

Ep #103: Unpacking Relationship Issues with Dr. Kimmery Newsom



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 103.

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, hello, hello Diamonds, how are you doing? I am so excited to talk to you today. Okay, let me tell you, I'm kind of obsessed about relationships right now. So, for those of you that don't know, I do relationship coaching as well. So, I'm coaching couples, often somebody will start as my private client and then they're like, "Could we have a couple of sessions with my partner?" And then we would have couple sessions with my partner.

And obviously I've been trained to do coaching with more than one person, with couples and things. But I am on this quest to know more, and more, and more about it. So, I am bringing on my own partner, Dr. Kimmerly Newsom to talk more about partners and couples coaching. And I'll let her introduce herself because she's got all the degrees. I never remember all of them and I don't want to get it wrong to tell you the truth.

But I'm pretty excited to have her here so that we can discuss the questions that come up when I am coaching couples together. And also, some of the things that she might see and how she goes about addressing these issues. So, without further ado, Dr. Kimmerly Newsom, please introduce yourself and then I'm going to ask you all the questions that I have.

Kimmerly: Sounds good, thank you, Dr. Sonia for having me, I really appreciate that. My name is Dr. Kimmerly Newsom and I am a licensed family therapist and a relationship coach. I have been doing work with families, and individuals, and couples probably 17 years. And I also have a

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doctorate degree in family studies. And so that helps me with kind of both the preventative as well as the kind of reactive side of things. I did my undergraduate master's and PhD at Kansas State University.

And yeah, I have also been a professor and just done a lot of work in the classroom regarding family, and marriage, and those sorts of things. So, I'm really excited to be here and talk about relationships.

Sonia: Yeah, and I'm also excited to have you. And I didn't mention that you also come into my Own Your Sexuality Now group and they're so ecstatic to have you there. They just keep bringing all the questions and the biggest question there I always have is, "When is she coming back? When can we ask her more questions?" It's kind of fun because I'm this logical person, my brain thinks in logical forms and Kimmerly formed her training and background, just so she thinks in terms of the value of emotions.

So, it's really fun to have both of those things together and interacting with each other. And so today here are some of the questions that my clients, my Diamonds ask me when I'm doing coaching and just when I'm doing individual stuff, when I'm doing Own Your Sexuality Now. So, one of the biggest issues that comes up all the time is, how do I get my partner to open up and have discussions about sexuality or about conflict?

What has to be in place, since you do a lot of marriage coaching and counseling, what has to be in place when you're dealing with couples, such that they're able to open up and to talk about these different things?

Kimmerly: Well, and that's a great question. And I think one of the most important things that people fail to realize is that we need to understand our partner's communication styles. And so, if the partner is kind of avoidant in their communication, they don't want to talk about the conflict, they definitely don't want to talk about issues surrounding sex and that sort of thing. Then there is kind of a little bit of a finesse that needs to take place.

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Sometimes it's a matter of not necessarily coaxing them but letting them know ahead of time, "Hey, this is a conversation that I'd like to have. Let me know when you have the emotional capacity to have this conversation or let me know when you feel like you can engage the best way that you can possibly in this conversation." And giving them the topic of the conversation because sometimes people feel like they have no idea what they're going to be talking about and that causes a lot of anxiety.

And so, I think when people feel like they have a choice that helps them to really kind of engage in the conversation about whatever the issue is at that time. If you just come at them with some situation and you talk about it without giving them any kind of heads up or warning. Then that's more likely to get the person to shut down and not be willing to engage with you in resolving whatever the conflict is or the questions that you may have regarding your sexual relationship and that sort of thing.

Sonia: Okay. So, I'm hearing first of all you need to know what kind of communication style your partner has and if they're avoidant. What other kind of communication styles are there? If only I could communicate. What other kinds of communication styles are there besides the avoidant type?

Kimmerly: Well, there are people who are very disorganized in their communication and so they're not able to communicate directly. But they can be kind of passive in some of their communication. Then there are the people who are passive aggressive in their communication when they are not really sure how to approach a situation. But they do so in a way that try and makes the partner feel guilty about not engaging with them, or guilty about whatever the conflicts may be, which thus could cause the partner to shut down.

And then there are people who are just flat out aggressive in the way that they communicate. And they're kind of like a bull in a China shop type of thing. And there's no finesse to it, there's no gentleness, there's no allowing the other person to have a say in what's going on, there's no, any of those things that really can facilitate positive conversation and positive

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[inaudible], even when things are difficult. So those are the ones that are the main types of communication.

Sonia: Okay. Alright, so there's a lot of different. Is there anybody that has a 'normal' style of communication?

