're an insecure girl, because you know he cannot betray you. And also because (sorry if I use a stereotype but in my case it was so) with a gay guy you can have a friendship that with a straight guy it is impossible to have. I remember that I really appreciated his patience, his passion for psychology, his gossip, his eye for aesthetics, the way we could talk for hours about how our male friends were, how they reasoned and so on ... then when we wanted to, we also had sex, and I didn't feel tested by him, because I knew he was thinking more than anything to himself while we were doing it, it was the affection towards me and his need to "unload" that motivated him, not my desirability as a woman ... The price I paid for this "comfortable" relationship was the frustration of my real need, which is not only physical but also emotional and psychological. I had much more desire than him, and he began to say that I was nymphomaniac, he went around saying that even after we had separated.

So it was the fault of both of us, that's what I think. I knew, deeply, that I wasn't really in love with him. He missed that light in the eyes that seemed to me to be the most important characteristic of the man I dreamed to have beside me. But when I tried to get away he chased me in every way. When I changed the phone number, he wrote to my sister, to my best friends, insistently, to know where I was ... He didn't respect my very simple request to be left alone to get over our story. When he thought I had canceled him he tried to come back with me. Perhaps he didn't want to lose me because I had been more or less the only person who had seen him, albeit consciously deluding herself, like the straight man he wanted at all costs to be. Losing me meant losing the person who most believed in his artificial personality, the one he spent and still spends his life to sculpt and finish, the one willing to find artificial justifications about why he's not normal, he is not like the

other guys, he can't keep in touch with people or women, or about why, according to him, women are stupid and have to be more like men ...

There is perhaps a third reason, sweet-bitter, that pushed me to stay with him, apart from the fear of a true love and the fear of be wrong about him, and it's a mixture of voyeurism and pity. Something morbid, a curiosity almost like a reporter. He seemed to me and still seems, a striking case of how the repression can completely destroy the life of an individual.

Standing near to him I lived a kind of perverse reality show in which I expected at every step that he betrayed himself and that it turned out that he was gay with irrefutable proofs, or better I expected him to confess it clearly. Although perhaps I would have preferred to sadistically catch him on the fact, as in a yellow. I cannot really blame him for his feeling himself cornered and with his back to the wall or for his continuous questioning the sincerity of my love, because there was also a dark element in it, and I knew it. It seemed to me also my legitimate compensation for all the things I endured from him.

Over time I accepted the situation, I understood that it was not me who was wrong, that I cannot change him, that he is like that with everyone and not only with me because he suffers deeply. Sometimes I would like to help him, but I don't know how to do it and I tend to say that maybe because I was his only girl and he was my most important guy in spite of everything ... maybe I'm the last person who can help him. And this is very sorry for me because nobody has ever been so close to me, and for him it's substantially the same ... Now I hope the future leads me to a normal story, with a guy who wants to kiss his girlfriend, to cuddle her, to stay well together with her, and all this keeping calm and living quietly. It seems impossible to me because I'm very cynical about it, partly because of traumas related to my parents. I'm afraid that if I met a good guy I wouldn't feel attracted to him. But okay, I'll see what happens. I needed to tell how much I felt understood on this forum. Thanks again to the OP and to all the others.

Greetings.

### **26.2.2 A girl in love with a repressed gay guy**

I'm reluctantly going out from a story with a repressed gay man I loved and love so much still now, despite all the evil he did to me. I only left him two weeks ago because I realized that he had never really loved me. I state that I'm 26 years old and he is 23.

We met at an internship, we exchanged the numbers and for commitments of both we met two months later to go for a coffee together. Well, that night we talked about this and that, nothing more.

Arrived home I got a text message in which he confessed me his love and he hoped that it was reciprocated. Honestly this thing made me think a lot, because it is unthinkable to love a person so quickly, especially because he had just come out of a story that had lasted two years. In the following days we started to meet, he seemed really a sweet and tender guy and so at the end I tied myself to him and after a week or so we got together, even though initially I was a little hesitant.

The first kiss was sought by him, and so even the first time we made love it was he the one who did the first step, let's say it all happened fast enough. After only 3 weeks, he wanted to take me to his parents because he cared very much about this thing, and so I went into his family.

The more time passed the more that sweet and good guy became a distant memory. He was a type who later was discovered to be a great liar, but of the chronic ones; even though he knew he had lied to me he managed to treat me badly and to tell me bad things because I had allowed myself to doubt him. I don't tell you how many tears I have shed, he often and gladly treated me badly even when I worried about him.

For example, once we were at the beginning of our engagement, he had to take an exam at the university, so in the afternoon, as usual, I called him to know how it went. Immediately after seeing my text messages and my calls he turned off the phone, and I, desperate, not knowing what had happened and imagining that something had not gone well with the exam, I decided to go to his house to see how he was and to lift a little his spirits, in case.

I arrive behind the door and find him ready to go out with his roommate friend to buy something, I saw him quite serene, but seeing me he got angry, he took me aside and told me that he didn't want to answer because he was nervous because he hadn't taken the exam and I would never have to allow myself to go to his house without warning. I felt very bad of course, because instead of appreciating that his girlfriend was worried about him, he got angry, and I didn't understand why he was calm when he was with that friend and became almost rancorous with me! He was always like that with me, if he was nervous about his business he treated me badly for no reason, he told me the worst things, while for his friends he was another person.

He didn't even want me to approach his phone for a matter of privacy and so over time I discovered he was hiding many things from me: he messaged secretly with other girls. It seems absurd I know but he used to exchange messages with other girls not with guys.

I have always been very sincere with him and I wanted him to do the same, because if he didn't do anything wrong he wouldn't need to hide. At the beginning he was really a chronic liar, he even came to lie about his past. Over time and with various speeches that I did he changed enough.

On a sentimental level instead I found myself with a person completely different from what he was at the beginning. He was not the type who kissed me on my cheek, who hugged me tightly, who cuddled me, these things were not spontaneous for him. Even when he was kissing me I didn't feel passion and complicity, sometimes I happened to have to interrupt a kiss because it seemed no more than a play consisting in rhythmically move the tongue! I felt that those kisses were detached, and he justified his mistakes and his behavior as "inexperience".

Even on a sexual level things were not going very well, he was very selfish, and we made love quite rarely because he was always stressed and tired. Only once I allowed myself to say with all the sweetness "I want you" but the ruckus broke loose, he began to shout against me and tell me that I didn't understand that he was tired and that I used to make love only for "venting". I don't tell you the tears! As usual I was the one who had to pay for everything and who felt bad about the discussions, he, on the contrary, was totally indifferent, and rather than clarifying he preferred to go and get a good sleep. I thought it was a matter of character. Once after a discussion in which I had finished crying because he had treated me badly, he had understood that he was wrong and in order to show himself really sorry (I saw him out of the corner of the eye) he licked his hand and then wetted his eyes. I was puzzled by that gesture, but I didn't say anything to prevent him from being uncomfortable.

Returning to the previous speech, to prevent him from reacting badly, I waited for him to make the first step to make love, based on how he felt! The intercourse, however, wasn't very satisfying, he liked better to be masturbated by me rather than to make love classically. Over time, talking about it, however, I made it clear to him that it was more important for me to make love classically because it was much more beautiful and intimate in a couple in love and so he changed his behavior to please me.

I had always noticed that his penis was not hard enough and that came out almost nothing of sperm. Initially talking to him he wanted me to believe it could be a pathology. Over time he confessed to me that he used to masturbate 5-6 times a day, and from there I understood why he almost never wanted to make love. This thing made me feel very ill, because I thought that it was me who was the problem, who was ugly and undesirable, so much so that my boyfriend preferred to do it by himself.

He simply told me that he loved me and that this was his longtime habit. I remember sadly the first night on vacation where we had the chance to sleep in the double bed together. As soon as I approached him looking for cuddles he turned away and with a serious and annoyed tone told me: "turn the other way and sleep!", I remained silent, I didn't understand why he reacted

like that, I did as he told me and without making him notice I cried a lot. I come now to tell an episode that dates back to a period before his "crisis". One afternoon he had to study with a very esteemed friend, a college mate. We should have met after they had finished studying. That evening for no apparent reason he treated me badly with an unprecedented wickedness, told me that I had ugly dark circles, that my hair was ugly and he also pointed out other physical defects with a face literally "disgusted". Obviously I felt badly, and my self-esteem was affected again.

A few weeks later (we are talking of about a year ago) it was a period when he was very nervous and he treated me very badly, he came to tell me that we could not stay together because he could not love me, and he would never have succeeded, that he didn't want make fun of me anymore and delude me. He said that in his own way he had loved me, but that always, not only with me then, he couldn't feel feelings for anyone, even in old stories, he couldn't even cry (and now I understand why he thought I was pretending when I cried because of him).

He asks me not to abandon him and I, who was anyway very attached to him, understand his discomfort and decide to stay close to him to try to understand where his malaise was coming from. In this period I try to talk a lot and to find the origin of his discomfort. He manages to tell me that, compared to the other guys, he has never felt much attraction for women, for example if he saw a girl in a miniskirt he felt nothing at all. He comes up to hypothesize to be gay, and he seems more and more convinced of it to the point of wanting to stay forever on his own because he would never have accepted the truth.

His dream would have been to go away and live his life away from everyone. In this period I'm his confidant and try to pull out of him the toad he had inside. It also comes out that as a child he discovered sexuality with an uncle 9-10 years older. In this "game" he had to masturbate his uncle, and he did it for a while ... he didn't tell me more. However I try to reassure him and try to minimize everything by saying that anyway they are experiences that can happen when sexuality is not yet developed and doesn't mean that for this he is gay. I was convinced that maybe he was becoming obsessed by the idea of being gay, and that anyhow he was not.

When he told me this, it was as if he felt a bit of resentment towards this uncle, as if his uncle had taken advantage of him who at the time was a boy, somehow an easy prey. But in reality he loves this uncle (I too know this uncle), he loves him very much and vice versa, this uncle loves him very much. He has always considered him a good person ... for him he is his best uncle!

Once become aware of such thing and seeing his discomfort I propose to go

together to a psychologist but in the end he is never ready to go, always postpones until he ends up saying that he doesn't need it.

In the meantime he, convinced that we cannot go back together, for my own sake, pushes me to go out with other guys and stay only friends with him, and slowly he moves away more and more. At the end I decide to go out with a friend with whom there had been something in the past, even to test his reaction. Starting from this episode he approached me again telling me that he loved me, that he had only had a bad time and that he wanted to care about me. After three months of "friendship", a little naively perhaps, because I was too much in love with him, I believe him and we come back together.

Things with him are not going very well, he continues to be nervous and stressed for no apparent reason, the exams go great, he finishes all in time, there are only two small easy exams to overcome and he is one step away from graduation. Secretly he begins to smoke because of anxiety, and in his life he had never smoked!

With me things were not good, on a sexual level I was not looking for a lot, and every time we made love he lose the erection, and sometimes even blamed me because he said he saw me absent and it was not true at all!

