

Sentinels Prayer Updates

Praying From Coast to Coast



G'day from the Sentinel Team

I read this incredible resource paper, entitled "**The Power of Sex**," in the latest "**Light**" Newsletter from [Festival of Light](#) and asked FOL's Research Officer, Roslyn Phillips if I could reproduce it for our updates.

Dr. Mary Anne Layden of the University of Pennsylvania, addressed the Sexual Integrity Forum at Parliament House in Canberra in August 2005, the text below is condensed from her two addresses.

Under His Banner

Bev Holmes-Brown



Sexual Integrity Forum

To obtain copies of the
**Sexual Integrity
Strategic Policy Plan**,
which includes their paper "*Sixteen
Reasons Why
Sexual Integrity Matters*"
please email info@fathersonline.org

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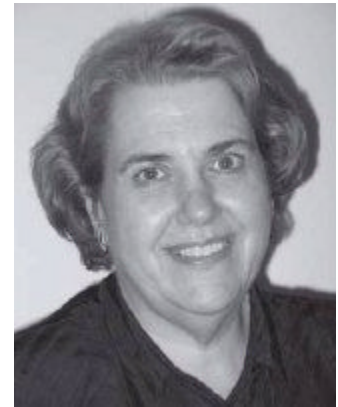
The Power of Sex by Dr. Mary Anne Layden (University of Pennsylvania)

Sex has power - for good or not good.

Sex is central to the human species. Sex drives humans to the best and to the worst in their nature.

We ignore, or misunderstand, or falsify or misuse sexuality at our peril.

For ten years I was a college professor and taught theories of human behaviour. Then at one point I said, "I wonder if any of those theories are actually true?" I had been teaching these theories all those years and then I thought: "Does any of this actually work?" It was at that point that I changed my career. I've now been a psychotherapist for 20 years.



I began working with individuals who had been raped, who had experienced incest and all kinds of sexual violence. After ten years of working with these individuals, certain things became clear. One is that there was not one case of sexual violence that didn't involve pornography. You didn't have to be a rocket scientist to know something was going on here. Apart from pornography, there was no other common factor.

The other thing I came to understand was that, despite my belief in the power of individual psychotherapy to heal, I knew that there were not enough psychotherapists in the world to heal all those who had been damaged. I knew we would not solve the problems merely by doing psychotherapy after a rape or a case of incest.

I was pulling victims out of the river as fast as I could, but that would not solve the problem. So I decided it was time to go upstream and see who was pushing them in. When you do that, it ultimately leads to another question: "Who's pushing the pushers?"

Sexual violence is learned behaviour

When you look at the issue of sexual violence, you notice that most of the rapists are men - as are most of those who commit incest, go to strip clubs, use prostitutes and pornography. There are some theoreticians who say, "That means those things are fuelled by male innate sexual behaviour."

But I don't agree - because most men don't rape, or commit incest on their children, or go to prostitutes or strip clubs. If this theory of innate male sexuality is true, how come it doesn't explain most men?

But if violent sexual behaviour is not inborn - if males are not rapists by nature - then it must be learned behaviour. So who is teaching them? I started to find out by looking and listening to the individuals with whom I worked in therapy.

When you spend all day every day talking to rapists, rape victims, paedophiles, incest survivors, prostitutes, strippers, sex addicts, porn addicts and cyber sex addicts, the language can get a little rough in my office. One of the men I was treating told me his basic belief - and his language was a little rough - was this: "Women's bodies are pieces of sexual meat to be consumed for male entertainment." Yikes.

That's what he learned and believed, and it seemed to be connected to why he raped.

After I heard that, I began to realise that other patients with different issues from this rapist believed a variation of the same thing. I found that there are many differences between types of sexual violence - rape, incest, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and so on - but all the perpetrators seem to have a variation of the same core belief.

Permission-giving beliefs

I'm a cognitive therapist. The founder of cognotherapy is named Aaron Beck, who has written about a concept called "permission-giving beliefs". Beck says permission-giving beliefs seem to be common in all

varieties of violence and addictions.

A permission-giving belief is a belief that: "What I am doing is normal, doesn't hurt anybody, is what everybody is doing and therefore I can continue to do it". So any belief that gives you permission to do what you're doing becomes a releaser of your violence or your addiction or other behaviour.

So cocaine addicts say to me, "Well, the laws against cocaine are just the government's way of keeping the good stuff away from the people. It's fine and it's normal". And I say, "Oh, boy, there's a permission-giving belief".