Kimmerly: Well, those are the people who use assertion, and those are the folks that I talked about in the beginning, the ones who can say, "Hey." Be assertive, talk to their partner about, "Hey, I would like to have this conversation with you about this topic. When do you have the time to do so and how are you feeling? Are you feeling up to having the conversation? And if not, can you tell me kind of a timeframe that you'd be able to have the conversation?" Those are the people who exercise assertion instead of letting things kind of build up and then things kind of spill over.

And that happens sometimes too, just depending on the understanding of what's going on in the relationship.

Sonia: Okay, so that brings up something that I'm thinking about. The white elephant, the big white elephant in the room. If you're in a sexless marriage and sometimes you get to this place of, how did I get here? How is this possible that I haven't had sexual intimacy with my partner for years? And you're starting to bring it up but you're so afraid that somebody's going to get hurt, their feelings are going to get hurt in some way that you'd rather not even talk about it and continue to be in a sexless marriage because you're so afraid of getting somebody's...

Okay, so I come from the logic side, then I'm like, yeah, well, their feelings may get hurt if you talk to them but their feelings are already getting hurt because there's no intimacy going on. So that's kind of my logical side of things, well, sort it out but at least we'll head towards the goal. I'm sure my Diamonds that are listening to this call, this is why I bring other people up because there's lots of different ways to do it. And so just talking to Dr. Kimmerly.

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So, if it's the case where somebody's in a sexless marriage, they're not communicating because they're afraid of hurting somebody else's feelings. What would you say to them in that situation? Because I would be like, well, you know what I would be like.

Kimmerly: Yes, I do.

Sonia: So, I'd love to hear what you have to say.

Kimmerly: Well, for me, like I said it's not that finesse. You kind of come in and you say, "Hey, this is what I hear is happening. What's your perspective on this?" Because if you put up a partition between two people, each person's view of their side is going to look differently. And they're going to interpolate differently. And so, being able to have a conversation about that and looking at the goal, and what is the goal? If their goal is to not have a sexless marriage, then let's talk about what needs to happen in order to get there.

But communicate with the partner in a way that they can communicate and respond the best. You don't want to just do it the way that you think you need to do it and know that they're going to shut down because that's what you've done for years. But really meet them where they are, not getting rid of who you are but also adjusting the way that you need to adjust in order for your partner to be able to engage. Because yeah, somebody's feelings are going to get hurt, you're right in that logic.

However, it doesn't have to be the way, the feelings don't have to be hurt because the way they were approached about the situation. The feelings can be hurt when someone is expressing their pain regarding something that the other person may not be doing that's helpful for the situation.

Sonia: I like how you separate out the origin or the source of the feelings. It's not necessarily from the initial conversation to bring up, "Hey, what kind of bullshit is this?" [inaudible] where you're like, "I love you and let's talk about this." And I know that, but you put the focus on there's the

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conversation that could lead to emotions depending on how you talk about things. But there's also the underlying pain that's there. And that underlying pain is going to come out regardless because a lot of things that have been going on.

So, what you're talking about is kind of what I talk about when I use the word, I call it the zone of sexual safety. Creating a situation in which somebody can be allowed to be vulnerable and to feel safe to initiate the conversation.

Kimmerly: Right, exactly. And that's something that's really important about everything when you're communicating with your partner. Being able to say, "Hey, this is something that's going on but I know that this might not be the right time because you've got x, y and z going on. And so, I just wanted to give you heads up about something I'm thinking about and then you can let me know when you're ready to have the conversation." And giving them an opportunity to kind of [inaudible].

And even giving them a chance to get their thoughts together around the situation instead of being put on the spot. Sometimes it's helpful for people to write things down and write how they're feeling. And then when it's time for the conversation they can have that as notes that they have or they can just give it to their partner to read or they can read out loud to their partner. And so that could be a way to start a conversation as well. So, it just really, really depends on the person and the situation.

Sonia: Yeah, I also like a love journal. I love that idea where you can write down thoughts that are on your mind and write it down in such a way where you get your information out and the other person can process it in their own timeframe. You can say, "Hey, I wrote in a love journal", or something like that. And then if you want to talk about it let's sit down and talk about it. So that's one thing that I definitely like to do but each person is different. Some people like to process that way and some people don't necessarily like to process that way.

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Okay, so here is something that I coached on as well which is either you or your partner has an interest in something and would like to suggest it, like toys in the bedroom, adding a little kink in, whatever it is that you're kind of afraid that the other partner would not necessarily appreciate. Or you have concerns that you will be judged.

