

WEIRD SCIENCE: PSYCHOLOGY EDITION

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Midnight Facts for Insomniacs

Podcast Transcript

**(Note: transcript
consists of episode
outline)**

We're going to talk about how irrational our brains can be, and all the myriad ways they like to mess with us.

So this episode was suggested by a couple listeners in a roundabout way. They both sparked the idea, although they'll both probably be disappointed because I mostly went in a slightly different direction. I apologize ahead of time. So Belle from Insta suggested funky psychology. Things like the Oedipus complex, Freud's Psychosexual development theory, and the good girl complex like the basis of patriarchy chicken.

I also had a convo about psychology with insomniac Ray person from Insta and these two interactions led me down a path that shaped today's episode: I'm calling it weird science, psychology edition, and we'll probably do more than one. We're going to

start with the basics of brain weirdness, not the truly weird and unique or obscure complexes, not like eating metal shavings and toilet seats, but the strange and fascinating psychological quirks that we all share. For instance, one that ray and I discussed was

Cognitive dissonance.

The human brain has this amazing ability to accommodate conflicting beliefs. We are masters of believing illogical nonsense that we ultimately know deep down is untrue. And it's actually relatively easy to believe two things at once when those things are both low stakes. Like, I believe that video games are a complete waste of

time and I kind of hate them and also I will destroy you at battlefront 2. Why do I hate video games and yet play video games? It's a mystery. But a harmless little mystery, not like a murder mystery, not like a mcgruff the crime dog kind of mystery. Remember mcgruff? The anthropomorphic bloodhound who taught us that the world is an evil, terrifying place? "Take a bite out of crime." What did that even mean? Like I get it, you want to get rid of crime, but by—what—ingesting crime? I will absorb the essence of crime. But yeah, there's a difference between simple cognitive dissonance like "I know eating meat is bad, but...", (fill in rationalization), and the the kind of extreme cognitive dissonance

that's like, "I know that eating people is bad, but..."

Right? In other words, the "magnitude of dissonance" between those internal conflicts is different. Although people are red meat. Right? There are two elements that determine the magnitude of dissonance:

1. The importance of the beliefs. If they're core beliefs that are at odds with each other, if you're really invested in those beliefs, that makes it much more important that you resolve the conflict between them. If you passionately believe that killing animals is wrong, but you also really love a good steak, you have a problem. This is very

relevant to me. That's why I'm a big fan of the idea of vat-grown, industrial meat. This is a massive area of cognitive dissonance in my brain. I love animals, but also some of them are super tasty. I'm ready to start eating meat that was grown in a lab, Frankenstein meat, sign me up. I want to eat cow parts that were never part of a cow. I want to eat chicken that didn't have a mother. People are like, "lab-grown meat is disgusting, "really? You eat chicken, chicken eggs came out of a butthole." That's how chicken anatomy works, there's just one hole. It's a cloaca. There's a midnight

fact. So hey, don't lecture me about gross Frankenstein lab meat; A lab is a sterile environment, unlike a chicken's vagina-ass.

2. The second factor influencing the magnitude of dissonance is something called the "ratio of cognitions." In other words, how much dissonance is in your head vs consonance. We can accept a small amount of dissonance. Someone might say "I completely oppose the idea of driving under the influence of any alcohol whatsoever. But I also really don't want to sleep in this parking lot. And I only had five

sips of beer. I want to get home, I'm not drunk, so I'm going to go against my belief." In this case, the consonance outweighs the dissonance. There's a small conflict, but I can find a bunch of logical reasons to tolerate it, to still do the thing that's creating dissonance: I'm not drunk, there are very few cars on the road, I'm only five miles from my house—while there's only one reason not to: my moral convictions. Always the bottom rung on the motivation ladder. The motivation ladder—like, while I did this particular thing—the rungs are like: horniness, jealousy,

anger, and then somewhere down at the bottom is moral conviction. Way down below "Internet clout" and "boredom."

So what exactly happens when you're struggling with a high magnitude of dissonance? well, things can get uncomfortable. There's a famous 1957 study by Leon Festinger, called *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, and Festinger found that humans have an internal compulsion to achieve harmony among our actions and beliefs, which is known as the principle of cognitive consistency. "When there is an inconsistency between attitudes or behaviors (dissonance), something must change to eliminate the dissonance."

