

The Power of 2

When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one...then you will enter [the kingdom of heaven].

Jesus, according to *The Gospel of Thomas*

When we speak about bonding and attachment, our minds usually go to the early years of childhood. Research documents the effects of touch, holding, breastfeeding and co-sleeping on children's developing brains and their ability to form healthy relationships with themselves and others. We have learned that such attachment practices raise levels of vasopressin and oxytocin, two hormones essential for forming social bonds and emotional intimacy. The cocktail literally hard-wires the brain for love.

But what about us — the adults in this scenario? Most of us were raised in the way that was fashionable at the time — birthed in hospital, separated from our mothers and put in a room full of other crying babies, bottle-fed on a schedule and made to sleep alone. This was our first taste of life on earth, and imprinted upon our brains is the resulting

predispositions that now often haunts us in our intimate relationships. Can we heal that primary impression that projects itself through the space and time of our life?

According to researchers, there are two windows of 'love blueprinting' opportunity that arise during our lives. The first, and most potent, is during the first three years of life (exponentially so during the first moments and days). The second is during adolescence. Both windows point to touch and intimate contact as the linchpin behind optimal development (i.e. growing up to feel secure, loved and loving). The second window is often downplayed, even downright ignored, as the public tends to feel very uncomfortable with the idea of adolescents having intimate relationships. But that is another editorial!

Perhaps there is a third window — in adulthood, with our intimate partners. The key, again, is intimacy. Intimacy is the oxytocin generator, and oxytocin is the hormone of love. Neuroscience has forged into the bedroom and emerged with some interesting conclusions. Just as we have used neuroscience to map the blueprint of optimal development in infants, now the same science points to



Kali Wendorf, Editor

similar outcomes during lovemaking.

In her groundbreaking book, *Peace Between the Sheets*, Marnia Robinson (see pp. 52–56 for the full story) reveals how biology determines our marital

destiny and how sex can either create love or create separation, depending on how it is done. In a nutshell, it works like this: biology has wired our brains so that we are compelled to have sex with one another in order to procreate, and then ultimately move on to other partners thereby spreading the gene pool. Research shows that when we have orgasm (both male and female), a neurochemical response sees to it that we will begin to separate from our beloved — by feelings of distance, judgementalism, irritability, fatigue, unavailability, dissatisfaction and even depression. The negativity even spreads to other aspects of our lives — our work, our relationship with our children. We might not feel it immediately (which is how nature tricks us not to put the two together), but for up to two weeks after orgasm, we will suffer this projected separation. Nature, it seems, does not care if we have fulfilling and happy long-term relationships. It only cares that our gene pool is strong and diverse, armed with hundreds of thousands of

years of evolutionary refinement. We are wired for separation.

But we are also wired for love. In a twist of irony, nature also arms us with an intrinsic desire for love and oneness. We seek not only harmony and wellbeing within our personal relationships, but also harmony within and a sense of coming home. Some call it enlightenment, sacred texts refer to nirvana or the kingdom of heaven; some just call it happiness. Certainly this is made difficult if not impossible in a climate of separation, divorce and unsatisfactory sex lives.

Will biology see to it that our happiness is perpetually out of reach? Not so, says Robinson. We can rewrite the biological script, by simply abstaining from orgasm while making love. This abstinence raises levels of oxytocin, and sex becomes — quite literally — the making of love.

This is where the healing begins. Research reveals that those with little affection and bonding in their childhoods have few receptors for oxytocin. Not only is it hard therefore, to feel loved, but the vicious cycle is sealed shut by a hindered ability to express love also. But the cycle can loop in the positive direction as well. Oxytocin is special in that the more that you give to another, by way of affection, the more you receive. Your levels of oxytocin not only rise by abstaining from orgasm, but also by giving to another. 'Oxytocin is circular,' says Robinson. 'The more you produce — by conscious, generous touch and nurturing and connections with others — the more receptors you sprout for it, and the more oxytocin you produce, too.'

When I first stumbled across Robinson's work, I was amazed by its similarities to attachment theory, and wondered if some of culture's negative hard-wiring of my own could be healed by approaching sex in this way with my husband, Alok. In addition, I also noticed that we suffered from orgasm 'hangovers' and was highly suspect of the Dr. Jeckyl and Mr Hyde scenario that seemed to play itself out between us at times. Alok was game to try, and so began our adventure together.

