

# growing up feeling good

A CHILD'S INTRODUCTION TO SEXUALITY



by  
Stephanie Waxman

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## *Acknowledgements*

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*For my parents - who set the example of love  
and  
For my husband - my lover and friend*



## *Introduction*

The kinds of things that make you feel good keep changing as you grow up. One thing doesn't change, though -- it always feels good to be loved. But the way you are loved, and the ways you love others, will change.

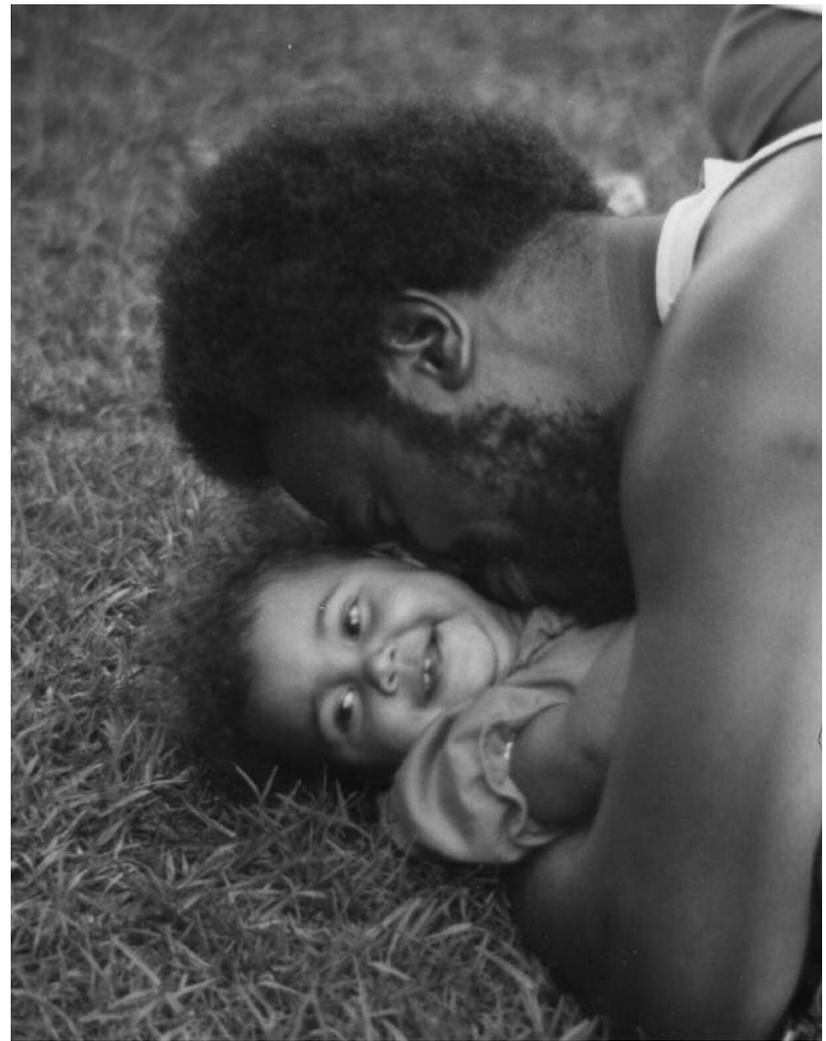
Sexual feelings are part of growing up too. Even though they are a normal part of everyone's life, just like other feelings, the word sex makes most people feel embarrassed, curious, or excited. Lots of children get silly about sex because of these feelings and so do many adults. Hopefully, this book will help you feel comfortable about your sexual feelings.

Many of the experiences described in this book won't happen to you for several years, but you may be wondering about them now. You may want to read this book with your parents or with your friends. Or, you might want to read it by yourself, in private. This isn't the kind of book that needs to be read all at once. You might enjoy it more a little at a time.

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When you were a baby you felt happy when you were held and cuddled.



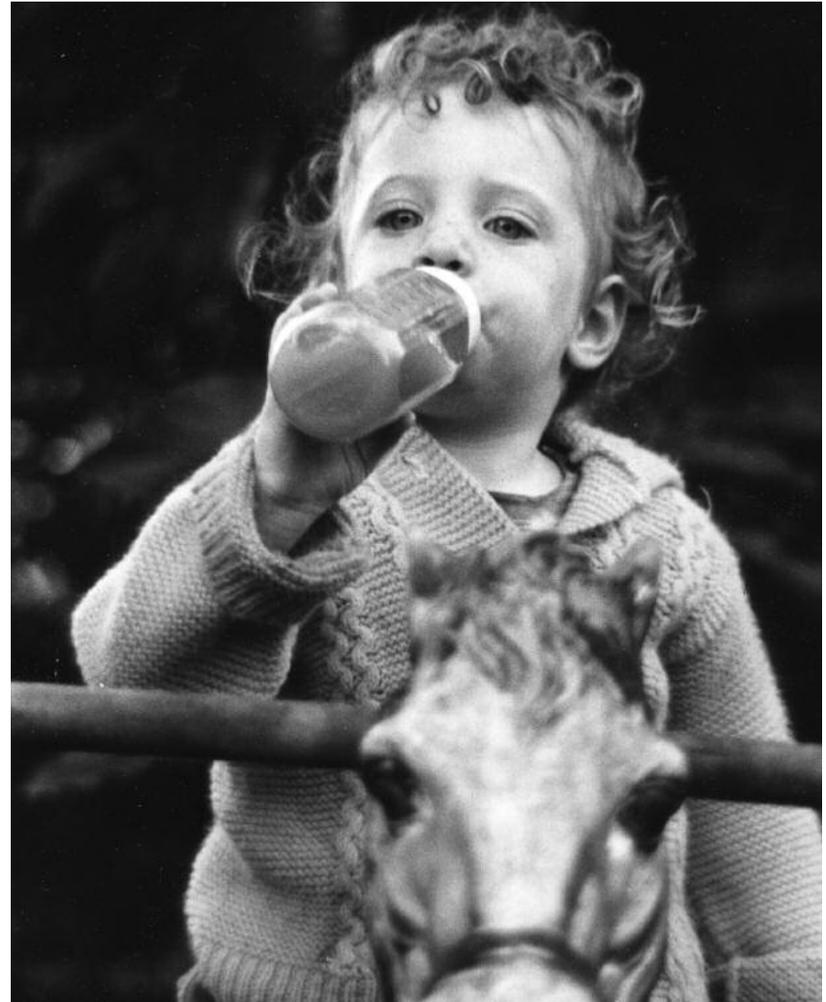
Rosie knows how good it feels to be loved by her daddy.

