

Life's Rascals
Communication Cousins
Chapter Six
Love, Sex and Beyond

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**Any man who can drive safely while kissing a pretty girl
is simply not giving the kiss the attention it deserves.**

Dr. Albert Einstein

One can kiss a nun but do not get into the habit.

Dr. Dennis Cogswell

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Did you come here first or later? A lot of people read around and start here. Even, I, the author, wrote this early on thinking it will be fun to do—it was and is.

Let's examine the title. Is the best title "Sex & Love" or "Love & Sex" or "Sex and No Love" or finally, "Love and No Sex"? I think all four would work—and yet adding the "And Beyond" gets to the heart of the matter.

For those that like orders, a good way to begin is with a definition. Often a definition gives structure, guidance and clears things up. Unfortunately, with "Love" and "Sex", definitions confuse things.

Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs--love, intimacy and sex can be any of the four. As a noun, love is something we get or feel. As a verb, love is something we do. As any adjective, love is a special product i.e. "Such a lovely day". As an adverb, love describes the quality of an action i.e. "You certainly have lovingly cared for your mother as she recuperated."

There is not one definition of "Love" but many. There actually are seven types of love:

Eros; Philia; Storge; Agape; Ludus; Pragma; and Philautia:

Eros is sexual or passionate love and is the type most akin to our modern construct of romantic love. Today *eros* has been blended into the striving for survival and reproduction. Eros has also been contrasted with thinking.

Philia or friendship is shared goodwill. A person bears goodwill for three reasons: that s(he) is useful; that s(he) is pleasant; and, that s(he) is good, rational and virtuous. Friendships here are associated with companionship, dependability, and trust. Real friends seek to live full lives by relating to each other authentically and teaching each other about the limitations of their beliefs and the defects in their character. It helps to find a friend with openness, articulacy, and insight.

Storge pertains to the love between parents and their children. It tends to be unilateral or asymmetrical. **Storge** is the fondness born out of familiarity or dependency and, does not hang onto personal qualities.

Agape is universal love that does not depend on filiation or familiarity. Also called charity, **agape** is defined as unselfish concern for the welfare of others or altruism. Research shows that altruism leaves us with a euphoric feeling—the so-called ‘helper’s high’. In the longer term, it is associated with better mental and physical health, as well as longevity. Generally, altruism, or *agape*, helps to build and maintain the psychological, social, and environmental fabric that shields, sustains, and enriches us.

Ludus is playful or uncommitted love that can involve activities such as teasing, dancing, flirting seducing and conjugating. The focus is on pleasure and often conquest, with no strings attached. Ludus relationships are casual, undemanding, uncomplicated and typically long-lasting. Ludus works best when both parties are mature and self-sufficient.

Pragma is practical love founded on reason or duty with longer-term interests. In the days of arranged marriages, *pragma* was very common. Although unfashionable, it remains widespread. Many relationships that start off as as eros, end up as various combinations of storge and pragma.

Philautia or self-love; either of a healthy or unhealthy type. In Ancient Greece, a person could be accused of hubris if he placed himself above the gods, or, like certain modern politicians, above the greater good. Today, hubris means an inflated sense of one’s status, abilities, or accomplishments, especially when accompanied by haughtiness or arrogance. www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hidden-and-see/201606/these-are-the-7-types-love

While pondering which of the seven (Burton, 1917) you want to approach for your life, ponder what Dr. Einstein and Dr. Seuss have said about love:

- You can't blame gravity for falling in love.
- When you trip over love, it is easy to get up. But when you fall in love, it is impossible to stand again.
- Women marry men hoping the men they marry will change. Men marry women hoping the woman will not. Each is inevitably disappointed.

Dr. Einstein

- You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams.

Dr. Seuss

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Sex. Everyone's Favorite Three Letter Word

Sex seems easy to define and yet is hard to understand. We all think we understand the physical activities related to sex but admit that the chemistry that brings it about is not understandable.

Sex is a biological, a chemical, a neuroscientific, a philosophical and a social/cultural activity.