I once asked one of my patients who goes to prostitutes, "How many men in the US do you think go to prostitutes?" He looked at me quizzically and said, "What do you mean?"

I was thinking, "That question was really clear, but I'll try to rephrase it." I then said, "Of all the men in the United States, how many of them go to prostitutes?" And he said, "Well, all of them".

"All of them?"

"Oh, yeah, all of them".

"Oh, yeah, all of them". I said, "Yikes". If all men go to prostitutes, then of course you'll go. "All men go" became part of his permission-giving beliefs - a releaser of his behaviour.

When I said to him, "Some studies say about 17 per cent of men in the US go to prostitutes", he was aghast. I said, "Maybe it's just all the men you know who go to prostitutes." Later on in the treatment he was willing to consider that. If you surround yourself with men who go to prostitutes, it's easy to come up with the belief that everybody goes. So of course you go, and take your son when he turns 16. You pass that belief on to your kids too.

These beliefs also have a way of being shared in violent situations involving men and women. As a cognitive therapist I typically focus on the beliefs of an individual, but I began to notice that sometimes people were sharing beliefs and the shared set of beliefs was part of the dynamic.

The first place cognitive therapists noticed shared beliefs was in the area of domestic violence. The perpetrator would often say, "Well, the soup was cold and so I had to break her arm and knock her teeth out to show her that she can't do that to me." I was thinking, "Well, that's his belief".

Then I talk to her and she says, "Well, the soup was cold, so he had to break my arm and show me." I said, "Wow, she's got the same belief".

People would say to me, "How come those domestic violence victims don't just leave that guy? How come they keep going back on average seven times before they decide to leave?" And I say, "She shares his belief." We've got a toxic duo here and they both believe the same thing.

Then we started to notice that in the area of the sexual exploitation industry there were shared beliefs between men and women as well.

A small, quiet voice deep inside

But when we began to look at the issue of beliefs, I began to note that people I treated also understood that deep inside them there was a small, quiet voice telling them the truth: "This activity is not normal. It does hurt people. It is not OK."

I would say to the men that I treat who are sex addicts - who go to prostitutes and strip clubs and view pornography, "So, would you like your wife to be a prostitute? You want your daughter to be a stripper, your mother or your sister to be porn star?" And one hundred per cent of them would say, "No. No, no, no!"

And I say, "No. You want somebody else's wife, somebody else's daughter, somebody else's mother or sister to do that. You don't want the ones you love to be damaged."

Often the women who get drawn into the sexual exploitation industry also know that it hurts. Women on the outside looking in also know hurts. It is almost never the case that a white, rich, 30-year-old woman would say to herself, "I think I'm going to be a prostitute. That's a great idea." Hardly ever do men say, "I wonder if I could be a prostitute?"

Now, if prostitution was such a great thing, don't you think rich, white women would want to do it? Don't you think men would want to do it? But they don't.

Typically, the people who get into the area of prostitution have a common background, and this is what I hear from patients I work with. Somewhere in her childhood every night she would get into her bed and roll herself into a foetal position and every night he would come in and peel her open. The physical invasion, the visual invasion of her body became normative. To her, this was what life is like.

So, in order for them to want to be a prostitute, you have to rape them as a child. Now, it also helps if you make them homeless, put them into poverty or get them drug addicted. For those people who think prostitution is just work, what kind of career is it that has a prerequisite that you have to be raped as a child, be homeless, live in poverty or be addicted?

I think people on the outside could also figure out how damaging the sex industry is if they note how it is structured. Most people know that strippers at strip clubs work with bodyguards. They have to have bodyguards because this activity produces violence.

You notice that in other places in our society, we don't usually have bodyguards. We don't have them stationed outside churches, for example. And up until recently we didn't need to have bodyguards at our libraries.

Of course, now, with the advent of the internet in libraries, some people are going into libraries and using child pornography and then raping children in the library bathrooms. This happened in Philadelphia last year - and there was a call for bodyguards at the library!

Strippers work with bodyguards. When they were little girls they were physically and visually invaded, and now as adults they're going to re-enact their trauma. Psychotherapists understand that concept of re-enactment. You repeat what you know. So now they're strippers - and they're sending messages to men in the audience that women are pieces of sexual meat to be consumed for male entertainment. Then the club owners fill the audience full of alcohol, disinhibiting the guys even further. The guys have got the message and they've got alcohol - and are then let loose on the women in the community who don't have bodyguards.

