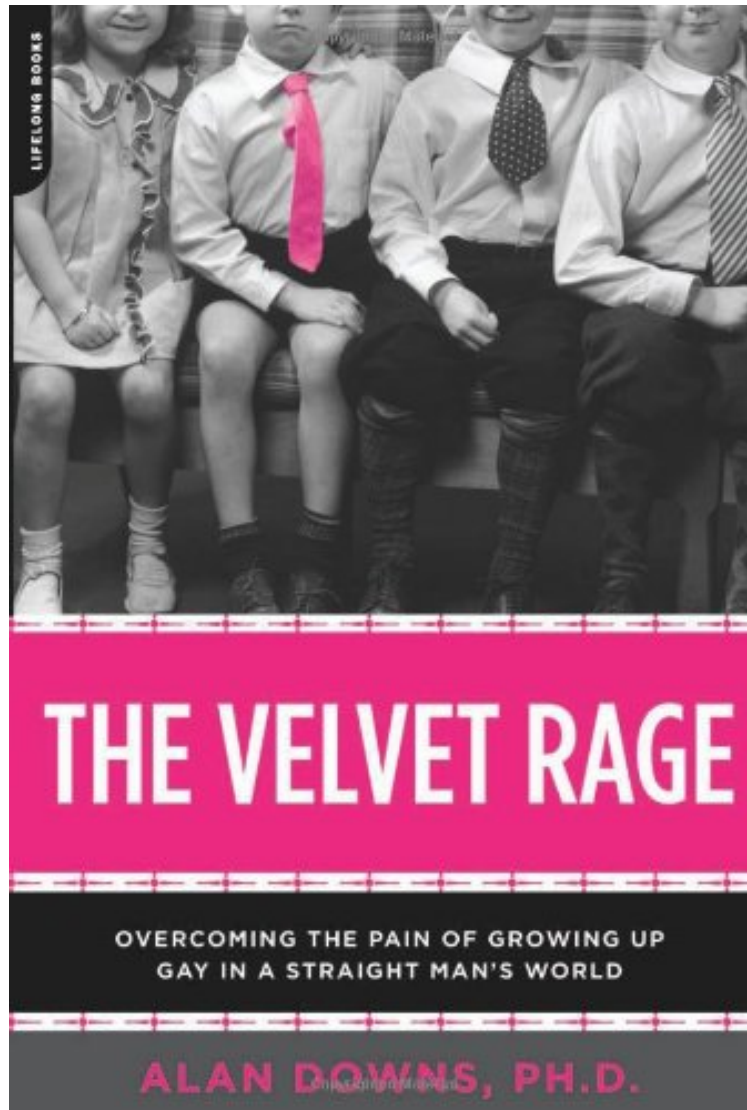


[Download] The Velvet Rage: Overcoming the Pain of Growing Up Gay in a Straight Man's World

The Velvet Rage: Overcoming the Pain of Growing Up Gay in a Straight Man's World

Alan Downs

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Alan Downs : The Velvet Rage: Overcoming the Pain of Growing Up Gay in a Straight Man's World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Velvet Rage: Overcoming the Pain of Growing Up Gay in a Straight Man's World:

87 of 90 people found the following review helpful. Important but flawed By MJ This book, particularly the first third (as other reviewers have noted) and the lengthy second edition add-on (Chapter 14) is a good starting point in understanding the origins and life-long impact of gay shame and how to overcome it. The author's three stage model