So what's fascinating is, I said our brains can accommodate conflicting information, but that's not exactly true. You can accommodate two beliefs, but your brain has to compensate in some way to reduce the discomfort. So how do we accomplish this? Well, there are a few different methods for reducing dissonance. Or at least the discomfort resulting from the dissonance. Which is really all we care about. How can I feel better about doing this shitty thing, without resorting to not doing the shitty thing? So The first strategy is to change one of the beliefs or behavior that's causing the dissonance. This one is the most difficult—it requires the most sacrifice—and thus is the least popular. If you're a smoker

and you know that smoking is awful for your health, you can reduce the dissonance by quitting smoking. No one does that. Why would you? God gave humans the ability to rationalize for a reason.

And on the sixth day God gave Adam the ability to deceive himself, and lo, it was good. So quitting a behavior is hard, if it can also be difficult to quit not just behaviors but strongly-held beliefs. Let's say you believe that there are pedophiles in a pizza restaurant running a child sex trafficking ring from the basement, and you break into that pizza restaurant and find zero pedophiles, you can do a couple things: change your belief and accept that it would be logistically challenging and financially ruinous to try to operate a

functioning pizza restaurant while simultaneously concealing a massive child exploitation ring—not to mention highly unhygienic (sex trafficking is bad enough when it's not happening on a tub of pepperoni)—or you can just convince yourself that pizza pedophiles do exist but that you accidentally targeted the wrong pizza place. The sex pizza was happening next door, over at Chuck E. Cheese.

Which is a much more likely child sex-trafficking location. I would actually be inclined to believe that...I'm glad the pizzagate conspiracy didn't mention Chuck E. Cheese because I would have gone down the rabbit hole. The cheese hole. That sounds filthy. So that second option—

holding on to the erroneous belief by adjusting your perspective — is a very popular one, especially in the Internet era. If you believe two conflicting sets of information, a simple way to resolve the dissonance is to seek out more information that supports whichever conclusion you'd prefer to believe. This is "selective exposure theory," Aka: "Do your research." It often involves finding a grainy YouTube video of some bug-eyed weirdo who watched a bunch of even sketchier YouTube videos because he does his damn research. So if you know that smoking causes lung cancer but you really enjoy smoking, it's a huge relief when 4chanfan420 on YouTube informs you that in fact the link between

cancer and smoking is a lie perpetuated by mainstream media and doctors from the deep state. It's a lie from "big medicine." This is both confirmation bias—where we specifically seek out info that confirms what we want to believe while dismissing conflicting info,—and rationalization, where we tie ourselves in knots to justify our preferred belief.

Rationalization it turns out, is not remotely rational.

Another way to reduce dissonance is to convince yourself that the conflict in your brain just doesn't matter. "Sure, smoking kills, but we all die eventually. I could fall down an elevator shaft tomorrow, might as well enjoy my life...By inhaling burning smoke into my lungs." I don't understand

the appeal. "You only live once, so you might as well stick hot poker in your mouth five times a day."

- There have been a ton of studies that have illustrated this concept, in sort of roundabout ways. Some of these studies, when you read them, it feels like their conclusions could potentially be explained by other factors. But here's an interesting one: so in the 1950s a group of women were instructed to give ratings to two domestic appliances (of course if there's going to be a scientific study involving women it's also going to involve household chores, it

was the 1950s, let's just let this one go) and then after they had rated the items they were told that they could take home one of the appliances. As soon as they had made their choice, they then rated the appliances again. consistently, researchers found that the women rated the appliance that they chose as even higher the second time, and the other one as lower. And the explanation is that there was a cognitive dissonance that had to be resolved—the appliance they didn't choose was still desirable in many ways, but they hadn't picked it. So they convinced

themselves retroactively that the one they didn't choose was absolute garbage and the one they did choose was conclusively better. We make a decision, and then we retcon that decision to make it feel like the obvious, indisputable choice. This study was called *Post-decision Changes in Desirability of Alternatives* which is why people think science is boring and sucks. Maybe come up with better names for your studies if you want people to pay attention to them. Notice how the government names bills the "save America anti satanic pedophiles bill" when

it's really a tax cut for corporations. Name your scientific experiment the "happy puppies Funtime" study. People will pay attention.

