Marriage. It has long been observed that many married men and women have sexual desires for members of their own sex. In the case of those who are primarily homosexual in orientation (Kinsey 4 to 6), the question which follows is why they marry. Marriage may be camouflage, a response to societal or familial pressure, and the relationship unconsummated; marriages of convenience between gay men and Lesbians are not unknown. Marriage can also be because the person does not understand or is unable to accept his or her sexual makeup; some of the latter group turn to marriage with the unrealistic hope of changing themselves. The desire for children is a motive for some, as is a desire for the public commitment and legal rights only available, at present, to heterosexual couples. Some simply happen to fall in love with a member of the opposite sex and try to make the best of it, and some, while preferring sexual partners of the same sex, or the anonymity and promiscuity readily available in the gay male world, prefer a marital partner of the opposite gender. A successful such union is possible if honesty and tolerance are found on both sides, or if the bisexual partner is able to keep any extramarital activities from the other partner. Some report that a person aware and accepting of the homosexual component within him- or herself makes a better partner in a heterosexual relationship. [p. 770]

In the case of married persons who are primarily heterosexual (Kinsey 1 or 2), the problem is somewhat different: how to deal with occasional erotic desires for a
partner of the same gender. In theory this is equally a problem for those in homosexual relationships who desire occasional sexual interaction with members of the opposite sex, and interest in the opposite sex can be more threatening to a homosexual relationship than same-sex interest is to a heterosexual one. Because male-female sex is less freely available for men than male-male sex, however, the problem comes up less often. Again, the problem is not sexual activity but the way the desired activity is viewed and the extent to which it threatens or is permitted to threaten the primary relationship. Not all desires need to be satisfied through activity, and questions of commitment, maintaining sexual interest, and protection from sexually transmitted diseases come up in relationships regardless of sexual orientation.

Marriage among members of the same sex existed in ancient Rome but then disappeared until the present century, when it has reappeared as a goal for gays. Even for heterosexuals, marriage is becoming an emotional union and commitment rather than an arrangement to produce and protect children, and if it is that then there is no rational reason why marriages of homosexuals should not be endorsed by society. This is controversial, however, even in the gay community, since marriage has long been viewed by libertarian thinkers as an outmoded and repressive institution, and a significant number of homosexuals, male and female, have “come out” from very unhappy marriages. Public and religious opinion is moving towards permitting same-sex marriage for those desiring it. It is available at present only in Denmark (in Sweden, while they may not marry, same-sex couples have more legal rights than in the U.S.). Elsewhere, ceremonies and rituals, even though they lack legal status, can serve some of the same purposes as marriage.
Daniel Eisenberg