

25 Myths About Sexuality, Gender, Relationships and Identity:

A Traditional Judeo-Christian and Scientific Approach

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Introduction:

This article is meant to provide religious communities with alternative scientific information on issues of sexuality, gender, relationships and identity that may not otherwise be easy to access. As a clinical psychologist with 15 years of practice, I have directly and repeatedly seen the distress that myth and misinformation alone can incur in the lives of religious individuals and families.

Therefore, especially in the complicated world we live in, it is helpful to have as much information on these topics as possible. Unfortunately, the climate we live in is such that we are only exposed to one set of values and ideas on these topics. The attitudes we form and the decisions we make are thus based on only this one perspective and it is difficult to know how biased or truthful such a perspective is.

In the Western world, any opinion which diverts or challenges the current LGBTQ+ narrative, is quickly degraded, dismissed, removed or cancelled, depriving society of accessing the same diversity of scientific and professional opinions that is easily found on any other topic. The secular world even conditions lay people with no scientific background on these issues to instinctively suspicious of other expert opinions. Hence, the importance of making such information as accessible, safe and easy to understand as possible.

In this article, I use a *myth vs. fact* format to present and challenge 25 different myths that many people seem to be seamlessly and blindly adopting from the broader secular culture. I organize these myths into six main categories, including:

- 1) Philosophical and Ethical Myths
- 2) Gender Myths
- 3) Sexual Orientation Myths
- 4) Relationship Myths
- 5) Sexual Desire Myths
- 6) Psychotherapy Myths

Each myth is presented first in bold followed by my challenge to it from a scientific, common sense and Jewish perspective. Sometimes the very spelling out of the myth is enough so that no detailed challenge is even needed. Though I have used Jewish sources familiar with my own background, my hope is that readers from other religious communities and faiths will be able to

draw from their own sources to do the same—and hopefully do an even better job in bringing some much-needed nuance and fresh thinking to these topics.

My hope is that you will find this information to complement core Judeo-Christian beliefs, and to also sound logical, nuanced and compatible with some established scientific beliefs and therapeutic values that you may already be familiar with. Much of this information has also been widely recognized by esteemed Rabbis and therapists in the Orthodox Jewish community as being Torah accurate, deeply compassionate and hopeful for those who are struggling.

To get the most out of this posting, I recommend reading through its entirety from beginning to end, because some of the ideas are connected and build on each other. That said, each item is also written as a self-contained, easy to read cluster of information. I hope that all this information gives you some food for thought and further discussion. If you have comments or questions to share, please feel free to reach out.

Philosophical and Ethical Myths:

Philosophy and ethics are not very interesting topics to most lay people. But according to historian Carl Trueman as he discusses in his highly regarded book “The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self”, in order to really understand the current cultural climate—including secular society’s rigid adoption of some very questionable scientific beliefs—it is first necessary to make explicit some of the *implicit philosophical values* that underlie all of these beliefs, which as you will notice, *are clearly in direct opposition to some of the most basic and timeless Judeo-Christian foundations*. Hence, I will present these values as concisely and simply as possible in a “myth versus fact” format.

- 1. Man is born pure and moral. Only by identifying and actualizing our deeper authentic selves, can people get in touch with this natural morality. Society, religion and civilization only act to restrict and corrupt this natural morality.**

The belief that it is our authenticity, as captured in the knowledge and actualization of our deepest thoughts and feelings, which can accurately guide us to what is moral—as opposed to any kind of absolute ethic, higher power or religious tradition—has been brewing slowly ever since the Reformation in the 1500’s. According to this belief, religion and transcendental morality is nothing more than an institutionalized form of oppression.

The obvious consequences of giving humans the power to define right and wrong means that morality is decided by the loudest person in the room with the most influential friends, the most powerful lobby and the most persuasive marketing strategy. Of course, this belief in man’s capacity to inherently know right from wrong is not just diametrically opposed to a Judeo-Christian understanding of morality, civilization and religious law, but is also outright reckless.

- 2. Human beings have the power to know their true authentic selves and identity, even if this defies empirical observation.**

According to this secular myth, it is our thoughts and feelings that tell us who we are, even more than objective fact or physical reality. “I think therefore I am”, Descartes wrote at the beginning of the 17th Century. We now see the consequences of such beliefs in young people who have no actual exposure to these underlying philosophies, but who nonetheless claim, “I am gay” and then demand to be believed even if they cannot provide credible evidence, even if their identity choice is clearly based on misinformation, and even if they don’t actually have any prior sexual or relationship experience.

