Tantra Workbook (Three)

Tantra can be a confusing concept for many people.

If you are looking at this just for sex or physical connection, you may have missed the point. It rejuvenates the relationship and balances you and creates deep appreciation in your partner. Profoundly meaningful sex is determined more by personal maturation than physiological reflex. If you can do the coping, managing emotions and still being open, you will be more apt to have profound sexual experiences.

Why? If sexual intimacy means “disclosing yourself through sex,” then people who can let themselves be known have more potential for profound sexual experiences.

Let’s keep it simple and call it sacred sexuality or sacred sex. It is about honoring ourself and the other. It is about seeing beyond the body, the physical realm, to the spirituality of it all. There are very traditional tantric practices handed down in secret from Tibetan Master to student. I will not teach those.

There are ways to prepare yourself for a more loving approach to sexuality, to transcend the body. This workbook has been intended to help you prepare your mind and body for a healthy approach to sex that honors you and your partner. Let’s start by eliminating the blocks to healthy sexuality. There is no rush, no goal, the process itself is extremely helpful. Stay as long as you need. If you then want to approach a tantric master to polish the skills and approach, you will be better prepared.

**Responsible Healthy Adults**

Do you take responsibility for your life or do you play the victim sometimes?

As an adult, if you want something- ask. Tell your partner why you want it (give context for your request). If you still don’t get it, you can ask again. If it is dealbreaker, or if the culmination leads to a dealbreaker, break the deal.

Do not put up with less than you deserve (after you have talked about it and made your point) and don’t disrespect yourself. No power plays or ultimatums. No unilateral decisions or taking issues in the relationship off the table.

Think about this: “I am not responsible for getting you in the mood. I can contribute or influence, but it really is your job.”

Step up and assume your responsibility- both of you.

If you want your relationship to work, you also have to do some of the work. If you are never in the mood, talk about it. Ask for help from a professional. Get yourself in the mood. If every Wednesday evening is date night and you usually are sexual, take responsibility for putting yourself in the proper mood. No blaming other people for what is your responsibility.

Take responsibility for your sexuality, as other healthy responsible adults do. Don’t just show up and expect to be entertained. “I let him have sex with me,” is insulting. “Sex is his job,” is not showing up as an adult.

Show interest and enthusiasm and if you find that you cannot do that, talk openly and honestly about it with your partner and your therapist. Be direct.

If you never have arousal or desire, there are likely emotional issues that block you. How are you blocking your desire or arousal? Could there be physical issues? In Rochester, we have the Sexual Wellness Center which can help.

Don’t blame the other person, please, that is playing the victim.

How are you doing it?

How are you building desire and arousal internally? It is your job, as is your orgasm. Help your partner figure it out, as a team.

Talk about it, don’t assume they know and are withholding it from you. Don’t assume they can read your mind. Ask yourself how well your partner has read your mind in the last few months. What is their track record?

Some people fake an orgasm, which is pure silliness. That is training them to do things that don’t work for you. If your partner believes you like something, chances are really good they will do it again. If you’re faking, you are going to get a lot of things that you did when you were faking and do not lead to orgasm.

Orgasm is not the point, building energy is. Relaxing and connecting with your partner… However, if you never have an orgasm, that is something to talk about with a specialist. Don’t deprive yourself, please.

**From the Art of Sexual Ecstasy By M. Anand**

 “The Tantric tradition of ecstatic sexuality stresses the importance of skillful preparation so that when you come to lovemaking, you feel whole, unified and healed.”

Are you willing to go through the preparation or will you give up? Do you follow through or go with instant gratification?

There’s something here that will be a huge reward if you stick with it.

“Tantric masters had always said; Your true nature is blissful. If you close your eyes and go inside, if you give yourself a chance to go deep enough, past the chatter of everyday consciousness and outside distractions, you can discover that you already have ecstasy within you, 24 hours a day.”

EXERCISE: Ask yourself the following questions and listen to that inner voice.

How much ecstasy can you handle?

Does it interest you to quiet your mind, tame it and not be distracted?

Do you want to go deep into it and find the ecstasy?

Are you willing to do the work to get there?

​EXERCISE Have you ever tried kegels? Look them up and try them. Go to my archive.org recordings, type in “Don Boice” if you want to know how to do them propely.

**Satisfaction, Contentment, Gratitude, Equanimity**

If you feel like a separate and finite individual, you are unlikely to feel equanimity, contentment and happiness.

Remember, your feelings are not facts. Just because you feel it, does not make it true. We want connection and when we are unaware of the connection already there, we don't like how it feels.

Get to know yourself, deeply (know you and you know the universe- remember you are of the same essence) and you unite with the universe- you are already one with all, you don’t become one with all just because you just realized you already are. There is nothing to be done, just be aware of it.

Nothing is achieved or reached, you just become aware of it.

Selfless love of others helps you wake up to that reality.

EXERCISE: Do something today that is kind and don’t get caught doing it. Do it without reward. Pay it forward.

Sexual intercourse, done mindfully, with awareness of the divinity in the self and the other, helps with spiritual attainment, heightens ecstatic feelings and helps people wake up to their true nature. It can be an overwhelming process, so there are breathing exercises, physical exercises and purification to prepare people.

EXERCISE: Ask yourself if you are ready for sacred sexuality.

Are you comfortable talking about deeper topics or are you superficial (no value judgment, just be honest)?

Are you more into pop culture or quantum physics or the metaphysical or spiritual or animals?

Can you see the connection to the above?

Are you interesting? Are you sometimes interesting? How can you tell?

Who is interesting in your life and what makes them interesting? Who finds you interesting? Why? Ask them.

What holds you back (fear?) from your full expression? If it is fear, what will you do to face your fear?

Name the fear and come up with an action plan.

Stop reading and do something. If you are simply reading this and not doing anything new, you are guaranteeing no change in your life. Go back and do the exercises and watch how your life starts changing in subtle ways.

**Emotional Connection Confuses People**

​Okay, usually confuses men, has been my experience. Talk about emotional connection and what you want and what it means. Define terms… Define what you want and what level and how you get there.

As you connect emotionally and become more intimate, you are becoming more open and vulnerable. It won’t be comfortable and soothing at times. You will need to validate and soothe yourself, not wait for them to do it for you.

This level of intimacy sets the tone for sexual conversations, preferences and the ability to come back from conflict and difficulty. Not every orgasm includes satisfaction or even high arousal. Those with intimacy do…

By the way, as both genders mature and age, men tend to be more interested in emotional connection. Women tend to enjoy sex for their own pleasure rather than for their partner’s pleasure as they age. Connection is more important than technique if you want the best sex. (Schnarch)

Exercise: Introduce yourself to 3 people today (strangers) and face one of your fears with them. (Fear kills intimacy and facing your fear helps you tolerate the difficulty of vulnerability required for a healthy adult relationship.) They don’t have to know what your fear is. It could be talking to strangers. It could be admitting something about yourself.

You have succeeded when you have talked to that third person and have faced a fear. Build your courage muscles…

How did it go?

What do you need to do differently for next time to be more successful?

Did you compliment them on something they are wearing? Did you just listen? Did you have a rehearsed line to start the conversation?

Tantra and Sacred Sexuality

Tantra leads to personal development and filling yourself, taking responsibility, for your life. There’s something missing in your life. You feel a hole or a void. Something is just plain off.

Everyone has inner conflict and a sense of something missing. What is missing? (Be absolutely honest with yourself)

What is the nature of your inner conflict? (spend some time this week contemplating this one question and come up with a good answer if you are interested in growth)

Can we bridge the opposites? Can we reunite the male and female principles, the yin and yang?

Some people are just looking for sex techniques here and don’t quite get the philosophy of using everything that arises as an opportunity for uniting with the sacred. It is not about good sex, it is about taking the goodness of sex and transcending the body, after having experienced the body. If all you have is great sex, you missed about 80% of the lesson!

Healthy sexuality is the urge for unity and self-discovery. Get to know yourself well enough to experience what is and is not missing.

Maybe that was part of the design, to keep you seeking… Maybe there is nothing missing at all and you struggle to accept that. Maybe what is missing is hidden but not missing.

Maybe there are parts of you that you do not accept and you have disowned or exiled. You feel separation and a lack of internal unity. You don’t fully experience yourself or your place in the universe.

You don’t get who you really are until you engage in self-discovery. Know your source and be aware of complementarity in your life. Again, watch what happens to your sense of wholeness. Ask yourself yet again, what is missing?

Merge the masculine and feminine energies within if you want unity. Stay in the unity for awhile

Welcoming all the parts of you back (they were never really gone) makes you feel more content and whole. You pretending that you do not have a shadow (hidden) side, that you don’t have flaws is delusional. They’re there, own them and move on.

For example, I know people who say that they are not selfish. As if

All humans are selfish, they were skipped for that character trait. We are inherently selfish. We are self centered, self referencing and self absorbed in many of our daily actions. Fight it or accept it and watch which path give you more growth.

Exercise- What parts of your personality do you pretend you don’t have?

For example, I am a nice guy, so I pretend I am not also rude, obnoxious, mean etc Very few people see that side and I used to tell people that I am not mean, rather than own that every human being has that aspect. I am no exception. If I own that I can be mean and do mean things at times, then I am less likely to be mean.

​Sometimes, I need to know that I can handle myself and use that gear. There are times I must stand up to someone very powerfully. Not be a jerk or awful, but bordering on mean. Imagine the stray dog that attacked me. I was not nice and I did not have to be abusive or hurtful, but I definitely was not going to let it bite me or go after my kids.

**Intimacy**

I have heard people say they are not deep or do not want intimacy or do not talk about these with their partner, but they do talk about these with their friends. This strikes me as indirect.

Tell your partner what you want and how what they do affects you. Let them get to know you. It might make you feel vulnerable.

Ask them to hold off on any judgment or rejection. If your partner is going to reject you because you have a preference, perhaps there is another problem in the relationship.

As people age, they seem to care less what others think of them. They care, just not as much as previously. Ask for what you want and you increase the likelihood of getting what you want.

Imagine hitting levels of energy and excitement and pleasure that leave you tingling and open your heart. Imagine your body feeling amazing and knowing your partner wants you to feel that way over and over.

Now imagine that it does not end with ejaculation or sleeping/exhaustion for the man. He decides not to ejaculate, but just to enjoy the ride. You cuddle up and bond emotionally, not just physically.

That’s not to say that ejaculation is a bad thing or undesirable. If it is the only goal every single time, perhaps you missed the point of high sex or sacred sex. It is not about just personal gratification, it is about bonding and transcending and personal development.

Don’t miss out of the good stuff because you got selfish.

Exercise: The next two times you have sex, try not ejaculating. Talk about it with your partner ahead of time and just experiment with it. The goal isn’t to exhaust yourself, it is to feel pleasure and enjoyment and go along for a ride. It is about the journey, not the destination.

​Second EXERCISE: Mix it up. Practice not being the nice guy and not following all the rules today.
Note: Neutered men do not make good partners. Don’t break laws or get yourself fired or deserving of a breakup.

​List 3 rules you need to challenge today:
1
2
3

How did it go?
1
2
3

What do you need to do differently?
1
2
3

**We Got Our Signals Crossed**

Have you ever really wanted your partner to desire you? Like they can’t keep their hands off you- that level of desire? They say they are really into you and the actions (in your head) don’t match the words…

That doesn’t feel good. We all want to be wanted (when we want to be wanted).

John and Julie Gottman PhD talk about making sure you each know the other’s signals.

When she shaves her legs, for example, chances improve… or when her bra and panties match, that is often a really strong tell. Pay attention to patterns, realizing they are not set in stone. Anticipate when the odds are in the favor of being intimate. That is part one.

Part two includes having the conversation(s) about preferences and the conversation about signals. Do you light the candle to let her know you are in the mood if she is? And then do you tell her that that is your signal?

Do you have that favorite playlist going as she gets ready for bed? Do you mention that maybe tonight she might get lucky if she plays her cards right? Do you put your arms around her for a hug from behind? Do you offer a back rub? Do you get flowers and arrange a babysitter and go out to eat first?

What are your signals? Tell your partner what they are, instead of making them guess.

My pet peeve is really indirect signals that you have not told your partner about. If you are sending a signal and it was not received and understood, your signal is not direct enough.

Are you someone who was taught that it was impolite to talk about sex and preferences?

Did your parents or friends or society tell you that sex was dirty and don’t think about it?

Are you in touch with what you like and are you courageous enough to own your preferences?

Part three is about warm up- have the conversation about how much time each of you need for warm up. Some people have told me that they need their partner to be nice for at least a couple days (which seems like a super low threshold) and others say that when their partner shows an inability to listen to them, they feel devalued and nothing will get them in the mood -if they don’t feel valued.

That warm up time includes clearing your mind from the thoughts of the day and changing gears mentally to being a couple instead of mommy/daddy or letting go of the events of the day.

​What do you need for yourself for this and what do you need from your partner for this? Include this in your ritual of connection for sex and making love.

Imagine being this direct, “I would love to connect sexually with you tonight and I am also feeling tired. How would you feel if we just made love but limited it to 30 minutes or less and then cuddled to sleep?”

1. **Tantric Massage**

by Ellen Green and Mike Sanders

The next few writings (6 total) will be from the Tantric Massage book by Green and Sanders- highly recommend you get it for the specifics. I will give you enough information to get your curiosity going, though.

“If a couple practices the techniques of tantra, then the bond that they share will surpass the physical realm and will help them connect on a spiritual and emotional level. It will revitalize your body, but it will energize your mind and soul as well. It will soothe your spirit and help you to rekindle your sexual energy.”

“Tantric massage makes use of all the dormant sexual energy that is present in the body for attaining a superior state of sexual awareness. It is believed that this energy has got the power to unite lovers by transcending the mental and physical boundaries and help in creating a truly ecstatic experience.” Think about how you feel fatigued or low energy sometimes and imagine releasing the dormant energy… Do you want ecstasy and what that could do for your relationship?

“Tantric massage will make you feel like you’re in a state of trance where there are no physical boundaries. The concept of time and space ceases to exist, and no problems or seem to be important or you probably will forget about your worries. Your sex drive will experience a positive change.

“It can also be made use of as a medium for forging trust, love and intimacy.” Think about what this could do for you and your relationship and whether your relationship could handle the passion this could unleash.

“Every part of the body needs to be given special attention. Long, smooth, and circular strokes should be made use of one massaging a person for arousing their senses. It is about experiencing the body to the fullest, and this can be achieved via loving and gentle strokes.

“One goal is to awaken the senses with a series of touches and strokes. Begin the massage at the back shoulders and neck.” Let yourself receive and let your body awaken, experiencing your body to its fullest… feel loved and cherished and enjoy your partner wanting to bring you pleasure.

“When there is not an expectation of men to perform well and when there’s no specific goal in mind, men perform better sexually. Tantric massage will help in teaching you to enjoy the moment... it’s all about drawing out the pleasure to make the experience more intense.” Live in the moment and just hang out there. No expectations, no destination, just here, right now… Can you handle the intensity or will you avoid it? Just be present.

​Exercise: Ask your partner if they want a foot rub or a backrub or a tantric massage this weekend. Plan out when it will be and prepare for it.

 (2) **Tantric Massage**

by Ellen Green and Mike Sanders
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 “Tantric massage helps people understand their body and their needs better. Talk about your needs, what you like and don’t like. Don’t let your partner guess or mind read.” Get to know yourself well enough that you can tell your partner. Ask for what you want so that you are taking responsibility for your pleasure. Explore and experiment with what you like and do not like and communicate that to your partner.

“Some men talk about creating a connection between their penis and the rest of their body and this type of massage helps that connection.” Imagine the tantric exercise of putting one hand on his heart while you breathe in synch. Then put the other hand on his penis while you breathe in synch. Some men do not quite get the multiple connections between their heart and their penis. Make love with the parts of you that make love, please.

“Men will also learn about receiving pleasure without having to touch or give anything back in return. On a psychological level, most men are not used to giving up control, and they are more likely to be expected to be “performing.” I should not use the word “men.” Instead, it should be “the masculine” because that is more verbally precise. Generally, the masculine likes to be a good sexual provider and that does not seem to include receiving and yet… So, no performing, just receiving one time (she gets a turn at just receiving as well) and learning what he likes, with words, he tells you what he likes and what he would like more of.

“They tend to receive most of their pleasure by touching, grabbing, looking and even giving. They only need to let go and relax for enjoying this kind of massage. Relinquishing their control and placing their trust wholly in their partner can be quite a “turn on” for the partner as well. Relinquishing control can be quite erotic.” It allows the masculine to try on the feminine aspect of sex as well, the yin and the yang, which is what tantra is asking you to try. Don’t limit yourself or pretend that the limit actually exists.

“It allows them to deepen their spiritual bond with their partner as well. They will get to understand the manner in which they should use their sexual energy and then channel it towards higher levels of their being, something that goes beyond sex.

“They will learn to open their hearts and love fully, bare their souls to their partners and it will obviously let them get more creative with their sexual acts as well. It will help men form a bond with their partner that surpasses any physical bond that they might previously have had.

“A bond that goes beyond physicality is quite strong, and it will deepen the relationship.”

​Well, what are you waiting for? After that intro, let’s do the massage.

(3) **Tantric Massage**

by Green & Sanders

The idea behind these writings is to reintroduce respect and sacredness into sexuality. Honor the divine in your partner and in yourself.
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 “During a Tantric massage, all five senses should be stimulated for creating a better experience.

“For women (their genitals) you would want to use water-based lubricant. The rest of their body- oil base is fine and for men oil base is fine for the entire body. Make sure you use some lubricant because your hands are dry and a dry rub does not feel as good (micro abrasions from the tiny cuts which make your hands similar to sandpaper).

“The idea behind this is quite simple is about bringing your partner to a highly aroused state and letting them stay in that state for a while.” Imagine not rushing to ejaculation, just enjoying the moment, bringing pleasure and playing with your partner’s body, teasing their senses to the edge, and then backing off- all the while wanting the best experience for your partner.

“Take into account all five senses and please put a pillow under the hips you can put a towel over the pillow.

“It is crucial that the receiver feels comfortable while making comments and requests regarding a massage harder or lighter asking for a break.

