

Eros^{for}Couples

- by Dr. Martha Lee, D.H.S. -



The logo for Eros Coaching Pte Ltd. It features the word "eros" in a lowercase, elegant serif font. Above the letters "e" and "s" are stylized, symmetrical wing-like flourishes. Below the word "eros" is the text "COACHING PTE LTD" in a smaller, uppercase, sans-serif font.

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About this E-Book

Dear Reader,

This e-book is a compilation of past work I wrote during the course of 2009 and 2010.

I decided to pool the articles to make an e-book because I have found myself repeatedly answering the same issues, topics and questions only in different angles and ways. Therefore, I realised that there must be a urgent need to get this sexual information out, whether it's about the changes that happens to a woman after the delivery of her baby; her consequent lack of sexual interest; the ongoing discrepancy in a couple's sex drives; ways to improve sexual communication, or how to meaningfully increase sexual intimacy, trust and rekindle passion in people's lives.

I have come across many people, individuals and couples alike, who sit on their sexual problems, choose to suffer in silence and seek my services only after the frustration and resentment had built up for far too long. There really is no need to. I certainly do not proclaim to be all things to everyone. Seek out the practitioner who is most qualified to help you through your own particular issue.



Warmest regards,

Martha

Clinical Sexologist

About Eros Coaching

Eros Coaching is a sexuality and intimacy coaching company which believes in the innate solutions we each already hold in achieving and enjoying a fulfilling, healthy and pleasurable life. Eros Coaching listens, informs, facilitates and empowers you to spread your wings.

Services Include: Sexuality coaching/ counselling; Life coaching; Sexual education workshops; Telephone access; Answer sexuality questions via email

About Dr. Martha Lee:

Founder of Eros Coaching, Dr. Martha Lee is a Clinical Sexologist who does sexuality and intimacy coaching. She is compassionate, practical, honest, interactive and solution-focused. Dr. Lee incorporates a blend of conventional and alternative approaches and draws upon a variety of styles and techniques to support each client as they work to resolve both current problems and long-standing patterns.

Dr. Lee utilizes her years of experience in professional communications and volunteer counseling to optimize her coaching work. A well-traveled Singaporean Chinese, Martha welcomes individuals as well as couples of all sexual orientations.

Often cited in the local media, Dr. Lee is the appointed sex expert for [Men's Health Singapore](#), and the [Durex Singapore Facebook page](#). She also blogs for [Good Vibrations Magazine](#). She was listed as one of 'Top 50 Inspiring Women under 40' by [Her World](#) in July 2010 and 'Top 100 Inspiring Women in Singapore' by [CozyCot Singapore](#) in March 2011. She is married with no kids or pets (yet).

For more, visit www.eroscoaching.com or email info@eroscoaching.com.

Catch your 'Wind'

We visualise childbirth as a blissful, even a spiritual or transcendental experience. For some women, the experience is traumatic, to say the least.

When a person goes through pain or suffering, the presence of loved ones around them is a great help. Yet, I am learning that in our eagerness to resume normalcy, we are often missing 'down time' – a period of rest after the experience of childbirth.

Pete A. Levine, in his audiobook Healing Trauma, made the example of a person who has taken a fall. Our immediate reaction when someone falls, say, your future child or your elderly parent, is to help the person up. Levine says that, first of all, we should check if there are any broken or injured parts. If there are, you really should not be moving the person.

Also, unless the person is in immediate physical danger, such as where there is oncoming traffic, there really is no need to get up immediately.

According to Levine, our desire to help the person who falls has a lot to do with fear of our own helplessness, rather than the necessity of this person getting up. I agree with Levine.

“Our desire to help the person who falls has a lot to do with fear of our own helplessness.” – Pete A. Levine

I remember how when I was in Polytechnic, I was walking with a classmate when I stepped on a metal drain covering after it had rained. The next thing I knew, I was on my bottom and in a daze. It knocked the wind out of me. The books and papers I was carrying in my arms flew and scattered impressively around me.

Instantly, my friend was pulling on my arm, “Get up! Get up!”

Here I was trying to get my bearings, and she won't let go. Finally, I yelled at her: “I am fine! Just let me sit here for a while!”

She looked on helplessly as I refused to move. I was perfectly alright and just wanted to catch my breath. Now I understand from Levine that I was asking for time for the shock reaction to dissipate.

I 'had' to get up soon afterward, however, because a passerby offered to help as well, and to continue to sit there would be "weird" for him. My friend later said she was 'embarrassed for me' because I fell. Yet, in all honesty, I was not in any way embarrassed. It is only human to fall. Some people are more prone to falling down. I was glad I was not hurt, other than having a rude shock. If I had really been hurt, this friend would have caused me greater damage.

Don't get me wrong. I am not saying not to get or give support if it is needed.

I am acknowledging that you might have had a difficult pregnancy, and a worse time giving birth to your baby. Rather than be in a hurry to get well, or rush to be on your feet, give yourself a break. Your body has been through a lot. There is no real need to hurry to 'get up'. Faster does not mean better, not in this instance.

And, down the road, when your own child falls, please recognise that it is all right to let him sit for a while, to recover and to 'catch his wind'.

Stay with the feeling. Stay true with what you need when you need it. Ask for support. 'Catch your wind'.

Real Moms: Body after Baby

Welcome to Motherhood! Having carried your baby to term, you might have hoped that life would fall into some kind of normalcy over time. However the reality is life will henceforth be quite different. In fact, your body may never be the same again.