When you were a baby you did a lot of sucking.



Tessa sucks her thumb to make herself feel good.

Jaime loves to suck her bottle.



When you were two or three years old you still liked to be held and kissed and tickled. Maybe you still liked to suck your thumb or cuddle with a favorite toy, but you also had new ways of learning and new ideas.



Do you remember when you first began to use the toilet? This was an important time because it meant you were beginning to know more about your body.

Look how proud Eric is.

About this time you were beginning to play with other people and care about their feelings.



Guy and Andy both want the truck. Remember how hard it was at first to share your toys?

Sharing is a way of caring about someone else. It is also a way of beginning to understand someone else. So is pretending. Everyone enjoys pretending. It is a way of finding out what it would be like to be someone or something else. It is a way to begin to understand other people.

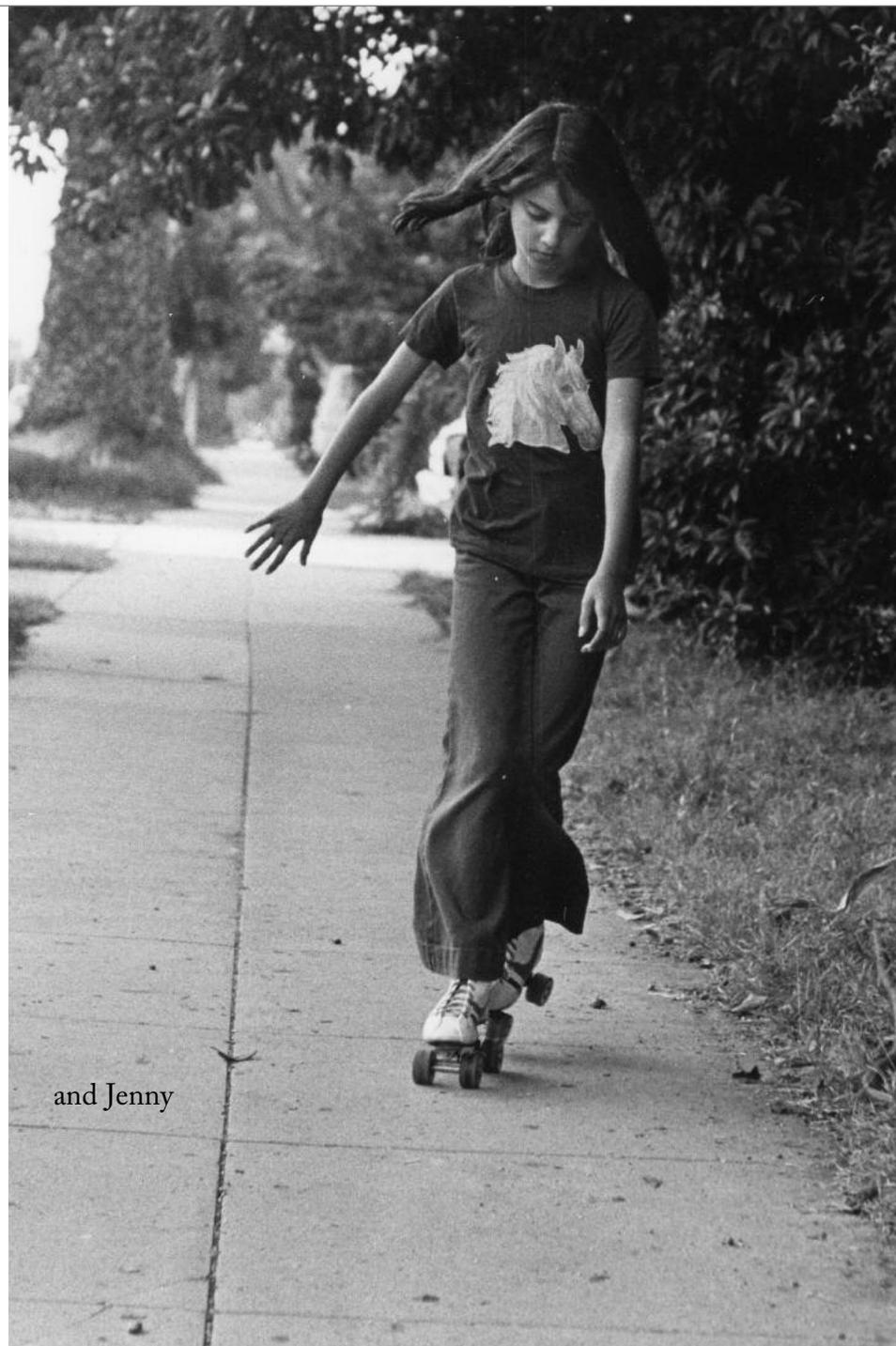


Anthony plays dress-up and pretends he is a lady.



Maria holds the hose between her legs and pretends she is a boy peeing! She giggles with her friend, Rebecca, at the joke.

