

Glen

Los Angeles County

I have struggled with my sexual orientation issues since at least my teenage years, although the true causes for that struggle began much earlier than that. As a young boy, I suffered from an emotionally and relationally distant and abusive father who preferred to ignore me and use rage and escapism as control tactics, a mother who tended to run to opposite extremes of protection and distancing herself. I also suffered verbal and sexual abuse at the hands of my two older brothers and sister. Peers at school were unmerciful in their torment and teasing. I have dealt with the issues of Unwanted Same Sex Attraction on a daily basis in my life as a young man into adulthood. I became very confused about my sexual identity/orientation as a result of the abuse, neglect, and lack of connection to any person on anything other than a superficial level. Abandonment issues were also a prevalent concern for me in my childhood years. I became very good at isolation, escaping, avoiding. Why not, I had excellent teachers. I built walls so thick that nothing could penetrate them for many, many years.

The desires that I had within as I was growing up conflicted with what I believe to be true for me religiously, for me in life, in sexuality, in purpose. I came from a very strong religious faith, which produced knowledge of what I was intended to be as a man of God, and ultimately, it was this faith that carried me through moment after moment of torment from without and within. It was the single most important factor as to why I am still alive today; there really was no other reason to continue living within the hellish life I was enduring.

I married fourteen years ago. My wife and I have two sons, from her previous marriage. Those two sons have become good friends and supporters. I was married at a time when I knew that life circumstances and God had provided my wife to me, there was then and is now no question in my mind about that issue.

I have spent 30 years of the 48 years I have been alive in therapy of some sort or another. My therapy and therapists have ranged from county mental health facilities when I was younger, prior to graduation from high school and college to individuals in private practice, both male and female. Prior to my current therapeutic setting, I have seen "sex" therapists, "Christian" therapists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers and Psychoanalysts. Each one brought a certain gift to me in my healing journey, but none provided THE answer and the healing, I was so desperately seeking until I entered into my current therapy.

71 months ago, as the result of the encouragement from the minister at the church I attend, I walked into a re-orientation therapy setting. I was there to deal with my unwanted same sex attraction issues and all that stemmed from those desires that I so desperately wanted to be rid of. The last 71 months have been the most liberating, most difficult, most important months of my life so far. My 71 months in therapy have opened the doors of my life and my heart in ways I cannot fully express here. As I said, I have spent 29 years in therapy, most of that time was in not knowing what the real issues were, just that I didn't want to continue to live in conflict with my church, my sexuality, myself. I have found the past 71 months to be the most challenging of times, but these last months have given me a sense of who I am, what the roots of my unwanted same sex attraction issues were and what was needed for change. In the process of my continuing healing, I have learned to care for myself in powerful ways, I have met many, many men who want to liberate themselves from unwanted same sex attractions, men who realize that change is possible and in fact, like me, desire it at the deepest levels of themselves. These men are working at it and some are waiting for the opportunity to be given to them when circumstances allow it, but all see change as necessary and important to them in order for them to live healthy, productive, and purposeful lives.

I have not been coerced into my chosen path of recovery and healing. I have walked in that direction because it is right for me, right for my life goals and right for my own happiness and well-being. Those voices within deserve recognition and deserve to be heard, not silenced. In my case, my voice was silenced in childhood, and I believe, contributed greatly to the issues that I bring with me into each therapy session and carry with me daily.

Is my life perfect? I still struggle, not so much with attraction issues any more, though occasionally that is the case, but for me, it is more now, and always has been a need for affirmation from other men. Therapy and my involvement in various men's organization have helped fulfill that need. It fills my heart with joy, after a period of absence, when I walk in to one group meeting and men tell me with a genuine spirit of love that they are glad to see me again and have missed me. Therapy has helped to open those doors for me. There are healthy relationships with other men that I have developed that I know are a direct result of the work done in therapy, and I am constantly amazed at the doors that are opening. Another benefit that I find now is that I can express whatever emotion I am feeling in a way that is assertive and feels right, while still respecting the rights of others in my life. Therapy has given me that, as well as involvement in the men's groups I alluded to earlier.

Twenty-four **years** of conventional therapy practices did NOT address the issues fully. Seventy-one months of reparative/reorientation therapy have provided me with a sense of who I am as a man in the world who is worth loving, who has come to love himself, who recognizes the beauty of my heart and soul and the beauty of the heart and soul of others. You may question why I have been in reorientation therapy for 71 months, but as I mentioned, the wounds were deeply inflicted and the issues were of a severe nature occurring over a period of many, many years. This time has been essential and any remaining time is just as valid and will prove just as helpful, I am certain of that.