

Desire Challenge January 2022

Am I normal? What a place to start the conversation

It will get lighter I promise. The challenge is all about having some fun, but it is also about really reflecting and learning, about breaking through some barriers. Starting your journey towards a fulfilling and pleasurable sex life.

Sex is GOOD for us, it brings pleasure, reduces pain and releases oxytocin which can act as a relaxant and de-stressor and strengthens the feeling of connection.

Brene Brown says that the way that we create true connection is from being vulnerable with others, sexual activity is one of the most vulnerable places you can be in.

She says "Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy and creativity"

So you can see, it has a great impact on our lives, and it can change the way we see the world. It has changed the way that I see the world. The biggest change is that I now ask 'why' much more. Why should I do that? Why should I make that decision? Is it truly for me, or is it because I SHOULD?

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Firstly, we need to put some cracks in the shell that has built up from those years of being taught that sex is dirty. It is a big part of our lives, it is how we all

came to be! But it is a topic that as a society we shy away from and so makes us ask the question – am I normal?

I could go into a lot of whys that this happens, the history of female sexuality over the last few centuries is fascinating. However, what it comes down to is that female sexuality is full of contradictions, negative conditioning and shaming. We are told that our sexuality is unsafe, we are too much or not enough. The research is heavily biased towards male sexuality, and the education still given to our children is outdated and unreliable.

I have first-hand knowledge of this, from my own experiences with sex education and my 11 year old daughter.

I will just quickly clear this one up, teaching our children about sex WILL NOT encourage them to go out and have sex. That is not how things work. What it WILL do is give them the information to make informed decisions, safer decisions and feel more in control of their lives.

The other day I read an article about a couple who have created a podcast of their sexual experiences together, recording themselves having sex and sharing those audios. It helped them build a more pleasurable and connected relationship. They have more than 170 000 downloads. However, the outpour of comments was heart-breaking, things like 'who wants this kind of subject, these types of people are selling' and 'surely, when you're in a long-term relationship, you just pipe up about what you want? You don't have to listen to two weirdos having sex.

Here is the big problem, because as a society we fear talking about sex, generation after generation are making the same mistakes.

We need to take active steps to break the cycle for the next generation but also for ourselves. Sex, intimacy and pleasure are all within our reach, and we are entitled to all of it, without fear, shame or judgement.

We DO need this subject spoken about, to me this podcast is incredible, it is a subject people need! And I've spoken to many women in long-term relationships who have no idea how to ask for what they want, we've never been taught to do that. Saying 'just do it' isn't enough.

Change needs to happen, and why I hope you are here with me today. These are the first few steps

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Quick side note, I want you to start using the term vulva, not vagina. Because when we are talking about female genitals, it is the vulva we are really describing. The vagina is the tube that stretches and joins the outside to the inside of our reproductive organs. It most likely became the 'word' used because it is the 'important' part for reproduction. It is the place where the penis goes after all, so in terms of what is important for male sexuality vagina is the go to word – see back to my comment about research and education being male based. BUT NOT for females, it is NOT the only important part for pleasure. So let's stop using vagina, and get correct – its vulva!

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So moving on, taking you back to the topic at hand, what I particularly want you to think about today is the question 'am I normal?' and what it means to you. And I like to talk myths, misconceptions and things that are generally a load of crap, to help support your thinking....

- Firstly, it is absolute crap that our vulva should look like a barbie dolls, like a porn stars, neat, tidy, hairless, neat little clitoris. Well guess what, the number of people who look like that is in the minority, in fact porn stars are either picked for this reason or have surgery to change the natural beauty of their vulva. Because flappy, loose, purple, pink, brown, long, short the vulva lips (labia for the correct term) come in all shapes and sizes and are ALL normal. I want to give a stern talking to the person who named the labia majora and minora, or inner and outer lips, because sometimes the inner are outer, the outer are inner, and neither of them are more important than the other, all serves a purpose to keep our genitals clean, bacteria free and healthy. YOUR vulva is beautiful, I can tell you that without even looking at it. I'll be coming back to this a bit later.
- Secondly, it is a myth that you should be able to multi-orgasm, after all women can go on, and on, and on – that is what is so amazing about us right? Can our bodies do it? Yes, because our 'refractory period', which is the time it takes for us to recover from an orgasm is short, much shorter than for men. However, that does NOT mean that we should be multi-orgasmic or that we want to be. Personally, I am content with experiencing one orgasm, particularly when I masturbate I have no inclination to keep going. What you want is your normal! In fact, I could even argue that an orgasm isn't the bees knees of sex, it is not the epitome of satisfaction. It comes back to connection! And don't get me started about the types of orgasm. Vaginal, nipple, g-spot, cervical - there is a message that seems to be taking steam that certain types of orgasm are better than others. NOT TRUE!
- Next, one that I get asked about is can all women squirt, it has become popular in porn and seems to be something that 'men' want of their partners. I can only tell you it is due to more social messaging and peer pressure. Squirting for the majority of women is not something that can