With "sex", one must distinguish between gender—the social/cultural characteristics of a human being-- rather than biological ones. 'Sex' is a common synonym, referring to the two main humans' genders¹ in terms of their reproductive categories. Male is used about the characters of men, especially the gender of male. A 'man' is an adult 'male'; a 'woman' is an adult female."

A person's "sex", as determined by their biology, does not always correspond with their "gender" Therefore, the terms "sex" and "gender" are not interchangeable.

¹ When one looks at the many variations on sexual gender, often the concept of 'sexual orientation' is used. There are well over fifty variations of sexual orientations. America loves/hates all!

- “Sex” refers to physical or physiological differences between male, female, and intersex bodies, including both primary sex characteristics (the reproductive system) and secondary sex characteristics (such as breasts and facial hair).
- “Gender” is a term that refers to social or cultural distinctions associated with a given sex; it is a socially constructed concept.
- Gender identity is the extent to which one identifies with their sex assigned at birth. In many Western cultures, individuals who identify with a role that is different from their biological sex are called transgender.
- Human sexuality refers to people’s sexual interest in and attraction to others, as well as their capacity to have erotic experiences and responses.
- Sexual Orientation refers to a person's sexual identity via gender attraction; there are over fifty variations possible.

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-psychology/chapter/introduction-to-gender-and-sexuality>.

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The Largest Sex Organ

Our bodies are made up of tissues, organs and other things, each individually tailored, with an individualistic name identifying ‘it’. The largest of these organs is located inside your head, the human brain. Do you know what is the largest sex organ?

It is the human brain. The brain is the largest sexual organ because sex is mainly psychological, perhaps as much as 90%. One's brain/mind controls the functioning of the whole body; much of the controlling mechanism working without our conscious knowledge via our autonomically nervous system which also runs our heart, our breathing, our thinking-feeling and valuing/believing and all that we focus upon. In addition to our unconscious nervous system, we also have pre-conscious and conscious activity—a lot going on 24/7/365!”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_distinct_cell_types_in_the_adult_human_body

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The Pleasure Principle and Sex²

Humans have linear chromosomes that are arranged in pairs within the nucleus of the cell. One pair of chromosomes relates to the 'sex' or gender of the organism, a relatively small proportion of our whole-body system but a very important one. One idea as to what makes this pair so important is that humans like pleasure i.e. the pleasure principle and in this set of chromosomes is where 'pleasure' originates. Thus, the definition "sex=pleasure".

That is a widely utilized in science circles but not acceptable in our cultural world. Recognize that our middle-class mores definition and the professional's definition of sex are very, very different. Sex, from before Freud's time right up into the 21st century, was/is defined by neurosciences researchers, and human sexuality experts, sometimes called human sexologists, as anything pleasurable, thus chewing gum counts as sex.

Theoretically, human sexuality experts/researchers state that there are two primary human drives: aggression and sexual. As the sexual drive is defined as anything pleasurable, that greatly increases the list of what then a human might do in seeking pleasure. When the definition is broadened to include anything pleasurable (rather than limit it to genital contact or activity), the whole topic can begin to make some sense. In an American national survey from the mid-1990s, over half the men and a fifth of the women reported thinking about sex at least once a day, and frequently more often. . . Sex sells—in many ways.

The broad activity of 'sex' takes up major cognitive and emotional brain space when people are sexually aroused. The insula, the anterior cingulate, and the hypothalamus get into the act. The insula monitors the internal state of the body and regulates our autonomic nervous system, including heart rate, blood pressure, and sweat responses. The anterior cingulate monitors for mistakes to guide future behavior. The hypothalamus

² When initially mentioned, this explanation and the definition of sex as being anything pleasurable will likely be quickly rejected by most listeners. Stay the course and have them give their evidence of their definition.

regulates the secretion of hormones such as prolactin and oxytocin into our bloodstream. In addition to the usual reward systems, parts of sensory cortex also get engaged.

