

Women—Want Better Sex in Your Marriage? Stay in the Game

For too many married women, their sex life can best be described as a sad stalemate. Which is not at all what they signed up for. As one of my marriage counseling clients put it, "I did not get married to fight about sex for 40 years."

Nor did you aspire to feel like co-CEO's of your household. But a lot of couples do. Without a sexual connection, life together can feel like a lot of work. Conflicts cut deeper. When you feel sexually fulfilled, it's easier to let things go. Whether the garbage got taken out or not just isn't as important as the closeness you feel.

The usual story goes that women just don't want sex any more after a certain number of years of marriage. But I don't think that's true. It's just that married women wind up with a cocktail of pressures and disappointments that do a number on their desire.

If this sounds like you, you can probably reel off a long list of sins your husband committed that got you here. And I'm sure you're right about at least some of them. But for now, I want you consider how you might keep the stalemate going. Here are some sexual ruts women tend to get stuck in.

Are You Afraid to Be Selfish?

A lot of guys tell me they are trying very hard to figure out how to please their wives, but the women just won't talk. You might be a giver, who tends to everyone's needs except your own. And sex feels like just one more way you take care of your husband.

Or you might have been a bit wilder when you were younger and now you're just out of the habit of talking sexy.

So speak up a little. You know what you like. You know what your body needs. Maybe you think your husband isn't interested in your needs. It's possible. There are guys like that. But maybe he just needs a little coaching. Sometimes when men seem indifferent, they're really just feeling tense or inadequate.

You might be afraid to speak up because you think your guy is very sensitive about getting sexual feedback. About that you're probably right—most men are amazingly sensitive about getting some simple information. What is up with that? Do they think they were supposed to be born knowing their way around a woman's body? I admit this is a tricky relationship communication problem.

What works really well is to be very low-key and gentle. You want to convey the idea that everything is great, just wonderful, and if you just did this one tiny thing right here, it would be just that much more awesome. I have coached many clients to use this approach with many happy results!

Do You Put Down His Sexuality

Men don't always realize that you don't want sex because of all the stress you have because it doesn't work that way for them. Stress does not neutralize the male libido. As my husband once said, "If men gave birth, they'd want to have more sex after they had the baby, not less, so they could relax!"

And men don't need to feel close before they have sex. It usually works the other way around. Sex makes them feel closer. This doesn't make men insensitive brutes or some kind of lower life form, but women often act like it does. In fairness, that's because we've had to deal with insensitive brutes.

Very few of us come to marriage without having been treated like a sex object. Most of us have some experience with the classic jerk who "only wants one thing." Or worse—a lot of us have been abused. This makes it hard for us to distinguish between a man taking advantage of us and a really good man who has a different sexual response. But it's crucial we learn to make that distinction.

Men feel really hurt when women show contempt for their natural way of being. And they feel hurt when they're not wanted. They might not speak up about it. A lot of times they just go underground. This could be one of the reasons for that withdrawal that drives you crazy.

Have You Opted Out of the Sexual Game?

Here's a hard question for you: Have you started to treat sex as though it's optional? It's not. Taking the 30,000 foot view for a minute, marriage has taken a lot of different forms over the years, but the one constant you'll find in all eras and cultures is that marriage is a sexual relationship.

You may be too tired to be interested. You may feel distant because of conflicts between the two of you. You may be completely absorbed in being a mom. But the "low-desire" partner is actually just as responsible for the sexual relationship as the one who wants sex more. And whether you feel it at a gut level or not, you need it just as much.

Sex (make that good sex) gives a relationship warmth and affection. It brings more color and texture to your whole life. It's a chance to stop the endless rushing and doing-doing-doing and just be with each other and appreciate each other. Even though life is more complicated now, you still need and deserve that kind of time.

Just not interested in sex anymore? More likely, you don't know how to find your way back to the sensual woman you used to be. Try to kick these habits and might find your passion is still there, waiting for you to wake it up.

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