

**Ep #148: Body Image Q&A
with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad**



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 148.

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, everybody, so good to have you here. We are talking about body image, sexuality, all the things. Thank you for joining us tonight. It's so good to see you all here. This is only going to be one hour but it is going to be a power packed one hour because body image is something we definitely need to talk about. So, so happy that you're all joining us to talk about this. It's one of those things that when we are in midlife and our body doesn't change. Our body's always changing from the time we're born.

But somehow when we think about sex and sexuality we have a concept of what is okay for our body to look like for us to give ourselves permission to engage in sex. And so I really want to talk about this and of course I want to talk to our expert. And we're going to get started in a minute, but first I'm going to introduce myself. I am Dr. Sonia Wright, I'm a medical doctor, I'm a sexual counselor. I am a Master Certified life coach. And I love all things about the toys. And tonight I have just one of the most fabulous coaches that I know and it is an honor to do any work with her.

I can't even tell you how much I adore this person. And when I was putting together The Lit Clit team, I just knew that she had to be a part of this. And so I am going to introduce you to coach, Master coach, Lisa Hatlestad. And I'm going to have her do her introductions and then we're going to talk a little bit. While she's introducing herself, feel free to put any questions that you have in the Q&A. The Q&A is open, feel free to put any questions you have there. If you want to put in the chat, feel free to put it in the chat.

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Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

The chat only goes to hosts and panelists, which is us. And the Q&A only goes to hosts and panelists. There is an anonymous feature in the Q&A so feel free to put that in the Q&A, any questions that you feel that you want to add, feel free to just contact us. And once again, this is Lisa Hatlestad. Please introduce yourself, and we'll get started.

Lisa: Hi, everyone. Thank you, Sonia. Just love that introduction, heartwarming and I love it and I love being on The Lit Clit team. And I was smiling because you said it very carefully. It's something to get the tongue used to and I'm getting better at it. I'm so proud about that. Yeah, I am a master life and intimacy coach. I have worked with Sonia for quite a few weeks now within the advanced certification in women's sexual intimacy course for coaches and just absolutely love that.

I also have my own business and my primary focus is to put it really simply, I help women dissolve shame, to really understand their shame and start with the process of letting go of that because shame, it's not one of those feelings we have internally that's natural like sadness or happiness. It's something that is in response to external learning. And yeah, that's what I do, so glad to be here talking to you all about body, body image, everything.

Sonia: Well, thank you so much for that introduction. It's so good to see you and to be excited that you're here. So, Lisa, let's just start talking about the body. I have to say that I've had an interesting relationship with my body. There's research that says that girls as young as eight years old are on diets. And I as a child can't really remember a time where my body was right, was correct. I always had the feeling that there was something wrong with my body from a very young age. I mean siblings, they can tease you but even family members.

Everybody I know always had something to say about my weight. And it's interesting because I look back at these pictures of me in the 70s as a little chunky, but what was the big issue about?

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

Lisa: Yeah. And I mean it's so interesting, Sonia, because I say things, I think every woman who has had this experience sometimes will say things like, "I was a little chunky." But what are we even comparing ourselves to? And that's the first thing. Everyone on this call really just kind of touch in with what you have been taught a good body is for a child, for a female child and where did we get that from? There's already the impression there. And Sonia, I think that more often than not for most of us, our body image started around the same time.

It doesn't start when we're teenagers and dating or even young adulthood or later in life. It starts usually with childhood. I remember I never really thought about my body, it was just what it was. But I remember, I was maybe about four or five and one of my family friends, a guy, picked me up, an adult and he goes, "Look at that tummy, it's just like the Pilsbury dough boy. Look at the way that thing sticks out." And that, from that point on I was self-conscious, conscious about my body. And that somehow or another just like you said, it wasn't right.

Sonia: It wasn't right. And when I got into my teenage years, I actually ended up with an eating disorder. I didn't get anorexic but I went on 300 calorie diets. I remember my diet was five M&Ms and a cup of orange juice, that's what I ate.

Lisa: Yeah, it's not funny but wow.

Sonia: No, I know, it's really sad. And then after a while my grades were affected and my identity was more tied to being smart than being small. So then I switched to trying to do bulimia but it gave me a headache. It does start at a very young age, right?

Lisa: It does and back in our day, there wasn't the internet. There wasn't Reddit. There weren't threads on how to eat like somebody with anorexia. And literally that is a thread. But still somehow in most of our schools, peer groups, communities there was still the transference of information it seemed like among peers, how to diet, how to do all of these little tricks. I

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

remember being about 12 years old and swiping [inaudible] from my parents' medicine cabinet because I had learned that you could eat all you wanted as long as you had something to purge the food.

Sonia: Yeah. And just think of this, you're 9, 10, 11, 12 years old, and this is what your relationship with your body is. That you will basically abuse your body in some way in order to make it be a certain way that society says is okay. So you can imagine when you become a woman and then you add on sexuality. You're in this place where it doesn't look the way it is. I have to look a certain way. It's about sexuality. It's really about pleasing other people and looking the part to please other people.

