

Yoga Conference.32.0

Neo-Tantrism (Shakti Das, 3/30/99 10:12:33 AM)

Firstly, Tantra we must credit the word, tantra, as describing a diverse and rich East Indian tradition that attempts to deal with the elements of manifest creation in synchrony with their greater integrity and as a means for spiritual integration and self enrichment.

There are thus many avenues of tantra including medicine, astrology, yantra yoga (visulaization of sacred diagrams), mantra yoga, elaborate ceremonial tantra, amulets, magic, etc.

Sexuality is also one avenue as well (and a particularly rich avenue to the yogi because it deals with the union of opposites i.e., the male/female or shiva/shakti energies.

There are many existing books and traditions (hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist)on classical sexual tantra utilizing either symbolic sexual imagery or actual partnered sexual activities in order to explain and resolve the energetics of polarity and duality and thence to follow this phenomenon back to its Source in the process of spiritual re-integration.

Although it is helpful to learn and quote from these past techniques (as well as related past Western techniques of alchemy), it is the intent of this topic to go beyond merely learning what has been done before, avoiding the trap of memorizing or arguing "right" applications, and or avoiding conformance to any existing prejudice about sexual tantra; but rather to take this exploration one step further.

Sexual tantra peaked in India just prior to the Moghul invasions (which wiped out Buddhism from India in a Jihad as well as persecuted authentic tantrics (which were forced to go underground taking on many synbolic forms).

Medieval India was the heyday of eclectic (both Buddhist and Hindu) hatha, kundalini, and tantric yoga which converged in the tradition of the Medieval Mahasiddhas (of whom Matsyendranath or Luipa (who is generally credited as the founder of modern day Hatha Yoga was a member.

Coupled with the fact that tantra has not significantly evolved either here or in Tibet for almost a thousand years, the presence of widespread sexual abuse and dysfunction, the widespread abuse and dissipation of the life force, the wantom consumation and destruction by the human species of natural resources for all life forces, and the recent upsurge in the West of body based psychotherapy, the somatic movement, body/mind therapeutic, and the new wholistic consciousness, it

may be well to raise the vital question again as to how we can learn to integrate our most intimate physical experience (sexuality) in harmony with ideas of a living spirit, inspiration, health, re-generation, creation/creativity, and evolution.

It is my experience that if the human species is able to get in touch with, embrace, and honor the life principle in their everyday life then they would not be dependent upon nor victimized by external authoritative books or systems, gurus, approval, need for external status or privilege, similar neurotic compensatory systems of false security, paranoid need for power or control over others, related modalities of jealousy, and the like all of which stem from this basic unresolved integration resulting in the aforementioned list of insecurities.

This topic can and is designed to take a body positive and nature positive attitude toward spirituality thus including Spirit in everyday earthly activities which to my thinking must also take into account sexual identification, sexual modalities, sexual activities, as well as how we got here in the first place (creation stories in sexual terms).

Unfortunately since many have become conditioned to see sexual and natural function and activity as the opposite from that of spiritual activity (and I do not intend to offend anyone) I suggest that those people may benefit the most from this discussion and they are welcome to discourse or hide the topic (use the prompt at the topic of the topic list).

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Vajroli Continued (Shakti Das, 3/30/99 10:59:02 AM)
Vajroli is an advanced topic in hatha yoga, found in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika for one. There is controversy around whether it should be taken literally or symbolically (externally or inwardly). This subject is a continuation from the Yam and Niyama discussion of Brahmacharya #110-#114 and will provide background for those who are interested.

Bob asks> "So how do you learn the reverse flow trick without the catheter for training wheels" .

Yeah I liked Robert Crumb also when I was younger, not because of any "intellectual" or conceptual association but rather he honestly reflected my physiological truth which gets to another topic how men are blamed for not trying to "understand" women; but something a woman usually can't understand about man's physiology (a phenomena not based on judgement nor logic but rather natural law). That's another subject, but how to "deal" with it is the present subject is it not.

Well instead of cold showers, over eating, exhausting

physical exercise, and other neurotic activities we can approach the subject as a result of male energy signalling its natural propensity for intercourse and resolution with the female energetic (which can be distinguished from neurotic desire).

Thankfully you and I do not have to worry how to find an appropriate partner for this alchemical reaction to take place as we have navigated the societal milieu for forty years or more in this regard and have that "chore" behind us (for the most part).

Now to answer the question i.e., learning the reverse flow technique without the catheter. There are many answers. Lots of practice, going slow, cleaning out the physical impurities and irritations to the nerves in the area, bandhas, breath (powerful), visualization, going slow at first, transferring energy, constant awareness (especially of the lowest two chakras), moving the energy into the manipura chakra, knowing yourself, and the like are all helpful for control but we want to go beyond control right?

The portal seemed to me to get to sustained and heightened flow where I could experience at first complete energetic pulsation in the area without overloading the circuitry (the spasms of physical ejaculation). This was the first stage of education i.e., not to dissipate the charge as a relief from sexual tension (as Reich suggests) but to simply be in the process (rather than be goal oriented).

As my male charge was not being dissipated, I also had to make sure that the female charge did not cause the female to overload, go into spasm (in terms of pushing out, tightening up, or drying up). It was a process of mutual building and I had to change my ways of sexual interaction from that of genital self gratification and temporary genital pleasure to the greater joy of caring for the partner and entering into a greater participatory transpersonal state of union, i.e., we slowly discover the fluid transpersonal state beyond individual pleasuring each other.

Here upward flow starts to happen for me usually starting at the sacrum and running up the spine. There is a warning here (and I am serious) that once upward flow occurs our normal "need" for sexual interaction may be lessened. This actually seems logical as well, but since we are used to being pleased by satisfying a need, when that need no longer arises, sometimes we see that as a loss of pleasure? This may explain the Viagra phenomena?

Now maybe I am confusing ED from upward flow? I think I have met at least one person who had spontaneous upward flow without tantra. He was an older but very compassionate retired Catholic Priest who took my yoga

classes, bathed naked in the warm pools with beautiful young women while showing no need or physical attraction. He used to come up every year or so (I think just to test the genuineness of his urdva retas) before he passed on.

On the other hand we more commonly meet those who through their vehement contempt and condemnation of sexuality demonstrate merely their own anguish regarding past inhibitions of their unresolved sexual expression.

Here we are differentiating mere sexual repression, fear, or will power from natural urdvaretas. In any case genuine urdvaretas also has a profound effect upon the koshas and especially the jnanamaya kosha.

Of course I left out many "seedy" details, but this could form a platform for further exploration of a topic which is unfortunately laden with widespread guilt, fear, distrust, anger, and controversy.

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Good Intro! (tympachus cupido, 3/30/99 2:45:33 PM)

I'm drawn to this theme:

It is my experience that if the human species is able to get in touch with, embrace, and honor the life principle in their everyday life then they would not be dependent upon nor victimized by external authoritative books or systems, gurus, approval, need for external status or privilege, similar neurotic compensatory systems of false security, paranoid need for power or control over others, related modalities of jealousy, and the like all of which stem from this basic unresolved integration resulting in the aforementioned list of insecurities.

I understand "honoring the life principle" to mean the process of becoming fully human - learning to balance the need and urge for altruism, service and cooperation with the needs of the individual for self-actualization through self-understanding, creativity, personal mastery (thinking, feeling, doing) and self-trust. What do you mean by it?

>>Thankfully you and I do not have to worry how to find an appropriate partner for this alchemical reaction to take place...<<

Presumably, the study of Tantra offers the opportunity for deepening the bond but change (more knowledge/understanding, different expectations...) can have a down side too and I suspect it's wise to keep that in mind. Alstad's INTERPERSONAL YOGA is instructive here I think.

Doubt anyone will be offended and I doubt I'll write here as if they might be; I invite you (and anyone

else) to do the same. I'll be dipping into the library to bring some specific and explicit comments from others to the table.

I may have confused you with the reverse flow question. I was referring to the practice of recovering ejaculated semen and/or absorbing feminine genital secretions rather than the practice of ejaculating into the bladder or the energetic flow toward the higher chakras.

Age appears to be more of a factor in the decline in "orgasmic need" - however the need for intimacy and the sexual transcendental state appears to increase with familiarity (perhaps that's just an unresolved greed thing) with the altered state.

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Empire State Bldg. (Shakti Das, 3/31/99 8:18:09 PM)

Bob; There is a well known story about a past reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, which you may have heard, but bears repeating, that he used to stand from the roof of the Potala Palace, pee, and catch the pee right before it was about to hit the ground, and then re-absorb it.

The modern age however offers us even greater challenges i.e., the Empire State bldg., etc. :-)

Sorry we got our signals crossed. As I said, I haven't practised the external form of vajroli, but a few comments about it may be helpful as I have been practising the other forms for quite some time.

1) the practise of vajroli back into the bladder seems worthless altho it is easily learned. It may even cause problems unless practiced "correctly".

2) the ancient books describe a pathway of vajroli other than back into the bladder.

3) the practice of absorbing the female juices (as well as the male juices) is a gross mis-representation (in my opinion) and belongs to the school of sexual cannibalism. What is a more subtle (but also more powerful practice in my opinion) is to milk and suck your own juices in and upward without any ever leaving the tip in the first place. Here the male juice becomes compounded (lead into gold) when sufficient heat is applied and it is mixed with the female catalysts (which also is not a gross external substance but rather a subtle essence).

You mention that you do not buy into the theory that losing the physical substance (ejaculation) is important; but if you take into consideration the complexity of the compounds involved, the amount of work/energy it takes the body to manufacture it, that it is heavy in protein, and that such a manufacturing

processs takes priority in the male oragnism over almost anything else, I do not wonder why some males crave rest and protein after ejaculation. If men did not ejaculate their food cravings would change dramatically, their eating habits would be altered, and their energy would be much different.

Notice that I did not say not to experuience complete orgasm, but rather to have a long long long orgasm but without dissipation or loss of fluid.

The method that seems to work best here is the 99.9-99.99 % plateau which is mastered through trial and error.

Here I don't want to wind up overly talking about our P..is but it is a topic often neglected (at least in public) in energetic and spiritual terms.

So in otherwords I am suggesting an energetic where the man does not lose his energy in ejacualtion and the woman also does not lose hers -- that both people bring more and more heightened energy to the equation which forms a whole or unity (pardon the expression) which is self accelerating and which they can eventually rest in mutual nurture and support. A win-win situation i.e., the more empowered you are, the more you have to share with me and vis versa.

Here there is no need of vajroli and i suspect besides the kriya aspect, the practice was geared to simply give the practitioner a sense of the energetics involved as well as "control" whereas once loss of control is mastered we can relax in the overall process without tension (or if we be goal oriented can be the first to do it off the empire state building :-)

bro don

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Sahajoli and Vajroli (Shakti Das, 4/3/99 1:41:13 AM)

Actually to be more detailed vajroli is specifically concerned about moving the energy (and fluids) inward and upward. The kriya form is cleansing of the nerves and physical organs as well as opening of the pathways. The external form can take on many forms, but the internal form is purely energetic. Because the nerve pathways are opened and cleansed, there is more control over the functioning.

Paradoxically this control allows the sadhak to either restrict this function or enhance it. As many notice in authentic yoga practice all the organs, glands, nerves, and functions are enhanced and this includes rightfully the reproductive organs. Unfortunately many (especailly in monastic life) find this to be an added burden/distraction and/or viewed as an impediment. But hatha yoga is not designed to supress, restrict, constrict, or diminish the natural life functions.

Hence vajroli became valuable in this regard.

Here we keep the second chakra open, let the energy move without fear or shame, and either express it (when it is appropriate) or redirect it without constricting or cringing from it. This is very similar to Reich's theory of neurotic behaviour where the sexual charge if not allowed to express itself would wind up fueling deviant, neurotic, and/or pathological behaviour (usually involving violence, abuse, exploitation of others or in other cases self inhibition and withdrawal.

In tantra and hatha yoga instead of discharging this dammed up sexual energy we let it flow (like Reich) except that we do not discharge it. Basically the expulsion of seminal fluid is a discharge; yet it also allows a certain amount of energy to flow through the system; while repression does not allow any energy to flow or fears its flow.

In tantra and hatha yoga the energy is allowed to flow THROUGH the entire system and circulate without causing a shutdown. It is very much natural. This can be done with asana, pranayama, and visualization or it can be done through active tantric practice. If it is active tantric practice with a consort, circulating the energy for at least one hour in active state is usually sufficient to build up enough reserves so that if physical ejaculation occurs the physical reserves and resultant energetic processes so initiated to replenish the procreative/hormonal reserves may not be strained. This stress is also less in the adolescent and becoming more severe in older men in general.

It seems that functional success in vajroli is not learned from techniques of constriction like the big hold, the big draw, finger pressure, anal pressure, or withdrawal but rather conversely by opening and expanding. In other words instead of walking around tight assed and constricted in the first two chakras the secret is to keep it open. This again may seem like a paradox on the surface, but technically one may look at the process scientifically in this way.

If orgasm is a spasm wherein through alternations of opening up wide, contracting strongly, opening again, and contracting again, etc the seminal fluids are milked out or propelled from the male system, then it is just as easy (is it not) to conjecture that keeping the area open and wide would just as much prevent the spasm (or better) than by clamping down hard with a clenched jaw?

Although this avenue is not widely discussed, I have found it extremely valuable. Also keeping the right nostril open and allowing oneself to inspire with the breath are adjuncts along with the standard

visualizations that are more commonly given. Thus at the first sign of spasm or contraction (or better before the onset of that state) be aware of the region and relax it. Be aware of the breath in the right nostril and inhale through it. Be aware of the energy in the body and the "back body" and move it in the direction of flow by opening up the inner cave within.

This topic can go on indefinitely (here I mean both the words and the practice). But to "tie it up" (:-) sahadjoli is associated with the external practice of drawing up external fluids (or essences) and particular sexual essences that have been expelled. It is of course can be thus associated as a specialized case of vajroli or vajroli could be considered a specialized case of sahadjoli.

Another take of sahadjoli however is a possible inner meaning where the seminal essence becomes produced and generated in one area of the second chakra and then transferred, redirected, absorbed, and imbibed into another organ in this same region. A kind of inner flow and alchemy takes place without any external secretions. It is also then in this regard that amaroli can also be approached.

Technically, if one

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earthworm (earthworm, 4/6/99 9:27:33 PM)

By the way this does not apply only to those of the male persuasion. Expanding the experience of "orgasmic energy" is something women can do as well. I have experimented with directing the energy, diffusing it (more space, less intensity, longer duration). If I am having a problem in a particular area of my body or in my life, I direct or send the energy there, (with my intention) as a way of bringing more awareness, healing energy to that issue.

So, ladies, you can be a part of this discussion too.

Love and Blessing, Gena

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Authentic Tantra is Wholistic (Shakti Das, 4/7/99 12:43:29 PM)

In our education (or rather lack of it) in regards to all the real empowering questions such as who we are, whence we came from, what is life, death, and disease there is amidst this usually a sexual void, riddle, or dichotomy i.e., Adam and Eve, Sin and paradise, pleasure and pain, etc.

In our miseducation (to identify with pain rather than with how to release it), men especially know nothing about female sexuality. To the man (from his own experience) the culmination of human sexuality is in the sexual act itself (sexual intercourse) which is a premature conclusion drawn from his own physiology. When (and if) a man matures he can realize that things

are necessarily very different for the the female especially in regards to her sexual organs. Here the sexual act of union is only a first step in a more sophisticated creative/procreative process. Man's ignorance (lack of awareness) in the fuller implications of his sexual role and identity is the cause of many difficulties; yet this does not have to be the norm because this condition exists only because of institutionalized fear, ignorance, prejudice, and neglect and can thus be institutionalized out as well (when we institute values of respect for life, nurture, healing, and the life giving process -- values that are traditionally considered female).

Thus authentic tantra not only seeks out the wholistic relationships between the body and the mind, between nature and spirit, between differentiated and undifferentiated, between Shekinah and Ayin, but also between the wholistic inter-relationships of man's culture and society on one hand and his consciousness on the other -- because mind is conditioned through experiences and behaviour is governed by our beliefs, emotions, and consciousness (or the lack thereof).

Tantra has always had a cultural aspect, and today in order to make it vital and relevant (reclaim it from the librarians, historians, intellectuals, and curiosity seekers) its wholistic as well as cultural inter-relationships have to be integrated in a present day vital synthesis and to me this proves to be both a very fertile ground as well as a needed creative evolution.

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Neo-Tantra (Shakti Das, 4/7/99 12:51:06 PM)

Gosh got these out of synch. I thought this post was going to precede what is now the preceding post, but now to proceed...

Thanks Gena;

Yes almost all of the older literature regarding hatha yoga and tantra yoga "presumes" that the sadhak is a male, and as such many of the given practices only addresses half the population, but in fact yoginis have an equally long history in yoga (not all undocumented). The "lack" of support in this regard "historically speaking" is culturally based (where in traditional Indian society, women had roles designated for them that were rather (dare i say?) "overly" limited).

In the Mahasiddha tradition and yoga tradition of Medieval India such cultural limitations seemed to have been considerably altered (not surprisngly it being also the golden age of hatha and tantra yoga). Of late, both Swami Sivananda (Divine Life Society) and more so Swami Satyananda (Bihar School of Yoga) have taken strides in making these practices more relevant to females which we can discuss if there is interest. Of

course Osho was also very much concerned along these same lines.

It seems that coming from separation and polarity on a physical level, the man is the provider, giver, emitter, providing essence and seed -- he is the solid energy, and hardness; while the female is the receiver, receptacle, the dissolver, and the softness; however in tantra (and in union) these roles become reversed when the male/female polarity is balanced i.e., the man's hard contrapedal expands to centrifugal while the female's centrifugal energy compacts into contrapedal -- polarity and separate sexual identifications dissolve and words (based on separation) fail to distinguish the two from the greater living whole or neural circuit that is formed and which then transforms its parts (the male and female) when this neural circuit is inter-connected, aligned, and activated.

The point I am trying to make (with difficulty) is that the polar energetics of the "normal" state of separateness characterized by what is "normally" quantified as male and female attributes, is quite different from the non-polar or energized characteristics of the participants who engage in a tantric relationship to achieve flow.

Here there occurs an arcing over from the male essence to the female and visversa (without spasm or overload) and (as Gena describes) the ability to stream energy and achieve flow in the entire biopsychic organism if we allow ourselves to consciously participate in the process.

In this last regard, there are two opposing schools. The traditional tantric school is big on directing the energy through the chakras and/or psychic energy systems (for healing or spiritual evolution) through the breath and other visualization practices; while another school (Paul Lowe is one) suggests that we "do" nothing with the mind, but rather follow the juice, align with the central axis, ask the big question beyond any of the words, and not even "conceive" of bathing in the non-conceptual, but rather continually drop ALL limiting concepts as in meditation, etc.

From my experience, through practice it is far easier to achieve "mastery" in the former approach (which may prove to be a dead spiritually), than to explore the depths of the latter which may know no bounds.

Are these the two opposite approaches or are there others? It is well past time to consider this most intimate interaction between two people who love each other as a spiritual intercourse/dialogue on a deep level, rather than as a sin or a mere act of procreation. This would go very far in reducing much of the sexual neurosis, tension, and dysfunctional abuse

far too rampant in today's society if human beings looked upon their bodies, nature, their natural functions, creation/creator, life and healing in a non-limiting, life affirming, nature and body positive tantra yoga context of simply being a practice (sadhana) of integration -- the simultaneous synergistic union of the two into the one -- the shiva/shakti or tai-chi (yin/yang).

Both sexes have suffered from this ignorance (ignoring and fearing sexuality or experiencing guilt or shame in this regard) for far too long (women and children suffering as victims more than by the physically stronger and more violently prone men). From what I see men won't change much as long as they go through the present Western neurotic adolescent rituals and "training" (by omission) which most certainly is a huge factor in shaping their adult sexual attitudes and habits. This dysfunction in modern social science (or rather in the light of the lack of any social science other than guilt and blame) in regards to cause and effect is for me proof of the manifestation of a wide disconnection, gulf, rend, trauma, denial, alienation, and separation.

Going away for a few days to the North country, but look forward to some "action" here. (:-)

love

donny

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connecting. (earthworm, 4/8/99 5:06:09 PM)

The dramatic healing taking place within me of late is leading me to a deeper place with my lover, husband, co-parent, partner, John. The process has led us into our painful relational holdings. Processing and opening to the pain and then releasing it without knowing the outcome has been leading us into unknown territory. TMLSS (To make a long story short), the effects are felt in our sexual relationship; attraction and expression. How can they not be as it is all interconnected. As we are still very much in the process and unclear about how to proceed, I have asked Infinite Mind for Guidance about the next step.

One of the interesting challenges we face is that I am very much rooted in Yogic practice (Conscious union with the Infinite) and John, although somewhat open-minded, he is typical of most male Americans, that is he is still somewhat rooted in the cultural objectification of women and hardened by the separateness engendered in that stance. He has tried asana and finds it "boring". I want to introduce him to the ideas of tantra and I know he will initially see it through his conditioned lens but I believe in the transformative power and energy of conscious union with the Infinite.

I feel we are on the verge of discovering some profoundly new ways of relating but in the present are experiencing some "death" of the old ways. One of my questions probably reflecting my midwest puritan sexual ignorance is, how does a couple go about learning authentic tantric practice????

Much obliged, Gena

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delurking... (tympachus cupido, 4/9/99 9:43:29 AM)
...momentarily. Been chasing my tail [don't succumb to that urge to get cute, now, but yes that's a priority too ;-)] lately - new computers + SuZ is changing jobs (she will be marketing in the US West for ACS) and will be working at home (so we've been busy getting a home office together for her). SuZ is planning on getting a regular Erich fix at some of his Santa Monica classes when she will begin traveling to LA occasionally for her new job.

The two of us have been doing our homework (tricky topic this one, when it comes to the cliches) via books, videos, talking to friends who have had formal "Western" tantra instruction (as you have er, noted, Gena, Tantra is a delicate area - not all the relationship results have been good), yoga, breathwork, massage, meditation, thinking, writing, cultivating love rituals {we shower together nearly every day we're both in-town and then apply body cream to each other - give it a whirl, it's a non-sexual ritual that adds some yummy [that's what I often call "my" (some of these possessive things are kinda fun) SuZie - Yogananda Yummy] intimacy}, working on emotional mastery and assessing our expectations about a tantra practice.

We all have culturally derived issues - some we know about, some we don't. Tantra will take ya down to the bare metal - as donny has pointed out, it will do way more than amp your sex life (sex: as in the somatic stuff, mostly). But then, that's what we're all shuffling towards anyway, huh? Bare metal.

"So when are we gonna quit screwing around and start walkin' the talk," ya wanna know? Yeah?

No rush - I used to think there was, but there's not. The "authentic" part seems to come as we become more authentically ourselves. You've got to work at it a little (yoga and stuff) but essentially you already know how - the culture simply beat (sometimes literally) it out of you.

Stuff we've found useful (about 20% of what we've looked at) so far.

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Thanks. (earthworm, 4/10/99 3:04:05 PM)

I'll take a look at Stuff.

I hope SuZ likes her new job. Nice L.A. perk!

Love, Gena

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earthworm (earthworm, 4/10/99 3:07:50 PM)
"Stuff" doesn't seem to work for me (internet explorer?) Any suggestions?

Gena

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Stuff (crotalus, 4/12/99 1:53:00 AM)
(Hidden Response....176 lines)
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Yeah, I know ... (crotalus, 4/12/99 1:56:12 AM)
...the internal links are broken but it's the outside ones we're offering here.

Web site will be back up soon - betcha.

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Whoa! (earthworm, 4/12/99 11:17:49 AM)
Thanks Bob. Looks like you've compiled a lot of resources. I'll be availing myself of some of them.

Gena

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Boring = Missing Juice! (Shakti Das, 4/12/99 3:31:47 PM)
Thanks Gena for the subject, a question that has catalyzed some deeper percolations. Here are some thoughts (hope that they do not miss "the mark" too far). I hesitate because my own passion for sexual tantra has dwindled in the past few years; yet I still remember how much I suffered from my ignorance of it in my youth and hope (if such is possible) to help others avoid that needlessly.

