



# Sexual Communication

## *Take 2*

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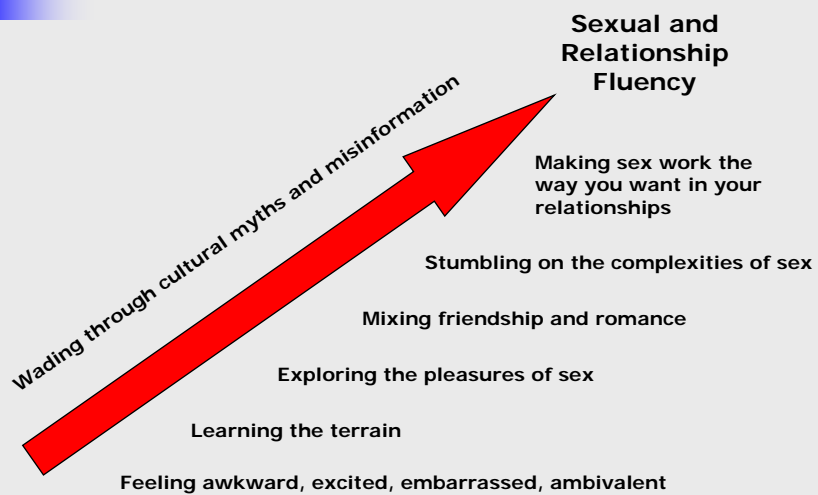
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## A Ten-Year Path

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## Physical Phases of Sex

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- Excitement
- Plateau
- Orgasm
- Resolution
- Desire
- Excitement
- Orgasm
- Both of these models treat sex as an event in the experience of a single individual
- We want to look at sex as a couple experience, reflecting a shift in their relationship



## Relationship Phases of Sex

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- Simmer
- Individual arousal
- Signaling desire or willingness
- Engagement
- Exploration (rhythms, styles, activities, etc.)
- Mutual satisfaction (however defined)
- Reflection



## Components of Extraordinary Sex

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- Commitment to process (vs. outcome)
  - Act out of consensus and comfort
- Focus on mutual pleasure (vs. performance)
- Communicate ahead of actions
  - Ongoing, verbal and non-verbal
  - Shared vocabulary
- Keeping the relationship sensual
- Managing the *dilemmas of sex*

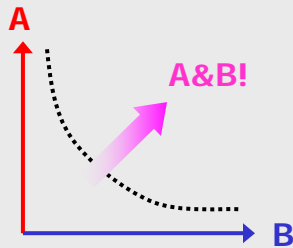


## The Dilemmas of Sex

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- Comfort vs. Adventure
  - Developing a wider repertoire
  - Keeping it exciting
- Connect vs. Protect
- Giving vs. Receiving
- Emotional vs. Physical
  - Meaningful/spiritual/romantic vs. Raunchy/raw/robust/earthy
- Fantasy vs. Reality
- Couple focus vs. Individual focus

## Managing Dilemmas



- Never demand just one half
  - ..'cuz each half gives meaning to the other
- Know and respect the minimums
- Strive to maximize **both** sides

## Two Attitudes about Differences

### *Sabotages Connection*

- Differences pose a threat to marital harmony
- Differences suggest my partner doesn't love me enough to change in ways that would "make me" happy
- Differences mean maybe I'm in the wrong relationship

### *Supports Connection*

- Differences are normal and unavoidable
  - They reflect our unique style and perspective on the world
- Differences can be a springboard to greater intimacy
- We can be connected even though exploring differences



## Related Behaviors

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### *Sabotages Connection*

- Judging / evaluating
  - right or wrong
  - good or bad
- Rigid / closed
- Selling / insisting / pushing / demanding
  - Lecture
- Over-react
  - Blame / defend
  - Unedited dumping
- One up / dominate

### *Supports Connection*

- Respectful
  - different interests
  - different views
- Flexible / open
- Curious / exploring without challenging / empathy
  - Recap facts and feelings
- Poised under pressure
  - Q-TIP
  - Manage unruly emotions
- Equal partners / collaborate