

# HOW BOVT DAT?

A COLLECTION OF CONCEPTS

BY

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## **I. Standing Up to Ourselves (An Idea)**

Whether we realize it or let it pass us by, we are constantly talking to ourselves. What we might realize even less often is just how hypercritical many of these internal dialogues can become.

While we are growing up, we internalize compelling information such as, "You are loved" and "Avoid putting that in your mouth". However, much of this advice, although well intentioned, may be fear based. An example could be a parent telling their child not to do something because they fear it may result in the injury of the child, which may be true. However, over the course of growing up, avoiding things because bad things MAY happen becomes internalized as avoiding things because bad things WILL happen.

A modern example: A child loves to draw. As they get older, influential figures, be it parents, mentors, or peers, suggest to them the notion that pursuing art may lead to financial hardships. Regardless of facts, these notions begin to manifest themselves in the mind of the artist. The difference is that now, instead of a parent/outside influence directly telling the artist, the artist begins to tell themself.

Suddenly, the risks of a situation seem to outshine the benefits. Why quit a job that's lacking fulfillment when you can end up broke? Why confess your feelings when rejection can greet you? Why exit a toxic relationship when loneliness is so plausible? We begin to trade in fulfillment, opportunity, and authentic connections for the PERCEPTION of safety. To avoid catastrophic disappointment, we accept mediocrity. The problem is that we now seek mediocrity as a symbol for safety because we know what to expect; we *feel* in control. Why apply ourselves to a risky dream when we have the certainty of a mundane reality?

Fortunately, our inner child has a way of communicating with us. Panic attacks on the way to work? Anxious feelings around a significant other? Apathetic about goals? This is our intuition letting us know we are here for something more.

However, Doubt is a slippery devil. It wants to keep us stagnant. It will do it's best to convince us that we are comfortable right where we are, in the company of Mundane and Mediocrity. When we wise up and realize that we want more than to just be comfortable, Doubt will try to scare us with Rejection and Failure. They will tell us that we are not good enough, that we do not deserve any more.

WE ARE WORTHY

WE ARE DESERVING

## WE ARE ENOUGH

We hear these affirmations so rarely that we seem to forget the power they hold. Yet, often times, we are the first ones to tell ourselves otherwise. Why? To protect ourselves? From what? It is Doubt and his big brother, Fear, trying to hold us back. They want to keep us afraid and doubtful because they can ONLY exist as long as we remain fearful and doubtful. We hold their power. Once we realize that, we can open the doors to Acceptance, to Tolerance, to Compassion.

Imagine being at a party with all of our thoughts and emotions. Would we want to hang out with the Accepting and Confident feelings or our Jealous and Hateful ones? The choice is obvious. Every day we wake up and have the choice on which thoughts and emotions we want to hang out with. We are the hosts of our own party and it us up to us to decide who is invited.

## II. Weapons of Masturbation (A History)

In an age marked by technological progress and social liberation, we are still shackled to the chains of our own sexuality. From gay thoughts (relax, we all have them) to fetishes, there is an abundant amount of topics to be explored in the realm of *Sexual Taboo* \*cues fog machine\*.

Masturbation is the topic at hand \*;)\*. So we're all on the same proverbial page, by the term masturbation, we are referring to the act of physically (and/or mentally) stimulating our genitals up to the point of orgasm. Choking the Chicken, Flickin' the Bean. Y'know.

Historic accounts on Going Solo vary from culture to culture. Egyptians believed the god Atum to have created the universe by masturbating to ejaculation. Diogenes the Cynic from ancient Greece is said to have masturbated in public. When asked why, he answered, "If only it were as easy to banish hunger by rubbing my belly."<sup>[1]</sup> Some teachers and practitioners of Traditional Chinese medicine, Taoist meditative and martial arts relate sperm (and sexual excretions of a woman) to the life force energy or "Original Qi" so expelling qi via masturbation can cause

lowered energy levels. The Buddha would encourage his serious disciples to limit their sexual behaviour or to embrace celibacy<sup>[2]</sup> although modern Buddhism views the guilt and self-disgust about masturbating as certainly more harmful than masturbation itself.<sup>[3]</sup> In Sunni Islam there are varying opinions. It is considered a haram (a forbidden act) for Shi'a Muslims as well as for practitioners of Sunni Imam Malik<sup>[4]</sup> while the three other Imams allow it only if it is used as a tool of self-restraint from adultery. Bathing is compulsory after any sperm-falling.