The whole idea of sexual tantra consciously merging and aligning with the evolutionary/creative/procreative energy and activity is no trivial activity, but rather is sacred, profound, pure, and natural. When this process is ignored, confused, and/or misunderstood, life itself is not honored and a basic "unfeelingness", disconnection, alienation, and abandonment is experienced.

I like Bob's suggestion, especially if number two below is occurring. Most of us can benefit from loving touch while purging the inherited fears associated with being touched (or its lack) or coming "in touch" with or owning our feelings.

It's helpful to check and explore innocently (without blame or guilt) in what ways our relationships are not spontaneous and are being held in stasis. Creating a safe space where both people can explore the territory beyond superficiality and illusion/delusion that will lead to greater authenticity and energy flow, which in turn will lead to greater intimacy, openness, and spontaneous interaction is where the profoundly

intelligent and healing juice of creative/procreative relationships lay. It's not always easy to create this platform for our self let alone simultaneously (and spontaneously) with another partner -- this being actually quite a deep, powerful, mature, and profound practice. To allow this to occur all the time (as self healing) is the crux of the practice is it not?

The best relationship is a spirit filled one not for the purpose of satisfying the myriad insecurities of a disowned earth chakra in mired attachments involving external economic or social fears/obligations, but rather as a partnership of living love and mutual exploration into Self. Both parties must agree on its general focus or overall purpose, even though they may most likely differ on the methods or means. If a relationship can be kept ruthlessly young, loving, healing, and treated as an exploration of consciousness and Self, then shedding the old armor, dysfunctional past garments, and/or old negative afflictions and propensities (kleshas and vasanas) will be as easy, because when they come up, they can be consciously recognized and discarded.

Specifically to respond to the question, there are different reasons (depending on the unique characteristic patterns of the individual) why tantric practice may be considered "boring".

1) We may allow (although this is unfortunately not the most common situation) that the person has achieved urdvaretas (upward flow) where there is no longer any polar stasis (and thus no longer any energy exchanged and transformed during sexual relations). If the person enjoys what is called "normal sex" (but is really reactive/discharge sex) then this situation does not apply and we must look further.

2) More commonly the activity is not enjoyed because the energy is damned up, repressed, feared, intimidated, inhibited, tortured, and/or there is a physiological dysfunction i.e., one is not in touch with their feelings and life energy. If the person enjoys the "common" discharge type sex, this situation may also not play an significant factor in the present situation.

3) Although each situation is unique, we will assume the most common situation where the tantric practice is inefficient, unskilled, and/or too controlled and rigid. Thus the below will "presume" this situation (#3) for lack of further data. This is at least the pitfall that I made (and I assume it may be relevant to others).

So you will have to let me know if this applies, but I will continue a bit along these lines (in situation number three) ruling out one and two above.

Firstly, if the male eventually learns the 99-99.9% technique the activity is far more pleasurable than ejaculatory orgasm. What occurs briefly is that the man learns to be aware of his own neuro-physiological process of ejaculatory orgasm. Instead of being bored with not approaching orgasm (being bored and frustrated) he learns how to get ever closer to full orgasm consciously. For most men, this is learned through trial and error gradually and ever more subtly until one experientially realizes:

- a) that ejaculatory orgasm is a spasm
- b) that the greatest pleasure is at the moment prior to ejaculation
- c) that the ejaculation is a discharge (release) of sexual tension polar charge) not its culmination
- d) that a far greater charge and energetic exchange resulting in a far more pleasurable and energy flow (streaming) through the entire system (at first at the sexual organs) can be sustained for extended periods of time building up entirely sufficient energy for the alchemical process (the elixir compounded) to be accomplished with total fulfillment.

The above is a neuro-physiological, hormonal, and physical description of the process in which boredom is overcome to a limited extent, however even here, if the process goes on indefinitely one may ask what is the point (too much of anything -- even orgasm can become boring). So if this is the case i.e., a-d has become accomplished, then most likely we must look to less control and add more juice to the tantric practice.

Now we are assuming that both partners agree to the spiritual principles or purpose of the spiritual partnership in the first place and NOT that it is the role of one partner to pleasure or gratify the other. Any partnership based on the gratification of one or even both the partners, is based on barter, selfishness, desire, and need and will suffer from the normal pitfalls of greed, competition, conflict, deceit, exploitation, jealousy, and similar ego related abuses. Even if one partner is gratified by gratifying/pleasuring the other the eventual burden of separateness will still not be resolved by itself. In other words even if the gratification is based on transpersonal feelings, the enigma of a dualistic burden remains unresolved which has the seed potential to lead us into possible future afflictions.

With this assumption, then we must look at the sexual union as a greater "participation" or joining with the activity of creating life itself (it's the way humans participate in evolution). The pleasure being only a symptom of the release of sexual tension (polarity), but not the purpose/goal of the activity (less we place the cart before the horse). So if we approach the activity as a transpersonal adventure to attune through

the procreative energetic/organs with creation/creator (the Source) this becomes a transverbal/transconceptional journey which we must naturally allow to continue and flow. Here through authentic yoga, we "touch" upon the greater Self.

In other words, the participants at first do have to learn how to control the dissipating or discharging urge (or be graced to find) a certain amount of conscious orgasmic sustenance (firing the pot so to speak) so that the energy level is sufficiently established in the first place, but the control part unfortunately can too easily become overly restrictive or "boring". So having described the neuro-physiological, and hormonal (annamaya kosha) , we look at the more causative energetic (pranamaya kosha) polarities held together by the mind, emotions, and belief systems,

Without going into elaborate detail here, but rather describing two phases of the activity. The first phase can attempt a controlled or specific healing ritual, psychic nerve visualization, prayer, or ceremony should only be one phase (controlled) of the tantric activity. Then we must also allow another receptive, meditational phase for non-conceptual, listening and/or even spontaneous but conscious (sahaj) meditation where the energy is exchanged and interaction occurs consciously, spontaneously, authentically, and naturally, without any pre-arranged conception or activation of volition to explore without "succumbing" to discharge -- just follow it to "completion". Here we can chose to utilize the breath as a modulator of the fire or we may allow to surrender the breath as well upon creation's altar. Similarly the first phase may be the receptive phase while the second phase the controlled phase, ending with dedication of merit for eventual conscious awakening of all beings *(including "self". Or we may alternate between receptive and controlled phases.

As you know there are so many (probably endless) meditations/visualizations that we can do partnered, but the most expedient activity for our own unique situation must be customized through "wisdom" (upaya). Through upaya a greater fulfillment will be realized (which will not lead to boredom) and there is energy, joy, kindness, happiness, equanimity, healing, and love there.

In other words some sort of synergistic balance between right and left, conscious and unconscious, male and female, willful and receptive, must be aligned.

In other words some "problems" are due to falling into stupor and unconsciousness in regards to dissipative (as well as distractive) sexual knee jerk activities

(which is by far the normal situation), but in tantra the opposite pitfall (of too much control) is also to be avoided. As long as both partners are committed toward coming together to realize the yoga (union) of samadhi a deeper heartfelt connection with our core energy and Source will be eventually flow. So we must be careful that when we practice in order to continuously move the stagnant energy and establish flow that we do not contribute to the opposite effect. Here I am talking about my own experience as I had overly reduced it down at one time to a mechanical (and even unfeeling mechanism) without realizing it and thus hope to warn others of this pitfall (which is not often discussed).

I used to study with Dr. Stephen Chang, who was a Chinese acupuncturist, herbalist, and yogi who was both very humorous in his presentation and also quite detailed. There is one visualization practice that may be more relevant along these lines because it combines both a simultaneous conscious volitional activity phase and a feeling kinesthetic phase, which I will share later, but this is already a long post.

16 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.16

Om? (Lotus183, 8/16/99 12:15:32 PM)

I'd like something to share with you all that I find very interesting. I don't have as much to say as Shakti Das but to me it's important. People that I'm sexually attracted to seem to be sexually attracted to me, but people who I am not sexually attracted to are not sexually attracted to me. It's really neat. I am not sexually attracted to someone upon them saying they are sexually attracted to me, and what draws me to be sexually attracted to someone is their physical appearance. I wonder if the sexual attraction between people is sort of a mind connection or something.

17 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.17

Erich Schiffmann (schiffmann, 8/16/99 3:53:24 PM)

Nice inquiry. I'm guessing that someone's appearance is the expression of their presence, and that what you are really attracted to is their energy... which, yes, is a mind thing.

18 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.18

kevin wood (sahaj, 8/17/99 5:34:07 AM)

could sexuality be a reflection of the supreme attractiveness of the divine?

19 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.19

Bob Cox (crotalus, 8/17/99 10:30:49 AM)

The yoga of sex seems to me to be the yoga of divinity without the veils.

20 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.20

All was not what I beleived (Lotus183, 8/17/99 4:01:05 PM)

Yesterday I was confronted by someone who told me that they were sexually attracted to me, but not in the exact words as that. But I am not sexually attracted to them. That was another interesting thing to me because it was like God was telling me that sometimes people can be sexually attracted to me but I don't feel a sexual

attraction to them.

21 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.21

kevin wood (sahaj, 8/17/99 6:30:38 PM)

raw, undiluted, pure shakti! Then why all the strange porno deviations?

22 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.22

?? (Lotus183, 8/19/99 2:33:11 PM)

What do you mean by porno deviations? And what is shakti?

Will

23 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.23

SuZett Estell (suz coyote, 8/19/99 5:08:53 PM)

Kevin,

If I understand your question, Kevin, you ask where the impetus for porn comes from.

Lately, I have been thinking a lot about the pornography issue, probably because I have a 13-year old daughter just reaching puberty and am worried about her safety in our "anything goes" sexual culture. I also have a 14-year son, who is, by nature, very conservative.

I have always been anti-censorship and mostly liberal in outlook, especially as regards sexual issues. But, lately, I have lost patience with the porn apologists. Bob and I disagree mightily on this one, but I say its time that men who care about the women and girls in their lives take action to put a stop to pornography's rampant spread - at least make a decision not to indulge in it themselves. I would think this is more of an "ahimsa" issue than not eating meat, for example.

The other day, I was web-surfing with my daughter, looking for some of her favorite music groups. After clicking on what looked like a music site, her computer was filled with image after image of girls (who looked her age) engaged in all manner of sex acts. Clicking the "X" in the right corner only caused even more images to show. It took several minutes to kill them all off. What did those images tell her about herself and her body? What did they tell her about sexuality? I wondered about those young girls. Despite the few women who claim to enjoy their role in making pornography, most of them have very sad and troubled lives.

In my post on Great Moments in Yoga (which no one would touch with a ten foot yoga mat), I provided an in-the-moment account of what it feels like to be a woman accidentally lost in a porn district, in a big city that is not her home, after just having had a wonderful yoga class. It was an ugly post, but it was an ugly moment-driving by signs that screamed "pussy" in neon, locking my doors and hoping for no red stop lights. Like I said, exactly WHOSE freedom did we concern ourselves with when we made the world safe for pornography?

Porn is how cultures keep the hierachical domination

structures in place. Porn, by placing a wedge between men and women, creates the first familial breakdown.

Porn isn't generally something one does "with" women, but something that is done "to" women. Porn is something men generally do away from their women and families (or at least hide from them), in venues where "bonding" with other men is accomplished to the tune of the bump and grind and where the only participation generally allowed by women is as objects.

Tyrannies control all of us by disrupting our natural familial bonds. Porn is passed on from generation to generation specifically for this reason.

My son attended a sports training camp this summer at the Air Force Academy. He knows all about sex, but almost nothing about porn. He came home quite disturbed because the young men had initiated him into the terms and conditions of pornography. I think he was genuinely shocked to hear about things such as "doing her good," "f***ing her eyes out," "No means Yes" etc.) At 14, he could see it was an inappropriate way to relate to the women in one's life. I don't think it was by accident that this was an extremely Christian crowd in an extremely conservative military environment.

Religious sexual oppression provides the breeding ground for porn's acceptance. Porn alienates us from healthy sexuality and enables this entire domination structure in which we live.

Of course, tyrannies use our own Desires and Greed to control us (don't I know it). That is why yoga (especially tantra) really IS dangerous to those hierarchical religionists who truly understand its potential. Yoga, in liberating us, unfastens the bindings of obedience-based religion and social interaction.

"Porn deviations" appeal to the male biological urge to procreate without responsibility. But the fly in the ointment is that sex bonds men to women in a very deep way and tends to counteract this urge. Since familial bonding is the bane of all tyrannies, porn is used to disrupt the sexual bond by objectifying women in general.

Porno deviations in tantra occur for the same reason that sexual perversion is common in other religious traditions (such as Pedophilia in the Catholic Church or child sexual abuse within the evangelical circles). Tantra evolved within a religious tradition that marginalized and divided women into whores (those who are free) and madonnas (those who are owned, not by the men who think they own them, but by the tyrannies that control us all.) If you doubt that Hinduism does this - just read the Kama Sutra - it's all in there; the kinds of girls you marry versus the ones you have fun with. Its really quite sick -

not the sexual part, but the sexist part.
Porn deviations are simply manifestations of the worldwide use of pornography as a tool to corrupt human bonds - a necessary by-product of civilization as we know it.

Bob sez that porn is simply a symptom of sexual repression. I believe it is more than that. It is a tool, as well as a symptom, creating a cycle of dysfunction. The question I have is how do we break the cycle, without destroying freedom?

SuZ

24 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.24

Kit Spahr (Kit Spahr, 8/19/99 11:32:57 PM)

You know what's really annoying...when you type this long piece and then when you go to post it, you've been dumped out of the forum and everything is lost. But now its late...I'll try and re-create it tomorrow.

Kit

25 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.25

kevin wood (sahaj, 8/20/99 1:31:05 AM)

There is nothing we can do to break the cycle by imposing rules and regulations. But we can clarify for ourselves the healthy natural sex. Another disturbing topic is the obsessive freak out that the yogis had concerning the loss of semen. Perhaps a fear of the vampirism of the female created a completely repressive atmosphere for women in that society. The whore and the madonna are archetypes that persist in the climate of the modern world as well. It seems that we are split into two worlds and don't know the balance. It has to be naughty or immaculate.

26 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.26

Kit Spahr (Kit Spahr, 8/20/99 8:24:52 AM)

I'll try my post again.

I don't think we are all destined to change the world in large and obvious, nightly news kinds of ways. And it can be easy to be overwhelmed by the "bad" stuff. My husband who can tend to the pessimistic at times gets frustrated with our fellow human beings as shown on the news sometimes. I remind him that there are just as many people out there...more people out there doing good things everyday but its quiet, doesn't make for a good sound bite, and won't be on the evening news.

I agree with Kevin that rules and regulations won't change things. Nor will "wars" as in the "war on drugs". To simply make something unavailable are harder to obtain doesn't do anything to address the human misery that creates the desire in the first place.

So what I tried to do as an individual is raise a son who treats not just women but all beings with compassion and respect.

And I teach yoga. While it can seem like spiritual blather to some, I truly believe that by the time something manifests itself in the physical body, mental body, emotional body, it has been with us already for a long time un-noticed, un-acknowledged. That disconnection from the source, the ocean that erich talks about in his workshops. I cannot create the connection for anyone but I can offer a tool for transformation. One that is not instantaneous nor guaranteed...but if practiced with patience, kindness to oneself, and awareness can change to world...one person at a time.

And I agree with Kevin wholeheartedly when he writes of being split into two worlds. For me yoga is all about balance...and balance is not static...in tree pose...or in life.

Kit

27 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.27

Bob Cox (crotalus, 8/21/99 10:35:40 PM)

The heaviest freedom of all is the freedom of choice. We can chose ugly or we can chose beauty. We can chose tyranny. We often do.

There is no defending porn. It makes of us ugly not beauty. It is a tool of the patriarchy. It's a public health issue. SuZ has spoken eloquently and passionately on this topic before, I think in the couple year's debate she has come to a crisper, better researched and supported view, but this one, for all its faults, still has punch and I recommend a look.

At the end of the day I chose the Bill of Rights. From there I can mount the good fight, as can we all. We must have it and we should think carefully about just how we should treat those who would abridge it. It is under constant attack (the 4th amendment is almost completely tattered), usually by those for whom it seeks to provide the rights. Those rights transcend - they belong to us all and we shall have them only so long as we are vigilant.

28 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.28

Yes Kit (crotalus, 8/21/99 10:39:38 PM)

..there is a special place on the Wheel for those who insist that a portal like Webb.net should regularly force its patrons to stand postless and forlorn begging to be signed back in. It has been pointed out to them before and I think I shall make it a point to find some one's ear about this...

29 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.29

That Damn Snake (tympachus cupido, 8/21/99 11:32:57 PM) is hiding under the Bill of Rights again, ignoring consensus reality. I believe I did hear him say it was one of the few things he thought was worth his low to the ground life...

30 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.30

SuZett Estell (suz coyote, 8/23/99 11:32:28 PM)

Kevin, Kit and Bob

WARNING, WARNING, DANGER, DANGER, WILL SMITH, LONG POST COMING!!! (Posting's a lot cheaper than therapy.)

I used to believe as you all do regarding porn. Perhaps I still do, I am working on it. But maybe I am thinking about Changing My Mind. In reviewing the article that I wrote (and bob referenced above), I find I still believe most, but not all of what I wrote then.

If someone was afflicted with a disease, say a germ of a most virulent sort, that rapidly spread to others, causing great harm to innocents, then would we not institute whatever public health regulations as we are able to to prevent an epidemic? Compassion would say we would do what we could to heal the sick, but would we leave them free to infect others?

We care about keeping our water supplies clean, legislating wherever we can to impose restrictions on pollution; few of us on this forum would organize against attempts to limit the legally allowed levels of toxins in our foods. Yet, our hackles are raised when we discuss limiting the sexual pollution and toxins produced by our culture, saying "we have a right to these."

I'm not talking about refusing to let someone "go to hell in their own handbasket" but refusing to let them take others who are young, vulnerable and in many ways defenseless with them in that handbasket. Isn't the basic precept of freedom, "Yours ends where mine begins?" Or as the pagans say, "An' there be be no harm, do what thou wilt?" Everyone likes to grab on to the "do what thou wilt" part, while skipping merrily over the "An it do no harm" portion. Aliester Crowley dumped the "no harm" part of the equation and settled on simply "Do what that wilt shall be the whole of the law." Best I can tell from the literature, the man descended into a strange brew of debauchery and yoga - a total corruption. He is said to have gone to his death screaming in terror of dying and what would come after - hardly what one would expect from a yogi.

Since my youth in the 70s & 70s I've been of the hippie mind-set - all or nothing, total freedom, anything goes, let each make his or her own choices. I still feel there is a whole lot less true freedom in the world than there could be, if only humans truly wanted freedom. But we seem to have descended into a pit where the only freedom that matters is the freedom to do whatever the hell we want, regardless of who we hurt. (Mind you, I am as guilty as the next, and only just now coming to an understanding of my own character flaws in this regard.)

Lately, I am beginning to have this sneaking suspicion that all we have done by instituting this all or nothing mentality, is to have empowered and amplified the most base of human tendencies - bullying, exploitation, and repression (characteristics which, granted, have been with us

for a while, but that we are supposed to be trying to transcend). Like it or not, the world is neither black, nor white, but an infinite number of gray tones. And I wonder to myself sometimes, what would be so wrong about saying, "Enough. Our society officially respects the female body, the producer of new human life. Anyone who doesn't want to abide by the fundamentals of mutual respect can go be a hermit somewhere and get the hell out of polite society?"

Why do we seem to be inordinately interested in securing the freedom to nurture our darker sides, everyone else be damned? Whatever happened to the ideas of freedom and the opportunity to pursue happiness for ALL of us?

I remember visiting Miami once on a business trip several years ago. One evening, just before dusk, I was walking to a fitness center a few blocks from my hotel. Suddenly I was surrounded by a group of Hispanic men (recent immigrants of one sort or another I think) saying menacing things in Spanish. I couldn't catch many of the words, but I knew the gist of it and I was frightened. I thought to myself "We have worked so hard in this country to secure equal rights for women, and here these jerks are, taking that away from me." This isn't a rag on Hispanics - it could have been any ethnic group. The point is, they had their freedom of speech, but what did I have? What irked me at the time (though I was not able to articulate it) was that our dream of freedom for all was being sacrificed in the name of "multi-culturalism."

I am beginning to have a glimmer of understanding for those who would restrict the flow of porn. I'm not talking about making it illegal, but about managing its distribution. (In other words, get it the hell out of town and severely punish those who would infect children with it.)

I'm not talking about a "War on Porn." I do not support the current War on Some Drugs. But, if a person's drug use hurts others, then attempts should be made to limit that person's impact on others. The social drinker (or druggie) should be free to follow his or her path, even if it leads to self-destruction. But if they get high and beat the kiddies, or spend all their dough on drugs and starve the kiddies, there should be interventions of increasing severity. If a person can't use drugs responsibly then they should be shunned - a cultural punishment against a cultural crime.

Take, for example, the Web. There are plenty of ways to managing the flow of porn, while keeping it out of the hands of children. Indeed some sites use a variety of tools, other say (literally) "fuck-it" and throw it up anywhere a stray click takes you. Today while searching on "gravity boots" I ended up on a site with a grotesque, naked, gagged and bound man hanging from gravity boots. Try to put a

little sanity in the process and hear the Netizens howl, " Violation of my rights!"

Well, what about the rights of my daughter (for example) to surf without being humiliated? "If you don't want her to see the stuff, don't let her surf" you might say, but then whose rights are being violated? In the real world I can advise her on staying out of bad neighborhoods (though she still can accidentally stray into one, at perhaps the cost of major chunks of her self-esteem and well-being), but not on the web.

I am a parent who has the right and obligation to protect my children. You might say, "Well, don't bring porn into your house" or "restrict your children's access to the media," or "monitor your child's friendships." I do all those things - no TV in my home, very little media (I threw out Ms and I'm beginning to wonder about Yoga Journal). But I can't lock the kids up in a closet.

A teenage woman at puberty seems to be the most desired thing on this earth. Everyone seems to want a piece. Unless reined in by law, Men kidnap, buy and sell her the world over. (I'm talking the "Capital M" - Men as a group, not all individual cases of men.) The inclination throughout the world is to own her, use her, rape her, diss her, or cut her down to a collection of body parts.

I think the mark of a civilized society would be to provide a young girl with the protection and space she needs to grow up healthy, with her psyche intact. And a civilized society would likewise be charged with protecting the young boy, providing him with healthy images of sexuality so that he may grow up to be a friend and partner of the women in his life?

I know we do not live in a peRfect world; but do we really need to encourage this darkness?

SuZ

31 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.31

kevin wood (sahaj, 8/24/99 5:14:45 AM)

I guess the questions are: what is the porn feeding in us and society. What is the aspect of ourselves that creates this reality? How to surf the dark side of ourselves without creating harm? Or is the blackness the contrast for the light? There is sect in India called the Aghoris who believe that nothing is outside of the divine and they consciously take sides with the dark to emphasize this point. They hang out in graveyards doing sadhana and do all those forbidden things. These things must be mirror for ourselves.

32 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.32

Kit Spahr (Kit Spahr, 8/24/99 7:46:03 AM)

Bob it happened again...is it best to compose potentially long posts in Microsoft word and import or something?

Anyway...I'll try that and get back to you on this topic.

Kit

33 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.33

Kit Spahr (Kit Spahr, 8/24/99 8:18:19 AM)

Okay...here is my ramble.

I think that our puritan ancestors left us with a lot of "stuff" to deal with...or not. We, as a society are very repressed around issues of sexuality. Not that I think we are too uptight and need to all be having orgies, but we don't talk to our children about sexuality well or at all sometimes. Then we expect them to suddenly develop healthy sexual images when they are adults? I'm not afraid of television. Yes, my son is an adult now. But if you see an image on television that feels false, it can be a wonderful moment for discussion and education.

I'm not sure that "protection" is always a good thing...within limits. Did I mention in my previous post the line from a Joan Baez song about her son..."and I sang to him an honest lullaby"? I spoke to my son about sex early...8 or so...and kept talking. The message. Sex is a wonderful thing with someone you love and respect. Sex can be a weapon. The desire is powerful. Try in the middle of that intensity to remember the humanness of the other person and of yourself.

Isn't it better to discover that the world is not always a wonderful place within the loving confines of your family where you can gain the strength to face it with courage and love? Rather than get out there later and have it suddenly appear without your being prepared.

