

Kort's Korner



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Joe's practice specializes in sexual addiction, childhood sexual, physical and emotional abuse, depression and anxiety.

He offers workshops for couples and singles. He runs a gay men's group therapy and a men's sexuality group therapy for straight, bi and gay men who are struggling with specific sexual issues.

His therapy services are for gays and lesbians as well as heterosexuals.

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Therapist Helps Gays Make Love Less Elusive

By Sharon Gittleman, *Between the Lines* January 2002

Passion is rarely subject to reason. Deciding whether to let go of a seemingly troubled relationship is an emotion-laden decision that cries out for a logic-based solution. One area social worker hopes to give lgbs some tools to help them examine whether their decision is based on unresolved past emotions or a clear-headed look at the present.

Imago Relationship Therapy teaches people how to communicate with others in their relationships. "One technique teaches how to be in dialogue and not in a monologue," said Kort. "Most people use the shoot and reload theory - while your shooting they're reloading." The therapy also offers people insight into why they chose their current or past partners. "There are two things that draw people together. One is that we're drawn to people who have the positive and negative traits of our primary caregivers. We're unconsciously drawn to familiar love," said Kort. "The other thing we're drawn to is people who have the parts of our denied selves. If we were taught not to be angry as children, we're drawn to angry people. It's all done through the doorway of romantic love." Kort said there is a big difference between "romantic love" and "real love." "Romantic love is an illusion. Its only purpose is to bring incompatible people together," said Kort. "In the beginning it's all about the positive. You're having this ecstatic positive experience and you are recreating your childhood." Kort

said when we experience romantic love our bodies literally drug us with endorphins and phenylethelamine, a molecular structure that imitates amphetamines and helps bond us to our partners.

"Nature takes care of bonding us through this internal pharmacy which is released. We overlook the negatives about your partner. However, the biological change goes away," said Kort. "You become very alert and hyper-vigilant about the negatives about your partner. Now, they can't be overlooked."

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Kort said at this point people in relationships engage in a power struggle. "You have the same issues you had in childhood. For example, if you had a domineering father you start feeling dominated in the relationship," he said. "This is where most people end the relationship. They feel it's too much work."

Kort said the only way to get to real love is to go through the power struggle and work out the issues. The biggest mistake people make is leaving their relationships prematurely. "Conflict is imperative. You need conflict in relationships. Without it there's no challenge to grow," said Kort. "People will often say I don't want this pain, but it's the only way to get to real love. Real love means loving your partner warts and all. It's removing the projections from childhood and seeing your partner for who he or she is." Kort was taught

Continued on reverse

Imago Therapy by the master teachers trained by its originator, Harville Hendrix. Kort and his partner personally experienced a Getting The Love You Want Couples Weekend.

"They demand you're working on your own relationship before you can help others," said Kort, who has been practicing Imago therapy since 1995.

Kort said his therapy sessions may meet in groups, but they are conducted like a class not a group therapy session.

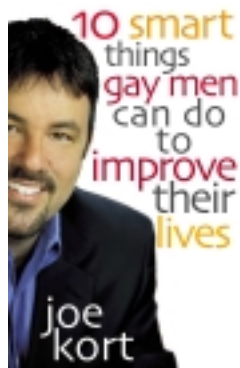
"People learn communication skills. Personal sharing is encouraged but not required," said Kort. "The basic skill we teach is intentional dialogue and reflected listening. You listen and don't react or interrupt when your partner is talking. It's your moment to reflect back on what your partner is saying."

Kort said this type of therapy has special resonance in the lgbt community. "Nobody listens to gays and lesbians. There is such a wounding of our being," said Kort. "We are

so isolated and experience so much shame. There's shame about being gay and then more shame about why we can't find a partner.

Kort said many gays are homophobic or homo-negative. "The very thing you've been taught to hate is in you," he said. In addition to his private practice, working with gay and lesbian singles and couples, Kort teaches gay and lesbian studies to master level social workers at Wayne State University.

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