Recently we have witnessed how many high-profile celebrity moms bounce back from pregnancy with a model-perfect shape in remarkable time. Unlike these stars who have an entourage of support staff, from a personal trainer, fashion stylist, a personal chef, to a nanny all at their disposal, most of us don't have that kind of luxury. Pressures to "match up to Hollywood's standards" or to recover quickly after pregnancy like your cousin, neighbour or colleague can be so great that one can feel depressed.

Real Woman, Real Body

Your body may have new curves in certain areas, such as your breasts or hips. Changes in fat deposits and lost muscle tone will also play a role in altering your body shape.

So what if you have a permanently expanded waistline, or differently shaped breasts? Perhaps you might even stretch marks that no expensive cream can vanish; varicose veins that may not disappear completely; and troublesome skin.

The first step to making peace with your body after baby is being aware that you are a real living, breathing woman, with a real life. You just gave birth. Give yourself a break.

Your body's transformation is just part of the change into motherhood. This change happens inside and out, on our bodies. Motherhood is a just whole different

“dimension” of being. Be aware, recognise and embrace your current body first. Wear your new body with pride.

Know About Your Post Pregnancy Body

The next step to moving ahead is finding out more about your post pregnancy body and what you can expect in the months to come:

Your belly – By the time you go into labour, your uterus has a capacity which is at least 500 times greater than before you conceived. For a few weeks or so, you will continue to look pregnant. This is normal! Your uterus will contract slowly over the next six weeks. If you breastfeed, your uterus will contract faster. As for your stomach, crunches are the best exercises for a flatter stomach. But wait until you have stopped bleeding, your body has to heal before you start exercising.

Stretch Marks – Stretch marks can appear on your belly, your breasts or thighs and buttocks. They become lighter over time, but will probably not go away completely. There are stretch marks creams available on the market which you can try.

Linea Negra – The linea negra – the brown line some pregnant women get on their belly during pregnancy – should disappear completely within a few months. If you breastfeed, it may take a bit longer.

Your skin – Hormonal changes, stress, and the fatigue brought on by motherhood may affect your skin along with the rest of your body. If you breastfeed, your skin and hair might become very dry for a while. If you have a very sensitive skin, see a dermatologist.

My hair – During pregnancy, high estrogen levels may prolong your hair's growing phase, causing less to fall out than usual. After delivery, your estrogen levels tumble and you begin to shed more. Your hair should be back to its pre-pregnancy thickness about six to twelve months after you give birth.

Your breasts – Your breasts will change during pregnancy and from breastfeeding. Get a good bra and do push-ups to strengthen the muscles.

Your vagina – If you had a natural birth, you will be sore. This soreness should fade away within a week. If you had wounds that were too small to be stitched, you may be sore for a longer period. Try ice packs and prescribed pain relievers to ease swelling and make you more comfortable. Relaxing in a tub filled with a few inches of warm water a few times a day (a sitz bath) also helps. Exercise the muscles down there by squeezing them as often as you can.

Weight loss – The body stores fat during pregnancy to prepare for breastfeeding. If you breastfeed, you might lose some of that weight quite easily. By thinking about what you eat, you will be well on your way back to your pre-pregnancy body. (Note: this does not mean dieting, but rather eating healthily.)

Sex – Sex is probably not the first thing you think of after giving birth. It is a scary thought for most considering how exhausted and sore they are. However, if you feel you are ready, remember to use a condom if you are still bleeding to prevent infections. Use lots of lubricants since your mucous membranes are fragile.

In the months to come, changes to your body may include:

- Belly
- Stretch marks
- Linea Negra
- Skin
- Hair
- Breasts
- Vagina
- Weight Loss
- Sex

Work With What You Have

Beyond accepting and understanding the changes of your body is to work with what you have. Exercise is highly recommended, as it can not only help you get your body back, but also increase energy and even reduce risks of postpartum depression.

Check with your doctor before starting to exercise. Generally, it is recommended that women wait about six weeks to start exercising after delivery, or eight weeks if they went through a caesarean section. Most experts would agree you are free to begin a mild workout as soon as you feel up to it – and you can keep up with the activity level. Listen to your body. Always drink plenty of water, warm-up and cool-down properly and never exercise to the point of exhaustion. Exercise should make you feel better, not worse.

One of the easiest ways to begin a postpartum exercise routine is walking. You can place your baby into a stroller or in a sling. You can also consider adding in the exercises you did in your third trimester of pregnancy – and then work backwards. Do not neglect strength-training exercises, especially your core muscles. This is an area many women neglect during pregnancy as well as during the postpartum.

The truth about your post-pregnancy body is that some things will change, others will stay the same. Almost everything can be fixed with some effort and with the help of time. Yet then again, maybe some things do not 'need' to be 'fixed'. Welcome to Motherhood!

Exercises for Yummy Sex after baby:

Post-pregnancy exercises to help your body prepare for sex again

Congratulations on your bundle of joy! While you might be eager to regain your figure and resume your life, it is important that you be gentle on yourself and take it very slow. Your body is still recovering. Many women wait until after their six week postpartum check-up to start exercising again. Be sure to talk it over with your health care provider before embarking on any exercise routine.

However, when you feel up to it, here are a few easy post-pregnancy exercises to get you started:

Pelvic Floor Strengthenener

The pelvic muscles become weakened during natural childbirth, as a result of increased pressure on the area during pregnancy and may also be affected by caesarean section.

Kegel exercises can strengthen and tone the vaginal walls. They are the “first line” of a management program to treat stress or urge urinary incontinence. Stress incontinence is when a person “leaks” urine during laughing, sneezing or coughing. Urge incontinence is when a person feels a sudden urge to “go” and cannot quite make it to the bathroom. These conditions are common in women after pregnancy, childbirth or C-section.

1. Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
2. Tighten the muscles of your vagina as if you were trying to stop the flow of urine when going to the bathroom.
3. Hold for a minimum count of three, then release. Try to progressively build to a count of ten.

You can vary this exercise by varying the speed or assuming different physical positions such as standing up or walking.

Head and Shoulder Raises

1. Lie on your back with knees bent and hands behind your head.
2. Flatten the small of your back against the floor by tightening your abdominal muscles. Breathe in and as you exhale, slowly raise your head and shoulders off the ground.
3. Lower yourself slowly and repeat the sequence eight to ten times.

Be sure not to strain your neck with your hands, and to keep the small of your back pressed against the ground the whole time.

Pelvic Tilt

1. Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
2. Inhale and allow your abdomen to expand.
3. As you exhale, lift your tailbone toward your navel, while keeping your hips on the floor.
4. At the top of the tilt, tighten and release your buttocks. Repeat these steps eight to ten times.

These gentle exercises will help get you started. In addition, you may want to include some light cardiovascular exercise, like walking, swimming, or light weight training.

- Post-pregnancy exercises:
- Pelvic Floor Strengtheners
 - Head and Shoulder Release
 - Pelvic Tilt

Talking to your Child about Sex:

Appropriate language for different ages

When is the right time to begin talking to your child about sex? The answer is: Right away!

From Birth

Children should not become ashamed of their body. If there is confusion, this can present later in life as body image issues or shame surrounding their sexuality.

- Use the correct names for body parts. Nicknames may imply that the body is something to be hidden or masked.
- Be positive about bodily functions. Instead of saying, “Eek! That stinks!” when changing the diaper, consider saying “What a healthy bowel movement!” Bowel movement is just a part of life.
- Normalize self-touch. Recognise that self-exploration and curiosity of one’s genitals is normal and healthy.

Ages 2 to 3

Your child will begin asking questions about his body and the bodies of others. He or she will start to notice the differences between men and women, and will begin to verbalize that confusion and seek answers from you. Here’s how you can educate and guide your own child:

- If your child is exploring his or her body and genitals in public or at inappropriate times, explain that while it feels good to touch the penis or the vulva, they are *private* parts and this touching should only occur *in private*.
- Teach your children that their private parts are their own and that no one else should touch them, other than parents/ caregivers who are helping to wash them or wipe them. Also, let them know that other people’s private parts are off-limits too.

- Enforce the lessons of “good touch” and “bad touch” at this age. Good touching is wanted and feels okay; bad touching is when they don’t want to be touched. Teach your child to say “Don’t touch me that way” if someone ever touches them in a way that they don’t want to be touched, and to inform you or a teacher.

Ages 7 to 9

The child enters the phase of asking all questions related to “Where do babies come from?”. Rather than become overwhelmed by these questions, try answering questions using a matter of fact approach and in bite-size stages.

Ages 10 – 11

Consider giving an anatomy lesson by using sexual anatomy drawings of girls and boys. You may talk about how semen is made, ovulation, menstruation, tampons or pads, and “wet dreams”. You should include the other physical changes that happen with adolescence, such as hair growth, deepening voice, and growth of breasts and penis. Normalize all of this and let them know that these changes happen at different times for everyone. Reassure them that they can come to you any time they want with questions or concerns.

Ages 12 – 14

Your child is well into adolescence. It is very important to continue reinforcing the lessons you have taught them in the past. You may be giving the same information and answering the same questions numerous times, but realise that the information is being processed differently each time. Be sure to cover birth control options, including discussion, demonstration and condom negotiation.

Ages 14 – 17

Answer questions and concerns as fully and non-judgmentally as possible. Revisit the safer sex, birth control and condom negotiation subjects. Continue instilling the importance of behaving appropriately online and via cell phones. Discuss current events, and use the media for teachable moments. Lastly, remind them that sexual pleasure goes both ways.

Keys to Sex Education:

- Discuss in a matter of fact approach
- Avoid lecturing
- Include more than just biological facts
- Don't worry about telling too much
- Use correct terminology
- Teach prevention and protection from abuse
- Discuss the opposite sex
- Teach about STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections)
- Discuss Homosexuality
- Help them be comfortable and check to see if they understood

Your Other 'Baby': Your Husband

You are a great mother. You are a great employee. You are a great daughter. Are you a great wife, too?

Well, then you won't want to forget the other 'baby' in your life, the love of your life, the man of the household – your husband.

Over and over, I hear from couples about how their relationship took a beating after their bundle of joy arrived. You are constantly tired and justifiable so – you just had a baby! You have domestic help – are they reliable? He chips in – is it enough? Or, is he the one giving you the most trouble – whining he doesn't receive any TLC (tender loving care) from you anymore?

There are not enough hours in the day to squeeze in everything that needs to be done. Gradually, the loving couple who started the loving family can easily drift apart. It is especially true that when the pitter-platter of little feet can be heard that romance and intimacy are important, and I am not just referring to the importance of sex.

Child at Heart

In most relationships, the woman is the primary nurturer, caring for both the home and the relationship in an instinctively maternal way. Because of this, is it any surprise that he's remarking about losing your nurturing attention, or sulking about having to share your love and your energy, or being resentful at not being the centre of your world?

We are all multi-functional beings with numerous roles. He is now a father. Yet, don't forget that he is also a child at heart. He may not admit it, but he enjoys being mothered by you. Does he love it when you make him a sandwich, run him a bath, surprise him with a treat, and care for him when he's sick? Do some of it and watch how his eyes sparkle with childlike delight.