As I alluded to in my previous post...I don't think taking it away or shunning the user is useful for either the drugs "we" decide are not useful or porn or whatever else we decide to regulate. I just realized I am talking my way into not regulating guns either which I guess if I keep following my reasoning here I guess I'd have to admit to. Oh well let's see where this goes.

Its not the porn or the drugs or the guns...it's the fear that creates the darkness that sometimes seems to surround us. Why do we fear difference so much that it turns to hate? What causes us to obliterate our lives in a drug or alcohol induced stupor? We want to legislate all these things but we don't want to support the social services that give people a safety net to protect them against violence, hunger, abuse, poverty. We live rather in a world where we want to protect what is ours now that we have it from "others". Everyone who is different is suspect.

Can you imagine how suspect we yogis appear to some?

And I'm thinking about those images on the web, etc. Was it better to live in Father Knows Best world where it all still existed but we simply pretended it didn't? Neither

pretending it doesn't exist nor fighting the symptom will work I don't think.

Keep reminding the people you meet you are human...remember that no matter what...so are they. See the ocean in everyone.

The other evening I went to dinner in a restaurant with a bunch of yogis. Where I live you can still smoke in restaurants even though the sections are divided. The restaurant had put us in the smoking section. As we walked to our table...several people in our group loudly chastised people for smoking...my feeling was that first of all, these people were sitting in THE SMOKING SECTION, under the law they had every right to be doing what they were doing. We on the other hand were choosing to be in that space. We could have waited a half an hour or so to sit somewhere else but we chose not to. Did this petulance encourage the guy to think about not smoking do you think? I doubt it. Maybe if we had made contact with his humanness with politeness, he might have refrained from smoking while we were there...maybe not.

I know this part isn't about the original topic but in a way it is. We have to keep going back to the source, back to what connects us all...ALL...not just some.

Kit

34 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.34

SuZett Estell (suz coyote, 8/24/99 10:21:55 AM)

As I said, I'm still working on the issue. I understand the slippery slope of making decisions about what is acceptable in society and what is not. But, avoiding the issue as "too hard" doesn't seem to make sense to me. To use a hackneyed phrase, "why throw out the baby with the bath?"

Kevin, you say there is nothing we can do to break the cycle of porn by imposing regulations, but what is intervention, if not actions designed to break unhealthy cycles? If porn is a self-perpetuating system for keeping humans focused on the wrong things, how would you go about breaking that cycle?

Your questions: "What is the porn feeding in us and society? What is the aspect of ourselves that creates this reality?" The underlying assumption behind your question is that we are love and light and the urge towards domination and oppression are caused by environmental factors - religions, families, etc. This is one operative belief structure in the US. But what if that is not true, that humans simply have that dark streak as part of our natures and one job of society is to help us rein in these dark impulses, so we can concentrate on the higher aspects of ourselves? Who among us would be so smug as to say we are never tempted to the dark side?

It's a "faith thing" as they say, and I believe I'm losing my faith in the unerring good of humanity. Maybe, as religionists of all kinds say, we really MUST work to

seek the light?

We make collective moral decisions all the time, after debate and discussion. We have to or we could not survive as a society.

I can talk with my children till I'm blue about healthy sexuality, but that doesn't do one thing to abate the sexual sewer they encounter when they walk out the door. Any cop will tell you that upon arresting a sexual predator, he almost always finds a housefull of porn. Though it does not necessarily follow that all those with house-fulls of porn are sexual predators, I can't help but believe there is some link. I could talk to my kids forever about the importance of not polluting the air, water and food supply, but that would not help them get deal with the illnesses resulting from an anything goes policy towards our environment in the name of freedom. Does freedom mean the right to foul the planet for others? Does it mean the right to foul the sexual planet for others?

Interestingly, I am on the other side of the gun control issue than you, Kit. Could be I'm "western" in nature. But I know that groups of armed marauding young men, grouped together as "soldiers" or "police" are less likely to want to break into my home and rape me and my daughters, or kill our menfolk if someone is there to shoot back. This is not a moot point, as it happens, every day all over the world. We un the US think we are somehow immune to the graft and corruption of the third world, but we are not. We only have what semblance of freedom we do, to the extent we are willing to fight for it.

As I said, I don't have any answers, but the issues is much on my mind lately.

SuZ

35 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.35

Kit Spahr (Kit Spahr, 8/24/99 2:06:56 PM)

I'm a westerner myself only transplanted. And I guess I can live with hunting and such but I'm not sure why anyone needs an Uzi.

But back to the talking to your children...I'm not suggesting it fixes anyone else...but is the option NOT talking to your children? You've helped one person...what if someone had talked to those slime dwellers you are concerned about?

A reporter said to John Lennon once...do you think that if you just said Peace Peace Peace to Hitler it would have made any difference? He said no, but what if someone had been saying it to him since he was a child?

I don't think addressing the underlying reasons that people seek this darkness as you describe it is turning away from an issue because its difficult. Although maybe that's not what you were suggesting. And I think we all

have to work with the skills we possess.

The Southwest Yoga Conference's theme this year has to do with yoga and service. There are some awesome yogis teaching yoga and meditation in prisons. With measurable effects on recidivism.

I must say that no matter what, I will not live in a prison of my own making. Fear is a prison. Freedom is not for anyone else to give me.

Kit

36 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.36

Bob Cox (crotalus, 8/24/99 6:11:44 PM)

re<32> loss of long posts and the logout monster

The response from OSS has been underwhelming. Perhaps I'm too hasty but I've sent the complaint to Dave Shaw via email and haven't received an answer. Probably they'll eventually simply say, "What ya 'spect for free, anyhow?"

Anyway, the tracks and discussion from the other side of the Webb.net swamp follow indented below.

Andre Durand is the originator of the software and has sold it to OSS - clearly they have a different development focus these days. Harry is <maddog>, host of most of the eminds conferences. <Tarat> and <fattymoon> are conference hosts from the original <Howard> Reingold (originator of eminds) days.

Yes, indeed you should always, at a minimum, clipboard out the long post (more than 5 lines!) and I'd advise using Word or some such to compose for the most part. You can clipboard the post(s) you're responding to and lay them down at the front of the Word document for reference and then clipboard your response for pasting into the Message box on Webb.net.

1134 of 1136 Commons.26.1134

Bob Cox (crotalus, 8/23/99 6:42:47 PM)

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Kit Spahr (Kit Spahr, 8/19/99 11:32:57 PM)

You know what's really annoying...when you type this long piece and then when you go to post it, you've been dumped out of the forum and everything is lost. But now its late... I'll try and re-create it tomorrow.

Kit

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Yes Kit (crotalus, 8/21/99 10:39:38 PM)

..there is a special place on the Wheel for those who

insist that a portal like Webb.net should regularly force its patrons to stand postless and forlorn begging to be signed back in. It has been pointed out to them before and I think I shall make it a point to find some one's ear about this...

Well, Harry tells me there's no one to call, so we'll just drop this 'un in the punch bowl and see if anyone gives a [expletive deleted]

Surely a portal should not log out its members unless the server has been restarted - what gives with this lame ass deal?

Most know that it's best to clipboard out the long posts but the relogin process is more than a little irritating.

1135 of 1136 Commons.26.1135
David Shaw (DaveShaw, 8/23/99 8:22:47 PM)

(Erased by DaveShaw at Aug 23 1999 8:29PM)

1136 of 1136 Commons.26.1136
Old home week? (fattytoon, 8/24/99 4:54:55 PM)

First Mr. Shifter...

Now Dr. Bob!

Hi Mr. Bob! Fatty living stress-free life now. Fatty soon launch website sell stress-free life. Fatty soon make enough moolah trade in '89 Ford pickup. Wheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

205 of 213 CommunityWare Comments.10.205
Tara Twain (tarat, 8/19/99 11:41:52 AM)

I'm curious to know why the members of this development team are incognito. In any case, at your suggestion I am bringing my questions to this forum. My questions still stand.

Why are the weather and news headlines on the front page?

Will front pages be customizable in the future?

In addition: Who is on the development team?

Tara Twain
ttwain@hotmail.com

206 of 213 CommunityWare Comments.10.206
From Andre Durand (DaveShaw, 8/19/99 1:21:36 PM)

Tara,

Hi, this is Andre speaking. I understand your question. The answer to it your questions is basically this. At one time, we had aspirations of creating a personalizable start page. Similar say to the likes of My Yahoo or My Lycos etc.

The difference that we were going to focus on was the integration of communications components (friends, instant messaging, email, conference lists etc.) rather than the integration of content.

With the first release of this Personal Portal (if you'll allow me to refer to it as that) was a bit lite on the 'personal communications' side of things, and so we integrated 2 standard content elements which we have been using in other applications(e.g. weather and headline news).

It was never our intent to keep this content on the personal portal long term. With new acquisitions, we've now focused our sites on the opportunity to leverage our talents and software in the local e-commerce space. I'm not sure that here and now is the right place to go into those details.

We are furthering the development of the basic service components of CommunityWare by rather methodically re-writing them in a new XML architecture. Also focusing on scalability etc.

While we do this, we are not focused on furthering our efforts of the Personal Portal and will likely get rid of this product in the future.

Thank you for your concern. If you have other questions, feel free to contact me as I'm fairly aware of the 'why' things are they way they are and where we as a Company are headed.

Sincerely,
Andre Durand

Now back to your regularly scheduled porn, err, programming...
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kevin wood (sahaj, 8/24/99 6:18:59 PM)
I like you analogy of polluting the sexual environment, but I wonder if sex wasn't such a repressed issue and [naughty] this abusive stuff might give way to a healthy outlook. But I guess some people need to explore to find balance. The way of religion was to repress and

therefore give the illusion of a healthy outlook on life. But in reality, inside was and is a seething pit of repression that is waiting to explode with a mass shooting or a rape or some other crime against humanity.

We have to admit that we have a dark side and though it is not our real nature, it still exists in us to be brought into the light. How to do this without feeding the process? Possibly yoga can help to liberate stuck energies? That is my experience anyway.

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Bob: (sahaj, 8/24/99 6:21:00 PM)

What a coincidence that you were posting that message about slipping post and mine slipped as you were writing it!

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The Porn Side (crotalus, 8/24/99 6:58:20 PM)

A man who well knows the South American shaman scene told me that the shaman who chooses the dark side can not go back. Whereas the dark side is always available to the shaman who works on the light side. It would seem that the Essential Core of Goodness is an elective; you can choose to discard it or choose to ignore it. But if you reject it, you lose the option to return to it.

As Jung has elaborated, we are filled with "shadow material"

(he certainly was - appears as though he was a Nazi sympathizer - the truth can sometimes find strange vessels; take Osho for instance). Just why this is so, is endlessly debatable. The shadow material may well be there to balance the Core of Goodness (this being something of a Tantric view) or it may merely reflect the yin/yang nature of all things.

I suspect no one would argue that we shouldn't try to purge the shadow stuff, even if it leaves us unbalanced towards the "core of goodness." Psychedelics, meditation, sweat lodges, breathwork and some kinds of bodywork will certainly bring them out and in the abreaction, sometimes they are dispelled.

Does yoga, where it encounters resistant areas of the body, offer a similar way to release armoring stored in the body as a result of bad experiences? Might there be a breath technique and certain asanas that could foster the surfacing and release of shadow material?

Do any of you know if it's common for yoga to simply foster the dark side occasionally? Take Crowley for instance - he wrote most convincingly on yoga and what is it that took him off into the deep end? Too much shadow material? Too much of a whipped youth in that fine Brit culture that encouraged it? Too much black magic or time at altitude in the mountains? Or did he simply choose it as a perverse way to freedom?

Aye, Kevin - synchronicity strikes again!

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kevin wood (sahaj, 8/25/99 5:51:35 AM)

Bob, thanks for those interesting links. After reading some of the Crowley stuff I felt he was in a particular madness and found it quite disturbing.

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kevin wood (sahaj, 8/25/99 6:05:31 AM)

Bob,

in regards to: "Does yoga, where it encounters resistant areas of the

body, offer a similar way to release armoring stored in the body as a result of bad experiences? Might there be a breath technique and certain asanas that could foster the surfacing and release of shadow material? "

I think that this would require that the person has the right motivation rather than a particular technique. My experience with teaching has been that the essence of the transformational experience of yoga rests in the firm commitment of the practitioner to change and open themselves to new realities. This does require so much courage that most people are left behind in their own fear and resistance. Occasionally someone has the courage to go beyond and trust. But this is rare hopefully as I become more skillfull as a teacher I will be able to inspire more people to venture beyond the known and use yoga to open to all aspects of ourselves light and dark. Do other teachers experience this resistance in their students or is my teaching not reaching people?

Or do my expectations get in the way?

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Kit Spahr (Kit Spahr, 8/25/99 6:48:58 AM)

Kevin, having read your posts I doubt its your teaching that doesn't reach people. I was talking to a friend of mine the other day and...being a person who loves metaphors...said that being a yoga teacher is like being a tour bus driver. You can take people on tours of the most awesome landscapes but if they don't look out the window all they get is a relaxing bus ride.

But people are who they are. When they are ready they'll look.

Kit

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Looking at evil (YogaSuz, 8/25/99 7:01:03 AM)

I believe there is good in all of us. It is sometimes a hard belief to hold. For example, I struggled for many years to try to understand how someone like Jeffrey Dahmer could possibly have any good in him. He seemed to negate my own belief that everyone has some good within. He was as evil as I could imagine. Then, I read his father's book and it was so wonderful to read about him not as the evil Jeffrey, but as Jeff, the son of a man. Jeff(rey) was not locked in a basement or tormented as

a youth. He had a normal childhood but seemed to be drawn toward evil (which is one of the reasons I found him to be so horrifying). Yet, when he died he was a born again Christian and apparently he finally got some peace away from his personal demons once he was locked in prison. He went through periods where his alcoholism lifted and he could get his life together, then he'd fall deeper and deeper into his own madness. Even though I am appalled by his crimes, now I see him as a very sad person, not a very bad person. He wanted love like all of us and had an awful way of trying to get it. The want of love can make us do terrible things.

I used to volunteer on a listening hotline and had a caller who was my own personal nemesis. He was horrible to talk to. I was convinced then and still think that this man may have a body or two in his basement. He tried to lure women to his home through various ploys (and it was amazing how many women, according to him, would actually respond to these transparent ploys). I hated to talk to him and he would keep me on the phone forever on these arduous, manipulative conversations, but finally one day I had a breakthrough. Then, I realized, that he was not mean but incredibly sad. That he had built a wall so strong and so tall around himself to protect himself from hurt, built it so tall and strong that no love could get through. Yet he was reaching out by telephone hoping someone would be brave enough to come into his dark world anyway.

Is there a way we can approach this issue of porn with compassion and not with abhorrence. Are these fellows who frequent porn worthy of our love? If they are seeking love, how is it that they are failing and how is it that porn fills their need for love?

Also on the hotline we used to get many, many masturbators hoping to get their rocks off while talking to a nice young girl. I was good at deflecting these calls, but I trained a girl who received one of these calls and didn't realize what was happening, and so sat helpless listening to the call as she stepped deeper and deeper into his traps. It was actually rather hilarious (he was fantasizing about Tipper Gore). The caller spoke about his emotions, as the girl requested, but there was all this veiled metaphor ("Ah, yes, that is just a tremendous release." I remember reading back some of his words and asking for the girl's feelings about the call at the end of it and she was so proud. "I felt like I really helped him.") Anyway, those men were pretty awful but if you stood up for yourself against them they backed down awfully quick. Some of the more experienced listeners said that occasionally they could get even these men to talk about their need for love and their loneliness at a genuine level, which I think is what they were actually seeking.

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Suzanne (YogaSuz, 8/25/99 9:43:23 AM)

It's interesting that just as I wrote that, this article on serial killers appeared in Salon Magazine.

I particularly found the quote below to relate to the conversation. It supports Suzette's point that the objectification of women is truly damaging.

Central to possession is the necessity to utterly dehumanize the victim, typified by a comment from Robert Leroy Anderson, a sexual killer now on death row in South Dakota. According to an acquaintance, Anderson once complained that his first murder victim, a female fellow employee at a meat-packing plant in Sioux Falls, proved less than ideal for his purposes because he knew her too well and could not completely objectify her. It was therefore impossible to fully incorporate her into his fantasy.

"The perpetrator cannot see the victim as a separate, whole, real, meaningful person, with her own thoughts and feelings and perceptions," says Meloy. "She must be reduced to an object with no meaning except to gratify his desires."

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Bob Cox (crotalus, 8/25/99 11:04:16 AM)

>>Might there be a breath technique and certain asanas that could foster the surfacing and release of shadow material?

Kevin responds:

I think that this would require that the person has the right motivation rather than a particular technique. My experience with teaching has been that the essence of the transformational experience of yoga rests in the firm commitment of the practitioner to change and open themselves to new realities.<<

So, it is intent then, that conditions the result? The usual set part of "set and setting" as regards the direction an altered state experience will take. Might this approach be a valid yoga based therapy? A holotropic yoga let's call it; a yoga that leads to wholeness on a faster track than the traditional pranyama-meditation-asana practice. This could be a dangerous area in which to encounter a guru with bad intentions. But what of a self directed practice? Grof, BTW, does not advocate the solitary practice of holotropics.

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Bob Cox (crotalus, 8/25/99 12:14:28 PM)

As a sidelight to the porn discussion [confirmation that most all cultures seem to prize "teen pussy"], I've clipped out a section of an article in the current National Geographic that treats the coming of age [Eunoto} of Masai elders [men]. I've noticed in the past that the NG has exercised editorial control over sensitive subjects (such

as neglecting to mention that a frozen Scythian woman's grave contained a large amount of cannabis) but this time they're right down the line with a pat patriarchal position. The practice of FGM has been largely suspended in Western cultures (from the link: "Until rather recently, clitoridectomy was the surgical 'remedy' for masturbation in Victorian England and even more recently in the United States. [Assad, N., 1979, p.12], [Wallerstein, E.,

1980, p.173]) but somehow I can imagine it returning as a conservative Christian way to keep our "unruly" women in check.

The articles in this issue on Olive Oil and Kashmir are also worth a look. The likelihood of a nuclear war starting over the conflict in Kashmir seems higher to me than for any situation we ever had during the Cold War.

From the September 1999 NG:

"Young Masai girls (left) wear ornaments designed to sway as they dance. Before the Eunoto, warriors may have sex with these girls, who are prepubertal and uncircumcised. After initiation these relationships must end. As an elder, a man may marry a mature woman, circumcised at puberty, and may take more than one wife. The Masai are a semi-nomadic people of about 300,000 whose land straddles the Kenya-Tanzania border. The future of such large-scale ceremonies is in doubt, as more Masai send their sons to school, and into another world.

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The Evil Within (suz coyote, 8/25/99 10:02:12 PM)

"Compassion," according to the Oxford English dictionary, means to "suffer with" or "participate in the suffering of another."

It is not, as many people choose to believe, simply forgiving, forgetting and accepting sociopathic brutalities. It is not a matter of dropping the abhorrence to the people who perpetrate evil. On the contrary, abhorrence of sociopathic behavior is healthy - for the person and for the society.

Good for Jeff that he was "born again" before his death, but that doesn't lessen the pain and mayhem of his selfish crimes. (Born-again are some of the most savage (and sanctioned) serial murderers history has ever produced, BTW.)

Jeffrey Dahmer met his appropriate end, which was far better than that of his victims. I don't believe his father's story of a beatific childhood. What would most people say? Circle your answer: (1) "I beat, abused and sexually molested my kid when he was a child," or, (2) "He had a good childhood; we gave him lots of love." Dad, BTW, is a fundamentalist Christian. Maybe pertinent, maybe not, but we know, in general, how fundamentalists feel about gays and Dahmer was gay from a very early age. The only testimony

we have that Dahmer's childhood was hunkey-dorey is Dad's. A very thorough, (and disturbing) psychological profile of the serial killer can be found at <http://www.appi.org/simonb.html>. Suffice to say, almost none of them had what we'd call happy childhoods, despite self-interested family members who would attest otherwise. Dr. Park Elliot Dietz is generally recognized as the international expert on serial killers (whatever that means). Anyway, he's studied them exhaustively. Here are some of his thoughts.

"...serial killers are produced by having the right genes in combination with the wrong parents." Asked to imagine what it would take to create another Bundy, Gacy, or Kemper, Dr. Deitz writes: "Start with an abusive, criminal father and a hysterical, alcoholic mother; torture the boy as erotically as possible; have the naked mother spank him and sleep with him until age 12; bind and whip him regularly; have the mother sexually arouse him and punish him for his erections; let the mother appear promiscuous while condemning prostitutes; leave detective magazines and bondage pornography around the house for him to find; and encourage him to watch R-rated slasher films and violence against glamorous women."

As Dr. Dietz also notes, "while every serial killer is mentally disordered, nearly all are psychopathic sexual sadists, and few if any, are psychotic. Psychotic offenders rarely have the wherewithal to repeatedly escape apprehension." (American Psychiatric Association Annual Review, vol. 6, 1987).

Though it seems I'm terribly off subject here, there is a reason for this rant. The nature of compassion and how it expressed is very important. Yogis are exhorted to practice "ahimsa." Is it "ahimsa" when we refuse to deal with harmful aspects of our culture?

I am compassionate with those who produce and profit from porn only to the degree that I suffer with them (against my will) as they exercise "their rights."

There are evil people out there. It doesn't really matter, from a societal (or parental) perspective if they were born with evil souls, were genetically damaged in or out of the womb, or whether they became that way due to falling off their hobby horse in one way or another when they were children. A serial killer will kill you and your loved ones for their sexual enjoyment if they get a chance. They are bad seed.

And, likewise, it doesn't matter to me how a pornographer or pornophile came to be; they are sociopaths who care nothing about the effects their obsession has on others. Despite study after study linking porn to violence against women and children, their answer is always "I don't believe there is enough evidence to prove a link." How convenient. Guess what? There will never be enough

evidence to satisfy either the pornographic profiteer or his client.

When our bodies have a cancer, we don't say, "Oh well, the cancer is there because of environment factors, let's forgive it." We "suffer with it" only until we can kill it (or until it completely overcomes us). We endeavor to get it out of our bodies before it spreads, which is what cancers, and pornographers, (to come full circle back to the subject) do.

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Love the sinner, hate the sin... (suz coyote, 8/25/99 10:07:47 PM)
I don't buy it. I neither love, nor hate the sinner (though I'd feel different, I'm sure, if I or a loved one were his/her victim).

But, I want rid of them. And if their demise saves others, who make the shaman's choice to the light side, then good has been served, ahimsa has been done.

SuZ

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Talking to the kids... (suz coyote, 8/25/99 10:26:54 PM)
I do talk to the kids about sexual matters. But all the talking in the world isn't going to help my daughter if some porn-inspired yahoos grab her out of a parking lot in broad daylight, rapes and murders her (as happened here last year) to have their fun at her expense (in the backseat, by the way, on top of a bible inscribed with the name of one of the rapists - in gold). Nor will it help my son if some jerk tricks him into a situation where he's vulnerable to attack or lays some choicy porn rags on him.

Everywhere in the world, women, children and "weaker" men are violently repressed through sexual terrorism. Everywhere, pornography perpetuates this system. Only by aggressively fighting for respect and decent behavior, are any gains made.

Where FGM is practiced, for example, nothing gets better by simply saying, "Let us have compassion for the clit cutters. They simply have a different culture than we do (yeah, a culture tha mutilates women)" [The same goes for male genital mutilators.] Discussing the philosophical merits of dark side/light side doesn't make for change, and neither does providing \$600 seminars for people to engage in breathwork. What works is people collectively saying, "Enough is enough. We don't do that to our women" and then aggressively prosecuting (and persecuting) those who persist.

But then, perhaps being a yogi, to some people, means transcending and therefore never having to sully one's hands with cleaning up ugly messes....

Namaste,
SuZ

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Dilemma: a situation in which any decision you make is wrong. (crotalus, 8/26/99 10:39:42 AM)

What about the POV: "the answers lie within?" Many of the great spiritual teachings say this, usually as a preface to requiring renunciation of some sort.

