

## Ep #109: Celebrating Coming Out



### 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 109.

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.

Hey, Diamonds, I'm hoping everything is good with you. Today I want to celebrate National Coming Out Day. Yes, I usually talk about issues related to expressing your sexuality but today's podcast is about celebrating your sexual orientation. National Coming Out Day has been around since 1988 and we celebrate it on October 11<sup>th</sup> which is the anniversary of the second march on Washington for lesbian and gay rights which took place in 1987.

For some people, National Coming Out Day may not have much meaning and to others it represents everything, the right to be seen, the right to be heard, the right to be acknowledged, that they matter and their lifestyle choices are supported. And it's especially poignant now at this time as the LGBTQIA+ community is concerned that some of our rights may be restricted in the near future. I want you to know that I love my Diamonds and I support all sexual orientations.

Some of you may not feel like you can come out and live the life that you want to live. And others are out living life loud and proud, whatever your choice, know that I am here for you. And I want to bring on my partner today, Dr. Kimmery Newsom, to talk more about sexual orientation and coming out. So, Diamonds, enjoy this podcast and as always, it's my gift to you with lots of love.

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Sonia: Good morning, Dr. Kimmery how are you?

Kimmery: I'm doing pretty well, how are you doing, Dr. Sonia?

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Sonia: I'm doing alright. I'm doing alright. So, this morning we're going to be talking about coming out. And I think it's kind of ironic that we're recording this podcast in our closet because it has really good acoustics.

Kimmery: So funny.

Sonia: I thought that we would start by defining sexual orientation. And then I thought we could have a discussion around some questions kind of like a back and forth. And talk to our Diamonds about what it's like to come out and what our lives have been like. And we have not prepared these answers ahead of time. So, this is kind of going to be interesting. I don't know what you're going to say, you don't know what I'm going to say. That's always a good recipe for something. Okay, let's start by defining sexual orientation.

So Planned Parenthood says that sexual orientation is about who you're attracted to and want to have a relationship, it's who you feel drawn to romantically, emotionally and sexually. There are many sexual orientations, some of which include gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, pansexual, queer, asexual, grey, questioning. And Dr. Kimmery, you have a textbook out there. This textbook is Cultural Diversity, and Family Life Education.

Kimmery: In my textbook I define sexual orientation as who a person is attracted to sexually and it is made up of the psychological and the behavioral components as well.

Sonia: Okay, so then I'm like what are the psychological and behavioral components, what do you mean by that? I always love that you come from this academic perspective and I come from the, what the fuck does that mean.

Kimmery: It's very true. Yeah, so the psychological aspects of things is the way that people think about their sexual attraction, the way that they think about the person that they may be willing to engage in relationships with. And then the behavioral components are directly related to how they behave sexually towards the person who they may be attracted to. And so,

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an example is, people who are lesbians usually are sexually active with other people who identify themselves as lesbian in their sexual orientation.

And then there are people who are asexual and these are folks who don't necessarily have any specific behavioral components towards sexual orientation, they just know that they don't have any sexual attraction to anyone and there is no action regarding sex in their life and lifestyle.

Sonia: I'm going to add something in here. And this is the outward to other people because asexual people may still experience desire and libido, and may still want to engage in self-pleasuring but they're not necessarily going to be attracted to somebody else and want to engage in sexual activity with somebody else, is that **[crosstalk]**?

Kimmery: Exactly.

Sonia: Okay, cool, so I hear what you're saying. And the thing that I really like about this is you wrote this book when you were in the closet.

Kimmery: I totally did, I totally did, yes. It was a very interesting experience. But of the chapters that I worked on, this was one of the most exciting ones for me, honestly, because it gave me an opportunity to actually look at specific sexual orientations and also gender expression. If people pick up the book, it definitely talks about gender expression as well and how sexual orientation and gender can sometimes be interchanged.

But I make a delineation between those two because one is action oriented and the other one is just, you know, not just, but can be relegated to how you view yourself in the context of gender and those sorts of things. But I loved it and it was a great excuse for me to talk about these things and to really be open about what I was learning and that sort of thing. And I was learning about myself at the same time. And so that was a beautiful thing too.

Sonia: So just so that my Diamonds have a better idea of what it might be like for someone that's living in the closet, can you tell us more about what it felt like to be you? When did you know your sexual orientation was kind

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of different than the 'norm' would be? When did you realize that you liked girls, you liked women, was that just something more recent or was that earlier in your life?

Kimmery: Oh, no, it was not recent. I knew when I was a teenager that I was a lesbian. And it was okay as I think about it now. But then there was no way in hell I would have told anybody that I had an attraction to girls. And it was scary for me because there was no space within my community to actually live that out and to be true to who I was. And so, I suppressed that, I mean I buried it so, so deep. It was buried so deep underneath culture, was buried so deep underneath religion. And I never allowed myself to experience the full beauty of what I'm experiencing now.

