



THE WATER LILY MODEL
Becoming sexually empowered

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Turku 2011-11-20

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ISBN



Sexuality

Sexuality is humans' experience of their humanity and the relationship of masculinity and femininity to each other

Creativity, motivation, and sexual desire make erotic experiences possible in mind and body with oneself and with others. At their best these experiences become so closely intertwined that time and space lose their meaning.

Ability to throw oneself fully into sexual desire produces pleasure and enjoyment.

The core of sexuality, its centre, is human's existence as an integral part of cosmic beingness.

Ruuhilahti & Bildjuschkin 2010

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1 Preface

In this booklet, the water lily metaphor describes the growth and development in the dimensions of human sexuality. In the same way as a water lily seeks protection by closing itself, also humans, in addition to growing, every now and then turn inwards in order to recognize their emotions and learn about new things at their own pace. The aim of the Water Lily Model is to reflect on human sexuality and the factors affecting it. The model emphasises sexuality as an opportunity, an empowering force in life, and a beautiful part of the human when its diversity and multiplicity are taken into consideration. The Water Lily Model can be applied to reflecting on and understanding oneself and one's own attitudes as well as the sexuality of people living in different cultures, healthy and sick people.

Sexuality begins when human life begins and ends when human life ends. Every human is a unique and meaningful individual. Every human's sexuality is unique and meaningful. As a concept, sexuality is quite new: it was not coined until in the 1800's and its meaning varies in accordance with the historical era, culture, and environment. Even members of the same family or extended family may define the word sexuality differently. There is no explicit global explanation for the word and, as a result, it is often interpreted as a synonym or near-synonym for sex or heterosexual intercourse. (Bildjuschkin & Ruuhilahti 2010.)

The Water Lily Model describes human sexuality and its development throughout the whole life. The model emphasises the meaning of sexuality to human health and well-being. Understanding the word sexuality as a comprehensive and essential part of the human opens the door to understanding the most intimate and delicate aspects of the human. When sexuality is understood as an opportunity and a creative force,

it is possible to support people in seeing the uniqueness of their lives. The beginning of a human being is in the miraculous moment in which life can begin from sexuality. Life is a gift and sexuality is part of life from beginning to end.

Understanding sexuality as a comprehensive part of humanity with all its dimensions provides sexuality education with many views and opportunities at all levels of education: in counselling, teaching, guidance, and giving information. Owing to the diversity and comprehensiveness of sexuality, also sexuality educators need much knowledge, understanding, being familiar with their own sexuality, and working on it as well as understanding the meaningfulness of their own lives. Everyone has the right to have sexuality education throughout the whole life. Sexuality education is a sexual right.

Changes in life, such as developmental crises, illnesses, blows of fate, human relationship problems, loves, and pregnancies make sure that sexuality is allowed and can grow in the changes of the human's life becoming - sometimes more important and sometimes less important. It is even possible to think that experiences of for example suffering, death, and big life changes make humans aware of their own unique existence (Jaspers 2005).

The Water Lily Model emphasises the human's unity with all the dimensions. Without one there is not the other one either and, in unity, a human is more than the sum of the dimensions. Humanity requires all the dimensions so that sexuality can open in the way it deserves. The humans of the Water Lily Model seek their connection to the source of life and to other humans and also want to experience the meaningfulness of their own lives and sexuality. Therefore the Water Lily Model examines sexuality and the elements related to it, not sex.

The way of defining the concept of sexuality is linked to the historical period and place as well as the culture in which the human lives. Sexuality is variable also because of our social storytelling traditions. New stories are told all the time, for

example in interaction with others and through the media. Some stories are forgotten soon, some become part of the human's own story. This happens throughout the human's life history. Therefore it is useful every now and then to take the time and reflect on our own thoughts and emotions. Growth as a human, a unique person, forms the professional foundations of working with humans. A healthy self-concept, strong self-confidence, self-directedness, responsibility, creativity, and innovativeness are required in working with humans professionally. This work is done by means of reflection and the stories we tell to ourselves

In interaction with others, we convey each other knowledge and skills that are considered valuable and worth learning. However, there is no single lesson or encounter that can renew traditions as such because we value matters in accordance with our appreciations. It is especially important for those who do human relationship work professionally to be aware of this.

In the Water Lily Model, the developers of the model open the world of how they understand sexuality, the core of sexuality, and the matters related to them. Thanks to the storytelling element, the Water Lily Model metaphor makes it possible to understand sexuality in a different way than theoretical texts. The metaphor creates stories in people's minds. Stories are basic tools for thinking, knowing, and understanding. Growing and developing have always meant constructing and reconstructing stories at both individual and community levels. When humans take the time to reflect on themselves, their values, attitudes, thoughts, and emotions, it is possible to think that they are creating their own stories that are born in their mental processes. When humans are constructing their stories, they interpret the meaning of their lives through stories. When they are telling their stories, they bring about social impact, share experiences, and may also gain social confirmation for their thoughts. Storytelling also provides opportunities for reflection.

The Water Lily Model aims to deepen the reflection on our own sexuality and the matters related to it and in this way to promote and enhance well-being and professional competence. The model also aims to increase flexibility and encourage professionals to be more creative and courageous in motivating their friends, family members or clients through positive strengthening. Knowing ourselves increases the acceptance of differences, makes us take better care of others, be more emphatic, feel love and respect, and improve our sense of humour. When we are aware of this, we dare to take risks and make mistakes in our personal lives and also professionally.

Everyday experiences, increasing knowledge, and growth of tacit knowledge cause changes and modifications in the model. In the hands of different people, the model is born again to become a different and unique water lily, and this is how it should be. In the role of midwives we have given birth to the model and we hope that it will grow and encourage growth. Let us hope that the water lily be born again in different hands and that it will always express the appreciation of the diversity and beauty related to sexuality.



2. The Foundations of Sexuality

(The roots of the water lily)

The foundations of sexuality are formed by the human concept and values. Life is full of conflicts and ambiguity and it is not possible for humans to find their real identities and own sexuality without being aware of the human concept and their values.

Individuals' all action is based on the human concept and values. The basic values make it possible for the water lily to be rooted in its own place; in the same way humans are not being tossed about in their lives. The roots create protection

and trust – they also enable growth and flourishing and, at the same time, existence. Although in the model the roots appear to be located in the past, they are not actually tied to time and they can always be seen in a new light in the course of life. Humans' roots affect the present, plans for the future, dreams, and choices.

The Human Concept

In addition to humanity, the human concept determines also what sexuality encompasses and what matters are related to sexuality. It determines also our thoughts about what a man, woman, child, adolescent, adult, or old person is, and reflects our notions of humanity, diversity, normalcy, and the matters related to them even without explicitly speaking about them.

In the Water Lily Model, a human is seen as a physical–psychosocial-spiritual entity with sexuality being present in all the dimensions. Every human is unique and everyone's sexuality is meaningful and an important part of the whole person. Humans are more than their bodies, human relationships, genotype, or sexuality. Life is a gift that is given to humans, and all humans can choose the attitude they take to their lives and how they react to their luck or suffering. The choice is influenced by the social capital, experiences, tacit knowledge, and cognitions they have obtained or acquired in their lives.

There is no model that can explain sexuality in full detail, as there is much in all humans that cannot be described in words and the origin of which cannot be made concrete. The model is more likely to make us ask questions about what the meaning of sexuality is to an individual's life here and now. Sexuality is often seen in the light of risks, dangers, or falling ill. In order to get rid of this kind of mythical thoughts about the dirtiness and sinfulness of sexuality, it is necessary to bring up also the effects of sexuality on enhancing optimism, well-being, and health.

The human's physical body makes life possible. The human body has also psycho-social and spiritual dimensions. All these dimensions are required so that the human could be a whole person and sexuality could be seen as an opportunity and part of humanity. Emotions as well as value conflicts and wrong choices can make the body show symptoms. When our values are genuine and meaningful, most of us feel good. When we understand and love ourselves, we can make informed choices and strive to enhance well-being and health. There is hardly anyone who knows if a choice is "right", but it is enough when we try to make the right solution. We have to live with our choices no matter what the future brings. We are thus also creators of our own lives and sexuality. If our sexual rights have been respected, we have the opportunity to decide on our own sexuality.



The human concept of the Water Lily Model

Physical

All that can be seen and felt in our bodies belongs to the human's physical dimension. Our physical being is created by our appearance, biology, neurobiology, and what happens in us physiologically and chemically. The physical body has been obtained in the genotype and also the environment has a great deal of influence on it, but there are certain limitations that we cannot remove or change, for example some defect of the body.

Psycho-social

The human's psycho-social dimension encompasses emotions, temperament, basic character, inborn abilities and talents, observation, cognition, memory, becoming part of society as well as learned behaviour and action. This dimension can be researched and brought up for example by the means of psychology, sociology, and educational science.

Spiritual

The spiritual dimension makes it possible to make decisions that we feel to be our own – genuine ethicality is present and the human has a will. The spiritual dimension brings up genuine love, creativity, and ability to see different things, and it also makes it possible to seek and find one’s own values. The values are found intuitively through both conscious and subconscious thinking. The spiritual dimension provides an opportunity to reflect on the future consequences of the actions and choices. Humans are directed towards the future and look there for goals to their lives. The spiritual dimension challenges to reflect on one’s own sexuality and its meaning to life. Being enchanted by another person and the presence of this person means courage to choose a path without knowing its destination. Genuine love is surrendering oneself from inside outwards: “I give my life to be used by the person I love” (J.R.Miller).



Humans are born in a place and time. Humans have their past and life situations that have become possible and caused by the choices made (by themselves and others) in the past. The environmental conditions and the social environment, in which we are born, set certain limitations to our lives and our sexuality. These matters cannot be changed. However, when they are taken into consideration, we can choose our attitude to such matters as our sexuality.

Sexuality and the matters related to it may be difficult and they may cause suffering. In the Water Lily Model, we want to foster hope and strength in difficult times. Everyone is faced by big changes and many encounter difficulties. When we can accept these sufferings and tolerate the occasional unpleasantness of life, we accept the challenge posed by life. Life can never feel only good; however, dreaming about happiness can also be happiness.

Values

Values may be related for example to the community, individual, culture or workplace, or they may be learned, and an ethical aspect is always linked to values. Values help in finding identity because the values that are found good direct humans to act so that they are not driven to situations in which they have to face conflicts between their hopes, thoughts, and action. On the other hand, change may begin also from a conflict situation, which may thus be a good thing. Humans have many kinds of values simultaneously in their different communities. If the values are contradictory, the conflicts are likely to cause fatigue, loss of the meaning of life, and frustration. Values may be matters and life situations that make us feel positive emotions willingness to act accordingly.

Many values are related to sexuality. These are strongly regulated by the different communities in which we live our everyday lives. It is important to pay attention to the values are at the workplace and in private life and whether human dignity and sexuality are respected in interaction with different professionals, friends, and family members.



Values can also be reflected on in accordance with the three types of Viktor Frankl's (1983) values. These values are divided into experiential, attitudinal, and creative values.

Experiential values challenge to accept beauty, goodness, art, and for example experiential love. We live up to experiential values by reflecting on the choices made in life, our own values, and the secret and meaning of life. Becoming merged with another person in love also belongs to experiential values.

Attitudinal values are related to how we accept the blows of fate and the limitations of our lives that we cannot change (for example illness, environmental catastrophes, loss of loved ones, or strokes of luck). Attitudinal values help us to seek

and find meaningful and life supporting solutions when there is something that challenges us to reflect on our values and the meaning of our lives.

Creative values are matters and action: what kind of work we do, how we act, and who the action is directed to. The motive of the action determines its value. If we treat two persons the same way, we treat then one of them in a wrong way.



