

Ep #8: Having the Difficult Conversation



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dr. Sonia Wright

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You are listening to The Midlife Sex Coach for Women Podcast, episode 8.

Female Announcer: Welcome to the Midlife Sex Coach for Women Podcast, the only show that combines a fun personality, medical knowledge, sexual counseling and life coaching together. To create unique sex coaching that helps busy women awaken their libidos, address intimacy issues and learn how to express their sexuality for the rest of their days. Here is your host, certified life coach and sexual counselor, Dr. Sonia Wright.

Hello diamonds. Let me just tell you I'm a little upset right now. I live in Minnesota and for the most part it's actually a pretty good place to live. I know there's a lot of stuff that's been going on in the media lately but usually life is easy. There's not too much traffic. It's a good place to raise your kids. There's reasonable housing prices. And the Twin Cities are pretty diverse and open-minded.

But I've had it up to here with the weather. This week it has snowed seven inches in the middle of October, it's just not right and I am not feeling it. I'm actually feeling like I've been robbed. Fall is my favorite time of year and it's really beautiful up here. It doesn't last long but it's really fantastic, the sun is shining, the air is crisp, the leaves are turning gorgeous colors. Everything feels vibrant, and alive, and just fabulous. But you know what? Not this fall. First off we had a windstorm that ripped all the leaves off of the trees, so we didn't have that gorgeous autumn color that we normally do.

And now we have a snowstorm and I'm just about ready to boycott Minnesota, really, I'm serious about this. Usually I spend my time telling my friends, "It is not that cold up here." There's not that much difference between 10 degrees and negative 30 degrees. If you're left outside you're going to die either way. But usually I focus more on how beautiful the summers are here and just how most of the year it's pretty good. And we just have those times where we're kind of below zero and we're really freezing.

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But I have nothing, no, I have nothing. There's snow on the ground in the middle of October and I have got nothing to say about this.

Okay, so why don't we switch topics and I'm going to do some mind work on this. I'm going to have to life coach myself, the coach needs a coach when it comes to this topic. So let's talk today about having the conversation. Yes, it's time. So what exactly do I mean by having the conversation? What exactly is the problem? So several women have reached out to me about how they need to have this conversation with their partner around sexual intimacy issues.

It's like everyone in the room knows that there is a problem and nobody wants to address it. So they wait, and wait, and wait, and sometimes wait months or even wait years before the issue is addressed. And the women come to me with a lot of different issues. Maybe they've been faking orgasms during sex. They've been engaged in what I call to do list sex and focusing on the efficiency and just wanting to get it over so they can go back to their list.

And so they think to themselves, well, the faster I get this over with, the faster I'll be able to get back to my list and focus on my efficiency. So they just kind of fake it once, and then they end up faking it again, and again, and again. And then they get into this spiral where they can't not fake it. But they want to do something about it. They've come to this realization that they would actually like to slow down and enjoy sex. But now they know in order to make that change they're going to have to talk to somebody about this. They're going to have to have a conversation.

Maybe someone comes to me because they need to talk to their partner about their erectile dysfunction issue. It's been impacting the relationship and the sexual intimacy. Maybe the partner's shut down emotionally and intimately because of the ED. And doesn't want to talk to a urologist about it, just kind of wants to pretend it's not really happening and there's really no impact. But it is impacting the relationship and nobody's talking about it.

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Very often I find that women start blaming themselves and thinking that they're not attractive enough. I'm not quite sure why this happens, but somehow we want to put the ownership on ourselves for an issue that is somebody else's issue and we make it our own. But it does become our own because it impacts the relationship.

So just a quick side note, I'll put a link in the show notes for a great book about dealing with erectile dysfunction by Dr. Barry McCarthy, it's really good so I'll put that in there, because so many women have reached out to me on this issue. And at some point I'm going to do a separate podcast.

But getting back to our conversation about the conversation, maybe the women come to me because they've been dealing with performance anxiety. They think that they're taking too long to have an orgasm or they're not doing something right. So they just kind of decide to avoid sex altogether.

They may even get to this point where every time their partner touches them they get into this anxiety mode and fear. And then they just shut down, they don't even welcome the touch of their partner. And so now everything's shut down. They're not talking about the issue, the partner doesn't know what's going on. And now there's no touch in the relationship. And so this is a problem we need to work on.

Maybe one partner is interested in opening up the relationship or trying something new or different in terms of kink or BDSM in the bedroom and really does not know how to approach this issue. I find that the issue may be different, they have a number of different reasons for getting to this place. But what they do have in common is that they're at the breaking part. And maybe you recognize this in your own relationship. These people are at the breaking point and they don't know what to do. Sometimes they just decide never to have the conversation.

Or maybe sometimes they have had the conversation years before or months before and they don't know how to approach the subject again.

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That didn't go well, they don't know what to do. But this problem is still there. Either case they get to this breaking point and then it usually doesn't go well. They get to the breaking point, they had this conversation but they haven't processed and thought about it ahead of time and so it doesn't go well. Usually they end up blurting out what the problem is really quickly. It's not really organized.

There's usually a component of shame and blame mixed in there that the partner picks up on. The time and the location for the conversation may not be the best. Maybe the partner's just getting home or you're just getting home. And maybe you corner the partner in your kitchen, or maybe the partner's just come home from work and they're all exhausted. But you told yourself you're going to have this conversation and so you corner the partner. And you're just there waiting to pounce on them. This doesn't work out well.

Maybe you demand an immediate answer or some action that you really want to take. And basically it's kind of a recipe for failure. It doesn't work. There's so many issues that have not been sorted out around the conversation. You haven't had the time to sit and think how you'd like to have the conversation, that by the time you get to it, it's hurried, the blame and shame is there. You've cornered them. You're demanding stuff. It just, it doesn't work out well.