“Communication is vital please make sure that you talk about expectations before you start.” Let the person know what you want, what you like, because this is about you. Harder, faster, slower, longer strokes, scratching lightly, silky, feather etc. This is how they get to know you, do not hold back that information. Let yourself be known. What you want matters.

Teach them how to please you and know yourself well enough that you can teach them. Let them surprise you with new and different, but please communicate. Some couples choose to not have sex after the massage, so as to not confuse touch with sex. Some couples enjoy great sex after the massage. As long as you are communicating.

Exercise: Talk about the type of lube you want. Remember to get both oil based and water based (for her genitals). Purchase it together, for extra conversation and extra points.

(4) **Be Present and Responsive to Your Partner During Tantric Massage**
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 “When massaging the male you’ll need to change, slow down or stop what you were doing before he reaches the point of no return. Repeated peaking can at times help men have multiple orgasms without actually ejaculating.

“Repeated peaking helps in delaying the orgasm and when it does come, that orgasm would be like no other. The main objective of the massage is to provide maximum pleasure.” Ejaculating is not the goal, because there is no goal, other than to enjoy the journey. Faster, slower, listen to the breath and tune in to one another...

Make sure you are using lubrication and that you have trimmed your finger nails, no sharp edges (and the callouses on your hands are generously lubed at all times, so that it does not feel like sandpaper).

“It isn’t necessary that the man needs to have an erection throughout the duration of the massage. Some massage strokes feel better when a penis is soft.  Men, you don’t need to worry about whether or not your penis is erect. (this is not about you performing or showing her how manly you are)

“It is a safe bet to assume that firm and consistent stroking feels good for the man.” Again, the man is not performing, but receiving. Focus on your whole body, not just the penis. Be where you are and be present, eyes open so that your consciousness is focused on the massage, not on fantasy land."
All quotes are from Tantric Massage by Ellen Green and Mike Sanders

In the book there are actual techniques: healing stroke, anvil stroke, climbing the mountain. Check out the book for the techniques.

The main points are to make sure that you pay attention to the entire body and when you’re doing general massage make sure that you’re having variety in your stroke and continue to stroke, even after his orgasm, or stop if your lover asked you to stop stroking. Variety is a huge deal. Talk about the timing of the orgasm, if you are choosing to have one.

One complaint is that the woman stops too soon because she misreads when he is ready to be done.

Exercise: Talk about what you might like to receive and how. Talk about how you see this encounter going and compare notes with your partner. Talk about expectations for just receiving versus penetration and ejaculation.

(5) **Tantric Massage**

by Ellen Green and Mike Sanders
​
“Women tend to think of the G spot orgasms as deeper and the clitoral orgasm as distinctly sharper.

“Keep massaging going on through one peak and then to another.” You can keep stimulating and mixing it up. After an orgasm, the clitoris is potentially overstimulated so move away for up to 30 seconds (or more if she tells you longer) but still touch her and massage. The female body has the capacity for multiple orgasms, so go ahead and keep massaging her sexually. Try alternating from clitoral to Gspot and then consider the deeper cervical orgasm (not often referenced- I’d ask you to look that up- not covered here) and talk about that.

“Communication is key about expectations before, during and after. Some people refrain from sexual activity after massage so that they can just receive or just give and then later they make love.

Specifics: “Usually, women prefer having their entire vulva stimulated by rubbing gently, followed up with clitoral stimulation and finally having their G spot stimulated. Neither clitoral nor vaginal stimulation tends to feel good unless the woman happens to be in a high state of arousal.” Consider touching different zones of her body, the primary, secondary and tertiary sexual zones, so that her whole body is alive and feeling stimulation and the waves come. Women tend to prefer less variety in stroke when approaching orgasm itself. Variety is good during the massage, but when she is near climax, slow down and gentle, less stimulation- ask her about this, in case her preference is different.

“Ask her what she likes best when it comes to each of the above. Each part of her body is sacred and to be respected and honored, just as yours is.

“It is quite helpful to include verbal as well as non-verbal encouragement while massaging your partner. Tell the receiver something sexy about their body that you enjoy seeing them in a vulnerable position and that you like the way their body reacts to your body. Some women report that they’re worried that perhaps her partner is getting tired of pleasuring them. A woman might feel pressure of having an orgasm to please you.”

Women talk about not wanting to put the male out by having to do too much work or maybe trying too hard to have an orgasm. Orgasm is not the goal, pleasure is the goal and then channeling the energy.

If you are intent on giving her an orgasm, consider the perspective that it might be your issue not hers.

Don’t make her feel like she is letting you down by not orgasming or then she might fake it.

Talk about faking it with her. Ask her to never fake it so that she does not train you to do stuff that does not lead to orgasm.

Tell her what you like about her body. Both men and women are sensitive about their bodies and this is not the right time to mention weight, scars, birthmarks etc. anything that might be sensitive to them.

Make them feel good about themselves by pointing out what you appreciate about them.

Exercise: Make a list of things you like about your partner to share during this phase.

(6) **Tantric Massage**

(book by Ellen Green and Mike Sanders)

 “Try this: breathe in sync with one another

“Remember that when you are massaging, you are trying to relax the person and then stimulate them, make sure they feel safe with the slow and gentle movements first.” Get emotional closeness, emotional safety and ask them if this is okay and ask for feedback or you won’t know for sure what they like.

Some people struggle with this in a big way and say that everything is okay or good or nice. You are not looking to be graded or flattered, you are wondering if they would like you to keep touching them in this manner or if you have a different preference.

“Set aside about two hours for this. Women, this is your chance to not only pleasure your partner but also show them how much you love them and your willingness to pleasure your partner. Provide him with a sensual experience that he will enjoy.” If you do not have two hours, please set expectations accordingly.

When in tantra, the lovemaking and exercises will take about two hours or so. Let your partner know ahead of time what you are thinking. If it is going to be shorter, talk about your expectations.

“Some women say that they are not comfortable with handling a man’s penis and if this is the case, then it would do you some good to set aside a little while to reflect upon the reasons for the negative impressions that you might seem to have about the penis. This type of massage includes the massage of the testicles, the perineum and the prostate.”

This might be a good time to mention “charity sex.” That is when one person is not in the mood but they let their partner have sex with their body. I have heard people say that they are good sex partners because they let their husband have sex with them. There are two people in sex.

If both are not into it, healthy people tend to decline that offer. If you are not in the mood for sex, that is okay. If you are not in the mood to handle a penis or to perform fellatio, say so.

If there is an underlying issue, address the issue with courage. If there is healing that needs to happen, do the work to heal.

Healthy sexuality, sacred sexuality, healthy communication… these are ways to transform your life. Don’t give up because you are procrastinating or lazy or scared. You got this. There are specifics in the book (encourage your partner to read and experiment) on how to handle and massage the penis, testicles and prostate.

“Sex can become a sacred experience... try to find more pleasure and feel more in general, it can become a wave of immense pleasure.

“Both partners are breathing deeply and slowly. When she inhales she’ll be receiving all of his sexual energy and arousal and loving energy is transferred to him when she exhales. It will make the giver more empathetic toward the thoughts and feelings of the receiver. It will also help in improving sexual intuition of the massage giver and make her more aware of what her partner wants. The same is true when you switch roles.

“Breathing slowly and deeply is really important breathe in sync with your partner and keep gently lovingly reminding them to do so.

The book goes into more detail as far as the actual massage I would encourage you to get the book. They spent a fair amount of time on the prostate massage and that’s worth conversation with your partner.

There’s also a lot of talk about bonding through eye contact.

Remember that the woman may expect that you, the giver, expect something in return and therefore the woman might hold off some of the enjoyment of the massage. Talk about expectations before the massage starts.

The book gives very detailed description of what to do and how to do it. Rather than re-create the book, I strongly urge you to read it. It will help with your technique and your approach to massage.

“Shower your partner with attention and pay homage to their body. The sexual high that you will receive will be like nothing that you have ever experienced. Knowing that you’ve given them such a pleasure will do some good for your ego it’ll make you feel good about yourself give your partner your true self that is the best gift that you can give.

“Tantra transcends physical boundaries of the mortal realm.”

Exercise: Ask your partner to buy you the book for the next holiday, if you have not already bought the book. Who doesn’t enjoy an educated touch and learning more about how to bring pleasure to your partner?

**Harness More Desire for Your Partner**

\*Reminder: Sexual behavior is not always about sexual desire- it is about arousal.

Slow it down because couples don’t tend to get aroused at the same rate or have the same sex drive.

Can you do non-sexual, but bonding activities? Can you get each other relaxed? Can you still cuddle and kiss and rub backs without intercourse?

Build your capacity for emotional connection. How? Clarify, read between the lines and check your assumptions, validate the other person, validate yourself and be able to tolerate intense emotions. Once you have the connection, follow the connection and let it flow…

Sociologist Constance Gager has conducted studies- found that sharing chores actually helps couples stay connected. Her study showed that, on average, the more housework men do, the more sex they have. It affects how much energy the woman had overall for everything. If she is exhausted, your likelihood of being physically intimate is less.

They also are more likely to feel respected if the man is sharing the chores than expecting her to do the chores and then have sex. (Many women see sex as a reward for the guy but not something they do for their own pleasure. “I let him have sex with me,” is something I hear in my office. Yes, I cringe. She is clearly not doing it for herself and I wonder if that comes through. Many men do not know that this happens. If this is happening, have a conversation and see if it can be win-win. As women grow more mature, they are more likely to want something for themselves from sex and have a better idea of what they prefer. Just talk about it.)

**Passion for Women**

Men and women do some things differently. Not better or worse, just different. Schnarch suggests that women often progress from

1. just “doing it” to
2. “doing it” without anxiety- to
3. relax and feel your way through it- to
4. move in new and unfamiliar ways
(Schnarch- Passionate Marriage)

Reminder: Communication is no assurance of intimacy -if you cannot stand the message. How you say it is almost always more important than the message itself.

Exercise for sexual communication:
Can you imagine being more sexually open with your preferences with your partner? Each book on tantra suggests involving the entire body, the five senses and moving from one region to the next to keep the body awake and aware. Why not try going from a secondary to a primary to a tertiary and then make another round a few times. The idea is to increase the level of excitement and keep building the energy so that there is enough energy to transcend.

Try kissing and touching/caressing and licking etc, not just on the nipples, breasts and genitals. Learn your partner and ask them what they like, explore the body and what feels good and pleasurable. Get to know yourself and your partner and be responsive to their breathing, their sounds, their words and touch.

Instead of focusing just on the nipples, breasts and genital, try the secondary and tertiary regions of their body. Talk about it before, during and after, but don’t talk too much. Each couple defines “talk too much” differently. Remember, you want your partner to know how to give you pleasure, if you like pleasure.

Ask about kissing the neck (where on the neck feels good and how) or earlobes. Talk about the base of the back, the upper and inner thighs and where the buttocks meet the legs, ask about caressing and tickling.

Once there is a high enough level of arousal, the center of the palm can be quite pleasurable, as can the naval, the outer surface of the pinky. Touch, kiss, lick and ask for feedback

Again, wait for the arousal to be high enough, gently bite the tip of the nose or kiss the nasal openings (not inside). The opening of the ear, the sole of the foot are often missed, as are the big toe and the thumb, but in ancient times, these spots were revered for their connection to bringing people to higher levels.

​Sucking the other person’s thumb while they are pleasuring you completes an electric circuit. There are multiple reports of reaching orgasm while the man sucks her big toe. The back side of the knee, above the calf is another region that is often forgotten when there is high arousal.

The idea is to have the entire body involved and then transcend the body. Again, please talk about what is okay and acceptable and desirable before springing it on your partner. They might react strongly (negatively) if you bring something that is new to your repertoire and they might not like the particular sensation or the thought of it.

The anus (use plenty of lube) is definitely an area to talk about before exploring. Some people are absolutely against it because of homophobia, while others swear by it and there are articles about the inner prostate massage (not covered here).

Again, talk about it before, during and then after. Sometimes things that appeared enjoyable were not or things that seemed to not matter during helped set the stage for later love making. Please talk about these things and watch how it brings you closer as you become more self-aware.

**Want Profound Sex?**

Profoundly meaningful sex is determined more by personal maturation than physiological reflex. If you can do the coping, managing emotions and still being open, you will be more apt to have profound sexual experiences. Why?

If sexual intimacy means “disclosing yourself through sex,” then people who can let themselves be known have more potential for profound sexual experiences.

If you are interested in sex with intimacy, there is not a 17 yr old alive who can keep up w a healthy 60 yr old. (Many thanks to David Schnarch and his book Passionate Marriage for his thoughts- suggest reading it.)

“Saying no to sex does not kill it. How you respond to that “no” can kill it. Showing annoyance when you hear “no” has many layers to it.

Does the person have the right to not want it?
Do you follow up with that person because you are emotionally connected?
Do you insist on never having needs again to protect from feeling rejected?
Can you be true to your adult self in the midst of feeling rejected?

Do you really want to make love w someone who is not in the mood?
Wouldn't you rather know it than force or coerce a yes?

When you shut out the needs of your mate- it hurts each of you and it hurts the relationship between you.” Passionate Marriage

I teach people to answer “yes” to sex.
“Yes, I would love to have sex with you. Let’s set a time. Tonight I am really tired, though.” The person is not getting rejected. Sex is not getting rejected, the time is not optimal for a good connection.

That is a very different experience than continually hearing “no” and feeling like you have to keep asking every day just in case this is the time the partner says “yes.” Practice this approach and let me know how it works for you.

Visual Exercise:
Outfits- some people really like lingerie, or stockings or undressing or… Talk about what you like and own it. Just because you like it does not mean your partner will. Partners, please listen to (without judging) the preferences. Feeling judged for a sexual preference often shuts people down. Speaking the judgment or shaming them shuts down even longer.

Does not mean that you have to accommodate.

I have found it best not to talk about this by mentioning how you had sex with people in the past, especially if there is an issue with jealousy. Some people like undressing their partner. Others like complete dark so they cannot be seen and then they get under the sheets to avoid being seen. Especially with body image issues in our culture, I would talk about preferences and why they are preferences and encourage each other to have a healthy discussion and healthy pushing of boundaries, all the while reserving the right to not do things that are uncomfortable for them. “I have never felt comfortable doing….” Is not fun to hear after doing that thing for two years.

At the risk of sounding judgy, if you cannot talk about sex and your preferences, if you cannot honor sex and respect preferences, your own and theirs, are you ready to be sexual?

**Female Arousal and Desire**

Original article by Catherine Elton entitled Learning to Lust in an article of  June 2010 Psychology Today; Info compiled her from that article by Don Boice (still relevant)

She writes that sexual desire in women in less directly tied to physical arousal than it is in men; in fact, it often follows arousal, rather than precedes it….more a matter of mind than mechanics…

Many women engage in sex feeling neutral and experience desire only when they are physiologically aroused.

Data show that what ignites women’s desire, regardless of any generalized decline in desire, is a new partner.

Ester Perel, author of Mating in Captivity, contends that domesticity undermines desire. “Good intimacy doesn’t always guarantee good sex,” she says. “The very elements that nurture love- reciprocity, mutuality, protection, closeness, emotional security, predictability- are sometimes the very things that stifle desire. Love wants a certain kind of closeness; desire needs space and distance to thrive.”

Marta Meana supports this “formalizing their relationship by marriage rendered sex so overly available and so sanctioned that it lost a forbidden and erotic quality that formerly turned them on. Among others, overfamiliarity with their partner led to a decline in romance and in sexual innovation, as well as to a loss of their own sense of individuality and desire to care for their appearance, which they felt promoted sexual desire. The roles of mother, wife and professionals were not only overwhelming but highly desexualizing.” Journal of Sexual and Marital Therapy

Fantasy:
Women often fantasize about being ravished or found irresistible. Perel and Meana say that women yearn to be uniquely desired- to be chosen as the one. Women want a commitment because it signals they are uniquely desired. Once you are married, he is stuck. His advances no longer signal your unique desirability.

Meana points out research- “Women find is arousing to think of themselves in lingerie or nude. Thinking of themselves as sexy boosts their desire. Feeling good about themselves emotionally and physically appears to be a bigger mediator of women’s desire than men’s. Women are often distracted during sex by their own negative evaluations of their physical appearance.

Meredith Chivers notes that women may just need more time for their minds to catch up to their bodies-perhaps explaining why they want more foreplay. Men are more in tune with what is going on with their bodies than women are.

​One solution: learn the basics of mindfulness (Lori Brotto) to reconnect the mind with the body’s sensations. Then examine their bodies in a nonsexual way without generating distress. Lessen distractions by judgment of physical appearance during sex. Allow your mind to just be and just look, not to judge. Then Brotto helps women change the way they look at their body and enjoy sensations in a sexual way. Lastly, she teaches them to connect bodily arousal and emotional pleasure. Tune into the sexual sensations of your body.

**I Have Settled**

There is sadness in realizing that there is more to life. Relief, too

 “…disappointed…because most of us are like owners of a precious Stradivarius violin that we have never learned to play.” Jolan Chang, The Tao of the Loving Couple

“The individual is flooded by light of supernatural beauty and experiences a state of divine epiphany. He or she has a deep sense of emotional, intellectual and spiritual liberation and gains access to breathtaking realms of cosmic inspiration and insight.”
Stanislav Grof, Beyond the Brain

Exercise: Talk about these with your partner. What are you really looking for in this process? Are you both settling or trying to get the other to read your mind? Ask for what you want. Let them know your preference and how to get there. This is one tried and true way to reach the pinnacle. What is the downside of getting closer in the ways described above?

​EXERCISE: Imagine being fluent in this language and having the experiences that we described. Would that be better than just having sex? Imagine it being that wonderfully fulfilling and being able to talk about it and feeling the connection that deeply. Wouldn’t that be something worth your time? What is more important than what we are talking about? How do you want to use your time on this planet?

**Do You Want a Blend of Emotional and Physical Intimacy?**

Keep your heart open if you want closeness. If you struggle to stay open to yourself and others, we can help with that. This skill is vital to being intimate and connected.

Soothe yourself when you feel like clamming up. Clamming up interferes with passion. That means you need to relax yourself on the spot and tolerate some difficulty. Passion is not always easy. If you can talk yourself through it, stay there and remain open, you will be amazed at what you can achieve. One author calls it “open hearted living.”