The men become carriers of the message back into their homes, onto the street, into their jobs, onto the schoolyard. There are those who want to make money out of this whole phenomenon - the pornographers, the pimps, the sex traffickers. They feed upon the psychological vulnerability of others. They don't care that this stripper is stripping because she was violated in childhood. They don't care that she's become a prostitute because it feels like home. They're driven by their greed, by their own sexual dysfunction, to feed upon those who are damaged and vulnerable.

When these psychological cannibals feed upon this system, they increase the damage. I regret that in some places, here and in the US and elsewhere, some laws have been passed that cause the government to join in.

So you have laws which try to regulate or segregate - which say, "Let's just put pornography on TV late at night; that'll fix it. Let's put all the prostitutes in this industrial zone over here, that'll fix it." Those laws are such naive attempts to work with this problem. It is like having a "pee" and "no pee" section in a swimming pool. We're all swimming in this place together, so we're all going to be in it. Segregating pornography or prostitution doesn't work.

And as for legalising prostitution - how does changing a person from being pimped by somebody else to pimping themselves solve the problem? The damage is still being done because the act in itself is sexually,

psychologically denigrating.

The sexual exploitation industry

My definition of the sexual exploitation industry is "sexual abuse for money". The involvement of money - paying someone to let you exploit them - doesn't make it non-abusive.

These are several areas of sexual abuse. There's pornography - print, video and internet. There is prostitution - street, indoor and massage parlours. There is what we call "prostitution-lite" - strip clubs and phone sex - and then there's sex trafficking. All of these are just variations of the abuse of women and children that involve money.

All of these are on the same continuum. They all feed and increase each other. Those who think pornography is not involved in prostitution and sex trafficking don't know anything about pornography, prostitution or sex trafficking. They are all variations on the same theme.

Sweden has reduced demand for prostitution

All are driven by demand, but very few governments have focused on how to reduce the demand. Sweden is trying a different social experiment, where the customers of prostitutes are arrested. The customers are fined, and the prostitutes are given rehabilitation - job training, drug rehabilitation and so on. Sweden has flipped the model, and as a result sex traffickers don't want to go to Sweden any more. It costs them too much.

The sex traffickers avoiding Sweden, but where are they going? Some are going to Germany, because Germany has legalised the prostitution trade. As a result, the number of child prostitutes in Germany has gone from 11,000 to 15,000 - because legalising just increases the demand.

About a third of the child prostitutes in Germany have been trafficked, mostly from Nigeria. If you don't have enough prostitutes in your country now that you have increased demand by legalising the prostitution trade, you are going to have to kidnap some women and children, move them across international borders, steal their passports, beat them up and threaten their families. Anybody who thinks that legalisation solves the problem hasn't seen how supply and demand works. You've got to work on the issue of demand.

My perspective on the sexual exploitation industry is that it's an equal opportunity toxin. This is an industry which damages the viewer, the performer, the partners of the viewers and the performers and the children of the viewers of the performers. You can't just take out one group - all of them are damaged by it.

When I talk about prostitution, some people say, "These people are adults and they have consented - consent makes it OK." But how does consent make it OK? Consent does not make it psychologically healthy, ethical, moral, legal or good for the society. Consent does not mitigate the damage that is produced by this industry.

Consent does not make damage OK

Consent does not make damage OK in other areas. In the US we have a TV show called Jackass where people do things which make them look stupid. One day the producers said, "Let's see if we can find some homeless guys and then pay them \$50 to let us sock 'em in the stomach." So they found a homeless guy who was willing to let them punch him in the stomach for \$50, and they filmed it. They were going to put it on TV.

But the police said, "That is an assault. It doesn't matter that the guy consented - he was still damaged. There's a power differential between the TV producers and the homeless guy, who is financially and psychologically disadvantaged. The fact that he consented doesn't reduce this crime. We're going to arrest the TV producers."

Now, how is it that police and other people can see that consent is not relevant when homeless guys are

socked in the stomach, but think consent is somehow relevant for prostitutes and sex trafficked individuals?

A worldwide problem

American statistics show that one in eight women are raped and 50% of women are sexually harassed on their jobs at some point in their life. By the time a female is 18, 38% have been sexually molested. Sometimes they have been molested by six or seven guys. We are talking about millions of perpetrators.