So how do you approach this issue? I like to focus on it with coming from a calm centered place. I like to work with people to process their emotions around the issue. Maybe you need to identify what your feelings are ahead of time. Are you feeling shame, or anger, or resentment? Whatever it is, identify what the feelings are and get to a place of self-compassion where you're not judging yourself on these feelings. And try to be in a place of neutrality, journal on it. But work on processing your emotions around the issue.

And then you know me and belief, I love belief, so I'm going to bring it in here as well. So work on the belief that things can get better, that you and

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your partner can work together and you can figure this out. Go to that future place where it's done. Figure out how it feels when you're in that future place and then come back to the present. And then begin to work on the issue.

Another thing to do is to focus on your overall goal. What would you like to see happen in this situation? What would you have to do in order to get this result? So what type of actions would you have to take in order to get this result? How would you have to feel in order to get this result? And what would you have to think in order to get this result? So those are some questions to ask.

Also take time to visualize how you want to show up during this conversation. Ask yourself, how do I want to show up? This is a pretty important conversation and it's going to impact our relationship, how do I want to show up? Do you want to show up from a frenzied place? Or do you want to come from a peaceful place? What feeling do you want to exude? Do you want to feel curiosity? Do you want to feel centered? Do you want to have compassion for yourself and your partner?

Take some time to visualize how you want to show up and take some time to figure out how you would like to feel during this conversation. Then when it comes time to approach your partner don't come at them like you're on the attack. Maybe say to them when they're relaxed and when they're more comfortable, not when they're just rushing through the door, maybe mention to them that you'd like to have a conversation some time about sex. Ask them what time they think would be good for them. Don't jump on it, just ask them what time might be good.

And then tell them they don't have to answer right away, they can think about it. You've been taking a long time to think about this. Give them enough room to think about it as well. Tell them they can get back to you. And if you want to further mention that you don't want to come from a place of blame or shame, but you want to work together, you want to make the

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focus about the relationship, the partnership and how you can figure it out together and make this better. And then leave it at that.

If they ask you where this is coming from you can explain further. Or I always give people the option to blame Dr. Sonia. You can be like, “I was listening to this podcast and they were discussing about having the conversation. And it made me start thinking about this. And what exactly I’d want this conversation to be about. And so I just wanted to approach you with this and talk a little bit more about this conversation and how to start it.” So feel free to blame me, there is no problem with that.

Okay, here’s an important thing to recognize. Recognize that you cannot control your partner’s actions or thoughts. They may be onboard with working on this situation or they may not be. They may think that it’s a fantastic idea and they’ve been waiting for you to come to them. Or they may be feeling like they need to protect themselves because they’ve been hurt in the past around this issue and they’re not so thrilled to deal with it now. Maybe they’re just not in a place to process and work on it.

You have to allow your partner to have whatever thoughts, feelings, actions that they want to have, because you don’t control another person. So if you go into it feeling like it should end up being this one way, it could ultimately work out, but you need to recognize in the immediate timeframe it may not work out exactly how you want it to be. And how are you going to be okay with that? How are you going to be okay with that ahead of time?

Another thing that’s important to note is to focus on keeping the communication going. This may not be a one and done type of thing, one conversation and then it gets sorted out. And the likelihood is that it’s not going to work out that way. And it’s not going to work out perfectly right at the beginning. So keep the focus on the communication. What can you be okay with?

What would you need to commit to for the long term in order to get this situation worked out? Make sure you spend some time listening to your

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partner around the issue. Try not to interrupt them when they feel that it's time for them to talk. Make sure that you both are able to make a safe environment for this conversation. If that requires that you just listen, then listen. If you want to ask some questions, then ask some questions.

Journal a little bit on this and ask yourself how can I get through the messy middle while things are being worked out? It doesn't have to be perfect in the beginning, middle and hopefully it works out in the end, but it may not either. Whatever happens make sure you have your own back throughout this process. Don't beat yourself up. Be kind to yourself, be kind to your partner.

If you're feeling anger, or resentment, or frustration coming up during the process, be aware of it. Figure out what's causing the feelings, delve into your thoughts that are leading to these emotions. And journal, yes, my friends, time to journal again. And then be aware that it may take additional help to get this sorted out. You may need additional help from a sexual counselor, a therapist, a marriage counselor.

AASECT which is The American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists has a great website. And there you can find resources for additional providers that could help you with this. So I'm going to make sure that we put the information in the show notes about AASECT.

Alright, so here you have it, what you can do in terms of the conversation, it can be take time to process your emotions around the issue, focus on your overall goal. Take time to visualize what you want and how you want to show up during this conversation. Make sure to approach your partner from a calm place, ask them what time would work for them for a further discussion. Recognize that you can't control your partner's actions or thoughts. Focus on keeping the communication going. Have your own back throughout this process.

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And take additional time and get additional help if you need it from a sex therapist or a marriage counselor.

Okay diamonds, that's it for this week.

To celebrate the launch of the Midlife Sex Coach for Women Podcast I'm going to be giving away a \$50 Amazon gift card to five lucky listeners who subscribe, rate and review the show on Apple Podcast. It doesn't have to be a five star review, although I would really love it if it were a five star review. But more importantly, I want your honest feedback so I can create an amazing show that provides tons of value.

Visit www.soniawrightmd.com/podcastlaunch to learn more about the contest and how you can enter. I'll be announcing the winners on the show in an upcoming episode. Okay, that's all for now, see you next time diamonds.

Female Announcer: Thanks for listening to this week's episode of the Midlife Sex Coach for Women Podcast. If you enjoy Dr. Sonia's fun and caring approach to sexual intimacy, head to soniawrightmd.com to learn more.