

Ep #137: Self-Pleasure is Self-Care 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 137.

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. Yes, it's so good to be back. And I'm bringing along with me the relationship coach, Dr. Kimmerly Newsom because this is the month that we talk about relationships, the month is April. And we are talking about relationships. And I had asked Dr. Kimmerly to work on setting the foundation. And we've been talking about relationships and setting the foundation a lot in the month of April. And so now I want to bring in more of the sexual component. And I also want to bring it in, in terms of what I hear a lot of people talking about, and a lot of concerns, a lot of things that I talk to my Diamonds about.

And one of the things that comes up again and again and again is self-pleasure, specifically self-pleasure when you're in a relationship, is this okay? People have thoughts and ideas that we're not necessarily supposed to choose ourselves, but we're possibly supposed to choose others, specifically our partners. And that self-pleasure is kind of something that you do when you're not partnered. And then once you're partnered then you switch over and spend more time with your partner around sexual intimacy and not necessarily with yourself.

So, I wanted to have a discussion with Dr. Kimmerly because she is the relationship coach but also she's my relationship person being my partner. And so I wanted to talk about, I think what I would call misconceptions around self-pleasure, masturbation if you want to, whatever word you choose. But I really just wanted to have a discussion around self-pleasure. Now, I'm just going to start with some basic concepts around self-pleasure.

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Self-pleasure, when I think about that I think that is a wonderful thing. I think of it as a way for you to know your body.

And that it's kind of a gift that we give ourselves which keeps on giving, there's nothing shameful about it. It helps us especially as women to know and understand our body more. We don't know what stimulation works for us unless we kind of try it out ahead of time. And I think that in this society there's a lot of permission that's given to people that consider themselves male gendered in order to engage in sexual exploration with their own body. It's kind of like guys will be guys, that type of concept. And I don't necessarily feel that women are given the same permission.

In a lot of ways that permission is not given to us, it's actively taken from us. And we are taught to feel shame around sexuality, around our body. And we're taught to focus on other people's pleasure and not our own pleasure. So in the context of all those things in terms of how we have been raised in this society as girls, as women, we come out of that, into adulthood with this feeling and these thoughts that maybe self-pleasure, masturbation is kind of okay or maybe it's not okay. Everybody has different ideas.

Maybe some people think it's something that's very shameful. Some people think it's something that's a substitute, and when you have a partner then you kind of let go of it. But I just want to talk for a minute with Dr. Kimmerly about our relationship with ourself because I think that that's a healthy important thing. What do you think, Dr. Kimmerly?

Kimmerly: Well, that's a great introduction to our conversation. And I think that it's right. We need to have this conversation about how to be with ourselves. And people talk about self-care all the time, going to the spa or going to get your nails done or your toes done or your hair done or facials, all that kind of stuff. But we forget about the sexual aspect of self-care.

And so I think having a conversation surrounding the faux pas that sometimes happens in these conversations where people are judgmental

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about whether or not it should take place is really a good idea especially for your Diamonds as you call them. So that the reality of being able to self-care in that way and it being self-pleasuring being a way of self-care and spending time with yourself is also seen as something that's important and significant is definitely a great conversation to have.

Sonia: Yeah. I love how you call it self-care because I call it sexual self-care. But essentially it's having that connection to yourself, to your body. I think that's really the foundation of being a sexual being, one, the foundation. The other one is your mindset and what your thoughts are around of being a sexual being. But the other side of it is actually getting into your body, getting comfortable with being a self and sexual being. I think that is something that's important.

And I think that we become comfortable with ourselves as sexual beings physically when we know our body. When we know what stimulation works for it. When we are pleasuring ourselves and giving ourselves a beautiful gift, we learn so much more about ourselves and we're comfortable with ourselves. And if we do choose to share our body with another human being we already know what it's about, what stimulation works for it, what you enjoy, things like that.

Whereas we may have come from this concept in the past that our partner's responsible for our pleasure and our partner should know more about our body than we know about. But it's kind of the pathway to doom in terms of now you don't know anything about your body or very little about your body and then you're expecting somebody else to know about your body. You can't teach them. And they're trying to press buttons and see which one might work and then everybody's getting stressed out and thinking I should come faster.