Just two months after our returning together, he falls again into crisis, we are in late July, last year, and he once again comes to tell me that he doesn't love me, and never will, that the fault is not mine but he doesn't feel feelings for anyone; he leaves me this time for two and a half months, in August, the first month, he sent me messages telling me that he loved me, that he was wrong and that he wanted to see me again, but he never did anything concrete to see me again.

In September and mid-October he disappears completely and afterwards he goes back to show himself sending me a lot of text messages and I, tired and still hurt, call him and ask him to leave me in peace after all the evil he did to me.

He arrives up to tell me that he has been a month with another girl, and punctually, five minutes later, like always, also because he sees me agitated, as if I was the real problem, he starts to totally deny what he had just said (the story with another girl) perhaps for fear of losing me, but I don't believe him.

I find him one morning behind the door with a bouquet of flowers and my heart still weak could not say no! He told me that he had only left because he was stressed out by the thesis but that he always loved me, it was nonsense but the heart sometimes doesn't want to see certain things and I believed him! He told me that during this period he did nothing and told me that he had been with a girl for a month just to know if I was engaged with

someone else and to test my jealousy. The reality is that he had disappeared also with text messages for a month so I'm well aware that the story of the fake girl with whom he would have stayed for a month in order to test my jealousy is just another lie, in all likelihood for all that time he had to do much more interesting things than to think of me! Honestly I think he can have had another girl for a month or two, because, not feeling anything for anybody, according to his thought, one girl or other doesn't matter at all, the important thing is to appear heterosexual, especially if it is a dear friend of his the one who introduces him to the girls in question ... all easy girls!

Things immediately went wrong, even the first time we did it as soon as we got back together his erection faded and his penis became soft quite immediately and so all the other times, he didn't have a good (hard) erection. I didn't feel in him the desire to have sex with me, as I have never felt it in two years of our story. Many times I told him that I had the impression that he made love mechanically, and he punctually got mad at it! Lately he told me that those caresses, those kisses and those cuddles he did to me, which he never had done before, were a play, were only a "recitation" because he hadn't really changed. I felt very bad, and even more because I believed he had unlocked himself since at the beginning I had asked him to make me some cuddle and do me some caresses every now and then. Obviously I was wrong!

He punctually said that it was not true and that he had said it because he was nervous ... I think instead that it was just when he was nervous that he was really telling me how things were ... with a cold mind he was inclined to deny everything not to let me get away.

One of the last times we made love, immediately after putting the condom, in a few seconds, without giving me even time to undress, his erection became soft, and once again he blamed me saying "Asshole! Hurry up!"; understanding his embarrassment I didn't even answer, it was clear that it was not my fault! It was he who, in his haste to put on a condom, had given me no time to undress! Usually, knowing his problem, I preferred to wait a while and was not in a hurry. The fact is that I was tired of his humiliations ... once, after we did it, perhaps because I had kept inside the anger for his gratuitous wickedness, I cried ... and he obviously believed I was pretending! I don't even know how he could have thought such a thing ... and oh well!

I arrive to the drop that broke the jar and made me say "now it's enough" even if I love him I want a little love for myself! While I was doing oral sex on him he was very excited with a fantasy of his so much so that he expressed it aloud, in practice he imagined another man who together with him penetrated me. Such a fantasy left me a little disconcerted because I love him, I don't need to think about anything else, I only need him! I would

never enjoy seeing him with another girl, rather I die from jealousy! He told me that it didn't mean that he didn't love me but that there is a distinction between sex and love.

Then to understand how things really were, I "pretend" to understand his point of view and I tell him that maybe he's right, that maybe I'm a bit closed because with him I conceived only the classical making love. I tell him that I would like to make this fantasy come true, and that I would have been looking for a guy in the chat! At first he refuses but with a little insistence he accepts (at that moment I would have preferred to die!) and he advises me to find a young guy, better if already engaged, who is not inclined to fall in love with someone else ... and coming from a different city.

Then he thought of where to do it ... he didn't know if in the car ... or in some house! However at the end, being a little hesitant, he decided to drop it for the moment ... maybe later we would have talked about it! Inside me, however, there was a huge disappointment, because I'm convinced that a man who loves his girl would not do a similar rubbish with her, but not even for a joke! The fact is that he was angry with me because I didn't have to play with his imagination and told me that I, not having such fantasies, was an amorphous girl.

After two years of great love for him in which if I had been allowed, I would have given my soul for him, if, according to him, thinking only of him when we made love, I was only an "amorphous" girl, well, this was not the man I wanted at my side, because as he has often said to me "he never loved me" and certainly he doesn't know what true love means, I am convinced! And I'm even more convinced that he was a repressed gay who for fear of the reality held me bound to him doing me an evil that he couldn't even imagine. I'm tired of suffering, I want someone to make me feel loved and that at least cares about me. I still want to believe in true love ... I hope it exists!

I only regret having given an immense love to a guy who has never understood it, because he was too devoid of feelings to be able to perceive mine, I was simply for him "the girl with whom he was" no more and no less than many other girls! Which girl in my place would have accepted so much stress if she hadn't been madly in love? I think certainly none ... pity he never understood such things!

This is my story, ended on April 18th, 2014 ... from that day I'm trying a new rebirth, even if I'm still at the beginning and for me everything is difficult ... I have to suffer long before I can smile again ... also because this was for me the first big love of my life, and I really believed it! I apologize if I have been too wordy and thank all those who will want to comment on my story, the opinions are always welcome!



### 26.2.3 Story of a married gay guy

Hello Project, now it is so much that I don't write to you. With my wife we talked and we decided to separate. Now we are still at home together for logistical reasons and it is not easy, but I imagine that slowly everything can improve. The guy of the message I have not heard him for months and I cannot deny that I miss him, but slowly all this will be over.

On my orientation I sincerely stopped asking questions and giving me labels. I decided to live with sincerity and that's it, without making me a thousand problems. I also managed to talk with my male best friend and with my female best friend, with my sisters and especially with my parents. I was afraid that they wouldn't understand, in fact I was convinced of it, but it happened the exact opposite, they understood me and they are close to me. This helped me a lot. My father's answer was "Certainly I'm old, but in 2017 it's no longer strange". I and my sister were more shocked by his reaction than he was by me. He has always been one of closed mind (at least apparently). Now I'm just trying to find a balance in my life even if I have swung for months between moments of contentment and serenity and moments of confusion and sadness. I also write to you because I wanted to add my experience to the forum by telling you my story, but before inserting the post I wanted you to read it and tell me your opinion. Below you find the text (I know it's very long, but it's a life to tell and there are many themes). Bye! And thanks.

Hello everyone, first of all I congratulate you for the forum, which I have been following for many months and that I continue to follow, reading texts, reflections and comments, and I thank Project for its advices. All those testimonies have helped me in this period not exactly easy. I have tried many times to write my story to give some help to someone else with my experience and above all to receive help or advice, but I have always been afraid and uncertain about what to write.

I'm a 29-year-old guy, not exactly a teenager. I state that I understand that I have always had a strong internalized homophobia, probably acquired by a loving and affectionate grandmother who was completely against the gay world and by a father who joked about it with friends. I was a child and certain phrases that, with today's head, I would understand that they must be contextualized and understood in a completely different way, they had marked me. I don't know if it was because of these phrases or whatever else, but I have always seen the fact of being homosexual as something perverse and sick, I don't say as pedophilia but almost.

I remember that as a young child I had "different" thoughts but I had con-

firmation of being different at 14 when I fell in love for the first time with a guy. Obviously it was an unrequited and unilateral love, because he was straight. All this made me suffer, not only because of the unrequited love, but because it was something I absolutely didn't want and I tried to deny inside myself, covering the truth and lying to myself, telling myself that he was just a friend. My dream since childhood was to have a family and children. The children were my biggest dream. As far as I was concerned, in addition to emotional involvement, I was also sexually attracted towards this guy, sometimes it was enough to stay close to him to get an erection, but I couldn't avoid to want him and it was impossible for me to take him out of my head, and all the story made me ashamed to death.

At that time I don't sincerely remember masturbation in which direction was oriented, even if remembering it would be useful to understand things better. I also remember that at that time when I was interested in a guy I tried to "translate" the feelings I was feeling, directing them to girls, trying to convince myself that I felt those feelings for girls. I don't know why I did it, but I was convinced that it was right. It was a period when I felt wrong and suffered.

I remember trying to change my gestures to look as masculine as possible, even if I still now maintain a slightly effeminate attitude. I didn't do sports or anything that could lead me to enter a male locker room because I was very ashamed to see naked guys, I found myself looking at them and wanting them. I tried to do everything to look as normal as possible and the fact that I had a good appearance helped me because I was always surrounded by beautiful girls, many of which followed me, while for me they were only friends. Still now, I find myself better with girls and I have more male than female friends, with guys I have more difficulty in tying. I also tried approaches for a while with some girls, but without having any emotional or physical interest.

At one point she came, the girl who later became my wife. She had a great love for me and I found in her the emotional tranquility that comforted me and made me feel normal. For me she became a point of reference and I was completely carried away by her love. I somehow love her and I still care for her today, but even knowing that there was something wrong with me, nevertheless I was able to see it as something external, not mine, to such an extent that I had finally come to think of being "healed", or better, not even "healed", that there had simply never been anything strange within me. Sex worked (maybe), even though I never looked for it and it had never involved me so much. Sometimes I fell into periods of sadness and silence because something came out and I closed in myself knowing that in a little time the malaise would have passed and everything would be back as before.

And my poor wife was always trying to understand something that is quite incomprehensible even for me even now.

Masturbation had become a necessity, I devoted myself to it in a mechanical way and always watching porn, straight porn, of course, watching a gay one was something unthinkable for me. Sometimes I looked at them to convince me and confirm that I was not interested. But in the hetero movies I looked at the man and in my mind I felt the greatest pleasure while thinking about oral sex, with the wish, not only that it was done on me, but that I was able to do it to him, and then I used to identify myself in the actress. I know, it's absurd if I think about it, but in that way I felt normal and above all not guilty. Probably I'm the only one in the world to have certain quirks. My life has gone on like this, I have filled my life with things to do without stopping, I guess just only in order to avoid having time to stop and think. I really believed it was all normal like that. After all I was not serene but somehow I was happy, I had a perfect life. With my wife we grew up together, we respected each other and we always did everything together, traveled, learned languages and supported each other in difficult times. So I decided to get married and give her that much-desired wedding. I tried to give her a dream wedding, I had committed to this purpose with all my heart. Although it was a mistake it was a day when we were really happy, it has been anyhow the best day of my life and when I made the decision, for me, that problem that I had inside didn't exist anymore.

