

ADVICE

Post-coital personalities

Sometimes it's your own fault you're single

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

I'm a 44-year-old lesbian who has been single for the past decade. I meet lots of attractive, interesting women, and sometimes I date them.

But the problem comes after having sex with them. After sex, I feel happy and calm, knowing that they are interested in me and that now the real getting to know each other is about to begin.

Inevitably, this is exactly the time that my would-be calm, attractive, interesting date turns into Dr. Lesbian Jekyll and starts getting antsy and nervous and insistent that I don't like her enough. I find this crazy. Would I have slept with her if I weren't interested?

I don't understand this post-coital anxiety, and it works to drive me away. I'm turned off by the calling and the questions and the blatant insecurity. These women accuse me of being cold when really what happens is I get put off by their constant need for reassurance.

Is it me? Or is it them?

—Ms. Hyde from *Start to Finish*

DEAR MS. HYDE:

Lesbians (and perhaps even other creatures) in the early stages of dating fall into two groups: those who experience relief after having sex with someone new and those who experience anxiety after having sex with someone new.

The Relief-After-Sex girl—who is anxious before the boffing occurs and works very hard to get her date to like her—relaxes and laughs after she gets laid. “She must really like me!” she hums. This change of mood horrifies the Anxiety-After-Sex girl, who doesn't begin to put her emotions on the line until after she shucks off her panties.

So, Anxiety Girl gets sweaty and nervous because she's just engaged in a meaningful act and now Relief Girl is seemingly no longer engaged. Anxiety Girl starts to analyze Relief Girl's every gesture: “Why didn't she call me yet? What does it mean that she slept with her back toward me? She's not looking at me as much as she used to,” etc.

This disturbs Relief Girl. She does not like to be looked at or analyzed, and, in reality, she's frightened of intimacy. So she withdraws even more, which perpetuates the cycle. She begins to think Anxiety Girl may be a stalker and stops returning her calls.

Now Anxiety Girl is hurt and confused and seeks extra therapy. Or, if she doesn't seek extra therapy, she begins to wait outside Relief Girl's house, until it dawns on her that she is, indeed, behaving like a stalker.

So, Ms. Hyde, there are two ways to avoid this problem: 1) Stay in therapy long enough to figure out why you fear intimacy and what you

can do about it or 2) Stick with your own kind and out-distance one another into the sunset.

Of course, your current cat-and-mouse pattern probably serves you in some way, so it will likely be a hard habit to break.

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

About three months ago a male reader asked you about lesbians' potential problem with “man smell.” I'm a lesbian but have never heard of such a thing and could not tell whether your answer to him was humorous or serious!

I have both gay men and straight men as friends and have never noticed a “man smell.” You suggest the men might shave their body hair in order to be let into the women's house. Does this happen? Were you kidding?

—Christine (Gay woman who likes men as they are...)

DEAR CHRISTINE:

You haven't noticed the man smell problem? Perhaps you haven't heard that a small, but significant, percentage of lesbians have a defective olfactory gene, which renders their sense of smell useless after exposure to certain elements.

These scent-robbing elements include: tongue piercing, lesbian love juice, folk music, men's cologne, hiking and vibrating sex toys. Have you been affected?

Actually, Ms. Behavior was surprised by how many readers wrote in to object to her tongue-in-cheek suggestion that the men shave their body hair in attempt to be more suitable guests. She even received a nasty diatribe from a gay man who ranted on and on about the smell of menstrual blood. (How would he know what menstrual blood smells like?)

Ms. Behavior was merely fondly poking fun at the reader who posed the question about why he wasn't invited to the lesbians' bridge game and at his own suggestion that it might be his “man smell.”

To clear the air, Ms. Behavior hereby announces that she embraces men and their odors. She does not believe they need to remove their body hair to be acceptable guests and does not support the efforts of the dyke vigilante groups who have recently held down and waxed innocent gay men. This is not helpful, ladies! ☞

© Meryl Cohn 2003

MERYL COHN is the author of *Do What I Say: Ms. Behavior's Guide to Gay and Lesbian Etiquette* (Houghton Mifflin). Her Internet site is www.msbehavior.com. Send questions or correspondence to msbehavior@aol.com.

