

THE MADDOW BLOG

'Reparative therapy is nothing more than quackery fueled by bias'

By Nazanin Rafsanjani - Mon Apr 23, 2012 9:55 AM EDT

We have gotten some nice feedback about **Wednesday's segment** (after the jump) on the ex-gay movement and Dr. Robert Spitzer's controversial **2001 study** asserting that reparative therapy can change some gay people to being straight. Dr. Spitzer is now on the record as saying he wishes he had never published the study in the first place. Our segment was inspired by Gabriel Arana's piece in The American Prospect called "**My So-Called Ex-Gay Life**." Arana first broke the news about Dr. Spitzer's desire to retract his study. If you haven't read his piece yet, you should. It's great. He also **talked with Rachel** on Wednesday about the study and about his own experience in reparative therapy.

After the show, the American Psychoanalytic Association sent this e-mail:

This issue deserves coverage in the news as long as individuals and the "ex-gay movement" use faulty science and bias to advance their agenda. APsaA states in its 1999 position statement on reparative therapy that efforts to "convert" or "repair" an individual's sexual orientation are against the fundamental principles of psychoanalytic treatment and often result in substantial psychological pain by reinforcing damaging internalized homophobic attitudes. We emphasize that anti-homosexual bias, just like any other societal prejudice, negatively affects mental health and contributes to feelings of stigma and low self-worth. Reparative therapy is nothing more than quackery fueled by bias.

Keep an eye out for a followup to Wednesday's segment. We're working on another story about Dr. Spitzer's study and how it's being used currently -- even though Dr. Spitzer wishes he'd never published it -- to further anti-gay causes.

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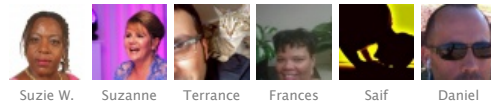
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Trollop



As a homosexual myself, can I pay a subscription fee so I don't have to watch an ExxonMobil commercial every time I watch a video clip?! (/semi-snark, I really would prefer contributing more than listening to a BS oil company commercial about creating jobs.) These guys already screwed all of us at the pump thanks!

#1 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 9:59 AM EDT

[REPLY](#)

7 votes



Craig-711

The only good thing about having to watch that smarmy, lying, Exxon/Mobil spokesperson's BS about how great the keystone pipeline will be over and over again, is knowing that they are throwing their money away for the most part by paying for advertising here. Do they really think that having to watch this guy over and over again talking about how great the pipeline will be and not talking about the real facts that it will create very few permanent jobs while creating very real potential for permanent environmental damage will make rational thinkers believe that his side of the story is the only one? I would rather they spend their money here, where it will have little impact, than elsewhere, where people will see it and say "yea, we should do that."

#1.1 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 1:15 PM EDT

1 vote



DJ Shiva

If you subscribe to the video podcast on iTunes, there are no ads. :)

#1.2 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 2:42 PM EDT

[REPLY](#)

nomoremagicalthinking

The only thing that bothers me more than the 'I wish I had not done, said or supported that' people are the ones without the balls to say I screwed up. Continuing to spin an obvious failure or pretending it did not happen or matter is malignant and insidious.

#2 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 10:27 AM EDT

[REPLY](#)

4 votes

Todd Whitley-5791587

Here's my experience with the fraud known as "ex-gay therapy"...

<http://tdub68.wordpress.com/2012/04/12/there-will-be-no-miracles-here-2/>

#3 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 10:56 AM EDT

[REPLY](#)

3 votes

Trollop

Wow, thank you for sharing and so sorry to hear of your earlier struggle!

#3.1 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 1:40 PM EDT

Zora Renee

This may be off topic, but can someone, anyone explain to me exactly why the GOP are so

maddow: "Banks betting on Romney to repeal restraints on risky large-scale investments"

<http://t.co/AMuBri3J>

#WhatCouldPossiblyGoWrong

maddow: RNC's gotcha video today is Obama in 04 talking about GWB's disastrous fiscal policies. This RNC is weird. <http://t.co/UeLJqzOI>

