

Ep #105: Creating Your Future Relationship



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dr. Sonia Wright

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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, hello Diamonds, how are you all doing? It's Dr. Sonia and today I wanted to talk to you about relationships, specifically future relationships. And I was thinking about this because right now I am celebrating a relationship that I've had in my life in all actuality for 37 years, yeah, just about 37 years. This one's an interesting one. So just yeah, sit down and relax. So, this year 2022 is the 30th anniversary of my wedding to my husband at the time, Edward.

And Edward is just an amazing person and we have been 'a family' for the last 30 years even though 17 of those last 30 years we have been divorced, yes. But I was still like, "Okay, we got married in 1992, it's 2022, originally our plan was to go to Europe and to kind of recreate the three weeks that we spent on our honeymoon kind of traveling around Europe and having fun." But then I decided because of COVID, and monkeypox, and stuff that was going on in Europe right now that maybe it would be a better thing to just celebrate right here in the United States.

Well, our other favorite thing to do is to go to Disneyland and Disneyworld. So, this week we are in Disneyworld celebrating our 30th anniversary, 17 of which have been divorced. But I wanted to highlight this because for me it helps me to realize you can do whatever you want. Society says that we're no longer married, that we're ex-husbands, ex-wives. And so, we should be miserable and not want to be around each other and not want to spend any time together.

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But Edward's a great person, it didn't necessarily work out for our marriage but the friendship, friendship is still strong and always will be. And so, I was thinking about all this because I was in a ride, Pirates of Caribbean. And this ride this week it's been open, and then it closes, and then it opens, and it closes. It has been having some issues going on. And so, we had these passes to get on it and it was closed at the time we had the passes. So, we were a little miffed about that but we came back and we just happened to be passing by and it was open again.

And so, we just ran in there and it was wonderful because you didn't have to wait at all. The line was relatively short. But what got me thinking about relationships is we ended up in line right in front of this other couple that were our age. And she spent the entire time, it was a man and a woman and she spent the entire time berating her husband about how because he hadn't listened to her, and there was so many people ahead of them now in line. It was going to take forever and it was all his fault.

And it was kind of miserable, I was miserable hearing it and I wasn't even the one that was having this directed towards me and I just felt so sad for the poor guy. He was like, "I just didn't know what you wanted me to do." That's what he kept repeating. "I just didn't know what you wanted me to do." And she's like, "All these people are ahead of me. I can't stand you." I mean it was really kind of sad and it went on, and on, and on.

And so of course me being who I am said in a relatively loud voice to Edward, "You know, I'm having such a great trip with you as my ex-husband. It's so much fun that we get to go travel and do what we want to do." And this line it was so short, it was only five minutes, that's really amazing, I mean five minutes for a pirates ride. And of course, he's like, oh God, here she goes again. It's probably what he's thinking in his head. That's not what he said. He just laughed. He likes to say that I am cheap entertainment.

But that just stopped the woman in her tracks and she just stopped talking. And the husband kind of looked at me and kind of smiled a little bit. But it made me realize that you really can make your relationship any way you

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want it to be. Here we are, two couples that were about the same age, one couple were divorced and very much close friends. And then the other couple were married and very much not friends at all. They spent the remainder of the time in the line not talking to each other. And you could feel the tension in that relationship.

And it made me sad that for whatever choices or reasons they chose to stay together, not that they needed to leave but they also chose to be in that kind of a relationship. And today I wanted to talk to you about creating the future relationship that you want. I want to be very clear, Diamonds, that you get to create the future relationship that you want. Edward and I did not have the best marriage and at some point it was like, okay, it's time to end this. And we made a decision to end it.

But we did have an amazing friendship. Part of the celebration was for our anniversary but part of it was also celebrating the launch of our son. The fact that he had finished at Stanford and we no longer had a bill to pay. So, there is so much that we had to celebrate. And we created the relationship when we got divorced in 2005, who knew what the relationship was going to be. But I knew that I did not want to raise my son and be bickering. I had seen relationships very closely since my parents had divorced.

I had been basically the child that was between two parents and miserable. And I was like, "That's not happening to my son. We're going to figure this out so that we maintain the friendship." So back in 2005 we made a decision at that point that we were going to create a future relationship that may be was not what society expected divorced people to have. But you get to create this. It doesn't have to go by the books. You get to create the relationship that you want even if your relationship up until this point has not been what you want it to be, you get to create that relationship.

So, decisions made back in 2005 had a ramification such that in 2022 we're sitting in line laughing and joking at the pirates of the Caribbean. And Edward always likes to say that I am cheap entertainment. And we just laugh, we laugh the whole time. And so, you get to make a decision and

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then you get to create what you want. And I like to say, “Stay away from the shoulds of a relationship.”

