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01: The World is Hiding, Admit It

My client, let's call her Libby, is a high-end New York City prostitute. She has no shame about her job, her title and what she does for a living. She also a English Literature PhD student at an ivy league college who is finalizing her thesis and therefore her degree. She loves her work and views herself as a healer and a medium for people (mostly men, some couples, a very rare woman) to embrace their sexuality. She charges \$800 to \$1200/hour (depending on the service) and makes over six hundred thousand per year. In other words, she's making a lot more money than myself and every other coach/teacher I know.

She has absolutely no shame about what she does and in our coaching. I'm helping her more with her personal relationships with her family, lovers, and the IRS than her business. To say that she is one of my more dynamic clients would be an understatement. In our sessions, she tells me story after story about her clients, their issues, and how she works with them. She is having an overwhelming positive impact on the people she touches and their worlds.

About six months into our work together, Libby tells me something fascinating: "The funky thing about my clients, these guys is that the things they're doing with me, the kinky things, they would MUCH rather be doing them with their wives".

My mind flashes to an image of an older (white) businessman with his equally older wife in a dominatrix style scene. I contrast that image with one with the younger and more nubile Libby insert and am instantly confused by her statement. My guess is that these men would prefer a younger woman but instead are choosing love over youth.

“Really?”, I ask, “they wouldn’t rather have you? Um, your face, your body, your expertise?”

“No” she responds with absolutely certainty. “They would rather be doing these things with the women they love. But, because they can’t even START a conversation with their wives about their true desires, let alone ask them to participate, they hire me”.

“How many times have you seen some of these gentlemen?” I ask understanding the depth of the situation.

“Sometimes weekly, often for many months” she replies.

My financial brain quickly does the math. Since most sessions are 1-2 hours each (\$2000 including tip) multiplied by three months would cost her client approximately \$25,000 because he couldn’t bring up a sexual desire with the woman he’d rather be having the experience with. If he continued for a year, that would be over \$100,000.

While this may seem like an extreme case, this kind of living HIDDEN, this kind of withholding, exists in 99.9% of all relationships I’ve witnessed. Staying on the thread of sexuality, let’s do a quick self-rating of your personal transparency. On a scale of 1 to 10, one being “manically private about your sex life” and ten being “out there with a vengeance”, how open are you around your sex life? Now, before you answer, go to the parts of your sexuality that you feel the least comfortable admitting. Are there a rape fantasies? Same-sex desire? Some dark fetish that should never see the light of day? Do yourself the service of answering honestly.

I’ll give you my answers first as an example to follow. The “before” refers to at the start of my journey at the tender age of 28.

Group	Self-score (before)	Self-score (now)
Friends, same-gender	6	9
Friends, different gender	3	9
Family (includes your parents)	2	9
Workmates	3	7
Romantic and Sexual partners	4	10
Average (sum, divide by 5)	3.2	8.8

If you don't believe me about my scores, specifically my parents, come listen to my podcast Tuff Love and see how I speak. In a recent series of Six Conversations, I admitted to the world (and my Mother) about my bi-curiosity around men and other sexual fantasies.

Your turn:

Group	Self-score
Friends, same-gender	
Friends, different gender	
Family (includes your parents)	
Workmates	
Romantic and Sexual partners	
Average (sum, divide by 5)	

My experience has shown that most of my client's answers tend to hover around the 5-7 range. Same-gendered friends tended to rate the highest scores with transparency with family members sinking to the low 1-3's. For women, their scores rises significantly with their girlfriends but plummets with their romantic partners. Men, on the other hand, tend to withhold their truth from everyone and prefer to keep their non-conforming desires secret even from their most intimate friends.

The cost of this isolation is that you are creating an opaque facade where you and your so-called "intimate" friends/partners/family members know only this mask not your true self. In turn, we know that these other people are relating to that mask and we can never relax because we fear their rejection or abandonment. The cost to the gentlemen utilizing Libby's services runs way beyond the \$25,000 but it is the killer of intimacy between them and their wives. For the rest of us, it means we're never truly seen or known which leads to a life without honest connection.