And the other partner is thinking, I should be able to please this person, all this bullshit that we're getting when we could just kind of settle ourselves down, accept that we're sexual beings, allow ourselves, give ourselves permission to learn about our body and enjoy sexuality. But I did

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specifically bring you here, one, because I want to talk about the relationship that we should have with ourselves because I think you can help us with that. But then also the relationship of being a sexual being with ourselves while we're in a relationship with somebody else.

So anything you want to comment, in terms of having this sexual or having this relationship with ourselves? I'm giving you the mic, go for it, Dr. Kimmerly.

Kimmerly: Well, I think there are several factors that we have to take into consideration. One, the cultural conditioning. We have to have an understanding of what we have come from, if it makes sense. If we have learned that to be selfless is the way to go, then it's very difficult for you to think about or focus on what your needs are regardless of whether it's inside or outside the bedroom or in the bathtub or wherever it is that you self-pleasure. It's very difficult to do that because that's not something we're taught to do as women. It's not a given for us.

'Our jobs' is to make sure everyone else is okay. And then whatever is left over energy wise, money wise, food wise, all those different things goes to us, which often is very little. And so the relationship that we have with ourselves is called the intrapersonal relationship, the I-N-T-R-A personal relationship. And the relationship we have with other people is the inter, the I-N-T-E-R personal relationship. Intra implies inside.

And so the inside way of thinking about ourselves, the way we see ourselves every day, the ideas behind the boundaries that are necessary for us to feel comfortable and at peace in this world are definitely affecting the ways that we have our inter, the I-N-T-E-R personal relationships. The relationship between and within other people's spheres of influence. You gave me the mic so I just kept going, so go ahead.

Sonia: I gave you the mic and now I'm taking it back. Okay, so I'm going to hand it back in a minute. So you're saying our relationship with ourselves

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essentially is going to inform and influence our relationship with others, particularly our partner?

Kimmerly: That is exactly right, yes.

Sonia: Okay, I'm handing it back to you.

Kimmerly: Yes. So having an understanding of how we function and how we work and how we tick is going to be really important when we interact with our partner because like Dr. Sonia said, if we don't know what we want and we don't go on this process of self-discovery, sexual self-discovery, then how is it that we're going to have a satisfying sex life where we can direct our partner where we want them to be to experience the maximum amount of pleasure. And so knowing ourselves doesn't just talk about the mind or the spirit, any of those things.

It's also the body. And when people talk about the body, they don't talk necessarily about the sexuality. And I can't make that as a generalized statement, but knowing oneself also includes knowing your body, knowing what limits your body has and also knowing what buttons to push personally in order for you to experience the maximum amount of sexual pleasure that you can and usually that comes through self-discovery.

Sonia: Yeah. And I was just thinking that our identify, if we take on the identity as a sexual being, that's one thing, but if we are like, "No, there's shame around that masturbation or whatever", then there's no way that these ideas can't flow over into our relationships, sexual encounters with somebody else. If we are not comfortable with ourselves as a sexual being, comfortable with our relationship, our sexual relationship with ourselves. You can't be over here like, "Yeah, no, this is shameful, this isn't right, I shouldn't do self-pleasure and stuff like that."

And then not have any of those ideas come over and influence your relationship with another person.

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Kimmerly: That's exactly right, yes, absolutely. And there are numerous women that I've worked with who feel like self-pleasure is in some way violating their marital covenant.

Sonia: This, can we just talk about this because I coach on this quite a bit. And I come from a neutral place but inside my mind I'm like, how is this? But if we have been given a concept and a belief system that somehow we are violating our marriage, we're violating our relationships or we're doing something wrong. I try to come from a neutral place and everybody has their belief system. And I try to honor their belief system. But they're also coming to me because they have issues, usually it doesn't just stay here.

