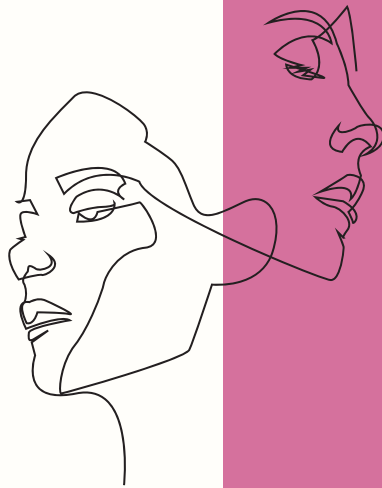


DR. OFER GROSBARD

THE ORGASM FANTASY



Improving Sex and
Relationships

The Orgasm Fantasy – A New Social Movement

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ISBN: 978-9655992441

I'd like to live in a world in which, when people shake hands to introduce themselves, they also tell each other their orgasm fantasies. Then we would more easily get to know, understand, and accept one another.

(The author)

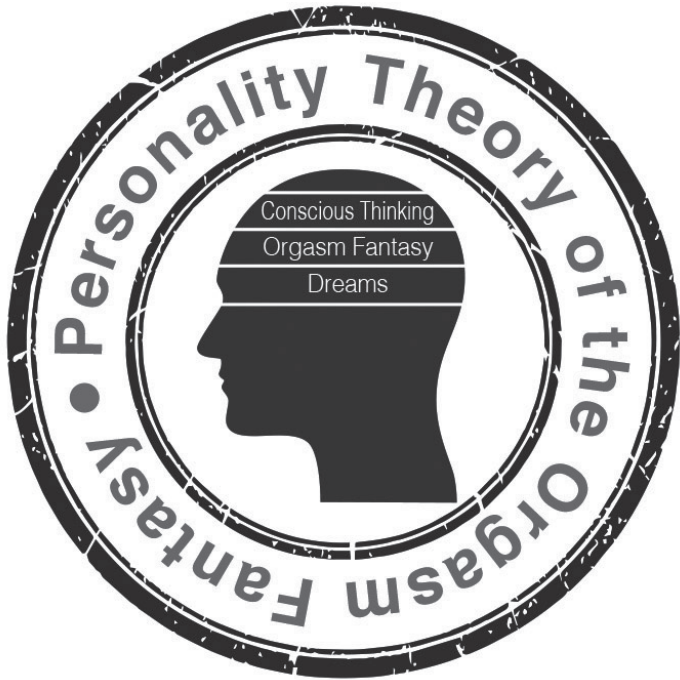


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Preface

Orgasm Fantasy Theory is an applied theory of personality that invites a person to become familiar with the three main levels of thinking that comprise his personality – nighttime dreams, the orgasm fantasy, and conscious thought – in order to better know himself and how he encounters and interacts with the world. The case studies presented in the book to illustrate the theory were drawn from different sources: the author’s clinic, case presentations and discussions with colleagues, and the psychoanalytic literature¹. The clinical material that appears in the book is authentic; only the patient’s identifying details have been changed. Thus any resemblance between a patient described here and an actual person is purely coincidental. In the section on “Improving Sex and Relationships” after every case study, the author has added descriptions from his own imagination to illustrate how the lessons from each case study may be applied. The case studies are arranged from the milder to the more serious. Separate chapters are devoted to homosexuality and guidance for parents. Awareness of our three levels of thinking can help us not only in our relationship with our partner or other adults, but also in raising better-adjusted children. In the afterword, the reader will find a brief discussion of six issues of special importance.

¹ See the bibliography at the end of the book.

The Unconscious First Level of Thinking – Dreams

Every night each of us becomes a great artist: We create full-length movies of which we are the director, screenwriter, casting director, and also the set designer. Then in the morning we awaken and erase all our hard work. Does this make any sense? We need to recognize that while we sleep we live an emotional life that is just as intensive as the emotional life of our waking hours, and we shouldn't ignore this other life. We should try to remember our dreams, write them down, and attempt to understand them. This is not a complicated process and requires only minimal practice. The mere act of listening to our dreams makes us more creative people. Suddenly we will begin to understand the nuances of our feelings that are repressed during the day and slip into our dreams at night. Suddenly, too, we will grasp how associations work. These are the heart and soul of a dream in which one thing calls to mind another, and we allow ourselves to play more freely with our imaginations. All this comes from listening to our dreams. How often have new ideas and thoughts come to us in dreams or just while lying in bed in the dark when thinking is freer and more associative? At these times a person is not occupied with putting his thoughts in logical order but rather is closer to his feelings, and suddenly things become clearer.

I personally had the good fortune to undergo therapy with a therapist who encouraged the exploration of dreams. For over two years, I kept a detailed dream journal and brought my dreams to each session. I discovered that I had a world inside me whose existence I'd been unaware of. I would never have come to really know and understand myself without the revelation of this hidden world. No amount of talking over

many years of therapy in any verbal language about my feelings could have competed with this rich dream world that depicts my emotions in a precise symbolic language of images, my own personal language. Also, there are many things we can't talk about simply because we are unaware of their existence. But our dreams are well aware of them. In my work with patients, I look for characteristic elements of dreams - for emotions that recur within this rich dream world. One person may have paranoid dreams, another dreams filled with anxiety, and another consumed with guilt in his dreams. A patient's profound emotional dependence on others may only become apparent through his or her dreams. Yet another may find that he is always laughing in his dreams. These central themes are revealed after we have written down our dreams for some time (though not for too long) and are crucially important in helping us understand our inclinations. Sometimes these central themes are not entirely clear and the process can take somewhat longer. Often there will be several different themes, some of which may be contradictory (e.g., dreams about success along with dreams about failure).

Just as each of us has a unique overt personality, we also have certain trends in our dream world that we need to identify. Patience is important here. But we now have our Archimedes' Point, that point of reference outside ourselves that enables us to observe ourselves and to bring about change. We are now more conscious of our tendencies and more ready to take responsibility for them. My impression is that many therapists don't work enough on their own dreams. Many have never kept a dream journal over an extended period, making it difficult for them to give this gift to their patients. Contemporary psychological theories also place less emphasis on dreams. I can, however, attest that in many instances the breakthrough in

understanding a patient occurred through uncovering his or her dream world.

Until now we have not been talking about the interpretation of dreams, but rather how to relate to the overt content of the main dream themes that characterize our personalities. We now turn to discuss the hidden emotional content of dreams.

How do we work on a dream? First, a dream is a product of the residue of the previous day, such as something that happened to us or a thought that was repressed for various reasons. The emotion that we experienced was unpleasant, we were preoccupied with other things, although pleasant it was something we felt was impossible, something we criticized ourselves for, etc. Dreams may be either pleasant or unpleasant. Sometimes we have suppressed a wish, and sometimes anxiety. This emotional content is largely expressed in a symbolic language of images, a private language we have developed in the course of our lives.

Thus the traditional question about a dream, “what does this make you think of?” is an appropriate and correct one. It is also true that only the patient can really know the source of his or her dream. An experienced therapist who knows his or her patients well can certainly conduct a dialogue with them on this subject and make suggestions that will often be helpful in advancing their understanding. The final arbiter, of course, is the patient. He or she must have the feeling that “the penny has dropped.” This often occurs as a flash of insight in which all the pieces of the puzzle have fallen into place and the dream and its origins have been understood.

It is often worth paying attention to what the patient related to just prior to or following recounting the dream. Why did he suddenly recall the dream? Or, perhaps, what did the dream remind him of? The solution may sometimes be found

there. In focusing on this associative thinking, the therapist listens to what issues lead to recalling other issues, rather than focusing on the dream story as a whole and its overt content.

A dream, however, is far more than this. The main themes of our dreams are also the internal prison in which we are locked, a constant translation of external events into our unique personal code, a recurrent experiential world that characterizes us, a bit like a fish that thinks there is nothing but water around it. In the book, therefore, we will meet John, who translates many situations in his life into loneliness; Luna, who no matter what happens in her life, feels that she is in control of things and is also rescuing her mother; Samuel, for whom each external event is a trigger for his next creative invention; and Lisa who feels repeated humiliation, even when she has attained love. In order to uncover these hidden themes of an internal experience it is not even necessary to identify the origins of the dream in the preceding day; rather, it is sufficient to examine the overt content of the dream.

For the most part, dreams change slowly and incrementally over many years. Sometimes we are lucky, and witness in the course of therapy the process of dreams changing relatively rapidly. When this change endures and echoes a change in reality, it can indicate deep and meaningful change for the patient. Samuel dreamed about a scary puppet that resembled his mother. Gradually, he began to fear her less until he was not afraid to confront her in his dream. The change in his real life was not long in coming.

I like patients to lie on the couch. As Freud said, this situation naturally stimulates more associative thinking. This way, as we embark on a journey together, neither of us is distracted by facial expressions that can be inhibiting or

misleading. Sometimes I close my eyes so as to be better attuned to my own associations that could possibly serve the patient.

Delving into dreams makes a person more creative, and it has a similar effect on therapy. The underlying message is that there is more inside me than I imagine, and that it is okay for me to feel and freely express my thoughts and associations. “Tell me everything that goes through your mind, even if it’s clever, silly or embarrassing.” This is the basic directive of psychoanalysis that I have found to be particularly effective.

I feel I remember patients more by their dreams than by events in their lives. Sometimes the patient brings a formative dream that explains a deep conflict in his personality, the kind of dream that stays with us for a long time. The same happens with recurrent dreams. I advise my patients to keep a notebook or cell phone next to their bed and to start writing down or recording their dreams as soon as they wake up, before they lose the thread. Sometimes I ask them if they had a dream that week that they remember. In this way I teach them to pay attention to themselves, to listen to themselves and to respect what they have created. Indeed, one of the main goals of therapy is for patients to be able to play more, to create more, and to fulfill themselves and their inherent potential. To this end, obstacles need to be removed, and dreams do this very well.

The Second Level of Thinking – The Orgasm Fantasy

The orgasm fantasy is the most stimulating fantasy a person has, one that brings him or her to a sexual climax. Usually it is experienced during masturbation when a person is alone and free to imagine anything. But it can certainly also be brought to mind during intercourse or at any other time.

In the psychoanalytic literature it is known as the Central Masturbation Fantasy² and depicts what is regarded as a person's Final Sexual Organization. I have chosen this name, the Orgasm Fantasy, to highlight the unique and powerful physiological change that this imagery may bring about. It is hard to imagine another fantasy whose objective is such a dramatic physiological change.

The first natural law of human behavior arising from the “imprinting” of the orgasm fantasy is that the emotional core of the relations depicted in the orgasm fantasy does not change over the course of a person’s life.

What is interesting is that while the content of the fantasy, the “action,” may change, the emotional hallmarks of the relations between the actors within it remain constant³.

For example, if a man achieves satisfaction when he whips a woman and dominates her, he may also achieve satisfaction when he takes her from behind and dominates her. The story that is told in the orgasm fantasy may vary, but not the type of relationship that underlies it.

The second natural law of human behavior arising from the “imprinting” of the orgasm fantasy is that we tend to reenact and relive the type of emotional relationship that is revealed in our orgasm fantasy in our daily lives, with people of both sexes.

This is our default reaction, an automatic personal and rapid response when we don't have time for the more complex third level of conscious thinking. We tend to use this response in relations with close family members as well as in moments of

² Laufer, M. (1976). The Central Masturbation Fantasy, the Final Sexual Organization, and Adolescence. *Psychoanal. St. Child*, 31, 297-316.

³ The literature review at the end of the book confirms this, and is also backed by the author's personal experience with many patients. Even though the writers do not indicate this explicitly, it is evident from their detailed case studies.

stress, which is why it is so vitally important that we familiarize ourselves with and come to understand our orgasm fantasy. For example, the man described above who in his orgasm fantasy is whipping a woman, will tend to quickly react with anger in many different situations.