A lot of the times people come to me and they're like, "I'm not getting the sexual satisfaction that I would like. If I could get some clitoral stimulation then that would be helpful but I don't want to hurt my partner's feelings. So therefore, I don't really want to discuss this. And so therefore I'm going to go for the next 30 years without." I add this in. So, I'm like, "So are you going to go for the next 30 years without getting the satisfaction you like because you're not having a conversation?"

And what very often happens is when they actually have the conversation with their partner the partner is not the one that was going to be offended to begin with. It's the individual person that had their own thoughts and ideas about what it is that they'd like to add in. And so, a lot of it is processing, helping people to process their own thoughts and ideas as well. What do you do if it's something where one partner is asking the other partner from the perspective of the partner?

I did a podcast on partner requests. And I talked a lot about consent, and safety, and making sure that this is something that you want to do. So, if you have couples that come and one person wants to engage in some kink activity or a threesome or something like that, and the other person is not certain that they want to do that, how do you address that with them?

Kimmerly: Well, I mean as we've been talking about, conversation is key in all of this. Maybe addressing the person who wants to have those additional experiences in the bedroom, maybe asking them, "Okay, what is it about those experiences that is drawing you?" And then the other partner who is unsure about that can actually listen in and hear what the person is saying and asking. And really making it known that it's not about the

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partner at all. It's not about the partner who's not doing it. It's not about the partner who is 'lacking' in some way.

It's just that this is a request that I have and I want to know if you're interested in that. And if you are, then this is what it could look like for us to participate and learn more about it together, that sort of thing. If you're not sure about it, we can do some research together. We can go to some places to learn a little bit more information about it. And if you're flat out not interested in it, that's okay, because it's about consent. So, let's have a conversation about why it's something that you wouldn't be willing to entertain.

And the person who is interested in adding those things in has to also have a conversation with themselves about the zone of sexual safety because their partner needs to also feel safe enough to say no and consent is really important in that regard as well. So, it's kind of a two way street.

Sonia: Yeah. And that's what I find, it's like when somebody comes to me, a Diamond comes to me and they say, "They got this request from their partner." They don't realize that they can say no. They're trying to do all sorts of somersaults and flips in their brain as to how to accommodate this. And I was like, "You can initially say no and process, and figure it out, and what might work for you or might work at all. You don't have to come from a place where you're by default saying yes and then trying to figure out how to make this okay for you."

I always say, "If it's not an absolute hell yes, then it's a no for now." And then kind of figure it out and have a discussion. And this is one of the things I'm loving about couples coaching is that you do get the perspective. You have a third person that's kind of the mutual person that's asking the questions. And the partner gets to sit and listen to the answer and be like, "Oh, that's interesting. I didn't know that's how they thought about this." So that's one of the aspects that I do enjoy about this.

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One last question for now and then we're going to have a part two later on. But okay, I'm going straight for the jugular on this one because sometimes I have to coach on this too. When you have the scenario that a partner has had an affair and they're coming to you, the couple is coming to you and they're not sure what they want to do. And often I have the Diamond that says, "Every time my partner touches me, I think about them touching somebody else or I think about them not wanting me or not being turned on by me."

And I try to get them to understand, "It's really not necessarily about you. It's a lot about what's going on with them and what their needs are and what they're thinking in their mind. It's not specifically rejection of you." But how do you deal with couples that come in where there has been this concept, an affair and with this concept of an affair our society says that you have two choices, which is one, to lie down and just take it, and ignore the situation, or to leave the marriage. But that's not necessarily what people want to do. They don't want an either or.

They want a paradox in which is best for their relationship. So how is it that you help them when they come to you and they're hurt, and they're trying to figure this out?

Kimmerly: Yeah, these are very hard conversations. And I think the partner who is shrinking away from the touch, well, the question is, when is the touch happening? Is it only when you're in bed together and the partner is trying to initiate something? Or do they just want to snuggle with you or that sort of thing? It's a conversation about that. When are they trying to touch you? Is it you're in the kitchen and they just walk past you and they touch you on the shoulder? Or you're coming into the house and they want to give you a hug?

It just depends on the context. And so, if we're talking about the context being the bedroom and the partner has tried to touch you in the bedroom, then yes, it makes perfect sense that you'll be triggered by that. And the thoughts that you would have is, are they thinking about this other person

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and not thinking about me as we're getting ready to enter into this intimacy or this type of situation?

Sonia: Yeah. A lot of the people on coaching, they don't even go back to the bed. They haven't had sex since they found out about it. And there might just be the touch in the kitchen, that they can't even tolerate. They're maybe at the point where they just can't tolerate any touch at all because it just, for them in their mind it means that they are lacking in some way. So, they have made this connection. And they are blaming themselves essentially for the affair which it's not specifically anything to do with them. It's usually something else that they're not aware of.

