

Women: The Next Frontier (for the Ex-Gay Man)

Book Review: Changing Homosexuality in the Male,
by Lawrence J. Hatterer, M.D. (McGraw-Hill., 1970)

Reviewed by Thomas Phillips, MBA

Reviewer Thomas Phillips is a reparative-therapy graduate who was employed for many years in marketing and finance, and is now a real estate investor in Sonoma County, California.

(Editor's Note: Dr. Hatterer's advice to men in recovery will not be relevant to those men whose faith traditions uphold the Scriptural model of premarital celibacy.)

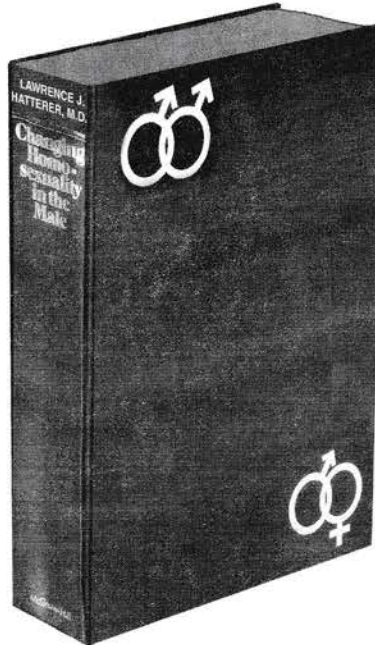
Changing Homosexuality in the Male is a classic text that was published over thirty years ago. The author, Lawrence J. Hatterer, M.D., is a psychiatrist who concentrated on treatment of homosexuality.

During the 1950's and 1960's at the Payne Whitney Psychiatric Institute and the Cornell University Medical Center, both in New York, Dr. Hatterer worked with over 625 homosexual males. This review focuses on his clinical experience and his suggestions for the man who wants to transition to heterosexuality and develop close relationships with women. The book explains three phases in the transition from homosexuality to heterosexuality.

Phase 1 - Beginning of transition: In order for a man to change, he must identify the triggers that stimulate and perpetuate his homosexuality. Triggers include homosexual imagery, personal associations, behaviors (including bars and cruising places), and use of drugs and alcohol. Since his natural inclination is to "go with" these triggers, he must go the opposite way for recovery.

The man in transition begins removing himself from homosexual stimuli. He is no longer swept up in the gay scene, and his gay fantasies begin to subside. He becomes aware of how distortions in his interpersonal relationships (preoccupation with sex, often leading to emotional detachment to mask anxiety, depression, or guilt) have contributed to his homosexuality.

Phase 2 - Middle of transition: The man in recovery must fill the void created by ending his gay life with new contacts, this time with straight men and women. In place of the tenuousness and superficiality of gay relationships, he will now need to develop a close relationship with a



woman. Usually, he has a series of relationships with women in order to gain perspective and experience. Often his initial tendency in these relationships is to focus on sex (replaying his gay pattern). Ensuing difficulties with women will include being overly sensitive to rejection, waiting too long to make contact, and insecurity in planning a date.

Dr. Hatterer identifies some women as undesirable because they can thwart the client's recovery. A dominant woman who asks *him* out, tells him where she wants to go, calls him, and initiates sex should be avoided. He warns against women who are competitive, aggressive, dominant, possessive, moody, masculine, manipulative, emasculating, sexually obsessed, bisexuals, lesbians, career- and income-oriented women, and those with greater

wealth and power than he. Some men compensate for their insecurity in their transition by dating less desirable women (older, motherly, physically challenged, lower socioeconomic and intellectual levels).

According to Dr. Hatterer, "The more religious the man is, the greater likelihood of denial and guilt complicating his behavior. With a loss of guilt, the easier it is for the man to be assertive, aggressive, hostile, and emotionally free." On the other hand, in this reviewer's experience, it is clear that religion and spiritual beliefs can be a valuable motivator for a man in recovery.