Your marriage is the backbone of your family.

Assure, and reassure him

You have the ability to ease his fears. Assure him, frequently that you have enough love to go around. Learn how women you admire make time for their relationship as well as their kids. Discuss how, as a couple, you can establish ground rules and traditions to make sure you keep the romance alive, from committing to a weekly 'date night' to ensuring a bedtime routine that allows for intimacy.

Implement what's feasible

It's imperative to carve out time to spend with each other. Treat it as you would a work appointment. Yes, it sounds extremely unromantic, yet is necessary when your schedules become erratic. This might be the one thing that might save your sanity and even marriage. And, if at all possible, get out of the house. Hire a babysitter (or ask a relative or friend to watch the kids), go out to dinner, and take the time to stare into each other's eyes again. Go to a movie and snuggle up to him in the dark. Take a walk on the beach, listen to the waves and reconnect. After all, you married because you loved him – not to run a childcare service with him!

Note to Anxious Parents

I already know what some of you are thinking – "I want to, but I can't because"...

- **My child will cry his or her eyes out without me/ us around.** Your child is in good care, is more resilient than you think, and will get used to the idea of you needing 'me' or 'daddy-mommy' time.
- **My child gets jealous when we are affectionate in any way.** Your child doesn't understand that this is what is important for your relationship but he/she will get used to it and see it as the normal, healthy behaviour that it is.
- **My child _____ (fill in the blank).** Trust me, your child will live and thrive.

Never forget, your marriage is the backbone of your family. It needs to stay strong in order for your child to be happy, healthy and to ensure the longevity and sturdiness of your family. Long after your kids are grown and gone, you two will still be together. Remember your other 'baby'.

Sex? Not Interested

- Why; and What to do a Woman Loses Interest in Sex -

First there was a fray of activity after arrival of your baby. Also, your body needed recovery time. Before you knew it, you had to return to work. This was followed by the multitude of household chores to be done. Are these valid reasons or excuses for not having sex? Only you know in your heart of hearts what the busyness of life could not deny: you are no longer interested in sex.

Why do women lose interest in sex after the arrival of a child? The fact of the matter is you have gone through some major physical and emotional changes, and this might affect sexual experiences moving forward.

Physical Changes

Some of the physical discomfort after birth might include vaginal discharge, engorgement from breastfeeding, tenderness of the perineum, constipation, haemorrhoids and other related after-birth pains. A lack of energy during the early recovery period is common, and may last weeks or even months. It is undeniable that the body needs time to recover and adjust to parenthood.

Emotional Changes

Many mothers experience postpartum blues after delivery. This includes feeling overwhelmed with the responsibilities of caring for an infant, changes in your relationship with your partner and exhaustion. Feelings are also affected by the hormonal changes your body is undergoing. And hormones do affect the sex drive. It is normal to experience insomnia, tearfulness, mild anxiety, sadness, and irritability. If these feelings do not after two to three weeks, one should contact a health provider.

Exhaustion

Exhaustion is a very real concern for any working mother. When women have to deal with the kids, and the dishes, and the laundry, and a whole host of other urgent matters, sex sometimes goes on the back burner. Generally, women are still

expected to be the main caregivers for their children. It's hard to get in the mood or have any real desire when you've been working long hours or when you haven't been sleeping well. In addition, exhaustion can be attributed to hormone imbalance so do get checked.

Overparenting

It is only natural that we desire to be the best possible parents to our children. First-time parents are particularly fixated about getting things 'right' and done perfectly. There is a constant fear of irreparable damage and consequently a need to monitor and manage everything. In revolving one's lives excessively around the whims of the child, there is little time allocated for being a couple.

Attitude towards Sex

I have come across women who shut down sexually after having a baby. Uncomfortable with sex, intimacy and touch, they do not have any enjoyment from lovemaking and hence avoid it in entirely where possible. Sex might trigger unresolved issues of guilt and shame, usually related to upbringing, cultural programming and negative societal messages about sex. To them, sex is a marital duty and for the purpose of procreation.

Unpleasant Sex

If you are breastfeeding, maternal estrogen levels are very low and ongoing dryness and discomfort can be an issue. I would suggest using a water soluble lubricant, such as K-Y jelly or AstroGlide as your vagina may also be tender. Due to decreased tone in the perineal muscles you may notice less pleasurable friction during intercourse and that your orgasms are less intense for the first few months. In addition, you will be experiencing fatigue and may be distracted by the baby. It is important not to let the initial pain and discomfort put you off sex for good.

Why women lose interest in sex:

- Physical changes
- Emotional changes
- Exhaustion
- Over-parenting
- Attitude towards sex
- Unpleasant sex
- Misconception: Need desire for sex

Misconception: Need Desire for Sex

Did you know it was possible to feel sexual arousal without sexual desire? Women blame their lower sexual desire for the lack of sexual activity in their lives. However there is the possibility that when you incorporate more touch in your life, you are more likely to get aroused or 'turned on' and want to continue with sexual activity.

Now that you have some idea of the factors that might cause a woman to lose sexual interest, what can be done to rekindle desire and intimacy?

'Pencil in' time for sex

We make time for what is important. Put sex into your schedule and prepare yourself for it as you would a date. It might sound unromantic to plan sex but we all know how to make time for what is important to us – and sex deserves us making time. Some people plan a night where the kids go visit or hang out with grandma or their favourite auntie, and some just plan on getting them to bed early. As long as you're not worrying about them, that works.