And I think there was a time and a place for everything but my life was miserable. I was depressed. I couldn't figure out why. I could really never get out of the cycle of depression and anxiety, it just was taking over and had taken over my life. And as the years and years went by my depression and anxiety got worse, and worse, and worse. And I ended up in the hospital because I just didn't know how to handle what I was dealing with. And when I got out I realized that I was living my life as a lie.

I was not supposed to be with men. And it's easy in some communities to say that you're bisexual, that's easy because then they're like, "Okay, well, she still appreciates dick too. So, there may be hope here nonetheless." But as I started to explore my relationships with women I realized that I'm not bisexual, I'm a lesbian. I enjoy being with women. I enjoy sexual contact with women. I enjoy the intellectual stimulation that you and I have and it really is a beautiful thing for me to be able to express who I am fully.

And I still struggle with some depression and anxiety. And now it's not as deep as it was before because the full expression of who I am is out. And I can handle that now and I have a partner who understands that, and who's supportive, and gives me space to deal with that and have a soft place to land because I am being true to myself.

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Sonia: Yeah. I think you bring up something that's really important. People don't realize the emotional weight and energy that's utilized when you're in the closet. You're like, "Do people know? Can people tell?" At first is the internal part where you're pushing it all down constantly. And that wears on you emotionally, physically. And then there's a part where you're like, "I need to play a certain role. I need to be a certain way in order to fit into society."

So, I think that that's very important to bring up this concept so that people understand that it's like every day you wake up and you are telling me your gender expression is changing as well as the full aspect of you comes out. But you would spend time putting makeup on and doing these things so that you look like you fit in, in terms of your gender expression but also in terms of the sexual orientation. And yeah, it's kind of like if you're bisexual then that's okay because you like men, you like women and you can choose men and still society's alright with that.

But as you go through this process it can look different. And you talked a little bit more about your coming out journey. But to be specific, when did you come out, 20 years ago or a year ago, how long ago did you come out?

Kimmery: I officially came out as bisexual in September of 2020, yeah, September of 2020.

Sonia: And so how did you do that? Did you just post on Facebook, "Hey, you all, just so you know, I like pussy?"

Kimmery: Hell no.

Sonia: How exactly did you do this?

Kimmery: So, I had told my sister a few months before that. And I wasn't quite ready to tell my mother yet. But I told my sister and so there it is, officially there it is. And then it's not really official until you tell your parents, at least in my mind. And so, I was standing in the kitchen, we were standing in the kitchen of my sister's house and I said, "Mom, I am

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bisexual.” And she said, “Well, I knew. I know that.” I was like, “I’m sorry.” “What?” Because in my mind I had masked it so well, that I was wearing the makeup. At one point I was wearing the heels.

I was good at doing my makeup because my mother and my aunts, they’re all into those things and so I thought I masked it really well. But she told me that she knew when I came home, the first time I came home from college she knew. And I didn’t understand that. And she explained that my demeanor was different, the way that I handled myself was different. And she was in denial about it.

She said, “No, no.” And she literally said this to me. She said, “No, no, Kimmery likes dick, it’s fine. She’s okay. No, no. She can have any man that she wants. She’s beautiful, she can have any man she wants.” And in my mind I’m thinking, I didn’t want any man I wanted, I wanted women. And so, it was a really interesting situation with my mom. She was very accepting, very loving. There are other people in my life who were not so much very accepting of my coming out and really caused a rift in some important relationships that I deemed important.

And it’s been painful in a lot of ways. And you’ve watched me go through some of this and experienced these situations. And it just has not been beautiful except, except that I’m so much in love with myself that I can remove that hate, and that disdain, and that unacceptance that people have put onto me, that have projected onto me away. And it doesn’t have to sit within my spirit and within my body. I allow myself to experience it and I purge it. And so, it’s great, nothing has changed.

I even had someone that I was really close to and sent me a letter about how wrong I was. And then I got myself to a point where I was ready to have a civil conversation and I reached out to them and they reached back and we talked. And they were like, “I thought you were calling me to tell me that you changed your mind.”

Sonia: Going back in the closet.

Kimmery: Exactly.

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Sonia: “Don’t worry, my bad. I really thought more about it and yeah, no, I’m not gay, I’m not a lesbian.” So yeah, some people cannot accept choices that have been made. And I think my Diamonds need to understand that there is a price that people have to pay to come out. You can’t guarantee that people you thought who loved you will be there for you. And you really get an understanding of what is unconditional love and what is love with conditions.

And this is something, if your sexual orientation is straight, that you don’t really have to even comprehend. Now, that’s not to say that there might not be other pain in people’s lives and that their life choices or whatever may not lead to rifts in their relationship with other people. But recognize when people come out of the closet it’s at risk to we don’t know if we may lose a job, if we may lose family members, if we may lose the entire family, if we may lose our religious support system. There’s so much that can be on the line when we come out.

