

Ep #15: Pleasure



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With Your Host

Dr. Sonia Wright

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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. How are you doing today? I am so excited to talk to you. I just got off of my Own Your Sexuality Now talk and I'm all fired up. I'm fired up to talk about pleasure, your pleasure, self-pleasure, otherwise known as masturbation, anything to do about pleasure. I love my Own Your Sexuality Now group. And it's just a pleasure and an honor to be able to work with women and to help them own their sexuality, become comfortable with their sexuality. And I'm so happy that I get this podcast where I can interact with you and also help you to become more comfortable with your sexuality.

So today we're going to be talking about self-pleasure. And I just wanted to say that I love you all Diamonds, I love the work that I'm doing. And I'm just so grateful to be here. So let's talk about pleasure.

What exactly is pleasure? Some people say it's a feeling of happiness. Others say it's a sense of satisfaction. Some people think it's a state of feeling gratified, feeling thankful. I went to the Googles and they said, "An agreeable feeling associated with getting or doing something." If you prefer a more scientific background it would be a release of neural transmitters like dopamine and serotonin. So that is what pleasure is.

And a better question is what actually gives you pleasure? I know some of the things that gives me pleasure. Holding a baby always gives me pleasure. It's just like a miracle to just look at those little things, they're so cute and they're wonderful.

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Walking in nature, walking in nature is something that's pretty important. I get grounded, and connected. I feel the pleasure throughout my body. I love the crisp fall scents, and we're heading into winter now, the cold crisp air. I love the sound and the crunch of the leaves under my feet. I just enjoy that, walking in nature gives me a lot of pleasure.

Dancing, I come from a – well, I'm African American but my family is from the Caribbean. And so dancing is something that's pretty important to us. It's a way that we connect. We connect with our bodies but we also connect with each other. And culturally, dancing is an important part of my culture. A warm nice relaxing bath, that gives me a lot of pleasure as well.

So what else, what gives you pleasure? And I ask you this question because we're going to talk about generalized pleasure. And then we're going to move into talking about sexual pleasure. So my first question to you is what are your thoughts about pleasure? And now this question is what gives you general pleasure? Because so often we don't feel comfortable with pleasure, we don't feel comfortable being able to have pleasure. We feel guilty about it if we have pleasure, or too much pleasure. Is there really such thing as too much pleasure?

But we can have all sorts of thoughts and ideas around it, and so I just want you to get comfortable with the idea of general pleasure and then we'll move on to sexual pleasure. So when we're talking about general pleasure, what does that feel like in your body? I know for me it's kind of like a tingly sensation that flows from my heart outward. It's like a warmth, it's just something enjoyable. Somebody else mentioned tonight that it was like a tingling sensation that goes up their spine. I love that. I was like, "Yeah, that's wonderful."

For some other people it may be more like a soothing, calming sensation throughout their body, or possibly just a deep, deep sense of contentment. So a question to you is how does pleasure feel in your body? So just take a minute to feel what that pleasure feels like, to remember what it feels like.

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And something that I think is important is for you to kind of imprint that sensation to be able to recognize that sensation in your body.

So let's close your eyes for a moment. We're just going to relax, kind of breathe a little deeper. Go to that place. Go to the things that bring you that joy and that pleasure. And then feel that feeling in your body. We're just going to take a moment to just feel what that feels like in our body. Then go within your mind and take a minute to remember that pleasurable experience that you've had. Figure out where you feel it in your body when you're experiencing pleasure. Imprint that feeling in your body and in your mind.

This is what general pleasure feels like and you deserve to have this general pleasure. We're going to take a minute and shift gears now, we're going to shift gears from generalized pleasure over to a more sexual pleasure. And we're going to be talking a little bit about your right to equal pleasure, to equal sexual pleasure. And in regard to that I'm going to be talking about the pleasure gap. And I know that I have mentioned this before. But I think it's something that's important to talk about.

When I'm talking about the pleasure gap I'm talking about heterosexual sexual encounters between a man and a woman. In the case when we're talking about heterosexual sexual encounters around the issue of pleasure we find that 85-90% of men are experiencing pleasure but only 63-65% of women are experiencing pleasure. Now, this is unique to a heterosexual sexual experience. If we look at men having sex with men, both partners are usually in the 85-90% range of pleasure. If we look at women having sex with women both partners are also in this 85-90% level of pleasure.

