

The Art of Sexual Certainty

BY VANCE EDWARDS-ORR

America is obsessed with sex. More beautiful people on TV. More lollipops. More Viagra. More weight loss. More hair products. More eating disorders. More shoes. More cleavage. More Britney. The fact that we all walk, talk, and fuck the same is no more a secret than the fact that the cigarettes we suck while doing all these things are going to kill us. Any eight year-old can tell you that.

Vaginas are really cool, and in the right hands, quite attractive. It bothers me that so many women (let's not even talk about gay men) find them hideous. Perhaps it's because most people don't spend the time to really get to know a vagina. How many of you could identify the vestibule or the prepuce? Few know much about it, but everyone seems to have an opinion on the subject. In this respect, the vagina is much like sexuality in general.

The other night I was walking home and ran into a clique of women that I had known through school. With a squeal, their leader pounced on me and tried to break my ribs. Before I even had a chance to make pleasantries, a second post-adolescent straight female intruded and demanded to know why I hadn't hugged her first. My sweet tooth for sarcasm kicked in (I couldn't resist) and said, "Well, honey, that's because I don't like you anymore." Apparently, that is where I made an instantaneous shift from being the most exciting thing since latex to being the most colossal asshole that had ever tread this planet. I briefly tried to defend myself in the ensuing drama, but gave up as soon as it became clear that they were serious.

A situation disturbingly similar occurred when I failed to notice more straight female friends at a diner. One of them approached my table to discuss how upset another had become that I was "dissing" them.

What is causing my perceptibly innocent actions to be received with such pejorative inference? One possible explanation is that I am simply an asshole. Or

perhaps there is a certain way I am supposed to behave around women.

Aaron, a guy I met this summer, recently came to visit me for a week. During that time I introduced him to all my friends, the vast majority of whom are attractive straight women. He couldn't handle it. I received complaints about him from a significant majority of women to whom Aaron was introduced. On two separate occasions, he was told, "Don't touch me."

It seems that he had never really had female friends. Aaron was unable to wrap his mind around the concept that I had all these women "at my disposal", as he put it, and wasn't fucking them. I was striking out left and right. I couldn't seem to act out any behavioral expectation for a 22-year old male.

When I was a sophomore in college, I really wanted to be gay. Being gay was cool. Forget cargo pants, homosexuality was the hottest accessory those days. If you don't got the gay, you don't got shit. This desire for the desire for males was convenient for me, only because everyone thought I was gay. Eventually after much drama and panic and angst and exploration I came out straight. The crowd roared. Money exchanged hands.

The acceptance of my sexuality has done nothing but empower me. Though not as much, it is still common to be pegged for being gay. I wonder how much of this misinterpretation comes from people's reaction to my sexual confidence, a trait that, to one extent or another, nearly all gay people who are out possess.

Perhaps the reason I have so many straight female friends is that, when they meet me, they file me in the "gay" box. Even after being straightened out, their first impression is still that I am gay. There will forever be a

triangle stamped somewhere on the Vance folder in their beautiful heads.

At one time or another too, I have had crushes on all my female friends. For some reason, I never felt any of my friendships were structured for mobility. It would almost seem like I had the social structure of a gay man.

I seem to accumulate people who, for the most part, possess the same sexual certainty as I. The resulting atmosphere is high energy that leads to "situations" and drama. Over the course of my adult friendships, I have had some amplitude of loin-led drama with nearly all female friends, and many male as well.

I seem to be leading a sexually charged lifestyle. Not that I'm actually having much sex, but it affects nearly all of my relationships. I realize a significant part of this behavior is simply a function of my age and species, and whether we like it or not, the Gay-Bi-Straight junta has been deposed.

For me, the ideal relationship is one where both partners actively want to be vulnerable. This requires a significant dose of confidence and conviction. Self-confidence comes from self-knowledge and self-love, plus a few other hyphenated terms.

It's hard to love yourself when you have love handles. Or at least it's supposed to be hard. Although if I listened to the media, it would be completely impossible to love myself with my love handles.

It takes a certain strength of character to unconditionally love yourself. The same conviction it takes to turn down an invitation to dinner without offering an explanation. In fact, this utopian sensation is the same thing that, if held close to your heart, can help you own yourself.

Whether we like it or not, the Gay-Bi-Straight junta has been deposed.

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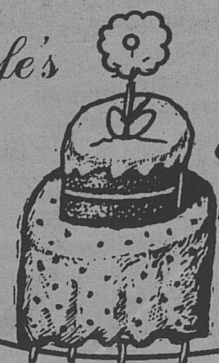
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