But one day "he" arrived. I was in church, that same church that so often comforted me in the most difficult moments. He was in front of me. I couldn't look at him and the absurd thing is that every now and then I caught him while looking at me, and seeing that I was looking at him, he looked away, almost ashamed. I told myself it was strange. He was not handsome, but his dark eyes, his naive look of teddy bear (so I called him), big and tender, attracted me. Then someone told him he had to change place and he put himself next to me. As soon as we left the church we had a chat and he was also nice and intelligent. There were so many things in common to talk about. After the course, I ran away, I left without too many words.

I didn't see him for a while until one day I saw him in a group. We had to take a group photo and he took my hand to make me get close to him, a gesture that any friend would do, but that contact pleased me terribly, after the end of the photo service I quickly left, full of shame.

The following days I was continuously thinking of that guy. I couldn't get it out of my head. I cried, I don't know exactly why. Then one day I had to ask him for some information and he gave me his phone number. He looked at me in a strange way, mixed with contentment and shame. I felt that he could also feel my own feelings, but I avoided thinking about it. But I didn't

understand exactly the meaning of his behavior and I repeated to myself that it was all in my mind. I called him for that information, but the chat lasted two hours. It was really nice to talk to him and I saw that it was like that for him too.

In the following days we got newly in contact and we managed to talk for hours with pleasure, without stopping. We began to be in contact more often also with messages. I realized that I was more and more interested in him, but as usual inside me I told myself that I had found a good friend only. Until one day I went to his house to meet him. I had to stay there no more than half an hour, but he had to go for an errand and insisted that I wait for him at all costs, and so I waited for him. Then we talked again about our studies, our travels and our passions. He seemed happy to see me and stay with me. I certainly was.

The next day I had to go abroad for work and I needed a helping hand, we had talked in the morning and I had also told him about my trip and he came abroad with me to give me a hand. During the whole trip we talked and the speeches about gays and in particular about gays who attend the church came out. I suspected he was gay and I asked him it without too many preambles, stressing that it was just out of curiosity.

He asks me in turn the same question and I answer him "straight" but I talk to him about my doubts and tell him that maybe I can call myself bisexual (it was the first time in my life that I was talking to someone about such things, and it was something that I didn't even want to talk about with myself). He replies that he too was bisexual. So we began to talk about our doubts and about the feelings experienced in the past. It was the first time that I really asked myself questions and talked about them aloud.

He tells me that he had begun to accept himself two years earlier, at the age of 30. I also tell him of the feelings I felt towards him (I had no ulterior motive, it was only out of sincerity). He tells me that for him it was the same, I was happy but confused, I didn't expect it. Then with a tender and shameful look he puts his hand on mine. He had a sweet firm touch, I felt uncomfortable, but I loved that contact terribly. I felt afraid and guilty. Then he made a simple gesture but I remember it with great pleasure. It was hot and he was worried about me, he took off my hat, and so I could see he was worried about me. This thing filled my heart. We spent the day together, looking at the panorama of the city and then we stopped for a drink and he clumsily tried to kiss me.

I was shocked. I pushed him away saying I was married. I read in his look that he was ashamed. He apologized. All this made me so tender, I too wanted the kiss, but I couldn't let me go. I was afraid of myself, of the situation, and the sense of guilt grew inside me just thinking about it. I shook his

hand, saying to forgive me, but I wanted nothing more than a friend. The following days we continued to stay in touch, more and more and we took every opportunity to see each other. We did nothing but talk. It was so pleasant. But I felt that feeling grew stronger and stronger inside me. Then one day he wrote me a message, a simple "I love you", and I thought I was the happiest person in the world. I was ashamed to answer him and sent him a song. From there followed messages and songs, which until that day didn't make sense for me, then suddenly took deep meanings that I could finally understand.

We talked about everything, our secrets and the deepest fears. We opened up with each other a lot, until one day he wrote to me "I love you, but maybe even a little more". I would have cried from the myriad feelings and thoughts that passed through my heart and mind. I was really confused, but now I realized that I loved him and for the first time in my life I was reciprocated. I was not alone. And the only thing I thought was: how is it possible that such a strong and beautiful feeling is wrong? Then he had to leave for a trip and we met to say goodbye. I was married and I had no intention of doing anything wrong anyway. So we talked and hugged before saying goodbye. I was so happy in his arms. Then he looked me in the eyes, those eyes that I dreamed of so much, and I found myself with my face closer to his, I felt terribly ashamed. I literally ran away greeting him.

During his two-week journey we were in touch every day, every moment we could. We were also joking about sex, but always for fun. Then he returned from vacation; that night, by coincidence, I had to go out and we met on a Roman bridge. He told me about the trip and all the good things he had seen. It was cold and so, he, big and tender, hugged me to warm me up. It was so sweet and I was so happy, I felt protected for the first time in my life, I wanted that embrace never to end. I looked at him and asked him sadly why God says that such a beautiful thing it's wrong. I've always seen gay love as something vulgar and carnal. Instead it had everything but vulgarity. And that's how I found myself kissing him. But it wasn't a kiss like all those I had given until that day. I felt my heart beating wildly, a desire that pervaded my whole body. It had never happened to me in my life.

We stayed hugged a little more on that bridge in the dark, watching the moon and the stars, over the incessant noise of the river. It was cold but for the first time in my life I felt really warm. I went home and thought about him all night and the following day.

Oh, what I had done! I had cheated on my wife and with a man. But it had been beautiful. I talked to him and he had the same guilt feelings, he was not married, but it was as if he were. Stupidly we were convinced that perhaps God had given us the opportunity to love each other without ruining

our hetero duties (what a stupidity, if I think back!). But at that moment it was enough for me to get rid of guilt and to be with him. We continued as friends in front of others and any excuse was good to steal a kiss or a hug or even just a caress, until one day we found ourselves making love. It was not as vulgar as in porn movies, it was love, it was a mutual pleasure. I cannot get out of my mind his way of looking at me. I miss that tender teddy bear look. Then, afterwards, we fell asleep in each other's arms. That hug is the most beautiful memory I carry with me.

After that episode we joined even more, I worried about him and he worried about me, we were very considerate of everything. We dreamed of impossible journeys and a life together, one in the shadow of the other. We imagined our old age in front of a fireplace, hand in hand. All this until one day an event happened (of which I prefer not to speak) that led him to feel guilty. I was married, and he too was as if he were. So the sense of guilt began to grow in us. We understood that everything we were doing was wrong. So he began to cry and I felt guilty about everything, about my wife and about him. I was a rag. I wanted to detach myself but I couldn't. All this without being able to talk to anyone, being also obliged to try to appear cheerful and sunny as usual in the eyes of people.

But I saw that he was moving further away from me. I told myself it was right this way, but the more I saw him get away, the more I died inside and looked for him. Until one day, talking on the phone, I felt him far away and asked him if it was over, he said yes, that it was better that way. I think the world around me stopped making noise at that moment. I told him "it's ok", after all it was right that way. For a week I couldn't stop crying. I was newly alone and aware that something inside me was different, was gay.

So in that week I asked him if we could meet again. I wanted at least him to say it to me in my face not on the phone. We met. He was calm now. I didn't understand how it was possible. So, when I got back to work, I wrote to him if he had another guy. He told me that he didn't know how to tell me it and that he was sorry, but he had met a guy two weeks before and that with me he had confused the initial interest with love. At that moment it was like receiving a punch in the stomach, the world collapsed under my feet. I felt destroyed, I found myself losing the most beautiful thing in my life for another guy, I found myself aware that a part of me so repressed existed and that made me really happy, and I also felt guilt for what I had done to my wife. All this in a fake straight life that made me feel in prison.

At that time I began to wonder if I could really be gay or bisexual. This thought stressed me more and more. I began to lose weight and close myself up like a hedgehog. Seeing any person made me uncomfortable. I was ashamed of myself. Sometimes I got to the point of feeling repulsion for

myself. Finally I accept that that part of me exists and I talk about it with my wife. That's where I met the forum and talked to Project.

My wife helped me to understand, she thought it was a period of depression, but when she realized that this part of me exists, she went through a period of rage. But then she realized that it was simply so. On the one hand she was sad and disappointed, but on the other she was relieved because she had given herself so many faults and she thought that there was something wrong with her but now she understood that the problem was not her but was I, and she kept telling me: if you're gay now everything is clear to me.

At first I thought being gay was only a small part of personality, but over time I saw my awareness grow up and, asking myself questions and reasoning on it, now I understand many things that I didn't understand before. Now I'm aware that bisexual I'm for sure, and maybe gay. My wife says it's clear, I've never looked at any girl, I've never looked for her to make love. I prefer a book or something else to her, she repeats that if I'm bisexual it's just because she's there. But there she was and I never had problems in making love. So a part of me is straight. At least I hope, I don't want to believe that I really hid behind my wife. However now I stopped wanting to give myself a label. Now I just want to rediscover my serenity and really live, since until now I let myself be carried away by what was right for society. I know that from that day I rediscovered masturbation mostly without watching porn movies and all centered on that much desired guy and I also started to watch gay porn movies that give me satisfaction after all, even if I prefer the parts with oral sex or those "romantic", Some films, however, I don't like them because they are too "hard".

Now four months have passed since we said goodbye with that guy and yet I still miss him so much. For what concerns my wife I realized that she deserves a person who really loves her and really wants her. I tried to talk to her sincerely and to stay close to her for what I can. It's hard to leave her because I love her deeply and she has been a fixed point in my life. And the sense of guilt does not help. But it's the right thing. On the advice of my psychologist I have been able to talk about myself with my two best friends and with my family. After talking to my parents I felt an incredible sense of liberation, especially because they didn't take it badly although I had thought exactly the opposite. On the contrary they speak as if they had always known or suspected it. They support me, worried perhaps also of my weight loss and of my sadness and loneliness that I have been carrying with me for months. Sorry if I was verbose, but summarize a life in a few lines is almost impossible.

### 26.2.4 Experiences of a married gay

I'm writing to you because I cannot stand it anymore, I don't know where to bang my head. I'm thirty, I'm gay and I'm married for two years, I have a son not yet a year old. I feel literally split in two, on one side there is my wife with my son, on the other my sexuality.

When I married I was 28 and I had been with the same girl for ten years. Everything started almost as a game because all my friends had a girl and I with my friends was fine. Was I gay even then? I think so, my friends were drooling over their girls, I was fine with mine, but already I felt that having a girl at social level, for me was the maximum I could aspire to; for my friends to have a girlfriend meant having sex with that girl. For them, doing such things was obvious and obviously very engaging, for me it was kind of a hypothesis that I tried to keep away as much as possible, even though I used to see my girlfriend almost every day with the blessing of my parents who were trying to leave us all the possible freedom, that is, they tended to leave us alone as much as possible, what I was trying to avoid systematically, because when it happened that we were alone, a kind of sexual game, that she liked very much, started, but for me it was quite embarrassing.

Playing with a girl, including a certain level of physical contact was after all good and when we kissed the erection arrived. When she was touching me from above my trousers (always from above, with one exception) I felt a strange feeling of the type: "But what am I doing here?" I was wondering why I was not involved as my friends in similar situations, although I knew it very well. The only time we masturbated each other my feeling was of total passivity, the brain was elsewhere and had already removed everything.