But if we look at the dynamics and the pleasure differential between men and women and if we're talking about heterosexual sexual encounters, we find that men's pleasure's about 85-90% whereas women's pleasure is only at 63-65%. There is a pleasure gap that is existing. And this is horrific, honestly. I'm appalled, and shocked, and not happy about this. But this

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pleasure gap, it's just like a wage, a gender wage gap. It's the gender pleasure gap that we're seeing here.

And we're finding it tends to be because women are prioritizing their partner's pleasure, their male partner's pleasure and orgasm over their own pleasure. They kind of feel that their pleasure, that a woman's pleasure is kind of optimal, it's nice if we get it. It's also kind of optional but it's not an entitled sexual pleasure. Entitlement meaning that it's a 100% absolutely there all the time, so there is this discrepancy here. And then if we were looking at the ways that women obtain their sexual pleasure we find that about 15-20% of women have an orgasm from penetrative sex alone.

The majority of women require some sort of clitoral stimulation either by itself or in conjunction with penetrative sex in order to have pleasure and to have an orgasm. So that's something to take into consideration. So let's look at the fact that you are entitled to sexual pleasure. Do you believe that? Do you a 100% believe that you're entitled to sexual pleasure at the same level of your partner if you have a male partner? It's about adopting the belief that your pleasure is equally as important as that of your partner's.

It's believing that it's essential that your partner care about your pleasure and your orgasm to an equal extent to which they care about their own pleasure. And even before I say this I would also say that it's important that you, and I'm going to repeat this, that you care about your own pleasure and your own orgasm to an equal extent to that of your partner. So before your partner can think that your pleasure and orgasms are at an equal level to his own, you need to believe it yourself. And I'm certainly not saying that partners are not caring about your sexual pleasure, I'm not saying that at all.

There's so many wonderful partners out there, but I am saying that society to a certain extent has prioritized a man's pleasure over a woman's pleasure. And it's time for us to look at that situation at this point in time. So if we're talking about making sure that a woman's pleasure is equal to that

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of a man then we have to take into consideration and put more attention upon the clitoris. This translates to you expecting your partner to stimulate your clitoris, and to understand that it is an essential part of sex and just as important as stimulating his penis.

These are analogous structures, so basically if we're looking back at gestation, I don't have the exact weeks' gestation, but there is a point in time where the fetus, the embryo has the clitoris and the penis look like the same structure. And then they differentiate and one becomes a clitoris if it's a woman or a girl, and the other one becomes a penis. But they start out as the same structure so therefore stimulation of the penis is important, stimulation of the clitoris is also equally important.

So entitled sexual pleasure is about equality, it's really about equality. If you're going to stimulate a penis, then you're going to stimulate a clitoris to the same extent. So this is the part where my mantra comes in and this is the part where I get just a little bit on the intense side. Maybe that's a good word, the intense time. So I think it's time for a clitoral revolution. And I know there's a lot of other people that are saying that. And there's a lot of people that have been advocating for centuries about a clitoral revolution.

So here's the mantra, I am entitled to equal sexual pleasure. I am entitled to equal sexual pleasure. You're supposed to be repeating this after me, if you didn't know what we were doing here. I am entitled to equal sexual pleasure. Don't worry. We've only got about five or six more of these. I am entitled to equal sexual pleasure. I, who? Me, I am entitled to equal sexual pleasure. Let's say it all together. I am entitled to equal sexual pleasure. I am entitled to equal sexual pleasure. What? I am entitled to equal sexual. I am entitled to equal sexual pleasure. Okay, I think you get the idea.

So let's talk about self-pleasure, let's talk about masturbation. It's a natural activity. Most people engage in this activity. Most people engage in self-pleasure. It's how you learn about your body and what's pleasurable to you. And I mentioned in the last podcast about the emotional bullies, shame and guilt and judgment, those are the emotional bullies. And they have no part

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in self-pleasure. They should not be associated with self-pleasure in any way.

Very often we do associate those emotional bullies with masturbation and self-pleasure but they should not be, it's not helpful in any way. And it's what you're meant to do. I like to say your clitoris is within arm's reach for a reason. So it's just a natural part of what we do.

So let's talk about some benefits of self-pleasure masturbation. It boosts your immune system and increase white blood cell counts. It relieves stress, it's an endorphin release and it relieves stress. It helps you sleep better. We all know that, it can relax you, it improves your mood overall. Masturbation prevents sexually transmitted infections because it's just you yourself and you. It leads to better sex because you're more assured of yourself.

You're more aware of your body. You're more aware of your pleasure. You're more aware of what your body can do. So you're more self-assured in this regard, have more self-confidence around this area. It actually boosts your concentration, it leads to better cognition. It alleviates pain. It increases blood flow to your vulva and your vagina. And hey, it probably leads to a happier overall relationship.