With the power of humans to know their authentic Self, it then makes sense why it can seem *immoral* and egregiously offensive for anyone else to question a person’s perception of themselves. A challenge to their supposedly authentic behavior or choice of identity term, can be seen as an attack on their very personhood. In fact, even implying that, at some point, they did in fact choose to identify themselves using the term “gay, lesbian or trans etc.”, can be construed as deeply offensive.

Though it sounds like a very new belief in our culture, popular artists and intellectuals over the last few centuries have proposed exactly this – that if people just “clear the static” of elite society’s unreasonable expectations, they can discover and know their true selves in a way that no one else can.

In Judaism, mankind simply does not have the authority to truly know their core Self. As Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, “The Lubavitcher Rebbe” wrote: *“On his own, a person is not objective in evaluating his own characteristics. A person’s inclination and his own innate, materialistic nature and self-love often will “bribe” an individual into a distorted view of his negative traits.”* (Source) It is a person’s job to discover their unique purpose of being in the world through the actions we take to improve it, but it is only G-d who knows and who tells us our core identity.

3. Our sexual feelings are a true reflection of our authentic identity.

This belief has also been simmering for several centuries but is most explicitly referenced in Freud who famously wrote: “The behavior of a human being in sexual matters is often a prototype for the whole of his other modes of reaction in life.” (Source) Popularized even more by the sexual revolution and LGBTQ propaganda, the belief in the centrality of our sexual feelings as defining our Core Self or Identity is deeply ingrained in our culture and is often just presumed to be accurate. When made explicit, however, it is easy to see just how incompatible it is with Jewish values and beliefs, which sees sexual feeling as a means to a greater end and not as a value in itself.

4. Given the centrality of sexual feeling, and the central human importance of sexual self-actualization and sexual expression, those people or systems who discourage this, even in their thoughts, are cruel, stupid, neurotic and immoral.

This myth helps us understand how so many people, including religious Jews, are not just reluctantly or apologetically coming out as gay and expressing their same-sex feelings, but are doing so proudly with strong moral conviction, often accompanied by patronizing expressions of righteous indignation.

It explains why religiously devout people might support their loved ones or community member's "coming out" and even publicly celebrate them. They do not want to be seen as immoral. People who "come out" can now justify their behavior as Jewishly moral, even if it is clearly prohibited on a legal level. And since they see their behavior as morally virtuous, it does not matter if their closest friends and family members are offended by it. Even if it clearly risks harming their future physical health, future family and psychological wellbeing, the importance of sexual self-actualization is *implicitly understood* as the highest moral value.

5. The values of authenticity and sexual self-actualization are even more virtuous than the sexually restricting religious values of modesty and self-restraint, which were designed by the elite leadership class to oppress, exploit and inhibit people's nature.

According to historian Carl Trueman in his book, "The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self", (date) secular society no longer just preaches "It's not cool to be so religious" as it has for many centuries, but rather, "we have a different religion and it is better than traditional religion", a philosophy popularized by many beloved writers, artists, psychologists and taste-makers over the last several centuries, but which is now *widely integrated within the highest echelons of society*, including within established medical, academic, social-service, governmental and religious institutions. Many people, however, are led to adopt this belief *implicitly* in their speech and behavior, but without explicitly knowing the *underlying* value that it is based on.

6. Individuals and groups who are judged or excluded by a majority "leadership class", are victims and are therefore inherently virtuous, no matter who they are and how they behave:

This myth explains how smart good people could sympathize with Hamas terrorists, while terrorizing innocent Jews—even those who are not living in Israel or directly involved in the war. Hamas has successfully played the victim card and painted Israel as their oppressor, which immediately makes them "the virtuous one" in the minds of those who implicitly adopt this myth, no matter what kinds of violent acts they perform.

The LGBTQ movement has similarly managed to automatically and blanketly stamp all of their members as "victims", who are by-definition oppressed by religious society, making them virtuous just *for their chosen identity terms alone*, no matter how they actually behave. Religious individuals and groups are automatically and blanketly stamped as "oppressors", *unless* they actively fly the rainbow flag on their churches and synagogues or loudly profess their love and acceptance of LGBTQ+ members—all to avoid suspicion.

