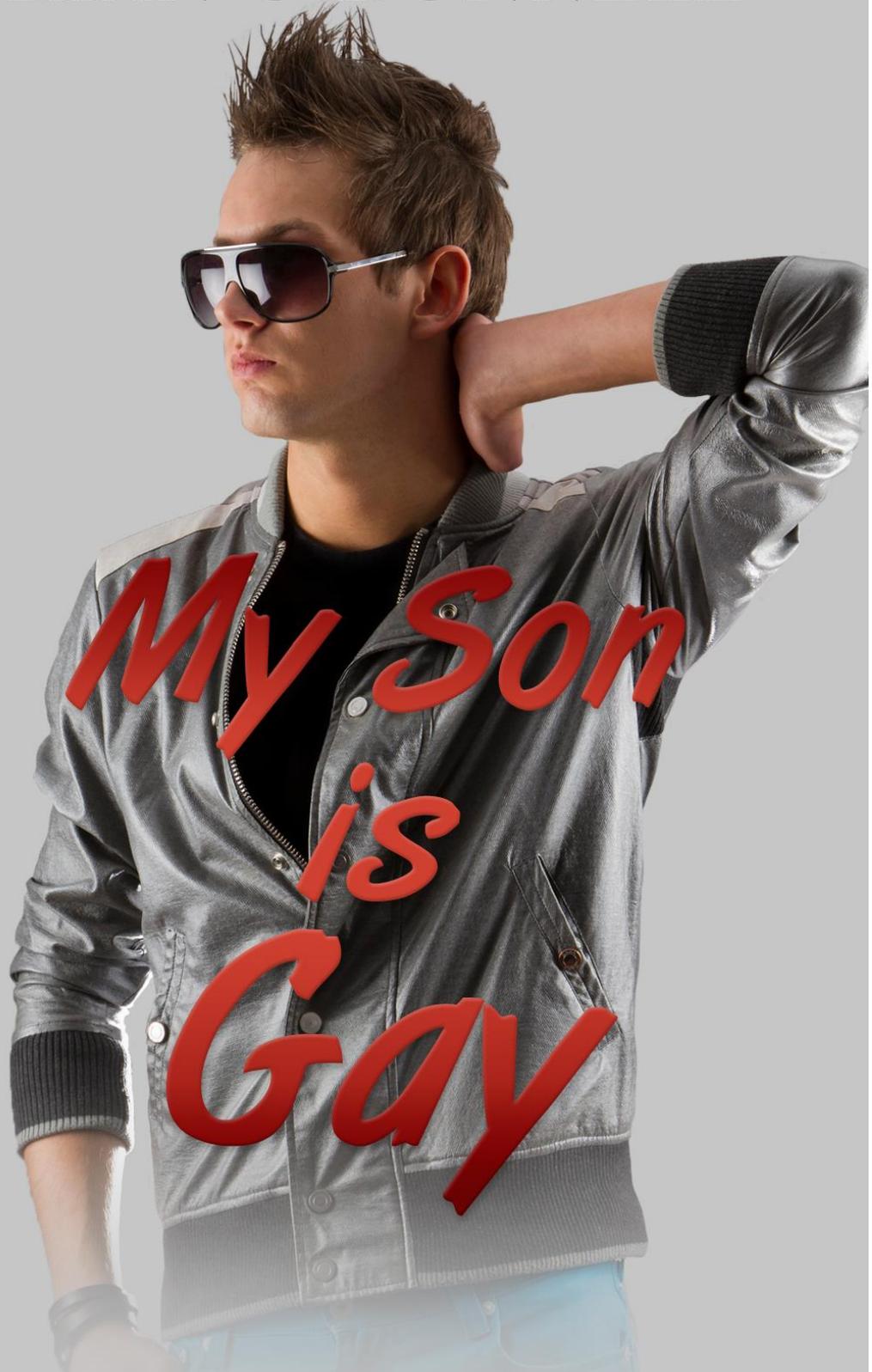


BRIAN O'DONNELL



A parent's ten-minute guide to
accepting their slightly different son

MY SON IS GAY

A parent's ten-minute guide to accepting their
slightly different son.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER ONE	Why is My Son Gay?	5
	Dr Ellis' A-B-C-D-E Formula	6
	How the A-B-C-D-E Formula Works	7
CHAPTER TWO	Putting Out the Emotional Fire	8
CHAPTER THREE	The Four Steps to Emotional Control	11
CONCLUSION	12

INTRODUCTION

Having a family member attracted to the same sex often leads to family feuds. While I am not a qualified therapist or psychologist, I have helped such families. In this book, I will outline the problem-solving approach I used to help these families overcome their differences. In no time at all you will see how quickly and effectively my approach works.