So, so much gets tied into our body and then we go into our late 30s, 40s, 50s, things shift around, the hormones shift around, our body looks different than it did previously. But we have this concept, it's stuck in time that our body should look a certain age or what we looked like when we were our hottest or some ridiculous thing like that. And we just miss out, we just miss out on what our lives are right now because we're like, "I'll get into a relationship, I'll start dating. I will become sexual when I'm a size 10"

And then five years, 10 years, yes, I want to be more intimate with myself or with my partner but I don't look the part, all I have to do is lose that 20 pounds. And I don't know about you but there's a big gap in time, where I was not in my pictures with my children because I didn't look the way I wanted to look.

Lisa: Right. I think the first thing on Facebook, social media, I saw about this, it was almost 12, 15 years ago, that somebody had posted. It was either a meme or a personal post, I don't remember about a woman who wasn't ever in pictures with her children and her children as they were getting older was like, "Why?" And solely because of the body. And this all sounds so obvious but I kind of want to slow down and focus in on something that you said about missing out.

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

And the reason is, and listen listeners, there's no judgment here. I have my hand up along with anybody else with whom any of the things that Sonia and I have been saying are resonating. But unfortunately the byproduct of the body image issue we have in our culture has been with us so long. And when you think about where your brain is focused, if you thought about if you had to look with your eyes at what was most important to you, our culture has our girls and women's eyes on what is wrong with their body.

When our eyes are focused on something all of the time then the dating, the sex, the enjoyment, the unself-consciousness, the ability to or the willingness to be in pictures and to take part in things. Those things are just kind of out of our field of vision.

Sonia: So when, when do we get to have this life? When do we get to be part of our life? That's my question to all of you. If we could get rid of this concept of perfection, our body has to look and be a certain way before we can enjoy life and be part of life, this is bullshit. It needs to end. We get to give ourselves permission. I remember when I gave myself permission to be in the pictures with my children because I knew it was important to them and it also became, it was a time where I was spending time learning to love my body.

Learning to be like, okay, this is my body that I have right now. And I want to be in the pictures, I want to be in the life, I want to be in the bedroom, I want to be in the sex. So this is going to require me to come to a place of loving myself, loving myself right now, not when I lose the 20 pounds or something like that. And so for any of you that are on this call, if you have any questions or anything that you want coaching on, please feel free to put in the Q&A. Please feel free to put it in the chat. We'll definitely get to it.

But this is something that is so important to us here to Lisa and I and to all of the coaches in The Lit Clit team but definitely it's a big issue. We coach on it all the time.

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

Lisa: Yeah, it is. And just loving ourselves or loving our bodies can feel like a really daunting issue to a lot of women. And I think, again, I'm always going to point to the external because we were not born hating our bodies. We were not born dissatisfied with our bodies. We were not born comparing our bodies or wanting to change our bodies.

It started at some point and it did not start because there was something wrong with our bodies. And so even when I talk about that sometimes to women, working these questions through, working these issues through, again there's some perfect version of a body or perfect range of a body that we have been taught to think is right. Fully abled, number one, so it's not right if you are not fully abled, if you have a disability. It's not right if it's a certain height, weight, size, anything.

Sonia: Color.

Lisa: Color, the pigmentation, spots on our skin. There is this tiny, tiny margin of what is right and so when we talk about, even when I talk about babies weren't born, we weren't born not loving our bodies. Somebody is almost always bound to say, "Yeah, but their bodies are cute when they're babies." And so I'm always just bringing people back. Find that image that you think is the right body because that image is what's keeping you from loving your own body. And like I said, it can feel daunting to want to love it, I think.

So, Sonia, when you started this work, what do you think was your catalyst? What did you need to use or do to start reshaping your relationship with your body?

Sonia: I just didn't want to miss out on life anymore. That's really what it came down to. I was tired, and I realized, all I need to do was think a different thought. I didn't have to sit there and change my body. There was nothing wrong with my body. What was wrong was my thought that there was something wrong with my body. And if I could get to this place of actually loving my body, I could be kind to it and ask and check in with it

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

what it actually needed. Did you need good nutritious food? Did you need love?

Did you need rest? Did you need a massage? I don't ask it any of that when I'm in this place of hating what it looks like. I'm just demanding that it lose weight, demanding that it be a certain way. So when it came to that point where I was like, I don't want to miss out on another day of my life. And I don't want to be miserable, not loving my body anymore. I want to be here and give myself permission. And I think that I saw so much pain in so many of my clients that I was coaching as well. And we've all been trained with weight loss as well in the place that we've trained.

And realizing that you can choose to lose weight if you want to but please do it from a place of loving your body. Anybody I worked with I was like, "You have to love yourself first." We're not losing a damn pound, we're going to work on loving yourself first and then you choose what you want to do from that place.

