

## HE COMES NEXT POP QUIZ

SHORT ANSWER—60 POINTS (please provide the answer in essay form)

1. Name the three types of erections that all men experience.

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2. What's the difference between orgasm and ejaculation, and are the two inextricably linked?

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3. What is the best sex toy money can't buy?

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4. Do you know the difference between a "local" orgasm and a "global" orgasm, and how to ensure the latter?

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5. How do you use fantasy to navigate his unique sexual "lovemap"?

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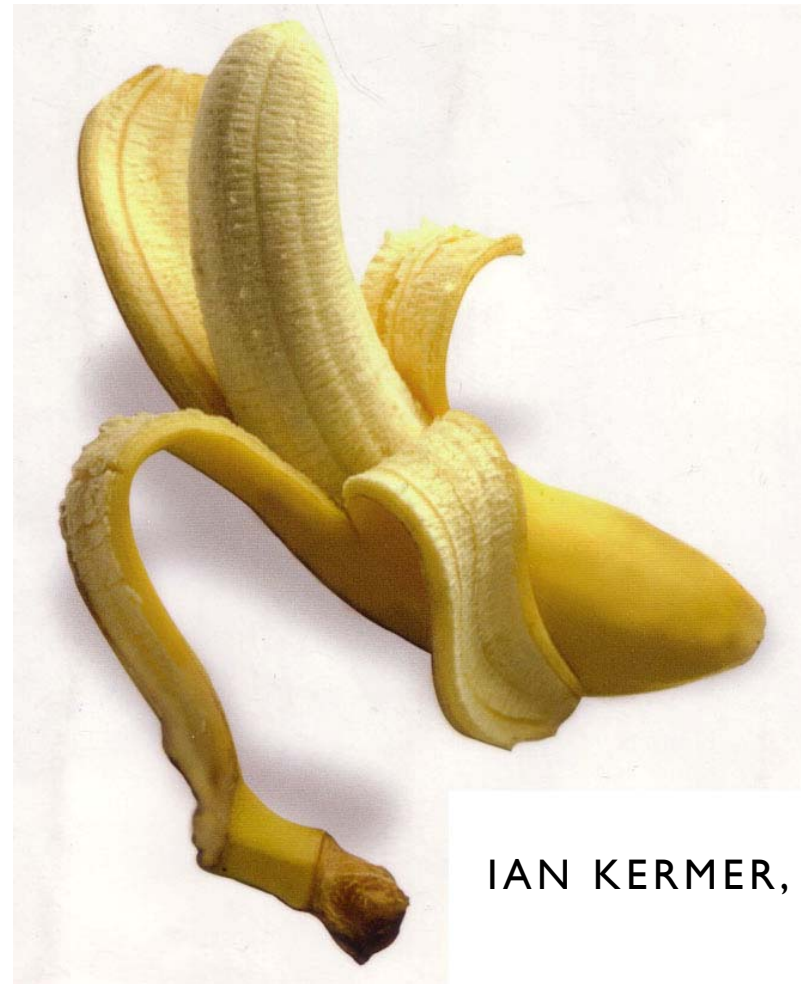
TRUE OR FALSE—40 POINTS

6. It is impossible for a man to fake it.  
7. A properly administered pelvic massage can lengthen a man's penis.  
8. Adrenaline makes the heart grow fonder.  
9. Most men long to be sexually dominated.



# HE COMES NEXT

the thinking woman's guide  
to pleasuring a man



IAN KERNER, Ph.D.

Preface:  
The Woman on the Shaky Bridge

*Warning: This book is not recommended  
for any woman with a fear of heights.*

ALLOW ME to explain.

If you ever happen to find yourself crossing the Capilano River in North Vancouver, Canada, you'll have two bridges to choose from. The first is definitely not for the faint of heart: A mere five feet wide and 450 feet long, the Capilano Canyon Suspension Bridge is constructed solely of plank and cable and sways perilously in the wind some 250 feet above the turbulent rocky tides—right out of a scene from Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. Your other choice? A solidly built anchored bridge that sits a mere ten feet above sea level.

In 1974, two well-known psychologists, Arthur Aron and Donald Dutton, used these bridges as the focus of an ingenious experiment—one that sought to explore the mysterious nature of sexual attraction.

It's informally dubbed the Shaky Bridge Study, but I like to refer to it as the If He So Desired Test.

The two-part experiment went something like this. On day one, whenever an unaccompanied man ventured across the shaky bridge, he would find himself stopped midway by a beautiful young woman. She would introduce herself as a psychology researcher and then proceed to ask if he would mind participating in a brief survey.

On day two, the identical routine would be conducted by the same woman on the sturdy bridge.

Sounds pretty straightforward, right? But there was a little twist: When each of the men completed the survey, the young woman would hand him her phone number and tell him that he was free to call her later that evening for the results...*if he so desired*.

Unbeknownst to the subjects, the real study was not the answers the men gave on the survey, but what happened afterward. Aron and Dutton set out to examine which of the men gave the pretty psychologist a call and, more importantly, why. In other words, they were interested in studying not just what happened on the bridge, but how that affected what happened later. They wanted to examine the rudiments of sexual desire, not merely the in-the-moment cause-and-reaction of talking to a pretty girl, but also how that first interaction evolved into a long-term desire for extended contact. Would the excitement and exhilaration of being on the shaky bridge, versus the more mundane experience of being on the solid bridge, promote romantic attraction?

In technical terms, Aron and Dutton were testing a concept called "misattribution," also known as excitation transfer theory: Lingering excitement from one situation—say walking across a shaky bridge versus a stable one—could intensify a subsequent emotional state (in this instance, recollection of the encounter with the beautiful "psychologist"). Or, to put it simply: Does adrenaline make the heart grow fonder?

The answer? Indeed, it does.

Not only did Aron and Dutton find that the men on the shaky bridge were more likely than their stable-bridge counterparts to call the woman later for results of the survey, but they were also *far more likely to ask her for a date!*

We'll come back to this experiment a little later when we talk about the roles excitement and novelty play in stimulating our brain's natural "sex wiring," and I'll outline my "shaky bridge" approach to great sex. (Don't worry: It doesn't involve getting it on while bungee jumping—though that probably wouldn't hurt, accidents notwithstanding.)

Based on my experience working with couples, it's my wholehearted conviction that beneath the layers of decorative linens that cover our conjugal beds, there lies a shaky bridge, ready and waiting for high-stakes action. Yet most of us spend our sex lives on the stable, sturdy one—often without realizing it. As your friendly neighborhood sex therapist, I'm here to help you take a monumental leap across the crashing tides to reach that soaring pendulous viaduct of desire.

But before we shake things up, allow me to wax poetic for a moment on The Woman on the Shaky Bridge:

She is Dante's Beatrice and Gatsby's Daisy; she is Guinevere, Juliet, Helen, and Eurydice, to name a few. Or, to put it in more contemporary terms, the woman on the shaky bridge is Billy Bob's Angelina; she's Tom's Nicole and Katie all rolled into one; she's Nick's Jessica (before the alleged anorexia and cheating), Brad's Jen, I mean Angelina—okay on second thought I'd better stick with the classics.

You get the point. The woman on the shaky bridge is the stuff that dreams are made of, the gold from which love at first sight is wrought. She's sexy and exciting—the embodiment of desirability, the essence of allurements.

But believe it or not, the greatest asset of the Woman on the Shaky Bridge is not her beauty or her body; it's her brain. It's her

knowledge of sexual psychology and her ability to apply it—*it's knowing which bridge to walk on in the first place.*

My goal in these pages is far more ambitious than to provide you with a collection of hot sex tips and techniques. I want to give you more than just a way of a way of doing; I want to give you a vision: a way of thinking and being.

Regardless of your looks, body, or age; whether you're single or married; whether you're approaching date number three or 3,000, I want nothing less than to make you the woman on the shaky bridge.

## Introduction

THE INSPIRATION for *He Comes Next* came to me on the road, while I was out spreading the word about *She Comes First*. At every stop on my national book tour, women approached me with questions and comments.

Many were all charged up about the whole *She Comes First* philosophy, but they wanted pointers on how to get their guys to read it without hurting their feelings or pissing them off—a theme I’ll return to later: How to deal with the sexual know-it-all who really doesn’t know a whole lot. Others thanked me for their many fabulous orgasms and wanted to know when they could expect a guide on how to return the favor.

Truth be told, I was a bit surprised by the demand. Certainly, there’s no shortage of how-to’s on the subject. If anything, the overblown focus, pardon the pun, on pleasing men was the reason I decided to write *She Comes First* in the first place, as a means to level the sexual-playing field. But apparently, something was still out

of whack. When I asked women what they wanted from a sex book on pleasuring men, in one way or another, all of them said the same thing: “a thinking woman’s guide—a book that doesn’t treat us or our male partners like dummies.”

Over and over again, I was told that sex manuals often “dumbed-down” male sexuality. They reduced the art of male seduction to tricks, smoke and mirrors. Thigh-high stockings, mechanical devices, a signature blow-job technique, or a “spicy” new position was, apparently, all that it took to keep a man slobbering and sexually content. But the truth is that men, just like women, are deeply complex, hard-to-read, and often unfathomable. In reality, our sex lives are anything but easy; they’re rife with subtext, miscommunication, and ambiguity, as well as unspoken wants and guilty desires.

One woman in her early thirties summed it up perfectly: “The cliché that guys think with their dicks or that they have two heads couldn’t be farther from the truth. In the end there’s only one head, and if you really want to understand his penis, you have to get inside his mind first.”

I couldn’t agree more.

Fortunately, guys love to talk [to me] about sex. And I don’t just mean in my office; I mean *everywhere*. I can’t walk down the street without getting stopped: the UPS man, my super, my upstairs neighbor—hell, I know more about what turns on the guy behind the deli counter at my local grocery store than his own wife does (clearly, this is part of the problem).

One guy in particular, named Charlie, always makes me smile. He’s a salesman for a pharmaceutical company, and we share an office suite, so I occasionally run into him at the coffee machine. With George Clooney looks, Charlie has a sex life that most men would envy. Every time I see him, he leans in close and whispers in hushed, enthusiastic tones: “Doc, last night I had the most *amazing* sex of my life. She was *incredible*. Can I just tell you—?”

That's when I have to cut him off and excuse myself. After all, I have a life to live! I have patients, deadlines, and a wife and son—if I indulged every guy who wanted to stop and talk to me about sex, I'd never get anything done.

But once I made the decision to write *He Comes Next*, that's exactly what I did: I stopped and listened to every guy who wanted to talk to me about sex. In fact, I sought them out: With each city on my national book tour, I met men of all stripes. And every time I sat down with a guy for the first time, I always began with the same lead-in: "Tell me about *the best sex* you ever had."

And boy did I get an earful. Not only did I hear about the best sex they ever had, but also, more importantly, I heard about the best sex they never had—experiences they always desired and fantasized about but were afraid to share with their partners for fear of offending or seeming weird. I heard the question "am I normal?" so many times that I'm now convinced that when it comes to sex, the only thing normal is that everyone's different.

To really get to know a guy, you practically have to wake up inside his skin, get inside his head, and know what it feels like to have a penis, with all the fantasies, desires, fears, and anxieties that go along with it. So think of Part I of *He Comes Next* as your own personal *Freaky Friday*—the closest you'll ever want to come to waking up in a guy's skin and knowing what truly makes him tick.

Great sex isn't about techniques or knowing what works; it's about knowing how and why it works. From the latest findings on the brain-chemistry of desire to the physiology of snuggling to a review of the three different types of erections all men experience, I'll take you on a guided tour of his body, brain, and mind that will leave no nook or cranny unexplored.

As for Part II, remember when I warned you that this book wasn't for women with a fear of heights? As I'm sure you know, I wasn't talking about literal heights. I'm talking about flying in the Erica Jong sense: Reaching new heights in pleasure, intimacy, and erotic creativity. So, get ready to take a walk out on that shaky bridge and

stir things up because in this section we talk about tactics, techniques, and tips.

But let me be clear: *He Comes Next* is not an encyclopedia of sexual positions or a catalog of techniques and tips. I'm not out to give you an all-in-one, blow-by-blow (sorry, I couldn't resist) reference guide, but rather a clear, concise, achievable vision of sexual pleasure, one in which each technique forwards the action, and where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. (And yes, for all you women who begged me, that vision does, indeed, include a point-by-point description of the perfect blow job.)

But mastering the art of fellatio is just one stop along the path to providing satisfaction. Sexual pleasure goes beyond techniques and tactics. Our sexual identities—and the expression, gratification, and growth of these identities—is fundamental to our overall health and the success of our intimate relationships. If most of us live in a world where the best sex we ever had is the best sex we never had, then it is of little wonder that sexual dissatisfaction is one of the leading causes of divorce.

At heart, *He Comes Next* is a natural extension of the feminist philosophy of *She Comes First*, one in which I encouraged men to liberate themselves from the "Intercourse-Discourse" and make love with more than just their penises, but with their entire selves.

While a man's genitals are clearly at the epicenter of his experience of sexual pleasure, they can also serve as an impediment to a more fully embodied sexual experience. The penis is often the focal point of a man's sexual anxiety, stemming from issues such as size, stamina, and performance: "Am I big enough, am I too big, will I be able to get it up, will I be able to keep it up, what if I get off too soon, what if it takes too long?" And so forth, and so on.

Sex therapists call this condition "spectatoring"—a process in which a person watches his or her own engagement in the sexual event, rather than being fully immersed in the moment itself. Those most afflicted with this tendency will judge and evaluate their performance, even while it's happening. Some therapists believe that

spectatoring is the primary cause of most sexual dysfunction in men. As anthropologist Lionel Tiger wrote in *The Decline of Males*, “Intimacy becomes a performance art.”

Now, I’m not saying that your typical guy “spectates” to the point of dysfunction, but it’s been my observation that most men suffer from it to a varying extent. In the same way a woman may lose an orgasm by fretting over how she looks during sex—whether she’s wet enough, thin enough, too slow to climax, too loud, not loud enough—men’s ability to experience sexual pleasure is similarly impaired by a self-conscious feeling of being watched, especially when the spectator turns out to be their harshest critic: themselves.

Truth be told, male sexual anxiety is on the rise. This has much to do with the proliferation of porn, especially given its easy access through the Internet and its emergence into mainstream pop culture. With sex books on the market, like the *Vivid Girls’ How to Have a XXX Sex Life* and *Porn Star Secrets of Sex*, one of the greatest things you can do for a guy is reassure him that he doesn’t have to make love like a porn star to satisfy you. Now, more than ever, women need to take an active role in this mission to liberate men from their own oppressively high, unrealistic standards. That’s because, in addition to porn, the pharmaceutical industry is targeting younger and younger men with erectile stimulants, such as Viagra, Levitra, and Cialis, and bombarding them with marketing messages that reinforce a penis-focused, intercourse-based vision of sex that preys on performance anxieties and breeds spectatoring.

As a recent article in the *New York Times* noted, “Many men take Viagra to offset the pressure they feel to perform perfectly in a hypersexualized age.” Soon it won’t just be a condom in a hopeful teenager’s wallet; it’ll be a condom and little blue pill. (Whenever I lecture at a university, I’m always amazed and disheartened by the show of hands when I ask how many guys in the audience pop Viagra on a regular basis recreationally. It’s not because they need it, they boast proudly, but because it gives them a better hard-on. And isn’t that what women want?!)

But as any woman will attest, just because a guy has a hard-on doesn’t mean he knows what to do with it. And with the “rise” of Viagra, it looks like “hard times” ahead for the female orgasm—unless you set him straight and show him how to put the focus on his erection to bed.

Even though this is a book about pleasuring men, your pleasure remains a fundamental right and an essential part of sex. He may come next, but don’t forget that you should come first and you should come again (and again and again!). Destiny gave you a clitoris for a reason—make that multiple reasons! As best-selling author and zoologist Desmond Morris has written in his homage to the female body, *The Naked Woman*, “Every woman has a beautiful body—beautiful because it is the brilliant end-point of millions of years of evolution. It is loaded with amazing adjustments and subtle refinements that make it the most remarkable organism on the planet.” Faking it is simply not an option. That behavior leads to a vicious cycle of resentment, recrimination, and anger—not the makings of great sex. Your pleasure is vital to his pleasure. It’s not about what you do to him; it’s about what you do with him.

The sex you give is only as good as the sex you get. In that sense, *He Comes Next* is as much about your enjoyment of sex as it is about his. Always remember that the sexiest thing that a woman can do for a man (and herself) is to enjoy honestly and fully.

Feminists of the 1960s and 1970s fought hard to reclaim a woman’s right to sexual pleasure and make feminism synonymous with sexual freedom and equality. Fortunately, many of today’s women were born into the spirit of sexual entitlement and have never known it any other way. Their struggle is not for the right to be sexual, but rather how to use it. Today’s woman has choices, but what she does with them is another matter.

Meanwhile, today’s man is waiting for answers. Faced with independent, sexually liberated women, masculinity is in a state of flux and up for grabs, as it were, which is why the double-punch of porn and Viagra is so persuasive—and dangerous. Says Dr. Derek C.

Polonsky, a clinical psychiatrist and sex therapist at Harvard Medical School, “The script that many men follow is one that is tailor-made for increasing anxiety and isolation.... it is often based on the unrealistic portrayal of sexuality in movies, where there is a seamless progression through intensifying states of sexual arousal and breathless nonverbal passion, usually with the male directing the pace and at all times knowing exactly what will please his partner.” But the good news is that now, more than ever, sex-scripts (the ways in which we make love) are ripe for revision, and that’s why women must seize the opportunity to turn attitude into action. It’s your turn to lead.

In the very first episode of *Sex and the City*, Carrie ruminates on whether, in an age when women often enjoy the same income, power, and success as men, they can also enjoy having sex like a man? While my knee-jerk response is yes, on second thought, I believe that today’s woman can do better. Rather than having sex like a man, she can teach her man how to have sex like a woman: how to make it more sensual, more intimate, more open and connected, and, ultimately, more pleasure focused for both men and women than merely ejaculation focused. One question I often ask my female patients is this: If you don’t orgasm, is the sex still enjoyable? Almost all of them say yes, often citing intimacy and affection as their principal reasons for wanting sex. Now, men can and do enjoy affection as well. But for them, the orgasm and the sex are virtually one and the same. (This has its roots in biology, as they seek to spread their seed.) Men are generally goal-oriented, whereas women enjoy all the various parts of the experience, even if they don’t “get off” per se. It’s time to show men how to separate the sensual experience of sex from the one-shot goal of orgasm. That’s the path to real pleasure: not a single technique, but an approach to sexual contentment that inspires men to reach new levels of excitement, awareness, and intimacy.

In the preface, I spoke of the Woman on the Shaky Bridge as a poetic ideal. But, in reality, our sex lives are often far from perfect.

That’s why I keep a framed photo of the Capilano Canyon Suspension Bridge on my desk—not only to show my patients, but also to remind myself, as a man and as a husband, that I have to be willing to venture across that bridge too if I want to find the exciting woman at its center. It’s all about meeting each other halfway and taking the journey together, one in which we never stop growing.

## Pop Quiz

Feel free to read *He Comes Next* in whatever manner you find comfortable. However, if you're inclined to skip Part I and go straight to the techniques in Part II, then I ask you first to consider a few simple questions.

- What's the best sex toy *money can't* buy?
- Name the three types of erections all men experience?
- Is your guy faking it? That's right—*faking it*. How do you know for sure?
- How can a properly administered pelvic massage actually help to lengthen your partner's penis?
- If, as the poet Ogden Nash wrote, “candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker,” what are the brain's natural sex-stimulants, and how do you get them flowing?
- What's the difference between orgasm and ejaculation, and are the two inextricably linked?
- Do you know the difference between a “local” orgasm and a “global” one and how to stimulate the latter?

If you're unsure about any of these important questions, then, in the spirit of *She Comes First*, think about postponing your immediate gratification and read *He Comes Next* from start to finish.

## Postscript

When I got back to New York from my national book tour, I had almost forgotten about Charlie (the George Clooney “womanizer”). So, when I ran into him at the coffee machine and, on cue, he said, “Doc, last night I had the most amazing sex. She was incredible. Can

I just tell you...,” to his amazement, I said yes and dragged him into my office to get the 411.

The first thing I learned about Charlie's sex life was that all the various women he'd gone on and on about were, in fact, one woman: his wife of nine years and the mother of their two children, with a third on the way.

Charlie never stopped being in love with his wife, and the sex, to this day, remains fantastic.

Want to know his secret?

I'll tell you.

But first...



Dear Ian

.....

Dear Ian,

*Doesn't being a sex therapist take some of the awe and joy out of sex for you? After all, sex is more than just mechanics and positions (Insert A into B and twist until secure)—it's an expression of love. And isn't love ultimately mysterious and unknowable?*

—Latitia, twenty-eight, advertising production manager

WHAT A GREAT QUESTION to help me frame my preliminary thoughts on male sexuality. The more I learn about the nature of love and its expression through sexual intimacy, the more I am in awe of it. But sometimes I think we use the concept “love is a mystery” to avoid responsibility for the hard work true intimacy entails. We live in a culture in dire need of sexual education. Despite or, perhaps, in accord with our country’s prurient, almost pubescent fascination with the “look” and “fashion” of sex, we remain sadly sophomoric in flesh-bound *pleasure-training*.

The number two reason for divorce in this country, after financial conflict, is sexual dissatisfaction, and a crucial part of the problem is lack of communication and poor information. When it comes to talking about sex with a partner, breaking the ice is like breaking an iceberg, and all of us know what happened to the *Titanic*.

To give you a sense of my clinical philosophy, let me briefly explain how I approach a new patient or couple. Sex therapy

generally follows a model called PL-I-SS-IT, which stands for permission, limited information, specific suggestions, and intensive therapy. First, a patient needs permission to confront an issue openly and safely with a therapist or counselor. Second, they need accurate information—ranging from physiological facts to psychological reactions—to tackle their problems. Next, they need specific suggestions to get them back on the road to sexual health. In some circumstances, they may also need intensive therapy, though most of the time the first three steps will do the trick.

I’ve adapted the PL-I-SS-IT model to accommodate my own working version, which I call the “See Me, Feel Me, Touch Me, Heal Me” approach to counseling. (Yes, I listened to The Who a lot growing up.) For counseling to succeed, a patient must, first and foremost, be seen. This is important when you consider how many people are leading lives of quiet desperation when it comes to personal relationships. Next, that individual must be felt. Their emotional turmoil must be communicated effectively and experienced by their partner. The third, and touchy, part takes the form of sex and intimacy assignments that are done at home and then discussed in subsequent sessions. All of this must occur before a person can even begin the process of healing. So, to answer my reader’s question, love is indeed mysterious. Sexual ignorance, however, is not. It’s a function of laziness, prejudice, and fear. The more we learn about sex, the more there is to appreciate, understand, and savor.

Hey, just because we hit an iceberg doesn’t mean we have to go down with the ship!

**HE COMES NEXT**

PART

The Male Body

ONE

## Beneath His Armor: Inside the Male Body

**S**EX HAS A LANGUAGE all its own. You know that old saying, “Sometimes the best defense is a great offense?” Well, it just doesn’t cut it. When we talk about sex, sometimes the best defense is, in fact, no defense at all.

Picture this: A guy gets up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom and slowly winds his way through a dark room cluttered with furniture. One hand is out in front of him as he gropes for the bathroom door and light switch, but what do you think the other hand is doing?

Protecting his genitals.

Sounds obvious, right? Men protect their privates. And why shouldn’t we? After all, nobody wants the family jewels getting chipped.

But what if I told you that this idea of self-protection goes far beyond a simple reflex and is, rather, the key to fathoming the inner recesses and dark corners of male sexuality?

Allow me to elaborate. Men’s genitals grow outward. From an early age on, boys intuitively protect them. But over time, this instinctive desire to protect manifests itself as a permanent sense of inwardness, a physical “pulling in” that ultimately extends to the entire pelvic area. (If you don’t believe me, the next time you’re on a dance floor, take a look at the guys around you. They’re all arms and legs, as if they’re doing the “Dance of the Missing Middle.” No wonder Elvis was anointed king.)

Over the years, I’ve talked to countless physical therapists, chiropractors, as well as dance and yoga instructors, all of whom concur that the adult male pelvis is frequently in a state of tension. All of these professionals, in one way or another, work with guys to help them “open up”—sometimes to help manage back pain, sometimes in the course of facilitating recovery from an injury, and other times just to get them through that first dance at their wedding reception without looking like Frankenstein.

As a sex therapist, my first goal is to help you open up his pelvis, so he can experience sex in a way that’s less inhibited and more sensual and exciting.

But this sense of pulling in is more than just physical. Men are shrouded in layers of protection—physical, emotional, psychological—that find a nexus in the pelvis, but permeate throughout the body and mind. In this sense, every man is a knight in shining—or not-so-shining—armor.

Now I know what you’re thinking: Hold on a minute. *Protection? Please! I’m the one that could use some protecting—every time he pushes my head down and expects me to open wide and say, “Ahhhh.”*

But that’s exactly what I’m talking about. For most men, sex begins and ends with the penis and rarely extends beyond it. From a fear of having his testicles rough-housed to sensitivity around the

perineum (the area between the testicles and anus that is rife with nerve endings and shields the male G-spot) to a nobody-touches-me-down-there attitude about his butt, the male sex experience is one that's controlled, circumscribed, and the living embodiment of uptight.

Some of these protections are physiological and involuntary—like the “cremaster reflex,” which is triggered when you touch his inner thigh. The testicles literally pull up and in. But many of these are largely conscious and psychological in nature.

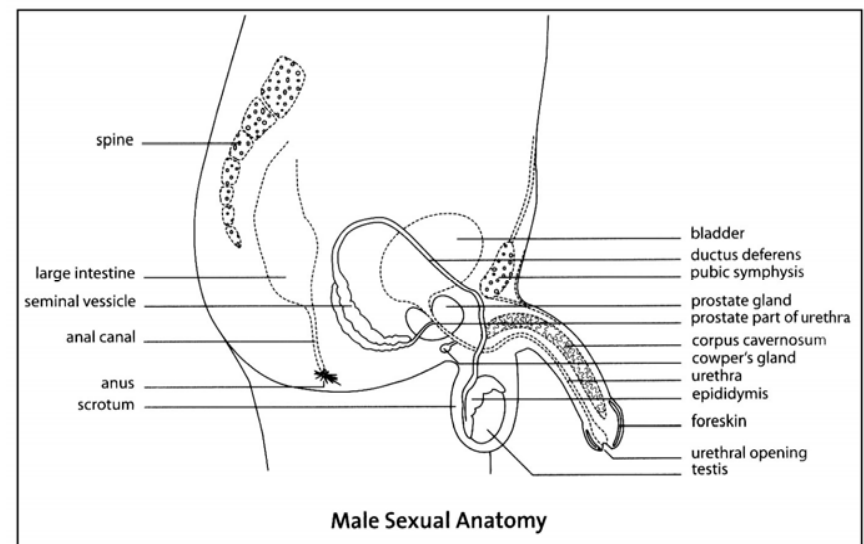
The journey to, and through, manhood is very much a journey of learning to stay in control. As R. Louis Schultz, M.D., wrote in his seminal book, forgive the pun, *Out in the Open: The Complete Male Pelvis*:

To live in society, we all require a degree of control. Too much control, however, and we can become automatons. Control is always being right. Control is not letting your feelings influence your life. Control is not letting the joy of life be a goal. Control is not expressing your feelings. Control is being neutral or neuter. Control is not being sensual. Control is lessening the enjoyment of sex. Control is not being aware or responsive to the feelings of others, since you are not aware of your own feelings. Control is always being on an even emotional plane.

I quoted this passage at length because, even though Dr. Schultz's astute observations are based on his experiences as a physician and deep tissue massage expert, I've too often heard in counseling these exact complaints from women about men: “He's disconnected from his feelings;” “He won't let go; he keeps everything inside;” “We have sex, but we don't make love;” “He won't talk about sex; he walks away the minute I bring up the conversation;” and so on and so on.

Dr. Schultz continues on the subject of control and its physical manifestations: “To achieve such control is not to feel, to become numb. This can apply to the entire body and is especially true in the anogenital region. Protection begins by pulling in the offending penis and anus.”

Later in our discussion, when we talk about the male mind, this area—the anogenital region, or complete pelvis as Dr. Schultz has dubbed it—often figures heavily in sexual desires and fantasies. Although it's heavily guarded and sometimes taboo, the pelvis is ultimately a region that signals abandon and capitulation, an area of letting go and surrender to which men want to succumb, but are timorous. Beyond the penis is a whole new world of erotic pleasure to discover and explore. But, unless he's a Chinese contortionist, it's completely virgin territory, the physical equivalent of the Forbidden City.

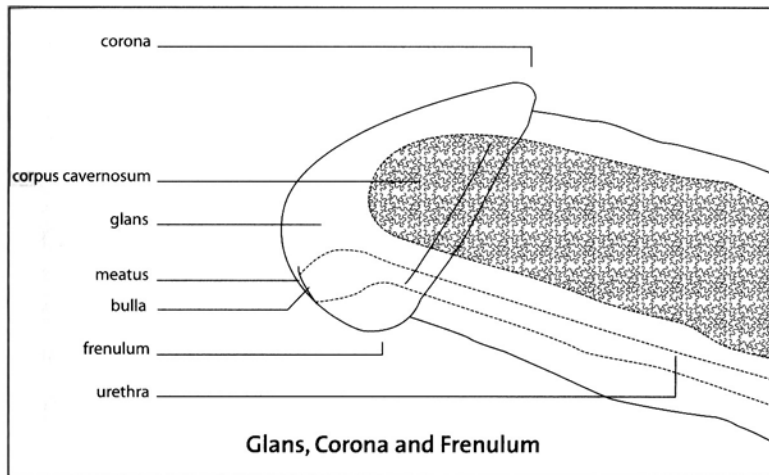


So let's take a look at the complete pelvis, and why—for both physical and psychological reasons—its various parts are subject to layers of protection.

## Head Case

Commencing our journey at the penis, the part that gets the most attention is the glans, or head. This soft, fleshy area swells during arousal and is replete with sensitive nerve endings. From the ridge of the corona to the underside of the frenulum (which many men consider their “sexual sweet spot”), the glans is indubitably the most physically sensitive part of a man's body.

Like a woman's clitoral head, the glans is incredibly sensitive to touch, especially after orgasm or in the early stages of arousal. The glans is the area that most men stimulate heavily, even exclusively, during masturbation. For some men, their pursuit of pleasure never extends beyond the head of their penis. As author Sally Tisdale



wrote in her book, *Talk Dirty to Me: An Intimate Philosophy of Sex*, “Male sexuality seems different from mine fundamentally because nothing need be involved but the head and shaft of the penis, no other part of the body need be troubled, touched, undressed, or soiled....”

But the glans, by dint of its very sensitivity, is also a protected area, both physically and psychologically. And when it comes to physical stimulation of the glans, the complaints of men are not dissimilar to those of women, who often protest about guys who make a mad rush for the clitoral head. As one woman told me, “Every time he goes down on me, it's like the running of the bulls at Pamplona—I just want to get the hell out of his way!” But women aren't the only ones who get rushed. Here, from the annals of persecuted penises:

“She milked me like I was a fucking cow!”

“She bit into my cock like it was a stick of pepperoni!”

“Watch the teeth; *watch the teeth!*”

One guy, a police officer who's seen more than his fair share of mayhem, said of his wife's oral abilities, “I'm telling you, I'm more scared of her blow jobs than I am of rushing a crack house. At least in the crack house, I can suit up. What I really need is a bulletproof vest for my dick!”

Another type of protection that finds its focus in the glans is the fear of premature ejaculation (PE). Almost every guy struggles to some degree with PE. It's been reported that PE is three times more prevalent in the United States than erectile disorder. Countless reports cite that the anxiety of ejaculating too quickly significantly decreases men's enjoyment of sex.

*Sex and the City* star Kim Cattrall wrote in her book *Satisfaction*, “Premature ejaculators were the bane of my existence.” And I can assure you from a guy's perspective that it's no fun being the bane of any woman's existence, especially when it comes to sexual performance or Kim Cattrall. While we're inundated with commercials for Viagra and its competitors and impotence seems to

have gone mainstream (with its media-friendly metamorphosis into erectile disorder), premature ejaculators still suffer in silence. (What I find interesting is that many women seem to regard premature ejaculation as a compliment and a sign of explosive passion, whereas erectile disorder is almost always interpreted as an insult or a lack of sexual attraction.)

What it all comes down to is that the sensitive glans is an area of conflict. There's nothing more enjoyable than having it stimulated, but all too often, the pleasures prove nerve wracking and overwhelming. As Dr. Alex Comfort wrote of fellatio in *The New Joy of Sex*, "A few men can't take even the shortest genital kiss before ejaculating."

Bad masturbation habits don't help matters. By focusing on the head during self-pleasuring, men have hard wired themselves for rapid ejaculation, which can lead to a lifetime of sexual failures. I've counseled guys who have been so distraught over PE that they'd rather not date at all or they've broken off potentially meaningful relationships with women—often without even telling them why. Instead, they continue to masturbate alone with a library of triple-X DVDs for feminine fodder.

But suffice it to say that our culture's myopic focus on intercourse and the ejaculating penis (the all-important money shot), with the hyper-sensitive glans at its center, has inspired men to devise ways to insulate themselves from too much pleasure to postpone ejaculation. Chronic sufferers of PE have been known to wear double condoms, imbibe alcohol, apply numbing agents, run baseball statistics, even think about dead people—*anything* to reduce the pleasure. But, in truth, their efforts are misguided. Rather than reduce pleasure, men should be encouraged to *increase* and *distribute pleasure*—to extend the sexual experience to areas beyond the glans. In short, *to slow down*.

**QUESTION TO MEN:** "Have you ever named your penis, and/or what did/would you name it?"

**ANSWER:** Spike, Godzilla, King Kong, Pee-wee, Sea Monkey, Nervous Nelly, Iron John, the Little Engine That Could (n't).

**QUESTION TO WOMEN:** *If you could, what would you name your guy's penis?*

**ANSWER:** Speedy, Zippy, Weary, Wrinkly, Lazy, Woody (as in Allen—neurotic and hesitant), the Little Engine That "Shoulda, Coulda, Woulda."

## The First Cut Is the Deepest

In uncircumcised men, the glans is covered with a prepuce, or foreskin, from which it emerges during arousal. Circumcision, a common practice in the United States, but not elsewhere in the world, is increasingly becoming a matter of debate, with many likening it to genital mutilation.

There are those traditionalists—often members of the medical establishment—who maintain that the foreskin is an unimportant, functionless flap of skin that inhibits hygiene and can potentially cause infection in both men and women.

