

Challenge YOUR Desire

Day 4

Welcome to Day 4! And today I am going to be covering one of the biggest links to turn-offs that anyone can have when it comes to sex, and that is stress.

Firstly, I want to talk about turn-offs in general. Because we often talk about the turn-ons for our libido, and although it is important for us to know what those are. It is also just as important to know what our turn-offs are. These are our brakes, they stop us from moving forward with sexual experiences.

Sometimes stopping even thinking about sex, other times they can happen mid-way through your desire pattern. Remember, during responsive desire, building up all those lovely feels towards sex, there is plenty of time for something to nip its head in and say 'nope' not for you today.

Because a lot of the time these brakes, turn-offs that we have, are hard brakes. An example of my own used to be how much I disliked my thighs and if they were touched during sex, my brain would flip from 'oh this is nice' to 'oh my, I don't like that, I bet he thinks that is as horrible as I do?'

Or how about when my hubby does not shave, I am not a fan of stubble rash – anywhere – and so if I'm in the mood and he is in the mood, and then he leans in and kisses me, and it scratches – nope! There are a lot of 'nopes' happening. BUT here is the thing, we can start to see these turn-offs and do something about them.

When we notice them, we can prevent some of the discomfort and loss of libido. I can tell you that now I don't mind my thighs being touched. And now I just send hubby off to the bathroom to shave and still bring myself back to the place where I was ready and excited for the experience. Because I'm aware of my libido ruining list and I've stopped telling myself 'he didn't shave on purpose, maybe he doesn't really want me!'. Big old story I told myself for years!

That takes me back to stress, as I said this is one of the biggest issues that is linked to low or loss of libido. Because there is research done that links the stress hormones to sex.

Not only is it about your stress, but it is about any partner stress too. In fact, any familiar stress in the household can have impact. When you are stressed you don't want sex. When you partner is stressed neither do they, but we might take that upon ourselves to think 'they don't want or love me anymore'.

When you are stressed you are in essence going into fight, flight or freeze mode. Your body floods with adrenaline and cortisol and gets ready to save you. All of this comes back to the days when we could have got eaten by the mountain lion. In today's society the likelihood that the lion will get you is rare, however we are constantly surrounded by different stressful situations that can keep us in this stage of fight, flight or freeze – chronic stress! We are constantly trying to survive.

Also, cortisol has been linked to testosterone, in both men and women, we both have it in different levels. Testosterone is linked to libido, it is our sex hormone, so if our testosterone levels fluctuate, so will our desire to have sex.

So we just get rid of the stress right? Well easier said than done. We might be able to get rid of the immediate stress, but the stressor might never go away. For example, the horrible boss at work, it is hard to get rid of them completely as your stressor. So you have to constantly fight the stress, maybe getting rid of it each day, but coming back to it the next.

Knowing all this, it is more than understandable that the desire to have sex in any form flies out the window. But here is what is interesting, and why I want you to think about this a little bit, being intimate with ourselves and our partners will actually help to reduce stress. Sex reduces the levels of adrenaline and cortisol and stimulates feel good hormones like oxytocin. So making time for intimacy and sex is actually good for our stress levels. Because sex and intimacy are forms of physical activity, which like exercise, helps us to complete our stress cycles, to shake it off and keep going.

Which takes me nicely onto the action for today... we've touched on what might turn us on to sex, and something I love to do is to go back to a past sexual experience, one that I really enjoyed and re-imagine it. A pen and paper is great here, because I want you to write down everything you can remember about that experience. Where you were, what you were wearing, what can you smell, what you did, how you felt. Reimagine the experience.

Two reasons why, firstly this is great to get you 'in the mood' because you can imagine those feelings again, how great it felt. And secondly, it is an interesting list to look back on and see what you really enjoy, you might even want to think about what wasn't quite right for you. Was there something in particular that you could re-create, or you really enjoyed but haven't experienced since.

What we are doing here is looking at the context in which YOU enjoy (or don't enjoy) sex. And you might recall on Tuesday I mentioned, that if you take nothing away from this but one thing, it is pleasure is context dependant.

That takes me to the end of Day 4, I hope you are feeling good, that this is interesting and thought provoking. As before, my inbox and Discord are open for any feels and comments. And I'll see you tomorrow for a chat about immersion!