for how gay men experience/deal with shame (overwhelm, compensation, authenticity) is useful and occasionally eye-opening as are his observations of how shame at each stage can be "foreclosed" on (ignored, buried, etc.) or healthfully resolved. The solid practical advice offered in the aforementioned Chapter 14 ("Skills for Living an Authentic Life), while being tailored to the gay male experience, could be of benefit to a much wider audience. The main flaw with "The Velvet Rage" -- and it's a stunner -- is that it focuses almost exclusively on only one type of gay man, i.e. the urban, successful, materialistic, attractive, sexually promiscuous, well-traveled, fabulous "powergay". Life examples from the less-than-fabulous, i.e. rural/suburban gay men, unsuccessful or non-materialistic gay men, poor and middle-class gay men, ordinary-looking gay men, gay homebodies, senior gay men, disabled gay men, gay men of color, and many others are almost nowhere to be found, likely because these people appear largely absent from the author's social and professional circles (which he talks about a great deal, almost to the point of bragging at times). Though surely unintentional, this is a terrible oversight for a book that seeks to provide psychological support to a marginalized minority, and I suspect a fair number of gay men reading this book will feel further alienated in some way as a result. I would still recommend "The Velvet Rage", as it is vitally important for gay men to understand the toxic shame that lies at the core of our personal and collective psychological shadows as well as acquire the psychological tools necessary to make positive changes in our lives. Just don't expect to see your life experiences adequately reflected if you're an average gay Joe.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Insightful and eye opening!
By Clayton Stults
I have recommended this book to my friends, and purchased copies for other people as gifts. When we are aware of our actions which produce less than satisfactory results, We can choose to take a different action. Definitely buy this book. It's a quick and easy read. It will enhance your life in communication, relationships, honesty, passion, love, romance, and happiness if you consistently practice it's lessons. The best part is, it is a self help book for the gay male written by a gay male. I LOVE IT!
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great for any childhood trauma
By Wrecks
Brilliant, Insightful, Deep! This book is for anyone who felt grossly inadequate, flawed, bullied, or an outsider as a child. Whether the trauma was embarrassment about your family, your personal flaws, or any secret, this book walks the reader through the ways we compensate in childhood. These childhood adaptations are limited by our development and options at the time. However, we get so good at protecting and hiding our flaws or shame that we never reopen the thought patterns around the wound to see if, as a developed adult with adult options, we can free ourselves from the boundaries and consequential life we created to compensate. I've explored human potential for decades and found this book to be profound. It's a lot of material and requires introspection. But, it came with experiential rewards when it "clicked." The author provides many examples from his therapy practice which illustrate his point and the patient's ultimate insight and healing. Admittedly, only the first half of the book brilliantly deals with freeing ourselves of childhood shame, the second half of the book deals more with the ways that we have become socially challenged in relationships. I found the second half to be material I had heard in other places, and some of it might seem like common sense. But, nonetheless, it provides a good refresher, and if you have a challenging relationship today, there is a good likelihood this book will help. Well worth the time if you have something inside that you protect or are reluctant to share with others. As you read, you may find yourself finding insights and freedom. You can begin to see how your life and relationships have been far less based on your own free-will than you realized. Instead, you may discover your life has been largely designed to continuously validate a life perspective developed with the capabilities and emotional maturity of a child. It's time to reinvent yourself with an adult perspective freed from the limitations imposed by shame.

The gay male world today is characterized by seductive beauty, artful creativity, flamboyant sexuality, and, encouragingly, unprecedented acceptability in society. Yet despite the progress of the recent past, gay men still find themselves asking, "Are we really better off?" The inevitable byproduct of growing up gay in a straight world continues to be the internalization of shame, a shame gay men may strive to obscure with a facade of beauty, creativity, or material success. Drawing on contemporary psychological research, the author's own journey to be free of anger and of shame, as well as the stories of many of his friends and clients, *The Velvet Rage* outlines the three distinct stages to emotional well-being for gay men. Offering profoundly beneficial strategies to stop the insidious cycle of avoidance and self-defeating behavior, *The Velvet Rage* is an empowering book that will influence the public discourse on gay culture, and positively change the lives of gay men who read it.

From Publishers Weekly
With a title that plays on Janet Jackson's epochal 1997 LP *The Velvet Rope*, and its anatomy of unmet desire, therapist Downs's book describes the paradigmatic ways in which early childhood molds the future lives of gay men: scorned on the playground, disrespected by Dad, loved only by Mom until their first sex with men. Through this mechanism of rejection, gay men feel unlovable, correspondingly angry and, he says, driven to heights of creativity and "fabulousness" in addition to shopping addiction and obsessions with fat, muscle and penis size in a bid to distract themselves from their inner shame. For Downs, the only thing that will bring an end to this spiral of torment is, finally, "validation," which produces "authenticity." Downs is an engaging writer, though prone to repeating the same few points in different words, while his patients, quoted in sidebars, often make witty quips that rival Quentin

Crisp for dry, bitter sarcasm. While many gay readers will fail to recognize themselves here, others will find Downs's logic warming and even generous. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Philadelphia Gay News bestseller, 5/11/12A groundbreaking examination of the psychology of homosexuality, why it leads to shame over one's identity and how to overcome it. This book has remarkable staying power. Artvoice, 11/26/15The clearest, most succinct delineation of the origins and consequences of internalized homophobia, and how to address them.