Looking for Dick

How a search for sexual meaning helped me find my true self.

July 10, 2018 By Aundaray Guess

From as long as I can remember I was a young man looking for dick. Even during my curiosity phase when I had yet to come out, the mystery of what someone else's dick looked like was something I needed to solve. You can say my journey began when I discovered the power of my own penis. As a child, alone in the bathroom, accidentally brushing the head with my hand. At that moment, shocked at the feeling it provided. A feeling that curled my toes and raced my heart. A repeated movement with my hand and soon rewarded with a feeling I later learned called an orgasm.

I had to know more about this member between my leg. What was the power it held? And why did it tingle when I thought of a male's body and not a woman's. I was witnessing an invitation to my own sexuality. A dance that would move me around this thing we call life. A ballet taking me to the edge of my sexuality, scared of entering this new part of me.

"He's funny"

"I think he's one of them"

"He's a homo"

"A freak."

Words I would hear my family members direct to others. A warning sign to stay away as if we shared the same air, we too would be gay. A warning too late for me as I felt the difference inside of me. A feeling defined as boys my age running one way and myself running the other way. Scared as the only thing I knew about being gay was the sexual piece of it.

In my limited exposure to gayness, it was about men posing in X-rated magazines. Similar to the ones which sat next to the comic books. Pretending to look at the newest issue of Superman, when in actuality I was eyeing the cover of Playgirl. Seeing the bare chest of a male stranger looking back at me. Finally getting the nerve to stick a magazine under my shirt, hoping I wasn't seen.

In the darkness of my basement, the Playgirl was my bible. My guide into this new world where images of nude men and elongated penises greeted me. Wondering did I have the same physical attributes to join this club. I memorized each image, carefully hiding the book away within a well-

hidden hole in the basement wall. When I needed a lesson or wanted to see if I could replicate an orgasm, I'd venture back to my hiding spot. The Playgirl replaced with my new stolen treasure, a Honcho magazine. A more rugged and graphic display of men in various forms of undress. Instead of men sprawled solo they now participate in men on men action. Something which was new for me to see. Another chapter on my forthcoming gay life.

To be clear learning of your gayness and sexuality is not all about the sexual act. In fact, it was never about the sex but the person who wielded it. The glossed up, muscular man whose eyes seemed to be looking at you. The math teacher who showed you kindness. The swim coach who made you question if he was gay as well as you let your fantasies run free. They were all nice to look but even in my young mind, I knew there was more. I knew, but couldn't yet prove that it wasn't all about looks. It was about looking to find meaning. It was about clearing up the confusion of my identity.

In my search for self, I started finding someone who promised me they would make me feel better. Seeing a dim light shine over me they saw a glow of confusion and opportunity. He must have been in his mid-twenties as I was in my rebelling teenage years. Promises were thrown my way. Choice words and phrases with only one intention. His tool of choice, no pun intended, was the usage of his penis. He would be the first as I was promised to experience one without the struggles of worn paper or staples in the way. My interest got the better of me. It seemed like my search for dick and what it represented would be over. Little did I know it was the beginning? Little did I know the first dick I encountered had a substance that would lie in my body for the next 40 years. A new disease altering the course of the life of many.

When I learned I had HIV, you'd think my search for dick would end. Actually, it was when my search began. As a young man, I now had more freedoms in my search. I was no longer hiding magazines in basement walls. Magazines replaced by adult movies which I could watch in secret. I was bolder in my observation of men, as I gazed at their groins. I didn't want love or romance or anyone to share my feelings with. It was all about looking for dick as I didn't have to display emotions or feelings when I found one. You'd think learning of my status would make me run away from physical contact with others but in a way it makes me go forward. I wanted to punish myself. I wanted to scream and yell and ask myself how I let myself be a statistic. I wanted to get lost. Lost in my twisted reality.

My search for dick became obsessive as I saw it morph from sending out written personal ads, to sitting in front of an old computer at 3 am, trying to hide evidence of my search as the screeching modem gave me away. Elated when I hear, "You got mail." Knowing someone took my bait.