She was obviously inexperienced and then she was a girl and to me it was not good at all and then finding me masturbating a girl provoked me some moments of real rejection. It was a world I didn't know at all and that I didn't care at all. After that I had to make it clear to my girlfriend that it did not feel right to me to live sexuality that way, in practice I was flaunting false religious sentiments to prevent such experiences from repeating and it worked because she was not really excited by sexuality, at least as far as she could put it into practice with me.

Anyway, she was somehow perplexed at the beginning, that is, she was uncertain, then she realized that if she insisted she would lose me completely and she preferred to avoid systematically the subject, even because she was interested in marriage even so, as if marriage could be imagined without a real sexual interest, at least at the beginning. At that time I was 22 and she 21. We went on for six years between holidays together, without sex, of course, and lunch at my own home one Sunday yes and one no.



Then we had to think about the study and a reason to postpone the important decisions was there, then I graduated and she shortly thereafter.

There is something that I'm ashamed of a bit. I could have looked for work on my own but my father-in-law offered me to work with him and since everything seemed so obvious and the offer was good I accepted almost immediately. My father-in-law created a very collaborative relationship, almost a complicity, but my father-in-law took absolutely for granted that I would marry his daughter in a very short time. I was trapped now and I knew I could not escape so we fixed the date and married.

It all seemed wonderful but between me and my wife there was a fundamental issue never faced, not so much about having sex with her because at the limit, thinking of something else, I could have a sexual intercourse with her, the real problem was that I had a parallel life: no occasional lovers or sexual intercourse, but I was masturbating with gay pornography and I was doing it since I was 15 years old. I never put my wife's health at risk, I would never have done such a thing and, honestly, it was a hypothesis out of reality.

I knew very well that I didn't want to be with a woman, what for me was absolutely unnatural, but in my background there was the idea that "with a bit of will I could set aside the stupid vice of masturbation and so homosexuality would disappear. I started to try everything to get away from homosexual desires, I forced myself not to go to gay sites or rather not to go to porn sites of any kind, because in fact you can see men also in the straight pornography, I tried to drive away those which I used to call "bad thoughts" but there was nothing to do, after a short period of time I was again masturbating with gay videos.

I had, if I can say so, a little bit of tranquility the last times of my waiting for my son and the first six months after his birth. Frankly I thought I had found peace again. My wife didn't attract me sexually but she was busy with the baby now and the problem didn't even arise. Grandparents were radiant, we were always receiving gifts for the baby and for us, my wife was in the seventh heaven but I slowly began to feel guilty in an ever deeper way: "I have a beautiful family and masturbate thinking about guys, but I'm an adult, I'm a father, I should think of the happiness of my family but instead of thinking of them I go looking for gay sites and I do it at night, in secret, when they are asleep, I'm just a shabby depraved!"

I considered as irreconcilable things my homosexuality and my love for my son and, all in all, also for my wife, who was completely unaware of what I was going through, as if they were really incompatible things. I said to myself, "If you do those things you cannot love your son!" But even though I was looking for gay sites all night long, I loved my son tenderly.

Then I started wondering why homosexuality should be destructive of my

real family feelings and I came to a conclusion, namely that I would never have put in crisis my marriage for "a gay adventure", at that time I used that expression but limiting myself to a few porn videos I would not have destroyed anything at all and so, we can say with more awareness, I decided to be able to afford gay pornography even if with limited time and of course in very private form.

Talking with my married friends I knew that they also used pornography, obviously straight, and that, from time to time, they betrayed their wives if they had the opportunity, and so I began to feel less as the black sheep.

This is where I'm now. I don't think I would ever betray my wife with a man, I don't know, maybe the opportunity has not occurred yet and if it will occur I will do in a very different way but honestly I think I would stay at my place, but apart all this, why should I deprive myself of that bit of sex that I really feel belongs to me? For the sake of my son? But what do you mean? I don't put anything into crisis and then why should I make a clear speech to my wife about these things? I know that in theory between wife and husband there must be no secrets, but she is happy now, so I just don't see why I should put her life into crisis because of things she could never understand.

I'm gay but she doesn't suspect anything like that, so what do I do wrong going on like this? If things will change, I will think about, but now speaking clearly would mean destroying everything for a matter of principle that, in certain cases, can make sense, but in this case it's completely misleading.

I'm anxious for your answer.

### **26.2.5 Gay fantasies of a married man**

Hello Project, only in this days I have met your beautiful and very useful site and I have found several answers to my "troubles" and I must say that at least in part and thanks to you I feel a little less agitated. I'm writing to you, however, because I think that my experience may also be useful to others (so I authorize you to post this email, if you think it appropriate), and above all because I would like to have advice on how to behave, or most precisely I would like to know which, according to you, is the best way to deal with my situation with less anxiety. And then I'm just fine talking about it, because I've never talked about it to anyone and then I've been carrying this weight for 30 years now. So I would like it to be clear what a great step I'm going to make.

I am 44 years old and I'm going to send this email because I read that you like to increase the number of "no longer boys", as you call them, who bring their experiences.

I am happily married to a wonderful woman and I have two beautiful kids. I want to underline it because I love my wife to madness and she loves me even more, if possible, and with her there is also a good sexual harmony: I find myself satisfied on that side, also because, without exaggerating, we occasionally experience something new. The only flaw is that over the years (12 of marriage) the frequency of the sexual intercourse has diminished. She too seems to me to be satisfied, but she would like to have a greater frequency in the intercourse.

But let's get to the point. Ever since I started masturbating, that is, at 11, if I remember well, my sexual fantasies have always been oriented, at 95%, towards homosexual contents. In most cases, depending on the time, the fantasies have seen me and see me even now in the passive role and in fact, from the beginning I had and still have a great pleasure in anal self-stimulation. I have never had any kind of sexual intercourse until the age of 28 and this does not seem normal to me. My sexuality was then expressed through masturbation. In truth, my discovery of attraction to the guys has never led me to any particular sense of guilt or to attempts of repression: I accepted it immediately, but at the same time I realized that it would not be easy to live my sexuality freely.

Girls for the truth I have always liked them, and even today if I see beautiful women, sexual thoughts come to my mind. Conversely, as it happens to most guys, if you exclude the adolescent phase, I feel that I cannot find any affective interest in a man/boy: at best I could fall "sexually" in love with someone of them. As far as I'm concerned, honestly, I don't believe in love between two men; the true love I could have found, and I really found at the end, it is only that with women, which I consider to be superior to men in this respect (I know you will not agree but that's not the point).

Given the above, in adolescence, I was having trouble communicating with girls, both because of shyness and because I was conditioned by the social environment (at that time I lived in a small town) and by my mother in the sense that I didn't want to be seen around with not nice girls because my mother always told me I was a good guy (that's true) and that cute girls had to line up for me (obviously it's not true, because I'm not particularly attractive). Perhaps I missed a strong push to have heterosexual intercourse because I probably liked more those gay. Surely I always liked better the male body. I also have always been involved in the studies and probably at that time masturbation was enough to calm my sexual appetites.

As far as the possibility of gay intercourse is concerned, even though, as has already been said, there was no problem neither moral nor of personal acceptance, living in a small town, even though there was no internet, there was anyway, of course, a strong social conditioning. etc. etc. I have never had

real opportunities, nor have I really been looking for such opportunities (except for some timid approaches which have not led to anything). However, I lived quite serenely (blessed masturbation!) And by the truth I said to myself that the sexual intercourse between men was superior to that hetero because it gives the opportunity to enjoy with all parts of the body. Probably if I had had more opportunities and more explicit, if there had been internet with its beautiful sites (like this) to help me overcome my shyness and, why not, less beautiful sites (porn movies) to make me understand many things about the gay world, I would have had my homosexual traumatic or beautiful but still right experiences, because that was the age to make those experiences!

At that time, however, I could also have fallen in love with guys, what really happened with some comrades (without any possibility). When I left my little town to go to college in a big city, you could suppose that, freeing me from the conditioning of my old town and of my family, I could have experienced my first gay relationships but no! Again in this case, I was overwhelmed by other types of conditioning: first of all, and maybe it was also right, the commitment to the study, since I felt obliged to my parents who spent a lot of money to keep me in college, but also the fact that I was living in an apartment with one of my high school friends (and that's where the little town comes back to me) plus two absolutely hetero guys totally locked up at any dialog. So I didn't even have time to look for boys and girls and didn't even have such a big desire.

I kept masturbating thinking of homosexual intercourse (during this time both active and passive, I imagine because, without having any experience, any way of feeling pleasure attracted me) and I was there "drooling" when I was seeing guys around or on television. When I finished my studies and started working, always in the big city, I went to live alone. At that point I said, "Finally I can arrange my life as I want, I can decide whether to have gay relationships or not, or go looking for girls!" But it was not that easy: I didn't have a computer neither I was really interested in buying one, and at that time social networks and chats were still in the early days, during the university years I had been isolated from the social context and I almost had to fit into the social environment of the city, I did not know how to meet people, women or men, and those were even the first few months of the new job with all this entails, and I didn't have the luck to have some bisexual colleague with whom to try something! I really was not so bad physically: not much beautiful in the face but with a muscular body, tall, wide shoulders, only with a slightly prominent belly but with a nice ass. I had started a first approach to gay pornography (magazines), but nothing more.

When at last (at the age of 28!), maybe because I felt alone, I decided that it was time to have sex (hetero or even gay), I first went with a female prosti-

tute and lost my virginity. I must say that it was not traumatic, but I didn't feel a particular pleasure. Then I started thinking that I could not go on like that and that I had to experience gay intercourse.

At that point, however, and I don't know why (what do you think about, Project?) I felt also a strong need for paternity and "normality": I absolutely wanted to have a family with a woman who loved me and that I could love, and also have children. I really wanted such things and not just to suppress my gay sexuality! So I thought that it was absolutely crucial to make a choice, a choice that really influenced all my life and that's why I'm now writing to you: had I to follow the "sexual" part of me and then give vent my desire to have fun with guys every time I wanted it, but with the prospect, on the other hand, of living a life not easy (it is useless to turn around) as a bisexual single because I never wanted to "live" with a male? This would have forced me to remain basically alone, it would have been so in any case, regardless of whether I had chosen to remain hidden or to exhibit my nature causing great pain to my family. Or had I to give up a part, even important, of my sexuality, continuing to take refuge in masturbation, but having for the rest a serene life, (which then actually happened)?

I decided that sex wasn't certainly the most important part of life and that in the end you cannot have everything and therefore I made my choice. Today I don't regret it and this choice for the truth is very similar to that of a heterosexual man who marries and decides to be faithful, to renounce having sex with other women. Nevertheless I regret that I didn't have gay relationships in adolescence and youth. I wish I could say today: "I still like guys, but I've already done what I wanted to do, I have had my many relationships, and have experienced what was to be experienced and then I made the right choice."