We should live so that we can live up to all the three types of values. People's values differ much, and the value system is also connected to the attitude we take to ourselves, our lives, and other people. If one value is emphasised over the others, the person's life rests on one pillar. In this kind of pyramidal value system, a creative value is often on the top. If the important value is lost for some reason, the whole system is damaged and the person's health and well-being are at risk and there may even be a crisis knocking the door.

On the other hand, when persons with horizontal value systems suffer a loss, they do not lose their meaning of life as easily as persons with pyramidal value systems and their holistic well-being is not threatened.

Reflecting on our own values, the value of our work, and the values related to sexuality and sex education makes it possible for sex educators to find new perspectives not only in their thinking but also in their interaction with clients and those who they are educating. The human concept and values create the foundations (the roots of the water lily) for all interaction and work with the clients and they also build a framework for understanding sexuality. In what ways does sexuality manifest itself in the light of the values mentioned before? What kind of value do we give to sexuality in human life and our work?



3. The Basics of Humanity

(The stem of the water lily)

Early interaction

When a child is conceived, also parenthood starts to develop. When a child is born, also the parents are born in their own individual ways. Early interaction means giving and receiving. From the moment of birth, the baby and the parent are in most cases prepared for a reciprocating interactive relationship. Part of the interaction is conscious and part is subconscious. We influence other people also unwittingly. During the pregnancy and after the baby's birth the parents also come face to face with their own childhood, the memories and images related to it – they have to come to terms with their attitudes to their own parents and their own childhood.

Pregnancy transforms life and the female body undergoes many changes. At least the pregnant woman's psychological and physical well-being is put to a test, which may make vulnerable to depression and even cause it. Postnatal depression has effects on early interaction. If the life situation in general is stressful, there may be little positive early interaction and the attachment relationship with the child may suffer. Early interaction is influenced at least by the parents' life situation, family histories, environmental conditions, and social situation.

Even during pregnancy, the parents have an opportunity to start building the relationship with their child. The future child's sexuality education should start no later than the beginning of the pregnancy. Becoming prepared for parenthood means also coming to terms with own sexuality and growing as a sexual human being. The reflections of the couple together or the pregnant one alone on how to consider and take care of their own sexuality and the sexuality in their couple relationship are especially important during the pregnancy. Sexual

counselling must be an integral part of all maternity care and counselling.

Studies show that, during the pregnancy, the embryo/infant reacts strongly also to environmental circumstances – voices and especially to different emotions through the mother's mood. In Finnish maternity clinics, an imaginary baby is created with the future parents to improve the quality of early interaction. The parents reflect together or a parent reflects alone on what the baby will be like and what they want to offer to their own baby at the early stage of life. Also imaginary trips to the future contribute to attachment and becoming prepared for the everyday life that is now influenced more by the baby than the adult. The images continue to exist when the baby grows. We have an image of the baby but the baby also has an image of the caregiver or caregivers. In everyday life, the connection is built also through everyday rhythm. Care and play take turns. Eating and sleeping take place at approximately the same time – separating and coming together mould a secure everyday life for most children. The quality of the early interaction is important also for the growing body. According to research findings, secure early interaction promotes for example the child's neurophysiological development.

Early interaction offers the unborn and newborn baby building blocks for humanity. It is important that the early interaction with the baby should succeed. The baby needs admiration, care, tenderness, love, and touching. The baby gets these in close interaction with the caregiver. The baby examines faces, follows expressions and gestures. Children also start creating the conceptions of themselves and their environment in early interaction. They need also a lot of activities in order to develop. No child gets perfect care and seldom is the environment perfect either. However, the children must not be left to manage on their own, because that does not enhance development. In addition, the child experiences emotions that

the caregiver has the opportunity to recognise and name by chatting with the child.

The attachment relationship is formed between the child and the caregiver in early interaction. The child's first love relationship is the relationship in which the child is taken care of. A newborn baby does not survive without this care. The child needs touching, food, and sleep, but also peace and quiet. When the child grows, the caregiver helps the child to master and learn new things, tolerate and understand different emotions.

During their upbringing, humans learn to feel shame for different, perhaps even natural emotional states and thus to suppress emotions that have been disapproved of. The parents' difficulties or inability to tolerate different emotional states affects strongly the child's emotional life skills. Every child learns to feel shame for their natural emotional states and expressions of emotions – some children for their crying, some for their anger, some for being easily frightened, and some others for their sexual curiosity or pleasure. Feelings of shame may also be related to the child's own body, way of being and living, and feeling own dignity, if the child has learned that in the early childhood (Huttunen 1997).

Children's growth to their own emotions, recognizing, and tolerating them is important. People who recognize their emotions and are connected to their inner selves are emphatic. They have the experience of being valuable and visible, loved. Empathy skills grow and develop throughout the whole life. Experiences of love and appreciation are born in fleeting moments in everyday life: Were my words heard and what was the reaction? Was I treated well, was I touched lovingly and respectfully? In educational institutions, but also in homes, emotions and what is done to enhance children's well-being are central factors in empathy education. Adults who feel good about themselves and their sexuality are good role models.

These adults are able to display a warm attitude to the child and are open to the child's emotions. Empathy skills and own sexuality are sought and found without hurry, in peace and quiet. (Bildjuschkin & Ruuhilahti 2008.)

It is meaningful to the child's growth and development, if the early interaction relationship remains unsatisfactory or, for the newborn baby, becomes avoidant or dependent. This is crucially important also for sexual growth and development. In the model, the stem of the water lily grows towards the surface of water but lack of interaction and feelings of unworthiness make the stem grow more fragile and prone to being broken or damaged. On the one hand, the factors supporting growth may strengthen the stem making it sturdier and, on the other hand, even a weak stem may develop a beautiful and unique flower when we remember humans' uniqueness. If the child's relationship becomes avoidant, dependent or fearful, it will affect the child's adult relationships. However, it is never too late to reflect on one's own life and gain also healing experiences (Markova 2007).

With early, secure attachment and successful interaction, the stem of the flower is strengthened, which makes it possible to face life challenges with an open mind. However, even successful interaction cannot ensure happiness and a good life, because all humans live their lives in their own ways. Every individual's life is dependent on the choices made, strokes of luck, and blows of fate. The choices made and the human concept and values adopted in the childhood are affected by the idea of one's own value and attitude to life; therefore early interaction has either a protective or predisposing effect. Humans are, however, always more than their past and their experiences of early interaction.

The Dimensions of Health

Several factors affect humans' self-image, health, well-being, and experiences of themselves. According to for example Kerttu Perttilä's (1999) health dimension thinking, health is affected among other things by the environmental conditions that create the foundations of growth for humans. It makes a difference where people live. Environmental conditions have a considerable effect on human sexuality and the appropriate ways of expressing it. For example studies on environmental pollution have shed new light on sexuality and sex-related health issues. Environmental pollution is known to affect fertility and the heat produced by portable computers is known to affect sperm production. Studies have shown that vegetarians are more likely to give birth to girls than boys due to an increase in oestrogen derivatives in plants. Based on research, men do not easily seek health counselling and often fight their symptoms far too long.

Sexual counselling is not offered to teen-age boys as if they did not wish or need it, although questions related to sexuality are flooding to websites and helpline telephones. However, possibilities to live healthy and good lives, fall ill or get medical treatment are the most dependent on what country, environment, religious atmosphere, and so on, the person happens to be born in. Sexual rights include the right to have information and guidance, but that is not realised even in Finland. Boys and men are always likely to get fewer services and less counselling than women. In addition to the place of living, health includes physical, social, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and sexual dimensions. Changes in any of these dimensions are bound to affect also the other dimensions. Sexuality cannot thus be discussed separately as a single matter, as it is part of health and part of the whole human being.

Gender

Gender is inextricably linked to our bodies and one of the most central concepts in defining human beings (Charpentier 2001). The normative expectations related to sexuality hide the diversity of gender. Gender is an issue in the describing of which the words used, customs, and definitions are linked to the history and culture in which the people are living. At the personal level, experience of the gender and its realisation varies during the course of life.

“The diversity of gender includes the idea that people can experience, express, and define their gender in many ways: male, female, or both male and female, sometimes male and sometimes female or not actually either of them. In the same way as sexuality, also the diversity of gender is a phenomenon that concerns all humans. The diversity of gender is made especially visible by the women, men, and other people who defy the division into two groups in thinking about the gender. They are intersexuals and transsexuals, transvestites, and transgender people.” (Lehtonen 2006.)

In the Clearing Up! project, the notion of health has been adapted from several definitions of health (for example Pirttilä 1999; Ewicks & Simmet 1995; Groy 2005):

Dimension of Health	What belongs to it
Physical	functional capacity of body organs, physiological and biological phenomena, genetics, anatomy
Psychological	functional psychological capacity, ability to think clearly and coherently, cognitions, memories
Emotional	skills of expressing and reading emotions, ability to express emotions appropriately, ability to interpret and understand one's own and others' emotional states
Social	ability to create and maintain human relationships, interaction between individuals and society, and how people's lives and behaviour are regulated and enhanced through legislation and support (e.g. availability of health services, free basic education and school lunch, laws pertaining to working hours, social benefits and allowances)
Sexual	accepting one's own sexuality and experiences of sexuality as a positive part of oneself, ability to achieve an empowering form of sexual expression, realisation of sexual rights, sex education and counselling
Spiritual	understanding the meaningfulness of one's own life, experiencing life meaningful, ethicality, skills in distancing oneself, freedom of choice, responsibility, peace of mind, religiousness may be part of the spiritual dimension but not necessarily
+	Environmental issues

In Western societies, the changing body in the so called puberty emphasises even more the classic dicotomic division of gender – division into girls/women and boys/men – and thus contributes to regulating the behaviour and body that are appropriate to the genders (Aapola 1999). Handicapped girls and boys, sick and often also people with different cultural backgrounds remain outside illustrated publications. Especially people with different cultural backgrounds have different experiences of their bodies: style of dressing and allowed or not-allowed touching are emphasised when different cultures meet. A person's body may also be submitted to another person's power and it may be in relation to the honour of the family or even extended family.

Children learn much about interaction skills and people's respect for each other in their families, with their friends, and in educational institutions. They learn what kind of attitudes are taken to different people, how women, men, and people representing their own gender are respected, how others are treated, and how the treatment is affected by for example gender, age, and skin colour. Children learn if gender is an important thing and if it is always necessary to determine it before it is possible to do anything else. Children learn very early if gender is automatically accompanied by benefits and if something is more appropriate to girls and something else to boys. They also notice if it is better to be born as a girl or a boy in their culture.



4. The Elements Supporting Sexuality (The green leaves of the water lily)

The green leaves of the water lily describe the important and even essential matters for humans that are crucial to our health. The matters represented by the green leaves enable us

to grow to our own kind of humans. Our experiences and attitudes to them make us different and unique. The green leaves are therefore an important part of the water lily, holistic sexuality, and sexual health.

The Pearls of Goodness

Nowadays the positive dimensions of people's mental health tend to be ignored, although many people would like to have more discussion on them instead of risks and dangers. The so called pearls of goodness are represented by the first green leave of the water lily. They are universal matters, appreciated in all religions and cultures. When these matters are brought up, it is possible to empower people of different ages and strengthen their beliefs in their own lives, sexuality, and sufficiency. Seligman and Peterson (2004) analysed these character strengths and differentiated six virtues among the 24 strengths. Personality traits can predict something about the future with a view to threats to health or matters enhancing well-being.



