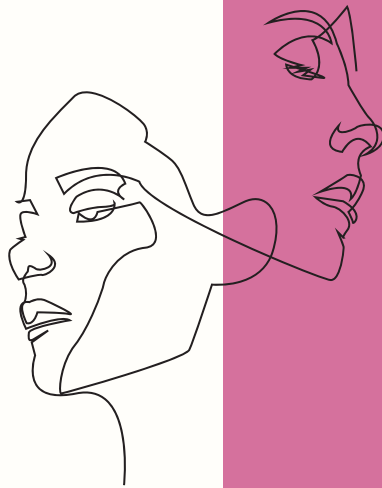


DR. OFER GROSBARD

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)

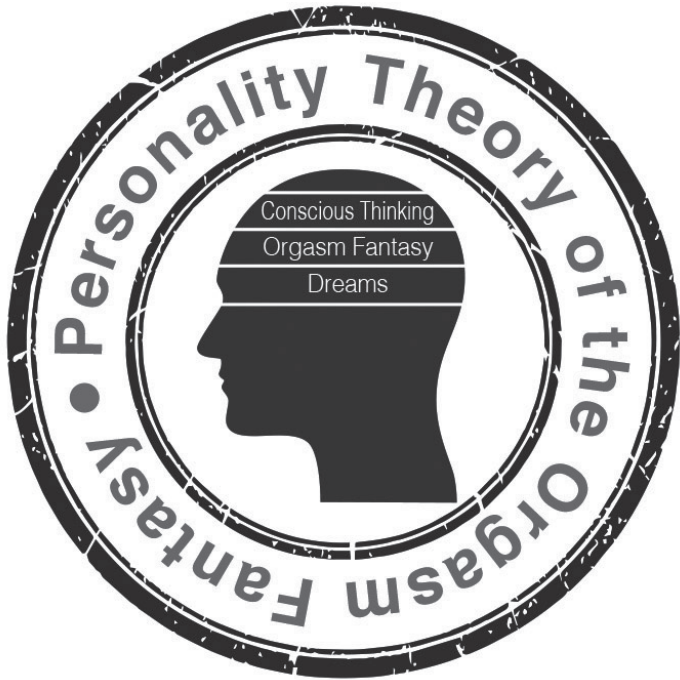


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Preface

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.

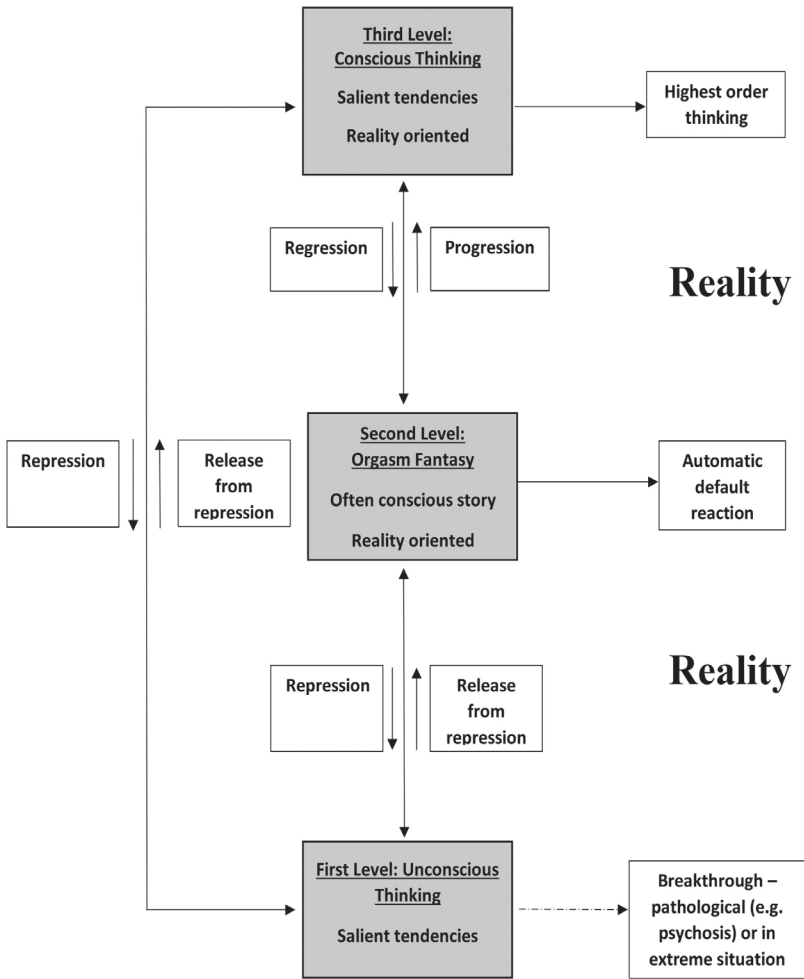
The two higher levels of thinking, the orgasm fantasy and conscious thought, shape our encounter with reality, which is not the case with the unconscious first level of thinking. The orgasm fantasy, however, will always be personal, while the conscious level of thinking will also include other elements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

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

