

# Homosexuality: nature versus nurture assignment

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**HOMOSEXUALITY: NATURE VERSUS NURTURE** Nature; all things belong to Mother Nature; the trees, the flowers, insects, the great waters, animals, and even the human race; all following the laws of nature that we are instinctively born with. However somewhere along the line something or someone defies those laws and go against what nature intended. Whether or not this rebellion is fostered by nurture, or if there is an exception to the laws that Mother Nature has set forth is a question that psychologist and many people have encountered and most have yet to find the answer.

Homosexuality has been thought of as being something that some are born with and others believe it is a learned behavior. Whether or not nature or nurture is the cause for this “ abnormality” we may never definitively know the answer to. But then again that all depends on what we define as being “ normal”. To begin to answer the questions that plague humanity about sexual orientation we must first ask ourselves what exactly is sexuality and what role does it play in our society and the continuation of life.

Sexuality is broken down into three areas: heterosexuality, bisexuality, and homosexuality. If you look at these on a scale one’s sexuality would be measured by the degree in which ones feelings are more drawn too from one end of the scale to the other (Feldman, 2009, pg 376). There are several components that are argued to have a significant role in what a person’s sexual identity is. These components are both biological and environmental in nature (Feldman, 2009, pg 377).

Biologically hormones may play a role in determining sexual orientation (Feldman, 2009, pg 377). “ Research has shown that women exposed to a

drug called diethylstilbestrol (DES), taken by women to avoid miscarriage, before birth were more likely to be homosexual or bisexual” (Feldman, 2009, pg 377). “ There is also research suggesting that brain structure could be a factor in the determination of ones sexuality” (Feldman, 2009, pg 377). The structure of the anterior hypothalamus, an area of the brain that governs sexual behavior, differs in male homosexuals and heterosexuals; compared with heterosexual men or women, gay men have a larger anterior commissure, which is a bundle of neurons connecting the right and left hemispheres of the brain” (Feldman, 2009, pg 377). Although biological reasoning can not be a clear cut explanation for homosexuality; it leaves us room to understand the condition of homosexuals rather than boorishly passing judgment on people for something they did not ask to be.

Examining the notion that homosexuality is a learned behavior rather than an innate behavior has led to one very interesting yet sad life lesson for one family suffering from what one could call the effects of inadvertent child abuse. David Reimer was born Bruce Reimer, however he was raised as Brenda Reimer. When David and his twin brother Brian were just six months old their mother took them in for a routine circumcision. The babies had been having difficulty passing urine and with the suggestion of the family Doctor Mrs.

Reimer took her boys in for the procedure that would ultimately change David’s life before it even began (McKenna, Kessler, Tiefer, and Schober, 2002). “ The doctors had chosen an unconventional method of circumcision, one in which the skin would be burned. The procedure went horribly wrong and Bruce’s penis was burned so badly that it could not be repaired

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surgically. " Thinking irrationally, Mrs. Reimer's first concerns were how Bruce would cope as an adolescent lacking a penis.

The decision was made; after listening to a Doctor by the name of John Money, and taking into consideration his views on sexuality, it was decided that Bruce would be raised as a female, and was renamed Brenda. Dr. John Money of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore argues that " boys ??? caught early enough ??? could be raised to be girls; nurture and not nature determines a child's gender, the doctor argued" (McKenna, Kessler, Tiefer, and Schober, 2002). If this is to be true, that nurture is the determining factor in ones sexuality, then raising Bruce as Brenda would seemingly erase any hardship he would have to encounter growing up.

However that would prove to be furthest from the truth. Growing up Brenda couldn't understand why she liked doing things that boys were doing and why as an adolescent she became attracted to girls and not boys. Eventually Brenda would learn the truth of her true identity and what he had been going through with Dr. Money and his " experiment"; a life experience that would ultimately lead to his committing suicide (McKenna, Kessler, Tiefer, and Schober, 2002).

Subjecting individuals to such traumas can prove to have a psychological hold on people who have to endure such horrific episodes in their lives. Sexual trauma and early exposure to sexual activity is another argument in the quest to determine the roots to homosexuality. There are so many young girls today that start out with sexual activity at an early age; some as early

as ten years old. Over time these young ladies are exposed to sexual activity such as oral sex, group sex, and same-sex gratification.

They have allowed themselves to be misused by men, for lack of guidance, and find that blaming the men for their broken hearts is an easy way to act on their curiosities about same-sex relations. With the rise of same-sex parenting it is only natural for one to assume that such behavior displayed in the home would raise questions to rather or not this type of dysfunctional display of what a family is “supposed” to look like could actually be one of the causes of homosexuality amongst pre-teens and teens. If this is all they see at home this becomes normal to them; therefore making heterosexuality an abnormality.