But another school of thought holds that the foreskin plays a significant role in both sexual pleasure and hygiene. The foreskin is filled with nerve endings, and any uncircumcised male will tell you that stimulating it is a source of tremendous pleasure.



Uncircumcised Penises

But for most uncircumcised men in the United States, the foreskin often creates an extra layer of protection that is entirely unwanted. Uncircumcised males are sensitive to their foreskin's strangeness and often encounter confusion, or even disgust, from both men and women. As an example, one woman told me that when she first encountered a former boyfriend's foreskin, she joked, "Now what the hell am I supposed to do with that?" From that time onward, the poor guy experienced erectile disorder and was unable to get an erection in her presence.

An uncircumcised patient once told me that, as a teenager, he caught so much flack from the guys in the locker room about his foreskin that he became terrified that they were going to try to circumcise him. As a result, he dropped out of team sports altogether and avoided locker rooms for most of his life.

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Dear Ian,

*So, I was about to go down on my new boyfriend for the first time when I was stopped in my tracks by a foreskin. Hello! I've only been with normal guys before, and it kind of freaks me out. What should I do?*

—Jenny, twenty-six, legal secretary

First of all, please be advised that while circumcision is prevalent in North America, it's much less common in Europe and other cultures. So taking a global perspective, it's really far more normal for a guy not to be circumcised.

Also know that the foreskin can play a pivotal role in both his pleasure and *yours*. The foreskin is filled with sensitive receptors that turn him on. And when it retracts behind the glans, it creates a wider ridge that many women find especially stimulating during sex. Some women refer to the bundled-up foreskin as a built-in "G-spot stimulator."

Also, uncircumcised men are usually hypersensitive about hygiene, so know that he's probably cleaner than most guys. (I once did a survey of women, "Which matters more, a big penis or a clean penis?" Clean won hands [*and* mouth] down.)

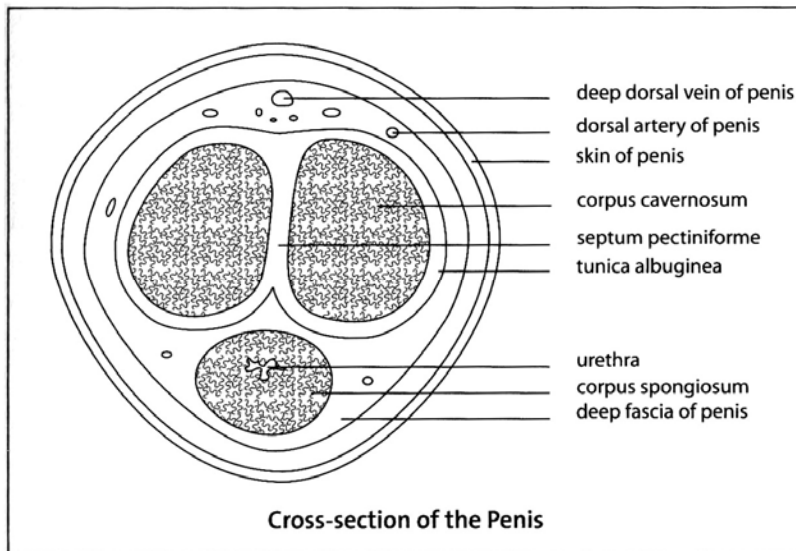
But it's all right to tell him that you've never been with a guy with a foreskin before. You probably won't be the first. Just remember to express yourself in a loving, constructive manner and recognize that not only will it not hinder great sex, but also it will probably enhance it. As one woman told me, "a foreskin is the best sex toy money can't buy."

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## Shafted

Continuing our journey of the penis, the shaft is the middle section and consists of three cylindrical spheres of soft tissue. In his clever book, *Talking Cock*, author Richard Herring dubs the corpus cavernosum, the two larger cylinders, “‘the lung of desire’ because it almost seems to ‘breathe in’ blood during arousal. And it holds that breath until its work is done. It’s not a ‘hollow chamber’ as the translated Latin would have us believe. It is full of sound and fury. It’s a sensational, expanding hive of blood.”

Think of it as the hydraulics of desire. A system of “valves” enables blood to be retained in the penis and then allows blood to be expelled post-ejaculation, which returns it to a flaccid state.



## Does Size Matter?

In many men, the penile shaft is the focal point of anxieties around size. We already know that many guys worry that they’re too small, but there are also some guys who worry about being too large. Penis size plays a significant role in performance anxiety in men of all shapes and sizes.

So, does size really matter? It’s a subjective question. It matters if it matters to you. The clitoris is the powerhouse of the female orgasm, so technically deep penetration is not necessary for a woman to experience orgasm. However, the G-spot is reached inside the vagina, and a clitoral orgasm enhanced by G-spot stimulation would require penetration either with a penis, hand, or sex toy. But as the G-spot is only one to three inches inside the vaginal entrance, nearly any penis will do, unless the guy has a micro-penis—a truly “teenie-weenie”—a condition which, according to BBC News, afflicts one in 200 men, with a penis less than two and a half inches in length, erect. In fact, when you consider that virtually all of the sensitive nerve endings that contribute to the female orgasm are located within the first inch or so of the vaginal entrance, girth (thickness) matters more than length.

Looks are often deceiving. A small nonerect penis will often double in size when erect. And while most heterosexual women enjoy the physical sensation and/or emotional closeness of penile penetration, because the vagina is actually a compressed tube that “tents” during arousal and wraps itself around the penis, size matters less than is generally assumed. But sex goes beyond the mechanics of orgasm production. It’s a physical, psychological, and emotional experience, all of which affects how a particular woman will ultimately feel about penis size.

Why does size matter? The question, itself, is a Pandora’s box. When asked to describe the best part of sex, many women cite the first moment of penetration, not the orgasm. When asked why, almost all mention the sense of anticipation and connectedness. In



fact, most sexual positions, especially the beloved missionary (the most popular in the world, according to anthropologists), often miss the clitoris altogether. But whether it's a result of cultural or emotional factors or simply the procreative possibilities so signified, intercourse often seems to carry emotional pleasures for women that outweigh the physiological component of sexual response. Thus, according to the semiotics of desire, size seems to be an emotional, rather than a physiological, signifier of sexual pleasure.

### **What Other Women Say About Size**

“These days, what matters most is that it works. More and more, a good man is hard to find, or should I say a hard man is good to find!

“I don't mind if it's short, but hopefully it's also thick.”

“It's all about a good fit. But that depends on the person more than the size of his dick. The fit has to be emotional and physical.”

“If you love the man, then you love his penis.”

“Size is irrelevant. Because most men don't know what to do with it, anyway.”

“I like guys with small dicks because they work harder. Guys with big dicks are lazy.”

“The great thing about the vagina is it's flexible—one size fits all!”

“Most guys don't last enough for me to really notice one way or the other.”

Those women who insist that size does matter almost always do so in the context of a guy's ability to use it well. Men miss this latter bit, especially the “ill-cliterate” ones. Many guys seem to assume that having a big penis is tantamount to being a good lover or, conversely, that having a small penis dooms you to the sexual sidelines. So, while for many women, bigger is immediately perceived as better, all else being equal, it is largely a matter of first

impression. When push ultimately comes to shove, the majority of women feel that bigger does not automatically equal better. Much the way men may regard a woman's breasts as more or less erotic depending on size and shape—largely owing to cultural tropes of desire—penis size, like breast size, has nothing to do with the actual physiology of orgasm or the propensity for sexual and sensual pleasure.

For many guys, penis size is really more a matter of vanity than a concern for female pleasure. Like a fancy sports car or a nifty Rolex, it reinforces a sense of masculinity. And unlike women, who are likely to have honest conversations with other women about breast size and insecurities therein, men rarely, if ever, have a heart-to-heart about their penises (though it's funny to imagine—“Hey Jack, do you think my pecker's too small?”) All a woman needs to do is look around to know that she lives in a world populated by breasts of all shapes and sizes. (The problem is that men are looking and judging, too.) But when it comes to a guy worrying how he measures up, he doesn't have much to go on, unless he sneaks a peak in the locker room or the urinal, at the risk of getting caught (and potentially beaten up). This means that guys tend to get much of their feedback about penis size from porn, that is, the awfully “tall tales” of other men.

Also consider the fact that when a guy looks down at his own penis, the angle is likely to make him look smaller than he actually is, and you'll start to understand why, from pumps to pills, there's a massive market for all sorts of phony penis-enlargement products.

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*Dear Ian,*

*My boyfriend keeps saying he knows he has a small cock and apologizing for it, or he makes little self-deprecating remarks, and the truth is he does have a small penis. Whenever he makes a comment, I just act like I didn't hear*

*him, but it only makes matters worse. Next time he goes on and on about his small penis, what should I do?*

—Liz, twenty-eight, retail clothing buyer

Ask most women, and they will tell you in no uncertain terms that, when it comes to their beloved joysticks, men make far too much of far too little. In short, perhaps I should rephrase, men place way too much stock in penis size. In a recent survey I did of college guys, I asked, “If you could ask your girlfriend anything about your sex life, what would it be?” I was sure they’d want to know if she’d ever faked it, but do you know what the number one response was? “How does my dick measure up to other guys she’s been with?”

As a woman, you can’t underestimate just how much of a guy’s sexual identity is wrapped around his penis. So, let me turn the question around: Does it bother you that he has a small penis? The truth is that whenever I talk to women who complain about their guy’s lowly lower measurement, once we get around to discussing the real issues, the problem is rarely about his size, but rather her lack of orgasmic fulfillment. Whether you’re satisfied or dissatisfied with your guy’s size, you need to reframe the conversation to focus on quality, not quantity. Because unless you’re ready to break up with him over the size of his penis, there’s not a whole lot either you, or he, can do about it.

I’ve certainly met plenty of women who have broken up with a guy because of sexual dissatisfaction, but I’ve never met a woman who left a guy solely because of inadequate penis size. You know there’s an old joke that goes, “A bastard is a guy who makes love to you with a three-inch penis and then kisses you good-bye with a six-inch tongue.” This is just one more way of saying that there’s more to sex than penis size. My advice is that the next time he makes a joke about his size, use it as a launching-point for some genuine communication. Ask him why he cares so much about his size. If he says it’s because he wants to pleasure you or that he believes size is related to pleasure, take the opportunity to set him straight. As one

woman I know told her husband, who was insecure about his size, “Look, yours isn’t the only penis I’ve known, but it’s the only one that’s been worth knowing.”

If that’s still not enough, for those on the small side, it’s been estimated that one to three inches of the penis is typically pulled into the perineum: The tighter the pelvic area, the more likely that the muscles in his perineum are pulling on his penis and drawing it into the body. When a man’s pelvis is opened up through relaxation, breathing, and massage, all of which we will discuss later, it may actually lengthen his penis!

In many cases, the issue of size comes up when a man is too big. Many women panic at the sight of a big penis and worry about getting hurt. In some cases, it actually can lead to injury. Rarely does this mean you can’t have sex with him, but it does mean taking it more slowly, making sure you’re amply aroused, and keeping plenty of lubrication on hand(s). One female patient of mine was so afraid of the size of her fiancé’s penis that she thought she might call off the wedding. What made the situation worse was that her girlfriends teased her about it and told her they’d kill to be in her shoes. But it’s a genuine anxiety and one that’s likely to be more damning to sexual relations than concerns over small penis size.

Despite some unpopular views, Sigmund Freud certainly warrants respect for heralding the primacy of sexual dynamics in the formation of gender identity. A product of his Victorian age, one of his quack “theories” was that the clitoris was an immature source of pleasure—a diminutive penis, as he conceived it—and that the “true” or mature female orgasm was physiologically rooted in the vagina. This theory was later debunked by Anne Koedt’s brilliant essay, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm.” Another was his oft-maligned conviction that women suffer from penis envy. His theory went something like this: A young girl sees her dad’s willy, becomes agitated that she doesn’t have one, assumes that her mom castrated her, and spends the whole of her existence seeking completion

through the anatomical supremacy (i.e., projectile appendages) of her husband and sons.

I must admit that, while I have yet to meet a woman who has suffered from penis envy, there seem to be plenty of guys who fall prey to this tendency. So perhaps Freud was onto something after all given that he was, just a man, who, like most men, walked through life primarily flaccid. From surreptitiously checking out one another's members, to envying the long-johns depicted in porn to ancient erotic renderings of exaggerated phalluses, men have long measured and compared their alleged virility based on penis size and turgidity.

And for those women who have chanced to ponder what it would be like to have "one of those things," here are a few "Member Musings:"

"If I had a penis, I'd pee standing up and wouldn't worry about whipping it out in a dark alley or behind a tree."

"I'd donate sperm."

"I'd make my boyfriend go down and swallow!"

"It would be interesting to penetrate, rather than be penetrated."

"I'd rule the world!"

"I'd make Donald Rumsfeld squeal like a pig!"

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*Dear Ian,*

*My boyfriend won't let me get on top during sex because he's afraid I'm going to "break" his penis? Is that even possible?*

—Tania, thirty-six, attorney

Yes, believe it or not, it is possible to break one's penis, though highly unlikely. Interestingly, male anxiety over breaking one's

penis is far more prevalent than actual occurrences and a not entirely uncommon fear.

Broken penises usually happen when an erect penis is thrust against a harder object, like a pelvic bone, for example. You'll know if he's broken his penis because you'll likely hear a "cracking" sound; he'll lose his erection, and his penis will bend to one side or the other. If it were to happen, he would need immediate medical attention and possibly even surgery—all in all, not a fun visit to the emergency room.

I have yet to meet any man who has ever actually broken his penis, though I have worked with patients who were born with Peyronie's disease, a congenital condition that causes a curvature of the penis due to fibrosis (hardened tissue). I have heard of only one case of a broken penis, where the woman, far larger and heavier than her sexual partner, pounced on her boyfriend with reckless abandon in a female-superior position and succeeded in fracturing his member. Needless to say, after an embarrassing trip to the ER and proper healing, the couple was less energetic in their romps.

As far as sex positions and broken penises go, the female-superior position is one of the least likely to land him in a penis splint (yes, they often need to "set" a broken penis) because most of the pressure (and pleasure) is a function of rubbing the clitoris against his pelvic bone. But if he's nervous about the position, start in the standard missionary or side-to-side position and let him penetrate you fully and then gently roll on top.

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## **Going South: The Road Less Traveled**

Continuing our journey down the shaft of the penis toward the abdomen, we now reach the scrotum, which contains the testicles, or testes.

From the Annals of Terrorized Testes:

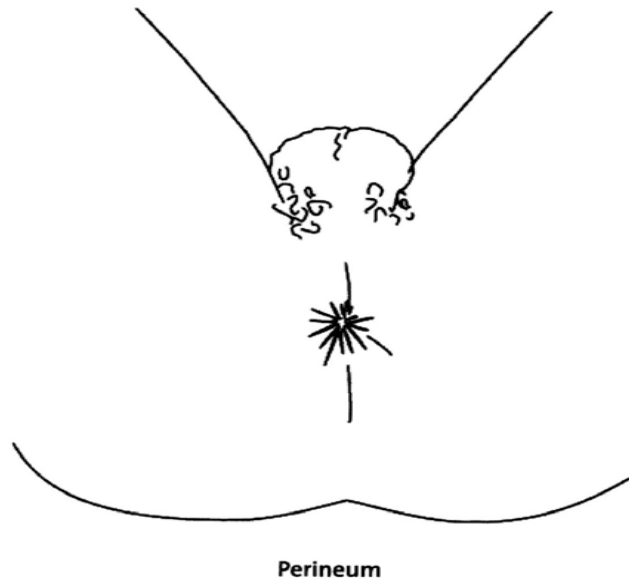
“She gobbled up my balls like she was sucking dumplings!”

“Don’t squeeze; caress!”

“Focus on the scrotum—the skin—not the testicles. Tickle, graze, nibble, pinch lightly.”

“Every time my girlfriend touches my balls, I start to have a panic attack. It feels great, but it’s also torture.”

Typically, the left testicle hangs lower than the right because the left side descends first during birth. Approximately 75 percent of men hang to the left (although clearly this lefty disposition doesn’t translate at the polls).



And talk about central air-conditioning: When exposed to heat, the scrotum loosens and pushes away from the body; but when exposed to cold, the scrotum pulls into the body and tightens.

Sexual arousal also causes the testicles to be pulled up into the body to protect them during sex. As mentioned earlier, if you want to test the cremasteric muscles, touch his inner thigh and just watch his testicles run for the scrotal hills.

From the scrotum, we continue our journey deeper into protected areas—hot-zones that abut (no pun intended) the taboo. The perineum contains the root of the penis.

Positioned between the scrotum and the anus, this area is sometimes called the “t’aint” because “it t’aint one or the other.” But regardless of what it t’aint, it is most definitely an area rife with nerve endings and erectile tissue that swells during arousal with the infusion of blood to the pelvic area. It’s also possible to stimulate the prostate—known as the male G-spot—through a perineal massage (that is, if he’ll let you). With the scrotum to the north and the anus to the south, this area is typically more heavily guarded than Guantanamo Bay.

## He Has Kegels Too

Both men and women have a PC (pubococcygeus) muscle, which is responsible for the health of the pelvis.

Exercising this muscle regularly will *naturally* prolong sex and allow him to distinguish better between orgasm and ejaculation and lead to a more intense climax. As men age, they sometimes complain of orgasms that are less intense and pleasurable. One reason for this loss is the steady weakening of the PC muscle. That should be motivation enough. So the next time he heads off for the gym, tell him that weight lifting isn’t the only exercise he should be doing.

If he wants some guidance on how to do them, tell him to practice by first stopping the flow of urine midstream—that will help him locate the muscle.

From there, he should do reps of kegels, gradually increasing the overall amount, as well as the length of time he holds the contraction. He can do them anywhere, but sometimes it's fun to practice them together.

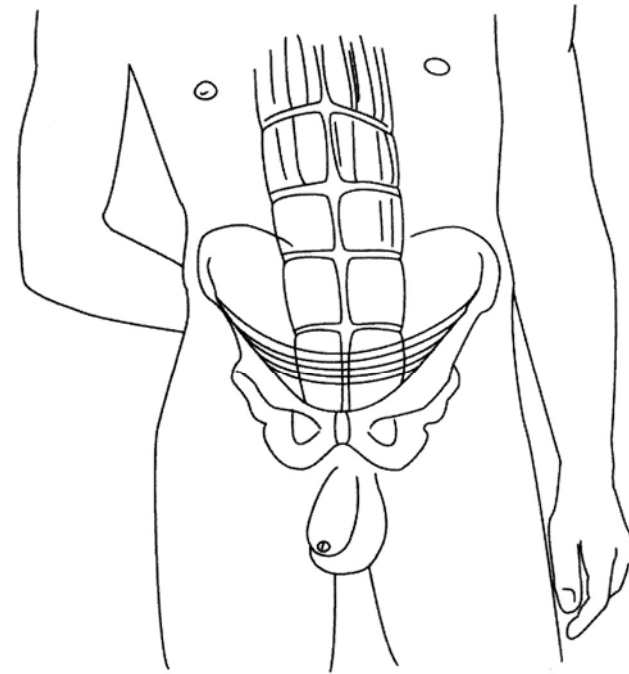
When you're having intercourse, you'll both benefit from stronger kegels: He'll be able to last longer, and you'll feel it against your G-spot when he does them inside you. And remember that your kegels will feel great on him, particularly if you squeeze them while he's pulling out of you or, even better, having sex that involves mutual squeezing, rather than thrusting.

### Butt Why?

Like the perineum, the anal entrance is rich with nerve endings and a source of tremendous pleasure, but it's also protected (to say the least). Think of it as the *Heart of Darkness* of male sexuality. Mess around with him there, and he's likely to get as loopy as Marlon Brando in *Apocalypse Now*.

The prostate gland is a walnut-size gland that lies below the urinary bladder and produces prostatic fluid. The white, sticky fluid forms most of the volume of semen and serves as its delivery mechanism.

The prostate is also a source of pleasure, one that can be stimulated through anal touch. Often called the male G-spot, I prefer to call it the *P-spot*, as in protected rather than prostate. If you and your partner want to enjoy this intense nugget of pleasure, you will have to travel about one to three inches inside his rectum toward the front of his body (his stomach). For less intrusive pleasures, you can also stimulate the prostate externally through perineal massage.



Rectus Abdominus, aka “the Six-Pack”

Beyond the anus, there's the entire buttocks and the gluteus maximus muscles that run through them, which are often tight with tension. Additionally, there are bands of fibrous tissue (rectus abdominus), aka the “six-pack,” situated beneath the abdomen in the groin area. As Dr. Louis Schultz observed in *Out in the Open: The Complete Male Pelvis*, these bands form a sort of interior jock strap, which, when overly tight, can restrict oxygen from reaching the area and contribute to a numbed sensation.

When exploring the male body, it's important to look beyond his penis and consider the entire pelvic region. In most sex, the penis drives, if not drags, the other parts along for the ride. The other parts are left overly tense, or flaccid, and somewhat desensitized. Through a combination of factors, both physiological and psychological, the male compulsion to protect or guard this area can hobble sexual experience. By opening up the pelvis and engaging his entire pleasure platform, you can help him enjoy a heightened "out-of-body" sexual and sensual experience very much rooted *in his body*.



## Male Sexual Response: A Protected Process

**W**HENEVER I talk to men about their adult anxieties and dysfunctions, invariably the subject shifts back to memories from their teenage years: embarrassing erections, troublesome wet dreams, and masturbation traumas. Many of the men grew up with brothers and sisters stealing precious moments of privacy. Others experienced their own anguished versions of *Portnoy's Complaint*, with intrusive mothers banging at the bathroom door, demanding to be let in or berating them for stained sheets or underwear. No matter what your partner's personal experiences, his discovery of arousal's fierce hold and irrepressible timing no doubt caused him some trauma, embarrassment, and hardship during critical points in his psychosexual development. Hormonally driven cravings are often experienced as uncontrollable urges, from boyhood through early manhood, an unwieldy force to be managed stealthfully and quickly, rather than a source of joyous self-exploration.

Although the process of arousal, also known as sexual response, is nuanced and progressive, it's typically experienced as a mad rush to orgasm. The focus is on destination, rather than journey, and what should be appreciated and savored is often consumed ravenously like a condemned man's last meal. Men deprive themselves of the time to luxuriate in fantasies and desires that are personal and individuated and frequently turn to the generic visuals of porn to catalyze the process. More and more men are turning away from their intimate relationships as a source of sexual exploration and settling, instead, for erotic junk food. They often reserve their innermost fantasies for static, airbrushed images and anonymous encounters in chat rooms. Men are more "graphic with their graphics" than they are with their sexually evolved, eager-to-explore partners.

## PONDERING PORN

*"I feel like porn has sort of fucked up my sex life. I feel like I don't know how to slow down or appreciate all the parts of the process that lead up to orgasm. I get aroused so quickly, I fast forward straight to the money shot, and I'm done. I don't watch any of the foreplay because I'm already ahead of it. I just want to get straight to the orgasm. And when I'm with a girl, I get nervous and scared because I've gotten sex to this place where it's totally defined by orgasm.*

—Matt, twenty-seven, graphic designer

*"When I was a kid, I jerked off to magazines, but at least then, I had to fill in the gaps around the pictures. And I remember that as I was masturbating, the girl in the magazine would turn into the girl I had a crush on or, later in life, the woman I was going out with. The photos were a sort of a starter. But back then masturbation was an extension of*

*my erotic life. With movies, it became easier. I didn't need to fill in the gaps. Masturbation was less work, and I guess I got lazy. I let the images do all the work instead of using my imagination. But the orgasms also became less meaningful, more disposable. I didn't feel any connection to my own inner erotic life. I wasn't masturbating anymore to my own past or current experiences, real women I had been with or wanted to be with for that matter. I kind of lost my sexual history, as well as my erotic creativity. Now with the Internet, I feel like it's all so...external. I'm kind of lost in all the visuals. I don't think I've jerked off inside my own head, without porn of some sort, for years. But it's also lonely and hollow. I always hear that masturbation is healthy, but I wonder if that's true—at least the way I go about it. Masturbation used to be a way of going inside myself, now it's a way of avoiding life. I used to feel energized and vital after masturbating. Now it just makes me depressed."*

—Jonathan, thirty, Web content manager

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As we discussed earlier, for most men, sexual stimulation and gratification are almost entirely focused on the penis, to the exclusion of other erogenous zones in the pelvic area and across the body. During arousal, men—like bulls in a china shop—crash through to the point of "ejaculatory inevitability," missing out on all the subtler experiences. Ejaculation and orgasm become inextricably linked, when, in fact, they are separate processes. Male sexuality becomes orgasm focused, rather than pleasure oriented.

This male process of sexual response, as reinforced by masturbation, is often incompatible with a woman's. The differences manifest in the relationships we form. Some of us embrace the challenge and recalibrate our sexual behavior to mesh with our partners' needs. Others wallow in happy ignorance, owing to a

partner's fear of rejection and consequent willingness to fake it. Then there are those who can't disabuse themselves of their adolescent fantasies, who retreat into porn-centric safety, denouncing any woman who cannot achieve orgasm through intercourse as frigid, unsexy, or aberrant. Often, these ostensibly desireless men, who'd rather spend the night online than deal with a real-life woman, are not so much lacking in desire, as motivation for something more.

"It's easier to masturbate. I don't have to worry about her."

"I can just get it over and done with."

"I don't have to deal with all the issues of the relationship."

"There's no pressure or anxiety when I jerk off."

"The sex in my head or on the Internet is better than the sex in my bed."

Many men develop a sexual shorthand with their partners, a sex script that offers the path of least resistance to consistent gratification, one that reduces them to sexual automatons in which sex is familiar and routine. The orgasms may even be simultaneous, but they are emotionally and creatively hollow, no better in qualitative terms than the sexual release each partner could have had on their own. This is the world of the lonely orgasm.

## **Desire**

Sexuality researchers Masters and Johnson determined that the human sexual response cycle consists of four distinct stages: excitement, plateau, orgasm, and resolution.

But experts concur that there's another stage as well, one that overpowers the others: desire.

Desire is the most mercurial and mysterious of all the phases. In fact, when Masters and Johnson first defined the sexual response cycle, they didn't even include desire. One of the reasons for this is

that desire and excitement (often used interchangeably with the term "arousal") are closely interlinked, especially in men. Give a guy an erection, and he wants to use it; hence the success of Viagra and other erectile stimulants, such as Cialis and Levitra. Stimulating arousal or excitement often stimulates desire itself.

But when Pfizer tested Viagra on women, they were unsuccessful and ultimately abandoned their hopes of developing a female version of the little blue pill. Interestingly, Viagra had some of the same physiological effects on women as it did on men: It stimulated blood flow to the genitals. But whereas in men, this physiological arousal quickly led to desire (with just a bit of prodding through, say, a porn magazine or erotic video), it by and large did not create desire in women. For men, desire and arousal are virtually one and the same. Give a guy a hard-on and he wants to use it. But for women, desire usually requires components that don't necessarily need to be present for men: intimacy, affection, trust, humor, respect, and security among others. Men appreciate those qualities, but we don't necessarily *need* them to get turned on and have sex. This difference in how men experience desire explains why men are more easily able to compartmentalize between sex and love.

Though there may be some truth to the statement that men are more easily aroused than women, we should not fall prey to the assumption that guys are walking hard-ons, always ready for action. While men may be able to have sex without emotion, that doesn't mean they don't want the emotion or cannot refocus the lens of their arousal to encompass these emotions.

As an example, I meet with many guys who have cheated or are thinking about it. Many have told me that they're not looking for sex, so much as an emotional connection they're no longer getting at home. Men may be more easily aroused, but that does not make them any less fundamentally interested in romantic or emotionally based love. And desire is the phase that keeps sex interesting and fresh over the long term. Desire is what starts the ball rolling...and keeps it rolling for that matter.



As a relationship progresses, it's more important than ever to remember that male desire for sex doesn't begin in the genitals; it begins in the mind. Yes, Pfizer was right: Desire and arousal are generally more closely interlinked in men than in women. But as time goes on, sexual experiences substantially redefine the nature of that link. What starts out as a small gender gap can become an abyss when a man's locus of sex becomes singularly associated with the goal of erection and orgasm. Viagra and porn can become a quick substitute for actual desire and intimacy. But the gender gap can also be diminished when the primary focus of sexual interaction is placed on building and sustaining desire.

In the next chapter, I'll specifically discuss the brain chemistry of the mating process, and why a loss of desire (relative to the infatuation phase) is a perfectly natural and ultimately manageable part of a healthy and fulfilling love life. But in a world wrought with clichés about male sexuality—"men are dogs; they'll screw anything"—the worst thing a woman can do is take desire for granted and assume he *should* want you just because, well, *he has a penis!*

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*Dear Ian,*

*My husband has little desire for sex and has been taking Viagra, but it's just not working. He's more upset than ever. What can he, we, do?*

—Kirsten, thirty-five, journalist

Let me reassure you: I see this type of scenario all the time. Viagra works on the hydraulics of arousal, but not desire, itself. In fact, Viagra exacerbates the pernicious gap between actual desire and physical arousal, causing chronic abusers to focus on the mechanics of "getting it up and off" instead of figuring out whom and what turns them on. Properly used, it helps a guy achieve a hard-on when

he can't do so for physical reasons. Viagra does *not*, however, stimulate desire. Sometimes it can help nudge desire along, but sexual appetite begins in the brain. Viagra won't make him want to have sex with you. For that, you have to look at your relationship. You must examine the level of excitement and erotic creativity you bring to your intimate encounters as well as other factors, such as stress, diet, and depression. Depending upon his age, he may also be experiencing male menopause (known as andropause), which is characterized by low testosterone levels and consequently low desire.

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### **A Bird in the Hand...**

I often deal with women who are frustrated by the fact that their husband or boyfriend claims to have no interest in sex, but then they catch him masturbating. They feel betrayed and lied to: "How could he say he has no desire when he masturbates? Clearly he has an interest in sex, just not with me, *right?*"

*Wrong.* The fact that he's masturbating is a really positive sign: It means he still has a libido. He hasn't lost interest in sex; it just means your relationship needs some sexual maintenance, a tune-up, perhaps a fuel injection. With a little creativity and a lot of communication, you can breathe new life into your tired old sex routines by learning how to explore what turns him and you on together (more of this to come in Part II).

The truth is that when you fell in love, there were some very potent chemicals fueling the process and making desire a no-brainer. Now you have to work at it. But with that work (which is actually a whole lot of fun) comes a deepening of your relationship as well as a potentially more exciting, dynamic, and varied experience of sex. It may not be the euphoric, chemical-addled sex of infatuation, but that doesn't mean it won't be better or at least different.

I meet so many couples in their fifties and sixties who insist that the sex they're having now is better than ever before. Sure they're the first to admit that sex has changed. But they also say that sex has become more creative and tender, less orgasm driven, more sensual, and ultimately intimate. Some of this has to do with the fact that as men age, their testosterone levels decrease, while estrogen levels increase. So he's naturally discovering a softer side of sex. The men who are the happiest are the ones who ultimately accept and embrace these natural changes and discover new paths in their sexual journeys.

People change. Relationships change. Why should sex stay the same?

The fact that you may have taken desire for granted in the past is a mistake, an all-too common one that's easily made (and rectified), with a little effort and determination. Why do you think so many divorces occur within the first five years of marriage? Because of the desire gap. In the next section, I'll elaborate on the structural dynamics of the mating process. But for now, know that in general, relationships go through three phases that are genetically soft-wired into our relationship DNA. I say soft-wired because while I believe in the power and necessity of natural selection and determinism, I believe just as strongly in the power of social forces and free will. The truth is that humans are among the 3 percent of mammals that tend toward monogamy. That's right, the other 97 percent basically "fuck and flee." But of that 3 percent, humans are the only species that exercise free will in their decision to be monogamous. We are the only species that doesn't follow preprogrammed hard-wired rules in how we pair bond; we make choices. And frankly it's much easier to follow a rule than it is to make a choice.

So back to our soft-wiring: All relationships basically go through three stages: lust, romantic love, and attachment. Lust is what gets us into these predicaments in the first place. Lust is unfocused, looking for action. But once lust finds its focus, it develops into infatuation. In these first two phases, lust and romantic love, some really

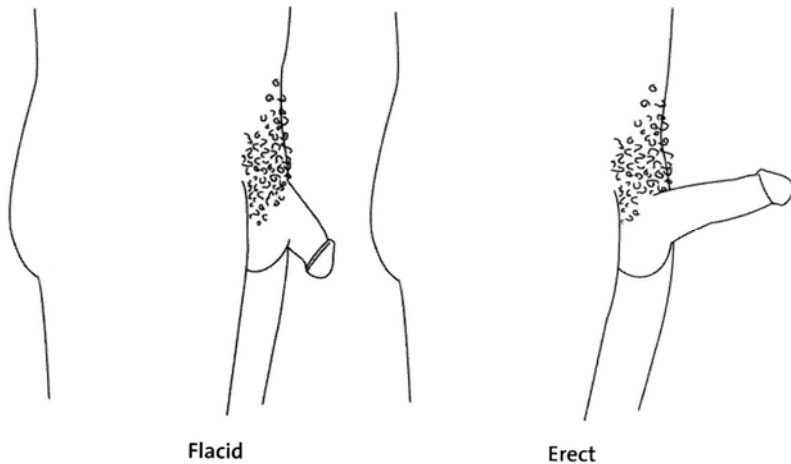
powerful chemical processes compel us to hook up and then get hooked on each other. Romantic love paves the way for the attachment phase, the sense of stability we need to mate and raise our young. But in many ways, the attachment phase works against the romantic love phase. This is where free will comes into play, as well as the high divorce rate. Once those sparks start to wane, we tend to get freaked out and confused. We tell ourselves that our relationships are broken. We feel helpless, rejected. So we cheat. Or we settle into silent recrimination. Or else we cut bait entirely. We don't know how to move forward into the attachment phase, while maintaining the excitement of the romantic love phase. Nature pulls the rug out from under us, and we can't seem to find our footing. So we jump on another rug altogether. We are a culture that loves to fall in love, but doesn't know how to stay that way.

But guess what? While nearly half of all marriages end in divorce, the vast majority of those who get divorced end up getting remarried. The soft-wiring of pair bonding kicks back in. You'd think we'd get it right the second time around, right? Wrong. A staggering two out of three remarriages *also end in divorce*. Our hearts are in the right places (we want to be in long-term committed relationships), but we make the same mistakes over and over again. Hence, we are a society that effectively enshrines serial monogamy over lifelong relationships.