Society may say there’s certain things you should do in a relationship. Or maybe they say certain things like, “You should stay together if you’re married. Or you should stay together for the children, or you should do certain things.” But don’t do the shoulds in life. Do specifically what you want in the relationship. And you’ll make it even better than you could ever have imagined. Yeah, you do get to create this relationship.

Okay, so since I’m in Disney this week, I was at Hollywood Studios this morning and they have this section where you can go and make a Star Wars robot in the back. And it got me thinking that you could use that same philosophy and concept to make the relationship that you want. Take different components and put it together. And create the relationship that you want. And so, I was talking to my current partner, Dr. Kimmerly which I think all of you know at this point.

And I was talking to her about what is it that we specifically would like in a relationship and what is it that might be founding building blocks or LEGO blocks to put in a relationship? And I was talking about what I thought was important to have in a relationship. So here are some of the components that I would put in a relationship, just about in any relationship but definitely in an intimate relationship in order to create that amazing intimate relationship that I want with another person.

I think first and foremost, mutual respect. I think that that is definitely something that’s important. I always say actually, if I’m in a relationship, any type of relationship it’s built on a friendship, any type of intimate relationship I’ve ever been in has been built on a friendship, I have to say. I’m definitely one of those people that needs to connect. And so, the friendship has to be there. And part of the basis, the foundation is the mutual respect.

That couple that we were standing in front of did not have mutual respect. And I think it definitely showed but definitely a respect for the other person

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as a human being, a respect for recognizing that they have thoughts and feelings of their own and that's okay. But just a respect for them as an individual and respect for their choices that they're making in life. And then just a respect for them.

Okay, the other thing that I would put, and you don't have to put this in yours but I have found that people that can laugh and people have a good sense of humor. If you can laugh in a relationship I see that those have a tendency to overcome whatever else is going on. So, if you're dealing with a sexless marriage and you're trying to figure out if you should go or if you should stay, and if you stay, what it is that you want to do, put back the laughter. Find your sense of humor in it all.

Because with the pirates of Caribbean you could have laughed your way all the way onto the ride, laughing and joking, and having a good time. Or you can sit in silence and be miserable and berate somebody. And make your day and their day, and possibly people around you, day miserable too. Obviously you don't 'make' other people miserable. They have to decide if they're going to choose that. But if they decide they're not going to choose it, there's a likelihood that there might be some ignoring going on.

At the expense of your behavior they may decide, yeah, I can't live my life like this anymore, I'm just going to ignore you. And then your relationship gets further and further apart as opposed to closer together. So mutual respect and laughter with a good sense of humor, those are important aspects of a relationship. And maybe this one is first too which is communication skills. And not just waiting for emergencies to come up but to do regular check-ins.

So, it's kind of like building that communication skills muscles, building it up by having weekly or monthly, just sit down and communicate, "Hey, what's happening in the relationship? Any concerns that you have? Anything that you want to talk about that we haven't really had a chance to talk about because of our busy schedules or dealing with the kids, or whatever's going on?" This is our chance to sit down and have a communication.

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I suggest if you're having those communication sessions that maybe there's some touch involved. Maybe you're next to each other on the couch, maybe you're holding hands or whatever it is. But if you're having those regular check-ins and there's something you want to discuss, obviously make it a safe environment but also the touch helps with the connection and I think that is something that's important.

Intimacy. Intimacy of words, intimacy of touch, intimacy of emotions. I think that to have a beautiful relationship there has to be intimacy in there. And as I always say, that there's the communication part and then general intimacy which would be the laughing and the joking, that type of thing is built on the communication. And then the sexual intimacy is built on the general overall intimacy. So, there's different layers that are there but definitely intimacy is something that's important.

Trust, integrity, trust, that is something that's key, to trust the other individual. When I say trust it doesn't necessarily mean trust that you're monogamous or whatever. You all decide that for yourself. But the level of trust where there's not the deception and sneaking about and things like that, there's more of a trust that they're going to do what they say they're going to do. Trust that they're going to be there for you. Trust that you're going to be there for you and also for them. So, a level of trust I think is a beautiful thing.

At one point during the vacation, we decided to go on this rollercoaster that looked like the easiest rollercoaster in the world. And we both are prone to motion sickness. And it looks like a nice slow rollercoaster and so we went on the rollercoaster and almost died. I got off of the other side and I was ready to vomit and stuff like that. Ed made sure that we got back to the hotel and he gave me my regimen that will calm my queasy stomach down. And I just trusted that he was going to take care of that.

And if something's going on with him, he trusts that I'm going to take care of that too. And so that's part of the trust that you build into the relationship, just knowing that that person's going to be there for you. Honesty, I think that goes hand in hand with trust, the honesty that you know that person's

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going to be honest and truthful. I think that that's a key component to a relationship and I think that that's something that's very important as well is just knowing that that person's going to be honest.

