

Bouncing on Beds: October 1, 2014

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5 mins:

script advisors: Anoo

This is a piece on my theme of the things we've all agreed not to talk about.

I watched my male peer's attempts to handle their daughter's sexuality. It ranged from being helpful through to active blocking. I have only one friend, where discussion of sexuality was a normal topic of conversation in the family. A girl has to grow up watching the line where her peers will call her a slut. Her mother has input here. But without a father to give his view of the daughter's sexuality, the mother's voice will count for little.

From what I can see, mothers are not comfortable with their son's sexuality. This accounts for much of the problems in the way their sons treat women when they reach adulthood. However it would seem that the father's discomfort with their daughter's sexuality has worse affects. It results in adult women who accept poor behaviour by the badly educated males.

The immediate inspiration for this piece came from a standup piece by Katherine Lloyd <http://katherinelloydcomedy.blogspot.com>. As a little girl Katherine, discovered the joys of leaning up against sofas. Her mother would watch to make sure she didn't do it too long. If she did, the mother would warn her this feeling was only for when she was married. While listening to Katherine, I realised that the subject of the sexuality of little girls was now up for discussion.

A while ago I read a book by Anka Radakovich where she described, how as a young girl, she discovered the joys of bouncing on beds.

The expression "front bottom" comes from a set of short stories by a woman, which I read a long time ago. In the story, the young girl finds out about herself, to the horror of the adults around her (nuns in a convent, I think in Ireland). The story did not turn out well for the little girl. I do not have the book any more and I have no idea who wrote it.

I do have a son. He spent about 2yrs bouncing on beds when he was 6yrs old. I don't have a daughter and this part of the piece is completely fictional.

talking to audience:

This is a piece on my theme of the things we've all agreed not to talk about.

I watched my male peer's attempts to handle their daughter's sexuality. It ranged from being helpful through to active blocking. I have only one friend, where discussion of his daughter's sexuality was a normal topic of conversation in the house.

The immediate inspiration for this piece came from a standup done by Katherine Lloyd, at Chuckle and Chortle, here in this room 2 weeks ago. In it she talked about how she began to find out about herself, when she was a little girl.

A while ago, I read a book by Anka Radakovich, where she described, how as a young girl, she discovered that she liked bouncing on beds.

I have a son and he liked bouncing on beds when he was young too. I don't have a daughter. The daughter in this piece is fictional.

So here we have "Bouncing on Beds"

My first child was a son, Peter. When he was about 6yrs old, he discovered that you could bounce on beds. This was a source of great joy. He would bounce in the middle of the

bed, landing on his feet. I would hold his hands so he didn't fall over and crack his head open on the head board.

He would last about 10mins and then be tired and stop. In the meantime the house would resound with the sounds of my son shrieking and having a good time,

(show holding son's hands as he bounces up and down. Do it for a short time with a joyful look on your face and then stop and return to the story.)

while the bed went sproing, sproing, sproing.

Whenever we'd visit people for a get-together, Peter would always want to test out the bed. We'd ask the hosts if it was alright. They always said yes. So the first thing on arrival, we'd take off his shoes and start bouncing on the bed.

Places that sell beds and mattresses, never advertise the bounciness of the bed. I don't know why not. There must be a big range of bounciness. If you're going to buy a bed, take a 6yr old kid with you. He'll happily test it for you. He'll tell you all you need to know about the bed. Bouncing a kid on a bed is much more important than anything you and your wife are likely to do in it.

Then 8yrs later, we had a daughter, Chloe. When she was about 6 yrs old, she too discovered bouncing on beds. After my son, this was hardly a surprise. Who doesn't like bouncing on beds?

But Chloe bounced differently. Instead of landing on her feet in the middle of the bed, she started in a sitting position, bouncing on her butt on the edge of the bed or on a corner of a bed. Chloe didn't get nearly as big a bounce doing it this way, compared to being on her feet. I mean her feet didn't even reach the floor, but that's what she wanted and if she wanted to do it that way, well why not? And Chloe would work at it for a lot longer than Peter ever did. Her face would get all red and she'd be sweating like crazy. She had a lot of stamina. I was really impressed.

My wife, Alice, would go into the bedroom and hold Chloe's hands, so she could bounce better. The whole house would resound with Chloe's shrieking and Alice's laughing encouragement, while the bed went sproing, sproing, sproing. It always warmed my heart to hear all the joy coming out from the bedroom.

After an olympic length session one day, Chloe came down covered in sweat and said (play both parts)

"Daddy, do you know why I like jumping on the bed so much?"

"No sweetie. Why?"

"It makes my front bottom feel all tingly."

I looked at Alice. Her face was a picture of wide-eyed innocence.

Chloe ran happily out of the room.

I looked at Alice again.

(play both parts)

She said "Well, who do you think she should tell, if not you? The boys down the street? Besides, it helps her get to sleep at night."

"It has the same effect on me."

"Well, mister smarty pants, how old were you when you found out about yourself?"

"About 10, if you really must know."

"Well she's almost twice as smart as you then. Don't worry, bouncing on the bed won't last forever. Some day she'll figure out something better to do with herself. Then there'll be complete silence. Won't that make you happy?"

"But you're just encouraging her."

"I'm just there to make sure she's OK. You wouldn't want her to hit her head on the headboard, right at the end, just as she's getting all worked up, now would you?"

"I guess not"

"Well, if she's doing it all wrong, why don't you tell her how to do it."

Now when I hear Alice and Chloe laughing and shrieking in the bedroom, and the bed going sproing, sproing, sproing, my heart isn't warmed anymore by thoughts of my daughter's innocent joy.

It seems Chloe hasn't found anything better to do with herself, at least yet. Maybe she's not as smart as my wife thinks.

Guys can't handle listening to this. Chloe must have told her 14yr old brother Peter too.

(show pained face)

From the pained look on his face, he knows what's going on. It's just torture.

(turn up the TV)

We turn up the TV. It doesn't help.

(cover ears)

We put our hands over our ears. It doesn't help.

Eventually we admit defeat. I say to Peter

(play both parts, holding hands over my ears)

"do you want to go fishing for the afternoon son?"

"that's a long time Dad."

I think about Alice and the phrase "like mother, like daughter" comes to mind. I turn to Peter and say,

"maybe we should take the tent and stay out overnight."