So, does the yogi/yogini try to fix himself/herself first or band together and regulate the environment according to the popular doctrine (leaving aside the sticky problem of just where to draw the line on behavior)? As Kramer & Alstad have mentioned in the Guru Papers: Authoritarian Masks of Power, "If these systems of renunciate doctrine and dogma are so hot, how come nothing much has changed in the 3,500 years they've been operating?"

When the horde is at the door, the choice is usually to get your elbows out. The Internet has brought the porn horde to door. The suppliers seem to be the only ones really making any dough out of the net and the users seem to have deep pockets. The emerging demographics of the Internet user base will undoubtedly change this trend. Most of the people coming onto the net these days are not looking for porn. They may briefly poke about in it to assess the true nature of a disturbing cultural profile or to satisfy their notion of revulsion but in the long run they'll just whine about the difficulties and dangers of dealing with its unwanted presence as they surf along. Technology and vigilante techniques (it's not hard to bring even the most robust server to its knees) will probably win the day.

I've been astounded at the number of men (it's mostly middle class males, age 16-50 according to the early web demographics) who favor the material; surely ennui is setting in and not even an escalation of the hardness scale will hold their attention for long - when fruit is no longer forbidden, it becomes just fruit. (Ever smell rotten fly covered watermelon?)

Whether Internet porn is a new enhanced version of an old tool of the patriarchy to consciously repress women and brainwash the male slave is debatable. I'd say sports

(particularly the violent stuff: rodeo, football, hockey, auto racing, rugby...) and the trend towards reclaiming traditional male prerogatives (The Promise Keepers and their ilk) are just as worrisome.

How many more disturbed individuals with a porn habit will haunt our news sources? As SuZ points out, it really becomes a personal issue when it increases your own personal anxiety and increases the danger to your personal circle.

So, is Hogue right or not?

"The key to endless tomorrows is the realization that you,

all of us, are the problem.

Stop running away from the seeds of every human misery.
Stop making excuses for the past. Your only home in the
cosmos is on fire and every one of us is equally
responsible for lighting the match and looking the
other way.

You are the problem and you are also the answer.

The first step toward saving the world is within."

Move into stillness and tell us what you learn.

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Suzanne (YogaSuz, 8/26/99 10:46:35 AM)

SuZ,

I think you are asking two questions. One is: What do we, as
a society, do about porn. The other is: If there is a
pornographer living on your street, what do you do.

I think some of us have been arguing that the roots of
porn are in the society itself, and that to punish
pornographers without changing society, or at least the
part that we can affect, is short-sited. However, if we
ruthlessly drive the porn industry underground, will we
actually change the behavior of those attracted to it?
This is a business that already lives in semi-legality.
Making it illegal, enforcing the laws vigilantly, still
would probably result only in it being less-widely
available (of course, to anyone with a computer it is still
just a mouse-click away). It seems to me that the only real
action one can take is to try and affect the people
around you by voicing your opinion and giving them a
better way of viewing sexuality.

Now, as for question 2, if there is a pornographer on my
street, do I invite him to have tea with my daughter
while giving a sermon on peace love and light? NO! But the
only way to protect her is to give her the strength to
recognize danger and fight against it. I remember
distinctly going to Stone Mountain Park with my
stepdaughter and stepson a couple of years ago. My
stepdaughter was 12 at the time and following us walkers on
her roller-blades. We were passing the playground when a
van stopped next to my stepdaughter and the driver
asked my if she wanted to take a ride. I was so proud
that she recognized the danger, yelled "No!" loudly, and said, "My
father is right there" and skated toward us as fast as
she could. We had a harder time at the skating rink that
summer when a strange fellow who was there without any
kids kept coming up to our kids and telling them jokes,
acting real friendly. We told them afterwards that we
thought he was suspicious and they said, "Oh, but he seemed
so nice!" "How many adults do you know who come to a skating
rink without kids?" we asked.

I was very thankful for the experience I gained in dealing with creeps on the listening hotline. Before I worked there, a guy approached me at a subway and struck up a friendly conversation. I was uncomfortable with him, and I never gave out my rather unique last name ever, but somehow because I was too polite to shoo him off, he got enough information to track me down at work (he called claiming that he wished to employ me). At that point I was smart enough to say, "I'll take your number and call you back," and not call back, but if he had been more persistent he could have tracked me down on foot since he had my work address.

After serving at hotline, I was again accosted at a Metro station by a man, but that time instead of engaging in the "friendly" banter, I said, "I'm sorry, I don't know you and I don't feel comfortable giving out any information to you. Good bye." The creep backed off.

No, victims can't always avoid a sex pervert, but they can sometimes. Being kind doesn't mean being a sucker.

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Jeffrey Dahmer (YogaSuz, 8/26/99 11:42:10 AM)

BTW, the book by Jeffrey Dahmer's dad seemed like a genuine effort at introspection; it was almost painful to read his efforts and finding the places where he felt he might have gone wrong as a parent. In it he did not mention his religious beliefs, although perhaps he is a Born Again himself. He came across as rather non-religious in the book; more of a geeky, unemotional engineer. What was suspiciously absent from the book was much information about Jeffrey's mother, who divorced his father when Jeffrey was in high school. The information about Jeffrey's early years indicated that the mom was kind of freaky and hysterical and the book was light on explanation about why the mother left Jeffrey to live alone in the former shared residence in high school, splitting with her other son to another place. It seemed like the father wanted to explore his own role in Jeffrey's upbringing and not get caught in a blaming game about which parent was responsible for their son being a serial killer of the worst sort. I would be quite interested in knowing more about Jeffrey Dahmer's mother.

My point about Jeffrey Dahmer is not that he should be forgiven because he got religion, but that he is not pure evil, but a person with good and evil both within him...just a whole lot more evil than good.

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Suzanne (YogaSuz, 8/26/99 12:49:20 PM)

SuZ,

I read the article on serial killers you referenced above and found the conclusion to be, interestingly, quite different from what you are arguing about pornography:

Ted Bundy, in his last days, made apocalyptic pronouncements against pornography, saying that it was responsible for his excesses. He opined that men progress from soft-core porn to hard-core, sadistic, bloody porn, to rape and serial murder. Dr. Dietz does not subscribe to this simplistic though popular "domino" theory of pornography addiction being the cause of serial murder. The cause lies far deeper, in the childhoods that have been spent before the boy ever sees a pornographic magazine or video. Dr. Dietz observes that

Paraphilia almost never originates after adolescence, and psychopathy never does. No sprinkling of images, however deviant, can render an otherwise normal man either paraphilic or criminal.

The leap from fantasy to action has much to do with character and the vicissitudes of life, and little or nothing to do with the objects of desire.

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Coming Together (Shakti Das, 8/26/99 1:57:40 PM)

I've been watching at a distance, but it's hard to remain in silence when ya'all are talking about such a NEGLECTED and widely IGNORED subject. I want to say first thanks to Suz for bringing it up and trying to come to effective terms with "it" and positively make change. If we are successful then the world will be a more creative (and safe place).

But first I think in order to do this (if this is indeed our true goal) then I suggest that we focus on the goal. Is not the goal to prevent violence to women and was banning pornography only one suggestion in order to do that?

I agree that pornography is merely a symptom of the greater malaise, and putting it underground (like prostitution, drugs, or like prohibition in the twenties may not be actually counterproductive and take us away from longer lasting and more causal solutions (to the problem of violence and oppression of women or any sex for that matter).

Like Nazism in Germany, Hitler needed a captive audience. If they were not already psychologically and emotionally ripe, they would not have bought in to his "program". Yet few have investigated the psychology of authoritarianism, fascism, totalitarianism, or other such dysfunctional schemes.

Likewise the question must be asked sooner or later what makes men ripe for pornography (some women also). Now many do not want to know "reasons" because they have a

prejudice against reason. They fail to distinguish it from justification, but my "contention" (forgive me) is that when we find out the reason, we can find out the cause, and then we can eliminate the causes. I believe in it, because I have experienced this first hand.

I suggest that if we are serious in tackling this hatred, manipulation, strife, abuse, and violence between sex (while pornography feeds off of) then we eventually have to tackle this underlying question.

Oppression and manipulation of women existed for centuries before the inter-net and before modern pornography. To "think" that by eliminating the symptom, the problem will go away is wishful thinking. The idea that the availability of pornography contributes to violence toward women I feel is also unsound. For may it gives them release. The fact that most sex criminals are addicted to pornography does not make pornography the cause, just like the fallacious argument that most angina sufferers may take nitro, doesn't make nitro the cause of angina.

No pornography doesn't help, but I'd like to ask men why they are attracted to pornography in the first place. As a man I can answer some of these questions first hand and I know that some of the answers may surprise women. So we all have something to learn if we stay open to learning.

Men have been criticized for not wanting to understand women, and for many men they have had to learn to listen to something which is foreign to the male experience. Yes women are different from men (hard lesson). However in this case if we wish to understand male violence to women (not justify it) in order to remedy it (if that is our true purpose) then women have to want to understand the male pathology (not simply demonize it or condemn it) not simply suggest even more repressive measures as a fix (if the cause has something to do with repression). No men are not an evil species (you know violence to women and pornography are not common or occur at the same ration everywhere equally.

I believe that consciousness and awareness can lead us all into a richer, more productive, and better life, but closemindedness, ideology, and emotional posturing will not. Men and women both suffer from this ignorance about their own sexuality and the ways that its natural and harmless expression becomes corrupted and perverted.

I truly welcome a constructive discussion of this long ignored subject if we can stay focused. Have I mis-stated the focus and/or are we very far apart on this? Is there a basis to continue along these lines or ?

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kevin wood (sahaj, 8/26/99 7:38:07 PM)

The muslims destroyed many of the beautiful temples

in India because of their "pornographic" statues that were on the temple walls. A few like Kujaraho have survived. To some these would be evil depictions of perverted sex acts and to others a beautiful artistic expression of uninhibited sexual relationship in a sacred context. Unless somebody is harmed physically or mentally then people should be allowed to do whatever they feel like doing and nobody should try to stop them. Maybe when all the possibilities of perversion have finally been explored then a balance will come. How does the spiritual fit into this?

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Good ta see ya again donny (crotalus, 8/26/99 7:52:18 PM)
Yeah, that's about my take on it. Gotta keep working the underlying causes - for that we need the very rights put in peril by porn.

heh

>>Like Nazism in Germany, Hitler needed a captive audience. If they were not already psychologically and emotionally ripe, they would not have bought in to his "program". Yet few have investigated the psychology of authoritarianism, fascism, totalitarianism, or other such dysfunctional schemes.<

For a minute there, I thought I was readin' Kramer (& Alstad though as I recall Joel was the focus of your issues).

>>No pornography doesn't help, but I'd like to ask men why they are attracted to pornography in the first place. As a man I can answer some of these questions first hand and I know that some of the answers may surprise women.<

Uh huh. Les' hear em.

Well yeah, Kevin; "no accounting for taste" and there-in lies the rub but then we can all probably rally around something that seems beyond the pale. One of the things we all can't abide is violence to women, even the ones who, from time to time, deserve it by some heinous act (like violence to a child maybe). I can't really abide violence to men either but we seem to encourage it (ask SuZ, she loves hockey). So, really how does the spiritual fit into this?

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Betcha Walter from the Big Lebowski shows up soon (crotalus, 8/26/99 8:15:35 PM)

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SuZett Estell (suz coyote, 8/26/99 9:30:31 PM)

SuZ,

I, too, read Dietz's comment that he doesn't accept the simple theory that porn leads to rape, though he does later bring it up, in part, as a causal factor, in the quote I posted. I wonder...does he personally use porn? I've seen

folks go right up to the brink of understanding the ill-effects of porn, only to back off because, well, what the hell would they do with their Saturday nights if they gave it up.

I always ask myself this question when I find a vehement apologist for porn. If I directly ask the question "are you a porn consumer?" I most often get a "none of your business (Yes, but I won't admit it.)" "(Proudly) Yes," a very rare "No" and a whole lot of nervous wiggling. I won't ask the question on this forum, (but the personal is always political and any one so inclined is invited to speak their truth.)

You are right about Dahmer's father's book; from what I understand (I've only read excerpts) he does try to take a hard look at what his role could have been. Still, I don't believe we got the whole story.

Kevin,

I never advocated for a ban on porn, but to simply apply some attention to managing its distribution coupled with severe penalties, routinely enforced, for inappropriate use. I am after management, rather than free-for-all.

Donny,

The issue I am exploring isn't how to prevent violence to women. I have attempted here not to label men as vicious perpetrators, but as players in a system that seems to run on pornography as fuel. I, personally, have reached the point where I think we need to transcend the tendency to gender-blame. I'm not looking for a feminist debate on violence against women, nor have I any interest in male-bashing. I happen to like men - a lot (especially the one I live with).

Granted, men use porn more frequently and do the lion's share of the raping. On the other hand, women make up the engine of the consumer culture and the impacts from that little vice are every bit as violent. It's always something...

My question is more along the lines of "do humans flourish spiritually in an environment of total freedom to do anything they desire, even if it harms others. Or, is it a collective (dare I say spiritual) responsibility of all of us to develop reasonable social boundaries that provides space for ourselves and others to grow?" Or, in simpler words, is spirituality a strictly solo occupation ("spiritual masturbation,") or are we obligated to work together as a group to maintain basic standards of behavior?

I'm not talking about developing a religious doctrine and burning those who won't believe in a particular set

of myths. I'm talking about setting community standards for fair, respectful treatment of one another - sort of a Golden Rule. What is so wrong with this? My point of view is that those who can't follow this simple rule should go off and be hermits.

You say: "Like Nazism in Germany, Hitler needed a captive audience. If they were not already psychologically and emotionally ripe, they would not have bought in to his "program". Yet few have investigated the psychology of authoritarianism, fascism, totalitarianism, or other such dysfunctional schemes."

Many people have done a fine job of investigating the psychology of the dysfunctions you mention, specifically Alice Miller (who wrote extensively on child abuse), Joel Kramer (whom Bob has discussed), Eric Hoffer (on mass movements), Harold Bloom (who writes on, among other things, memetic structures), and many others. But, few people really have paid attention to their work.

It seems to me (and history bears this out) that humans seem to be "perpetually psychologically and emotionally ripe" for mass movements similar to Hitler's. Perhaps there may be no "longer lasting and more causal solution" for the violence visited upon the weaker by the stronger; that this is the "normal" or "natural" condition of humans? There is much evidence this is so. If you take the position, if only for a moment, that the natural inclination is towards violence, then it makes sense, as a society to try to circumvent this tendency, which Ken Wilber refers to as the "kill it or fuck it" urge. (As war is almost universally accompanied by mass rape.)

Certainly, there is something to what Bob says about other forms of violence. As he said, I love hockey, which is a particularly physical game, wherein the men go at one another pretty aggressively. I'm not out to get joy from men hurting one another. It's more a case of delighting in seeing fierce, strong warriors, performing mock battle in difficult conditions (on the ice). They are "champions," - safely (for the audience, anyway) channeled warriors. I'd rather have them in the rink than in the alley. And, as long as I'm baring it all here, I am not interested at all in college hockey, where the game is less physically violent. But, I would remind Bob, this violence is voluntary, as opposed to that visited upon a woman or child during a rape, for example.

Porn is only one aspect of the greater spiritual question regarding the nature of human-kind. I brought porn up here as a vehicle for the spiritual discussion because I think it is relevant to tantra and human sexuality.

Check out <http://newfrontier.com/russia/> Meet Beautiful Tantrikas, in Moscow, Russia! Or, here's one to find yourself a beautiful, young tantrika!

<http://www.thatmall.com/cgi-bin/thatmall?tantra/tantra>

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kevin wood (sahaj, 8/27/99 1:44:36 AM)

Wow, those links are strange! Very interesting twist [no pun intended] to tantra. I'm not sure if that is what the ancients had in mind but it certainly reflects an interesting aspect of ourselves. Noteworthy is the amazing power of the female form to evoke a response [for good or bad ends]. I think that this was at the heart of some of the use of eroticism in the tantric art and ritual. The pure shakti and power of the beauty of the female naturally moves energy somewhere and if it is channelled towards a higher state then I guess it is a good thing.

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Are we shooting ourselves in the foot? (Shakti Das, 8/27/99 2:31:04 AM)

Suz you say; "The issue I am exploring isn't how to prevent to women."

Well I was afraid of that. I read earlier posts of yours which claimed that you didn't want to walk down the streets in fear of violence and also Suzanne's worries of potential violence to her step daughter. I also share this concern and it is an issue to me.

Suz when you say: "It seems to me (and history bears this out) that humans seem to be "perpetually psychologically and emotionally ripe" for mass movements similar to Hitler's Perhaps there may be no "longer lasting and more causal solution" for the violence visited upon the weaker by the stronger; that this is the "normal" or "natural" condition of humans? There is much evidence this is so ..that the natural inclination is towards violence."

I am reminded that this sounds strangely much like the doctrine of original sin, which I find both exceedingly cynical and nihilistic as well as disempowering ideologies on the planet.

Granted that this is the view of the fundamentalists as well (and not just Christian fundamentalists) whose solution is usually more punishment, more laws, more prisons, and more armies i.e., more force, repression, and violence to counteract it. In this regard are you saying that you are in align with that or am I reading mostly my own weird stuff into this?

Not that I am calling you names :-) but calling this this to your attention as a possible contradiction (shooting yourself in the foot?)

I know that everytime I am blocked and finally find my way out the maze, I find that I was shooting myself in the foot.

It is not at all clear to me that the consumer engines, the engines of violence to women, nor the engines of

violence in war and murder runs on pornography. Rather these banes existed way before pornography -- they themselves are the real obscenity (to me) and thus as I suggested such "thinking" may be taking the cart before the horse.

Suz you say;

"My question is more along the lines of 'do humans flourish spiritually in an environment of total freedom to do anything they desire, even if it harms others. Or, is it a collective (dare I say spiritual) responsibility of all of us to develop reasonable social boundaries that provides space for ourselves and others to grow?' Or, in simpler words, is spirituality a strictly solo occupation ('spiritual masturbation,') or are we obligated to work together as a group to maintain basic standards of behavior?"

Well it all depends how you, i,we, define spirituality (another can of worms ja?) Remember the difficulty in simply trying to define "What is yoga"? Defining things for others is always a can of worms and I try to avoid it. "Standards of behavior is even worse (and in a sense is the glue of what the witch hunts did by defining "witches" to be below the standard worthy of life (decided for them) by the Church and Queen (others).

Such questions of external manmade standards belong in a conference dedicated to moral and ethical behavior, certainly not in this topic (tantra and Sexuality) other than to say that I would agree that behavior follows consciousness (or lack thereof i.e., that people act out according to what is inside. So if yoga as a spiritual practice is about harmonizing the body/mind about what we feel -- aligning what is inside of us in harmony with honoring and respecting our own life, and from there honoring and respecting all life and life in general, and from there other people's lives as well, then yes yoga as a spiritual discipline can positively affect society because it affects our own behavior (as part of society) and other people's lives as well (in our positive inter-action with other people and our environment).

"So, really how does the spiritual fit into this?"

To take this back to tantra and human sexuality, (and I think this answers Bob's and Kevin's comments), if we learn at an early age that our feelings about sex are not evil but rather sacred, that women are not objects of our sense gratification but simply remind us that we are spiritual animals coming to functional embodied terms with life, creation, co-creation, and pro-creation as a coherent whole, than all the pain and frustration that we(I am speaking as a man) have tied and knotted up in not acting in concert with our feelings (in terms of sexual feelings) would never occur in the first place and thus the neurotic sex (which is associated with suffering,

bondage, pain, anguish, and disempowerment) would never be fed in associating these elements in relationship to the opposite sex.

Granted this may be a little heavy for many (and I skipped a few stages), but it's basically a synopsis of the well known Reichian model of character armoring through sexual inhibition (just refer to Wilhelm Reich for more). In this regard, functional yoga practice brings us to the awareness of the pre-existence of this armor and helps us work to deprogram it (not through repression, but by affirming the positive feelings and through joyful alignment with "flow").

Tantra yoga does this specifically in regards to sexual function by placing the sexual activity within the context of establishing this flow, resolving the imbalance of polarities (male/female, moving us out of fragmented alienated existence and bringing us bathe within the non-dual embrace at our true center (before the extraction into the negative programming and artificial conditioning) --into the Great unconditioned which is our natural state (danger my own predilections).

Personally I think tantra hasn't been given a "billionth" of a chance yet in the West. It is best applied young before the neurotic dysfunctional patterns are formed (something that the fundamentalists are "hotly" set against).

Thus here is the link (albeit in a nutshell) between violence, armoring, estrangement, spirituality, sexology, and yoga if anyone wants to take the ball and run with it?

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Cultural (YogaSuz, 8/27/99 7:50:22 AM)

I think porn is a symptom of a culture that views sexuality as immoral. Sexuality then somehow becomes perverted into possession and ownership. Similarly, in cultures with FGM, a woman is prized as a possession more than a sexual being. She is unmarriageable without the " operation," but with it she is incapable of having sexual pleasure.

I agree that to stop pornography, we also need to change the way our culture approaches sexuality as a whole. What is so different between pornography and Baywatch?

Children early on get the message that sexual pleasure comes from possessing a beautiful woman. Watch Saved by the Bell sometime and watch the boys chase after the cute but bitchy girl and ignore the nice girl.

I've been enjoying watching Buffy the Vampire Slayer because it has a woman as the lead...a thinking, active woman who is both masculine and feminine. Yet, as I'm watching it with my husband and stepson, they are commenting on how pretty Sarah Michelle Geller (Buffy) is. It angered me that they were lusting over her in this physical way, when there is so much more to her that makes her attractive. Yet, physicality is a part of love. Shakespeare

understood this and his plays have numerous plays on "appearances" and "true love." A Midsummer Night's Dream deals with this issue throughout. There is a physical side to love. We shouldn't deny the sexual allure of physically beautiful person. Isn't there, though, something more to it? Isn't it also about connecting deeply with someone? That, to me, seems to be the part that gets left out in our culture.

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Bob Cox (tympachus cupido, 8/27/99 10:20:25 AM)

>>There is much evidence this is so ..that the natural inclination is towards violence."

>I am reminded that this sounds strangely much like the doctrine of original sin, which I find both exceedingly cynical and nihilistic as well as disempowering ideologies on the planet.<

Now that is a salient observation. My mom's Christian faith bloomed late in her life and I never knew her to subscribe to the miserable idea of original sin as the Yahweh crowd define it. I can't remember that she ever laid it on me as a kid

I was a failure and quickly ejected from Anglican Sunday school - when the whole cock and bull nature of the doctrine is obvious to a 9 year old, it should be a clue. Seems to me just because we have complete tolerance [suspended, of course, for witch burnings and the like] for other's faiths, that we shouldn't be forbidden to speak critically.

The original sin doctrine, which I find as hilarious as it is abhorrent, may be coloring my own pessimism about the ultimate prospects for our species. I agree with John Hogue that Homo novus will emerge from Homo moriens ("death man," the gang we belong to unfortunately) and that there may be some significant attrition in the process. The four horsemen are circling again or maybe that's Kali on the horizon or maybe there's a celestial event (sooner or later, for sure) in our future that will reboot the biosphere.

I'd like to think a way out might be the blooming of the buddhafiield.

As individuals we can certainly work towards amplifying the wavering flux of the buddhafiield. My question is

(ignoring the predilections and tendencies of the species as a whole),

"What's the best program?"

Do we start within or without or, if the answer ain't that simple, how to strike a balance given our individual talents for work in either area.

Certainly I'm more likely (neglecting the very real possibility of hubris here) to have a more positive effect locally (myself, my near relationships, my community) than globally. So, I work to preserve the rights that allow me to do so. I "move into stillness" as often as I can and in as many ways as I can to listen for some programmatic "answers."

Interrupting the cycle of repression for which porn serves as tool and indicator is daunting. How we move beyond the platitude of "encouraging the development of sexuality as a spiritual component" is not clear. By example perhaps. By supporting the depiction of the beautiful (tricky because of taste issues and preferences of the BDSM crowd who I've come around to including in the great "norm" when their practices lead to no physical or psychological harm) as opposed to the ugly and the violent. By insisting that honoring cultural diversity does not include allowing oppressive practices in my culture or ignoring the oppressive practices

(particularly genital mutilation, torture and slavery) in other cultures. The worthwhile pleasure (always a contentious issue in our pleasure adverse culture) and empowerment of spiritual sex is nearly ineffable and is discernable really only by experience or observation of the lives of those who practice it (I believe this is an aspect of Jesus that was edited out in the construction of the dead man on a dead tree blood cult that Paul made of the holy memory).