The average age of entry into prostitution in the US is 13 - some are as young as 12. These are the people whom some claim are consenting. These are children! A 12 year old cannot consent to have sex with a 45 year old guy.

In the US, 70% of hits on internet porn websites are made between 9am and 5 pm on business computers.

Australian statistics show that one in six adult women experience sexual assault before the age of 15. One in four girls and one in seven boys are sexually abused. Between 1999 and 2003 there was a 29% increase in sexual assault. The risk of sexual assault for adult women is double if they were abused as a child.

All of those statistics show we've got a problem - a worldwide problem. We've got a whole world suffering from the consequences of these assaults, and many of the people who are suffering are children.

Damage to porn viewers

The damage to viewers of pornography which most catches male attention is that it can increase sexual dysfunction. Men who view pornography have more premature ejaculation and more erectile dysfunction than other men. Pornography which is supposed to stimulate their sex life is actually destroying it.

When I'm working with the sex addicts, I don't begin by saying, "Do you understand how degrading this is to women?" They don't want to hear that. But when I tell them that their sex lives are going down the toilet, they say, "Maybe I don't want to do this and have the erectile dysfunction I am taking all this Viagra for."

Freedom of speech is important, but there's a difference between words and pictures. When somebody is speaking, people in the audience are thinking about the words and saying to themselves, "That's just your opinion." They may agree or disagree, and some will think of counter-arguments.

But pictures don't work that way. Nobody is counter-arguing against a picture, because you can see it. Once you see a picture it doesn't come in as an opinion, but something that happened. It's stored in your brain where you store other things that have happened. You don't challenge it or say, "That's not true." You saw it. So when you see a picture of children enjoying sex with adults, that picture goes onto your brain and is stored in what they call the episodic memory of things you've seen which you now think to be true. You cannot erase the picture - it is there forever. That is why pornography addicts are harder to treat than cocaine addicts. With cocaine, you can at least detox and remove the drug from your body.

I don't treat the cocaine addicts who walk into my office high on cocaine - I say, "First, go to detox. You've got to get the cocaine out of your system before I can treat you." But when a pornography addict comes into my office, I cannot detox them or remove the pornographic pictures that are permanently implanted in their brain.

It's easier to treat a cocaine addict than it is to treat a pornography addict. The pornography addict is more likely to relapse. This is the first addiction we have had to treat where the addictive substance is permanently implanted in the brain.

So we should treat pictures differently from words, because the brain processes them differently. I believe you can have all the freedom of speech you want, but pictures are different.

Attitude shifts

The thing about pornography which concerns me most about pornography is what we call "attitude shift". What ideas do pornographic pictures convey to people?

Some pornography research was done some time ago. These days it would be very hard for any research ethics committee at any university to clear it. The researchers showed a group of people a lot of pornographic imagery - four hours and 48 minutes over six weeks. They called it "massive exposure". Now people go on the internet and have more than four hours and 48 minutes of porn in a single day.

What did the researchers find? First, those "massively" exposed to pornography overestimated how often people are involved in sexual psychopathology. The porn viewers estimated the number of people who like bestiality, or group sex, or violent sex, at twice the number estimated by the control group.

The more pornography you see the more you think the whole world is crazy and sick. But you don't think it's crazy and sick - there's an attitude shift. There's a decrease in the belief that children should not be exposed to pornography.

The researchers found that pornography also reduces how much time you think a rapist should spend in jail. Compared with the control group, porn viewers would cut rape sentences in half. The shocking thing is that both men and women who view porn think rapists deserve only half the time in jail.

Porn increases the belief that women want to be raped and need to be raped. Porn increases the belief that children enjoy sex with adults. Viewers say, "I've seen the smiling children enjoying sex with adults on the internet or in magazines. I know it's true - I have the pictures branded on my brain."

A woman is more likely to get post-traumatic stress by being raped than by being put on the front line of war. More rape victims want to commit suicide, and more of them do. But pornography makes you think women enjoy rape. Permission giving beliefs are central to understanding violent behaviour.

Pornography also distorts true beliefs about sex. According to pornography, sex is not about kindness, vulnerability, responsibility, sweetness, intimacy, communication, commitment, procreation or marriage. You are not going to see any of those in pornography - not even procreation. Nobody gets pregnant and nobody has a baby.

What is sex about? According to pornography, it is about selfishness, violence, strangers, groups, faeces, objects, children, manipulation, body parts, casual recreation, prostitution, lingerie and using women's bodies as entertainment. Is that the message we want to send? And, remember, we're sending it in a potent way that is going to burn onto your memory. Not only is it there forever, not only does it produce arousal, but its false messages are reinforced with the orgasm, ensuring the memory stays.