Our brain biochemistry also comes actively into play as hormones play a major part in our sexual activity, the hormone and neurotransmitter dopamine. This brain area sends dopamine to many areas of our reward systems, like the ventral striatum, the nucleus accumbent that operates chiefly on two essential neurotransmitters: dopamine, promoting desire and serotonin, promoting satiety and inhibition, the amygdala, the hypothalamus, the septum, and the olfactory tubercle.

In their research on 400 million individual internet user inquires, more than a quarter of the search requests were about sex. Neuroscientists/Authors Ogi Ogas and Sai Gaddam (2011) wrote **A Billion Wicked Thoughts**--a controversial and fascinating book on sexual desires and related sexual behavior. As one would expect from a culture still heavily influenced by projected Victorian sexual values³, their results are very controversial as they challenge cultural stereotypes and simplify gender differences related to sexual desire.

www.salon.com/2013/11/09/orgasm_for_dummies_neuroscience_explains_why_sex_feels_good

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The Variety of Intimacy

Wikipedia offers this comprehensive definition of an intimate relationship:

An intimate relationship is an interpersonal relationship that involves physical or emotional intimacy. Physical intimacy is characterized by romantic or passionate sex or sexual activity. The term is also sometimes used euphemistically for a sexual relationship. Intimate relationships play a central role in the overall human experience. Humans have a general desire to belong and to love which is usually satisfied within an intimate relationship. Intimate relationships involve physical and sexual attraction between people, liking and loving, romantic feelings, and sexual relationships, as well as the seeking of one or more mates and emotional and personal support for the members. Intimate relationships provide a social network for people that provide strong emotional attachments, and fulfill our universal need of belonging and the need to be cared for (Multiple, 2013).

³ I think the feminist movement is basely over, not an overall winner but a bit influential.

Intimacy comes in varying degrees. The definitions change with age. How many times a day do you say: "I love you." And mean it, but in different ways?

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Judy and John Bearister's View of Intimacy

Judy: "When I was a teenager, I thought that being intimate was something one did in a car on a date or in bed. I love my husband in several ways. We love to hold hands. I am learning how to initiate that as often as he does. Both John and I love our kids deeply and very strongly but not as in sexual love. I love my sister Loni with a great deal of acceptance, honor and respect. I no longer want to hold her hand. I love being with our many good friends. I am relearning to love me, and not seek my attention rewards through achievement as many all post seventy-year old men do. I am learning that not everyone in the world will love me, as I used to want as a teenager. I also don't have to love a lot of people who may say that they love me."

Suzanne Braun Levine offers options a woman has today that she calls "The New Intimacy":

. . . She may find intimacy without love (on the Internet), among other new locales). She may experience love without sex and sex without love. She may discover pure and simple love (with a child). And she may enjoy a new love that is not related to a human being (for her work). All of the infinite variations can be satisfying, depending on the woman, her circumstances and whether she is ready to move off the well-worn paths that have taken her this far. Those paths were carved by another woman-familiar but no longer defining. The most liberating insight of Second Adulthood is that *You Are Not Who You Were, Only Older*. And when we apply that prism to the landscape of love ahead, we can discover that there are many more options than expected (Levine, 2013, p. 6).

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Socially/culturally, there are other views brought into play. When someone is raped, it is thought that is an act of 'violence', not really an act of 'sex. Aggression and violence, including prominent sexual aggression, is a focus in Book Three.

Our "something pleasurable" sexual definition includes kissing and intercourse and other daily activities such as licking an ice cream cone, or chewing gum, or talking with a friend. Most people think that intimate relationships always involve genital sex, but that is hardly the case. When watching a baseball game, one can appreciate the intimacy that can come out of sports e.g. when a baseball third baseman grabs a sharply hit ball, steps of third for one out, speeds the ball to the second baseman who steps on second and pivots and sends a rocket of a throw to the first baseman in time for a triple play. As they rush off together, taking the shortstop with them, all four are intimate . . . for a while. Then the third baseman goes to bat and work begins again.