Desire is the launch-pad for the process of sexual response. But don't think of desire as a compartmentalized aspect of that process—only the beginning. Says Dr. David Schnarch of this limited definition of desire in the *Principles and Practice of Sex Therapy*, "It subtly narrows clinical thinking of desire as "willingness to get started" (initiatory eagerness) rather than enhancing desire during sex. The result is a paradigm that encourages utilitarian sex...and ignores couples' common complaint of boring, meaningless sex devoid of passion, eroticism and intimacy." Desire is more than just a starting point. It's the beginning, middle, and end of sex (and all the little steps in between), as well as the erotic glue between sexual

encounters. Desire doesn't just give rise to sex; desire is borne of sex as well.

Schnarch advises us to “focus on 1) desire during sex, rather than just initiatory problems, 2) desire for one's partner rather than desire for sexual behavior, and 3) consciously chosen, freely undertaken desire rather than biological drive or natural function. *This approach recognizes human sexual desire as the most complex manifestation of sexual motivation among all living things.*”



### Excitement

Now that we're beyond the murky depths of desire, the road ahead becomes a bit more straightforward (albeit “wobbly” at times). In men, genital stimulation often causes an erection within a few seconds.

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*Dear Ian,  
Is it possible for a man to ejaculate without an erection?*

—Tricia, twenty-six, theater manager

Yes! The penis is highly concentrated with nerve endings, and it's possible for a man to reach orgasm with a soft erection or even none at all. In my treatment of premature ejaculators, many young men complain that, while they don't experience a lengthy refractory period (the time necessary to become aroused again) and can often muster a second or third erection quickly, they often reach orgasm again prior to becoming erect. When a man experiences ejaculation from a soft erection, his ejaculation may lack propulsion, but he still experiences it nonetheless.

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Did you know that all men experience three different types of erections? Count'em: three.

The first type, produced by erotic stimuli, is considered a psychogenic erection, or what I like to think of as a “brain erection.” Men also experience reflex erections as a result of direct genital stimulation, what I like to think of as a “body erection.” And finally, they experience spontaneous nocturnal erections during REM cycles, explaining why guys are often into morning sex—they wake up in the midst of a nocturnal erection.

It's worth understanding each of these different erections because all three play a role in arousal. As an example, when men become bored with sex, it's often due to a lack of fresh psychogenic stimuli within the relationship—in other words, a loss of erotic creativity.

Reflex erections are caused by the stimulation of nerves in the genital area, which will activate nerve fibers in the penis, initiating the first part of a reflex circuit and continuing to the lower spine.

Once received and sent back to the erectile tissue in the penis, the circuit is completed and voilà! Enter the hard-on. Sometimes a man can be so depressed or stressed out that he's closed off to both psychogenic and reflex stimuli. That said, he will often still wake up in the morning with a nocturnal erection, and I advise women to use this as a starting point. Hey, if he's got it, use it. As we discussed a little earlier, sex can be a springboard for increasing desire. An exciting sexual encounter today is what tomorrow's desire-based fantasies are made of.

For this reason, I sometimes counsel patients to take advantage of the reflex erection and to focus simply on physical stimulation, as there's truth in the idea that sex begets more sex. Some men just need to be physically jumpstarted, so, as per the slogan for Nike, just do it. As simple as it sounds, one of the best ways to break out of a sex rut is to have sex. This is especially true of men, where studies of the brain during sexual stimulation, using a technique called positron emission tomography (PET), reveal that men appear to focus significantly more on the sensations transmitted from the genitals to the brain than do women. As Gert Holstege of the University of Groningen told the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology conference in Copenhagen, "This suggests that for men, the physical aspects of sex play a much more significant part in arousal than they do for women, for whom ambience, mood, and relaxation are at least as important." This idea—that sometimes arousal can create desire, rather than the other way around—is also borne out by the research of Rosemarie Basson, a Canadian sex researcher and therapist, who observed that couples in long-term relationships often do not experience as many spontaneous sexual thoughts or fantasies as they used to. Says couples counselor Michele Wiener-Davis in her important book on the subject of mismatched libido, *The Sex-Starved Marriage*, "being touched in stimulating ways often leads to arousal. Arousal triggers a strong desire to continue being sexual. Hence, desire follows arousal." I once read somewhere that sex is both a poison and its own antidote. When

couples aren't having sex or the kind of sex they'd like to be having, the silence, anger, and resentment between them is indeed a poison. And sometimes simply having sex or talking about the sex you'd like to be having, is indeed the antidote.

### **Love at First Hard-On?**

From Romeo and Juliet to *Titanic's* Leo and Kate, we are drawn to the romantic notion of love at first sight. But is love at first sight a specifically male way of seeing? Are men more likely to experience the phenomenon than women? In my surveys of couples, when asked, "At what point in your relationship did you know for sure that you wanted to spend the rest of your life with each other?" invariably the guys were much more likely to have had definitive feelings at the outset, whereas most women said they needed time to make up their minds.

Indeed, scientists have observed that, when falling in love, there is greater activity in the parts of the male brain associated with visual processing than there is in the female brain. Says anthropologist Helen Fisher, "When the time is right and a man *sees* an attractive woman, he is anatomically equipped to rapidly associate attractive *visual* features with feelings of romantic passion. What an effective courtship device."

So when it comes to sex, do men and women see differently? And does visual stimulation play a much greater role in male sexual excitement than in female arousal?

When Pfizer conducted its clinical trials of Viagra on men, in conjunction with porn, they came to the unequivocal conclusion that visual stimulation plays a key role in male sexual excitement. When they conducted similar clinical trials with women, the porn did little to spark desire. Is it as simple as concluding that men are visual creatures and women are not? Or is it that women need more than just visual stimulation, whereas men do not? Or maybe women are

indeed just as visually oriented as men, but much of the porn is male-centric?

Most of the women I've spoken with say that porn can be a turn-on, but it's not something they'd watch on their own; it's part of the larger experience of being with a *particular* guy. There's even data to support that women are playing a larger and larger role in selecting porn with men. But I surveyed over a hundred men and women and asked them each, "Have you ever ordered a porn film alone in a hotel?" All of the men had done so (except for those who had never stayed alone in a hotel where porn was offered), but interestingly, only a tiny percentage of women had done so, and more out of curiosity than an interest in being aroused.

But there's a very vocal, and quite possibly correct, camp that insists that women *are* as interested in porn as men, but that porn caters largely to men's interests, consequently alienating women. In the 1980s, Candida Royalle, a pioneer in adult film making, started making porn for women. In her own words, this is what she set out to do with her *Femme Fatale* Films:

I created the *Femme* line to put a woman's voice to adult movies and give men something they could share with the woman in their life. I like to call my *Femme* movies 'sensually explicit,' or as one viewer described them, the 'Rx for couples.' You'll find them to be less graphic and lacking in the traditional 'money shot,' a staple of most adult films. You'll also find story lines, good original music, and real characters of all ages.

Does her prescription work? Here's what she had to say about a scene from one of her films, *Urban Heat*, that was put to the test in a clinical environment:

This scene was selected for a study on what actually turns women on. Dr. Ellen Laan showed a group of women a hard-

core scene from a typical male-oriented porn movie, and she showed the same group of women the scene...from *Urban Heat*, which is considered 'women's erotica.' The women's sexual response was monitored, and afterward they were questioned about how they felt. In a nutshell, women seemed to respond physically to both, but their subjective responses were very different in that they felt shameful and disgusted by the male porn and felt more accepting and positive about their feelings and reactions to my scene from *Urban Heat*. This study was reported in professional journals of sexuality as well as an August 13, 1995, article in the *Sunday New York Times* "Week in Review" section.

Candida Royalle is still going at it. Joining her today is a new generation of porn created by women for women, from *Impulse* Films to *CherryBomb* to *PlayGirl* TV, which is an entire porn network created for women. Lee Migliara, spokeswoman for *Playgirl* TV, made the following comments about porn for women: "Women want to see more storylines. They want to see less closeups of genitalia. They want more fooling around. They also want to see better clothes."

Um...does that mean women are just looking for better fashion in porn? The jury's still out on whether women are as visually stimulated by porn as men and if sales of female-centric porn will ever come marginally close to that of their male-centric counterparts. Hopefully it will prove to be a deliberation worth watching.

### **A Hose by Any Other Name Would Smell so Sweet**

While men may be more visually oriented than women when it comes to sexual attraction, there's been clear science to support that

women have a keener sense of scent than men and that olfactory stimulation plays a much stronger role in women than in men. In short, follow your nose; it always knows.

In one of my surveys of sexual attitudes and behaviors, I asked both men and women to rate various factors in sexual attraction, including features such as eyes, breast size, sense of humor, fashion taste, and so on. In the vast majority of responses I received from women, “his smell” rated extremely high on the list and was often cited amongst the top five factors in sexual attraction, along with confidence, height, a sense of humor, and a handsome face. In men, a woman’s scent was consistently rated among the least important factors in sexual attraction.

But that doesn’t mean that men don’t respond to scent without realizing it. A recent Swedish study concluded that men and women respond differently to two odors that play a role in sexual arousal: a testosterone derivative produced when men sweat and an estrogen derivative found in women. These odors are thought to be pheromones, chemicals emitted by one person that trigger a reaction in another. According to the *New York Times*,

The estrogen-like compound, though it activated the usual smell-related regions in women, lit up the hypothalamus in men. This is a brain center that governs sexual behavior and, through its control of the pituitary gland lying beneath it, the hormonal state of the body. Interestingly, the testosterone-derivative lit up the hypothalamus in women, but acted as a normal smell in men. The two chemicals seemed to be leading a double-life, playing the role of odor with [the same] sex and of pheromone with [the opposite sex].

If a couple’s “odor-prints” don’t match, they won’t make for a good fit. The source of a person’s unique odor, in fact, derives from his/her respective immune system. According to *Psychology Today*,

A part of our DNA called the major histocompatibility complex (MHC) is involved in producing our own singular smell. Immunity is inherited from both parents, and because the human species is best protected by the broadest array of disease resistance, we are designed to mate with a partner whose MHC profile differs from our own. As such, studies suggest that we like the scent of people with immune systems unlike ours. Couples with similar immune systems have a higher risk of spontaneous miscarriages and have more trouble conceiving.

To test the theory that the DNA of differing immune systems drives sexual preference, Claus Wedekind, of the University of Bern in Switzerland, conducted a study in which women were asked to smell various clothes worn by different men and select the ones they found sexiest. The women selected the shirts belonging to men whose immune-system profiles most differed from their own. Proving the power of this discovery, many women also said that the favored clothes reminded them of current or ex-lovers. Interestingly, clothes belonging to men who had similar immunity profiles reminded the women of male family members, such as their fathers or brothers. Wedekind writes, “This indicates that MHC-dependent body odor preferences play a role in actual mate choice.” So when it comes to mating, it appears that opposites do attract. It’s better to pick a partner who is genetically dissimilar, and often the best way to find him is to follow your nose. No wonder that a woman’s power of scent is at its strongest during ovulation.

## Hard Times Ahead

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Dear Ian,

*What's the difference between Viagra, Levitra, and Cialis? Are they basically the same, just with different names, or do they do different things? As a woman, I see all the commercials, but I'd like to know what to potentially expect.*

—Amanda, thirty-two, office manager

All of these drugs basically inhibit the enzyme PDE-5, and, therefore, they enable muscles in the arteries of the penis to relax and widen. This ultimately encourages blood to flow more easily into the penis to create an erection.

It's no surprise that new competitors to Viagra have popped up (no pun intended), given that as many as 150 million men worldwide potentially experience erectile disorder.

Levitra takes effect more rapidly and supposedly has fewer side effects. Cialis lasts up to thirty-six hours, so couples don't need to feel they have to have sex as soon as he pops a pill. We're only just starting to get clinical data and reports back from doctors about how the competitors stack up against Viagra. Many men like to experiment and find the pill that's right for them. Such explorations must happen under the care of a medical doctor, however, for none of these drugs are without side effects.

Since Viagra was introduced seven years ago, more than 23 million men have been prescribed the drug worldwide. Annual sales are worth nearly \$2 billion, with approximately six prescriptions written per second. As the *New York Times* notes, the pharmaceutical industry makes no bones, as it were, about their intention to enlarge their customer base, contending that erectile disorder is now of epidemic proportion, and that "the face of ED now is a younger, seemingly much healthier guy."

Yet if erectile disorder is, indeed, approaching epidemic rates, shouldn't we look at correlations between the rise in ED and the rise in obesity, stress, and sedentary lifestyles? According to Dr. Irwin Goldstein of the Center for Sexual Medicine at Boston University, researchers should be looking at these factors. "Impotence can be one of the earliest signs that something else is not working."

So, perhaps the flaccid penis is the new icon of the overweight, stressed out, sedentary American man and a condition that shouldn't be medicated away with Viagra, but treated on a holistic level.

Whether a guy actually *needs* an erectile stimulant or not, advertising campaigns for Viagra and its ilk have exploited male anxieties surrounding "ideal" firmness and duration of erections, the very anxieties that often lead to ED in the first place.

Like people, erections don't respond well under pressure. As one *New York Times* reporter noted, "Many men take Viagra to offset the pressure they feel to perform perfectly in a hypersexualized age." But the irony is that Viagra creates an expectation of sexual performance that can only be met through the use of Viagra itself.

Surely it's the power of this marketing message that emboldens young men in their twenties to say of Viagra, "I like how it makes me feel; it gives me power." But would those men feel as powerful if they knew that the vast majority of nerve endings that contribute to female pleasure are located on the surface of a woman's vulva and that no penetration whatsoever is required for a woman to be stimulated to orgasm? Without his erection or Viagra to stimulate that erection, a man may not feel as sexually virile, but he would possibly prove a more satisfying sexual partner.

As the *New York Times* noted of this Golden Age of the Erection, major pharmaceutical companies have launched multimillion dollar marketing campaigns to redefine erectile dysfunction as a quality-of-life issue for significantly younger men: "The response of the drug makers is, essentially, what's wrong with that?"

Clearly, they aren't asking the thirty million women who will be on the receiving end of those erections. In fact, the media rarely, if

ever, alludes to the female perspective on erectile stimulants and how they are reshaping women's intimate lives, altering "sex expectations," and often relegating female pleasure to an afterthought. It's as if all of those commercials depicting happy, contented wives basking in the glow of their husband's newfound potency are being taken at face value and accepted as fact.

Prior to the pharmaceutical treatment of impotence, couples dealt with the issue through intimacy-building exercises, erotic creativity, and communication. Couples were encouraged to spend more time on desire-building activities, such as communication, foreplay, fantasy, and manual and oral stimulation. Men were encouraged to make love with more than just their penises. The irony is that while these activities didn't always lead to consistent erections, they did often result in greater intimacy, stronger relationships, increased desire, and, yes, more female orgasms.

Before Viagra, men were significantly more likely to address erectile dysfunction holistically. Now, a little blue pill solves the problem. But it does so in a way that's purely physiological, often to the detriment of psychological factors. It's become a lethal part of our culture's sexual shortsightedness and limited romantic attention span, or what I call SADD, sexual attention deficit disorder. As the *Journal of Canadian Family Physicians* recently noted, "Individual psychological, and couple, factors remain important causes. Combining medical treatments with individual, couple or sex therapy is often more helpful than prescribing medicine alone."

Even so, it's virtually unheard of for a medical doctor to recommend a program of sex therapy along with a prescription for an erectile stimulant. And as prescriptions for these drugs become more commonplace, there is far less communication about the condition itself, both within the doctor-patient relationship and the long-term romantic relationship. Instead, we rely on the cultural shorthand embodied in the pill itself, as well as its pervasive branding, to avoid the personal, often difficult, task of communicating about sexual issues and conflicts.

Viagra and its brethren not only reinforce the same old bad habits and often recreates the same old bad sex, but also refocuses the lens more intensely on coital sex, with the penis as its totem. As one woman noted to me about the introduction of Viagra into her sex life, "It's like his penis is a trophy for a game he never played and shame on me if I don't get in there and act like a cheerleader."

With or without Viagra in their lives, many women have resigned themselves to orgasmless relationships and often resort to faking it in lieu of bruising the fragile male ego or prolonging an already uncomfortable or unpleasant activity. And because many of us were taught that intercourse is the "right" way to experience orgasm, many women feel that they are responsible for their nonclimactic state of affairs. With its focus on physiology rather than the holistic sexual landscape, Viagra continues to subordinate female sexuality to a phallogocentric model, creating yet another reason for women to feel responsible, unsexy, inadequate, and guilty, rather than fed up and underserved, when their penis-pill-popping partners leave them unsatisfied.

So, if your guy is on an erectile stimulant or thinking about going on one or if you discover some little blue pills in his wallet, I urge you to use this as an opportunity to open up new channels of communication. Remember, a big part of why he's taking an erectile stimulant is because he wants to pleasure you. But, as we discussed earlier, he needs to know that there's more to sex than simply having an erection.

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## **Plateau**

As men cycle through arousal, they reach the plateau phase, which lasts anywhere from thirty seconds to about two minutes. The prostate and testicles swell, the pelvic floor muscles tighten, and men



often release—a drop of clear fluid. He’s fast approaching the point of ejaculatory inevitability, a point in the plateau phase where, with or without further stimulation, he’s going to ejaculate. This does not occur with women. Even if a woman is teetering on the brink of climax, she can still lose her orgasm if there’s a sudden change in stimulation.

I think that men and women fundamentally misunderstand this important difference in their respective processes of sexual response. On the one hand, women often don’t recognize when a man has crossed the threshold of no return; even if there’s a change or total cessation of stimulation, he’s still going to come. Men, on the other hand, often think that a woman has reached a point of orgasmic inevitability and, therefore, cease clitoral stimulation at the mission-critical moment to enter a full-throttle rush to coital mutual orgasm, even though the process of sexual response can be interrupted right up to and into climax. In both men and women, the plateau phase is an intense and exciting period. The body and mind are on the brink

#### **TOP TEN THINGS YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SPERM BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK**

1. Average volume of a single ejaculation: Around a teaspoon
2. Main Ingredient: Fructose
3. Calories: About 5
4. Protein: 6 milligrams
5. Fat: 0
6. Average speed of expulsion: 25 miles per hour
7. Average duration: 4 to 8 seconds.
8. Average amount of sperm produced over the lifetime of a male: 14 gallons
9. Average number of spurts: 4 to 8
10. Longest money shot in video history: 27.5 inches

of total surrender. But it’s also a phase that isn’t indulged in nearly enough. Men typically crash straight through to ejaculation, and women often get a taste of the orgasmic release to come, only to have it abruptly ceased, deferred, or abridged.

Hot sex is all about recognizing when he’s in the plateau phase and keeping him there as long as possible, often bringing him right to the edge of orgasmic inevitability, only to turn him back around.

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### **Orgasm**

Put simply, a man’s orgasm is the sexual climax that occurs when the penis expels semen in a series of intensely pleasurable contractions. It’s simple: *The stronger and greater the number of the contractions, the longer and better the quality of the orgasm.* This is true for both men and women.

What does the male orgasm feel like? I asked a bunch of guys to describe their orgasms, and here’s what I got.

“An eruption.”

“Pulsating. Throbbing.”

“Intense. Quivering.”

“Focused in my penis, but spreads throughout my body.”

“An explosion, then tingling.”

Many studies have shown that male and female orgasms possess more similarities than differences. One study asked both sexes to describe the experience of orgasm and subsequently removed specific references to body parts and gender. The results were then given to a broad team of doctors and psychologists, with the challenge to distinguish which was which. The result? It was even

impossible for a group of trained professionals to tell the difference between the men and the women.

### **A Shot of Happiness**

In terms of “ungloved love,” all of these studies have suggested that seminal fluid contains beta-endorphins, which can help to diminish feelings of depression in women (if only they contained appetite suppressants or anabolic agents, designer knee pads may become the hottest new fashion statement).

In Jonathan Margolis’ *O: The Intimate History of the Orgasm*, he cites the controversial work of Dr. Gordon Gallup at the State University of New York, who maintains that women who had sex without a condom were quantifiably happier than women who had protected sex, based on answers to a questionnaire. Other findings stated that women whose partners did not use condoms became more depressed when their relationships ended; that agitation, irritability, and suicide attempts increased with condom use; and that women with gloved partners took longer to get involved in new sexual relationships than their nongloved-love counterparts. He concluded that some women become chemically dependent on semen. Again, this is highly controversial work, but given that semen contains 60 percent of the USDA recommended daily dose of Vitamin C, perhaps it’s only a matter of time before the latest herbal supplement will be sperm-capsules. “Organic,” we’ll assume.

### **Shots in the Dark**

Regardless of the possible emotional or health benefits, I would not consider engaging in unprotected sex with a partner unless the relationship is monogamous and you have comfortably ascertained that your partner is disease free.

I probably don’t need to tell you that there’s no such thing as completely safe sex, but you can, and should, take steps to make sex safer. By using condoms and being careful, straightforward, and smart in your choices, you can significantly reduce the risk of contracting and spreading sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

There are approximately nineteen million new cases of STDs each year in the United States alone, and that number does not account for the large population of people who don’t report, or even know, they have an STD due to the asymptomatic natures of their illnesses. Also the incidence of STDs is on the rise. It’s been estimated that 20 percent of Americans are living with genital herpes and more than 50 percent of women will contract HPV (Human Papillomavirus), which often leads to cervical cancer and infertility. Millions of women are suffering from Chlamydia, which can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and infertility. And let us not forget the more than one million Americans living with AIDS and the millions of others who are HIV positive. While many STDs cause lesions, abnormal discharge, or other symptoms, very often they are “silent”—exhibiting no outward signs—detectable only through blood work. For example, we now know that the viral shedding associated with Herpes can also occur in the absence of sores. What it all comes down to is the fact that many of us are wholly unaware whether we or our prospective partners, are infected with STDs.

Thinking women of the world take heed! Recent studies show that heterosexual women suffer a higher risk of contracting STDs than their heterosexual male counterparts. For example, the likelihood of transmitting herpes to a partner is approximately 10 percent from an infected woman to a man but 20 percent from an infected man to a woman. It’s not fair, but it’s true.

Studies reveal that while men are more likely to transmit STDs, women are more prone to ask about sexual history. According to a recent poll conducted by MSNBC and Zogby, 48 percent of the women surveyed claim to check STD status always, compared with

only 33 percent of men. This makes it even more crucial for women—who are at a higher risk of contracting a disease—to bring up the subject and know the STD status of their partner(s).

I'm always surprised by the number of smart, educated women who tell me how anxious or embarrassed they feel about introducing the topic of STDs. They're afraid they'll be labeled undesirable or set themselves up for rejection. As one woman told me, "It's so unsexy to talk about your sexual history in the heat of the moment—it's a total killjoy." In addition, many women are concerned that if they insist on the use of a condom, the man will lose interest or his pleasure will be impeded. But caring about your safety should never be regarded as embarrassing, unsexy, or secondary because being comfortable will help you relax and trust your partner and that is the surest route to uninhibited mutual pleasuring and exploration. Rest assured, if a man doesn't care enough about your safety, comfort, and pleasure to wear a condom, then he's not a smart choice for a partner (or a generous lover, either).

My general rule of thumb is that if you're not comfortable enough to talk to a potential sexual partner about health concerns, than you probably shouldn't be having sex with him in the first place. Good sex requires open communication and honesty. And if you lack that fundamental basis of trust and mutual understanding, chances are the sex is not going to be all that satisfying anyway.

Being educated about sex is more than just accumulating information; it's about having the courage to translate attitude into action. It's about having the confidence in your own desirability to say what you want and need. And let me tell you, that is always sexy.

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*Dear Ian,*

*I think my boyfriend has been faking it. Is that possible?*

—Eliza, thirty-three, hotel party planner

It most certainly is, especially as more and more guys take selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) like Zoloft, Paxil, and Prozac. SSRIs boost serotonin levels, which calms us and makes us more even-keeled, but this also has the deleterious effect of inhibiting desire and delaying ejaculation. So if your guy is on an SSRI, it's entirely possible that he's faking it. Encourage him to speak to his doctor if he's suffering sexual side effects.

It's also possible that your guy is faking it as a function of stress, especially if he's using a condom, which diminishes penile sensation. Or perhaps he's feeling distant and doesn't want to hurt your feelings. Writes columnist Amy Sohn of an interview with a male faker:

For men who find themselves starring in their own personal remake of *Endless Love*, he has some advice. "Pump away, give a sudden exclamation of 'Ahh!,' toss your back a bit, and spasm." What if the woman raises suspicions about output? "You say, 'It's not always a lot.' And if you really get down to it, you can say, 'Where's yours?'"

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### **Orgasm vs. Ejaculation and the Male Multiple Orgasm**

With three types of erections, is it any wonder that some experts contend that there are actually four types of orgasm? In her books, sex therapist and former surrogate Barbara Keesling maintains that men can experience:

1. A nonejaculatory orgasm (using the PC muscles or kegels to experience the contractions of orgasm without ejaculation)
2. Multiejaculation, in which a man experiences a series of partial ejaculations
3. The aftershock orgasm, in which a guy has one intense orgasm with subsequent less intense aftershock contraction-based orgasms
4. Retrograde ejaculation, or injaculation, in which semen is ejaculated into the bladder rather than out through the urethra. Injaculation is mentioned often in tantric sex books as the be-all, end-all of orgasm, while most sex therapists consider it a relatively harmless experience that occasionally occurs.

While the male multiple orgasm is a great strategy for helping a man get the most out of physical arousal, it shouldn't be confused with female multiple orgasms, which have a genuine basis in physiology. Male multiple orgasms are a technique. This is not so with female multiple orgasms. As Natalie Angier wrote in *Woman: An Intimate Geography*:

...the clitoris does not have a venous plexus. In men, this tight-knit group of veins serves as the major conduit through which blood leaves the organ. During arousal, muscles in the shaft of the penis temporarily compress the venous plexus, with the result that blood flows in but then cannot depart, and lo, it is risen. The clitoris does not seem to have a distinct, compressible plexus; the vascularization of the organ is more diffuse. On sexual kindling, arterial flow into the clitoris increases, but the venous outflow is not clamped shut, so the organ does not become a rigid little pole. Why should it? It has no need to go spelunking or intromitting. And it may be that the comparatively subtle nature of its blood

trafficking allows the clitoris to distend and relax with ease and speed, giving rise to a woman's blessed gift, the multiple orgasm.

## Resolution

Says Jim Pfaus, a psychologist at Concordia University in Canada, to the *Economist*, "The aftermath of lustful sex is similar to the state induced by taking opiates. A heady mix of chemical changes occurs, including increases in the levels of serotonin, oxytocin, vasopressin and endogenous opioids (the body's natural equivalent of heroin). This may serve many functions: to relax the body, induce pleasure and satiety, *and perhaps induce bonding to the very features that one has just experienced with all this.*" In other words, sex isn't just an aspect of love: Sex begets love and is a vital key to its reinforcement.

## Bridging the Snuggle Gap

To snuggle or not to snuggle, that is the question. I get complaints all the time from women about guys who don't snuggle after sex, but rather roll over and start snoring.

**HE SAYS:** "*After sex, it's like I'm dead. I've been wounded in battle. I need to recover. I need to sleep and heal. I know she wants to cuddle and spoon, but I got nothing left to give.*"

**SHE SAYS:** "*After sex, I'm tingly and alert. I'm relaxed and happy, but every fiber is alive. If he were up for it, I could definitely keep going. I'm still aroused, and sometimes one orgasm just isn't enough.*"

Before you beat up your guy for turning over and snoring, consider that there's a biological basis for why he's shattered and why you're still in a state of semiarousal. Men have to develop the requisite sexual tension to accomplish ejaculation, also known as the propulsive orgasm. It takes a whole lot of blood going into the genitals to accomplish this, and a whole lot of blood flows out after. It's physically exhausting. Since women have no need to ejaculate, blood circulates longer in the genitals: It's slower going in and out. Thus, women remain in the aroused state longer, hence their capacity for multiple orgasms. So if your man rolls over and starts snoring, cut him some slack. Sure, maybe he could use a little retraining (it would be nice if he at least fell asleep while holding you in his arms), but his heart may still be in the right place.

AS WE VENTURE beyond the protected pelvis and continue our journey into male sexuality, let us take a page from Joseph Cohen's witty, eclectic volume, *The Penis Book*, "When taking an oath, our biblical ancestors placed their hands over the testicles of a witness to vouchsafe their utmost sincerity and honesty. Words like 'testify' and 'testament' all derive from this unique association."

In the spirit of this ancient tradition, the next time you're unzipping his fly, reach your hand in and take an oath: to strip away the layers of pelvic and psychic protection and approach his body with a new sense of understanding.

## The Male Brain: The Itch

THE POET W. H. AUDEN wrote that sexual craving is an intolerable neural itch. And true enough, much of our real longing happens in the brain rather than the genitalia.

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*Dear Ian,*

*When my wife and I first met, the sex was so hot and exciting we couldn't keep our hands off of each other. Now it's just not the same. I hate to say it, but sex has become boring.*

—Jack, thirty-two, international pilot

Jack's right. We hate to say it, and we hate to hear it even more because, when it comes to sex, there's no blow more devastating than the sucker punch of "boring."

Boring is the sexual kiss of death. Better to be called freaky, kinky, speedy, rusty, or even crusty (well, maybe not crusty)—or even selfish, nervous, erratic; distracted, neurotic, sporadic; uptight, fucked up, phlegmatic—anything *but* boring.

Yet sexual boredom and lack of interest in sex are probably the two most common complaints I hear from couples, especially, ironically enough, from young ones who are often just a few years into a relationship. In a society that emphasizes instant gratification and quick fixes, where we're bombarded with sex talk, but starved for meaningful sexual discourse, the seven-year itch is making people scratch even earlier. And without guidance or a sense of perspective, all of us are too likely to jump ship, or at least jump to the conclusion that our relationship must be fundamentally flawed.

But what if I told you that there was a biological basis for the sexual boredom that often creeps into our relationships? What if I told you that Nature, herself, ironically stokes the flames of desire, only to douse them later, leaving us with embers that must be reignited to avoid going permanently frigid?

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## Secrets from the Underground

During my interviews for this book, I asked twenty-five happily married and committed men and women if they would ever commit infidelity in the form of a one-night stand if they knew beyond a shadow of a doubt they'd get away with it, with no consequences whatsoever. Now clearly this wasn't a particularly scientific poll, but of the twenty-five men surveyed, *seventeen* said they'd do it, as opposed to only two women who would.

So what would compel a happily involved guy to take a free pass at a one-night stand?

Ladies, if you were a fly on the wall during Poker Night, here's what you might hear.

"I love my wife, but I'm not *in love* with her."

"I'd kill for a little *strange*" (aka, "a fresh piece of pussy").

"The sex just doesn't sizzle anymore."

"Sizzle? *Please*. My sex life makes C-Span seem exciting."

And, trust me, I'm well aware that men aren't the only ones who get bored with sex. If anything, recent studies have shown that rates of female infidelity have been outstripping those of men, so to speak. Rest assured, guys, that if you were a fly on the wall at Girls' Night Out, your little wings would likely burst into flames:

"I love him, but he doesn't make me hot anymore."

"If the thought of him enters my mind when I masturbate, I can't come."

"The only way I can get off with my boyfriend is by pretending one of us is somebody else."

"I would kill to have rough all-night sex (with any man other than my husband)."

"Balancing my checkbook is more stimulating."

But this begs the question: Do men and women cheat for the same basic reasons?

As we discussed earlier, men are generally able to separate sex from love more easily—they can commit adultery and still genuinely love their wives—"it's sex, not love." This ability to separate the two supports the idea that sexual desire in men is more closely linked to arousal than it is in women and less dependent on emotional context.

When women are unfaithful, it's generally tied to broader relationship factors, for instance a prolonged sex rut at home, a breakdown in communication, or a pattern of long-term neglect. In my experience, married men are just as likely to have a one-night

stand as they are to have an ongoing affair, whereas women are more likely to have full-blown affairs than one-night stands. Women often cheat, looking for a new chance at love, while men often cheat, at least at the outset, for the sheer excitement of sex with a new partner and the sense of risk that accompanies infidelity. In fact, I've talked to many men who became involved in affairs, fell in love, left their wives, married the women they were cheating with, and then ultimately complained that their new relationship was not exciting anymore.

What went wrong? Did the newness of the relationship wear off? Was the passion largely driven by the sense of danger? Do we only want what we can't have? Do we prefer the thrill of the chase over the actual attainment of the object of our desire? Is there any way to sustain sexual excitement in a long-term committed relationship? Or are we basically a society of serial monogamists with a fundamental need to refresh our love lives periodically? In short, is there such a thing as a "right person" or "soulmate" with whom we *could* enjoy everlasting passion?

The ancient Greek playwright Aristophanes conjectured that, at the beginning of time, man and woman comprised one creature. Split apart by the Gods, we were left to search for our other halves. This search, Aristophanes opined, lies at the very core of love. But is love primarily driven by the desire to find our other halves rather than keep our relationships whole?

Remember in my introduction when I said that I'd asked scores of men to describe the best sex they'd ever had? For most of them, it was with their current long-term partners. But it was usually at the very beginning of the relationship, when the sparks were flying.

When asked to describe what made the sex so amazing, however, many drew a complete blank. Sure, she may have been enthusiastic in the sack or known her way around a penis, but no, that's not what made it great. What made the sex memorable was the excitement they felt for the other person at the time. And it wasn't limited to a

single experience, but rather to the period of time in which the sex was truly amazing, the early days of infatuation.

So I asked this group of men another question: "Is the sex still great?" Here, I received many "yes, buts." Yes, they still enjoyed sex (once or twice a week, if even), *but* no, it wasn't nearly as exciting as it used to be. In some cases, the sex had become more affectionate and intimate. But in many instances, it had become flat out boring. Virtually all of the men surveyed said it wasn't nearly as hot or wild as it was in the beginning of their relationships.

So often did these words, hot and wild, come up, that I felt compelled to ask another question: "In five words or less, describe hot, wild sex."

"Unpredictable, spontaneous. Exciting, new."

"Heart-pounding. Like skydiving."

"Sweaty, dangerous. Going all night."

"Like night driving without headlights."

"Uncontrollable, unstoppable. Totally raw."

"A shot of adrenaline."

Then I asked, "In five words or less, describe the sex you're having now." Here's what the same men said.

"Tender, affectionate."

"Loving. Nice."

"Safe and familiar. Reassuring."

"Consistent. Predictable. Pleasurable."

"Boring. A chore. Same old."

When I asked the guys what had changed about sex over the course of their relationship and why it wasn't still as hot and wild, again, many of them drew a blank. Nothing, they said, had really changed. Perhaps that was the problem.

