

Educating The Public On The Causes Of Homosexuality

By Julie C. Harren, Ph.D.
Palm Beach Atlantic University

Abstract

Education on the causes of homosexuality is greatly needed, as few people really understand the developmental nature of same-sex attractions. Many people believe the theory that homosexuality is solely biological, while many others mistakenly believe it is a choice.

Typically, the biological explanation is preferred by homosexuals as this explanation helps to generate greater tolerance and also helps to build their case for minority status. Since education on the developmental contributors to homosexuality discredits the theory that it is completely inborn, some people are opposed to this explanation. Even though education on the developmental contributors is not always viewed positively, it is very important that this information be shared. In this paper, less offensive, and therefore, more effective ways of educating the public on the developmental contributors to homosexuality are described.

Educating The Public On The Origins Of Homosexuality

In the 2004 presidential debates, a question came up regarding the nature of homosexuality. The moderator asked both candidates, "Do you think homosexuality is a choice?" President Bush answered that he didn't know, and Senator Kerry answered that he did not believe homosexuality is a choice, but that people are born that way. He referred to Vice President Cheney's daughter, saying that she, as a lesbian, is "being who she was, being who she was born as" (personal communication, October 14, 2004). I believe President Bush's and Senator Kerry's answers illustrate two aspects of a serious problem regarding the origins of homosexuality.

The first part of the problem is that there is a great deal of confusion regarding the causes of homosexuality. There is a clear need for education on this issue. Many people simply do not know what causes homosexual inclinations. Many others have believed the erroneous theory that homosexuality is solely biological. Most people have not been informed about the developmental contributors to homosexuality.

The second part of the problem evidenced in this presidential debate is illustrated in the moderator's question. He asked if they believe homosexuality is a choice, "choice" being the popular alternative to the biological explanation for homosexuality. The problem indicated here is that there seems to be only one alternative explanation for those who realize that the biological explanation is incomplete. In much of society there seems to be only two popular explanations: either people are born gay, or else it is a choice. Unfortunately, however, as NARTH members are aware, neither of the two widely held beliefs provides a comprehensive explanation for the origins of homosexuality.



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The research has never revealed that people are born gay. In fact, the research indicates that there are many factors, including possible biological and environmental factors, which contribute to a homosexual orientation (LeVay, 1996; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1999).

While homosexuality is not simply biologically based, neither are homosexual attractions a conscious choice. Attractions and desires are like feelings; they come from deep within us and are not a conscious choice on our part. Furthermore, the idea that same-sex attractions are a choice is extremely offensive and hurtful to those who have these desires. Promoting the perspective that it is a choice often perpetuates judgmental attitudes towards homosexuals.

Although neither of the common explanations for homosexuality is accurate, the biological position is the one that is promoted by the gay community and secular society. This explanation, though incomplete and misleading, is extremely widespread. In the media and popular culture it seems to be assumed and implied that homosexuals are simply born that way. Flawed research studies are often cited as evidence for the biological basis of homosexuality.

There are a number of possible explanations for the popularity of the biological argument. Certainly if there are only two options, that it is biological or that it is a choice, it is clear that the biological option would be the preferred option, especially in the age of political correctness, in which tolerance is often the goal. Anything that promotes greater tolerance is more widely accepted. The biological explanation is used to do just that. It is assumed that if homosexuality is strictly physiological, society will be more compassionate and tolerant for homosexuals. In addition, the biological explanation is used as a platform for homosexuals seeking minority status. Many homosexuals will not entertain the idea that it is *not* biologically based, because any other explanation is often perceived as a threat to their cause. Thus, we are left with the promotion and widespread acceptance of information that, while considered politically correct, is incomplete and misleading.

Ironically, however, if people were taught that homosexuality is neither biological nor a choice, but a combination of both biological and environmental factors, the results of such education would include some of the advantages that homosexuals are seeking. When we educate on the environmental, developmental

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