



10-1-1989

An Appetitional Theory of Sexual Motivation: Its Contemporary Status and Applications in an Approach to Change

Kenneth R. Hardy

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/irp>

Recommended Citation

Hardy, Kenneth R. (1989) "An Appetitional Theory of Sexual Motivation: Its Contemporary Status and Applications in an Approach to Change," *Issues in Religion and Psychotherapy*: Vol. 15: No. 1, Article 6.

Available at: <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/irp/vol15/iss1/6>

This Article or Essay is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Issues in Religion and Psychotherapy* by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu.

An Appetitional Theory of Sexual Motivation: Its Contemporary Status and Applications in an Approach to Change

Kenneth R. Hardy, PhD
Address to AMCAP Convention
March 31, 1989

Abstract

Changes are noted in American society and culture in the last generation since the appetitional theory was first formulated. A current statement of the theory is reviewed, together with the concepts of motivation upon which it is based. A model of change is introduced, based upon central Christian concepts, especially as they are propounded by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The change model and the appetitional theory are then applied to the area of human sexuality in an attempt to provide a framework for a program of positive change.

It is an honor to be with this group, and to present some ideas to you, thanks to the gracious invitation extended by an old friend and former student, Dr. Clyde A. Parker. It was at his invitation that I met with a predecessor group to this one: the LDS members of APGA—twenty-four years ago (on 11 April 1965) in the Taft Room of the Leamington Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to discuss what was then my newly published paper on the appetitional theory (Hardy, 1964). I have always felt an affinity for your group, though I have never felt qualified to join your organization. For this reason, I feel quite humble in addressing you today. I speak not from experience or training as a counselor or psychotherapist, but from my background as a theoretical psychologist. I have had some experience as a bishop in dealing with the topic

that concerns us today, but I have neither your clinical expertise nor therapeutic experience in coping with the problems of human sexuality that serve as a theme for today's discussions. Please forgive me for that.

In the fifteen minutes allotted to me this first hour, I will try to do three things: First, I will consider changes in American society and culture that have occurred since the original formulation of the appetitional theory. Second, I will review, in part, the appetitional theory as it now stands, and the motivational orientation on which it is based. Finally, I will provide a glimpse at a model of change derived from our religious faith, and which, combined with the appetitional theory, may provide a framework for change efforts, including those via counseling and psychotherapy.

Societal and Cultural Changes

I begin by highlighting social changes, doing so, first, to provide a historical perspective and social context for the individual problems that we see daily in our professional work and in society generally; these do not occur in a social vacuum. Second, to suggest their impact on our conceptions of sexuality. And, third, to stress the urgency for a program of positive change in our sexual thought and conduct.

American society has witnessed awesome changes in the last generation, and the sexual experience has been profoundly affected. I will mention seven changes that have had an impact on our topic for today. First, there has been a burgeoning of research in various aspects of human sexuality. From the pioneering interviews of Alfred Kinsey have come a host of attitudinal and behavioral surveys of American sexual beliefs and behavior. The work of Masters and Johnson, propounded in books, journals, seminars and workshops, has led to much research and treatment in the areas of sexual function and dysfunction, leading to a clinical specialty in sexual and marital therapy, in which some of you may be participating. Research and clinical work in the area of homosexuality has eventuated in the elimination of homosexuality per se as a classified mental disorder, and there is much discussion and value-laden controversy over its etiology and treatment. One last area of research that must be mentioned concerns the effects of viewing pornography [erotical] via the media. Concern over this has led to two national commissions, a large number of research studies, and intense public controversy.

It is appropriate to acknowledge the contributions of our good friend and colleague, Victor Cline, in evaluating these research efforts and in clarifying effects.

A second area of change has been in the public discussion of sexuality. Just one generation ago it was a hush-hush subject. Now it is openly treated throughout our society, not only in newspaper tabloids and TV talk shows, but also in learned journals, academic classrooms, and in such conservative magazines as *Reader's Digest*. With the advent of AIDS as an urgent social problem, there is heightened pressure to discuss sexuality in the public schools on a broader and more open basis than before.

A third area of change has been in the depiction of erotic materials and innuendoes in the media. We have witnessed a revolutionary change in the last thirty-five years, beginning with the print media (that is, in *Playboy* magazine), and extending through the motion picture industry, to TV, in its broadcast, cable, and video segments.

Still another area of change has been in medical science. Biochemical research and marketing have made available to a worldwide clientele effective contraceptive devices (especially the pill); so-called "safe" abortion is now accessible to rich and poor alike in American society. For a time, it looked like miracle drugs would treat and cure all sexually transmitted diseases, so that one could engage freely in sexual behavior without fear of disease. Then AIDS was diagnosed, and studies of its spread showed the hazards of indiscriminate sexual relationships. Now we press for heightened medical research and treatment for this devastating debility.

A fifth type of change derives from the upheaval of the social movements that flooded America during the period, roughly, from 1956–1976, beginning with the civil rights movements and extending through the protests of the Vietnam war, to the hippie, women's liberation and gay rights movements. People were enjoined to "make love, not war," to "do their own thing," and to beware of the establishment and establishment values. The tenor of the times was to experiment, to try anything, in the search for fulfillment, for gratification, for self, whether that search involved drugs, sex, communal living, alternatives to marriage, new religious movements, or whatever.