Gottman calls it “DPA- Diffuse Physiological Arousal” when your heart rates goes above 100 beats per minute and it kills intimacy, conversation, vulnerability and blocks access to parts of our brain. You need to relax or parts of your brain are not open to you. It is helpful if your partner can help you relax when you need it, but it is ultimately your job to cool yourself down. You need to have this skill if you are to be successful in relationships and in life.

James Coan of the Virginia Affective Neuroscience Laboratory- wrote that the “prefrontal cortex is key to calming the emotional brain. A fear response is expensive to the brain and usurps many of its processes. fMRI-see what gets it worked up and what calms it down. When partners (healthy and happy relationships) held hands "everything went quiet" massive decrease in emotional responding”

“Prefrontal cortex helps you regulate yourself when you are by yourself- exhausting. You can do it but you are self- involved, which inhibits focus on the task at hand, like having sex. Holding hands is more efficient brain wise- leaving you more able to play and connect w others. It offloads what is not relevant. There are fewer distractions. "

Opening up is easier when you do not feel defensive, challenged, threatened or anxious. The challenge is to remain open even when things are difficult. My teachers would joke that when you can do this, it means you are now an adult.

Can you still be you, even when things get difficult, when you feel rejected, can you still be true to yourself? That is preparation for passion. Can you handle the passion or does it trigger you to either collapse or go off?

We will focus more on sexual intimacy, which is predicated on emotional closeness. If you have the emotional connection, the playfulness and ability to have successful conversations, your sexual connection will benefit.

Exercise: Write down your fear-based behavior in this relationship. What am I doing that is based on fear/scarcity/lack? That was probably enough for day 1. Why don’t you leave the following for maybe day 2 or beyond. What impact does that fear based behavior have on other people around me?

Exercise: People who face their fears feel more confident, and have fewer fears at the end of the day. A. Which fear (choose one that involves other people) am I going to face first? How am I going to face it?

With whom am I going to work to face it at first?

What will my life look like when I face this particular fear?

Which fear am I going to face next? How am I going to face it?

With whom am I going to work to face it at the beginning?

What will my life look like when I face this particular fear?

**Sexually Responsive**
How responsive are you? Do you pay attention or get distracted?

Pay attention to their breath rate and their heart rate. The idea is to excite and relax, build excitement and maintain, then release, then build, then release, then build again, maintain, push and release again, all without ejaculation.

​EXERCISE: Visualize yourself stimulating your partner with the above pattern. Just visualize yourself doing it and then feel the emotions that go with that. Does it excite you?

Imagine your partner telling you how much they enjoy it. Visualize just stopping and not going just for the ejaculation because ejaculation is not the goal. How do you feel? Try that on and sit with the feelings.

When considering the body, remember that the body has nerve endings that determine the amount of stimulation.

Different parts of the body have different amounts, so require different stimulation, speed and pressure.

The most sensitive parts are the genitals, nipples, lips and mouth.

Followed by the ear lobes, nape of neck, lower back just above your bottom, just below your bottom and the inner thighs.

So many people just focus on the most sensitive instead of spreading the love around.

Imagine a little kissing, touching and licking in each area of sensitivity, starting with the second most sensitive, then the most (not the genitals yet), then the third, then the second, then the first, including the genitals this time so the body speeds up and slows down, so the whole body awakens, the person feels pampered and indulged and the excitement grows. So much anticipation and foreplay… Tantra works with building excitement, not a rush to ejaculation. It is a process, a journey of enjoyment.

EXERCISE: Visualize the above and think through how it might feel, then allow your body and emotions to experience the visualization. Do you like it? Can you feel the anticipation and playfulness? Can you be okay without having the instant gratification?

The next level of sensitivity is the outside surface of the little finger, the thumb, the big toe, the center of the palm, sole of the foot, the Navel, the ears and the back of the knee.

Here’s a simple cycle of stimulation following two rounds of a  pattern just described ear lobe, mouth, anterior nares, breasts, sacral lumbar junction, mouth, navel, genitals.

EXERCISE: Visualize it and feel the emotions and involve your body’s sensations as you imagine it happening. This cycle follows a tried and true pattern of increasing desire and arousal. Try it or at least the parts that resonate with you.

Be mindful of their breathing, to help them stay present and focused. There is a window between too much and too little stimulation and the goal is to go up and down within this window, so their body/mind does not get bored. Mix it up, have variety for them.

EXERCISE: You can ask them first what they might like. Some people are not ready to talk about it or have not spent much time thinking about fantasy or sensations and you might have to ask them what they would like and then give them multiple choice.

**What Are You Signaling?**

Are you signaling that you have no value, no life, nothing to offer and are just glad to be along for the ride?

Take stock of how you come off to other people. Do you have friends and family who want to be with you? Why do they like you and want to spend time with you? If you are unsure, please ask them.

​If people do not recognize your worth, it is possible that you are not properly communicating your worth/value to them. Do you recognize your worth?

Rather than blame them and withdraw, which is what many of us do, consider looking at your worth to them and attempting to demonstrate it in a way that is clear and compels them to want to spend time with you. How would you do that?

I will be introducing action steps or exercises for those of you who requested balancing the ideas and quotes with a more practical approach to keep the spark or get the spark. I find that more women than men read the blogs and relationship articles, in general. I am trying to appeal to the men in my practice to read these and learn how to make their side of the relationship better.

Think for a moment what you believe you are doing right in attraction and romance and passion. Write it down.

Many of the exercises are directly from the writings of Tantra: Ashby, Deida, Anand, Odier, me and the world of pick up artists (for example, Neil Strauss).

My hope is that by following them you will become better at picking up your partner, courting her, if you follow these exercises and expand your comfort zone. I’ve included courting tips, sexual tips, ideas to consider, inspirational quotes and motivational quotes. Take what you need…

**Respect Sex**

Can you imagine if people treated sexuality with more respect and honored their partner and the process more highly?

EXERCISE: Contemplate these quotes. Read through them one by one and think about how this applies to you at this very point in your life. Once you understand the power of tantra, you realize you have to treat it with respect. It is sacred and powerful and can burn you if you are in it just for the sex. It is meant for personal development

Art of Sexual Ecstasy Quotes (M. Anand):
“High Sex is a simple, step-by-step process that is accessible to anyone who wants to find a gentle and conscious way of bringing the spirit back into sex, of honoring sexual union as a bridge between body and soul.” Sex is sacred and beautiful and should be honored- imagine teaching our young people to honor it and respect its potential to transform them.

“High sex takes the experience of orgasm to a new dimension- a dimension in which genital orgasm is only the beginning. It inspires you to explore the full capacity of orgasm, culminating in ecstatic body-to-body and soul-to-soul communion. It is an experience of the whole body, the whole being. The path helps your body to be free of tensions, your head to be trusting and open, and your mind to develop such psychic skills as visualization, imagination and meditation. When this integration has taken place, you are ready for a new, qualitatively higher sexual experience in which physical pleasure becomes a delight of the heart and an ecstasy of the spirit…Ecstasy is a state as natural as sleeping or breathing… a transformation of sex…a recovery of our ecstatic self in love. We need to bring the spirit-the inspiration to manifest our highest potential- back into sex…cultivating the art of sexual ecstasy to reach higher states of consciousness and in this way deepening our intimacy with our loved ones.”

 “One moment of ecstasy can transform your life.”

Exercise- Play music you like when you are alone. Let your body find the rhythm of the music and move to it. Surrender to the music and be in your body, aware of the music as well as your body. Practice this so that you are in touch with your body and how it moves. Let yourself be led and be responsive to the changes, without tuning out or getting distracted. Pay special attention to your hips. (We will do special hip stretches and exercises as time goes on.)

**Can It Be Better?**

Not the bland, numb, charity sex or obligation sex

Where it’s not just settling for physical pleasure but enhancing it and taking up a notch?

Want a deeper emotional connection and take it to the next level?

How about feeling super connected then moving to spectacular physical pleasure? Add in secure feelings of being loved…

Imagine what that would feel like physically and emotionally. No really, take a moment and put yourself in that scenario. Feel it in your body and let your emotions flow.

Are you willing to do the personal work, being gut level honest with yourself and the world, in order to get what you really want?

Some people want something for nothing and get a bit lazy rather than doing the work and self-discipline that this requires.

Are you willing to lean into the emotional pain in your life? That’s how you get to the emotional connection, the courage, the bravery to have difficult conversations and overcome self-consciousness.

EXERCISE: Are you bold enough to ask for what you want? How about doing the work to know what you want (self-awareness) and having the audacity to request what you want?

Do you have the courage to look at yourself honestly and your level of self-love and self-care? When you love yourself and take good care of yourself, you are more open to receiving love, to lowering your walls and defenses and connecting deeply.

Or are you trying to manipulate someone to love you to make up for what you lack in self-love?

Are you manipulating their perception of you to trick them into approving of you?

EXERCISE: Are you willing to spend time in solitude, with just you and the silence and really get to know yourself? The ugly parts, too? Own all of you and embrace it, accept it and then watch how it often changes by itself. We all have shadow sides that we don’t readily show or we deny they exist, except we can’t fool ourselves. Own the shadow and you’ll like what happens.

EXERCISE: Can you sit with your own anxiety and not overreact? Feel the emotion. Name the fear or the thought that created your anxiety and sit with it. Don’t do anything except experience it. Practice doing that every single time you have anxiety and you have nothing to fear. Watch how that helps you in relationships and with sex. No over reactions, just raw experience and going with the flow. No stopping or avoiding or escaping, no controlling or manipulating, just experiencing…

EXERCISE: Can you look at your shortcomings honestly and openly and make the necessary adjustments? Go ahead and problem solve. For example, I want 6-pack abs and am only willing to do 5 sit-ups a day. Can you see what is wrong with this problem solving? Do what it takes to change what needs to be changed. That is taking responsibility and taking the initiative. Partners find that really attractive. The victim stuff or blame or not trying is not attractive.

Can you accept who you are in the meantime? Will you accept the call to become who you really truly are and hold yourself accountable to get there?

No more complaints or blaming, no more victim thinking or justifying less than your best effort.

Be who you are and put yourself in the feeling state of flow, get it done and see it clearly and honestly- forgiveness and compassion for the highest good of all. We are all capable of so much more than we realize!! Push yourself out of your comfort zone when it comes to feelings and letting down your wall. Watch how much better your emotional connection becomes.

You can learn what has been called “Sacred sexuality” or Tantra. Be ready to enjoy yourself and grow by leaps and bounds. It is worth the work that you put in. Try it for six months, doing the real work, the necessary work at the proper level of effort required and you will not settle for just having sex.

Breathing exercise 1
Breathe in through your mouth, very slowly, for as long as you can. As you breathe, think about each of the colors of the rainbow in turn. When you have mastered this, breathe in this manner, thinking about the colors in turn and add your eyes looking up, one chakra at a time- all in one breath. First chakra is red (located between your genitals and buttocks), then eyes go to second chakra (put your hand on the pelvic bone)  orange, then third (solar plexus) yellow and fourth (heart) green fifth is throat (blue) and sixth (between the eye brows) indigo and crown chakra (top of head) white. Get all the colors in the rainbow in one breath. Once you’ve mastered that, in that same breath, go back from crown chakra back to root chakra, being aware of the color of each chakra. Should be relaxing, so that is the goal is to relax when you are excited- in order to not tense muscles, but fully enjoy the experience. Relax into the pleasure, the excitement…

**Accountability and Interdependence**

We need to hold one another accountable. We need to confront one another and help each other grow. How you do it is vital. Tell him what you need from him without beating him down. You wouldn’t criticize your child when they are learning to walk, would you? That is what it feels like sometimes with life. Criticism does not help the situation. The goal is to build one another, not weaken one another, right? What is the expression about getting more flies with honey?

We are working on growing into the higher level of interdependence, not independence and definitely not over dependence.

“He can’t feel what you can feel.

“Remember it is just as difficult for him to remain open and receive your criticism especially when he can see that you’re not coming from a place of love. Ultimately, as you grow in your capacity to live love through your body, you will no longer depend on your man to “be there for you.“

“He will no longer depend on you to give him comfort and rejuvenation.

“These are real gifts when they are given and received freely, but when your ability to relax in the bliss of love depends on them, they become expectations that limit growth.

“Your man knows how to express his non-desire for you, the woman, with as much precision as you know how to weaken him with your energy.

“Give and receive love in all you do, through everything you do- infuse your life

“As you give your gift more fully and you become more aware of your kinks. As you hold yourself back to avoid feeling any kinks you don’t let your gift to shine you hold back your deepest gift- undo these forces of habit!” Deida

Have you tried doing the exercises on a regular basis (The Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand) yet? Are you practicing this particular one 10-20 times before it becomes comfortable during sex? It is time to get the book, and read it, if you have not already done so. Here is an exercise to practice: Sexual Breathing

**Our Gender Agendas**

“Men- higher value on autonomy, more motivated to establish independence, prove that I am an independent man and have mastery. Hard to say no to my partner because I am supposed to be a sex machine. Women-higher value on intimacy, more motivated to seek interconnection, feel close

“Together- she asks for more kissing and touching- he hears criticism of his performance

“She asks him to talk about unmet sexual needs- he hears invasion of privacy. He withdraws emotionally to protect himself and she views this as proof that he does not love her.

“She wants to talk, well really communicate, but her only valid form of communication is talking. He – sex is the most intimate way to communicate. It shows caring. It shows my desire to please. It shows my love on the most profound level. Women need to appreciate the depth of passion that can be expressed through eye contact, touch and body language. Men need to be more verbally communicative.” Deida

​I have suggested several exercises, to this point. They are intellectually interesting so reading about them is good, but like physical exercise, they do no lasting good if you do not do them. Here are more ideas to get your body involved in the relationship, to feel and be present to what is happening and to wake you up. Please talk through which exercises you have read and which ones you would like to go back and do to see how they might help your relationship.

Touch Exercise:
Temperature- warmth and coolness or more extreme. Washcloth, heater in the room, clothes partially on, electric blanket, fan, air conditioner, ice cube, wax. The idea is to keep the body awake without shocking it.

Relaxed excitement lends itself to tantra. Yes, women are more likely to reach orgasm when wearing socks, if they normally have cold feet. Worth a conversation, don’t ya think? That is not the only goal in tantra, but if you can add some pleasure to your life with your partner that easily, might be worth it.

Texture- leather, lace, satin sheets or pajamas, silk tie, brush, feather, massage oil, light scratching, lips, sand paper etc- all these are wonderful sensory objects during the caressing. It turns the body on and awakens the senses.

Ask about being overstimulated versus understimulated, how fast, how many strokes, how hard, how long- gotta give feedback because the partner cannot read your mind. You are teaching your partner how to love you and bring you pleasure- train them to give you what you want. Gotta speak up. The goal is connection with self and partner, leading to the ultimate connection.

**Are You Coming From a Place of Love? Be Honest**

Have you tried doing the exercises on a regular basis (The Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand) yet? Are you practicing this particular one 10-20 times before it becomes comfortable during sex? It is time to get the book, and read it, if you have not already done so. Here is an exercise that you to practice for your tantra to flow well: The Butterfly

Do you have your passion, your direction?

Are you aligned with the highest good in your day to day life?

Do you serve others and the world on a primal level?

Are you settling for a second rate life or are you living life to the fullest?

How are you betraying yourself in this very moment?

Be open to feedback. Ask for it and watch how grateful you are when someone calls you on your BS. You want to be accountable, it just feels better.

Deida challenges both men and women in relationship. Sometimes it is hard to read or understand and other times it hurts because he is so accurate.

“To women:
When your man hurt you because he lacks direction, integrity, or charity, you can love him without supporting his weakness. Loving your partner when he hurts you includes not tolerating his bull.

“Women are exquisitely sensitive to their man’s alignment with his own truth. You know when he’s betraying himself before he knows sometimes-you feel it in his posture -you hear the ambiguity in his voice. You may know that he is deceiving himself before he is aware of anything.

“Your feedback can be a great gift to him -he will only trust your feedback if he feels your openness as love.

“You cannot disconnect from the love deep in your heart, tense your body in fear and anger, and then expect that he will believe you. He will think that you have a problem. He will criticize you or try to fix you instead of focusing on himself. Your unlove will hurt him and he will close off even more.

“Tell him about this place in him that you trust. Show him love through your body and your breath -tell him how you lose some of your trust when he acts a certain way. Remember that he probably does not know what you were talking about.” David Deida

Please go back and re-read this. There is quite a bit there. Put a note in your phone calendar to prompt yourself with this. Keep taking your inventory so that you keep growing. Women find that super attractive!

**How Do You Fill Yourself?**

What really fills you? When you chase after things, do you feel fulfilled/satisfied? Does it give your life meaning? Maybe you are searching in the wrong places for fulfillment. I don’t mean settling, but really feel satisfied. What is the place of love in your life?

That feeling like you want more or you’re still longing or hungry, that is what tells you that you should keep seeking. Here are some ideas for you to reach the goal.

“The challenge for women is that the divine does not mean anything to you unless you feel it in your body. She will try to fill herself with emotion, flavors, texture, experiences if she does not feel love. She wants to feel divine forces passionately enter her heart and ripple through her body like waves of intense love more pleasurable than any orgasm she has ever had. She’s not attracted to the freedom beyond experience like a man is.

“Relational ecstasy is the genius of the feminine. Relational blessing is the domain of the feminine divine. The joy of family, the colorful web of life on earth, the circle of friends and community the feminine divine is more strongly expressed through the body in relationship. She may settle for sights and sounds of a walk by the lake rather than receiving the ravishing that forces a divine energy deep into her body.

“She devotes her time to community and friends rather than swooning in the divine love that swells all bodies.

“Women need dance, massage, and yoga to start this process finding the divine- start with finding their body, feeling their breath, freeing their emotions, and allowing themselves to be wracked with unbearable pleasure.

“Sex is often the place you most desire and resist the infiltration of divine love.

“One of the basic lessons of spiritual growth occurs when you realize you will never be fulfilled for very long or very deeply by anything in life. Devote your life -devote your relationship to realizing the truth of this and every moment is spacious, full, aware, and luminous, regardless of the love you feel you’re getting or not. Even if you’re not being treated like you wish you were, you can do love and give love because you are love.” Deida

EXERCISE: “Make love by breathing love. Make love through your every action. Through each word. Through your tears and smiles.