By being more prepared, both of you can be assured of a better experience. Also because a woman's body takes longer to respond to physical stimuli, it helps if you allow more time for sex. Arousal may feel very different since having your baby, and that's normal.

Self care

Brainstorm ways your husband can help you get more sleep and down time, such as taking turns putting the kids to bed. Your body needs a healthy, sensible diet to aid healing. Drinking plenty of fluids and getting exercise daily will also help manage fatigue and reduce tension and frustration. Take turns having time away from the kids if you do not have a helper.

Get Support

Give up as many household responsibilities as you can. Discuss expectations with your spouse. Husbands will do well in helping out at home more, learning to communicate their needs better and not letting sex and intimacy slide either. Consider hiring help.

Prepare for sex

Ease into the mood by unwinding with a long bath, lighting candles, and burning essence oils. You may wish to caress yourself slowly and gently to prepare your body for sexual activity. When you feel sexy, you are more likely to feel sensual and sexual. Get something that makes you feel sexy – lingerie, makeup, heels, etc. The item doesn't have to be expensive but so what if it is? You deserve a treat.

Communicate about sex

Are you talking about your sexual needs, wants and desires? Do you get feedback after sex? I often come across couples who find it difficult to communicate openly, honestly and without fear of reproach about the sexual aspect of their relationship.

Finding out what your partner likes and dislikes and informing your partner about your own stylistic preferences are important experiences of any sexual relationship. This is where I come in to share with couples simple, practical yet impactful exercises that can help in the areas of communication, intimacy and touch.

Expand your ways of having sex

Too sore for penetrative sex? You don't need to have intercourse to have sexual pleasure. There are plenty of other ways to have fun – oral sex, manual sex, mutual masturbation, sex toys etc. Expand your mind and enjoy! Remember: Practice really makes sex better. Also you don't have to do this alone. I would also encourage you to find out the availability of sexual techniques classes for couples.

It does take time, effort and commitment to maintain an active sex life with young kids. However it is possible to rediscover each other by acknowledging your needs and desires, building intimacy, and expressing affection and love. With some creativity and imagination, you can reignite same passion and excitement that you felt earlier in your relationship.

What can be done:

- Schedule sex
- Self care
- Get support
- Communicate about sex
- Expand your idea of sex

Sexual Communication:

Asking for what you want in bed

The best way to get what you want in bed is to ask for it. However, before you can ask for what it is you want, you need to know what you want. This may sound simple.

And yet, because we grew up with little or no sex education, and live in a society where sex is not talked about often, the conversation about sex and sexuality is a difficult one to raise for most people – even between married couples.

Learn what to ask, how to ask it, and improve your love life!

Reality Check

More than ever, we are exposed to sexual images in the media. This might create the expectation that a great sex life is easy to attain.

The first step to starting to have good sexual communication is acknowledging that it is one of the most difficult things to achieve in a relationship, because of the desire not to hurt, impose upon, or (gasp!) inconvenience your partner.

Without honesty, patience, and the ability to be vulnerable, it is not possible to let your loved one know what you like in bed. Also, because your desires and preferences may change over time, sexual communication must be an ever-evolving process.

Examine your Sexual Pattern

We are all unique in the way we like to be touched. What one person feels is going to be quite different from the next – from the type of touch, frequency of touch, to intensity and stimulation.

The next step is not to presume what your partner likes, and that just because something feels good one day does not mean it will be the same during every sexual experience. Examine your current sexual pattern. In other words, what is usually

happening during love making? How about mixing up the order? Or possibly trying one new thing each time you have sex – varying the location, position, or attire? Just one!

Ask the Right Questions

It can be a turn-off and annoying to answer questions every time one has sex. So experiment with when and how you ask those questions and what works best.

Explain why you are asking those questions – because you care and want to better please your partner. When you make the effort, your partner is likely to reciprocate by paying more attention to your desires.

Begin by touching your partner gently and, while you're doing so, asking what feels good: 'Do you enjoy having your nipples squeezed?' 'Do you like your neck nibbled upon?' 'Is this enough pressure?'

Be Open-minded and Non-judgmental

We want to feel that our desires are normal and acceptable. Since your partner loves you, your opinion of their sexual desires play a bigger role than you might realise.

You can also help by touching your partner in a way that feels good to them. While you shouldn't do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, remember that you shouldn't make a loved one feel odd or unclear for enjoying those forms of arousal.

Once again, remember that sexual communication is an ongoing process. Improving how one can speak about love-making will increase the closeness of the relationship and make it a happier one!

Quick Glance:

- Reality check
- Examine your sexual pattern
- Ask the right questions
- Be open-minded and non-judgmental

The House of Love:

Eight Tips to Improve your Relationship

After the arrival of children, the relationship you need to nurture most is not with your baby, but with your husband. When your marriage isn't strong, there isn't a family.

Here are eight tips how you can improve (and you always can!) your relationship:

1. Have a 'relationship meeting' weekly

Reserve a few hours each week where both of you go out on a date. Even if you do not have much money, you can create fun and frugal dates, such as packing a picnic or driving close to the airport and watching the planes come in. Spend the time talking about what is going on in your relationship right now, or resolve old issues. It is important to end the evening with a fun activity.

2. Make sure you have your partner's attention before you talk about an important issue

Simply ask, "Is this a good time for us to talk?" to help make sure you are being heard. Never try to hold a conversation when your spouse's mind is on something else. Instead of forcing the conversation, schedule a time when both of you will be able to give each other your full attention. Yet, in times of crisis, you need to be sensitive enough to drop what you are doing, and be prepared to listen and talk.

