

Changed for Life

"DAD?" MICHAEL tried to sound casual, but actually he had been puzzling over his question for some time. "Dad, you remember we were talking about sex? Well, the subject came up yesterday and I didn't know the answer."



"The answer to what?" asked Dad. Michael had been at scout camp all week and they were both in holiday mood as they drove to catch up with the rest of the family.

"Well, when you can make love," Michael said.

Human fertility



A healthy man becomes fertile at puberty and, although his fertility diminishes as he gets older, he remains so for the rest of his life.

The changing pattern of human fertility therefore rests upon the woman, who is mostly infertile. She can only actually conceive in any one cycle during the 12-24 hours that a fresh egg is available to sperm. The fertile phase, when an act of intercourse can lead to pregnancy, is extended by fertile mucus, which can keep sperm alive in the female tract for 3-5 days.

Natural family planning methods may treat a wider span of days as potentially fertile, depending upon the woman's supply of mucus and other noticeable symptoms. It is easier to know when ovulation has happened than to predict its exact arrival.

A woman ceases to be fertile in middle-age, known as the **menopause**. Ovulation is also suppressed during pregnancy, and in the first months of breastfeeding. How long breastfeeding infertility lasts varies with the woman, her lifestyle and the way she feeds her baby.

His father was concentrating on the traffic. "You can make love whenever you want to, but most of the time it's at night or in the early morning, because that's when a husband and wife are relaxed and close and snuggled up in bed together." He stopped talking while he changed lanes. "Why do you ask?"

"Well, dogs only mate when the bitch is on heat," Michael replied, shrugging. "I wasn't sure if we might be like them."

"You've got a good question there," Dad replied. "Most animals, dogs included, only mate when the female is fertile, but men and women are different. They can make love at any time, when the woman is fertile, which is only for a few days every month, and when she's infertile, which is most of the time."

"Why's that?" Michael asked.

"You are full of questions today, aren't you? Still, they're important. The reason is that there's something very special about men and women. They don't just mate like animals. The act of intercourse really is designed for 'making love'. Making love uses the language of the whole person, spirit, mind and body, in a way which goes beyond words. It creates unity between husband and wife and helps to keep their love fresh."

"So how do you get yourself ready?" Michael asked. "D'you remember, like you were telling me last time? I mean, it would be a bit unfortunate if you thought you were going to make a baby and you went for a wee instead!"

Dad shook his head at this, and smiled. "I was explaining to you about the seminal fluid and the urine, wasn't I, and how only one of them can come through the **urethra** at any one time? I said it was a bit like railway points, switching from one track to the other." Dad paused for a moment as the lights went green and then, concentrating on the road again, said, "Most of the time your penis is floppy. It just hangs down on top of your testicles. But sometimes, like when you wake up in the night or first thing in the morning, it's stiffer and points upwards, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Michael, starting to redden.

"Well, if you want to do a wee, you don't go when it's pointing upwards, do you? I mean, it's tricky till it flops down again."

"Which is just as well!" laughed Michael.

Dad grinned. "Agreed. Well, your penis becomes stiff because it **engorges** with blood. When the penis stiffens the 'points' turn, making ready for sexual intercourse."

"So when the penis is floppy, out comes the wee, and when it's stiff, it's the sperm?" suggested Michael.

"I suppose so," agreed his dad, "though the **seminal fluid** isn't all sperm. Most of it, as I told you before, is actually a sugary liquid which transports the sperm and keeps them alive."

Dad went on to explain, "You might wonder how the 'points' are controlled. Our spirits, minds and bodies are knitted so closely that you only have to think actively about sexual attraction for the body to go on alert and give you an **erection**. It takes a lot more sexual arousal than that for the fluid to be ejaculated. But you can equally switch those thoughts off, especially when you've learnt to be self-controlled. Can you remember which of your organs governs your sexuality?"

"Your brain?"