Unfortunately, things are not so and after so many years, now I feel a little in crisis because it seems to me that masturbation is not enough anymore, nor it's enough to feel very excited when on public transport I see good guys; I would like to feel a male's body with all my senses, to let a gay penetrate me, and also enjoy him. But in my situation it's not easy. I would not have moral inhibitions to look for male escorts, but in addition to the obvious fear of illness, however overwhelming, I would not have time or opportunity to stay at the computer choosing this or that one because I obviously have a family and from when I'm working I cannot go to these sites.

I could put an ad and then just wait, but in this case too, the thing should be handled by the home computer and I would have difficulties for the above reasons. And then, it's really worth?

Ah, I wish I had had the luck of several people who write to you, who can, by "normal" ways, get in touch with gay or bisexual people! I could make

contacts with men who are in my own situation and experience sex stories, but my wife probably would not forgive me and I don't know if I would do it. And for the truth I do not know how much I can enjoy having sex with men of my age: I still like teenagers but at my age it's ridiculous to think that you can find someone willing to have sex with someone over 40, moreover passive, if not for money. Besides, I'm no longer as handsome as when I was young because with growing age I got a little belly. Of course, a thirty-year-old man would theoretically have more experience and would know how to make me enjoy.

I didn't said anything yet to my wife, I don't feel like it yet, I don't know if she would understand. maybe in the coming months I will do it, perhaps just to get rid of such a weight and maybe this could make our relationship even better, because she would understand that I'm honest. Lately, I've given her some signals, because during sexual intercourse I asked her to penetrate me with phallic objects. At first she hesitated, but then she said to me, "Because I love you, if you like it, I'll do" and then she asked me if I like males but I didn't have the courage to say it and indeed I told her that if a man wants to feel pleasure in that way it's not an index of homosexuality. She told me something I was happy about, that is that if I had sex (and I suppose, sporadically) with a male, it would be less harming than if I had sex with a woman for the simple reason that I would go looking for a kind of pleasure that she could not give me. But soon after that she started crying and I felt my heart wounded!

Project, what do you suggest to face my situation more serenely? I would like to have your reply. Lastly, I would like to send positive messages. I hope my experience will be useful to the young guys who are now living the same things I have experienced, I hope they reflect before acting to avoid my own mistakes, putting away any hesitation in experiencing gay relationships if they feel they want to do it, and putting also away every external constraints (which, contrary to what people think, still today are common among the guys, although in very different manners according to the context). Even today, even for those who live in the little towns, thanks to the internet there are more ways to get to know each other and compare their anxieties. And then I also think of my children, both boys: I think that what I've been and still I'm through is not useless because, when the time will be right, I will be able to educate them correctly about affectivity and sexuality. For charity, I will not encourage them to be gay, rather I will explain to them that gay life is tough, but I will tell them that their dad has no problem if they want to experience gay sexual or sentimental relationships. And then they will decide what is better for them.

I wish you all the best.

P.S.: I cannot use chats and the like, I'm ignorant of the matter and on the other hand in my situation I would not even have the chance of it; so please give me an e-mail reply; if you think it appropriate, you can also post on the blog this mail and your answer.

Hi, I go straight to the point. What you write does not have much of gay, rather it is a mentality far removed from that of most gays. I try to better explicate my point of view, for you it is important to experience a kind of sexuality, but not to build a love story with a guy. For you there is only one of the two components of homosexuality, that is, the typically sexual one, and it lacks the affective one and you tend to read gay sexuality as a set of sexual practices that are not even the most widespread ones in the gay world (penetration) and are a vague transposition in a homosexual key of a typically heterosexual sexuality.

Experimentation of sexuality has nothing to do with sexuality, it is an experiment not an act of love and on the other hand you say and underline in any way that you don't believe in love stories between two men, what for a gay guy is absolutely essential. A married man gratified by heterosexuality, having a relationship with a guy or wanting to have a relationship with a guy is not a gay but a heterosexual who goes or wants to go with guys but will in all likelihood transpose into a homosexual relationship things that with the gay world have little or nothing at all to do. In the heterosexual dimension, sexuality is inevitably with fixed roles, in the homosexual dimension the existence of roles doesn't even make sense, despite what people believe, there is a principle of substantial equality, it is the sexuality of similarity and not of complementarity.

A gay guy falls in love with another guy (even heterosexual) and doesn't fall in love because he wants to experience some sexual practice with him, but because for that guy he feels love and tenderness. I would like to clarify one thing, according to the common language a man is homosexual if and only if he has sexual intercourse with another man but this doesn't make sense, on the contrary it happens often that guys not yet openly gay fall in love with guys with whom they could never have sexual intercourse. A gay guy may regret a love story ended badly but not the lost opportunity of having sex with a guy.

A gay falls in love with a guy and then sees him sexually, masturbates thinking about that guy, wants him but wants him as a person, because it must be just that boy and not another one, he does not want him because he's a guy but because he is just that guy. A gay would not think of going to search for a male escort to try a sexual contact or of putting ads for sexual purposes, perhaps he could even put ads but dreaming of doing almost miraculously in

certain environments the encounter he had dreamed of all his life, that is to find there a guy who really loves him, a guy who will be his boyfriend and his mate all lifelong.

A gay guy does not dream of gay sexual intercourse but of a love story with a guy and when he is in love he's willing to do anything for his boyfriend. I have seen authentically heroic gestures, incredible courage and abnegation manifestations of gay guys in love for the good of the guy they love. A gay guy in love, for the guy he loves, is capable of giving up everything because he realizes that the relationship he has created, if real, is able to change his life 100%. But you tell me, "in any case I still feel the strong impetus to try the gay sexuality". Given that you cannot build any serious affective affair with a gay guy, you will find only guys or men who, like you, just want to try or continue to experience sexual intercourse, if you allow me, this is the anteroom of a deep frustration. I don't say it for moralism but because I have seen these things a lot of times.

A forty-year-old guy seriously looking for an affective relationship with a man can also find answers worthy of being taken into consideration. But when I saw married men go looking for homosexual experiences not because they had fell in love with a guy but only to say that they had experienced also this kind of sexuality, inevitably, a few months later, I saw the consequences of all this in terms of frustration and sometimes of sexual dependence. I add another thing that seems to me absolutely fundamental, and it is the relationship of a married man with his wife, especially in families with children. If I try to think about how a woman can feel when she understands to have a husband looking for sex out of the house and with a man, I get shivered. You are destroying your wife's life this way, and moreover when she made her choice she was not aware of what really you had in mind. Let's not talk about the kids. I have seen guys of 16-17 who have accepted that their father was gay and that he lived with another man but in a relationship that nevertheless appeared in the eyes of the sons (because it really was) as a true love affair, but of course those sons would not have accepted that their father wanted to experience gay sexuality as such.

When you married you didn't speak clearly to your wife, until now even if you didn't really allow her to understand who you are, however, you have considered that your relationship should not be crushed by different sex fantasies (hetero or gay) but if now you're looking for sex from a man, your wife would feel betrayed and no less than if you were looking for sex from a woman.

I strongly disagree with your invitation to the guys to "experience gay intercourse". It is good not to be "afraid of external conditioning" if it is to build true gay love story but pushing people to experience gay sexuality without



an affective basis means not having the faintest idea of what gay life really is. I apologize for my perhaps too much determined way to deal with the problem, but I have to clarify and point out that what you consider gay fantasies are the typical gay fantasies of a heterosexual man, that have nothing gay, except the appearance.

Here below you can read the answer to my email.

Thank you so much for the wonderful answer, it has been very helpful, you are really a nice person. The perception of me as bisexual or gay or otherwise attracted to males stemmed from the fact that my free sexuality (masturbation) has always been addressed to guys and seeing beautiful males still excites me. If things are different then ok. In the meantime (and I hope I did well) I took courage and I told my wife everything! In confirmation of what you say, she felt betrayed because I didn't tell her everything before marrying and maybe she would have accepted me the same but in a conscious way. She said practically the same thing you had foreseen to confirm that she is definitely a person better than me. But better late than never, now I also know, above all thanks to you, that I must not betray her for any reason in the world because I love her immensely and now more than ever I need her love and she needs mine.

I hope my wife will be able to metabolize the suffering I caused her, she who simply dreams of a normal life with a normal man, thanks to the fact that she knows that now I would never betray her and that I need her. Paradoxically, however, I feel better, because I have freed myself of a burden that I have worn for too many years and because now I know I can masturbate without hiding from her who is willing, out of love, to participate in these fantasies of mine and also accepted more serenely to practice anal penetration on me using a particular device. Yesterday, after I told her, every time I approached her there was an erection and I think that our couple sexuality will improve a lot over time, that's why I feel truly satisfied: it's always a compromise solution but less hypocritical and freer.

Excuse me if I said that guys have to experience gay intercourse, I was wrong to write and in fact if you read the part dedicated to my children, I spoke, more correctly, to experience gay relationships both sexually and sentimentally, if they feel they want to do such things. I just wanted to say, in fact, that if a guy in adolescence feels he wants to have a gay relationship in his sexual and sentimental fullness, he can do it without hesitation, so as not to find himself living in regret, like me.

Feel free to publish this e-mail, if you think it appropriate, I'd like to read your opinion and also those of the guys of the forum, even with reference to

developments with my wife. You're a big! Bye.

Here below my answer.

Your mail makes me immensely pleased, because you did what had to be done, that is, you spoke clearly with your wife. Sure she felt betrayed for not having known everything before, but at least now she can have the certainty of having an authentic relationship with her husband, in which there are not things that are not said. Of course you feel better! You did what you had to do. See, the relationship with your wife, just from what you write, has all the characteristics of a true emotional relationship, in which there is sex, of course, but there is also a community of life and a cooperation to build something together. Being accepted by his own wife even after such an admission is a sign that the relationship is very strong.

You can also have your fantasies about guys but loving a person is a different thing. To love means to live together, to build together, to have a common world, in two, to be a couple and no longer to two individuals.

A hug! And good luck!

Project

I report below the answer I received.

Dear Project, I'm always "the married man who experiences gay fantasies". Excuse me if I write to you again, I don't want to take advantage of your immense availability, but I read the discussion that followed on my case with great interest. I would have liked to register on the forum and answer the numerous comments, but my wife wouldn't have approved.

I was pleased about the interest, but have been said also things I didn't like too much about the relationship of love with my wife, that I can be considered a repressed gay or a schizophrenic bisexual (yes, I always knew that my behavior is not 100% normal and in my life I never felt heterosexual, I felt gay at times, before getting to know my wife, bisexual almost always), but it hurts me when one calls into question my deep love (both feeling and sex) for my wife. You can understand that for me questioning my feelings for my wife would be terrifying: it means that for all these years of marriage with my wife I only pretended to love her first of all if front of myself and unknowingly, even though I am deeply convinced of loving her in the highest sense of the term and above all of feeling sexual fulfillment with her: if I think about it, I feel like crying!

