



“Hooked” by Joe S. McIlhane, Jr, MD and Freda McKissic Bush MD

As a pediatrician and a father of four, I was concerned when I learned the content and attitude of the sex education being taught in Minneapolis Public Schools beginning in the 1980s. I spoke up in meetings with the school officials and was told that teens are going to have sex regardless of what we say and the best we can do is to prevent pregnancies and diseases. When I claimed that one partner for life should be promoted as the best choice, I was variously told, “That’s just your opinion,” or “We can’t say one choice is better.”

In my pediatric practice I saw the babies of teen mothers, living with family while the teen tried to complete her education. The father of the baby rarely provided any support -- emotional, financial or even his presence. Yet regardless of his irresponsibility, the mother of his baby usually defended his behavior and felt connected to him. The young man, however, seemed to shrug off any responsibility – even any interest – in the baby he partnered in creating.

“Hooked” by doctors McIlhane and Bush answers the question, “Why do bright young women attach to men unworthy of them? The book is more than a psychological study of the behavioral consequences of sexual intimacy, it investigates the physiological changes – indeed, structural changes in the brain -- that take place as a result of neurotransmitter release. The intense bonding of mother and baby is related to that phenomenon. Likewise there is a physiochemical bonding of people who have sexual encounters. This can occur before the two have investigated whether or not this is a person with whom they wish to share their entire

life. But on the even darker side, multiple broken sexual relationships can dull and even destroy the ability to feel and experience bonding in the future. This seems to be seen more quickly in males.

Will teens continue to make poor choices even if given good advice? Of course! But when those choices are branded by adults who ought to know better as “safe sex,” then those adults ought to consider themselves guilty of educational malpractice.

As intelligent voters and wise advisors to our children and grandchildren, nieces and nephews, we need to be informed.

Book reviewed by Ross S. Olson MD