Willamette Valley:

Physical Recreation

The OUTdoor Group is a friendly, inclusive bunch of Eugene people who go biking, hiking, skating, mushroom hunting, skiing, hot springing and just about any other activity you can dream up. Occasional weekend camping. (Kim 541-484-2147. kims@efn.org. www.outdoorgroup.org.) (7/03)

Frontrunner and Walkers go out every Saturday morning in Eugene. (9 am. 15th and Agate. Hank 541-484-6259 or Sadie 541-485-3282.) (7/03)

The **Eugene GLBT Tennis Group** gets together weekends to play for fun and exercise. Open to all ages and skill levels. (kfranken8@yahoo.com.) (7/03)

Willamette Valley: Social

Confluence: The Willamette Valley Mixed GALA Chorus rehearses 4-6:30 pm Sundays at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem, 5090 Center St. NE. (541-754-4144. confluence@aol.com. www.confluencechorus.org.) (7/03)

The **Eugene Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual 20s/30s Social Club** enjoys a weekly game night and brunch every Sunday at Brail's. (Brian 541-485-3437.) (7/03)

The **Lesbian Connection (TLC)** meets once a month for potlucks and other various fun activities in Eugene. All women welcome. (Bonnie 541-683-2793.) (7/03)

Marionberry Salon meets monthly in Salem for potlucks and discussion of books touching on the lesbian, gay, bi experience. (Cary 503-363-6036. marionberrysalon@aol.com.) (7/03)

SPIRITUALITY

Metro: Spirituality

Ainsworth United Church of Christ is a multicultural, multicultural, open and affirming church. Sunday worship is at 10 am; church school for children runs concurrently. (2941 NE Ainsworth St. 503-284-8767. acc@teleport.com.) (7/03)

Anawim Community of gay men meets weekly for Christian meditation and prayer. (7:30 pm Thursday. 503-281-0722.) (7/03)

Atkinson Memorial Church is a Unitarian Universalist welcoming congregation in Oregon City. (710 Sixth St. 503-656-7296. www.atkinsonchurch.com.) (7/03)

Compassionate Heart Sangha plays host to weekly sittings in the Vipassana Meditation Tradition at Flanders House. (7:30-9 pm Wednesday. 2926 NE Flanders St. Jon 503-239-5539.) (7/03)

Congregation Neveh Shalom, an open and progressive Conservative Jewish synagogue, extends a warm welcome to all sexual minorities. Shabbat services 8:15 pm Friday and 9 am Saturday. (2900 SW Peaceful Lane. 503-246-8831.) (7/03)

Congregation P'nai Or (Faces of Light) is a vibrant, egalitarian, Jewish Renewal congregation in Portland. Meets several times a month in various locations. (PO Box 42187. Portland, OR 97242-0187. 503-248-4500. www.pnaioipdx.org.) (7/03)

Dignity Portland meets for Mass on Sundays. (503-262-6947.) (7/03)

Eastrose Fellowship Unitarian Universalist, a welcoming congregation, offers Sunday service and children's religious education. (10:30 am. 1133 NE 181st Ave., Gresham. 503-665-2628. eastrose@teleport.com.) (7/03)

Faith United Methodist Church is a welcoming community of Christians in Troutdale that values and encourages all people in finding a place of belonging in the family of God. Sunday worship at 10:15 am. Adult Education at 9 am; children and youth at 10:30 am. Wednesday Prayers 6-6:30 pm. (27400 SE Stark St. 503-661-4520.) (7/03)

First Unitarian Church of Portland is an open and affirming liberal religious community offering a wide range of programs to nurture spiritual growth, community and social justice. Sunday service 10 am. (1011 SW 12th Ave. 503-228-6389. www.firstunitarianportland.org.) (7/03)

First United Methodist Church of Portland, a welcoming and reconciling congregation, believes no one is left out in God's family. Sexual minority potlucks held monthly. (10:30 am Sunday. 1838 SW Jefferson St. 503-228-3195. www.fumcpdx.org.) (7/03)

Grace Space is a New Thought spiritual center dedicated to offering ways to experience Spirit. Sunday evening celebrations with Rev. Stephanie Torres. Conscious Breathing experiences, Chanting, Healing Services, Meditation classes and a miracles study group. (5 pm. Bridgeport Community Church, 621 NE 76th Ave. 503-287-3216.) (7/03)

Integrity is a group of sexual minority Episcopalians and friends. Various locations throughout Oregon. (Bruce Mason 503-286-9111. brucepdxor@attbi.com. www.integrityusa.org.) (7/03)

Interfaith Spiritual Center houses spiritual directors from various world religious traditions, who are available for guidance, classes and retreats. (Second Floor, 3910 SE 11th Ave. 503-233-2026, ext. 3. www.interfaithspiritualcenter.com.) (7/03)

Keshet Portland is a group for Jewish members of the sexual minorities community and their partners, spouses and supporters. Monthly social, religious and cultural events. (David or Laney 503-226-7079, ext. 14.) (7/03)