It usually comes into the relationship, the sexual relationship in some way or another, the concepts that they have over here. And usually it's concepts around there is a right way to do something and a wrong way to do something. And this concept, this black and white thinking around sex and sexuality that they have with the relationship with themselves also happens in their partnership. So they think that by not engaging in self-pleasure, that that is a better thing for the relationship but not necessarily because the black and white thinking comes over to this other situation in the relationship.

And then there's a lot of ideas and thoughts as to how this can, it puts you into a little box in terms of how you can express yourself sexually in the relationship if you're not even allowed to get to know who you are, just and who you are as a sexual being and what your body is like.

Kimmerly: Yeah, for sure. And the carryover is this, this is what I've seen. "My partner doesn't satisfy me sexually." My response usually is, "What's your conversation around sex like?" "Well, we talk about it every now and again and this, that and the other." "Okay, what do you like?" "Well, I don't know." "How come you don't know?" "Well, I've never tried to touch myself or anything like that." "Why is that?" Well, it would be a violation of my marital covenant." Now, this is me breaking that conversation skit right now.

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These are usually women and don't get me wrong, I myself was scribed to Christianity and God and loving God and Jesus and thinking that that is a definite important connection in relationship. A lot of these women are coming from the purity culture which tells them that self-pleasure is a violation of the commitment that you've made sexually to, one, remain pure before you get married. And then two, if you're in a marital relationship that it is the job, since the husband and wife is primarily the ideal couple it is the responsibility of your spouse to please you sexually.

And in some cases if there are people coming into relationships who have never self-pleasured, who have never had sexual relationships with anyone. And this person that they're about to marry, they haven't had sexual relationships with them either, neither one of them are going to know what to do. And so sex life in and of itself is going to be horrible. And is not going to be a great experience for either of them unless they are willing to explore outside options which usually include self-pleasure.

Sonia: Yeah, definitely. And I often coach on this as well with this group of people. But I find that if they have belief systems around no sex before marriage, no self-pleasure and things like that, it's not like they can flip a switch. And suddenly they're going to be married and suddenly they flip the switch and then they're good to go. They have spent a lot of time repressing and not exploring themselves and themselves as a sexual being that they don't know how to do it on the other side.

And even if they have the most kind loving partners and they're really getting together to be really supportive, it's really hard to make that mental shift and it's so hard to. Yeah, go ahead.

Kimmerly: And I want to add something into what you said that they haven't done so with their partner or anyone else or they've been doing so in secret. And so there's shame associated with it. There is shame associated with how your body responds to sexual stimulation.

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And then when your partner doesn't know how to stimulate you sexually in the way that you have been able to do so for yourself in a shameful way, in a shameful mindset then that contributes to a dissatisfaction in the sexual relationship. Because there's shame associated with saying, "I know I like this because I've done it to myself." And so you have to be willing to understand that a part of self-development, self-discovery is understanding your sexuality. And not only in your partnered relationship but also with yourself.

You say so also, Dr. Sonia, that we're all responsible for our own pleasure. And that means when we're partnered too.

Sonia: 100%, yeah.

Kimmerly: Yeah. And a lot of that responsibility is verbal. You talk and you tell the person what you want. You move their hand to where you want it to be. You tell them what type of touch is necessary in order for them to feel the most pleasure and to feel the most excited. And it goes on both sides. Each partner is responsible for their own pleasure in the context of the partnered sexual relationship. And so if you've done this in shame and you feel that it's a violation to your partner, then you're not going to say anything and you're going to be dissatisfied.

And then you'll feel the need to do more of the masturbation because you're dissatisfied and more shame comes with that. So there's a cycle that you get kind of stuck in. And then that's when people come to me because they're unsure of what to do.

Sonia: Yeah. Or they choose to not have any intimacy with their partner at all because it's not enjoyable, they're feeling things of shame. They don't know what to do with it. So they kind of avoid their partner and then they get in the situation. Or they just try to get it over with quickly. And then intimacy, which is really, if you have a belief in a higher power, I think it's one of the most beautiful gifts that we can share with ourselves and with another human being.