Reasonableness

Reasonableness protects from extremes. Reasonableness is seen as self-discipline and skill in reflecting on matters instead of aiming at immediate pleasure. The skill of forgiving and modesty belong to reasonableness. Based on the study "From a Child to an Adult", it is possible to think that an unreasonable way of life makes people prone to drug addictions, behaviour problems, difficulties in human relationships, and aggressiveness. On the other hand, people who are leading reasonable lives are typically characterised by satisfaction, well-being, healthy self-esteem, and better experienced health. Reasonable people seem to study longer and be more conscientious and adaptable. It is paradoxical that our time urges and even supports people to acquire peak experiences and take big risks. Reasonableness is not appreciated and risk takers are admired. Reasonableness is often belittled and described playfully - life should be a continuing festival

every moment. It is often forgotten that reasonableness and a daily rhythm are important supporting factors at least in social and psychological well-being. Reasonableness as a way of life makes it possible also for future generations to grow in safe and secure conditions. It is our task to consider also the quality of our descendents' lives.

Wisdom

There is wisdom in both communities and individuals. Wise people seldom think of themselves as particularly wise people. Wisdom can be seen as willingness to learn and adopt something new as well as to generate and develop new ideas. Wisdom provides a multitude of perspectives in approaching matters. Sternberg (1998) defined wisdom as an entity encompassing wisdom, creativity, and intelligence. So called tacit knowledge can be regarded as wisdom that requires the directing of wisdom outwards from the individual; wisdom aims at common good. Wisdom is needed when we make quick decisions or far-reaching choices. Wisdom can be classified also in accordance with Baltes and Strandinger (2000). They think that wisdom is about being concerned with difficult and important matters in living conditions and represents the best knowledge, assessment, and guidance. Wisdom is comprehensive, deep, and balanced knowledge that can be applied to specific situations. It is directed both to our own and others' benefit, and it combines mind and character. It is difficult to achieve wisdom, but it is easy to recognise it. We can think that wisdom has a strong social role.

Transcendence

Transcendence focuses on life as a gift and the significance of the meaning of life. A human is part of an entity in which everyone is needed and, through transcendence, we see that humans' task is to direct themselves to something or someone, and not to themselves. Transcendence stresses the importance of living our lives here and now. Graber (2004) describes transcendence as follows: "I determine my life from moment to moment, when time and events are flowing past, I am travelling from the future to the past. Only here and now can I take a stand or act and face the challenges posed by life. Transcendence encourages us to live ethical lives and

to understand beauty that can emerge in the form of good thoughts, deeds.”

Justice

According to the principle of justice, we must not insult other people and, on the other hand, we should not accept infringement on our own boundaries. Justice urges to defend the weak. However, it does not mean that everybody should be treated equally – then only one person is treated right and the others wrong. Justice includes equality, respect, and reciprocity between people. These matters can emerge in many ways, for example in ways of behaving, dressing, interacting with other people – in the way how I respect the existence of others and show respect for their existence. Justice means that girls, boys, men or women get the support they need in a dignified way and genuinely taking the individual into consideration.

Humanity

Humanity is the value of values that must not be ignored. Every human must be seen as a physical-psychological-social-spiritual entity whose existence has a meaning.

Courage

Standing up for ethical principles requires courage. Courage takes a stand in favour of cherishing virtues. It takes courage to admit our mistakes and take the responsibility for our choices. Courage also urges to practise what we preach and it empowers to bring up matters for discussion. Courage is needed in remedying grievances and experimenting with new ideas. Courageous people take other people around them into consideration and create space also for them to express their thoughts and emotions - to be the kind of people they are.



Five Personality Traits, the Big Five

Temperament and personality traits as well as “the big five” (abbreviated as B5) express individuals’ general way of adapting themselves and being committed to the social world. The

culture in which people live affects their temperament. Temperament is defined as a number of inborn and fairly permanent tendencies and preparedness that impact on the individuals' way of reacting to the environment as well as expressing and controlling their emotions. Temperament becomes personality in adulthood. Temperament has been shown to correlate with school success and gender. It is possible to consider also sexuality education and guidance in this light – does the present practice pay attention to people who make observations and learn in different ways? What are the people like who are liked and disliked? How do these thoughts affect education and working with clients? When people's typical characteristics – personality types – are taken into consideration, it is possible to understand their different ways of seeing the world and deal with their experiences and emotions in choice situations. Although the B5 traits can be criticized and personality types can be classified also in other ways (Enneagram types, for instance), these classifications can be thought to have considerable benefits especially in every area of sexuality education. In Böschmeyer's words, "we could positively accept the persons who are different from us. We would accept them because we have no objective reason to reject and belittle them on account of their otherness."

Personality traits are probably biologically inherited traits which, together with temperament, build our personalities. Each of the B5 traits has its own independent role, and the traits can form a multitude of combinations. Classifications by gender can be made, but these are strongly linked to culture. When we think about personality traits, we must always take also situational factors, the environment and historical period of time, into consideration in addition to culture. Further research should be done also on such sub-traits of the B5, such as feminine-masculine, sense of humour, and religiousness – to see how they affect the five main traits. As members of their

community, people must be able to take others into consideration, control their emotions, and act in responsible ways. Studies of personality traits can give ideas and guidance on how to interact with those who need help and support. This helps to create understanding and to find a common language when providing help and guidance. Understanding our personality traits is useful also when we are reflecting on our sexuality.

Personality traits can be discerned even in children, and they can be made use of in the categorisation of how apt they are to experience positive or negative emotions and how skilful they are in controlling emotions, behaviour, and observations. In Finnish society, examples of appreciated traits that are linked to gender are joviality, adaptability, strong self-discipline, and lack of shyness. These traits improve the school success of girls, but not the success of boys at school.

In addition to the B5 traits, personality can be thought to include also interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. According to Kari Uusikylä (2003), interpersonal intelligence requires ability to understand others, their motives and actions as well as background factors related to them. Skills are also required in interaction with others. On the other hand, intrapersonal intelligence means that the persons understand themselves. Then they understand their own strengths, inclinations, and emotions. These are crucial factors in human relationship work and affect also personal relationships.

It is important to understand the significance of these traits in people's lives, because hereditary tendencies may have influence on the ideas people build of themselves and the surrounding world. People, who trust themselves, their own capabilities, and the environment, experiment with different things and learn from these experiments regardless of whether the experiments succeeded or failed. On the other hand, the life skills learnt from these experiences promote healthy self-esteem. An environment that enables people to trust

themselves and the environment also serves to maintain and strengthen their personality. (Caspi & Shiner 2006; McAdams & Adler 2006.)



B5

Emotional Instability

Emotional instability is tendency to experience negative emotional states and, as a result, to see the world and human relationships as threatening. It is typical of people who have this trait to be worried, arrogant, critical of themselves, and, in stressful situations, to have weak control of emotions and behaviour. Then for example the challenges or experiences related to sexuality may emerge through worries and negations. Disappointments for example in human relationships may emerge or become apparent in expressions of anger towards themselves or others.

Extraversion

Extraversion is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world, experiences of positive emotional states, playfulness, and enthusiasm. Extraverts are warm and emphatic in their human relationships and they enjoy the company of others. For extraverts, sexuality is often an “easy and natural” part of the whole human being.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness is reflected in trust, willingness to help others, belief in others’ goodness, sincerity, and altruism. The quality of human relationships is more important to agreeable people than the number. Agreeableness is also linked to social skills. The more agreeable the people are, the fewer conflicts and failures they are likely to have in their human relationships. In addition to agreeableness, also their optimistic view of human nature contributes to self-discipline and serves to maintain balanced human relationships. Agreeable individuals are adaptable, while for example aggressiveness can easily lead to a vicious circle of failure.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is a tendency to show organisation skills, order, dutifulness, and ambition. Conscientiousness contributes to success in daily work and activities.

Conscientiousness, which becomes apparent in taking responsibility, attentiveness, perseverance, and planned behaviour, predicts a good couple relationship, health, and longevity (Pulkkinen 2009). Conscientious children have been noticed to improve their social skills, such as controlling their emotions and behaviour. In addition, conscientiousness has many other cumulative effects: conscientious individuals are for example receptive to new health information and they take responsibility for themselves and others (Hampson 2008). Conscientiousness has also been linked to less risky sexual behaviour, which includes for example recurring short sexual relationships, unprotected sex, and sexual relationships started at an early age. Conscientious individuals also show less self-destructiveness and violent behaviour than other people (Bogg & Roberts 2004).

Openness

Openness is a controversial part of the big five classification. People who are open seem to have a deep consciousness on the emotional level and a need for intellectual experiences. Imagination, aestheticism, and curiosity belong to this trait.



Risk Behaviour and Sexual Ill-being

Sexual risk behaviour often means individuals' attempts to solve a problem in the way they can. Based on experiential understanding, young persons' engaging in sexual intercourse at an early age is likely to be linked to loneliness, longing for closeness, breaking barriers, and weak parenthood. It may also be a means of survival or an attempt to find answers to experienced sexual abuse (Bildjuschkin & Ruuhilahti 2008). On the other hand, behaviour that does not seem to make any sense, for example when some persons fail to use contraception, con-

tinuously go to STD tests or have abortions made repeatedly, may not be irresponsible or intentional. Perhaps it is more a question of longing for closeness, need for acceptance, desire to be important to someone, need for touch or inability to set own boundaries. It is also important to remember that these people may live in relationships with domineering partners under the threat of continuous violence. On the other hand, sexually abused people may try to eliminate their experiences with new risky sexual contacts or to prove to themselves that they are worthless and deserve their bad reputation in order to adapt themselves to the assumptions of their environment, as their own self-image is in shambles.

Conscientiousness is an important trait, and it is believed to be even genetically inherited to some extent. However, conscientiousness or elements related to it can be brought to everyone's reach when the persons are challenged to see the spiritual dimension in themselves. According to studies (Roberts, Walton & Viechtbauer 2006) people become socially more skilled, more conscientious, and more emotionally stable especially in their early adulthood (ages 18 – 25). Changes in personality traits are especially likely to happen in adolescence and early adulthood. It is believed that this is due to the facet that young people go through many transitions related to their developmental stages.

Love

People need love. Experiences of being important and meaningful give people opportunities to see themselves as whole beings also in their own inner world. Experience of self is built in relation to other people. It is especially important to surrender to be loved, to allow another person to love. Every encounter could be thought to include love. When working with people, it should be based on caring and willingness to interact respectfully with the other person. Viktor Frankl thinks that

loving is the only way of understanding the innermost core of another human's personality. Love can be considered to include all the other human values. Love is the expression of saying "yes" to life (Böschmeyer). Loving can become challenging when someone behaves in a way that the other one cannot understand or accept.

It may be difficult to tolerate situations in which a client, friend, or family member acts against our own values or seems to make wrong kind of choices. In these moments it is necessary to be tolerant and accept other people's rights to make their own choices regardless of whether they were right or wrong. With a respectful approach and appreciating human dignity, we can stress the importance of bearing responsibility, but we must not make choices on behalf of others and neither should we press into making decisions to comply with our wishes. In challenging moments it is important to remember everyone's uniqueness, recognise everyone's different history, notice the uniqueness of the moment, and understand what it will mean to the future – what kind of memory the encounter is likely to give. In interaction situations we are for the clients or family members and the challenges they have faced in their lives, not for getting the work done, for instance. Everyone acts in accordance with the skills and resources they have in their lives. Genuine communication is possible even in a hurry. Caring can be shown with small gestures and deeds in a moment. Do we dare to do our work as whole human beings and do we dare and want to surrender to our work lovingly?