In Western culture, masturbation was considered sinful largely due to mixed interpretations of the story of Onan (Genesis 38) where, after Onan's brother, Er, died, Judah, their father, told Onan to fulfill his duty to his brother and impregnate his brother's widow, Tamar (this is referred to as a levirate marriage. It is done so that the child can inherit their would-be father's inheritance, in this case Er's). In the story, Onan does the ol' trusty pullout method, referred to as coitus interruptus, and spills his seed outside Tamar's landing strip. Like his big bro Er, Onan is slain by God. Onan's death was retribution for being "evil in the sight of the Lord" through his unwillingness to father a child by his widowed sister-in-law. This is traditionally interpreted by Jews to be about the emitting of sperm outside of a vagina. Thereby condemning masturbation, although the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible/Old

Testament) does not explicitly state that Onan was masturbating. So, even though there are ZERO references in the Bible or Torah to Diddling Thyself, by virtue of Onan, traditional Judaism condemns male masturbation. This tradition was carried through out Christianity where most branches view masturbation as a misuse of the gift of sexuality. People were cursed with Shame and Guilt as a result of masturbating.

For a while, modern civilization was conditioned to believe their instinctual sexual urges were plagued with Malice. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Dutch theologian Dr. Balthazar Bekker distributed a pamphlet in London titled "Onania, or the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, And All Its Frightful Consequences, In Both Sexes, Considered: With Spiritual and Physical Advice To Those Who Have Already Injured Themselves By This Abominable Practice." In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, French psychiatrist, Jean Esquirol, declared masturbation was "recognized in all countries as a cause of insanity."<sup>[5]</sup> and Doctor John Harvey Kellogg (yeah, that Kellogg) invented Corn Flakes to help curb our nation's appetite for bunching our oats. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Sigmund Freud addressed masturbation in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* and associated it with addictive substances. At the same time, the supposed medical condition of hysteria was being treated by what would now be described as medically prescribed masturbation for

women. By the end of the century, the taboo had evolved from disease to cure<sup>[7]</sup>.

Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in an Era of Camgirls and Teledildonics, where do we stand? Even though many medical professionals and scientists have found large amounts of evidence that masturbating is healthy<sup>[6]</sup><sup>[7]</sup><sup>[8]</sup><sup>[9]</sup><sup>[10]</sup><sup>[11]</sup><sup>[12]</sup><sup>[13]</sup> and commonly practiced by males and females, stigma on the topic still continues today. Researchers in 1994 found that half of the adult women and men who masturbate feel guilty about it (Laumann, et al., 1994 , 85). Another study in 2000 found that adolescent young men are still frequently afraid to admit that they masturbate (Halpern, et al., 2000, 327).<sup>[14]</sup> Our sexual desires and curiosities are still sharing a cab with Jewish guilt.

However, businesses have realized sex sells. As a result, marketing ads are often (hyper) sexualized in order to sell anything from car insurance to tennis shoes. Sexual triggers are everywhere. Cue in high speed internet, high definition pornography, and the relatively free cost of masturbation. We have managed to culturally objectify the act of sex. With the availability of high quality porn, we often masturbate out of boredom or for a quick dope hit without even necessarily being horny. So where does that leave us? Although masturbation and pornography have minimal impact on most of our daily lives,

many of us find that our convenient fix can easily *get out of hand*.

The problem then lies on how it shapes our perceptions of sex. We begin to view the human body as a sexual object and associate nakedness with sex. This is troublesome because a majority of human interactions are predominantly sexless. Yet, we're telling our minds something very different every time we orgasm in front of a screen. This also distorts our brain's reward system. Our bodies crave dopamine and our reward centers positively associate acts with dopamine releases like with food or drugs. Except food and drugs cost money and vary in availability whereas orgasm and porn for the most part are almost always readily available. Imagine having our favourite food/drug a google search (and a used sock) away. How often would we be able to resist? Moderation and discipline become that much more difficult to sustain. Many online forums, such as [reddit.com/r/NoFap](https://www.reddit.com/r/NoFap/), have even associated the overstimulation of pornography to erectile dysfunction and premature ejaculation (although EEG testing might suggest otherwise).