Lisa: And I've had women want to hire me to help them love themselves so that in hopes that they would then lose weight. There's this weird fear that if I just give myself a break or if I just start doing the work and really listening to all the thoughts in my head about how my body is wrong and starting to turn from that and choosing what I want to think about my body. Then I won't want to lose weight or I won't want to do this. And number one, would that be a problem though?

And number two, body love, and loving ourselves enough to respect and honor our body and kind of yeah, you can keep all that outside noise about the right body. That has absolutely nothing to do with our desire to want good health and even some muscle and good nutrition and we can change our body if we want to. The problem is right now for a lot of women, doesn't feel like a choice. It [crosstalk] on everything.

Sonia: Yeah, but it ultimately is a choice. And because of the COVID thing we couldn't get hairdressing appointments. And so something so simple

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

like that but I have been gray since my late 30s. And I have dyed my hair since my late 30s up until the time of COVID. There's several times where I always stopped dying but I always go back to dying it. And because of COVID I cut it all off so I started anew. And I had to get to this place of really doing the work to love my gray hair.

Because I was like, I'm going to start this again and I'm going to grow it out and I'm not coloring it anymore, because the chemicals, I was starting to get reactions to it. I was like, "This is not healthy for me." And all it requires is that I love myself. And I don't think there's a day that doesn't go by that somebody doesn't tell me how beautiful my hair is. I love my hair and I sit there and I think I started going gray at 32. And by 38 I was almost completely gray.

And I'm 56 now so we're talking almost 20 years that I did not see the beauty that was me because I was believing somebody else's lie that said, you couldn't have gray hair. Gray hair meant something about it that was not good. You need to color your hair and all this stuff. And then it makes me think, what other lies are out there like that I'm believing? But I did not see my own beauty because it was not the standard. And so for everybody on this call, what else are we not seeing that's our beauty because it's what the media or advertisers or whatever want you to see something else?

Lisa: Yeah, absolutely. I'd love to see what the people on this call are thinking. What's coming up for you about this? What aren't we seeing? And here's a question that came up for me when you were talking, Sonia, is did you start thinking, I'm going to love my hair despite the fact that it's gray?

Sonia: No, I was just like, I want a relationship with my gray hair. I am a Wright, the Wrights gray early. And it is interesting, even when I posted pictures of me on Facebook with just my gray, I got other family members telling me that's not what we do. I even had a family member tell me, "My grandmother would roll over in her grave if she saw that."

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

Lisa: Wow. Your hair is powerful. I was asking almost rhetorically, I'm glad you answered that way because I love that, Sonia Wright has powerful hair, she can make people roll over in their grave. But this is a lot of times what we do when we think about body love. We set out to love our body, I'm using air quotes, 'despite its imperfections'. And that, let's just take the down in spite of out of it. We love our body because it's our body. And if you're vibing with love your body or it's something that you would like to be able to do, I am curious about what's coming up for you.

Why aren't you? Or what feels hard about it? I have some ideas but I really would love to hear from the people on this call.

Sonia: Yeah, so go ahead and fill in the Q&A what your thoughts are specifically around this. And I'm going to shift gears a little bit while we're waiting for people to put stuff in the Q&A. I coach a lot around body issues and sex. And women telling me that they don't want to have sex because they're afraid that their partner's not going to find them attractive. They want to have the lights off when they're having sex. They want to suck in their tummies when they're having sex.

I hear a number of things about there's something wrong with my body and therefore I'm not really going to be in sex. Because they're not really enjoying sex in the moment.

Lisa: Yeah, or they're up in their head worrying about it. That's what happens to us.

Sonia: Yeah. Try to have an orgasm when you're wondering if you could suck in your belly or not.

Lisa: Yeah, exactly, or if you have cellulite on the backs of your legs and so I don't want to put my legs in a certain position. And I mean just flat out, most partners are so flipping happy that another human being wants to get naked with them. No lie, no lie. So I think that one thing that we need to keep in mind about this is that it's not your partner's thoughts about your

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

body that are keeping you feeling inhibited or having trouble having orgasm or staying with it. Those thoughts are going on in your own head.

Come by it naturally because it happens, it's just like we were talking about all of this conditioning we get. But I'd love to talk about how to maybe turn some of those thoughts off.

Sonia: Yeah. Actually we do have a question that's coming in that says exactly, when I'm in bed with my partner I can't think about anything except the fact of what my husband is thinking about my body. And it makes me not want to have sex so I kind of avoid it because I think that he thinks I'm not attractive. So yeah, and you were just talking about this Lisa, in terms of who exactly is thinking about this?

Lisa: Yeah, I mean number one, we don't know what people are thinking. Number two, if we have a partner that wants to engage in sex with us, they are not thinking about how unattractive you are. They're not thinking things like that. And that came out wrong. You're not unattractive in the first place. But they're not having thoughts like she or he is or they are so unattractive. I know I stuck my foot in my mouth on that one, [crosstalk] I'm with Sonia without saying something completely. Anyway, they're not thinking about that.