However on the contrary studies show that “researchers looked at information gleaned from 15 studies on more than 500 children, evaluating possible stigma, teasing and social isolation, adjustment and self-esteem, opposite gender role models, sexual orientation, and strengths. Studies from 1981 to 1994, including 260 children reared by either heterosexual mothers or same-sex mothers after divorce, found no differences in intelligence, type or prevalence of psychiatric disorders, self-esteem, well-being, peer relationships, couple relationships, or parental stress”(MD, Chang, 2002). Some studies showed that single heterosexual parents’ children have more difficulties than children who have parents of the same sex,” Perrin says. “They did better in discipline, self-esteem, and had less psychosocial difficulties at home and at school” (MD, Chang, 2002). “Another study of 37 children of 27 divorced lesbian mothers and a similar number of children of

heterosexual mothers found no differences in behavior, adjustment, gender identity, and peer relationships” (MD, Chang, 2002).

The effects of same-sex parenting seems to be equally or more effective than that of heterosexual house-holds. The one governing element in child rearing is a combination of love, discipline, and explanation of things not easily understood. There can, however, be a much darker side to the equation. Such as childhood rape; “ although it is difficult to make accurate estimates of the true incidence of child sexual abuse, due to the majority of the cases going unreported, experts estimate that each year a half million children are sexually abused” (Feldman, 2009, pg 380). The short ??? and longer term consequences of child hood sexual abuse can be extremely damaging. Victims report fear, anxiety, depression, anger, and hostility. Long-term effects may include depression, self-destructive behavior such as drug and alcohol abuse, poor self-esteem, and feeling of isolation” (Feldman, 2009, pg 381). Children who experience same-sex sexual abuse can suffer identity issues when it comes time for them to identify their sexual orientation. Because of the trauma this behavior fosters confusion, and uncertainty about who they are sexually.

There are however those who triumph in the face of adversity; those who take negatives and make out of them their testimony and help others with the same or similar issues. Take for example the life of Mr. Donnie McClurkin; as a child Donnie was not raped once but twice by two different family members. Both family members were of the male gender. Throughout his life Donnie had to cope with the sexual trauma he had endured at such an early age; he became confused and could not understand why him (Boykin, 2002).  
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Mr. McClurkin led a homosexual lifestyle for over 20 years until he completely gave his life over to his religion.

He is now married to a woman and has children. He no longer lives a homosexual lifestyle (Boykin, 2002) In this situation his choice to lead a homosexual lifestyle was fostered by sexual and mental trauma, this does not constitute factual standing that he was born a homosexual or even that he really “ choose” to have these misunderstood feelings for the same sex. So how then do we conclude whether or not sexuality is a choice or an inborn attribute people come to this world with before they even completely understand the beauty of sexual orientation?

Living in a world where you are forced suppress who you really are to pacify the needs of others will always be a hindrance and in turn will keep you oppressed in your own body. Most homosexuals suffer from depression because they are hiding their true selves from the world for fear of being exiled so-to-speak by society. However in this day and age freedom to self expression has become more accepted though there are still others who have become like a recluse to their families because of their sexual preference. Is homosexuality really a sin?

First of all we have to establish what the word sin really means. According to the Bible; to sin is to transgress the law. Most people who are familiar with religion and its origin know that according to Hebrew Scriptures the law is what we call today the Old Testament, or more accurately referred to as the Torah. The Torah was given to Moses in it you will find the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34: 28) Though in the United States of America

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church and state are deemed separate, the constitution adheres to those Ten Commandments in which speak nothing of homosexuality.

So, how then does homosexuality become a sin; would it be the same as saying a person afflicted with mental retardation is a sinner; they too did not ask to be that way. Being in your natural state means to be who you are; if you are a homosexual who pretends to be heterosexual to please society you are then in an unnatural state. If God makes no mistakes then why are homosexuals persecuted so harshly? Religion is a man made institution to allow for structure within a society; it has nothing to do with nature.

If one can not explain the beauty of God in mere mortal words how then can they determine what is natural and what is not. Life is an expression; so is love. Therefore if it is more natural for one to express their love with someone of the same sex, then who are we to judge? The line between “normal” and “abnormal” can be as thin as the line between love and hate. To be is to exist and to have your very existence held hostage by the insecurities of someone else’s existence is an injustice imposed by a society who finds great thrill in playing the role of God.

Nature is beautiful. It brings with it the beauty of mystery and the excitement of being able to acquire knowledge thereof. It can not be explained by limiting its greatness to the confines of the human psyche and the ignorance of its grace. Nature determines what is natural. If it is born of nature that it is in the state it was intended to be; so again I ask who are we to judge? References Boykin, K. , (2002) Confessions of Donnie McClurkin. Retrieved May 23, 2009 from <http://www.keithboykin.com>.

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