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Priming the Pump

In an intimate relationship, there is a psychological joining that does not have to be spoken; it is often desirable that it is not spoken. A husband-wife are at a party and their eyes connect. They communicate to each other that both are tired and ready to go home. Without speaking, both find the hosts of the gathering and offer their thanks. It is only on the way out of the door that they touch. They leave holding hands.

* * *

John and Judy are in bed together but there is a problem. John wants genital-based sexual intimacy and Judy wants to sleep. John could force the issue and have a quickie, but he knows that would only be a physical release. They both agree that some sexual time would be good, and morning sex can be great, when all are rested. Both sleep and at 6:30 am, the excitement begins with John taking Judy's hand. She holds on tight and ninety minutes pass with intimacy experienced. They couldn't have done this in years before because they had kids to take care.

On another night it is Judy whose desire is the strongest. She places her right leg over his, hoping to begin to feel close to him. The problem is there is a third entity in bed with them and it is John's I-Phone. He is listening to a basketball game and is quite engrossed in it. He fails to notice his wife's signals and the process to get to sexual intimacy is never even a possibility.

This can go two ways. Judy can gather a bad feeling and turn on her side with her back to him and go to sleep, angry that her sexual assertiveness was missed. She has the option also, of waiting until the game is over and then approaching him. She can also become aggressive in her needs and take his hand and place it on her breast and kiss his ear. All three responses/actions are fine. She can indeed pout, if she doesn't store those bad feelings away. She may choose to communicate her wishes more accurately, at either an assertive or aggressive level.

The fact that bodies have aged, dried out, lost some of their elasticity, and no longer look like the movies and magazines have told us must be, is irrelevant. Wikipedia has a very extensive overview of human sexual functioning in all aspects and ages. It is recommended reading for all at any age. It has this to say about sexual functioning and aging:

Sexuality and age is similar to most other aspects of aging. Age does not necessarily change our need or desire to be sexually expressive or active. If a couple has been in a long-term relationship, the frequency of sexual activity may decrease, but not necessarily their satisfaction with each other. Many couples find that the type of sexual expression may change, and that with age and the term of relationship there is increased intimacy and love. If sex and sexual intimacy are important aspects in one's life during young and middle adulthood, they will continue to be factors in older adulthood.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sexuality.

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Multi-intimate Moments via the Card Game Wizard!

In an extended family, after the young kids have gone to bed, the grownups get together to play a game of cards. Tonight's choice is Wizard. In the room are eight adults. They are the mother and

the father, their grown children, and each of their spouses. Of this system of eight, there are several different sub-systems. First, there are the individual marital couples. Mom and dad are not only parents but also a marital couple or marital system. The adult offspring are their parent's children and they are in their own marital system. In addition, there is the sibling sub-system consisting of only of the three grown children of the mother and father. There are four marital subsystems in the room.

Sometimes these are very cohesive and intact. The eight are ready to play cards but waiting for Dad to fill the drink orders and Mom to bring in the food. Each marital couple is talking quietly to themselves while in the room with others. It is within that subsystem where all the energy or action is, for the moment.

As the game goes on, the energy shifts away from the marital systems to the group. The oldest child and the youngest child's spouse briefly form a sub-system as they are going head-to-head in one round, each determined to win. There is much energy in the room, and it is being shared equally by each of the card dueling pair. Just before the last card is revealed, there is a moment of intimacy between these two as they are joined in anticipation and excitement.

Once the winner of that round has been determined, the couples coupling goes back to their marital systems. Soon the intensity resumes as the scores are very close. At one moment the entire group of eight is intimate as all closely hold their last two cards and look triumphantly at the others--the card problem is, each of the eight is doing this and there will only be one winner. But at that moment, there are eight winners as each achieved intimacy. That moment, like all intimacy, does not last long and soon the game is over.

The marital subsystems stop functioning temporarily as the men become a subsystem and go to the television to get some scores. The women do the same to examine a purchase made by Mom that day. Neither sub-system becomes intimate; by choice and design. Soon all head for bed, feeling great. They rejoin their family of origin, checking on their little ones before they retire.