Speaking of nihilism, Nietzsche had a good observation along the original sin lines:

"Has the famous story that stands at the beginning of the Bible really been understood? The story of God's hellish fear of science? [...] Only from woman did man learn to taste the tree of knowledge. What had happened? The old God was seized with hellish fear. Man himself had turned out to be his greatest mistake; he had created a rival for himself; science makes godlike - it is all over with priests and gods when man becomes scientific. Moral: science is the forbidden as such - it alone is forbidden. Science is the first sin, the seed of all sin, the original sin. This alone is morality. 'Thou shalt not know' - the rest follows." -Friedrich Wm. Nietzsche Der Antichrist [1888/1895] 63 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.63

Donny Simon (Shakti Das, 8/28/99 1:20:05 PM)

errata: the first paragraph of my last post (60) left out the key word, violence. Should have said: "The issue I am exploring isn't how to prevent violence to women." when quoting a "learned" friend.

Suzanne: I agree with your statement, "I agree that to stop pornography, we also need to change the way our culture approaches sexuality as a whole. "But

then how do we change this. Unfortunately, this is where most people stop (in protest, abhorrence, shock, complaint) and thus become ripe when a demagogue comes around and proposes "bigger punishments", more laws, more violence, more prisons, more repression, more restriction all of which feeds the police state and authoritarianism/totalitarianism. This is the emotional factor driven by the engine of sexual repression that is characteristic of the demagogues of disempowerment and manipulation (as they feed off of this sentiment of powerlessness and despair).

So the next step is to confront and investigate the "cause" within man (rather than neatly label it as man being evil which is one step away from the further corrupted extension that "life is hell and heaven is death" -- i.e., that life is not sacred.

If we look at this "problem" of externalization and objectification it is very old (before pornography). Fortunately the answer is easy i.e., to wake up. Unfortunately waking up is a threat to the power system (and institutions of repression).

To me waking up is yoga and tantra is a path to merging and harmonizing with the power of nature (shakti), creation, and creator through the vehicle of conscious pro-creation energy. Yep, I am pro creation :-)

Yes, I think the Buffy image is great (a strong and powerful woman who can't be easily manipulated nor overpowered) honoring the body. I like that integration and message and the show has a nice spirit (wish it would go further though)!

You hit on a profound connection when you say: "There is a physical side to love. We shouldn't deny the sexual allure of physically beautiful person. Isn't there, though, something more to it? Isn't it also about connecting deeply with someone? That, to me, seems to be the part that gets left out in our culture."

Is this not the process of body/mind integration or yoga (the physical part of love)? We are males and females in the body, but in Spirit there is oneness in divinity. My mate enriches me and completes me (as a male) because she presents and embodies the other half -- the embodied vistas that I am blinded to as a male (unless I overcome my own polarity, duality, and separateness) through yoga (joining) with the Universal. If I am not in samadhi yet, then love can be a path (not just as integrating the procreative energies). Here I do not mean simply discharging or dissipating them) but also a joining, harmonization, and completeness bringing forth an emotional and psychological fulfillment, is that not so?

Oh, if marriage was only focused upon being more of a spiritual partnership (helpmates helping each other realize yoga), then how many problems could be avoided! The

more enriched and powerful you are, the more so, I become as well, and the less tension and stress are brought into our lives -- the more energy we have to empower our deeper embrace! So yes, I agree there exists a sexual tantra of emotions as well and they correspond to the body and the energy systems (chakras) and maybe that's where we may discuss more about later if we can allow it?

Yes Bob; "The original sin doctrine, which I find as hilarious as it is abhorrent, may be coloring my own pessimism about the ultimate prospects for our species." I am afraid that it is pervasive as well as insidious, and the sooner we become conscious that there is a "war" about this going on in this culture, the faster we can free ourselves from its influence. This I agree with Hogue is part of "our" collective awakening!

As mentioned above sexual repression is part of the fuel for the "dark side" (in the star wars sense of course).

"What's the best program?...Interrupting the cycle of repression for which porn serves as tool and indicator is daunting."

I linked those two thoughts of yours together, because we have only a limited reserve of time to effectively make change and treating symptoms (such as porn, pornography, etc) can be distracting as well as counter-productive. I have complete confidence that if were to eliminate the causes of these "effects", then these aberrations (a result of neuroses) would entirely disappear. I think that this is the "best program" and most worthy and also I do not see it daunting (if we can focus upon provoking the awakening).

If we do not awake, these and other abuses will be heaped upon "us" as we will continue to "heap" it upon others and our environment (it works hand in hand). As most nurses treating symptoms can have more disastrous results than the disease for which it was prescribed.

So given that negative sexual conditioning can feed these negative aberrations (as an engine) then I ask how can yoga and in particular Kundalini and Tantric yoga techniques that consciously investigate and work with the procreative function serve this end (of awakening)?

There are many tools and practices available to us, and new ones to develop. To the extent that we chose and innovate wisely, may well be to the extent that we consciously take our own destiny into our own hands (a mark of true liberation) while to the extent that we leave this task to the aristocracy, external authorities, power mongers, gurus, and external manipulators, or to Mom and Pop may be the markers of the depth of our confusion and sleep.

So the first thing I propose is that this process of awakening is not at all "complex" or daunting, but rather very simple -- it can be known within simply as "what-is", as our

natural unconditioned state. Rather it is our past conditioning and programming (and habitual grasping unto this negative programming) which occludes the Reality of this sacred presence. Thus the awakening process is simply a means of simultaneously deprogramming (purification of the channels) and activation of our dormant evolutionary potential (the awakening of kundalini). It is not complex -- the complexity is of the mind, negative conditioning (vrittis), and its resultant confusion (ignorance). Obviously here I am using a tantric yoga model. This is not to say that I am not suffering here as much as any body else.

Is there a basis here for tantra yoga? Whaddya think?

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Erich Schiffmann (schiffmann, 8/28/99 11:54:41 PM)

Right, the sacred presence is already present, and snapping to the fact of it (Waking Up) is simply a matter of keeping your conscious attention here in the now, wherever you find yourself being, the only place where the living now Reality is available to be clearly experienced. Yes, it is not complex -- the complexity is of the mind. The necessity is for mind to become quiet and still, at least every once in awhile, and thereby place itself in the position of having a new experience, from which new more accurate conclusions can be drawn. I practice as many moments of the day as I can. Mirror gazing is good, Tadasana with full-on eye contact. Also eye contact with others throughout the day. First you feel it within, then you start seeing without.

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kevin wood (sahaj, 8/29/99 6:32:29 PM)

Erich do you thing that the simple, natural state can be experienced by everyone or is this simple process of just waking up to the now not enough for people that are too deeply conditioned and require some type of process [yoga asana, movement with breathing, etc..]?

donny writes: So given that negative sexual conditioning can feed these negative aberrations (as an engine) then I ask how can yoga and in particular Kundalini and Tantric yoga techniques that consciously investigate and work with the procreative function serve this end (of awakening)?

I think that this way of using the sexual force will fuel some engine or another. Even the exposure of our dark fears and desires could release us from them or further bind us to a heavy conditioning. None of us can ignore our sexual side and if it isn't delt with, it will deal with us! So can we use these techniques to the cause of awakening? Yes I think so but we should be aware that we are playing with fire [literally] and we take responsibility for the consequences of our actions. The razor's edge of desire and animal

impulse and the conscious natural liberation
if nature is the teacher then we need not fear
our impulses. Maybe it is the repression of our
natural sex impulse that creates deviate actions[meaning
those that harm]. What would happen if we really let go
into the sexual impulse?

Maybe this is when it would be exposed in its true
nature as the spiritual?

I just saw the movie "eyes wide shut" last night
and this film seems to deal with that undercurrent
of sexual repression that is hidden inside us.

I guess their honesty in exposing their sexual desires
could be seen as a sort of tantric technique of facing
the reality as it is. An authentic looking at reality
without the masks.

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SuZett Estell (suz coyote, 8/30/99 9:15:58 AM)

Hello, Donny, Kevin, Suz, Bob and Erich:

Lots of food for thought in all your posts. I will have
to digest for a while. I am moving the discussion over
to "the heart of the matter" in deference to Donny's view
this topic doesn't really belong in the tantra topic.

On a tantra note... Some of the lessons are good, but I guess
I am somewhat distrustful of tantra. First, as has been
mentioned before, there is this weird emphasis on a man
conserving his seed and not giving it up to the woman.
In addition, much of the written tradition seems to focus
on how to use the woman "tantrika" for a man's own personal
spiritual elevation. Oh, I know the popular stuff
emphasizes the partnership aspect, but the older roots of
the tradition seem to recognize shakti as a power to be
brought under a man's control via the tantric practice,
with the woman (or women) being simply a catalyst for the
man's enlightenment (or altered state high). Also, as I have
mentioned, much of the writing seems to separate the
tantrika from the marriageable woman - another version of
the "sacred prostitute" perspective.

Having gone through the sexually liberated 70s, I am a bit
jaded and suspicious of any kind of "free love" sexuality (
which does seem to be woven into the tantric thing). As
I've mentioned before, free love was never "free" to most
women who ended up dealing with abortion or tending to
the children that often resulted from this approach to
sexuality (not to mention the diseases). Perhaps this is
just resentment, but there seems to be no end to the
sexual scams played on very young women. I certainly
fell for enough of them. I see so many middle-aged guys
engaging with a series of young girls in their late
teens and early twenties, calling this practice "tantra." This
happened to me, but it was called sexual liberation, rather
than tantra. Seems like just another version of "teen
pussy" if you ask me...

SuZ

67 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.67
(Shakti Das, 9/1/99 12:51:29 PM)
Erich,

The practice of "looking into a mirror" is way too scary for me! Haven't evolved that far yet. The purpose of my practice at this phase in my life is to integrate my yoga in daily life and thus this includes applying it to everyday life activities. This way there is more of a continuous flow (and my asana practice is benefits as well). Thus for me yoga is not just how well my asana practice or meditation practice comes along, but rather the reverse how well can those practices influence the nitty gritty of daily life so that my life becomes more of a magnification of the conscious practice of integrity.

Naturally, in daily life I put this awareness (that my asana, bandha, mudra, pranayama, and meditation practice has helped developed) into the society at large (maintaining this focus). Without this integration there is no balance or integrity to my practice and it becomes sterile, extractive, and escapist.

In this regard I have not forgotten the process of my own adolescence where the desire to escape from my body made the most sense to my mind and wherein much neuroses were created (through guilt and repression). This was not an exception, but the norm, those being the most "bookish" and inhibited being the most severely disconnected from their feelings and body.

In any case, I saw the connections early in life between body negative, life negative, ecological negative, and sexual negative authoritarian dogma on one hand and freedom, self empowerment, and life affirmation on the other. In short *skipping the pathology) I noticed in men that pretty women often reminded them of this disassociation (their repressed sexual feelings that they were trying to repress and disown) and in these people in particular there was more of a tendency to shoot the messenger rather than to come to terms that they had inside themselves some unresolved feelings. For instance this is a common cause for misogyny. This is when I found Freud, Reich, Keleman, Pierakos, Grof, et al advanced and relevant. I also found tantra to be advanced and relevant as well and hence studied it also. Chinese sexology pretty much is similar.

We already discussed this above, but I am giving some context here because almost without exception people will complain about sexual abuse, violence to women, fear for the safety of the children, pornography, sex related crimes, prostitution, and the like. However when the conversation should come to inquire as to what may be the causes I am almost always surprised to see the escapism and avoidance neurotically appear (often defensively and/or self righteously).

If we are appalled or at least do not desire the above list of sexual "problems" (and there are more problems than that which are reinforced through negative sexual/negative body conditioning) then why not discuss it (in order to find the cure)? Yes, original sin does not offer a cure. Perhaps this is the problem. Does just suggesting that all the above evils may vanish if we found the cure, contradict the ideology of original sin and hence for religious reasons people can not allow themselves to go further?

So usually after complaining, expressing their abhorrence, anger, or grief after hearing about such events, the "normal" educated citizen usually leaves it at that and defensive/agressivly becomes primed to agree with anyone who suggests that more laws, more restrictions, more punishment, more prisons, more police, death penalties, etc (all elements of repression, a police state, and signs of totalitarianism. Indeed it is well known that totalitarian and other authoritarian systems works best when people are out of their body and power and especially when they are sexually repressed (as per Reich).

You know after the Columbine High School tragedy, every one expressed their shock and abhorrence. They all asked the same question "How could have happened"? But I knew right away that no one was really interested in how or why. It was only a knee jerk reaction. I knew that all they would do eventually was suggest more police, tighter restrictions, more repression, more penalties, and that was exactly what they did.

Now these kids who did this terrible thing, didn't care about penalties -- they were bent on killing themselves anyway. thus threatening them with punishment was irrelevant. What WAS the real problem was obvious i.e., they had become more than insensitive toward honoring life, alienated, "extracted" from life, cynical, and nihilistic. Precisely because they no longer honored life within themselves (they had lost touch), they had lost any meaning in life and had no further "reason" to live (other than to take those who contradicted them with them to the grave).

Now two more things about the relevancy of this and human sexual activity (which is the thread). No it was the adults who were in "disbelief", but the interviews with the students were much more revealing, many of them told a story where they too often felt self hate, suicidal, desparate, helpless, and often extreme hatred of others. Because I have a close friend who works as a school psychologist he told me of plans that were implemented to reach out to these potential "troublesome" symptoms (symptoms of what were never brought forth by the media) BEFORE such a tragedy occurred (you know they are on the rise). This was proactive right?

Well it turned out that he was tasked to get the

confidence of the kids to tell him their feelings, and then what happened, he was told that he had to tell the administration (and then the police) of any possible trouble makers. Well the police started going to these kids homes searching for weapons, internet records, explosives, and even "seditious" literature and books. These kids got into a lot of trouble, so you can imagine that the word got out fast not to talk about their real feelings with adults.

Where does our bungling and dysfunction come from in our dealings with our kids? To me I see it as an example of the same pattern of denial, repression, and punishment that these adults received while they were children are being repeated and that these (Samskaras) will not cease until they are confronted. Any thoughts on this?

In other words, these kids having lost touch with life, having bought into despair, having lost trust in their parent's way of life, the adult world, president Clinton, churches, and other role models -- having bought in to a certain amount of cynicism at an early age on one hand (through external reinforcement) and on the other hand also not having any validation of their inner world, instincts, or vision (rather having that repressed as well had nothing (but gross materialism and hypocrisy) to grab onto -- and no LIFE AFFIRMING reason to live. This should be obvious (they killed themselves as well) by their actions and from interviews with friends, but does not this fact contradict the middle class faith of materialism i.e., what was wrong with these kids (such denial decries) they could have become lawyers, accountants, owned a house in the suburbs, or at least could have joined the army! Are some of these answers not being answered because it may point out what is wrong with ourselves or the society?

Now we won't go into the politics (just the psychology) other than to say that in my opinion more force, violence, punishment and repression only reinforces in the long run a belief that violence and force works. I think that is mistaken i.e., that love works and there is a wide difference.

To sum up, a solution (without the society changing enmasse) would be to reinforce the children's inner connections with life, ecology, life positive values, honoring life within, awareness of the prana, authentic yoga practice, chi gong, meditation, asanas, etc. Doesn't this seem logical to others? Indeed some schools offer a little of this (but there are objections by the fundamentalists that yoga for instance is Eastern religion and thus can't be allowed in public schools. Also many kids just aren't at a stage yet where they are interested in yoga (Will being an exception). Karate and Gung Fu however have been a gate for many of them who later went into the healing arts, Chi Gong, and meditation.

Since tantra is too hot a subject for those who are

under 18 (in this country it is illegal), I suggest that tantra is a powerful approach to help us re-connect with the disowned parts of the body/mind which has become suffered from the onslaught of body negative/nature negative programming (coming from adults who themselves have become so dis-associated).

For me I couldn't entertain spirituality and sexuality as an integrated spiritual practice (in the form of tantra yoga) until my early thirties, but it has been a powerful deprogramming tool for me. I have seen similar testimonies.

Can approaching sexuality consciously have its pitfalls? Certainly, but to mistrust anyone who advocates or teaches it as a abuser is rather paranoid (most of the teachers here are women). Albeit some are simply glorifying sex, but others are sincere. Especially those who have practised asana, pranayama, and meditation have a feeling for the energy and approach the process less mechanically but more of a method of listening and meditation to get to the source of the pro-creative energy -- the source of Creation -- to activate the evolutionary energy much like we practice pranayama with the breath to get to the Source behind it (hence breathing exercises go along with tantric practices nicely).

So to end what may be a potentially disturbing post (over simplistic as it is), a quote from the Great Eclectic period of Tantra:

"I became united with the middle (sahaj way)
Where the thunderbolt and lotus flower met.
Here their union (of apana and prana) at the navel cakra
has turned ordinary passion into the Candali (Kundalini)
fire.

The body of the Dombi girl (purified avadhuti) burns as the passion of great bliss. Taking the path of the moon (Bodhicitta), I sprinkle water on that fire so that neither scorching flame nor smoke is seen; but reaching the peak of Mt. Meru(the sushumna), the flame bliss enters the sky (the chakra of Great Bliss). Orthodox religious practices and the dominion of doctrine and intellect has been entirely melted down. Dhama says clearly: 'Having understood simultaneously arisen bliss through the five channels, water rose up (Bodhicitta) from the lotus of great bliss to the jeweled pinnacle'."

from the forty seventh poem of the Caryapadas of the 84 Siddhacharyas attributed to Dhamapa from the Great Eclectic Period (Medieval India)
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So Much Great Wisdom Going Down, my head hurts... (suz coyote, 9/1/99 9:13:36 PM)
"Invisible Girl" checking in..... Mary Daly believes that one symptom of the covert misogynist is his refusal to

acknowledge the contributions of a woman. In this way she is rendered invisible. So, these days, when I see it, Donny, it I call it. Never thought I'd be shunned for sincerely speaking my truth in the forum I helped create. I guess detached intellectualism is the vogue these days.

A person could get irritated.

"So usually after complaining, expressing their abhorrence, anger, or grief after hearing about such events, the "normal" educated citizen usually leaves it at that and defensive/agressivly becomes primed to agree with anyone who suggests that more laws, more restrictions, more punishment, more prisons, more police, death penalties, etc (all elements of repression, a police state, and signs of totalitarianism."

No need to talk down to me, Donny (ostensibly through a third party).

I may or may not be "normal." Few have labeled me that way. I AM educated, but that's a doubled-edged sword because higher education in our culture is generally reduced to memorization of all the wonderful things that DWEMs (Dead White European Males) have accomplished, with an emphasis on scientific materialism, coincidental with the rendering of others' contributions null and void (see above).

I see I am once again hoisted on the horns of a faulty dilemma. If I do not agree with those who believe there should be no societal controls on sexually explicit materials, I am labeled "passive/aggressive" (for pity sake) and an advocate of what was it? Oh, yeah, a police state, body negativity, massive repression, totalitarianism and the death penalty. You say it so succinctly, "sexual negative authoritarian dogma on one hand and freedom, self empowerment, and life affirmation on the other." Well, there you have it in simple black and white - none of those pesky shades of gray.

Pornography is a very sharp tool. I am not a Fundamentalist (my Christian friends would howl at that one) because I advocate keeping sharp tools in the hands of adults and out of the hands of children . In fact, I am not any kind of religionist - I don't hide behind of the psycho-spiritual babble of the Bible, the Koran, or even (here comes the heresy) the Vedas. Unfortunately, most in the world aren't as enlightened as we all are on this web [right]. When the guy from down the street shows my son or daughter hardcore pornography that can cause long term damage to their sexual health I want him stopped. End of story. Mother bear protecting the young.

People (not just me) are getting tired of our society's endless and disappointing experiment in debauchery. People aren't becoming sexually free, they are acquiring

perversions and becoming dysfunctional at the speed of light (the TV light). Child sexual abuse is increasing, rape is increasing, and the scope (but not the numbers) of violence is increasing. Children aren't getting in touch with their spirits, they're being pressured into sex when they are still children. They are learning their bodies are for sale and for selling and that their only value is in who they can screw.

Where do you think sexual dysfunction comes from, how it grows, what it feeds upon? Religiously-induced guilt is one way to become damaged. There are many other ways that can be far more devastating and difficult to root out. I came of age in the belly of the beast - in a sexually dysfunctional family, with an alcoholic, abusive stepfather, in the midwest in the '50s. And, from the perspective of keeping a healthy sexual perspective, I've got a huge advantage over my kids - I had a clear sense of right and wrong. I knew what was being done to me was wrong. The messages my kids are getting - that irresponsible and abusive sex is good - are everywhere, with only the lone voice of immediate family as a counter. And, too bad if a small voice inside a kid is crying, "But it's hurting me." What do they hear instead? "Buck up kid, it's total freedom time. What are you, some kinda passive/aggressive, an advocate of the police state? Sorry, no quarter for you wussies."

I see all sorts of name drooping (Freud, Reich, Keleman, Pierakos, Grof - all men, unless you were referring to Eva, not John Pierakos - defining women and their sexuality). I'm up on all the current body therapy theories. We have here all sorts of references to obscure Vedic texts and Hindu philosophies on the topic, but no admission that the Hindu culture can be incredibly woman-repressive nor that the Vedic philosophies in no way advocate sexual license or the free flow of pornography,. Quite the contrary, the Indian culture tends towards sexual conservatism. (Yes, yes, I know all about the left-hand, but that is a cult even by the admission of its adherents, and very controversial in places where Hinduism is faithfully practiced.) I have heard very little REAL discussion about sexual issues - but plenty of high-minded condemnation for presenting the non-PC perspective.

But, oh, excuse me. I forgot that a discussion on pornography doesn't belong on a topic about Tantra and Human Sexuality.

Donny writes:

"I noticed in men that pretty women often reminded them of this disassociation (their repressed sexual feelings that they were trying to repress and disown) and in these people in particular there was more of a tendency to shoot the messenger rather than to come to terms that they had inside themselves some unresolved feelings."

Still shooting messengers?

Are you a parent, Donny? I'm a middle school mom. Understanding the Columbine massacre is more than an academic indulgence for me. I have kids that may not come home at the end of their day, regardless of whether or not we've discussed sex that week, or whether or not they feel good about themselves or their budding sexuality, or whether or not they've done yoga during the day. (Yoga is a spiritual practice based deeply in the Hindu religious tradition - Yoga doesn't belong in school, it belongs at home, just as I would expect Christian doctrine to stay at home.) Columbine wasn't about sexual repression, police state activity, censorship or kids not being in touch with their sexuality. Kansas was rife with repression when I was a kid (we didn't even know it was repression), though mass shootings at middle school was not our general approach to relief.

Columbine was about a corrupt and decayed school system - a place where kids are required to go every day, regardless of the misery they suffer at the hands of cruel peers and teachers who sometimes join in the abuse. It was about selfish adults who cared only for their own freedoms and concerns - a "fend for yourself" mentality. Columbine was about two outcast boys sitting day after day in a classroom, at desks that didn't fit (talk about not honoring the body) trying to deal with hormonal upheaval. Meanwhile, one teacher or another, who may not have even understood the material she is teaching, droned on and on (but she was "certified" I bet). Columbine was about two boys dealing with unrelenting verbal abuse between classes and an administration that ignored the situation. It was about young, healthy boys doing mind-numbing and meaningless homework every night and on the weekends.

Well, gee, didn't we have crummy schools and idiotic teachers way back when? Sometimes. What we didn't have was the incredible load kids today carry, coupled with "relaxation and entertainment" consisting of graphic television depictions of the worst sorts of violence, unloving sex, and the constant use of bodies for commerce. What we didn't have was a system that seems designed to kill the spirits of our children to make them into useful corporate assets (read brain-dead, compliant and willing to believe $2+2 = 5$).