Presumably the emotional core of this fantasy starts to develop at a very young age, possibly in the second year of life, as a result of the parental bond, and is imprinted in us as our default relationship with those around us for the rest of our lives. The significance of imprinting is that a critical period exists for consolidating a particular behavior that then remains fixed in a person's life. From the time of its creation, the orgasm fantasy shapes our behavior, usually outside our awareness. In adolescence, however, it may become apparent during masturbation or sexual relations. It will often take many more years for the person to become fully conscious of the orgasm fantasy, if he or she ever does, the reason being that the content of the fantasy, while sexually pleasurable, may be destructive to one's self-image and is therefore suppressed within the unconscious. Some thus claim they do not have any sexual fantasies, or that they cannot point to a fantasy that arouses them the most.

The unique power of a single fantasy is clear, in that the type of relations it depicts is something that constantly accompanies us throughout our lives and is responsible for some significant areas of our behavior. Dreams, as noted above, can change slowly and to a small extent during the course of our lives, as may various conscious tendencies of our thinking (depression, anxiety, anger, etc.). In dreams, as in conscious thinking, we may identify several central currents that characterize us. However, when a single fantasy maintains a constant presence throughout life, the kind of emotional relationship that emerges in this

fantasy will have an enormous impact on our relationships with the people around us. The orgasm fantasy is thus above all a relationship fantasy whose importance far exceeds its sexual context.

One example of the consolidation of the orgasm fantasy in early childhood, prior to reaching the awareness that takes place in adolescence, is that of people (both men and women) with homosexual tendencies. Such people may have orgasm fantasies in which relationships include various emotional characteristics that occur with members of the same sex. We know that these homosexual tendencies are crystallized very early in life (there may also be a genetic component involved here) and do not change in the course of a person's life. Signs of these tendencies may be evident in boys and girls of preschool and elementary school age. During this period, when boys tend to associate with other boys and girls with other girls, those with homosexual tendencies will tend to form friendships with members of the opposite sex. In adolescence, the opposite will occur for both groups. Thus, not only do relationships within the orgasm fantasy become fixed at a very young age, but so does the gender of the object of this fantasy.

People can be attracted to members of their own sex (homosexuals), members of the opposite sex (heterosexuals) or to both (bisexuals) in an endless variety of fantasies. Bear in mind that what interests us here is the type of relationship that is created in the fantasy and not the content of the story itself or the particular person to whom the individual is attracted. Bisexuals will also tend to build the same type of relationship whether they are picturing women or men in their orgasm fantasy, and will reenact this type of relationship with other people in their lives.

How does the orgasm fantasy take shape in the interaction

between child and parent? For an outside observer it is not easy to get into a baby's mind and imagine what he is imagining. We do, however, have one lead to go on – the orgasm fantasy. One young woman reports that she achieves a climax when she imagines that she is being beaten. This fantasy does not necessarily mean that she was ever beaten. But it's quite possible that the emotional dynamic that became fixed in her orgasm fantasy is one in which someone is angry at her or scolding her. How did this come about? Her mother or father may have often looked at her in an accusing, or perhaps only a critical manner. At such moments, this child senses a certain kind of connection to the parent. Another possibility is that she was ignored much of the time and her way of attracting attention was to do forbidden things for which she would be rebuked. Later in life, this girl will tend, largely unconsciously, to imagine that others are angry with her, or to provoke anger in others so as to reenact and relive this feeling. Again we see that it is not the story itself that the person invented that matters, but rather the nature of the feelings that characterize the relationship between the characters.

Or take a young man who imagines that the woman in his orgasm fantasy trusts him completely. He pictures himself undressing her, sees the look of trust in her eyes and then achieves climax. He is surely reenacting a key emotion that developed between him and his caregiver parent at a critical stage in the formation of the orgasm fantasy. This person will tend to trust other people and therefore could often be hurt when this trust is not reciprocated.

Often, however, identifying the emotion hidden in the orgasm fantasy requires deeper exploration. Take, for example, a man who achieves climax when he sees a woman's hands beckoning to him. Only when asked why this woman is calling

him does he tell us that, in his mind, she is calling him because he is a good boy. How did he come to have this particular orgasm fantasy? His mother had postpartum depression and gave him little attention. He tried to be a good boy so that she would call him to come and be near her. Throughout his life he will keep trying to be a good boy and to please the people around him.

Another girl will achieve climax when she imagines in her orgasm fantasy that she is secretly spying on her masturbating boyfriend. An in-depth examination of this story reveals that for her he is the important central figure and that she feels small next to him, observing him. This is not relations between equals. She achieves satisfaction through him, by identifying with his satisfaction, and is thus dependent on him. She even seems embarrassed by this dependence and therefore keeps herself hidden. We may surmise that in early childhood this girl tried to observe the parent caring for her and adapt herself to him or her. She was the little one and he or she the important one, the leader, and her pleasure came through the parent. This girl did not have a parent who sees her, places her at the center and adapts himself or herself to her. In her life she will have difficulty assuming a central role and will let others lead her, at least in her automatic default behavior. Another girl, however, could have the same fantasy of watching her boyfriend masturbate, but with a very different meaning. Hence, finding out what emotion underlies the fantasy is of utmost importance.

The variety and richness of orgasm fantasies is endless. Just as no thought or dream is impossible, no orgasm fantasy is impossible. People can imagine stories that have no sexual content whatsoever and find themselves aroused, while others may be aroused by things we would consider as unimaginably perverse. Still others may picture romantic love stories. There

are no good or bad fantasies. Throughout this book, we will see that the type of relationship manifested in a person's orgasm fantasy can serve that person positively or negatively, depending on the circumstances. In any event, sometime in our earliest years, this fantasy was the solution we developed and it proved to be effective in our relationship with our parent caregiver.

The following are several examples of orgasm fantasies illustrating the idea that the key element of the fantasy is the quality of the relationship that is developed between the characters and not the sexual story itself. Evidently, in our early life a powerful primal relationship pattern developed between us and the parent caregiver, and our developing sexuality simply "hitched a ride" on it. In other words, our sexuality exploited the power of this primal relationship in order to come into being. These relationships, therefore, have relevance for the individual far beyond the sexual context. Consider, for example, a teenage boy who climaxes when he pictures himself as a goalkeeper who keeps failing to save the incoming shots, a decidedly humiliating experience. This boy had masochistic personality traits and tended to irritate his friends, causing them to lash out at him and hurt him. Only later did this boy come to associate the balls penetrating the net in his orgasm fantasy with himself being penetrated. Another person achieved sexual satisfaction by imagining he had a factory in which he completely controlled all the precision machinery. At the peak of exerting this control he climaxed. In his daily life, he constantly tried to control the people in his world. Another girl would achieve satisfaction when she imagined boys wanting to sleep with her and turning them down. This girl showed clear sadistic tendencies in her daily life. The orgasm fantasy is thus, in essence, a relationship fantasy.

Often the patients' orgasm fantasy accompanies them

into the therapist's office. We will meet Jacob, who comes into the room looking at the floor, afraid to make direct eye contact. In his orgasm fantasy, a woman dominates him. Avery⁴, on the other hand, enters the clinic holding herself erect, exuding a strong presence. She will later relate that during sex it's important for her to be on top, and that in her relationship with her husband she is the one "who wears the pants in the family." Maya comes in, pauses in the center of the room and smiles before sitting down, inviting the therapist to take a good look at her. In her orgasm fantasy she is being watched as she showers. In life she has a strong desire for people to notice her. Another man strolls into the clinic brimming with self-confidence, as if he were walking into his own home. In his orgasm fantasy he pictures a relationship with young, even very young, girls, over whom he has total control. In his work as well, it's important for him to be the boss, the one who controls everything.

Such is the orgasm fantasy, our primal encounter with the world. Unlike dreams, this second layer of thinking embodies a primal response to reality. The first year in a child's life is largely nonverbal and in this way it resembles dreams. The orgasm fantasy is also primarily a story in pictures, but sometimes has a more developed verbal component (people may imagine hearing certain words that arouse them) as well as, most crucially, a recurring pattern of a real relationship. Hence, the hypothesis (still in need of corroboration) is that it develops in the second year of a child's life.

In other respects, the orgasm fantasy may be compared to dreams which, as we know, have both overt action and covert emotional meaning. The same is true of the orgasm fantasy, in

⁴ Participated in parental-guidance sessions and is not included in the case studies appearing in the book.

which there is an overt story, but the part that really interests us is the hidden part, the emotional ties between the characters in the fantasy.

Where does the content of our orgasm fantasy originate? The fantasy draws on a stockpile of events with a sexual connotation that we encountered in the course of our lives in order to bring the emotional message to life. The process works in a similar way to dreams that use our private stockpile of imagery in order to convey an emotional message.

To the best of my knowledge, therapists generally give little thought to the orgasm fantasy, and certainly do not ascribe to it the meaning and significance that I note here. This I believe is a pity. The great advantage of the orgasm fantasy, as with dreams, lies in a person's ability to take responsibility for these aspects of himself. The person comes to understand that if throughout his life he imagines the same kind of thing with the same type of relationships, all of his own accord without anyone asking him to do so, this surely has significance. Unlike dreams, the orgasm fantasy is conscious and overt and the relationships in it repeat themselves exactly, and therein lies its power.

Needless to say, being conscious of the orgasm fantasy and accepting its legitimacy in the world of the imagination and play, can not only substantially improve a couple's sex life, but also improve their relationship by making them more aware of their own and their partner's personal inclinations.

On first hearing about their partner's orgasm fantasy, people often feel that many things suddenly make sense. Something that for years they couldn't quite manage to put into words now emerges as a single, focused story. I can also confirm that being exposed to a patient's orgasm fantasy in the clinic can often serve as a breakthrough in understanding him or her. Getting to know people's orgasm fantasy can help us

understand and accept them, because then we will also realize what underlies their behavior and not ascribe hidden meanings or negative personal motivations to it.

Should we not all come out of the closet and reveal our orgasm fantasy, even if it may not be exactly flattering? If gay men, lesbians or other LGBTQ people refuse to acknowledge their sexuality, including that within their orgasm fantasy, their lives are likely to be phony and empty. The same is true for all of us if we conceal from ourselves our orgasm fantasy which offers critical information for understanding our unique encounter with the world. As there are endless possibilities of the orgasm fantasy, and apparently no two people share the exact orgasm fantasy, personal discovery and tolerance for the other become all the more vital.

How do we discover our orgasm fantasy? This can be harder for people who tend to repress their emotions. Masturbation is one way. During masturbation we should try to freely and fearlessly imagine all sorts of scenes and see which arouses us the most. Sometimes pornographic movies with diverse contents can give us a direction. But ultimately no porno movie will compare with the movie that we ourselves create and which accurately depicts our orgasm fantasy. Many people have a general idea. They only need to fine-tune it, to be precise about it and find the most arousing story. Then the tremendous power of this orgasm-inducing story will help them take ownership of it, at which point they will realize that they have found the key to one of the most important hidden chambers of their being.

A few words for the many people who find it hard to discover their orgasm fantasy. Even people who are familiar with their orgasm fantasy may find it difficult to activate this imagery. Our defenses can impede our ability to fantasize. Thus, in the midst of the orgasm fantasy, thoughts may intrude, such

as “This isn’t real” or “It’s just a fantasy” or even “Am I out of my mind?!” The objective of these defensive thoughts is to prevent us from losing touch with reality. And indeed, many people find it hard to set aside, even momentarily, the constraints of their daily reality. Such people will have trouble discovering their orgasm fantasy. What can be done in such cases?

Each person needs to find his or her own way. Some will be able to discover their orgasm fantasy when they are on vacation, far from their everyday tasks and with the opportunity to focus on themselves. They may then find time to masturbate, watch porno films, or play sexual games with their partner. Others may actually be more open to this discovery when they are very tired, because that’s when their defenses are lowered, while for yet others, the early morning when they are feeling refreshed and ready to tackle new assignments may be the most opportune time.