What is sex not about? According to pornography, sex is not for bald men, small breasted women, older women, kind men, large women, spiritual women, thin men, disabled women, ugly men. None of those people get to have sex in pornography because there, sex is just for young, physically attractive and atypically constructed people.

Sex addicts lose

Sex addicts think the more sex and sex partners they have and the more kinds of sex they have, the better they are as men. Their self esteem is sex-based. This is due to pornography distortion, and no school curriculum has such a potent message. People in media education sometimes say, "Let people look at all these images and we'll dampen their impact by talking to them about it." No way! You cannot dampen the impact of pictures by the words that you say afterwards. The advertising industry knows that little one-minute movies about soap can change your attitudes and your buying behaviours. Pornographic pictures, reinforced by arousal and orgasm, have a much greater impact.

Forty per cent of sex addicts will lose their spouse because of their addiction alone; 58% will have financial difficulties, some losing all their savings and their earnings; 27% will lose their job or be demoted; 40% of sex addicts who are professionals will lose their professions because they act out on their jobs and lose their

licences - all examples of damage suffered by viewers of pornography.

Sex industry performers

Many people are damaged before they get into the sex industry. But what happens to them after they get into the sex industry? Some consequences of this job are: depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociative identity disorder, substance abuse disorder, eating disorders, low self-esteem, and traumatic reenactment.

In a dissociative identity disorder, people dissociate - they feel they can't stay in their body psychologically. It typically starts when a child is being sexually abused. He or she can only tolerate that immense horror by leaving their body, going up to the ceiling and watching as if it is happening to someone else. Dissociation is a coping strategy.

Traumatic re-enactment is repeating the rape of childhood - the physical invasion that now seems normal. So as an adult she becomes a stripper, a porn model or a prostitute, with the customer playing the role of the perpetrator.

One person said to me, "When you're a stripper and you have to be physically and visually invaded every day by many people at once, that the damage is even greater than the one-to-one invasion of prostitution." And the men who go to strip clubs say to me, "Oh, those women, they are really attracted to me." I think, "Have you ever talked to a stripper and heard what they say about men? They're acting as if they are really excited by you, but they are thinking, "You disgust me. I don't want you to touch me. And I'd better get out of my body or I will go crazy."

When they find they can't dissociate, strippers and prostitutes turn to drugs such as cocaine or alcohol to get them out of their body so they can work. You have to be drunk or high to be able to dissociate and get through the day.

Sex industry performers also have marriage problems. One study found that strippers and prostitutes have about a 25% chance of making a marriage last as long as three years. Some people say that pornography really is a marriage aid. If that were true, then those most deeply involved in the sex industry would have the best marriages. But the opposite is the case.

Then there's the self-harm. Almost 100% of the strippers I've encountered have had fake breasts implanted. It's part of their job requirement, because men have become so used to women with gigantic breasts that they think it's normal. They want to see strippers who look like Barbie doll with an 18" waist and 40" chest. The Barbie doll was based on Lily, a famous German prostitute. Ruth Handler bought her in a German porn shop, brought her to the US and gave her to Mattel to make a doll for children.

What happens after the strippers get their breast implants? Four very large studies conducted in four different cultures have found that women who have breast implants are three to four times more likely to commit suicide. Many of those strippers who say, "I'm going to be a stripper and make some money for college," never make it back to college.

Lest you think legalising the sex industry would mitigate all this damage, I point out that strippers are legal in the US. And here are some of the things that legally happen to them on their job: 36% are bitten, 24% are slapped, 58% are pinched, 28% have their hair pulled, 73% have their breast grabbed, 90% have their buttocks grabbed, 81% per cent have their arm grabbed, 76% are pelted by ice or cigarettes or coins, 91% are verbally abused, 70% are followed home and 42% are stalked. Want this legal job?

The hostility and the anger that come out of those men cannot be legalised away. You cannot fix sexual exploitation by legalising it.

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What Are Sentinels ? :

[Dictionary.com](#) describes a "**Sentinel**" as one that keeps guard. The french and latin roots speak of vigilance and combine the words "watching" and "feeling" in their description. I think of "**Sentinels**" as being those the Lord positions in specific areas to Guard over Community, National and Governmental issues needing Prayer.

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