3. Give in on the little things

Have you heard the saying: "Don't sweat the small stuff, and remember: it's all small stuff"? With the arrival of your baby, your attention and priorities have changed. There are bigger things at stake now. Consider reading [Don't Sweat the Small Stuff in Love](#) (by Richard Carlson and his wife of 14 years, Kristine) for their simple and stress-free approach to love.

4. Find ways to say 'I love you' without saying the words "I love you"

Random acts of kindness go a long way in demonstrating that you love, such as setting the coffee machine to brew, making lunch or opening the car door for your

partner. Give to your partner in the ways he or she wishes to be given to. And do so frequently; you *can* be nice without reason.

5. Say “I love you”

It might sound like an oxymoron given the above point, but I assure you that it isn't. Above and beyond being kind and considerate, it is nice – always nice – to remind and assure your spouse of your love. The saying, “Love not expressed is love not received”, rings true. If you want your spouse to know about your affection, express it.

6. If you are hurt or angry, communicate your feelings in a loving, constructive way

You do not wish to hurt your partner, so you do not speak of your feelings of hurt or anger. I assure you that you are not doing your partner a favour, or yourself. Instead, the grudges you nurse or resentment you harbour is only poison that will kill your relationship over time. Find a way to communicate. Period.

7. Fight fair

It is evitable that conflict will arise. Do not get stuck in the bickering game with no real solutions. The trick is how to resolve a conflict in a positive, constructive manner. Never threaten the relationship. Don't call each other names or belittle each other. Work it out before you go to sleep or agree to disagree.

8. Act romantic and you will feel romantic

Do not wait for the “mood” to come over you. Set the scene, be receptive to touch, and you will be surprised how easily you feel the desire. Some of it has to do with understanding the way you like to be romanced. The other part has to do with just being open to the possibilities.

Quick Glance:

1. Have a ‘meeting’
2. Get your partner's attention
3. Give in on the little things
4. Express love
5. Say “I love you”
6. Communicate constructively
7. Fight fair
8. Act romantic and you will feel romantic

With these tips, may your household continue to be one of love.

Just the Two of Us:

How to bring Romance to Each Other's Sex Lives

Before we talk about how to bring romance back into your lives, let's not assume that we know what it really mean even if we may use the word 'romance' all the time.

Romance Defined

Romance is a general term that refers to the attempt to express love with words or deeds. It invokes the feelings of excitement associated with love. To continue to romance and woo your spouse is also to not take each other for granted.

Different Understanding

Men and women have different definitions about what is sexy or romantic. Generally, women's sexual fantasies tend to be filled with more romantic interludes than men's: such as a candlelit bubble bath or a spontaneous picnic at dusk.

For boys (whom become men), their sexual fantasies tend to focus more outrightly on sex without all those romantic frills. So, it's not that he loves you any less: he's just different. In addition, some men have a harder time expressing their deeper emotional feelings, and fear feeling vulnerable if they do.

Spell it out

This may be a shocker for you: HE ISN'T A MIND READER, so, he isn't doing what you want romantically to hurt you, but because he genuinely doesn't know! Ask for what you want and be specific — for example: "It would be really romantic if we forgo the roses this year and have strawberries and champagne by candlelight."

Set Intentions

Would you like him to make you 'be mine' card? How about heart-shaped candies, roses, and fine wines? If not objects of adoration, how about him making you a romantic dinner or affectionate sweetheart kisses when you wake up? When you set clear intents for what you want, you are more likely to get it.

Drop gift hints

When it comes to presents, it is still reasonable to tell him what you want. If you can't bear to do that, email him or place a little note on his pillow that says: "I would like some pearl earrings for Valentine's Day this year." Ask for simple things. You want to make him a hero for pleasing you. And if you have children, don't bring them into it, because they might end up feeling responsible for your romantic happiness.

Compliments, Compliments

So he's done what you wanted to be in the mood, but he needs to see that romancing you is worth the effort and will also further his goals. So after you tell him what to do, give him feedback. Tell him how much you liked it, what a turn-on it was, how much you appreciate his doing it and how you hope he does it again soon — hopefully before next Valentine's Day.

Bring yourself to the table

If you sit back waiting to have the desire or mood to initiate sex, it might not happen. The spark you need in your relationship is out there waiting for you to ignite it! On Valentine's Day, and any other day, your love life is what you make it: it's what you create with your actions.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Romance Realised:

- Define romance
- Realise your definitions may be different
- Spell it out
- Set intentions
- Drop gift hints
- Pay compliments
- Be engaged

Keep the Fire Going:

Sex doesn't need to end after Baby

One of the most common sexual concerns for couples that come up is sexual boredom. After years of marriage, people get bored of doing the same thing over and over and it is not as much fun as it used to be.

Learning ways to make some changes that make it more interesting and fulfilling for both partners can make a huge difference in couples' sex lives. Maintaining a passionate sex life doesn't always come naturally – that is a reason why some couples come to me.

Sex certainly does not have to end when the baby arrives. How do you keep the fire going? Here are just three tips:

Make Time for Sex

It is important for couples to begin by having a honest discussion about how often they need to have sex versus how often they would ideally like to have sex. There needs to be a conversation about the role sex plays in a relationship and why it is important.

For many men, sex is about fulfilling a physical need and for women it tends to be the feeling of being physically close and emotionally connected. Hence it is useful to understand sex from each other's perspective.

From there, work out suitable times in the week both of you can make this happen. It might sound unromantic to plan sex but we all know how to make time for what is important to us – and sex deserves us making time.