But I wanted to tell you that you're really great and do you know why? I went to read a post of March 31, 2010 entitled "Gay Sexuality and Transgression". I quote here two passages:

"It sometimes happens that some guys who have a typically heterosexual and fully satisfying emotional and sexual couple life don't ever masturbate thinking of a girl but they do it thinking exclusively of guys with whom they don't feel emotionally involved, but their sexual fantasies are concentrated only on a particular sexual behavior, considered very transgressive. In such situations, the classic principle of free sexuality, according to which sexual orientation emerges through the masturbation (free sexuality) and not through the couple sexuality, cannot be applied precisely because in these situations masturbation is not really free and the fact of masturbating with transgressive gay fantasies (or considered such) indicates that masturbation is experienced not as sexuality but as an act of rebellion against taboos. The more transgressive the fantasies that accompany masturbation are the greater is the gratification that is obtained by overcoming the taboo. I mean that for these guys masturbation is not really a sexual experience but an act of self-assertion as a person who got rid of taboos. This mechanism of overcoming taboos through transgressive masturbation can in some cases evolve into forms of transgressive couple sexuality."

"It is evident that in this case masturbation is not at all a form of free sexuality and, I would say, it is not even a form of true sexuality. It often happens that the "transgressive" masturbation of a guy who is really a heterosexual is linked to the temptation to put into practice masturbation fantasies. It should be noted that in these cases the affective dimension is totally lacking and the problem is reduced to bringing the overcoming of taboos from the masturbatory dimension, that appears reductive, to a far more "transgressive" dimension of couple sexuality. I emphasize that the guys who have a "transgressive" gay masturbation generally have a rather distorted view of gay sexuality that for them, even if they say otherwise, is basically something anomalous that becomes interesting precisely because "transgressive", the idea of gay sexuality and affectivity as something normal for these guys is difficult to accept, in a sense, if they considered gay sexuality normal, it would lose all attractive force in their eyes. It must be said that these guys in the vast majority have never fallen in love with a guy and consider at least unnatural that two guys can live a deep and mutual love. All this with being gay has clearly nothing to do."

In the aforementioned post you describe exactly my situation after I met my wife, except, in my opinion, that I'm not exactly hetero. You wrote this thing 3 months before I told you my experience! So to insist on the theory that is the free sexuality, without other specifications, that determines the

true sexual orientation seems to me too simplifying in my case. I would like to say that, without having read the post above (I swear it, before anyone doubts it) after my coming out with my wife, as I said, we are having sex more "transgressively" (I admit, in this period I cannot help but be penetrated by her almost every night, I'm sexually happy, also because pleasure comes to me not only from the act itself, but also from the fact that it is exactly my wife who makes it to me and such a thought makes me feel like in the early days of marriage). Not only this, but the things I learned from your site have made me better understand the gay reality as something less transgressive and, maybe it's a coincidence, but at least for the moment, I don't masturbate with certain fantasies!

I realize that trying to describe my sexual and affective life in 3 pages was a mistake, because I cannot make people understand all the nuances, but I couldn't bore you by focusing on the details. After all, my goal was not to know what I'm (I am a person very self-interested: I've been forming a precise idea of myself for a few years now), but to have an advice on the best way to live my situation and you gave me that advice very well, Project: you made me understand that looking for occasional intercourse even on payment would be detrimental, first of all for me, even before than for my family. Of course, before knowing my wife I thought almost exclusively of guys in masturbation but it was almost always an affective masturbation: even when I was thinking about specific guys (for example high school or college mates) I always thought of them as sexual objects. I almost never fell in love with guys, while it happened with girls (with a lot of sexual desires that anyway only for very short periods accompanied my masturbation fantasies: Jek is right, I'm not normal).

I was engaged to my wife for three years and they were beautiful years like the first years after marriage, when we were sexually very active and not only because upstream there was a deep love relationship. In those three years I should have realized that something was wrong and I should have given everything up, instead everything was fine: the other night I remembered with my wife that it was enough for me to hear her voice on the phone to get an erection! Not that I stopped masturbating thinking about homosexual intercourse, but my sexual fantasies oriented themselves exclusively towards imaginary transgressive relationships, I was no longer thinking about specific guys. After all, the emotional part of love for my wife has never failed, she is the most beautiful thing that has happened to me in life and I want to scream it aloud! The sexual interest has waned, starting from the birth of my first child, but it is a normal thing in couples (isn't it true, Barbara?). I would not charge it to my being bisexual or if you prefer repressed gay, if ever it is the opposite. Those who know the life of a couple know that

at a certain point it is no longer enough to see the partner naked to get excited, also because the body is not as beautiful as it once was, but it is necessary to know how to touch, how to caress, etc. in a crescendo of new sexual stimuli that for those who have a very high libido like me can mean experiencing "more" transgressive "games". This needs time, dedication and with two children, the work, the house, I assure you that it is not easy. That's why I don't consider masturbation as the only true manifestation of my real sexuality, given that I don't like that shared with my wife, but as the security valve to vent my own instincts in a simple way, without too much effort and intellectual or sentimental involvement. What I wanted to say then is that for years I have convinced myself that I was bisexual and I believe that the discussion on the forum does nothing but confirm it, but I don't place too much emphasis on the dissociation between heterosexual affectivity and gay sexuality, because also from a sexual point of view the hetero side is satisfying for me and it is much more satisfying exactly because at the base there is a deep emotional bond! (and, Project, you understood it immediately).

I would not then unleash your ethical reactions (don't be too bad with me), but I would say that I have always been happy to be bisexual: it is nice to be able to love one's own female partner and feel sexually satisfied with her and at the same time to feel excited to see beautiful guys on the street and then if I can share this excitement with the woman of my life it is even more beautiful! It is obvious that a bisexual who places the "traditional" family at the top of the scale of his values should at some point make a choice: hence my regret for not having fully lived the homo part when I could. I thank you all, no one excluded and I would really like to embrace you not only virtually, even that "bad guy" of Publisher, whose analyzes have been very useful to understand myself even better. A special thanks, as well as to Project, also to Barbara, who was able to express in a sublime way my mood and of which I share every single word. Congratulations to Telemaco for his sensitivity: it is a quality that is always a pleasure to find in guys his age and I wish him to find the person who can make him happy because he deserves it. Congratulations also to Aster, who from his blog appears to be a sweet boy, cultured and also cute: in my next masturbation fantasies I'll get excited thinking of him while says "ugly typical repressed fennel!" Joking aside, he is a smart guy and not just for the coming out story (as a parent I hope things with his father are settled: for a father to feel close to his son who "cheated" him has not price). In fact, as far as I am concerned, these coming out stories have been a bit annoying due to the controversies they gave rise to. Rather, Aster, let us dream and tell us your love story with your boyfriend (sentimentally eh, I better specify it before you start to think that I'm a pervert). I regret not being able to participate actively in the forum,

but maybe I will follow it in the future and who knows, in a few years, when my eldest son will be in age, I hope you can enjoy reading what I have to say about education related to sexual and sentimental orientation. I hope I will be a good father, and this thanks to my "experience" and thanks to you. Best wishes.

Peter

### **26.2.6 A married gay guy who has not repented**

Greetings to all, "I have not just registered in the forum", I was undecided whether to introduce myself, partly because I don't know if my story will be useful for the discussion. My not being repentant for the choices I made could mislead some who are looking for their identity.

I immediately say that I have a certain age, I am married and with children, but since adolescence I have always had homosexual fantasies and even homosexual experiences. But I made a choice of life that I don't want to question now. The fact that I have read many of the interventions of this forum, which I judge serious and above all commendable in protecting the privacy of users, also highlights that I still have an interest in these issues and my fear of not being completely in peace with myself.

I think I have an ideal family life, a wife who loves me and children I'm proud of. All this, however, has been achieved without my having ever been able to distract myself from my drives which are clearly in the homosexual sense. Even after the wedding I had some falls, I considered them "betrayals", yes serious betrayals, but in my opinion not very different from those of straight people. I don't know whether to consider myself a true homosexual, but the more I analyze my life the more I believe to be gay. But I also think with different attitudes from experiences of others.

I never thought of being able to share the couple life with a man and I was mostly driven by sexual attraction, I don't know if I "fell in love" with another guy, perhaps at a young age, perhaps my attentions were directed towards those who couldn't create a relationship with me, inside me however the thing has always been confused. What is certain is that I have always refused to recognize it and have tried to live a seemingly normal hetero life. In short, my homosexuality is the one that is called dystonic homosexuality. You have to consider that on me the religious element has had a decisive influence. I have understood from various interventions that this is normally considered negative. But faith for me is an irrepressible fact, full of doubts and contradictions, but I cannot and don't want to eliminate it from my life. I never said anything to my wife. I realize that complete sincerity in a relationship is essential but I have never succeeded, perhaps at the beginning I

made some attempts, but exactly as I read in some posts of the forum, often this by the partner of the other sex is not understood or the partner doesn't even want to consider it.

Now, after a long time, for the great affection that I have towards my wife, never, never I could have let her be aware of a situation that she surely couldn't have understood. I try to accept myself this way, maybe I have not been completely honest, but sometimes other priorities are included in the scale of priorities. The textbook on homosexuality has greatly struck me positively, especially when the topic of married gays is dealt with. I think I have found a balance as indicated in the first option, that is with fantasies and, sometimes, with porn sites that I'm a bit ashamed of but nevertheless I consider the lesser evil.

I feel fragile and willing to give in to temptation but I resign myself to what I'm. I understand that maybe my experience cannot be taken as an example, I may have managed to realize myself in a way that can be judged not appropriate to the full acceptance of how we are but, as I have repeatedly heard, every case is separate and I frankly I cannot repent of my family choice. Perhaps today with the most widespread and above all clearer and more scientific means of information on this topic, I would have done differently, but it went like this and no verification of other hypotheses is anymore possible. Hello everyone with my most sincere sympathy.

### 26.2.7 Falling in love with a married man

Hi Project, I've been reading your sites for a long time and they've helped me a lot. My name is Maurice, I am 26 years old and I think I have a lot of problems related to the sphere of sex. I make a seemingly normal life, I recently graduated and I also found a job, I know very well that these days it is very difficult and I was lucky and moreover I do a job that I sincerely like. Since I started working I no longer live in the house of my parents and with a little money that they lent me I bought a little cottage in the country, very close to the place where I work and I have been living there for three months now.

Loneliness is not a burden to me, I leave the house at six in the morning and go back after seven in the evening, lunch and dinner in the canteen, I don't cook. I have internet and from eight in the evening I surf the net. I basically discovered your sites when I went to live alone. I had thought almost immediately that I would have liked to talk a little with you, but then it seemed to me an embarrassing thing and I put aside the idea. Reading the forum I found many things that made my ideas a little clearer, every time I read something that interested me directly I told myself that I should write

to you and in the end I did it.