Perhaps you may know of other families who will benefit from reading *My Son is Gay* – a parent’s ten-minute guide to accepting their *slightly different* son.

CHAPTER ONE

Why is My Son Gay?

Many gay men still enjoy the company of women. However, very rarely will such males change their sexual preference.

Here's why!

If we study males, we will clearly see around 10% of them are born with a rather unique kind of emotional programming. While next to none of these *slightly different* males are born gay, a tiny percentage of them will go on to think 'sex with men is more desirable than sex with women' or 'men are more sexually appealing than women'.

As this is the case, what then can be done to help the many families who may be divided over a family member's sexual preference?

The first thing to note is that **not all** families 'exchange blows' over a family member being gay. Perhaps then feuds that do erupt because of a gay family member are somewhat unwarranted.

Dr Ellis' The A-B-C-D-E Formula

To show you why some families cope better and how all families of gay people can be more accepting of *slightly different* males, I am going to introduce you to a behavioral model known as the **A-B-C-D-E** formula.

This concept was created by Dr Albert Ellis, the founder of the world-renowned therapy practice known as Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT).

Dr Ellis was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, United States, on 27 September 1913 and, sadly, passed away on 24 July 2007. He was a leading authority on human behavior; he was the genius who heralded in the cognitive revolution in psychotherapy. Dr Ellis wrote scores of books and published thousands of papers on the subject and was considered by many to be the finest cognitive, emotive and behavioral therapist in the world. *The New York Times* wrote that Dr Ellis had more impact on psychology than any others in the field, and that psychologists ranked him ahead of Freud in terms of his influence.

In Dr Ellis' **A-B-C-D-E** formula, **A** stands for **Activating Event**. Anything that occurs or happens is an activating event.

B stands for **Belief**. In his book, *How to Stubbornly Refuse to Make Yourself Miserable About Anything—Yes Anything*, Dr Ellis writes, “You can also call your beliefs: notions, thoughts, views, opinions, values, meanings, attitudes, ideas, expectations or philosophies”. It is here at **B** that all your beliefs become known as your ‘belief system’.

C stands for **Consequence**. It is at point **C** that we experience our emotions or responses; we may also experience and express behavioral consequences.

D stands for **Dispute** and **E** stands for **Effective new philosophy**.

How the A-B-C-D-E Formula Works

Let's just say at point **A** (*Activating Event*) two men each have a son who has become gay. One father at point **A** (*my son's gay*) thinks at **B** (*this is very sad and it's not what I wanted*) and at point **C** (*feels very sad*).

- A.** My son's gay
- B.** This is very sad and it's not what I wanted
- C.** Feels very sad

The second father also has a son who has become gay. **A** (*my son's gay*) believes at **B** (*This is terrible and it's the worst thing that could ever happen to my family*), and at **C** (*feels very hostile, angry and depressed*).

- A.** My son's gay
- B.** This is terrible and it's the worst thing that could happen to my family.
- C.** Feels very hostile, angry and depressed

Although the activated event these men have experienced is the very same – *my son's gay* – they have very different emotional responses. One feels *very sad* about his son's behavior, while the other father feels *very hostile, angry and depressed*.

Even though each father may not be known to the other, have different circumstances, and could even have different spiritual beliefs, as you can now see, it is mainly their **different ways of thinking at B** that has created their **different ways of feeling at C**.

CHAPTER TWO

Putting Out the Emotional Fire

Since one father is much more upset over his son's sexuality than the other, it would suggest this parent's 'over the top' way of thinking may lead to family problems. To avoid this, the upset father would need to see that his thoughts are helping to create his unwanted emotions.

We could show him Dr Ellis' famous **A-B-C-D-E** formula, which is usually all that's required for people to see that if something happens at point **A**, our thoughts at point **B** help to create the way we feel at point **C**.

Once the upset father can see how his thoughts help to create his unwanted emotions, he would then need to identify what he is thinking when he feels upset. If he delved deeply enough into his thoughts and asked himself, "What am I thinking when I feel upset?", he would see he is actually thinking, *"My son's gay and this is terrible and it's the worst thing that can happen to my family"*.

Once the upset father has discovered what he is thinking when he is upset, the next step would be to encourage him to dispute or question the logic of his thoughts. We do this by moving onto **D**, the **Dispute** part of Dr Ellis' **A-B-C-D-E** behavioral formula.