Prepare for Sex

Putting it on the calendar is not enough. We are all so stress-ridden, and shifting to sex while under stress does not work well. To prepare ourselves, and there are some specific steps to do that – whatever works best for you is what counts.

You might get into something that makes you feel sexy or handsome-looking. If you can, catch a short nap at work or back home. Ease into the mood by unwinding with a long bath, lighting candles and burning essence oils. You may wish to caress yourself slowly and gently to prepare your body for sexual activity. Fantasize about being touched and held in the ways you best enjoy.

Let go of expectations and be in the moment. In short, take positive steps to relax yourself.

Acquire More Sexual Skills

Did you know that it was possible to massage a male penis or female vulva to orgasm? If yes, how many different ways do you know? If your answer is below three, this might be your reason why sex life is getting monotonous.

To do a good job (pardon the pun), you could do two things: communicate and experiment. You don't know if you don't ask – ask: How is this for you? How would you rate it on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest)? Would you like me to continue? Remember: Practice really makes sex better. I would also encourage you to find out the availability of sexual techniques classes for couples.

With some creativity, imagination and planning, both passion and excitement can be sustained in sexual intimacy. Keep the fire burning. It is worth it. You're worth it.

Quick Glance:

- Make time for sex
- Prepare for sex
- Acquire more sexual skills

Keeping the Romance Alive

We make reservations for all manner of things from our dining, travel, accommodation, to our entertainment needs. Why not sex? Isn't it important? Scheduling sex does not necessarily take the fun out of the experience. Bring to the table (or bed, in this case) what you wish to get out of the time you spend together.

Steamy Dates

I like to cite the American, Cindy Crawford, as an example. As a former model, Crawford may have adorned hundreds of magazine covers throughout her career, but when it comes to sex, she has to make time for it just like anybody else.

She was quoted on November, 2010's Star Pulse, saying, "If you just wait for the moment to strike, you're going to have some dry spells. But even if you don't start out in the mood, once you get it going, everyone's on board."

Scheduling sex will better prepare both of you mentally, physically, and emotionally for a good time. Having a healthy and positive sex life takes effort, and scheduling sex is a part of it.

Discuss your sexual desire discrepancy

There is often a sexual desire discrepancy between the male and female. I like to first emphasize that just because a woman may have a lower sex drive does not necessarily mean that there is something wrong with her, and/or it is her fault sex is not happening more. What this means is that you need to be aware of this difference and together come up with creative ways to fulfil both of your sexual needs.

Low frequency in sexual intercourse does not necessarily mean that the relationship is on the rocks. However, it is important for couples to begin by having an honest discussion with how often they need to have sex versus how often they would ideally like to have sex. There needs to be a conversation about the role sex plays in a relationship and why it is important.

For many men, sex is about fulfilling a physical need and for women it tends to be the feeling of being physically close and emotionally connected. Therefore, it is useful to understand sex from each other's perspective. From there, work out suitable times in the week both of you can make this happen.

Need a Getaway?

Singaporeans love to travel. With the availability of low-cost carriers, easy access to neighbouring cities and plenty of tour packages and tour agencies to choose from, travel has become easier than ever.

If you have budget or time constraints, know that you do not need to go far to be transported to a different reality. In fact, there are a number of boutique hotels that are gaining popularity in Singapore, such as the Hotel Re, New Majestic Hotel, and Wanderlust. Or you might prefer D'Kranji Farm Resort for a rustic farm stay experience. There is also Riders Lodge, the only lodge in Singapore that provides both accommodation and horseback-riding lessons.

Get going with:

- Steamy Dates
- Discuss your sexual desire discrepancy
- Plan a getaway

In summary:

Obviously, putting sex on the calendar is not enough. Prepare yourselves. Here are some specific tips to do that:

Don't:

- Don't spend a lot of money on the sex date. The quality of the date is not necessarily determined by the amount of money spent.
- Do not wait for the "mood" to come over you. Decide to be open to possibilities.

Do:

- Discuss what makes a good sex date.
- Take turns planning the date and making it happen the way you would like.

- Get into the mood with music, essential oils and/ or candles.
- Wear lingerie that makes you feel confident, sensual and sexy.
- Request a sensual massage.
- Seize the moment wherever or whenever it hits.
- Send hot sizzling text messages, email and/ or notes to each other during the day.
- Buy a sex toy. Read an erotic novel together. Watch an erotic massage video online.
- Above all else, relax and breathe.

Aromatherapy for Sexual Healing, Romance and Passion

Most of us would agree that aromatherapy is beneficial to emotional and psychological well-being. However, what exactly do we know about it?

According to Susan Kwok, certified Aromatherapist of Fragrant Blessings, aromatherapy is a compound noun made up of two words: aroma and therapy. A lot of people may get very confused because this word is used a lot in the marketplace, describing anything from household products to toiletries; it is so overused that any product with a smell is called aromatherapy.

Whilst aromatherapy refers to the receiving of therapeutic benefits through aroma, however, not everything aromatic has therapeutic benefits. To be called aromatherapy, essential oils must be used. To produce essential oil, a plant has to give up its 'life' or its 'essence'. This life blood of the plant is akin to blood in a human. Because essential oil is nature's gift to promote healing, it should always be handled with the utmost respect.

The molecules of the oils are small; they can enter the bloodstream rapidly and be carried to all parts of the body. This allows the aromatic essential oils to affect not just our sense of smell, but our entire beings. These odours stimulate the nerve endings of the olfactory bulb at the back of the nose. These nerve endings, in turn, stimulate a part of the brain called the limbic system, which is associated with emotions, memories, and sex drive.

