

Online Sex Education Chat Room

The student – teacher conversation below is extracted from the Certificate in Sex Education Module 3 Chat Room.

(extracted from 17 February 2003 Online tutorial chat room on the chapter “Sex and Culture”)

S = Student T = Tutor

Extract 1 Sex culture in HK

T: For sex culture, different societies have different sex culture, since their norms and values vary from society to society and from one religion to another. So may I ask how you perceive the sex culture in Hong Kong?

S1: Hong Kong is still a conservative society. Personally, I think even big cities in China are more liberal than in Hong Kong.

T: In my view, the religious bodies run many schools and hold the socialization. This may be one of the reasons why people are so conservative compared with China and Taiwan.

S2: Yes, Hong Kong is still a conservative society, but her sex

culture is quite open. At the same time, I feel the sex culture in Hong Kong is quite cheap too, if not, why do we always find prostitute guide in the newspaper! The newspaper is immersed with the soft porn material.

S1: Years ago, when most of the schools in Hong Kong were run by religious body, their moral education is very strict. Nowadays, schools are usually run by voluntary bodies, but not religious group, and therefore they are not as strict as before.

T: Religious bodies still dominate the education field, there is not any improvement compared with 10 or 20 years ago.

S1: Tutor, where did you receive your secondary school education?

T: In a Catholic school and I had a conservative attitude before as I am also a Catholic. But my scope of values and attitude was broadened when I entered University. I explored and reconstructed my attitude of life, including sex and their values in our society. I also toured around different places and countries as well as their sex concepts and values in the world that enhance my further exploration of life.

T: So, don't just stay on your own stage of life, value changes with days and years. One day you may think that certain concept is incorrect, but in later years of your life, it would change to be correct.

(extracted from 18 March 2003 Online tutorial chat room on the chapter “Sex, Love in the Age of Terrorism”)

Extract 2 Terror Sex

T: Disasters take two forms: those that are beyond our control – so called “natural” ones – caused by environmental events, say a flood or earthquake, and those that are man-made, like terrorism and war, sniper attacks, poisonings. All are gruesome and will cause trauma, but the man-made ones pose more psychological damage because we can point to perpetrators.

T: For example, right after the terror attacks on the World Trade Center, there were reports that some singles were engaging in what was called “terror sex”, meaning that they felt, since there could be disaster at any time, they might as well enjoy themselves. This led to less caution about sex: a kind of reversal of the previous safe sex precautions, thereby people were not as careful about casual sex and prevention of AIDS or even pregnancy.

T: In a related phenomenon, some people felt so fearful about life coming to an end, that they reached out for closeness and more intimacy: sex being a way to achieve this closeness.

T: Others re-evaluated the nature of their sexual intimacies, and made decisions about whether these were satisfying or not. Such re-evaluations were often the silver lining in a dark cloud. What I

mean by that is that women in particular who were in unsatisfying relationships, where they may have felt that they were being used or abused in sex, came to realize that this was self-destructive and they did not want to continue this any longer. This became a healthy decision since such advice had been given to some of these type of women for years, which they had not needed.

S1: Like Hong Kong, after the atypical pneumonia, I started to think that I need to care about my relationship with my family and my children, because you don't know what will happen and you cannot control. During the 911, my husband were in USA, after confirming that he is still alive, we found that our relationship becomes more close.

S2: It depends on one's personality! It's either of the two extremes.

T: Yes, you are right – it is either of the two extremes, and we as psychologists must know which it is in order to help people.

S2: People who choose to see the dark side would react in a withdrawal manner. People who are positive will get the best out of the worst.

Extract 3 Post-traumatic growth Vs Post-traumatic stress

T: It is a personal terrorism. We can withdraw out of fear of losing the person, or approach closer, in order to express our

deepest feelings and love.

T: The new concept for this is called post-traumatic GROWTH, as opposed to post-traumatic stress. It is part of positive psychology that looks at resilience and people's ability to bounce back from trauma.

S1: yes, after 911, I told my husband strongly what I felt. I also want him to hug or hold me at sleeping time because I can feel that he is really in the world.

T: That holding during sleep time is a very psychological principle that is very healthy. It is called "contact comfort" and harkens back to a psychological principle about attachment theory, when the mother provides contact comfort for the child, by holding, and creating a space where the child feels safe and nurtured. We need this as adults, and rarely get it enough. That is what the joke implies, when it says to give people 3 hugs a day.

S1: but sometimes the feeling of hopelessness will make people depressed, then depression will affect sex. They can be in a vicious circle.

T: Most people fear that they cannot control life. This makes them being passive in relationships. When they become more assertive and confident, they can control their life, even if they can only control HOW THEY REACT to some disaster or traumas, they become more confident and have a higher

self-esteem. This is what we aim for in therapy.

S3: Yes, from what you are saying, I also agree that crisis can be disaster but can also be a blessing! But it depends on the person, it also depends on whether there is a supportive community, a community that promote positive thinking.

S4: In Western society, they advocate on psychological counseling, debriefing and support.