It may seem strange to you, but I've never been able to talk seriously with anyone about things related to sexuality. At home, this subject has always been a taboo, but not just about gays but even about sexuality in general. I've never had friends, rather acquaintances, but they were certainly not guys with whom I could talk about sexual things. Until the age of 21 I didn't have internet, I heard someone talking about what could be found on the net but they seemed to me dirty things, for depraved people, and so I put aside the problem even though I knew long since that I was gay, let's say I considered it as a negative thing that had happened to me, that I had to keep for myself only, a kind of pathological corner to which I was allowed to dedicate only in moments of self-eroticism and also with great feelings of guilt.

In practice, up to 21 years I have always tried to repress my homosexuality through study, but of course what you are comes out anyway but, let's say, I didn't accept myself in the full sense of the term. So up to the age of 21 I tried to hide from myself that I was gay even if I lived those things through masturbation, that attracted me a lot and at the same time made me feel conditioned by a lot of complexes, as if in practice I was destroying the best part of me to make room for the gay part, now I know it's absurd but at that time I reasoned like that.

At 21, things changed, I had my first computer connected to the internet and I became sex-addicted, in practice I spent the nights to see photos and porn videos and even here there was an evolution, at the beginning anxiety and guilt, then I got wild but over time the interest started going down. In the early days I felt very excited to think that I had to switch on the computer to see porn, then, in the course of a couple of years, things have changed to the point that in practice the videos don't make me any effect anymore, and in any case I saw a lot less videos and I had become very much selective, I could be interested in at most two or three out of a hundred.

Then there was the chat phase, let's say it started when I was 22, a bit like with porn videos, at first a huge curiosity, but here it was different, I had to expose myself but I didn't want to do it. The very first experiences were squalid, obscene proposals and that's it, but I didn't give up and I finally met Steven who didn't do like everyone else (I had tried in the chat at least thirty times!), He told me a lot of good things that I liked and liked a lot.

After several weeks of long conversations day and night, since he didn't make any proposal as did everyone else, I tried in my turn and asked him to go on cam but he didn't want. Such a thing displaced me, I didn't understand why, I thought he was cheating me but I couldn't understand the meaning of such a behavior, because if he wanted to take advantage of the situation he would have to go to the point, and instead it didn't happen, the more time



passed the less he talked about sex and then he didn't really have anything that could push me to suspect something strange.

I insisted several times to induce him to show up on cam but he never did. After about six months that we knew each other, he disappeared at all and I didn't hear from him anymore. I have not the faintest idea of why, I thought about all possible hypotheses, that he was an old man, even though he had told me he was 24, maybe he was a married guy or a priest or maybe a guy with handicap problems. The story of Steven has upset me a lot, maybe I would have fallen in love with him. Even now, sometimes I read the text messages and the conversations with Steven and I'm struck by the level of the conversation that had nothing of the classic erotic chat dialogue. At the time of the chat with Steven, which lasted more than six months, I had not looked for anyone else, but then I started again.

Shortly after my 23th birthday, after a lot of squalid things, I met a guy from Alexandria, let's call him Mark, he was not of Steven's level, but he seemed like a good guy and he didn't live too far from the house of my parents, I lived with them at that time. With Mark we got to the concrete proposals, he was also all in all a nice guy, or at least passable, I lost a lot of time trying to convince me that with him something could have been born but for me he was not really sexually attractive, let's say that since I saw him on cam I stopped masturbating thinking about him!

What should I have done? I should have told the truth, I know very well, but I didn't do anything like that, I was afraid he would go away, I was fine with him if it was about talking, in a sense he was a friend but for him it was impossible to stop there. He insisted and I escaped, I was looking for excuses, I went on like this, holding him on the rope for a couple of months, he finally made me an *aut aut* and told me: "If you are not interested in me you must tell me it" but I don't have had the courage to say things as they were and we have arranged an appointment. We met one afternoon, we had to go to his small country house near Alexandria. He, seen in person, didn't attract me at all, I told him that I didn't feel like it, he tried to insist but I turned and I started running, I just ran away in the most shameful way, he didn't even try to follow me. At home I saw that he had blocked me on msn. This was my most engaging adventure with a guy, at least until recently. Now you understand what contacts I've had with gay guys. After the story of Mark I thought everything, I asked myself if I was gay, if I was a pathological case, if it could be the case to try with a girl, but for me this is an absolutely unknown planet and then such things never crossed my mind. At this point of my life I'm in total confusion also because something happened to me that I never would have imagined.

Five months ago, a 27-year-old guy came to work with me, let's call him

Andrew, who is exactly the embodiment of my ideal of man, I think I have never seen a more beautiful guy, for a smile of his I would give my soul, he has a voice so sweet that it upsets me, I also have the opportunity to talk with him and when it happens I feel in heaven. Andrew is the real reason why I'm writing to you, Project, because he is really upsetting my life, I would do crazy things for him, I started to explore a bit the ground, maybe it's early to say, but I have the impression that he is interested in me, somehow he's looking for me, smiling at me, he treats me in a loving way, but there is a huge problem, Andrew is married for 5 years now and also has a child.

In our conversations he never told me it and where I work nobody knows it but I came to know it from unofficial sources, in practice from people who know him well. If Andrew was 100% hetero I would end up removing him from my head. There are many beautiful guys and he would be one of the many who have nothing to do with me, but I think Andrew is not really hetero, it's not something I hope, it's something that I think on the base of many elements that himself has provided me and that I believe he has provided me those elements because of a good reason.

Project, try to understand, I'm not fantasizing, I have the very clear impression that Andrew is trying to tell me this in all the moments when we are together, he cannot but he is trying and I feel myself in great difficulty, the main reason is not that I can fall in love with him, what anyhow scares me, but rather the fact that he can fall in love with me. Even at the cost of breaking my heart, I could always drive back, but if he loses his head where are we going to end up?

Andrew is not a chat user but he is a married man, according to what I think, he is a gay married man who is desperately lonely and is trying to build something with me and I don't know what to do, I'm afraid of these things, I don't know how I would react in front of a similar situation and I don't know where to start from. Project, let's say that of what I said I'm 98% sure and I think that I'll get soon to an explicit talk with Andrew but I fear that he too can be split in two. But why does a married guy with a child completely avoid any mention of his family? It should be a beautiful thing and instead he never talks about it with anyone. Of the fact that he is married and has a son, I am absolutely sure.

I wonder if it is morally honest for me to keep him away from his family, to hear him, and maybe offer him a chance to throw out everything he carries inside. For me it is a very important person and I tell you that I'm thinking of him from morning to night, but I would also accept not to see him any more so as not to ruin his life, but he looks for me and I have the impression that I'm also an important presence for him. Here I arrived at the end of the story. Project, please, take it for granted that Andrew is not straight, or

at least he is not 100% straight, and tell me what you would do. I need a serious advise.

### **26.2.8 Falling in love with a married guy - a very complicated situation**

I'm 31 years old, I was born and raised in Italy but I lived abroad for many years. I have always been "different" from others, grown up between adults and with a keen interest in being with adults. I figured out that I was gay during high school but the acceptance phase was long and hard. I started declaring myself 5-6 years ago with my female best friend and with my male best friend. I told my parents everything last December, but they had already guessed it. I'm proud of how my dad took it, the person I was most afraid of. Being told by my father that now I would have been even more appreciated by him, made me feel good.

In more than 31 years I have had only one "story" with a guy, 5 years ago. The thing was over after two months because of the distance and perhaps because he, just out of a relationship, was not ready to start a new one with me. I had been in love with him, I felt destroyed but then, slowly, I reconstructed a group of friends. I met guys / men, I attended people to understand if and how I liked them. But apart from the infatuations, I have never met a person who, in addition to reciprocating certain feelings, was also compatible with me.

Until August of the last year, when after two and a half years of peace of mind, a guy writes to me on Planet Romeo. He was a few years younger than me, intriguing, we began to chat, cuddling each other. It has to be noted that, despite I said I was not looking for sex, he continued to write: a true rarity. Four days later we go on Whatsapp and the same day he tells me that he was married. I still remember the scene: I was in a coffee break, I felt stunned.

I asked him what he was doing in a chat like Planet Romeo and if his wife knew. Of course his wife was totally unaware. He apologized, he thought he had already told me it, the first night we had chatted, and tells me that he understands that I don't want to meet him anymore. But a voice inside me told me I had to meet him. I wanted to understand, only understand (?). We continue to write to each other nonstop, I from my office (empty for summer holidays), he from his workplace. The next day we decide to see each other spontaneously and I invite him to have a coffee at my house. The moment he enters my house and extends his hand to introduce himself, I feel a lump in my throat and my stomach closes. Beyond the fact that already in the

picture I had understood that he was my type, seeing him live was love at first sight.

The strange thing is that I, who am generally very nervous, after not even two minutes, was calm and happy with him on the balcony drinking coffee as if we were friends of a lifetime. I felt so comfortable, as if we had always known each other.

Because of the heat, we move into the living room, in the cool, and we keep talking. He tells me about him, born and raised abroad, in this country for a couple of years and married for just over two years with a girl from here known in his country years before. He tells me that he has problems with his wife (too little sex in his opinion) and that he has many doubts, that he doesn't feel integrated, that his linguistic knowledge is not enough to work in his field, blablabla. He asks me about me, I tell my story. We never stops talking a second ... we have so many things to say ... everything is so natural ... and an hour later he tries to kiss me, I reject him and say that I have to reflect on what I'm doing. He understands and does not insist.

He tells me that at the time of the university he had thoughts for the guys, but he never tried (perhaps for fear, or I don't know what for) and that these thoughts never ceased, that he masturbates while watching gay porn and feels guilty ... and tells me that, when he got married, he promised to abandon and repress this side of his life because of which he feels guilty. A few months before meeting me, however, he cannot take it anymore and decides to meet a man with whom to have sex. He says that before he met me he had met three men in all and he had had sex with them, cheating on his wife. He says that sex with men is exciting but at the same time it disgusts him, and he insists saying how the feelings of guilt are destroying him ... he loves his wife, he wouldn't want to betray her ... but he needs guys, although he continues to repeat that sex with men doesn't convince him. And I tell him that, perhaps, this is due to his non-acceptance. Strange situation, I think ... then he says he is 80% happy and tells many other things. We say goodbye, I accompany him to the door and he goes home.

No more than 10 minutes after, climbed on the train, he writes to me: "where have you been for all my life? I have eternally been looking for someone like you." In the following days we continue to exchange messages ... uninterruptedly ... in the evening we say goodnight and good morning in the morning. Crazy things. He writes to me that he would like to see me again ... and, please, don't ask me why, I accept.