"That's right. And it's really important that your brain always remains in charge of your body."

"So, when you make love, what comes out is mainly syrupy water, with billions of tiny sperm inside?" asked Michael after a pause.

Neurochemicals



Hundreds of chemicals travel about the brain's cells all of the time. Some carry messages. Others play critical roles in our thinking, desires and behaviour.

Neurochemicals are released by the body in response to physical, mental or emotional stimuli. They are released automatically in response to these stimuli, regardless of whether the behaviour is morally good or bad.

"Millions. The billions of sperm are how many you make each month, but in any one **ejaculate** – that means the amount which comes out at a time – there're more like two to three hundred million. What I don't think I told you before is that most of the sperm are concentrated in the liquid that comes out first. In fact, the concentration can be so great that it's possible for a woman to become pregnant without the penis entering the vagina."

"Do you know anyone that's happened to?" Michael enquired.

"What questions you ask!" Dad protested. "I do, as it happens. Though it's not the sort of thing one normally talks about."

"How did you make love to your wife?" laughed Michael. They fell silent again, but not for long. Dad wanted to know how the scout camp had gone, and Michael was regaling him with the latest jokes and how they'd been chased by a bull in a neighbouring field.

Then Michael remarked thoughtfully, "Dad, you always talk as though everybody who makes love is married. I know it's meant for marriage, but lots of people make love before that."

"Yes, I know. It's an easy thing to slide into. You can seem to be getting everything you want, the love and physical closeness, without having to commit to the long term. And sometimes there are even practical advantages to moving in with each other, such as sharing the bills."

"Like Annie and John?" suggested Michael. "Annie was round at our house the other day and she told Mum that renting a one-bedroom flat was the only way they could afford to live in town."

"Starting out in life can be difficult," Dad said, "and it can be tempting to shortcut the waiting in a relationship. You'll find that, even when you love a girl,

Visual attraction



Some of the most colourful displays in nature are designed for attracting a mate, such as a peacock's tail or flamingo's dance. Human beings are even more sophisticated, using all five senses to attract each other.

What we see with our eyes can stimulate the **neurochemicals** in our brains, changing our moods and, on occasion, inclining us towards sexual arousal. A sunset over a still sea provides an atmosphere different from a rubbish dump on a dreary day. A smile from someone we love warms us, and a beautiful girl or a handsome boy attracts our attention and draws our gaze.

you'll hang back from being tied to her before you're able to get yourself established. Marriage is a big step, and young people need to have money and stability before taking it. But waiting takes self-control and sex is very tempting."

"If you live together you might have a baby," Michael pointed out.

Dad smiled ruefully. "You're right," he replied.

"What about all those ways to stop a pregnancy, like the condom and the Pill?" Michael asked.

"And other things too," Dad replied. "But **contraception** is a big subject in its own right. I'll tell you now that it has a high failure rate, especially

among young people. If a girl messes with it when she's young, she may damage her ability to conceive in the future."

"At least that doesn't affect a boy," said Michael.

"It does if it's your future wife," Dad reminded him. "And boys can catch **sexual diseases** as much as girls."

They had caught up with a large lorry which was going at just the wrong speed to overtake. At last Dad was able to accelerate past it.

Michael had taken out his mobile and was fiddling with it. Without looking up he remarked, "Anyway, when I marry I'll want to have some way of saying 'I love you' which I haven't already used up."

The brain



Neurons are the primary cells of the brain. Electric impulses connect them, which is how the brain works. Each **neuron** has several short projections, called **dendrites**, which receive transmissions, and one long projection, called an **axon**, to send them.

The **neurons** are not 'wired' to each other but are linked by **neurochemicals** to connectors, called **synapses**, through which messages are passed. The synapses are created, strengthened or killed off according to the use made of them (or lack of it). The **neurons** form over 100 trillion connections with each other - more than all the Internet connections in the world.