One woman discovered her orgasm fantasy when her husband announced that he wanted a divorce, which freed her to say, “What do I care?” She masturbated and found herself imagining a highly arousing fantasy she’d never allowed herself to entertain. This was a very high-functioning woman, firmly anchored in reality, and always concerned about what others would say. It’s no wonder that it was difficult for her to let go and discover her orgasm fantasy when she was so attuned to the opinions of others.

Another man was unable to use his aggressive orgasm fantasy, of which he was aware, when his wife was being nice to him. He asked her to deliberately do something to anger him, and was then able to get uninhibited pleasure from his orgasm fantasy.

Sometimes wine or marijuana can help. I don’t, however, recommend relying on drugs; better to develop the

imagination. Similarly, I would advise someone who is having physical problems with sexual intercourse (difficulty getting or maintaining an erection, vaginal discomfort, etc.) to work on developing their imagination rather than resorting to chemical remedies.

Most of us are functioning individuals firmly rooted in everyday reality, and may have difficulty immersing ourselves in a fantasy world. People with a hysterical personality will certainly find it easier to discover their orgasm fantasy than those with an obsessive personality. The former allow themselves to be more associative and colorful in their thinking, rather than clinging strongly to the minutiae of everyday life. Many of us have lost contact with ourselves, preferring to dwell on how we function in the world and how we have dealt with reality over the years. Many people stopped listening to themselves long ago, to the point that their orgasm fantasy has ceased to interest them, and they consciously choose a dull daily life devoid of fantasies. The more stable, protected and organized individuals are in their daily lives, the less chance of them being carried away by their fantasies. People who are struggling with things are often the ones who are more alert to their orgasm fantasy and more able to enjoy it.

When and how should one ask a patient to divulge their orgasm fantasy? This is a question that is practically guaranteed to be awkward for both therapist and patient. Even long-term therapy often concludes without any discussion of the patient's orgasm fantasy. Because the patient's orgasm fantasy is a powerful tool for advancing therapy, it is advantageous to learn about it as soon as possible. Still, it's hard to say precisely when this question should be raised. It depends on the therapist, the patient, and the relationship that develops between them.

Each therapist and patient has to find the right time.

Often, but not necessarily, it will be easier when the therapist and patient have known each other for some time. When the patient is a young male and the therapist an older woman, or when the patient is a young woman and the therapist an older man, the patient may wait for the therapist to raise the issue as confirmation to proceed. Without help and guidance from the therapist, patients may find it difficult to raise this subject voluntarily. A therapist who asks this question at an early stage of therapy, possibly even as part of the intake interview together with other questions, some of which may also be embarrassing, conveys a message that this is an important subject that can be talked about. The therapist who in the intake interview asks about the patient's thoughts – nighttime dreams, conscious thoughts and orgasm fantasies – is sending the important message that the orgasm fantasy should not be set apart from all other thoughts just because it may be more embarrassing. During the conversation, the therapist may of course explain to the patient that the importance of the orgasm fantasy goes well beyond the sexual context and that it reflects an important aspect of someone's interpersonal relations in general. Above all, the message to patients is that it is up to them to determine the pace, and that they may choose not to answer this question at present, or in the future. In my experience, most patients understand and appreciate this, and are pleased to cooperate.

The Conscious Third Level of Thinking

People have different tendencies of thinking in their waking lives. Some remain angry all or most of the time, thinking about a remark someone made to them and how they're going to get revenge. They might imagine themselves cursing or hitting the other person. Others may be consumed by anxiety, and others

may feel guilty or unworthy most of the time for years on end. As with dreams, a person can generally identify more than one major theme, and just as no dream is impossible, no conscious thought is impossible.

In other words, even though each of us may have many different dreams or conscious thoughts, it is the major themes that shape our personality and our response to the world. Indeed, similar to dreams, since everyone has a unique personality, so he or she has one or more central themes in the conscious third level of thinking. While it is often difficult to decide which of these unconscious and conscious thought currents are more dominant, it doesn't really matter; it is sufficient to be aware of their existence. These thought currents during dreams and wakefulness tend to change slowly and incrementally over time. Thus we find much similarity between the first, unconscious, level of thinking and the third, conscious, level of thinking – except for the well-accepted difference that the first level is called a primal process and is based on associative thinking, while the third level is based on secondary thinking that is essentially organized and logical.

Some people have daydreams that recur regularly over many years. A daydream is a story we tell ourselves while awake; we are aware we are fantasizing and that it is not real. In a dream, however, we feel that what is happening is real. A frequently recurring daydream is just one possible current of our conscious thinking and it may be pleasant or unpleasant. One example of a classic daydream is that of an athlete who, ahead of a competition, envisions himself standing on the podium, being awarded a medal in front of the cheering crowd. Another person will keep fantasizing that she is a movie star or famous singer on stage and picture in her mind exactly what she does there. Yet another may regularly imagine that he

keeps failing his exams even though he actually does well in them. Throughout the book, we will encounter the daydreams of different patients and come to see the connection between these daydreams and the unconscious first level of dreams and the second level of the orgasm fantasy.

As we will see, there is a constant flow of content between the different levels of thinking. Thoughts from the conscious third level are repressed into the unconscious first level and surface into a person's awareness at different moments and in different contexts. Often the conscious third level of thinking compensates for or complements the second level, the orgasm fantasy.

The orgasm fantasy itself may be consolidated in early childhood from a response to currents in the unconscious first level of thinking or, as we have seen, may be repressed there when it harms a person's self-image. Put simply, there is a continual flow of content between the various levels of thinking, and reciprocal relations of opposition or balance between them. In the descriptions of the different cases, the reader will encounter this interplay among the three thinking levels.

How does the conscious third level of thinking develop? This is the highest level, which enables us to undertake more complex thinking. Responses from this level to the surrounding reality will thus be slower and more processed. Often these are responses to various social situations, thoughts that contain logical aspects or are based on previous knowledge. Third-level conscious thinking is different from the impulse-driven and personally-directed default of the orgasm fantasy although it is not always easy to differentiate between them.

Familiarity with the orgasm fantasy as well as with a person's conscious streams of thought will help us in making this distinction. This conscious third level of thinking is, of

course, shaped by the relationship with one's parents following (or perhaps also parallel to) the shaping of the orgasm fantasy. This level contains new aspects of identification with the parents on various issues as well as responses to the two lower levels of thinking. As we shall see, the conscious third level of thinking is responsible for many of our behaviors and decisions in life.

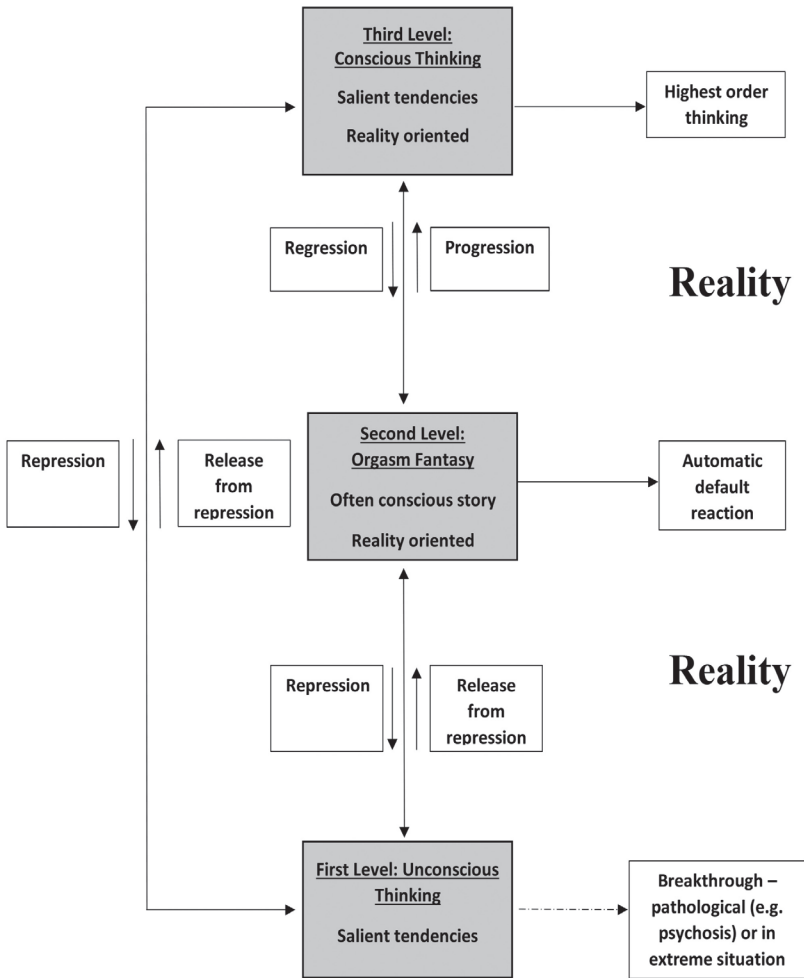
The two higher levels of thinking, the orgasm fantasy and conscious thought, shape our encounter with reality, which is not the case with the unconscious first level of thinking. The orgasm fantasy, however, will always be personal, while the conscious level of thinking will also include other elements such as values and conforming to social norms.

Without exploration by the therapist of the conscious third level of thinking, this material may remain inaccessible to therapist and patient, because the patient is accustomed to his ways of thinking and is often completely unaware of the extent to which it characterizes him. For example, he may think that everyone goes around feeling angry all the time, or not be aware that this is actually what he often does. Another possibility is that the patient is ashamed of this material.

Orgasm Fantasy Theory thus invites us to turn our attention to our three levels of thinking, of which we are sometimes unaware, so that we may realize our inherent potential. The examples in the book will illuminate how this can operate.

A dream of mine about this book: I organized a masquerade ball in a house whose address contained the number 46. During the ball I lifted everyone's masks and their true faces were revealed. I was there without a mask. When I woke up I understood that my orgasm fantasy theory removes people's masks, and that I have already removed mine. I still wasn't sure where the number 46 came from. A few weeks later, when I was going over the material for this book, I came to Samuel's dream. In his dream he is hiking in a canyon. His father is walking ahead of him wearing a shirt with the number 23 on it. Samuel searches for an adult at the head of the line to join up with and finds someone wearing the number 46. The man's graying hair makes him think that it's me. In therapy, he came to understand that he is searching for a father substitute and wants to identify with me.

This young man, as you will see, is extremely creative. He assigned me the number 46 and now my creation takes place in a house with this number. Samuel impresses me, and I greatly enjoy our talks and his interesting dreams. Is he making me, his therapist, creative? That is how I feel in the dream. Of course, I let him read what I wrote about him; he was quite moved and thanked me profusely.



**Personality Structure According to Orgasm Fantasy Theory:
Three Levels of Thinking**

CASE STUDIES

1. Spanking

Emily was unable to achieve sexual satisfaction until her forties. Only then did she suddenly discover her orgasm fantasy. In this fantasy, a man was spanking her. The fantasy had several variations. In one, he was spanking her while scolding her for what she had done. It's wasn't the pain that was significant, she thinks, but rather the feeling of being chastised. Sometimes the spanker was her father, sometimes a teacher she admired, and sometimes the woman in the fantasy was not her but someone she didn't know. There were also several variations in the scene she imagined and in the plot development, but what all this new imagery had in common was that her orgasm occurred at the moment of peak humiliation.

Emily came to see that this fantasy that was sexually pleasurable but destructive to her self-image had been repressed for many years. She now felt she had the secret key to her orgasm treasure chest – a very specific fantasy that had been hiding somewhere in her unconscious until it finally surfaced when she was apparently ready to recognize and accept it.

Emily warmly embraced this discovery, began masturbating frequently, trying out different imaginary scenarios, testing and exploring the limits of her fantasy. She noticed that the details of the fantasy could change but not the humiliating relationship that was the sole trigger for her orgasm. She also noticed that

this experience of humiliation had remained constant over the years.

