

Claire's Tips and Tools for Relationships That Work

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When It Comes to Sex, No News Is Not Necessarily Good News

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"If I knew I was going to spend the rest of my life arguing about sex, I would never have gotten married."

My client Laura and her husband are like a lot of young couples with children. They're having sex a lot less than they used to, and they're fighting about it a lot more.

Laura might find this hard to believe, but there are worse things than fighting about sex. A lot of people seem to have given up on sex. Or at least, they've given up on having what they used to consider a robust, satisfying sexual relationship. **They've settled for being companions rather than lovers.**

"Frankly, I've got other priorities," said Jocelyn. "I have to keep the household going, take care of my kids, and then my mother's not well. I think it's just the way life goes. My sex goddess days are over."

Makes perfect sense, right? And Jocelyn seems OK about it. If her husband agrees (a big if!) then there's no problem, right?

But I have to wonder if anyone is really OK with just being companions. **My experience with my clients tells me that people are more resigned than content.** Sometimes, the sexual part of themselves has been sleeping so long that they've forgotten what they've lost.

I want you to take a moment and think back to the days before children, before home ownership, before the two of you became co-presidents of your own little household corporation. Back to the days when the main purpose of your relationship was just to get to know each other and experience each other.

Back then, your relationship was driven by desire, not responsibility. Your senses were very much awake. That's why candles, wine, and walks in the park were a part of your courtship. Even the most practical person becomes a sensualist in the early days of a relationship!

Your experience of yourself had a new dimension as well. Your self-image had an extra vibrance to it when you knew you were desired and you were paying a lot of attention to your own desires.

That's a lot to lose. But that's not all you lose when you put sex on the back burner.

Being lovers colors the whole of your relationship. It warms up the emotional climate between the two of you. It softens the edges of daily life and makes you feel more loving and generous. **You're more relaxed about normal relationship bumps and scrapes when you feel fulfilled sexually.**

I think there's some kind of natural logic operating here. Both the level of stress and the sexual fulfillment you get from your marriage are unique to that relationship. If you have to deal with one, it's only fair that you should get the other, too!

Just because all is quiet doesn't mean all is well. Sex may well be lower on your priority list than it was in your carefree youth. That's normal for most of us. But it shouldn't vanish altogether.

Sex is a "vital sign" of a healthy, loving relationship. **If you can't find your sexual pulse, there's something seriously wrong!** It means you're allowing yourself to miss out on one of the rich experiences of this life. I'd be very surprised if, deep down, that's what you really want.