Sonia: So the odds are they're thinking how beautiful you are. They're also probably in a place of anxiety themselves because they know there's unwritten rules that they can't touch different places on their partner's body. They can't touch the stomach, most women are like, "Don't touch my stomach." You know how beautiful it is to have your partner touch your stomach?

Lisa: Oh my gosh, I used to never want my husband to touch my stomach. And one day he's like, "But it's so soft." And I took that as an insult. But he just meant the skin on my stomach is just like velvet and it is just a soft sweet place. I saw somebody put in the chat, if only I found my body as attractive as my husband does. Yes. So one of the things is just realizing

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

that if you and your partner are engaged in intimacy, probably the last thing they're thinking about is that they find your body unattractive. They might be thinking about their own body.

But most of the time when two bodies get together they're just thinking about what's next, what's next, ooh, I like this. And for you, for the person who's saying, "I can't stop thinking about what my husband is thinking about." Here's the thing, those voices are normal. There's nothing wrong with you because you're having those and they can be hard to turn down. But this is why I teach embodiment as part of my practice. So what I mean by embodiment is the work of putting our awareness, our consciousness more into our body.

Because as women especially I think we're always up here, we're always in our head, what's next? What do I have to do next? Why was that person rude to me? Did I do that wrong? It's all that stuff. And we can direct our awareness. We can direct our awareness. So something that I would suggest you play at and just do this playfully, you don't have to get it perfect and it doesn't have to be all the time. But whenever you catch yourself thinking about what you think your husband thinks about your body, bring your awareness back into your body.

What am I feeling right now? If they're touching you, how does that feel? Do I like that? How does the surface we're on, feel? All of that puts your attention back into your body. Of course it's going to go right back up there. And it's just a continual process. You'll get better and better at it. But so often we don't even feel all the good feels of sex because our brain is working so hard thinking that we're almost unaware of a lot of the little beautiful feelings and nuances that are going on under our chin.

Sonia: Yeah, I love that. I love how you say just take a moment, slow down and feel the sensations without judgment. So many women are so focused on either judging their body or judging the fact that they 'take too long' to have an orgasm or to get turned on or whatever. And so they're not actually in their body and they have no idea what's going on with their body.

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

And they're actively working against their body in some ways to I just want this to end quickly. It's like try and get into my body and I focus on pleasure. It might take a little while and I really want this to be over because I don't want my partner really looking at my body.

Lisa: Exactly. Part of the reason so many women want it to be over fairly quickly like you said is just because the experience of it is uncomfortable, not the physical part of having sex. It's just the suspense and the tension of us going, "What are they thinking about my body? How does that look? Gosh, I've gained weight or I've lost too much weight." Whatever it is that's on our mind.

So if we start paying attention and getting into the sensations and keep bringing our attention back into our body, would it be so bad if it took a little longer? Because that tension wouldn't be there anymore. We'd be mindful. We'd be in it.

Sonia: Exactly, I like that. Do you have any suggestions about embodiment and mindfulness around self-pleasure?

Lisa: Same, bringing your attention into your body. Again, sometimes even with self-pleasure, so a couple of things. My brain is going five different ways and there's a bunch of things I want to say. It depends on how you are approaching your self-pleasure. So if you are just like, I want to masturbate because I want to orgasm and release all that tension and then be done, totally different thing than setting yourself up, you are taking yourself and your own body out on the best night of their life or time of their life.

So even how you prepare for it ahead of time can be helpful, taking into account sensory things like are you going to do it on your bed? What do you want to be lying on? What do you want things to feel like? The more you plan ahead of time for a sensory experience, the easier it's going to be when you're in it to notice things that are going on. And then again, what if you just let yourself slow down? What if you let yourself explore? What if

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

you tease to yourself a little bit? Because have we all had the businesswoman self-orgasm?

Sonia: [Crosstalk], please tell me about this, you could neither confirm nor deny the businesswoman some orgasm. So please tell us more about this.

Lisa: The businesswoman self-orgasm, it's the I want to come but I also have shit to do and I've got stuff I've got to take care of. And so we're going to get down to business. And listen, there's nothing wrong with that but I also just want to encourage you to set up self-pleasure, set up masturbation for yourself as though you literally were planning to have sex with your own body because that is exactly what you're doing. And like I said, the more you plan ahead of time for sensory, lighting a candle, having some scent, having some great sheets, things like that.

You're already priming your brain to go, should pay attention to what's going on in here and slowing down and doing some caressing instead of going straight for the button if you know, if you get what I mean, yeah.

Sonia: I have no idea what you mean. The people at The Lit Clit Club would have not had any idea what you mean, what button are we talking about?