This exciting discovery was accompanied by another equally exciting discovery. Emily observed that her relationships with men often followed this same masochistic pattern, and realized that this was possibly the reason she had trouble forming a strong and stable relationship. For example, when her partner warmly caressed and praised her she might react unpleasantly, even aggressively. But when he admonished her, she often thought she was getting the punishment she deserved. At times, she sensed that she was deliberately angering him in order for him to respond in kind, while at other times, she would apologize unnecessarily as if she had done something terrible. These were subtleties, her deeply private secrets that she had never previously contemplated, and that now suddenly made sense in the context of her orgasm fantasy that had revealed itself in all its glory. Emily understood that she was reenacting her orgasm fantasy with her romantic partners and realized that this could be the reason for her never being able to establish a stable, long-term relationship.

One revelation followed another. Emily saw that she was also reenacting the mechanism of the orgasm fantasy at work with her colleagues and bosses, both male and female. This situation occurred whenever she reacted automatically to something, her default response. She would thus blame herself for things that went wrong that were outside her area of responsibility, and when her work was appreciated, her automatic response would be to feel that the praise was undeserved. If I would just stop and think about it, she told herself later, I might not react this way.

Emily's friends had long been telling her that her sexual behavior was harming her but she didn't really understand what

they meant. She would push the men she met into bed before they'd even considered it. She told her girlfriends that she just wanted to see if they clicked in the bedroom since sex is such an important criterion for a relationship's success, so why wait. When she first met someone she actually liked, she blurted out in the middle of their conversation: "Come on, let's fuck." The guy was shocked. They did sleep together but never went out again. Only now does Emily seem to understand what lies behind her behavior.

Improving sex and relationships

Emily gradually realized that she had no reason to be ashamed of her orgasm fantasy or of who she is. On the contrary, it was better for her to acknowledge this fantasy and put its tremendous power to good use. She began to share her orgasm fantasy with her partners, encouraging them to tell her theirs and suggesting that they play out these fantasies in the bedroom with the sky being the limit. Emily, who until recently had never experienced orgasm, reached sexual heights that she vividly described as "explosions of divine revelation." The great sex made her and her partners feel closer. By overcoming any embarrassment and sharing their orgasm fantasies, they were able to more fully accept one another.

Moreover, having become cognizant of the masochistic element of her orgasm fantasy and the destructive way she handled her relationships, Emily is now able to control how the fantasy affects her daily interactions rather than letting it control her. She also shared this difficulty with her partners and asked them to be mindful of her weakness. These conversations helped Emily and her different partners – and ultimately her permanent partner – to understand how she might tend to

sabotage their relationship and for them to avoid falling into the trap that she unintentionally set for them.

Emily also helped her partner to see that he too has an orgasm fantasy that affects his behavior even if he is unaware of it, and how together they need to overcome whatever difficulty it may cause for him. Meanwhile, Emily keeps reminding herself that, beyond the powerful feeling of pleasure it brings, the moment of sexual climax is actually a moment of self-discovery in which she attains a profound understanding of an important element of her personality.

Emily undertook this process on her own without the aid of a therapist. One can only admire her ability to acknowledge her problems and examine them fearlessly.

2. Beautiful Women Strolling on the Beach

Liam, a high school history teacher, tells his male therapist that he generally has nice, pleasant dreams about loves, successes and so on (unfortunately, we won't see many cases like this). In his fantasy, he pictures beautiful women strolling on the beach, slim and shapely girls in bikinis, and at this moment he orgasms. In the conscious third level of thinking, however, he is known as a critical person.

A new, rather selfish and pushy teacher started working at his school. She wasted little time trying to rearrange the class schedule to suit her. Liam reacts calmly and pleasantly to her, while other teachers are ready to kill her. "But in staff meetings, I'm known for being highly critical and my friends urge me to restrain myself. I can't abide the idea of students coming to school out of uniform, or smoking, being disruptive and so on. I believe in setting clear boundaries." It wasn't hard for Liam to differentiate between his moderate instinctive responses in personal relationships and his uncompromising, rational criticism at teachers' meetings. The former originated in his orgasm fantasy, the latter in his conscious third level of thinking – just the opposite of his friends, he says. One can well assume that these patterns characterize Liam in general. In an immediate personal interaction, he will be pleasant and easygoing, as in his sexual fantasy. But on the organizational level, with tasks and assignments that have to be completed and that do not involve personal interactions, he is highly critical

both of others and of himself. We are probably all familiar with people like this who can be kind and accepting in a personal encounter and abrasive and disapproving in a formal setting (I can think of a few politicians that fit this description). Since Liam's dreams are pleasant, he probably has little need to develop a more defensive or aggressive orgasm fantasy. His critical position within the conscious third level of thinking is related to his identification with authority figures.

Liam seems to have grown up in a judgmental environment with which he identified. As we shall see in many instances in which the conscious third level of thinking contradicts the second level of the orgasm fantasy, we can assume that the third level of thinking develops as a response to the second level of the orgasm fantasy. In demonstrating gentleness in the second level of the orgasm fantasy, Liam often feels unprotected, vulnerable and angry. At the appropriate developmental stage (possibly in the second or third year of his life), he most probably developed a conscious third level of thinking that is more critical and aggressive. At the start of the conversation with the therapist, Liam claimed that his pessimistic forecasts at the teachers' meetings usually come true and that a tougher attitude should be taken toward anyone who harms the system. Later, as Liam began to take responsibility for his different levels of thinking, he understood that the way in which he sees things at the different levels is unique to him and does not negate others seeing the same problems differently.

Improving sex and relationships

Liam greatly enjoys his sex life with his girlfriend. When they sleep together, he enjoys picturing beautiful women strolling on the beach and this tranquil image drives him wild. His

girlfriend asks if she is also in the picture and he replies with a smile – not always. His girlfriend has an equally interesting fantasy. She imagines that a certain guy whose name she won't reveal has a birthday; she comes to his house and tells him she has a wonderful present for him. When he asks where the present is, Liam's girlfriend replies matter-of-factly: "I'm the present. Do with me whatever you want." During sex, Liam tells his girlfriend what a wonderful gift she is giving this guy: how he unwraps the gift, opens it and penetrates it while she, the gift, surrenders to him completely – and how in another second the guy's pleasure from the gift will put him in ecstasy. Exactly at that moment, his girlfriend climaxes. Meanwhile Liam switches fantasies and returns to his vision of the women strolling on the beach. Now he too achieves total ecstasy.

Liam's girlfriend – as befitting her orgasm fantasy – is a pediatrician known for her compassionate personality. At home, however, she is quite a slob. Liam has a hard time responding forcefully from his conscious third level of thinking when something bothers him. Instead, he responds out of his orgasm fantasy, gently and with consideration. But when his anger over this has built up, he ends up overreacting and harshly criticizing her. Many people find it difficult to vary their responses to people and situations between different levels of thinking, and tend to be fixated at one level. Liam's girlfriend, who is aware of his laid-back orgasm fantasy, often asks him if he is feeling angry at her. In this way she tries to help him express his anger and not let it build up and fester. Liam, for his part, also understands that in her daily life, his girlfriend gives out too many "gifts" and is always worrying about everyone else, and tries to help her moderate this behavior.

3. Tough at First, then “Giving”

Emma used to be hard on different men she met. She would go from practically ignoring them in social situations to subtly mocking them, almost wordlessly, primarily through her facial expressions. This was in fact a clear sign – which took her time to recognize and acknowledge – that afterward she would “give herself” to them. Of course, many guys were scared off from the start and didn’t try to get closer to her, but anyone who did would find that beneath the initial hard outer shell was a profound gentleness and primarily a cry for help. Her boyfriend related dreams of his in which he had to save her: She would be drowning in the sea and he races to her aid, or she would be hurt in a car accident and he rushes her to the hospital. It often happens that our dreams are inspired by the signals we pick up from the other person. How did this tendency of hers to display hardness and then fragility develop? All we know is what the boyfriend recounted. For example, they were once sitting in the kitchen with her father who raised her. In a despairing tone, the father asked the boyfriend: “Why don’t you marry her? She’s such a good woman, and she’s a good cook; it would be good for you” and so on, he continued pleading. For the boyfriend, the humiliation he felt for his girlfriend was nearly unbearable. What happens to a girl who grows up with such a father? Perhaps she tries to protect what little she has until that falls apart too. We don’t quite know what her orgasm fantasy was. But her behavior is consistent with sadomasochistic

relationships in which she demonstrates toughness in order to instigate conflict followed by total surrender.

At some stage her father was hospitalized. She wanted him to get the best possible treatment and asked to speak to the head of the department. He was busy. When this doctor finally gave her a few minutes of his time, he patted her hand and tried to reassure her. She told her boyfriend that if sleeping with the department head was what it took, she would do it for her father. Clearly, this fantasy was hers – we know nothing about the doctor. Once, Emma's boyfriend asked her whom she would rather sleep with – a policeman or a professor. Her answer was unhesitating – a policeman.

How is a masochistic experience created in a one-year-old child? What causes her to enjoy being berated and suffering? The father who raised her wasn't necessarily a bad father. He seemed to care about her very much. But it's sufficient for the parent to have a hidden sadistic streak in order for a masochistic pattern to develop in the child. The father gives the baby a bottle to drink. She doesn't want it. He forces her. Just a little, not a lot. She drinks for him, suffers for him. Now she and he are satisfied. The father doesn't have the energy to change her diaper right now. She intuits this and stops crying. She is suffering now for her father's sake. It's no wonder that she is ready to sleep with the department head for her father's sake or that she provokes men in order to ultimately surrender to them and satisfy their desires. The more accurate term for this behavior is sadomasochism, because Emma initially provokes men in a sadistic manner in order to satisfy her masochistic desire. The literature is replete with cases in which a patient's orgasm fantasy appears to be masochistic, but on the conscious third level of thinking, they behave sadistically. Did this sadism develop as a response to masochism and a desire to compensate

for it? Perhaps it is the opposite and is intended to provoke the other person to achieve a masochistic outcome? Such questions are reminiscent of which came first, the chicken or the egg. In any event, we see here that the orgasm fantasy and the conscious third level of thinking can be closely interconnected.

Emma's masochistic orgasm fantasy naturally could not compensate for her threatened dream world. In her daydreams, however, she was Beyoncé, strutting her stuff in spectacular stage shows, singing and dancing and thrilling the crowd. This short film often ran through her mind, especially following moments of anxiety or humiliation. Thus, when her boyfriend rebuffed her desire to meet, suddenly she was again Beyoncé feeling tremendously empowered observing herself on stage. Here we see how the unconscious first level of thinking and the conscious third level of thinking can be connected. Emma related that often after climaxing she also saw herself starring on stage. Presumably, Emma achieved satisfaction out of some kind of masochistic fantasy, and after having reached orgasm activated her pleasant daydream in order to dispel the humiliation and low self-worth, she felt due to her orgasm fantasy. We can see that in Emma's conscious world – the conscious third level of thinking – grandiose fantasies appear alongside sadistic ones, and the repertoire could be even richer than this. We also see that the conscious third level of thinking could be connected to the unconscious first level of thinking as well as to the second level of the orgasm fantasy.

Emma did in fact achieve personal development in wake of her daydream and became successful in the field of art. Often it is the conscious third level of thinking that compensates for difficulties in the lower levels of thinking. This is the level that is best connected to the complex reality, and the discovery of

ambition at this level can definitely lead people with many challenges to positive places.

Often, a sensitive look from the outside can reveal the different levels of thinking of the person we are with. Thus, with his dream world, Emma's boyfriend brought out the tendencies of her dream world as well as the characteristics of her orgasm fantasy and her conscious third level of thinking.

When we are not aware of our orgasm fantasy and that of our partner, not only do we forego the playfulness and richness it offers for enhancing sexual relations, but we also close off part of our personality, which surely detracts from free and creative thinking.