Sex had become reduced to its rote, physiological components, shorn of its emotional and psychological dimensions, narrowed down to a thin and predictable straight line: beginning, middle, and end. One guy summed it up perfectly.

Sex used to be a jaunt down the yellow brick road: exciting, unpredictable, a Technicolor explosion of sensation and emotion. But now that I know the wizard is just a bald, little man, the journey's just not as much fun. Why go to the effort of clicking my heels when I'm already home?

Rarely, if ever, do I hear the complaint of boring sex from couples who have just met or are in the early stages of a relationship. (I do, however, meet plenty of couples who have been together for years and confess that a particular problem in their relationship was always present, but they ignored it, believing it would naturally work itself out.) Sometimes, looking back, couples aren't even sure if the sex was ever really that "hot" because being in love made everything seem so great at the time.

According to *Psychology Today*, one factor that may prove unifying or divisive to a couple is the degree to which their nervous systems are naturally inclined to pursue novel and stimulating experiences. Some of us are natural thrill-seekers, constantly seeking new and exciting stimuli while embracing a sense of risk, marked by a spirit of wanderlust, a love of danger, a hunger for adventure. Others of us are more content with the familiar, reveling in quiet domestic rhythms, intimate rituals (like always celebrating birthdays at the same restaurant), and the joy of knowing someone or something inside out. Nowhere are these differences between "thrill-seekers" and "familiarity-lovers" more apparent than in the area of sexual compatibility.

More than likely, you have some attributes from each of these categories, but you're probably more firmly anchored in one. If you and your partner are both situated at either end of the spectrum, you

have the best potential for sustaining a fulfilling sex life together over the long haul. But if you're a sexual thrill-seeker and you're paired with a familiarity-lover, then you will need to work harder to find a happy medium that will simultaneously allow you to get your fix of novel excitement, while enabling your lover to take comfort in familiar routine. Often this differential in your natures will be masked in the beginning of the relationship, when you are awash in the sense of newness. Says Marvin Zuckerman, a psychologist at the University of Delaware, "A person's inherent need for sensation is not necessarily obvious in the early stages of a relationship, when love itself is a novelty and carries its own thrills—it's when the sex becomes routine that problems occur."

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## **Candy Is Dandy**

In the early stages of a relationship, our brains bathe us in potent sex chemicals that predispose us to fall in love. We like to say that love intoxicates us, but little do we realize that we really are operating under the influence.

The chemicals that are released during infatuation are the same chemicals triggered when we cheat, which, interestingly enough, are also the same chemicals released when a drug addict gets his or her fix. Says anthropologist Helen Fisher, "Romantic love is an addictive drug. Directly, or indirectly, virtually all 'drugs of abuse' affect a single pathway in the brain."

So what are the euphoric-inducing chemicals that feed great sex and leave us craving more?

As mentioned previously, Ogden Nash wrote that "candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker."

Well, dopamine leaves both in the dust.



In her book, *Why We Love*, Fisher and her team studied the brains of prairie voles, little mice-like critters that, like humans, have a tendency to mate for life. In fact, the prairie vole is among the 3 percent of mammals that remains monogamous. Once they've selected a mate, prairie voles copulate like mad (over fifty times in two days—*talk about hot and wild*). Then they set about the business of bonding for life: nesting, mating, protecting, and nurturing. In fact, they go through the same stages we do: lust, romantic love, and attachment.

In contrast, the montane vole, a close cousin of the prairie vole, only engages in one-night stands and has no desire for monogamy, despite the fact that they are more than 99 percent genetically similar to their happily married cousins. So what is it about that 1 percent makes them behave so differently? What makes the prairie vole so hot and heavy at the outset, as well as committed for the long haul?

According to Fisher, during that initial frenzy of copulation, dopamine levels in the prairie vole's brain catapult 50 percent, along with significant increases in norepinephrine. The montane vole, however, does not possess receptors for these potent sex chemicals. As the *Economist* writes in an ode to the faithful little prairie vole, "So long as men can keep their hormones potent/They'll be romantic as that model rodent."

In humans, dopamine and norepinephrine are considered natural amphetamines and play a key role in sexual arousal, as well as goal attainment. Dopamine not only helps us focus, but it also contributes to our choice in mates (that harnessing of raw lust into focused romantic love). When scientists reduced the dopamine levels in the brains of female prairie voles, they were no longer faithful or choosy about their sexual partners. In fact, they slugged it up.

No wonder couples in long distance relationships tend to battle the sexual doldrums better than their cohabitating counterparts: Absence doesn't just make the heart grow fonder, it makes the brain produce higher dopamine levels. Says Helen Fisher, "When a reward

is delayed, dopamine-producing cells in the brain increase their work, pumping out more natural stimulants to energize the brain, focus attention and drive the pursuer to strive even harder to acquire a reward: in this case, winning one's sweetheart. *Dopamine, thy name is persistence.*"

But once we're in a committed relationship, sex becomes easier, in a sense, and more readily available. It's no longer a reward, but a given. As one guy commented, "Isn't that the whole point of marriage, so you don't have to worry about not having sex anymore?"

To that end, sometimes the best thing a couple can do is to take a break from sex and get the chase (and sometimes chaste) going again.

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*Dear Ian,*

*I'm confused. I've been seeing a guy for the past month, and when I told my best friend that I was holding out and wanted to wait to have sex until I knew it was right, she said, "How quaint." I'm really attracted to him, and it's been hard not to go all the way, so should I just give it up?*

—Michelle, thirty-two, pastry chef

My vote is to follow your instincts and enjoy the exquisite torture of delay, which will certainly heighten his sense of anticipation. Today's woman has choices, and you can choose to give it up on the first date or wait it out. I know plenty of happily married couples who slept together on the first date. I also know plenty of women who confuse hooking up with love and wonder why the sex isn't leading to a committed relationship. Regardless of changing sexual mores and female sexual empowerment, romantic love is wired into the brain's reward system, and the more a reward is delayed, the more dopamine is produced. And this natural intoxicator only

sweetens the chase. So with that in mind, think of sex as the sublime fruition of hot pursuit and that much more coveted for the delay. Long story short: Every guy loves a good chase, and there's a biological reason why.

### **Love Is a Battlefield**

Maybe Pat Benatar was onto something. Sometimes the best sex we have is after a heated argument. You may be surprised to learn, however, that the appeal of hot make-up sex has biological underpinnings. Not only does arguing stimulate adrenaline, which produces dopamine, but it's also well known that aggression and orgasm are linked in men. Arguing also creates a situation in which love is jeopardized and then (with some luck) rescued with sex. Without a doubt, fighting for some couples is a form of foreplay, which leads to intensely satisfying sex.

“The best part of a fight is making up.”

“What can I say; we're passionate people. We fight hard, and we fuck hard.”

“The sex is hottest after a fight. We claw and rip into each other with such passion and hunger; it's like we've been starved for each other.”

But *must* we fight to love? Some couples have reported that once the fighting diminished, so did the sex. It's as if the two impulses, aggression and eros, drew from the same reservoir of energy. But isn't there an easier way to get the dopamine flowing?

As we've talked about before, when we progress through a relationship, those sex chemicals that initially drive us wild with passion start to wane. New ones kick in, chemicals that engender a sense of security, well-being, and attachment: vasopressin in men and oxytocin in women. When you are with someone you care about,

oxytocin gives you that blissful feeling of completeness when he holds you in his arms. That's one of the reasons it's known as the “cuddle hormone.” In men, vasopressin helps him feel protective, and loving and, down the line, paternal.

But sometimes the chemistry of attachment works against desire and romantic love. Helen Fisher observes, “There's evidence to suggest that elevated levels of vasopressin reduce testosterone levels in men.” In other words, as men become more attached and more paternal, they often lose desire.

But here's the good news: By understanding the chemistry of desire, we can develop techniques for tricking the brain into stimulating the hot and wild sex chemicals throughout a relationship.

In that sense, our brain really is our biggest sex organ. A true alchemist, it has the power to transmute new, raw experience into shimmering desire.

### **Forget Everything You Ever Learned About Romance**

Too often the things we need to emphasize in relationships—trust, familiarity, predictability, and romance—are not the building blocks of desire. That's why we need to have a place in our lives that's just for sex.

Most of the time, we spend our time making sure our relationship is built on a solid bridge. But if we want to get the dopamine flowing again, we need to have a special place in our lives for sex on that shaky bridge perched perilously high above the crashing waves! There's a bit of a sexual thrillseeker in us all, and once the initial thrills of infatuation dissipate, we have to put time and effort into the process of seeking.

Part of the problem for most couples in long-term relationships is that when it comes to sex, we become trapped in the same old, dusty

sex scripts that map our behavior from foreplay to goodnight kiss. For most couples, sex becomes a rote, serial process. First comes kissing and hugging. This in turn leads to genital stimulation. That leads to intercourse and orgasm (nearly always his and, hopefully hers). Same ol' thing, same ol' way. And, sure, you may know each other's bodies more intimately and be able to provide each other with more dependable, frequent, even more intense orgasms, but, still, the spontaneity and surprise factors have grown stale.

As Dr. David Schnarch has wisely written of low-desire, sex-starved relationships, "Given the mediocre sex that lies behind common complaints of sexual boredom, low sexual desire often actually reflects good judgment. Rather than focusing on the low-desire partner, clinicians should wonder more about the high-desire partner who often wants more of the usual—often he or she does not know enough about sex or intimacy to realize the sex he or she is having may not be worth wanting."

Whether in or out of the bedroom, couples need to create a sense of novelty. We need to throw away those old scripts and incite a true sense of discovery and surprise. Variety isn't just the spice of life; it's the very life blood of great sex.



## The Male Mind: Overcoming Libido Limbo and the Fear of Fantasy

**F**ANTASY IS BOTH the engine of desire and the lubricant of arousal. Even if a couple's sex script becomes rote or formulaic, fantasy allows us to sheath the familiar in an exciting new skin.

Let me put it another way, from a purely physiological point of view, all orgasms look the same: Blood flows to the genitals (in a process known as vasocongestion), muscular tension (also known as myotonia) builds throughout the body to a peak, and a series of pleasurable pelvic contractions are triggered. That's it—the whole kit and kaboodle.

But surely great sex is more than just maximizing pelvic contractions. As Jonathan Margolis has written in *O: The Intimate History of the Orgasm*,

More than a hundred million acts of sexual intercourse take place every day according to the World Health Organization. Men and women have practiced procreative sexual intercourse for approximately a hundred thousand years. A back of the envelope calculation suggests, then, allowing for expanding world population since 98,000 BC, that human beings have had sex some 1,200 trillion times.

Fantasy is what makes each and every one of those 1,200 trillion acts of sex absolutely unique. Fantasy is what differentiates us from one another erotically; fantasy confers on us our sexual individuality; fantasy is our sexual fingerprint.

Yet when it comes to sexual fantasy and the male mind, most women don't have the first clue as to what's really going on inside a guy's head. Frankly that's because the flipside of fantasy is fear, and many men are reluctant to acknowledge their inner thoughts to themselves, let alone to a partner. Numerous studies, as well as my own clinical experience, support the fact that many individuals see their sexual fantasies in a somewhat negative light and, thereby, repress them to varying degrees. How many times have I heard a guy say, "If she knew what was going on in my head, she'd think I was some sort of pervert." But the truth is our sexual thoughts and fantasies are so unique that, to anyone else, each and every one of us is something of a pervert.

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*Dear Ian,*

*I feel terrible. I frequently find myself fantasizing during sex about men other than my husband. Is that abnormal? I feel so guilty, but I can't help it: Fantasizing helps me enjoy sex, especially after seven years of being together. Sometimes, in the middle of sex, my husband will ask me what I'm thinking about (I guess he can tell I'm in another world),*

*and then I lie and say I'm not thinking about anything. Should I tell him the truth? Won't he be hurt? I love my husband, but in a weird way, I feel like I'm cheating on him when I fantasize; so much so that I'm starting to avoid sex.*

—Ellen, thirty-six, interior decorator

Relax. You're not alone.

Studies have shown, time and again, that people fantasize during sex and not necessarily about the person they're with. Not only is it normal, but it's also healthy. Sexual fantasy, in and of itself, should never be construed as a sign that your relationship is in trouble or that you're dissatisfied with your partner. Quite the contrary, sexual fantasy is an indicator that you're alive and kicking. As I've said many times before and will do so countless times again, imagination and sex are consummate bed partners.

Fantasy, a close cousin of dreaming, allows your brain to be stimulated and entertained, so your body can relax. As neuroscientist Mark Solms, a leading expert in the field of sleep research, explains, "[D]reaming does for the brain what Saturday-morning cartoons do for the kids: It keeps them sufficiently entertained so that the serious players in the household can get needed recovery time. Without such diversion, the brain would be urging us up and out into the world to keep it fully engaged."

While your fantasies likely extend beyond the lust for Scooby snacks, what this boils down to is that fantasies, much like dreams, free your brain to explore secret, extraordinary realms without the compunction of practicality, morality, or logic. Flooded by a barrage of images, memories, and thoughts, your body can, basically, kick back and enjoy the show. Fantasy also helps your mind to shut down, an important component of the female orgasm.

A recent study in which male and female brains were scanned during sexual arousal revealed that women virtually fall into a 'trance' during orgasm and that this brain "deactivity" is necessary for a female to orgasm. A big part of female arousal, much more so

than of male arousal, seems to be deep relaxation and a lack of anxiety. Fantasy helps that happen. Says Dr. Gert Holstege of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, “What this means is that deactivation, letting go of all fear and anxiety, [may] be the most important thing, even necessary, to have an orgasm.” So keep fantasizing. Your body and mind are doing what comes naturally for you to experience orgasm.

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### **Am I Normal?**

The idea that fantasies aren't normal comes from Freud, who declared, “a happy person never fantasizes, only a dissatisfied one.” The Bill Gates of sexuality, Freud enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the field. Psychiatrists and the academy jumped on the idea, developing what was commonly referred to as “deficiency theory”—the idea that fantasies signify some deficiency in individuals. A product of the Victorian age in an era of profound socioeconomic upheaval, Freud's theories effectively bullied the sexually-shamed masses into submission. They rigidified the codification of sex and gender, labeling those who dared to deviate from these codes or even fantasize about something different perverts and hysterics.

Today we recognize, even valorize, that sexuality resides on a continuum where normal and abnormal are differentiated by subtle hues of gray. Just look at any Internet porn site, and you will find an encyclopedic menu of readily available prefabricated fantasies that span from orgies and bondage to sex with farm animals. In an economy largely divorced, as it were, from the family, it seems that fast-food fixes, like pornography, have come to force feed our inordinate hunger, enabling us to remain in stable relationships mired in sexual secrecy, shame, and guilt.

Of course, sexual fantasy can be a powerful and healthy tool to facilitate intimacy and pleasure. But how we, as individuals, deal with our fantasies—whether we embrace them, repress them, or use them as a substitute for intimacy—will depend on a variety of factors, especially our upbringing. Based on clinical data, approximately one out of four people report some degree of guilt, ambivalence, or fear associated with their sexual fantasies, so much so that it impairs their sex lives.

As an example, individuals from strict, authoritarian, or devoutly religious families are more likely to see their fantasies as forbidden, condemning them as sinful and immoral, based on the view that evil thoughts spawn evil deeds. Some simply find their fantasies embarrassing. Many fear that their fantasies signify mental illness or worry that, unless curbed, thoughts of illicit conduct will eventually bubble to the surface and demand overt enactment.

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*Dear Ian,*

*I'm engaged to a great guy. We've been together three years, and we're getting married in two months. The problem is I've started having sexual fantasies about his brother. It started with a sexy dream, and now I find myself often thinking about my brother-in-law-to-be when I masturbate. The reason I'm writing is because last night I was having sex with my fiancé, and the whole time I was thinking about his brother! Help! The more I try to push the thought away, the more I end up thinking about it. I feel so guilty. Should I call off the wedding?*

—Alexandra, thirty-one, computer programmer

First, you have to ask yourself if your fantasies are a legitimate indication of ambivalence about your impending marriage. Is there something going on that you may not be admitting to yourself? The

fact that you're fantasizing about your fiancé's brother could be your unconscious way of expressing doubt. It could also be a way of grappling with fears regarding your ability to sustain a long-term relationship through focusing on a taboo with the propensity to destroy your marriage. But if you love your fiancé and feel good about the wedding and your emotional readiness to commit, your fantasy may be nothing more than a "forbidden thought"—it's often the things we're *not* supposed to think about that are the most alluring.

What's more, trying not to think about it is a sure way to escalate the situation and make the thought even more intrusive. In the mid-1980s, a University of Virginia psychologist named Dr. Daniel Wegner, Ph.D., studied the mechanics of thought suppression in an experiment known infamously as the "White Bear Study." Wegner sat people in a room with a tape recorder and told them to say whatever came to mind, with one caveat: No matter what, don't think about a white bear. Yet, no surprise, people mentioned the bear constantly. The more they tried not to think about it, the more they mentioned it. They couldn't stop thinking about the bear, which led the researcher to conclude that by suppressing a forbidden thought, the brain never has an opportunity to process it fully.

So what can we take away from this? Don't let your brother-in-law turn into the white bear. Give yourself permission to enjoy the fantasy, and more likely than not, it will pass. The fact that the fantasy bothers you and feels "out of control" leads me to believe it stems largely from a fear of losing or unconsciously jeopardizing a relationship you cherish, which either statistics or your own experiences imperil with tenuousness. Ultimately, it's not the fantasy itself that needs to be examined, but your reaction to it and what those feelings of shame, guilt, and lack of control may be telling you. However, if you find yourself growing more and more genuinely attracted to your potential brother-in-law beyond the sexually taboo scenario, you should evaluate the vows you're about to take. After

all, sometimes a bear really is a bear, and it may be time for you to get the heck out of forest!

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Guilt over "forbidden fantasies," such as the one just described, represents one of the strongest antagonists to uninhibited sexual fantasy and expression. Such fantasies usually center on sexual behaviors that are deemed morally unacceptable or illicit. An example is the conflicted desire many men feel for anal stimulation, an innocent pleasure that some associate with homosexuality.

Or a fantasy may call into question a sense of political conviction. For example, a feminist may feel ambivalent about indulging in a rape fantasy even in private, feeling she is trivializing or, worse, endorsing violence against women. Cultural values and social mores often sit in diametric contrast to sexual desires, giving them their taboo status and appeal. For example, I meet lots of sensitive guys raised in the wake of feminism, who, much like their feminist counterparts, feel guilty about fantasies involving sexual domination. In the best of circumstances, fantasies can help us bridge the gap between our inner worlds and the world at large, allowing us to explore safely what we most desire and fear.

### **Normal, but Different**

So what *do* men really fantasize about? From the racks of porn magazines and advertising eye candy, it would appear, at first look, that big busted babes enjoy a near monopoly on the male gaze. But it is important to remember that mass media is just that; it's pandering to the lowest common denominator.

The fact that most heterosexual men may be turned on by these images does not mean that this is all, or even foremost, what they individually find erotic. Bluntly put, tits and ass sell. To put it in a

more palatable context, if you are an ardent enthusiast of imported dark chocolate and you're given a Twinkie, in the service of "one in the hand beats two in the bush" (pun very much intended), you may indulge your sweet tooth. But that doesn't mean that that's what you would want, given a relative choice in the matter. Porn thus exploits a fast-food approach to male fantasy.

The male propensity to objectify body parts stands in marked contrast to women. While certainly appreciative of the male form, most women fantasize about sex within a more emotional, passionate context.

In one study of 300 college students, 41 percent of the women but only 16 percent of the men said their fantasies focused on the "personal or emotional characteristics of the partner." Nonetheless, interpolate the economics and socialization aspects—such as the fact that until the advent of Internet pornography, women were far less likely to have easy access to porn and that most pornography is aesthetically geared toward men—and the gap between the numbers contracts. Luckily for women, they have, until recently, been a largely undertargeted market segment for pornography consumption and have thus developed a healthy aversion to the fast-food aspect of cookie-cutter pornography.

Other salient differences in male and female fantasies are that men are purportedly more likely to imagine themselves taking an aggressive or active role, whereas women often envision something being done to them. But, then again, this behavior has been codified as normative and causes the least amount of guilt and resistance. It is also a familiar semiotic shortcut that works.

Male fantasies often involve sex with two or more partners at one time. That said, I've observed that while many men fantasize about having a threesome with their partner, the additional partner they're hoping for is not always a woman! And what is important to understand about the prevalence of male fantasies about lesbianism and orgies is that it alleviates the pressure to perform. The male spectator can envision being a welcomed, coveted participant from

the safety of the sidelines, while he is free to let the images wash over him, free from physical compunction. Thus, it takes on a dreamlike quality as described earlier, in that it allows the male spectator to enjoy the visuals without forging an identification with a male protagonist required to perform.

Men also fantasize about being sexually irresistible. They fantasize about their seductive power and ability to overwhelm a reluctant woman through the power of their sexual magnetism. While women are generally the recipients of the male gaze, men, like women, are turned on by being looked at, admired, and desired. Women are often so sadly preoccupied with how they measure up to mainstream standards of feminine beauty and sexual appeal that they fail to recognize that men are likewise insecure about how they hold up to these same oppressive standards. The masochistic upshot of watching pornography for men is that it features men with gargantuan appendages, Herculean endurance, and the kind of cocky arrogance that, in real life, would result in a slap in the face, not a *spank* on the fanny.

Both sexes enjoy fantasies that center on domination and submission, as the giving over to sexual release is inherently predicated and fueled by the intoxicating principle of wielding control and letting go. (What other realm but sex offers such an enticingly open yet private playing ground?) Men are allegedly more likely to fantasize about being aggressors than women, but in my experience, all men have a secret desire to be dominated, and this is one of the keys to understanding and enhancing male pleasure. I'm not necessarily talking about incorporating cuffs and paddles into having sex, but simply allowing a man to experience the act of physical surrender, the alleviation of the pressure to perform, and the license to enjoy sensual and sexual release.

Of course, this letting go is anathema to the socialization of the Western male, who is raised never to lose control and never to show weakness, especially to a woman. I am convinced that if men were more honest with themselves and their partners about what they truly

wanted, the desire to relinquish control and indulge in sensual pleasure free from inhibition and performance anxiety would easily trump ogling a couple of silicon cushions in sequin pasties.

That being said, where do our fantasies come from and how do we liberate ourselves from our fast-food fantasy fixes and explore what really makes us tick?

To begin, it's important to understand that there are two basic forms of sexual fantasy: ones that spring from our own imaginations and others that are aroused by external sensory stimuli. Based on my informal surveys, I would say that women are more likely to rely on their own imaginations for erotic fodder (especially during masturbation), while the opposite often holds true for men, who go for prefabricated, visual image-based fantasy. But, again, necessity is the mother of invention. As I've said before, women have been fortunate in the sense that they have had no choice but to rely on their own imaginations, while men have been the hapless, easy targets of mass-market masturbatory material.

Psychologists commonly hold that, for both women and men, internal fantasies are drawn from our unique "love maps," a term first coined in 1980 by Dr. John Money of Johns Hopkins University to describe "the sexual template expressed in every individual's erotic fantasies and practices." In other words, our love maps describe the subconscious blueprint of our erotic desires. The love map lies at the root of our sexual preferences, explaining why we prefer one physical type over another and influencing our sexual fantasies and practices. Each of us has a distinctive love map, as unique as a fingerprint, but there's no real consensus on exactly how our love maps or sexual templates are formed.

Some say early childhood experiences and impressions shape our love maps (beginning with an unconscious tendency to seek out characteristics found in our opposite-sex parents). Fetishes also ostensibly derive from this source, an early association of an object or image with a sexual stirring becomes emblazoned into our sexual psyches.

Others believe that our early pubescent masturbation fantasies forge our love maps. Early experiences that result in sexual stimulation and orgasm are instinctively repeated.

Is it entirely circumstantial that a teenage boy first masturbates to a typical Playboy centerfold and is later drawn to busty blondes? This theory would argue that the image has been imprinted on his love map through the reward of orgasm. It also begs the question of whether the depiction of more realistic, natural women in pornography would result in greater sexual attraction to "real" women than to airbrushed, surgically altered models, thus helping men to escape from the fast-food fantasy fix once and for all.

Still others opine that emotional cravings and unconscious psychological needs inform the love map. An example is the guy or gal who gets off on being tied up and bound sometimes simply longs to be hugged and held close. Another is the sexual exhibitionist who had to clamor for parental attention as a child or the voyeur who grew up in a home devoid of intimacy and physical touch. It should come as little surprise that the male desire to be dominated often stems from growing up in a hypergendered household where the pressure to act like a man was ingrained from an early age.

All of these theories have merit, and, in my estimation, there is some truth to each. In the end, our love maps are most likely a dynamic, ever-evolving confluence of factors. Ironically, we often don't know our own love maps, which is why the expression of fantasy, especially via internal triggers that spring from our imaginations is all the more crucial: It's our only real way of knowing and sharing our sexual fingerprint.

This is why porn, particularly the ready-access of Internet porn, is such a personal bete noire: It's not just the simplistic, erroneous view of female sexuality that bugs me, but the degree to which it creates dependence on external triggers that can both obscure and override the organic development of the love map.



**A**S WE APPROACH the end of Part I, it's only apt that you now find yourself at the beginning of navigating the primordial mist of fantasy. Going forward, it's up to you to stop succumbing to the fast-food fantasy fix and begin exploring your own and your partner's unique sexual love maps and figuring out all the extraordinary, unpredictable ways the two connect and collide. Through this exciting and dynamic process of self-revelation, exploration, and discovery, you will find your mutual love map, a topography of fantasy and desire particular to you and your partner that can never be duplicated—and trust me, there's enough depth in those crashing waters to support a lifetime of journeys over the shaky bridge.

Bon voyage!

# PART

## Techniques

# TWO

## Putting Ideas into Action



LET'S TALK techniques.

Part II of *He Comes Next* is comprised of two main sections: “Foreplay” and “Coreplay.”

Those of you who read *She Comes First* will remember that “coreplay” is a term I coined to recontextualize those acts commonly referred to as “foreplay,” which too often are trivialized as a mere prelude to “real sex,” or intercourse. It is my view that sexual pleasuring, such as oral and manual stimulation, should be embraced as self-contained features of a dynamic, ever-evolving sexual menu. We need to *move away* from a scripted approach to lovemaking and *move toward* a concept of mutual pleasuring that is achievable through a broad spectrum of fluid activities, with none deemed hierarchically superior to the other. Only then can we keep sex from becoming boring and predictable and ensure that our behavior is wholly attuned to our partner’s unique love map.

In Part I, we examined the construction of male desire and arousal. Now we will look at ways to harness, stimulate, and gratify those desires. We will journey chapter by chapter through the full arc of the male sexual response: desire, arousal, plateau, orgasm, and resolution—and connect thought with action. So, grab your galoshes and buckle your seatbelts because we’re in for one hell of a ride.

Before we begin this exciting adventure, here are a few guiding principles from Part I to keep in mind.

1. Like a great literary protagonist, the male pelvis is rife with internal conflict and struggle. A source of epic pleasure and anxiety, it is guarded by layers of protection at once physical and psychological, conscious and unconscious. As a result, many men are unaware of their extraordinary potential to engage in deeper, more responsive sexual interactions, settling into a narrow set of sex scripts or automated patterns of behavior. Left unchallenged, these protective scripts calcify into mechanistic, static behaviors, which often take the form of male-initiated acts that start with dimmed lights and conclude with intercourse. In other words, it’s the same ol’ running of the bases we’ve been doing since high school. To have truly great, breakthrough sex, we need to break through all the layers of protection and let go of the tired old sex scripts to create something new.
2. Although the process of male sexual response is laden with nuanced sensations and arousal at every turn, many guys approach orgasm the way a kid does a gourmet dinner—rushing through a spectacular meal to get to dessert. While women are well aware that sex is more than achieving orgasms, for many men, sexual interaction and ejaculation are synonymous. Sex equals orgasm. To help your partner savor the entire meal, you need to help him relax, slow down, and let go, so he doesn’t crash through the main course to nab the cherry on the sundae. Remind him. Good things come to those who wait (especially those who say “please”)!

3. Desire is not merely a light switch that turns on and off with a tug of the genitals. It's the beginning, middle, and end of our sexual encounters and the glue in between. For true desire to flourish, we need to create a sense of hungry anticipation and continue to feed each other's sexual appetites, not just at night in the bedroom, but throughout our daily lives. After all, why should sex be anymore compartmentalized than eating? If we were doomed to ingest the same meal at the same time in the same place until death, chances are we'd get so bored that we'd struggle to consume enough to survive. But we don't approach food that way. We crave and indulge different tastes, different flavors. We eat in different places, at home, on the run, from a quick bite to a Bacchanalian feast. Sometimes we stuff ourselves; other times we have a tasty appetizer and force ourselves to wait for later. Sex should be regarded in the same vein. New flavors, new settings, and new ingredients keep us excited and hungry for more. We don't need a variety of sexual partners to spice up our sex lives; we just need to update the menu more regularly and offer a more inventive selection of daily specials.
4. Sexual excitement is part of the neurology and brain chemistry of romantic love. The stimulation of dopamine is key to our interest in, and pursuit of, sex, as well as our thrill of enjoyment. In the early stages of a relationship, natural sex chemicals fuel our feelings of infatuation. When those chemicals wane, the same glands help generate a chemical cocktail that produces feelings of comfort and attachment. As we move out of the infatuation phase and into the attachment phase, we literally have to trick our brains to "light up again." But it takes more than conventional notions of romance to get the dopamine flowing. We need to find innovative ways to reintroduce elements of surprise, novelty, and mystery to recreate those early feelings of lust. We need to learn how to walk that shaky bridge together.
5. Fantasy is the engine of desire and the lubricant of arousal. Ongoing passion doesn't derive from getting off; it stems from "thinking off." Finding out his fantasies and his sexual fingerprint is the key to unlocking his unique turn-ons. While visual triggers like porn have become a quick fix for many a Hungry Jack, they're no substitute for the real thing. Eating on the run may do in a pinch, but eventually all of us crave something more nutritious and filling. While he may be accustomed to the ease of erotic fast food, rest assured that if you take the time to find out his favorite dishes and prepare them with artful imagination, he'll be coming back for more and more. It's time to stop settling for TV dinners loaded with silicone fillers and chemical additives and begin cooking our fantasies together from scratch. Because as much as we may like the occasional shake on the run, there's nothing as satisfying as a good, home-cooked meal.
6. Finally, always remember that great sex isn't about doing something to him; it's about experiencing something with him. It's about getting to know each other's unique tastes and preferences and exploring new worlds of exotic spices, textures, and flavors. It's the exhilarating, secret journey that you and your partner undertake to reach uncharted realms of passion, pleasure, and intimacy. You're not simply going to play the part of the woman on the shaky bridge; you are the woman on the shaky bridge. And you're about to embark on the most exciting adventure of your life with your guy right there by your side.



**W**HEN YOU'RE SICK and laid up in bed, very often the first thing to go is the appetite. Sometimes that takes the form of not eating at all, while other times it translates into scarfing down whatever the hell happens to be lying around without regard to taste or nutritional value.

It stands to reason that hunger for sex functions along similar principles. If your guy isn't sexually healthy, he is more likely to skip "meals" altogether or mechanically address his baseline needs in the least exertive, most efficient means possible. His desire for a gourmet, several course meal will dwindle to the mindless consumption of a power bar in front of the computer—not much of a hungry man (so to speak).

In his book on male sexual health, *The Hardness Factor*, Dr. Steven Lamm cites a British study in which men who reported having three or more orgasms per week experienced a 50 percent reduction in heart attacks and strokes compared to those who had sex less frequently. Lamm's book was inspired by the correlations he

made in his own practice between the diminished erectile quality of his male patients and conditions such as obesity, high cholesterol, hypertension, depression, sleep disorders, diabetes, and heart disease: "On the surface, it looks as though the principal message of this study is that having sex reduces the incidence of heart attack and stroke and lets you live longer. In fact, just the opposite is true: *being healthy allows you to have as much sex as you want.*"

### **So, Is Your Guy Sexually Fit?**

Ask a woman if she is "fit to f\*\*k" and she will tell you straight away to what extent the state of her body impacts and impairs her sexual state of mind. Fat, skinny, fatigued, out of shape, dehydrated, you name it: Women know and understand all too well how their sense of physical well-being influences their level of desire. For men, however, much of this is virgin territory. While today, more than ever, men worry about their weight and fitness, their focus tends to be more superficial. If it looks okay on the outside, they're good to go. And because most men tend to have sex with their penises instead of their whole bodies and minds, they often measure their sexual health by the inch, i.e., by how well they can get it up, keep it up, and get it off, even if it requires a little porn or a pill to make that happen. But to have truly embodied and ultimately out-of-body sex, a man has to become more attuned to his entire body, head to head and nape to toe.

So before you embark on your lifelong sexual journey, here are some questions to consider regarding his fitness for long-term travel.

**Does he exercise?** Regular aerobic workouts keep the blood flowing and the arteries producing nitric oxide. Nitric oxide is the life blood (literally) of the male erection and is essential to sexual arousal. To that end, you'd be amazed how many guys tell me that they often feel their horniest post-exercise. Says Steve, a real estate broker in

New York City, “Running the Central Park reservoir is like foreplay with myself. Pushing myself physically gets me juiced-up, and then I want to channel all that energy into sex. It’s like the workout before the workout.” Says Peter, a psychologist in Tulsa, Oklahoma, “I feel at my most alive when I’m pushing myself physically during a workout, and, consequently, I feel at my most alive sexually when I make love right after a workout.”

These observations aren’t surprising: Not only is overall vascularity heightened during aerobic exercise, but also feel-good endorphins that contribute to sexual arousal are released. So next time he heads off to the gym, tell him to wait on the shower until he gets home. Then you can really get his heart pumping with some steamy shower sex!

Exercise also plays a major role in generating positive self-esteem, perhaps the most powerful sexual enhancer. Women aren’t the only ones to suffer from diminished desire due to insecurity about fitness and physical appearance. You wouldn’t believe how many men suffer from poor body image. And as women know all too well, low self-esteem dampens sexual desire.