A sixth area of change has to do with changes in attitudes and values (norms) surrounding sexuality, marriage, and the family. The traditional standard of premarital chastity, especially as applied

to women, has lost ground—it now being a minority view. The majority of Americans now approve of abortion within the guidelines established by the Supreme Court. Masturbation is not only condoned as a common practice, it is even proclaimed in texts today as a laudatory mechanism for sexual fulfillment. Traditional marriage is seen as barely desirable and rarely attainable. Our professional groups, the American Psychological Association and the American Association for Counselors and Development, and others, have taken stances in favor of the right of homosexuals to their life style, though this is still a minority view among the public at large.

The concluding area of change has to do with changes in sexual behavior itself, not merely in attitudes, talk, and depictions of it. Clearly, more people are more sexually active than previously. Youth are involved in sex much more and at earlier ages, resulting in a great increase in teenage pregnancy, and massive increases in abortion. Adults, married or not, young or old, are more concerned about sexual performance and more active in pursuit of it. It is my personal belief—though it is well-nigh impossible to obtain accurate data about chronological changes—that we have far more child sexual abuse than formerly. Rape and sexually-charged serial murders have become almost commonplace.

In summarizing these changes in our society (some of which are taking place in other countries as well), I think it is fair to say that our society has a much greater sexual ambience, a greater sexual focus, than ever before. Thirty years ago, both professionals and the lay public tended to view sexual motivation as a masculine attribute, driven by a biological imperative. Now, there is a recognition that sexual behavior is a matter of choice and that both men and women have sexual desires. This is a step forward. But, under the vaunted banner of equality and freedom, we have encouraged women, especially young women, to not only become sexually available (receptive), but even assertive, exercising initiative, taking the stance that sexual fulfillment is a right to be vigorously pursued. Rather than encouraging men to become more like women in their reticence to engage in sexual adventures, we have urged women to become more like men. I don't believe that I need repeat a litany of negative consequences of this change to this audience. Finally, I believe that our society, and especially the media, in the attempt to bring sexuality out of the closet and

“liberate” us, has primarily succeeded in cheapening and degrading the sexual act. We have not been well served!

All of this suggests the importance and the urgency of providing a more adequate view of our sexual nature, an emphasis upon the positive side of sexuality in its larger context of marital love, and a hopeful model of change, which can lead us to higher moral ground and real happiness.

The Appetitional Theory

In summarizing the appetitional theory, I will present it in an updated form. Modifications include giving the cognitive aspects fuller recognition, emphasizing the importance of imaginal processes, of plans and decision making, and of attributions, all of which reflect theoretical developments in the last twenty-five years. I have also modified my views of the relationship between hormonal and behavioral determinants in sexuality. Please remember that the theory as it stands is only a working framework which needs further elaboration and revision. I solicit your input and efforts to make it better.

While I have prepared a table (Table 1)² that provides a partial view of this approach, given our time constraints this hour, I'll attempt only a capsule statement. The workshop period may permit a closer look at both the theory and the table, should interest call for it.

The appetitional theory of sexual motivation is derived from a general motivational theory with a cognitive-affective orientation. At the same time, however, it recognizes the biological foundations of affective reactions and the reality of choice in affecting sexual decisions.

The theory asserts that sexual motivation is a learned appetite, based on two innate (biological) foundations: the pleasure of mild genital stimulation and the intense pleasure of sexual climax with its subsequent relaxation. The learning involves linkages between the affect (emotion), the stimuli attendant thereto, and the person's own behavior. Once the linkage is formed, the stimuli become cues to the anticipated emotion, predisposing the person to behavior to evoke the sexual thrall. The motivation increases and becomes solidified as this linkage is repeated with satisfying results. The greater the intensity of the affective experience, the

²Editorial Note: Because of the lengths of each of the tables referred to by Dr. Hardy, they are grouped together in an appendix at the end of this article.

stronger will be the resulting motivation. Since sexual climax may be experienced as highly pleasurable, sexual motivation may become a powerful engine driving a person's behavior.

The linkages formed range from the simplest conditioned responses to very complex structures as the person builds a network of beliefs and expectations about things sexual and sexually related (dating, romance, marriage, etc.). When our positive expectations about one linkage are confirmed and are thereby strengthened, the whole group of related expectations tend to be strengthened as well. All of this occurs within the framework of concept formation, abstraction, generalization, and discrimination. The learning of these frameworks is of course affected by our socialization, that instructs us about appropriate objects of sexual interest, actions that are acceptable or desirable, etc. These ideas, as already suggested, are tested in the person's crucible of personal affective experience.

Because of our human ability to conceptualize and imagine, sexual desires and actions are triggered not only by external stimuli but by our own imagination. Thus, not only do external stimuli foster sexually-oriented thoughts and wishes, such thoughts may be self-generated and lead, in turn, to our production of stimuli, to sexual arousal, and to sexual behavior itself. To the extent that one's ideas about sexual matters are not subjected to social validation, very idiosyncratic linkages can be formed and maintained.