It is the impermanent nature of the **synapses** which allows the brain to be continually moulded throughout life according to how we behave, think and feel.

"You know, your age group has got such a chance to learn from our mistakes," Dad replied.

"I told you just now that our spirits, minds and bodies act in such unison that you only have to think actively about sex for your body to react. The way this happens is through chemicals in our brain (**neurochemicals**), which link our thoughts and emotions to our physical reactions. Brain scan technology is teaching us more about this all the time. It seems that sexual activity gives rise to potent chemicals which have a huge influence on our behaviour. We're designed not only to fall in love with another person emotionally, but to become physically attached to that person through chemical attraction, almost like an addiction."

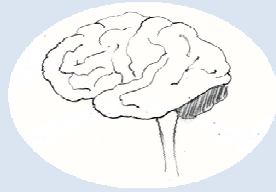
"So that's what you meant when you said that love-making creates unity?" Michael replied, impressed.

"It's even more than that. We don't just become chemically bonded. Making love creates new electrical circuits in our brains which change the way we think. Didn't you tell me that you learnt at school about brains and how they work?"

"Yeah, we did," Michael agreed. "It was when we were learning about sport and they told us that exercise makes new connectors in the brain. They showed us how we build our brains at the same time as our muscles."

"OK," Dad responded. "Well, sex builds your brain even more than sport. You'll remember that the connections between the **neurons** aren't fixed like a wire, but that the electricity jumps from one neuron to the next? They use connection points called **synapses**, don't they? And where the energy runs, pathways are either

Dopamine



This neurochemical has many functions, including that of giving a feeling of intense energy and exhilaration when we pitch into demanding activities or take risks. The number of **dopamine** receptors in the reward centre of the brain declines in adolescence so that young people need high levels of excitement. This encourages them to be bold. The **dopamine** reward creates habits of behaviour, which can be either good or bad.

Dopamine's release can also be artificially triggered by stimulants such as alcohol, nicotine and recreational drugs. When over-stimulated, the brain learns to become resistant, needing more for the same effect and so creating addiction.

Sex is one of the strongest generators of the **dopamine** reward. A couple in love are excited and confident, and prepared to take risks so that they can be together. The sexual act then seals their love and keeps them loyal to each other. Sex indulged in lightly can trap people into wanting it for its own sake, in increasing quantities.

created or shut off, and that depends upon how you're thinking and the way you act. Now, when you bond with another person sexually, you create a lot of activity in the brain – so much activity, in fact, that it has a really big impact and your brain is never the same again.

"Being bonded to your husband or wife is wonderful. Then your sexual makeup is matched by your actions – all those little things you do for each other throughout the day, the responsibilities you take on, the goods you share, the way you rely on each other, especially when you have children. That's real love, even when you don't always feel it as 'being in love', because feelings mature over time."

"That sounds a bit dull," Michael said.

Dad chuckled. "It's also a lot more peaceful, and it gives you a deep sense of well being."

"Which you don't have till you marry?"

"Especially when you're young," Dad replied. "You may not even have chosen your partner with much care. So along comes an obstacle and the relationship breaks up. But the chemical bond is still there, unsatisfied. You are left with a taste for sex, which you will look for again, but this time you'll be tempted to jump in even more quickly."

Oxytocin



This **neurochemical** is primarily active in a woman, and bonds her to her sexual partners, and to her babies.

Any meaningful sexual contact can begin the release of **oxytocin**, even a hug. Its effects are so powerful that it can cloud a woman's judgement and make her desire and trust a man to whom she is unsuited. When sexual relations are reserved for her husband, **oxytocin** helps a woman to overlook his faults and enjoy a stable, well-bonded marriage. The further release of **oxytocin** at childbirth and in breastfeeding cements family relationships.

The breakup of a relationship is altogether more traumatic when full sexual bonding has taken place. It weakens the ability to bond satisfactorily with another man in the future.