On a personal note, I was way over my ideal weight about three years ago, and I was basically stuck in a low-level sex rut (being an anxious, sleep-deprived father didn’t help, I should add). I rarely exercised. Not only did I not have the energy for sex, but also I just felt unattractive. I definitely didn’t feel comfortable in my own skin or being seen in the buff, for that matter. Then my wife started taking Pilates classes, and I made a decision to get in better shape myself: I wasn’t going to be left behind. So I went on an exercise and fitness program. Not only did I lose the weight fairly quickly, but also the smallest improvements along the way boosted my self-esteem and libido tenfold. It wasn’t about getting the perfect body or looking like a Calvin Klein model, but about getting myself to a place where I was more energetic and confident. I went from a lights-off to a lights-on attitude and from being sexually stagnant to sexually charged. It wasn’t about my attraction to my wife (which was never

in doubt), but rather my sense of being attractive, both to my wife and in general. So what’s the lesson? Not only are both exercise and diet vital to sexual vitality, but also, for both men and women, when weight is up, body image and libido go down (and for men, down is never good).

**Is he eating well?** A poor diet is a major contributor to heart disease, high cholesterol, arterial plaque, and high blood pressure, among other conditions, all of which inhibit blood flow to the penis and negatively impact erectile quality and desire. So what’s the desire-diet key? Eat for the heart, and you’re eating for desire. Now I’m not about to prescribe a precise food regimen (there are enough diet choices on the bookshelves without adding another to the mix), but I will tell you that I was personally inspired and transformed by Dr. Joel Fuhman’s book *Eat to Live*, which I recommend wholeheartedly. The key to his diet is the idea of nutrient density. In short, when the ratio of nutrients to calories in a food is high, as is the case with most vegetables, fat burns off, and health is maximized. Hence, the more nutrient-dense foods you consume, the more you will be satisfied with less calories, and the less you will crave more high-calorie foods. As a result of practicing the *Eat to Live* approach, I no longer just love to eat; I eat to love, too!

**Is he stressed out?** Not only does stress mar sexual performance, but the medications commonly used to treat it, such as antianxiety drugs, tend to depress the libido and inhibit desire. But with or without pharmaceutical aids, men, like women, feel less sexual when they’re emotionally distressed.

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*Dear Ian,*

*My husband and I have never before had a problem with sex (we’ve only been married for two years, so I guess we*

*were still in the honeymoon stage—at least up until recently). But in the last couple of months, things have taken a turn for the worse, and we're stuck in a rut. My husband didn't get a promotion he was counting on, and now he says he wants to wait before we try to have a baby, which has crushed me. We just seem to be angry at each other all the time. In bed, it's like I'm lying next to a stranger. I've never felt more alone.*

—Debbie, twenty-nine, public relations manager

Well, Debbie, you're certainly not alone. The fact is you've been hit by the most prevalent double whammy that incites marital discontent. While financial issues are the number one cited reason for divorce in the United States, sexual issues are the second (and it is safe to assume that sexual dissatisfaction is highly underreported). But, the truth is the two are insidiously intertwined: Financial stress often facilitates and intensifies sexual discontent.

In my practice, I've found that one of the main reasons for loss of libido in men is financial worries. And in your situation, the pressure to have a baby "on schedule" is compounding this anxiety. Take these two factors—loss of an anticipated promotion and accompanying procreative consequences—and you begin to understand why he's avoiding physical intimacy. But not having sex only makes matters worse, exacerbating your respective isolation and eroding the foundation of your marriage.

Men often suffer silently through problems or lash out irrationally, rather than engage in constructive communication. Right now, he perceives you and your wants as part of the problem. You need to show him that you're part of the solution instead.

Just because he says he wants to put off trying to have a baby doesn't mean he doesn't want one. Far more likely, he is not only disappointed, but he also feels guilty and possibly even emasculated about having to delay your family plans. While women often believe that there will never be a perfect time to have a child, one of the main reasons why men put off fatherhood is that they don't feel

ready. This sense of readiness is often intrinsically connected to a sense of financial confidence.

In an interview for the Actors Studio, Francis Ford Coppola said that having kids was the best thing that ever happened to his film career because it really motivated him to get his butt in gear. That said, in the short-term, you need to let go of your schedule, take some pressure off, and reestablish your bond as a couple and a team. One way to do this is by returning sex to the realm of pleasure and letting go of its procreative implications. Not only will a return to having sex for pleasure reinvigorate your relationship, but it will also revitalize his approach to life and help confer on him the confidence and sense of assurance he needs to meet and overcome his other life challenges. It will remind him that you value him for who he is rather than for what he can provide you.

**One final tip:** When men are stressed out at work, they often feel more pressured about their abilities to pleasure their partners and they are more susceptible to sexual performance anxiety. So, at least at the outset, focus on his pleasure. You'll find that the love you give will soon be surpassed by the love you receive (and, eventually, conceive).

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**Is he sleeping well?** As vital to our physical well-being as food and water, a good night's rest often finds its expression in his morning erection. So don't hesitate to give him a routine morning exam.

**Is he taking his vitamins?** L-arginine, an amino acid, is a building block of protein and converts to nitric oxide, which, as we discussed earlier, is vital to sexual arousal. Pycnogenol is a combination of many antioxidants extracted from the bark of a pine tree and is known to protect the heart, fight those nasty free radicals, and increase sexual arousal. Omega-3s, which are found in certain fish,

also reduce plaque that builds up in arterial walls and impairs blood flow. Vitamins C and E are powerful antioxidant supplements that protect against free radicals and reduce fatty deposits in the blood. Most of these vitamins and minerals will be found in a quality multivitamin. With a combination of a balanced diet, exercise, stress management, and some good old-fashioned erotic creativity (more of that to come), your guy's going to be fit as a fiddle. And fit to f\*\*k.



**O**NE OF the cardinal rules of writing (post-high school) is never introduce a topic with a dictionary definition. Yet when it comes to foreplay, so many of us are leading dictionary-definition sex lives that I've decided to break the rule.

Main entry: foreplay

Pronunciation: fôr-" plA

Function: *noun*

1: sexual stimulation preceding intercourse

2: action or behavior that precedes an event

If you've read Part I, my problem with this definition will come as no surprise: It positions intercourse as the main event and

implicitly diminishes everything that comes before (and after) as prefatory or auxiliary. But as we've discussed earlier, as long as inter-course remains the fixed end point, our sex scripts are going to be deathly predictable and unimaginative. Men will remain rife with performance anxiety. Women will continue to fake orgasms. And both women and men will fail to realize the extraordinary power of sex as a starting point for exploring new realms of mutual pleasure and fantasy.

As the definition suggests, foreplay is about sexual stimulation or arousal, which, in our culture, is interpreted as whetting the parties' sexual appetites for the main course. Having made its debut appearance in the dictionary in 1929, this rather arcane notion of foreplay has remained strangely static. Run a Google search on the term, and you will yield well over a million hits, with foreplay still largely characterized as a range of physical activities (such as undressing, kissing, fondling, and oral sex) that in men stimulate erection and in women lubrication.

With its emphasis on sexual "readiness," foreplay, as defined and practiced, focuses more on stimulating physical arousal than sparking desire. If you'll recall, a little earlier we spoke of the three distinct types of male erections: psychogenic (or mentally-inspired erections), reflex erections (that occur as a result of direct genital stimulation), and nocturnal erections (that occur spontaneously). Our basic societal conception of foreplay endorses the reflex-based approach to sexual interaction, at the expense of a truly impulse-based psychogenic approach. As a result, we often struggle to create desire from physical arousal. We pop pills and conjure pornographic images to speed the desired effect (arousal to erection to ejaculation in six minutes or less), cajoling the brain to follow the body, when it should be the other way around.

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*Dear Ian,*

*My boyfriend and I are living together, and we're both really focused on our jobs at this point in our lives. We haven't had time for sex, or much else for that matter, for several months. We've tried to schedule sex, but it's just not working. My boyfriend says that where there's a will there's a way, but the problem is that we've made time for the way, but I just don't have the will anymore.*

—Rebecca, twenty-six, C.P.A.

For couples leading hectic professional lives, scheduled sex has become fairly commonplace. Unfortunately, structuring sex into a weekly schedule only compounds performance pressures and undermines spontaneous desire, reducing sex to another task that must be squeezed into the to-do list, much like taking multivitamins or doing sit-ups.

Rebecca, what are you and your boyfriend doing outside your compartmentalized appointments to remain emotionally fused and passionate? I'm actually not as concerned about the lack of sex, per se, as the lack of much else as you say that goes right along with it. No wonder the scheduled sessions aren't working: You're half-heartedly going through the motions, relying on a mechanical sense of arousal to get you going rather than a genuine desire to pleasure each other and connect intimately. In a healthy, long-term relationship, desire isn't about fulfilling a need to have sex, *but rather desiring sex with a particular person.*

Another downside of scheduled sex is that it rarely meets our expectations for intimacy and often reinforces the very sense of disconnectedness we're trying to overcome. I'm not saying that showing up isn't half the battle, but if that's all you're doing, then you're missing out on the other half.



So why don't you keep your one-on-one sessions on the calendar as an opportunity to spend quality time together, but remove the pressure to have sex? If you do have sex, fine, but if not, don't sweat it.

Also, why not think about taking a personal day or calling in sick together, and then go out and "play hookie" as a couple: Sleep in, take a long walk, a luxurious lunch (with wine), hold hands, go to the movies, and just *enjoy* each other's company. An hour or so a weekend after an exhausting and stressful week of work is hardly enough time to relax, let alone recharge your relationship batteries. My guess is that if you spend more unstructured, pressure-free time bonding, you will find you have more time in your busy schedules for pleasuring each other than you think.

Also, and I think most importantly, as a favorite old blues song goes, "Love is like a faucet; it turns off, and it turns on. Only sometimes when you think it's on, baby, it has shut off and gone." A vital prerequisite to holistic sexual health is the ability to integrate your sexual identity into your overall identity and see yourself as a sexual being, even as you navigate the most mundane avenues of daily life. It's about turning any street you happen to be walking down into that shaky bridge. If you spend the majority of your waking hours turned off to sex, it will not automatically turn back on during your weekly allotted time slot. As I've said before and will repeat many times again, sex breeds sex, and desire breeds desire. Creating a sense of anticipation through exploring fantasies, both alone and with your partner, enhances your overall desire and short-circuits the arousal-based shorthand your current approach is likely to induce.

.....

When it comes to foreplay, it's time to stop confusing arousal with desire. Foreplay is not a few mechanical strokes or flicks of the tongue that give rise to an erection and lubrication. Foreplay is the

mental component of sex. Foreplay happens outside the bedroom; I'll say it again: *Foreplay happens outside the bedroom* (or wherever else you'll be pleasuring each other). All of that scrumptious kissing, touching, stripping down, nibbling, teasing, and sucking—that's not foreplay: It's coreplay.

I'm not saying that foreplay can't, or shouldn't, include physical interaction (in fact, we need much more physical intimacy in our lives outside the bedroom), but it's important to break out of the physical reflex-based approach. It's time to let the brain lead and the body follow.

As I touched on above, I want to disabuse you, once and forever, of another well-worn idea: that foreplay and sex go hand-in-hand. It's time to decouple foreplay and sex.

By no means does foreplay, or coreplay for that matter, always need to lead to intercourse or even orgasm. Remember back in high school when the possibility of a quick kiss or a stolen smooch with your sweetheart was enough to make you sneak out a window past curfew? That's the feeling we're talking about.

Intercourse may factor into a sexual interaction, but certainly needn't, nor should it, serve as the final punctuation, the proverbial exclamation point to a rather dull, unimaginative sentence. Think of great sex as a favorite novel: Every word, every page, and every chapter adds up to the whole. The pleasure is in the experience of reading rather than finishing the book (which is often accompanied by a bittersweet tinge of loss and an overarching desire to read more of that author's work or another type of book entirely). The general desire to read is augmented by every fabulous book you enjoy, the enticement of "opening" something new because of the excitement of never knowing what you will discover "between the covers."

**S**EXUAL DESIRE SHOULD similarly stand above and beyond any single act of sex. Sometimes a sexual interaction is a mere phrase, sometimes a chapter, sometimes a full book you reread over

and over before moving onto the next, keeping its memory alive in your thoughts, transforming you, if just a little, forever. On a simpler level, studies have shown that intermittent rewards are more powerful than consistent rewards. Being erotically charged by your partner does not mean that every interaction has to end with sexual gratification. Grabbing each other in a movie theater or sneaking into a bathroom together at a party for a make-out session is what keeps desire alive. It keeps our brains “lit up” and leads to more resonant, spontaneous, and creative erotic encounters.

I often talk about being erotically engaged with life, and I don’t mean suddenly transforming into a nymphomaniac. The term “erotic” is derived from *eros*, which is the Greek word for romantic or sexual love. But Freud had a different definition of *eros*. He said that *eros* is “the life instinct innate in all humans.”

For once, the vaunted cigared-one and I couldn’t agree more. *Eros* isn’t just about sexual lust; it’s about a lust for life. And foreplay is not about sex. It’s about infusing our relationship with a sense of *eros*.

## Extreme Foreplay

**O**URS IS AN EXTREME CULTURE. From extreme sports and extreme makeovers to the extreme ways in which we work and play (even our favorite reality TV shows are growing more extreme by the season), we thrive on the intense rush that comes from taking risks and pushing ourselves to our physical and emotional limits. So then, if adrenaline and endorphins are our bodies’ natural drugs of choice, isn’t it time we consider taking on a little extreme sex?

If you think I’m talking about having sex while going skydiving, well, you’re right; I mean sort of.

Sometimes, in my clinical practice, I like to do a fun exercise with couples to get them thinking and talking—often for the first time—about what really turns them on.

I start by showing them an unedited DVD of real people skydiving for the first time, complete with screaming, cursing, and

even hysterical crying that's typical of that primal jump, as well as the whoops, hollers, and howls of joyous exhilaration that follow.

Next, I ask each of them to take a moment and think about one thing that really gets him or her sexually excited. It could be a fantasy or a particular sex act, even a strange position they always wanted to try, but it has to be some secret thing they've never shared with anyone else before.

Then I ask them to phrase their sex thought as an "I want" statement (for instance, "I want you to do me up against the wall in the basement stairwell"), but not to utter that statement aloud...yet.

Next, I place a narrow one-foot bench in the center of my office, and I ask the couple to hold hands and step up onto it together.

Then I say, "Close your eyes. Imagine you're on a plane, flying thousands of feet above ground, perched by the cabin door, about to parachute down through the great blue beyond together. Now, instead of jumping off the bench, when I say go I want you to shout out your 'I want' sex statements at the same time."

Now some of you may be thinking I'm taking this whole skydiving metaphor a little too far (or perhaps not far enough for some of you true extremists). But, the truth is, for most of us, the very act of revealing our secret sexual selves to an intimate partner is as daunting and terrifying as jumping out of a soaring plane, if not more.

Many of the exercises I do with couples involve stepping, slowly but surely, outside their sexual comfort zones. This is what I call taking "safe risks." Time and again I have seen that even the smallest, "safest" risk will reward a couple with the sense of newness and novelty that is crucial to dopamine production and sexual excitement. It helps foster an attitude toward sex that is inquisitive, adventurous, bold, and empowering. It is part of my signature, four-pronged approach to counseling, which I call the "See Me, Feel Me, Touch Me, Heal Me" framework. And the very first, and I think most essential and extreme step, is allowing yourself to see and be seen by your partner, dirty secrets and all.

In no particular order, here's a list of what some of the guys have shouted in their "I want" sex-jump-statements.

"I want to spank you."

"I want to tie you up."

"I want you to tie me up."

"I want to watch you touch yourself."

"I want to role play."

"I want to have sex with the lights on."

"I want to have sex in public."

"I want you to go down on me more often."

"I want to have a threesome."

"I want you to wear sexy lingerie."

"I want to make you come with my tongue."

"I want [you] to shave your genitals."

"I want to have anal sex."

"I want to watch you get it on with another girl or guy."

"I want [you] to talk dirty."

"I want to take naked photos of you."

"I want to make a sex video."

"I want us to watch porn together."

A list of women's "I want" statements range from requests for more oral sex to a wish to dominate or be dominated. In fact, the couples are frequently startled to discover that their secret innermost desires aren't so different.

After the couple makes their jump statements, I repeat each of their statements aloud just so there's no confusion. Then, I ask them to clasp their hands together and step down from the stool: One small step for woman- and mankind, one giant leap for their sex life.

Now, we begin to discuss what these statements and desires actually mean to and for each other. We talk about how they can continue to experience the exhilarating freefall sexual journey

they've initiated in my office in their daily lives, whether through fantasy or action.

What are your jump statements? How do they make you feel? Are they consistent with your values and sense of self, or do they run counter to your social identity? Are you prepared to utter them to your partner and potentially pursue them? Are you ready to hear what your partner has to say and embrace his desires with a positive attitude?

But, before I continue, let me respond to a frequently cited concern. What if your jump statements don't involve your partner at all? What if your secret desires are about wanting to have anonymous encounters with sexy strangers, for instance? (Such as, "Honey, what I really want is to have sex with someone—hell, anyone, for God's sakes—who isn't you.") Oh dear, you're thinking. Are those the death bells playing in the public square? And the answer: No! Not at all. What you're hearing is the provocative overture to a symphony of creative role playing! It's important to remember when you're doing this exercise, whether alone or with your partner, not to censor your true desires for fear of offending or excluding your partner. Experience has shown me that a little imagination goes a long way in making almost any desire the fodder for endless hours of creative sex-play.

If you're still not entirely sure, then from this moment on, I want you to think of yourself as a white tigress. That's right; you heard me—a white tigress.

Allow me to explain.



**T**HE WHITE TIGRESS is the Chinese term for a woman who practices disciplined sexual practices for the purpose of fostering her own health, youthfulness, and rejuvenation. The sexual principles of the White Tigress were developed in Ancient China by female Taoists, a secret society of women sexual warriors, and have been scantily documented in western culture.

Taoist author and historian Hsi Lai was given the opportunity to observe one of the last remaining White Tigresses and learn many of the secretive practices with the intention of communicating her wisdom to Western women. He writes in his book, *The Sexual Teachings of the White Tigress: Secrets of the Female Taoist Masters*, "A White Tigress may appear and function in any walk of life. She is not restricted by either her social environment or religious beliefs."

While some of the principles of the White Tigress run counter to modern western thinking and empirical knowledge, such as the idea

that absorption of male sperm by a woman (mainly through oral sex and contact with the skin) can lead to physical rejuvenation and spiritual immortality, the general approach to sex is empowered and emboldened. A woman after Samantha's heart, think of the White Tigress as a character from Sex and the Ancient City.

White Tigresses were trained in "Absorption of the Male Sexual Energy," also known as "the Dragon's Breath:"

The orgasm emits sexual energy from the body, not only in fluids, but as a substantive psychological force. The Tigress discovers how to absorb and make full-positive use of the fluids and energies of her own orgasm and the male's orgasm to benefit her health and well-being. Absorption is the ability to mentally and physically induce the energy of the orgasm into herself, whereby she then uses that masculine energy to both fortify and enhance her own feminine energy.

White Tigresses traditionally maintained sexual relationships with two categories of men, Green Dragons and Jade Dragons. The former were men who were seduced by a White Tigress purely for their semen and sexual energy. Learn to treat your guy as your Green Dragon. Use him for the pleasure he gives you. Use him for your own sexual contentment. Trust me; he won't mind. Your willingness to initiate and your boldness in taking and making him your personal sex toy will drive him to new levels of ecstasy. He won't know what hit him, and you don't have to tell him. Remember, the White Tigresses were a secretive bunch, and you can keep your new identity to yourself.

The latter category of male consort, the Jade Dragon, was an equal partner to the White Tigress in sexual practices. Their sexual relationship was mutually beneficial.

So I'm telling you now to think about your guy as the Jade Dragon, at least sometimes, too. Your willingness to give and take, to initiate and receive, to communicate, express, learn, and share,

will make for a sexual relationship that never stops growing, never stops venturing into unexplored avenues of secret pleasures.

As a modern White Tigress, you must learn how to find the Green Dragon and Jade Dragon in the same guy, from moment to moment and moon to moon, depending on your ever-evolving individual and mutual desires.

At the heart of the teachings of the White Tigress, however, is a willingness to make sex a critical and essential component of your life. It is allotting plenty of time and a revered place in your busy, hectic lives solely for exploring and experiencing sexual pleasure together. It's making a conscious decision not to relegate sex to a quickie on Wednesday nights and a romp on Saturday afternoons before dinner. It is according your sexual relationship with your partner the vital importance it deserves as the life blood of emotional intimacy.

But before you can do as a White Tigress, you have to start thinking and acting like one.

So, how do you acquire this mindset? By going back and moving forward:

To a Tigress, a man pushing his penis in and out of her vagina to orgasm is not sex. To her, sex means recreating [youthful] feelings of adventure, romance and playfulness.... In simple terms, she changes her perception of sex and sees through the eyes of a young girl seeking adventure, not an adult woman seeking to satisfy her emotional sexual desires and urges. Briefly said, she seeks the excitement of sex.

When it comes to sex with a monogamous partner, it's too easy to sink into our adult mind-sets and routines, where we are no longer open to learning or experiencing anew. We become focused on our emotional needs, using sex to express those needs, to gauge our compatibility and desirability, instead of allowing sex to release us from the daily rigors of adult concerns, fears, and obligations: In her

practice, the Tigress allows for periods of engaging in mild exhibitionism, periods for flirting and showing off to acquire men, and periods for secret sexual interludes. She does all this, obviously, within the context of being an adult, but attempts to be childlike in her energy and actions.

So go ahead and jump into new and secret worlds of sexual exploration. Give yourself permission to make the leap. Learn to listen without judging and take chances. Let yourself be the subject of desire, and have the confidence to know that you can give through taking, without gauging yourself through a man's eyes or erection. Be the Tigress on the shaky bridge.

Speaking of erections, the ancient Taoist texts have a saying about the male member: "When the Tigress plays, the dragon whips its tail."

So get playing...

## 10 The Foreplay Files: An Oral History

**I** WANT YOU to close your eyes for a moment and try to visualize yourself as the Tigress on the shaky bridge (for all you film buffs out there, think Orson Welles's *Lady from Shanghai*). Now I ask you to join me in taking a glorious trip back in time, back to the tumultuous days of youth when sex was still naughty—fraught with mystery, peril, excitement, danger, intensity, and above all else, newness. I want you to dig into the recesses of your memory and rediscover the inimitable joys of pleasuring and being pleased. I want you to recall the indescribable sense of surprise, exhilaration, and passion that first time you felt, heard, smelled, watched, tasted a lover gripped in the throes of orgasm; the first time you yielded to the power of another person's touch.

We will begin our journey where passion is born: in the mind. Because desire is the overarching framework in which the physical mechanics of arousal and release reside, it is important not to get

side-tracked by attempting to memorize an encyclopedic list of sex tips and techniques. Great sex, as we discussed earlier, is like a favorite book: It's not about speed-reading or getting to the end, it's about cherishing everything in between. It's about nuance, detail, surprise, adventure, suspense, mystery, tragedy, comedy, beauty, insight, and, maybe sometimes, a lick of pain. So rather than open with a description of the physiological hydraulics of arousal and orgasm, i.e., the "start" and "end" points of an interaction, I want to focus your attention on the broader landscape. Like the Tigress on the shaky bridge, I want you to go back in time and collect all those late-night longings and wicked fantasies you've been hiding in the attic trunk and spread them all over your bed, your couch, your shower, your kitchen counter, your taxi, your movie theater seat, your boss' desk (hell, we'll never tell). I want you to get ready to whisper in your lover's ear all the dirty little secrets you've never dared to share with anyone else before and reignite that extraordinary sense of youthful wonder and surprise that embodies truly great sex.

### **These Pleasures Which We Lightly Call Physical**

The French novelist Colette understood that by labeling our erotic lives as essentially physical, we greatly underestimate the significance of other personal and societal forces—from psychological to aesthetic—that influence and define our desires and liberate sex from the generic sphere, to give it lasting meaning. While taking sex out of the bedroom is an important part of integrating our sexual identities into our everyday lives, there are other ways we can keep our desire from growing stagnant. By exploring fantasies with our partners—sometimes through words, sometimes through actions—we make our erotic lives dynamic, unpredictable, as forever evolving as we are, creating an endless

spectrum of possibilities for mutual discovery, pleasure, and intimacy. Redefining the locus of sex beyond the physical rudiments of arousal and orgasm also alleviates performance anxiety and can help men, in particular, truly relax and enjoy a richer, sensual out-of-body experience. So in homage to Colette's poetic justice,

We sample here what may await; The Tigress and her lucky mate.

### **I Had a Dream**

Says Jenny, a thirty-two-year-old investment banker: "I have a very creative sex life, and I owe it all to Dr. Martin Luther King. No kidding. I used to get really nervous talking about sex and fantasies with my boyfriend, Bill, and he's also really shy about that sort of stuff, so we never said much of anything. We're basically sexual introverts, but there was so much I wanted to explore with him, and I knew we weren't fulfilling our sexual potential.

"Then one day I was home from work for Martin Luther King Day and I heard part of his famous historic speech on television—that whole 'I have a dream' mantra really stuck with me. The next morning I turned to Bill and said shyly, 'I had a dream.' He wasn't really listening to me, so I said it again: 'I had a dream—a sexy dream.' That's when Bill got curious and said, 'Oh, yeah?' and I made up this fantasy about watching him have sex with another woman.

"At first I was nervous describing it to him, but because I was supposedly 'recounting a dream,' it was easier than I thought it would be. I mean we're not responsible for our dreams, right, at least not consciously? Anyway, it really turned us both on, and he couldn't stop asking me about it. He even called me several times from work, and I let myself get more and more explicit.

“Of course it was only a matter of time before he asked if watching him get it on with another woman was something I actually wanted to try. I thought about it for a moment. Then I said no; it was just a sexy dream that I wanted to share with him. And we left it at that.

“But sometimes there are sexual things I do want to try and my ‘sexy dreams’ have become our way of breaking the ice. And Bill has suddenly begun having ‘sexy dreams’ of his own.”

Says Ian: Jenny’s “I had a dream” approach to sharing a sexy fantasy is brilliant because it gives her the freedom to express her secret desires and fantasies without feeling judged. Even when Jenny and Bill don’t act on the dreams, which is most of the time, Jenny and Bill love to talk about them before and during an encounter: And that invariably leads to great sex. Jenny’s habit of sharing her sexy dreams in the morning gives them something to think about all day and creates a strong sense of sexual anticipation.

On those occasions when there is something new that Jenny wants to try with Bill, her “dreams” are a great way of getting the ball rolling. For example, Jenny was interested in trying anal sex for the first time, but she wasn’t sure if Bill shared her curiosity, so she made up a sexy dream about it. When Bill asked her if that was something she may want to try, she said it was. And they went on to explore it together.

Jenny has definitely noticed a change in Bill’s libido, and his newfound sense of desire is no doubt tied to his increased sense of excitement for Jenny in general. Through sharing her dreams, Jenny has become unpredictable, bold, adventurous, desirous, and even a little dangerous. In short, Jenny has become the woman, maybe even the Tigress, on the shaky bridge.

As a postscript, the “I had a sexy dream” technique is also a great way to initiate a dialogue about a sexual issue that may be troubling a relationship. As an example, one woman I counseled was frustrated by her husband’s less than stellar oral sex techniques. Like many men, he was too rough and impatient. She didn’t know how to raise

the subject without hurting his feelings or making him defensive, so I suggested she express her desire for change as a positive fantasy. She told her husband that she had a sexy dream that he kissed her tenderly all over her body and then slowly teased her to orgasm with his mouth. He didn’t even need to ask if that was something she wanted to try. He just did it. And it was a happy ending, indeed.

### **All the World’s a Stage**

“In a car, at a bar, in a store, by the door”—sounds like the makings of a Dr. Seuss story. And with a little bit of imagination, there’s no end to all the fun places we can play our naughty games. So pack your toothbrush, your camera, and your favorite lacy thong because we’re off to explore the vast sexual amusement park we call desire.

Let me put it simply: For most guys, a little playful exhibitionism—being sexual in public, or semi-public where there’s a risk of being caught or observed—is like a jolt of sexual adrenaline. Not to be confused with public sex, which could get you arrested or at least seriously embarrassed, playful exhibitionism is about making the most of quick moments to stimulate the mind and get the heart pounding. Following are some noteworthy public moments that later, in private, led to momentous sex.

**In a dressing room** Says Jeff, twenty-nine, “I used to hate going shopping, until I met Tammy. She turns every dressing room into our own personal peep show. She’s definitely an exhibitionist. She goes in to try something on, and then she calls me to come in and help her. Sometimes the dressing room has a door, but sometimes it’s just a thin curtain that barely shuts all the way. And Tammy likes to go shopping on weekends, when there’s always a crowd of people waiting. So she calls me in, and she’s usually half-dressed or just in her panties and bra, or in the middle of taking something off. (One time she was totally naked, and I’m sure people could see in.) But



she doesn't care, it just makes her bolder, and it totally gets me juiced. Sometimes she makes a play for my pants, but I don't let her. I love the feeling that she just can't wait to get me into bed with her. It drives us both so wild that we usually wind up hopping in a cab to rush home and get it on."

**In a restaurant** Says Sharon, thirty-six, "Peter's an SVP of sales for a technology company, so we go out to a lot of restaurants with his clients and their wives. I used to get bored and annoyed during those dinners. But then I found a way to keep it more interesting and pick up the pace. I like to put my hand on Peter's crotch under the table and give his cock a firm squeeze. Then I whisper something *really* filthy in his ear about what I'm going to do him when we get home. A couple of times, I told him I had to go rub myself in the bathroom to relieve some of the tension. Then I came back and surreptitiously brushed my fingers over his lips, so he could taste and smell my need. That definitely got the meal moving faster."

For his friends Says Chloe, twenty-six, "Jake's always having 'the guys' over for Sunday afternoon football, and I like to wear something casual, but sexy, whenever they're here—like a tank-top and a pair of cut-off jeans. His friends are always checking me out, and I know it turns him on to know that his friends think I'm hot. I always make sure to kiss him and hang on him. And I think it gives him a sense of power to be wanted like that in front of all his buddies."

**In a taxi** Says Sara, thirty-one, "Come on, is there *anything* better in the whole world than fooling around in the backseat of a cab on the way home? There's something about the eyes of the cab driver in the rearview mirror that's a real turn on. I love to kiss and snuggle in cabs or unzip my boyfriend's fly and put my hands down his pants. Sometimes I'll pull my skirt up high above my legs and close my eyes and let him touch me. One time I took my panties off in the bathroom before getting into the cab and handed them to Jake. It

made him crazy. I know the cabbie was probably getting an eyeful, but hey isn't that one of the perks of the job?"

**In nothing but a coat** Says Leslie, thirty-four, "Last year I bought this old fur coat and felt hat at a vintage store in the East Village. Whenever I wear them, I feel like a flapper from the 1920s—I want to go dancing on tabletops. The coat falls just below my knees, and it makes me feel sexy and wild, which is saying a lot, since ordinarily I am self-conscious about my body. I'm the kind of person that likes to have sex with the lights off, or at least I used to be. So, one night my boyfriend and I went to do some midnight shopping at the supermarket, and, without telling him, I wore *nothing* but the coat and the hat. And pointy pumps of course. When I suddenly flashed him halfway down the cereal aisle, he was totally shocked and turned on. Then, as I was pushing the cart down the aisle, I kept lifting the coat to show him a little bit of this and that, and he couldn't keep his hands off me. We went home and had sex on the floor, with the lights on, and I never took off the coat. It was definitely the best sex we'd ever had...until I found this red-hooded rain slicker and yellow galoshes at a second-hand store a few weeks later."

**With the blinds up** Says Ken, forty-two, "We live in brownstone that overlooks a courtyard—it's straight out of Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, with a view into everyone's apartments. Sometimes Candace walks around naked after getting out of the shower, and I know people can see right into our bedroom. I always tell her people are watching, but instead of shutting the blinds, she shrugs it off and says she doesn't care. Once, she pushed me onto the bed and climbed on top of me. I told her I could see strangers peering in, but that just made her bolder and more passionate. You know what? As it turns out, I'm a big fan of having sex with the blinds up, too."

**In silence** Says Howard, thirty, "Actually, this may sound crazy, but one of my favorite places to have sex with my wife is at my in-laws."

We sleep in her old bedroom, which is right next to her parents' room, so we have to be super quiet. If the bed even creaks once or if I grunt, my wife puts her hand over my mouth and whispers 'Shhhhh.' Sometimes I'll start laughing, and she'll cover my mouth with her hands, and then we wind up giggling hysterically. The struggle to stay quiet makes the sex super hot, and it's an extra turn-on because she feels like a rebellious teen all over again, sneaking a guy into her bed with the lights out after dark."

**Mission possible—lingerie** Says Pam, thirty-five, "My husband's office is right around the corner from Victoria's Secret, and every now and then I'll call him up before he goes to lunch and tell him to stop off and pick me out something special for later. By the time he gets home, he can't wait for me to open the box. It's always something super sexy, like a mesh thong or a lacy v-string. And I think it gets him extra turned-on to know that he picked it out. He can't wait to see me try it on, and trust me, it isn't on for very long."

Says Ian: Pam hit a home-run out of the park because 1) men love lingerie and can't get enough of the stuff (need I say more?), and 2) men are very task focused. By sending your guy on a solo lingerie mission, you're not only getting him turned-on by browsing at all the different possibilities and imagining you wearing them, but you're also building sexual anticipation and postponing gratification.

**Mission possible—sex toys** Says Janice, thirty-three, "My husband I and were never into sex toys, until I got a gift certificate to [www.GoodVibrations.com](http://www.GoodVibrations.com) at my friend's bachelorette party. I didn't think much of it at the time, but when I showed the gift certificate to my husband, he got really curious and eager. He asked me what I wanted, but the whole thing sort of embarrassed me, so I told him to go online and pick something—anything. 'Anything?' He asked. 'Sure,' I said: 'I trust you. So yes, anything, whatever turns you on.' Later that week, when I asked him what he ordered, he said it was going to be a surprise. To be honest, I was more than a little nervous.

I mean, I'm not a kinky person. What if it was whips and chains or some kind of crazy four foot-long dildo? When the box finally came, I was more excited than a six-year-old on Christmas morning. I didn't know what was going to be in there. But it turned me on to think that I was going to be at his sexual disposal and that I was going to submit to whatever he had ordered in that box. Do you want to know what was in the box? Well, I'm not going to tell you. But I will tell you this: We've since gone through that gift certificate and many, many more. And now we take turns surprising each other. And remember how I said I wasn't a kinky person? Well, I guess that depends on your definition of kinky."

Says Ian: By giving each other the license to explore their personal fantasies, Janice and her husband have opened up new realms of mutual pleasure and possibility! Sometimes a little naughty surprise can be the beginning of a whole lot more giving and getting every day.