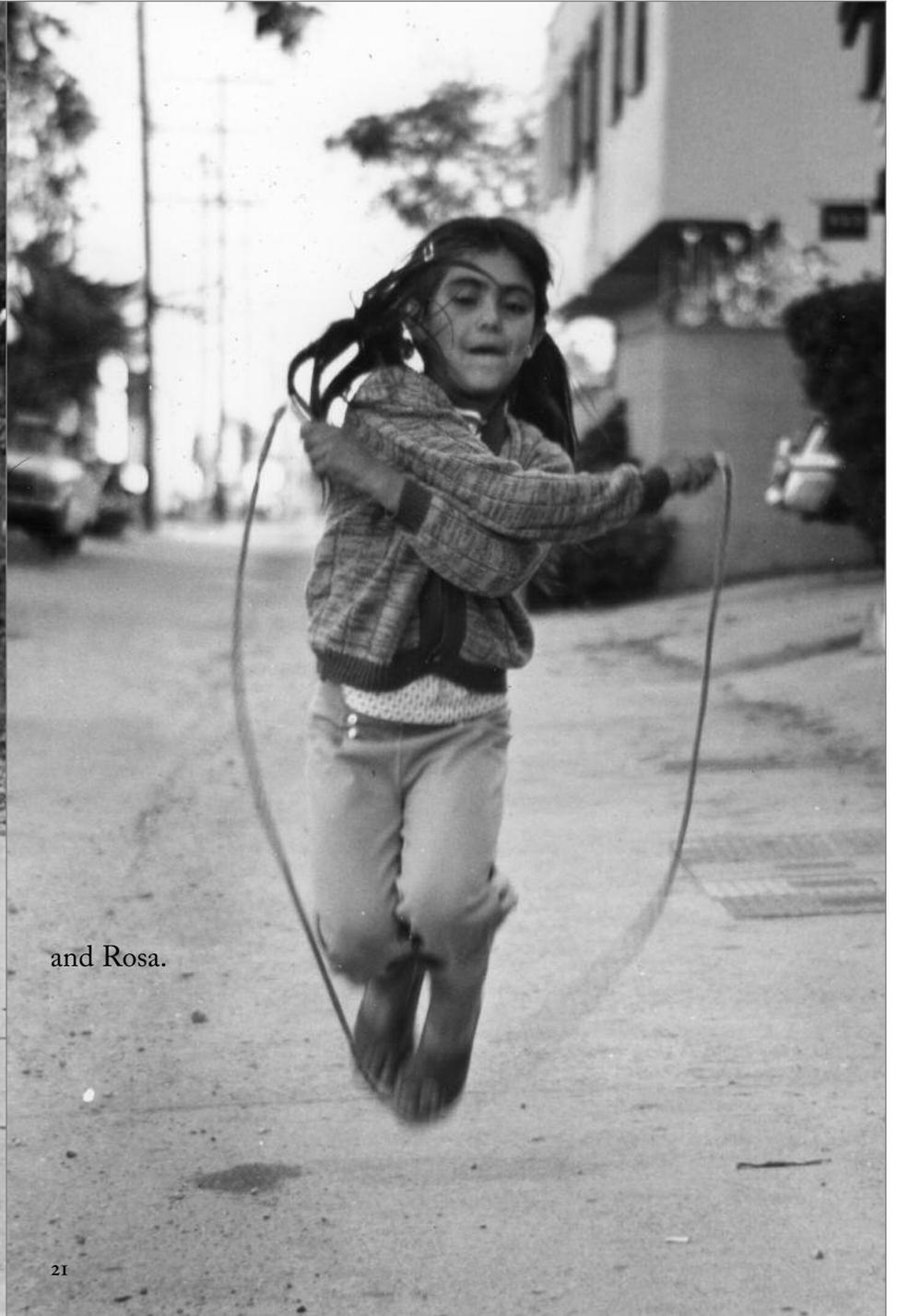
Now you are older. You are bigger and stronger and have lots of new ways of feeling good. It's fun to run, jump, twirl and do new tricks like Shawn --



and Jenny



— and Morgan —



and Rosa.

You have learned how to make yourself feel good in many ways. Another, more private way, is by touching yourself. Do you ever touch your body while you are going to sleep or taking a bath or getting dressed? When you touch your genitals, it feels good in a sexual way.



A girl's genitals include her vagina on the inside and her clitoris on the outside. The clitoris is outside and above the opening of the vagina. When a girl rubs her clitoris, her whole body feels tingly and excited.

A boy's genitals include his penis and testicles. When a boy rubs his penis it feels good. Stroking may make his penis stiff. That is called an erection. Lots of times erections happen all by themselves, without touching. Having an erection is an exciting feeling.

When people make themselves feel good in this way it is called masturbation. It is a way of learning about your body. You are the only one who knows exactly how you feel and it is nice to know you can make yourself feel good in that special, private way. Did you ever realize that your body belongs to YOU? No one has the right to touch it unless you want them to. If someone tries to touch it, tell them to stop. And if they don't stop, tell an adult who can help you.

When you were little, sexual differences didn't matter very much. But now, you probably notice the differences more. When you were a baby, you didn't care whether someone had their clothes on or off. But now, you're curious to see someone naked, even though sometimes you may not want other people to see you with your clothes off!



Amy and Mark peek at their mother in the shower.



Playing doctor is a favorite game for Anya and Jess. It's exciting to see and touch each other's bodies.

Have you ever imagined kissing or touching someone? Have you ever imagined you were someone else? This kind of pretending is called fantasizing. Fantasies let you imagine things you might never do in real life.

What do you suppose Lilian's fantasy is about?