Emphatic people want and are able to pay attention also to other people and respect their rights as much as their own. Empathy enables us to react even to other people's small gestures and facial expressions – we are able to feel other people's emotions, experiences, and still be able to help or be present. Emphatic people do not feel a need to submit other people to their own power. Quality education can thus dec-

rease sexual violence and promote equality between people. Empathy education should be increased considerably in the everyday lives of schools, health counselling services, and day care centres, because empathy skills are essential for sexuality. Without empathy skills people cannot face their own self and neither can they face another person sexually. (Kemppainen & Lajunen 2004; Tikkanen 2003; Skinnari 2004; Bildjuschkin & Ruuhilahti 2008).

Everyone's uniqueness is emphasised in pedagogical love, pedagogy, and honest desire to communicate with the learner. The uniqueness is not based on performances and taking an over-critical attitude to a certain kind of existence (Skinnari 2004).

Education

Education can be thought to mean many different things. In the Water Lily Model, sexuality education is divided into giving information, teaching, guidance, and counselling. The foundations of education can be thought to encompass spirituality, sense of responsibility, intentionality, and ability to know one's own boundaries. Education means supporting growth and giving guidance and it includes the educator's own personal growth. Education and thoughts about it are linked to the human concept and values, while these are related to all aspects of the Water Lily Model simultaneously as it is not possible to separate any single element from humanity. Based on these, people build their own ways of educating and growing. The human concept and educators' values determine their attitudes to those who are educating and influence their thoughts about the contents of sexuality education. Sexuality education is always subjective, not objective. Sexuality education is both conscious and subconscious: some matters are discussed, some are not. Choices are made also when some situations are not discussed or they are ignored. What kind of

matters do we consider important in sex education and why? What kind of matters or ways of educating are unnecessary, not worth considering, or even humbug? Whose needs guide sexuality education?

Humans educate by their whole existence and, in sexuality education, educators' most important duty is to bring up their own values and guidance concretely. Education does not succeed only by giving examples and information, but the educators must truly care for the matters and live up to their own values in the education. Educators' self-education is important in sexuality education. According to Schleifer (Pykäläinen), it is not possible to educate others without prior learning. Therefore, sexuality educators should continuously reflect on their own sexuality in terms of all the aspects of the water lily again and again. Sexuality educators should be aware of their own "materialising" attitudes and limitations. On the other hand, it is important to show mercy for oneself, and the relationship with oneself should be appreciative and loving.

Sexuality educators should live up to their values. This can support those who they are educating to search for their own meaningful values consciously and make them part of their lives. Dialogical sexuality education is telling and creating shared and individual stories. In educational situations, the emphasis is on confidentiality, openness, loyalty, and reciprocity. Pedagogical love (Skinnari 2007) urges to throw oneself into an open discussion with those who are being educated. This requires genuineness, being present in the moment as well as a warm and caring approach. In these moments, also the educators grow if they can allow that to happen.

Successful sexuality education enables learners to see different alternatives in the situations, reflect on these, and eventually make well-informed choices, which are generally positive, enhancing health and well-being. This kind of education has to be interactive: it is important to ask, listen to, and hear the

learners' thoughts. They are challenged to engage in dialogue and reflection so that a change in attitudes and views become possible. It is important to give time for reflection – to dare to allow silent moments in which thinking can flow freely. Ismo Aho writes in this doctoral dissertation (2011) that the process of teaching-studying-learning is an adventure with equal partners, teachers and students, participating in it. Social skills are then required of the teachers. The need for good interaction skills is emphasised in communication with students. This thought can be applied in all interaction.

Creativity and wisdom are intertwined in open discussion. We talk about wisdom when values are linked to subject matter and a synthesis is made of them (Humarniemi 2001). It is possible to change behaviour or health also by making use of humour. According to Guttman (1998), learning is easier and learners are more enthusiastic about learning when the material is presented in a humorous way. Communicative education is possible when neither party uses their images, needs or wishes to classify each other (Buber 1993). Discussion opens an opportunity to find latent wisdom. Discussion and open atmosphere support the growing of one's identity to become positive and self-reliant. This can contribute to building belief in one's own dignity, which makes it easier to take care of bodily integrity. Making choices and bearing the responsibility for the choices as well as the courage to want, hope, and express one's thoughts in matters related to sexuality become then possible.

Sexuality educators need a great deal of current and theory-based knowledge. They must also reflect on their own human concept, world view, and values in relation to the world view, human concept, and values of the subject matter. Educators must also respect the thoughts of those who they are educating. In addition to this knowledge, educators need intuitive, tacit knowledge, which is gained through experiences. Just like a water lily sucks into itself a lot of what is conscious

and subconscious from both itself and the environment and deals with the substances as it closes itself when it gets cold and dark, humans go through the same process in their own rhythm, sometimes more slowly, sometimes faster. Part of the knowledge is filtered into the subconscious and the past while part is built again opening a new perspective on the world and life.

According to Niikko (2001), teachers who are also researchers examine themselves and their thinking critically and strive to develop into a better direction. They are willing to learn about themselves, their work, and the surrounding reality by doing research (this is the so called scientifically oriented approach to working and thinking). If teachers do not reflect on and change their beliefs they have about the past, their future will reflect their past.

Sexuality education should develop the sense of values in those who they are educating and encourage them to realise virtues in acts. When interaction takes place in an accepting and allowing atmosphere, people learn to respect and appreciate themselves, they are able to cope with the challenges of life, and they dare to seek support from other people. Sexuality education should shed light and challenge to see beauty in the environment, sexuality, and themselves.

It is important to bear in mind that freedom is accompanied by responsibility. In sexuality and matters related to sexuality, doing well for oneself is not enough, as there is also a need to grow to listen to the conscience in order to make choices in which also other people are taken into consideration in addition to the time perspective. Choices are not made only from the perspective of the present moment. It is necessary to think about the longer-term consequences. Everyone's responsibility for the choices is life-long.

In modern society, we should take an open attitude to diversity and get along with other people. According to Heikkinen (2009) diversity should be seen as a matter contributing to progress in society. Communities degenerate without diversity and change.



5 Developmental tasks

(The lower petals of the water lily)

Developmental tasks, changes in humans' lives, can be examined in many ways. According to developmental psychologist Erik H. Erikson, negotiating a developmental task successfully makes it possible for us to negotiate the following task. On the other hand, failures make developmental tasks to accumulate, and then it is difficult to negotiate other developmental tasks either, if one task fails. The significance of developmental tasks varies by time period and culture. Theoreticians in different cultures agree on the fact that people experience changes throughout their lives without ever becoming ready. Sometimes changes cause problems that are solved more quickly, sometimes more slowly. There are times when growth and development seem to stop. Successful change, meeting challenges, takes time. Sometimes a developmental task may push the person even "backwards" in the development before it is possible to make progress again. At the moment of negotiating the developmental tasks, people contemplate their values and the meaning of life. This makes it possible to change direction and make changes in living conditions, when necessary.

Erikson created a psychological developmental theory of human development and life cycle, in which the biological, psychic, and social dimensions of the different life stages are integrated into a whole. For example, dealing with developmental crises of childhood has a direct impact on dealing with

later developmental crises. Success in earlier developmental stages helps in coping with later developmental crises and, correspondingly, failure makes it more difficult to master new developmental tasks.

Psychosocial developmental crises

Early Childhood – autonomy vs. shame and doubt

Small children learn to speak and to use language also in expressing their will. In parent-child struggles, children test their power. Children have to learn to practise their emotional control and flexibility. Leaving children alone with their disappointments may make them take a hostile attitude to themselves. Strong emotions of shame and doubt may cause also lack of consideration towards others. Trusting other people also in adult love and human relationships is based on how we have learned to trust others during our early interaction.

Play Age – initiative vs. guilt

Children learn many things in their lives by playing. Playing makes it possible to practise different social rules and act in accordance with gender roles and, at the same time, learn to play roles in which gender limits can be challenged and experimented. Playing makes it possible to practise adults' pursuits and experience sameness with adults. At this age for example transsexual people may already have a strong experience that their physical bodies do not correspond to the experienced gender. Playing contributes also to the growing of conscience and learning moral rules, a large part of which are learned. In fact children follow strictly for example the rules of plays. Successful interaction situations strengthen belief in coping skills and encourage activity. Feelings of guilt may make children feel inadequate, which can make them withdraw from the company of others. Do we take the initiative in sexuality or do we experience guilt? Can we make our sexual dreams come true in our adult relationships?

Early School Age – industry vs. inferiority

School-age children gain experiences of their own learning. School provides opportunities to do work, to be with others, and in a way to direct outwards from oneself while focusing on exploring the surrounding world. At its best, learning becomes a goal in itself, and school builds a strong role to the child, the role of a schoolboy or a schoolgirl.

Adolescence – identity vs. role confusion

In adolescence everything changes. Adolescents' bodies change much, and this change forces also the mind to change. It is necessary to build a new kind of relationship to one's own body, emotions, and thoughts, which have changed. The attitude of the environment to adolescents changes while adolescents are seeking their places as members of society. They have to find their own self among others – to be different enough, but at the same time similar to others. Young persons have to meet often conflicting expectations. In the middle of these expectations, they should find their genuine identity that is based on their own choices and listening to their own inner wisdom. While the changes are going on, it is sometimes difficult for adolescents to know who they are and where they are going to. If the problems are not solved successfully, adolescents may have to deal with conflicting roles, which may make them less self-directed and prevent them from gaining the experience of being whole persons, but alienated and unsettled.

Young Adulthood – intimacy vs. isolation

In young adulthood people want to be independent, needed, and worth loving. Many commit themselves to couple relationships or focus their energies on something that they experience meaningful. If it is not possible for young adults to find a balance between autonomy and dependence, they can get caught in a vicious circle, as they do not want to be alone or isolated from others because of their inability to maintain

human relationships. It is worth noting that, according to a Finnish study (Oranen), about 25 per cent of 18-25-year old women experience violence in their couple relationships. Corresponding men's statistics have not been studied much, but it has been estimated that the figures do not differ much (Törrönen 2009).

Middle Adulthood – generativity vs. stagnation

In middle adulthood people already know what they want. They are seen as generative people who do their best both in their working life and family life. Middle adulthood requires meeting many kinds of demands and being successful. Although creativity and productivity may contribute to a feeling of meaningfulness and purpose, adults at this age may also burn themselves out in the pressure of excessive demands. Experience of not being needed or feeling that one's life is meaningless, may depress. When the developmental task is negotiated successfully, adults are able to love and see their own meaning outside themselves.

Late Adulthood – (ego) integrity vs. despair

Late adulthood is the last period of time when it is possible to examine one's past. It is also possible to reflect on own experiences, accomplishments, choices, and their meaning. Late adulthood is a period of time when it is worth making a balance sheet of one's life: to reflect on what one has done and achieved and, on the other hand, go through what one could still offer to life and how to fulfil one's purpose. The past is past and it exists for ever. People maintain their integrity when they experience their lives valuable and see valuable, meaningful things also in their past. When reflecting on the past, it is useful to direct to the future because the past offers an opportunity to choose again in new ways. The experience of integrity is enhanced by a forgiving and merciful attitude. When old

people are longing for the past, they live in their memories that can no longer be changed. Living here and now offers opportunities to take a stand on the past and choose at least one's attitude to the future. In late adulthood at the latest, death becomes a matter of concern. Life is a gift for those who understand their mortality and accept it. When the purpose in life is seen to be fulfilled and life is seen to be ready at the moment of death, ego integrity can be maintained and death is accepted without despair.



6 The Dimensions of Human Sexuality (The petals of the flower)

Human sexuality starts when human life begins and ends when life ends. Humans are thus sexual throughout their whole lives, and love makes also children dignified human beings. Appreciative and respectful love promotes the growth as sexual human beings. Humans become never 'ready' and human sexuality never ceases to change either. Humans grow, develop, and change from the moment of birth until their death. Humans feel, want to be accepted and loved and they also want to take care of their family and friends. Humans have the ability to love and hate – feel emotions – as long as they live.