Coca Cola struck a deal with my kid's school district last year. Coke is helping fund the school in return for exclusive rights to the school for their product. My kids are not even allowed to bring in Pepsi products, for example, on their own. They use Coca Cola book covers and there are Coca Cola banners all over the school. Why did the school board accept this? Because our society won't provide sufficient funds to educate our kids and our government won't interfere with the national teacher's

association's monopoly wasting the funds they do have. And why is this? Because we have this belief structure going on that says "If I put on blinders and pretend that what I do doesn't affect anyone, I can have perfect freedom. Screw the kids, let them take care of themselves."

Well, gee SuZ, why don't you try to change things? Someday when I have PMS, I'll get into it. Let's just say the system is not currently amenable to change.

I would note that both the German Nazis and the Chinese cultural revolutionists were fueled by young people (teenagers) who became fed up at their child-abusing, child ignoring, cultures. Both groups, by the way, ended up being far more sexually repressive and socially conservative than previous governments.

What my mother didn't have in her day was the "Sophie's Choice" of giving her son a mind-altering drug to help him conform to the only learning style available in public (and most private) schools or simply let him fail. I finally chose option 1. My sister chose not to give her son drugs. He dropped out of high school (9th grade) and now, at 19, can't even hold onto a job at MacDonaldis, because his sense of self is so crushed. He is having lots of sex, though; he seems to be quite sexually free, as a matter of fact. He knows how his body works and all about how to avoid AIDS, but we're all still afraid he's going to get it. He learned most of what he knows about women from porn sites on the web, so his relationships aren't particularly satisfying.

We all have difficulty with sex. Sexual repression has been going on ever since humankind noticed how vulnerable women were when they were pregnant or caring for young children. For civilization to be realized, Men had to be pressed into service to help and women had to be domesticated. Though men do bond with women and children when the environment is right, they aren't naturally monogamous. Sexual mores were developed to get men enrolled in the system and keep them there, by giving them each their own woman (or women) and children, and trying to get them to keep their hands off the women who belong to others. This is really very simple and has been noted by every anthropological observer who has cared to look. This isn't about "sin." It's about how we are built.

"Thou shalt not commit covet your neighbor's wife" was the means by which fledgling cultures, without access to birth control technology, kept a lid on things within the tribe. Rarely were there ever any injunctions about coveting the women of one's enemies - that was what rape was for. Ken Wilber pointed out that sex and violence have always been linked. That is why there is always rape in war. Sex is an emotional event and jealousy can be deadly. In hunter/gatherer cultures, where sexual restrictions are observed less there is a very high

rate of homicide.

Who would have thought - them being so "natural" and all.... must have been a case of not getting the dharma right.

SuZ

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Donny Simon (Shakti Das, 9/2/99 2:50:05 AM)

Suz

You misread my post entirely. I said that these tragedies were the result of people being out of touch with life and not honoring the life force. I mentioned that yoga was one way (chi Gong another, tantra a third, meditation, etc) to get back in touch with it. I did not suggest that these were exclusive or the only ways. Sex is only one powerful way where many in adolescence get turned off and alienated from the body and life. Adolescent problems can't be successfully disassociate with this hormonal change.

I never suggested that it was the only way. To ignore the guilt and neuroses involved as factors in this alienation is your right (you don't have to agree with me) and I don't require that of you. Now here I am not calling you personally guilty or neurotic. You see the difference?

However I do wish that you take the time to read what I said before you get so "hot and heavy" (whew) with me. I would like an educated, polite, and non-emotional discussion about human sexuality and tantra. Really I don't care what methods that are used to help kids or adults to connect back up with the life force and their bodies and achieve reintegration, whatever works is fine for me, but without honoring life, we get these problems. No i do not own stock in tantra.

Now I was assuming that you actually care about solving these problems, and that requires first reading what these posts actually say (not reading in all sorts of things) and then staying focused on what you/we are really trying to accomplish. Given your response I observe that you seem to have some charge here about discussing this subject with an open mind (without taking the higher ground).

For instance, if what you say is true i.e., that yoga is the practice of the Hindu religion then are you Hindu? Is this yoga conference for those interested in Hinduism? I'm not Hindu, thus do I qualify as a yoga teacher?

When you characterize tantra teachers as; "Seems like just another version of "teen pussy" if you ask me..." I say that it is your right to express your harsh judgement on tantra if you care, but I say that you are doing it out of ignorance and prejudice. It is not correct to extrapolate that because there may be a bad apple in the bunch, that

does not make the whole bunch sour.

"No need to talk down to me, Donny (ostensibly through a third party). " Again Suz, I don't know what you mean here. What third party? What's going on here?

You say: "Never thought I'd be shunned for sincerely speaking my truth in the forum I helped create." I really don't know what you mean here. Can you be more specific. How have you been shunned and by whom?

Well now that I have read your post over I see that you internalized everything that I was saying personally. Actually I have been saying these weird things for years (it has nothing to do with you) and tes I am a real fan of Reich's, but won't get into details about that. Not dropping names, but these neo-Reichian people really have done tremendous work in this field and all because the one's that I mentioned were male, it doesn't automatically make them or me sexist.

But this does show that you don't trust or respect me much (or my intent), doesn't it? You betcha! Sorry, though misogyny is not my style (I am happily married). Too bad the internet doesn't allow eye contact.

"I am somewhat distrustful of tantra", yes this shows.

I've been in electronic conferencing for 18 years and know some of its pitfalls, can you re-read my post over again in a different way? Once distrust is there, it is very difficult for the other person to say anything that can be trusted, is it not?. Dunno what I could gain by alienating you and insulting you, but then again maybe I am another passive/agressive mysogynist as you implied? That would explain a lot wouldn't it?

Here I agree with you completely when you say, "People (not just me) are getting tired of our society's endless and disappointing experiment in debauchery. People aren't becoming sexually free, they are acquiring perversions and becoming dysfunctional at the speed of light (the TV light). Child sexual abuse is increasing, rape is increasing, and the scope (but not the numbers) of violence is increasing. Children aren't getting in touch with their spirits, they're being pressured into sex when they are still children. They are learning their bodies are for sale and for selling and that their only value is in who they can screw.

"Where do you think sexual dysfunction comes from, how it grows, what it feeds upon? Religiously-induced guilt is one way to become damaged. There are many other ways that can be far more devastating and difficult to root out. I came of age in the belly of the beast - in a sexually dysfunctional family, with an alcoholic, abusive stepfather, in the midwest in the '50s."

So all the more reason to solve the problem by getting to the root. Putting the finger in the leaking dyke isn't working, just like prohibition in the twenties just helped the mafia and the police both make more money. Yes, pedophiles, sex criminals, "perverts, etc -- why do they do it, how are they made? Not too many people ask, because they themselves are not capable of thinking straight on these "disturbing" subjects.

Hey, don't paint me as a sex fiend just because I want to stop the violence and don't lump me into the free sex "pussy" game. This is another read in. I never once in any of my posts advocated free sex (a total read in), Why?

You continue on in a defensive/aggressive manner about monogamy and free sex, but I don't have any recollection of referring to these topics previously. So what's going on here.

Look Suz, if I didn't say this before, I am saying this now; you have a great spirit and you are intelligent, but you get carried away some times. I wish that you could put that great energy that you have toward some real problem solving here (no you don't have to agree with me) but my observation is that the tone of your post was not in this direction. Please correct me if I am wrong.

Now if you just needed to vent (in the outside chance that I was calling you names), then I can accept that once in awhile, but I'd rather use my free time in constructive dialogue (not personal attacks) and although I practice many forms of yoga (as well as Chi Gong) I feel that tantra yoga can be discussed without wasting our energies by getting emotionally upset or angry. If this is not your agenda (and you are the hostess) then tell me to scram (not the first time this has happened).

Again I encourage you to re-read my previous posts as they were worded (as well as implicitly intended) and if you still feel the way that you do, then I'm gone. Sorry to have riled you up so!

lastly, you said, "Ken Wilber pointed out that sex and violence have always been linked." No this is only true in certain men, not all. You are right that in present day India, women are not at all treated well, but the age of tantra in India has long disappeared (1000 years ago) and the common Indian has no practice of Tantra nor yoga.

We can't adequately judge ancient Greece, by present day Greece, Rome, Egypt, etc. They are entirely different cultures today. So the same is true with India. Does classical tantra have all the answers? No I do not suggest that any one system of yoga has all the answers.

Again I agree that there are many factors involved, but it remains in my experience and observation a direct connection between the junk food, the abuse, the

disconnection, the self abuse, sexual abuse, and violence (as Ken Wilber points out), so it seems logical that we can learn what forms do not create this negative association i.e., what factors contribute to non-violence and honoring all life (ahimsa) in this regard. I don't believe that given the choice (and awareness) that any man or woman would willingly chose the violent path, but when man is lost in compulsion, fear, pain, and confusion, their actions reflect their consciousness. Waking up is thus the answer in general, but first we must wake up to the fact that we are asleep.

In this society such questions have been relegated to the police, jails, and judges (who have no clue or training) more than to the psychologists, criminologists, or sociologists (demonized as late by the fundies). That framework has some things to offer, but I find that genuine (non-religious) tantric approaches have more to offer in this regard if anyone else is interested in exploring this (no this is not a solicitation for sex) in the context of the forum, i.e., what worked for you, what doesn't, etc? If I'm out of line here, let me know!
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(Shakti Das, 9/2/99 3:16:43 AM)
Suz,

I re-read your last post a few times, and came to see more of its value of expression. Forgive me for not appreciating its merit's more. One confusion may have been (and I should have caught this earlier) when you said;

"Never thought I'd be shunned for sincerely speaking my truth in the forum I helped create. I guess detached intellectualism is the vogue these days. A person could get irritated."

and

"But, oh, excuse me. I forgot that a discussion on pornography doesn't belong on a topic about Tantra and Human Sexuality."

I observed that the conversation was going very off topic and going nowhere because of that. This is something that occurs often on this conference (IMO) and I thought that I was attempting to focus it to the thread when I suggested that if we cut out the moralizing or the attempt to solve things through manmade standards or moralizing, we may be able to focus on the topic better. I said:

"Such questions of external manmade standards belong in a conference dedicated to moral and ethical behavior, certainly not in this topic (tantra and Sexuality)"

Notice I did not "suggest" that pornography was off topic. It was not an attempt to silence or censor you. So now when

I read your post in this new light i can see that you were sharing a lot of "valuable" things in a remarkably compact space (considering its broad scope).

Without over grandizing sex (it looks best when we are denied it) nor ignoring it power and allure on the other hand, isn't there a middle road (sahaj) that can be expedient?

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Synchronicity again (YogaSuz, 9/2/99 11:04:09 AM)

I want to point out that one of the reasons this topic languished for so long before the porn issue struck big was that, at least for myself, I was afraid to put up any information about my own feelings about sexuality.

Naturally my feelings come from my personal experience, and for safety reason I do not wish to talk about my sexual experiences in such a public forum. Men are fortunate to be able to post here whatever they please, but I, for one, am afraid to talk about sexuality because the lurkers or even regulars (I only know a few people here personally, so perhaps not everyone here is who they present themselves to be) may be reading posts and fantasizing about me or other women.

I think that men may not fully grasp the fear and repression that women must live with, how hurtful the Madonna/Whore image is to us.

Although I want to explain my feelings more clearly, I am too scared to put up more information here. Even among the friends here, I cannot ever share how I feel. Isn't this what we're discussing...why women feel always that they must hide their sexuality, how we've gotten this afraid, and how to change that?

<HL>

Today I am thinking hard about the recent posts here. Two days ago my husband and I discovered that my stepson had spent the two days alone at home viewing all manner of porn on the 'net, for hours on end, and not doing one of his chores. (His school starts after the schools in our area do. The camps were closed and no babysitters were to be found...all the high school and college age girls were back in school and even the mothers of kids were overwhelmed last week, so reluctantly we left him alone and unfortunately he proved that he was indeed too immature to be left alone.)

Naturally we were angry that he betrayed our trust, as we had specifically cautioned him not to go to those sites. He is too unsavvy computer-wise to empty the browser's history files, so it is easy to monitor his activity and we have let him and his sister know that we can see everything they do on the internet. We always thought the knowledge that we could view the sites they visited was deterrent enough, but apparently the appeal of the porn was too strong.

Frankly, I cannot blame him for wanting to look and the 'Net makes it so easy. My husband and I discussed how disturbing the Internet is: we might have some sexual reading materials laying around our house somewhere, but we would never have the XXX stuff that is all over the 'Net in our home.

Now that this issue is out in the open, I feel that I have an opportunity to discuss all sorts of big issues with my step-son...sexuality, addiction, why he did something with the almost transparent need to be caught and punished...but instead I have been mute the last two days, not knowing how to react.

It certainly changes my relationship to him to know that he is viewing women in this way. For the first time I find him a bit menacing, even though he is only a young boy. Because he already has a poor self-image and can be aggressive, I worry about him becoming obsessed with porn and how this might affect his attitude toward women.

I'm not sure how I feel about porn myself. Like most people, I find it compelling even though it bores me soon enough. I do feel overwhelmed by all the anti-woman messages out in the media today...not just the pornography, but the more subtle forms of it on t.v., like Baywatch and Pacific Blue...or even the fact that there are no women lead characters on most t.v. shows. I feel like there is no where I can be seen just for who I am now, even in my own family. I am very sad and once again feel shut out, afraid that if I speak about my feelings and experiences honestly I will be labeled a whore, or worse, ignored.

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Getting to Artistry (crotalus, 9/2/99 1:06:58 PM)

>>If this is not your agenda (and you are the hostess...<

SuZ has not been a co-host here for some time - "too busy to keep up" she said upon requesting to be removed.

Strikes me this dialog is also about moving onto the dashed line curve (taken from The Magic of Conflict: Turning a Life of Work into a Work of Art); looking for the high road of artistry.

Searches on AltaVista yield:

porn: 28,465,610 web pages

hardcore: 12,224,180 web pages

"teen pussy": 518,907 web pages

"kiddy porn": 50,643 web pages

About 3 months ago the last three numbers offered comparable ratios to the porn number with only modest growth. Perhaps, we're close to a peak or maybe it's just a breathing spell [trying to stay on topic here ;-)] in the surge of porn on the web. I've also noticed that watching

Magellan Voyeur
reveals many fewer sex related searches
than in the past.

Kiddy porn gets my cabrone on its hind legs. If it's made with live kids (as opposed to animation) then it is clearly the most serious violation and that stain must fall on the user as well. A good many of the web pages tapped by the kiddy porn search are speaking out against kiddy porn or claiming that their teen pussy is legal.

The Pueblo, CO police department has been running a sting operation in which a police woman pretends to be a vulnerable child on Internet chat. Anyone appearing in person is arrested. A clear case of entrapment. Just why Pueblo feels they have to go "national" with this is beyond me, but a similar operation in every major police department in the nation would quickly create enough paranoia to cripple the Internet as a vehicle for the child molester. A vigilante approach to this actually appeals more (I believe the techniques of gov't entrapment encourage bad behavior on both sides), even though the people that tend to that sort of regulation seem to be as narrow minded and violent as the ones they're after.

Perhaps a web page (supplied by NSA who could have the data if they'd stop worrying about Amnesty International) of IP address frequency correlations with porn sites would be useful. These might be ranked by ISP to see what interesting geographical trends emerge. This might tell us where to concentrate our education efforts...maybe an antiporn bookmark for the bibles in the bible belt, say.

>>I am very sad and once again feel shut out, afraid that if I speak about my feelings and experiences honestly I will be labeled a whore, or worse, ignored.<

Openness has it's drawbacks but closedness is where "they" want to keep you. SuZ and I (mostly me) had a real head butting with a misogynist over on the other side of Webb.net some time ago that made us (me, after SuZ brought it to my attention) concerned about not "asking for" in-your-face kinda trouble over the web. Finally, a 100+ year old character named Rachel showed up to blow the whole thing away with a graphic bit of vile porn (pic of a woman whose naked abdomen was labwled with an Intel like graphic [Satan Inside!] as she defecated in the mouth of a man labeled with the on-line handle of the misogynist). So, yeah things can get out of hand; but even low porn has its uses (I'm probably the only one who admired the high artistry of this denouement - naturally, I got blamed for it.)

Probably you don't need to worry about sharing what you've learned and felt here. The feedback will be good (

perhaps useful, even) and I doubt you'll raise your anxiety level. Of course, people are rarely what they seem or who they pretend to be...

I tend, like a woman I suppose, to watch my back constantly because of all the travel I've done over the years and, simply, because it's good protective coloring and an awareness reminder. So, I'm not as concerned (only hubris, really) about my safety. I try not to get into situations or locales where I can't hold my own. I was in the can after a Denver Avs game during the playoffs (Denver had lost to the hated RedWings) where a RedWing jerseyed man was getting verbally crowded by an alcohol soaked Avs fan. I was tempted to scoot out but rode out the tense moment in the interest of my bladder. Virtually the entire room full of 40 guys needing to pee became ugly with the kind of anger that alcohol and the ritualized violence of hockey promote. Fortunately, everyone needed to pee more than they needed to scrap.

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(Shakti Das, 9/2/99 1:28:00 PM)

Suz,

Thanks for expressing yourself and sharing your feelings and fears. This is a good step (vulnerability) to "open up" deeper communication. You are right, men will never know how it is to be a female (like female's won't know what it is to be male). No I am not being superficial here (because this is not an easy lesson (at least for me) as is unfortunately the case, many humans's tend to "assume" shared assumptions/contexts/values that actually are not shared at all.

When I am able to give up my bias (assumptions) and prejudice then real communication (through better listening skills) can occur. Yes, this communication ability is much like what yoga teaches i.e., being present more, emptying the mind, applying full awareness, sitting in our own authenticity yet being open (while not reacting).

In other words we all tend to "frame" reality according to our experiences and this can lead to provincialism, stagnation, and self limitation if we are not careful. Hopefully any authentic practice (for me it has been mostly yoga) empowers me to let go of the limitations (imposed by the mind, fears, and negative emotions) and allow myself to relate better from that core (of good energy which is nourishing, healing, and liberating. Not that I am centered as much as I would like to, but it's a path.

In this way (if we both acknowledge this common path) or have another better common ground that we can relate to and present to the other that we can share in a positive context, we may be able to fall back upon that as an effective reference and refocusing point.

So what if any expedient context can we create (if it is not tantra) that can allow us to communicate effectively

and productively (without fear) about these "sexual" dynamics, rather than ignore discussion completely as the other extreme alternative?

Perhaps tantra yoga was a bad choice of terms. I picked it when I created this topic, because it was the only tradition that attempted to bridge the "gulf" between intimate relationships, sexual procreative energies, breath, joy, and "love". It was something that I studied and found somewhat effective in my own experience.

On the down side, it has many religious connotations and other negative associations in some people's minds, so maybe it would be more effective to throw the word away and approach the subject (if we share it still) again what causes this gap, what causes the strife between sexes, how can male/female live in a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances both people (both/and) versus dare I say contractual, and on the negative to the joy and love, what causes the sexual conflicts, hatred, violence, sexual abuse, pedophiles, "pornographic urges", and how can the "negative" or undesirable be prevented and the positive "desirable" affirmed.

Can we put this in a yoga context or is that hopeless. If it is hopeless then the premise for this topic creation in the Yoga Symposium is hopeless as well.

Perhaps none of us are ready, prepared, or willing to engage on such a pursuit at this time? So whaddya think? Can we create something better to this end?

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Re-post (crotalus, 9/3/99 1:58:23 PM)

The post (donny's) this refers to is missing now.

>My take is that the widespread interest in porn reflects a widespread unfulfillment in real life or at least an inability to run energy through the water chakra (seems to get stuck there in many). Any comments?<<

I'm guessing there are more people (mostly men) that do porn than do pot (estimate is ~20M regular users and ~60M

occasional users of cannabis).

I'll guess further that some of those pot smokers hurt other people (sifting out those who are on some other violence prone drug, like alcohol or speed or coke); about the same number as those who directly hurt other people because of their porn habit. Doubt they're the same group, though many cannabis users will tell you they're as drawn to the porn (or sex if the opportunity presents itself) as the chow when they've a snoot full of THC.

The real issue of damage concerns the possibility that the existence (less available is worse than more available, until the underlying causes are addressed) of porn will inappropriately sexualize a person when no

other timely information is available for comparison or to properly condition (ya gotta love that in its social contex) taste and Right Thinking. "Which came first, the porn or the violent pervert?"

As a culture we certainly worry more about kids and pot than we do kids and porn. Any pothead college student can tell you that smoke and tests don't mix and that it is not the best study aid (better'n the TV but hey...). The bad effects of pot are short term (neglecting the stupid acts and failing lungs of the chronic user) (certainly less than alcohol by any measure) whereas those of porn may not be. A War on Porn will be about as successful as the War on Some Drugs - it would become much more expensive, desired (the naughty factor) and troubling. Attention to root causes with no expectation of a quick fix is in order.

I see it personally as one of the tools the patriarchy uses to maintain the mind set about the inferiority of the female. The conscious use of porn to inculcate this mind set (with a willingness to live with the tendencies that violent porn may precipitate) is a bit of a stretch for me. Certainly it may be a consequence more often than right thinking people concerned about maintaining good public order (none of that hollering "Fire in the theater!" stuff.) can tolerate. Surely it is a symptom of our inability to be responsible about our freedoms.

I'm a bit more concerned about constant media portraits of nonsexual violence when it comes to 1st amendment issues of the day and worries about conditioning. That concern is not uncommon but it seems an even more sacred domain of free speech.

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A Moment of Clarity - Pulp Fiction from 1244 (crotalus, 9/3/99 3:43:39 PM)

This poem by Rumi was recalled by the stimulation of donny's post (elsewhere) about laughter and Kit's post

(elsewhere) about Rumi and the prisons we make for ourselves and some of the discussions we've been sharing here recently.

The spiritual discussion and grand conclusions ignore the fundamentally bad treatment of a beautiful woman because she is a concubine. This view leading to poor treatment was common in the Muslim world of the 13th century and was not restricted to concubines. Nor have things changed much. The piece begins with a bit o' porn.

Intro by translator Coleman Barks.

ON THE DESIRE-BODY

Sufis call the wantings nafs. From the urgent way lovers want each other to the sannyasin's search for truth, all moving is from the mover. Every pull draws us to the ocean. Rumi says it's important to live the wantings as they come and not get stuck somewhere, stagnant. He was

asked once what to do about a young man caught doing some indecent act. The story doesn't mention what exactly--masturbation, peeping-tomming, whatever wild wantings young men think to do. Rumi told them not to worry about it. "It just means he's growing his feathers. The dangerous case is a kid who doesn't do indecent acts, who then leaves the nest without feathers. One flap and the cat has him." Be careful, Rumi suggests, about shaming sexual behavior in an adolescent or anyone who hasn't yet had his or her fill of erotic trancing. Often, the closest we come to surrender is orgasm. In Rumi's symbology the rooster is a symbol for that energy.

So how did Hasam kill his rooster? By dissolving into the play. The nafs are energies that keep us moving, stopping nowhere. Union with the divine continually unfolds. Next to the glowing drive-in movie, the junkyard's rusted stacks of old desire-bodies. Let the beauty we love keep turning into action, transmuted to another, another. What have I ever lost by dying? Rumi asks, exchanging one set of nafs for the next. Chopped rooster energy becomes another dining room story. Particles of praise shine in the sunlight. Anything you grab hold of on the bank breaks with the river's pressure. When you do things from your soul, the river itself moves through you. Freshness and a deep joy are signs of the current.

SEXUAL URGENCY, WHAT A WOMAN'S LAUGHTER CAN DO, AND THE NATURE OF TRUE VIRILITY

Someone offhand to the Caliph of Egypt,
"The King of Mosul.
has a concubine like no other,
more beautiful than I can describe.
She looks like this."
He draws her likeness on paper.

The Caliph drops his cup.
Immediately he sends his captain to Mosul
with an army of thousands. The siege goes on for a week,
with many casualties, the walls and the towers unsteady
as soft as wax. The King of Mosul sends an envoy.
"Why this killing? If you want the city,
I will leave and you can have it!
If you want more wealth, that's even easier."

The captain takes out the piece of paper
with the girl's picture on it. This.
The strong King of Mosul is quick to reply.
"Lead her out. The idol belongs with the idolater."

When the captain sees her, he falls in love
like the Caliph. Don't laugh at this.
This loving is also part of infinite love,
without which the world does not evolve.
Objects move from inorganic to vegetation

to selves endowed with spirit through the urgency
of every love that wants to come to perfection.