To be clear masturbation (as well as consensual sex and exploration) are OKAY! Let's avoid inviting Shame and Guilt to this party. The purpose of this dialogue is to open up the conversation on masturbation and its relationship with our daily lives. It's

difficult to know exactly how much of a *grip* any habit or relationship has on our lives without first stepping away from it. So, as an experiment, if you have never masturbated, check it out. Explore your body. Now that we've addressed the liars, for the rest of us, it would be interesting to abstain from masturbation/pornography/and/or orgasm if only for a period of time (this could be a week, a day, a month) and see if there are any noticeable effects. Set a goal, say a week. How often do we catch our minds drifting towards sexual fantasies? How does abstinence affect our time management? How does it affect our romantic relationships? What about our platonic ones? Are we able to differentiate between love and lust any differently? How does abstinence affect our libido? Are we hornier or less horny? Does this change our view on the opposite sex? What about our same sex? The differences may be monumental or negligible, but there is only one way to find out!

### III. A Call to Vegans: Lettuce Lose the Title! (A Rant)

For those of us who have ventured to the dark side of the nutritional pyramid (Fun fact: the cattle, egg, and dairy industry heavily pressured the government in response to a 1977 USDA report stating Americans should increase their carbohydrate intake to 55-60% of their calories. The agriculture industry spends \$150 million dollars each year lobbying and has done much to influence food labeling, climate science, and the undoing much of the Clean Water Act to allow for greater water pollution. But that's a topic for another zine.) and have decided to adopt a plant based diet, congrats. It is a disciplined route often riddled with limited dining options at restaurants, cultural taboo, and questions like "where do you get your protein?"

(Broccoli, black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans, lentils, quinoa, flax seeds, hemp seeds, sunflower seeds, chia seeds, wild rice, rye, corn, pasta, spinach, peas, peanuts, almonds, pistachios, walnuts, cashews, tofu, tempeh, seitan, nutritional yeast, tortillas, soy beans, artichokes, brussel sprouts, potatoes, yucca \*cough cough\* I digress, for it is natural and beneficial for us to ask questions when exposed to alternative

lifestyles regardless of our current opinions. Question everything!) Although challenging, we may also find it rewarding. From environmental sustainability <sup>[15][16][17][18][19][20][21]</sup>, animal-free energy, and less chronic dis-ease <sup>[22][23][24][25][26][27][28][29][30][31][32][33][34][35]</sup>, plant based diets have their benefits.

NOW, having said that, we can proceed to the meat substitute of the rant. Titles such as vegan, pescatarian, vegetarian, ovo-lacto vegetarian, raw dietarian, fruitarian, all have legitimate seats at the table of dietary choices. There is value to identification, especially in a society where it is assumed we consume meat (kindly being served meat by someone with the most hospitable of intentions is hardly a pleasant feeling). However, to the lay human, titles like these may be off-putting and even intimidating. For those of us who empathize with the causes but are having a harder time adapting logistically, we want to be *inclusive*. If our intentions are to spread awareness on the benefits of a plant based diet, we should do just that; spread awareness. Putting a title to something most people have barely even considered, like dietary choices, helps spread the illusion of separation. For better or worse, we are ALL on the same team, including animals. So, we should encourage and embrace each other's journey because we're all on the same mountain, we just have different views to the top.

#### **IV. Everyone is a Singer (An Anecdote)**

Ever since I was a wee lad, I wanted to sing. I also wanted to play guitar and piano. So I did. I also noticed very early on that, while guitar and piano came naturally (ish), singing felt a lot more foreign. I instantly felt a burden of shame. Much of this stemmed from a lack of security (being denied for a chorus audition in front of my entire 4<sup>th</sup> grade class did little to help). I allowed these negative emotions to convince me that I was unworthy of singing. So, for a while I hid behind my strengths and avoided singing at all costs. And by a while, I'm talking all the way to college. Eventually, I realized that working out my biceps and triceps was going to do very little to improve my cardio; I needed to practice singing if I ever wanted to get better at singing. It was tough if I'm being honest. I have been surrounded by talented and confident singers my entire life. This led me to feel like an adult sitting in grammar school. Regardless, I had seen many parents and even elderly students share the same classroom with me in college, so who was I to judge my journey?