We have only just glimpsed the tip of the proverbial iceberg, but many insights have revealed themselves in the process. And while I have no concrete evidence behind the revelations, intuition tells me that we are on to something.

After some weeks of engaging in non-orgasmic lovemaking, a

byronchild continuum of principle and manifesto

byronchild magazine supports and gives voice to the powerful movement towards conscious parenting and conscious living. It is in honour of that evolutionary movement everywhere that *byronchild* courageously addresses issues ahead of mainstream media. Its staff, contributors, photographers and contributing editors are drawn from an internationally diverse team of professionals on the front lines of their fields, exploring issues that impact our children, families and planet, ranging from education, optimal child development, medicine, psychology, healing, spirituality, politics, relationships, family dynamics and global and environmental issues.

byronchild recognises the call of humankind's biological imperative that we evolve and transform into our greatest potential. For our children, that potential is best supported by the practices of secure bonding and attachment.

The content of *byronchild*, therefore, is selected upon its reflection of the following principles:

- **Children** are the mantle upon which the future of our planet rests. Investing in their wellbeing is the ultimate sustainable and political act.
- **Every child** is wanted and welcomed.
- **Pregnancy** is a natural event (not a medical condition) and the importance of the mother's emotional, mental and physical wellbeing is recognised and supported.
- **A natural birth** affords significant benefits to mother, baby, father and family; therefore both the potential benefits and risks of any intervention warrant careful consideration.
- **Parents** have the right and responsibility to be fully informed about pregnancy, birthing, health and education choices.
- **Optimal development** for infants and children is fostered by full-term breastfeeding, baby-wearing, co-sleeping, maintaining genital integrity (no circumcision), and plenty of skin-to-skin contact.
- **Children** are by nature social beings, born with the drive to love and be loved, to learn about their world through spontaneous play, exploration, and participation/inclusion in the activities of their elders, to cooperate with others, and to contribute to their world. They are most able to develop their full potential when treated with care and respect.

- **Children are born** with inherent, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs.
- **Children depend** upon their caregivers to protect them from violence, abuse, being left to 'cry it out', shaming, toxic food and toxic environments.

- **Children depend** on their parents to demonstrate and model to them appropriate ways of setting safe respectful boundaries and limits to inappropriate behaviour.

- **The role** of the father and mother is profound and not to be underestimated. Also important are the multiple attachments outside the immediate family.

- **Optimal development** includes supporting children's growth towards healthy sexual maturity across the physical, emotional, social and ethical dimensions of sexual wellbeing.

- **Family-friendly** political, economic, educational and social structures enhance parents' opportunities and ability to nurture and sustain a secure bond with their children.

- **Community** plays a vital role in raising children, both as a support system for this secure bonding and also as a source for secondary attachments.

- **Parenting our children** means also re-parenting ourselves. Self-discovery plays a major factor in the art of effective parenting.

- **Imperfection** is the lesson in how to be perfectly human. Allowing ourselves as parents to make mistakes, be transparently ourselves and emotionally alive in relating to our children, enables them to individuate and find their own separate and unique self. After bonding comes healthy separation, facilitated by our perfectly human inability to be everything to our children.

Understanding that there are immense and complex forces impacting our lives and shaping the choices we each make at any point in time, *byronchild* recognises that there is no single formula for meeting each person's individual challenges, and respects parents' innate ability to know and intuit what is right for their child.

byronchild explores the realms of parenthood that reach beyond the bounds of sentimentality and cliché and into the arena of an ever deepening conscious understanding and appreciation of our relationship with life, each other, ourselves, our children and the world in which we live.

byronchild is an independent publication and is neither controlled by nor beholden to any organisation — business, political, religious or institutional.

Kali Wendorf
Publisher/Editor

The *byronchild Manifesto and Continuum of Principle* have been adapted in part from the Alliance for Transforming the Lives of Children (aTLC)'s *Blueprint of Principles and Actions*.
www.aTLC.org

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new reality began to emerge, one of wholeness, wellbeing and an ongoing vibration of happiness that I had never before experienced. Issues that niggled on the sidelines just disappeared and life seemed to become wonderfully synchronised. But if orgasm entered the picture, we were down the rabbit hole again.