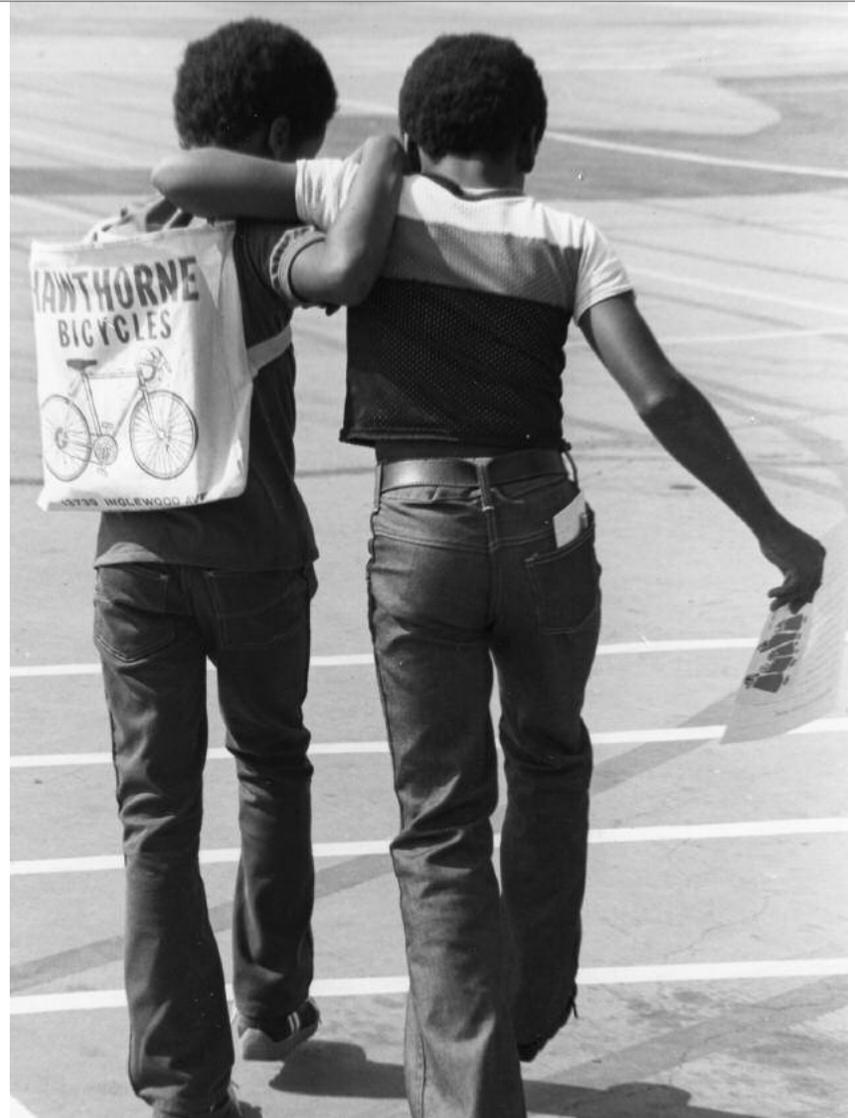


Sexual fantasies are exciting and confusing at the same time. One thing is certain, everyone has them! These kinds of feelings may make you shy or awkward around people you used to be comfortable with.

Some boys and girls become good friends, but often boys are more comfortable with boys and girls are more comfortable with girls.



Jolandra and Jessica ride their bikes together and wear each other's clothes.



Wayman and Charles are pretending they are brothers.

Between the ages of 10 and 18 is a time of big changes. Your body will gradually change from a child into an adult. You will probably gain 50 pounds and grow about 9 inches! You will look and feel different.

If you are a girl, hair will begin to grow around your vagina and under your arms. Your breasts and nipples will become larger and feel tender. And, you will get your period. Another way to say it is, you will start menstruating.



Menstruation is a big word to describe a wonderful process inside the bodies of women that makes it possible to make babies.

Here's how it works:

The vagina is like a tunnel leading to the place that a baby grows in, called the uterus. On either side of the uterus are ovaries, little sacks full of very tiny eggs called ova. An ovum (one egg) is the female part of making a baby. Once each month, a tiny ovum ripens and travels very slowly into the uterus. The uterus gets ready for the ovum by making extra blood.

But, in order to start a baby, every ovum needs something from a male, too! (How this happens is described later.) If the ovum has gotten the male part, the blood stays in the uterus and nourishes the fetus, which will eventually become a baby. But, if the ovum has not gotten the male part, a baby can't start so the blood isn't needed. The blood and the ovum leave the uterus through the vagina. For several days the blood trickles out and that is the menstrual period. Girls get their period every month. All girls get their period eventually, usually between the ages of 11 and 13.

It doesn't hurt when the blood comes out, but some girls get an aching feeling in their uterus. Many, however, can't even feel it when they have their period and go on with their activities as usual.

Girls use a pad specially made to fit inside underpants to catch blood. Some girls prefer a tampon, which fits inside the vagina and absorbs the blood there.

Camden noticed spots of blood on her underpants when she went to the bathroom this morning. That's how she knew she had begun to menstruate. She is sharing her excitement with her friends, Kate and Shelley. A girl's first period is a very special time for her because physically, it means she has become a woman!





If you are a boy, your body will be changing, too, but the changes begin later than for girls. Your voice will get lower. Your penis will get bigger. Hair will begin to grow around your penis, under your arms, and on your face and chest.

By the time a boy is 15, his body will be ready to help make a baby.

Here's how it works:

Hanging under the penis is the scrotum. The scrotum is like a sack which holds two testicles. The testicles make sperm, the male part of making a baby. Millions of sperm are made all the time. They are so tiny that you can't even see them without a microscope. They come out through the penis in a thick, white fluid, called semen. When this happens it is called ejaculation. Ejaculation feels good. By the time boys are 15, they can ejaculate when they masturbate, though some are able to ejaculate as early as 10.

Sometimes ejaculation happens during sleep. This is called a wet dream. A wet dream is not the same as wetting the bed. It is impossible for urine and sperm to come out at the same time even though they come out of the same hole.

