Show and Tell

November 1, 1998

FROM THE HEART

Compiled by Belinda Filipelli

Serodiscordant relationship sounds more like Cold War tensions than hot nookie between people with and without HIV. So in honor of detente, POZ called some of our favorite positive folks and asked, “What’s your advice for those shooting for serodiverse love this fall?”

Greg Louganis, Olympian, author, actor:
“My advice is this: Love yourself enough to always protect yourself and those whom you are with, and conduct yourself in a responsible way.”

Jennifer Jako, artist, filmmaker:
“My current significant one is great, but most guys I’ve dated have been like, ‘Um, it’s OK if I lick you there, right?’ I recommend talking about intimacy and protection outside the bedroom. Do it over a candlelit dinner while sipping wine. Trust me, it will be sexy.”

Barton Benes, artist:
“My lover died of AIDS, so that was never an issue. Now I’m waiting for it to be an issue.”

Jason Farrell, director of NY’s Positive Health Project:
When you’re dating, don’t get wrapped up in the worst-case scenario. And be aware that the person who is not infected tends to bail when things get bad. I tell women I’m with that they’re safer with me than with someone who doesn’t know his status.”

Edmund White, author:
“I’m in one right now. My advice is to just forget fucking.”

River Huston, columnist, poet:
“Invest in firearms, or just get a dog.”

Spencer Cox, TAG:
“I’ve been in one for seven years. Keep using those rubbers!”

Monica Johnson, activist, mom:

“My ex-husband was HIV negative, and my advice is to make sure that everybody knows exactly what they are getting into upfront. But don’t base your relationship on your status—everybody just wants to be with somebody, regardless of HIV.”

Rodger McFarlane, writer, advocate:
“For nearly twenty years, I’ve made a point to have several serodiscordant relationships a week.”

John Dugdale, photographer:
“Not a good idea. It’s hard enough to be in a relationship. The possible guilt of making your partner sick is more stress than anyone can bear.”

John Kelly, performance artist:
“If I had my choice, I’d choose a positive lover because it would be less scary. But love is love, and I’ll go wherever it takes me.”

Tony Valenzuela, columnist, porn star:
“I’ve only had them for brief periods of time, like an hour or four days. Actually, I could use some advice myself.”

Louise Binder, Voices of Positive Women:
“Sometimes the seronegative person has a lot of fears that they’re not ready to talk about. The positive person has to bring information in without waiting to be asked. Recognize also that you have to give the seronegative time to reach a comfort level. And then decide if you can live with that comfort level.”

REAL (POSITIVE) WORLD

The music vidiots at MTV are now casting the next season of their documentary soap The Real World and POZ wants a place for Shawn Decker, 23. Stop everything and tell them you want your posi-TV.

Real World Casting
Bunim/Murray Productions
6007 Sepulveda Blvd.
Van Nuys, CA 91411
Or call: 818.754.5790

ILLNESS AS BESTSELLER

We get so many PWA memoirs in the mail. Here, Edmund White, author of The Farewell Symphony*, and Michael Denneny, the editor of* KoolAIDS*, offer their views on the state of AIDS in publishing:*

“There are stacks of remaindered books about AIDS everywhere. As a writer, you have to create interest in the reader. You can do that through humor and mixing AIDS into material about quite different things—family relationships, say, or a trip to Egypt. AIDS is a subject that has to surprise. As soon as readers hear the word AIDS, a little curtain goes down. You have to anticipate that and fight it. I don’t think people with AIDS should have to be interesting about it, but if you want to sell books, you must take the reader unawares.” —Edmund White

“Writing about living with AIDS is much like writing about surviving the Holocaust—it comes out of a need to make sense of what has happened or to keep the memory of those we hold precious from disappearing. Like those memoirs, much more AIDS writing will be produced than can be published, which is why I think the impulse to write such narratives should not be connected with the idea of publishing them commercially. What we need is to invent new repositories or archives for the narratives that bear witness to this great disaster.” —Michael Denneny

WISH LIST

We asked some prison advocacy groups (see “Helper Cells”) what they’d be thankful for this year. Go ahead and fix your karma.

1. Money (duh)
2. Office supplies, stationery
3. Stamps
4. Clothing for future job interviews
5. Ready-to-eat meals
6. Computers/typewriters
7. Books
8. How-to guides (trades, web design, etc.)
9. Your time, dammit!

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Show-and-Tell-7590-6018