**Selecting and watching porn together** Says Nicole, thirty-one, "It always pissed me off that my boyfriends were into porn, and I had this idea from college that porn was basically for sexually immature frat boys. Then one evening my boyfriend and I were at the local video store, and we found ourselves in the porn section. He kind of gave me this 'What do you think?' look, and, on a whim, I said, 'Sure, let's go for it.' We picked up a couple of funny titles—one was called Hannah Does Her Sisters—and I have to say it was sort of fun just browsing all the titles with my boyfriend, since it made me feel less alienated from the whole thing. And it turned out, watching it was actually sort of fun. The video was really cheesy, and it made us laugh. But it was also pretty hot, and my boyfriend definitely got turned on that I was turned on. And we wound up trying some of the positions they were doing on the screen, just for fun.

Says Ian: Nicole is dead on the money shot. In addition to turning a guy's interest in porn from an auto-erotic experience to a shared one, watching porn together is also a great way to get comfortable

talking about sex with your partner. After watching Hannah do her sisters, talking about, well, pretty much anything, doesn't seem like such a big deal. But ladies, it's important to make sure you address any concerns or reservations you may have from the outset, so the experience proves to be a positive and mutually gratifying adventure for both of you, rather than a potential source of contention. If you're worried, for instance, that he may ignore you in lieu of the women on screen or think you may prefer completing your sexual journey unaccompanied by visual aids, discuss these possibilities ahead of time. Remember to use this as an opportunity to get to know each other's fantasies, so it brings you closer together long after the movie ends.

**Planning your own porn film, but not necessarily shooting it** Says Kim, thirty-four, "I've always been the type of woman who craves sexual stimulation and gets bored easily. I'm completely comfortable with sex toys, and I enjoy watching porn, both with my man and on my own. I have no problem taking charge of my own sexuality, but I've definitely wanted to get, shall we say, more theatrical with my boyfriend. I wanted to role play and explore some domination and submission themes, but I couldn't get my man to open up and go there. So one day, when we were watching a porn film together, I turned it off and said we could do better. That's when he got interested. He bought an old video camera off eBay because I didn't want anything digital that could somehow find its way onto the Internet, and we planned the whole scene. It was really hot, a kidnapper/hostage scenario: Basically he kidnaps me, ties me up, and turns me into his sex slave. Then, when he's sleeping, I break free, tie him up, and exact sexual revenge. Can I be honest? Just planning the movie was really hot. We even bought props and a costume for me—I wanted to play a prissy heiress. And I got really excited. I got off on the idea of tying him up and doing him, something we'd never done before. When it finally came time to make the movie, I got nervous about the actual filming. So we decided to rehearse it

without a tape in the camera. We've since done two more films, one of which we actually put on tape. But, to me, the best part was planning and, especially, rehearsing and, of course, working out 'the dramatic kinks.'"

Says Ian: Like the "I had a sexy dream" tip, making your own porn film is an exciting way to explore your fantasies without feeling judged. After all, if you're making a film about a kidnapper/ hostage scenario, then you're just exploring those themes, without having to deal with whether you really have domination/submission fantasies. Your own sense of identity or how your partner perceives you aren't on the line. And like Kim said, so much of the fun is in the preparation. Some couples really do enjoy making sex tapes. But you shouldn't do it if winds up making you feel self-conscious or pressured. A dress rehearsal (make that un-dress rehearsal) can be just as fun.

**Webcam** Says Lila, twenty-seven, "I caught my fiancé downloading porn twice, and it made me angry, especially since I thought we had a great sex life. We're very open and affectionate with each other, and it bothered me that he felt like he needed porn. Then I bought a new Mac, and I received this e-mail from Apple about how easy it was to set up a webcam. That's when I got an idea: I decided to make my own Internet porn for my fiancé. I set up the camera and the web page in our bedroom and called him at work and told him he had to check out this website. Anyway, he went onto the webpage, and I have to tell you, my heart was pounding. I came out of the bathroom in a towel like I had just come out the shower and sat at the edge of the bed and pretended to dry off. Then I put on a pair of panties and one of his pajama tops and got into bed. I never once looked into the camera, but pretended to go about my business as usual, which just happened to include a vibrator. I had never done anything like that before, and it was exhilarating. After I was done, my fiancé called and told me not to move; he was on his way home.

Later, he confessed that watching me do that was the biggest turn-on he'd ever experienced, and he made me promise I'd do it again."

Says Ian: Kudos to Kim for making the most of technology and one-upping the Internet porn stars. Something else that Kim tapped into is the thrill of exhibitionism and voyeurism, which figure dominantly in more than 80 percent of sexual fantasies. In fact, they're half of the big four: exhibitionism, voyeurism, domination, and submission. With those four poles to navigate, the possibilities for creative sexual exploration are virtually limitless.

**Cell phone photos** Says Hank, thirty-six, "Julie's always using my cell phone to take photos—mostly of our friends and us. But one day I got to work, and she called me to see if I had checked out the new photo series yet. I was in the middle of a meeting, but decided to give it a quick gander. Man, I couldn't believe what I saw. I was floored: a whole striptease. I don't know what got into her, but it was amazing. She asked me to erase them, and I said, only if you promise to send me more. Several times. I totally love the photos she takes because the angles are all funny, and she's laughing all the way through, making silly faces.... The photos capture that combination of beauty, boldness, and shyness that makes me love and crave her all the more. Sometimes when I'm at work and feeling stressed out of my skull, all I need to do is look at those photos of my little stripper, and I feel like the luckiest guy in the world."

Says Ian: Another winning way to make technology work for you! Hank's Tigress excited him by building new levels of surprise and novelty into their sex lives and taking sex out of the bedroom and into the office, creating a broader landscape of desire.

**Chat room fantasies** Says Amy, twenty-four, "I saw that movie *Closer* with Julia Roberts, and there's that whole chat-room scene between Jude Law and Clive Owen, where Jude Law's pretending to be a chick. I thought it was hilarious, and I told my boyfriend, Brian, that we should try it—we're big pranksters, needless to say. Anyway,

we signed up on a couple of chat-rooms and started creating these Internet personas—there's Wild Blondie, Cowboy Marcos, King Cream, African Queen, and a bunch of others. It's sort of a goof, but we have a blast, and letting our digital alter egos go wild is a real turn-on. It's all typing, but there are chat rooms where you can actually put up a webcam and be seen while you have sex. We're not sure if we're ready to go that far, but we're talking about letting Cowboy Marcos and Wild Blondie make their on-screen debut and do some 'digital swinging.' "

Says Ian: Hats off, once again, to Amy and her boyfriend for using technology to bring them closer together rather than pushing them apart. And the best part of what they're doing is not the sex simulation, but the fun and laughter they're having along the way, allowing them to explore their fantasies safely together.

**Erotic chores** Says Steve, thirty-seven, "Lisa's always on me to wait until after dinner to start the dishes. I'm always up and washing plates, in a half-assed way, just to get it over with as quickly as possible, usually while she's still eating. I tried to tell her that most women would be thrilled to have a guy who wants to do the dishes, but not Lisa. On top of it, it drove me crazy when she would inspect the dishes afterward. Then she told me she was going to give me a lesson in dish-washing etiquette. And I told her there was only one way in hell I'd listen: If she did it naked. Well, would you believe it? There I was doing the dishes, and she comes in wearing only a thong, bra, and high heels and says it's time for my lesson. And, well, let me say, I listened. I scrubbed. I waited. I took my sweet old time and got that job done right. In fact, I've asked for a few follow-up lessons, just to make sure."

Says Ian: Couples spend too much time quibbling about chores and not nearly enough time eroticizing the mundane and making things fun. From doing the dishes to taking the trash out in a trench coat to washing the car (hey, there's nothing like soap and a hose, not to mention an occasional hot wax treatment, to get his engine

roaring and his machine buffed), there's erotic potential everywhere. I can't tell you how many women have complained about guys who seem to want to have sex at the strangest times, "Like when I'm ironing or vacuuming and looking my worst!" The truth is that sometimes when you think you look like your worst, you actually look your best to us. So, make the most of it. And you'll be surprised how extremely happy we are to lend a helping hand (and tongue).

**Trimming/shaving each other's privates** Says Cheryl, twenty-eight, "One day I was in the bathroom shaving my legs, and my boyfriend, Carl, asked me if he could shave them for me. It was really gentle and tender, and then he looked at me and asked me if he could shave more. I said, 'Sure, if you let me shave yours.' That was the start of a really beautiful (and sexy) ritual for us. We don't actually shave each other because it's too itchy, and I prefer to get waxed, but we do trim each other down there with a little pair of scissors. It's a total turn on for both of us. Carl gets totally hot being so up close to me and carefully trimming everywhere. I sit on the edge of a chair, and he likes to go down on me and finger me too, while he's doing it. And then he stands up, and I do him. It makes me crazy when I'm trimming him, and he's getting harder and harder right there in my hands. We usually hop in the shower right after and have really hot, steamy shower sex."

Says Ian: Sounds like a plan! Shaving or, in many cases, just trimming each other's genital hair is a sexy, intimate experience. It requires trust and patience. Washing, drying, soaping, shaving are all extremely personal, private, yet nurturing acts, which are perfect for a sexy encounter. So why not make getting clean a little dirty, too?

**The model** Says Cheryl, thirty, "My fiancé, Simon, is a 'painter,' and lately I've been posing nude for him. He's done a beautiful series of charcoal sketches, and it creates a very powerful erotic bond between us. I even let him hang one on the wall, and it's a turn-on to know that people know it's me up there. He said I was so good at

posing that I should sign up to model nude in an art class he takes on Wednesday nights. When he said it, he got this mischievous look in his eye, and I asked him if that was something that would turn him on—all those eyes on my body. He said it was, so I figured why not. Personally I thought it was a turn-on, too. If you've never posed nude in front of a group of twenty strangers, I say go for it. It was one of the scariest things I've ever done, but also the most exciting. Simon didn't tell anybody he knew me, so it was like this sexy secret just between us."

**Role-playing** Says Sue, thirty, "I once pretended I needed something in the hardware store. I wore a very tiny, tight black dress with nothing underneath and went in and asked for a hand-held shower massager. Of course, all the guys in the shop offered to help me find it, asking lots of questions about what types of pulsating massage I was looking for. Then this guy I was seeing walked in and offered to help me find it. I pretended like I didn't know him. He just came over and said he could assist me. After paying, I walked out of the store before he did. He told the guys at the store he was going to go back to my place to install it, and they high-fived him, which he said made it even hotter. Then he came over, and we hooked it up, and I showed him exactly how I liked to use it, still pretending we had just met. We even acted sort of different with each other, like total strangers. And I felt slutty for going home with someone I'd just met, which really turned me on."

Says Ian: A nice twist on the classic "stranger-in-a-bar" scenario, where you pretend to be a single stranger and let your boyfriend pick you up, much to the chagrin of all the other guys trying to do the same. Every errand has an erotic twist, and a trip to Home Depot will never be the same.

**Around the world in eighty beds** Says Adena, thirty-two, "Dan and I haven't actually been around the world in eighty beds, but that's our goal before we have kids. I guess we feel like we have a lifetime

ahead of us to sleep in our own bed, so why not do it in as many beds as possible—with each other—while we have the chance?”

Says Ian: Now there’s a show I haven’t seen on the Travel Channel yet. The truth is that the easiest way to shake up your sex life and add some sizzle is to have sex somewhere new (as opposed to with someone new). And who says it even has to be in a bed? There are beaches, parks, mountains, not to mention kitchen tables and other horizons to be conquered.

**For his eyes only, not necessarily** Says Sue, again, “I had one boyfriend who liked to watch me masturbate in public, like on a train or in the park. He would sit across from me, in a public place, a library, a coffee shop, basically anywhere. And I would pretend he wasn’t there and surreptitiously rub myself to orgasm, knowing he—and possibly others—could see. Then right when I was about to come, I would look directly into his eyes and smile.”

Says Ian: This is a biggie for guys: watching women masturbate. And to watch her do it in public to boot is tantamount to winning the lottery. One woman I know likes to use those tiny silent remote-controlled vibrators at movies and give her guy the remote. For her, the whole challenge is having an orgasm while appearing to nonchalantly watch the movie. For him, the challenge is following the story.

**Fellatio at an afternoon movie** Says Gina, twenty-eight, “My boyfriend and I love to go to movies that have been playing for a while during a work day, knowing the audience will be pretty sparse. I begin touching him, stroking him slowly. And I always make sure he brings a jacket or something to throw across his lap. Then I lean over and take him into my mouth. We both have to be really quiet and slow. I make him wait until a really loud scene comes on before I let him come.”

Says Ian: Ah yes, exhibitionism, always a good one. Love in the afternoon is always more fun when you get to do it in secret with dozens of people around.

**Planning a threesome, not necessarily having one** Says Heidi, “I know my boyfriend, Jon, wants to have a threesome with me and another woman, but I’m not really into doing it. But it’s fun to talk about. Sometimes when we’re out at a bar or at the beach, we look around and set our sights on a particularly sexy woman that we pretend we’re going to try and have a threesome with. Jon loves to hear me talk about why I’d be into her, maybe it’s her breasts or the way she moves or something about the look in her eyes. Then we talk about what we’d do with/to her. I have to admit it really turns me on. And, who knows, maybe one day we’ll really do it. Until then, it’s fun to think about.”

Says Ian: This is a great way to explore the idea of a threesome; making it a fun and exciting game, instead of a threat or source of conflict, teaches you that the best way to deal with divergent desires is to make them converge!

**N**OW THAT HIS HEART IS pumping and his mind is racing, it’s time to transition into the bedroom, or wherever you’re going to have sex, and talk about building and sustaining arousal. As you may have observed, many of the aforementioned foreplay scenarios involve physical stimulation. But it is essential to note that in every case I’ve discussed, the physical component is secondary to the mental component. And where you’ve begun your sexy adventure is not necessarily where you’re going to finish it.

## 11 Getting a “Head-Heart” on Great Sex

**W**HENEVER I LECTURE on desire differences between the sexes, I stir up the crowd by making the provocative statement that men are ultimately more interested in “making love” than women.

My logic goes something like this: While men are more likely to get initially aroused through a combination of visual and genital stimulation than women (for whom emotional and intellectual components play far more pivotal roles), for men the sex act is the primary conduit for expressing their feelings. In other words, while women generally deem closeness a prerequisite for engaging in sex, for a man, having sex is probably the best, sometimes only, path to achieving a true sense of intimacy with a romantic partner.

But just because male sexuality may appear simpler in some ways than female sexuality doesn't mean you should approach it

*simplistically*. Male sexuality is, in reality, a complex picture that relies just as heavily on nonphysical dimensions for sustaining long-term desire. If you want to combat the sexual boredom that occurs when the natural sex chemicals that fuel excitement in a new relationship wane, not only do you have to get inside his head, but you also need to get inside his heart.

By this I mean that, in general, men are not nearly as emotionally evolved as women. We simply don't have the same breadth of outlets for emotional expression; we aren't as comfortable crying, nor are we as open to outward gestures of physical affection. And we're certainly not as comfortable talking about our feelings. Ask any couple's therapist, and they will tell you that it is typically the woman who initiates counseling and forces sexual issues to the forefront. Women may not be as inclined to have sex with the lights on, but when it comes to *talking* about intimacy, you're light-years ahead of us. But it's the highly charged emotional currency of sexual intimacy that makes it so difficult for us to talk about.

The question remains, however: Is the gendered sex-love divide culturally acquired, or are we wired this way? Probably, it's a bit of both. Brain scans of men and women during sexual response reveal greater activity in men in an area of the brain known as the insula, which registers emotion, and also rates the significance of physical sensations. So from a neurological perspective, it appears that men are more likely to correlate the process of sexual response with an emotional response.

This sex-love connection is why guys intuitively understand the difference between making love and “fucking.” Men don't need to be in love to have sex, nor do they necessarily feel love during sex, but when they are in a committed relationship with someone they love, sex is likely to be the most genuine conduit for expressing love. In recent years, I have thus observed

- More and more single men, particularly guys in their mid-thirties or older, are inclined to postpone intercourse when they meet a

women they think could be “the one.” In an age of casual sex and hookups, it’s their way of respecting the power of sex to express love, and they want to treat sex more seriously than they have in the past. Their emotional maturation is often matched with a concomitant sexual maturation.

- Sometimes the sex-love connection, however, can prevent a man from enjoying the full potential of a creative sex life. The desire to engage in more intimate lovemaking rather than lust-driven casual sex in a mature relationship will lead some men to shy away from sharing fantasies, engaging in dirty talk, or exploring certain sex acts they may consider kinky. A significant number of women have come to me after catching their partners in digital dalliances complaining about just this. Why are their boyfriends or husbands so prudish and proper with them when they are so unbridled with complete strangers? Said one woman, “Online he’s King Schlong, but with me he’s Limp Larry.” When one of my patients confronted her husband about his Internet affair and the fact that she wanted him to share those sexual thoughts with her, he was very clear: “You’re my wife. I respect you and make love to you; I don’t talk to you like that or do those things to you.”

If a guy becomes sexually disconnected from his partner, he’s also likely to become emotionally disengaged as well. And this, in turn, could leave him more vulnerable to infidelity or lead him to choose online fantasy over making love with the woman in his bed.

Men also turn to sex as a means to ameliorate an emotional conflict, much to their partners’ stunned horror. I cannot count the number of times I’ve had a woman complain to me about a boyfriend or husband who initiates sex after a terrible argument. Such was the case with one woman who complained, “He screams and shouts all evening, and then we get in bed, and he starts touching my boobs and kissing my back. He’s made me feel so unsexy and bad and ugly, and then he wants to do it. What’s wrong with him?” It was no surprise

that when I spoke with the husband, he told me that he was hoping that by making love, they could make up and reconnect.

Similarly, men are often startled to find that after hot make-up sex, their partners are still angry and don’t have the same sense of resolution. Over and over, I’ve heard, “I don’t get it. We made love, and she’s still angry and holding a grudge. How can she have sex with me and still be mad at me?” For guys, they’ve literally put the issue to bed; for women, the issue is still festering under the covers, keeping them awake.

.....

*Dear Ian,*

*My husband and I have been married for a year, and we recently had a baby. Ever since then, my sex drive has gone down, and we just haven’t gotten back into a sexual routine. I’m afraid he [may] go off and look elsewhere. Am I just paranoid?*

—Sarah, thirty-four, stay-at-home mom

No, you’re not paranoid; you’re intuitive. As a culture, we have this fantasy that having a baby is the most intense form of bonding that a couple can experience. But, in truth, most marital dissatisfactions begin after the birth of their first child. And it’s not just lack of sleep or new routines that leads to marital woes: It’s the sense of emotional alienation many guys experience.

Think about it: Post-birth, oxytocin levels in women are higher than ever, which facilitates an intense sense of bonding between mother and infant. Most women say they experience a feeling of falling in love with their baby, and this infatuation period often lasts as long the mother breast feeds, but very often longer. Yet increased oxytocin levels have a side effect of inhibiting a woman’s testosterone level. That’s right; women produce testosterone, too—not as much as men, but the hormone still plays a strong role in a



woman's libido. So even after a woman has physically recovered from the experience of childbirth, she may be less interested in sex.

Many new fathers have told me how guilty they sometimes feel after their first baby's arrival. On the one hand, they're happier than they've ever been and would sooner lose their lives than see any harm come to their child or partner. On the other hand, they often feel like third wheels in their own homes. This sense of emotional disconnection is seriously amplified by the lack of sexual connection, which is why it's really important to find ways to make your marriage a priority and remain intimate. It's not about the sex; it's about the emotional connection that comes with sex, especially for men. You need to remain emotionally and, thus, erotically connected to your partner for the sake of the baby and the well-being of your whole family.

Granted, you may be tired, uncomfortable, or just plain exhausted. I know it isn't easy. Your breasts are swollen and leaking, and you feel fat! I know. I *know*! But take it from a new dad, finding ways to maintain the sexual connection with your husband or boyfriend, whether it's through intercourse, or kissing, or just plain fooling around, can mean the difference between staying happily married or becoming a statistic.

## St[r]oking His Heart-on

**W**HENEVER I TALK TO MEN who are bored sexually or feel they're trapped in a routine, they usually say that sex has become mechanical and predictable. And when I ask them to drill down and elaborate on what they mean by routine or predictable, it invariably comes down to, "We know how to get each other off, but there's no emotional connection."

The trick to maintaining the emotional-sexual connection is not just changing the sex script and introducing new positions or techniques, but becoming more emotionally engaged before and after each intimate encounter: It's finding ways to let the feelings of connectedness you experienced during lovemaking flow into the rest of your daily lives.

More than any technique or position, emotional presence is the currency of great sex. And, as we've been discussing in regard to foreplay and sparking desire, this sense of emotional engagement

starts outside the bedroom. So while you're getting into his head and stimulating his mind, here are some simple techniques for touching his heart.

### **Embrace Until You're Connected**

Whenever I'm working in my office with couples, not only do I pay careful attention to their body language—how they're sitting next to each other, whether or not they're holding hands or touching each other—but also at some point in my initial sessions, I invariably ask them to get up and hug. An embrace is very telling and can provide a real snapshot of the overall relationship. It's always interesting to see how long a couple maintains contact during an embrace and who breaks first. Most of us don't know how to hug or don't really hug in a way that fosters a sense of connection.

It sounds simple, but hugging—really hugging—is hard work, so embracing until you're connected is an assignment I often give couples. Make a point of really hugging each other at *least* three times a day: once before leaving for work, a second time when arriving home, and a third time before going to sleep. If you do nothing else, hug three times—but truly hug. For more on this technique and how it's used to stimulate great success in sex and marital therapy, I encourage you to read the groundbreaking work *A Passionate Marriage* by Dr. David Schnarch.

### **The Present of Presence**

One of the biggest obstacles to embracing until you're connected is the baggage of life itself. So often we're angry, hurt, or stressed out about something the other person did. Or we're carrying around conflicts from work, the strain of a long commute, or the fall out

from an argument with a colleague, a friend, or family member. Intimacy with our partner starts to feel like a chore or obligation, something we simply can't get ourselves to focus on without feeling anxious or distracted. Life will never stop happening around us, and we have to protect our bond—from the rest of the world, each other, and ourselves. This means setting apart some time when we make an effort to let go of everything else except our connections to each other.

I'm always saddened by the degree to which we let the outside world intrude on our intimate lives. So many of us have televisions in our bedrooms or else rituals—like reading or going to bed at different times—that may help us unwind, decompress, or wrap up our days, but not to reconnect. Even worse is when couples bring their arguments to bed. I'm not saying that there won't be nights when you go to bed angry, but you don't need to continue your arguments in bed. I'm a big believer that the place where you regularly have sex (which for most of us is the bedroom) is also a place that as much as possible should be argument free and present focused.

But that sense of presence begins with you, not your bedroom, and starts with that feeling you get when you embrace until you're connected. Not only does being present enable you to let go of the past, but it also allows you to focus on the experience of being together and the subtle to sublime sensations of sex.

### **Eyes-Open Lovemaking**

Sex and marriage therapist Dr. David Schnarch writes about making love with open eyes as a way of fostering trust, presence, and intimacy. In fact, the main reason the missionary position is cross-culturally the most popular and prevalent around the world is because of the degree to which it enables us to maintain eye contact. It can be the most powerful sexual position, especially if the

emphasis is on pressing (pelvis to clitoris). But it can also be the most routine and least satisfying if the couple isn't really present. Most of us are making love with our eyes closed, both literally and figuratively. Whenever I've talked to men about their most powerful orgasms, invariably those orgasms involve looking: At a partner's body and facial expressions, but more importantly, into her eyes, up to and sometimes through the moment of orgasm.

### **Kissing**

This eyes-open approach to lovemaking begins with kissing, and while David Schnarch actually advises couples to kiss with their eyes open and endure the awkward, initially uncomfortable pupil-dilation that comes from such close eye contact, I think, like the embracing exercise, it's important essentially to use kissing to get connected and present. So many books or articles focus on the art of kissing, and so many times I've heard men complain about kissing techniques. The same goes for fellatio techniques. Not that you shouldn't have a knowledge of technique based on an understanding of sexual response and physiology, but whether you're kissing, hugging, orally or manually stimulating, or having sex, you have to let intimacy, presence, and emotional substance drive technique. The more you actually focus on technique and what you're doing or how you're doing it, the more you close yourself off to intuiting and responding to the experience you are ideally striving to create in tandem.

### **Five to One Statements**

Eminent marriage therapist John Gottman has spent a lifetime working with thousands of couples, researching what makes some

marriages succeed and others fail. Gottman concluded, "It is the balance between positive and negative emotional interactions in a marriage that determines its well-being—whether the good moments of mutual pleasure, passion, humor, support, kindness, and generosity outweigh the bad moments of complaining, criticism, anger, disgust, contempt, defensiveness, and coldness." Those couples that succeed in their marriages enjoy an overriding proportion of positive over negative sentiment. But, how do you ensure that? "All couples, happy and unhappy, have conflict, but the ratio of positive to negative interactions during arguments is a critical factor," and Gottman proposed that this ratio should ideally be five to one. While it's impossible to go through life tallying positive versus negative interactions, I've found that it's possible to intuit whether positive sentiment overrides. But just to make sure, finish off any argument or discussion by embracing until connected, emotionally present kissing, opening your eyes, and saying something positive to each other.

It may sound simple, but being wholly vested in both giving and receiving as described above is far more often absent than present in our relationships.

As we move forward into building and sustaining sexual arousal through orgasm(s), remember that foreplay is not just about getting inside his head and heart, but ultimately keeping the two of them and the two of you connected.

## Arousal, Part I: The Hands-Down Hands-Off Secret to Hands-On Heat

NOW THAT YOU'VE CAPTURED his head(s) and warmed his heart, it's time to lay hands.

In an effort to promote sexual self-awareness and enhanced pleasure perception, sex therapists often tell patients to think of arousal as a process that unfolds on a scale from one to ten, with the upper parameter representing orgasm. But in my professional experience, I've found that while the idea of a one to ten "arousal arc" is more consistent with female sexuality, it generally overestimates the male trajectory of sexual response: Male arousal more typically unfolds on an accelerated scale of, say, one to five, with one being low-level arousal, two and three resulting from direct genital stimulation, four being the moment of ejaculatory inevitability, and five being orgasm.

Or, to put it another way, as the founding editors of *Men's Health* magazine, Stefan Bechtel and Laurence Roy Stains, so succinctly put

it in their book *Sex: A Man's Guide*, "Studies show that three-fourths of men are finished with sex within a few minutes of starting. But women often need fifteen minutes or more to become sufficiently aroused for orgasm. And therein lies a world of rage, grief, and airborne pots and pans."

But in defense of the quick-triggered male, it is apt to point out that ejaculation is the seed of survival after all, and, from a crudely deterministic standpoint, efficiency does make sense—why would evolution stand for anything less? You will find, however, that most of us semicivilized male beasts prefer a gourmet meal to a raw bludgeoned moose carcass and would choose a working toilet over a latrine of thorny brush, not to mention a bit of lace and spiky heel over a clutch of sweaty leaves. Despite being hard-wired to act fast, most men would agree that haste and efficiency are not the stuff of ecstasy. So one of the things we're going to focus on in this chapter is how you can slow down his process of sexual response and extend its boundaries, so that he, too, can appreciate all the scenic frolics and detours along the curvy path.

Remember that guys tend to be orgasm focused rather than pleasure centered, so in extending his scale and taking him from one to ten, as opposed to just five, you have to first and foremost focus on the low-level arousal that often gets overlooked during sexual interaction. This means touching, nibbling, teasing, or, in other words, building excitement *without* primary genital stimulation—you know, stuff that feels good and will help him relax: maybe a neck, back, or foot massage or washing and styling his hair, sucking on his fingers or toes. If you have any doubt whatsoever about the wisdom of this advice, just think back to how you felt when your annoying ex-boyfriend grabbed at your boobs or crotch, only to be stung with irritation when you instinctively pulled away. Now, if he had first offered a gentle shoulder rub or kissed the nape of your neck and whispered something naughty in your ear, things probably would have taken a far more satisfying turn.

I'm here to tell you that regardless of what you may think men want, we enjoy being touched, wanted, and seduced too (even if we're not accustomed to these forms of sensual stimulation in a sexual context). And I'm not talking about just flashing him a g-string or bit of cleavage (though it never hurts). I mean something that makes *him* feel desirable, wanted, relaxed, and physically charged. If you want to slow things down, you have to start by showing him that it's okay for him to kick back and enjoy the ride.

The experience of touch during sex is especially crucial to men because sex is one of the only situations in which guys actually give themselves permission to touch and be touched, and, even then, we remain plagued with a sense of guardedness. The truth is that men love nongenital based touch, but we're inhibited, sometimes even feeling guilty, when it comes to asking for physical comfort in a sexual context. This ambivalence, as we discussed earlier, often stems from a number of underlying causes: a male sense of compunction to take the lead in sexual interactions, a discomfort with submitting to a woman or abdicating control of the sex script, a sense of emasculation when not focusing on performance and penetration, and embarrassment at wanting to be stroked, flattered, and doted on (desires typically considered feminine).

Relaxation is the key to arousal, so in this early stage, when you're taking him from one to five, instead of focusing on turning him on, *per se*, focus on calming him down. Think about it: If stress inhibits erections, then it stands to reason that relaxation does the opposite. It promotes arousal.

When men are stressed out or anxious, blood flow is naturally redirected into the limbs as part of the primitive, hard-wired, flight-or-fight system. This is one of the reasons men often experience erectile difficulties when they're stressed out or anxious.

Relaxation is the key to redirecting blood flow into the genitals. That's why men often get hard when they get a massage: They're not turned on, but simply relaxed. Most good masseurs know this, and rather than interpreting the spontaneous erection as a sign of sexual

desire, they take the tumescence as a sign that they're doing their job well (though it may very well be a product of both).

Another similarity between the sexes is that men also have different qualities of orgasm with varying degrees of intensity.

There's a wonderful passage in Norman Rush's novel *Mortals* in which the narrator recounts his wife's description of an orgasm, or rather, in her words, "what it feels like when you come really hard:"

Well, part of what it feels like is this, that you're just a drop of oil on a white tablecloth, just a tiny, still drop of oil, and then in a flash you're expanding outward in every direction, evenly, turning into a stain, a little drop expanding into a bright stain that covers the universe.

Sounds pretty intense: And men, like women, have the propensity to achieve a more expansive, fully encompassing orgasm, what I call a "global" orgasm. Although more often than not, they wind up experiencing a contained penis-based orgasm, a "local" orgasm, which may be sharp and pleasurable, but lacks the fiber-tingling full-bodied resonance of its global brother. He may be coming, but, to borrow the phrase, "is he coming really hard?"

Probably not: With an already compressed process of sexual response, coupled with a genital-focused approach to physical stimulation, men do not typically develop particularly high levels of myotonia (sexual muscular tension) throughout their bodies at the point of orgasm. The sexual tension is localized in the pelvic area and, even then, is inhibited by protections endemic to the region, which were discussed in Part I. Sure, it still feels good—that's the nature of orgasms. To quote Dr. Drew Pinsky, of *Loveline* fame, "Sex for us is like pizza, okay? You put anchovies on it, you put pineapple on it—all of it's good." True enough, but just as there's a difference between good and great pizza, between a frozen supermarket box of preservatives and a coal-fired pie from New York's Lombardi's (hailed by *Zagat* as the "best on the planet"),

there's a big difference between coming and *coming really hard*, and if you want him to experience the latter (a global orgasm), then you can't act locally. But when it comes to stimulating arousal, most women do exactly that: They think and act with one point in mind: stimulating the penis.

Women are just as culpable as men for perpetuating a narrow-minded penis-focused approach to sex, often gauging their own desirability by the speed and girth of a guy's tumescence and focusing primarily on his erection as a way of increasing this excitement. Sure a hard-on can be a turn-on, but an erection is more than just a means to an end; it's part of a broader, holistic pleasure system. For a woman to focus solely on the erection as an indicator of arousal is as naïve as the guy who focuses narrowly on vaginal wetness as a sign of female sexual readiness. An erection may be a byproduct of arousal and certainly indicates a physical ability to perform, but that doesn't mean it has to be the focus of your arousing—at least not yet.

Helping him to relax and enjoy the all the pleasures of arousal, including his erection, means encouraging him to focus on the global sensual experience. And that means thinking and acting globally yourself. The first step in allowing him to relax and enjoy is alleviating his perceived pressure to be hard at all times. Because, if you're doing this right, he probably won't be. Realize that the state of his erection, or lack thereof, is not a state of address that "he's not that into you." It simply means he's comfortable enough to embrace sex in a more fully embodied way. Showing your guy that you want him to enjoy the incredible (often new) sensations of sexual arousal without regard to his ability to pop and sustain a boner and that you want it and him to take longer will ultimately allow him to relax and experience a shattering global orgasm.

So with a focus on building a strong foundation of arousal and keeping him in "the zone" (one to five), here are some tips for thinking and acting globally.

## **Get Him Naked**

It's called "socks-off sex," and you'd be surprised how many guys are content to leave them on, along with other articles of clothing. Why are guys so resistant to getting naked? Most would say they don't have an issue: They're just lazy or else they get so caught up in the heat of the moment, they can't be bothered to get completely undressed; or some may simply say, "Why bother to do more than unzip my fly and pull my pants below my waist?"

But these are the very behaviors we need to change. Men *do* get lazy and stuck in those same old musty sex scripts. Men *do* get caught up in the heat of the moment—that's the accelerated process of arousal I've been talking about. And most men *do* focus primarily on direct genital stimulation and fail to respect the role other parts of the body (and mind) play in the arousal process.

Clothes-on sex is closed off sex. It is the epitome of the localized orgasm. So when he gets completely naked, you're immediately subverting all of these bad behaviors. But, more than that, when a guy is totally naked, not only is he more physically receptive to pleasure (after all, the skin is the largest organ of the body, with a surface area of eighteen square feet), but he's also more liberated, vulnerable, and open to receiving pleasure. Men can have sex with their clothes on, but they can only make love with their clothes off.

## **Enjoy the Receiving End**

Most of the time when we think about sensual touching, we think about giving rather than taking pleasure. This is especially true of women, who are socialized to put male pleasure ahead of their own. In my experience working with couples, I can unequivocally say that women are much more comfortable giving than getting and would

often fake an orgasm rather than feel like they're inconveniencing their partners with their own "selfish" desires.

I often find that it is harder for women to receive pleasure than give it, for a variety of reasons: body image, fear that they're taking too long, fear that he's not enjoying himself, fear of letting go, and the loss of conscious control that's crucial to the female orgasm. Most books and magazines supply an overabundance of tips and techniques for giving, but they don't talk about the importance of being able to receive pleasure.