"The sad thing is that you can end up wanting sex for its own sake, and lose the ability to bond in a long-term relationship. It's a bit like a plaster. It's designed to stick once. Try it again, and it might stick, but third and fourth time round it sticks less and less. But people aren't plasters, and when they're torn off their self-esteem takes a knock, sometimes a big one. You'll find that teenagers who get into sex start losing grades at school, and they're much more likely to drink and smoke and get into the drug scene."

"Dad," Michael asked, "if sex is such a big deal, why isn't everybody warning us off it?"

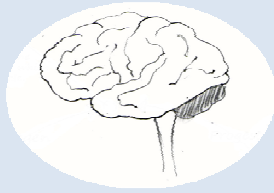
Dad sighed. "Sex is big business. Put a gorgeous girl into an advertisement, and it sells a car. Include a sex scene in a film, and the audience goes up. And that's to say nothing of the money that companies earn from pornography and contraceptives."

He paused for a moment, concentrating again on driving, then said in a brighter tone, "Now it's my turn to ask the questions. Did you know that men who are married to the mothers of their children can expect to earn 20-30% more than men living in a similar situation but without being married?"ⁱ

"Really? Why's that?" exclaimed Michael.

"I'll leave you to work that one out. But it centres on security and long term commitment – and generally knowing that your family is fully yours for life." They drew up at some road works and Dad, pulling on the brake, relaxed back into his seat. "And I've got another one for you. This one's more difficult. Have you ever thought about marriage and what it really is?"

Vasopressin



This **neurochemical** is the male equivalent of oxytocin. It has many functions, but is specifically responsible for bonding a man to his sexual partner and to his children. Like **oxytocin**, it is designed to support a stable long-term relationship within marriage.

Men, like women, are susceptible to losing their judgment because of premature physical bonding. Their brains are flooded with **vasopressin** each time they have sexual intercourse, producing a partial bond with each woman. Bonds thus made and lightly broken lose a man the ability to unite successfully in marriage.

Men who have many partners depend for their sexual satisfaction upon the dopamine rush. They also mould the neurological circuits of their brains into accepting multiple partners as normal.

"It's a solemn promise to stay with someone till one of you dies," Michael returned.

"You're right: it's a very solemn public promise, and because it's witnessed by the state, and often by a religious authority, it makes it easier to keep. But apart from promising to stay with someone for life, what do you also promise?"

Michael looked a bit puzzled.

Dad helped him out. "Well, you promise to be faithful, don't you? Marriage is exclusive – just for two people – and it's forever. Now, let's get back to the act of intercourse. The language of the body in having intercourse is saying exactly that: 'I love you so much that I want to share everything I have with you, even

to my seed.' The seed means either the man's sperm or the woman's egg. There's nothing more solemn or more exclusive and long lasting than sharing in giving life to a new human being. So whether or not a child is actually conceived, the giving of the seed by the man to the woman is a sign of lasting and exclusive love. It belongs to marriage.

"So what do you think happens when you make love without that commitment?"

Michael had to think hard. "I guess it's dishonest," he said slowly, "because your body is doing one thing while your spirit is saying 'I don't really mean this'."

Prefrontal Cortex



Our capacity for cognitive thought, when we make judgments, sort out priorities and control our impulses, is seated in the **prefrontal cortex**, just behind the forehead. This most sophisticated organ ultimately connects with many other areas of the brain. It only reaches maturity at the age of 23-25.

Other advanced brain organs also mature in the early 20's. These include the **amygdala** (emotion centre) and the **hippocampus** (memory centre).

By the time the **prefrontal cortex** is fully developed, most young people have already completed their studies and decided upon their adult occupations. Many have experienced their first loves, and may even have married or set up home together.

Young people have always turned to older ones for advice and we can now see that it is not only because adults have more experience: they are physically capable of better joined-up thinking.

Car insurance companies know this. They regularly charge higher premiums to the under 25's.