My experience is that the union of a man and a woman can be sacred ground, and the place of quantum

When love is made between two people — when we don't use the other for our satisfaction or gain — a presence or field emerges within which thoughts, agendas and beliefs are suspended.

change and transformation. We often speak about healing childhood as the way forward, but I wonder how forward we can venture without the healing of male/female relationships? It is fascinating that the subject of sex and intimacy rarely finds itself in the same public discussion as optimal child development — and yet the two are so closely related.

When love is made between two people — when we don't use the other for our satisfaction or gain — a presence or field emerges within which thoughts, agendas and beliefs are suspended.

This field, according to pioneers in innovative learning, quantum science and organisational transformation such as David Bohm and Masaru Emoto, is the place where real change and healing can occur. Not only that, but it has the power to effect the consciousness of others. They understand that to create effective change that ripples into the whole, a different kind of problem solving must occur — one that does not rely on the logical problem/solution thought process.

Non-orgasmic lovemaking seems to open this field so that, without effort or even conscious understanding, all that is unresolved in life seems to very slowly but surely enter the hallowed ground of oneness and be transformed.

I began to notice many things at first — that I was more present to those around me, that my workload didn't stress me out as much, that dinner became more creative (much to the relief of my family) and that I became more

direct and honest in my communication with others. I also began to see and understand the perspectives, pain and dilemmas of the opposite sex. You notice I speak in past tense. Old habits die hard, and the trajectory of learning how to make love without orgasm is less than straight! But the journey becomes an adventurous process, and detours just part of the unfolding. It's a whole new world of discovery and learning for us, and we are coaxed to be comfortable with wading into depths unknown. We've tasted something real and it beckons us forward into the deep waters again.

He and I wonder what implications neuroscientific research in the bedroom will have on the collective consciousness. What would be the effect of many couples making this discovery? When we consider that conventional sex brings with it an inability to clearly see the 'other' simply because of neurobiological dictates, then it is easy to see why the world is in such a state. Just think of the vicious cycle that ensues: oxytocin-deprived sex (orgasm), creating children who are born into oxytocin-deprived

environments (medicalised birth), who grow up craving love and seek the neurochemical fix through oxytocin-deprived sex (as well as other 'fixes' such as alcohol, drugs and shopping). Yikes!

The good news is we can see that the separation that has manifested in our collective lives is not our fault! How could we have possibly known? Science provides us with the wonderful gift of understanding why we do the things we do. It removes the 'shame-based

secret to humanity's liberation lies in the arms of those with whom we share a bed? Could it be that one of the missing links for our own children's wellbeing and sense of belonging, is through our own healed sexuality? I don't really know yet, but I am looking forward to finding out!

Kali

Is science now confirming what ancient texts have always said was true, that the secret to humanity's liberation lies in the arms of those with whom we share a bed?

personal' from our issues, and helps us to see that up until now we could not have done any differently.

And the very very good news is that the cycle is held together by the tiniest, thinnest, frailest thread — oxytocin.

How do we reverse the cycle? You got it — build your oxytocin banks. Apart from participating in non-orgasmic lovemaking (and hey, what have you got to lose by trying it?), there are innumerable ways to build your reserves — touch, care, affection, thinking of the other's best interests, generosity, listening, doing simple things that communicate 'I care for you', deliberately (and not co-dependently) putting the other first. Think of how much oxytocin you can gain if you did this for many people in your life! This is how love is actually made.

There is something unmistakably literal in the metaphor of man and woman, yin and yang, dark and light — which is almost too simple to grasp and yet it is right there in front of us. Is science now confirming what ancient texts have always said was true, that the

Editor's note

As an aside, I am most pleased and honoured to announce that I will be presenting alongside Robin Grille (Author, *Parenting for a Peaceful World*) and Anne Manne (Author, *Motherhood: how should we care for our children?*) at the upcoming Sustainable Living Festival at Federation Square, Melbourne, 1-19 February. Our talk, *Rethinking Sustainability: childrearing reform as the linchpin to social change*, will discuss childrearing practices from a social change perspective, as well as sustainable living (downshifting) as a means to meet family needs. We will also have a *byronchild* stall with book signings from Robin, Anne and also Sarah Buckley (Author, *Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering*). Please come by and say hello!

Please also look out for the outstanding film, *The Future of Food* (Lily Films). Some Australian screenings will be hosted by *byronchild* as fundraisers for various organisations. Our March edition will feature Lisa Reagan's interview with the film's director, writer and producer, Debra Koons Garcia.

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