When a boy's body begins to produce sperm, it is very special because physically, it means he has become a man!

During this time of change most girls and boys feel excited and troubled at the same time. They are excited at becoming adults, but they worry about the way their bodies will develop. Some worry they will be too tall and others worry they won't be tall enough. Some girls worry about the size of their breasts and some boys worry about the size of their penis. But it really doesn't matter because everyone's body is different, and there is no right or wrong way to look.

It may be hard to imagine your body's changes before they happen. Sometimes you may even feel like you don't want to grow up or that it was more fun when you were a baby. Everyone has these feelings from time to time. But growing up is something that happens to everyone, and it will happen to you, too.

When you are a teenager it will still be important to love and be loved by your family and your close friends. But you will also be more interested in others in a sexual way.



Paul and Wendy are in the same high school and spend almost all their time together. They are shy about showing their feelings in front of other people, but when they are alone they kiss and hug and press their bodies close. This is an exciting part of their time together.

Most people are heterosexuals, people attracted to members of the opposite sex. Homosexuals are people who prefer being sexual with members of the same sex. The name used to describe a female homosexual is "lesbian" and the name for a male homosexual is "gay." Some people don't understand homosexuality and are afraid of it. That fear is called homophobia. But gays and lesbians are just people, people who happen to be attracted to members of the same sex.

When men and women hug and kiss and feel sexual, they may decide to have sexual intercourse. There are many words to describe sexual intercourse -- screwing, balling, fucking. These words are sometimes used as "dirty words," but sexual intercourse itself is not dirty. It is a very pleasurable part of having sex and making love.

Carolyn and Larry are lovers. When they make love, they caress each other tenderly. They roll around together and touch each other all over with their hands and mouths. Their bodies begin to tingle. Carolyn's vagina gets warm and damp as she gets sexually excited. Larry's penis gets larger and stiff as he gets sexually excited.



When they feel like it, Larry slides his penis inside Carolyn's vagina, which stretches open to make room for it. Carolyn likes the feeling of his penis inside her vagina. Larry enjoys the feeling of her vagina around his penis. They begin to move as Larry's penis slides in and out of Carolyn's vagina. The rocking motion feels good. They may giggle or whisper or shout or moan with the pleasure they are feeling.



They tell each other what feels good. Usually they make love until one or both of them has an orgasm. It is difficult to describe what an orgasm feels like. (Sometimes people have an orgasm when they masturbate). Some people say an orgasm feels like waves of pleasure. Others feel dizzy or tingling. Orgasms are different for different people, but everyone agrees that an orgasm is a very good feeling!

After Larry's orgasm, his penis gets smaller and soft and slips out of Carolyn's vagina. They rest in each other's arms enjoying the feeling of their loving.

Larry and Carolyn make love in the way which feels best to them both. They can make love for several minutes or for an hour or more. Sometimes they make love more than once in a day; other times they make love once a week or less. Making love is a private matter between the people who are doing it.



Everyone who makes love needs to take care to avoid some unpleasant and even dangerous infections that can be passed from one person to another during sex. Some of these infections are gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, genital herpes and AIDS. These infections are called sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs for short.

Fortunately, most STDs can be cured. However, there is no known cure for genital herpes or AIDS. The viruses which cause these two STDs stay in a person's body for life. Of all the STDs we know about AIDS is the worst because AIDS kills people. It is caused by a tiny but deadly virus, HIV.

STDs can be caught and passed on by either men or women, boys or girls, homosexuals or heterosexuals. The germs which cause these diseases don't care who is passing them on. These germs don't live in the air so they aren't on things that people touch. People can't get these diseases from sharing drinks, towels or toilet seats. They can't get these diseases by holding hands or hugging. But STDs do get passed on through sexual intercourse. (AIDS also gets passed on through a few non-sexual ways which you can learn about from other books.)

In order not to risk getting these dangerous diseases, people must practice "safe sex." This means using a condom, also called a rubber. Condoms can be bought at a drugstore. They look like uninflated balloons. Before the man starts having sex, he rolls the condom down over his erect penis. Even a germ as tiny as the AIDS virus or genital herpes cannot get through a condom. Neither can the germs which cause other STDs.

A person who wants to have sex must use a condom for disease prevention each time he or she has sex, including the first time. Making love is a way of being very close and loving. But, people have sexual feelings toward people they don't love, even toward people they don't know! When people act sexy in movies, T.V., or magazines, it usually has nothing to do with love. Have you ever tried to act sexy?

Sex is a way of being loving, but love doesn't always go with sex. Sometimes men use sex to be hurtful and to feel powerful by forcing people to have sex when they don't want to. This is called rape. Rape certainly has nothing to do with love.

It's confusing. Love doesn't always go with sex and sex doesn't always go with love! People have many different ideas about it. Some think that it's okay for people to have sex as long as they love each other. Others believe people should have sex only after they are married. Some feel people should be a certain age before they have sex. You may not be ready now to figure out these questions. Finding the answers is part of growing up.

It may be hard now to imagine ever wanting to make love. But, just as it has happened before, what you like will continue to change. Some day you will probably want to have a sexual relationship with someone. It may not happen until you decide to have a family of your own.

One of the most important decisions about sex has to do with having a baby. A woman's orgasm does not have anything to do with having a baby, but when a man has an orgasm during sexual intercourse, he ejaculates and the millions of sperm that come out of his penis go through the woman's vagina into her uterus. If one of the tiny sperm meets an ovum there, they combine and become something new, a fetus, which will grow into a baby.