"That's very well put," Dad responded. "I may say that, at the time, the actions of the body can make you feel so good and so close that you can believe you are giving everything."

"That means, surely," Michael said, "that you're cheating yourself as well as the other person."

"And I am warning you, it's very easy to do."

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A few weeks later Dad was driving Michael back to scouts. It was the first meeting of term and he was normally excited before seeing everyone again.

"You're unusually quiet today," Dad remarked. "What's up?"

"Nothing," Michael replied. Then he said, "Dad, you remember last time we had that conversation about sex? Well, what happens if boys are attracted to each other? I mean, do they have to wait till they're grown-up? After all, since you can't have a baby, surely it doesn't matter when you start having sex."

Dad was taken aback by this unexpected question, but answered calmly, "What makes you ask?"

"I saw Ben last week, and he told me that, at the scout camp, he was sharing a tent with Kevin, you know, the boy who moved in down our road? He's a really

quiet boy, keeps himself to himself most of the time, but as they were in the tent together they started talking. And Kevin told Ben that he's in love with Johnnie Campbell. He keeps fantasising about him, and blushes whenever Johnnie speaks to him. He feels really embarrassed and thinks we must all notice, and that makes him even shy of us too. He thinks he must be homosexual and doesn't know what to do about it. Which just made me wonder."

"So, there are two questions there, aren't there?" Dad pointed out. "The first is about active sexual behaviour with somebody of the same sex. And my answer to that is the same as if you were attracted to somebody of the opposite sex. Sex binds you to another person, but it also carries with it the symbolism of new life, doesn't it?"

"You mean that business about the man giving his seed to the woman? But this would be giving it to another man," Michael mused.

"So if the symbol of life isn't appropriate, which it isn't, the sexual act isn't appropriate either. Look at it another way. If I had x-ray eyes, I would be able to understand the function of your liver, and your heart, and your kidneys, because they're all self-contained inside your body. I could see them cleaning and pumping your blood around. But what explanation would I have of the testes, or the prostate?"

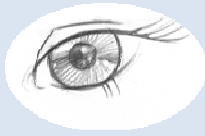
Michael puzzled over this. "Well, they produce the sperm and the seminal fluid."

"But what's the point of them? What purpose do they have? You can't explain sperm by just looking at the man's body, can you? They only make sense in the context of a woman. And the same with all the woman's reproductive organs, the ovaries, and the tubes and the uterus. It's only in the sexual act, when the man and woman join together, that you can make sense of either body by itself."

Michael thought about this hard. "So it's like the two bodies become one?" he asked, clearly impressed.

"Yes, it is," Dad replied, "and seeing the body like that will help you understand something else I told you, too, which is why **masturbation**, or engaging in sexual activity on your own, is also out of place. You see, the seed of your body is precious, and it has to be treated with respect." Dad could see Michael's expression

Pornography



Pornography is the explicit portrayal of images which cause sexual arousal. It can be through any medium: the internet, magazines, films, animations, or on any electronic device. It is dangerous and very addictive, setting off patterns in the brain different from those experienced when looking at the beloved.

Increasingly extreme images are needed to maintain the same level of excitement. The user's own sexual life can appear insipid by comparison so that the user loses the enjoyment of ordinary sexual relations. Even previous **pornographic use** interferes with the ability to bond well with one person.

Pornography imprints itself on the brain, leaving lasting impressions in the imagination. These can pop up again at any time; images viewed on screen are especially dangerous.

Pornography also exploits the models, portraying them in poses which attack their dignity as full human beings, composed of mind, body and spirit. Often the models are vulnerable people taken advantage of because of their youth or their financial and social need. **Pornography** is a big and growing business making billions of dollars every year.

**If a sexual image comes up,
don't wait:
turn it off!**

tautening at this. He went on lightly, "It's common at your age not yet to be in full control of your body. It's just something to be aware of and to work on.