“Notice what is always true. Rest in love; that is always available to you. To expect life to fulfill you is foolish.

“To be strong as a man is to give love even when you feel hurt -not because you wanna look good, not because you feel that you were growing if you do so, but because not to love is more painful...

“The love springs from the depths of your being demands to flow strong regardless of how much you or your woman would rather slump and take a break.” Deida

EX: How have you tried to escape yourself?
At a certain point, we run out of commonalities. The easy topics that evoke consensus and reduce anxiety are done; only the hard ones are left. I either confront myself or my partner at this point. Easier to confront partner (proxy fight). We can escape situations we have created. We cannot escape ourselves.

Emotional gridlock is when I am no longer willing to adapt to partner and not willing to confront myself. This will happen in any relationship that has growth. This is not pathological. This is "falling out of love." The above was from Passionate Marriage by Schnarch.

EX: Ask yourself why this might be a true statement: Sociologist Julie Brines states that, “sexual frequency was higher in couples where the man spent more time doing such traditionally masculine chores as bill paying and yardwork.”

Have you tried doing the exercises on a regular basis (The Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand) yet? Are you practicing this particular one 10-20 times before it becomes comfortable during sex? It is time to get the book, and read it, if you have not already done so. Here is an exercise to practice: Squatting Together, Dual pelvic rocking, Pelvic curl

**Setting the Stage For a Deeper Sexual Relationship**

Pretty much every couple gets into a rut within a few years of the relationship. The limerance has worn off, some emotional baggage has weighed you down and the newness just isn’t there. Spark your creative mind, allow yourself to be human and a sexual being who has fantasies and preferences- own it. Not sure where to start?

Don’t forget 365 Naughty Nights, 101 Nights of Great Sex (book), it is about setting the stage, the environment, and then The Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand (book) for exercises and Gottman cards (deck) for specifics- Might I also suggest a foot rub and do an internet search for acupressure or back rub (swedish, thai, deep tissue, lymph drainage), head rub etc.

In our society we have been taught to not talk about sex, but then we are bombarded by TV shows and movies that make sexual innuendo throughout. Magazines, billboards, ads, commercials all sell sex. Songs talk about sex and a distorted version of the word “love” and then we expect people to revere sex, to honor it and treat it with the respect it deserves.

What messages did you get about sex and sexuality and seeing yourself as a sexual being?

What messages did you get about what your partner might like and want?

If you received unhealthy messages, perhaps you could start to undo the programming by putting in healthy messages about sex.

It is beautiful and amazing and transports you to other worlds. It is such a wonderful bond when done with respect and with a positive attitude. As a tool for personal development, it awakens the senses, the emotions and spirituality.

In a negative mindset, this same tool can be used for exploitation or instant gratification or using of others.

What do you want to model for others? How would you like your loved ones to learn about sex?

I would like to suggest that not only are there techniques for breathing, and rocking the pelvis and setting the mood, there are sexual techniques and attitudes that go along with that to challenge unhealthy messages you may have already heard.

One such challenge is the Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand. Don’t just give up one set of messages for hers, but hers might just challenge you enough to expand your belief system and look for more knowledge about sexuality. You are likely to run up against beliefs that are foreign and that generally challenges people. Some people run away and some people sit with the challenge, feel their own discomfort and self-consciousness, embarrassment.

Below is a sampling of the exercises in her book:
Conscious Breathing, awakening your inner lover, the heart salutation, creating your sacred space, the melting hug, moving beyond resistance, the sensory awakening ritual, the dancing gods, th inner smile, soul gazing, the ritual of purification, the basic stance, the ceremony of recognition of the body, The art of erotic touching: feathering, fingertip stroking, slipping and sliding, the square stretch, squatting together, the pelvic curl, the opening lotus, the pc pump, sexual breathing, pelvic rocking, dual pelvic rocking, the self-pleasuring ritual, the sexual dialogue, self-pleasuring under the eyes of your beloved, pleasuring each other, role playing each other, the yin-yang game, shaking loose, the streaming process, the butter fly, healing the yoni and the Vajra, riding the tiger alone and together, shooting to the crown together, charging other areas of the body. The valley orgasm level 1 and 2; the basic postures of love; oral loving and the final is Riding the Wave of bliss with Pelvic rocking, cultivating arousal, opening the inner flute together, the playful wave, connecting breath to breath, opening to your inner light, the infinite cycle and the advanced infinite cycle-

Even if you do not do every single exercise, your sexual self-awareness will have been broadened.
You are free to skip any that do not interest you.

There may be some that challenge you and I have heard a few people were “grossed out” by a couple of them. You do not have to do them all, but it is interesting to explore what bothers you and why. That exploration makes you more conscious and less reactive.

Goal: Express your sexual needs and wishes in more positive and specific terms…A greater sense of safety and intimacy develops between you, which greatly increases your change of experiencing the kind of sexual pleasure you long for.

​EXERCISE: Go back and re read those. Think about your relationship and your responsibility and contribution to it. What might you need to rethink about your behavior and beliefs?

**What is the Point of Having a Body?**

There are some experiences you can only have if you have a body. Use the body for what it is intended, to experience joy and pleasure and ecstasy and then the body leads you to experiences that transcend the body. Try it, you’ll like it.

“Your bodies are simply vehicles through which to feel and express your deepest truth, your unbounded openness, your divine nature, the love who you are. Practice being love and being penetrated by divine love.

 “This feeling of two merging into one is the epitome of sacred and secular pleasure.

“Merging with the divine -the mystery and depth of open being -has very little to do with infantile oneness, losing yourself in athletic flow, or merging with your woman emotionally. Whereas all these mergers are with a particular state a pleasure, excitement, or empathy, divine merger is not with any particular state at all, but with the deep openness of all states.

“Practice opening as the depth of being in the midst of sex. Then, spiritual bliss will include and exceed the merely sexual.” Deida

EXERCISE: “We can practice realizing this depth over and over, when things are good or bad. Feel through every condition and merge with Divine openness, your true nature, the true nature of everyone and everything, over and over until it’s no longer dependent on outside conditions which are always changing.” Deida

Have you tried doing the exercises on a regular basis (The Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand) yet? Are you practicing this particular one 10-20 times before it becomes comfortable during sex? It is time to get the book, and read it, if you have not already done so. Here is an exercise to practice:  The Square Stretch

**Stereotypical Gender Differences**

The man speaks to the woman and makes his point. When he is talking, he is simply exchanging info assuming she is doing the same.

She is talking to get closer and assumes he is doing the same. Until you know the possible explanations, this could stymie you.

Got a problem with your communication, check the above first.

Exercise: Listen to yourself when you communicate with someone today. When did it go well and when did it not? Are you more masculine or feminine in your communication?

The man hears the woman tell about how horrible her day is. Feeling compassionate, sharing in her pain, he protects her and demonstrates his love for her by solving her problem. She feels misunderstood by his problem solving. She simply wanted him to listen and be there with her.

Does this lead to the kind of passion they want?

Hearing him tell about his day, she demonstrates her interest in him and in their relationship by following up with questions and requesting detail. He feels interrogated and now wants to have some space. She feels rejected and wants to talk about the relationship and he retreats further. Does this lead to an intimate encounter?

The above is from Deb Tannen, PhD, who also notes (I am paraphrasing) that about a third of what people say is just not heard/processed. Maybe a third is heard through the listener’s filter and maybe a third of what the talker said is actually received accurately. Imagine how much is lost in translation.

​When you have a challenging conversation, I usually ask couples to stop and ask themselves if it could be an easy, stylistic problem like stereotypical gender communication. Could it be introvert/extravert differences? Are there other style challenges that should not be taken personally? Try those first.

When couples have difficulty talking about sex or being sexual, I usually ask them to consider talking about their understanding of their gender role and responsibility. Oftentimes, they do not see eye to eye about who does what or what the expectations are. Talking about expectations can do a world of good and then follow up with what you prefer from the other person and negotiate a win-win.

**Are You Fully There During Sex?**

Do you close your eyes and tense your body? Have you practiced enough tantra that you are able to withstand the incredible intimate experience of orgasm, eyes open looking at your partner and just fully relaxed?

Let him feel through you. Allow yourself the gift of being open and allow him to receive this gift.

“She had an old habit of going inward during sex, especially when she wanted to have an orgasm. She would close her eyes and withdraw, going inside herself to experience her own sensations. It was as if I wasn’t there anymore. Although I was the source of her stimulation, as she turned inward she became completely unaware of me or anything else outside of her own body. As she trained herself she would open her eyes, feel through her own pleasure, and reconnect with me, heart to heart. Even while she was approaching orgasm, she remained open and felt through the waves and thrills rather than closing down and going inward. She allowed her orgasm to move outward, like a gift to the universe, through her body, through my body, and far beyond. She gave herself in pleasure rather than keeping the pleasure in herself. Her openness deepened our mutual surrender, where in we both gave ourselves so fully in love there was no inward left to go.

“Feel through your lover into the love that moves the universe -the love that is alive at the heart of all beings.

“If you were going to go inward during sex you might as well do it by yourself; there are for less complications in solitude.

“Sex is a natural way that depth can recognize itself in another. This depth is openness or love.” David Deida

EXERCISE: Practicing love means staying in direct relationship Eye 2 Eye, body to body, breath to breath, as much as possible during sex, including when you’re bursting with pleasure, shyness, fear, or shame.

**True Love**

While I do not agree with David Deida on several topics, I value that he challenges my thinking. He makes me challenge my own ways of looking at things, so that I can make up my own mind. Do not take what he says and swallow it whole- process it and see if it is true for you. Allow it to bug you and bump you out of your comfort zone.

“Most women choose physical comfort and emotional security over true love.

“The only surrender that is truly fulfilling is to the love that is the substance of every single moment, the love that moves as you and the universe. You will serve the world as love. Only that will be fulfilling. Surrender directly as the flow of love.” Deida

EXERCISE: Learn to relax your muscles your heart, your belly, your thighs, so that the energy of love can flow through you without obstruction.

EXERCISE: “Let go of your dreams of comfort, security, and romance. Receive and give the bliss of deep openness with every breath. This love fills your body and heart with a pleasure so deep that even your own thoughts and emotions cannot sway your fundamental happiness. Your loneliness is filled with a bright immensity of joy. This love energy flows from your heart through your body and out your feet, hands, and eyes like beams of beauty.”
​Deida

**Your Love**

Is there anything that compares to love? Don’t settle for less than love.

You know when you are loved and cherished and treasured and when someone is less than present.

Don’t settle for the person who cannot be present. Don’t settle for someone who cannot live in the moment.

Help them get there, to experience the glory of being fully present.

“You live in love’s rapture even as your day to day life continues in the form that you choose.

“Your love is larger than your man or yourself. You have nothing to fear or protect. Love has already worked its way through your secret hopes and dreads and opened every speck of you as light. You live as love. You are love. You are neither possessed by your lover’s needs nor by your own.” Deida

EXERCISE: “Practice surrendering more deeply as love. Practice receiving love deeply into your body and giving love from every cell. You were thus transfigured. You are now a woman who is self-sufficient who loves herself and she is already full of love’s bliss and blessing power.” Deida

**Remove Yourself From the Role of Victim**

Are you somehow feeling like the victim? Do you like that role? What might that role offer you, other than the obvious one- If I am the victim, then I do not need to change or take responsibility. If I am the victim, I am innocent and was wronged. Being in a victim mindset blocks love.

“But I loved him,” she said. She did and he did not reciprocate her love. He used her and manipulated her to get what he wanted. She hoped that by giving him what he wanted, she would get what she wanted- love. She wanted to feel a strong presence, not an abusive one.

You do not have to sacrifice or martyr yourself for anyone. You are enough, more than enough. Learn how to be content by yourself and with yourself and you will find yourself more than content enough.

Check yourself if you find yourself adopting the victim role or putting yourself in a situation in which you could easily be victimized. Yes, there are legitimate victims as well, that is not what we are talking about here. I am talking about people who self-victimize, to avoid responsibility for changing. It is self-sabotage. If you are being abused or misused, manipulated, coerced etc. please get professional help ASAP because it can be incredibly helpful to have someone helping support you and someone helping you see more clearly.

“In many cases, you are tolerating their abuse because of the love you also hope to get from them.

“Otherwise, you would simply stop making yourself available as a potential victim. His abuse may seem better than total lack. In his anger at least you can feel his presence. You can love yourself.

“When you were dependent, you practiced sacrificing yourself for the sake of pleasing your man.

“When you were independent, you practiced strengthening yourself so you could please yourself, with or without your man.

“Now you practice true spiritual surrender, which involves opening to the Love that lives the universe, flowing as your body mind and emotions, you submit to the very flow of love for which you yearned all along. Now you are a force to be reckoned with.” Deida

Take back the power that you have. The serenity prayer is helpful here: Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.

**Relax Into Your True Nature**

You don’t have to figure out your true nature, it is already there. Just let it be.

Fear confuses things, do not live there. Face the fear, lean into it instead of avoiding things you fear, make friends with it and it loses power over you. Stop chasing and grasping and desiring -just allow things to be what they are. It is okay to have preferences, just stop pursuing them in a manner that if you do not get what you want, it leaves you miserable.

What if life were perfect as it is right now and you simply need to accept life as it is, relax into it and enjoy?

“Relax as the bliss that you are, over and over until fear and desire lose their hold in the fullness of unfettered emergence, realized anew every moment.

“For women, when love is not flowing, you tend to feel depressed and tired. It is very natural for you to try to create a flow of love.” Deida

Exercise: Pay attention to how you block love. Pay attention to what it feels like inside you when you allow love to flow unfettered. What if love is your true nature and by relaxing, you stop blocking?

**Feel the Depth of Openness**

When I hurt, I go within and seek to learn the message. What am I to learn from this?

The pain is simply the messenger and while I want to be without pain, I want to remove the root of pain, not the message of the pain. The pain functions to get my attention and stop me from being distracted.

I want to be open and receptive and aware. Can you be open to fullness and emptiness or do you have a block?

If you are in touch with feelings, can feel them and sit with them until they have finished the lesson of what you are to learn, you gain so much. You get more pain as well as pleasure, wonderful guidance from the messengers (feelings).

Can you get in touch with that little child within and send him/her a message, “I am sorry you’re hurting. Come here and tell me about it while I hold you. Tell me how it felt when it happened and know that right now you are safe. I will hold the space for you to have your own feelings. I will not fix you or ask you to suck it up. I will keep listening and trying to understand how it was to be you. That is my gift to you, listening to understand and not judge you. You have a right to your perspective and way of feeling.”

These messages that you send yourself are very important if you want to heal old wounds you are carrying around from childhood. The wounds can be healed when we listen to them and honor them.

**Feel More Deeply**

David Deida writes it better than I do

“Eventually suffering compels you to greater depth. Who you are is the entire depth of being, including the things outside yourself, the “reflected” things. Focus attention through every experience so you can know and feel this depth of openness. Feel through everything to what you pay attention- opening as the depth of being, over and over; practice this and eventually even practice this during your dreams.

“Feel into the space of sensation itself.

“This simultaneous realization of fullness and emptiness liberates bliss from the merely physical into an unconstrained infinitude of openness and depth.

“Sex is only as deeply fulfilling as you’re willing to feel.

“The capacity to feel through the surface into the depths of any moment is learnable. Its strength grows with practice. When you can practice feeling through experience, then you no longer hope for the impossible, that this or that particular experience will fulfill you. Feel through it all, and in doing the very bliss of being dawns overwhelmingly obvious, suffusing all experience.” Deida

Feelings are key to wonderful sex as well as the key to living a deeper life.

**You Are Consciousness**

“I need to find myself,” he said. I jokingly replied that I found him and he is right there. After he threw the pillow at me, he told me that I knew what he meant.

“Have you forgotten who you are?” I asked, turning serious. I wanted to listen and really hear what he meant.

Did he mean that he had stopped being true to himself in trying to be liked and earn her love? Did he over accommodate her and lose his sense of his own importance and lose touch with what he himself liked?

Or had he never really known himself, his nature of mind, his deepest self? Struggling to articulate it for him, I asked him to read, and then reflect on, this passage from David Deida.

“Certainly you’re aware of what is always true -you are consciousness radiance itself. Everything that happens takes place in this openness and is the creation of conscious light.

“Always practice to remember who you really are even in the most pleasurable circumstances.

“Women reveal to man the beauty of existence. Your relationship to feminine attractiveness does not have to stop with the sexual titillation.

“The feeling of wanting someone is the feeling of wanting to merge with her, to take her and make her yours, so that for some moments you are absorbed in her beauty and her delicious womanness. What is it that you really want?” Deida

What you really want, prefer, like, what makes you tick is a large part of who you are.

Tune into that and do things that bring you joy and passion, that ground you. How do you practice this type of thing? Well, there is a book that I recommend to people who want to reach the deeper depths.

EXERCISE: Have you tried doing the exercises on a regular basis (The Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand) yet? Are you practicing this particular one 10-20 times before it becomes comfortable during sex? It is time to get the book, and read it, if you have not already done so. Here is an exercise for you to practice:
The Heart Salutation

**Let Love Flow**

This is really powerful. Allow, go with the flow, let it happen, let it be…

“It is entirely natural for you to feel like your body is betraying you. It is now time for you to continue growing deep in your feminine art of love light.

“Locate the love in your heart and practice shining it through your body.

“Allow the full spectrum, the entire rainbow, of love energy to flow through your body.
If your body is resistant to flowing with some aspect of feminine energy, then you will limit the force of love that is allowed to shine from your heart- you will weaken yourself.”

“Whatever energy you are unwilling to incarnate in your own body, you would resist in others. Your very resistance will attract these energies into your life so that you can learn to love in their midst!

“If you deny your own power to influence others through your energy, then you will disdain women who seem manipulative, attracting them into your life.

“Developing your capacity to shine love through different shades of energy takes time, as does learning how to put on make up.” Deida

Exercise: Remove the idea of limits and remove any blocks. Don’t resist. Love in all circumstances. You have an influence on others, own it.

**Are You Guarding Your Heart?**

I love the poetry of his writing, and while I do not agree with all his views, they challenge me to think and to grow and to make up my own mind.

How did you learn to enlighten hearts?

How open is your being?

What is your purpose?