The picture is complicated by additional considerations. Sexual behavior, like most other behavior, is driven by multiple motives, which can be combined in many ways from person to person and from time to time. Needs for power, esteem, love, competence and achievement, moral motivation, etc., can undergird various expressions of sexual behavior, from rape, to tender affection, to anxious performance, to guilt-ridden pleasure. Also, more than motives are involved in affecting behavior. Our perceptions of what conduct is morally acceptable, what our chances are for achieving our goals, what behavior is appropriate to the occasion, etc., affect the behavior we try. Not only that, but ordinarily the person has other alternatives vying for attention and action. So choices must be made between options for our time.

Bodily states (such as illness or general vitality) affect sexual interest. Also, the level of androgenic hormones apparently affects the tendency for men and women to become sexually aroused.

Approach motives are constructed around pleasurable experiences; avoidance motives around negative ones; and we may have ambivalent motives when the same cues arouse both positive and

negative expectations. This applies most directly to sexual experience. It is common, for example, for women to have ambivalent feelings about sex, as it may arouse at once feelings of pleasure and of being loved, yet at the same time concerns that her partner is more interested in the physical satisfaction involved than in her as a person.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that, unless the sexual context is a solitary one, other persons are involved. Thus, in mutual or collaborative enterprises, the needs, feelings, goals, and behavior of others along with the communication between the couple affect the course of conduct. So what happens, sexually, depends very much upon the dynamic interplay which occurs as they interact. Each person has a more or less elaborate, long-range agenda of goals, ideals, projects; and these may become jointly shared and worked on by the couple over time.

Finally, it must be remembered that each individual involved is a dynamic system, with motives, beliefs, goals, values, health, in flux. Each of us is trying to preserve stability, but each is also itching for variation and change. Also, the relationship between people is a somewhat stable, yet ever changing one. An important point is that persons, individually and jointly, can exercise considerable control over the change process in regulating thought sequences, courses of action, and environmental conditions.

A Model for Positive Change

My last task at this time is to introduce you to what I believe to be an exciting model for change applicable to all of us. It is rooted in the central teachings of the Savior, who has asked us to become like Him. This means that we not only *can* change, we *must*! He and his prophets have identified the most important attribute we must develop: the pure love of Christ. We must change from a lower, carnal state to a higher, spiritual state via an ongoing process of change called repentance (which, unfortunately, has narrow and negative connotations for many). Thus, it is a model for change which is centered in certain goals and values. (Recognizing this, the therapist should make its use explicit, inviting the client to consider it, but allowing choice to employ it or not.)

We have begun to apply this framework to the area of sexuality and marital relationships, drawing upon the positive view of sexuality inherent in the teachings of the Master. We believe it can apply to people generally; you will sense better than I its possible relevance to counseling and psychotherapy.

A Goals-Centered Approach to Positive Change

I am excited to share these ideas with you because of my testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel, which includes the conviction that by following its teachings is the only real pathway to eternal joy and happiness—a conviction growing out of my own life experiences in this area along with many moments of spiritual confirmation. The gospel concepts are well known to us all. My efforts to apply them are a personal, tentative effort, and should be considered as such. My approach grows out of the conviction that a complete understanding of human nature will ultimately derive from a rapprochement between already revealed gospel truths and truths obtained from scientific inquiry. I recognize that this is a long term effort, and we must remain tentative and willing to change our ideas as work continues. This is true not only because our scientific understanding is very limited at present, but also because our comprehension of gospel truths is incomplete.

Ideas Central to the Model

1. Our ultimate objective or purpose in life is to become like God the Father and the Son, experiencing the continuing joy, glory, happiness and activity attendant to that state. This seemingly impossible goal is unattainable without the massive help of the atoning Savior, his mercy, and forgiveness. Neither is it possible without our consistent struggle, without our obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Our subsidiary goal is to qualify to return to the presence of the Father and the Son, reaping the benefits of eternal life in Their presence, enabling further progression to occur.

2. The Father is the Man of Holiness, and no unclean thing can enter His presence. The Savior, being our Advocate with the Father, cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. We must, therefore, be fully repentant of our sins, thus enabling the cleansing power of the Atonement to work in our behalf to qualify ourselves for readmission into Their presence.

3. Not only are the Gods holy (righteous), they are characterized by love. Accordingly, the central characteristic of the follower of Christ is love—His kind of love. In response to query, the Savior stated that “all the law and the prophets” are encompassed in the two commandments of love: Love of God with all thy heart, all thy soul, all thy mind, all thy might and strength; and the second, like unto the first, Love thy neighbor as thyself. These two

commandments are like unto each other not only because they both refer to love, but because actions in keeping one of the commandments are congruent with keeping the other; thus, by serving others we honor God; by honoring God we help to lift others.

4. What does it mean to love with all our heart, soul, mind, might and strength? The change model seeks to examine this more closely, to provide guidance for our efforts to change. Details follow below.