Lisa: Just discreetly, yeah, that's instead of going straight for the clit and going straight for the orgasm like a little playfulness and a little time. And then again, so I was in a group once where we were too focused on something. I picked a candle, lit a candle, lives on my desk. We were supposed to focus on it. And every time our attention strayed and we started thinking we had to put our hand up.

All of us were constantly, this is the way it is and that's why I said, your brain's going to go right back into thinking mode, just invite it back, bring it back into your body. It's going to go into thinking mode, bring it back into your body.

Sonia: I think that that is so good. I'm going to switch gears a little because I want to talk about the perimenopausal through postmenopausal body.

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

Now I know that is shifting our hormones and decreasing hormones and that can affect our vulva. We can get vulva atrophy. It can affect the way we interpret stimulation. We may need more stimulation. Our orgasms may shift, our sensation of pleasure may shift. Our body feels like it's gone and it's going someplace. But we do not authorize it to go.

So I'm going to talk about this damn hot flushes all the time and things like that, but now our orgasms are not the same. Our lubrication is not there. And you get a little pissed off, you're like, "What is happening with my body?" I always came this way. If I have nipple stimulation and if I have clit stimulation I will come. But now it doesn't necessarily work the way it did before. How do you coach somebody that is dealing with those type of things where they kind of feel betrayed by their body?

Lisa: Yeah, and it can. And I think one of the reasons that it can really feel like a betrayal by our own body is because there isn't no one talking about this enough. We don't talk about it, just a few notable books on menopause and perimenopause are not enough. We should be constantly talking about this and spreading the word because if we're not expecting it or we think it's not widespread, it's just a few people or something like that, then yeah, it's going to catch us off guard and it is going to feel like a betrayal.

So usually one of the things that I offer is just some consciousness around the thinking that because your body is no longer working the way it used to, that it is no longer working right because that's a couple of different things. There's a lot of things, a lot of us women were able to do when we were 17/18 that we can't now. And maybe, I don't want to spend too much time being mad at myself that I can't jump a hurdle or something anymore. But for some reason it's like, well, I used to be able to do this just like you said.

So it's kind of like your brain has changed over the years, a lot of things have changed over the years and so has your body. And we are constantly in a relationship with our body that is going to keep shifting from the time we're born to the time we die. And so approaching it more like it's time to get to know this body. It's time to befriend this body because you're still in

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

this body, your consciousness is and you want pleasure, got to befriend that body, not accuse it of bad things.

Sonia: Yeah, 100%. We sit there, we compare things to the past. We say it needs to be that way and because it's not that way, what, are we not going to do anything? Are we not going to do any work? It's okay to have to work at this. It's okay to have to learn a new body. It's okay to have to learn new stimulation. It's definitely okay to learn new toys.

Lisa: Absolutely. And if something's been going on in perimenopause or menopause that has been preventing you from having pain free sex or preventing you from having really enjoyable sex, how fun to get to know your body better and get the information you need to of course, to bring back pleasure, to bring back great sex.

Sonia: Yeah. And you can bring it back better than ever. It really can be better. It doesn't mean that you don't have to work at this sometimes. But it can come back better than it ever was before. It can come back with different amazing sensations. You might focus, maybe before you were just focusing on your vagina or your vulva or your clitoris. And now you're focusing a little bit more holistically, your whole body and finding where the sensations are throughout your whole body. And tying that into your pleasure center of your vulva.

And I'm always going to make a public service announcement, that estrogen, it's almost like vitamin E, it's what we need in our vulva and vaginal area as we're postmenopausal. And so you can get something that's localized. Go obviously talk to your gynecologist about it. But it will help with vulva health. And so that's something that we should be having conversations, but it's amazing the number of people that do not have conversations about this because we don't talk about it.

How many people on this call were like, there's things that your mother never told you about, about if you happen to be postmenopausal? There's

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

things, the odds your mother's somebody that was older and wiser than you, did not mention. We're all like, "Well, good luck with that."

Lisa: Yeah. Not just that but there are a lot of people who did not get the full picture from their doctors unfortunately.

Sonia: 100%, because honestly, the doctor's not trained about the full picture. We're not trained in this at all. So this is where it becomes important for us to advocate. But if we're thinking that there's something wrong with our body and we're in this place where we're like, "Well, this is just the way it's going to be." Then we don't advocate for ourselves. And we lose our sexuality over a period of time. And this is why we're bringing it up, in all different aspects of things and definitely with body image.

If we have a feeling that there's a right way for the body to be and a wrong way for the body to be. As soon as we start labeling things wrong then we come to a place of shame around it. As soon as we come to a place of shame then we stop trying to investigate and see what we can do to help the situation. And so that's why it's important to just don't label it as something that's gone wrong.

Lisa: Right, exactly. If we respond to it as a problem, to me one of the things I teach, I'm sure you do too is things aren't a problem unless we decide they're a problem. So if we're always responding to our body as doesn't work the same way, now I have to use more lube. And now I've got to do this and I've got to do that. That isn't freeing you to experience the pleasure that is available to you and the pleasure that you can create. Whereas it's just like this is I'm in a new phase of relationship through my body and how fun is this going to be.