Are you loved?
​

“Are you guarding your heart, hiding the depth of your love, attempting to disregard your constant yearning to give and receive deep love? The deepest form of feminine beauty is love itself, shining freely from the heart, radiating through the body and into the world, unobstructed and unguarded.”

“Our culture does not support this depth of energy. Your mother probably spent more time teaching you how to dress than how to love. She probably commented more on the way you should do your hair then on the way you should breathe in order for your energy to move blissfully through your body and enlighten the hearts of others. At the deepest level of expression, feminine love is the same force as masculine freedom; they are one openness of being.”

“They look different -the feminine asks how do I look, am I loved? The masculine asks what is my purpose? How can I be more free and successful?”

“Your body is going to rot, no doubt. Sooner or later you will look in the mirror, and see yourself getting older and your heart will sink. This is the equivalent of a man’s midlife crisis, when everything seems empty to him. The masculine part of you can experience the same midlife crisis that a man does. The feminine part of you goes through very different kind of crisis, not a purpose but of light, “am I still radiant?”

“Feminine spiritual practice involves surrendering as, and expressing, the deepest light and love that flows through your heart, devoting your body to dancing love’s dance, breathing love’s bliss, and radiating love’s light, moment by moment, regardless of how bad you feel. You don’t need to deny your emotional ups and downs or your physical pains while you practice being love in their midst.”

“This requires learning to identify more with the radiance that shines from your heart through your body, rather than identifying with the superficial shine inherent to youthful flesh.” By David Deida

I love the surrendering, the radiance that shines from the heart, openness, sense of purpose. It makes me think. It challenges how I have thought about this in the past. Practice being love and radiate it outward.

EXERCISE: Try directing your sexual energy towards heaven. Can you unify heaven and earth within yourself? Try it. Body and spirit are not separate, even though we perceive it that way sometimes.

**Underlying Unity**

Are you at war with yourself or are you aligned with your highest good, your purpose, the absolute?
You are rooted in the absolute, how could you not be?

Perhaps you have forgotten who you are and need the reunion that we call sex to become one, to balance, to realign and remind yourself who you are.

That is why we call it “sacred sexuality.”

There are techniques, as well, but if you don’t know the reason why you are using the techniques, you might get disoriented, confused or lost.

EXERCISE: Keep moving the energy to the higher energy centers in your body. Do you know how to do that? Energize your lower chakras and watch your heart become the gateway to the divine. There are very specific exercises (they are called yantras and I do not teach them in my blog) that can help with this energy. Fill your tank, don’t settle for a half tank of energy.

EXERCISE: With your eyes closed, not moving your head, look straight up. What do you notice? Stretch the eye muscles and watch how your brain appreciates this. Can you hold it for 30 seconds? Two minutes?

Did you know you can enter a trance if you hold it long enough? It is hypnotic and can lead to a mystical experience. In religious terms, the kingdom of heaven lies within and this is one way to start to access it. Remember to experience, not judge or label…

​What if I told you that you could have a direct experience with the divine? Would that interest you? Would you be willing to do the exercises that built that capacity?

**Do You Need to Improve?**

​Who you truly are is not wimpy or fearful.

Remember who you are, who you are is strong, knows what it wants and goes for the gusto. Be authentic and genuine. Own your wants and preferences, sexually and otherwise.

He/she successfully conveys his/her strength, power and value to those around him/her without bragging or annoying people. (I’m going to stop with the pronouns, so as to make the job of the writer easier. There is doubt that you will lose the lesson based on a pronoun.) He is focused on bringing joy to them, not on what he can get from them.

“As you grow spiritually, your feminine essence identifies with more and more profound depths of love and light.

“As you make love, do you shine in the bliss of love light? Or do you close your body and heart to some degree, allowing less of your radiance to shine, delaying energy enjoyed yourself, your lover, and the world and then doubting yourself worth it? Do you grow from superficial to deep forms of love?

“Learning how to dress and put on make-up is a full-fledged feminine art. Some women master it, others only dabble, but most women spend a significant amount of time concerned about and adorning their appearance, becoming artists of energy (does this or that earring make me feel better?) And of light (what color blouse brings out the shining in my eyes today?)

“If you grow, this kind of concern may begin to feel superficial.

“As you grow spiritually, your feminine art and mastery can deepen. You can play with your internal energy flow its self as well as that of others.” Deida

Homework: Practice doing something nice for someone else, really making their day today, NOT from a needy place. Not from a place where you need for them to acknowledge or reciprocate, just because you want them to feel good.

Exercise: Take a day off this week and just look at your life and how you are improving or staying the same. Are you doing the exercises or just reading them? It works the same way with sit ups, when you do the work, it pays off. When you read about sit ups, you don’t earn a six pack abdomen.

**Sexual Polarity**

David Deida is an author who has very strong opinions. I find that what he writes stirs up strong feelings in me. I don’t have to agree with him, just entertain the thoughts and if they apply to you, use them. If they don’t, skip to the next blog.

“Perhaps 10% of women have a more masculine sexual essence. These women find more bliss in challenge and competition than in sensuality and relationship. At the movies, they would prefer an action adventure to a love story. They would prefer to quickly scarf down food and get back to work than to relax and enjoy fine cuisine with champagne, candles, and intimate conversation. They would more often prefer to ravish their lover then be ravished by their lover.

“A person with a masculine sexual essence identifies with the freedom of consciousness.

“If you are such a person, you struggle to feel free, which requires that you were clear and your priorities. You were not really happy unless you know what you want to do and are free to do it, financially, emotionally, politically, and spiritually.

“Money is a stepped down version of free masculine consciousness.

“The qualities of consciousness, presence, humor and wealth reflect different levels of the attainment of masculine freedom.

“A superficial but wealthy man does not interest a woman as much as a man of profound consciousness, humor and depth. If he’s wealthy, too, so much the better.”
By David Deida

Play with some of the concepts above. We have both masculine and feminine energy, the polar opposites or complements or yin and yang. Every one of us has both, just in different amounts. There is not a right or wrong to either, just an awareness that they are not in competition. They complement each other well if we choose not to judge. Be who you are and own it. Allow your partner the same. Own the sides of you that you wish you didn’t have. Pretending does not make them go away. Welcome back both the masculine and feminine parts of you. The feminine in you brings out the masculine in me.

​EXERCISE: Imagine building sexual excitement and then backing off. Do this a few times. It is often referred to as “edging.” It builds anticipation and can be frustrating too. Don’t take your partner too far, past the point of no return. It is meant to tease them and build the sexual tension, the excitement, the energy.

**Spiritual Growth, Going Deeper and Letting Go**

You feel like you want more from life, right? There has to be more than just working and paying bills and watching tv. Why are we here? What is this all about? Do I want to be self-aware?

“Spiritual growth can be painful and difficult. Spiritual growth depends on cultivating a depth of attention or awareness in spite of the condition of your body and mind.

“The source of your attention is consciousness itself, the openness of being. When you begin to awaken, if you are very sensitive you can feel attention come out of a deeper, blissful consciousness and carve a whirl of thoughts, object, feelings, and relationships that you call your life.

“Suddenly you are aware of whatever world reflects your current fears and hopes. You grow spiritually by letting go of your attachment to certain objects, which happens naturally, and then relaxing your attention more deeply into which source, but openness of being. This development of attention from superficial to deep can be practiced in many ways, including prayer, devotional contemplation, meditation, and studying scripture.

“Our culture only supports growth up to a certain stage. We are allowed to liberate our attention from childhood and adolescent concerns, but then we are supposed to be satisfied by occupying our attention with adult concerns of money, family, sex, sports, and affection, with a little bit of do -gooding, artistic appreciation, and religious belief thrown in.

“When we grow beyond these objects of concern, when they no longer interest us -our modern culture offers very little advice.

“Meaning is not to be found in the world, but in the depth of being, which then recasts the world in a new light.

“Your only true choice is to go deeper. Practice feeling through your most physically pleasurable sexual moments, relaxing as the openness of deep being, again and again.

“Meet every moment of unfulfillment as a call to feel through the present objects of attention and relax more fully as the openness of deep being.” By David Deida

When you feel like there must be more to it, follow that. There is more and it is worth paying attention. Feel everything, be in the moment and when it matters most, you have that skill mastered.

**Want to Add Some Spice to Your Sex?**

Try the Gottman deck.

Examples:
Pretend you’re two different animals, like panthers, and make love.
Draw a bubble bath and bathe your partner.
Play naked twister and then have sex.
Masturbate to orgasm thinking of your partner and then tell your partner about your fantasy.
Spread whipped cream or chocolate sauce on your favorite body parts of your partner before kissing and licking him or her.

Want it a little hotter? Check out these and see if they fit your style and comfort:

Elevator kissing and touch

Give oral to climax without breaking eye contact at all

Try to have silent sex try to make the other person moan. The first person to make a sound loses, kind of.

Lick a trail from one of her nipples to the other and then down to her clitoris. Linger for only a few seconds on each of the three hotspots.

Wrestle naked

Set the washing machine on high and have sex on it.

After sex gently blow on each other’s below the belt regions.

Lightly wrap a beaded or fake pearl necklace around his penis, and roll it back and forth

Do a dirty 360- get into girl- on- top and spin all the way around without pulling away.

Listen to different songs from two iPads as you have sex. The contrast and rhythm will make the sex unpredictable and hot.

Touch either side of her clitoris where there are lots of nerves that often get neglected.

Keep warm tea nearby and take a swig every so often while you go down on him.

In front of your guy, eat a piece of fruit exactly how you’d like him to go down on you.

Strip her down, and put your belt loosely around her hips so that during doggy style sex, you can pull her closer and get deeper with each thrust.

These are examples from cosmopolitan’s card deck called “365 Naughty Nights”

Come up with your own spin and talk about what you might enjoy to mix things up a bit and keep them fresh.

**Am I Open?**

​How open are you to new ideas?

Can you open your chakras and your energy system and stop blocking the natural flow that is all around you?

Have you learned how to increase excitement and pleasure and feel it throughout your body?

Is your whole body involved or are you focusing on a couple spots?

Are you all in?
Tune into your body and the body of your partner simultaneously.

From the Art of Sexual Ecstasy By M. Anand
“In High Sex, instead of intensifying stimulation, we are developing an expanded awareness of increasingly subtle sensations in the whole body.”

Exercise: If this interests you, read her book, complete with examples, techniques and exercises. Keep reading here and we will cover this and tantra from other authors, as well.

​EXERCISE: People get super focused on genital sex, forgetting that the whole body can be involved. How about a kiss on the neck, behind the knee, the hands, the back, caressing and kissing- the body will respond by tuning in. An earlier post discussed, in specifics, a sequence you can use that amplifies this process.

**How Do You Think About Sexual Intimacy in a Monogamous Relationship?**
Monogamy is challenging, otherwise we wouldn’t read and hear so much about cheating. It does not have to be boring or dull. It can be amazing, if you talk about what you want. It can be wonderful if you continue to explore yourself and learn more about sex and its deeper purpose of self development.
How are you keeping your sexual relationship interesting, vital and transformative? Or have you settled or sold out?
Hot Monogamy Quotes by Pat Love:
“…the burst of sexual passion that accompanies a new relationship is time limited…couples that want to sustain passion and intimacy have to consciously create it. If you do not have intimacy skills, you will struggle to create it.”

“There is no upper limit to passion and intimacy!”

Exercise: Ask your partner if they think that this is hyperbole/exaggeration. Ask your partner if they would like to improve the connection between the two of you. Do the inventory in the book Hot Monogamy
Sexual Style Inventory (pages 21-35 within Hot Monogamy)

“I created other exercises that help couples explore- romance, sexual desire, sensuality, body image, communication about sex, technique and sexual variety”

“The strongest indicator of sexual and marital satisfaction for women was the ability to express sexual feelings to their partner.” (Speak openly and honestly to their partner. Plan for sex and make it happen regularly or you’ll find that it doesn’t happen.)

​Exercise: Imagine the woman being able to express sexual feelings and ask for what they want with intimacy, emotionally and sexually. Now imagine the man listening and reciprocating this expression. Each person knows what the other wants and how they like to be.

EXERCISE: Taste Exercise- Remember, all 5 senses are to be used when being intimate to include the entire body- whiskey (obviously ask first), asparagus, pineapple, chocolate, marshmallow, bitters, beer, ice cream, or flavored lube etc- get to know what they like (talk about it first) and really experience the taste. Don’t gross them out or make it a yucky experience.

Do they want one chocolate chip or a handful of m and m‘s? Are they needing a snack or just a chance to awaken their taste buds and their tongue? All of this is an exploration- be adventurous and creative, showing that you are thinking of them when you are not together. Usually good to ask first, rather than surprise…

Please talk about these things so that you are truly in it together as partners. Some things are great for “winging it” and other things frighten people or trigger them or perhaps they did this with someone else and it didn’t bring back good memories or they don’t want to be thinking of their ex while they are with you. You have to manage your jealousy and other feelings and still be able to talk.

**What Would Happen if We All Honored The Capacity of Sex?**

“The secret of sexual energy, therefore, is not only that it is capable of begetting new generations, but that it has a second function of much greater importance for man; to lead his consciousness step by step up the great Jacob’s ladder of consciousness to God.”
Elisabeth Haich, Sexual Energy and Yoga

Exercise: Can you imagine being conscious enough to go up Jacob’s ladder?

I hear story after story of people using one another, exploitation, sexual assault, groping, harassment, rape etc and I grow weary.

Sex is amazing and spiritual and transformative and people seem to misuse and abuse this wonderful gift. Some of it is ignorance and some of it is that we have not taught our society how to truly honor and reverence this sacred sexuality.

Now is the time to have conversations with our friends and family about sexuality and the potential of it. Overcome your fear, your self-conscious nature and have the conversations that are necessary.

“When you are in love with someone, you do indeed see them as a divine being. Now, suppose that is what they truly are and that your eyes have by your beloved been opened. Through a tremendous outpouring of psychic energy in total devotion and worship for this other person, who is respectively god or goddess, you realize by total fusion and contact, the divine center in them. At once it bounces back to you and you discover your own.”
Alan Watts, Play to Live

Exercise: How might it change your relationship, physically and sexually, spiritually and emotionally if you were to look for the divine spark in them? In yourself?

“To play is to be unfettered and unconditioned, to perform actions that are intrinsically satisfying; to sing, dance and laugh. To play is to step out of the ordinary world of the humdrum, to enter a special, magical world where one can revel in the superfluous. To play is to display oneself aimlessly and gracefully. As players, then, the gods are revealed to be delightful, joyful, graceful beings whose actions are completely spontaneous, unconditioned, and expressive of their transcendent completeness and freedom.”
David Kinsely, The Sword and the Flute

 EXERCISE: Re read the above quotes and consider how often you play and are light and airy.

​Play more this week through song, laughing and dance- enjoy the lightness of being during intercourse

**Are You Self Aware?**

Can you improve this?

So who are you, and what is this inner complementarity of which we speak? Have you worked to define who you are or seek the nature of who you are? Have you balanced your male and female aspects, your yin and yang?

It feels good to connect with ourselves and it feels good to connect with others when we are coherent and even better when we are well connected to ourselves.

Quantum physics tells us we are all made of atoms, right? So your atoms are arranged differently than mine, yet we’re both made of atoms. We have the same source- connect to your source and you connect to their source, it is the same.

It satisfies the urge of the soul- to unite. That is our longing, that is what seems to be missing for many of us. Life seeks life and we think it is outside ourselves. What if it is not?

We feel this sense of separation from others, even if only temporarily, like the raindrop falling into the sea, connecting/uniting. Is the water that makes up the raindrop truly separate from the sea or the cloud?

When you feel disconnected or you feel a sense of separation, consider that this could be an illusion. Just because you feel separate, does not mean that you are. We’re all connected, just because I am not aware of it or I don’t feel it, doesn’t mean it is not real.

Realize it…

Some people know how to use sex to go beyond themselves and achieve knowledge/realization of the absolute. Contemplate this and think about how to do it.

​Exercise: Discover and be your best self. Stop holding yourself back. Be who you are, the best version of you without all the neurotic stuff.

**Peak Experiences**

Transcend yourself, fly, go beyond, leave yourself behind, unify, merge, ecstasy, alive, filled up, at home, absorbed, flow, awe, intense experience- these awaken your energy

From the Art of Sexual Ecstasy By M. Anand
“Because we know such moments are possible, each time we enter into lovemaking, we secretly hope that this time we will enjoy them again. We hold the vision of a deeply fulfilling and joyful embrace, in which the vibrant pleasure of the body encompasses the delight of the heart, the meeting of minds, and the mutual recognition of kindred spirits.”

 “I have seen relationships between couples who had become bored-not only with sex, but with each other- suddenly blossom into entirely new love affairs, with open, heart-to-heart communication; renewed sexual intimacy; and an underlying spiritual connection that gave their lives together new meaning and fulfillment.”

EXERICSE: Read that again- The peak experiences- is that what you are looking for? Isn’t that why we go into relationships in the first place?

How close are you feeling in your relationship?

Do you experience the mutual recognition of kindred spirits?

Her book is filled with exercises to get there. My suggestion is that you read her book and take what you need from it. I will not repeat all her exercises here, but there are resources that really help the reader. Not all exercises are for everyone, you get to pick and choose.

​EXERCISE: Have you had a melting hug? Hug until both of you sigh. This is not the typical hug. Go ahead and hug until you melt into your partner.
​
Margot Anand The Art of Sexual Ecstasy

Exercise: Ocean Breath- Here’s another exercise to do when you’re trying to transition from the workday to the bedroom:

Relax your jaw and allow it to naturally drop open. Breathe in and out through your open mouth. (This alone can cause you to feel super sexy.) As you breathe, allow your chest to expand with your inhalations and contract with your exhalations, in a similar fashion to the Cat Cow Pose in yoga.

Picture your breath traveling down the front of your body on the way in and up your back on the way out, forming a cyclical wave of energy. Continue allowing your chest to open and close with your breath. Ride that wave.

If you’re really want to awaken your sexual desire, do this kneeling with knees apart and a pillow under your pelvis.

Begin gently contracting the pelvic floor muscles on the exhale. This will again direct blood flow to your sex organs.