So let's talk about how women self-pleasure. There is a report that was put out in the 80s called the Hite Report by Shere Hite. And she did extensive research on women and sex just in general, women's ideas about sex, how they engaged in sex and also about masturbation. And she found that 73% of women masturbate on their backs. Some will masturbate on their tummies. Some will rub against a soft object like a pillow. Some masturbate by rubbing their thighs together. Some use running water directed at their vulva region.

And then there's about 11% that favor a variety of all these things put together, but the majority of people, 73% masturbate on their back. 86% focus solely on external stimulation of their vulva, which essentially means

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stimulation of their clitoris, 86%. If you're masturbating by yourself, 86% of people, or women I should say, solely focus on the vulva and stimulating the clitoris. 12% will do a combination of external stimulation and then also something within the vagina, like a dildo.

And then only there's a very small percentage that just would insert something in the vagina for masturbation. So the majority of people focus on external stimulation to the vulva, and that's something to take into consideration. So from this information, if you have not masturbated before, or you're just starting, or you want to get more information on it, probably a good place to start is on your back. And just focus on your vulva, focus on the sensations and the touch to your vulva.

Don't go for some sort of goal like I have to have an orgasm or anything like that. Just enjoy the pleasurable sensations as you learn to masturbate and don't forget your lube. If you need more resources, omgyes.com is a good place to look at it. And then also Betty Dodson and Carlin Ross have done a lot of work and they have instructional videos on masturbation as well as using sex toys and such. So [omgyes](http://omgyes.com) is a wonderful place to look for more information on masturbation and then Betty Dodson's work as well is really good.

If you're looking for books, *Becoming Cliterate: Why Orgasm Equality Matters and How to Get It* by Laurie Mintz, and she has a PhD. And then also *The Pleasure Gap* by Katherine Rowland as well, that's another great resource to look at. So if you want some more information on this subject.

And before I leave you I just want to ask you some questions, some questions that you might want to work on, you might want to journal, and you might want to think about. So my first question is do you deserve pleasure? Do you deserve general pleasure? Do you deserve sexual pleasure? And does it have to be earned before you can enjoy yourself? Do you have to feel like you've done something to warrant having this pleasure or can you just have the pleasure?

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Another question that I would ask you is, can you prioritize your pleasure? Can you put yourself first, why or why not? So, journal on that as well. These are some interesting questions to ask yourself. And what would happen if you put your pleasure first, put your pleasure first ahead of your partner, and your partner put their pleasure first for them, and everybody was responsible for their own pleasure? But specifically women, because we have a tendency not to put our own pleasure first, so what exactly would happen if you put your own pleasure first?

Okay Diamonds, those are questions that I have for you.

I'm actually going to end this podcast by just talking a little bit about a woman, an amazing woman called Betty Dodson and unfortunately she recently died at the end of October. And she was just a maverick, like a trailblazer, just an amazing woman and I just wanted to talk about her for just a moment. I just want to honor her life. So she was a feminist sexologist and a self-proclaimed evangelist of self-pleasure. And she taught millions of women to masturbate in the 70s and beyond, 80s, 90s.

And she was known for hosting masturbation and conscious awareness groups in her apartment in New York in the 70s, and then it kind of grew from there. And she evolved into a social justice, and a feminine pleasure liberation worker. I love that, social justice, feminine pleasure, liberation worker. And she liked to say the most consistent sex would be the love affair that you have with yourself.

She also liked to say that masturbation will get you through childhood, puberty, romance, marriage, divorce. And it will see you into old age, which is really wonderful if you think about it. It's something that you can do throughout your lifespan. Gloria Steinem mentioned and said about Betty Dodson, "Her workshops turned women onto the beauty of their own body. And her outrageous honesty allowed more women to speak our truth." Her mantra was 'better orgasms, better world'. And if you think about it, if more people were having pleasure I think this world would be a better place.

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Annie Sprinkle who's a porn star and a mentee of Betty Dodson said that "Betty had it all. She popularized the clitoris and clitoral orgasms and gave the clitoris celebrity status." That in itself, the fact that she elevated the clitoris that it's not like a mini penis or a defunct penis, but its own amazing structure, that's something to celebrate. And that's something that every woman should thank Betty Dodson for.

So I'm dedicating this podcast to Betty Dodson and her life and the work that she's done. And I'm saying thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you for being an inspiration, thank you for all that you've done for women, thank you.

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.