Metanoia Peace Community United Methodist Church is a “house church,” bringing gay and straight together. (Daily prayer 7:20 am. Sunday gathering 5 pm. 2116 NE 18th Ave. 503-281-3697. www.tearsoup.com/metanoia.) (7/03)

Metropolitan Community Church of Portland holds ecumenical Sunday morning worship services at 9 and 11 am. Sunday school for children is held during the 11 am worship service. (2400 NE Broadway. 503-281-8868. info@mccportland.com.) (7/03)

Portland Center for Spiritual Growth is a New Thought Center offering an uplifting, warm and refreshing service with the Revs. Casey and Berdell Moffett-Chaney. (10 am Sunday. Call for location. 503-777-0727.) (7/03)

Portland Church of Religious Science is a liberal, open, progressive New Thought community welcoming everyone to discover the spirit within. Change your thinking, change your life! (10 am Sunday meditation, 10:30 am service and junior church, 6:30 pm Wednesday prayer circle. 3983 NE 112th Ave. 503-261-0677.) (7/03)

Portland Radical Faeries meet twice a month with potlucks and circles at the full moon and the new moon. Open to all men seeking alternative spiritual growth and community. Coffee hours start 9:30 am Saturdays at 3 Friends Coffeehouse, 201 SE 12th Ave. (503-235-0826. otter@pccz.com.) (7/03)

SisterSpirit offers women's spirituality celebrations, discussion groups, a drumming circle, workshops and classes. Schedule of events available. All women are welcome. (Suite 102, 3430 SE Belmont St. Mailing address: PO Box 9246, Portland, OR 97207. 503-736-3297. sistersp@teleport.com.) (7/03)

Spirit Circle is for lesbian, bi or trans women seeking a welcoming community in the Catholic church. Meets every third Thursday in the St. Andrew Nativity School. (7 pm. 806 NE Alberta St. lbtspiritcircle@yahoo.com.) (7/03)

Southminster Presbyterian Church is a challenging, supportive community that welcomes all people. It is the first More Light Presbyterian Church in Oregon. Sunday school and nursery care. (10 am Sunday. 12250 SW Denney Road, Beaverton. 503-644-2073. staff@southmin.com.) (7/03)

St. Andrew Catholic Church invites all to join a diverse faith community for prayer and fellowship. (9:30 am Sunday. 806 NE Alberta St. 503-281-4429.) (7/03)

St. James Lutheran Church, a Reconciled in Christ congregation, welcomes all people for traditional, liturgical worship where we experience God's reconciling love that sets all people free. (9 and 11 am Sunday. 1315 SW Park Ave. 503-227-2439.) (7/03)

Gay and Lesbian Outreach (GALO) of St. Philip N.E. Catholic Church celebrates an affirming Mass followed by a social. (7:30 pm Friday. Paulist Center, 2408 SE 16th Ave. 503-231-4955.) (7/03)

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church has been welcoming all people since 1863. (12:10 pm Wednesday and 7-45 and 10 am Sunday. Sunday school and child care at 10 am. Southwest 13th Avenue at Clay Street. 503-223-6424.) (7/03)

Waverly Heights Church (UCC) is open and affirming with worship, children's school and child care. (10 am Sunday. 3300 SE Woodward St. 503-238-1337. www.waverlyucc.org.) (7/03)

Wyeast Unitarian Universalist Congregation is an open and liberal religious community offering inter-generational services and religious education for children. It welcomes gay, lesbian, bi and trans members. Nurtures spiritual growth and promotes living by Unitarian Universalist principles. (4 pm Sunday. 3915 SE Steele St. 503-777-3704. www.wyeast.pnwd.uua.org.) (7/03)

Zion United Church of Christ, an open and affirming congregation, is open to gay, lesbian, bi, trans and heterosexual people who wish to worship in a Christ-centered, warm, caring, multiage/race/cultural faith community. (11 am Sunday. 2025 NE 23rd Ave., Gresham. 503-665-8741.) (7/03)

Washington: Spirituality

Abundant Life Center is a New Thought Community for spiritual awakening and transforming lives through love. A safe place where children learn to embody spiritual principles. (10 am Sunday. 10006 NE Ninth Ave., Vancouver. 360-573-2626.) (7/03)

East Vancouver United Methodist Church is reconciling and welcoming. (10 am Sunday. 5701 MacArthur Blvd. 360-693-4761. ourclarkcounty.columbian.com/273/.) (7/03)

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, holds two Sunday services, traditional and “less traditional” in an open and affirming congregation. (1220 NE 68th St., Vancouver. 360-693-1476. vanucc@aol.com.) (7/03)