Improving sex and relationships

Emma and her partner had an excellent sex life. He had sadistic tendencies that meshed well with her masochistic tendencies. In their shared fantasy, he forced her to sleep with various men whom he chose for her. He would ask: "Who is the man you'd least like to sleep with?" Thinking it over she chose an older man she worked with who she found disgusting. He would then order her to give herself to him. Emma shouted, "No! No!" and soon afterward she would be moaning with tremendous pleasure and climax with this image in mind. At other times, he would force her in their shared fantasy to sleep with friends or relatives, even children, and the greater the taboo, the greater the pleasure they both seemed to derive. They will never forget how he once forced her in the fantasy to sleep with her brother. Emma refused, and almost fought with him over this. The boyfriend told her she had no choice, and had to do it. He started describing how her brother was penetrating her, and how she was surrendering herself to him,

and suddenly submitting to her body's desires. It was hard for Emma to admit that even though she was used to reaching incredible orgasmic heights, breaking the incest taboo brought her to a truly unforgettable climax. Many of us have dreams in which we have sexual relations within the family, but in the – conscious – orgasm fantasy, this is of course much more threatening and therefore repressed. For humans, this may be the most powerful taboo after cannibalism. Thus, for Emma, it brought the ultimate humiliation and the ultimate pleasure.

Clearly, Emma's boyfriend had issues with women and sought to degrade them. His awareness of this tendency, however, and their ability to incorporate it in their sex play helped the boyfriend to control it in his daily life and especially in his relationship with Emma. His aggressive orgasm fantasy would often pop up out of nowhere. For example, on the road, safe within his car that would soon leave the scene, he would loudly curse other drivers. At other times, when he thought someone was trying to take advantage of him, he might respond with impulsive aggression. However, the more they practiced their orgasm fantasies in bed, the more conscious they became of them and the more they could control them. So, when Emma said something to her partner that annoyed him, he was quick to realize how aggressive he was and was able to stop himself from responding angrily as he would have in the past. Emma, meanwhile, was now sufficiently aware to be able to wonder whether she was not reenacting her orgasm fantasy at that moment.

Emma became a manager in the art field. She saw her challenge as setting clear boundaries for her employees without later changing her mind and capitulating. This wasn't easy for her. But she learned to do so and came to be seen as a very kind and considerate boss.

4. Becoming One

30-year-old William tells his female therapist that he can't experience pleasure unless his wife does. He admits that his pleasure is dependent on hers and that when she achieves satisfaction, he feels that he becomes one with her and climaxes directly after she does. If she does not climax, even if he does, it's worth nothing.

How did such a dependent orgasm fantasy develop? William says his mother always offered him suggestions before he thought of them himself. For example, she would say, "You're tired, go to sleep," before he himself sensed this. When William tells his mother that he's not hungry, she still makes him food. Why? She knows he is hungry but doesn't want to bother her. Even when he's debating whether to go with friends to a movie, he'll probably consult her, thinking she knows better than him what he really wants. At the critical time when William's orgasm fantasy developed (more or less during the second year of his life), his mother probably created this type of bond with him which remained unchanged over the years.

She may have nursed him just before he began to feel hungry. When he started to walk, she was always there to catch him just before he fell. By always staying one step ahead of him, she was denying him the possibility to express an independent will. In this way, she encouraged his passivity and the belief that she knows better what's best for him. But William also had powerful angry outbursts that no one, including himself,

could understand – after all, he had such a good mother who was always looking out for him...

William began to bring dreams into therapy from his unconscious first level of thinking about horrible creatures that were hiding all over his house. For example, he had dreams about smiling snakes with prominent fangs and scary eyes hiding under his bed. He associated the teeth and the eyes with those of his mother. The creatures were also cunning, “like my mother,” he blurted out – “smiling nicely but also able to strike.” This encounter with his dream world was shocking for William. At first, he thought he was a bad person, a total ingrate. After everything his mother had sacrificed for him, is this how he feels toward her?! Little by little, he began to understand that his dreams don’t lie and, moreover, they are his. In other words, this is what he actually feels toward her even though he doesn’t know it. Thanks to this insight, his angry outbursts began to seem more comprehensible to him.

The outbursts, which derived from the conscious third level of thinking, tended to occur when his mother, and later his wife, had not prepared the food he liked or laundered the clothes he wished to wear. He would lose his temper with them as if they had broken an ancient promise. William also had recurrent violent daydreams: how he’d beaten the crap out of a noisy neighbor; how he’d shot friends who foisted a party on him he didn’t want. He noticed that these aggressive daydreams did not occur at random moments; rather they would usually run through his head when he felt he hadn’t been able to say what was on his mind.

William says that in conversations with his wife, she says what she thinks and he says what he thinks she wants him to say, as in his orgasm fantasy: “I’m afraid to upset her, afraid to be myself.” For example, she wants to buy a new outfit; he

thinks they don't have the money for that right now. He tries to find a compromise so as not to assert himself. He realizes that he is storing up anger and fears that he'll suddenly lose his temper with her. For William, the second and third levels of thinking are therefore interconnected. But when there's no food at home, his wife is to blame; similarly, when the clothes he wants to wear are not in his closet. Even though he knows that she works as much as he does, he still blames her for every little thing. In situations where he should say something, he is silent and when he should be silent, he speaks. This is how it is with dependency. He complains that she doesn't look after him and, having decided to turn her into his mother, he doesn't tell "his mother" how angry it makes him when she spends money they don't have. In his relationship with his wife, William has therefore repeated his dependent orgasm fantasy along with a conscious third level of thinking that is filled with anger.

In the course of therapy, an interesting development occurred in William's dreams. He began to have dreams about far-away journeys to marvelous places while she – sometimes his mother and sometimes his wife – watched him recede into the distance. This seemed to signal William beginning to practice separation from the mother figure. In another series of dreams, his mother was a patient in a mental hospital. When the doctors explained to him that she was abnormal, William couldn't stop crying. William seemed to be undergoing an unconscious process of mourning that contained a growing recognition of his mother's complicated personality from which he wished to free himself. As these new dreams appeared, William's angry outbursts slowly began to subside as his self-restraint increased.

We thus see that the conscious third level of thinking in which William has angry outbursts is fueled both by the

unconscious first level of dreams and the second level of his dependent orgasm fantasy.

Improving sex and relationships

Even though William's dreams changed and his angry outbursts gradually abated, his orgasm fantasy did not change. This is something he will need to develop control over. William's wife tried to encourage him to reach orgasm without her, and even sometimes before her, but without success. She then suggested that he use his imagination to envision her experiencing a powerful orgasm. Sometimes this worked, but needed more practice. Sometimes she would fake orgasms for his sake, and their ability to laugh about William's incredible dependency also helped somewhat. Increasingly, William was able to tell his wife what he wanted and to stand up for himself, and his angry outbursts also became less frequent. When William wants to reach orgasm, he still imagines that his wife is climaxing, and he along with her, but in their marriage, William has become the leader in many areas; lately, in particular, he has taken control over financial matters.

William's wife has an orgasm fantasy in which she sees herself having sex with William in public places: in a car parked in the middle of the street, in the public park, or in her classroom at the university. She imagines a crowd of people watching them in awe. William understands that it's not that his wife actually wants others to see her naked but rather that she has a deep need to feel that she is being seen. In social gatherings, she also tends to seize the limelight and do a lot of the talking. By getting to know his wife's orgasm fantasy, William is better able to accept her.

In bed William describes them having sex in a public

park. Passersby are approaching and offering them suggestions how to do it even better. One spectator even wants to show William how to do it right. William's wife says she wants a woman spectator to teach her the best way to do it. Still in the park, laughing, William tells her she must climax before him so that he can join her. His wife, however, wants to hear more reactions from the crowd. William invents several more cries of encouragement and flattering responses from the women. When his wife is sure that she is being seen and that everyone sees her, they see her well, she suddenly begins to climax with intense pleasure and William naturally experiences the same pleasure along with her.

The sex is now over and soon they will both fall asleep. She asks him plaintively: What am I lacking? He caresses her and tells her that he will always see her. For as long as he lives, he promises, he will really see her. She tells him she'd like him to be stronger, more independent, and less dependent. He promises her he will change in other things, but not in bed.

5. I, Myself

In Olivia's orgasm she sees another woman masturbating. The next moment she'll say that she is the woman in the fantasy. What is so special about Olivia's orgasm fantasy is that she is watching herself satisfying herself. Even in her body language this is how she behaves. As Olivia, an attractive blonde with striking eyes, walks in to the clinic, she pleases herself with her physical movements. This is what her orgasm fantasy looks like to the therapist, a woman, observing her. Her arms twist with each movement she makes, her head almost seems to be licking her body, and her constant smile or trace of a smile all seem to be directed mainly toward herself. When the therapist says something, Olivia listens closely, then carefully enunciates what the therapist said, phrasing it slightly differently so that she can really absorb it. Usually she doesn't agree or doesn't quite agree even if the therapist repeated something that she, Olivia, had said. It all has to come from her. This behavior also matches her orgasm fantasy of watching herself giving herself pleasure. We note her writhing body language, her habit of directing her words to herself and the inner-directed smile that implies she is savoring a secret that only she knows. Every orgasm fantasy can be described in physical terms, because its origin lies in the primal parent-child bond. Thus, a person's orgasm fantasy will always be a part of him, wherever he may be.

How did this orgasm fantasy develop? Olivia was raised primarily by her father because her mother was very ill from the time she was very young. When Olivia's father took her

to the mall to buy her clothes, they would end up coming home with clothes for him instead. What happened to Olivia's clothes? She tells her therapist she doesn't really know. She just remembers that often when she would start to tell him something about herself, the subject would quickly change to him. Her father expected her to be a top student and refused to accept any talk of difficulty. "It's not really hard for you," he would tell her with a gleam of admiration in his eye. Olivia did indeed excel in school. At the same time, she had to listen to him talk about his problems at work and help him in many other ways, again because her mother was unable to play this role. At school she was often ostracized by the other children. Olivia notes insightfully that this was because she was simply egocentric. The therapist winces: "Pain upon pain," she says to her. "First you were egocentric because you didn't have enough for yourself, and then when you tried to care for yourself, you were punished." Olivia started to cry.

Thus, from very early in life, Olivia didn't feel she could rely on her father to really see her. And so this intelligent child developed satisfying and comforting imaginary scenarios. Perhaps she pictured that she was playing by herself in the many hours that she was left on her own; or maybe she learned – as many children whose parents don't pay attention to them do – to keep herself busy. So when she stimulates herself, she feels satisfied, which is exactly what happened.

Olivia's dreams fall into two clear categories. In one, she is alone, with no other people around her. If other people do appear, they are far away and unreachable. Sometimes they come closer but do not speak, and in particular do not look at her. The image seems to be dark and she has the sense that in the dream she is depressed. She makes no attempt to change her fate, but just endures the dream by herself. The second type of dream,

more optimistic but also more infrequent, is about wishes. For example, she dreamed that her father phoned her and then she woke up to another disappointing morning; she dreamed that she and her mother were going out somewhere, something that hadn't happened in years. Much later, Olivia learned to understand the significance of the two types of dreams: how an elusive feeling of optimism she hadn't dared to think of would suddenly sneak into the dream, while, for the most part, she is engaged in repressing the moments of loneliness.