This captain thinks the soil looks fertile,
so he sows his seed. Sleeping, he sees the girl
in a dream. He makes love to her image,
and his semen spurts out.

After a while he begins to wake.
Slowly he senses the girl is not there.
"I have given my seed into nothing.
I shall put this tricky woman to a test."

A leader who is not captain of his body is not one
to be honored, (best send this to Slick)with his semen
spilled so in the sand.
Now he loses all control. He doesn't care
about the Caliph, or about dying.
"I am in love," he says.

Do not act in such heat.
Take counsel with a master.
But the captain couldn't.

His infatuation is a blackwater wave carrying him away.
Something that doesn't exist makes a phantom
appear in the darkness of a well,
and the phantom itself becomes strong enough
to throw actual lions into the hole.

More advice: it is dangerous to let other men
have intimate connections with the women in your care.
Cotton and fire sparks, those are, together.
Difficult, almost impossible, to quench.

The captain does not return straight to the Caliph,
but instead camps in a secluded meadow.
Blazing, he can't tell ground from sky.
His reason is lost in a drumming sound,
worthless radish and son of a radish.
The Caliph himself a gnat, nothing.

But just as this cultivator tears off the woman's pants
and lies down between her legs, his penis moving
straight to the mark, there's a great tumult
and a rising cry of soldiers outside the tent.
He leaps up with his bare bottom shining
and runs out, scimitar in hand.

A black lion from a nearby swamp
has gotten in among the horses. Chaos.
The lion jumping twenty feet in the air,
tents billowing like an ocean.

The captain quickly approaches the lion,
splits his head with one blow,
and now he's running back to the woman's tent.
When he stretches out her beauty again,

his penis goes even more erect.

The engagement, the coming together, is as with the lion.
His penis stays erect all through it,
and it does not scatter semen feebly.
The beautiful one is amazed at his virility.
Immediately, with great energy she joins with his energy,
and their two spirits go out from them as one.

Whenever two are linked this way, there comes another
from the unseen world. It may be through birth,
if nothing prevents conception,
but a third does come, when two unite in love,
or in hate. The intense qualities born
of such joining appear in the spiritual world.

You will recognize them when you go there.
Your associations bear progeny.
Be careful, therefore. Wait, and be conscious,
before you go to meet anyone.
Remember there are children to consider!

Children you must live with and tend to,
born of your emotions with another, entities
with a form, and speech, and a place to live.
They are crying to you even now.
You have forgotten us. Come back.
Be aware of this. A man and a woman together
always have a spiritual result.

The captain was not so aware. He fell,
and stuck like a gnat in a pot of buttermilk,
totally absorbed in his love affair. Then,
just as suddenly, he's uninterested. He tells
the woman, "Don't say a word of this to the Caliph.

He takes her there, and the Caliph is smitten.
She's a hundred times more beautiful than he's imagined.

A certain man asks an eloquent teacher,
"What is true and what false!" "This is false:
a bat hides from the sun, not from the idea of the sun.

It's the idea that puts fear in the bat and leads it
deeper into the cave. You have an idea
of an enemy that attaches you to certain companions.

Moses, the inner light of revelation,
lit up the top of Sinai, but the mountain
could not hold that light.

Don't deceive yourself that way!
Having the idea is not living
the reality, of anything.

There's no courage in the idea of battle.
The bathhouse wall is covered with pictures
and much talk of heroism. Try to make an idea move

from ear to eye. Then your woolly ears
become as subtle as fibers of light.

Your whole body becomes a mirror,
all eye and spiritual breathing.
Let your ear lead you to your lover."

So the Caliph is mightily in love with this girl.
His kingdom vanishes like lightning.
If your loving is numb, know this: when what you own
can vanish, it's only a dream, a vanity, breath
through a mustache. It would have killed you.

There are those that say, "Nothing lasts."
They're wrong. Every moment they say,
"If there were some other reality,
I would have seen it. I would know about it."

Because a child doesn't understand a chain of reasoning,
should adults give up being rational!
If reasonable people don't feel the presence of love
within the universe, that doesn't mean it's not there.

Joseph's brothers did not see Joseph's beauty,
but Jacob never lost sight of it. Moses at first
saw only a wooden staff, but to his other seeing
it was a viper and a cause of panic.

Eyesight is in conflict with inner knowing.
Moses' hand is a hand and a source of light.

These matters are as real as the infinite is real,
but they seem religious fantasies to some,
to those who believe only in the reality
of the sexual organs and the digestive tract.

Don't mention the Friend to those.
To others, sex and hunger are fading images,
and the Friend is more constantly, solidly here.
Let the former go to their church, and we'll go to ours.
Don't talk long to skeptics or to those
who claim to be atheists.

So the Caliph has the idea
of entering the beautiful woman,
and he comes to her to do his wanting.

Memory raises his penis, straining it in thought
toward the pushing down and the lifting up
which make that member grow large with delight.

But as he actually lies down with the woman,
there comes to him a decree from God
to stop these voluptuous doings. A very tiny sound,
like a mouse might make. The penis droops,
and desire slips away.

He thinks that whispering sound is a snake

rising off the straw mat. The girl sees his drooping
and sails into fits of laughing at the marvelous thing.
She remembers the captain killing the lion
with his penis standing straight up.

Long and loud her laughter.
Anything she thinks of only increases it,
like the laughter of those who eat hashish.
Everything is funny.

Every emotion has a source and a key that opens it.
The Caliph is furious. He draws his sword.
"What's so amusing.' Tell me everything you're thinking.

Don't hold anything back. At this moment
I'm clairvoyant. If you lie, I'll behead you.
If you tell the truth, I'll give you your freedom."

He stacks seven Qur'ans on top of each other
and swears to do as he says.
When she finally gets hold of herself,
the girl tells all, in great detail. Of the camp
in the meadow, the killing of the lion,
the captain's return to the tent with his penis
still hard as the horn of a rhino.

And the contrast with the Caliph's own member
sinking down because of one mouse-whisper.
Hidden things always come to light.
Do not sow bad seed. Be sure, they'll come up.
Rain and the sun's heat make them rise into the air.
Spring comes after the fall of the leaves,
which is proof enough of the fact of resurrection.
Secrets come out in Spring, out from earth-lips into leaf.
Worries become wine-headaches.
But where did the wine come from! Think.

A branch of blossoms does not look like seed.
A man does not resemble semen. Jesus came
from Gabriel's breath, but he is not in that form.
The grape doesn't look like the vine.
Loving actions are the seed of something
completely different, a living-place.
No origin is like where it leads to.
We can't know where our pain is from.
We don't know all that we've done.
Perhaps it's best that we don't.
Nevertheless we suffer for it.

The Caliph comes back to his clarity. "In the pride
of my power I took this woman from another,
so of course, someone came to knock on my door.
Whoever commits adultery is a pimp
for his own wife.

If you cause injury to someone, you draw
that same injury toward yourself. My treachery
made my friend a traitor to me. This repetition

must stop somewhere. Here, in an act of mercy.

I'll send you back to the captain,
saying another of my wives is jealous,
and since the captain was brave enough
to bring you back from Mosul,
he shall have you in marriage."

This is the virility of a prophet.
The Caliph was sexually impotent,
but his manliness was most powerful.

The kernel of true manhood is the ability
to abandon sensual indulgences. The intensity
of the captain's libido is less than a husk
compared to the Caliph's nobility in ending
the cycle of sowing lust and reaping
secrecy and vengefulness.

-Rumi

So, the Caliph salvages a bad moment with a grand gesture

(forgetting that the captain lost interest and that
another human is treated like a sexual slave and that
many have died or suffered needlessly in the sordid
acquisition). A decent moral I suppose and many insightful
comments on the nature of spiritual sex complete with
tantric overtones. The final call for renunciation to
find "true manhood," if only the kernel, is typical.
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Missing Post (Shakti Das, 9/3/99 5:27:13 PM)

Well no big loss (but if anybody saved it) can you repost
it or send to me. Basically if I remember any of it, we did
a classic study of adolescence sexual behavior and how
there too often exists a conflict between the message
coming from the physiology (body) and social (especially body
negative societies) values and conventional anti-sexual
morals. This conflict usually rears its ugly head during
puberty often suddenly and is very much part of this
often "difficult" time for parents and children. How we deal
with this innocent and powerful physiological "urge" (as
children and adults) can create a strong vector in the
future development of the child.

The post was more comprehensive and offered more than
an analysis but tried to delineate a long list of
possible actions/reactions running the gamut from
indulgence to avoidance considering their possible
body/mind ramifications.

I believe that Sue's response is also missing (I enjoyed
it much). Does anyone have that one?

To respond to her's (missing). I feel it is better that we
not see each other as liberal or conservative but
rather as individuals. Sure there are some who fit these
stereotypes just like some fit "New Age", hippy, fundamentalist,
and other labels but I don't think any one here is a

conformist to any of these (we all have our leanings). Actually (almost everyone I have voted for the past 25 years have lost) and certainly politically I do not identify with either liberal or conservative. I'm sure I wouldn't be able to fit you inside any such box as well, so let's keep open the possibilities that each one is speaking from their own experience and truth (unless we catch someone speaking the party line). You can call me to my truth anytime you feel a need and I'll do the same for you (if you like).

In order to clarify, are we not better off by distinguishing some discrete issues (although very much inter-related).

- 1) Violence to men or women is bad
- 2) We both sincerely wish to eliminate violence
- 3) There exists a cause to this violence
- 4) Pornography is a symptom of (Is it the result of negative sexual programming?. If not what is the cause?)
- 5) Pornography is like a smelly elephant in the living room which can not be ignored without being dysfunctional.
- 6) Pornography has negative consequences for women because it usually demeans their image in the minds of men, objectifies as sexual objects for men's gratification and pleasure, and otherwise perpetuates the negative cycle of violence.
- 7) Men are also victims of porn as well as women. Consumers of pornography are living vicarious lives, yet they may feel more in touch with their feelings through it. In fact they are participating vicariously trying to fulfill a sublimated desire through this vicarious and fantasy media.

Is the above some of the themes that we have been exploring? Certainly we have not agreed on the solution.

As Bob and you point out its use is widespread. Other than to make it illegal or more expensive, what about classifying it as a public health menace (like drugs were done in the sixties). Maybe then it would be able to be treated scientifically.

I think pornography is actually a disease like a drug addiction. In the long run it is not serving the consumer, but (as a means toward masturbation and relief) it serves to temporarily discharge the tension, but never getting to the core neuroses. I'm serious here, what about offering free counseling? I mean how many are addicted? But is there anywhere these poor people can go for help except to hire a psychologist?

With all the negative publicity, shame, and guilt involved it would be difficult to start a pornographer's anonymous club PAC), but ignoring the fact that that it is a sad affair for ALL concerned, or simply ignoring their plight as well as the potential negative consequences of censorship or making it illegal seems dysfunctional.

Of course for any real addiction counseling or therapy to be effective, the therapy would have to understand the causes and have an effective treatment. Could reconnecting to the body such in yoga, learning how to run the energy through the meridians and chakras so it wouldn't be stuck in one place (the swadhisthana chakra in this case) through practises of taoist yoga and chi gong, psychoanalytical techniques such as regression, or other techniques be effective?

Tantra, Taoist Yoga, Chi Gong, and Reichian Therapy, claim to offer answers, but none of them are easily obtainable by the majority of pornographers. Maybe there are even more better solutions available, but in order to develop them, we must first have a good handle on the cause of the malady.

What I find is that parents especially know that there is a problem, but not knowing how to deal with it they blame it on sex itself. But sex by itself is innocent. Thus(although if it didn't exist there would not be the problem) but of course is must not be confused with the cause of pornography, but rather pornography results in our culture as a symptom of a specific negative type of sexual programming.

So before I would suggest a therapy, I'd like to be certain of the diagnosis. Is it simply a result of an unconscious urge to get in touch with lost feelings -- with vitality, their youth, their body, life itself -- and as such another sublimation/distraction much like other addictions but more specifically related to negative sexual conditioning?

So to confront the problem (and not shoot the messenger again) we can ask how does this negative programming occur, how do we prevent it from occurring in the first place, and how do we make available effective treatments to those who have been already so programmed?

Well, maybe this post will get lost as well? fate? Yes, I am simply thinking out loud as well.
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SuZett Estell (suz coyote, 9/3/99 6:33:14 PM)
Hello All,

My long post of yesterday evening was mysteriously erased. I didn't save it, so.....ah well.

Donny, I have not been a hostess around here for a while, as Bob pointed out. My schedule has been too erratic to do the job justice. You do a fine job here and I truly appreciate your work as well as admire your wide knowledge base. I would not say you were "out of line" - but I did feel I was being dismissed for having the gall to present a conservative side of a complicated issue.

Conservatives aren't the only folks who operate out of a "belief structure." So do liberals. The liberals, however, are sometimes worse than the Fundies at refusing to apply a test of reason to those beliefs.

We all like to giggle at Fundamentalist belief structures. But to a Fundie, their beliefs provide a consistent moral, spiritual and ethical system. They believe in "original sin," back up their assertions with examples from a long historical tradition, and act on that belief. They cite a "holy book" that prescribes remedies for humankind's flaws. I don't believe in their set of beliefs, but they can, at least, explain them.

The liberals, on the other hand, also have a belief - that humankind is inherently love and light and if we could only get the Fundies off us, we'd live in a near-utopia. But when you ask a liberal to back that belief up, you are greeted with a reassertion of the belief, a wringing of hands over the closed-mindedness of the Fundie and a trite incantation to the deity of personal freedom. Instead of a reasoned response, one gets derision, anger or dismissal.

Most folks in the forum know that I am passionate in my arguments. What you may consider this "getting carried away," I like to think of it as enthusiasm coupled with intellectual courage (or foolishness, as the case may be). I don't like to waste time (each of us has our allocation of minutes and that's it) and I always try to go right to the heart of issues. I am not (as my loving husband can attest) a demur and submissive woman, but, by way of compensation, I'm told I'm interesting.

SuZ, thanks for your brave and honest post. You said, very succinctly, what I have been trying to get across, because you said what you FELT. Tantra requires trust and women have a very difficult time trusting men. It's a historical thing having to do with:

female infanticide,
officially sanctioned domestic abuse (until very recently) -
now rarely or minimally punished widespread violence
against women
sale of young girls to strangers,
incest,
forced prostitution,
male-dominated courts,
husbands' imprisonment of wives in mental institutions
for disagreements with their husbands
war
rape
discrimination and harassment

You get the picture. This stuff is primarily done to women by men (or by men to other, "lesser" men). Though, occasionally a woman is abusive to a man, the abuse is not anywhere near the scope and intensity of that

visited upon us. A recent poll asked men and women what their deepest fear was - an overwhelming number of men replied "Getting laughed at by a woman." The women replied, "Getting killed by a man."

It's not that every man does these things. These things (like the promulgation of porn) have been done so long that every man DOES NOT HAVE TO do them. Mary Daly calls this the "Holy Ghost" or the internal fear that prevents women from stepping too far out of line (and from fully trusting men).

Many women believe the "old boy network" (including men who do not directly abuse women) protects women-abusers through lax laws and lax enforcement of laws, excusing the behavior, ganging up on a woman to protect a buddy, or refusing to intervene when another man is "getting his woman in line." Our culture still doesn't always see these things as crimes.

Some of us link a man's refusal to consider the potential harm done by pornography with "good" men's refusal to take on "bad" men on defense of women. (Historically we've only been defended as pieces of property). Pornography objectifies us and it is difficult to trust a man who objectifies us (at least it is for me). If we can't count on even the "good" men to treat us with sexual respect, you can imagine the difficulties we have with trusting any man at the level required by Tantra.

I would think that a man who wanted a Tantric relationship with a woman would be willing to give up porn if it would help that relationship.

Bob, you write:

"I'll guess further that some of those pot smokers hurt other people (sifting out those who are on some other violence prone drug, like alcohol or speed or coke); about the same number as those who directly hurt other people because of their porn habit."

Not the same thing. Pot-induced violence is minimal, from what I can tell. Sexual violence pervades our culture. Pot doesn't objectify and degrade half the population (as violence-laced, hardcore porn does) and, as many studies, but not all, have shown, is not directly linked to rape, child sexual abuse and ritual sexual murder. People who hurt others while on pot, hurt others anyway. In my experience, as a matter of fact, pot helps some people curb their violent tendencies.

I agree that "A War On Porn" would be shortsighted and, in the end, would never eradicate porn. I'm not talking about a war; I'm talking about managing distribution. What is wrong with punishing people who willfully involve children in pornography?

"As a culture we certainly worry more about kids and pot than we do kids and porn. " Yeah, because the same man who will send a pothead to jail for toking up will fight vehemently for his right to porn. In the first case we have something he doesn't want anyone doing and in the second we have something HE wants to do.

As for Rumi, I am not surprised. I haven't seen much come out of that part of the world, during ANY historical era, that doesn't denigrate women.

I don't know about sports. I've never been able to make up my mind whether or not rough sports are a healthy outlet for aggression (mock war) or a conditioner for more violence. Yeah, I know some people (mostly men) like to fight after sports. I see that as a bunch of drunk guys wanting to get on the action after the fact to forget THEY weren't the ones who were the focus of adulation.

SuZ

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Donny Simon (Shakti Das, 9/4/99 12:12:44 PM)

As I see it:

Suz is against violence and exploitation to women and has articulated her opposition well as well as creating a long list of abuses.

Although one could nitpick some of the things on the list as being violence only to women (such as war, discrimination, infanticide, etc), I think that it is safe to say that everyone here agrees with Suz that violence and exploitation of women as well as of men is best ended.

Now if I am wrong about that, please let us know. So assuming this is correct, i.e., that we are serious about DOING something to change this, the next question would be to focus on how (while continuing to bemoan the situation may be simply a diversion).

I'm trying to focus this (not control it for any other ulterior motives). If we are thus united in the goal, then let me try to list some proposals

1) To ascertain the cause of this oppression to women i.e., is it just men in general, or certain kinds of men? What factors make or program these kind of men versus another kind? Can positive conditions be reinforced? Can those who have become negatively programmed be reprogrammed? etc?

2) If it is just physiological and genetic i.e., all men are oppressive, then what can we do in the culture to protect women more short of extermination of men as a genetic failure?

3) Is pornography a primary cause of violence to women or

in some cases does it actually distract men from violence (thru providing an outlet) or both?

4) If pornography is a major contributor (remember violence and oppression to women existed for ages previous to the existence of the internet and modern mass media pornography), then how would controlling its distribution be implemented without a constitutional amendment? Would preventing such set a dangerous precedent for government to further limit/ban literature and thought? Or similarly can such limitations or curbs be instituted without a constitutional amendment? What are the issues in enforcement, costs, and other side effects?

5) What is the engine that drives pornography today and how do we divert its fuel? Is that engine (this is my own whacky idea) really fed through negative programming of what is primarily innocent sexual desire i.e., it isn't the male physiology that is primarily at fault, but rather the negative programming and conditioning around this physiology that creates the fuel for the porno engines.

6) If 5 is true, then what social factors can be changed to
a) prevent more fodder for the porno industry
b) create some sort of de-programming facility for those who are addicted to porn.

7) What factors besides porn and sexual repression are responsible toward violence and exploitation to women and can we identify those and then effectively deal with them as well.

The above focus points might be helpful. My prejudice in the matter is that all of this stems from a violation of ahimsa (violence to the life force) and once this has been internalized in the human being's body/mind then it manifests also in violent or brutal behavior. But I already stated my opinion.

Now in the above, was an attempt at a summary focus. What follows is my own opinion only.

The reason that I created this topic is because as a society we are dysfunctional on this topic i.e., we are leading the entire world in marital violence, sexual violence, and violence in general despite having the highest incarceration rate in the world. Also just the underlying current of having frightened women and angry men all around brings me down. I don't want to live in such a society.

If I felt that the government was actually working on these causes, I'd put my heels up on the desk and drop this real quick. The fact they are not, because they do not have a clue. They don't have a clue, because the voters who elect them don't have a clue.

Those very few people who are in the field of sexual pathology are not listened to nor funded, because it seems that the general populace is not interested in treating causes, but rather symptoms i.e., in the form of bigger government such as more laws, more prisons, more police, and more repression. It seems that the idea of original sin and "bad seed" fit in nicely with advocates for more government powers, a police state, and more repressive legislation, more police, jails, wire taps, internet censorship, and similar. What is the engine that powers these reactions (I am not lumping anyone here on this conference as being reactionary but rather am talking in general).

Everytime another young girl is kidnapped, everytime there is another rape, everytime another shooting incident in the schools occur, everytime some one goes postal, there is widespread talk about PREVENTING this violence from occurring. This talk is big, but what about anything a little more in depth. Does prevention mean simply locking everyone up a little tighter i.e., a bigger government power over the individual, or can we entertain a more functional and efficient mode of prevention that deals with the causes?

In other words, if we understood (not justified) why people do these things in the first place, why they feel violent, then (as long as it isn't natural but rather conditioned) then we can propose remedies. In this context wholistic body/mind modalities such as chi gong, yoga, Functional Integration, Neo-Reichian work, and/or similar other such integrative approaches offer greater hope than ignoring the "problem" further and/or approaching the situation as a criminal/penal system problem.

Oh yes, my missing post, I remember that I proposed porn addiction to be considered more of a public health problem. Then perhaps those who recognized this as a dysfunction could have easier access to treatment -- sort of a 12 step for porn addiction (not that I think 12 step itself is an advanced program).

I see that there is a reluctance by some to talk about causes (of violence or of porn), is it that bizarre or what is just talking "about" it too fear ridden or disturbing?
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SuZett Estell (suz coyote, 9/5/99 10:39:50 PM)
Donny,

Thank you for your thoughtful reply. I have decided to stop posting on the issue of pornography. I am weary of arguing and I am sure you (and the others) are weary as well.

I have decided to take my energies on this issue to the folks who acknowledge the problem and are trying to do something about it. One has to act in accordance with one's heart.

Namaste

SuZ

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SuZett Estell (suz coyote, 9/5/99 10:42:38 PM)

And...I left out the most important point.

Thank you all, sincerely, for being here as I sorted this out for myself.

SuZ

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Loni Burnett (mothra13, 9/6/99 6:31:59 PM)

Hello there... My name is Loni, and I have been reading the various posts throughout this site for a few weeks now. Only this thread has really prompted a reply. Let me apologize in advance to those of you who I am going to piss off. I'm sure there will be a few.

I am one of the few women I know of in my peer group that has not been raped, sexually abused, coerced into sex or whatever. And yet, I must question some of the ideas floating around on this thread in regards to banning pornography.

First of all, lets talk about what mean by pornography. My1977 Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines pornography as 1 - The depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement. 2 - Material (as books or a photograph) that depicts erotic behavior and is intended to cause sexual excitement.

So are you wanting to do away with ALL pornography? Or do you just want to ban child pornography? What about depictions of rape? S&M material? Fetish magazines? What about Hustler, Oui, Playboy and lets not forget Playgirl. What about those steamy Harlequin romances with pictures of Fabio on the front cover? What about the writings of Anne Rice - and I don't just mean her "Sleeping Beauty" S&M books penned under the nome de plume of A.N. Roquelare. Where do you draw the line on what is pornographic. I can assure you that your lines (whoever you may be) are different than mine.

I want to give you a bit of background. I am coming into this conversation cold. None of you know who I am. I am 33, female, and have been practicing Buddhism for about 3 years, and yoga for about 1-1/2 years. I am not a vegetarian. I am not a "good" Buddhist or a "good" yogini.

I started studying witchcraft or wicca when I was about14. I got into it for all the wrong reasons, but I made it through ok, and got on track. Part of what attracted me to wicca was the Goddess. I fully rejected all patriarchal traditions for many years. I had a tattoo of Goddess, as proof that no male god would ever hold sway over my life. Years later, I would add a tattoo of God as a

reminder that God is neither and yet both. Balance. I was not raised in any religious tradition. I am not a recovering anything. I have spent my life checking out various philosophies and am just what I am. Eclectic (read confused - but aware of it). I have what (after reading the previous posts) seems like an awful confession to make. I like sex. And you know what is worse? I like reading about sex. Yes, there I have said it. I use pornography.

waiting to be struck down by lightning

OK, I'll continue then. You know my favorite stuff is the Anne Rice S&M books, but I like other stuff as well. My partner has a stack of magazines. Should we even broach the topic of adult toys? Does this make me a pervert? A moral degenerate? Someone who perpetrates violence against women? Ok, a pervert maybe. Does that make me abnormal?