5. Repentance, conversion, and sanctification refer to a continuing, long-term process toward the goal of becoming perfected like the Savior Himself. In a broad sense, then, repentance can be defined as any change that is good (positive), which brings us closer to Christ and the Father. It encompasses overcoming serious sins, but involves much more than that. Our objective, then, is to change in positive ways by progressively replacing the carnal man with the spiritual man until we are totally spiritual, "one," whole, unified, cleansed, healed.

6. With objectives as lofty as these, will we be buried in a morass of hopelessness, of self-doubt, frozen by our inability to reach perfectionistic goals? A significant question. The answer recognizes our human frailties, counseling us to run no faster than we have strength, but, on the other hand, to be diligent in seeking the prize. The answer recalls that the qualities of love include mercy, long-suffering, mildness, patience, and self-prizing—loving ourselves as well as our neighbors. If we are patient and long-suffering with others, should we not be so with ourselves? If the Master continually stretches out His hands to us, beckoning us to return from our prodigal ways, can we not have hope for ourselves? Only the adversary, not the Lord, would have us give up on ourselves. The promise of the Lord is a promise of hope, of optimism, if we will have faith. We need to have faith and hope in Christ, and also in our ability to overcome, with His help.

7. We are accountable for changes over which we have agentic control. Since (positive) change is mandatory for progression, it is important that we not drift, allowing ourselves to become the victims of change, but that we become proactive, taking charge of the changes that we can control, and directing them for good. At the same time, we are not accountable for things we cannot control, things outside our agency. We must learn to make accurate distinctions between these, a task that is a continuing challenge.

Applying the Change Model to Sexuality and Marital Relationships

1. How do the commandments to love God and fellowmen apply to this area?³ The Lord has established standards for sexual expression: It is to be limited to married partners. There are two central purposes for sexual intercourse: (1) For the procreation of children, and, (2) For the maintenance and enhancement of the marital relationship. Examining these in turn, we can note that the married couple who have children are special partners with God, helping Him fulfill his objectives in bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. This they do by providing mortal tabernacles for His children, and then by providing the kind of home for them which will foster their return to His presence. This is an awesome responsibility, one not to be taken lightly, and one requiring, over the long haul, immense and consistent efforts. Thus, properly understood, one embarks upon this responsibility with love for God and His children, and one grows in that love for each of those individual children who become, besides one's spouse, our closest neighbors and most important stewardship. This is a task, again properly understood, which one embarks upon with loving and joyous anticipation.

The second purpose ordained by God for sexual intercourse is to help to bind together the union of man and woman—to become one flesh—to leave father and mother and to set one's course and one's loyalty to each other. In the Father's plan, the couple are sealed together as a unit for all eternity. It is only natural, then, that there should be loyalty and fidelity to one another, that the bond of trust and unity should be strong. Sexual intercourse is one (among many) of the ways to secure and strengthen that bond. The commandments of the Savior and the prophets in this area of our lives are designed to support the commandment to cleave unto our spouses and to none other, thus preserving the special love and covenant between the married couple. These purposes help to establish goals for us to work toward in our sexual relationship.

2. A solidly bonded marriage is built upon love, mutual consideration and respect, effective problem solving, financial responsibility, compatibility of interests and values, good communica-

³As an aid to following the discussion here, please refer to Table Three, in the Appendix.

tion—in short, diligent and consistent attention and work. Sexual attraction is not a firm foundation upon which to build a marriage. However, if the commandment that husbands and wives are to love each other is to be kept beyond the bare call of dutiful obligation, it is requisite that the couple have real love for each other. In our society, romantic love, which usually has a sexual component, forms part of that loving attraction, and most couples who are sealed in life have chosen each other, partly for romantic reasons. (Even in those societies where marriages are arranged, couples, nevertheless, often cultivate highly affectionate feelings for each other.)

All of this suggests the importance of preserving and enhancing this special attraction via continuing courtship throughout the marriage. Within this larger relationship, sexual relations can be a sweet, fun, exciting, and joyous celebration of that love. I believe that the most profound sexual experiences happen in this context.

This special romantic love is one of the great mysteries of life that has bestirred poets and composers for ages, leading them to celebrate that love in word and music. That love, and the betrayal of that love, serves as a major theme for much of the world's literature and music, in story, in opera, in poesy.

3. Sexual desires and behavior within the bounds the Lord has set, then, is beautiful, joyous, acceptable—indeed, commanded. Sex per se is not dirty, degraded, or filthy. Sexual motivation can be directed in positive or negative ways. Because of the intense influence associated with it, it provides a central battleground in the lives of many in the struggle to employ it to good purpose rather than for ill.

4. The person without a marital partner can experience the (non-sexual) joys of respect, caring—of love—in its many aspects. Thus, we can experience the fulfillment of the giving and receiving of love, friendship, acts of genuine consideration, etc. One need not feel that God has cheated us by asking us to miss out on sexual fulfillment provided only within the marriage covenant.

The Change Process

The process and mechanisms for change receive direction both from the guidance supplied by the commandments and from the implications of the motivational theory, together with psychological contributions from therapeutic and other approaches to change. Let us examine these, using the core commandments as a framework. The commandments include the injunction to love with all

our heart, our minds, our might and strength, and our souls. Let us look at each of these components in turn, and see what they imply. (Again, see Table 2).