Compensation for the above, however, is provided by Olivia's daydreams: Here she is a member of parliament who changes the world, especially in the field of education. She builds special preschools that teach creative thinking, transforms abandoned children into successful adults, etc. In a more recent daydream, she advances the cause of world peace by brokering a peace treaty between hostile African countries. Over the years these daydreams were Olivia's most closely guarded secret. "Maybe even more than my strange orgasm fantasy," she says. "I was so embarrassed to tell anyone about them." "Why?" the therapist asks. Olivia ponders: "This desire to be someone, that's what's so embarrassing." "Why?" the therapist asks again. Olivia considers. She doesn't really know. "Maybe because in this daydream I'm telling other people that I'm better than they are. Maybe because it's condescending." "But you're helping the world in this daydream," the therapist persists. "Yes," she says, "but it's still condescending." Olivia says she's noticed that this daydream recurs whenever she expects someone to pay attention to her and it doesn't happen. In the past, this often occurred when she waited in vain for her parents to take more of an interest in her and to notice her academic achievements. Today it happens when someone disappoints her, then suddenly she's a famous member of parliament who

is busy bringing about world peace. At night she knows that she will feel lonely but right now she's a powerful lawmaker. Her therapist says that maybe if Olivia hadn't seen that spark of admiration in her father's eyes, she wouldn't now be picturing herself as such a powerful figure. Olivia agrees that she did at least get something good from him – her daydreams and the ability to fulfill them, as she proved in her studies.

Improving sex and relationships

Olivia “forgot” to tell her therapist that she has a boyfriend. For several months, she spoke only about herself and hardly ever mentioned him. The therapist reminded her of her orgasm fantasy, which could be the reason she is so focused on herself. Olivia finds it hard to climax when her boyfriend is inside her, which bothers her. After he climaxes, she wants him to leave her alone for a while; she then masturbates and climaxes. She also doesn't want him to watch her in these moments. As far as she's concerned, it's best for him to turn around and look the other way. Olivia's boyfriend loves her and understands how she is trying to reclaim what she never received from her parents. This helps him overcome his feeling of insult, both in their sex life which is not very satisfying for him, and in her never bothering to ask him if he wants anything when she goes to the supermarket. When Olivia asks him in wonder why he loves her, he replies simply – “Because I get you.”

Lately the couple's sex life has improved. The boyfriend penetrates Olivia and doesn't move, which is what she wants. Without him disturbing her she can masturbate by gently rubbing her clitoris engrossed in her orgasm fantasy. She then climaxes. The boyfriend needs a few more minutes of intercourse and climaxes as well. Only recently has Olivia realized that she

doesn't know what he's thinking about when he climaxes, and asked him. He imagines a scene in which she is begging him to sleep with her. When she is really pleading and telling him how badly she wants it – this is the moment he suddenly comes.

These days Olivia also asks her boyfriend what he wants when she goes to the supermarket. She also understands that he needs her to be less immersed in herself and more appreciative of him, as evidenced in his orgasm fantasy. Lately, before going to bed she begs him to have sex with her. But she also understands that he needs to feel this admiring and appreciative attitude at other times of the day as well.

6. Tear Me Apart

35-year-old Oliver says that he gets the most pleasure when a girl says to him: “Tear me apart, put it in as strong as you can, I’m opening everything to you.” Oliver wants to describe this very precisely: “I can imagine that the girl is saying all these things to me. But if she actually says it then it’s definitely better. Without her permission, however, whether in reality or in my fantasy, if I’m just acting on my own, it doesn’t turn me on. That is, I need her permission to let my anger out and feel pleasure.” Again, we see that it is often necessary to explore the orgasm fantasy in detail in order to understand the complexity of the experience. Unfortunately, we have no information about Oliver’s dreams or his conscious third level of thinking.

Oliver says that his current girlfriend plays along nicely with the idea. His problem is that it’s the same for him in his daily life: He has to ask permission from the other person in order to say what he wants, to find self-fulfillment, and to assert himself. For example, in his marketing job he has many interesting ideas about how to boost sales. He feels certain that his ideas would help but he won’t argue with his superior. He’ll barely ask permission to finish presenting his ideas. For the most part, he’ll wait to be invited to share his ideas, just as in his orgasm fantasy. The other people on the marketing team walk freely into the boss’s office, make suggestions and try to promote their ideas, while he “walks on eggshells” and waits for approval. Listening closely to Oliver’s orgasm fantasy, however,

reveals other elements. Not everyone needs approval from his girlfriend for his aggression, perhaps because not everyone is so filled with aggression. When talking with his friends, if they allow him, he dominates the conversation and goes on forever complaining about different people who have done him wrong and what a cruel and messed-up world we live in. He carries on at a furious pace and doesn't let anyone get a word in. Oliver needs others' approval and attention in order to express his pent-up anger. Whenever he feels that the other person isn't fully listening – which is what usually happens in life – he'll find it difficult to speak his mind and will keep his anger to himself.

Where does Oliver's tremendous anger come from? What took place between the infant Oliver and his mother who cared for him that made him so angry? And why will he only express this anger when she approves and not when he wants to? Let us imagine that Oliver wants to nurse. His mother might be busy at the time and unavailable for him. His anger starts to build up. If he gets too angry and begins screaming, she might get upset and frustrated. Or she may simply ignore him as happened before. Possibly she'll also get angry with him and purposely refuse to come to him. His mother may be a good woman but she needs her quiet and can't tolerate being forced to do something. Finally, she comes to nurse him at a time that suits her more than it suits him. She smiles, he's furious and crying and possibly hitting out. She smiles again, understanding him and allowing him to let his anger out. Little Oliver understands that he can vent his anger only when his mother is ready, when she is with him, calmer, and can handle it. An orgasm fantasy thus arises that contains tremendous anger that may only be released with the other person's approval.

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Oliver's girlfriend has no trouble telling him how much she wants him to "tear her apart." She loves him so much, she says, that she is glad to totally submit to his fantasy. And what is her orgasm fantasy? Oliver once asked her if she would be willing to sleep with someone in his department so that the guy would let Oliver have his excellent class notes to study from. She didn't rule it out. Oliver told her right away that he was just kidding. But the girlfriend kept on wondering about the notes for a long time. She seemed ready to do anything for Oliver. Moreover, it seemed that this was exactly her fantasy – i.e., she was ready to do this but for her own sake.

Oliver's girlfriend's orgasm fantasy might be that she climaxes when she feels she is helping someone else or possibly even sacrificing herself for someone else. There are apparently many people like this. Oliver, meanwhile, liked to give her little tests now and again: Once when they were driving, a cop pulled them over and gave them a ticket for a traffic violation. When they drove off, Oliver asked her if she would be willing to sleep with the cop in order to get the ticket canceled. She thought about it, smiled and said – Why not? Oliver didn't stop there. During sex with the cop would she be willing to do whatever pleased the cop most, to ask him what his orgasm fantasy is and to fulfill it. This time Oliver's girlfriend smiled even more. She doesn't know what the cop's orgasm fantasy would be, but if they're already having sex, she says, then why shouldn't he enjoy it? Oliver knows he has found a goodhearted woman and he loves her for this. And she loves him because he lets her be a part of him and fulfill his fantasies. Some would say that his girlfriend has no personality of her own. But she would reply

that it is precisely this personality of hers that makes her, and others, happy.

Some time later, enjoying a good meal in a restaurant with a glass of red wine and talking about their fantasies, Oliver's girlfriend admits that her orgasm fantasy, like every orgasm fantasy, has certain disadvantages. Oliver nods in agreement; he knows what she is talking about.

7. Only I'm Allowed to Come

Charlotte has an orgasm fantasy in which she is lying on a table surrounded by serious businessmen engaged in discussion. Every so often, someone comes to have sex with her and leaves a few bills by her side. This impulsive girl obtained great pleasure from sex. She does not seem to feel exploited; on the contrary, in her sexual fantasies she feels flattered by being narcissistically in the center. She asked her boyfriend to tie her up and do whatever he wants with her. This request did not come from a masochistic stance but rather from the pleasure of knowing that she is important, central and vital. Again, we see that the overt story doesn't always depict the hidden emotion that needs to be explored, and that the same story can have different emotional meaning for different people. Once, during sex, she surprised her boyfriend by suggesting that he invite his friend in the next room to join the party. Here too, she would be at the center. Another time, she excitedly related how she saw a weary soldier at a hitchhiking station, called out to him and then invited him to sleep with her, "just like that, so he would feel good." For her, this was a gesture of strength. But her narcissism had other less positive aspects as well. She could sit in the classroom on the first day of university studies, look around, not recognize anyone and immediately say that everyone there was stupid and that she wouldn't carry on studying in that department. It was that difficult for her to give someone else room, to understand that not everyone is stupid, and that she might learn something from the professor.

In romantic relationships, she displayed hysterical tendencies. If the boyfriend expressed doubts about their relationship, her level of hysteria soared. When he wanted to end the relationship, she would chase after him, preventing him from leaving, and just couldn't tolerate rejection. At times she would act as if she was being unfaithful – suggestively embracing another guy while the boyfriend looked on in envy. Sometimes, she actually did cheat on him, claiming that she was not responsible for her actions, but rather had been led by her emotions: “What could I do?! It's what I felt.” Another time, during an argument she asked him to perform oral sex on her. She climaxed but then refused to let him have intercourse with her so that he too could obtain satisfaction.

Charlotte had a warm and admiring relationship with her father, as opposed to power struggles and mutual wariness with her mother. She would describe her mother's manipulations, how she always knew what her mother was aiming at, and that she, Charlotte, wouldn't fall into her trap. “Take a sweater, it's cold outside,” the mother would say. But Charlotte knew that her mother wasn't really worried about her, but rather about her self-image as a mother, and therefore wouldn't take the sweater. But the real “victory” over her mother probably began when she was just one or two years old and still in the playpen. What was the nature of the relationship between Charlotte and her mother that dictated the development of such an orgasm fantasy? Probably already then, the mother was looking at little Charlotte in expectation, awaiting whatever she might say. Not so different from those businessmen in her orgasm fantasy who are longing for her.

One can see Charlotte in the playpen, smiling. Her mother is busy and Charlotte is making noises, wanting attention. Her mother says, “I'm coming in a minute.” Charlotte isn't ready

to wait. Her mother apparently caused her to be unable to wait. She already gave in many times before. Now Charlotte is screaming. She knows that this will upset her mother and that she will capitulate. Precisely at this moment the baby feels as if her mother is sitting inside her head, ready to fulfill her wishes as if they were a single entity named Charlotte. In this way Charlotte develops a narcissistic mindset in which she is at the center and most important, is unable to see the other and to delay gratification. Later she will tend to look for such a relationship with her partner.

What about Charlotte's positive relationship with her father? This seems to have contributed to her conscious third level of thinking. Here Charlotte could be part of a saner and more moderate world and tell her boyfriend how much she appreciates his kindness and his honesty – directly after enacting dramatic scenes from her orgasm fantasy in which she drives her boyfriend mad with jealousy. Thus, through interaction with reality, each level of thinking can be independent and develop separately. Sometimes, however, an interesting connection takes place between the different levels. We don't know anything about Charlotte's dream world, but her appearance strongly projects a feeling of restlessness: protruding lips, eyes racing in their sockets, fluttery hands and a suspicious look in the corner of her eye. Her narcissistic orgasm fantasy seems to help her compensate for the powerful feelings of rejection from her inner world.

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Charlotte and her boyfriend broke up. Charlotte's responsibility for the breakup is clear, namely her narcissism and inability to see the other. She also failed to make a connection between her

orgasm fantasy and her day-to-day behavior. Her boyfriend, however, also contributed to the failure of the relationship. In his orgasm fantasy he watched a strong, handsome man sleeping with his girlfriend. At his girlfriend's moment of climax, as her arms and legs are flailing with tremendous excitement with the man leaning over her, he experiences a powerful orgasm. A closer examination of the boyfriend's orgasm fantasy does not reveal homosexual tendencies or a wish to be entertained. Rather, he wanted a strange man to sleep with his girlfriend in his presence because in his mind he felt he was too small and too weak for such actions – like the little boy who imagines his parents having sex that he is not a part of, or a boy who leaves the stage to his big father. At his girlfriend's moment of climax, therefore, the boyfriend, in addition to a powerful orgasm, also feels deep humiliation. It pains him that he is not the one who is satisfying her. When Charlotte cheated on him, he was deeply hurt but, strangely, also wanted her to tell him every little detail about the sexual experience. Charlotte felt that this clearly aroused him sexually while at the same time being emotionally painful for him.