Sonia: Yeah, exactly. And I love how you're saying a new phase of relationship with my body. And this is very true. The body I had in my 40s is not the body I have in my 50s. It's not going to be the body I have in my 60s. And it's not going to be the body I have in my 70s, 80s or 90s or even

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

when I make it to 100. It's going to go through changes and I get to love the body I have in each one of those stages and just to marvel at it.

Looks like we have, I'm teaching my mom about menopause. I love it. She happily believed she never really had menopausal symptoms or changes. Okay, well, hey.

Lisa: I know, great. You know I ask my stepmom too about menopause and she's like, "No, not really." I'm like, "You never had one hot flush?" "No." And she said, "I just I felt like I was flying." And I'm like, "Where do you sign up for that? That sounds great."

Sonia: And I often wonder about has our food changed over the years and that may be impacting menopause as well. What is it about our lifestyle that may be impacting menopause versus was it the same? Or if we were all, I mean your family comes from a farming background but if we were all really tilling the land and really working it and out exercising all day long, I wonder if we would experience things the same way.

Lisa: I mean it's interesting when you think of biology and evolution. Also though I think, okay, we don't need to get too political but I think that our nation is one of more industrialized ag now. And there are a lot of studies done about the nutrients in a lot of foods are not the same as they were back in the 70s, 60s etc. Yeah, somebody else is saying, no one spoke to me about intimacy or anything else. Yeah, I didn't really either. I mean nobody told me that and I remember when I went into my OB because I suspected I had entered actual menopause.

She shared a little but it was more just kind of jokey and welcome to the menopause club, girl. And I didn't get a whole lot. And I think so highly of her but I have learned more working with Dr. Sonia over the past couple of years and going, "Damn. I've wasted a lot of time."

Sonia: There's still so much I'm learning. I was on a sexual health call with Evelyn Resh and if anybody has not been on a call with Evelyn Resh, you

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

need to come to those calls. I was still learning, I was like, “What?” So it continues, we all have something to learn about this thing. So that’s the important thing about the work that we do is that we get to decide what is our relationship with our body. How do we want that relationship to be and how do we want it to be in perspective of our sexuality, our intimacy in our lives?

Now, as your body changes, your sexuality might change too, the way the sexual intimacy looks like. So you need to choose if you want to continue penetration or not. If you choose to continue penetration and it happens to be painful, check in with your gynecologist because you will probably need localized estrogen and maybe even testosterone. You may even need some pelvic floor physical therapy type of thing. And definitely if you need lubricant then that’s something that you’ll need to add on as well.

But if you choose not to have penetrated, that is an option as well. You get to choose how you want your sexual intimacy to go. And as time changes, there may be other factors that impact things. And then I have so many thoughts in my head. I have thoughts about your partner is also on this lifelong where their body is changing too. So if you happen to have a partner that has a penis and they are dealing with erectile dysfunction, that’s going to impact your sexuality as well, what your sexual intimacy looks like.

If you have a partner and their libido is shifting and they’re not as interested in sex, that’s going to impact things as well. There’s so many different ways. So yes, we have our relationship with body image and our body, and then our body is changing over time. If we engage with other people, their body is changing as well. And so it’s two or more bodies coming together that are changing over time. And that’s impacting sexual intimacy as well. And then if you’re solo partnered, if you’re a single woman, yeah, your sexual intimacy may also be impacted.

And we kind of alluded to this a little but when your androgens, your estrogens are decreasing in your system, and this is not just all about

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

menopause but this is a lot of the times when people have a big shift in what their body is doing is around that time. And your sensations change and your orgasms may not be as strong or the sensations in your vulva may not be as strong. Then we do get to look at different ways to improve that as well so yeah.

Lisa: Sonia, so good. You know one thing too I was thinking about while you were talking is all of these changes that do come upon us in perimenopause and menopause. I know so many women who hit their late 40s, 50s, mid 50s and they're just done with so much BS. I have a friend once that told me when she turned 50, she's like, "I have kissed ass my whole life and now everyone can kiss mine."

The reason I'm bringing that up is because this is an age in our life where we are really being asked to step into our freedom and our fierceness and our self-allyship in ways very different or at least somewhat different from how we've done it in the past. And even more so, if you even just look at the age cycle of metaphorical, mythological women, the maiden mother crone. We're entering into a crone stage and crones, they're looking after themselves. They're looking after their needs. They don't need other people's cooperation by being sweet to help them anymore.

So I know I'm getting a little off topic here but I do want you to see how all of these body changes and all of these different factors in our intimacy that can come up around menopause are also an opportunity for we women to really take a stand for ourselves in a whole new way.