The widespread and implicit adoption of this myth can explain why—even in the most traditional religious communities—people are known to immediately side with those who claim they are any of the LGBTQ +letters, *including if they behave provocatively and disrespectfully, and if they are spreading their religious vehemence to others.*

7. **It is morally virtuous for people to discover within themselves their inherent and authentic non-heterosexual “queer” interests—even if they have to work hard at it or explore different kinds of sexual relationships to see what feels best—as a way to actualize their core self and reject society’s oppressive heteronormativity.**

This extreme belief is now *explicitly taught to children* in many public educational settings. (Baucham source) In this view, it is no longer enough to fully actualize one’s non-heterosexual feelings. It is now an ethical requirement to search hard for one’s “natural non-heterosexuality” within oneself, since it is shameful to become part of the oppressive “heterosexual order”, a particularly damaging recommendation given the inherent aimlessness of sexual energy, which is especially flexible at younger ages. This explains the popularity of pornographic books in children’s libraries, Drag Queen hour at public libraries and the suggestion made by teachers that it is good for children and teens to explore sexual relationships with all types of people in order for them to know who they really are. (Baucham source)

Further, even if a child cannot find any non-heterosexual desires within themselves, they are still invited to call themselves “queer”—an identity term that is completely devoid of actual meaning—but which allows people to nonetheless behave in various norm-disrupting ways and closely align themselves with their “sexual minority” peers.

8. **Judaism is either wrong in condemning same-sex behavior, or it makes an exception to allow for the actualization of our inherently natural desire.**

To say that traditional Judaism is wrong, is obviously a conversation stopper. But to say that Judaism supports any other sexual relationship outside of heterosexual marriage, or that it “looks the other way”, also can’t be true because heterosexual marriage is the literal bread and butter of the Jewish faith. Further, if Judaism were to allow for the expression of one’s “natural sexual interests”, then any of the sexual prohibitions—incest, pedophilia, bestiality or premarital sex—would be completely meaningless because each of these can be considered “natural” to different groups of people. Further, if “natural” would justify doing a sin, then one could argue that many things are natural, such as sleeping with one’s family members, eating pork or not keeping Shabbos.

As Rabbi Manis Friedman discusses in one of his “Ideas that Changed the World” podcasts: *By nature, we would do the sin. We would have the sinful relationship rather than the kosher one. Because it is more natural... The only time G-d commands us to do something is if, to do it, would be natural.*

Gender Myths

9. Men who are more sensitive, effeminate, poor at sports and interested in the arts probably have same sex desires and are probably “inherently gay” whether they know it or not, whether they admit or not.

Since the concept of “inborn sexual orientation” and “born gay or straight” has been refuted by all credible scientific studies (New Atlantis source) we can know that there is no *inherent* link between same-sex desires and a man who does not present himself as stereotypically masculine. In fact, this link between personality and sexual desire was in many ways created by the media and the LGBTQ founder’s explicit public relations strategy to present gay people in the media as effeminate, witty and likeable, as a way of distracting society from thinking about the unpopular sexual behaviors that gay-identified people are known to enjoy. (After the Ball Source)

This myth of “the effeminate gay man” is also inaccurate. For example, many people with same sex desires look just as masculine as anyone else. And many men with gender-atypical traits have no experience of same-sex desire. Further, this myth is harmful because it causes distress for those boys who see themselves—or who are seen by others—as not “masculine”, who are then liable to unnecessarily question their “inherent sexual identity”, thus fulfilling another insidious aim of the LGBTQ movement, which is to manufacture an identity-crisis in people where they are led to unnecessarily question “who they are at their core”. The second step of this strategy is to shower love and attention on those who “come out”, while shaming those “who are too cowardly” or “living in the closet” to come out. (Queering of American Child)

In my experience, the two possible *indirect* links between a less stereotypically masculine male and the presence of same-sex attractions are as follows. (1) A boy who is bullied by his peers as being “gay” because he is not athletic or because he is shy or likes the arts etc., can literally take on this identity and sexual behavior as a way of submitting to the abuse, especially if they have no other recourse to survive it. (2) Children and adolescents who struggle with low self-worth for any number of reasons (poor body image, lack of athleticism, social challenges, being persistently bullied etc.) are equipped with the natural capacity to use their imagination to cope with this low feeling by idealizing and sexualizing those male peers who are seen as having the very qualities that they feel most lacking in.

Such a person can automatically develop obsessions and sexual fantasies about being accepted, loved and physically embraced by their “perfect” male peers as a way to feel better about themselves. This potent “sexual template” could then continuously be used as a kind of coping strategy “drug” to deal with ongoing life frustrations, even later in life when they develop more self-worth. Indeed, this explains many—but certainly not all—men’s same-sex fantasies involving chiseled and confident high-school looking types (called “twinks” in gay culture), which always traces back to their experiences of being insecure during this emotionally formative period of time.

Consider that if a non-athletic, shy or somewhat effeminate acting boy is not bullied or excluded, they will grow up with healthy self-esteem, will not need to question their core identity and will not need to subconsciously sexualize their male peers as a coping strategy.

