

Thu, 16 Jun 2005

Dear Alice:

I would like to share with you the learning that the workshop Paso a Paso left to me, since I think that it has been one of the most interesting experiences I have ever had.

During the three days of the workshop I felt really involved with the other members of my group and with myself in a very deep dimension. It was not a rational but an emotional and spiritual involvement that changed my perception about me and my life in different ways. First, as a woman, I felt more confident with myself, a feeling of ownership of my sexuality developed and many fears disappeared. I felt I had the right to feel pleasure and to look for it. Secondly, as a doctor and a professional, I could see clearly the link between gender and health. Till this moment my understanding of that connection was rational, but while I experienced the different activities of the workshop and I heard the testimonies of other women that came from different backgrounds and experiences, I understood how gender inequalities operate in sexuality and determine women's vulnerability, particularly for HIV and STIs. I learned that HIV positive women are the extreme expression of gender inequities in sexuality and health.

Thirdly, as a mother of three adolescents, I learned that the best way I could help them to prevent HIV infection was promoting their empowerment and autonomy.

Fourthly, as a consequence of the whole experience, I developed a personal commitment with HIV prevention, and HIV positive women. For the first time in my life I felt the importance of devoting my energy and knowledge for others' benefit. All these experiences and feelings changed my life. I think that in the future, I will try to contribute, from any position I have, to change the perception society has of HIV- AIDS, of the persons living with HIV, particularly women, and to rethink the way all of us live sexuality.

Since "Paso a Paso" can help to introduce important changes in people's behaviors, I will like you to share my impressions with persons that can contribute to the dissemination of this methodology.

Finally, I want to thank you a lot for coming to Ecuador because this gave me the opportunity to meet you. I think your participation in the workshop was a very important element for the changes this experience generated in me.

Best regards,

Ninfa

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