So, I started singing. Except, now, instead of judging or comparing, I listened. I

traded in my judgments for patience. I could see progress. More progress is always nice. But even the slightest progress was a testimony to change. I had a pilot instructor once tell me, "You are a pilot. You got to start thinking of yourself as one". I have since moved on from my aviation days (shout out to the Cessna fam) but his advice still rings true. When does the runner become "A Runner"? When they take the first step! It's all about perspective. Some runners are born faster or have better training, but we are all running different races. Medals and landmarks are only reinforcements of the Truth. We can run a thousand miles before we ever consider ourselves to be "real" runners. But at one point, we must decide we are runners, regardless of our position in the race. If we want to be singers, we must first realize that we are already singers, we just need to sing! (And practice. A lot of practice.)



"Dope"

## V. It's Fine (A Story)

(Forewarning: We are not promoting the use of legal, or illegal, psychoactive substances. This story is made for harm reduction purposes. If you are planning on consuming said substances regardless, legal or illegal, please be CERTAIN of what you are ingesting. If it is your first time trying a new substance, go with half of a dose; you can always take more later but good luck trying to take less! Remember: Set and Setting! Follow your heart and have a safe trip ☺)

~

The rabbit hole goes down deep. If you're there now, relax. We're exactly where we need to be.

~

It's Saturday evening. The red sun is about to set over the warm, pink sky. The clouds are playing and the trees are breathing. "Alright, I got the shroom cookies". A close acquaintance of mine proceeds to pass me, a close friend, and another close acquaintance a tan cookie sandwich. They are filled with a creamy concoction of dried "Penis Envy" psilocybin mushrooms. There's about three grams in each.

We engulf them with the grace of a child consuming their last Oreo. It kind of tastes like one too, except with a little extra shroominess. *Bon appétit*. Butterflies begin migrating in my belly. The anticipation of a trip is a trip of its own.

The four of us make our way to the residence in front of us. A lavish house, there is a pool, and a lakeside dock. Around the corner there is a yellow, blue, and red bounce house that connects to the pool via inflatable slide. It is filled with young adults imbibed with gas station beer. Talk about set and setting baby. There are a select few young adults I recognize amongst a fraternity of strangers.

My buddies and I begin a round of flip cup while running diagnostics reports on our bodies. Whatever minutes later, I notice how the geometric tiles surrounding the pool seem to be breathing in all the excess water. Like lungs, the water expands over the surface and contracts between the cracks. Seconds (or minutes) later, I make eye contact with my close friend whom has also ingested a shroom cookie. Before our thoughts could manifest into words, we simultaneously know we are both tripping. He giggles in his tropical button up (with most of the buttons undone) and returns to his game of flip cup. I suddenly grow conscious of just how loud my surroundings are. I attempt to shift my focus back to the

breathing tiles but it's too late, the moment has passed. I grow distracted. I feel tension. My focus is surrendered to the drunk couple arguing on the other side of the pool. I hear them as if they were yelling directly into my cochlea. I do my best to ignore them but I am captivated by the drama. She is crying. Why? He grabs her by both her arms and demands that she calms down in a very stressing manner. Why is he doing this?

I retreat to the dock to gather myself. I begin regulating my breath just as waves of partygoers join me on the dock. Oblivious to my state of mind, they start talking at me. What are they saying? I feel unsteady and step in the water. Something about the water is soothing. I look down and am caught off guard by the swarm of fish around my legs. My personal space feels invaded. Startled, I walk back to the pool yard.

Although it may have only been moments since I was last there, the pool party starts to look ever increasingly apocalyptic. Everywhere, it seems savagery is taking place. Some are consuming alcohol to the point of regurgitation. A friend of mind stumbles past me with her bikini top half exposed. People are abandoning their bodies in the name of celebration. Why do we do this? I feel overwhelming amounts of sadness.

Suddenly, a rush of adrenaline replaces my sadness. The bounce house, filled with human patrons, topples over and onto the

concrete geometric tiles. That's it. These people just died right in front of me. Seconds/moments/time later, they rise from the dead, laughing, and carry on without hesitation. I'm still super tense. My friends who are also tripping ask me how I am feeling. I can tell by the expressions on their faces that we are on very different wavelengths. To avoid bringing them down I keep my response brief and forfeit any attempts to relate to them.