I think also knowing that it's safe to be vulnerable, that it's safe to be you, that you don't have to worry about, you don't have to have a mask on. If you can't show who you really are in a relationship you're not really in a relationship. So, this goes along with you know that there's mutual respect, you know there's intimacy, and there's trust, and there's honesty. And all of that lays the foundation so that you feel safe to be vulnerable and to be yourself, safe to show your emotions, safe to discuss something that's important to you.

Like with that couple in the pirates, that was not a safe environment in order to be vulnerable. And so, you could tell they were standing next to each other but there was a gulf of emotion, so much space, like a ravine that was never ending and such a tense silence. And they were at Disney together to be there. They didn't have children with them or anything. They were spending time with each other and yet they weren't because it wasn't a safe place to be vulnerable.

And so, there's no eye contact between them. There's more eye contact between the guy and us than there was between them which was kind of sad. So, autonomy, freedom to be you, freedom to be who you are without someone wanting to change you. Never ever, ever get into a relationship thinking that your partner, you can change them for the better, or being in a relationship, they're going to change. Some annoying habit is going to change or whatever. No, it's not going to change.

If for some reason they decide that they want to work on that and they change it, that's one thing. But when you go into a relationship just know and understand that what you see is what you get. And the question is, are you okay with that because you don't have influence on another person. You don't have the ability to change another person. If you want a dominant person in the bedroom and they're more of just a calm kind of

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more dismissive type of personality and they're not going to 'take control in the bedroom', it's really hard to change that.

It's really hard to, I have women that come to me and they're like, "I just want my partner to take more control and so I don't have to always initiate and I don't have to always do that." And then I ask them, "What is their personality outside the bedroom?" They're like, "They're an easy happy go lucky kind of person that just follows whatever I want them to do which is how I like it in the relationship outside the bedroom." And I'm like, "So then you want things to switch suddenly in the bedroom?"

Or maybe that's a discussion you two can have but you have to recognize this is the person's personality, this is who they are. And I have people that are really upset, and unhappy, and anxious, and they want things to be different. And it's a matter of, this is the person who you married, this is the individual who you're with. And so really look at that, because expecting them to change because you want it to be a certain different way in the bedroom is not necessarily what's going to happen.

So, you get to ask yourself, is this what I want? And can I make this something that I want? And continue to have discussions but not from a place where you're trying to change another individual. You'll never change another individual, you'll just kind of make yourself miserable and you'll find that you change based on your thoughts and your feelings about the situation. And then before you know it you find yourself frustrated and no longer talking and you're the pirate couple. Don't do it. Don't do it.

And this goes back to mutual respect, don't try to change your partner. Recognize that they are who they are, that's not like we need to change and have respect for who they are. And recognize if you're in a relationship with them, it's not from the perspective of eventually I'll change that trait. You probably won't but you will make yourself miserable. So, autonomy is the freedom to be who you are without someone wanting to change you or without you wanting to change them.

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Dr. Kimmery said this line which I thought was kind of interesting. It's the freedom to be you and the freedom for you not to be lost in the we, you still get to be who you are. You still get to be the individual you are. And you're not lost in the we, you didn't enter the relationship and then you have to become a different person or merge into one to become we. Yeah, there is the we in the relationship but that doesn't negate or stop who you are as an individual. You still get to be who you are.

So, freedom to be you and that's not a question and nobody's trying to influence you or change you. As soon as people try to change you in different ways then we go back to that safe to be vulnerable, you no longer feel that it's safe to be you and to show up. So, you kind of shut down and you put masks up. You put walls up. And then suddenly you're looking at a relationship where there's not that connection.

Of course, this is something that I should have said way back at the beginning but I think I just assumed obviously there's no violence. There's no physical or verbal abuse because that goes back to mutual respect. So definitely no physical or verbal abuse.

And then there's the gaslighting. No gaslighting where there's somehow the situation is manipulated that it's always your fault. Or maybe you're the one doing the manipulating so that you're blaming the other person all the time, but no gaslighting where no matter what's going on you're feeling like something's wrong here. And somehow you must have done it and somehow your partner ends up blaming you quite a bit.

I coach a number of women in Own Your Sexuality Now that have dealt with gaslighting in their relationships. And they're just coming out the other side. They didn't even know what that term was. So, for you that don't really know what the term is, look it up and see.

It's really an interesting thing but basically what I put it down to is if you're in a relationship and you are being blamed all the time no matter what is going on, it's always your fault and you kind of feel like that's not the truth and something's not right here. But you can't quite put your finger on it, but

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you know that no matter what happens, you're the blame. No, that's not right. There's an element of gaslighting going on. So, spend some time looking at that. That goes back to trust, and intimacy, and honesty, and mutual respect, and obviously feeling safe to be vulnerable.