Sonia: Yes, 100%, yeah, and I think that a lot of the stand starts with ourselves taking a stand against what we're thinking about ourselves. And questioning, are these thoughts serving me? Are these thoughts helpful? What exactly have I been taught and do I want to keep these thoughts about my body and what it needs to look like? And sometimes I'll lead people through an exercise where we focus on the parts of our body we really like and what we say about those parts of our bodies.

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

Like our scapulars are so beautiful or our clavicles or our breasts or the cleavage or smile or something like that. And all the beautiful words that we use to describe the part of our body we love, my smile is brilliant. It's just radiant or whatever. And then take those same exact descriptions and put it on a part of our body we don't necessarily like.

Lisa: Yeah, overlaying them, almost like I see a bathroom mirror that you're rating stuff, yeah, I love that.

Sonia: Yeah, you just shift that bathroom mirror from a feature that you like down to a feature that you don't necessarily like. And then be like, "Beautiful, strong, brilliant, marvelous." There's no difference here, it is a body part.

Lisa: Yeah, it's totally true. And one thing that I often do with clients when we talk about body image and I'll just, if you're on the call, put your hand anywhere on your body, anywhere. And now put your hand on your body image. Where is it? They are not the same thing and it is our body image that is getting in the way of everything. So a couple of things, you don't have to 100% approve of every single thing about your body to love your body and to even say that part of me is beautiful.

I think some people are just like, until I can just see it and it takes a while. But I want you to think about the reason we have body image issues is because of long slow conditioning that we haven't even seen as conditioning. We've just seen as that's the way it is, this kind of body is right. So I want you to think about how big of an impact you could have on yourself if you just did the conditioning on yourself in a different way. You learned, we all learned in some way probably that our body isn't quite right. We can also teach ourselves and learn that our body is spot on.

That our body is the perfect thing for us, that our body is beautiful and capable of so much and so much pleasure and deserves so much.

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

Sonia: I love that. Our body deserves pleasure, our body's capable of so much. Our body is beautiful and strong and yeah, when you just start thinking of your body in a different way. Yeah, so true, yeah.

Lisa: Yeah. Sometimes I mean I think the older I get I get more and more grateful for my body because we're getting to the age where our parents are starting to die, our aunts and uncles, maybe even some of our peers and life just gets more and more fragile. And I'm always like, "Thank you, body. Every morning I wake up."

Sonia: I know, it's so true. I had knee surgery. I've had knee problems since I was about 10 years old. And I had my first knee surgery when I was 19 and my second one when I was 21. And I was always like, I have these knees, they suck, blah, blah, blah. But at 56 my knees are actually doing better than a lot of people's now, it's interesting. To be at that place where you're like, wait, my knee, it still works, I can still walk on it.

Lisa: Yeah. And it's hard to be grateful when it's hard, I've watched so many people who eventually their mobility might decline. And then they were like, "If only I hadn't taken for granted." So there's that and there's also just kind of swinging back around to the sex thing. What would be different for you, anyone listening to this call, what would be different for you in your intimate life if you gave yourself, I really want you to hear this because society will never give any of us permission to think other than the way it wants us to.

So we can just set that to the side, that's across the board on everybody about everything. But if you gave yourself permission to think differently about your body and love it and honor it and see it as beautiful and see it as the vessel and the giver of pleasure for you, what would be different?

Sonia: So good, yeah. I think people's relationship with their body would definitely shift from one of impatience to one of kindness and love and understanding and appreciation I think definitely. I know from a lot of coaching that I've done that, it would shift in terms of if you happen to be

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

partnered in terms of being more open to intimacy. It wouldn't necessarily lead to taking your clothes off and having to face your concepts of yourself and your body. There would be more acceptance and allowance and attention and lack of avoidance.

Lisa: Yes, for sure. Somebody's saying, "I would strut my stuff with vivaciousness." And just to let you know you have full permission to do that now. And wouldn't it be fun just to try that on? Try it on for an hour in the grocery store or an hour in the bedroom or an hour wherever you are, five minutes where you are.

Sonia: I think everybody should have a pair of come fuck me shoes, the ones that you can't wear anywhere but you put on for two seconds. And then whenever we feel sexy, we think it's because we've put on an outfit or something like that. But it's really about how we are now thinking about ourselves. And so sometimes it's fun to put on the sexy negligee and things like that but it's almost, maybe we'll give that as a homework assignment to everybody, to go put on the negligee. And then take a journal out and start writing down your thoughts that you're thinking in that negligee.

Lisa: Yes. I would fall and break my hip.

Sonia: You're screaming in the bedroom but not necessarily [crosstalk] we were hoping for.

Lisa: Listen, I fell off my own platform sandals one year, fell off of my own sandals. Yeah, but I know, I get it and we don't want you to break your hip but have something to hang on to nearby.

Sonia: Yes, 100%, to hang on to. But it's the free flowing of thoughts about ourselves as we acknowledge that we are sexual beings in the body that we have. In order to be sexual beings all we need is a body and mind and permission. But we have all the prerequisites that are necessary, we have them all. But then we just kind of have to shift our thoughts around as to what is acceptable.

