

I was in seventh grade when my friend Janika lost her virginity. Soon after, my other close friends started having sex that year. The majority of the time when they had sex it wasn't between two people who were in love, but in lust. The friends of mine that were having sex were from lower class neighborhoods. My friends would always joke with me about not living around the same neighborhood, or how I was still a virgin. At the time I didn't see anything wrong with it, but still didn't have any interest in having sex myself. Now that I reflect on my past I can't help but think: Why did I think it was okay for them to have sex at such a young age? How did I know I wasn't going to have sex? My grandmother, compared to my friends' parents, has very different beliefs on how to raise children. I didn't appreciate it back then, but reflecting on it now I realize that how your parents raise you has an effect on your beliefs. Which brought me to the question: How are someone's beliefs about sex shaped?

I realized that for me to understand values about sex now, I must research about the history of sexuality that led to what most people believe today. In the Victorian Era women were banned from many things, from owning property to showing their ankles in public. Then, during the 1940s and 1950s, America started to change culturally and socially. After the World Wars and the Depression, Americans felt the need to start living in the moment and break from traditional behaviors. In the 1960s people started to acknowledge the change of sexual attitude and behavior. This was called the "Sexual Revolution." This was a political movement that affected many.

In the 1960's women were able to have casual sex, without the risk of pregnancy. It was birth control that gave women an advantage that would change their thoughts towards sex forever. Many believe that this was the cause of the Sexual Revolution, because this gave women the ability to have sex without the worry of getting pregnant. This revolution also gave gay people their first opportunity to be open with their sexuality. Gay people didn't have to hide behind a heterosexual relationship, and didn't have to be afraid to be themselves in public. The upcoming generation got to experience a different atmosphere than the generation before them. Although there are many positive outcomes, there were some negative results. Sexual diseases were more common with adults, and young adults were having sex with numerous people without protection. Some of the consequences from this revolution were complicated, and carry on into contemporary America.

The way people look towards sex has changed over the past six decades, and will continue to change. Back in the day, sex education was left to the parents having "the talk" with their children. It became one of the main responsibilities of a parent to teach their child to be aware of the importance of sex. Most parents may have trouble discussing sex with their children or believe they might learn about it from school. I would think that discussing a topic that is usually uncomfortable to talk about would be better to do with your parent, whom you know and trust on a personal level. My friends that didn't have sex education in their school or didn't have the "talk" with their parents learned from their peers or from the media. People who belong to a religion often follow the rules of that religion. Growing up in a religious household is usually hard when you are a teen because you can't do most of the things others can. Talking about sex can be uncomfortable for a teen, so they end up keeping all of their questions unknown and unanswered.

However, it wasn't only the parents' duty to inform teens about having sex, but the education system. I have had sex education since the fifth grade, but only because an after school education program provided it for my peers and me. Most teens I know took health, and that was the closest to sex education that they would receive. I've heard from people who never had sex education repeat myths they heard: the first time having sex you can't get pregnant, or you can't get pregnant from having sex in a pool. Some things about sex I thought were common sense, but I assume that because I've had sex education since fifth grade.

Another resource that adolescents mostly go to to talk about their curiosity and questions they have are friends and classmates. If anything I think this should be the last source a teen should go to for answers. If most schools lack sex education, why would someone go to another person that most likely lacks the same knowledge about sex? Some people think just because someone else had some sort of experience, that they must know a lot about sex. Sometimes teens that are in relationships are peer pressured by their significant other, and told things about sex that are not true. When information is coming from a teen it's either not completely true, or a myth they heard from another peer.

Nowadays most people don't experience love during sex, but lust. Why are people quick to have sex with each other? When two people share something just as special as sex, there are chemicals that go through their brain. The three natural chemicals are dopamine, norepinephrine, and oxytocin. The differences between each are: Dopamine is usually released during romantic love. Norepinephrine is when lust appears during a relationship or sex. And oxytocin takes place when attachment is felt between two during sex. People don't understand that having sex isn't just a moral thing, but the body and the mind becoming one.

After researching the questions I have, there is still an unfulfilled void that I can address by asking people close to me that I trust. Do you have to be with someone with a certain amount of time to experience love? Do you have to have an orgasm for it to be love? When I feel some type of way about something I always feel comfortable going to my family about any question I have. Usually my family has an open mind towards people and opinions, and that gives people a safe vibe to be themselves around. I created a documentary of interviews with different family members, asking them questions on how their beliefs about sex were shaped.

I picked each family member by age and personality. The people I chose to interview were: my sister, my aunt, my uncle, and my cousins. My sister, Bree, is 20 years old; she goes to college full time and works as a secretary at a senior home full time. My aunty Rosalind is 54 years old, and works at a shelter for women that suffer from domestic violence. Ralph is 63 years old and has recently been employed at an art gallery in San Francisco. My cousin Sean has been in jail for seven years, and was released a month ago. And my cousin Jason is a substitute teacher at a high school in Oakland, and Myra is a kindergarten teacher in Richmond. I chose these people because I respect them and they have a big impact in my life, but also because they all have very different opinions.

The reason why I chose my older sister to be apart of my documentary is because she is one of the main role models in my life since I can remember. She always knows

what to say to me when I am in trouble or need advice. Since she is the oldest she has gone through things I wouldn't ever have to experience. If there was something's my grandma thought I wasn't ready to know, my sister would never leave me in the dark. People were always surprised how close we were when they heard we were four years apart. Even though my sister is older than I that never stopped her coming to me with her secrets or for some advice. I feel my sister is the best candidate because we have a trustworthy and open relationship.

My aunt is my grandmothers' youngest sister, Rosalind. She spent her teenage years at Berkeley High School in the late 60s and early 70s. I would always hear stories of her getting in trouble with my great grandma, about coming home high, or past her curfew. Other than her always being in trouble, she was always reading, and interested in the health of the human body. Even as an adult she has an open mind towards people and other opinions, but is not afraid to tell you her opinion. When coming to raising my sister and me, my grandma never hesitated to go to my aunty for advice, or for another opinion. I asked her to be part of my documentary, because she was a major part of the Sexual Revolution era, and my life growing up as a child.

My uncle is my grandmother's younger brother, Ralph. My uncle had a time in his life where he lived in San Francisco for about twenty years. He always had nice clothes, lived in a fancy apartment, and many young, beautiful girlfriends. When my cousins and I were young, we would always go to uncle Ralph's house for the weekend. Since I was young I always had a special relationship with my uncle; he knew he could be more honest with me than my sister, just because I can handle it. He lived his life as a bachelor for a long part of his life, and always had an honest relationship with me.

My mom is the only child, and my sister and grandmother raised me. Therefore my sister and I didn't have a lot of cousins our age on my mom's side, besides our second cousins. It was annoying growing up with cousins older than us, but the older I get the more I appreciate the advice they gave me. There are a lot of mistakes they made I got to learn from—from school to dealing with my grandmother. Even though they were a great amount older, they weren't too old to go to with problems about boys or friends. I appreciate the relationship I have with each one of my cousins. My cousin, Sean, was chosen to be a part of my documentary because I always felt comfortable around him, and knew he would bring a sense of humor to my film. My other cousin, Jason, is that family member who talks your ear off at family occasions. I don't ever appreciate his lectures at the time, but I must admit he has helped through a lot of my obstacles, and I felt he would be honest for my film. He and his wife have been together since high school, and a part of our family since I was born. I thought they would be perfect to say their perspectives on my documentary.