"It's important to bear in mind that none of us has an automatic right to something just because we're attracted to it, in sex or anything else. And those with same sex attraction aren't the only people asked to control their desires. Everybody does, whether married or single.

"And you might be surprised at quite how many people do live without engaging in sex. Some choose to do so because they have a specific religious vocation, or because they're happier being independent. But there are many others who lead a continent life without choosing it. Some have never found the right person to marry. Others are widowed, or divorced – and many of these had separation forced on them. Whatever the case, luckily you don't have to be actively sexual to enjoy firm bonds with other people.

"But there's a second part to your question, which is what you do about Kevin. It sounds as though he's feeling a bit lost and is looking for acceptance in the wrong place. There are lots of reasons why he might be feeling as he does, but, at the nub of them, there's likely to be something which tells him that he doesn't quite measure up as a boy. It's not unusual to muddle up the desire to be loved with sexual feelings. Most young people settle

down if they're encouraged in the right wayⁱⁱ.

"So the best way for you to help Kevin is to make sure he feels a boy among boys. Why don't you invite him home? And get Ben and the others to include him in your group?"

Michael raised his eyebrows at this. Typical Dad to suggest that he should adopt some boy he didn't even like. But then perhaps he didn't really know him. And he did live up the road.

Kevin was walking along the pavement as they arrived. Michael got out of the car, and then with a set face signalled to Dad to wait while he hurried after him. "Hi, Kevin," he called, catching up. "My dad's asking how you're getting home tonight? Would you like a lift?"

Points to remember

The penis conveys both urine and seminal fluid but never at the same time.

Seminal fluid is made up of sperm and the sugary liquid which conveys, nourishes and protects them. The greatest concentration of sperm is in the liquid which comes out first.

After puberty, a healthy man remains fertile for the rest of his life. A woman is mostly infertile: her fertility is restricted to 3- 5 days in any one menstrual cycle and ceases in middle age.

Unlike the vast majority of animals, men and women can have intercourse at any time in the female cycle, regardless of whether or not the woman is fertile.

Every full sexual act retains the symbolism of giving life since the man releases the seed of his body. Sex is only truly satisfying when the language of the body is in harmony with that of the mind and spirit.

The brain governs all our sexual functions and is the link between the physical and the spiritual. We can exercise control over our sexual responses.

Neurochemicals prompt sexual attraction and are released at intercourse in such numbers that they impact upon the connections in our brains, changing the way we think and behave. This is designed to bond us permanently to our sexual partners.

A man can only fully understand his masculinity in the context of a woman, and a woman her femininity in the context of a man. In the sexual act, the man's and the woman's bodies function organically as though they were a single body.

It is not uncommon for adolescents to be ambivalent about their sexual identity and to have same-sex crushes. The best way to help them is to affirm them through the warmth of friendship, from both girls and boys but especially from people of their own sex.

It is not necessary to engage in active sexual behaviour in order to enjoy close bonds with other people.

Pornographic images leave lasting impressions in the brain and are highly addictive, especially when viewed on screen, for instance over the internet. They interfere with the ability to enjoy ordinary sexual relations and to bond well with a spouse.