With an orgasm fantasy such as this – and especially with him being unaware of its significance in terms of his relationship with Charlotte – he was unable to provide Charlotte the security that could have reassured her. Being constantly hurt naturally reinforces vulnerability. Later, Charlotte will marry another man who will provide her with stability. When a couple is not getting along, it is recommended to examine their different levels of thinking, which might deepen their understanding as well as provide a solution. In this case, the conscious third level of thinking does not seem to have been the problem for either of them (she could compliment him for being a good guy and apparently, he really was a good guy). But an examination

of their orgasm fantasies could at least have helped them to understand the dynamics of the situation and why they were both so unhappy in the relationship.

8. Can Trust Be Sexually Arousing?

James, a kind young man who likes to help others, tells his therapist that he has unpleasant dreams in which he tries to do various things but for some reason they never work out. Others, however, are more successful than him. James does not project confidence, and comes across as introverted and hesitant. He is rather scrawny, breathes haltingly and often seems to be shivering. In his orgasm fantasy he is undressing a woman. “What do you mean exactly?” the therapist asks, knowing that the details of every orgasm fantasy should be carefully examined as they often reveal hidden truths about the patient’s experience. “What’s the mood like and what is happening between the two of you?” he continues. James says that in his imagination, the girl trusts him fully and this is what arouses him. He envisions himself slowly undoing the buttons of her dress. She is standing there, he says, very still, with a little smile on her lips. She is relaxed and accepting. She knows that she can trust him and so waits quietly and patiently. And then... in the middle of observing this patience or maybe the middle of undoing a button or seeing her smile, he suddenly comes. No, he doesn’t need to undo many buttons; he just has to do it very slowly and when he recognizes the trusting look, she gives him, he celebrates his triumph.

James also built relationships of trust with other people based on a similar type of experience to that he envisioned undressing his girlfriend. He is a very honest and

non-manipulative person who expects the same treatment from others. However, if someone lies to him or betrays his trust, he cannot get angry with or confront that person. Rather, he tends to say to himself, “He’s not worth my anger. There’s no point revealing to him how I feel,” and he then breaks off contact. James also describes how hard it is for him to negotiate his pay at work. He always tends to say what he really thinks and won’t try to negotiate based on what he believes he could obtain from the other side. His friends tell him that he’s being a sucker.

One girl who happened to hear about James’ orgasm fantasy, said, “What a sweetie!” How then does such an orgasm fantasy about trust develop? James’ mother apparently instilled in him the feeling that she trusts and believes in him. This is accomplished by listening to him, to his crying, to his complaints, and believing that he must want something genuine, that he’s not simply crying for no reason. But many mothers act in this way, enabling their babies to internalize the kind look from their mothers who respect their wishes as if they were adults. He sees that she believes in him, and that she is there for him. How can one describe from the outside the internal experience of trust that develops in a baby? In this case, James was the first of his classmates whose mother explained the mechanics of sex to him. This was in an era when sex education was only whispered about and not taught as part of the school curriculum. James once told his religious parents that he didn’t believe in God. This time, it was he who felt safe enough to put his trust in them. On another occasion, young James was given a chocolate bar by his mother. She suggested that he share it with his friend standing next to him. Little James refused. His mother did not scold him or snatch away the chocolate. She respected her son’s wish even though it was rather egocentric and certainly not socially acceptable. All she did was to let her

disappointment show on her face. She gave the friend a piece of chocolate from somewhere else. To return, we can imagine little James in the playpen gazing at his kind mother and seeing something in her eyes that will be etched in his mind forever in the form of an orgasm fantasy that is all about trust.

On the conscious third level of thinking, James has a recurring daydream in which he is saving people and being showered with admiration. In one version, a plane makes an emergency landing and James directs the passengers to a safe escape. The reader might not find this to be particularly moving, but James has tears in his eyes whenever he envisions this scene. Does James run this film through his mind whenever he unconsciously – i.e., from the first level of thinking – feels guilty? Possibly. As we have said, the three levels are interconnected and trigger each other. Like many people, James tends to actualize his daydream in his daily life. He is known for his kindness and for being helpful to others. He can go overboard with this as well, as in his tendency to go on and on explaining something he is knowledgeable about to the point where the person who asked the question is sorry they ever brought it up.

What type of dynamic develops between the different layers of James's thinking? As we have seen, James has a tendency toward anxiety in the unconscious first level of thinking. He builds trust relationships in the second level of thinking, in his orgasm fantasy. And in the conscious third level of thinking, he rescues people in his daydreams. But where is the anger? Where is the assertiveness or aggression that we don't find in any level of thinking in James's emotional world? When people don't express their anger, it is repressed and, as we know, is transformed into depression and anxiety, which is what characterizes James's inner world. His orgasm fantasy – building a trust relationship – which is his developmental

solution to the depression and anxiety, doesn't always work. In life, one sometimes has to know how to be aggressive as well. Becoming familiar with his orgasm fantasy will help James to sketch the differences between himself and others and to gain deeper insight through his recurring fantasy that while giving trust is his "default" behavior, other possibilities exist, such as being assertive. This is James's "absent fantasy" that he will have to work on developing either on his own or in therapy.

We will often speak in this book about "the absent fantasy". As the name implies, this is a fantasy that is not present, or only very weakly present in any of the individual's three levels of thinking. As a result, this fantasy is less familiar to the person and it is harder for him to make use of it. For James, the absent fantasy is assertiveness. In other cases, we will meet people who have difficulty feeling guilt, others who are unable to admire anyone – including themselves, of course – and so on.

It appears to be easier to direct a person to act from a different level of thinking in which the necessary attitude exists, rather than to invent this from scratch when the tendency is absent. For example, we can help a person not to act from the automatic default response of his violent orgasm fantasy, but rather to respond in a way that is more thoughtful and forgiving if that is present in his conscious third level of thinking. Sometimes the opposite is true, and we would like him to act from his orgasm fantasy in order to encourage him to be more spontaneous and authentic. When a certain type of attitude barely exists in the person's emotional world, we try to teach the person how to engage this "absent fantasy", the assumption being that all types of feeling are accessible for everyone.

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James wants to look his girlfriend in the eye and see the trust she feels as he enters her. He doesn't imagine penetration at all, but rather how he slowly undresses her as she smiles tenderly at him. Meanwhile, she fantasizes that the apartment is spic and span, with everything in its proper place, just where she wants it: the papers are neatly stacked, the clothes are folded, the cushions are nicely arranged on the couch. This is the moment when she comes. He wants tenderness and she wants control. We see here that the orgasm fantasy doesn't necessarily have to be about sex, but can be simply a certain kind of emotional expression. Usually when James and his girlfriend have sex, they are absorbed in their own fantasy world, but sometimes one of them will come out of their shell and tell the other the fantasy that he or she would like to hear. So, James will tell his girlfriend how clean and neat their apartment is, just the way she likes it. Then she'll ask him, "And what about the floor?" And he'll say that he vacuumed and mopped it, and it's really shiny, and then she just needs to add a little more from her own imagination about how the house is completely in her control and ... then it happens. Or she will smile at him, thrust out her chest and ask him to undress her. Inside, she's laughing, but this body language and these words have their effect on James and it doesn't take him much more to reach orgasm.

In everyday life, however, things are more difficult. James's girlfriend is in a quandary: How can she help him become more assertive? Should she really tell him not to give in to her, which is what he usually does? She tries but it's not easy for her. Then she sometimes lets out her mean side, as she says, and intentionally tries to get him mad. She wants to see him angry, which happens only very rarely. James, meanwhile, recognizes

her need for control. The orgasm fantasy is not only about house cleaning; James's girlfriend tries to control him as well as her colleagues at work. So, in those moments when she is telling James what to wear and how to eat, he looks at her lovingly and quietly tells her that she is now speaking to him out of her orgasm fantasy.

James thinks that he and his girlfriend, despite awareness of their fantasies, have not changed very much. Mostly, they have learned to accept themselves and each other. This is the big change they have made, which would not have happened without them being conscious of their orgasm fantasies.

9. Do It Just the Way I Like It

Sophia is a forty-year-old attractive woman with charming dark curls and big blue eyes. For years she has been chasing a married man who has yet to keep his promise to leave his wife. In her daydreams, they live together and have a wonderful family of their own. She knows exactly what their house will look like and pictures how they will each leave for work in the morning, and return in the evening. Other men who want her she rejects with contempt. “I’m a bitch,” she says. “I’ll go out with a guy without taking my wallet, let him lick me but stop him as soon as I’m satisfied, not respond to his texts and then post something on Facebook just to make him jealous.”

In the conscious third level of thinking, we can say that Sophia has a pleasant daydream about her warm relationship with her married man. This pleasant daydream probably kicks in at moments of disappointment and despair that Sophia’s mind is trying to fix for her. Again, he hasn’t replied to her message, again he doesn’t have time for her, and then suddenly in her daydream they’re living together happily ever after. In moments like these, the disappointment is repressed into the unconscious, into the first level of thinking – dreams. But why is Sophia so disdainful of other men who want her?

It seems that Sophia is responding to them from deep within her orgasm fantasy. “My last boyfriend would lick me in the most amazing way, with love, and really listen to me, just how I like it. But it basically doesn’t matter to me who it is.” Indeed, in Sophia’s orgasm fantasy, she is in the center, the most

important person in the world, receiving all the attention, and no one else exists. With such a fantasy it's not surprising that she responds in this way when she is not interested in someone. Did Sophia's mother behave this way with her during a critical period in early childhood? Most probably.

"According to the family stories, my mother was a good mother, very warm and nurturing until I was about three. I'm told that I was her whole world and that she hovered around me constantly - running to me for every little thing. Then my younger brother was born and I lost my special status as an only child. In those years, my mother also started working and was much less available for me. I remember being a whiny and restless girl. To this day my mother doesn't understand me. When I want to tell her something, she immediately switches to talking about herself and about how she raised me and my two little brothers amid many hardships. She never even calls me these days. My father, on the other hand, was more affectionate but he was hardly ever home." Sophia's female therapist wonders if Sophia's mother was once warm and involved, or possibly submissive to little Sophia's desires, which could explain Sophia's tendency to erase others.

Sophia indeed seems to be reenacting with this married man her ceaseless running after her mother when she was a child, trying to regain the lost paradise in which her mother belonged solely to her, really saw her and was invested in her as if no one else existed. This scenario can be seen as an outgrowth of the conscious third level of thinking. However, when someone does not conform with this desirable scenario, she relates to them from a regressive and more automatic position of the second level of thinking - from her egocentric orgasm fantasy in which she is the center of the world and others serve her in the way she experienced her mother's relationship to

her in her earliest years. The contrast in Sophia's personality is intriguing: in her orgasm fantasy she seeks only to receive, while in her daydreams she is prepared to give everything to her married man. It is not unusual for the connections between the second and third levels of thinking, which here are simply an age-old reenactment of Sophia's development, to appear this way.

Sophia has two main dream themes, the first a painful insight that reveals her failure, and the second a pleasant experience of wish fulfillment. In the first she is singing in a choral ensemble but can't keep the right pitch and keeps going off-key. The other members of the choir turn around uneasily. Her associations with the dream quickly led her to say that her married man likes to sing and sings well: "So maybe we're not good together." Thanks to the dream, she is able to say something she was unable to say in the many hours she spent daydreaming about their home together. In another dream she wanders the streets of an unknown city at night, trying to find her way but not succeeding. Here too, the dream helped her admit to herself that she was in a trap with her married man that she can't get out of.

In the pleasant dream theme, church bells are ringing and she, a young girl with braids, is still sleeping. A man comes up to her, kisses her and whispers in her ear that they need to hurry to a wedding. This is how I experience myself, she tells her therapist – as a little girl. In another dream she and another man are in the kitchen preparing a meal together, a wonderful experience, she says.