Enjoy and explore the sensations. As you ride the wave and undulate your body, grind the pillow. Keep breathing through your open mouth. Done regularly, these exercises can calm you, improve focus, lower blood pressure, and put you in better touch with your sexual energy. Enjoy your practice.

**What is Tantra?**

Tantra deals with dissolving the opposites and using their complementarity to restore wholeness. We are one and transcendental, if we would but realize it.

Merge the male and female and we have union. Sexuality is one way to do this, so be aware and conscious and open to this union. Don’t be someone who minimizes it or exploits.

Treat it as special because it has power to transform your life.

Unite with your own male and female principles within yourself and your own consciousness. Don’t bother with the silly concepts you hear in our society about a real man or a real woman. You have masculine and feminine energies within you that are out of harmony, unless you have consciously done this work.

Don’t discard or exile any of your energy by judging it as soft or not right. Accept everything that is and allow it to flow without interfering or controlling.

Unify with a divine self- that is the goal.

In yoga, sometimes the teacher will greet students with “namaste.” The best definition I heard from a teacher was “The divine in me recognizes the divine in you.”

You have to own that you have divinity and then you act differently. You also own that everyone else does and it makes a difference in how we treat others. If I truly see myself as having any divinity, there are actions that don’t really go with that.

If I see everyone else as divine, there goes using people and exploiting others. Transformative

Harness your sexuality, sublimate it by not just going for ejaculation or prioritizing orgasm and use this energy to transcend your body. Keep building the energy of excitement and then release it. There are techniques that deal with cultivating the energy. In essence, build your pleasure and excitement and keep building it until your energy is full.

Your gas tank is rarely full.

Keep building until it is full and then channel it and experience what happens without interfering.

Watch what naturally happens when you practice these techniques.

EXERCISE: Try ocean breathing while pleasuring self or partner. Both do the breathing in synch (when you have mastered the pleasuring breathing), to really feel connected.

​The idea isn’t to hurry but to enjoy one another, to harmonize, to be connected and unite. Do this multiple times until the breathing becomes second nature. Breathing relaxes you and opens you up emotionally to your partner.

**From the Art of Sexual Ecstasy By M. Anand**

 “From the Tantric perspective this “orgasm of the brain” greatly stimulates the brain cells and creates a bridge between the right and left hemispheres, fusing the intellect of the left hemisphere with the intuitive faculties of the right.”

“You explore ways of escaping the gender trap that identifies you exclusively as either masculine or feminine…to establish a balanced partnership….develop a spirit of adventure, spontaneity, and erotic creativity in your love life.”

Exercise: Challenge your ideas, your thoughts about what it means to be a man or a woman and whether or not it is a false dichotomy. Are they complementary? Are they yin and yang?

​EXERCISE Any hip openers that you can do… Especially as people get older, the hips are not as flexible as they used to be. Stretch those hips, loosen them up. Do this daily for at least a few weeks and you’ll thank me. Keep them limber.

**Climax**

“Climax,” in ancient Greek, refers to a ladder to heaven.

Imagine being mindful and having the energy take you to a divine experience, a union.

EXERCISE: Focus on excitement during sex; not ejaculation.

There is no destination, just the journey- excitement and pleasure.

Ejaculation, without the excitement phase, is not sufficient to get you there. Make the excitement last for as long as you can. Practice opening yourself. Feel more pleasure, open pleasure, with an open heart and then extend how long you can be present with pleasure and watch what that does. Not only for your relationship with your partner, your relationship with yourself but in the ability to not label, just experience what is happening- then union with the divine.

Imagine that for a moment.

The resolution after the intense orgasm, will be slow. You can experience union prior to or instead of orgasm, as well. Arousal is the key and being aware, mindful, in your body. Let the energy shoot out of your head, but first, let the energy build. Hold back, manage the energy

EXERCISE: Particularly for men, learning how to manage the excitement and practice letting go is challenging. Go beyond the physical pleasure and surrender to both the masculine and the feminine energy within. Actually practice this during sex

​There is a union of self when you allow the feminine and masculine energies to flow freely, not getting in the way, not judging yourself.

**Who is In Control of You?**

EXERCISE: Ask yourself -Are you in control of your desires?
How do you manage your emotions and your preferences and over attachments?
Are you giving away your power?
How can you be in control?

“The inability to control one’s desires and to see the world objectively is a factor of one’s dependency upon forms as sources a pleasure. The best way to control desire is your discipline, restraint in control of the sexual urge while at the same time getting insight into the nature of sexuality and nature of your true identity.” Ashby

EX: Consider your sexual preferences, likes and dislikes. They are not static and unchangeable. They are in your control.

“A person should ask -why is it a mom or sister, father or son is not seen with sexual arousal even if they are attractive? Sexuality is a mental concept and it can be unlearned or sublimated according to your will.” Ashby

Have you practiced taming your mind so that you return to power over your body instead of giving power away?

I have a body; I am not my body

Have you developed yourself to the point that you realize you are not your body, that you have a body? Or are you over identifying with your physical body?

It is similar to saying, “I am angry,” instead of “I am experiencing anger.”

Who is this “I”?

Relationships are there to help us grow, to move beyond the selfish or self-absorbed existence. To transcend our body and to see ourselves more fully, with raw vulnerability.

“If you remember that, in reality, you are not a body, you’ll be able to rise above the pettiness of your own ego -you can rise above the pettiness of the mistakes of your partner -you’ll be able to forgive all… Learn from your mistake and discover that you were seeking something which you cannot find in an ordinary relationship…if you do not expand your horizons and let go of your ego desires, you will suffer the endless miseries of human existence.” Ashby

Our ego confuses us and tricks us into thinking we will be happy if (fill in the blank) as if it is dependent upon some external development or circumstance. We create happiness or misery with our thinking, with our behavior.

Imagine not having the limitations you think you have. Imagine a world in which your happiness was dependent on your thoughts. This is yours for the asking.

“At a deeper level there’s no need to forgive because you’ll see everything as yourself -as connected -you will grow beyond the relationship itself and live on a higher plane” Ashby

**What is Your Vision?**

Set a goal for the relationship and the sexual relationship and make sure each is realistic. What is the highest good of this relationship for the other person and the couple? Think about unity and uniting with the divine as part of the goal.

“Stop running endlessly on the treadmill and going absolutely nowhere-do not expend your energy in the pursuit of pleasure and fulfillment when there’s no chance of getting it where you’re looking …can you let go of your ego and look for the higher purpose of relationship? Can you discipline yourself to live according to your higher ideal instead of the ideal of your ego and of your culture?” Ashby

EXERCISE: Sit with this concept of uniting with the divine. What does it mean to you?

“Uniting with the divine represents the innermost desire of the soul in every human being -we also want to unite with nature” Ashby

Exercise: Talk about your job and your day without complaining, without criticizing or focusing just on yourself. No one bonds with a Debbie Downer. They may listen and give feedback or validation a few times, but it gets old fast. If your job or day is a problem, take the initiative and do something about it. This shows what you are about. Fail to take initiative and you are seen as weak!  They want someone with ambition and initiative, not someone who will be a project for them (if they are healthy).

Failure to talk about your day often signals that you are not interested in her, that you do not want to connect. Figure out how to talk about your day in a way that makes her feel connected emotionally (hint, talk about emotions) that has interesting stories.

Our work seems to have patterns or themes. What are two stories from this week that you can tell her about work and how you responded?
1
2

Did those stories convey the qualities to her that you want to convey?

**What is the Point of Relationships?**

I have heard many people say they are not meant for relationships, that they are just too complicated and they don’t get why people go through the pain. “I just want to be happy,” I hear. “I am okay with relationship as long as I don’t get hurt again.”

What if relationships are simply tools for growth? What if being happy is the side effect of helping another person grow and growth is the actual point?

Are you helping your partner discover their true nature?

Are you forgiving them for being human?

Are you letting them be who they are?

“This is the true purpose of maleness and femaleness- to help the soul discover its true nature, which is beyond gender, through interactions and relationships of gender. Working to help each other grow toward enlightenment. Don’t scrutinize each other’s actions and accuse them of being egoistic -don’t deny your own misgivings and limitations. Make sure that you are understanding the other person and yourself and make sure that you forgive. Understand that your partner is a struggling soul who is, in reality, striving for the same goal as you –enlightenment” Ashby

Exercise: Take an inventory of what you do that demonstrates a fundamental understanding of who you are and what relationships are about. Look at your own side and attempt to improve rather than asking your partner to improve.

Exercise: Want to be happy in a relationship? Keep appreciating yourself and your partner. Keep looking for beauty and opportunities to serve others. These are keys to happiness and they are in your control.

**Can You Let Them Walk Away When They Need the Space?**

Let’s face it, we are not always in synch with ourselves let alone our partner. Don’t force things, allow them to take their course. Stop fighting what is and use the energy of allowing and watch how your own equanimity is affected. Don't be overly attached to the results.

“If you fight back (with your partner) at the time when the person is irrational and caught up in ego energy, it is more difficult to restore harmony. If there’s understanding- for example silence, giving space to the other person and you allow the energy to flow, instead of pushing, accusing, recriminating-During times of anger, the reconciliation process is easier.” Ashby

As Americans, we tend to force things and push through, instead of allowing them to be what they are. Sometimes no action is the best option. The same thing is true during sex. Let it be what it is rather than force your preferences. “I wish it were different,” doesn’t sound like accepting what is in the moment.

“The deeper aspiration of every human being is to discover inner peace and contentment -this is why people engage in relationships, pursue careers etc.” Ashby

What are you doing today that helps you with inner peace and contentment? Are you focusing on the external or the internal conflicts?

**How Are You Getting Detached From Your Ego?**

What gets in the way of growth? What stops you from stepping up to the plate, from summoning the courage?

Do you let fear of what others think stop you?
Can you feel the feeling of fear, knowing it is a story in your head that you tell yourself, then continue on doing what you need to do?
Can you face your fear piece by piece and sit with the feelings until you realize that fear is not the enemy, avoiding the fear is the problem.

I prefer to be comfortable rather than uncomfortable. This is true for emotions and for my physical body. Does that mean I should not exercise or ever feel discomfort? Growth means I go through the discomfort for a higher goal, for what my purpose dictates.

Imagine I have a goal and I am so attached to the goal that if I do not reach it, I tell myself my life is over. It is the end of the world. That is what we call “attachment” or “grasping.” Goals are good when we approach them with a healthy outlook. I am okay even if my desire is not met. It is no big deal.

Now, imagine in your sexual relationship, you want something and your partner wants something else. I want her to listen first and she wants me to listen first. That’s ego based if we have a fight over that. The ego is the deeper cause of all conflict in relationships. “I desire something rather than demand it,” is a healthier thought. There is the yin and the yang, the principle of opposites and complementarity. Let’s try to stop making everyone the same and appreciate the differences that exist. How much of sex is about technique versus communication, expectations, personal growth?

Play with your desires and how this relates to your relationship. Allow yourself to want what you want, without getting bent out of shape if you don’t get it. Delay gratification and pay attention to your emotions.

One way to expand your comfort zone is by joining a group. Joining a group is hard. It requires some of the more complicated social skills. It is give and take and self-discovery.
Are you adding to or draining from the fun?
Are you pulling/inviting everyone into the conversation?
Make a comment on what they are wearing or doing- pull them in. Be motivated by curiosity- get to know them. Do not open with a question- try a statement or observation. “It takes effort to appear effortless.”

**Tantra is About Personal Development and Transcending**

Know what is sexy? Exploring and finding yourself, developing, growing, confidence with humility. Get out of your comfort zone, through exposure to things which are not comfortable. Discipline yourself to follow the path of growth. When you have self-discipline, you can then develop real peace and calm. Do you want contentment and happiness? Follow the causes and conditions and do not give in to distractions.

For those of you who are shy or find that your social skills need some polishing-

Exercise: Talk to a stranger today in a non-threatening manner.
Stir their curiosity and capture their imagination- it is a springboard for more conversation while showing your personality. Practice with strangers and then watch how well it works with people you already know, like your partner.

How might you stir their curiosity?

1

2

3

When you are talking to strangers today, put a smile on your face before you approach and don’t start with “Excuse me.”

​Laugh at yourself and while you speak, play with them and enjoy being with them.
Are you radiating positivity when you talk?
Are you upbeat, non-needy and empathetic?
Stretch yourself by challenging yourself realistically and keep challenging yourself every day. Revise the challenge until it is something that is hard but achievable.

Can you grow within your relationships? Can you push your boundaries and accept a little discomfort? If you can, you will find life is richer. You have more options and your partner will appreciate that.

**There is More, Please Do Not Give Up Too Early**

Sometimes we don’t realize how much we know and think others know what we do.

Did you know that some people have sex just based on their animal instincts and don’t look for more?

Imagine their surprise when they have an experience that transcends. They relax into it, breathe deeply and stay present in the moment. They relax and are not pursuing orgasm, just building the pleasure. They feel into the other, instead of just their own experience and they look deeply into their partner’s eyes.

Some people simply stay on the surface and do not reflect on life or why they are here, where they came from or what they are to do here. They aren’t aligned with themselves or their purpose. They don’t know why they are doing what they are doing and it doesn’t even bother them. Keep looking, there is more to find and experience right in front of you. You need not leave this place to find the higher level answers. Don’t look outside yourself for that which can only be found within.

Be not distracted by your needs and your desires, when in pursuit of your purpose.

**Tantra Exposes You to a Different Way of Thinking**

Are you satisfied or do you think life can be better?

“The soul is degrading itself to the extent of associating with the limited form, the body. Associating with its ignorance, desires and frustrations. The ignorant soul is submitting to the whims and desires of not only another personality but nature itself. You can’t get satisfaction... (Ashby)

EXERCISE: “What would you advise someone who is digging for gold in a coal mine to do? Where do you look for the satisfaction of your desires?

“Do you sink deeper into despair, ignorance and debauchery in the form of mental dullness and negative emotions such as anger, hatred and greed?

EXERCISE: “Do you indulge in superficial sexual pleasures? (for example recreational sex, pornography, prostitution) and drugs as a means to compensate for the inability to provide for the higher needs of the soul? How do you provide for the higher needs of your soul? Many relationships are based on ulterior motives and animal desires” Ashby

What needs are you trying to get met within the relationship? What needs are you not even looking to the relationship to get met?

What are the higher needs of your soul?

Are you seeking the fulfillment of those needs?

**What Can You Do If You Have Some ED?**

Acknowledge that all men have already had issues or will have issues in time.

In Rochester, NY we have the Sexual Wellness Center that can help.

Talk about it beforehand with your partner and how you want her to respond (she is not to take your body’s behavior personally, not make a big deal and not put pressure to perform) if/when it happens.

Acknowledge that it is not an issue, unless it persists.

Anxiety about performing is perfectly normal. Take away the focus on performance.

Remind yourself to focus on her, not yourself. Focusing on yourself can make you hyper aware and self-conscious.

Define sex more broadly-remember that you have kissing, touching, caressing etc available to you. Have a plan b if/when it happens. It is about pleasure and connection and spirituality, not just ejaculation. Your penis is not what “makes love” when you are making love.

​Stop having sex be about ejaculation and more about connection

Hint: These are great reminders even if there is not Erectile Dysfunction!

**What Is Worth It?**

What is worth doing? How shall we spend our time, invest our life energy?

“... the process of discovering what is truly fulfilling, liberating and meaningful in life

“... giving up those things which lead to bondage and pain.

“Under the influence of sentimental attachment, people want to feel like they “belong to each other”…this feeling can escalate into “ownership”. Oftentimes people enter into relationships to satisfy their own desires. The desires can never be quenched by indulging in the pleasures of the world. (Key concept in Ashby’s writing)

Pleasure feels good, it is not the end goal, though. Be in the moment and let pleasure teach you something important. If you are pursuing pleasure, know that you cannot grasp it or keep it and be happy.

“The desires of your mind and body cannot be satisfied through objects, people and wealth. Ordinary married people engage in competition to see who can get more out of a relationship. Others may feel the need to be selfless but will still expect something in return. “I did this and you’ve done nothing.” Ashby

ExERCISE: Sometimes we look at the relationship and see how the other person can be useful or helpful. Look at your relationship and be honest about whether or not you are using the other. (Transactional instead of developing a true relationship)

“She might hold sex as an incentive for getting him to do what she desires. If he does not submit to her, she may curse him with her weapons of angry words, and hurtful humiliating remarks. He may bring flowers, candy and expect to have sex only to find she was not in the mood or that she’s punishing him for something he did that she did not appreciate. Unable to handle his ego with emotions and desires there is frustration and anger which will eventually turn into hatred. She will eventually lose respect for him and develop disgust with the relationship.” (Most of this section is from Ashby)

EXERCISE: “Frustration and misunderstanding engenders a desire to look elsewhere for satisfaction. Are you getting relationship needs met outside your relationship? Are you asking your partner to help you meet these?

“If they stay together, as time goes on, when the sexual attraction wears off, there will be disgust and regret because they “wasted time.”” Ashby

Communication will not fix everything, it is necessary, though.

**Lose Yourself, Your Ego**

Ecstasy is our natural state, let it arise by remaining relaxed.

If you can prepare to do this in the every day moments, watch what happens during sex. Allow yourself to be obliterated, allow the infinite to express itself.

“In the beginning, the ecstasy will come in waves and will subside as it pleases. You will feel moments of intense communion and others that resemble oblivion. But when even the smallest trace of the infinite is allowed into the consciousness, it cannot keep from totally emerging. The essential thing is to not chase after ecstasy. It arises naturally if your presence in the world remains relaxed, without goals and constraints, free, open and light. Let the divine come and go as it pleases, it becomes familiar. Let things be...” Odier

EXERCISE: Let go of performing, of what the ego is telling you. You can actually feel incredible pleasure without ejaculating. Don’t focus on ejaculation, because that isn’t the highest goal here. If you are interested, learn how to circulate the energy within yourself first. Look up “microcosmic orbit” Then learn how to circulate the energy with your partner. It becomes effortless and flows naturally, if we can get out of our own way.

Have you tried doing the exercises on a regular basis (The Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand) yet? Are you practicing this particular one 10-20 times before it becomes comfortable during sex? It is time to get the book, and read it, if you have not already done so. Here is an exercise to practice for tantra to flow: Shooting to the Crown Together

**Find Beauty Everywhere and Point it Out**

Try to find the beauty in everything today and say thank you, every time you experience beauty. Accept and love yourself without putting conditions on it, resist nothing. Life attracts life and you feel the ecstasy of connection.