Change of heart. When the scriptures use the term “heart,” they do not refer to the organ in our body that is the main blood pump. They refer instead to our motivation, to our desires, wishes, intentions. If we are to change fundamentally, then, we must experience a change of heart—a change in our desires or disposition, from doing evil to doing good. In the higher law of the gospel, we should do the right things for the right reasons; and the reason that is most right is that of love. This change requires a *commitment* on our part, and when that is thoroughgoing enough, miracles can happen.

Let me illustrate this with a true story I encountered recently. It concerns a critical incident in the life of a young black man, Ben Carson, who grew up in a single-parent household in Detroit, Michigan. He and his older brother were reared by his poorly educated mother who had suffered a terrible childhood. But Sonya Carson was a devout Seventh-day Adventist who spent a lot of time on her knees, and received inspiration in rearing her boys. Ben had a terrible temper, and as he describes his high school days, he says:

I was easy to offend, and I felt I had to inflict pain on the offender with a bottle, brick, knife or anything else at hand. I was a good kid when I wasn't mad, but I was frequently mad. One day I got enraged and stabbed a kid. He was wearing a large metal belt buckle and my camping knife blade broke on it. I realized instantly that he could have been seriously injured or even killed. I ran home, went in the bathroom, closed the door and sat on the tub. I thought of how I'd wanted to be a physician since I was 8, when I began listening to the stories of Seventh-day Adventist doctors doing missionary work abroad, I realized that I'd never do anything worthwhile if I didn't control my temper. I'd recently decided to become rich by becoming a psychiatrist, and I'd begun to read every issue of *Psychology Today*. So I knew that personality traits are exceedingly difficult to extinguish, and therefore I prayed for three hours, asking the Lord to take my temper away. I read passages in the Bible with my prayers, like Proverbs 14, verse 29: “he that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly”; and Proverbs 25:28: “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls.” I felt that these verses were written for me.

What happened next, Carson says, was as much a miracle as Jonah's emergence from the whale or Daniel's from the lion's den.

“When I left the bathroom, my temper was gone. And it never returned. I have never even needed to suppress it. God had taken it away. People who know me now can never believe I had a temper problem. They have never seen me angry.” (*Michigan Today*, 21 [Feb. 1989].)

Benjamin Carson went on to college at Yale, medical school at Michigan, and is now chief of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Medical Center, a position he has held since age 33, in 1984.

You and I could probably relate many stories like that, where people’s lives have turned around, because of a total commitment to change, and at times, at least, supported by divine assistance. Sometimes, however, one’s commitment to change is less whole-hearted (we don’t “come clean,” completely). We may return to old ways, and have to begin again.

So one way to produce change is via a motivational change, a change in the desire of our hearts. And for change (repentance) to be complete, that change is essential. How can such change be facilitated?

In the case of Ben Carson, a critical incident, which aroused great fears and probably guilt, led to an intensive reexamination of his conduct that he realized was threatening his desired future. We need not wait until such precipitating events crash down around us, though they are certainly motivating. Perhaps thoughtful review of what we are doing, analyzing whether it is leading us to our own prized goals, may stimulate a change of direction. And perhaps discussions of this type with a spouse, a friend, a therapist may be helpful.

Change of mind. Here the scriptures focus on our thoughts. “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly” pleads one. The proverb states, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Note the importance of the phrase *in his heart*. Not every thought we think is reflective of our character. Many thoughts are driven by external demands. But thoughts which are related to our motives, our desires do reflect *us*. There is an interplay between our thoughts and our desires: Desires give rise to thoughts; and our thoughts may give rise to desires. And both have some relationship to our environment, to stimuli which impinge upon us. “He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery in his heart” is the insightful statement of the Savior. In the March 1989 *Ensign*, President Ezra Taft Benson relates the comparison of our mind to a stage, with the Lord in the wings seeking to

influence our thoughts for good, while the adversary is on the other side of the stage trying to influence our thoughts for evil. President Benson makes the point that we are the stage manager, deciding what the stage presentation will be. It is up to us what scenario gets played out on the stage of our mind.

If we are to control our desires, our behavior, our character and our destiny. One way to do so is to exercise jurisdiction over our thoughts. We can redirect errant thoughts and channel them into more positive pathways. A variety of stratagems are available to us, ranging from simple substitution in a conditioning paradigm to more pervasive cognitive or cognitive-behavioral approaches. Here active reorganization of cognitive priorities, perhaps supplemented by a change of environment, is adopted. The ideal here is to think or focus upon what Christ would do or have me think and do. One might also develop a pattern of asking oneself: What would be thoughtful, helpful, or of service to another?

An older gentleman (about my age!) approached me several years ago, being troubled by his chronic viewing of sexually arousing pictures, which he felt guilty about and which he felt was estranging him from his wife. I suggested that he not only refrain from this activity, but that he develop an active program of developing a closer relationship with her: of planning thoughtful things to do for her, of taking her on dates, of complimenting her, etc. He reported some time later that this was very successful for him.

