

Ep #28: Sex Apathy



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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, it's Dr. Sonia again. And I am coming to you from sunny warm Minnesota. Yes, spring is starting to come to the Midwest and I am just so excited. In fact it's already spring break out here and the kids are out of school which means my nine year old is home from school. So I am hanging with my mini me this week.

And I have to actually laugh when I say mini me because pretty soon I'm going to be the mini. She's actually already 4'9 and she just turned nine years of age. And I'm 4'11 so pretty soon from now it's going to be reverse and I'm going to be the one that's the mini. And we really don't look much alike but personality wise yeah, she is my baby girl. She opens her mouth and people are just like, "Oh yeah, I know who your mom is."

And my mother, she just laughs and laughs and she says, "It's time for payback for all the years that she had to raise my spirited self." And that's being kind to say spirited. But my child, my daughter, she's incredible. She has an amazing sense of humor. And she can reason and talk a person into doing just about anything. She has this internal drive to be and to do all that she can in this world. She's just really a force to be reckoned with.

So this week while she's on spring break I have had my very own task master, she keeps me on track. She reminds of the time and what needs to be accomplished in the allotted amount of time. And I have to say it's been wonderful having her around.

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So in an effort to stay on track I want to wrap up the series that I've been doing over the last two months. We've been talking about sex confidence, and sex abundance, and sex tolerance. And now I want to end the series with the topic of sex apathy. I wanted to end with the topic of sex apathy because I think it's one of the most concerning responses that people have to sex and sexuality. Some people may think that apathy is better than intolerance. But I actually think that sex apathy, it's harder, it's a harder response to remedy than sex intolerance.

So what exactly is sex apathy? In the simplest of terms, sex apathy is a lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern in regards to sex and sexuality. I think of it as a numbing of the internal sex drive. It's like you're devoid of all feelings concerning your sexuality. Like there's a blank space in your brain, there's no information to retrieve from the databank. It's like a lack of an ability to feel any emotions regarding sex, a lack of desire to take any actions regarding sexuality. It's kind of like you're frozen in time and you're frozen inside. It's a state of inertia.

It's actually the ultimate state of inertia, there's no movement and you can feel hollow inside. And sometimes the emotions associated with sex and sexual difficulty, they start and they're really strong, they feel overwhelming and after a while you just shut down, you can't deal with all these overwhelming emotions. You go to that place beyond feelings. You get to that place of sex apathy. And I can describe sex apathy so well because I experienced it for many years.

As several of you know I was in a relationship that didn't have much sexual intimacy and I suffered in silence for years. I thought there was something wrong with me because my partner did not want to engage in sexual intimacy with me. I thought I was the problem, that I was broken. And the situation got so bad that I spent most of my time frustrated, resentful or sad. I really experienced a profound sadness related to this disconnection. We didn't know how to deal with it so we just kind of ignored it. And that large white elephant in the room, it just got bigger, and bigger, and bigger.

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At that time I really didn't have the life coaching skills that I have now. And at some point the emotions got too overwhelming to feel anymore and I just shut down. Instead of feeling the emotions and focusing on the difficulties with the sex and the sexuality in my life I poured all my energy and I focused my attention on raising my kids and on being the best radiologist that I could be. And over time I became less and less interested in sex. I just went numb inside. And so I was experiencing first hand this sex apathy.

But the problem with sex apathy is it's not experienced in isolation. It affects your overall relationship and it can affect your overall life in general. As there was this numbing out of my sexuality that numbing continued and it spilled over into other aspects of my life. The relationships started to numb out. My emotions in general started to numb out. I started to withdraw. That overall connection with my partner it was lost and we ended up living parallel lives. Our kids kind of kept us together but the communication and the connection that was all gone.

And the problem with sex apathy I think of it is something like quicksand. You don't really notice it, you're just walking along, you're leading your life and then all of a sudden you look down and you're stuck. You're stuck in this quicksand, you didn't notice it was there ahead of time and you couldn't do anything about it. You were already in it and you were sinking deeper and deeper into this numb place. And you just can't get out. You struggle for a while and then you just kind of give in, you allow the sandy numbness to take over but you don't die either.

It's more like you're half alive, like you're in suspended animation. And even if you wanted to get out of this apathy it really feels like you can't. You can't seem to tap into the emotions that you need to release yourself from this bond of apathy. But at the same time you're not living. When I think about how to get out of sex apathy I kind of think of two main ways. Either you build a ladder with your thoughts and you get yourself out or you cry out for help and you get the help that you need. And somebody will give you that ladder and help you climb out.

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And usually what I find is that it's a combination of both of those. You have to be involved. You have to take control. You have to figure out what thoughts, and actions, and feelings you want to take around this issue. And you also need to get the help that you need. So if you find yourself in a place of sex apathy the first thing to ask yourself is, are you ready to get out? Are you ready to get out of that quicksand?