But women should realize that touching for their own pleasure, touching in an effort not to give but to take is not selfish at all: It's invariably recited by men as one of the greatest sexual turn-ons. When you touch for your own pleasure, when you touch to turn yourself on, it will naturally turn him on. So don't focus on what he's feeling; focus on what you're feeling, and you'll both end up feeling good.

## **Tie Him Up**

Render him lovingly helpless. Allowing him to revel in his willingness to submit to your lead is both liberating and erotically intoxicating, as male submission and bondage remains tinged with taboo. But exploring sexual domination is not about being into sadomasochism, but rather it is about taking enjoyment in being the top to his bottom and feeling confident that your enjoyment is a product of his.

When he's tied up, you're in control. It's a chance for him to remain relatively passive while you direct the action. And that's both extremely exciting and relaxing (as discussed earlier), relieving him of an enormous sense of pressure to perform and dominate. Over and over, men tell me how being tied up figures into their fantasies.

It's not about how you do it or the extent to which he's actually tied up, but rather the symbolic nature of what you're doing. If you

don't want to go out and buy handcuffs, try a bra or stockings. Thigh-highs are especially useful. His leather belt, an old tie—almost anything can do the trick. Just like getting him completely naked, restraining him helps him get to a place where he's vulnerable, exposed, open to new experiences, and receptive to a more expansive sense of pleasure. It allows him to submit to the glorious sensations of being touched, wanted, and teased. Not being able to move forces him into his body, while not being compelled to perform frees up his mind. You can't get more global than that: It's the full-body politic.

Be sure to explore his entire body and all of its untrammelled erogenous zones extra slowly. It's all about teasing, taunting, and tantalizing. Make him crazy with sexual frustration. But if you're new to the world of playful restraint, then take heed of some basic cautions:

- Don't bind him too tightly, as you don't want to damage any nerves or blood vessels. So tell him to pay attention to any signs of numbness.
- Never leave your partner alone while he's restrained.
- If you're role playing while restraining—captor/captive, mistress/servant, teacher/schoolboy—establish an arbitrary "safe word" (such as "kumquats") to cease the action immediately.

Always end a session of restraint on a note of intimacy. After you untie him, make sure to hug, cuddle, snuggle, and kiss. Guys often feel very emotional and vulnerable after being tied up and want to feel loved and protected. Savor the moment for all its worth, both for the sexual power before and the tenderness after, and you will travel miles in gaining his trust and stimulating his desires.

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Dear Ian,

*My boyfriend and I recently started sharing fantasies, and it's been really liberating: We don't judge each other, nor do we feel a pressure to act them out. But many of my boyfriend's fantasies have included scenarios where I dominate him, like one where he told me that he fantasizes about me tying him up and spanking him. I asked him if this was a situation in which he'd like to turn fantasy into reality, and he smiled and nodded his head. Now I'm sort of freaking out. It's one thing to talk about a fantasy, but I've never tied up a man, or spanked one for that matter. What do I do?*

—Rachel, twenty-nine, legal editor

First of all, congratulations on using fantasy to build excitement and newness and sustain a more satisfying sex life. So many fantasies go awry in their transition into action, so I think it's important that you don't feel pressured to do anything that makes you uncomfortable. The spirit of nonjudgmental sharing you've established with your boyfriend is far more important than gratifying any one particular fantasy.

That said, if you are curious to explore domination with your boyfriend, know that you're not alone in feeling a sense of hesitation. Women are very often socialized to be accommodating and sexually submissive to men, so it only makes sense that you may not be completely comfortable with playing the dominant role. Take the time to talk to your boyfriend in greater detail about the domination fantasy he'd like to enact and make sure you're both comfortable with it. Talk about the activities you're going to engage in. One of the problems with domination fantasies is that they're often so general—"Dominate me; I'll do anything you want." The more specific you get, the better. Decide on the activities you both find sexually exciting, and also talk about the activities that you're not

necessarily excited by, but open to trying. Also talk about the activities that you're definitely not comfortable with and take them off the table.

For example, maybe he's fantasized about you spanking him, and you're comfortable doing this with your hand, but not with a paddle. Or maybe you're more comfortable hitting him with a riding crop, but not a cat-o-nine tails presoaked in oil. Or perhaps you're totally keen on handcuffs, but prefer to pass on putting him in a collar and making him drink from a doggy bowl. You'll find that out by talking through your fantasies together in a light-hearted, nonjudgmental way; you'll be able to chart the terrain to greater sexual intimacy, regardless of what you wind up doing. You'll also develop greater trust, facilitating an endless array of new fantasies to follow.

Make sure you feel encouraged and supported and that the environment is trusting and stress free. Don't set your expectations too high: My professional experience has shown me time and time again that fantasies when acted out rarely meet the sense of sexual excitement and gratification we expect. This is especially true of the first time we try something completely different. However, I've met scores of women who have really enjoyed, sometimes unexpectedly, the power of being on top and end up getting more out of the experience than just sexual thrills.

One woman I counseled was in a marriage where she was emotionally submissive and felt as if her husband held all the power. By exploring domination in the bedroom, she was able to redevelop a sense of confidence, assertiveness, and self-esteem that helped her to do the same outside the bedroom. On the flip side, her husband, the CIO of a Fortune 200 company, was finally able to relax and relinquish control, gratefully serving his wife's unwieldy sexual demands and taking his pleasures as she saw fit to bestow them. He, for one, was thrilled to rediscover this self-assured side of his wife, as it reminded him of the woman he'd fallen in love with many years ago, when they met at business school. They have been far happier for it, both individually and as a couple, and their sex life has never



been better. Which goes to show that sometimes acting out a sexual fantasy or playing roles can help you take action and subvert real-life roles where you least expect it.

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### **Blindfold Him**

This introduces an element of surprise and gets him more attuned to what he's feeling. Chances are he will try to catch a glimpse, but that's all the better. Most men are visual creatures and secret peeping toms, but it will build tension and allow him to focus on the sensual and physical, while making him all the more desperate to get a good look at you after. Also, men are so hard-wired to get aroused through visual stimulation (reinforced through porn), that hobbling this sense allows his other senses—touch, taste, talking, smell, and hearing—to *come* center-stage.

### **The Joy of Massage**

Massage his feet, head, toes, neck, even fingers. We've talked about the role oxytocin plays in women as the cuddle hormone, but men have an equivalent hormone, vasopressin, which is also released during touch. This hormone tempers testosterone and helps him feel calm, relaxed, and connected, which is why it's informally dubbed the monogamy hormone. Dr. Theresa Crenshaw, author of *The Alchemy of Love and Lust*, wrote, "Testosterone wants to prowl; vasopressin wants to stay home." In the long run vasopressin plays a role in fostering his sense of paternalism, but in the short-term, the more you focus on touch, the more vasopressin gets released into his

system and the more he's going to feel calm and connected to you. Massage also boosts circulation, which is essential for arousal.

Here are just some of the rave reviews I've heard from male patients whose partners have incorporated massage to foster greater sensual intimacy.

"I love a good firm, foot massage—it totally relaxes me: stretching my toes, kneading the skin in between them, it's a total turn-on when she sucks my toes, too."

"Nipples. Bite them, pinch them, tickle them, and nibble them—mine are more sensitive than my wife's."

"Fingernails on my back drive me crazy—I love a good backscratch."

"I like to have my calves worked. My girlfriend holds my leg steady with one hand and really works it down to the knees."

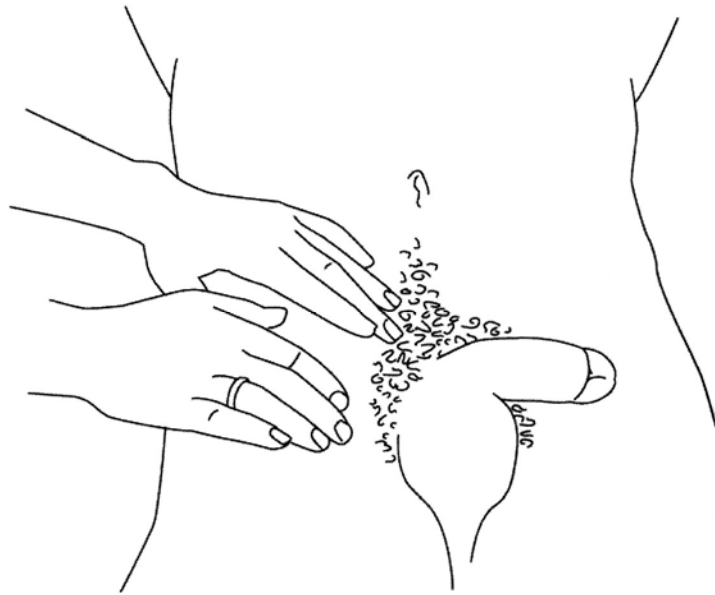
A good scalp massage is totally invigorating. I also love it when she puts a really hot washcloth on my face while she massages my scalp.

As you're massaging him, remember that his entire body is an erogenous zone, and many areas—like the earlobes, eyelids, and nipples—are rife with sensitive nerve endings.

### **Work His Pelvis**

As we discussed earlier, men's genitals grow outward. From an early age, boys intuitively protect them. But over time, this instinctive desire to protect them manifests itself as a permanent sense of inwardness, a physical pulling in that ultimately extends to the entire pelvic area. According to Dr. R. Louis Schultz, "the muscles at the base of the penis may pull the organ in with habitual contraction.

Most women generally approach this area cautiously and briefly, as a pit stop before direct genital stimulation. But make this area a stop in its own right and open up his pelvis.

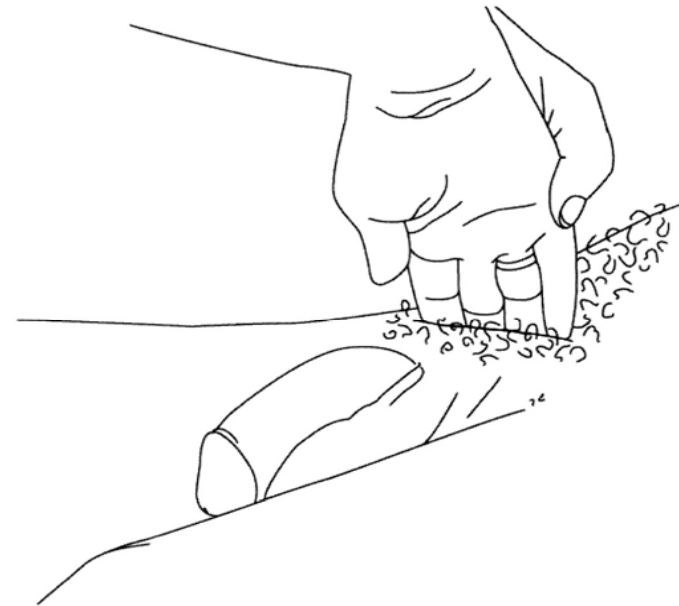


**Pelvic Massage 1**

To get into the groove take these basic principles of full-body massage and apply them creatively to his pelvis.

- Effleurage: These are long, stroking movements, which are performed using the flat of the hand or fingers by gently gliding your palms across his skin and then gradually putting your body weight behind the glide.
- Petrissage: These movements involve kneading, rolling, and the pulling of his skin. Begin with your fingers pointing away from you, and press down with your palm, while grasping his flesh between your fingers and thumb.

- Tapotement: These are fast and stimulating percussive movements that include cupping, hacking, and pounding (also called pummeling). While cupping, gently curve the hands to make a loose-cupped shape, bending at the knuckles while keeping the fingers straight and firm. While gently pounding (or pummeling), loosely clench your fists, keeping the wrists relaxed. Stroke your partner with either the outer edges of the loose fist or the front of the knuckles.
- Friction. Using your thumb, fingertips, and knuckles, apply direct pressure to a particular site of muscular tension. Lean gradually into the muscle and slowly deepen the pressure. Press for a few seconds, then release.

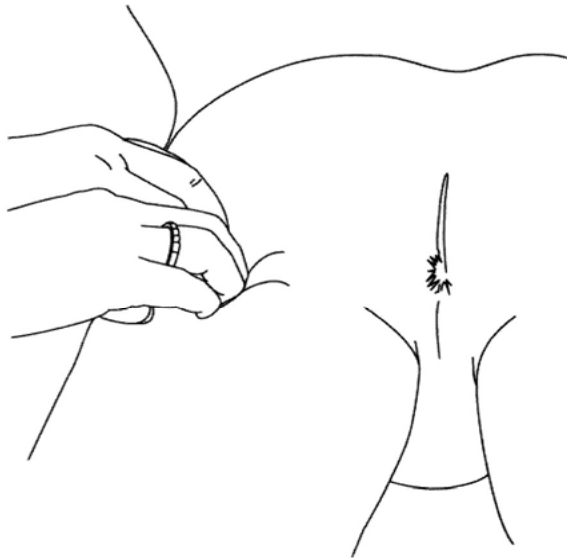


**Pelvic Massage 2**

If you're interested in learning more about how professional Rolfers approach pelvic massage, I encourage you to read Dr. Schultz' eye-opening (wait till you see the photographs) guide for practitioners, *Out in the Open: The Complete Male Pelvis*.

### Turn Him Over

Make sure to work his buttocks, which hold a great deal of tension. Many men have a hands-off attitude about being touched in this area, but there's a big difference between massaging the buttocks to



Posterior Massage 1



Posterior Massage 2

relieve tension and sensually massaging the anal area. Later we'll talk about direct anal stimulation to enhance and deepen the pleasure of orgasm, but for now, we'll focus on relieving tension.

Use a tennis ball to work his sweet spot and add some posterior pizzazz. By rolling a tennis ball along his back, you can give him a good massage, but the tennis ball is also a great way to get him comfortable with your exploration of posterior regions. Rolling a tennis ball along the lower half of his buttocks is a great way to take a hands-off hands-on approach to the more sensitive areas around the anus, like the space between his butt cheeks, as well as his perineum and anal entrance. You'll activate and stimulate the nerve fibers

without transgressing boundaries that he may be uncomfortable with, at least for now.

### Keep It Hot

Literally. Sex, especially vigorous, sweaty sex, stimulates the production of steroid hormones, tiny molecules like testosterone and estrogen that contribute to desire and arousal. Says psychologist Cameron Muir of Brock University in Ontario, Canada, on the virtues of sweating during sex and pursuant testosterone release: “The concentration is more than ten times higher, and that concentration is almost as high as the concentration doctors would prescribe for women to enhance the libido.”

**A**S YOU FOCUS ON BUILDING arousal, don't let his erection or semi-erection distract you. Depending how well you manage to slow him down and relax him, you may notice his erection is semi-hard as opposed to being rigid-hard. He will probably need direct stimulation to get him fully rigid-erect.

Which brings us to the next stage...

## 14 Rubbing Him the Right Way

**S**O LADIES, if you were to watch a guy masturbate in slow motion, what, precisely, would you see?

1. Well, you would probably see him engage in nonrhythmic manual stimulation, sometimes referred to as filling, because this form of light unfocused touch facilitates the filling of his penis with blood and its transition to tumescence from a flaccid or semi-aroused state. To get himself hard, he may:
  - Tap lightly along the shaft of his penis (as though he were playing piano on it with his index and middle finger).
  - Squeeze the glans (as though he were checking the ripeness of a melon), and gently stroke the frenulum and corona, where the glans meets the shaft.
  - Grasp the shaft and shake it.

- Massage his testicles; pinch the scrotal skin; press, stroke, and graze his perineum and anal area.

The length of time it takes for this phase of filling to unfold ranges widely from man to man and is dependent on a multiplicity of factors: his level of arousal at the start, his age, the last time he ejaculated, and his overall sexual fitness. Some men like to linger in the filling phase and enjoy the feeling of becoming hard, while others will do the bare minimum to get to the next stage of arousal where the sensations are more intense.

2. Once he's even minimally erect, he will likely grasp and clasp his penis: If he's a rightie, he'll use his left hand to firmly grasp the base of the shaft and stretch the penile skin down toward his scrotum. This stretching taut of the penile skin significantly increases the sensitivity of the frenulum and glans as he forms a ring with his thumb and index finger and clasps just below the corona. Rhythmic stroking of the frenulum and glans increases blood flow to the penis and facilitates the build-up of sexual tension required for orgasm.

This sexual tension will manifest itself throughout his body, and many men will break from stroking the frenulum to squeeze their nipples or touch other parts of their body. While rubbing up and down along the frenulum and glans, he may also break his clasp at peak moments of arousal to squeeze the glans firmly, which will momentarily force blood back down out of the head and consequently slow down the path toward ejaculatory inevitability while heightening sexual tension and building propulsive force.

3. As his levels of arousal build to a peak, he will experience the first of a series of pleasurable orgasmic contractions. Most men recognize this first contraction as the point of ejaculatory inevitability and take this as an intuitive signal to increase frictional massage of the frenulum and glans and tighten the grip on the base and shaft.

4. As the pleasurable orgasmic contractions propel semen through the urethra, he will retain his tight grip on the shaft and continue massaging the frenulum and glans, maximizing the pleasure and stroking through the orgasm and its first expulsion of ejaculate. He is likely to increase the force of stimulation to augment ejaculatory expulsion. Before finishing, he will squeeze or tap on the frenulum to expel the last pleasurable drops of semen before the tension in his body subsides and his penis returns to a flaccid state.

What I have just described is a four-part process of direct genital stimulation.

1. Filling
2. Grasping and clasping
3. Stroking and squeezing to ejaculatory inevitability
4. Stroking and squeezing through orgasm and ejaculation

As his partner, you need to be able to do all that and more. By all that, I mean you need to get attuned to his individual process of arousal and learn how to use appropriate levels of stimulation at each stage to maximize his pleasure and orgasm.

For example, though women often complain to me that their partners are too fast and furious when it comes to clitoral stimulation, according to their boyfriends and husbands, they, too, "jump the gun" and rush too quickly into heavy rhythmic stimulation of the penis.

Other common gripes are that women often stop stroking or sucking too soon, lessening the pressure and consistency of movements at the point of orgasm, rather than stroking through the orgasm to maximize ejaculatory propulsion. Alternately, they often continue stroking well past ejaculation and comfort.

I've often heard men say that their well-meaning partners will apply a new sexual technique they've read or heard about, but do so

mechanically without any regard to their partner's particular arc of arousal, focusing on form over substance.

### **Playing Your Hand**

When Wanda came into see me, she was positively frantic. Not surprising given that her fiancé, Bob, had gently informed her that sex with her was becoming B-O-R-I-N-G and that he was having trouble maintaining an erection. As a result, she had loaded up on French maid's uniforms, fish-net stockings, and paddles and stocked her nightstand with every book she could locate on how to give the perfect blowjob and have sex like a porn star. She'd spent hours practicing how to deep throat on countless dozens of innocent zucchinis (purportedly the best phallic instrument for gauging teeth marks). By the time she came in, her head was spinning with all the different "signature" techniques and positions she'd memorized. Yet, despite her impressive efforts, her fiancé's interest and erection were middling and falling steadily. My sense was that she was too focused on pleasing him rather than actually connecting with him. So I gave her the simple assignment of placing her hand over his while he pleased himself to get more attuned to his particular arousal process through all four stages of stimulation. At first she balked. "You mean you want me to give him a hand job?"

Like many of us, Wanda had placed too high a premium on sexual flash and novelty and had therefore dismissed manual labor as something he could do himself. But in truth, she, like many others, needed to start from the beginning, learning how Bob liked to be touched from the expert, himself. Almost like learning how to swim, she needed to learn the basic strokes before she dove into deeper waters.

The upshot? (pun intended)... Well, let's just say the zucchinis are back in their vegetable bin, and Bob is no longer bored.

In short, masturbation serves as a critical baseline for understanding your partner's unique arousal arc through all four phases of genital stimulation. But you will recall that I said that I want you to be able to do all that "and more." By more, I mean that the physics of male sexuality seem to tilt toward a conservation of energy: Men only stimulate themselves long enough to develop the requisite levels of tension necessary for orgasm—no more, no less. Creatures of habit and efficiency, they tend to follow a fairly straight line from start to finish.

Using his masturbation approach as a baseline for understanding his pattern of genital stimulation, you're going to move him through the process, but you're also going to diverge. Rather than merely facilitating his arousal, you're going to slow him down, thus forcing him to develop significantly higher levels of sexual tension than he would normally experience during self-stimulation or standard intercourse-oriented sex. In this way, you will be able to expand and heighten the parameters of his pleasure at each and every level of stimulation by introducing variety and unpredictability.

As the avant-garde filmmaker Jean Luc Goddard said, all stories have a beginning, middle, and end, but not necessarily in that order.

# 15

Fillin' Good

AS WE PROCEED with techniques for direct genital stimulation, the most important thing to keep in mind is how to integrate arousal with desire. When all is said and done, these techniques are intended to be inspirational rather than followed in a rote manner. Not only can and should lovemaking be improvised, but also the techniques are not nearly as important as the overall connection and spirit with which it is done: maintaining eye contact, talking, interacting, asking if he likes it, telling him you are in control and plan to make him wait and you intend to give him the best orgasm of his life. That's what's cherished and remembered. Permitting him to kick back, knowing it's okay not to be in control (hell, you prefer him that way!), can be one of the sexiest experiences to a man accustomed to remaining in control. Make sure you let him know that you know what you're doing, you like what you're doing, and you intend to be doing it a damned long while regardless of how

much he wants or begs for it. If he's not totally hard, all the better. You will take your sweet time, up until you decide that he's ready and worthy to come.

Remember that sex is ideally a holistic integration of emotional desire and intimacy, intellectual spark and creativity, sensual pleasure and physical arousal. The best sex fuses and builds on all these dimensions. And the way to achieve this with a man is to make him realize you are turned on by him being turned on, that you do not want to rush through it or let him take control. Let him know that you want to make him wait, savor, and enjoy; that you want to know exactly what he wants and plan to use it against him without mercy; that you will tease, taunt, tickle, nibble, suck, and stroke him until he cannot take another instant; and that there is no specific road to Oz. You will take your time playing with him, and then, if he is very, very good and asks extremely nicely, *perhaps* in due course you will...set...him...free.

- Many men tell me that the first touch to the penis sends shivers throughout the body, especially after the rest of his body has been amply aroused. Did you know that men produce significantly higher levels of testosterone when they are being touched by someone else as opposed to themselves? He may know how to touch himself, but his touch can never replace the connection, freshness, and unpredictability of yours. But very often, women don't take the time to touch; they go straight for the rhythmic stimulation, thinking that's what he wants or that's what it takes to build and sustain an erection. And while he may indeed want that rhythmic stimulation straight out of the gate and it may provide a shortcut to a powerful erection, your goal is to provide him with a new and varied sex script. So take the time to really touch and experience his response. This first touch is a vital part of the excitement and sense of connection you're going to forge. Style is borne of substance, and the most important part

of being a responsive lover is just that—being engaged and responsive.

- Start with gentle strokes, and be exploratory. Remember your goal in this phase—whether you’re using your hands, mouth, or vulva, or, ideally, a combination of the three is to fill and maximize his erectile potential and set out at a slow pace. He may instinctively want to speed you along and encourage you to grab his penis. Or, he may grab it. (This could be the ideal time to experiment with a bit of bondage, by tying his hands together.) Still, hold your ground and remain in charge. At this stage, you should not be engaging in rhythmic stimulation, but rather unfocused genital touch. At key moments, you may create an expectation of rhythm, but, as we will discuss further on, rather than pursue the rhythm, you should then slow or even cease genital stimulation for a few moments to build, rather than race, toward the next level of physical arousal.
- Think of his body as a vast erogenous landscape, one that throbs luminously from the heat of your touch. As you’re generating heat in his genitals, you want to keep the other areas warm. Don’t divert to the penis, but rather integrate and build connections and pathways to the penis from other areas. Stimulating two body spots together ignites a wider swatch of nerve endings and provides twice the erotic anticipation, *especially* when one of those areas is his penis. Focus on keeping his upper and lower body connected. Some hot pathways (think of them as the major erogenous interstates connecting north and south) include: lips/penis, neck/penis, nipples/penis, and earlobe/penis.

## Hands

- Lying comfortably next to him, drape your fingers over his penis and focus on light sporadic touching throughout the genitals. Use your fingertips to caress and lightly tickle or ever-so-lightly scratch, rather than squeeze or grab.
- With one hand, softly cup his testicles and hold for a moment. While cupping his balls, use your fingers to delicately massage the lower part of the shaft where it meets the scrotum. While cupping his testicles, focus on some of the upper body-lower body pathways already mentioned: Kiss or nibble his lower lip, whisper something sexy in his ear, nibble his earlobe, stroke his hair with your free hand, or lick or kiss a nipple. After engaging in the aforementioned filling activities, you’ll be able to feel the rush of blood to his genitals and see the change in his erection. Think of this position (cupping his testicles) as a place to return to after stimulating his penis. It’s a place to maintain contact, but also to take a break from some of the more intense stimulation.
- Return to his penis, and this time apply deeper fingertip pressure. Think of yourself as a potter gently kneading a piece of clay. Take the shaft between your fingers and squeeze it from different positions: the sides (where you’ll probably notice his dorsal veins swelling); the top and underside; the lower part toward the scrotum, and the upper part below the head which encompasses the frenulum.
- Press the flat surface of your fingernails against the shaft. All of these different forms of pressure and textures stimulate the receptors in different ways and create different exhilarating sensations.
- As you touch the frenulum (the underside of the penis encompassing the area just below the glans), you’ll probably notice a tensing of the body, a bucking of the hips, or a kegel contraction (as we discussed in Part I). This area, the frenulum,



is often referred to as the sweet spot, and many men consider it the most sensitive part of the penis. It's typically the area that gets the most rhythmic stimulation during masturbation. Tease this area lightly: Starting at the tip of the head, use a single finger to lightly pet the entire underside of the glans and frenulum—like you're petting a cat between the eyes with a single finger.

### **Mouth**

- When you use your mouth in the filling phase, focus on kissing, licking, and nibbling, as opposed to sucking.
- Again, think about what you're doing with your hands and how to continue that upper-lower body connection. Or simply use your hands to cup his testicles or graze the sensitive skin just below his navel. And, above all else, talk! Make eye contact. Physical arousal is nothing without some desire to go with it.
- Intersperse your finger work from above with light kisses.
- Gently nibble on the shaft—don't bite, but press your teeth against his shaft, as you did earlier with the flat surface of your fingernails.
- Place one hand under the shaft and lift his penis a bit toward your head as you gently nibble on it. Avoid clenching, squeezing, or rhythmically massaging. Rather, use your fingers to help his penis come to attention, and nibble as though you were eating straight from a plate.
- Add some tongue. A single ice-cream lick up the shaft and across the frenulum will send shivers throughout his body. But don't lick consistently. Keep it random and unpredictable. Think of this phase as the ultimate tease.
- Holding the base of the shaft with one hand, come in from above, press your tongue against his urethra and the tip of his penis. Make a tongue-to-tip connection. Now slowly begin to

take the spongy head into your mouth. Stop at the edge (the corona), think of it as the edge of a cliff. Don't suck. Simply hold the head in your mouth and let it bathe in the wet warmth of your tongue. As you do this, use your fingers to gently squeeze up and down the shaft.

### **Vulva**

- Use his penis to stimulate your clitoris. Lying next to him and facing him eye to eye, take his penis in your hand as you would a vibrator and use his glans to gently massage your labia and clitoral head. Focus on using the top part of his head to stimulate yourself, which shouldn't be hard if he's taller than you and you're eye to eye. Do unto yourself as you are doing unto him: In other words, hold off on rhythmically massaging your clitoris. Rather, focus on the connection between your respective heads and hold the moment. If you do take his penis inside you, as with the previous mouth-technique, only take the tip of the glans in—do not go beyond the corona, and don't let him thrust. If you need to, gently grasp the shaft just below the head to ensure that he doesn't penetrate deeply. In this position, with the head of his penis against your clitoral glans, focus on the upper body connection. Kiss him; connect your heads: lower and upper.
- In the same position as above (side by side, face to face), gently push his penis downward so that it is horizontal and perpendicular to your vulva. Now move your body closer to his and press your labia and vaginal entrance against the top part of his shaft. Ride his shaft. In this position, your labia will enfold the top part of his shaft, applying pressure from above. Your clitoral glans will be nestled against his pelvic bone. Hold the position. Stay still. Focus on eye contact. Kiss, nuzzle him, nestle into him, talk to him, tease him, do anything but thrust. Let yourself get turned on. Build your own sexual tension. Take

from him as you give. In this position, cross your ankles and press your inner thighs against his shaft.

### **Please, Squeeze, at Ease**

This first phase of genital stimulation is one that usually gets short shrift as the tendency is to proceed straight to rhythmic thrusting, which heightens arousal but also the inevitability of orgasm. Think about ways you can linger in each phase. Use the above techniques as a general menu, but be sure to do a full-tasting menu, taking your time to savor each dish.

- As you please him (and yourself), end each technique with a squeeze of the glans. Approach the glans from the top and position its tip in the center of your palm. Now wrap the rest of your hand around the fleshy head and give it a good firm squeeze. This squeezing action pushes blood down from the tip of the penis and decreases his ejaculatory inevitability. Get into the habit of pleasing and squeezing him.
- The main thing is to try to stay attuned to where he is in the process of arousal. Is he doing everything he can to thrust, or is he allowing you to linger and indulge in this phase? Is he, indeed, filling, or do you feel it necessary to proceed to rhythmic stimulation? Follow his rhythm, pace, and unique arc of arousal. If he's seriously excited (which is likely), follow your squeeze with an at-ease. Break from direct genital stimulation and do something else. Kiss him, whisper in his ear, massage him. Tease him. Taunt him. Tie him up. Take a trip to the south side of town, and touch, lick, or gently finger the anus (if he'll let you). And, always, let him pleasure you. Or better yet, have him watch you pleasure yourself and make him beg to get in the last lick.

### **Is He Ready to Move on to the Next Stage?**

- Does he seem to have achieved a full erection?
- Can you see the veins in his penis?
- Is he flexing his PC muscle?
- Is he seeking out rhythmic stimulation?
- Is his body starting to tense with the development of sexual tension?
- Most important: Are you turned on? Are you ready for more?
- Test the temperature of his arousal. Take his penis in your hands and engage in about ten seconds of nonfocused filling activities. Tease him; titillate him. Then give his penis one quick stroke from bottom to top. Did his hips buck? Did his heart skip a beat? Did his penis visually flick with a deep pelvic contraction?

If so, it's time to move on...

# 16

## Arousal, Part 2: Rhythmic Stimulation

**H**IS TIME HAS NEARLY COME. But don't let him regain the reigns of control. You need to be sensitive to his rhythm and move with it, but not be controlled by it. During this all-important penultimate phase, you are focusing on building and expanding tension throughout his body. You are thinking locally, acting globally, as they say. You must be attuned to his local state of arousal and aware of how close he is to the point of no return, but remember that the more you work him up and diffuse the pleasure throughout his body, the more shatteringly intense his orgasm will be. Again, sex breeds sex, and desire feeds desire: What you do today will fuel tomorrow's fantasies and an endless spectrum of exciting, unpredictable adventures.

That said, during this phase you should:

- Continue to intersperse and punctuate nonrhythmic stimulation with forceful rhythmic strokes that encompass the full length of his penis (shaft and glans).
- As you increase the pace of your rhythmic strokes, decrease the period of nonrhythmic stimulation. As you transition to rhythmic stimulation, start with, say, a ten to one ratio: After approximately ten seconds of nonrhythmic stimulation, hit him with a couple of solid rhythmic strokes. Then gradually work toward a five to one ratio. Now dispense with the nonrhythmic stimulation all together and focus on slow rhythmic strokes. Do not take a stopwatch to bed. Sex should never be mechanical or formulaic, and each man's arousal arc is unique. The key thing to think about at this stage is *slowly* transitioning from nonfocused teasing, squeezing, building, touching, licking, nibbling, and manual stroking to actual rhythmic stroking.
- Pay attention to his levels of arousal. You will want to lead him close to the point of ejaculatory inevitability, but do not take him to the point of no return. The longer you can keep him in this intense state of peak arousal, the more gratifying his orgasm will be.
- Use the "squeeze, please, at ease" method described earlier to transition between genital approaches and to keep his arousal at bay.
- And, always, make plenty of eye contact, talk to him, ask if he likes what you're doing. Tell him you're going to make him wait. Remember, arousal is nothing without contextual desire. Remind him that you're in control and you love it. Let him fully enjoy the sensations of kicking back, focus him on letting go, relaxing, and experiencing every touch, lick, stroke, command, kiss, smile, slap, and nibble.

## Hands

- Focus first on a simple grasp and clasp. Get yourself in a comfortable position, and firmly grasp the shaft of his penis at the base. Don't be afraid to apply pressure, I promise he will tell you if you're gripping him too tightly. Many women worry that they're hurting men when they squeeze tightly, while a common complaint from men is that women do not squeeze tightly enough when they are highly aroused. In a culture where women fret over vaginal looseness and are chided continuously to practice kegels or even to consider extreme newfangled vaginal rejuvenation surgeries, the reality is that a well-positioned manual clasp will serve the purpose more effectively.
- With your free hand, use your thumb and index finger to form a clasp just under the coronal ridge, around his frenulum.



grab base

- Starting at the coronal ridge, stroke down to the base and then back up. Keep the movement slow and easy at first.
- Vary this long stroke with short strokes that are confined to the frenulum. Many men masturbate themselves to orgasm with these shorter, more rapid strokes.
- It may be time to add lubrication, particularly if you are emphasizing manual stimulation. While your own natural vaginal lubrication is the preferred choice, if it's not in ample supply, a water-based lubricant, such as Liquid Silk, is your best choice. Oil-based lubes are not compatible with latex and whatever safe-sex precautions you have in place and can also lead to yeast infections. Silicone-based lubes last longer than water-based, but they're also harder to wash off and incompatible with silicone (and therefore lots of sex toys).
- The simplest way to add lubrication into your routine is simply to squeeze some onto your hands and rub them together and get to work. When it comes to adding lubrication, less is more. But, remember, if you're using a water-based lube, keep the tube on hand, as it dries out more quickly. Too much lube may make matters too slippery and lead to more rapid stimulation. Some other fun ways to lube him up include dripping some on your stomach and letting him rub against you or dripping some in the cleavage between your breasts and letting him rub as you squeeze your breasts against his shaft. But take note: Stomach and cleavage rubs are also some extremely popular ways for men to thrust to orgasm. Don't let him thrust. You're in control.
- Once you've lubed him up, focus on slow intense pressured strokes from the bottom to the top that go up and over the head.
- You can also loosen your clasp and go up and down over the head more briskly, all the while maintaining a loose clasp that barely grazes him.
- Rule of thumb: When using a loose clasp, increase the speed of your strokes. On a tight clasp, slow down. Genital arousal is all

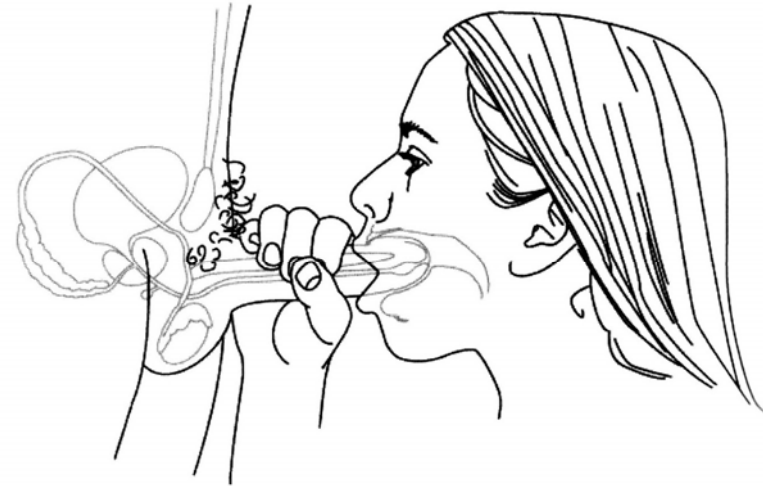
about the relationship between friction and pressure. When men masturbate, they tend to find a comfortable balance between the two in their strokes, but often will emphasize one element over the other to vary the quality of orgasm. An orgasm that comes from longer, pressured strokes may feel deeper, whereas an orgasm that comes from lighter, shorter strokes may feel more ticklish and propulsive. Both are intense. But one of the reasons that men often thrust violently during oral sex or intercourse is to compensate for insufficient friction or pressure.