Sometimes people make love to make a baby, but usually people have sex because they want to be close and because it feels good. Yet, if the little ovum and the tiny sperm meet, that will be the beginning of a baby. The ovum and the sperm don't care if the man and woman want a baby or not. So, if the man and woman don't want a baby, they must keep the ovum and sperm from combining. When people try to prevent pregnancy in this way, it's called birth control. There are different forms of birth control which are available from many sources, including drugstores and doctors. Using birth control is one of the decisions that everyone who has sexual intercourse must make.

Michael and Roz are married and sleep in the same bed every night. They don't make love every night -- sometimes they just go to sleep; other times they cuddle and talk for awhile. Last year Roz and Michael decided to try to have a baby so they stopped using birth control when they had sex. Now Roz is pregnant. It looks like she has a big stomach, but the baby is growing in her uterus, not her stomach! The baby will stay there for about 9 months and during that time Roz will not get her period.

Even though she is pregnant and spending a lot of time imagining what it will be like to be a mother, she still enjoys making love with Michael.



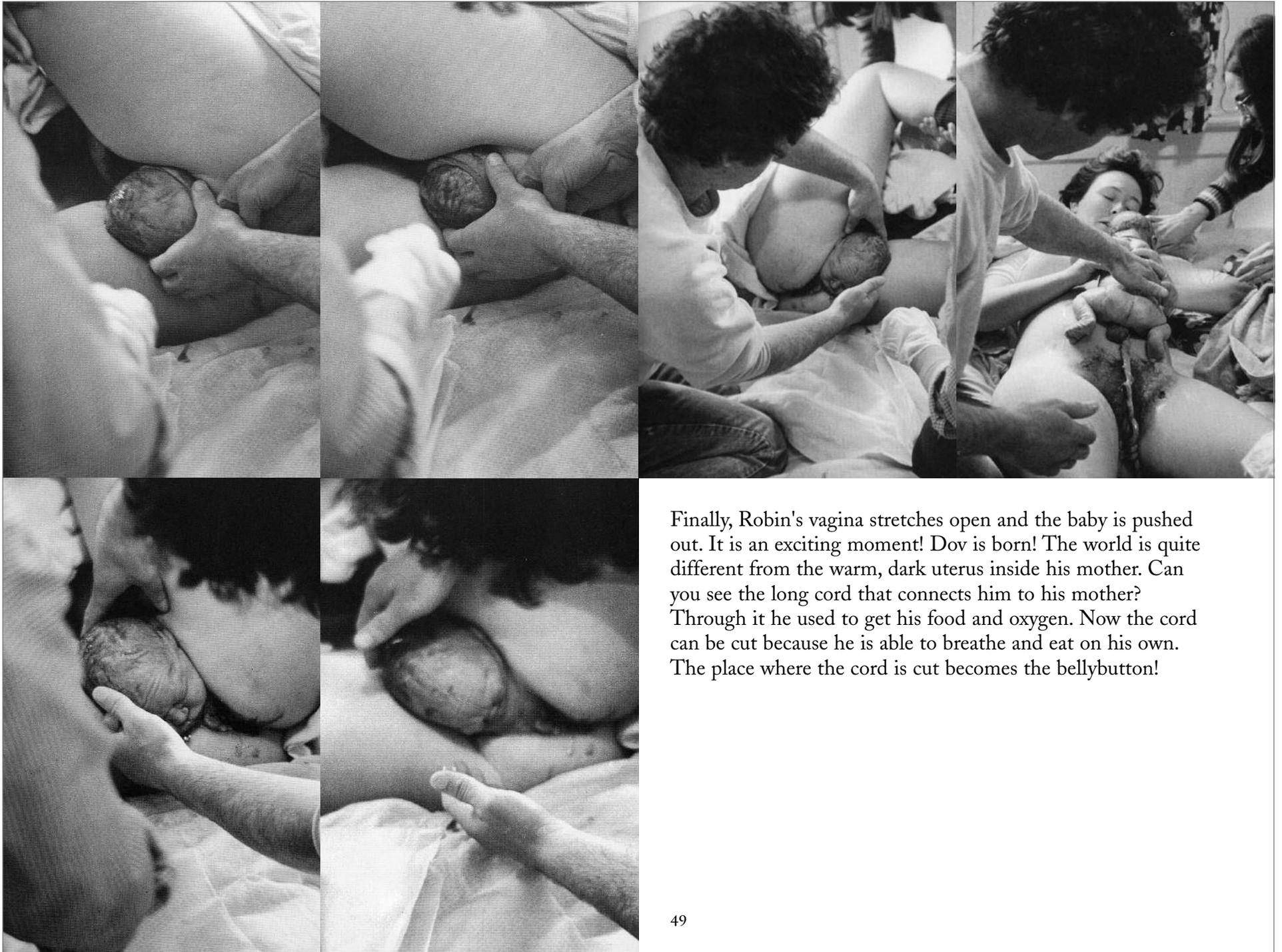
Most babies are born in hospitals. Before there were so many hospitals most babies were born at home, with the help of midwives. Today, too, some people prefer to have their babies at home, with the help of midwives or doctors. The father, too, can help with the birth of his child.



Robin and Tim's baby is about to be born at home. Robin has been in labor for 10 hours. That means that her uterus has been pulling and stretching open so that the baby can leave. The pulling is strong and sometimes hurts. Robin is uncomfortable, but she concentrates on relaxing so her uterus can do its job. Tim rubs her back to help her relax.

When the baby is about to be born, Robin helps her uterus by pushing very hard. It is exhausting work, which is why it is called labor.





Finally, Robin's vagina stretches open and the baby is pushed out. It is an exciting moment! Dov is born! The world is quite different from the warm, dark uterus inside his mother. Can you see the long cord that connects him to his mother? Through it he used to get his food and oxygen. Now the cord can be cut because he is able to breathe and eat on his own. The place where the cord is cut becomes the bellybutton!