The coping strategies of idealizing and then sexualizing another type of person is actually much more common than people realize. Many people do the same exact thing with the opposite sex. For example, they subconsciously idealize and sexualize opposite-sex personality traits, garments, body parts, hairstyles etc. as a way of coping with some kind of persistent distress that no one else helped them to manage earlier in their development. This specific opposite-sex “stimulus” then becomes a potent source of arousal, which can continue to tempt them throughout their life even later once their stress has passed.

Whether the same sex or the opposite sex, or even an inanimate object, this condition is called a “lust trigger”. And the only reason why someone would subconsciously “choose” a same-sex or opposite-sex person to idealize is entirely based on their individual circumstances, as in, *whoever is available in their immediate orbit that they can latch onto in their fantasies in order to help them cope and make them feel better.*

10. Certain men and women can “be in the wrong body”, and they can know or feel confusion about their gender, even if it is different than their physical gender.

This is an utter lie. If a person with a nose felt confused about whether they had a nose, would we not consider them delusional? Why is this any different? Only in this particular case, the delusion actually belongs to secular culture, which plants the idea in young people’s head that “they are supposed to feel their gender” something that no person was ever asked to do before in the history of mankind and something that is simply not possible to do. When young people are given this impossible task, they are essentially getting a hand-delivered opportunity to suffer a false identity crisis.

The fact is, however, that no one “feels their gender”. Some people can identify more—as in relate to—the males or females in their environment based on their personalities and interests. And when a person does not relate to or feel similar to their same-gendered peers, this indeed can be painful, but is usually the result of this child being shown that there is only one type of “ideal man”, thus depriving them of the opportunity to learn that they are a good enough man or woman and that there are plenty of people just like them. But these are all thoughts and feelings, which can be vented, worked through and changed and which often pass on their own as the person continues to find their way in life. These dynamic feelings, no matter how intense or persistent they are in the moment, cannot be used to determine one’s “real gender” and cannot override the physical way they were born and created by G-d, as defined by their chromosomes and genitals.

In other situations, a person can feel compelled to dress up or act like the opposite sex, which is a different issue entirely, usually related to obsessive compulsive patterns. Or, someone can also develop strong sexual arousal to opposite-sex garments, whether they feel urges to look at them

or put them on, which is another example of a “lust-trigger” discussed earlier. The Torah tells people that they are not allowed to cross-dress, which validates the potential temptation for such behavior but which also clearly points them in the direction of getting help if they feel emotionally compelled to do this.

Sexual Orientation Myths

11. From birth or early development, a person’s sexual attractions naturally attach to either the same gender, opposite gender or both.

No, sexual energy is inherently “object-less” and “gender-less”. It is a feeling that can get activated just like sadness and anger, and it can exist at many different levels of intensity. Family and society generally teach people where and how to channel this. Early formative experiences can also alter the way it is expressed and channeled. Since sexual energy is diffuse, hypothetically it could be channeled toward anyone or anything under certain predictable conditions. As I will discuss later, there are also different types of sexual desires, some which are more involuntary and urgent-feeling and others, that feel more under a person’s control, which intensify following a predictable sequence and are usually felt in consonance with an emotional connection.

12. By now it is obvious, and there is a great deal of scientific evidence and consensus to prove it, that all humans have a natural, stable and immutable sexual orientation, which is “given” to them through their biology and/or early experience.

Through clever, persistent and well-funded marketing campaigns, the LGBTQ+ movement has managed to plant this belief—called *the Essentialist perspective on sexual orientation*—in the collective unconscious of modern society, but it is simply not true. Normally, a logical society would normally require robust scientific consensus and support before it adopts such a new and radical human paradigm-shifting belief. The fact that it has so quickly and rigidly adopted this belief, without any credible scientific evidence, tells us more about our culture than about the issue itself.

For example, the most comprehensive study of its kind confirmed that there is no gay gene and no biological process that creates same-sex or opposite sex attractions. (Nature, 2009) In 2016, comprehensive review of all the available research conducted by a group of psychiatrists and epidemiologists at Johns Hopkins concluded: “The understanding of sexual orientation as an innate, biologically fixed property of human beings — the idea that people are “born that way” — is not supported by scientific evidence”.

Scholars have also identified the likelihood of systemic scientific bias in the “born this way” sexual-orientation research program. (Edward Stein, *Mismeasure of Desire*, 2001) These scholars also elaborate on the belief in “natural sexual orientation” as logically flawed, while also going against several established psychological and biological scientific foundations.