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And if we're getting to this place where we have a lot of shame and ideas and negativity around it then we're just trying to get it over as quickly as possible. And we're focused on the shame and not necessarily on the enjoyment. Definitely I'd say that your best and first lover, your first lover is yourself. That relationship with yourself is something that's very important. And then yes, I also say that you are responsible for your own pleasure. And obviously you come together with your partner and you have a lot of fun and enjoyment if you're able to.

But first and foremost it's about understanding who you are and what your body is. I do get this a lot where people actually are concerned that they should not self-pleasure or they don't want to self-pleasure in a marriage because they feel like they should be deferring and kind of holding on to, like it's a battery and if you wear it down, it's not rechargeable. But you know what, there's sometimes when we just want to have a quick one and done with ourselves and go straight to sleep. Self-pleasure is so good on so many different levels. And there's nothing wrong with this.

If you need to get to sleep, if you've been stressed, it's good for your health, it's good for connection, it's good for reducing your stress. It's good for getting you to sleep. There is nothing wrong and I'm repeating this, there's nothing wrong with having some self-pleasure. You get to have self-pleasure. You get to go to sleep. You get to do whatever you want. And it doesn't mean that you're not choosing your partner. What it means is you're choosing yourself. And there's sometimes where you don't necessarily want a long intimate gathering with your partner.

You just want that damn come and go to sleep, or the middle of the day I feel like I just need some quality time with myself. They have all these different, like paddling the canoe, robbing the pink pearl, there's so many different [crosstalk].

Kimmerly: Flicking the bean.

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Sonia: Yeah, flicking the bean, that always sounded kind of painful to me, I have to say. Ow, I don't like the damn bean, I want to rub and caress and love it. But it's fun, and people think that it's an either or. Once you choose to be in a relationship but you cannot masturbate or have self-pleasure any longer. That this has to be the case. That you therefore shift all your energy and focus to your partner. I of course say no to that. I am more than happy that we engage in masturbation. It's an important thing. Sometimes you just want to relax and just boom be done with it all.

It's not either or, it's an and. You get to have a relationship with yourself and you get to have a relationship with your partner. And one does not supersede or take the place of the other. And it's not like, I'm now in a relationship or now I'm having sex or whatever so now I can't have self-pleasure, I can't have masturbation. No, there's so many benefits to each one of them and we get to include both of them in our lives.

Kimmerly: Yeah, definitely and it is, full disclosure, well, part disclosure, I'm not going to give you full disclosure, Diamonds.

Sonia: Wait. Wait. Alright, let me see what [crosstalk].

Kimmerly: It's not about you. It's not about you.

Sonia: Let's see.

Kimmerly: It's about me.

Sonia: Okay.

Kimmerly: It's about me, yes, nothing about you. A lot of my sexual freedom came when I decided that I was going to live true to who I am. I have lived as the heterosexual person for 40 years of my life. And knowing that probably around age 14 and I think we had a podcast about the coming out process. But to just reiterate here, by probably around the age of 14 I knew that I was a lesbian but there was no space for me to be a lesbian where I lived and where I moved to for college.

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And so a lot of the sexual freedom I experienced was when I made the decision that I was going to live and be true to who I am, which is a lesbian butch woman. And when I met Dr. Sonia, having the opportunity to be in a relationship with someone who is so free in their sexuality and expresses it in so many different ways allowed me to have that same freedom. I came from a culture where it was seen as not a good idea. It's seen as something that only your partner should be able to give you.

And I talked about that a little bit earlier which is why people come to me, because they know I have that kind of background. And so I understand it in the practical sense. And now what I'm understanding and learning is what my body needs in order to experience the maximum amount of pleasure. And I get to practice that whenever I want to obviously within appropriate means.

But I get to practice that and I get to try new things and I get to experiment with myself so that when I am in partnership and I'm experiencing a partnered sexual experience I can say, "Hey, this is nice", or, "No, don't do that." You can really practice the consent side of things. That's something that really is seen as important in society now. And people are bringing awareness to consent culture in a sense. And you can actually say, "Yes, that's great. No, stop that, don't do that." Or have safe words even if there's not BDSM involved.