be done straight off the bat. It takes work, skill, practice and understanding how your own body works to get it right. Squirting is a mixture of the proteins in our urine and natural vaginal lubrication. It comes from a spongy collection of cells and is around the same place as the g-spot (yes this is a thing, not a myth). Interestingly, you cannot squirt during penetration, a little like you can't seem to pee when having sex, the same bodily function is happening, the expansion of the vagina and erectile tissues is pushing closed the urethra. The same happens for men, it is very difficult to pee with an erection!. AND the majority of squirting that is seen on porn, that is all fake. I have first hand knowledge of that, with friends in the porn industry who pessary water before filming begins and squeeze like doing kegals.

- Okay, I'll end this small myth busting list with my favourite one - The more we have sex, the better it will be, the more we will want it. I get asked this question all the time "how many times should I be having sex" – here is the answer "it is QUALITY over quantity every single time". The number of times we have sex seems to have been linked with how great it is, how much we enjoy it, how much pleasure we get, that is is better to be at it like rabbits 24/7 than only have sex once a month. Completely and utter rubbish. I am pretty sure you would agree that you would rather have amazing, toe curling, mind numbing, earth shattering sex once a month, than you would have 'meh', quick, unemotional, slightly painful sex every day, with the hope of every now and then getting a real thrill out of it. I know that I'd rather go with the assurance of pleasure, not the assurance of a sore and painful vagina.

Here is the BIG takeaway, you are uniquely awesome, your uniqueness is your normal. Sexologist and Author Emily Nagoski puts it the best way - We are all born with the same parts, organised in different ways.

Which draws me to talking about the action that I want you to do today. This is probably the most tricky, the one that will have you bulking and even avoiding, the one that needs some privacy and the ONLY one of the actions I will be asking you to complete over the next week that is 'doing'. So Please, please, give this a go, because here is the thing, you are unique and you NEED to know your own normal, for your wellbeing.

I'm honestly doing the hardest one first, nothing like putting you in the deep end.

Why am I doing this?

I spent 34 years not knowing what my vulva looked like. It was a part of my body that for 34 years I had never REALLY seen. How is that possible – because no-one ever told me it was something I could and should do. If I never knew what MY normal vulva looked like, how would I know if there was an issue. PLUS my vulva is flipping amazing, it is the centre of my pleasure zone I want to stare at its beauty. And the more we look, the more comfortable we become. The first time I was a bit put out, but I encouraged myself to really look at it, see my clitoris, see all the parts that make me up. And the feeling became similar to if I was looking at my hand.

So take a look for me? You might need a mirror, some privacy (although your partner with you never hurts, it is interesting to get them to look when it isn't a heightened sexual experience) and feeling brave then a camera to take a snap shot.

Spend some time actually looking, a few minutes, don't rush it. And if you do take a picture, then look at it tomorrow, and Wednesday and so on.

The thing is, we can treat our sexual organs as 'other', something that is separate from our bodies. It is a part of you, a beautiful part of you.

However, if you are really not feeling up to this? Is that little devil making excuses on your shoulder. Then I want you to write down those excuses, those reasons for NOT looking as your action. Leave it to one side and keep coming back to that list, are they really things that you cannot get past? Are they just excuses built up from what you 'should' be doing? And if you aren't yet up to it, then don't feel discouraged, because at first I wasn't up for it either!

Got some feels that you want to share? Then you can pop them into my inbox, or why not join my private discord server, which is like a FB group, but with much more privacy. I'll pop the link in the email for you.

Remember you can share any feelings or thoughts on Discord, or to me directly. No judgement, completely confidentially.

And Day 2 will be in your inbox tomorrow morning. Signing off, see you tomorrow.