Humans' sexual dimensions are biological, physical or anatomic, spiritual, ethical, psychological, cognitive, cultural, and social. The complex human sexuality as a whole is shaped by these dimensions shape. Human sexuality (and its dimensions) is affected by at least the life course and moments related to it, places of living, cultures in which they live, age, and dimensions of health.

Each human's sexuality is unique, and it is not possible to define or determine other people's sexuality on their be-

half. Sexuality is an experiential matter. The right to make the decision on one's own sexuality belongs to the human rights. Sexual identity and self-image mature slowly. Adult sexuality does not begin until after the 20th year of age. Even after that sexuality continues to develop and it never becomes ready. Humans transfer what they have discovered and experienced to the following generations. The development of every member of the community or family influences also other people around them. Sexuality is good enough for all those who are able to respect also the sexual rights of others. Sexuality may be accompanied by sex, but sex is not a prerequisite for sexuality. On the other hand, sex may be accompanied by sexual intercourse but it is not necessary or possible for all people.

“Sexual versatility becomes apparent in its historical and cultural variations. In different countries and different times, different meanings have been linked to sexuality and even in different parts of a country matters related to sexuality are experienced in different ways. What living is like as a non-heterosexual person and what opportunities are offered to one's own life vary by place of living. The versatility is increased by the fact that many other factors are intertwined with sexuality: socioeconomic, religious, cultural, and health-related factors, and possibly also factors related to being handicapped build adolescents' and young adults' way of seeing their possibilities and themselves as sexual human beings.” (Lehtonen 2006.)

Sexual versatility includes also the fact that human sexuality may be directed toward men, women, both men and women, more toward men than women or the other way round, or toward neither gender. The versatility is increased by the fact that humans' sexual orientation may vary in different layers of sexuality, for example sexual feelings and fantasies, sexual behaviour, love and couple relationships, and what humans think they are like sexually (Lehtonen 1997; 1998a). Humans may have non-heterosexual feelings and heterosexual

behaviour simultaneously. The concepts overlap and they do not cover everything.

Physical, Anatomic, Bodily, and Biological Dimensions

Sexuality is tied to our bodies. Our bodies function with the help of many hormones and part of these hormones contribute to sexual pleasure and, on the other hand, they are catalysts to desire. Many hormones and reactions in bodies are linked with love. The starting of a new life is also a bodily event: the merging of two human cells produces much in at least three persons – the biological parents and the child to be born. The body and its physiological functions are, however, inadequate in explaining sexuality, love, desire, and passion. It is often thought that sexuality and the matters related to it are of biological origins, which means that humans are seen to be inextricably linked with their biology. Sexuality is natural when the purpose is reproduction. Stressing the importance of biological differences, women's and men's desire is seen to be of different kind and magnitude. These matters are often thought to be natural and normal. However, humans are more than their biology: they are able to master their instincts and drives instead of being mastered by them. However, we have to remember that natural and normal matters take shape in accordance with the historical period of time and development. For example, we do not cook food at campfires in Finland and there are many who resort to ready-made meals bought from shops and heated in microwave ovens, and we can then reflect on whether it is normal and natural.

Biological, physical, anatomic, and bodily dimensions are important to sexual growth. We gain experiences, feel, think, and are directed sexually in our bodies. All bodily functions influence us and our psychosocial and spiritual dimensions in the same way as the dimensions mentioned above and the matters happening in them influence the other dimensions.

Sexuality and bodies are closely intertwined in Western societies. Bodies, biology, and physiology and their links to sexuality are tied to the matters, people, and culture of our environment. Our self-concepts and images of our bodies are born in complex interaction patterns with other people. In order to be able to find ourselves as well as our bodies and our sexuality as members of our own community, we must be able to evaluate ourselves in relation to other people, general norms, and our self-concept and the prevailing norms. Both internally and externally self-image, self-esteem, and identity (just like sexual self image, self-esteem and identity) are built to a great extent through the bodily dimension. The origin of all that is said, written, and done is our bodies. Postures, gestures, expressions, and the way we move convey culture-oriented information. One glance may be enough for drawing many conclusions about other people's thoughts and emotions. It is estimated that we spend almost a quarter of our time on social relationships, contacts with other persons. We long for touching and being visible, which becomes obvious when we think about the large number of alternative treatments based on touch. Humans seek a connection between their bodies and minds throughout their lives.

We need touching in order to feel good and develop, to perceive our bodies, and to find our sexuality. We also need touching in order to understand the boundaries of our bodies. Instead of the strict stereotypes of bodily expressions, touching provides an opportunity to seek ourselves and our bodily expressions as we grow older, gain different experiences, and face challenges brought by life (pregnancy, illness, injury etc.). Then it becomes possible to seek support from or challenge the sexual cultures that influence us and our bodies, such as the mainstream society, subcultures, family-related cultures, and friends.

Even in childhood we should be taught to listen to our own bodies and cherish our bodies as part of ourselves. We

need the environment to provide us with mirrors, but definitely not to provide guidelines. We need not be ashamed of our good, secure, and familiar bodies and therefore we can demand that our bodies should be looked at and touched in a dignified and respectful way. People who are satisfied with themselves provide positive experiences through touch. We feel the experiences of success and sexual pleasure in our bodies, which supports our holistic well-being and enriches our lives. Those who have the experience of being beautiful and regard their bodies as integral parts of their selves dare to listen to the messages of their bodies, make use of their bodies in many different areas of life and present their own persons even as a tool for art. (Svennevig 2005.)

Today people seek integrity, authenticity, and immediate connection to the basic power of life (Puhakainen 2002). If we have ignored our relationship with our own spiritual dimension and our bodies do not provide protection, we may start treating other people as a means of fulfilling our own needs in order to feel alive and cope with the feeling of emptiness. Then we may also begin to see the rest of the world for example so that we are the same as our work, couple relationship or sexual relationship.

Bodies separated from our selves are vulnerable to abuse and infringements of bodily boundaries. Bodies that are empty and shattered, belonging to no one have to be made visible even through self-destruction (cutting, risk-seeking behaviour, using drugs). Pain ensures existence, and pain is easier to tolerate than inner emptiness. Emptiness and experience of not being loved makes it also possible to infringe other people's bodily integrity. Sexual satisfaction and submission enables people to experience some kind of connection to themselves and their emotions for a moment. Ego detached from own bodies can be large, but at the same time extremely fragile. People who do not appreciate themselves or consider their bodies valuable cannot require respect of other people either. People

who do not feel worth loving are not able to demand bodily integrity and they do not see themselves in a merciful light either. People who feel inferior may experience loneliness and, in risk situations, become easily victims of potential abusers. Then there may be someone who touches and admires close to the person who feels worthless, although the price would be a sexual act infringing on bodily integrity.

People, children in particular, show their emotional states, anxiety, and shyness through their postures and then they are also vulnerable to sexual abuse. Our bodies do not forget their experiences, although our active minds may do that. Our bodies do not forget our emotions or sexual experiences, although our active minds would do that. We cannot force our bodies to forget. On the other hand, symptoms may often be the best possible effort to solve a situation that is not normal by resorting to the means that we find in ourselves. Symptoms may also be a cry for help and, at the same time, show that the internal search has not ended – humans seek answers to their questions about humanity and the meaning of life.

Humans are physical, psycho-social, and spiritual entities. Through touch it is possible to touch also other dimensions. Touch builds a connection between the external and internal realms. We can relax, balance, and decrease the emotions of anger and anxiety by touching. (Svennevig 2005.)

The Psychological Dimension

Emotions are an important part of humanity. Humans' reactions are not based only on instincts and drives, as emotions influence how they feel and communicate. Emotions help to cope in dangerous situations, direct attention, help to remember and learn, give information on important social relationships, promote helping behaviour, strengthen belonging to own groups, and make the prevailing roles in groups clearer. However, making use of emotions and their positive

characteristics requires an effective control system (Kokkonen & Kinnunen 2008).

Many different kinds of emotions are linked to sexuality. Emotions and thoughts about sexuality are linked to time, culture, and the place of living. Sexual emotions are aroused when the emotions are perceived to be sexual. Sexual emotions and experiences accumulate as the result of various emotions when we observe our environment and interact with other people. Internal emotions may be aroused when we notice for example sexual desire in ourselves. Desire arouses various kinds of emotions, which may be for example fear, anxiety, shame, guilt, joy, happiness, enjoyment, tranquillity, and relaxation

Emotions are linked to humans' thoughts and experiences of sexuality. These thoughts are built in close interaction with the environment in which we live. We learn to react with certain emotions, although the same situation and environment may cause different emotions in different individuals. However, we decide eventually ourselves what kind of relationship we build with sexuality and what kind of meanings we give to sexuality and the thoughts and emotions caused by it. Since our early childhood we have learned to practise emotional control in our lives. Sometimes this causes big problems and, when the control is lost, often leads to unintended behaviour or result.

Emotional control has a genetic and neurological basis. In neurobiology, emotions and their control are in continuous interaction with each other, as they take place side by side in the same brain structures. The frontal lobe and the limbic system play the central role, but also the cerebellum (little brain) contributes to the control, although its role is still partially unknown. It is, however, possible to draw conclusions about the importance of the cerebellum to emotional control as for example an illness or an injury in the cerebellum causes many kinds of problems in emotional control. (Ibid.)

The amyglada is known to be an important factor in controlling and evaluating emotions. For example messages from the amyglada are conveyed to the autonomous nervous system and the system consisting of the hypothalamus, pituitary gland, and adrenal gland, in which the messages cause physiological responses, such as the heartbeat, blood pressure, and an increase in the cortisol content of blood in frightening situations. It is harmful to health, if emotional control continuously fails to neutralise these physiological responses aroused by negative emotions. Also genes are known to be linked to emotional control. (Ibid.)

It is thought that temperament is partly genetic, and it is known to be linked to emotional control and ways of reacting. Temperament influences the occurrence of certain types of emotions. However, emotional control is not only physiological but develops in interactive situations. Parents' behaviour and ways of expressing emotions act as guides to different ways of reacting in different situational contexts – where and how emotions are shown. Parents also teach and name children different emotions and ways of reacting. Positive expressions of emotions, also parents' receptive, sensitive, and accepting attitude to the child and an amicable couple relationship serve to support their children's emotional control. Although the family plays the central part in the development of emotional control, the influence of professional educators and friends should not be underestimated.

Relationships with friends become especially important in adolescence. In these relationships, adolescents practise dealing with disappointment, competition, similarity, and belonging to groups without losing their own personality. Personality is a comprehensive concept that can be defined as the collection of the traits that are unique to an individual. "Personality includes the person's whole world view, self-concept, self-esteem, values, character, and temperament. It develops throughout

the individual's lifetime in interaction with the environment and it directs the individual's all action." (Uusikylä 1996.

Studies show that emotions are very important for people's health. Dwelling on negative emotions and suppressing emotions is particularly harmful. Emotional control strategies vary by age and also by gender. In their emotional control, women resort to social support, eating, sleeping, and passive avoidance more than men. On the other hand, men control their emotions more actively for example by means of alcohol, sex, humour, and pleasant hobbies (Kokkonen & Kinnunen 2008).