Change of might and strength. When the Lord asked us to love with all our might and strength, I believe he meant that we should put our whole energies into the change process, that we should translate our good intentions and thoughts into overt action, works. He suggested such tests of sincerity as “by their fruits ye shall know them,” and “forsaking sins and doing them no more.” The pragmatic test of repentance, of showing our love for God, involves an active program of good deeds: worshipping Him and doing good to His children.

This calls for a two-pronged behavioral change (therapy): We stop actions that are negative, that violate commandments, that lead us astray. And we increase actions that are positive, which manifest Christ-like love. Behavioral conformity has much to commend it, and behavioral therapies may have much relevance here. We remember, of course, that behavioral change without an inner change is incomplete, but it may facilitate an inward change.

This it may do by the gratification of nobler impulses that happen as one sees the impact of one's acts upon others.

Change of soul. The injunction to love with all our soul is one which is least clear to me, but it suggests a total conversion, a complete transformation reaching to the very core of our being. It perhaps relates closely to a change of heart, but suggests something all-encompassing. It implies a complete submission to the will of the Father so characteristic of the Savior Himself, and which has been approached by some of the prophets such as Elijah and Nephi, son of Helaman, who were granted vast powers because they would only ask and do what the Father would have them do. Certainly this whole-souled devotion is possible for us, else the Savior would not have commanded it of us. Any complete program of change involves this change, which calls upon the exercise of great faith, the development of great love, and reliance upon the merits of Christ.

Summary

In summation, a program of change, in which we take seriously the Savior's invitation to love God and His children with all our heart, mind, might, strength, and soul, involves a multi-pronged approach. We need all the help we can muster in this effort. Change agents such as counselors and therapists may reasonably facilitate this process using a variety of cognitive/affective, behavioral, and goals-centered strategies. Eternal joy and happiness are possible through following the pathway leading to the Christ-like character.

Kenneth R. Hardy is Emeritus Professor of Psychology, Brigham Young University.

References

- Hardy, K. R. (1964). An appetitional theory of sexual motivation. *Psychological Review*, 71, 1-18.

Table 1
The Appetitional Theory of Sexual Motivation

<i>General Principles of Motivation</i>	<i>Applications to Sexual Motivation</i>
<p>Motives are based upon learned expectations of an affective or hedonic change. This occurs when features of a situation or stimulus are linked with a change in affective tone (e.g., pleasure or pain). Thereafter, those features become cues leading to the arousal of expectations regarding affect. For motivated behavior to occur, an expectation involving personal action is necessary.</p>	<p>Sexual motivation develops when a person experiences sexually charged affect, linking it with some action taken in a given situation. Such motivation will tend to produce behavior designed to repeat that affect either in response to the cues already presented, or to seek out those cues associated with the affect. Repeated experiences with this stimulus-action-affect linkage consolidate the motive strength.</p>
<p>There may be innately given sources of affect (unconditioned responses) which occur in response to stimuli (unconditioned stimuli).</p>	<p>Two innate sources of affect are (1) the pleasure of mild tactual stimulation, and, (2) the intense affect of sexual orgasm and relaxation.</p>
<p>Learning involves a cognitive or attributional confirmation along affective change. These associations may occur at all levels of complexity from simple conditioning to more complex processes. Often, such learning occurs in associated groups or families of expectations. When this occurs, confirmation of one expectation may strengthen other related expectations. The processes of generalization and discrimination may be involved.</p>	<p>Persons develop a complex fabric of beliefs surrounding sexuality, romance, attractiveness, etc. At some point in time, sexual arousal occurs in conjunction with experience in one of these areas, and a linkage is formed between them. Any experience which tends to support beliefs in one related area will reinforce or support the other beliefs, depending upon the person's causal attributions and processes of generalization and discrimination applied in this case.</p>
<p>The more intense the affective change, the greater the resulting motivation.</p>	<p>When sexual pleasures are intense, they may become powerful drivers of motivation and resulting behavior.</p>
<p>The greater the number and salience of cues (cognitive or external), the greater the likelihood of arousal of the motive.</p>	<p>Sexual thoughts and desires may be frequent or rare, depending in part upon the extent to which thoughts and external stimuli serve as cues.</p>

