

Chapter 12

Erotic Community:

Justice, Compassion, and the Celebration of Sexuality

(synopsis)

The term *erotic community* refers to a society where sexuality is socialized, not marginalized; where eros has been fully integrated into everyday life; where the sexuality of every child, teenager, and adult is honored and respected; and where the dominant attitudes toward sexuality are not anxiety, guilt, shame, denial, and scapegoating, but pride, honesty, justice, compassion, humor, and celebration.

The integration of eros into everyday life involves rethinking our attitudes toward pleasure and our bodies. America is an ego-driven, anti-hedonistic society. Americans are generally overworked, sleep-deprived, touch-deprived, and exercise-deprived. Much of our everyday environment is ugly and noisy. We don't have enough time to cultivate relationships with family and friends. Our overindulgences, compulsions, and addictions are overcompensation for the lack of pleasure in our everyday activities. The body is less easily deceived than the rational ego, and is, therefore, a better guide to how to live wisely. Being more attentive to the body and to everyday pleasures would provide a saner, more relaxed context for sexuality; sexual activity could become one of many sensual and social pleasures—a celebration of everyday life rather than an escape from it.

An erotic community recognizes that we are all sexual at every age, and that the diversity of human sexuality is kaleidoscopic. Gender is regarded as relative, not absolute. Sexual equality and the rights of sexual minorities such as homosexuals, transsexuals, and intersexuals are respected. Research in pediatric sexology is well funded, and specialists are available to treat sexual disorders as they begin developing in childhood, before they become a permanent part of the personality. Erotic friendships are encouraged, both for children and for single adults. Physical affection is freely shared among friends as well as family members and lovers. Non-sexual physical intimacy is an important source of emotional satisfaction. The arts celebrate the diversity of human bodies and erotic experiences. The incidence of rape, incest, and child molestation declines as sexual wisdom and intimacy skills are handed down from generation to generation.

An erotic community is not a utopia. Irrational sexual desires will continue to challenge the ego's dominance. Many people will still feel the tension between monogamy and polygamy, and each individual will have to find their own solution to the dilemma. Intimate relationships will continue to uncover the flaws and dark sides of our personalities. Couples who were once compatible may find themselves growing in different directions. Human frailties, neuroses, and selfishness will not disappear, nor will the differences between the sexes. Mistakes will be made. Feelings will be hurt.

But with a full acceptance of our sexuality and a growing collective wisdom on how to express it responsibly and successfully, fewer people will find themselves wrestling with their sexual demons alone. Recognizing that we are all subject to the whims of eros, we will be able to support each other with compassion and humor, and find creative ways to channel the divine energy.