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Homosexuality and Heterosexuality: Many Similarities

Another definition in this crowded time is one that humans think that they know but don't. It is the seemingly polar positions of hetero-sexuality and homosexuality. Numbers wise, all of us are homosexual—the degree of our homosexuality just varies. We all are homosexual as we find pleasure in male to male and female to female, as well as male to female or female to male activities. Men like to be with other men (playing sports, cards, having a meal) and women like to be with other women (in a club activity, going shopping, having coffee). Although we primarily couple with a member of the opposite gender via marriage, we still greatly value of time with those of our same gender.

Here are some factual-like statements to help your pondering:

- Most people who engage in homosexual relationships also engage in heterosexual relationships.
- In the fantastic early Greek societies, most of the best known and beloved philosophers were as interested in members of the same sex as they were the opposite sex and that was fine with all. All loved it.
- Victorian era is thought to be a virtuous, uptight, anti-sexuality era; it likely was not.
- Issues around human sexuality arose a long time ago when men and women figured out how babies were conceived, and women figured out that they had to control their sexual activity, or they would be pregnant all the time. For women, human sexuality was an attractive aspect to both women and men, but it had to be regulated or controlled for the fear of unwanted pregnancy.”

- Many people think conservative Christianity is anti-sex—they couldn't be more in error. If you want the evidence of the sexual nature of Christianity, read the Song of Solomon in any Bible. Note that most of the sexual manuals and books about sexual relationships come from authors with both a professional counseling or human sexuality background and a strong, public identified, Christian religious faith.
- These and similar stories from other eras demonstrate that human love making has always been a controversial practice for some with normative accompanying prohibitions. That is certainly true in 21st Century America with our social issues of abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, and the use of drugs for pleasure.
- In earlier civilizations the sexual body images for women were to be rotund, full-bodied and to weigh over 200 pounds. Then the 'Twiggy' stereotype perpetuated by the media came along and spoiled it for all.
- An agreed upon difference between a heterosexual and a homosexual couple is that the latter cannot create their own children. Both can become pregnant and give birth to a baby if a female is involved, and regardless of the gender pairings, can successfully raise a child to adulthood. It all is complicated and a matter of semantics. Religious beliefs do not come into play in this scientific defining process.
- For many, there is much fun doing homo-sexual things such as holding hands with my teammates in a league championship football game, slapping my fellow basketball players on the rear after a great shot and with other guys, urinating my name in the snow as I have had fun doing hetero-sexual things such as holding hands with a girl that I just met, brushing snow off my new girlfriend's winter jacket or becoming most intimate on our honeymoon with my bride of a few hours.

Review what a sex/relationship therapist, New York Times best-selling author and TED speaker has offered about being sexual and enjoying the natural sexuality that all can experience. It will help begin a process of rethinking what "sex" is and how it works (Perel, 2018, pp. 80-81).

- A sexual relationship is much more than a physical act. It starts and ends with the human brain—the largest and most important sexual organ in the body; it is a multidimensional experience for all involved involving bodies, minds, attitudes and senses. It is much, much more than a physical act.
- In intimacy, sexual, genital intercourse is not the central objective; it may or may not be apart of an intimate sexual relationship. People who are extremely close to a favorite animal—perhaps a dog or a cat—love to touch them and have them rub

against them or lick them. This relationship does not involve any genital activity but is very, very intimate.