So the way this particular topic came up in conversation with Ray on Instagram, was specifically in regards to religion. SO MUCH cognitive dissonance in religion. And I'm not just talking about the disconnect between magical man-in-the-sky stuff and science, I'm talking about the hypocrisy issue.

particularly and famously, Leviticus instructs that a Christian should not eat shellfish or wear mixed fabrics, that homosexuals are evil, that people who cheat on their spouses

should be put to death etc., yet most Christians I know will happily dig into a lobster tail while wearing a cotton-synthetic blend and simultaneously not murdering adulterers. I'm not attacking religious people; I envy religious people, there's an incredible power in believing there's an omnipotent force watching over you and also in being able to cherry-pick your convictions. We all do it, but religious people are the masters of this. And again, I have Christian friends, and Muslim friends, and There's nothing wrong with religion, but there IS a truly epic level of cognitive dissonance.

Next.

Baader-

Meinhof phenomenon

Most of us have experienced this phenom, and for me it seems to almost always involve vehicles. Tell me if this rings a bell. I bought a motorcycle when I was 21, and suddenly it seemed that motorcycles were everywhere. It was the weirdest thing, I felt like everyone was jumping on the motorcycle bandwagon. But of course I was the one jumping on the bandwagon, I just hadn't realized how big the bandwagon was. Until something becomes relevant to us, we tend to tune it out. There were the same number of motorcycles in the world, but now I was becoming aware of them. My brain was suddenly tuned to

motorcycle frequency. It's kind of like how you don't pay much attention to breasts until puberty hits, and then breasts are fucking everywhere. You're like Jesus, did these things even exist yesterday. I guess if you're hitting puberty at the same time as your final friended, then a lot of the In didn't...anyway. This is getting weird. So These days I own a white Prius and holy crap, there are more white priuses than motorcycles in the world. So many people have exceptional taste. Another term for this phenomenon is "frequency bias." Alternately you can call it the recency illusion or the selective attention bias. Or as I refer to it, narcissism. It's self-absorption. we tune out stuff that doesn't

matter to us, which is basically the entire non-us part of the world, because we are special snowflakes and everyone else is irrelevant.

Now of course it's not like every time you notice that something is suddenly showing up all over the place that means you're in the clutches of a psychological phenomenon. It might literally be all over the place. A new Taylor swift song taking over the world isn't a result of the Baader-Meinhof phenom, it's just popular. The Baader-Meinhof phenomenon would be more like if you've never heard of Taylor swift and then you learn about her for the first time, and now you're noticing she's everywhere, which just

means you were in a coma for twenty years. Which is a totally different psychological phenomenon. And also, I feel sorry for you, because Taylor Swift is amazing. I'm a Swiftie. Which is spelled with an IE, not a why. I was corrected on discord by a much more intense Swiftie. I'm a medium-intensity Swiftie. I don't stalk her or like buy her bathwater on the Internet anymore. That was a phase.

Now of course corporations have made great use of psychology to sell us stuff, or convince us that we need to buy stuff. For instance

The scarcity principle

You could also call this "Covid toilet-paper theory." You can create demand for a product by tricking people into believing that the product is in limited supply. Thus all the ads that advise you to "act now, while supplies last! Going out of business sale! Limited time offer!" Limited time offers are such BS. "We really want to sell you this product right now, but if you don't act quickly, we're going to charge our minds, because we hate procrastinators. We'll punish you for your tardiness by not making a sale and losing money and really only punishing ourselves.." There are occasional good deals that actually start off as short term, but if those deals are successful and result in higher sales, just wait a

while and they'll come back around. It's crazy that corporate America has convinced us that we have to compete for the ability to buy their product at a discount. People trampling each other on Black Friday to get a tv half off. That's not a sale, that's the running man. It's televised armed combat, and the prize is that the winner earns the right to give away slightly less money than the loser.

"Congratulations, you're the victor. Pay me, but not as much as this slower guy." Another marketing technique leveraging basic psychology is the

mere-exposure effect

AKA the familiarity principle. In the simplest terms this is brand awareness. People tend to

favor brands and concepts and even people who are more familiar over ones that are less familiar. It turns out that our incredibly complex brains are also remarkably, unbelievably basic. You'll be standing in the supermarket aisle thinking "this unfamiliar coffee brand looks intriguing, but I can't recall its jingle. Not even a slogan. Very suspicious." And then you see a package next to it and you immediately start humming "The best part of waking up is Folgers in your cup" and boom. Sold. I've done this. I've been in a grocery store trying to choose between two products and found myself humming the jingle for one of them as I reach for the box. When that happens I immediately force myself to purchase the other

product, just out of spite. And to try to convince myself I'm not a mindless consumer automaton. But we're all sheeple at heart. Honestly, if you're one of those trolls online calling people Sheeple, the only problem I have with it is that you're not acknowledging that you are also a Sheeple. There are no non-Sheeple. Open your refrigerator or your cupboard and take a look at what's inside, and think about how many of those brands have slogans and mascots and jingles you can name. And it totally makes sense, because our caveman brains associate familiarity with safety. The things that we're familiar with haven't killed us yet. Can't say the same about strangers and unknown phenomena. The grocery aisle is no different from

the prehistoric Serengeti. "Unfamiliar coffee brand has intruded on my territory, I must kill it with fire."