You can also see the baby's testicles. That's how everyone knows it is a boy. It is a tradition in many families to have their sons circumcised shortly after birth. That means that the skin covering the end of the penis (foreskin) is removed. A circumcised penis only looks different than an uncircumcised penis, but otherwise it is just the same.

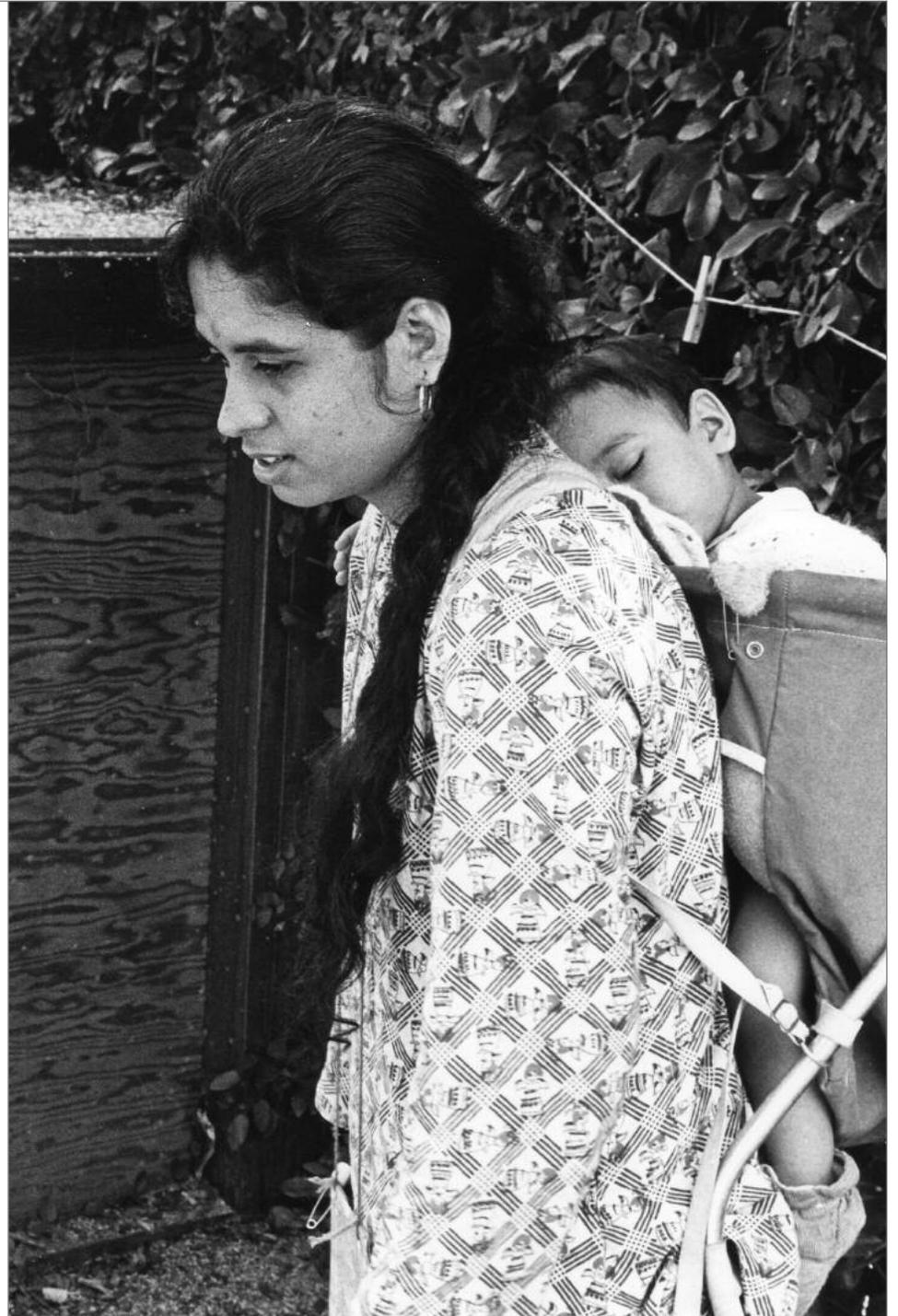


Tim and Robin feel a special closeness. It is amazing and wonderful to realize that together they have made this new life!



Elinor enjoys nursing Tavish. After he was born, his mother's breasts got larger as they began to produce milk. That is something that happens to all women after they give birth. Some women decide they'd rather feed their baby from a bottle. If a baby isn't sucking milk from the breasts, the milk stops being produced and the woman's breasts return to their original size.

Taking care of children is hard work and a big responsibility. Most people gladly accept this responsibility because they feel that loving and caring for a child is a wonderful part of being an adult.



Some adults prefer to live alone, but most people want to be part of a family. There are many different kinds of families.



Some people live together with their children, like Polly and Vincent and their children, Keke, Gia, and Bang-Bang.



Joan and her daughters, Jenny and Abigail, are also a family.

Rudy and Joseana are a family without children.