One day, a few years ago, right after I started studying Buddhism, I had a grand revelation. I AM NOT LIKE OTHER PEOPLE. I am not kidding. This was a monumental surprise to me. My friends had a great laugh with this. "We could have told you that." Gee. Thanks. I used to worry that I was insane. Then I figured out that the only difference between me and most other people is that I lack modesty or a sense of caring about what is proper in the Norm. I think most of us have the same thoughts, I have just never been afraid to talk about them. This makes a lot of people uncomfortable. It took me a long time to figure that out.

Since that earth shattering discovery... I have found that what separates us (people) is not so much what we think about but what we actually talk about in the open, and how guilty we feel about both. Most people only have to feel guilty about what goes on in their own head. I had the common discourtesy to actually talk about what was going on in my head.

Many women will not openly admit to looking at porn - much less liking it. It is considered to be unladylike. Amoral. Whorish. Would you want to be labeled this way? No, so you keep your mouth shut. Men who like at porn are judged to be either: a) Just a normal guy with an overactive sex drive. b) Some poor desperate hunchback schmuck who can't get a chick. Or c) A hate and lust filled sado-masochistic pedophile just waiting to explode on our youth.

Again I have to ask you though - what is your definition of porn? Kama Sutra videos? At what point does fun pass over into outright perversion? Who gets to decide? The fundies (pick your flavor - there are many)?. Generation X?

Pema Chodron says that all of our neurosis, our hang-ups, our faults are what makes us who we are. They are the tools for waking up. I believe this. My views on sex and

drugs and music and porn change as I get older, as my life experience grows. Partially they change because I engage in self examination and yoga - partially just with the passage of time. Maybe the fact that I like sex is a hang up. Maybe in 20 or 30 more years, I will give up on sex, and meat, and be a "perfected being" - I'm not holding my breath though.

I was just reading a book by TKV Desikachar (The Heart of Yoga). One part says that "One may ask, is it an expression of *asmita* (the ego) when someone begins yoga because he or she wants to be better? Such a question may lead us to important discoveries about the meaning of *avidya* (non-dualism). We are subject to *avidya*, and when we notice that - directly or indirectly - it becomes clear to us that we have to do something about it. Sometimes our first step is the need to become better or feel more accomplished. It is no different from someone saying, "I am poor, but I'd like to become rich," or "I'd like to become a doctor." I doubt that there is anyone who really does not want to improve himself, and even if our first step springs from the desire to become better and is therefore rooted in the ego, it is still a right step because it takes us on the first rung of the yoga ladder."

The reason I found this relevant is that we can talk about how to stop porn and everything else until we implode, but you cannot change someone else. They have to want to change. Maybe it (the desire to change into something better than what we are) is a totally egoistic drive, but as the old adage says, "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink". You cannot legislate the morality of another. You can change the availability of things (sex, drugs, food) in an attempt to enforce your moral code on everyone else around you - but you have not dealt with the fundamental qualities that attract them to such things. Nor is it necessarily your place to do so. I do not question that ancient missionaries had good intentions when they chose to convert the native peoples to their faith, but does that make it right? In the context of yoga and respect for another (and their beliefs) I cannot believe that it does. Who am "I" to decide what everyone else should believe? To quote another bad adage, "The path to Hell is paved with good intentions."

In his book, Desikachar also defines *ahimsa* (or nonviolence as is commonly translated). "The word *ahimsa* means "injustice" or "cruelty," but *ahimsa* is more than simply the absence of *himsa* which the prefix *a-* suggests. *Ahimsa* is more than just a lack of violence. It means kindness, friendliness, and thoughtful consideration of other people and things. We must exercise judgment when thinking about *ahimsa*. It does not necessarily imply that we should not eat meat or fish or that we should not defend ourselves. It simply means that we must always behave with consideration and attention to others."

YogaSuz asks, "What is so different between pornography and

Baywatch?" I'll go further... What is the difference between porn and Cosmo? GQ? Maxim? Vogue? Teen Miss? In my opinion, these are far more insidious sources of showing "normal" people what we are all supposed to look like. What about beer commercials, posters of models, the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue? I could go on for quite a list.

Before you send off that flaming hate mail, let me say that I do not approve in any way shape or form of child pornography. I don't approve real rape videos. Hell, when it comes right down to it, I don't approve of the super models who dress and wear makeup to look like androgynous prepubescent 12 year old girls, but I am fat and have an issue with this. So sue me - and I'm sure there must be a good list of reasons by now.

I have been to a strip club with my lover, and talked to some of the women there. Some are there for the money. Some actually have fun. Call me strange, but if I had the body, I would consider it. Looks like fun. Sue me. The point is - not every female feels victimized. Some girls work there because they can make lots of money. See attachment in the dictionary. They have the choice to do something else and live within their means. No one was forcing any of these girls to strip.

But coming back to magazines, if you want to look at mags that show women with big boobs, knock yourself out. If you want to watch the act of coitus to bad 70's music - be my guest. Porn and sex toys can be used and they can be misused, just like anything else. Sometimes sexual therapists teach their clients how to use these items in order to develop a healthy sex life. Just because its done missionary doesn't make it healthy.

It would be so easy to say, "You don't want your kids to see it on TV - get a box" or "You don't want your kids to see it on the net - get one of those programs that restricts the sites they can look at to ones you have already approved." I do agree with these statements to a point BUT - you have to realize that that won't solve all your problems. When I was a young sexually interested kid, I stole pornographic magazines from the store. If your kids want it that badly, they will get access to it no matter what. If they have friends at school, or down the street - they will be exposed. You want to lock up the adult down the street for showing them penthouse? What about the 16 year old who shows it to a 12 year old. What about one 12 year old showing it to another. What I am saying is, yes things can be done about it, but they must be reasonable things. Things conceived of with careful thought and not just emotional reaction. Someone will always get hurt when your laws are misused. And be sure that they will be. What about an 18 year old boy and his 17 year old girlfriend. If they have been sexually involved before he turns 18, how do you justify making this a crime?

One possible (though not realistic) solution would be to

make a law that all porn had to be on private sites, that required membership verification. Charge the hell out of them if you wish. If you are 16 and mom and dad give you enough money to buy a fake ID and a porn subscription, where does the real problem lie?? I can get you a fake ID in less than 24 hours.

And how will you legislate porn on the net. You can legislate what happens in the USA, but what about all those other countries? And just because you can legislate it here at home, doesn't mean you can enforce it.

Another possible solution would be to stop selling porn at Hastings or other retail stores that put it out in the open. Sell porn at porn shops. Not at family entertainment stores. I would be happy if they just kept the stuff out of the kids reach. In my local store, Yoga Journal sits right next to the porn magazines. By the same token, if you are going to restrict where it can be sold, you must still be reasonable. In the town I live in, they have very restrictive laws on where you can have a porn shop. No one wants it too close to them, or to their church or the schools. One of the shops here in town had to move illegally the first time to get a larger store, and buy their new location through a third party because no one wanted to sell them the land. The best way to eliminate a black market demand for something is not to create one in the first place. If you think you can eliminate porn, alcohol and tobacco tomorrow with legislation, I would like to point you to some very nice history books on prohibition. We are a nation of addicts and consumers and "Consumer Addicts". Hell, ban QVC while your at it.

Back to my stripper friends. I said no one was forcing them to strip. That is true and untrue. No one was holding a gun to their head. I was wrong. You want them to do something else? Pay them more money for "legitimate" work. Posing in Playboy opens a lot of doors for some women. You want them to stop? Open other doors. But realize that when some women take these other "proper" doors, there will be a million others willing to take their place. You have not stopped anything. You are just rotating the models. Though that may be good for sales.

I suppose my ultimate point is, that the only person you have any control over is yourself. I agree that everyone should be able to protect their children and loved ones. I have 2 godchildren I am very attached to. I worry about what the world will be like for them, but I do not see the need or practicality to tell everyone else in my city, state or country how to behave or believe in order to raise these children right.

I don't want to be forced to be a Christian, or a Moslem or even a Hindu. You bet I guard my personal freedoms jealously. Just as you are trying to guard your personal freedoms and beliefs. This is not a safe world in which

we live. But it IS the world in which we live. There is no other. The trick is learning to live in the world we have.

Yes, I think it would be great if more people were nice, and well adjusted and meditated and practiced yoga. We should certainly make those options available to as many people as want them. But if you believe in free will, you must realize that not many people will take this option. Because it is work. Self examination is hard and painful.

The road to eliminating pornography has little or nothing to do with banning magazines. The road to eliminating pornography is much longer and much more complex. It has to do with changing people. And most people do not want to be changed. I am not saying that your goal is bad, I am saying that your logic is faulty. I am the first one to admit that sex can be a huge distraction for me. But not being able to buy a magazine is not going to change my lust factor. I seriously doubt that it will change anyone else's either.

It is also important to realize that Men are not the only consumers of pornography. That is part of the reason I chose to write this letter. I am not ashamed of anything I have done (or am still doing). You cannot demonize the people who buy pornography. Oh, you can I suppose - and you can even win the battle and make sure that people see us for the misguided, stuck, unenlightened people we really are. But sometimes when you win - you lose. Think about what the word yoga means. To unite. If your strategy is divide and conquer - you missed the boat altogether.

Back to Desikachar's definition of ahimsa for a moment... The dictionary I referred to earlier defines "considerate" as being "thoughtful of the rights and feelings of others." I don't like a lot of what other people think. I may not agree with their ideas on politics or religion or abortion or whatever - but I would rather attempt to live in consideration and tolerance of their ideas than become the same kind of "thought police". I may lose the battle of governance over others, but I will have won the war of governance over self.

I agree that *some* things need to change. I would love to see an end to child pornography. I would love to see an end to rape (which has more to do with power and control than sex - but that is another matter). There is a bunch of stuff on the net that I would probably find pretty repulsive. I haven't bothered to look up the images.

I just saw everyone here arguing. People who I had come to know in a short time as wonderful yogic people. Your posts everywhere else have seemed so warm and loving to one another. My intent was not to upset anyone. Not to accuse. Just to bring us all back to center. You will

never agree with everyone. You will never like everyone. But when you stop being civil to anyone... who has truly lost?

When I was in college the second time around, I made a friend named Teresa. Over a few months we became quite close. One day she saw the bumper stickers on my truck - "Born Again Pagan" and "The Goddess is Alive and Magic is Afoot". She told me she was glad she got to know me before she saw those. She would have judged me a bad person and never spoken to me. I was grateful for her honesty. I was also grateful that we got to know each other as friends before we got to know each other as the labels we give one another. For those of you whom I have offended, (as well as those I have not) I hope to meet you at a yoga conference some day as the wonderful people we really are, before we see each other as our labels.

Namaste.

Loni

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Kuhl Rant (crotalus, 9/6/99 7:21:45 PM)

Where to draw the line? Aye 'tis the question. Can't go around with hands over the kiddie's eyes all the time, huh? Takes a lot of work to offset the negatives that appear in the parenting environment but that's part of the job I suppose. Still they get conditioned - it's the

Electronic heroin
mostly.

Good ta hear from ya. Nice ta have you writing as well as reading here. What else ya got for us? Whatcha think of Erich's style of yoga?

Here's a little different take on the Middle Way stuff you might enjoy. Not, mind you, that I hang there really - sorta prefer this stance as opposed to the renunciation perch.

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Heh (crotalus, 9/6/99 7:33:36 PM)

Noticed the Zen TV Experiment link (in the EH ref in <82>) was busted and found this timely pic running down the new link:

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Crash Thunder Roar Crackle (Shakti Das, 9/7/99 10:48:59 AM)

Loni

Namaste

Loni, good to hear from you. I appreciate your spirit, courage, and elucidation on what for too many of us is an emotionally charged subject (often preventing focus and creative problem solving). I especially liked your discussion of ahimsa. Being kind to ourselves and not harming ourselves is a basic starting point, but if we

are at war inside, it is difficult to spontaneously share it with others. Thus I agree this is a good learning situation for all of us.

Yes, I agree that pain is a mechanism that tells us that something is wrong, while pleasure usually is its release (of pain) or tells us that something is right. Now the mind can get those confused (the wires crossed or misinterpreted), but the body doesn't. So when our physiology at puberty tells us one thing, but the censors, parents, authority, belief systems, conventional wisdom, or super ego tells us another, then we start to either

- 1) distrust the body and natural instincts even further
- 2) start to adopt a body negative, pleasure negative, nature negative, and pain positive belief system fearing the instincts and body as base and dangerous.
- 3) become confused and disempowered ("normal" teenager)
- 4) try to compromise and adapt living trying to live with a certain allowable amount of guilt and shame.
- 5) distrust the society and authority and start to question authority
- 6) become a wanton hedonist and rebel

These are of course not all the possibilities, but many which I have observed. The point is that if we deny that natural and innocent aspect of life and the body at early age in order to satisfy "authority figures" then this dis-association has many possible consequences.

Adults and especially parents "forget" how it was when they were young. I especially remember a friend who I dated in my early twenties who used to complain to me how straight, repressive, restrictive, and prudish her parents were (in attempting to restrict her sexual freedom). About 20 years later, I witnessed her do the same or worse to her own teen aged daughter, but when I tried to bring up the "child's view" reminding her of how she was when she was that age. she freaked out with anger toward me.

Because I am in my fifties, I have seen this same syndrome occur with many of friends who eventually became parents. My observation is that being a "parent" carries with it a "responsibility and possible too often guilt feelings where the parent disassociates their own adolescence and now identifies with the "good" parent.

Now I am not faulting "parents", but sharing my observation of this hand me down "anomaly. Because I don't have this dynamic operating in life, I usually still look at externally imposed sexual restraint from the point of view of the child, but when I don't share this with my "parent" friends any more because they usually don't take this situation very lightly.

In short, yes, the sexual dynamics at puberty can definitely be a strong influence on how we deal with the body and nature in the future and that is why this topic seems appropriate here in relation to yoga (to

connect back up or re-integrate. Simply I see porn as a result of this negative conditioning (not as its cause) but we do not have to debate porn at all in order to get into the yogic biopsychic (body/mind) dynamics that are potential powerful allies in this regard.

What I saying about porn was that too many people are living vicariously and are addicted to it as their only outlet or connection with their own sexuality or even instinct. I find that sad and I do not suggest restricting their access rather than trying to reconnect them with their healthy instincts and life energy instead.

In this regard many who are sexually addicted are simply living in the past, (getting what they need "now" because they didn't have it "then"). I know that I suffered from this neurotic sexual impulse until one day that I awoke from it (and that awakening was quite a liberation because it allowed me to be in the present and also to love the other person -- as I was no longer coming from need).

So there is healthy and beneficial sexual activities and there are those which may actually be a slave. Again awareness eventually liberates.

Loni, yes, what you say I mostly agree with especially in that one person's porn may be some one else's art (look at D.H. Lawrence for example or even the writings of sex educators like Wilhelm Reich).

In anycase I feel that the real problem (sexually related abuse and violence) will only go away when we as a race come into healthy terms with our own sexuality, honor it, and then be able to deal with it in functional terms by lessening the "difficulty", pain, insensitivity, ignorance, and abuse that adolescent's suffer (discussed above). When this pain is not internalized (and hence brought forward into the future) then the deprivation and pain involved will also disappear.

Unfortunately as a society we are very far from that situation, and the symptoms of that gulf are everywhere apparent (witness this very conference as an example).

You said: "YogaSuz asks, 'What is so different between pornography and Baywatch?' I'll go further... What is the difference between porn and Cosmo? GQ? Maxim? Vogue? Teen Miss? In my opinion, these are far more insidious sources of showing "normal" people what we are all supposed to look like. What about beer commercials, posters of models, the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue? I could go on for quite a list."

Yep, and that's a very cogent point. The sexual repression is the engine of much manipulation. Ask any ad exec and they know that sex sells ; i.e., it gets people's attention! If

you have guilt about it, it will make you angry, but if you are too far repressed it may get you a little interested. I say if you have no repressions left, it has very little attraction. It's not just advertising that uses it, but in daily life, there is much manipulation going about with sexual issues and here it is not just men who manipulate, but more often it is women. From Madonna to the Sex Pistols, from sexy office secretaries who got their jobs because of being attractive to CEOs, to from neighbors, schoolmates, or mates, sexual manipulation fueled on sexual repression is unfortunately very common. Of course all the manipulators are victims as well, simply victimizing other victims. This circus goes around until we wake up and get off the exploitation cycle and for many of us, this requires us to awaken to our own sexual abuse (mainly in adolescence i.e., when our sexual instincts and biopsychic energies were perverted). Hence yoga and perhaps for some tantra.

Now this is a thread for those who want to explore this further. It isn't for those who do not -- no one is forced to participate, and I hope it doesn't simply become a homogeneous "cult" of like minded people, but rather a place where all the various "takes" can be assimilated.

However my "agenda" on this topic is not the only agenda, so is there another direction that is less distractive and still be somewhat true to this topic thread of putting together "tantra yoga and human sexual activity" in relation to Yoga?

85 of 227 Yoga Conference.32.85

more on tantra (Kit Spahr, 9/8/99 10:34:30 PM)

I'm not a yogic scholar so rely on the words of others here (Joseph LaPage to start with)...

"Tantra, which was a major spiritual influence in India from the 8th to the 13th Century, takes a unique perspective on spirituality. "If reality (God) is anywhere, it must be everywhere". For this reason, Tantra incorporates all the aspects of human life into the spiritual path and offers the possibility of integration of the spiritual and material aspects of life. Tantra emphasizes the integration of the dualities within ourselves including male and female aspects and this is why sexual imagery is an important motif in the Tantric tradition. Tantra also encourages the integration of the unconscious or shadow side of our being. For this reason, the 'wrathful deities' of Tibetan Buddhism are honored along with the peaceful ones.

This is the exact opposite of the Western tradition where we are encouraged to separate ourselves completely from the devil and from our own shadow. Tantra reversed many of the traditional spiritual ideals of its day. It honored the female aspect and female deities in contrast to the patriarchal system and it honored sexuality and other sense pleasures as a path to spirituality. One of the challenges of Tantra is

differentiating between exploring the senses as a path to who we truly are, and indulgence and addiction to the senses as an escape from seeing who we are."

This last line I think is the crux of the matter...although all types of yoga have their attractions which can lead to spiritual blindness in some way or another.

He goes on to say later in this piece...

"Hatha yoga cannot be understood fully outside the development of Tantrism with its positive orientation towards the body and its focus on awakening kundalini."

While the sexual aspects of Tantra appear to be the most titillating, if I'm not mistaken, the Tantrics were unusual in that they didn't try to leave their bodies behind in the search for enlightenment. Which must have lead to some sickly yogis I'm betting.

And also, if I understand correctly, the energy of the second chakra, the sexual energy if you will, is energy of creation. So if we practice yoga in order to freely access all of who we are and if I draw freely on that creative energy I can create...a painting, a novel, a great yoga class, a life. In the practice of Kundalini yoga (Yogi Bhajan's) that creative energy is not ONLY plumbed as sexual energy but also viewed in a wider context. What follows is a description of White Tantric Yoga...at the end there is a discrimination made between different types of tantric energies.

"Envision the energy of the universe as parallel or perpendicular in nature, like a cloth woven together. As a cloth becomes stronger when it is stretched on the diagonal, so is the White Tantric energy, diagonal or "Z" energy, stronger. This energy, when directed by the Mahan Tantric, cuts through the blocks that are stuck in the subconscious mind.

Using the diagonal "Z" energy, the Mahan Tantric, Yogi Bhajan connects his subtle body to the subtle bodies of the participants through the course facilitator. This works the same way as a world wide telephone system that relies on satellites and electromagnetic energy in order to connect two parties.

White Tantric Yoga should not be confused with black or red tantric. These forms of yoga also transform energy, but in a different way and for different purposes. Black tantric directs the energy to manipulate another human being, and red tantric directs the energy solely for sexual purposes."

I'm not trying to make any point here specifically, just adding some more stuff into the tantric mix.

Kit

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An aside (Kit Spahr, 9/8/99 10:41:21 PM)

While this forum is a wonderful place to be and allows for contact between geographically distant yogis with lots of cool things to say...the downside is that a lot can be lost in cyberspace...a tone of voice, a look in the eye, body language. I think its easy to take offense where none is intended. I think it is easy to be misinterpreted, I know there have been times in this last discussion here where I read responses to what I typed and thought hmmm...now I know that's not what I meant but apparently that's how it reads. I've felt that on occassion we have disagreed mightily with one another (here and in other topics) but I have never sensed lack of respect.

Kit

Kit

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(suz coyote, 9/8/99 11:44:08 PM)
Lori, thanks for your input.

I think a "good" Buddhist or a "good" Yogini is someone who has a spiritual practice and is open to whatever transformation the practice brings. This is what spiritual growth is all about. If all one does in practice is confirm existing ways of thinking, believing and acting, there may be health benefits, but little spiritual growth.

When I was 33, I believed exactly as you do, Lori, (and similarly used porn - many parallels there with the Anne Rice stuff.) When I was 40, I still believed that way. Now at almost 46 I have changed - and the change has come about since I began doing yoga seriously. For me, practice has brought a dawning insight that my own personal vices (or preferences, if you will) can impact others in negative ways. I didn't particularly want this insight, as I am the Queen of self-centeredness. This is not a guilt-trip, but simply recognition of my motives. It was Janis Joplin, not me, who said "freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose."

I'm not "against sex" or out to limit anyone's sexual-self expression (unless it is exploitative). One of my husband's more endearing terms for me is "horny little monkey" ('scuze the revelation, Bobby). Part of the hysteria surrounding this issue is the desire to make me out to be some kind of repressive prude. Then, I can simply be dismissed as a religious fanatic or pious hypocrite; everyone can laugh and go on about their business.

Only, I'm not pious; I'm not a prude and I'm definitely not religious. I am no more hypocritical than most of us and have a full set of sexual skeletons in my own closet. In my life I've done the promiscuity thing, the "free sex" thing, the "try the lesbian" thing, the one night stand thing, the get-drunk-at-the-bar, stand on the table and strip thing. Fortunately, I was lucky and didn't do the abortion, unwed mom or give-my-baby up for adoption thing(

though many of my friends got to do these things). I did the infection thing many times, the lice thing once or twice, but somehow evaded the VD/AIDS thing. What I'm saying here is I'm not sitting in some tower passing judgement on others. I thought I was being free. I was simply being used (a state of non-awareness is the spiritual term, I believe). I looked back at the life my culture encouraged me to live and gazed forward to the even more spiritually bankrupt life that it is encouraging my daughter to live and said "Hell No! I'm not going to take it any more."

I've written, several times in several posts, that I'm not lobbying to "ban" porn or institute a "war on porn." Yet, I've generated such hysteria around here just saying that maybe society ought to take a look at how pornography has come to define us as a culture. My other intolerable sin has been to suggest that we might manage certain types of porn's distribution with the goal of developing a healthier sexual environment for all of us. And I'm wicked, wicked, wicked for asserting that porn, taken at its full effect on everyone involved, is harmful. But, what everyone seems to have heard (regardless of what I've actually said) is that I'm advocating for repression. If you had ten minutes in my personal library, you would know that is just not true.

You say you know some strippers and say they seem to be having fun. Perhaps they are, but many are not. Recreation,

Arts, Movies, Erotica (

RAME), a pro-porn site, provides some interesting information on porn-stars' causes of death. I have known many strippers and prostitutes in my life (according to porn industry analyst Luke Ford, who keeps track of these things, most porn stars are also prostitutes).

I have never known a prostitute who was balanced and happy, though some could party hard (party hard does not always make for happy). I have seen some pretty nasty things go down in these folk's lives as well as a lot of simple sadness.

Of course, sex entertainers are going to smile and act like they're having fun - sour faces upset client illusions and result in loss of jobs. A career in porn is very risky. There are life-threatening diseases, and dangerous johns. Hard drugs (not the Illuminators, but those that dampen awareness and steal souls, such as heroin and coke) are a vital part of the porn business. Even

apologists for porn will admit this.