The cacophonic chatter around me becomes indistinguishable. It is hard to tell whose laughing and who is screaming. In an attempt to collect myself (whatever "myself" is at this point), I head towards the Jacuzzi. I spot a friend with her friend in the otherwise vacant Jacuzzi. I am unsure if I said hello or just thought about saying hello but they welcome me without hesitation. For the first time this evening, I feel like I belong in my environment. I grow entirely engaged in the conversation we are having. I almost forget that I am on a psychedelic. Calmness quickly seeps in. Just as quickly as it comes, it leaves; a boisterous crowd is about to hijack our Jacuzzi. My anxiety skyrockets as a wave of loud, primal energy surrounds me. "We gotta get out of here" a part of me says to another part of me. We agree. I bolt towards the exit.

Before I realize it, I'm free. My breath is steady. I find the concept of breathing to be of interest. Mid conceptualization I

realize that my body is walking around a gated community bare foot and in a bathing suit at about Night Time PM. Calm and collected me knows our intentions are pure. Why should we worry? Paranoid me fears exposing my situation to any on lookers. What exactly is my situation? I just want to sit in the grass and breath delicious air with my interesting lungs. But paranoid me knows that only crazy people would partake in such ordinary activities.

I make it to my car. I expect to feel safer. Yet, I feel off, like a compass in need of calibration. It is hard to tell where I end and everything else begins. Do I end? I remind myself I live a short drive away. If I'm cautious, I can drive slowly back home. Home, what a concept. I put the key in the ignition. The engine hiccups. I turn the key again. It responds with an eventless click. My battery is dead.

At this point, I am negotiating with the Universe. I am unsure what it is trying to convey to me but it has my attention. I surrender. You win. I just wanna go home and feel safe again. I grow jaded. Negative thoughts begin whispering in my ear, "You deserve this. This is your life, you asked for this". An inner part of me knows this is a lie. But then again, my situation is so convincing. Could it be true?

I see a light, a bright one. Jesus? Obama? No. A friend of mine pulls up in front

of me. She whips out an LED hoola-hoop that causes me to giggle. Like a jester ready to entertain, she asks how I am doing. I confess to her like a guilty catholic. She reads the situation beyond my words. I feel forgiveness. Suddenly, another friend emerges to help. They connect what seems like alien technology to both of our cars. "Clear!" C-c-c-c-Vrrrrrrrrrrum VrrrrrrrrrrumMmMmMm. My car breathes back to life. I am elated. What did I do to deserve such kindness?

They drive me home without having to ask. I enter my home. Both of my parents are sitting on the couch watching Spanish news and say "Hello" in passing. Can they sense my trippiness right now? I want to hug them but I feel tainted. I motion my way past familiar totems. I manage to make it to the back yard. I collapse into a hammock. I still feel empty. I'm home but still feel lost. I begin to question my role on this Earth. Have I treated my family well? Have I been grateful enough? Was I too, a savage? I question my worth. Things begin to grow abysmally dark. *I am deep down the rabbit hole.* I realize I am in an endless psychotic loop of negative thinking. My mind is struggling to form coherent thoughts. Like a rip current, the harder I fight, the more I drown.

I hear my mother approaching. I want to hide my tears out of shame. But she needs to know the Truth. I struggle to form sentences. The words I speak sound like distortions of my

thoughts. I begin to cry. I am a  
disappointment. I let her down. I let everyone  
down...

Without a word of judgment, without a  
lecture, she embraces me. Like a candle  
refusing to go out, Love burns on. With raw,  
utter conviction, she confronts my demons. She  
speaks,

"It's Fine. Everything is Fine."

**VI. It's Fine (A Song)**

So many people  
Not easy to see  
Who are the real friends?  
Whose just company

I remember when I nearly lost my mind  
You just told me,  
It's Fine

So many people  
They're asking me  
How are you doing?  
Don't you lie through your teeth

I remember when I nearly lost my mind  
You just told me,  
It's Fine

It's fine  
It's fine  
It's all Fine

So many Lovers  
Is there one for me?  
You may feel lonely  
But you're not alone

I remember when I nearly lost my mind  
You just told me,  
It's Fine

It's fine,  
It's fine,  
It's all Fine

*Fin*

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YOU CAN OUT THINK YOUR SELF OUT  
OF ANYTHING