My hunt took me into places like the bookstores and the gay porno section of the video store. Searching, trying to feed a hunger that seemed to never be satisfied. Each time I found someone, I was losing small aspects of myself. Yet I found I couldn't stop.

Several times some of my quarries expressed feelings. Sharing they wanted to know me beyond the bedroom. Wanting to know me as a person. It was those moments the man in me reverted

back to the young boy who wanted to run. It was those moments I realized I was still punishing myself for providing a host to this disease. I was becoming a master at sabotaging relationships. I was intent on not letting my walls down again. It would keep out anyone looking to hurt me. Yet I was not alone. I discovered there were others like me who used sex as a drug. As a way to forget, to move through their fog. Wondering how could someone love us, when we didn't extend that love to ourselves?

Looking for dick

The rules started to change.

Swipe right if you're interested, swipe left if not.

"Turn your location on?"

A reminder that you couldn't upload nude or objective pictures. It was learning that dick was only 0.1 miles away from you. Literally your next door neighbor. Although it was now easy to find dick, if you were HIV positive you now saw reminders of your status. Profiles that asked if you were clean. Or stating boldly in their profiles, "No fems, no fats, negative only."

Attachments become more difficult as now it was easier to objectify. It seemed you had unlimited choices and why settle for one when you can try to have them all. Faces start to blur as you no longer care what they look like but what can they do or how many inches. They soon stopped becoming a person and became disposable. On to the next.

For a while it was great as the handheld app allowed me to not be HIV positive. Within my profile, I had lines to create my story. A fiction I craft to connect. Somedays, I'm this. On other days I'm that. And I surmise others are doing the same so there's no harm/no foul. Adam4AdamGrinderScruffJack'dTinderCraigslist all becomes a means to the end. Yet was this the way my life would end? Always looking? For what?

My search for dick placed my own happiness secondary. I never thought about the future. Until I got older.

Entering my thirties, although I didn't know what I wanted, I knew what I didn't want. It was a point that I looked back and realized I spent a large chunk of it looking for dick. That since my curious phase to my now adult self, it was all about empty sex. And as judgmental as this may sound, I was now the older men I use to crave. But there was now a different perspective. Would I be that man in his fifties, displaying his penis in the hopes of having sex with a stranger? Or in my sixties, realizing that the only way to fight loneliness and isolation is by making myself available on sex sites, hoping someone didn't block my profile. I spent a lifetime running away from relationships and suddenly I wanted the same. I wanted someone to ask me how my day was after work, someone I could hold hands with while walking the dog. A constant presence and not random men ringing my doorbell for only one reason. I was afraid that with all the running I did from relationships, I wouldn't have the tools to ever find someone.

Looking for me.

I knew what I had to do. I had to go cold turkey and remove myself from the online world of sex. I had to uninstall not only the apps on my phone but also my way of thinking. I had to relearn what it meant to be gay and not wrap it around the concept of being gay. I had to stop looking for dick and start looking for me. I had to stop punishing myself for my HIV status and allowing it so much control. I had to know that my end game was to find a relationship not with another, but learn how to be in a relationship with myself.

Who was I? What did I want? What didn't I want? What makes me smile, cry, hurt and feel joy? What were my identities and how could I embrace each one? Learning how to understand my identity of being gay, of being black, of being a man and of being HIV positive. Not letting one identity overshadow another.

I was learning that you truly attract what you put out. If you look for only someone to relate to you physically, then you'll find that person/s. But if you put out energy meant to draw in people who wanted to know you more than physical, you'd find that as well. Yet knowing to do it involved letting go of past fears and developing trust. It meant to be open.

My final lesson was to forgive myself. To look at my past experiences, not as a curse but learning experiences. By looking in the mirror and embracing that child who was curious and letting him know he could stop looking for dick and it was okay to start looking for love.

Even if that love came from me.

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