

Healing the Savage Injuries That Led Me into the Gay Porn World

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In early-1999, I made what would be my last gay porn film, thereby ending a destructive journey through the gay world of San Francisco and Los Angeles that started in 1988. During those 11 years, I was a thoroughly confused and conflicted boy who sought the magical elixir that would finally take an insecure teenager and turn him into a man.

After over a decade of searching and still on the quest, I decided to take one last shot at what I perceived as masculinity. I made a desperate and final bid to do something that could make some sense of my life: my participation in a bareback film thereby exhibiting what I thought was "manhood" on screen. By doing this, I believed nothing would stand between me and my goal. But, when it was all over, I felt just as empty and unfulfilled as before.

You would think that such a disappointment would stop me, it did not. I delved even deeper into the subconscious darkness of the gay sex scene. I was so resolute to grasp the ultimate in perverse gratification that it almost cost me my life. After being left stripped and bloodied, God offered me a choice: live or die, salvation or hell? I chose to live.

The only people who would take in a washed-up 29 year old porn star and over-the-hill hustler were my parents. Psychologically and physically beaten, I laid for days in my bed. I felt as if I had just awoken from a bad dream and couldn't distinguish between fantasy and reality. Could all those years of anguish and despair have been lived by someone else? I didn't know what to do to alleviate my depression and physical pain so I started by just praying. Nothing fancy or intellectual; I simply called out to God. I was tired and broken and looked for sustenance, for some kind of inner strength. In my heart, I felt that He had picked up my bruised body, perhaps analogizing the scene as the Good Shepherd carrying the wayward lamb.

The willful stupidity of my early years had been dashed. I was humbled. I had nothing left. All those hangers-on, fake lovers, and fans drifted away. It was just me and the Lord. He revealed all the mistakes of my past, and He forgave me. But I could not Love Him in return because I was not yet ready to begin doing the psychological work necessary to go on a healing journey. I was afraid and thought I was too damaged to love anyone or anything. .

Almost immediately, once the physical ailments began to somewhat heal, I ran away and hid. I wanted to leave California, and especially San Francisco; the sight of all the familiar scenes tormented me. I spent almost 3 rudderless years trying to escape from the horrors of the years

before. But I could not leave everything behind me. The uncertainty and pain just followed me around.

Although I was terrified, I instinctually knew that in order to overcome my fears, I had to go back. Not, however, to the geographical location of my first entrance into the gay lifestyle, or where I made all of my porn films, but rather to the most hidden and shameful parts of myself: my childhood. And to do so, I would need help from others. I had to excavate the most inner parts of myself and I realized that I needed human help to do so.

What had happened to the little boy that I once was? What and who hurt him? Why had I begun this searching for something to make all the wounds go away? Won't that be painful? Would I have the courage to dig really deep in order to discover the hidden remains of my lost youthful innocence? Working from the present, I knew that to answer these questions, I would have to revisit the past in order to find my way forward on a healthy road to the future.

The advice and counseling I sought began with the help of several dedicated and knowledgeable Catholic priests, many of whom were themselves trained as pastoral counselors. Also, somehow, I became reacquainted with the Courage apostolate, started by the late Fr. John Harvey. Courage assists and guides men and women who are unable to bear the burdens and heavy costs of partaking in the homosexual lifestyle and want to return to the Catholic Church. To a few priests, especially those brave few associated with Courage who were also trained in psychological assistance, I revealed my soul. I opened up all of the inner torments which had haunted me, the raw wounds from which I internally bled. They understood and guided me.

Speaking with these mentors, I sat for hours on end trying to remember all of the ugly incidents that left a little boy shaking and hurtfully guarded. I began getting in touch with my inner child. I looked at the artistic and sensitive kid who got made fun of by the more rough-and-tumble boys. This was the child I had spent years hating and now needed to go back and rescue in order to deal with the pain and shame that was still living in my heart and soul.

In the gay world, I had tried to remake myself into the bloated and hyper-masculine image of manhood that I saw in pornography. That failed. So, I spent years blaming that sissified boy. In my mind, it was all his fault. I tried to kill him over and over again. Now, he was just lost in the jumble of fractured individuals that I had created: the violent sadist, the insatiable porn star, and the demented hustler. However, I pushed deeper and with the help of my confidants in the priesthood, my friends at Courage, and the books and materials written by leaders in the field of therapy for unwanted same-sex attraction (SSA), I was able to cut through the crowd of make-believe characters and finally reach that damaged boy whimpering in the corner still isolated and alone.

Once I reached my inner child, the question then became: Could he be saved? As indicated above, the digging process was threefold: (1) it started between me and God, but (2) was supervised by my spiritual director and life coach as well as (3) gleaning important information from the innumerable books and other material I read about SSA and from which I endeavored to understand how my psyche was damaged in childhood. The memories were often long buried, but through these three methods, all was revealed and became re-known. The teasing, the put-downs, the feelings of inadequacy, the embarrassment, the jealousy, and the eventual longing for male love and acceptance - all rushed back like some sort of feedback loop of lost memories. It was often overwhelming. But, methodically, I went through each and every one of these dark corners in my mind, exploring the psychological implications of each wound. I shined the light of knowledge into those hidden recesses, and eventually what resided there no longer retained power over me.

At the same time, I recognized the relationship deficits that occurred in my childhood and with intention became more and more involved with my fellow journeyers, those seeking to leave behind their homosexual inclinations and subsequently with those who accepted me but never had this struggle. Many of the initial comrades were men that I met in the Courage movement. In any event, I no longer felt isolated. I could find friendship outside the gay world. Over time, a confident form of camaraderie developed among this new circle of friends. We shared our innermost secrets with each other, supported one another, and offered advice. That which previously burdened us began to dissipate. By sharing with others, the wounds we previously kept to ourselves and therefore festered within us, started to hold little or no charge. We discovered how our wounds were covered by a thin veneer of superficial happiness that we believed was coming from the gay lifestyle. Once this became apparent, the false disguises we used to hide our true pain started to disappear: The masks faded away.

It was then, and only then, that the process of healing those savage injuries occurred. Through healing we also realized that we could serve an even higher purpose than our own restoration. Part of our own mending involved praying and working for the salvation of our brothers and sisters still entrapped within the confines of the gay fantasy world. This was accomplished first of all by allowing God into our lives and by following His Commandments. With this moral compass, we then had proper direction to provide testimony and assistance to others. As I was coached in my healing, I now felt comfortable providing advice and counsel to others on the journey to wholeness. Helping others not only benefited those with whom we worked but it also strengthened us in our own healing journey. After all, no one is condemned to live the kind of degrading lifestyle I chose to live for 11 years.

Working with other people and letting them know that help is available is essential if we are to be complete human beings. Just as I was mentored by others who understood my issues, so too do I now seek to mentor others. This is my ultimate hope and prayer for the future.