Watch what that does to your mood.

Odier says, “...ecstasy is the natural human state, and the obstacles we create to ecstasy are part of a dictatorial state our thought makes us live in. Ecstasy is simpler than suffering. It smells good. It is present throughout. It is with us always. There is nothing to do and nothing to look for. It’s enough to stay totally open and let things occur without worrying about changing their nature. By our being really present, continuously present, all reality becomes a source of joy and happiness.”

So live in the moment and don’t resist the experience or the adventure in front of you. Allow the energy to move through you and watch how much more ecstasy you experience, when you don’t resist the natural flow of life.

“We are here simply to know ourselves, to accept ourselves unconditionally, and to love ourselves without making judgment on what we do or think. All our energy is precious, we dismiss nothing.” Odier

EXERCISE: Just for today, live in the moment and don’t force anything and please don’t take things personally. When we take things personally, that means you forgot who you are (At the deepest level you are consciousness, not a separate discrete person and people keep forgetting who they are.).

EXERCISE: Hip stretch- feet shoulder width apart, standing up, do a deep squat so that your bottom is close to the floor. You should feel a stretch in your hips, so do it slowly. The goal is to loosen up, not hurt yourself. Repeat this stretch a few times

**Love Your Lover**

Oral sex- There are how to or instructional videos for people who want better technique.

There is room for improvement and there are no really great ways to have that particular conversation. Bragging about your sexual prowess is similar to the salesperson who over promises and under delivers. Be humble and ask what they want/need/ prefer and be open to improving your technique. Be aware that men and women like different things at different times and even if you were just sexual, it might be different now.

There are cards, articles, books etc for the technique part. What most people talk about is “Don’t approach it as a task or a chore.”

If you are going to ruin it with attitude, don’t do it. Ask them what they want and explore, get creative. You want your partner to feel good and look forward to being with you and to desire you, right?

Talk about what you like in terms of duration of oral pleasuring, what you prefer with position, variety, changing positions, be creative, duration, humming, eye contact, smell, temperature, heated washcloth, ice cube, strength of suction, speed, intensity, hands, no hands, kissing afterwards, intercourse before oral, after etc.

People are terrible at mind reading. Don’t bait and switch, apparently a common complaint. Don’t agree and make it seem like you enjoy oral sex just to “get” the person and then once you’re securely together, stop doing it. That’s not fair.

Hygiene is vital. Shower and wash (with soap) before doing this as a matter of respect to your partner.

There are smells that can be a big turn off and reduce the likelihood of it happening in the future. Yes, Pineapple works for smell and taste and asparagus negatively affects taste and smell. There are articles you can search for these hints.

If you don’t want to do it at all, be upfront with that and why.

**Be Awake**

The idea is to bond, to connect, to build energy and then transcend. You need a body for that process and go ahead and use all the five senses. Wake up the body, the whole thing. Get to know you partner and what type of touch they like, sounds, smells, tastes and sights.

​FIVE SENSES EXERCISES:
How can I arouse each of the five senses?

What happens if I put in ear plugs? Do the other senses heighten?

How do I build trust in conversation prior to doing this during sex?

Same with blindfold.

Make sure you have talked about it and agreed/consented to the sexual behaviors. This is not a time to spring a fetish on your partner or try something he/she might consider “risky”- be super considerate when you are asking them to surrender one of their senses, even temporarily.

Talk about how much time you want to spend doing this and realize that people do not estimate time accurately, so be open to a feedback loop. Literally ask, “How are we doing? Is it okay to keep going?”

 If it is going to be a long time, talk about types of lubricant and the need increases as the time increases.

Talk about positions. Kama sutra has plenty of suggestions. With age, some positions are not as easy to do. If there is any challenge with erectile dysfunction, you definitely want to negotiate positions prior to being intimate.

Remember this is the responsibility of both parties. If one person has the total responsibility for sex, most couples find that a bad long term strategy. The person who does more work often gets resentful later on. Find a way to share the load.

**Sex Drive**

I hear people say the equivalent of “You are not me, therefore you are wrong” every day for decades, in my office. There is usually resentment and hurt underneath that statement. Each of you has a different sex drive and it changes as we age, it changes as our hormones fluctuate, as we eat or drink alcohol or as we get enough sleep.

It is in a state of flux, but this is what we are asking:
“Will you let me love you?”
“I would love to connect with you tonight. I miss making love and feeling so close to you. I could really go for some naked cuddling and follow the connection wherever it goes.”
“What time this weekend would be good for you for us to physically connect?”
“What would it take for us to be intimate this weekend?”

Many times one of the couple will keep asking for sex, every day because they have not been sexual in awhile and they are afraid of not asking. They don’t really know when the other person is available and then they stop asking because they believe they were rejected, rather than that the timing was rejected.

Talk about the frequency and duration, the sex drive and what increases the likelihood of being sexual.

A big mistake I see is not knowing the other person’s signals. If she shaves her legs… Chances are really good tonight. If her bra and panties match… If she is touching you a lot and hugging you and kissing you… Okay, so here’s the thing. Everyone has a “Tell” or signals that they use. Some people want you to guess their signals because they feel self-conscious about it or they use the silly excuse “if you really loved me, I wouldn’t have to tell you”- so if you are psychic, you get sex.

Nope, that is pure silliness. Imagine the third base coach in baseball having signals but the person receiving the signals doesn’t know what the signals are- communication fails.

Tell your partner what your signals are and take the guesswork out. If you change signals for any reason, tell your partner. No guess work- you are on the same team.

EXERCISE: So if there is such a difference between desire and arousal processes for the average man and woman, is that worth at least a couple conversations over the course of the relationship? Can you accept that it is not personal and needs to be discussed? Be open and honest with your partner. Reminder that this changes over time and needs to be talked about as you age, as you are ill, when the kids are around, when the kids are not around, holidays, vacations etc.

In addition to sending signals that they are receptive, are you sending signals that you want them, respect them and are not just after them for sex?

Are you sending signals that you are desirable and they are desirable or are you signaling weakness and that they have to be the adult and they see you as a child?

Are you sending signals that you like or dislike them?

“I refuse to have sex with my husband unless he can be kind to me five days in a row. It has been 6 months now. I told him that and he cannot manage to be kind five days in a row. Why would I want to be intimate with someone like that?” a woman told me in my office.

In marketing they talk about sending a message about the brand. You are your brand and you are always sending a message. In the past few days you challenged this, right?

Is your message (consistently) that you are strong and capable, ambitious and protective? Exaggerate this or do what counselors call “opposite action.”

Is your message, “please ignore me” or do you demonstrate value?

Play with how to get attention, keep attention and not come off as desperate or attention seeking. This helps you with personal development, bonding and being more sexual.

**What Turns You On?**

Think about the movie stars who exude sexuality and confidence. I can think of a few actresses that are so feminine, it awakens the masculine in pretty much everyone who watches. If you are unsure what I mean, watch a movie with a superstar and you will almost always feel their sexual energy, their charisma, their animal magnetism. They are in touch with their sexuality. They come off as authentic, genuine and are present. There is something captivating about them. They are physically attractive usually, but it is more than that. Confident and charismatic, they hold themselves, their energy, their bodies differently…

They evoke a response.

 EXERCISE : Practice having a presence. In acting, they talk about a stage presence.

When you walk, do you walk with your head in the lead? Your chest or stomach? Your hips or butt? Your legs? Practice each of these

Practice 10 steps with each of the above. Feel into the physical sensation and emotion of each.

Now, what way do you want to walk? It might be different according to the situation- going up to your partner for a passionate kiss, going down a dark alley, walking into a bar, family reunion, boss’ office, sport etc Are you being real, authentic in how you hold yourself? Does it work for you? Do you need to practice posture or walking or do you need to boost your confidence? Consider other ways they have a presence and evoke a response,

​Take a day off and just be aware, without changing anything you do. Just notice what you do and the impact it has on others. How are you influencing them? You have an impact one way or another.

**365 Naughty Nights**
Cosmopolitan put out a card deck

There are creative ways to bond with your partner and most are very respectful. Let’s face it, many couples get bored sexually and need some outside help to break out of a rut.

New positions, new ideas and thoughts might stimulate their thinking to be more creative and have better conversations about what they like and prefer and prompt them to be more self aware and to take more responsibility for what they want from life in general, not just sexually.

It can really awaken people.

I have also had quite a few couples talk about not knowing what to do during sex, except missionary position. While I suggest talking about it, some people have blocked their sexual creativity and will not allow themselves to think about different ways.

They feel naughty or perverted and a few have asked if they were addicted. Nope, these were people that thought about sex like most people do, they just never had anyone normalize it for them.

These cards have very specific instructions for a much more stimulating sexual encounter. Pick one or two cards from the deck and talk about them.

Or go through the deck and pick out each one that you would not be willing to do, a pile of maybe and a pile of definitely yes. Share each pile with your partner and be prepared to get aroused just talking about it.

Tell your partner what you are going to do with her when the time comes. “Saturday night, we’re going to do that card you picked out. Let’s make sure you are well rested and have a back-up babysitter. I am going to spoil you.”

Many couples then talk about it afterwards. “I really enjoyed this and this and would like to that again. Thank you for spoiling me. I think I would be okay with the other thing we did if we changed this one little aspect.” Or “I really thought I would like the card I picked but I found myself super self-conscious about it. I would be willing to try that again to push my comfort zone, but maybe with a candle instead of during the day time light.”

Caution: Usually the person who has a higher sex drive ends up being the person planning it more. Just because you are not in the mood right now, does not mean that you will not be in the mood later on.

Communicate this to the person and encourage them to get you in the mood with a certain card. If the responsibility is consistently on one person, that is not fair and usually does bring some hurt, some resentment and wanting to feel desired by the partner.

You are both in a romantic/sexual relationship and you are both responsible for your sex life. Do not expect one person to do all the heavy lifting.

There is another book called 101 Nights of Great Sex (Grrreat Sex) by Laura Corn which again has multiple suggestions for mixing it up. Ask your partner if they want a surprise and know what the no pile includes and set the mood all week, then spice it up that day. It really makes your partner feel good knowing that you want to please them, that you want them to feel good, that you want them, desire them, are attracted to them, that you love them and then you follow through.

**She Doesn’t Want It As Much as I Do**

While that is more common, it can also be the man who doesn’t want it as much.

Talk about it, talk about it. What is it you are looking for?

How much is enough?

What makes it more likely that we both get a win-win? How can you say no without feeling rejected? What is the role of charity sex? Do you still have sex when you are not in the mood? Talk about it.

Talk about desire for each partner and what helps each one.

Do the same exercise for arousal. You might not be in the mood, but now you are aroused because you were cuddling or kissing or rubbing the back or finally relaxed or watched a great movie…

John Gray wrote a few books about Mars and Venus and the one about Mars and Venus in the Bedroom talked about how it takes women longer to warm up to the idea of having sex.

Many people have suggested he is correct and that men think women are “just ready to go.” Not all men are “ready to go” at any time, either.

Imagine having a really stressful day at work, being exhausted and maybe in pain and then being asked about sex. How long would it take you to change gears? Compare notes with your partner. What would you need to change gears faster?

Testosterone fuels the sex drive in both genders and it has been reported that in the morning, the amount of testosterone is much higher for men. Consider that in your equation. Consider also that when you rest during the day, “doing nothing”, that your body is producing testosterone.

One study a few years back reported that when the level of testosterone is higher in women, they are more active sexually, want it more and are aroused faster. They feel better, lose weight faster and had higher incomes...and had more difficulty in love relationships. So don’t take it personally, a hormone is a powerful thing. Breast feeding and the monthly cycle also affects the sex drive.

How do you help someone get in the mood? How do you get yourself in the mood? Have those conversations.

Remember that each of you has a role to play by being ready. Plan a night each week and be ready. Take responsibility for being in the mood and don’t bail out, unless there is a legit reason.

EXERCISE: Audio/Music Exercise:
Set up a playlist now. Some people like it varied - to stay in moment. Talk about what they would like or prefer. Some people have music they just hate or music that distracts them or reminds them of something they would rather not think about during sex. Make sure the music adds to the experience.

I had a list of at least 100 other sensory objects that you could use and decided to suggest that you just explore with each other. Nothing is off limits as far as bringing you closer to feeling connected. Just talk about it first. Integration of everything is Tantra. Every experience whether you judge it or not, can bring you to wholeness and fullness.

Don’t take anything personally, it is all here for you to learn, that’s all.

Go for what makes you , you...What turns you on and what opens you up. Be you, boldly and loudly, take up space and allow the part of you that you forced to play it small, play it safe, to emerge - if you really want this, prove it.

Have you tried doing the exercises on a regular basis (The Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand) yet? Are you practicing this particular one 10-20 times before it becomes comfortable during sex? It is time to get the book, and read it, if you have not already done so. Here is an exercise that you to practice for your tantra to flow well: Shooting to the Crown Together

**Acceptance**

If you would like to be miserable, please wish for things to be different than they are. Things are as they are, accept it. Once you have accepted it, watch how your mood shifts.

I didn’t say “unconditionally surrender or give up,” just accept. Play with the difference in your world. Live life on life’s terms. “It shouldn’t be that way,” is a phrase that often accompanies misery. Be fully present in the moment. Women love when their man has a presence, not being distracted or multi-tasking with the phone while watching the game. Not sure about this? Ask your partner.

How might this play out sexually?

“The masculine error is to live life as if it is going somewhere fundamentally different from this moment. It is not.

“Life in this moment is as deeply fulfilling, blissful and free as you are willing to be, right now and the same is true of every moment. Your capacity to relax as the openness of the moment does change over time - the things you do in your life never amount to a fundamental change in how fulfilled or free you are in any particular moment. You will not be satisfied as long as you are waiting to be satisfied!

“Don’t postpone your full presence and the deepest giving of your gift for a future moment -that is intolerable to the feminine! Death forces you to be present in this moment.” Deida

Have you tried doing the exercises on a regular basis (The Art of Sexual Ecstasy by Margo Anand) yet? Are you practicing this particular one 10-20 times before it becomes comfortable during sex? It is time to get the book, and read it, if you have not already done so. Here are exercises to practice: The Streaming Process and Shaking Loose

**Emotional Affair**
I hear about this at least once a week and still some people act as if it is not real. Let’s dig into it.

I define an emotional affair as “getting romantic emotional needs met outside the relationship.” Maybe they’re sneaking and hiding the communication or meeting or lying by omission.

What might this look like? Turning the phone when I walk in the room. Not telling me about a meeting or a lunch or happy hour. Going out to a bar and drinking with other men and I’m not there. Talking about our relationship troubles with other men.

I want people to know that emotional affairs exist, because some people have a blind spot. From sending/receiving inappropriate pictures to flirting that crosses a line. Discuss with your partner where the line is for you.

Apparently, many couples are okay with some behavior that would make other couples cringe. (Side note: I have worked with polyamorous couples and have counseled multiple members of the local BDSM community who brought me up to speed with my knowledge base.)

The idea about cheating implies that there are rules or understandings or a contract and you’ve broken the rules; thus “cheating.”

How do you know if you are crossing a line?

Sometimes they say that an affair didn’t happen because they didn’t have sex -they weren’t physical. We know that’s not true, that you can still put the relationship in jeopardy without having sex or being physical. Ask your partner and do a self-inventory.

Good self-inventory:
Would you do this behavior in front of your spouse/partner?

Would you be proud of yourself if your partner knew what you were doing?

What is good about what you did?
What do you do to actively protect the relationship?

What barriers do you use to ensure you don’t put yourself in a compromising situation?

Have you practiced what you might say or do if the temptation happens?

“I know it could happen, therefore I am prepared,” is much more reassuring than, “I would never do that.” If you think it would never happen, you are much less prepared when the situation arises. If you think it could happen, you have an opportunity to prepare a response.

Me, personally, I don’t want to have an affair. How can I increase my odds of not having an affair:
I don’t make great eye contact with women except my partner. I don’t talk to women for more than 5 minutes about anything but work- not let guard down. Never talk about the woman I’m dating- to another woman in negative terms. Not have women in my office unless a client. Tell her who I’m communicating with, so she doesn’t have to ask/guess. Talk about any/all threats openly. No happy hours or bar alone or even with partner. Reassurance is key. Be self-aware and own the human condition and how anyone can cheat. Make it hard to cheat. Not check women out AND linger. Not touch. Transparency is huge.
​

**You Are Responsible For Your Feelings**

Don’t wait on someone else to make you happy. If you are not happy, it is your responsibility to shift that. “My partner doesn’t make me happy,” is a true statement. Never has and never will. That is not a realistic expectation and it is your job.

If you want to be happy, try serving others and volunteering, then try living according to your purpose and then work on finding beauty and gratitude in absolutely everything (living in the moment). When you do these things, the byproduct is happiness. Be conscious and aware in each moment. Try it and feel better.

“Devotion to divine love does not eliminate the pleasures and pains of relationships. You simply no longer depend on relationships to give you what you already are: blissfulness surrendered as radiant love.

“You can either give yourself to a man or you can be your own woman!

“I need to be this love, spread wide and large, and in harmony with all, beyond all, or I suffer. The tension of ignoring this vast truth is unbearable.

“Consciousness is another word for love, the open space of existence, the cognizant radiance of being, in which all things shimmer, including your body. The only way your woman is truly fed by your consciousness is through your body.

“Because they identify with light and energy, most women want to be seen as beautiful and felt as love. Your woman probably wants to be worshiped, adored, and desired as the main attraction in your life, just as you probably want your woman to treat you like God.

“Women confuse their fullness in radiant love with their personal worth just as men confuse their fullness of consciousness with their sexual prowess and success in the world altogether.” Deida

This reading was heavy- go back and re-read this. Ask your partner what they want from you and ask them if the reading resonates with them.

**How Do You Set up Your Relationship to Fail?**
​
Please note, this list is not exhaustive. These are the most common ones. This is not a challenge or a dare to come up with more creative ways to destroy your relationship.

The goal here is to protect my ego and my feelings

1 I will never give benefit of the doubt to anyone. I will always assume the worst about my partner.

2 My default will be that I am unsafe, under attack and my partner is trying to hurt me.

3 I will be sure not to express my appreciation and gratitude. Guaranteeing my partner does not feel stronger in a power struggle.