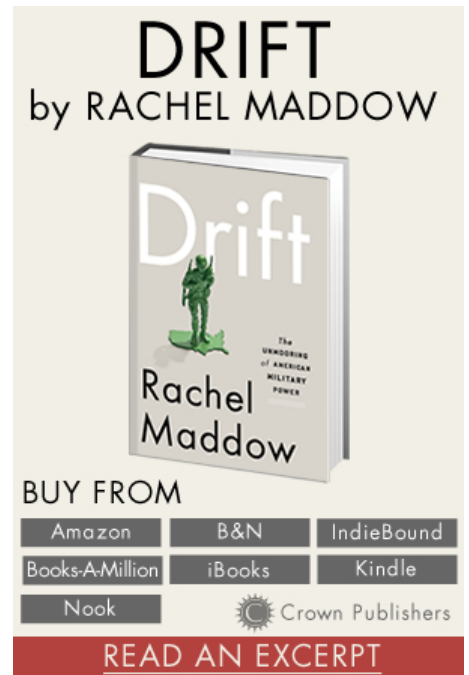
maddow: Thanks to GOP, new Kansas law lets a pharmacist size you up to decide whether or not you deserve your Rx. <http://t.co/mTgbB5M8>

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enthralled/enchanted/enthused/obsessed/entangled with the sex lives of "homosexuals"? Maybe it's just jealousy? Sorry, had to go there.

#3.2 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 3:28 PM EDT

Linder-2946183

I may have the answer to that, or rather Bishop Pike did years ago. He said that gay prejudice is at its base hatred of women, because unenlightened straight men (and their female followers) are disgusted with any man who would do anything remotely female, such as engage in receptive sex. They hate women, so they hate gays.

#3.3 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 7:18 PM EDT



MeddlingMonk

Wingers seem obsessed with the personal lives of just about everyone, although some more than others. They seem to think that other people's business is their own. Or they think that other people are like children and need their guidance. Or they're just @!\$%#s.

Linder comes close to something. I don't think that homophobia is directly linked to misogyny, but the part about "any man who would do anything remotely female" gets very close to something important. The more right-wing people are--and I've said this before--the more they like order. An orderly world is one where everything has it's place and stays in it's place. That's why wingers say things to the effect that men are men, women are women, and that each gender as specific and unchangeable roles. So, naturally for them, any crossing of the proton...I mean, the gender streams, is bad. So it's not just men who seem or act feminine in some way, it's also women who seem or act masculine. And it doesn't stop there, because it's not always as simple as high-school biology would lead you to believe, and wingers are very uncomfortable with that, and they fear it.

#3.4 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 9:54 PM EDT

3 votes

REPLY



Larry Yelen

Please, NO SYMPATHY for this Dr. Spitzer (again, a psychiatrist & not a real physician). It's nice that he regrets publishing his study, but the damage is done and he's the author.

#4 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 11:46 AM EDT

REPLY



Otto Katz

Larry, a psychiatrist is a "real" physician. A psychologist can not prescribe meds. A psychiatrist can. Let's focus on the real problem. The study itself, the doctor trying to right the wrong he helped do, and the wrong still being pushed on all of us.

#4.1 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 1:24 PM EDT

2 votes



Paul F. Wilson

A psychiatrist must have an M.D., which makes him/her a "real" doctor. On paper, at least. Doesn't mean they can't also be a quack.

#4.2 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 2:18 PM EDT

1 vote

REPLY

Charles Boykin

He should be in jail! Just another SCAM to make money!

#5 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 12:01 PM EDT

REPLY

1 vote

Steve Glickin

It's not precisely a scam because so many of them actually believe they can work magic. So much crap has been foisted on so many communities by "true believers" who never bothered to test their beliefs because it would show a sinful "lack of faith." At least vampires know they're doing it for the blood, not to heal their victims!!

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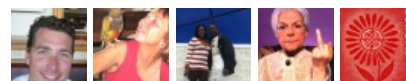
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sandyc954

I never went through any program, but I unsuccessfully assigned myself that I could choose to change my ways. After telling a good friend (just a friend-I was single) I could no longer associate with her, I sought and married a man. I turned my back on my friends and was starting over. I now must confess my guilt of promising something that was very much **love**, but unable to stick to the script society wrote for me. I was also involving several other people in my intent to fit into society, which told me I was unacceptable as I was.

The only thing I can comfort myself with is that my husband knew all along about my life and it was not a total deception, but I deceived myself. I also uprooted and moved his children during the process. That was in 1982-1986, I still feel guilt about it.