- Affectionate touch is the key to love and our happiness with our mates or partners. This touching can occur through hand holding, a touch on the shoulder, foot rubs, back rubs or any touching that feels pleasurable to the one receiving it.
- Being sexually active is a daily, ongoing process that occurs in many ways and via different steps. Sexual desire—the drive to feel pleasure—is natural and normal and a part of the two main drives humans experience. One-way sexual desire is experienced is to feel wanted by the other person. Another way is through regular ordinary conversation with your mate or partner. One usually starts generally and then becomes more specific as the couple moves towards intimacy.
- It is the relationship between mates or partners that matters rather than sexual techniques.
- The techniques of sex have become a recreational sport in America rather than a part of a loving relationship. Most young sexual partners are either in “lust” or “like” but not in love. Scoring on the other person or working to please the other partner is a part of an unhealthy romantic relationship.
- Romance is best when both partners ask for what they want, and both give their partner what the other wants.
- Nothing that happens in a sexual relationship is unhealthy if it occurs between consenting adults. Nothing that happens in a sexual relationship is healthy if one of the partners objects.

* * *

Dee and Doo on Sexual Myths

“Most of us have heard the traditional sexual myths such as:

1. You can't get pregnant if you have intercourse during your period.
2. The direction the head of the sexual bed faces determines the gender of your baby.
3. Human sexuality relates only to genital sex.
4. Men like blonde sexual partners better than brunette sexual partners.
5. Sex is good exercise.
6. Homosexuality only relates to genital sex.
7. Our Christian religion stance on sexuality is a correct one.
8. Men think about sex every seven seconds.

“I have heard of some of these but not others. I think # 3, 8, 9 & 11 need some explanation.

"# 3: Genital sexual activity is a small part of human sexuality which covers areas such as sexual orientation, human sexual behavior, human sexual preference and our interest in pleasure.

“# 8 Homosexuality refers to much more than wanting genital sexual contact with one who has the same genital physiology.”

"11. Dualistic thinking divides people into two camps or sides on all matters; however, that is not the way life goes. Rainbow thinking on sexuality⁴ has people being in many different places on sexual matters and that includes preferences for activities with people of common sexual psychic and attitude (homo) and different sexual psychic and attitudes (hetero)."

“All people are both heterosexual and homosexual although we react with horror when told we are homosexual.”

Dr. D. joins the fray: “Remember, one’s values, beliefs and attitudes don’t have to be, and can’t be proven. They are what we believe, are non-logical and never were intended to be logical. Our American Constitution provides the right to believe anyway/anything religiously sought as long as one doesn’t harm anyone else or seek to force/coerce anyone into a different belief.”

“Homosexuality, as used by human sexuality experts, refers to liking similar things with people of the same gender i.e. Women like to spend time with women and men with men—check out whom talks to whom at a party?

All of this is unlikely to change anyone's view on homosexuality First, this is not a thinking matter—it is a valuing matter about which most humans have many feelings. Thoughts seldom arise here. If you were to continue with this thought, you might state that our sexual mores are

⁴ Rainbow thinking, covered extensively in Chapter Four, says that all matters have polar positions and that what works best for humans is a position somewhere in between the polar positions—onto the rainbow.

culturally strongly influenced and within any country there is wide variance of acceptable practices—yet all insist that their beliefs and behaviors are the correct ones”

“Even well-prepared counselors and therapists do not get it correct. It is not possible to be a counselor or other professional without beliefs and values. No one goes valueless—their values can be very different, but they are still values.”

Doo sighed: “Oh dear. My mother had six children and was sexuality active with her husband. She loved her woman’s groups which are now labeled homosexual—oh dear—oh my, my.”

Dee: “I think the only way to end this is to say ‘Amen.’”⁵

* * *

Do not bite at the bait of pleasure, till you know there is no hook beneath it.

Thomas Jefferson

Be courteous to all, intimate with few, and let those few be well tried before you give them your confidence.

George Washington

I have been always told that sex gets better with age but have never really understood that until now.

Sex is a very important variable in a marriage but is only one of three thousand, three hundred, thirty-three variables so don’t over play it.

Dr. Dennis Cogswell

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If you seek more, do so. After all, stopping after foreplay is very frustrating.

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⁵ Note that this common religious ending has nothing whatsoever to do with maleness. Amen is a transliteration of the Hebrew word amen. The verb form occurs more than one hundred times in the Old Testament and means to take care, to be faithful, reliable or established, or to believe someone or something.