For me I came out in my 40s and I actually didn’t get the choice. I didn’t realize I actually liked women until my late 20s. And I was like, “Oh, I actually like women.” And it was not that big of a deal. And I think it wasn’t that big of a deal because I was in a heterosexual relationship, that was a longstanding relationship. And it’s kind of like I took that information and just tucked it in my mind and just left it there. I wasn’t planning to do anything about it. I looked very fem in my gender expression and it wasn’t going to, like the world was not ‘going to know’.

So, I just thought this was kind of fun and whatever. And it didn’t really faze me. And then when I got a divorce I really had to think, what do I want? And when I got a divorce I was just about 40 at the time. And I was like, “Okay, what do you want? What do you want your life to be like? This is your opportunity to have the life that you want to have.” And in terms of coming out in my job, I had been talking to a friend about my sexual orientation and I was open with her but I didn’t specifically tell her that I was in the process of coming out and that I hadn’t really come out at my job.

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And so, there was this picnic for residents and I went to the picnic and my friend had done the coming out for me. When I got there everybody knew I was a lesbian. I was like, "Wow, this is not exactly how I wanted to do it." So sometimes we don't even get the choice. Because I was okay discussing with her, she assumed I was okay discussing it with everybody else. And so, everybody knew, Sonia got a divorce and she likes women now. So that's kind of how the coming out went in that realm.

In terms of talking to my family I just remember calling them to tell them I was getting a divorce. And I figured if I'm telling them about the divorce I might as well tell them I like women at the same time. Why wait, like a two-for, because I've got to do something. I might as well tell them. So, I was like, "I'm getting a divorce and I will no longer be dating men." Which exactly wasn't exactly true because for me my evolution of my sexual orientation has looked a lot of different ways.

So, it was heterosexual at one point, then it was bisexual, then I ended up getting a divorce and I was just a lesbian. And then after another 10 years I was like, "I kind of would like to explore a relationship with men again." And then I realized, it's not either or but it didn't necessarily feel bisexual. And then I realized you know what? Queer fits for me where it's really about the person and if I had that connection with that person then I can explore sexual relationships with them as well. And pansexual.

So queer and pansexual is kind of where I land. Each one of us get to choose our expression. So, we don't necessarily even need labels. So, some people do need a label, and want a label, and love the label and they're like, "I'm a lesbian, I'm proud, I'm loud and boom." And other people are like, "I like the person and it really doesn't matter who they are in terms of their gender or anything like that. If I like them, I like them. I don't care what their genitalia looks like. I'm going to figure out how to have fun no matter what."

So, it just depends on the person and how they want to. So, I remember telling my family and my siblings were like, "Yeah, whatever, Sonia, sounds great." And my dad was kind of the same way. He probably had his

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thoughts about it but he didn't express it with me. I remember my mom was like, "This is just a phase you're going through." And I'm 56 now, that was around the age of 40. And I mean 60 years and I'm quite sure she still thinks it's a phase that I'm going through. So, everybody has a different way of looking at this and how our family members deal with our choices looks different.

And they're allowed to feel whatever way that they feel but I knew intrinsically I wasn't going to lose any family. I wasn't really going to lose anybody that really I loved or they cared about me. And so, for me coming out was not as hard as for other people. For other people coming out may mean that if they come out as a teenager that they are kicked out of the house. So, I need my Diamonds to understand. And Diamonds, if you're dealing with this sexual orientation and wanting to come out, I am here for you.

And if you know of other people that are dealing with sexual orientation and wanting to come out, I ask that you support them and you love them because it may seem like it's a simple thing, especially these days. The younger generation, I'm so proud of the younger generation, they're out, they're exploring, they're figuring it all out from a younger age.

And for them to have the freedom, some of them, now, it's not everyone because some people are still being raised in an environment where it can mean that they're kicked out, that they're not allowed to explore and they need to bury it down so deep. But understand that if people are burying it down so deep that there's an emotional toll that comes from this. And so, for all of our allies, I say thank you. And continue to support people that may be coming out because they need that support because it doesn't necessarily feel safe all the time.

So, thank you very much for those of you that are able to support and for those of you that are expressing a sexual orientation that may be different than the 'heterosexual norm', then I am here for you and we are here. And we are here to support. Okay, any last words that you'd like to say, Dr. Kimmerly before we sign off on this episode?

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Kimmery: Yes, one thing that I really, really want to emphasize is the importance of being true to yourself. It's easy to live your life for other people. I lived my life for other people for a really, really long time. And it caused me lots of emotional and mental distress. And once I started living my life for myself I am probably the most healthy than I have ever been emotionally. Because of that I don't feel like I have to hide or mask a part of myself.

And so, I just express the need for freedom and if you are in a place as Dr. Sonia said, where you're trying to figure this all out, know that you have support and you know Dr. Sonia is just an email, or phone call, or text away. And I'm also willing to help if I can as well. So just try and live free and true to who you are.

Sonia: thank you. Thank you. I don't have anything else to add except that I love you, Diamonds, thank you for your support. And if you need us we are here for you. Alright, Dr. Sonia and Dr. Kimmery 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.

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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.

You can get that consultation call by going to [soniawrightmd.as.me](https://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.