13. Most people in the world are naturally heterosexual. But some are homosexual.

Not true. All the scientific evidence shows that the constructs of “sexual orientation”, “gay” “straight” etc. are all man-made and have no basis in biology or even developmental psychology. People are not born inherently gay or straight and they are not created gay or straight in childhood. It is time to discard these constructs and look at what is actually happening in people using real psychological theories and valid terms, not empty made-up ones. Scholars in the social sciences have been presenting their opposition to these terms and beliefs for many decades, but increasingly so, have been silenced and punished for their views. (Stein source)

But, if heterosexuality is not “inborn” for most people, how do we understand the dominance of heterosexual relationships throughout the ages, and in almost all cultures since the beginning of time? In most cultures around the world, families and communities are seamlessly organized around biology. Therefore, children are typically socialized from a young age to channel their marital interests toward the opposite sex and away from the same sex.

Depending on the culture, family and individual person, depending on the social-historical context, these opposite-sex interests could then be colored with other needs and values such as a partner’s attractiveness, their class and income, the compatibility of their families, or the feelings of romance or sexual desire between them. This explains why many people who later develop non-heterosexual interests, such as same-sex attractions or other types of idiosyncratic desires, will frequently *report histories of crushes and romantic interests in the opposite sex from an early age*. This also explains the well-documented phenomenon of people with same-sex histories or desires who are easily able to develop satisfying romantic and sexual relationships with the opposite sex, without even necessarily engaging in any kind of therapy.

14. Being “a heterosexual” is not a choice.

Judaism simply does not recognize the idea that “people are heterosexual, homosexual” or any other brand name of sexual identity. Even though the Torah references many different types of sexual relationships and acts (other than heterosexual) these terms and beliefs are nowhere to be found in the Jewish tradition and in the history of mankind until the turn of the 20th century. Rather, G-d required humans to marry the opposite sex. But he did not deprive them of their free will to choose this. Since sexual energy is inherently aimless, it is a person’s family, community and culture that teaches them how and where to channel their romantic, sexual and marital interests.

15. Being a homosexual is not a choice.

It is true that many people report having powerful, immediate and involuntary arousal reactions to certain members of the same gender (as well as certain opposite gender types and even inanimate objects), well beyond the feeling of “basic attraction” or even sexual desire in intimate relationships. As I discussed earlier, this extreme involuntary reaction called a “lust trigger”—which tends to get activated by strangers and not intimate partners, unless that partner can

continue to be objectified—develops in childhood and adolescence as a helpful coping response to overwhelming distress. Hence their excitement and arousal around such a “stimulus” is not actively chosen but subconsciously “chosen”, as a way to survive and go on living normally.

Though the person never chooses to have this involuntary arousal reaction toward their specific “stimulus”—whether it is the same gender, the opposite gender or an object—they can always choose to seek help or not seek help if they feel confused or distressed about these reactions, such as if they develop an unhealthy preoccupation or addiction to pursuing arousal with such a person in the fantasies, in porn or in real life. A person can also choose whether or not to define themselves by these arousal reactions and to identify themselves by the gender(s) or object(s) involved in their involuntary arousal patterns, such as gay, straight, bisexual, pansexual, transgender etc.

16. People who identify as lesbian or gay must all have very strong histories of same-sex attraction.

Perhaps there was a time when this might have been the case. Now, however, things are different. First, with the popularity of the LGBTQ+ movement, many people seem to be identifying themselves with one of these letters, just because its fashionable and it helps them stand out in some way, irrespective of their relationship and sexual interests. I’ve also met men and women who believed that they were gay or lesbian simply because of a crush they had on a friend. The culture is leading people to consider same-sex feelings and behaviors as so unusual, that its presence must be a sign of being inherently different and “gay”.

Two, because the definition of being gay or being lesbian is so unspecific, it has increasingly cast a wider net, drawing in people who are not necessarily confused about their sexual or gender feelings, but *who are emotionally deprived of their basic social needs such as feeling belonging, recognition, life-purpose and admiration*, needs that the LBGTQ+ identity and community seem to be promise them. These are the same reasons why young people tend to strongly latch onto other types of pro-social and anti-social identities, movements and communities. Only with LGBTQ+, once they latch onto this identity, it can become especially difficult to shake their attachment to it, even when it no longer serves their needs. Further, it is not uncommon for gay identified people and groups to be harshly critical, guilting and unforgiving when a fellow “gay member” considers “leaving the lifestyle” to pursue a heterosexual life and family.

I’ve also met several people who considered themselves gay or lesbian because they believed that finding an opposite-sex partner would disappoint, hurt or break the connection with their opposite-sex parent, a message that parents can subconsciously send their child. In such cases, when the child is not explicitly aware of this message, they can grow up subconsciously sabotaging their intimate relationship searches in all kinds of ways, including believing that they are inherently “gay” and incapable of heterosexual love.

Relationship Myths

17. Immediate lack of opposite-sex attraction or a lack of general romantic and sexual interest, means that the person cannot ever have a normal heterosexual relationship.

