**Risky Business.** Beyond general acceptance across theories of adolescent development, the general public seems to accept Risky Behavior as part and parcel of adolescence. Whether jumping off a bridge or driving too fast, adolescents engage in risky behavior as part of a journey away from parental controls, testing limits, and towards healthy independence and decision making on one’s own, and off to college is often when the opportunity first exists to take the full-fledged leap into the uncharted waters. Mistakes happen; it’s a learning process.

A snapshot from the survey suggests a different truth. Only about half report use of birth control during sex. That certainly supports the Risky Behavior story-line, but I find it shocking in this day and age, with birth control so widely available. While reported unintentional pregnancy rates were very low, 14% used emergency contraception. At least it could be fixed. The lack of condom use for STD protection was shocking to me, at only about 50% for vaginal intercourse and 29% for anal intercourse. HIV drugs are no morning after pills! They are life-long expensive meds with severe impacts on daily life!

On the other hand, the data do not give across the board support to Kegan’s statement that “Sex is what God gives to teenagers when the appeal of Disneyland starts to fade” (Kegan, 1996, quoted at Kroger 186). Only about ¼ of respondents have had multiple sex partners in the last year, while about one-third had none at all. And a large portion of those who have had each listed kind of sex before, haven’t had any action in the last 30 days. This is more in line with an Ericksonian sense that adolescent search for identity and I ntimacy is more powerful for many than sex per se.

While I am not suggesting we have enough data to know, it seems that a more accurate assumption might be that most college students are not yet including sex as a primary regular activity. Sex among college students is more limited than we might imagine, and safe and intimacy focused for many of those who do engage. On the other hand, for many others those who do engage, it is a Risky Business indeed.