You can still have a safe word when things kind of get hot and heavy because sometimes people can't really respond or hear when they're in the middle of something. And so if that word comes then that is something that people can pay attention to. And so you know your body, you learn your body and you learn what works and what doesn't, what feels comfortable and what doesn't. And it's so helpful for people who have been sexually violated or who have sexual trauma to reconnect with their body, to stay and live inside of their body.

And a part of doing that is reclaiming the sexuality and the sexual experience that was taken away.

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Sonia: Yeah. And I have to say I do need to speak on that since I come from a trauma background, that there is a freedom that comes when you reclaim your sexuality. When you choose to have pleasure for yourself and to reclaim your body and the power of your body. And so definitely self-pleasure is an important aspect of that. And I also like to say that it's time to stop living our lives with a learner's permit and to get the damn driver's license and be in control of our own body and not be expecting somebody else to be driving us to our pleasure and stuff like that.

So in all those ways we do need to know about our body. And it can only enhance a relationship. And also responding to consent, consent obviously is a very important aspect of this all. And if we are not in control of our body and know what it does and what we like then we may be coming from this from an aspect where we're not necessarily able to find our voice in all aspects and say what we consent to and what we do not necessarily consent to.

So yes, on all those different things. And I think that, yeah, that is a great place. So any last words, anything else that you want to talk about in terms of self-pleasure and relationships?

Kimmerly: Do it.

Sonia: Yeah, do it now, do it.

Kimmerly: Do it good, do it, do it like you should. So do it individually. You can do mutual masturbation you and your partner both where you can watch for a while and see okay, they do this, they do that. Or you can use vibrators and all those different things and experiment with different types of intensities. You can use vibrators on each other and this is including male presenting male identifying people as well. There's lots of [crosstalk].

Sonia: There's tons out there for penis owners and male identified individuals, yes, [crosstalk].

Kimmerly: Yes, for sure. Yeah, so do it. Do it. Do it scared, but do it.

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Sonia: Yes. And enjoy yourself.

Kimmery: Yes, for sure. And don't hurt yourself.

Sonia: And don't hurt yourself, yeah, don't hurt yourself.

Kimmery: Don't hurt yourself.

Sonia: Alright, on that note, Diamonds, we're going to let you go from this call so you can enjoy your self-pleasure now.

Kimmery: Exactly, try it out.

Sonia: Here's your prescription or whatever you need, whatever permission you need we will write the note, but you ultimately have to give yourself the permission and just whatever you need to think in order to make it okay for you because we are sexual beings. The majority of human beings are sexual beings. And self-pleasure is something we're doing from a very young age. Then we get divided into gender and then we have ideas as to who's allowed to self-pleasure and who is not. And all that is bullshit. And so we're calling bullshit.

And we are giving you back what it is or you can give yourself back because I very much believe in empowerment, self-empowerment. So yeah, take a hold of your clit and go for it.

Kimmery: I like that, yeah.

Sonia: Alright, Dr. Sonia and...

Kimmery: Dr. Kimmery.

Sonia: We are out.

Kimmery: Bye.

Sonia: Bye bye.

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Hello, hello, hello again, Diamonds, it's Dr. Sonia. I have some questions for you. Do you feel like you're missing out on passionate intimacy and amazing pleasure even though it looks like your life is pretty good from the outside? Or maybe you feel like sex is an obligation, a duty, something that's on your to-do list right after taking out the trash. Perhaps you would love to get rid of the story that's on replay in your mind that sex is shameful.

Maybe you just want to know all about the toys or maybe you want to want to want sex and intimacy again. Maybe you feel like your libido is dead or missing in action never to be found again. Well, Diamonds, Dr. Sonia and her team, we are here, we hear you. We know what's going on in your lives and we want to make a difference. There's a lot of things that are going on behind the scenes and that will be happening over the next few months with *The Midlife Sex Coach for Women* organization. I am so excited about this.

So make sure that you're on our email list to get all the updates as soon as the information is available. So if you're not on our email list, click on the link below and get on that list. And in the meantime you'll get your free intimacy guide. It doesn't get better than that. Okay, Diamonds, talk to you soon. Lots of love.