

RECLAIMING YOUR DESIRE

Maybe it's been a while since you looked forward to sex. And maybe it's been even longer since you actually felt sexy. If you want to truly reconnect with the physical side of your sexuality, your first step is to define what is sensual for you, which involves becoming aware of your most subtle sexual thoughts and feelings.

.....

A fulfilling sex life is one of the most important ways to stay connected to your partner and boost self-esteem. But great sex doesn't just happen on its own—and less so as you age. Your need for intimacy changes, and your body may not respond the same way it did when you were younger.

When you look into your partner's eyes, what do you see? Hopefully the answer is love, respect and support. Next, answer this question: Do you feel that you deserve those feelings? The answer is important because it's how you feel about yourself. Your self-esteem plays a major role in your ability to maintain close relationships and to enjoy a full sexual relationship.

Simply put, self-esteem is the ability to view yourself as being able to cope with the basic challenges of life and the belief that you deserve to be happy. If you don't think you're worthy of happiness, for instance, you may also think you're unworthy of a full, rich, sensual and sexual life?

There is even such a thing as sexual self-esteem, which is how you view your sense of self as a sexual being. Do you think that you are sexually appealing? Sexually "competent"? How do you perceive yourself when you're in bed with someone? These all play into your sense of sexual self-esteem.

Your sexual self-esteem may still be low for other reasons such as being middle-aged, past traumas or being older in a society that values youth and beauty or being sexually adventurous in a society that expects everyone to be part of a more traditional couple

Let's talk a moment about how you feel about yourself as a sexually attractive being. Much of this is tied up with how you feel about your body image, particularly your weight. It's common for women not to feel sexually attractive, not want to be seen undressed, have little sexual desire, avoid sexual encounters, had difficulty with sexual performance and didn't enjoy sexual activity if they are concerned about their weight.

The whole self-esteem issue can also go in the other direction, with researchers finding that women who have a sexual dysfunction also tend to have low self-esteem and lack of sexual desire and the greater the lack of self-esteem, the less likely they are to seek treatment.

So how about this: How about committing to work on your sexual self-esteem and your body image so that you feel empowered and beautiful within yourself no matter what your weight, the colour of your hair or what happened in your past?

If this all feels a little too daunting to try this on your own, then this is an area where a good sex therapist can help. Make sure you seek help from a qualified sex therapist, also known as a psychosexual therapy. And, if you are in a relationship and have found a therapist you trust, you may want to consider bringing your partner. It's important that your low desire not be viewed as just your problem to be "cured," but as an issue the two of you should address as a couple. And one more thing: Check in with your doctor. Sometimes, physical problems can be responsible for a loss of sexual desire.

If you now realise that your sexual self-esteem is low, then I encourage you to work on raising it. Every woman is entitled to a happy, healthy sex life.

To find a qualified therapist in your area please visit the College of Sex & Relationship Therapists www.cosrt.org.uk

Author:

Lorraine McGinlay

COSRT Accredited Sex & Relationship Therapist

Reg.MBACP Accred

COSRT Trustee

www.lorrainemcginlay.co.uk

email: talk@lorrainemcginlay.co.uk