<i>General Principles of Motivation</i>	<i>Applications to Sexual Motivation</i>
<p>In many cases, the physiological (including hormonal) state of the person may sensitize or desensitize the person toward affective arousal. Arousal or behavior may also alter the physiological (hormonal) state.</p>	<p>Androgenic hormones in both males and females may affect sexual arousability (as may other bodily states such as illness). Sexual behavior in turn may lead to hormonal and other physiological changes.</p>
<p>Approach motives derive from positive affective changes; avoidance motives derive from negative affective changes; ambivalence occurs when the same cues arouse both positive and negative affective expectations.</p>	<p>Sexual motivation itself may become a complex mix of positive and negative components, depending on the richness of the set of beliefs and expectations which may occur in the context when that motive is aroused.</p>
<p>Behavior is often a result of multiple motives which may be aroused by a given set of cues. These motives include organically based needs such as hunger and thirst; cognitive needs for meaning, variation and consistency; power and self-determination; self-esteem; achievement and competence; love and affection; transcendence; and moral motivation.</p>	<p>Sexually related behavior is usually undergirded by other motives along with sexual ones. These motives may run the gamut from tender love and affection to power, self-esteem, competence, and moral motivation. All these motives may be directed toward "good" or "evil" ends, i.e., toward results which are ultimately contributive or harmful to the long-range welfare of the person(s).</p>
<p>Cognitive processes, including imagination, may trigger an affect-laden sequence of thoughts, which may produce a pleasurable, self-reinforcing (motivational) arousal; such a thought sequence may also precipitate an action sequence as the person experiences incipient gratification while at the same time anticipating greater gratification from the enactment of the fantasy.</p>	<p>Human sexuality is uniquely guided by imaginative trains of thoughts in addition to external stimuli. Such thought sequences may lead to sexual arousal which is inherently pleasurable and at the same time may lead to overt sexual behavior. Persons may begin these fantasies by recall of past stimuli and by creatively reworking them into new patterns.</p>
<p>On the other side of the picture, imagination may lead to scenarios fraught with negative affect, which may have a chilling effect upon both thought and action. Again, the person may employ various measures to block out or side-track such consequences. These measures may include problem solving strategies and defensive mechanisms such as insulation, denial, rationalization, etc.</p>	<p>The person may anticipate various negative consequences of thinking about, desiring, or acting upon objects of sexual interest. These may foster derailment of the train of thought or action. However, the person may neutralize these negative anticipations by employing defensive mechanisms, such as repression, etc. This is especially likely under the influence of powerful sexual affect.</p>

<i>General Principles of Motivation</i>	<i>Applications to Sexual Motivation</i>
<p>Persons may initiate dreams, create ideals, and pursue plans of action which may extend over very long time periods. They may also select environments and stimuli in their search for desired ends. In various ways, persons are mentally and behaviorally proactive, not merely reactive, in seeking satisfaction.</p>	<p>Persons are actively involved in producing and implementing dreams involving dating, romance, courtship, seduction, having children, etc. In the usual case, thoughts not only reflect wishes, but also generate desire and purposeful action. These action sequences may be of short or long duration.</p>
<p>Numerous additional factors affect the course of motivational development and the resulting action sequences. Such factors include the immediacy and certainty of the affective change, its perceived transience or permanence, the time perspective of the person, the salience and relative attractiveness of alternatives, the degree to which decisions and/or courses of action are perceived as reversible or not, and the extent to which alternative courses of action are conceived as being mutually exclusive. Also, habituation may come into play; this occurs when repetition of the action produces lessened affect than occurred previously. Such a consequence may lead the person to seek restoration of the affective intensity by varying the behavior or the stimuli involved.</p>	<p>Sexual gratification is attractive in part because it may occur quite immediately rather than being long delayed; the affect surrounding it is quite transient; it may be partly reinstated by recall. Lengthened time perspective enables one to anticipate and recall experiences over an extended period, giving rise to the ability to engage in deeper contemplation and comparison of many experiences, sexual and otherwise. The perception that decisions and/or actions about sexual behavior, marriage, etc. are reversible or not will affect the decision process and the decisions themselves, as will the recognition that options are mutually exclusive. Habituation may lead the person to try out new sexual behavior or stimuli in the attempt to regain or increase prior levels of affect.</p>
<p>Whether or not actions are carried out depends not only on the motives which are aroused but also on the availability of relevant objects, perceived appropriateness of the action, its likelihood of success, evaluative judgments, etc. These evaluative judgments may involve moral standards or other criteria (e.g., competence: "that was a smart [or stupid] thing to do!"). These judgments may be imposed before action begins (inducing anticipatory regret or gladness), during the behavioral course, or after the fact (leading to post-decisional regret or joy). The affective consequences depend, of course, on whether the behavior is consonant with the person's standards.</p>	<p>Sexual behavior depends not only on the motives which are engaged, but also on the accessibility of objects of desire, the appropriateness of the behavior to the situation, and the person's judgment as to whether or not the behavioral sequence will lead to need satisfaction. Also, prior evaluative judgments imposed by the person may either stop the action from proceeding or strengthen it. If judgments have been bypassed in the excitement of the anticipation and consequent action, but occur after behavior has ended, they may induce positive or negative feelings, based on whether or not the outcome meets whatever standards are employed.</p>