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

Lisa: And I think sometimes, I was like, whoa, okay. The reason why I had asked you much earlier in the call, what did it take for you to start loving your body and you went off on this beautiful explanation of how you were saying, I just got tired of not enjoying it or I can't remember exactly what you said, Sonia. But I was asking it because you know what, it takes courage to love your body in a world that has taught most people that their bodies are not worth loving unless they look like whatever it is.

And courage is available to all of us too, courage doesn't feel good. Courage basically feels like fear or concern but it's just the feeling of I'm going to dare to do it anyway. And if I could give the whole world something, I would get out my little magic wand with the star on the end and give everybody a little tap on the top of their head with the courage stick. Because just to activate your own courage on behalf of yourself, on behalf of your body.

Sonia: Yes. So good. I just put in the chat, you'll also have it in the show notes, I'll put in the chat here that we have a couple more days left in this month for The Lit Clit Club. And we would love you to join us. So I've put it in the chat and we'll put it in the show notes as well, just click on that link and come join us. Come join us and all the fun that we're having. It's definitely an amazing place. And the thing is, it's a safe environment for us to have these conversations, for us to exchange this information, to be able to talk about things that people are not necessarily talking about.

And that's the reason why we created this place, we created it for you. So I want to thank you for everybody that's on this call. If there is any last questions that you have or comments, please go ahead and put it in the chat or in the Q&A. And we're here definitely to answer any question that you have. It's just been a pleasure to have you all on this call. And coach, Lisa, it's just a joy as always.

Lisa: It's been great. I am seeing visions of Lit Clit Club swag.

Sonia: Yes. How can there not be?

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

Lisa: How can there not be and I am going to have a hell a body image. I'm going to strut that stuff with vivaciousness.

Sonia: I love that. I'm thinking of Tina, there is Tina, there was a singer back in the 80s called Tina somebody. And she had a song called Strut. Not Tina Maria, it's somebody, Sheena, it was Sheena Easton actually, called Strut. And we are going to strut, strut our asses off. And just really find the love for our bodies, find the love for our bodies because we have everything that we need right here right now. All we need to do is unload the crap, the thoughts around our body and upload the thoughts about how beautiful our body is and how we get to accept it.

It doesn't have to be 'perfect'. We don't have to change it. We just get to change our mind and we can also change our lives.

Lisa: That's so beautiful and I think everybody on this call, if you have two minutes after the call, grab a piece of paper or your phone and write down three new thoughts that you'd love to think about your body, that you'd love to start practicing thinking about your body.

Sonia: Give yourself permission to practice those thoughts. Okay, everybody, so good of you to join us. We love you very much and thank you for everything. We will talk to you soon. Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa, we are out.

Lisa: Thanks everyone.

Sonia: Take care. Bye bye.

Hello, hello, hello, Diamonds, have you heard the amazing news? Dr. Sonia, that would be me and my amazing team has started a sex coaching and life coaching monthly membership program called The Lit Clit Club. The Lit Clit Club was made just for you. It's a safe place where women can come to create the lives that they want, the lives that you want. It's a place

Ep #148: Body Image Q&A with Dr. Sonia and Coach Lisa Hatlestad

where you get to talk openly about your sexual concerns and be heard. There's no judgment, no reprimand, no labels, just acceptance, knowledge and freedom.

It's a place where you get to ask all the questions that you ever wanted to ask about sex and about life too. You get to dream big and create your life your way inside and outside the bedroom. You know I love the concept of creating the life that you want inside and outside the bedroom, that soul bursting life that you deserve. So come to the club for the sexual intimacy coaching and stay for the empowerment and the freedom.

Do you have questions about libido, menopause? Lord help us, menopause is no joke. Sexual health, relationships, sexual orientation, pleasure equality and orgasms, religion and intimacy? I am not finished with this list yet. Maybe you have questions about toys, maybe about non-monogamy. Perhaps you're interested in BDSM, maybe self-love, self-pleasure. Maybe you have questions about self-orientation. Maybe you need to work on healing from trauma.

Maybe body image is something that you want to focus more on and definitely embodiment. Perhaps creating the life of your dreams or journeying to your authentic self. Maybe you just want to stop people pleasing. Whatever questions you have and concerns you have, we have the answers and the coaching that you need. In all actuality, you have the answers inside of you. And the coaching will help bring that out. And you know what? You get to choose how you want to be coached.

You can be coached by video, by audio only or you can use the questions and answers session, it's whatever works for you. You get to sit back and relax and get the help that you need and your cameras are off. And every month we have a new workshop in addition to our regular coaching sessions. So click on the link below in the show notes and find out more about The Lit Clit Club. We can't wait to see you there in the club, come join us. Things are just starting to heat up. Alright, Dr. Sonia out. Love you all, Diamonds.