The upset father at **D** could ask himself, "Where is the evidence it's terrible my son has become gay?" and "Is there any proof it's the worst thing that could happen to my family?" If the upset father **repeatedly** and **aggressively** asks

himself these questions, he will be able to see there is no evidence to show it's terrible his son has become gay, and there is no proof to suggest it's the worst thing that could happen to his family.

If, however, the father is **still** convinced it's terrible his son has become gay and it is the worst thing that could happen to his family, he could then try **repeatedly** and **aggressively** shouting to himself, "Where, where, where is the evidence it's terrible my son has become gay?" and "Why, why, why is it so bad?" "Who says this is so, and is it written as a law in our society that it's terrible my son is now gay and that nothing could be worse?"

With this kind of **repeated** and **aggressive** attack on one's thinking, we will often see that we have been thinking a little foolishly. Once we have made this observation, we then take a huge step toward improving our emotional well-being, because when we **see** we have been thinking foolishly, we often **stop believing** our foolish thoughts. When we do this, our silly and unhealthy thoughts then **lose their ability** to create unwanted emotions such as hostility, anger and depression.

Once the father no longer believes his 'over the top' thinking and now feels more at ease, he can then work on **E**, an **Effective new philosophy**.

His effective new philosophy could be: "It's not that bad my son is gay – things could be worse. People may laugh at us now we have a gay son, but it's not the end of world. I will try to be the best father I can, and strive to keep our family together and happy."

If the father then forcefully repeated his effective new philosophy, he would find he has a '**cooler**' way of feeling, which of course is the whole purpose of the exercise.

Our now not-so-upset father could even add some self-coping statements to his thinking, repeating in his mind many times: **I can - I can - I can** handle my son being gay and things could be worse.

This is a much more rational way of thinking, and in the long term will help all family members.

CHAPTER THREE

The Four Steps to Emotional Control

Although the topic I have covered here is about a family member being gay, Dr Ellis' **A-B-C-D-E** formula can be applied to almost any situation where one's emotions may be out of control. The four steps to controlling our emotions are:

1. **Accept** that your thoughts, to a large degree, create your feelings.
2. **Identify** what you are thinking when upset. Look into your belief system and ask, "Ok, I am hostile, angry and depressed. What am I thinking or what am I telling myself?" Be prepared to look for any 'over the top' assumptions all humans have a tendency to create.

Once you have uncovered what you are thinking when upset:

3. **Dispute** and challenge the logic of these thoughts. Keep doing this very aggressively until you can clearly see that you have more than likely been thinking foolishly.

Then, once you notice this and stop believing your silly, unhealthy notions, move on to:

4. **Your effective new philosophy.** For example: It's not that bad my son is gay – things could be worse. People may laugh at us now we have a gay son, but it's not the end of world. I will try to be the best father I can and strive to keep our family together and happy".

Finally, you can add a self-coping statement to your thinking. For example, "**I can - I can - I can** handle my son being gay and things could be worse", repeating this in your mind many times.

CONCLUSION

This book focuses on how an upset parent can cope better with a gay son. However, it is also important that the gay son plays his part in maintaining harmony within the family. Many gay males, for example, like to show their sexuality, which can annoy some parents who don't believe it's important others know of their son's sexual preference.

Harmony is the key here, and for a family to cope better under these circumstances, a little give and take from both sides is required.

You are not the only parent who has a gay son. There are millions of gay men and many of their parents are as equally bewildered by their son's sexual preference, as you are.

If you follow the proven approach I teach in this book, you will be able to cope better as a parent. You may even now begin to see your son for what he is – a *slightly different* male. While not born gay, he is perhaps just a little prone to some rather diverse ways of behaving. That's just the way he and other *slightly different* males are.

If you accept this, I know you and your family will cope better and learn to live in harmony.

I have helped many gay males and their families overcome their emotional hurdles. I am mostly in New Zealand or Australia and can be contacted from anywhere via this website for questions, one-on-one sessions, over the phone advice and live group talks, as well as radio and television interviews.

I wish you good luck and joyful living.

Brian O'Donnell

Suggested reading:

- *How to Be Happy and Sane Despite the Rain* - Brian O'Donnell (Amazon Kindle download)

The following three books are all-time classics written by the late, but great, Dr Albert Ellis:

- *A New Guide to Rational Living*
- *How to Stubbornly Refuse to Make Yourself Miserable About Anything (Yes, Anything!)*
- *Feeling Better, Getting Better, Staying Better*

THE END