This is a myth created by the media and LGBTQ ideology. If this were true, many people would not have heterosexual relationships and get married. A law of human nature is that sexual energy can get activated through physical and emotional closeness to *anyone* – regardless of age, gender, race, appearance or type of relation – when there are some predictable factors involved such as: “personality chemistry”, frequent alone time doing enjoyable things, letting one’s emotional guard down and just being receptive to creating a deeper connection with someone in general. This law of nature applies even if we are at first not physically attracted or romantically interested in that person. This law also applies even if we have a history of fantasies and experiences with only one gender or a specific type of person/object.

18. Relationship or sexual disinterest in the opposite-sex has no other explanation that “being inherently gay”.

There is no credible science behind the idea of people being “naturally and immutably gay or straight”. But there are several predictable and common-sense reasons to explain why a person may not feel romantically interested in or attracted to the opposite sex, all of which can easily be resolved. These reasons have nothing to do with one’s inherent capacity for heterosexual relationships or “natural sexual identity”.

For instance, not clearly identifying the types of opposite-sex partners that one would easily “gel” with in personality, looks and values can cause people to consistently feel bored or disinterested in the people they date. A person’s lack of interest and excitement could be easily caused by negative experiences with opposite sex family members or prior intimate relationships. People with low confidence and self-esteem issues, or any number of psychological symptoms, may be uninterested in the idea of having an intimate relationship, or just too intimidated to even try. Or people with lust-triggers can develop outsized and unrealistic arousal expectations, where they implicitly expect to feel just as quickly and powerfully activate with their opposite-sex date as they do with their preferred same-sex lust-trigger.

Last, and perhaps most interestingly, when people have already concluded that they are “inherently gay”—whether or not they are public about this identity—this rigid belief can act almost like a physical barrier to opposite-sex bonding making these efforts doomed from the get-go. Since in the mind they are already “gay”, they will subconsciously resist a connection no matter how compatible they are.

19. People attracted to the same gender must be inherently gay or bisexual, pansexual or omnisexual etc. and can never have a fulfilling and lasting monogamous heterosexual relationship.

Not so. As human beings we can’t help but notice, look at and want to be close to those who we find attractive for whatever reason, regardless of age, race, gender or type of relation. For

example, many men will often report wanting to be friends with other men who are attractive and confident, even when there are no romantic and sexual intentions or undertones. And the same goes with women. But this is not at all the same as romantic interest and sexual attraction.

When it comes to romantic excitement and sexual arousal, there are also some specific “scientific laws” involved. First, in order to develop romantic and sexual interest in someone, we have to want it. Unless it is an involuntary “lust-trigger” as described earlier, if we consciously or subconsciously *don’t want* such a relationship to begin with for whatever reason, it is unlikely that we will give it a fair shot.

Second, physical and emotional closeness naturally breeds sexual interest, which is why any two women or two men who do not put up healthy boundaries in their friendship, can report feeling an occasional spark of attraction or sexual impulse, even though they never intended to feel this and even though they would never pursue it.

Third, nowadays with sexual norms much more relaxed, same-sex fantasy and experience is no longer considered that unusual that it has to be labeled as some kind of ingrained or abnormal issue.

The myth that people with histories of same-sex attraction will inevitably destroy their heterosexual marriages and should therefore avoid them at all costs, is alone responsible for unnecessarily scaring healthy men and women—and even gay-identified men and women who are feeling dissatisfied with their lifestyle—away from pursuing heterosexual relationships, which they truly want. As I have heard over and over again from clients, people are being persuaded by the aggressive LGBTQ+ messaging that they will inevitably be unsatisfied, cheat on their spouse and cause irreparable damage to many, a one-size-fits-all catastrophizing scare-tactic fueled by the media’s cherry picking of traumatic marriages-gone-wrong to unfairly paint a larger distorted picture. The fact that the media singles out this issue of same-sex attraction as an inevitable cause of marital dissatisfaction in ways that it would never do with other well-known issues such as PTSD, narcissism, sociopathy and substance-abuse, makes it easy to see the deeper political agendas behind these stories.

20. Most people date and marry the opposite sex because they are filled with romantic and sexual excitement about this possibility. Therefore, it is rare and also telling if a person doesn’t feel this way and they should probably not even try to date or develop heterosexual relationships.

Many people, for many different reasons, are actually *not* excited about dating or trying to develop a heterosexual marriage. But there are many reasons to marry aside from excitement and tapping into one of these can give people “the boost” they need to get started. For example, people may want to marry in order to fulfill the Jewish commandments, appear normal and acceptable in one’s community, leave one’s parents, feel more independent and settled in life, have children, give to the next generation, populate the Jewish world, transcend their own

feelings of mortality, achieve economic success and material comfort, or just have a dependable trusted life-partner. Typically, even if people get married for these more external reasons, they tend to soon feel satisfaction about the intimate relationship itself, as they get to know their partner.