But it's hard to figure out what that is and so our society puts the blame often, it makes us want to put the blame on ourselves or just on the other person. And not necessarily on the dynamics of the situation overall.

Kimmerly: And so, if it's the kitchen touch they were talking about there needs to be a deeper conversation about boundaries right now. And maybe it's a thing where, okay, I can tolerate a touch on the shoulder and that's it. When you see me you can say hello and wave at me and that's all I can tolerate right now because in my mind and in my spirit, I need to work through what does this mean for me and my body as I'm feeling all these things that this person has had a violation or they've violated our marriage or relationship vow to one another.

And the blaming is definitely there, blaming the other person who had the affair, blaming yourself because you had the affair, or the partner had the affair. And just knowing also that the person who had the affair is also having feelings. And so, it's a really complex situation with a lot of different moving parts because if you cannot evaluate the reasons why the touch is not something that you desire or if it's something that you're blaming yourself for then you are putting all of the shame and blame on you.

And then you've got more shame and blame where you are not feeling comfortable with the person touching you. And so, the conversation needs

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to be about how do you see yourself in juxtapositions with the affair, your partner and this other person. Where do you see you fit into that situation? And how do you see yourself kind of moving forward in the situation together with your partner if that's what you choose to do, if that makes sense.

Sonia: Yeah, it does. It doesn't sound like it's a quick fix either. It sounds like it's going to take some time and for people to understand that and to realize that it's okay. It's okay to have all the feelings and it's okay to realize you want to stay in the relationship if that's what you choose or decide you don't want to stay in the relationship. But also recognize that it's something that it's going to need to be addressed for both of you. It's not just one person with the emotions and the other person.

Everybody's got feelings with this situation and so that's going to take some time to address and that's okay. Alright, Dr. Kimmerly, I know your schedule is really busy. So how can people reach out if they want to talk to you more, if they want to work with you, how is that they can reach you?

Kimmerly: Yeah. So, email right now, is the best way, and my email address is drspecialk81, so D-R-S-P-E-C-I-A-L-K81@yahoo.com. So that would be the best way for people to get in touch with me. And once they do I can send out some information about scheduling a time to set up some relationship coaching and we can just kind of go from there.

Sonia: Yeah. And I think we also have a link to make it easier for them to connect with you as well. So, we'll get the link in the show notes as well. Alright, Diamonds, that is all for our podcast this week. We will see you next week and we will have Dr. Kimmerly back. And feel free to send in questions if you have questions specifically related to couples issues and relationships, and not necessarily romantic. It could be any type of relationship and we can work on that as well. Alright, bye bye, thank you.

Hey Diamonds, do you want to reignite the passion that's gone missing from your life? Do you want to want to want it again? You know I'm on a

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mission to end the emotional pain and isolation that women experience associated with sexual difficulties. And many of you also know that I was once in that place where I was experiencing little to no sexual intimacy in my life. And I kept thinking that there was something that was wrong with me, that I wasn't enough, I wasn't attractive enough, I wasn't good enough, I wasn't smart enough to fix this problem.

And I was worried all the time that my relationship was too far gone because of this lack of intimacy. Well, you know what? I was right about one thing, the relationship didn't last. But even though the relationship didn't last I committed to doing the work that I needed to do to own my sexuality. And now I have this amazing sex life and it's everything that I wanted it to be. And I'm also committed to helping my Diamonds by teaching them the same strategies that I figured out in order to revitalize the intimacy in their life.

So, if you want to stop feeling broken, if you want to stop feeling shame and guilt about sexuality, if you want to feel more comfortable with your sexuality and tap into that pleasure then I'm here for you, Diamonds. First of all, know that there's nothing that's gone wrong with you. You're not broken. And you know what? You can solve your intimacy issues. You can let go of that shame and guilt, and you can tap into that passionate person that's just waiting to come out. Let's get on a strategy call together and let's discuss how we can work together and how I can help you.

And know that a strategy call, it's 100% a safe place, there is no judgment. We'll talk about your intimacy situation, which is what's going on right now. We're also going to talk about your intimacy goals, what you would like your intimacy to look like in the future. And then we'll talk about how we could possibly work together to come up with a personalized strategy plan for you so you can get the results that you need. So, Diamonds, I'm here for you, don't wait another minute. Book that consultation call with me today and I can't wait to talk to you.

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You can get that consultation call by going to soniawrightmd.as.me. And the link is also in the show notes. Okay, have a great day. I can't wait to talk to you. Take care.