Sexuality should offer people experiences of being good enough, positive sexuality without shame or guilt. Denying and avoiding sexuality often causes a vicious circle in which sexuality is always present, as the focus is on one's own navel and the other parts of humanity suffer. Sexuality is part of a human, but it should not put everything else in anyone's life in the shade. At the same time it is a very intimate part of human life, which makes people vulnerable, and therefore it should be handled with silk gloves. Being insulted in the sexual dimension has much influence on health in general – health often collapses also in all other dimensions. An insult leads to emotions that are often difficult to cope with and handle. To a certain extent, these emotions are based on the mythical attitudes and assumptions of the community and they can be either strengthened or belittled in the community. It is important to remember that, although the events as such are past as soon as they have happened, the emotions remain and are remembered in the present moment until the person has dealt with them and got over them completely (Böschmeyer).

Sexuality and emotions are often reflected on through sex or negation. Sexuality is frequently assumed to belong to the physical dimension. The purpose of the Water Lily Model is to bring up the positive opportunity that sexuality provides. Se-

xuality provides an opportunity to gain experiences of life and humanity as a beautiful area of human life that is supported by positive emotions enhancing creative power. As for their emotions, all people are different and unique and good enough. This should be understood in the health care system

Although people would have learned to suppress their emotions in childhood, it is possible to learn to feel emotions and deal with them, but it requires that the persons themselves and the community work on them (for example how emotions can be expressed publicly, if children are taught to feel and deal with emotions in educational institutions etc.). It is possible to break the inheritance between generations and change these matters, but it requires that we have the courage to experiment with new approaches and that guidance and support are developed in sex education. Today all people should be provided opportunities to find their own strengths and joy of life. Then it is possible to get rid of the oppressive gender stereotypes and find individual and versatile sexuality, which enhances health and well-being and makes people feel good.

The Spiritual Dimension

The spirituality of sexuality means building a relationship to one's own sexuality: it is necessary to contemplate the ethicality of sexuality, listen to one's genuine conscience, and surrender to be carried by life also in one's own sexuality. In the presence of the spiritual dimension, sexuality is seen as a creative force and beauty – humans are then at the core of life. Sexuality does not appear driven by market forces and it is not defined by the amount of sexual desire. Expressions of sexuality, the soul of sexuality (Moore 2003), emerge everywhere. When we understand the beauty of sexuality, we become aware of the uniqueness of every moment and the fact that the moment is different to everyone. In the spiritual dimension we can take a stand on our sexuality so that we tolerate and

understand other people's differences without experiences of being threatened by them.

The spiritual dimension includes also imagination, creativity, responsibility, moral responsibility, sense of humour, and freedom of choice (Graber 2004). These are needed in expressing sexuality, in love and sexual interaction.

When the spiritual dimension is used, the human ego disappears at the moment of the sexual act. In sexual interaction people merge and gain a momentary experience of a higher force and holiness. The spiritual dimension provides with resources to maintain and to regain health (Fabry 1987). Should this dimension actually be in the centre of sexuality?

The Cultural and Social Dimension

Sexuality is a strongly culture-oriented matter. What is right and accepted in some part of the world, is forbidden elsewhere. In the same way as history proceeds, ideas of what is accepted and not-accepted undergo changes.

Cultural and moral rules regulate the showing of sexuality. In many countries women's sexuality is seen as a threat and a controllable matter. In the same way in many countries the building and showing of gender is controlled. Although the human concept would otherwise include a thought that humans are physical-psychosocial-spiritual entities, the matters related to sexuality and gender are returned to the concept of humans as biological bodies. The need to standardise and determine humans to be exactly a certain kind takes place in homes, educational institutions, media, and health care services. The norms and requirements of a certain kind of sexuality cause anxiety and stress leading to many kinds of problems in people's lives. If the permission to steer their own sexuality is dependent on other people's assessment, people are not present in their own sexuality.

Elisabeth Lukas (1985) tells how a German historian contemplated sexuality from the perspective of different eras. It was typical of the eras that, when sexuality emerged as a difficult matter and increased ill-being, the style of dressing became more transparent.

We can think about who and what function strict norms serve in the showing of sexuality and gender. Do the strict norms provide protection or are they used for classification, discrimination, and being left outside groups, with other people determining their humanity instead of own internal experiences? Don't people who know themselves and are connected to their selves as whole human beings (for example in accordance with the physical-psycho-social-spiritual human concept) provide other people opportunities to grow to become the kind of persons who they already are? Then the importance of humans and humankind to other people is strengthened and, at the same time, all people's approach to life outwards from themselves is enhanced – meaning and purpose are born in interaction with other people when others are seen as genuine, unique humans. Martin Buber expressed this as follows: "I become I through you."

The expression and control of emotions are guided strongly by both the people who are present and the cultural atmosphere. Culture is linked to the place of living, historical time period, degree of industrialisation, and environmental conditions. The cultural climate can change even quickly, for example as the result of environmental catastrophes. When Western countries were industrialised, people's lives became "easier". It is no longer necessary to fight for survival. Survival is easier and less time is needed for acquiring food than before. This has given more time to contemplate and reflect on oneself (Airaksinen 1999). In the same way people have had time to set goals for themselves that extend even far into the future. The importance of money has become stressed and the speed

of living has accelerated so that nowadays the challenges in survival are different than for example a few centuries earlier. At the same time, people are still fighting against hunger and severe conditions. The cultural conditions are versatile, but so are also the social conditions.

Rootlessness that is typical of Western societies and virtualisation in social relationships form a big contrast. The social environment may be formed by only the selected few people who are close and, on the other hand, relatives living in different countries may be in regular contact with each other and form a safety network of their own for support. The social and cultural conditions take their shape in accordance with laws and unwritten rules which set norms to our ideas of what is right and wrong, what is accepted and not accepted. On the one hand, these written and unwritten rules take shape in the mainstream culture, on the other hand, smaller social networks - for example friends, families, religions, and schools - have their own rules.

The perception of the versatility of sexuality is limited by heteronormative ways of thinking. Heteronormative thinking model includes the idea of all people being either women or men and automatically heterosexual (see Butler 1990). Gender groups are seen as internally similar but contradictory to each other, with men and masculinity being seen as more valuable than women and femininity. Also the thought about the biological body contributes to building the norm. Heteronormativity is directed to all people limiting people's opportunities for action. Boys are expected to behave in a certain way and girls in a different way. Certain matters are allowed to girls and forbidden to boys. Non-heterosexual people and transsexual young people may be forgotten altogether or they may be seen as problems. (Lehtonen 2006.)

Heteronormative thinking and the control linked to it are obstacles to building close human relationships. Closeness,

tenderness, and different ways of showing friendship may be sexualised and therefore also these important experiences are hindered. The thought about closeness between two boys may be considered doubtful. Also certain kinds of ways of moving and styles of dressing may cause doubt about the persons' sexual orientation and may cause problems in creating close human relationships. On the other hand, friendship between a boy and a girl may be interpreted to be heterosexual, which can be an obstacle to friendship, as the interpretation is made too early if it is question of for example children at lower comprehensive school. A boy's and a girl's friendship may also be interpreted to infringe on the gender roles, in which case the partners of the friendship may become targets for bullying and for example the boy may be given a homo label if he is feminised on the basis of the friendship. (Lehtonen 2003b).

For non-heterosexual adolescents, trans-adolescents and part of the heterosexually-oriented adolescents, heteronormativity may cause loneliness and lead to attempts to prove their coping skills for example by exaggerating school success. This may be linked to personality traits, but it may emerge also in the form of attempts to escape the anxiety-ridden everyday life: when the focus is on only one thing, it is not necessary to take the trouble to think for example about human relationships and own sexuality. Some of the non-heterosexual persons strive to fulfil the assumption of heterosexuality by engaging in heterosexual relationships. It is tragicomic that, while living among heteronormative people, non-heterosexual people have to reflect on their own sexuality and take a stand on it, whereas people who are considered heterosexual have seldom even thought about their own sexuality, sexual orientation, and its significance to themselves (Bildjuschkin & Ruuhilahti 2010).

Sexual orientation and building heterosexuality begins as early as before school age and continues especially when children go to school. Bullying, calling names, isolation,

and the other methods that are used at schools to undermine the self-esteem and humanity of some students and to build the self-esteem and humanity of others have their effects on these people. Part of the students drop out, change schools or classes, suffer from depression, self-destructiveness, eating and sleeping disorders, couple relationship and sex problems, or a broken image of their own sexuality, gender, and body immediately or later on in their lives (Owens 1998).



7. The Core of Sexuality

(The centre of the water lily)

The core of the water lily is humanity, which is shaped from everything in the water lily model. A human grows “another one” in every moment. Every moment makes humans different and new. Humans are made different from others by their shortcomings and deficiencies. Humans form a whole when different deficiencies complete each other. The result is more than the sum of the parts. In humans’ core, health can be thought to be searching for the meaning of life. What meaning does my sexuality have and what are my values like when I am rebuilding my sexuality? What kind of value do I give to other people and their sexuality? This core builds meanings and chooses values and meanings from a subjective perspective. A choice made in a moment and its meaning is not necessarily understandable or visible. It may be understood afterwards. In Carl Jung’s words, “Humans can cope with the most unbelievable difficulties when they are convinced that there is sense in them.”

Humans want to be loved and, in the lack of it, admired or, in the lack of it, feared or, in the lack of it, detested and despised. Humans want to arouse some sort of feeling in other people. The soul is afraid of a vacuum and seeks connection at any price.” (Hjalmar Söderberg 2006.)

The ability to distance from oneself grows and develops in the core of humanity. We need other people in order to grow and to be able to fulfil our whole selves and live in accordance with our values. The significance of community spirit and connection is emphasized in our growth to our own kind of human beings.

Incompleteness is human, and when we are striving for a better, good enough humanity, we must be merciful to both ourselves and our fellow citizens.

Human growth continues as long as we live. Reflectivity is one way to define critically the foundation and starting points of our action as well as to consider the consequences of the action. This enables both individuals and communities to get rid of routines and enhances their willingness to grow and learn.



8. Life Course and Continuous Change (Water)

In the Water Lily Model, water represents the life course and continuous change in human life. Life floats humans. In the challenges of life, in stormy water, the stem of the water lily is flexible giving space to the flower to move. On the other hand, calm water reflects the flower beautifully onto the surface to be seen at least by the flower itself. We see the change of seasons and the passing of time in water. As time passes, water may occupy more space covering ground under it – life expands and finds new routes in order to move on and to provide living space for new water lilies. Sometimes water becomes cloudy or is dried up because of pollution or other matters that put a strain on the water. Also humans' lives may be burdened and, even when the flower may still look beautiful and the surface of the water seems to be calm, there may already be a crisis under the surface.

Sexuality may also be questioned and the whole person may face challenges, which may make it necessary to take a stand on everything in life, values, and meaningfulness of life. It may be necessary to find new ways to express sexuality or sexuality must be protected and pushed to the background. There may also be big and positive changes when water brings nutrition to the water lily or forms a haven in which the water lily can grow and flourish. This means that sexuality can have a greater meaning than some other area in our lives. This sexuality may be discovered in inspiration, joy of creativity, experience of own body as a home, or deep human relationships.

Water – the stream of life that carries humans in the course of life through changes and events – is needed. There would be no water lily either without it. Water floats us and living may feel calm, peaceful, perhaps stagnant. Even then the water lily is moving slowly and the flower leaves a trace into the water affecting the whole area of water. At times, water carries the flower in a strong stream or in whirls. The speed may feel even too fast, but, in most cases, the speed is slowed down when the rapids have been shot or they have been left behind. In the middle of a storm the flower has a hard time. As the stem of the flower is flexible and strong, the flower follows the movement of the waves and is capable of weathering quite heavy storms. Even though the flower would be dirty and torn and would have lost part of its petals, it has weathered the storm and gradually new growth and flourishing can start.