Sexual Desire Myths

21. Same sex fantasy and experience is highly unusual or unnatural and either reflects some kind of pathology or is a sign of inherent homosexuality.

No, there is nothing abnormal or unnatural about same-sex fantasies experiences or relationships. If it were unnatural the Torah would not need to explicitly prohibit it. The fact that most people don't desire this or don't seek this out doesn't mean they are better or healthier - it just means that they are socialized to avoid it because of their family and community.

In my view, same sex desires are only considered abnormal or unhealthy person if the person does not feel in control over it or is compulsively drawn to such encounters. This would be just as abnormal as someone who has compulsive urges for opposite-sex encounters or anything else. The problem is not the person we are attracted to but the involuntary and powerful way that our arousal gets triggered, which can also lead to sexual compulsions and out-of-control behavior. The solution to these issues is, therefore, to help them regain control, but not take away the very attraction itself.

Unfortunately, many therapies for same-sex attraction have focused on pathologizing a person for the very fact of their same-sex attraction, without even considering whether this is something that they feel control over or not. This leads these therapies to promise things like “sexual orientation change” or eliminating one's same-sex desires or even changing a person's sexual desires for the same sex, so that they are able to feel these desires for the opposite sex.

These therapies are also flawed because they mislead people to believe that they are flawed just for having same-sex interests, convincing them that they won't be able to have a healthy heterosexual relationship, until this part of them is “fixed”. These approaches fail to take into account the different ways that sexual arousal gets activated. For example, most human beings are able to feel emotionally, physically and sexually drawn to *any other person* when there are certain factors in place such as mutual admiration, a “chemistry bond” or meshing of personalities, time spent alone, expressing of affection and sharing deeper thoughts and feelings.

Our secular culture is guilty of spreading a different set of inaccurate beliefs. It encourages people to see their own powerful and involuntary same-sex arousal reactions—as well as their out of control urges—as signs of “just being gay”, which is just a more polite way of saying that they are helpless victims of their inherent nature. The belief that a person cannot learn to gain control over their feelings can be very psychologically damaging and is completely at odds with Western values of mental health, which are known to promote agency and the importance of

gaining control over one's feelings. Such a belief is also Jewishly problematic at its core because it denies a person having the free will to work on controlling their impulses and habits.

22. Immediate and powerful lust for a specific gender defines whether a person is gay or straight. Therefore, lack of immediate arousal to the opposite sex, necessarily means that person is gay.

Though the media will tell you otherwise, immediate and powerful arousal feelings at the mere fantasy or sight of any specific person of either gender, is not really a very normal thing to happen. Typically, when it does happen it means that either: (a) someone's sexual energy is "spilling out from them" in their gestures, movements or speech, whether in general or specifically directed at the person aroused, or, b) the arousing person or object qualifies as someone's recurring lust-trigger as previously explained.

How do we understand lust-triggers? Modern psychology has long-ago discovered specific situations and psychological mechanics where a child or adolescent could idealize and then sexualize very specific types of males, females or objects in their immediate vicinity as a subconscious strategy to manage other stressors. In that case, those specific stimuli called "lust-triggers" can become imbued with powerful sexual energy—very much unlike sexual desires in relationships with real people—which can endure throughout their lifetime. A person with any kind of lust-trigger, however, nonetheless can still develop attractions and sexual interests in other people when there is personality chemistry, relaxed and enjoyable time spent together and a close emotional bond.

23. There is only one type of sexual desire and the most potent and consistent desire is the one that should direct our intimate long-term relationships:

There are actually two qualitatively different ways that sexual energy gets activated in humans. One is when it gets activated by someone from the outside – a stranger with whom we are not in an intimate relationship with, usually seen in public or in the media – who either "qualifies" as our specific lust-trigger (as explained above) or who is projecting out their own sexual energy through their gestures, movements and behaviors. In that case, our sexual energy can get activated quickly and powerfully. The arousal can feel impulsive, overwhelming and difficult to control. After the sexual event, the person is known to feel shame, emptiness and self-hatred and is often turned off by the imagined or real partner.

With relationship intimacy, on the other hand, sexual arousal must be created in some way – someone has to do something, say something or create a certain environment for desire to get sparked. As opposed to lust-trigger arousal, it doesn't strike suddenly just by looking or thinking about the partner. It comes from the "inside-in" connection as psychologist Anne Stirling Hastings describes in her book _____ (year). Sexual encounters also tend to follow a gradual but predictable sequence, with each step increasing the sexual arousal, but not in impulsive out of control way, (unless there is also aggressive energy in the interaction). And after the sexual

event, the partners tend to feel satisfied and closer to one another, creating a sense of joint wellbeing and that can endure long after the encounter.