So, if you are feeling, and very often the other person may have an element of narcissism in them. But you can just look it all up and kind of get familiar with it and decide if that might be something that's going on in your relationship. If that is, that might be something harder to fix to tell you the truth.

That usually has to do with another person's personality and their inability to take responsibility, and to focus on themselves, just being so perfect and wonderful that they can't handle making mistakes. And so, they kind of put it off on you. So that's something that yeah, you may need couples counseling, or you may need individual counseling and you may need to look at that relationship just in general.

And of course, at any point with anything that we're discussing, feel free to look into couples counseling, or couples coaching because, yeah, creating the future relationship that you want is so important. If you need some help with it, go ahead and get the help that you need. And then this is something that I think is important is understanding how the other person initially reacts and processes any conflict that's going on.

If you understand and know who your partner is and how they're going to react to things, I always say, "Your partner can react whatever way they want to react." But I think it's also kind of good to know how your partner is more likely to react. So, if you say something and you know it's kind of like a bombshell, everybody reacts to conflict a different way. Some people are very quiet and they're processing, they're taking in the information. And maybe they're going to process for the next day and then they might respond.

There's other people that get nervous and anxious right from the beginning and worry that you're blaming them and they might yell and scream at the

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beginning. And then they come back a day later and they want to have a conversation. Other people might just yell and scream and not want to have a conversation. But everybody has their individual way of coping and processing with conflict.

Understand the person that you're in the relationship with, how they deal with conflict, how they initially deal with it and that might be based on their history in the past. Like if they had any childhood trauma, what are their attachment styles? So how do they process and deal with emotion?

I'm like one of these logically minded people, which doesn't mean that I don't have emotions. I have a lot of emotions but I have a tendency to keep them very close. And so, if somebody tells me something I will usually just note what the words are that they're saying. And then I process it over time and then I come back.

Whereas somebody else might just have a different experience or have a different way of processing. Be aware of how your partner processes and don't take it personally whatever way that they process. But it will help you to understand how they deal with conflict, if you know how they process or how they react initially and how they process because the way I process things, somebody might interpret that as being cold or withdrawing. But based on stuff I've dealt in my life, I found that that was the best way for me to process from a relatively young age.

So, understand the history of your partner, and understand how they process and don't jump to conclusions, and don't take it all personally. And then also understand how they deal with conflict resolution. So, these are all the components that I would put together if I were making a future relationship and if something I wanted to change in the relationship, of course the communication would be there.

And it would be about talking about how you and this other individual or individuals would like to have your relationship look like in the future. Focus on these different components and choose what is important to you. Add in what other components are important for you in your relationship and then

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go ahead and create that amazing future relationship that you want to create. I think that this is so important. And of course, you know how I always talk about your first and most important relationship, being in a relationship with yourself.

And in this regard that's something that's important as well. You can take and look at all these components and use it for yourself and creating the relationship that you want with yourself. I think that that is equally important. So have the mutual respect with yourself. Put the laughter in there and keep your sense of humor there. Have your communication skills, hey, Sonia, what's going on here? Have the intimacy. You are your own best lover.

Trust, have the honesty there. Make it a place to be safe with yourself, don't berate yourself. Don't put yourself down. Give yourself that loving kindness. Talk about loving kindness, I think infused throughout all of these components is of course love. Yeah, definitely have love in all your relationships that you choose. Don't try to necessarily change yourself. Love yourself first and then figure out what aspects you want to change at some point.

So, yes, you can change certain aspects but also it's kind of like this balance. You also get to be like, yeah, this is what I do in this situation. This is how I think about things. And you don't always have to be serious about it. You can be like, "Yeah, that's kind of how I am and that's how I initially react and that's okay." And then I get to make this choice. When I say obviously no verbal abuse, no self-abuse. Understand how you react to things. Yeah, and understand how your conflict resolution looks.

So, these things, same things you can build your future incredible relationship with somebody else or you can build your future incredible relationship with yourself and make it part of your self-care. Alright, so we have been having a lot of fun talking about relationships, and building the future relationship that you want. I am sending blessings out to the pirate couple, pirates of the Caribbean couple and I hope that they are doing well.

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And I'm also sending out my love, and respect, and everything to Edward. I want to just say you are an incredible friend and an incredible parent, and it has been an honor to be together on this journey and have you in my life for the last 37 years. So, this podcast is dedicated to Edward and it's dedicated to all my Diamonds, and all the relationships in my Diamonds' lives. Take care. Dr. Sonia out.

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 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.

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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.

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.