So Let's talk about some psychological principles that are super relevant in the Internet age.

False consensus effect

This one is really fascinating in the era of social media bubbles and political polarization. We tend to believe that there is more consensus or agreement with our personal perspectives than there really is. Flat earthers, for instance, when polled, will wildly overestimate the number of likeminded idiots in the world. The disc.

We surround ourselves with people who agree with us, via geography and social media and social circles, so this consensus belief makes sense. I've experienced this. I'm always pearl-clutchingly shocked by the number of people who vote for candidates I don't agree with. I'm like wait, I've done the calculations and approximately 99% of Americans agree with me judging by my Facebook wall. And weirdly, this phenomenon is much stronger in people who hold views that are divergent or in the statistical minority. The flat earthers, QAnon, people who enjoy eggplant. And the more fringe our beliefs, the more likely we are to overestimate the number of people who agree with us. If you're a

weirdo, you see weirdos everywhere. Back to frequency bias. Although I think it's fair to say that there are even more weirdos in the world than white priuses.

And for the most part, human brains typically want to believe that we're part of a large and similarly minded group, because we're herd animals and also we tend to assign more credibility to opinions that are perceived to be more popular. This is why advertisers will tell you that moms prefer a particular brand of diaper, or that nine out of 10 dentists agree. You don't want to be that one stubborn dentist. Don't be part of the 1/10th dentist society, it sounds like a the proud boys of dentistry. You've heard of the three

percenters? Speaking of which, there are also people who just happen to be really contrarian and disagreeable and that's why they gravitate to unpopular beliefs. I guarantee I could start a successful cult called the 1/10 society. Eff the man, and by "the man" I mean those nine out of ten Colgate-loving dentists. Another related phenomenon is

belief

perseverance,

which is our tendency to cling to core beliefs even when presented with conflicting evidence.

We've talked about this and it demonstrates how difficult it is to reprogram people from cults. In fact, when core beliefs are challenged, people often dig in defensively and

become even more attached to erroneous ideas. This is the backfire effect, and it's the reason that arguing with jackasses online is counterproductive. Learning this stuff is fascinating, and it's also definitely not going to stop me from arguing online. Arguing online is one of my core beliefs.

There are also psychological principles that explain some basic human failures, and I love these, because I'm always curious about the variety of ways in which we collectively suck. One source of much suckage is the series of phenomena known as

Attribution Errors

There are a bunch of these, but let's talk about the "Fundamental attribution error": human brains like to assign responsibility, or you might say we look for something to blame. When it comes to perceived faults in other people, we're more likely to assign the blame to personality traits, rather than external forces. So in plain English, that means that if someone is overweight, or does drugs, or is broke, our tendency is to blame the person for the circumstance. Being obese couldn't be the result of a medical condition or metabolism; it's lack of willpower. Drug addiction couldn't be genetic; it's a character flaw. Being poor isn't due to family circumstances or societal obstacles; it's

laziness. But when it comes to our *own* flaws, we attribute them to those aforementioned external circumstances. We give ourselves the benefit of the doubt. *You're* fat because you're lazy; I'm just big boned. And when it comes to the positive aspects of our lives, we forget about external circumstances altogether and suddenly decide that everything good that comes our way is the result of hard work and perseverance. I didn't get into that Ivy League university because my parents are legacy millionaires; it was totally because of my killer 2.8 GPA. This psychological principle also helps explain popular opposition to social programs like welfare or universal healthcare. It's easy to

convince ourselves that if someone else is poor, or sick, that's their fault. We don't have sympathy until we experience those conditions ourselves. Of course on the other hand there are also people who always blame *themselves* for everything, and that's a completely different disorder. Never underestimate the human ability to find new and innovative ways to be mentally fucked up and neurotic. I speak from experience. Here's a great example:

The spotlight effect

I call this the Truman Show complex. We all secretly believe that we're the star of our own little reality show, and we imagine that people are focusing on us way more than they

actually are. "The reason for the spotlight effect is the innate tendency to forget that although one is the center of one's own world, one is not the center of everyone else's." This can also have a really negative effect on our mental state because we frequently assume that some minor foible or mistake or imperfection is absolutely world-ending. "Oh my god everyone is staring at this zit on my neck." No one cares about the zit on your neck. Because no one cares about YOU. Well, very few people care about you. Way fewer than you probably think, especially when you're young and more insecure. But even though it's stressful to believe that we're constantly under the microscope and being

judged, our brains prefer to believe we're under intense scrutiny to the sad truth of being irrelevant and ignored. This brings us to a related phenomenon, the

illusion of transparency

In which we believe that other people intuitively understand our mental state. For instance, if you're giving a speech in public you may be convinced that the audience can tell how nervous you are, it's like, "they know I'm freaking out." But the audience has no idea. This goes hand in hand with the spotlight effect. "Everyone is so obsessed with me, that they're scrutinizing every tiny action." It's silly. Unless you're visibly stammering and shaking

an audience has no way of knowing what's in your head, and yet we convince ourselves that we're an open book. I see this with new comedians all the time. There is this common phenomenon where a person on stage will forget what they were planning to say next, and when this happens to a brand new Comedian they will always panic, convinced that everyone can tell that they're floundering. After a few years, if you forget what you were going to say on stage, you just play it off, because you realize the audience has no idea. They only know what you let them know via body language.

Here's a quick and interesting one:

Recency bias

We mentally favor recent events over historic ones. This can be a problem in the legal arena, because the lawyer who speaks last may have an advantage. The jury is going to give more more weight to the most recent information they received. This is how stupid our incredibly intricate brains can be...we're basically complicated goldfish. Or cavemen. *Caveman voice* "Must make decision, which information to use? Can vividly recall only most recent event. Will ignore all other relevant evidence. OJ innocent."

Recency bias actually points to a much bigger issue, and one that most of us really struggle with. Our brains favor recent events, which also means that we tend to assume

that the current circumstances are going to continue. This will affect stock investors, who often keep behaving as if the market won't change even though they should know from past experience that it will. And it's really important to understand this principle in other areas of life, because it accounts for a lot of misery. When we are in a bad place mentally, going through a period of depression or whatever, we all have a tendency to believe that however we feel today is how we're going to feel tomorrow. That this is the real, true, and constant state of affairs. I struggle with this when it comes to OCD and anxiety, if I'm having a high anxiety day, it's hard for me to believe that this is just a temporary situation.

The most important four words in my life are "this too shall pass." Because it will. Right now jodi and I are experiencing the heartbreak of mouse's death, and I can't believe that I'm ever going to feel normal again, but logically I do understand that I will be OK someday. And of course it also applies to good times: those too will pass. But it's so important to understand that the way you feel right now is not a prison or a life sentence, it's not permanent. That's why I love the "it gets better" movement.

Because it does. If life sucks for you right now, take some deep breath's, journal, and be patient. It will change.

So we'll end with one that was suggested by Belle,

The Madonna-

whore complex

And this is something that I'll be honest, I've struggled with as well. Apparently this is turning into a therapy session. Even in this progressive era, even among progressive men, this complex is way more common than you'd think. Especially in the age of tinder. The Madonna whore complex refers to the internal conflict that many men experience between their desire for sex and a weird obsession with female purity. Many men fantasize about a woman who will be open to sexual experimentation, who will do all the weird crap that they obsess about—They want a woman to dress up like the bunny from space jam (a lotta people are into that, it turns out). they want a

woman to be totally pliant in the bedroom, but then they lose respect for any woman who is experienced or open minded and actually willing to do the things they want her to do. And let's be honest, it's partly because they're probably ashamed of their own weird fetishes. You want to bone a bunny but you don't want to have to look into the eyes of a person who knows that you wanted to bone a bunny. This be the "Lady in the streets but a freak in the sheets" dilemma. Guys say they want the whole package, but in reality, many of them want separate ladies for the sheets and the streets. No one will be surprised to learn that the idea of the Madonna whore complex originated with Sigmund Freud. Anything in which a

man has an extremely uncomfortable relationship with sex and the women in his life...any psychological complex that makes you feel kind of dirty and skeezy, probably old Siggy. I call him siggy, he can't complain, he's dead. I mentioned I'm not going to insult the subjects of this podcast any more, but that doesn't apply to the deceased. That was a promise made purely out of self preservation, not out of respect. I don't respect Ed kemper, that's just fear. I don't fear or respect sigmund freud. Old Siggy.