That said, people with any kind of lust-trigger are not exceptions to the core principles of attraction and can, therefore, develop the same high-quality relationship with the opposite-sex as anyone else, even if they are still powerfully aroused or preoccupied by their lust-trigger.

With lust-triggers, it is important to be mindful of our secular culture's aggressive messaging, which tells us that it is an almost *moral virtue* to follow, express and fully actualize our most potent arousal feelings, no matter what our values and community traditions are and no matter what kinds of relationships and families we *ourselves* ultimately want to cultivate. Said differently, secular culture encourages people to define themselves and their life-future around these psychological symptoms and around their involuntary arousal reactions.

24. Sex is about one's maximizing one's pleasure.

This belief is pervasive in our secular culture and is even a core value held by many professional therapists who teach clients to endlessly chase sexual highs with their own partners while missing the whole point of a relationship. Sex is about connection, giving and creating a bond or a new human being. In many ways it is the highest form of *Imitatio Dei*, the human endeavor to imitate God. When sexual energy is used in the right way and at the right time, it is a powerful and special experience that goes beyond just the carnal physical sensations. When used in the wrong way, sexual experiences can create some of our lowest feelings and can also harm oneself and others in significant ways.

Psychotherapy Myths

25. Psychotherapy that does not affirm a person's belief that they are inherently gay or that challenges a person's adoption of a gay identity and lifestyle, is called conversion or reparative therapy and it is unethical, illegal and harmful.

This false and exaggerated belief is actually a key component of the LGBTQ propaganda mosaic and has been aggressively planted into the minds of many intelligent people in Western society, including therapists themselves who are supposed to have more nuanced and informed view on the topic. But the truth is that therapists are not magicians. It is not their job, nor their expertise, to "change people" in any way, shape or form. Hence, the specific myth is often connected to this larger one about therapists in general.

But in terms of therapy for same-sex attractions, putting aside the name of the therapy approach, a general reminder of the very purpose of therapy should be all that we need to challenge this myth. First, it is the role of therapists to help people gain more understanding and control over any type of exaggerated or involuntary feeling, whether sadness, fear, panic or arousal. Even if the client does not overtly complain about such experiences, even if they are proud of them,

therapists nonetheless are supposed to maintain their objectivity to help clients better manage and express their feelings.

So if a client reports a history of powerful and immediate arousal at the mere sight of a specific body part, physique or personality, whether of the same or opposite sex, or are preoccupied with romantic and sexual feelings with anyone, it is a therapist's basic job to give the person an accurate name for these obviously exaggerated reactions and preoccupations and to encourage them to better understand and reduce these. Though our culture normalizes and exalts people's potent non-heterosexual feelings and compulsions, the people who actually experience them tend to report these as a source of discomfort, mystery and distress, even if it doesn't conflict with their religious values.

Second, it is a therapist's basic job to discourage any kind of helplessness and victimhood feelings in their clients, which are well-known catalysts of severe psychological distress. Therapists generally do believe in biological determinism, or early-childhood determinism that a person's symptoms or relationship preferences are fixed and immutable. To apply such a theory in the one instance of same-sex attractions would be suspicious and a sign that they are discriminating against these clients.

Third, another general task of a psychotherapist is to make a good "differential diagnosis" for each client, to make sure that one type of diagnosis is not being confused with another. With the popularity of sexual identity labels in our culture, it is now even more the therapist's responsibility to make sure that they are not just applying fashionable and scientifically questionable identity labels for patterns that may have a much different name and a clearer path forward. In fact, in my opinion, not taking the time to make such a careful diagnosis can be considered unethical clinical care, because it risks leading the client astray and having them suffer unnecessarily with lifelong symptoms and life problems.

Four, therapists traditionally believe in the psychological importance of maintaining connection with one's family and community of origin. Unless it is an extreme case, therapists try to help people appreciate the good in these social systems and tolerate or strategize around the bad.

Five, while therapists generally believe in the value of self-actualization, they are not supposed to encourage unhealthy and irresponsible sexual behavior, like promiscuous sex and expressing desire at the risk of their own health, and at the risk of offending or pushing away important people in their life, which is ironically the very explicit aim of the LGBTQ movement.

With this understanding of the basic purpose of psychotherapy, practitioners who apply one value system to one population and a completely different value system to just those who identify themselves using one of the LGBTQ+ letters, may actually be guilty of discriminating and withholding necessary care in the name of political correctness.