#7 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 12:17 PM EDT

REPLY

2 votes

The Mouzer

I don't think you should carry a lot of guilt about this subject. Although I can understand it. You're a product of the stupidities of society. The thing is you've now came to terms w/ yourself. So now you've gotta ask yourself: why are you letting society *still* dictate to you that you should feel bad?

#7.1 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 3:49 PM EDT

2 votes

sandyc954

I guess I feel bad about allowing society to convince me it was more important to fit in than be true to myself and hurt others.

Thanks, I am working on it. I know the past cannot be changed. I know it is ridiculous to feel guilty. I just hope that some folks will see that there's a whole lot of baggage when trying to make people be something they aren't.

#7.2 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 4:06 PM EDT

1 vote

The Mouzer

I wasn't meaning to imply it's something you get over in one night ;-). I just thought I might help to give you a different perspective. For me it helps me to think that I can't let the people who abused me win. I suppose that's a little weird to think of it as a battle...but for me it works. If it doesn't help you then ignore the advice since I'm not you and I don't know all ends. I just thought it might help.

The reason why you feel guilty- ultimately speaking- is because you aren't a heartless SOB. If you were a sociopath you would feel nothing. The problem is just as being a-emotional is bad, so too is being the opposite. Don't allow your emotional guilt to get the better of you- especially when you see the errors of your ways and have corrected for them. There's nothing left for you to atone for.

#7.3 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 4:54 PM EDT

2 votes

sandyc954

Thanks,

| you aren't a heartless SOB

Back at ya, for offering good advice.

#7.4 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 5:11 PM EDT

1 vote

REPLY

**Ray Knitterman Whiting**

Larry Yelen: Just a point for accuracy: psychiatrists ARE real physicians. They are required to take the same medical school and residency training, and they receive their M.D. just the same. (I worked in the medical education environment for over 15 years, with residents from both Tulane School of Medicine and LSU School of Medicine.) Psychologists, on the other hand, are a different specialty and are not all MDs. Psychiatrists, as medical doctors, are licensed to prescribe pharmaceutical medications; psychologists do not prescribe medicine. You'll notice even Dr. Spitzer is an M.D. not a Ph.D.

#8 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 12:20 PM EDT

REPLY

3 votes



Sierra Hoyer VIA FACEBOOK

Scientifically speaking, if you can make a gay person straight through therapy, could you make a straight person gay through therapy? MWAHAHAHAHA!

#9 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 1:00 PM EDT

REPLY

3 votes



I am Joseph

Truthfully, you could likely put them more in touch with their latent homosexual tendencies which are found in almost all people. Very few people are entirely "gay" or "straight". In fact, there are some studies that suggest that the majority of all people are bisexual to some degree.

The problem is that there is a tendency in American society to force people into preconceived notions of what group they are in.

#9.1 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 1:20 PM EDT



Craig-711

Actually that is consistent with most republican beliefs. Santorum said as much during his campaign. He was claiming that exposure to gays as a normal way of life and the lack of "christianity" in people's lives was leading to more homosexuality. It sounds ludicrous to anyone with the ability to think rationally, but that means that it sounds reasonable to most republicans. For how effective self denial, I mean reparative therapy is, just look at Marcus Bachmann.

#9.2 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 1:20 PM EDT

2 votes

Glenn Toman

Excellent point! If the tables were suddenly turned, How would these so-called "healers" react if they were told "We can "cure" Your Heterosexual behavior"? It's almost laughable in the face of so much scientific evidence.....

