

Journal #1 – Self-Assessment: Human Sexuality and Socialization

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Family

When I was young my family never discussed human sexuality openly. It was perceived that sex clearly was a personal matter, or even that it is taboo, and topic to avoid, particularly when I was a child. The most of messages that I was getting were indirect, they tried to warn me about respect, about being modest and about anything that could be deemed as inappropriate. Sexuality appeared to be a mysterious or even disgraceful activity because of a closed manner of discussion which led to the perception of sexuality as an element of human development. When I grew older, my family is somewhat more relaxed, yet we do not have any in-depth talks about the issues of consent, sexual identity, or healthy relationships.

Friends

Certainly, the first ones who were not shy of talking about sexuality with me were my friends (particularly in adolescence). What was the subject of our discussions was mostly curiosity and false information, which we heard about either on social media or rumors spread by older siblings. Throughout our lives, we hardly possessed the knowledge or vocabulary with which to discuss sexuality in a healthy or informative manner, but these conversations made clear to me that the influence of peers can be so great in the development of attitudes towards sex. As the time passed, I realized that my best friends were getting kinder and more open-minded particularly to things such as gender identity and sexual orientation that contributed to my changing perspectives as well.

Media

Media has contributed quite a significant impact on my perception towards human sexuality. Sexuality can be talked about and depicted as idealized, exaggerated, or entirely physical on music videos, TV shows, and social media. I have observed the way the media can

come out to focus on the physical form, unrealistic sex or sexuality and maybe even bad stereotypes of masculine, feminine and relationships. Meanwhile, I have also sifted through useful materials that critique such discourses such as documentaries, podcasts, and social justice campaigns that are more open, informed, and tolerant when it comes to sex and identity.

School

It happened to be that school was my first experience in sex education, albeit in a rudimentary way. The curriculum was more of reproductive health, contraception and the dangers of STIs. Although it was educative, it did not feature body of information on any emotional well-being, sexual identity, consent, and gender identity. To be sure, at the college, particularly in such courses as this one, I have begun to understand how sexuality is closely connected to development, relations, and culture. Academic environment provides me with language and structure to look at and interpret sexuality in the expanded and therefore richer sense.

Religion

My religion helped to form my initial sexuality views. Sexuality is an important matter and a serious topic that is treated as a confidential issue in the Islamic world that I grew up in. It is usually seen through a dimension of marriage, where there are well-understood moral expectations and outcomes. I was educated on the matter of modesty, self-discipline and respect of others. Although these values continue to have their impact on me, I have also learned how to consider critically the impacts of religious teachings and culture and how varying interpretations can make the individuals become comfortable with their sex and sexuality.

Laws and Government

Legally and governmentally, I have gained more knowledge in the past about the way the laws have been influencing access to sexual health, reproductive rights and the protection against the LGBTQ+ people. Any laws may restrict or support the right of people to express their sexuality and help or depend on the location. I have observed that the arguments on the subject of abortion, sex education and gender identity also echo much deeper political and cultural differences. Introductions to these legal systems have allowed me to understand that sexuality is not a personal matter the same way it is influenced by the policy and structural power.

Conclusion

Analyzing all these sources answered me a question I had, human sexuality is such a tricky issue, as I can now admit. All the agents of socialization, the family, peers, the media, school, religion and the government, have communicated a variety of messages, and even contradictory messages, on what sexuality is and how we are to think of it. That class already allows me to bridge those gaps and come to know sexuality with a more educated and decent perspective. It is also encouraging me to be more analytical of my personal convictions and my interaction with other people regarding these issues.