- Lube up both your hands, sandwich his penis (head and shaft) between them and rub them together as though you were warming your hands. (The same can be done with your breasts. Douse some lube in your cleavage and pull your breasts together, rubbing them up and down along the shaft and head of his penis, following the nonrhythmic to rhythmic stroke ratios we talked about earlier.)
- With a slightly dryer hand, get a good grip and wring his penis with both hands using the motion (but not the strength) you would use to wring out a towel.
- Remember to hold your grasp at the base of his penis—your grasp is going to help retain blood in the penis and heighten the quality and intensity of his orgasm. Additionally, use your free fingers to gently massage his testicles, pressing against his perineum or grazing his anal area. Feel free to break the grasp to engage his upper body, but remember to come back. (Chances are he won't let you forget.)
- As you “please,” don't forget to “squeeze” and add an “at ease” at regular intervals. This is especially important during the rhythmic stimulation phase, as you could easily continue your stimulation straight through to orgasm. The squeeze and at ease will help you bring him close to the point of no return, without sending him over the edge. Take a short break from direct genital stimulation altogether before transitioning into a different

approach. This both heightens physical arousal, and, in my experience, is a big turn-on. Incorporate more teasing, tying up, and dirty talk here. Make him serve you by using his penis or tongue as your personal sex toy. Show him that you mean to make him wait, maybe even beg, and that you're in control—that you will not release him until you've had your fill of pleasure. Alternate between stimulating him and yourself. Continue to maintain contact, keep him close, but do not send him over.

## Mouth

- In the rhythmic stimulation stage, your mouth is going to be most powerfully used in combination with your hands, with oral attention largely lavished upon the head and frenulum, the most sensitive parts of the penis.



oral sex

- Maintaining a firm grip on his shaft, place your lips over the head and form a seal. By bobbing your head up and down over the frenulum, you will naturally create suction, and you can experiment with how it feels. Some men love suction, others find it uncomfortable, and still others are indifferent.
- Press your tongue against his frenulum and use the hand around his shaft to move his penis up and down and back and forth across your tongue. Dote on the frenulum. Lick it slowly, delicately, while maintaining a very tight grip on his shaft. Think of your hand as a blood-pressure sleeve that's increasing in pressure.
- While maintaining your two-fingered grasp around the base, create a seal with your mouth and take in as much of his penis as you're comfortable with. Take heed: You *don't* need to deep throat. You can certainly do it if it's something you enjoy or think he may enjoy, but any stimulation you can provide from deep throating is something you can accomplish just as easily with hands and mouth. In surveys of men, deep throating is not a technique that features high on any man's wish list, except as a quick bit of novelty or fantasy. The last thing he wants is for you to be anxious or uncomfortable while stimulating him. It's more important that you stay engaged and attuned to the process. Most women enjoy performing oral sex on men, provided they don't feel anxious or like they're going to gag. They love the intimacy, the connection, and the power they exert, and the more strongly they feel about the man, the more intimate they consider the act. When women experience trepidation about fellatio, their anxiety usually stems from the following areas: Concerns about hygiene, fears of gagging, and discomfort (whether physical or psychological) about swallowing. So keep him clean, don't take more of him in your mouth than you're comfortable with, and if you don't want to swallow, let his fluids dribble all over your face or tell him you want him to ejaculate on your breasts.

Chances are he won't mind. Related to gagging, some women also worry about the violence of his thrusting, particularly as he gets increasingly aroused. When he's thrusting, it's called irrumation, as opposed to fellatio. During the latter, you're moving your mouth up and down his penis. You're in charge: You control the rhythm, pace, and pressure. In the case of irrumation, he's thrusting in and out of your mouth. In any session of oral stimulation, there's likely to be a bit of both, but make sure, in general, you're in charge, and remember that men tend to buck and thrust when there's some sort of stimulation (either friction or pressure) they require to maintain arousal. As for swallowing his ejaculate, the main thing men enjoy is stimulation through orgasm. Many women stop at the point of orgasm, rather than stroking through the orgasm. Swallowing naturally provides that persistent stimulation, which is why men enjoy it. But if you don't enjoy swallowing (and many women don't), there are plenty of other ways to stimulate through orgasm and maximize his pleasure, with your fingers, breasts, and tongue. What's most important is to understand that men love being orally pleased in a countless number of ways. And a little fanciful fingerwork, plenty of talking, eye contact, teasing, and squeezing will out-lip any Linda Lovelace. There are many, many paths to sexual gratification, and no one approach is necessarily better than the rest. In fact, you should get out of the habit of taking the same path each time. What's important is that you understand the principles of pleasure and continually find new and creative ways to attune yourself to his pleasure with confidence. Your excitement and sense of control will be the most erotic aspects of any sexual interaction.

## Intercourse

- As you did in the previous phase, use his penis like a vibrator or dildo. Lying side by side, face to face, eye to eye, take his penis in your hands and massage your labia and clitoral glans. Enjoy yourself; let yourself get aroused. Focus on taking pleasure, rather than giving. Use his body for your own enjoyment. Match your level of arousal to his. In controlling the sex script, you also need to take responsibility for your own pleasure. Being able to give pleasure is a relatively simple matter, but being able to take it is often a far greater challenge for many women.
- Do the slide, also known as femoral intercourse. Lube up his shaft, get on top, and let your labia enfold the underside of his penis. Slowly slide up and down his shaft. Lean forward slightly and press your clitoris against him. Feel free to touch yourself as well, grazing against his testicles and penis as you do. Take your pleasure.
- Lying side by side, push down his penis so it's perpendicular to your vulva and let your labia enfold him from the top. One way to vary the femoral intercourse described above is to squeeze your legs together and press your clitoral glans into his pelvis. Again, use your fingers to keep his penis in place. Let him thrust between your legs, while you grab and caress his buttocks.
- Get on top, and let him barely penetrate you—just the tip of the head. Now slide down to encompass his entire head to the edge of the coronal ridge. Hold the position. Now push down over the ridge to the heart of the frenulum and then back over the ridge to the fleshy part of the head. Work this area with small, slow movements, focusing primarily on the feeling of going all the way up and down over the coronal ridge.
- Either from the top or the side, penetrate deeply with a single thrust and hold the position for at least ten seconds. Massage your clitoris against his pelvic bone. Now very slowly pull up and out. As with the fellatio techniques we discussed, remember that you're in charge, you're leading, and you're the one doing the penetrating and thrusting. So try to focus on positions (like you on top or side by side) in which you can maintain a high degree of control.
- As you pull out from a deep thrust, squeeze your PC muscles (in other words, do a kegel) and tighten your vagina around his penis throughout the pull-out.
- Let him get on top and do the same thing. As he penetrates you, tell him to stay still and squeeze your PC muscles around his penis in rhythmic contractions, rather than letting him thrust. Control his movements by placing your hands on his butt. Hold the moment. Press your clitoris against his pelvis. Massage his buttocks, spread his cheeks a bit if he's comfortable with it. Press his perineum and stimulate his prostate from the exterior. Tell him or prod him to slowly pull out. Squeeze your PC muscles as he withdraws.
- Let him penetrate you from behind doing the same movement as above. Encourage him to press against you with his weight (as much as you're comfortable with), lying flat and still. In this position, the weight of his body will stimulate your G-spot, but you won't get nearly as much clitoral stimulation as you did when you were in the male-superior or female-superior position. You may wish to rub your clitoris or have him do it at the same time with his hand or a vibrator.
- When employing deep penetration, the point is to focus on single thrusts that are controlled and provide clitoral stimulation. The danger with any of these intercourse positions is that the session could easily spiral out of control and result in the sort of wild thrusting that produces lots of vaginal friction and his orgasm, but not yours. Yes, he comes next, but not at the expense of your own gratification. This is not to say that you must strive for simultaneous orgasm or even mutual orgasm during intercourse.

There is nothing wrong with him orally or manually pleasuring you throughout, especially during transitions from one phase of his arousal arc to the next.

- Whether you're engaging in femoral sex or penetrative intercourse, make sure these approaches are interspersed with manual and oral techniques and do not eclipse them. That goes for both of you.
- Also know that though women's magazines will often trumpet new positions every month, and yes, somebody somewhere is attempting to work their way through the kama sutra, there are really only four major positions and then nearly infinite derivations. The four major positions are female superior (woman on top), male superior (man on top), side entry (face to face), and rear entry. Each of these positions offers their own unique attributes. The female superior position is the most consistent position for vouchsafing the female orgasm. When you're on top, you're not only getting direct clitoral stimulation, but you're also in control of the rhythm and intensity. You can focus on deep pressing more than thrusting, while also enjoying the feeling of being filled vaginally. Additionally, many men say this is their favorite position, not only because they know it's the one you're most likely to enjoy, but also because he can stimulate your breasts or simply lay back, relax, and enjoy the show.

Women are all too familiar with the feeling of a man climaxing and then collapsing on top of them, and the female superior position often offers a nice reversal of this dynamic. Remember that when you're in the female superior position, you can also use your hands for additional clitoral stimulation, or you can have him use his hands.

Additionally, many men have told me that they love using a vibrator to stimulate the clitoris when she's on top, or you can surprise him by whipping out your vibrator and using it on yourself. Men need to learn that rarely does unassisted intercourse (i.e.,

complemented by a hand, mouth, or vibrator) lead to female orgasm, especially not the first one, and they need to feel a sense of collaboration, rather than threatened or alienated. The major downside of being on top is that many women are uncomfortable with their bodies and self-conscious about being seen. My advice is to take a few sips of wine, turn down the lights, and get on top.

- In the male superior position, he's going to have more ability to thrust and achieve the momentum necessary for a really propulsive orgasm, so this could be a great position if you've already had yours and want him to have his. Many women enjoy getting their orgasm from the female superior position, knowing that his isn't far behind and then transitioning into the missionary position. But by placing your hands on his butt cheeks, you can hold him inside you and receive clitoral stimulation, while also massaging his buttocks and anal area. Like the female superior position and the side-by-side position, the missionary position is a great lovemaking position in that it affords body-to-body, face-to-face, eye-to-eye contact. It fosters emotional presence and offers a form of intimacy that is part and parcel of genuine ecstasy. Make the extra effort to combine eye contact with the deep pressing that provides clitoral stimulation, and you'll be sure to get the most of intimacy and sexual pleasure combined.
- Like the missionary position, side-by-side is a great one for making love. Because it's harder to thrust when you're each on your side, it also predisposes the coupling toward slower, deeper lovemaking. This can be assured when you wrap a leg over his and hold the position.
- Rear entry is a powerful position for many men. It lends itself to strong feelings of power and dominance and affords maximum thrusting for the propulsive orgasm. When he's coming in from behind, you're also likely to experience a comfortable pressure and stimulation against your G-spot.



- While there's no shortage of sexual positions for you to experiment with, don't let form overshadow substance or performance outweigh the pursuit of pleasure. Use these four basic positions—female superior, male superior, side-by-side, and rear entry—to explore, like points on the compass, the parameters of pleasure and intimacy. And by all means, switch positions throughout, ending often with oral or manual stimulation to orgasm, his and yours. There is no prescribed rule that says his penis must end up in your vagina when the sheets grow cold. Keep it hot and varied.

### **Vibrator**

- Your vibrator isn't just for you. Boys enjoy toys as well, especially when you're using them on him. During oral or manual stimulation, put your vibrator on a low speed and press it against his shaft, frenulum, and head. You'll probably need to use both hands to encompass both the vibrator and his penis, unless you're using a very thin vibrator (such as the Rocket).
- Lower the vibrator against his shaft and simultaneously lick his frenulum, or use your mouth to create a seal around his head.
- Or use the vibrator when he's deeply penetrating you in the male superior or side-by-side position to stimulate his buttocks, anal entrance, and perineum.

Is he close to the point of ejaculatory inevitability (also known as the point of no return)?

- Does his body seem to be reaching a point of maximum tension?
- Are his testicles retracting toward his body?
- Has he entered the emission stage of ejaculation, as muscles close to the prostate begin to visually shudder?

- Has the spongy flesh of his head become even more tumescent as the urethral bulb fills with semen?
- Has he secreted that first drop of pre-ejaculate?

If so, he's about to go over the edge, and you need to determine whether you're going hit the brakes or step on the gas—  
My advice?

# 17

## Pump the Pedal!

**Y**ES, THE NAME OF THE GAME is to be able to lead him as close to the point of ejaculatory inevitability as possible, without taking him past the point of no return, but it's also important to familiarize yourself with the entire process of sexual response.

The time to have pulled back was actually the moment just before this one—that's usually the point when men will tell you they're going to come, if he's a communicative sort of fellow (and I would definitely encourage him to vocalize). Once his gun has loaded (so to speak), help him focus on firing it for all it's worth.

Very often men will end up pulling back from the cusp of ejaculatory inevitability, with the venerable intention of wanting to last longer. While I wholeheartedly support slowing down and building to a point of ultimate tension and arousal, I have heard from many of my male patients that such attempts at slowing down fail at this critical juncture and the ultimate quality that their orgasm

suffers. Or sometimes they succeed, actually emitting a small amount of ejaculate, or they lose some of the blood and tumescence from their erection. They may even experience one or two orgasmic contractions without ejaculating. Men who practice male multiple orgasms are familiar with this technique and some claim it's like taking two steps backward to achieve one giant jump forward.

But sometimes when you take two steps backward, you lose the energy to go forward altogether. So instead of practicing the true art of male multiple orgasms, I'd like you to focus on simply taking that big giant step forward and making the most of his orgasm.

- Once you've felt that spasm from the emission phase, which means he has crossed that point of no return, grab hold of his shaft and speed up the massaging at the base of his penis. Form a ring around the base, your fingers grasping tight and your hands thrusting up and down the base of his penis, hitting and tapping on his testicles. The pressure on his shaft will intensify the pleasure of ejaculating, but the friction will increase its propulsiveness for an orgasm that is qualitatively more intense than an orgasm that comes from most forms of vaginal penetration alone.
- Alternatively, when he's at that exhilarating point of no return, why not use your mouth and hands instead? There's more than one way to skin a cat. The surprise, the change, and the increased intensity of the oral and digital stimulation, which is easier for you to control than through intercourse, can provide a shock of excitement in addition to increasing the level of friction and pressure.
- Not that he doesn't love orgasms through intercourse—the only problem is that when you're in a position that's focused on deep penetration, pressing and clitoral stimulation, much of the sexual tension is being generated from the action on the base of the shaft. These orgasms can be deep, but may lack a top. In

women's terms, it's like the difference between coming as a result of very fast, purely topical clitoral stimulation and coming as a result of slower clitoral stimulation plus deep penetration. You can and should squeeze your PC muscles while he's coming, and if you're coming too, he'll feel those vaginal contractions as well, but again this will add to the pressure, rather than provide friction.

- To compensate for any loss of friction and pressure, use your hand if he's on top or side-by-side to massage his buttocks, press his perineum, or play with his anal area. Remember the anus participates in the pleasurable contractions of orgasm and is filled with nerve endings. By pressing against his perineum, you're stimulating his prostate. Some men, at least at first, may find this pressure uncomfortable, while others will immediately embrace it. For many men, simply grazing the anal area (perineum and anus) with your fingertips is enough to add a quivering intensity of sensations to climax.
- If he's in a missionary or rear-entry position, he'll likely focus on fast thrusting to experience the friction against the frenulum and shaft. But, here, there's often a lack of pressure against the shaft. So, as he's coming, squeeze strongly on your PC muscles at the moment he makes his crucial thrust. Or, if that's too hard to control, try to bring your legs as close together as possible so that they are pushing against the sides of his penis.

When you're giving him an orgasm through a combination of your mouth and hands, you're able to provide the ideal combination of friction and pressure.

This may not feel right to you, but again I believe it's important to get out of the intercourse-discourse and open ourselves up to new models of mutual pleasuring. As you know, I'm already assuming (with *She Comes First*) that you've had at least one orgasm (and this is *He Comes Next*), and no one is saying that you shouldn't experience another, but my personal conviction is that there is a true

sexual joy in committing to roles as giver and receiver and enjoying them fully.

Not that simultaneous orgasms are not a worthwhile pursuit, but it is my passionate belief that what you're doing here is focusing on his pleasure, his relief from the pressure to perform. Just like women, men need to let go to experience unqualified sexual pleasure, as I advocated in my first book. Here, it's about him: It's about letting him enjoy and submit to your control. You can make him watch and serve; hell you can tease him by thrusting your vagina in his face while you masturbate yourself to orgasm during a transition from one level to the next of his pleasure arc. But at this stage of the game, you should be attuning yourself to his pleasure, pure and simple. Come, by all means, over and over. Use his penis, his mouth, his hands...his thighs and kneecaps, for that matter. But let him focus on being taken, on being controlled by you, on feeling as if it's okay to relax and enjoy. If you get distracted, you may lose a crucial beat or be so consumed with your own pleasure that you do not stimulate him with everything you've got—hands, mouth, body, eyes, toes, breasts, talking, taste, tickling, smell, groans, threats, sweat—whatever it takes to help him achieve a fully-embodied global climax.

- As we discussed earlier, hold that pressure on his shaft—he may clasp his hand over yours to loosen or tighten the grip, or simply secure it. So take heed to his desires, and don't be put off or think you're doing a bad job if you suddenly feel a hand over yours. It means he's trusting you enough to communicate the full extent of his desires. And that, in and of itself, is a huge turn-on for men, not simply from an arousal standpoint, but from the vantage point of emotional intimacy.
- You could also try pressing a vibrator against his shaft as he ejaculates or even rubbing a fluffy slipper or pushing up and down on a cuff of sultry fabric (a velvet scarf, a feather boa)

wrapped around his testicles, adding an extra tactile element of friction.

- With your free hand, or mouth, continue to massage the frenulum. Many men say that there's nothing more exquisite than a tongue lapping against the frenulum at the moment of orgasm.
- His first spurt will contain the lion's share of ejaculate and will, by and large, be the most pleasurable. If you're giving him a hand job, you'll probably capture much of the semen on your hand, and if you're using your mouth, it's your decision whether you want to swallow, capture in your mouth and spit out, or let him ejaculate elsewhere.
- The main thing is to stroke through the orgasm and maintain contact.
- After his first spurt, you will want to loosen your grip on his shaft and also slow down your stroking of the frenulum.
- Now do the reverse of what we've discussed. Lighten your grip at the shaft, but intensify your clasp at the head. Focus on one or two deep strokes of the head that will lead to the expulsion of more ejaculate. You may want to take your stroke halfway down the shaft and give it an intense stroke back up and over the head. Do this one or two more times to extract those final shudders and pause for a few seconds.
- Now take his frenulum between your fingers and give it a light squeeze to exact the last drop and exquisite shudder.
- Pause for at least half a minute, as the penis is extremely sensitive post-orgasm.

Use this period to connect with him face to face, eye to eye. Touch his face, stroke his hair, kiss him, hold him, connect with him. Those thirty seconds are his true afterglow, where he's seeking that loving connection.

Have you had your fill? Most women I speak with are often so turned on by their partners' orgasms that they're ready for more at this point, even though their lovers are frequently ready for bed.

So remember, even if you came first and he came next, the incomparable beauty of the female sex is that you come again...and again...

# 18

## The Butt Stops Here

**T**HE BUTT OF MANY JOKES, the crack of many smiles, the derriere has been rearing up in unexpected places: one of them may be your bedroom. Whether this is cause for pleasure, laughter, or downright alarm, from yours to his, it's important to broach the issue with delicacy, understanding, and also some humor. So bottoms up!

As we discussed earlier, the entire buttocks is rife with nerve endings, comprising the largest, nongenital erogenous zone in the male body. Even a superficial massage will extend his sensory experience beyond the familiar nerve endings in his penis for a deeper, more embodied global orgasm, one he could never achieve on his own. This can be achieved with the simple addition of pulsating your fingers against his butt cheeks while taking him into your mouth, with a few squeezes, taps, or slaps thrown in for good measure. It can also be implemented to fire up the plain ol'

missionary position by firmly gripping his ass in your hands to control and restrict his movements (thus, layering in a dominating nuance). Press your palms into his cheeks and apply varying degrees of pressure, using your PC squeezing and releasing techniques in lieu of thrusting, to remain in control. This will allow him to relax.

How much he will allow you to delve beneath and between the gated portals into hallowed ground will depend, in large part, on your own level of comfort and sense of mastery (or should it be mistressy?). So, as always, make sure he sees that you know what you're doing and far more critically, that you like what you're doing, and that you want him to relinquish his will to your capable care. The more you are able to project a positive sense of excitement, pleasure, and adventure, the greater the likelihood he will open himself up to a richer, maybe even uncharted, experience. But before heading down yonder, do your best to abate any concerns you may have regarding hygiene (which is far and away the chief reservation my women patients express regarding travel down south). Better yet, make cleanliness an exciting part of your routine.

Strip him down to the buff, while you remain semi-clothed in lingerie and give him a shower or bath. Then slowly lather him up and wash him down from head to toe and everywhere in between. The warm water will help relax him (which is vital for a backroad excursion) and will focus him on his sensual enjoyment, rather than his state of arousal and erection. You may also want to watch him wash himself, directing his strokes and telling him when he is permitted to start and stop. This will push his (and your) hot buttons by incorporating key themes of voyeurism, exhibitionism, and domination into the rinse cycle. Try tying his hands behind his back or blindfolding him while you wash him to layer in submission and round off the big four hot list. Remember, however, you are building desire and global sensual arousal, rather than focusing on his erection. By making him realize that his rigidity, or lack thereof, is irrelevant to you, you enable him to relax and revel in a full in- and out-of-body experience.

Now that he's buffed and buff, it's time for a little dancing cheek to cheek. Most men will allow at least a bit of stimulation of their sweet spot, or perineum, which is the soft cushiony area located between his testicles and anus and is positively bursting with pleasurable nerve endings. By integrating gentle, tickling strokes of your fingertips when you orally pleasure him, you will increase his excitement tenfold. In fact, be sure to keep an eye on how close he is to the point of no return, so you don't move him too quickly through his arousal arc. You can also stimulate his sweet spot with a flickering tongue while you pleasure him with your hand. Again, make sure to remain decidedly in control. You may also want to incorporate the use of a small vibrator, by rubbing it up against his perineum (and watching him jolt with appreciation). Tell him how much you love watching him and making him wait. Give him confidence in your desire and ability to hold the reigns of control.

Continuing your journey into darkness, you may soon encounter a bit of resistance. Always respect his boundaries (especially, I may add, if you have your naughty boy cuffed, bound, or blindfolded), but remember that your own sense of desire, comfort, and control will best allow you to pioneer your way. If he will allow it, whether during a first encounter or subsequent journey, lightly stimulate his anus with your tongue or fingers. This area is extremely tender to the touch, so be careful or you will soon find yourself evicted and forcibly removed. Lick the outer ridge or rim of his anus—hence, the term rimming—or massage him gently with the cushions of your fingers (no pointy nails, folks!). That will make an ordinary hand job or blowjob a world-class adventure. It should also be noted that in allowing you to stimulate him here, you will open up new avenues of trust and facilitate stronger emotional intimacy. So take your time and explore with role-playing, fantasy, dirty talk, and plenty of eye contact.

The final frontier of your journey is penetration, once again, if he'll allow it, and only if you, too, are comfortable and desire it. I want to take a moment here to respond to the other common concern voiced by my female patients over the years: Second only to cleanliness, many women are resistant to the thought of penetrating their partners due to an odd societal stigma that equates anal stimulation with homosexuality and, hence, emasculation. There are so many ways I object to this view that I hardly know where to begin! Homophobia notwithstanding, this association speaks volumes for our restrictive view of heterosexuality as predicated upon penile-vaginal intercourse. No part of the body belongs to any sexual orientation. Breasts are not the provenance of straight men, no matter how much they tend to think it, and asses are not the fodder of solely gay delights. I would ask you to look within yourself, rethink any pejorative conceptions you may have, and make a full-faith effort to reconceive your limited, limiting views of his body and your own to make it a fully navigable, wholly sensual, and exquisitely sexual domain for endless exploration and pleasure.

That said, if you and your partner are ready to continue your trip, you should combine finger and mouth stimulation in initiating anal penetration, as it provides necessary lubrication as well as intensely pleasurable sensations. Get attuned to his rhythm and place a single cushioned finger (again, no nails, ladies!) on his anal opening. Only when you feel him relax and open (trust me, you will), gently nudge your finger in and let it rest there, motionless. Continue to lick his perineum and anal ridge while slightly vibrating your finger, without moving it in further. When you feel him open more and/or contract (which he ideally will at some point), then very gently nudge it in further. Continue slowly until you have inserted your finger a full two inches into his anus, pressing forward against the wall of his perineum: Congratulations friends, you have hit his G-spot (G as in guarded, golden, and grand). Once he is comfortable, you can continue to penetrate him while you suck and stroke his testicles, perineum, and penis until he is ready to luxuriate a breathtaking

orgasm. As always take your time and make him wait. I heartily suggest you keep your finger in his anus at first, rather than pushing it in and out. Move it slowly back and forth and side to side, tapping on his G-spot. You may add longer penetrating strokes in and out for variety when he is clearly ready or incorporate a small vibrator or butt plug. But remember, his G-spot is inside, so don't go Rambo on him and do unto him what he may have done unto you. We're not going for the thrust here. To make this not only a spectacular, but also an emotionally meaningful surrender to your power, be gentle, sensitive, and utterly unyielding of control. Remember, having him ask or beg, tying him up, pinching his nipples, and stroking his chest will help make this an epic climax that he will never forget and will want to repeat, with new and exciting twists (literally and figuratively).

*Also, and this is key, he may lose his erection.* Some men, for a combination of psychological and physiological reasons, cannot maintain a full erection when penetrated. Do not let that inhibit your journey or make him self-conscious about it. Keep on trucking, sistas! Make him wait. Build the tension throughout his body. And when he does finally explode into orbit, he will most definitely thank you for it many times over, buried head first between your thighs—that is, once he recovers from his post-orgasmic stupor.

A last remark regarding your own precious, possibly pristine posterior. If you are interested in exploring anal sex for the first time, a few words to the wary will save you a whole lot of discomfort later. Consider partaking in a glass or three of spirits. Have him warm you up by engaging in a perineal massage while he orally pleases you. Directly following orgasm, have him gently insert a finger while licking the surrounding area, gradually adding another. When you are ready to move onto the next step (and not a second before), let him know. Make sure you use plenty, and I mean, plenty of lubrication. And, herein, is the most important last step: Do not let him thrust. Not once, not a little, not at all. Have him lean the head of his erect penis against your anal entrance. Then use your hand to

insert it in *yourself*. Slowly back up and take him in. He should remain immobile, and you should direct the action. Once he is fully in, which may require more lubing and more loving (and more spirits) beforehand, allow him to rock his penis slowly back and forth. If and when you are ready, add momentum, slowly. I highly recommend, however, that you move back and forth on him, instead, and do away with the thrusting altogether. If it hurts, stop. Ladies, keep in mind that what goes in, must come out. If he comes inside you, expect to see a return sometime later in the evening. And on that tender note, I bid you and your buttocks many happy returns.

## Conclusion

OKAY, SO YOU REMEMBER that guy Charlie I was telling you about—the one with the killer sex life who’s been married with kids for nearly ten years?

Well, I finally sat him down in my office one day and asked him to tell me his secret: What exactly did he and his wife do to keep the fires burning so intensely? And you know what he said?

“We don’t do anything, doc.”

“What do you mean you don’t do anything?”

“I mean, sure we do stuff, but it’s not about what we do.”

“Then what is it about?” I asked, puzzled.

“Let’s see; how can I describe it?” Charlie began. “Well, it’s like a few nights ago, I was watching this show about how the universe is expanding. Did you know that was Einstein’s biggest failing? He thought the universe was static. So, when he finally did figure it out,

he said it was the greatest blunder of his life.... Well, I think that’s the biggest blunder we make in our relationships—we assume things are static and don’t let ourselves expand with the universe. I dunno. I’m not sure if I’m making any sense here.”

“Actually, I think you’re making a whole lot of sense, Charlie. Sex is about expanding who we are, what we want, and what we think we want in the most incredibly intimate way. It’s the only place in our lives where get to take and lose control, play make believe, do stuff simply because it feels good, as adults.”

Charlie nodded.

Suddenly, I thought about the woman on the shaky bridge. The psychologists who’d conducted that study had concluded that sexual desire moves and expands: A new, arousing experience can transfer and imprint itself onto a person, a place, even a madeleine (remember Proust?). They went on to hypothesize that falling in love was a process of self-expansion, that first powerful bang when you’re staying up all hours of the night talking and touching, getting to know each other’s likes and dislikes, disappointments and aspirations. And it’s not simply that you’re falling in love with the other person; it’s that it allows you to fall in love with yourself through their eyes as well, to rediscover yourself, to question who you are and, what you want. And it all happens at such a frenetic speed, it’s like an electric current recharging your brain.

But once couples get to know each other, they usually stop asking as many questions of themselves and each other, and that thrill of rapid expansion decreases, resulting in a precipitous drop-off in levels of satisfaction and love. If, however, they continue to engage in mutually expanding activities, they can continue to experience that sense of awe and discovery forever. That’s why it’s so important to choose a mate who provides you with more than momentary physical arousal, but an attraction based on intellectual, emotional, and spiritual compatibility as well. If a relationship gets to the point where you can predict everything your partner will do or say in a given situation, both in bed and out, it’s time to start challenging and



expanding your relationship, both alone and together. For the relationship to remain new and exciting, you have to be surprised and delighted by the other person's unique way of seeing the world. Your partner has to stimulate you in ways you could never do on your own.

The more I thought about this concept, the more I realized Charlie was right. Sex is the ideal forum for expanding the boundaries of a relationship. But to do that you need to be committed to communication and discovery. It must be a place you can go together, safely, to experience pleasure without pressure. Most of us want to let go, to experience the world through fresh eyes, through each other's eyes, just like we did when we were children, to reawaken that youthful spirit, much like the White Tigress we talked about earlier on. But men, more than women, are trained from birth not to let go, to be responsible mature adults, to be bosses, husbands, protectors, providers, and fathers. Sex provides an outlet from the pressures of life's constraints.

Sex is the one place where, if there's enough love and trust in the other person's genuine desire, the sheer pleasure of letting go can be experienced in a concert of all the senses, which is not only sexually cathartic, but can be emotionally bonding in a way unparalleled by any other form of human interaction.

To achieve that, however, takes the kind of trust and understanding Charlie and his wife have. You have to be able to welcome the fact that there will always be more to explore, more fantasies that evolve. And the relationship must be strong enough to bend and grow without breaking. There must be a fundamental fluidity and receptiveness to new experiences, stimuli, and desires—things that at first make you blush may seem threatening to a long-term relationship (for instance, a fantasy of a one-night stand can either be regarded as a threat or an invitation for exquisite role-play or naughty pillow talk). In other words, by opening yourselves up and sharing what turns you on, even when it's not technically your

partner, you can channel those wonderful sexy secrets into a passionate lifelong journey.

"So that's your secret?" I asked Charlie.

He flashed me a mischievous grin. "Well, you know, we have other secrets too...sexy secrets. It's not like they're all kinky or anything; it's more the fact that they're things we know about each other that nobody else does: stuff we like to say or do, that turns us on: fantasies we've never told anybody else. And I guess that's why no one in the world could ever come close to making me as hot as my wife does, even after all these years together. The truth is that when I think of something sexy, the first thing I want to do is tell her. Sex reminds me of my wife. And my wife reminds me of sex. And it all keeps on growing and expanding and twisting and turning in every direction, kind of like the universe. Take last night, for instance...."

Then Charlie stopped himself. "Never mind; it's a secret."

Charlie stood up, still reeling from his memories of the night before. "Hey, I'm sorry to disappoint you, doc. I really don't have too much to say about particular positions and techniques. I guess from the outside looking in my sex life probably looks pretty normal and boring.... But, let me tell you something, I wouldn't trade one night with my wife for a year at the Playboy Mansion."

Charlie shut the door behind him.

I thought for a second about Einstein and his blunder of not recognizing that the universe was perpetually expanding.

My eye drifted to the photo of the Capilano Canyon Suspension Bridge on my desk.

Then I picked up the phone. "Hey, honey," I whispered into the phone.... I have something I want to tell you.... It's sort of a secret.... Do you have a moment?"

"I do," she whispered, the two sexiest words in the English dictionary. And that's the fun of it all—there will always be more to share.

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## About the Author

**I**AN KERNER, Ph.D., is the hottest, hippest sex expert of our time, appearing frequently on Today, on the radio with Howard Stern, on the pages of Cosmo, Maxim, and Men's Health, and dispensing dating advice for LifetimeTV.com. He is the cohost of the series Love on the Rocks on the Discovery Health Channel. Also the author of She Comes First and the New York Times extended list bestseller Be Honest—You're Not That Into Him Either, Kerner lives with his wife and child in New York City.

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