<i>General Principles of Motivation</i>	<i>Applications to Sexual Motivation</i>
<p>Whenever a person engages in action involving other persons, the mutual interaction of the persons involved must be taken into account in any effort to understand the behavioral outcome. To the extent that the persons involved engage in joint or collaborative effort, the motives, intentions, and goals of all parties, and the communications between them become part of the equation. If the individuals believe that they ought to be considerate of one another's needs/welfare, there will be efforts to be responsive to the feedback or cues given, with attempts to adjust the pattern of future action to bring it in line with these needs or goals. The greater the feeling of love, respect, or obligation which exists between the parties, the more likely it is that adjustments will be made. Such feelings may not be entirely equal in both directions, so these adjustments will not be made to the same extent each way. Feelings of dependency may function in a similar manner.</p>	<p>Sexual behavior (other than solitary self-stimulation) generally involves other persons. The persons may be variously sensitive to the feelings and reactions of each other, from the minimal concern of the rapist to the finely tuned responsiveness of a loving, considerate couple. As an accompaniment of the intense, yet personal character of the sexual affect, sexual gratification has the potential of being sought for without regard for the feelings of others. At the same time, it may also reach intensely rewarding levels when it occurs in conjunction with pleasure experienced by another, and most particularly in the context of love and moral approbation. This means that sexual expression has a great potential for being a completely "selfish," self-serving gratification or being a source of mutual joy on the part of both parties. There are, of course, complex mixtures of these components in much if not most sexual behavior in which humans participate.</p>
<p>The person is not a static entity, nor is the relationship between persons. Individual motives, goals, competences, and values are subject to change, as are communicative patterns, degrees of understanding and intimacy between persons. Behavior may have an impact upon standards, and changing standards may impact behavior. Observing the behavior of another may produce changes in one's love and respect toward them, which in turn may alter one's own conduct toward them. Often, however, changes are not easily made, since the present behavior may be embedded in a nexus which is not only familiar and therefore comfortable, but which is also interlaced with connections and gratifications not easily jettisoned.</p>	<p>Individuals are not static in their sexual attitudes, appetites, and behaviors, and sexually interacting persons experience change in their relationship as well as individually. As sexual arousal and/or climax occurs, the appetite may increase; if further or greater gratification is not possible without violation of normative standards, there may be a tendency to modify standards, or at least to act to the limits imposed by those standards, putting pressure upon modification of standards. On the other hand, clear violation of such standards may produce intense regrets, leading to marked change in behavior (though the appetite may remain enlarged). Chronic violation of standards is likely to produce dissonance reduction in the form of lowering the standards.</p>

Table 2

A Goals-Centered Approach to Positive Change

Our ultimate goal: To become like God

Why? It is the pathway to everlasting joy, happiness, growth, glory.

How do we make progress toward that goal?

By coming to fully keep the commandments, centering on the key ones, thereby creating a god-like character.

What are the key commandments?

1. To love God with all our heart, mind, might, strength, and soul.
2. Similarly, to love our neighbor as ourself.

What does it mean to love God and our fellowman?

. . .with all our heart? It involves changing our desires, our dreams, our hopes, our intentions from the self-centered, worldly ones to those which reflect His purposes for His children. It involves a commitment to put God's will first in our life.

. . .with all our mind? It involves changing our thoughts, our convictions, our perceptions to be congruent with His purposes and thinking.

. . .with all our might and strength? It involves changing our behavior and redirecting our energies to the benefit of His children. By our works we demonstrate the sincerity of our repentance and commitment.

. . .with all our soul? Ultimately, it means total commitment to the very core of our being, so that we are whole-souled in devotion to Him.

Through all of this process, we become fully converted, healed, cleansed or sanctified. This is made possible through our repentant efforts and through the redeeming mercy of the Savior.

If all of this seems overwhelming, remember . . .

We take it one step at a time, starting where we now are. It's a long term project. The Savior, since He is so loving, is patient, long-suffering, forgiving, merciful. He is for us. He is more interested in our direction than in our location. Not only that, he blesses us with faith and hope, he provides the Holy Ghost as a Comfort and Guide to us, and rewards us with testimony and peace. Living His commandments leads us to rewarding associations with each other and to inner peace despite our trials and difficulties. His yoke is easy and His burden is indeed light.

Table 3

Sexual Guidelines and Standards for Married Couples

Purposes established by the Lord for sexual expression:

1. For the procreation of children: to join in partnership with God in providing physical bodies for His children, thereby furthering His work in bringing to pass their opportunities for immortality and eternal life.

2. To cement and strengthen the bond between husband and wife: a partnership of prime importance which is designed to be eternal. Couples are to love and care for each other.

Standard of chastity/fidelity: Sexual intercourse (including physical familiarity and intimacies) is to take place only between a legally married husband and wife. Husbands and wives should love and cleave to each other and to none else. The Savior also counseled against the infidelity of desire (committing adultery in one's heart), suggesting a higher, spiritual standard to augment the behavioral one.

Suggestions to husbands and wives to enhance their relationship (with particular attention to sexual expression):*Some Suggested Do's**Some Don'ts*

Be tender, sweet, and thoughtful

Don't use sex to show dominance or power or submission

Do express love and affection in many ways each day and week. Try being a joy to live with. Then let sexual relations be a joyous celebration of your love

Don't use sex as a reward, or denial of sex as a punishment

Be considerate of each other's feelings; this should be mutual, not sacrificial

Don't consider sex as a "right" to be exercised, or as an onerous duty to be tolerated

Keep your expressions to those which respect your dignity and worth

Don't use threats, intimidation, or violence

Keep communication lines open between each other

Don't cheapen your sexual relations by discussing them with others

Respect the sanctity and privacy of your intimate relationships

[Note: There are important limitations to this statement, including appropriate consultations with physicians or with therapeutic professionals in cases of abuse, or other disturbing practices]

Behave in such a way that you both look forward to your next sexual experience