Four days later we meet again at my house, we talk, drink coffee, we kiss and start cuddling (not sex). We also spend 4-5 hours, after my work, talking, cooking together, having dinner, etc. I repeat: crazy things. When the train is about move, from the train itself he writes to me that I'm his ideal man,

he wonders how I can be single and above all he tells me that 4-5 years before with his today's mentality he would have had no doubts about me, but that at that time he was 100

And he asks me if by chance we could have a possibility in a future life to stay together. I'm clearly upset ... you can imagine the emotion of hear such things from the person you spontaneously like better ... Even if then he tells me that, unfortunately, in this constellation someone would have suffered (his wife). The story goes on ... or better starts ... we meet every time we can, I go to work, he changes the shifts to be with me at my house ... we go together to the cinema ... go walking in the evening ... his wife, unaware of everything, works until late. On Saturdays, very often, he has to work ... so we get to see each other 4-5 times a week and we often spend Saturday nights together, either by him at work or at my house ... After work we walk together towards the station ... and then it happens that one evening he takes me by hand and in the station he kisses me. The first time I kiss a man in public. And he, married, keeps on going hand in hand with me with the risk of being seen by someone.

My family has always made me feel loved, but the sensations I start feeling are special ... this feeling light ... desired, etc. ... Two weeks later we end up in bed ... and there we understand that the harmony is total. I sincerely hoped that he would turn out to be a landslide in bed. At least I would have had a reason to close ... to forget him ... All the story really scared me. We go on ... in September I have two weeks of vacation ... he insists to take me to the airport ... and a week later he comes to pick me up and spends his Saturday with me. Obviously he had told his wife a lot of fake stories. He feels uncomfortable because he had lied and also because he is fine with me. That Saturday he tells me that in the previous week, while I was at a sea site, he thought that maybe he can live without me ... but anyway he was always with me. Even during the second week of vacation, while I was at my house, we keep on hearing and calling each other. And then he writes to me that he misses me, etc. ... I come back home ... the story goes on. He asks me if I'm in love, I don't answer him. But he understands. He says it's not right for me, that I deserve a man who is 100% available, not one with problems like him. But we are in touch every day ... messages ... he often comes for lunch in the neighborhood where I work ... even just to spend an hour with me ... and to shake my hand under the table, at the restaurant. Speaking of his wife, he says that he loves her but that sex with her is not enough ... that they do it once a week if all goes well. He says he has talked to her and that she only needs no more than that. He often cries when we see each other. When we make love he's in seventh heaven ... we talk, we laugh ... there's total involvement. He says that with me things are very different,

not just because of the sex performances that are really quite limited, but because of the harmony, of the feelings ... of the mutual trusting ... of the bond. Anyway ... then he cries ... he feels guilty ... and tells me that he loves her ... etc. .. But then we do it another time. When he leaves my house, I never understand how he feels.

Then he goes on vacation, at the end of October, with her. For three weeks we stay in touch very little because there is no field. When he comes back he closes the story with me. He says he cannot take it anymore, he says it's not right for me nor for her. He says that he got married and made her a promise ... he tells me that he loves her ... that sex with her is not bad ... that having sex with me doesn't convince him ... And here, for the first time I burst: I explain to him that when you are really happy there is no reason to look for sex elsewhere and especially not with the opposite sex. I tell him that maybe he didn't realize it ... but what binds us is not a friendship ... I didn't tell him it's love ... I told him that in my opinion he feels a great affection for his wife ... but that this is different from love, and that, always in my opinion, he suffers from internalized homophobia. He asks me what the solution would be and I reply that, the best thing would be to take a break with her, to stay alone (even without seeing me) and understand what he really wants. He tells me it's not true ... he tells me that he started going with men because he felt not integrated, without a work and depressed. And I tell him that if all men betrayed their wife with other men for the above reasons, we would no longer have happy marriages. The usual things ... I explained that he had to look for the true reasons of his fluctuating behavior talking to a psychologist, etc. I explained to him how it had been for me ... and that in any case, the fact of feeling the need to stay / go with men, combined with homo-affectivity, has its roots in the sexuality of the person. I was patient ... a lot, but hearing from him that sex with his wife was not bad ... and then the opposite ... well, it made me go out of my mind, even if in that moment I didn't realize clearly why. I spent a horrible week. I felt empty, discouraged, sad, alone. The following Saturday I wanted to see him again to talk to him and in the end we made "peace" if we can say so. And we started seeing each other again and again, etc. For the first time, it seemed to me that he understood that my goal was not that he left his wife ... but that he was calm, happy, fulfilled. Everything went on normally ... we saw each other when we could, I went to get him at work. As for the afternoons, his wife had changed job and now worked within a typical office hours, he could no longer lie and so, to see him, I choose the free day of the week coinciding with his. He used to come to me at home, reached me in bed, woke me up, we spent time together ... he helped me with my work at home ... as if we were a couple that we were really not. I was the lover in

love with a man of another person.

Then, at the end of November, he gets his much-hoped job ... and the same evening, celebrating with me (and not with his wife), he tells me that he loves me ... in his own way ... but he loves me. I was happy, I was beginning to hope to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Then I spent the Christmas holidays with my parents ... we stayed in touch normally ... I didn't tell him that I had done my coming out so as not to burden him with further worries and when I got back we met ... and there, crying, I he tells me that he has decided to close ... that he wants to save his marriage ... that he made a promise to his wife ... that he is fine with me, but neither sex nor life with a man convince him ... etc. ... a bitter blow. We cried for two hours .. and he told me that he doesn't want to lose me ... that he loves me, that I'm important etc. He didn't leave me for a minute. He said he had not yet made a choice ... but that he could not take it anymore. He even told me that he had to be careful not to mention me too much ... otherwise his wife would have asked questions. He tells me he cannot give me what I want from him, but that I'm very important in his life and he doesn't want to lose me ... he wants to keep hearing me.

But in the meantime he attended chats on the net ... and I saw him online many times... I thought: he wants to save his marriage ... but he's always chatting with other men and maybe he also meets them! Well, do you know what? We continued with good morning, goodnight ... uninterrupted messages ... we conducted a relationship without sex, because I was afraid of the HIV, ... just like before.

He assured me that he saw only a friend in me ... then, he was constantly looking for me and wanted to see me regularly ... he came regularly to my house for dinner ... when his wife was out to dinner with her friends ... I told him more than once that I was sorry ... but even if he didn't admit it, we were not friends ... because two friends don't hug each other ... don't give each other kisses on the neck ... and above all they don't have an erection with every hug. When I complained he said I was exaggerating ... My friends said he was an egoist and I had to close. But I, in order not to lose him, accepted everything.

At a certain point he tells me that his wife would like to meet me ... and that everything would be easier for him if she knew me ... because he wanted to integrate me in his life ... And I tell him that I would never do such a thing, that seemed to me disrespectful and disgusting. And what was the reason? If she had known me, he would not have to answer any more questions ... He asked me it, even though I had never asked too many questions about his wife and had never spoken badly about her, not even once.

Nevertheless, I asked myself what kind of wife doesn't want to have sex with

her husband at that age and above all I asked myself how she didn't notice her husband's moods. Perhaps it was because I realize quickly if something / someone doesn't work but I had the impression that his was a marriage already finished. I carried on the thing feeling uncomfortable, not sleeping at night, not being able to concentrate on the studies ... then I tried to discuss it with him ... and he cried a lot, etc. ... until in the end of March we went to walk in the mountains and once arrived at the top I extracted the thermos of coffee and a pack of biscuits ... and he told me: "Why are you doing all this? Why do you bring all the things I like?" I told him that I do it for all the people I love (which is absolutely true). And he said: "But, you know, our relationship is only a friendship." ... and I didn't say anything. I just thought: "You tell me it all the time ... but only because it makes you feel good".

Then I proposed to go for dinner after the walk and he told me: "And how would you see this dinner? As a romantic meeting or as a dinner with a friend?" And there I really lost patience ... we walked for more than an hour in silence, then we sat on a bench ... always in silence. And after ten minutes he says to me: "Don't you have anything to say?" And I let myself explode: I told him that his behavior was unjust, that he didn't make any choice in order not to have to take a position but in fact he was with her (heterosexuality of the facade) and nevertheless he continued to look for all the attentions on my part (homosexuality).

I underlined the fact that it was not right, either for me or for her ... and that I could not take it anymore. My life was not peaceful. It came out also the topic of the chats. I told him that I knew he was always online, etc. ... and he swore to me that he had not attended other men after me but that, as I knew, he could not do without that part of his life, a very ambiguous reasoning. And I screamed in face of him that it would have been right to let his wife go because she had every right to live with a man who really loved her. My friends said I couldn't know if anyway he really loved her. And I repeated that when there is love, certain things are not to be done and that if he were in love with his wife, he wouldn't be so attached to me as a lover. Also because I consider myself able to recognize the difference between loving someone as a friend and falling in love with him like a lover.

I patiently explained to him that I thought it was right not to see/hear each other anymore. I advised him to consult a psychologist (we had been talking about it for months) and to solve his problems. And then I added that, if his problems were resolved in my direction, my door would be always open to him, but as a partner, not as a friend. Well ... I have not seen him since the beginning of April. The same evening he wrote me a myriad of messages ... he left me vocal messages asking me to think again about it ... crying



... that it was not right to close a friendship ... telling me that I was not behaving well.

He proposed to me to let me heard even less, in order not to stress me too much, etc. ... I didn't listen to him, I held on. We have not seen each other since. He looks for me regularly ... once a week he writes to me ... he misses me, he concludes the messages with a big hug ... every excuse is good to write. I sometimes answer politely but in a detached way.

Clearly his wife is still unaware of everything ... but so ... why tell her strange things... he is straight!! His perpetual searching for me makes me sick ... but it gives me the confirmation that he doesn't accept to choice me and nevertheless he cannot stay without me. In a message he wrote to me that he had represses himself so as not to write to me. On Monday I received a message from him: "I went by the psychologist and told him about you. I cried a lot. I miss you a lot. I hope your phrase in your Whatsapp profile doesn't refer to me, anyway I don't understand why you don't make yourself heard. I hope you're better and that I can go to the concert with you in June."

In March he had bought tickets for a concert to go there together in June. I replied to him with a long message ... reiterating the fact that I hope the psychologist can help him find himself and live lightly ... explaining that I feel not at ease, that I miss him more than ever but that staying close is not a viable solution. As for the concert, I told him that I cannot give him what he needs ... as he cannot give it to me. And that he can go there with other friends or with his wife. His answer was "dumb!" The next day I wrote to him, just to know if he had slept. I did it because I needed it. I know what it means to go to the psychologist the first time and I felt compelled to write to him. He replied that he is well, that he had dreamed so much and that he feels alone ... he misses me, but he cannot expect anything more from me. And still a hug ...

Sorry if I was verbose ... this is my story ... at the moment, despite five months have passed since January, I feel really uncomfortable. I'm in love more than ever and I think he realized that maybe I'm more important than how he wanted to believe. But as my best friend says: "My dear, the facts, only the facts matter. And he's there with her, not here with you!" My opinion is that he is gay, repressed, with a strong homophobia and that he still has to make his acceptance path. I believe that in life we need balls and courage to follow our heart and I think he is not ready yet. I don't know how to behave anymore. I don't know how to stop this story and go further. The idea of seeing other men makes me vomit. And the fact that I cannot have the love of my life (because I know that we are exactly this, one for the other), it tears me apart.