#9.3 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 1:25 PM EDT

2 votes

MechTrek

Questions for Heterosexuals

developed by Martin Rochlin, Ph.D., 1977

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4. Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. Isn't it possible that all you need is a good Gay lover?
6. Heterosexuals have histories of failures in Gay relationships. Do you think you may have turned to heterosexuality out of fear of rejection?
7. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how do you know you wouldn't prefer that?
8. If heterosexuality is normal, why are a disproportionate number of mental patients heterosexual?
9. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
10. Your heterosexuality doesn't offend me as long as you don't try to force it on me. Why do you people feel compelled to seduce others into your sexual orientation?
11. If you choose to nurture children, would you want them to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they would face?
12. The great majority of child molesters are heterosexuals. Do you really consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexual teachers?
13. Why do you insist on being so obvious, and making a public spectacle of your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
14. How can you ever hope to become a whole person if you limit yourself to a compulsive, exclusive heterosexual object choice and remain unwilling to explore and develop your normal, natural, healthy, God-given homosexual potential?
15. Heterosexuals are noted for assigning themselves and each other to narrowly restricted, stereotyped sex-roles. Why do you cling to such unhealthy role-playing?
16. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
17. With all the societal support marriage receives, the divorce rate is spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
18. How could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual, considering the menace of overpopulation?
19. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed with which you might be able to change if you really want to. Have you considered aversion therapy?

20. Do heterosexuals hate and/or distrust others of their own sex? Is that what makes them heterosexual?

#9.4 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 1:43 PM EDT

3 votes

Kim Smythe

Awesome

#9.5 - Tue Apr 24, 2012 8:52 AM EDT

REPLY

Grace Schrotter

I AGREE WITH

Truthfully, you could likely put them more in touch with their latent homosexual tendencies which are found in almost all people. Very few people are entirely "gay" or "straight". In fact, there are some studies that suggest that the majority of all people are bisexual to some degree.

The problem is that there is a tendency in American society to force people into preconceived notions of what group they are in.

#10 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 2:09 PM EDT

REPLY

Linnea-2896245

Hey MechTrek,

I love that, and haven't seen it in years. It just shows how offensive and nonsensical those questions really are. Thanks for posting.

#11 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 4:04 PM EDT

REPLY

from TO

Even the words we use are wrong: HOMO means same in Greek so a HOMOPHOBIE implies a fear of "similar things". More correct might be HETEROPHOBIE=fear of different things.

And since HOMO means "man" in Latin, HOMOPHOBIE could be translated as "fear of men" lol

Just saying!

#12 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 4:09 PM EDT

REPLY

MeddlingMonk

Men are definitely scary things.

#12.1 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 10:00 PM EDT

1 vote

REPLY

Franklin Gullo

Another quack that should NEVER have received his doctorate.

#13 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 5:53 PM EDT

REPLY

MeddlingMonk

I'm guessing you are not aware that it was Dr Spitzer who back in the early '70s pushed for delisting homosexuality as a mental illness.

#13.1 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 10:03 PM EDT

1 vote

REPLY

dennis1946

Now I know why I will not let MSNBC come into the house, the left wing nut care like Rachel Maddow is not worth the 2 dollares much less the 2 million she made bad talking about 75% of Ameiracan and being an obama lover to boot. We need to boycott her show and boycott any company that support such trash.

#14 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 10:02 PM EDT

REPLY

The Mouzer

I'm going to pretend this comment made any sense.

#14.1 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 10:26 PM EDT

MeddlingMonk

Why?

#14.2 - Mon Apr 23, 2012 10:41 PM EDT

REPLY



Kim Smythe

I'm glad TRMS reported on this since the rest of the liberal media only seem to be concerned with the Trayvon Martin case. This story didn't get the coverage it deserved in the media. Aside from Mathew Sheppard...no despicable injustice done to gays ever does. If any other minority groups kids were committing suicide at the rate that gay teens were killing themselves due to bullying, anti-gay legislation, religious right hate being spewed at them and bogus claims from the ex-gay industry that "change is possible"....the liberal media would be outraged. But gay teenagers committing suicide in part due to the quackery studies like Spitzers 2001 and the reparative therapy industry...that all just gets overlooked by the media.

Frankly I'd like to see Rachel do an hour long show on the entire "ex-gay" / pray the gay away industry (past, present & future) & the politicians who are legislating against equality...since nobody else on the MSNBC network seems to be concerned enough to cover it. I stopped watching all of the other "progressives" on MSNBC who only LEAN FORWARD and muster up fake outrage over stories that boost their TV ratings.

#15 - Tue Apr 24, 2012 8:48 AM EDT

REPLY

1 vote



Iguarnot

"...homophobia cynically masquerading as treatment and compassion."

<http://centerforhealthmediapolicy.com/2012/04/14/shutting-the-door-on-reparative-therapy-2/>

#16 - Thu Apr 26, 2012 1:22 AM EDT

REPLY



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