Water represents also the limitations of human life. What our lives can become depends for example on the place of living, health, illness, or social conditions. These are matters that we cannot change, although we would like to do that. They determine what choices we can make in our lives and how we can make the choices. In a way they are barriers.

There is a rhythm in our lives. Day follows night, and a developmental task is always followed by another one. Things

happen rhythmically also in our bodies. There is a rhythm related to controlling our emotions, feelings, and memories. We breathe rhythmically – in and out. We work and rest. Our lives are full of different changes which continue until we die. Then humans are their most prepared.

The appearance of the water lily reflects the rhythm. The four seasons make the flower look different in its appearance. After flourishing in summer, the water lily languishes and prepares itself for resting in winter. When the sun starts to warm the water in spring, also the water lily wakes up in order to grow and flourish again. This rhythm is slow. The water lily reacts also to the day/night cycle. In the daytime the flower is open and exposed to everything new; it has opened itself to daily and future events. The flower closes up for the night in order to rest and to protect itself from the cold. During this rest, the flower deals with the events of the day and “filters” its experiences and issues. At dawn, the flower opens up again. This opening creates always a new unique flower, although it would look the same to the outsiders.

Sometimes we change slowly, but there is still change, although it would happen without our noticing it ourselves. Daily events are processed during the sleep and after that we open up to the new moment again unique and different than before. As the result of every matter and event, our lives change and we are always provided new kind of opportunities to get hold of the future. Even in crises, the process of opening and closing is going on. When the crises are at their worst, we close up and, when we have reflected on the matters and found our values and the meaningfulness of our lives, we open up again in order to shine in our own lives, being open to everything.

Changes can be classified and understood in many ways. In the Water Lily Model, humans are seen to have a momentary meaning, the meaning of the life stage, and the basic meaning of life (Frankl 1986). A momentary meaning occurs

to us suddenly and we may or may not seize it. Momentary meanings could be the choices of being alone or tolerating longing for tenderness or getting closeness although our own health would be at stake, or for example whether we allow sexual pleasures to ourselves or refuse them, whether we love or let love pass by.

Our choices can be right or wrong. Also not making a choice is a choice. We must bear the responsibility for our choices; even a small choice can have a big effect on the future. The tasks of personal growth and development at different ages are the meaning of the life stages. The living of every life stage is important, every stage is as precious, and sexuality appears to be different at these stages. As people make different choices in crises, their life course becomes different, unique also from the perspective of sexuality. There is no right solution or method in expressing and acting on our own sexuality. The basic meaning of life is that our lives are part of some larger entity. What the entity is cannot be fully understood or dealt with. Life is searching for a solution to this mystery, living our own meaningful lives.

Every change or crisis in a life situation makes us reflect on ourselves and our relationships with the surrounding world and the changed situation. Although a change would be necessary and hoped for, giving up the old is a loss and the emotions accompanying the loss must be worked on and lived. The change may be dramatic and even painful, because illness, death of a family member, or divorce may transform this person's world particularly dramatically and for a long time. We need then time for grieving and working on emotions as well as support from the people close to us: We need also a permission and space to let the emotions just be there. When we give up the old, we can hope that we dare and in a way are able to withdraw in order to protect ourselves, to meet the challenge and take the time to reflect on ourselves, sexuality in a new

light. It is necessary to give time to sorrow and getting used to it. We cannot force ourselves to forget. In the course of the change process, thoughts occur to us, which help us to look for answers on our own and together with others with the community acting as a mirror: Am I good enough? Am I sufficient? What is my value as a human being? What is the meaning of my life? When we succeed in solving the crisis that has resulted from the change, we experience that our lives as meaningful and, in the crystallisation of values, it is possible to find the will to fulfil the meaning of life. What kind of psychological challenges do we face on the way from infancy to adulthood? And how do the challenges influence our lives later on?



9 The Past – the Present – the Future

In the Water Lily Model, human sexuality is perceived also through the passage of time. All people have their past, present, and future. In the model, the past is under the surface. The past is important in terms of our thoughts and experiences of our selves, others, and the world. We can have both pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Many of these experiences provide opportunities to make different choices in the future. We can look at our past and realise that we do not want to experience again something that happened in the past. At the present moment we can choose to change a chain of events that we have been used to. On the other hand, in spite of our decision we may choose in the same way as we have chosen before and, consequently, have to experience everything again unless we happen to avoid it through a twist of fate. Every moment is unique and at every moment we make choices.

At the moment, we are here and now. The past is preserved. It always exists. The moments we have experienced and

lived exist. Our active memory forgets at least some of them quickly but they may still have influence. In crises, life changes, strokes of luck, or any such events, our past may come to the surface and what was forgotten may influence everything here and now. In the Water Lily Model, the past is under the surface full and complete. The changing weather, organisms living in the water as well as environmental factors make the water around the water lily move, and thus our past experiences change and “change places”. Change is caused also by the choices we make in the present. The choices made are already in our past, and the new past keeps arranging the old past always in a new way. We build stories of our lives on our own and together with others. The story must feel true both to us and others. The feeling of being true is often described as a feeling that speaks to the readers or listeners of the story on the basis of what they have experienced themselves in their lives. Becoming convinced of the truthfulness of a story is a more holistic experience than becoming convinced of the truth of a statement (Heikkinen 2001). Therefore communication with people, listening to, and hearing their stories are important.

Especially children’s and adolescents’ ideas of sexuality, tenderness, and love are built from the ideas and teachings (including hidden curricula). Is sexuality an acceptable part of human beings or is it troubled by guilt, shame, and disappointments? There is a big difference if sexuality is seen as sexual accomplishments or as a comprehensive life force that can emerge for example in the form of creativity in everyday life, skills of being close, or experiencing sexuality as part of life so that one person is able to fuse with another person. It is thus possible to find deep sexuality that we want to enhance. Knowing experiences of the past makes it possible to predict future choices, but the past does not necessarily tell about what people are at the moment or what they will become.

Also genes are known to be important for humans' temperament; physiology regulates sexual desire but humans build the uniqueness of their lives with their choices. The past experiences of identical twins are not identical and neither are their life courses, although they would have the exactly similar genotype and the environment could also look similar through other people's eyes. Life may have been aggravated by many experiences of the past and people may start to live as if they were living in the past while being afraid of the future. In these situations we often need something that helps those people to lift up their eyes from the past. Other people are needed for this. They are people who with their own presence and support make people trust and experience that the present is secure and the future is possible. We do not get drowned into the experiences of the past (the water lily does not get "drowned") when we surrender and start floating on the stream of life, get hold of the empowering life buoy in the present, and find again a meaning for our lives. Life starts to show its meaningful aspects. These life buoys can be close people, other people helping us, passing of time, an unknown person's smile, or even a word heard on TV. This may start the building of trust again and the opening of the petals of the water lily little by little.

The opening does remove past events, but it provides us with an experience that we are more the events we have experienced and the emotions resulting from them. With a respectful approach and open, sensitive and genuine presence it is possible to do much. There are also moments that just have to be tolerated, in which the client or friend makes a choice that is different than the choice hoped for. A merciful approach to the past makes it possible to take responsibility now and in every moment.

The present is the most important moment of life. The past provides a perspective on the choices. When we distance ourselves from the matter that is being reflected on, we see

it from a wider perspective instead of being directed only by emotions, for instance. When we think about what and what kind of choices we make, we make more sensible decisions. In choice situations, distance may make it easier to appreciate ourselves, others, and mercifulness – what we do is done as a reaction to an exceptional situation or often for someone else's good. Also the choices that we make for our own good are often good also for others, although the meaningfulness might be seen only much later.

It is possible to find solutions also in difficult situations when life poses us challenges. It is said that humans do not learn until we are forced to do it. Sexuality is intertwined with growing and maturing. We have to take a stand on many questions, and relationships with other people may be both supportive and suppressive. Sometimes the future does not become possible in the present until we are prepared to give up. Giving up is the beginning of something new. It is difficult to give up also ill feelings, pain, and aches. Despite their awfulness, oppressive feelings, pain, and aches are somehow familiar and safe to us. Letting go of them or accepting them as part of everyday life opens us to new still unfamiliar experiences, thoughts, and emotions.

At the present moment it is important to examine carefully our choices and the direction of our eyes: are we looking to the past or the future and how we choose the future. With a future-oriented attitude to life it is possible to feel satisfied and gain the experience of being able to influence our lives. We can lead harmonious lives instead of being accidentally tossed by the fate. As an essential part of it, the attitude to life includes ethical considerations: what I want from life and what I can offer to life (for example for work, human relationship, and creative activities). It is also important to consider what the motives are for our choices and if we are motivated by selfishness or love.

The future falls on people in the form of dew, nourishing droplets of water. The future opens up in new opportunities every single moment. The future is formed by choices. Some of the opportunities are verifiable by evidence, but there are many opportunities to be chosen every moment. When we choose one opportunity, the others cannot be chosen. We can make right or wrong choices, but when we bear responsibility for our choices, we can take a stand on the choices and live with our choices while being merciful to ourselves – no one is perfect, but everyone is sufficient. Taking a stand makes it possible to forgive - ourselves and others. Forgiving provides an opportunity for gratitude. Gratitude shows us a full life here and now. We need dreams but, just like living in the past, living in the distant future prevents us from living in the moment.

Life is not fair in the sense that we could get all the good things we imagine other people to have. Our lives are not our own, and every life has a unique meaning of its own. Everyone is needed. It is important to see life as a whole. We live in this world together with nature and other people. If we think about and focus on ourselves and our own benefits all the time, we fail to notice much. Perhaps gazing our own navels also emphasises small unpleasant things – they may become big problems, storms in water glasses. The Water Lily Model urges to open up to the future. We can live in the moment directing our eyes up to the sky and trusting life.



10 Questions Posed by Sexuality to Humans

(Drops)

Sexuality includes many different things. Irrespective of the life stage, age, and other limitations, we can think that sexuality touches humans in the same way as the beautiful drops of

morning dew. When all the different colours fuse, the result is white – clean, unique, beautiful canvases, on which we can paint our lives, our sexuality. We can also think differently: the whiteness of the water lily is reflected onto the sky in all rainbow colours taking a stand on currently important matters in an appropriate way. Part of the dew drops fall on the water lily, part of them are transformed into water circulating to the sky again and again different and still similar as they are filtered through the dimensions of sexuality.

Questions on Sexual Growth

Roots

Where does your family come from?

What has been thought about sexuality in your family before you?

What has been told you about it?

What is your human concept?

What values are related to your sexuality?

How are these values realised in your life?

Stem

Do you feel safe and loved?

Do you have an experience of being healthy enough?

Do you have an experience of living in the right kind of body and in the way you like best?

What does your gender mean to you?

How is your gender shown?

How do you experience your gender?

How do you express your feelings?

Green leaves

Love

What kind of love do you long for?

What kind of love do you get?

What kind of love do you want to share?

Who and what do you love?

What kind of thoughts does pedagogical love arouse
in your mind?

What feelings are related to love?

In what part of your body do you feel love?

How do you express love?

What is love?

Virtues

Do virtues play a role in your life?

How do you cultivate each of your values in your life?

How could you enhance the cultivation of virtues in your
work, your life?

What does sexuality look like when it is seen from
the perspective of virtues?

B5

What do personality traits mean in terms of human sexuality?

What kind of traits do you have?

How do you pay attention to people with different traits
in your work, in your own environment?

Education

Is there a need for more sex education?

What kind of issues should sex education deal with?

Who should be given sex education?

How do you give sex education?

Do you allow yourself to grow in addition to being educated?

What and who give you sex education?

Developmental tasks

What kind of memories, thoughts, and feelings do you have about different life stages and sexuality?

How has your sexuality changed?

What kind of bad and good experiences do you have of sexuality?