GLOSSARY

Amygdala	Almond-shaped groups of nuclei which perform a primary role in processing and storing emotional reactions.
Axon	Long projection attached to the neuron for sending transmissions.
Brain scan	Images the brain's activity by measuring its points of energy release and blood flow. Developed in the 1990s, it is allowing scientists to study the brain's reward pathways.
Cervical mucus	Produced by the woman's cervix round the time of ovulation to help the sperm reach the egg. It also nourishes them and prolongs their life.
Contraception	Drugs and devices used to avoid pregnancy.
Dendrites	Short projections attached to the neuron for receiving transmissions.
Dopamine	Chemical released in the brain, which rewards exciting or demanding behaviour with feelings of intense satisfaction and pleasure. It plays an important role in many aspects of human behaviour, including the sexual. Dopamine release can be over-stimulated with the use of drugs, alcohol and casual sex, leading to addictions.
Ejaculate	Ejection of seminal fluid from the penis. The average ejaculate has a volume of 3–5 mls, containing some 200 to 300 million sperm.
Engorges	Fills up with blood. The penis contains lots of tiny blood vessels which rapidly fill during an erection, causing the penis to stiffen.
Erection	Stiffening of the penis through a surge of blood, which fills up the many extra blood vessels which the penis contains.
Hippocampus	Major component of the brain's limbic system, which consolidates short- and long-term memory and spatial navigation.
Masturbation	Exciting one's own physical sexual responses as a solo act. Masturbation also involves sexual fantasies since the body, mind and spirit are closely interconnected.
Menopause	Phase of life, usually in her 40's or 50's, when a woman ceases to ovulate.

Neurochemical	Chemicals which bathe the brain cells and carry messages across the synapses from one cell to the next. Neurons form over 100 trillion connections with each other, more than all the internet connections in the world.
Neurons	Primary cells of the brain through which electricity flows to make the brain work. By the end of adolescence, a person's brain will contain more than 10 billion neurons.
Ovulation	Release of the egg from the ovary into the fallopian tube, where it becomes available for fertilisation by the sperm.
Oxytocin	Neurochemical, especially active in women, which stimulates feelings of bonding towards a man and towards her child. Oxytocin is released in large quantities during the sexual act, at childbirth and in breastfeeding.
Pornography	Explicit portrayal of images which cause sexual arousal.
Prefrontal cortex	Area of the brain responsible for executive functions, such as defining goals, setting priorities, assessing consequences and controlling impulses. It only matures at age 23-25.
Seminal fluid	Fluid ejaculated by the penis and made up of sperm and the water and various nutrients which carry the sperm. The seminal fluid contains a concentration of fructose , a very sweet sugar which feeds the sperm and gives them energy.
Sexual diseases	Diseases transmitted through sexual contact with a carrier. They are usually referred to as STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) or STIs (sexually transmitted infections) and are particularly catching among young people, whose defence mechanisms are not yet fully mature.
Synapses	Connectors which help carry electrical messages from one neuron to the next. The brain is not hardwired: the gap between the neurons and the synapses is bridged by neurochemicals. Synapses form and disintegrate according to use, making the brain continually adaptable, but especially so during adolescence.
Urethra	Duct which takes either seminal fluid or urine through the penis to the outside of the body.
Vasopressin	Neurochemical which functions in a man much as oxytocin does in a woman, bonding him to his mate and to his children.

ⁱ ‘Government and survey data overwhelmingly document that married-parent households work, earn, and save at significantly higher rates than other family households as well as pay the lion’s share of all income taxes collected by the government. They also contribute to charity and volunteer at significantly higher rates, even when controlling for income, than do single or divorced households, leading Arthur Brooks of the American Enterprise Institute to write that “single parenthood is a disaster for charity”. Data from an earlier wave of the survey reveal the disparities of household income among a greater range of household types with children under 18. For 2001: intact, married families had a median income of \$54,000; stepfamilies, \$50,000; cohabitants, \$30,000; divorced-single parents, \$23,000; separated-single parents, \$20,000; widow parents, \$9,100; never-married single parents, \$9,400.” Extracted from “The Family GDP: How Marriage and Fertility Drive the Economy” by Patrick Fagan in *The Family in America Journal of Public Policy* (Spring 2010); see http://www.familyinamerica.org/index.php?doc_id=9&cat_id=7

ⁱⁱ For a helpful study of same-sex attraction, see the article by Dr Richard Fitzgibbons MD entitled “Same-Sex Attractions in Youth and their Right to Informed Consent” on the Child Healing: Strengthening Families website at <http://www.childhealing.com/articles/ssayouth-if-imh.php>.