And you know what? If you feel more comfortable in that numb place, it feels emotionally safe for you then it's a choice that you're making and you're choosing to stay in this place of apathy. And it's not necessarily wrong to stay in that place of apathy.

But remember when you're staying in that place of sex apathy you're also choosing to limit your life and your sexual experiences. You're choosing to miss out on that marvelous sex abundance that can really be yours, that abundant experience where you're feeling fulfilled in the moment, you're in your body. You're experiencing all the emotions and the sensations. And it's just wonderful, that's what you're missing out on. You're missing out on the opportunity to be all that you can be and to really have the ultimate human experience in this world.

But I understand that it may seem a lot safer because in order to get to that place of sex abundance you're going to have to do some work. You're going to have to deal with your thoughts. You're going to have to deal with your feelings to get to that place. And you're going to have to do that hard work and have those difficult conversations. And to some people facing the fears, feeling the emotions and having the difficult conversation, that seems harder than just staying in a place of apathy and numbing out.

But if you choose to stay in that place of apathy numbness, recognize it's a decision. And it's also a decision to choose to leave that apathy behind. And it's a decision that you can make at any moment. For me I decided this was not the life that I wanted to live. I woke up one morning and I realized I was never going to experience that amazing sexual abundance if I stayed in this place.

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It got to that point where the pain of staying in this place of numbness, and the fact that I would be missing out on life, that was too much for me to handle more so than handling the hard work. And the pain and the effort that it was going to take to climb myself and get myself out of sex apathy and to get to that sex abundance. So I got the help that I needed. I started working with a trained sexual health provider and I started on this journey to own my sexuality. And I know that your journey is going to be different from mine. But these are some possible areas to focus on.

First of all you're going to have to get real with what your sexual situation looks like right now. You have to be willing to acknowledge the part that you played in this entire situation. For me I had to acknowledge the fact that I decided to go to that place of apathy. I decided to shut down. I decided to live this half alive life. I made that decision. I didn't stand up. I didn't fight for my sex and sexuality, I just kind of let it go and I went to that place.

But it's not about blaming myself, or blaming yourself, or anyone else. But it is about looking at the truth, that's the first thing. Next it's also about acknowledging that you're a sexual being and you get to express your sexuality. It's a human right. So how does it feel to acknowledge that you are a sexual being with sexual wants and sexual needs? How does that feel to you?

Next you're going to need to take some time to understand how your sexuality works which includes exploring your body and figuring out what is pleasurable for you. And sex pleasure is an important part of this work. And since we're talking about pleasure let's talk about general pleasure. And that's something that women don't allow themselves to feel.

So many women feel like or think that they have to earn it, that they have to be worthy enough for pleasure. But pleasure is your innate right. That means you get to experience pleasure right now because you are worthy right now. And this is something to really remember, so give yourself that

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permission to enjoy your life right now. Women also need to work to prioritize their needs above other people's needs.

Of course I think our needs as women should be at the top of the priority list. But so often our partners, our kids, our bosses, our work, even the grocery store clerk can come before us on the priority list. What is that about? Why are we not able to prioritize ourselves and our needs and to recognize that we need to do some basic self-care and to put our needs first in order that we can help other people? We do need to prioritize ourselves.

And I think it goes back to this worthiness and valuing ourselves. But just know that you deserve to put your needs first. And as women we are socialized to put our needs last. But I say that this has to end, what is it going to take for you to prioritize yourself and your needs? Do you even know what your needs look like? Are you even able to identify what your basic needs are beyond food, and sleep, and clothing? What are the other needs that you need in your life? Do you need to love yourself? Do you need touch? Do you need interaction with other people?

What exactly is it that you need? What can you provide for yourself and what do you need to prioritize in your life, so look at that, really think about that. And the steps that I mentioned before they're only like a foundation. They're just the beginning. After you get that foundation where you're valuing yourself, and you're prioritizing your needs, and you're recognizing what the situation was before and you're also recognizing that you're a sexual being. Then it's time to do the deeper work around sexuality. You get to do a deep dive and learn about your sexuality.

Learn about your body. Learn about what you enjoy. And also learn how you want to express that sexuality. What sexual acts do you enjoy? And of course bring out the toys, explore the toys. Feel all the different sensations. Enjoy yourself. This is your time, you get to enjoy yourself. You deserve to experience that incredible vibrant sex life and specifically that sex abundance that I was talking about. You deserve to come alive sexually.

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So, Diamonds I'm inviting you to leave behind sex apathy. Please leave behind sex apathy. I think that it's the most damaging state to be in. And I think it's one of the most damaging responses that you can have to sex and sexuality. So I'm inviting you to leave behind sex apathy and to come alive, to develop that sex confidence that I mentioned in a previous episode and to use that sex confidence to find your sex abundance. Say goodbye to sex apathy and tap into your sex abundance. And I know that you can do this, Diamond.

But as always I'm here for you, I've got you. And if you need any help in any way then reach out, reach out and connect with me and we can work on this together. Okay Diamonds, that's all for this week. Dr. Sonia out. Take care.

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.