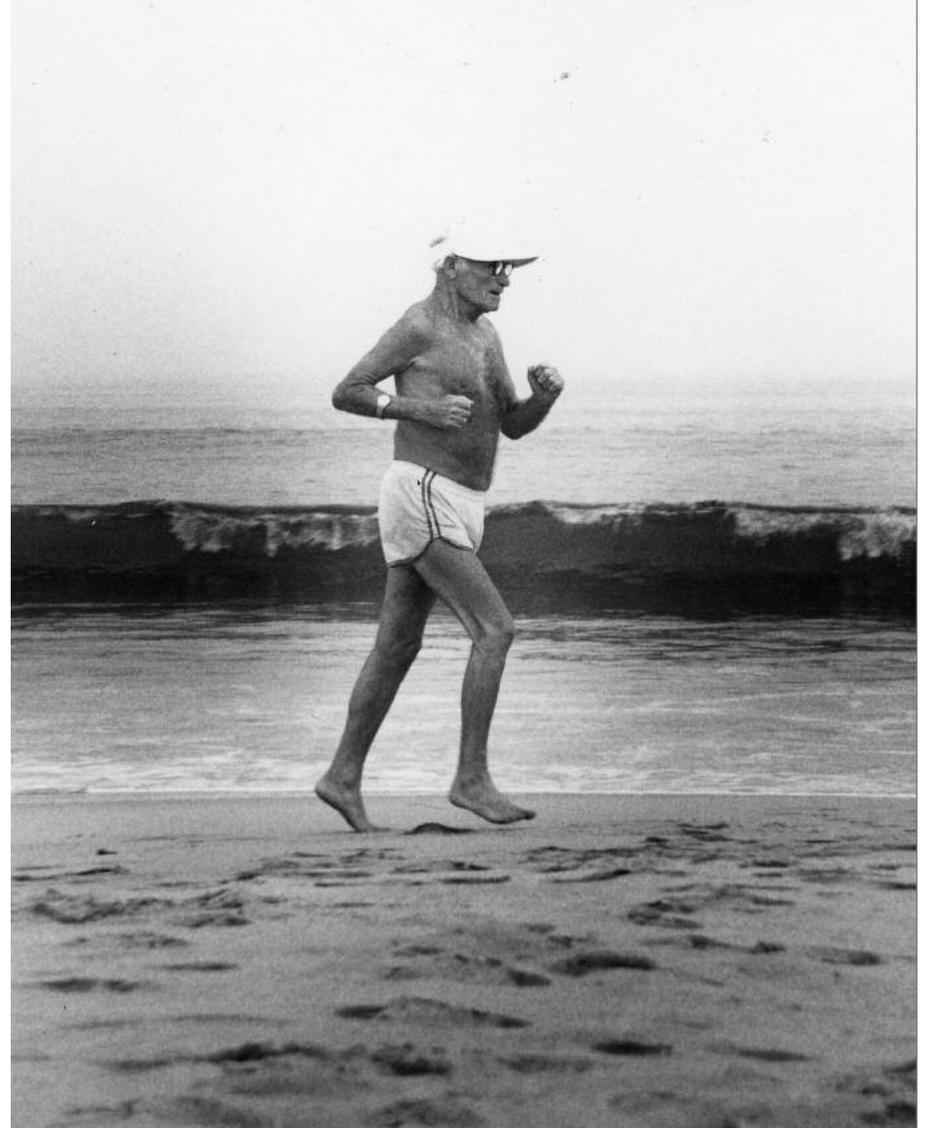
The people in the Wadsworth House have decided to live together and combine their smaller families to make one big family.



When you get old you will be the same person as you were when you were a little baby. Of course your body will look and feel different. And you'll have different ideas. But there are some things you like to do now that will still make you feel good when you are old.



Pauline likes to ride her big tricycle to visit friends.



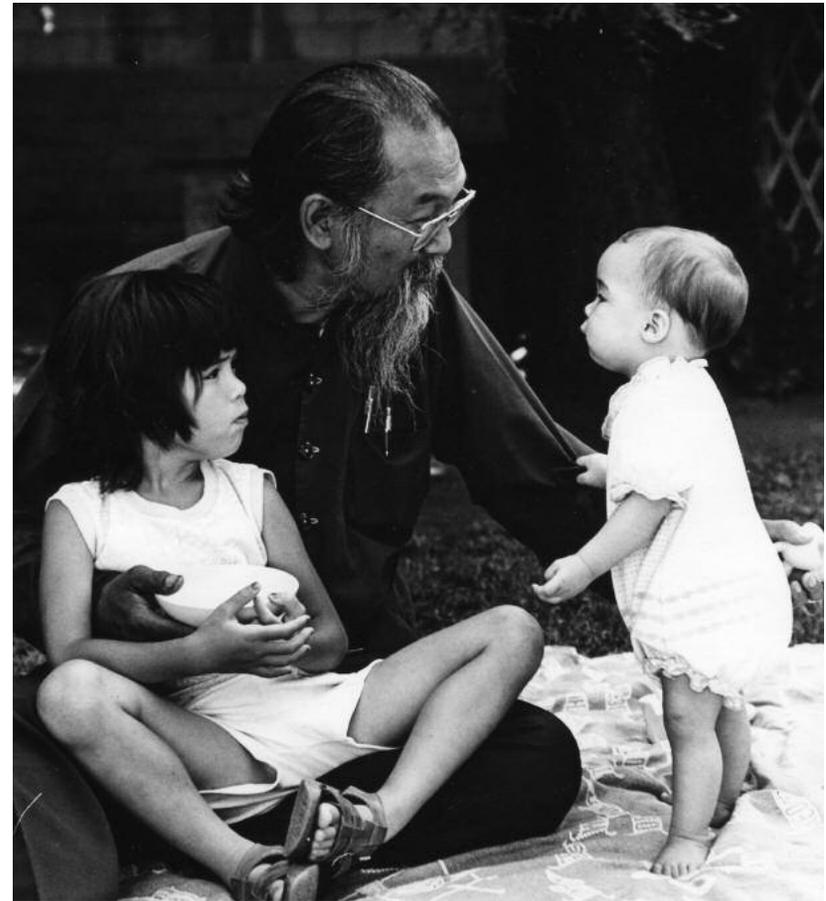
Sam loves to run on the beach.

And, no matter how old you are, you will still have sexual feelings.



Rena and Stan are grandparents. They have been married for 35 years. They've made love many times over the years and they know how to make each other feel good in their loving.

You will always like the good feeling of loving and being loved.



Grandpa Jim likes telling stories to his grandchildren about when he was young. Toska and Tika love to listen to him.

Can you imagine that you will ever grow old and have stories of your own to tell about growing up?