Many common essential oils are completely safe when used responsibly (using the correct amounts and application methods). It is important to be aware that essential oils are chemical substances and using them without sufficient knowledge could potentially be hazardous to your health.

Unbeknownst to most of us, the same essential oil can work differently for different people. Hence, the first way to benefit from aromatherapy is to learn, try, experiment and experience what works for you. Ideally, it is important to consult your Aromatherapist to tap into their know-how about essential oils and their usage. With proper learning sessions with your Aromatherapist, your usage of essential oils will be more effective in revitalising and enhancing your overall well-being.

As you can imagine, the types of essential oils and their application towards increased well-being are indefinite. Susan Kwok has kindly provided her expertise in listing a few possibilities for those who are experiencing low sexual drive, as well as for those who desire greater romance and passion in their lovemaking. For Passion and Romance, essential oils are most effective when used for massage, bath, in an electric vapouriser, or as a perfume and room spray.

Sexual Healing – Low Sexual Drive

Essential oils are most effective when dealing with symptoms of low sexual drive caused by stress-related conditions. For this condition, aromatherapy can provide assistance to:

- Induce relaxation – Bergamot, Lavender, Petitgrain
- Reduce irritable feelings – Lavender, Geranium, Frankincense
- Uplift feelings of sadness and depressed moods – Sweet Orange, Mandarin, May Chang
- Fatigue or loss of energy – Peppermint, Lemon, Rosemary

Romance

Essential oils can create a romantic mood enhancing feelings of being loved and cared for. With the right combination of essential oils, you can have more romance in your everyday life.

- Classic romance – Rose
- Exotic romance – Ylang Ylang, Jasmine, Patchouli
- Euphoric romance – Clary Sage, Neroli, Lime

- Sweet romance – Geranium, Lavender, Bergamot
- Soothing romance – Chamomile, Sandalwood, Rose

Passion

Passion Essential Oils are used to create sensuous moods and known to have aphrodisiac properties. These essential oils combine the feeling of both relaxing yet stimulating to bring out the passion in you and your partner. There are three categories to how essential oils work as an aphrodisiac:

- Calming & soothing – To reduce anxiety and relationship stress
- Stimulating – To assist sexual issues related to fatigue
- Grounding – In-touch with emotional self (love and passion) to assist ability to enjoy sexual pleasure and activities

The following are primary Passion Essential Oils, which are combined with other secondary essential oils to create the unique Passion Blend for you and your partner.

Passion Essential Oils	Description
Clary Sage	<p>Extracted from flowering tops and foliage of the Clary Sage plant, this essential oil has properties to enliven our senses and decrease inhibitions. It is known for its relaxing properties combine with euphoric action to ease emotional fears of intimacy.</p> <p><i>Caution: do not use during pregnancy</i></p>
Jasmine	<p>Extracted from Jasmine flowers (also known as Queen of the Night), this essential oil has long been known for its effect on the reproductive system. It has strong aphrodisiac properties and also used to assist childbirth. Jasmine has a subtle stimulating nature where it is suitable for rekindling the affections of a love one, and sexual warmth to deepen a loving relationship</p>

Passion Essential Oils	Description
Neroli	Extracted from freshly picked Neroli flowers, this essential oil is an aphrodisiac for anxiety related sexual conditions. Neroli essential oil is known for its ability to calm agitation and tension in a relationship. With a sense of comfort and stability, Neroli brings out your seductive nature to heighten the passion in your relationship
Patchouli	Extracted from leaves of the Patchouli plant, this essential oil has an earthy scent creating a soothing and calming feeling which is hypnotizing and very sensual. It's grounding effect helps to heal tension or emotional blocks, allowing you and your partner to be in touch with sensual pleasures
Rose	Extracted from whole Rose flowers, this essential oil is a fragrance of love, beauty and pleasure. The Rose essential oil is assigned to the heart, a gentle aphrodisiac to soothe feelings of anger, fear and anxiety; and opens your heart to an expressive love and sexual relationship.
Ylang Ylang	Extracted from freshly picked Ylang Ylang flowers, this essential oil has the ability to reduce symptoms of sexual inadequacy related to anxiety and stress. The fragrant of Ylang Ylang essential oil opens the inner self to a more passionate and sensual relationship

For instance, Eros Coaching had commissioned Fragrant Blessings to produce our own unique blend of essential oil to help prepare women for lovemaking also called Eros. Eros is a sweet blend of Rose and Geranium which promises to help relax, balance and prepare women for love-making. Besides Passion Blends, there are many who have sought out Susan Kwok to create their own blends for different purposes such as during menstruation, experiencing hormonal imbalance, or facing the different challenges of life.

As with anything, it takes time, patience and practice to first develop the knowledge, then later the skill, in a new activity. Understanding the use and application of essential oils in our daily lives is not difficult and is in fact very much achievable. For a more efficient and effective learning experience, we invite you to attend our aromatherapy workshops or sign

up for individualised coaching sessions; where the benefits to you and your family are tangible and countless. Feel good, inside and out.

Sex Tip:

Get something that smells nice as part of your preparation for your next sexual experience, whether perfume, aromatherapy, or rose petals on the bed, and see if it makes a difference!

References:

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www.ErosCoaching.com

Eros Coaching is a sexuality and intimacy coaching company in Singapore which believes in the innate solutions we each already hold in achieving and enjoying a fulfilling, healthy and pleasurable life. Eros Coaching listens, informs, facilitates and empowers you to spread your wings.

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