God's Holy Territory offers a spirit-filled worship experience, seeking God for holiness and wholeness. For gay, lesbian, bi, trans and straight. Everyone welcome! (11 am Sunday, 7 pm Thursday Bible study and prayer. 1500 NE 49th St., Vancouver. 360-885-9461. gmbear68@netzero.net.) (7/03)

Michael Servetus Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, a Welcoming Congregation, provides a home for the liberal religious spirit. (9:15 and 11 am Sunday. 4505 E 18th St., Vancouver. 360-695-1891.) (7/03)

Willamette Valley: Spirituality

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ is an open and affirming congregation offering worship and church school. Child care provided and wheelchair accessible. (9 am Sunday learning hour, 10 am worship. 700 Marion St. NE, Salem. 503-363-3660.) (7/03)

Morningside United Methodist Church is a reconciling congregation where everyone is welcome to participate in the full life of the congregation. (8:30 and 11 am Sunday. 3674 12th St. SE, Salem. 503-364-5013.) (7/03)

Sacred Souls honors all sacred paths, promotes peace and strives to create an environment that supports and promotes interfaith dialogue. Meets at the Oregon School of Massage. (6:30-8 pm Sunday. 440 Ferry St. SE, Salem. wholhth@aol.com. www.sacredsouls.org.) (7/03)

YOUTH

Metro: Youth

Flavors, a program of MultiQueer and Brother to Brother, is a social support group for sexual minority youth of color 24 and younger. Meets every other Sunday for food and socializing. Regular events and activities. (Des 503-228-3892 or des@lmfamily.org. Stephan 503-417-7991 or hey_stephan@hotmail.com.) (7/03)

The **Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)** fights to end anti-gay bias in K-12 schools. (12700 SW North Dakota St., Suite 180, #129, Tigard, OR 97223. 503-525-1177. glsen@glsenoregon.org.) (7/03)

MultiQueer, a program of Love Makes a Family, provides advocacy to sexual minority youth. Offers resources and support in the community and the school systems, with a focus on support for youth of color. (Des 503-228-3892. des@lmfamily.org.) (7/03)

Outside In operates a clinic for anyone who can't qualify for the Oregon Health Plan as well as needle exchange services that include those who inject hormones. Can provide transitional housing for youth 20 and younger as well as for those HIV+ and younger than 23. Also plays host to VOICES (Voices of Individual and Community Empowerment from the Streets), a self-support group for queer youth. Needs volunteers of all ages. (10 am-6 pm Monday-Friday. 1132 SW 13th Ave. 503-535-3800. www.outsidein.org.) (7/03)

Vanguard Youth Services, a program of Cascadia Behavioral HealthCare, offers support and recreation to gay, lesbian, bi and trans kids 23 and younger. Programs include: **Clackamas County Sexual Minority Youth Connection (COSMYC)** provides opportunities for queer and questioning kids to get together for free, fun and supportive social activities. Also one-on-one support and referrals to Clackamas County service providers. (503-969-0060. cosmycyouth@yahoo.com.) **Expression** is a free art/expression support group in Gresham for queer youth. Hang out and have fun every Friday! (Jonathan 503-872-9664, ext. 28.) (7/03)

Pride Project brings together Washington County queer and questioning youth to plan and attend monthly social events. Also information, referral and advocacy services in Washington County. (Molly 503-260-5792. molly@prideproject.org.) (7/03)

Sexual Minority Youth Recreation Center (SMYRC) offers drop-in computer access, pool tables and an informal place to hang out. Weekly youth support groups includes Trans Youth Group and Personal Deity Proxy (a creative group). (4-8 pm Monday and Wednesday, 4 pm-midnight Friday and Saturday. 2100 SE Belmont St. 503-872-9664. TTY 503-231-9286. www.smyrc.org.) (7/03)

Youth HIV/STD Prevention Project provides fun and educational programs along with counseling and testing to queer youth in a friendly, relaxed environment. (503-872-9664.) (7/03)

Washington: Youth

Triple Point offers education, support and advocacy to gay, lesbian, bi, trans and questioning youth in Vancouver, Wash. Meets 6-8 pm Tuesdays in the basement of Youth House, 1112 Columbia St. in Vancouver. (John 360-695-1325.) (7/03)

Willamette Valley: Youth

Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Transgender and Questioning Youth Group for ages 13 to 18 offers support, information and fun in Eugene. Free, confidential, adult-facilitated. (Drop in 4-6 pm Friday. Amazon Community Center, 2700 Hilyard St. 541-684-3466.) (7/03)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Youth Group for ages 25 and younger meets every Monday in Eugene. (5 pm. Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St. 541-346-1134.) (7/03)