

A Father's Search For Understanding

NARTH's Executive Director recently received the following letter:

Thank you so much for returning my call to discuss my question about the young man in a relationship with my son. You may recall my question to you was, "How should I act toward my son's companion?" After talking with you I have decided to be cordial and polite while in his presence, but to go no further. My intentions are to be honest in my disapproval of the relationship, while being gentle but firm.

My son disclosed his sexuality to me just a few weeks ago. The two of us immediately told his mother. That was clearly the most painful event of my life. It has dominated my thinking almost every waking moment. He made it clear he had resolved himself to the situation, and he offered me no encouragement of any desire to change. My life was in total disarray and I simply could not believe it. Thank God I did not lose my temper and reject him. My state of mind was of total shock, as prior to that date I had no idea or suspicions whatsoever. His mother had none as well.

My home is near Columbia University. I was intensely motivated to research the subject of homosexuality and went to the university library for that purpose. I found very little on the subject that was not advocating the condition. Thankfully, through the Internet I discovered NARTH and the good books and articles of your organization.

A short profile on my son. White, age 27; brother, age 16. Ben was not athletic in grade and high school; has always been closer to his mother; and friends in school were mostly girls. He was meticulous, artistic, and a good student. He was, and is, especially caring and considerate--the "perfect child."

Through NARTH materials, I have learned that the most critical relationship in a male homosexual's life is that with his father. In recalling my son's childhood and adoles-

cence, I can look back and see the void that was always there. I never realized it or even thought about it before. My son did not have the same interests as me, and after about age ten, I aborted efforts to direct him to areas of my interest. I realize now how much in error this was. That was the time I should have done whatever necessary to enhance my relationship with him. I abdicated his rearing to his mother, while I spent more time and effort with his younger brother.

We do have a close family. I know my son loves me and I feel he looks to me with envy. My feelings are that he has a feeling of inadequacy. Since studying the material dealing with homosexuality, I have devoted my time with him toward improving our relationship. Last week I had a one-on-one talk with him. During that conversation I tried to recall my many failures and shortcomings with him. I sincerely and humbly asked for his forgiveness. I told him I wanted to spend as much time with him as he would give me, and I told him I wanted to make up for my past failures. I hoped and prayed he would allow me to do so. After the conversation, my feeling was of relief, as I believe my request was meaningful to him. My objective is to fill the void I created.

In our brief phone conversation, you gave me much hope and encouragement. At the appropriate time, I will have another talk with him, give him some reading materials, and ask him to try therapy as a means to seek change. I pray every day he will be receptive.

I have personally learned a great deal about the condition of homosexuality. It is easier for me to deal with this devastating situation with the knowledge I now have of the condition. Thank you for making this information available. My mission in life will *never* change: freedom for my son. I hope to be in contact with you again soon.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Father