The ability to wear a mask has been available to human beings with their developed cortexes and their ever-present vigilance centers. Shakespeare's hackneyed quote from *As you Like it* "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players;" describes a world where people can hide their true selves. However, with the advent of social media, the ease to create an optimized facade has increased exponentially. We've never had the ability in our history of society to instantly and deliberately create a specific marketing message about who we are and what we're about. In the past, we gathered information about our family and friends through direct contact (phone calls, letters) or gossip (other's people talking about us). Today, we have the control to release on whatever schedule we choose, data and information on how the world

perceives us. We can choose between video, pictures, text or referencing other person's views or works. Our viewers are more likely to take what they receive on social media as true.

How often do we hear things like:

"I didn't think your relationship was really happening until I saw you change your Facebook status"

"I can't believe what that article on TMZ said about her"

Another example are professional social media professionals are popping up. *Serpant57* on Fiverr charges you just \$5 will improve your profile in a single day. If you pay him an extra \$15, he guarantees to get you at least one date or upsell for another \$5 and he will manage your account for a week. He writes:

Men: Are you having trouble getting women to respond to your messages, go on dates or even look at your profile? I've been in that situation before(to Men), and I understand where you're coming from(to Women). So I did my own studies of trial and error to see what would work, and what won't. I've talked to, and messaged girls on their situation, and put together all my data into one, and I started noticing results!!!

My Basic Gig will offer you to...

Men:

- *Stand out from all the other guys*
- *Give you 3-5 messages to send that suit you, and increase her chances of responding.*
- *Give you advice on what to do, and what not to do.*
- *Have a more appealing profile based on your personalities.*

Lisa Horne writes in [Fortune](#) that her clients spend \$100 to \$500 for her services on writing their profiles. Photography studios are now specializing in profile shots for dating sites as well. Charlie Grusso of [Tinder Photography](#) saw the niche and started her business in October 2014. She reports spending time with each of her clients, wandering New York City, for several hours taking images with both her single-lens camera and her iPhone with the goal to have her images looked less staged and more like [snapshots](#). This seems like an ironic statement.

While I have no judgment on using experts to help us look the best we can, I suspect more often than not we're inserting falsehoods into our profiles to attract possible mates. The Urban Dictionary defines the term *Catfish* as:

Someone who pretends to be someone they're not using Facebook or other social media to create false identities, particularly to pursue deceptive online romances.

I personally do not understand the logic behind this practice. It basically means that you are using another person's picture to attract a possible mate. Is this a modern day Cyrano de Bergerac technique where you suspect they will fall in love with your words and will forgive you once they see your real face? I think not.

Some of you might be ridiculing this catfish wondering how much of a loser he must be? However, I would argue that you are doing a form of catfishing by putting your best face-forward, ignoring your darker shadowy stuff, and hooking your online flirting partner. We then pray that once they meet you, they'll forgive you for your subterfuge.

I believe in a different approach. When I started dating Morgan in March of 2015, we got rather intimate (emotionally) quickly via text message. Five days into our courting, I wrote the following:

Okay, so I'll ask a really blunt question. I want you to feel open to explore with me. i also want you to feel so free to explore with others. how would it feel if i wasn't just with you?

This was a risky play because I had no idea on how she would react to it. Luckily, the conversation enabled us to express, without editing, our personal viewpoints about our desires around relationship. I knew that option A was to withhold my non-monogamous nature placate this woman, a relative stranger, with some lie about the chance of us being monogamous. I could have avoided the conversation, stretched the truth or being unclear. Instead, I picked the most direct route: I was going to be myself and let the chips fall where they may.

It can be scary to believe that you will truly be accepted in today's society. Society may be hiding and you may have been trained to follow suit but there is no law that you cannot go against the grain to live a life of being unHIDDEN. We often hear that if someone is straight-forward, vulnerable and honest, it is like a "breath of fresh air".