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The personal experiences related below are those of a male homosexual, a lesbian and a girl who calls herself bisexual, and a former homosexual who has undergone extensive psychotherapy. In otherwise candid interviews with TIME correspondents, all four requested that they be identified by pseudonyms.

CHARLES ELIOTT, 40, owns a successful business in Los Angeles. In the den of his \$60,000 house he has a bronze profile of Abe Lincoln on the wall and a copy of Playboy on the coffee table. Wearing faded chinos and a button-down Oxford shirt, he looks far more subdued than the average Hollywood male; he might be the happily married coach of a college basketball team—and a thoroughgoing heterosexual. In fact, his male lover for the past three months has been a 21-year-old college student. He says: "I live in a completely gay world. My lawyer is gay, my doctor is gay, my dentist is gay, my banker is gay. The only person who is not gay is my housekeeper, and sometimes I wonder how he puts up with us."

Elliott has never been to an analyst; introspection is not his forte. Why did he become homosexual? "Well, my mother was an alcoholic; my brother and I ate alone every night. I was the person who always went to the circus with the chauffeur. But I wouldn't say I was exactly sad as a child; I was rather outward-going." He went to prep school at Hotchkiss, and on to Yale. There he discovered his homosexual tendencies.

Elliott returned home to Chicago to run the family business; to maintain his status in the community, he married. It lasted five months. After the divorce he married again, this time for two years: "She began to notice that I didn't enjoy sex, and that finally broke it up. I don't think she knows even today that I am a homosexual."

It took ten years to make Elliott give up his double life in Chicago for the uninhibited world of Los Angeles. He avoids the gay bars, instead throws catered parties around his pool. "I suppose most of my neighbors know," he says. "When you have 100 men over to your house for cocktails, people are going to suspect something. Now that I no longer try to cope with the straight world, I feel much happier."

"If Katie were a man, I would marry her and be faithful to her the rest of my life." So vows Rachel Porter, 21, who is slightly plump, wears her blonde hair in a pert pixy cut, and works as a secretary in a Manhattan publishing firm. Rachel has been seeing Katie Burns, a tall, strikingly handsome private secretary in a large corporation, for three years now, and sharing an apartment with her for three months. Yet Rachel's feelings are mixed. "I don't really say to this day that I am a lesbian," she says. "I'm bisexual. My interests are definitely guys, and eventually I'd like to have a child or two, probably out of wedlock." Katie, by contrast, in the past three years has given up dates with men.

Rachel grew up in the large family of a plumber who was too poor to send her to college. "I probably wouldn't know that a good relationship was possible if it wasn't for my mother and father. I was pretty much of a loner,

and to this day I do horrible things like going to the movies alone. I never had a crush on a girl; I had an affair with a boy behind my parents' back when I was 18."

Rachel met Katie shortly after that affair ended. "Gradually there was definitely a growing feeling," she recalls. "When I realized it, I was very upset. I didn't want to be gay. When I first went to a psychologist, I thought, 'Gee, I'm such a creep!' I thought that being in love with a girl made me a boy. He told me that I most certainly was not a boy. I couldn't erase the fact that I loved another woman, but I began thinking that as long as I was a woman too, things couldn't be all that bad."

Rachel and Katie have both told their parents about their relationship. "Our mothers both said, 'You're my daughter and I love you anyway,'" says Rachel. They refuse to live an exclusively gay life and engage in tennis, horseback riding and softball games with a circle of many straight friends (who also know the nature of their relationship). Muses Rachel: "Do I see myself living with Katie the rest of my life? Off and on, yes. I will probably date, because it's nice to get involved with other people, but that's difficult to work out. I certainly don't think our relationship ought to be exclusive. All I know is that life ought to be loving."

What was it like to be gay? "There were peaks and valleys of despair," says Tom Kramer, 28, a tall New York City public relations man who was a practicing homosexual until 2½ years ago. "Throughout high school and college, I would try to put it out of my mind. I had sissified gestures, and when I was with people I would concentrate on not using them. I would constantly think they were talking about my homosexuality behind my back. In my homosexual contacts, I'd try to be surreptitious, not telling my name or what kind of work I did. When I read about somebody being a pervert, it was like a slap in the face—my God, that's what / am!"

Two years after college, and weighed down with feelings of hopelessness, Tom heard that therapy was possible for homosexuals and went into treatment with an analyst. His prognosis was good: unlike many homosexuals, he desperately wanted to change. Twice a week for two years he discussed his past: the disciplinarian father who said Tom should have got straight A's when he got only A-minuses; the mother who made Tom her favorite. Gradually, Tom says, "I learned that my homosexuality was a way of handling anxiety. Some men drink. My way was homosexuality."

The process went slowly. Strengthened by insights gained in treatment, at one point Tom finally brought himself to kiss a girl good night—and became so terrified that he "cruised" on the way home for a homosexual partner. Two and a half years ago, however, he had his last male assignation, and several months later he "met a wonderful girl. We dated steadily. We had an affair. It was the first time I had had actual intercourse, and it was the happiest moment of my life." Six months ago, he and the girl were married.

Tom is still in analysis, attempting to cope with problems stemming from the same fears that led to his homosexuality. But he is self-confident about sex. "Women arouse me now," he says. "It's a total reversal." He has discussed his therapy with homosexual friends and urged them to attempt the same thing —so far without success. Ironically, though he is no longer attracted to them sexually, Tom says: "I like men better now than I did before. I'm no longer afraid of them."

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