It seems to Sophia that in those moments during the day when she has clear insight and realizes that nothing will come of the relationship with her married man, suddenly at night they are together on the couch. And just when she is having

pleasant fantasies about their life together, the dreams come and upend the entire situation. Such is the world of dreams, certainly not prophetic, but simply the missing pieces of the emotional puzzle that have been repressed.

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Sophia doesn't need to improve her sex life. She can easily reach orgasm by fantasizing that a man is performing cunnilingus on her. She is also very open to her married man's sexual desires and their sex life is flourishing. But Sophia needs to learn not to be so egocentric with men as in her orgasm fantasy, and also not to negate herself and only serve the other person as she tends to do in her conscious third level of thinking with her married man. Sophia fluctuates between the two thinking levels that represent contrasting fantasies, and has not been able to find the balance between them.

Recently Sophia managed to break up with her married man. She subsequently met this "nerdy" guy, as she describes him, and says "he's not a man and doesn't know how to really have sex." He is one of those men she was bitchy to in the past and couldn't even think of bringing into her bed. She tells her therapist she knows that if they sleep together, she'll stop being bitchy with him, lose her power over him and start running after him. "Maybe that's why you demean him," the therapist suggested, "so that he won't demean you." This makes sense to Sophia. Sophia then slept with her nerd and said it was the best sex she'd ever had, which she attributes to the fact that he was open, wanted to hear her orgasm fantasy and put it into practice. This so-called nerd loves Sophia's sexual openness, and with him she feels that she can also realize her daydream of a home and family. The deep conversations they have are helping

Sophia to gradually understand that neither one of them has to be demeaned.

What is interesting here is that sexual relations changed Sophia's response to her boyfriend from the second level of her bitchy orgasm fantasy to the conscious third level of her daydream about closeness. In case study No. 3, Tough at first, then "giving", we saw how Emma followed the same path but in the opposite direction. She would be tough on guys she met from the third conscious level of thinking and after they slept together, she submitted to them through the second level of her orgasm fantasy. In this way sex can reduce conflicts and promote closeness. Sex seems to facilitate a transition between different levels of thinking, or, within the same conscious third level of thinking, a transition to a gentler and closer relationship.

The boyfriend told Sophia that in his orgasm fantasy he is going down on himself, sucking himself. "Yes, in the fantasy I can reach there," he responds to her astonishment with a smile. But Sophia is a sensitive woman. In bed she can tell him how he is sucking himself, or she can suck him while telling him to imagine he is doing it to himself, while at the same time she understands how much loneliness there is in this fantasy. Sophia's boyfriend often acts as if he doesn't need anyone. He is more than willing to assist other people but finds it hard to ask for help. It's as if he can't believe it could happen. Sophia says that when she looks at his cold and aloof parents, she is not surprised. Now in bed when she holds him in a maternal embrace, he tells her that his mother never hugged him that way and only with her he doesn't feel alone.

10. Funny Sex

Even though it took her a while in therapy to be able to say this, Elizabeth says that she doesn't know who she is. She has this image in her mind of a hollow head that can be filled with anything, and imagines different people she meets tossing all sorts of stuff in there. Elizabeth switched boyfriends frequently. She fell in love with all of them and thought she would marry them because they were just right for her – until the moment that everything blew up. But when she is helping others, everything feels different. She remembers herself in kindergarten as the good girl who always helped everyone: soothing a child who was crying, giving another child crayons to calm him down, and taking all the struggling kids under her wing. She still remembers how her kindergarten teacher would send her to calm all the kids who were crying because their parents had “abandoned” them at school. Now when she tells her female therapist this story, just the memory of it makes her emotional and she feels the “high” of someone who finally knows who she is. “I’m like a primitive woman who lives for others,” she adds in a moment of insight, even though Elizabeth is a university lecturer.

Indeed, in the conscious third level of thinking, Elizabeth adapts herself to others. She behaved in this self-negating way with the men she fell in love with until, inevitably, things fell apart.

What does the dream world look like of someone who doesn't know who she is? Elizabeth had many dreams in which

she was not herself. Once she was a little Gypsy girl with braids who was playing in the neighborhood. Another time she was a black cat that belonged to a very nasty family of cats with sharp claws. At other times she is part of a bunch of hippies and has five children. Her dreams, with their changing roles that she assumes and discards, depict far better the feeling of not knowing herself than any verbal description. While we may all appear in different guises in our dream world, if someone only rarely appears in his real identity, this is indicative of the distance he feels from his true self. We may therefore presume that there are more “costumes” in children’s dreams because their separation process has yet to be completed and their self has not yet crystallized, while adults will tend to see their own selves in their dreams.

A child knows who he is when he can see himself reflected in his parents’ eyes. But if there is no parent who will tell him in a thousand ways and reflections who he is, how will he know? Think of a person growing up without a mirror – how will he know what he looks like? Elizabeth’s mother and father were her friends from when she was very young but weren’t her parents. The baby Elizabeth thus failed to derive the benefits of the first unconscious level of thinking, the dream level, but was able to gain more as she got a little older and the second level of thinking – her orgasm fantasy – began to take shape. In her first year of life when Elizabeth needed physical contact and a warm and close connection with her parents, they weren’t there for her. They were the sort of parents who feel helpless with a baby who needs acceptance and closeness and doesn’t understand what is being said. Later, in her second year of life when she began to speak, the house was filled with humor and laughter.

The therapist observes how charming and playful Elizabeth is, quick to laugh and always with a twinkle in her

eye, and how enjoyable she is to be with. She knows, however, that Elizabeth's orgasm fantasy is "working overtime" with her as well. What most arouses her, Elizabeth tells her therapist, is joking and kidding around with her partner and laughing during sex. It's no wonder that so many people love her even though she doesn't love herself that much.

Did this laughter that was imprinted in Elizabeth's orgasm fantasy compensate for the inner feeling of emptiness in her unconscious first level of thinking? It probably did. In the conscious third level of thinking, however, Elizabeth feels sorry for her parents and has been concerned about them from the time she was young. After all, as we saw in her behavior at the kindergarten, this is how she finds meaning. Later we learn that Elizabeth sought therapy because she was constantly angry, which was causing her problems with her colleagues and students. When Elizabeth negates herself in the unconscious first level of thinking and doesn't know who she is, it's inevitable that anger should arise in her conscious third level of thinking. Her friends disagree about her "problem". Some say it's her insecurity while others say she's too aggressive sometimes. Who is correct? All of them it seems. On the unconscious first level of thinking she is insecure, doesn't know who she is, and frequently changes costumes, while on the conscious third level of thinking she can be aggressive and angry, or as we have seen, helpful and compassionate. But "in the middle," in her orgasm fantasy with the automatic behavior that derives from it, everyone loves her and her laughter.

The therapist observes Elizabeth and points out that Elizabeth has never been angry with her. People often connect with others at one level of thinking and not another. Elizabeth doesn't want to be angry with her therapist; she wants to laugh with her and be loved by her. Sometimes the therapist feels

very confused about her, a common situation with people who don't know who they are. When Elizabeth leaves the room, the therapist asks herself what exactly they talked about and finds it hard to pinpoint.

Recently Elizabeth began appearing more often as herself in her dreams. For her son's birthday, this was the first time she didn't stay up all night working on a beautifully decorated poster, and the first time she didn't spend hours running between shops to find him the Superman shirt he most loves. She had a much more modest birthday celebration with him and felt much less angry at him. Her laughter-filled orgasm fantasy was the only thing that didn't change...

Improving sex and relationships

Elizabeth's husband finds things difficult with her. He also doesn't know who she is. Sometimes she feels sorry for him, at other times she's angry and often – spontaneously – she's laughing and full of fun. In truth, he is unaware that he doesn't know who she is. He simply feels that she is unpredictable. This is what happens when you live with someone who doesn't know who she is. He prefers her to be angry with him rather than feeling sorry for him. That way he knows that she is expressing on her conscious third level of thinking something that is missing in her, and not some fake identity.

Familiarity with each other's orgasm fantasy is very important for a couple, but often it is just as important to get to know the main tendencies of each other's other two levels of thinking. All these together comprise the personality and make sense of things. In Elizabeth's case the problem lies in her conscious third level of thinking, her anger, not on the second

level of her orgasm fantasy. When this is in operation, everyone loves her.

Elizabeth is not looking for love and romance during sex. She wants the kind of laughter one has among friends. Her husband, however, does want romance and love, and doesn't want to turn sex into one big joke. In his orgasm fantasy, they are a pair of lovers at sunset. He pictures the two of them watching the sun go down... gradually sinking closer to the water... any moment now it will touch it... Exactly that moment of contact is when he comes. Elizabeth's husband has trouble believing that other people have different fantasies. All the beautiful travel posters show couples at sunset. Elizabeth still finds it funny how gently he treats his colleagues at work on the basis of his sunset model, while he finds it silly the way she makes a joke out of everything.

What's funny about sex? Once when he was having difficulty penetrating, he said to her: "What don't you understand?" She replied in astonishment: "Don't you think it's funny how you're trying so hard to put it in and then once you've succeeded you'll have to take it out, and then the whole thing just keeps repeating itself. But it's more than that. I enjoy laughing with you, when we're laughing together it really turns me on." He then told her he had a fantasy in which she was lying in bed and he showed up at the door naked, wearing just a tie, with a nice black hat atop his erect organ. Astounded, Elizabeth asks him why he never told her about this wonderful fantasy and that she wants him to do it for her right now. He immediately leaped out of bed and a minute later came back to the room just like that, with the tie and hat. Elizabeth started laughing hysterically. The husband penetrated her easily with Elizabeth still laughing and suddenly climaxing.

They lie side by side, exhausted, and she asks him, "What

kind of man acts like such a romantic?” “And what kind of woman makes a joke out of sex? It’s usually men who do that,” he retorts. Now that they both understand that it’s okay sometimes to switch roles and enjoy it, they feel that they love each other even more. He asks, “Why do you get so angry with me sometimes?” She replies that it happens at moments when she doesn’t know who she is or what she wants. He asks how he can help. She says she has to think about it but that he’s already helping her just by having this conversation.

The Orgasm Fantasy is the most stimulating part of our sexual imagination.

The book postulates two new natural laws of human behavior that arise from the "imprinting" of the orgasm fantasy:

1. The content of the **orgasm fantasy** may change but not the nature of the relationship between the characters, one that is imprinted in us at a critical time in our childhood through interaction with our parents.
2. The relationship between the characters revealed in the personal **orgasm fantasy** shapes an important part of our emotional relations with those around us throughout our lives – our soul imprint on the other person.

Overcoming the shame barrier associated with our orgasm fantasy, and our ability to play with it freely in the bedroom can considerably improve our sex lives. The importance of this fantasy, however, far exceeds the sexual context. It is actually a fantasy of love – as we will see throughout the book – that promotes awareness and self-acceptance as well as a deeper understanding and acceptance of the other.

Orgasm Fantasy Theory is an applied theory of personality which claims that personality comprises three levels of thinking: dreams, the orgasm fantasy and conscious thought. These different levels and the interplay between them are presented here through case studies of patients that illustrate their personalities and behavior patterns and that give the reader powerful tools for improving his or her sex life and relationships with others.

Dr. Ofer Grosbard is a clinical psychologist. His novels and non-fiction books have been translated into several languages and have been awarded prizes.

His works include:

The Arab Within – Tammuz Press. Hebrew Writers' Association in Israel Book of the Year – 2000.

Menachem Begin – The Absent Leader. Biography. Strategic Research and Policy Center, National Defense College, IDF, 2007. Winner of the Menachem Begin Heritage Center Research Prize.

The Holy Quran for Educating the Child. Ben-Gurion University, 2008. Represented Israel at the Israel President's Conference, 2008.

Online counseling: orgasmfantasy.com

