

Desire Challenge January 2022

Day 2

Welcome to Day 2 of the challenge, which means we are talking about desire. The whole point of this week is to make you think about desire, although this subject covers a lot of ground.

Did you know, although desire and arousal are often interchanged in conversation and description, that they are in fact two very different things, so should never be interchanged!

Arousal is the physical, it is mostly controlled automatically by our brains, which is firing off signals saying things like 'lubricate the vagina', 'reduce the pain receptors' and 'harden nipples'. Arousal is the physical characteristics of being ready for sex, and hard to control. After all, we can't WILL our vagina to create lubrication, not fully, regardless of how much we want sex, or we'd have no need for buying lubes. The body 'sees' the signs of sex and reacts. Sometimes at completely inappropriate times – you've heard of erections happening in swimming pools. The guys are aroused because the brain sees near naked bodies around them, not because of a 'want' to have sex with those people. It is reflexive, and no doubt embarrassing.

Emily Nagoski, the author of Come as You Are – if you haven't read it please do! – talks about the scene in 50 Shades of Gray where Christian is commenting on how wet Anastasia is, and because of this how much she must love the treatment she is receiving. Being wet means your body is ready for penetration, it does NOT mean you want it.

The want, is the desire, the psychological, it is the feels part, the thought processes. And can influence arousal. As I said, it is also much more in our control, so we can do something about it when or if we want to.

Desire and arousal are not interchangeable, and it is really important that we know that and understand that in our own bodies.

I want to move on to talk about desire in particular. And the two desire patterns.

I can go into much more detail about desire and the myth that our desire is linear, where one thing happens after another, a leads to b, to c etc, except well it doesn't, a can sometimes lead to p, or y. However, the two recognised desire patterns are interesting to distinguish and know about.... I'm talking responsive desire and spontaneous desire.

Men and women work differently, there is no way about it, I put my foot down on this one as a true believer of that fact. I have plenty of evidence to base it on. So how we want sex, is not how they want sex, vice versa. Although, how I want sex, to how you want sex will also be different, although statistically we have more in common.

However, the point of mentioning this here goes back to my comments yesterday, that male sexuality is deemed the normal sexuality, the target, the marker, the benchmark for all things going right. So anything that falls outside of the male normal, is not normal and needs to be changed, it is broken. That means that spontaneous desire is what we SHOULD all have, and responsive desire means we are not normal.

You guessed it, it is most common for men to have spontaneous desire and women to have responsive. And you've probably guessed what I'm going to say now, that is a load of crap!

What makes them different?

Spontaneous desire – simply deciding there is a want to have sex from a standing still position, or with little/singular sexual stimuli, see boob, want sex. This is probably the origin of that age old myth that men want sex all the time, and it is always on the mind. Because spontaneous desire really can come out of nowhere. It does seem to answer the question I often had, how does my husband go from putting the kids to bed and only 2 mins pass before he is 'up' for sex. Or when he doesn't really seem in the mood, but that can change pretty quickly.

Now, reactive desire, like it says on the tin, is more about reacting to lots of different stimulus usually over a period of time, even hours and that stimulus tends to be a mix of both sexual AND non-sexual. The non-sexual tends to come from things that relax the body, and remove stresses from the mind. And I don't mean BIG stresses, I mean even the little ones, the 'jobs' that have to be done. I will often use the example that coming home to fed children and a tidy kitchen is a turn-on for me, it activates the desire centre in my brain. Because it leaves spaces for me to 'think' about other things, including sex, not the chores of everyday life. Plus sexual stimulus is often mistaken for simply genital touching or something directly sexual, but there are lots of erogenous zones on the body. You might have noticed I commented on the non-sexual stimulus first in this, and that is purposeful. Because the brain is one of our biggest sexual organs, we really need to clear the way to get the most pleasure from any sexual experiences.

That brings me nicely onto the action today, answer the question for yourself – are you spontaneous or are you reactive? Remember, there is no right or wrong answer to this, and the purpose of answering the question is NOT to put you in a box, it is for you to discover a little about yourself and it might just answer a few questions.

Now you'll likely lean towards one or the other, but there is a sneaky third part to reactive and spontaneous desire, which is actually, likely the MOST important part of any desire conversation or thought process to include - and that is CONTEXT. Oh yes, the typical saying 'It really depends on the situation' – it is true.

You can lean towards spontaneous desire, like I do, yet there will be times when it still WILL NOT be something that you want. If I am exhausted, I don't give a shite about the kitchen being tidy, it won't get me turned on.

If you take nothing more away from this challenge, then I say take away this small snippet, sometimes what it takes to have mind altering sex, is changing the context.

You can probably see how understanding our desire can get complicated. I'm going to delve into another viewpoint on this topic tomorrow. In the meantime, really think about your desire pattern, and perhaps even think about your partners if you have one – then even better share it with each other!

I'll leave you with a quote from Emma Watson and I'll see you tomorrow...

*I don't want other people to decide who I am. I want to decide that for myself. –
Emma Watson*