



Affective Center for Therapy

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EMOTIONAL SEX EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

Sex is a natural behavior. It is not instinctual!

Great sex, good sex, even bad sex is learned behavior. What makes a good lover, both emotionally and physically? Being good at anything requires two things: 1) Knowledgeable instruction and 2) Practice.

Since sex is not instinctual in humans, the instructions you received and from whom you got your instructions can be problematic. If the information you received was slanted or false, your relationships are going to be in for rough times. Some examples of false beliefs are: "Men only want one thing," "Women have to be careful not to hurt the man's ego. You cannot be truthful in the bedroom." "Women want the strong, silent type. You have to dominate them." "Women should act like they do in x-rated videos and films."

The Instructions that you received can be broken down into two sources: What you learned as a child from parents and from school friends. Most of what you learned from parents was indirectly learned by watching your parent's interactions with each other. What did you see? Were they affectionate, touching and kissing each other?

A minister once told me that the best sex education a child could get was, Dad patting Mom on the behind and Mom loving it. Children watch their parents and draw their own conclusions as to what they are observing. Add to these the beliefs that are learned from their school mates, and these conclusions/meanings then become the "truths" that they will live their lives by.

The following is an excerpt from a woman's journal where she shared with me some of the beliefs that she learned.

These are some of the beliefs I had about sex as I was growing into womanhood:

#1. Sex is dirty.

#2. Sometimes Sex does not feel good. (JE. From my molest)

#3. Men want to marry only the good girls.

#4. If you wait until you are married to have sex, then everything will be roses and lollipops.

#5. When you have sex, you and your husband will have an orgasm together (at the very same time) and it will be an amazing explosion.

What was supposed to happen did not happen. Steve tried to be patient with me, but I did not even want to talk about sex. I would go through the motions and once in awhile sex was OK. But for the majority of the time, I could have easily done without it. I had a block and could not make the transition. If only I had a switch that I could turn off the "sex is dirty" and turn on the "sex is OK now that you are married."

Now, if Steve ever reads my story he will like this part. Steve was huge. But that was not good for me, because that huge thing hurt. (I never did understand the "size matters" concept.) I tried to make up for my lack of interest in sex by being Super Wife. I did everything, plus wait on him hand and foot.. I did all the cooking, cleaning, raising of the children, and later I did most the work at our electronics store.

Did you notice the part where she says, "I did not even want to talk about sex"? This breakdown in communication is **the biggest block** to successful emotional and physical intimacy. For most women, good sex is like beer and buttermilk, it is an acquired taste. To acquire the taste requires sharing of your beliefs, what you "learned" and sharing your feelings, what feels good and what does not feel good. All too often, men give to women what they want women to give to them and women respond by treating men the way they want to be treated.

When it comes to sex, men and women do not talk about what is going on emotionally and physically that results in their lack of interest in sex. Sometimes, it is because of shame, guilt or fear of being judged as a "cold fish." The fear that "something is wrong with me" often stops one person or the other and results in shutting down and emotional withdrawing. The result is that honest conversations about what feels good, seldom happen between the sexes.

As a result, both men and women learn to use cover-up words to avoid facing the emotional reality of what they are doing. They say, "We went to bed." Here, going to bed was not the problem. It was what they did/didn't do after they got in bed. Or, you will hear, "We slept together." Same problem here. Another one, "We made love on our first date." And so it goes. Then there are cover-up words that are often given to body parts. There is a politically correct joke that is currently making the rounds: With so many women becoming commercial pilots, it is no longer appropriate to call the flight deck the cockpit. You now must refer to it as "down there."

When a woman looks at her vaginal area, she sees something very different than what a man sees. Nothing turns a man on like a naked female body. Nothing turns off a woman like a naked male body. As a result, men often feel very powerless when it comes to women. There is little that a man can do to turn on a woman, especially if she does not want to be turned on or if she is angry at him. At first, he will usually try all the things she does that turn him on. He may run through the house in his shorts, hanging out a little. But to his surprise and dismay, she responds with "How disgusting, get some clothes on!" Next, he will try to turn her on by getting XXX movies that turn him on. That often does not elicit a lot of excitement on her part.

The other day in Group Therapy, I heard a comment. The woman was sharing about her rape, during which she experienced an orgasm. Her response was, "My body betrayed me." She felt shame, guilt and anger at her body for what it had done to her. In the past, I have heard women who were molested express the same sentiments with the same resulting shame, guilt and anger at their body. "There was part of the molest that felt good and that I liked; at the same time, I knew it was wrong. I should not have liked it."

The question is, "Did your body betray you or was your body doing what it was designed to do?" The only thing that betrayed you were your faulty beliefs.

A number years ago, there was a 26 year old Mormon woman who had been crowned Miss Wyoming, Joyce McKinney. She kidnapped one of the church's young missionary men, Kirk Anderson. She handcuffed him to the bed and proceeded to rape him for three days before he could escape and go to the police. She was later arrested.

In general, what do you suppose the difference would be emotionally and psychologically between a young woman getting raped and the young man getting raped under these same circumstances? Would the young man believe that his body betrayed him? What makes the difference between the man's response and the woman's response? Of course it is what a person believes about what happened, not the event itself. What are the differences in the beliefs of men, of women? Reread excerpt from the journal that the lady wrote, what were her beliefs:

About sex?

About men?

About women?

About the world she lives in?

- ✓ What are your beliefs about these same four areas?
- ✓ Can you be honest with yourself?
- ✓ Is there some part of you that believes that sex is not much fun and you could do without it?
- ✓ Is sex just too much work?
- ✓ Do you feel that you have to compensate for your lack of interest?

For some men and women, they may become workaholics, use drugs or look for sex outside of the relationship. Or, just about anything to keep from talking about sex with their partner. The behavior of not talking about sex usually started before you started dating or had your first sexual encounter with that person. What makes you think talking about sex and doing problem solving would be any easier after you started having sex?

Here are some questions to ask yourself and your intended partner. **Do Not** attempt to discuss these questions the same day or evening that you are going to have sex if you want honest answers. Getting answers to these questions is an opportunity to see if you and your partner really want the same thing and can you both accept delayed gratification.

- What does sex mean to you, to me?
- What are the purposes of sex? (I have a list of 27 purposes of sex.)
- If we choose to have sex, what would be our purpose in having sex?
- When we have sex, what do I want it to mean to you?

- Once we start having sex, how will our relationship change?
- Can we solve differences between us without either of us feeling like we have lost?
- Once we have sex, am I willing to communicate to you what feels good and what does not feel good to me?
- Are you going to get your feelings hurt if I tell you what I do not like about our sex?

Remember: **Sex is a natural behavior. But, it is not instinctual!** Great sex is a learned behavior and it is learned through open, honest and accepting communications.

Finally, what do you do to avoid talking about sex with your mate? If you are not willing to discuss sex with your sexual partner, then your relationship will have other problems in solving issues and conflicts will continue to mount.

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