Our man in transition is beginning to feel less isolated. He learns to express a wider range of emotions, including affection, assertion, aggression, hostility, and anger. For a successful transition, he's got to reclaim his "testosterone," because that's what women want, and that will lead him to the relationship he wants. His masculine juices begin to naturally lead him to the life and the woman he wants.

The man learns that he must take the initiative with appropriate women. He must not place sex before communication, getting to know a woman, and the social aspects of dating (meeting new people and going to fun places). He must permit both the woman and himself to reject each other, and also permit independent activities. He does not

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have to declare his past to his present partner; this can sabotage the relationship, especially in the beginning.

The man is becoming more and more interested in women, physically and emotionally, and looking less and less at men. He wants to see and be seen with attractive women. It becomes easier to relate to women emotionally, sexually, and intellectually. He is stimulated by a warm and responsive woman. As he gets more experience, he can choose women who are good for him and who relax him. Success breeds success.

Phase 3: Transition complete: He's ready for a sustained heterosexual relationship. He has few thoughts, feelings, and associations with homosexuality. He masturbates little or not at all. He's very interested in adapting heterosexually, and is spending more and more time with women. He is beginning to see his blind spots and inappropriate perceptions, reactions, and interactions with women, which occur because of memories and associations from prior, unhealthy relationships with the women in his life.

The quantity and quality of his heterosexual contacts increase. He'll probably go through a number of relationships before he feels sexually gratified and adequate. He becomes more and more aware of a women's nature. He picks up clues about a women's nature by noticing how she relates to himself and others. More and more women are available to him.

His relationships with women move beyond sex; his consciousness is less focused on sex, as he displays a growing awareness of a woman's many facets. He can give of himself to her, and make her feel valued, rather than being concerned solely with himself. He'll like certain aspects of the relationship more than others, as is true with all relationships.

Occasional, brief and limited dates give way to spending more and more time with a woman he likes. He is beginning to sense what kind of woman he wants. He begins to accommodate and deepen the relationship through her moods and the ups and downs of the relationship. He becomes more flexible as he "dances" with her. He now has developed the skills to attract the woman he wants, and to create a deeply loving attachment.

Dr. Hatterer recommends that the client pursue the woman the man is most attracted to (physically and emotionally). His desire to be seen with and possess a beautiful woman is not always narcissistic and superficial, because the selection of a particular woman by her appearance is valuable, in that the man gains a stronger sense of his maleness in attracting and holding a desirable woman. Skills can be developed to attract the women he desires more, because with confidence and a sense of well-being, and the financial success that such confidence may bring as well, he'll be rewarded with more desirable women. This can boost his confidence in his erotic attractiveness and effectiveness.

The woman who makes a man feel comfortable and is warm, accepting, and responsive is the most desirable for him. She can articulate her own needs in a loving manner. The woman who is warm, sensitive, and giving, rather than dominant, binding, possessive, and over expectant, will love him and treat him as a real man.

A significant change has taken place when erotic contact with a woman and heteroerotic fantasy are part of the man's life. With a good relationship with a woman he likes, he completes his transition.

Ultimately, his former homosexual side will seem alien, inappropriate, and unreal.

Author's Addendum: When I spoke to Dr. Hatterer on the phone recently, his suggestions to men in recovery were: Stay away from emasculating (castrating, depriving of masculine spirit) women. The U.S. is a hyper-sex-oriented culture which puts pressure on gender identity. Asian and European women may be more compatible, less hostile to men, and more likely to accommodate to men's needs. In addition, Dr. Hatterer said, there is no scientific evidence for a "gay gene." And speeches to high school students by Gay/Straight Clubs are dangerous, he says, because the speakers don't make clear the consequences of claiming a gay identity.

Readers are invited to email the reviewer at tommy@sonic.net with comments.

**2003 NARTH Conference
Scheduled for November in Salt Lake City, Utah**

Exact date to be announced.

Prospective speakers are invited to send proposals for papers or workshops.