Have your experiences influenced your ideas of sexuality?

How?

How do you see people's sexuality in different stages of development?

Dimensions of Sexuality

Physical

What is your body like?

What is your attitude to your body?

What kind of touching do you like?

What is sexual in your body?

How and where does sexual pleasure feel?

What must not be touched in your body?

Is it easy for you to protect your right to bodily integrity?

How is sexuality shown and expressed in the body?

Psychological, Social, Cultural

What kind of feelings does sexuality arouse in you?

How do sexuality and the matters related to it feel?

What kind of assumptions do you have concerning sexuality?

What kind of things have you learned to be related to sexuality?

What kind of stereotypes are there in your society?

Do they enhance humans' well-being or not?

Have you reflected on your sexual orientation?

Do you respect others' bodily integrity?

How do different feelings and thoughts related to sexuality affect your life or other people's lives?
What kind of attitudes do different cultures take to sexuality?
What meanings are given to sexuality in different cultures?

Spiritual

What kind of images does sexuality arouse in you?
When you have been walking in the countryside or in a town or city, has it ever occurred to you to think of the scenery from the perspective of sexuality, reflecting on how sexuality is present everywhere?
What is your creativity like?
What is sexual creativity?
What does taking responsibility mean on the personal level in the matters that are related to sexuality?
And what about your work – how do sexuality and responsibility belong together?
When was the last time when you laughed at sexuality?
Do you enjoy your sexuality?
Are we allowed to laugh at sexuality?
What kind of moral directs your sexuality?

Humanity

What meaning does your sexuality have?
What are your values in your fulfilling your sexuality?
What do you think about humanity?
What is your core? What belongs to it?

Water

The past
What kind of issues come to your mind when you think about sexuality historically?
What significance do they have in view of the present?
What kind of milestones do you have in your own sexuality?
How do they affect your present?

The Present

What is going on now?

What are your thoughts and feelings about sexuality like now?

What do you see in the past – what have you learned about sexuality?

What do you see in the future? Towards what kind of sexuality are you directing yourself now?

Do you dare to live in the present? Do you live here and now?

The Future

What do you want in the future?

What kind of effects will your current choices have on the future?

How do you live from now on?

Changes

How do you react?

Could you change your attitude to change?

What is good in change?

What kind of meanings does change produce to sexuality?

What do you think about giving up?

How have changes affected your sexuality?

What kind of changes do you face in your work?

What kind of support do you long for in the middle of changes when you think about your sexuality?

Could you support someone in the middle of change?

Compass

Draw or paint a map of your own sexuality. How do you direct your route on the map for yourself and in interaction with others?



11. A Compass for Living

Humans' consciousness of death and different life stages and limitations help us to find a meaning of life and a goal for our living. The life cycle perspective provides an idea of what is important at each stage of life and what must be done so that we can develop and grow. Death makes life precious. We must live every moment because there is no certainty about the next. In order to be satisfied humans we need an experience of security and controllability. When we feel secure, there is no need to control life much, but in times of insecurity it is possible to resort to even strong means in the efforts to restore the feeling of control – the feeling of security is restored when we feel that there is at least something that we can control, sometimes another person or at least own body. When seeking security, we may also seek protection from others. Then we give responsibility for our lives or choices to others instead of taking it ourselves and we end up being directed from outside. Many expressions of ill-being may also be seen as attempts to solve problems caused by insecurity. Experience of security provides a foundation for living our true lives. Security provides opportunities for flourishing and realizing ourselves – for experiencing sexuality and living holistically.

The feeling of security is built when we experience that we are allowed to discuss and reflect on the big questions of life. In the reflection it is possible to bring up our own thoughts and get confirmation for our own experiences – otherwise we may focus on defending our opinions that differ from those held by others. Open and respectful discussion and interaction provide opportunities for changing attitudes as well as opening new perspectives to choices and solutions made before.

Success does not mean that we should have fame and money. It means being mindfully present in our own lives and living our true lives. We have hope when we experience our lives meaningful and feel connected to the world, ourselves, and other people. We may succumb to despair when a blow of fate has struck on us. We may also experience despair when life feels empty and meaningless, when our values are in conflict with the values of the people or organisations close to us, and when dialogue is not possible. We can also feel like a failure although our life circumstances would be in good condition. People who are not connected to their own bodies, experiences, and emotions and who are not guided by their inner values feel frustrated and meaningless. We can also feel like a failure when we lose a central value that has supported us before. This could be for example couple relationship, work, belief, own appearance, and others' admiration.

For coping with difficulties, important factors are willingness to develop ourselves, personal coping capabilities, holistic view of life, and possibilities to discuss with others (Aho 2010).

The Rooms of Change

Claes Janssen (1996) has created a model of four rooms of change which, in the Water Lily Model, are represented by the four seasons and, on the other hand, is also an independent part of the system of coordinates. We all experience changes in our lives. Sometimes the changes are faster, sometimes slower, and every one of us visits all these rooms. Reactions in each room vary in accordance with our personal characteristics. The reactions are also influenced to a great deal by society, humans' uniqueness, personality traits, and all the other matters presented in the Water Lily Model. All rooms are needed and no room is better than the others.



Satisfaction
Censorship / denial
Inspiration / renewal
Chaos / conflict



The people who feel good in the rooms of satisfaction and censorship tend to censor their thoughts, emotions, action, and ways of communicating. They do this because they want to be “normal” in accordance with the values and norms of the society and community they live in. They find it important to adapt themselves to these requirements.

Those people whose favourite rooms are inspiration and chaos have experiences of being distinct from other people and may have difficulties in accepting the norms set by society. They are deeply connected to themselves and their emotions, which guide their activities. They may feel like outsiders and they may be left outside groups if their experiences are not integrated into their identity and self image or if they do not accept their own characteristics.

All people wander in all these rooms of change also in terms of their own sexuality and the matters related to that. What is seen as the best possible room is linked to the culture they live in. Society, family, educational institutions, and health care system impose their own demands.

Censorship is needed when people are fighting for survival or when fears and fantasies must be expelled. When people censor their emotions and experiences they often have experiences of finding situations threatening. It is difficult to be calm, when they are uncertain about others’ attitudes to them and their performances. This results in hiding, tenseness, reluctance, and moodiness, and it also causes a need to censor

others, as others speak about the things they would like to forget. It may also be difficult to notice things that they would not want to see or experience.

The different rooms of change are needed. They create a fruitful tension in our lives. We have to reflect on the meaning of life and meaningfulness and we have to act – to seek values that would help us forward in life and to take a stand. We should also be allowed to move from one room of change to another. It is all right if it is sometimes difficult and does not feel good – that makes new growth possible. Sometimes we have to fight for our survival. Then we have to focus on coping so that a new stage in life would be possible. We need the conditions of the chaos/conflict room so that we would hold our own and dare to question and doubt prevailing matters in our own lives or society. This is a source of new inspirations. It is essential that we should not get stuck to any of the rooms. If this should happen, the experience of the meaning of our own lives changes to an experience of failure and we may succumb to despair.

On the other hand, it is also possible to regard despair as an opportunity to solve problems – instead of feeling bad we want meaningfulness and humans' will to meaning raises a spirit of defiance, which makes it possible to look at our lives from a new perspective and find first a meaning for the moment. When moving in these rooms of change, we need intrinsic authority.

Authority consists of the values based on which we make our choices and live our lives day by day. These values can be imposed on us from outside but the most important knowledge is the wisdom of heart – own intrinsic values. We can move forward in the rooms of change when we are directed to someone or something else than ourselves. This makes it possible to fulfil our life purpose and interact with others with love. (Frankl 1986.) Our existence is shaken and collapses if

this kind of self transcendence is not possible. People who are contemplating their sexuality and matters related to it may be in many kinds of situations when they meet professional counsellors. It is necessary to be sensitive and genuinely present so that trust can be built in the situation and the person in need of help can get the necessary support.

An empowering approach to work, taking a holistic attitude to them, requires much knowledge and understanding but, above all, it requires paying attention to the people and listening to them. It is important to be sensitive to why the clients have come to ask for help and what they actually need the help for. Therapy is not always needed but a person who is present and who is willing to listen to and hear also what is implied. It is necessary to find a common communication tool. Therefore when a client is directed to the rooms of satisfaction and inspiration, it is necessary to give space also for suffering and depression; these make it possible to give up, which then makes the beginning and birth of something new possible.

Many things require reflecting on values and meanings. Questions related to sexuality are often directed to therapists although midwives with their expert knowledge of women's illnesses and pregnancy would be in an especially good position to enhance the well-being of a whole gender, families, society, and the world. We always move in the rooms of change, but we often feel moments of failure, despair, and chaos in the following situations: in dependency, divorce, unplanned pregnancy, sexual conflict between adolescents and parents, fertility, miscarriage, disappointment with relationship, sexual cruelty, transition period, so called puberty, gender versatility, various injuries and sexuality, experiences of insufficiency and helplessness, loneliness, lack of sexual desire, continuous desire. It is also useful to reflect on where the professional counsellors are in terms of their own sexuality and what kind of room is occupying the space. With their own lives tangled,

how can they interact professionally with their clients and building hope?



12. To Sum up

Humans' lives and thoughts about sexuality are built on the foundation of human concept and values. Concepts and values change and vary in the course of life events and at different life stages – humans develop and grow throughout their lives.

Experiences of our own sexuality are good enough for us when the relationship with ourselves is always mindful and genuine. Sexuality begins when life starts and in the course of life it changes, grows, and develops finding new dimensions and perspectives. Sexuality is renewed and it recurs in moments – at each moment life opens as a unique opportunity and so does sexuality.

Our language builds our ideas related to sexuality making something new possible and, on the other hand, telling us what kind of ideas and thoughts we have about sexuality. However, language cannot describe sexuality, as part of it always remains mystical and outside our conception because everyone's sexuality is different. Sexuality is an important part of people's health (Perttilä 1999). The dimensions of sexuality, the petals of the water lily, are built around humans' uniqueness. Humans start to grow from the core of the flower, “who are never only that and that, as humans are also this and that and then still something else that we do not know. Then we see that the reality is even richer than we imagined” (Ojanen).

For different individuals, the sexual dimensions and their meaning vary and are emphasized differently. Sexuality is affected at least by our life situation, earlier experiences, historical time, culture, and our own interpretations on sexuality and matters related to it.



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It is useful for people to take the time to reflect on how they see their own sexuality through the different dimensions and, on the other hand, what kind of meanings they give to other people's sexuality. Do for example people's illness, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and cultural background influence these meanings and the appreciation of their sexuality? It is also important to consider if our thoughts are guided by our own intuition and wisdom of the heart or by general values and norms or if our experiences of ourselves are directed by other people's thoughts and demands or by our own thoughts.

As sex educators we have to think about what kind of demands we place on those who we are educating: Does education allow them to make their own decisions and do we interact with them as equal individuals without requiring them to be similar? Despite our basic personalities, we are very different and react in very different ways. Also educational sessions are unique, sums of many factors. Sometimes it is difficult to tolerate people's choices or understand them, but educators cannot make choices on behalf of those who they are educating: we can only guide in the right direction.

Values, attitudes, and human concept, sexuality, and self-image are influenced among other things by early interaction and, as we grow older, the possibility to experience the meaningfulness and importance of our own lives. Experience of being worth loving and being able to answer the questions posed by life build humans' conception of themselves as valuable and fully-fledged members of the community. Sex educators can the health enhancing possibilities of sexuality into consideration by adopting pedagogic love (Skinnari 2004) as the approach and by striving to apply the ideals of the pearls of goodness in their work and encourage those who they are educating to appreciate their lives and sexuality.