4 I will express fondness and be affectionate only to get what I want and I will always anticipate the same from my partner.

5 I will talk poorly about my partner to my family and friends and either downplay or omit my contributions and responsibility to any negative situation.

6 Rather than directly say “ouch that hurts” -I will make my partner hurt so they feel my pain as intensely as I feel it.

7 I will hide and avoid self-disclosure and then I will hold a grudge that my partner does not know me.

8 I will avoid necessary conflict and instead I will withdraw.

9 I will speak in a condescending tone while criticizing my partner and then feign surprise when my partner gets defensive.

10 I will tell them how unlovable they are.

11 Because of my fear that my partner will not love me if they actually did know me, when my partner reaches out for comfort, support or just to connect, I will push them away, runaway, fight, hide or ignore them.

12 I will make sure I get my needs met first, because, well you never know... if my partner has needs I will call them “ridiculous” or “needy”

13 I will withhold sex and affection and comfort when they really want to feel loved. When they are telling me how important it is, I will make them beg for what they need. I will only miserly let them have what I think they should have. I will not listen and support them and I won’t show them that I value the relationship- in a way that they understand.

14 I will humiliate them when possible.

15 I will accuse and criticize when I start almost any conversation.

16 I will blame them for everything wrong.

17 I will refuse to improve the relationship by reading, watching YouTube going to counseling.

18 I will have fun with my friends but not with my partner.

19 I will have other people that I can go to if this relationship doesn’t work out. I will have reservations.

20 I will make sure my partner knows that I’m not investing in this relationship. I don’t think it is worth investing -whenever I see them not investing.

21 I will always have 1 foot out the door.

22 I will threaten divorce as often as I can.

23 I don’t know how to say that I hurt. I will blame you and be mean to you rather than tell you that I’m hurting inside. I would like for you to translate that in your head and know that I am hurting without having to be vulnerable and tell you that directly.

**I Am One**

There is the illusion of separateness. When you have a unitive experience, you cannot un-experience it and it changes your life. That is tantra.

What does it mean we are not separate, but that we are connected, as water droplets within the ocean are not separate but connected? If you fully understood that, would that make a difference in how you lived the life you were given?

What does the author mean below by “true love”?

“Tantra -recognition that there is no separateness in the universe. It is an understanding that all parts are inseparably related to the whole of creation. The love which most people experience for loved ones exclusively, is a contradiction to the Tantric movement. True love is universal and unrestricted. Even though certain things can be loved by you, true love cannot be reserved for a certain person, family, country or planet alone. It is an understanding that the entire universe is an expression of the divine and as such, it is all worthy of love. Thus the true expression of love is through service to others in order to promote peace, understanding, harmony.

“True love requires the sacrifice of the lesser expressions of love in order to experience the boundless source of love which is the very nature of the divine, just as the sun shines on all alike. The soul must evolve to discover an all-encompassing love for the entire universe -this is the kind of love which God has for all creation.

“…when this state of awareness is reached by a human being, there’s a transformation which occurs in the human heart. The individual becomes one with all…All creation is part of a whole and in reality there are no opposites, no separations and no differences. Everything is connected and the outward appearances are only illusions of the senses. Discover the inner -most reality of the universe and the human heart…Do not be deluded by the outward appearances. Discover inner peace and contentment wherever you are and under any conditions.” Ashby

That is worth reading one more time. If you can comprehend this, you have gained so much and can share your wisdom with all.

**When We Run Into Differences**

In a relationship, we look first for similarities. What do we have in common? This familiarity helps with the anxiety and comfort of a relationship.

One day, we realize that we are not clones and the difference might not feel welcome.

Do we allow the other to be different or do we think there is a relationship problem?

Do we break up or deal with the fact that we are two distinct individuals and are allowed to have different perspectives and ways of dealing with the world?

Differences help us.

We run into developmental stages in every single relationship. We negotiate it differently if we know this is part of growing and developing instead of defining it as a “problem.”

Differences are made so critically important due to this Neocortex- Emotional stimulation is often a more powerful determinant of genital function and satisfaction than is touch.

​We give meaning to sex- how you feel about your sensations has a bigger impact on overall arousal.
The ways in which we connect emotionally, and the ways we value emotions become more important than the ways we actually physically touch one another. Horniness and reduction of sexual tension vs desire for partner; wanting to share something with the partner

**Do You Use People?**

There is so much using and exploitation on many levels because people refuse to question. Does this behavior go along with your core values?

Are your relationships more like transactions?

Do you seek a higher truth and transcend your body?

Are you okay with a little bit of exploitation or do you justify all of it?

How do you transcend your society, your body? Give it thought.

“Life is meaningless without sexuality, fame or wealth” -is a lie.

“It works toward the degradation of society. This kind of life leads to an endless and fruitless search for fulfillment through satisfying selfish desires. In reality, it is a living hell.” Ashby

**Selfless Service to Humanity**

Can you imagine if we all did this on a regular basis and cut our own ego out of the equation?

Can you imagine if we really understood why we were here?

“The cure for the human condition of ignorance is spiritual knowledge and spiritual practice- selfless service to humanity.” Ashby

“Once discovered, the essence within is perfect in consciousness. Spiritual maturity and peace and increasing understanding, tolerance and forgiveness of others mistakes, wrongdoing, and sinful behavior.” Ashby

“True love means joining with the soul of all that exists, it’s true essence, to become one with the self which is at the heart of all. This is the highest expression of sexuality -the search for happiness drives people to repeat negative relationships with others as well as a failed search to acquire material wealth in order to feel happy.” Ashby

You were lied to by your society.

Contemplate that for a moment.

You cannot be happy if you follow your society’s recipe for happiness.

Follow the rules of your society and you will find empty promises.

Please, think for yourself.

Question what you were taught.

**I’m a Stickler for Clarifying**

Someone asked me why I clarify so much, my reply was fairly straightforward, “When someone’s behavior does not match what they say, I get confused.”

For example, “I’d like to spend more time with you.” To me that means the person is going to carve out time to spend. As a counselor, I often ask couples to clarify what the person meant by their statement. I am someone who takes words literally.

If someone were to tell me they wanted to spend more time with me, I would expect them to spend more time with me. The difficulty is that they do want to spend more time, they didn’t say they’re going to make more time. That assumption was mine and that’s why I clarify, to tease out the nuance. To understand what was said versus what was meant…

When someone tells me that they want to have sacred sex, my assumption is that they know that it is some work, not instant gratification. That’s when I clarify what they want. It is often not the case that they are ready for something that deep.

When someone says that they value their partner, in my office, and then are verbally aggressive to them, I ask them to clarify. In my world, being verbally aggressive is not something that you do to somebody that you value. Asserting yourself is fine, aggression signals the opposite of value, to me. When two simultaneous and mutually exclusive messages are sent, I am not sure which one to take seriously.

As a couples counselor, I hear this repeatedly,
“I really value you and this relationship,” and it doesn’t make sense that this behavior comes next- I’m going to have an emotional affair and hide my behavior from you. I clarify and ask people what they mean, realizing that they don’t match up in my head.

I have been informed that I annoy people by asking them to say what they mean, to be verbally precise and to mean what they say. Speaking with integrity and verbal precision takes away the guesswork in relationships at work and at home.

Yes, that means you have to think before you speak and the person communicating has the responsibility to get their point across to the specific audience.

I have had people complain that they have to think before they speak around me, as if considering the audience before speaking was an imposition. I had never considered that to be a burden. If someone wants to get their message across, it is incumbent on them to deliver a message in a way the person can hear. At least that is how I look at it.

“I think you’re amazing,” is nice for the wife to say, but to follow it with this series of actions- so I’m going to put this at so much risk it can’t ever work. When the partner asks for clarification and is confused by the disconnect between words and actions, he received, “I hear you protest and I cannot stand having to watch every word around you. I don’t like feeling judged. I am walking on eggshells.”

Notice the emphasis on being wrong about clarifying, not about the words and actions of the person not matching. Not on the person who is doing things that put the relationship in jeopardy…

Another point to consider-If you see something dangerous to the relationship and point it out, is that being judgmental or protective?

**Protect My Relationship**

You have a good relationship and want to protect it because you value it. That is what we do with things and people we value. The how becomes very important.

Relationships are incredibly challenging, why not put the odds in your favor?

What ways do you protect the relationship? Your partner?

Can you imagine a way to do an inventory or risk assessment, to see how vulnerable your relationship is to outside forces?

What ways does your behavior make the relationship more vulnerable?

Is the foundation strong enough to build upon?

In what ways are you signaling to your partner that it is okay to cheat, that it is not that important
to you, that you are not really invested?

In what ways are you letting them know that this is not a valuable relationship?

Consider talking with your partner about what reassurance you need, what facts you need, how much freedom and alone time you need, what you need in terms of fidelity, jealousy, anxiety and letting other people into the important areas of your relationship.

When people feel safe in the relationship, feel reassured, they are more likely to take good healthy risks and go outside their comfort zone.

**Want Specific Ideas to Discuss With Your Beloved?**

Try the Gottman deck of cards

Talk about how and where are you most like to be touched just for receiving affection, not sex.

While both of you are naked, one of you stand behind the other and make love in front of a mirror.

Describe what you love about your partners face.

Surprise your partner with a small gift.

Unplug your phone for an evening and just talk to one another. Understanding must precede advice be a good listener.

Tell your partner what you appreciate. Sincere compliments only.

Together, choose a new position and talk about it after.

Or slightly spicier
From Cosmopolitan- “365 Naughty Nights”

Lick her from the back of her neck just where her hairline starts, to her tailbone. There are tons of nerve endings all along the trail.

Lie with your head at the foot of the bed and have him get on top. Then put up your feet, flat against the wall or the bedframe, so you can thrust back.

Get into missionary position, and lift your butt up and down in sync with his thrusts.

Take a shower with her, and pat her entire body dry, lingering on her breasts, between her legs, and on her butt.

Massage each other’s butts, which are packed with nerves.

Have her put her hair in a ponytail, and gently yank it while doing her from behind. Ask her first.

Pineapple makes you taste super sweet down below.

Hold his face right in front of yours both with eyes open, so he can watch your face scrunch up as you climax.

His face down on the bed, rub your nipples all over his neck, back, butt, and thighs.

Most importantly, talk about whether it made you feel connected. Talk about your sex life with your partner if you want to feel more connected. Talk about it before you do anything different and see if your partner would want to do the thing you are thinking. Respect and honor the “no” and get to know one another better.

**Do You Love Their Soul or Their Body or Both?**
EX: Please spend some time contemplating-What is unconditional love and what place does it have in relationships? What is the object of my love? What is their true essence?

“True love is unconditional. This does not mean that people should not be told when they are acting improperly. What someone does, says or feels is external. If these affect the feeling of love than it is in reality not love at all. A true relationship is one which is growing beyond the externality and is discovering the deeper essence of the soul within the other person, the soul which is a reflection of the divine. The soul within one’s partner or loved one should be the true object of love. That is the true essence of the person. It does not demand or expect anything from you but is ready to open up to all.” Ashby

How are you making the world a better place?

That’s why we are here and that is what sets the stage for happiness. When you realize we are all connected, that we are more than our body, things will start to change for you. You are the observer. Watch what happens for your love when you identify with your consciousness instead of your body.

When used improperly, sexual energy destroys the physical constitution by depletion of vitality, willpower, reasoning ability and ability to experience a true mental peace. It leaves you longing for more and pursuing pleasure. None of these can be maintained -why not look for a deeper more stable essence in life foundation? You’ve learned to feel desire for certain objects, relationships and situations as well as disgust towards others. In and of themselves, the relationships, the objects in situations of life have no value except that what you have placed upon them  (no independent origination) forms are an expression of nature which in themselves have no reality. (There is no independent origination. ) …Desire is based on the conditioned response to form, as well as the mental association of that form with an idea of pleasure that form will bring.” Ashby

**Alignment With the Divine**

EXER: Are you in line with your highest good, the divine will? If my will is not the same as the divine will, chances are really good that I won’t get my way. Why not line it up with the divine and win more? Degrading and exploiting others will never satisfy you long term.

“When your action is in line with the divine will there are boundless positive resources and energy is available. The very purest form of sexual energy. Sexual energy is the source of all forms of action. It impels all life to move, grow and develop. The question is -is the movement toward progress and positive development or toward degradation and deevolution?” Ashby

EX: Think about ways you have been sexual and whether you liked how you felt or not. How deeply do you want to connect with yourself and your partner?

**Do You Want to Be Successful?**

​Channel your energy. When you wake up and you have too much energy, how do you observer, interact with, engage and manage or channel the extra? Have you ever felt anxious or even hyper? How did you channel that energy? That channeling really helps when it comes to tantra.

EX: Ask yourself the following, and answer honestly: Are you in control or are your desires? (When you find a higher good, you keep that.) That sounds like answering no is addiction, doesn’t it?

“One who is dominated by passion and sexual desire cannot aspire to great accomplishments in the relative world and is caught in the mire of nature’s Temptations and the pursuit of worldly pleasures -channel your sexual energy. The above leads to immaturity and weakness. We tenaciously and actively go after and hold onto whatever we perceive will bring the most pleasure and satisfaction -that’s why people don’t give up their vices. …it’s a very important secret-when the human mind discovers a higher form of satisfaction or happiness- it begins to leave the lower one behind, in favor of the higher one. ” Ashby

Tantra offers you a higher form of satisfaction with life and with sex. If you want to have a more satisfying experience, you will learn how to channel energy and make sure you are capable of generating sexual energy and excitement safely.

**The Soul is Androgynous**

Souls are not gendered, silly.

Atoms have no gender, but they have the capacity to express gender depending on how they are arranged. What if we looked at ourselves as having everything within- male and female and give ourselves permission to just be who we are at any given time. Stop the focus on whether this is more masculine or feminine and “just be.” Less self-focus and more caring and freedom, please.

“When consciousness tends toward femaleness or maleness there’s never peace because the soul is innately androgynous…most people do not even want to consider these questions :

Is there nothing more?

What is the nature of human existence?

Is this all there is?

When the desire for personal satisfaction is foremost in a relationship, one’s own gratification is paramount. When there is selflessness in a relationship, there can be true caring, peace and freedom.” Ashby

Exercise: Can you think beyond your body? First you have to develop your body and your mind, the discipline required to transcend

…
Have you gotten to the point of 10 kegels a day a couple to three times a day on a regular basis? This exercise will strengthen your pelvic floor, which helps during sex. Remember to keep breathing (no holding your breath) and no pushing with thighs, buttocks or even your stomach. If you dribble after urination or are sometimes incontinent, this can really help.

**I Could Not Help Myself,” And Other Lies We Tell Ourselves**

You always have a choice. Please take responsibility and avoid the victim role. It is not becoming. There is nature and nurture. You are not a slave to your impulses, you have choice. Tame your mind or it will be overpowered at times. Resist urges that you do not really want to follow. Otherwise you are giving in to your lower self.

When you have challenges in your life, are you able to stand up to the challenges and even if you get knocked down, can you get back up?

“A weak willed person is controlled by their ego, their desires, feelings and emotions rather than being in control of them and managing them …Nature has implanted an innate need to unite, to procreate. All things seek their mates in nature -it is in the polarity of males and females that the attractive force can be seen most prominently. For the person who has not understood this teaching, there’s no escaping the force of nature. Transcend your Impulses, expand your consciousness- that is the source of rich human spirituality, arts and social advancement of humanity. You must understand that sexual attraction is based on mental delusion due to the mind’s being overpowered by the desires of the body and ignorance of the greater truth…the force of passion compels us to want to search for ways to fulfill desires and the weakened mind which arises from living a life of distractions, due to giving way to emotions and feelings…human being incapable of resisting the urge is of the lower nature, the lower self and controls a human being.” Ashby

EX: Do you want to be at peace and stop searching and grasping so much?
Are you looking for your own satisfaction and instant gratification?
Do you want more than that?

**Do You Really Understand the Purpose of Sex?**

Are you someone who thinks for themselves and asks questions?
Are you someone who just believes, without independently verifying what people say?

EX: Consider a different view of sexuality and include complementarity within and between people. Each atom is asexual. Think about the implications of that. In tantra, we use everything to transcend and go beyond our limited understanding…

“Please understand the oneness of all- it is this understanding of the oneness of the androgynous nature which underlies male and female human bodies which is at the heart of Tantric philosophy. When this understanding is reached, and integrated in the human heart, it constitutes an expansion from limited consciousness based on a sexual understanding to an awareness of the non-duality, which is the ultimate reality. Sexuality exists as a practical reality of life.” Ashby

Go ahead and re read that. Seriously, that was profound.

“The practitioner of tantra discovers the asexuality of existence as well, thereby expanding in consciousness to encompass all sexuality and androgyny, duality and non-duality. The true identity of the human being is not sexual, not the body, mind, senses or anything which is in the realm of time and space because the realm of time and space is the realm of duality and illusion.” Ashby

Consider re-reading that, please. It was dense as fudge. I re read it line by line and took a few minutes between sentences so that my head would not explode.

If you would like your life to change, to be different, consider what you read and contemplate as a way to help you change.

**Balance Your Relationship With Socialization**

Many men have one or two friends and may be put in a position in which they rely too much on their girlfriend or wife.

Exercise: Make friends and hang out with them as a couple and as an individual.

When the relationship is challenging and the only friend you have is her, it sucks! When she feels the burden of being your only friend, she wonders about your ability to keep a strong connection. Life is about connecting to others (strength), not isolating and work and TV/video games (weakness).

Make new friends wherever you go by being the person people want to hang out with- good stories, care about making them feel good etc. Be playful and not take yourself so darn seriously. Adventure is around every corner.

Are you open to the adventures life hands you? Demonstrate that! Initiate an adventure and be spontaneous.

Do you go for routine and systems and predictability?

Are you enjoying your life and welcoming her into it or do you not have a life and therefore rely on her to give you a life (weakness)? Do you sweep her off her feet and make her wonder? Does she feel good around you? Does she look forward to seeing you and do you look forward to seeing her? Are you just together because you don’t want to be alone? If that is true, deal with that by making more friends and by being a better friend to yourself.

​Challenge: Be spontaneous at least once a day this week.