So sigmund Freud described the Madonna whore complex as the inability to maintain sexual arousal within a committed relationship. A version of psychic impotence, which sounds like when a ghost

can't get it up or something. Freud said, "Where such men love they have no desire and where they desire they cannot love." Which sounds profound but he was profoundly wrong, in my opinion. Because Freud initially tied the Madonna-whore complex to the Oedipal complex and castration anxiety, and later offered an alternate suggestion which was that the complex surfaces in men who have an underlying hatred for women as the result of growing up with a cold, emotionally distant and cruel mother. And again, all of this is wrong. It's just not true and I know this from personal experience. I dealt with this issue for years and I couldn't have had a more protective, loving mother.

This complex is real but it comes from insecurity, combined with cultural socialization. The insecurity aspect is straight up jealousy and low self esteem...insecure guys want to have sex with women but they can't handle the idea of a woman having sex with someone else. A woman who has sex with other men is gross to them, because these men are threatened by every other man in her life, terrified she'll leave them for another guy. And they're intimidated by her level of experience. Every other guy is a threat, and she's been sleeping with the enemy. A guy who is secure in himself doesn't view every other man as a rival, he isn't threatened by a woman who has had a satisfying and diverse sex

life.

You see this a lot.

And then there's the cultural indoctrination, the slut shaming in society.

And again there's a level of insecurity there. Society punishes and judges women for so-called promiscuity—we've been socialized to judge women for having sex—and an insecure guy is always worried that his partner's supposed bad reputation will reflect on him.

And of course you always hear the genetic explanation for this, which is the idea that men are biologically programmed to spread their seed but women are programmed to lock down a provider who will take care of their children. So men are born to roam and women are born to nest, so any woman who is roaming,

there's something wrong with her. Which is dumb; even if there ever was any biological grain of truth to this idea, it's completely irrelevant in the modern era when women don't need men to protect and provide for them. And there's the idea that men need to be sure that their offspring are actually theirs. If you had sex with a "promiscuous" woman, back before DNA testing, there was no way to know if a child was actually yours. So you had to find a pure, virginal woman, and lock her in your basement. The Madonna whore complex is the reason a man will often pursue a woman until she finally sleeps with him, and then immediately lose interest. It's the ultimate hypocrisy. You spend days campaigning for what you

want, and then you judge a woman for giving it to you. Think of the self hatred that indicates: I refuse to settle for a woman who would have sex with a guy who wants sex... like me. And obviously so much of this is just blatant sexism. A 2018 scientific study linked the Madonna whore dichotomy to sexist mentalities. "Men with this mentality were far more likely to Sexually Objectify Women, and endorse Sexual Double Standards...In addition, MWD endorsement negatively predicted men's romantic relationship satisfaction. These findings support the feminist notion that patriarchal arrangements have negative implications for the well-being of men as well as women." Bottom line, no one benefits from

this viewpoint.

I said that tinder has led to a resurgence of this psychological issue and I really believe that. There's this clear line that a lot of men draw between hookup culture and the supposedly serious relationship arenas. A lot of guys would never consider dating a woman they met on tinder, but if they met the same woman at work or even on hinge or bumble or something, it's a different story. We pigeonhole people.

Women do it too to an extent—we've all heard the term fuckboy—but in my experience women rarely disqualify a sexual partner from being a relationship prospect just based on his sexual history. I mean obviously this is a generalization but that's the reality as I've

experienced it. And I do have experience, I mentioned I've dealt with this, part of it was insecurity when I was younger, and part of it was this compartmentalizing of sex as being unemotional, I can't do emotional sex, and that can be tough in a relationship. Whenever I would I start to feel emotionally invested in someone, I would begin to have trouble connecting sexually. For years I refused to be monogamous because I wanted someone to cuddle with but I only wanted to have sex with strangers. Not because I wasn't attracted to my partner but because I was emotionally invested in my partner and that ruined sex for me. It's not the traditional Madonna-whore complex, but it has the

same result—I couldn't reconcile the sexual and romantic components of relationships. I didn't judge my partners or feel that they were gross or anything, and I certainly didn't lose interest in the relationship, it was just a "me problem" that made relationships unworkable because it took me years to find ways to meld the romantic and sexual elements of a relationship. Which is exactly the struggle of the Madonna-whore complex. Men have to find a way to synergize their desires, to get rid of the idea of purity altogether and realize that there's a benefit to dating a woman who is sexually open and experienced. Less judgment, more boning. Win win.

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