

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Closeness podcast, your new sexual education. My name is Tari. I'm your host, and today we're going to talk about what it looks like when you deprive your partner of sexual attention, of intimacy and romance, of love and care. And I've found that what many people think an unhealthy sexual relationship looks like is substantially different from what it actually is. What does that mean? Many clients who find themselves in an unhappy relationship due to lack of intimacy and sex actually often have a pretty stellar relationship with their partner in almost all other areas. In fact, if you saw people at a cocktail party, they might even look happy or like the perfect couple or the power couple. They might be respected in their community. And to the proverbial untrained eye, everything seems fine on the outside. There's a simple, interesting question I like to ask whenever someone fills out an intake form. And as opposed to looking at all the things that are wrong, it simply says, what's working? What's going right in your relationship? What do you love about your partner?

[00:01:06] And amazingly, almost unbelievably, it's the exact same comments, the exact same story every single time from almost everyone. In fact, the vocabulary, the sentence structure, the way people talk, the way they express their care for their partner outside of the sexual issue, it's virtually identical, client after client. It never ceases to amaze me. How does that sound? And what does it look like?

[00:01:33] My partner is my best friend. I can't imagine life without him. He's a wonderful father. He provides. He's a great caregiver. I talk to him about everything. I care about him so much. I cannot imagine my life without him. We have got great kids together. He helps around the house. He's so supportive. All of my friends love him. Everything is great, apart from the sex. He's fun, funny, athletic, loves the kids, is introspective. We have a lot of the same hobbies and values. He enjoys self improvement and we go into nature often. Our kids keep us together. He's a great father. He's kind, loving and funny. He's who I see myself marrying, but I keep getting in the way of my own sexual happiness.

[00:02:15] I'm incredibly attracted to my husband. He's hardworking, intelligent and funny. We have similar interests. He's an incredibly kind and helpful partner. He's a great father. We get along so well with our children. I truly enjoy his companionship. He's young at heart, but also loves adventure. He's trustworthy, masculine and loving. We have a lot of fun together. He's got a great sense of humor. I love how great he is at taking care of our kids. I love that he pulls his own weight around the house with domestic work. Even when we both work full time, he makes me laugh. Everything's working except sex. It's so frustrating since we both can't seem to overcome this issue. It's just this one missing piece.

[00:02:54] And I think all of us can relate to that one missing piece. In relationship, it may not be sex or sexuality, but it might be awareness or tenderness, presence, patience, any number of things. But today I really want to zero in on what it's like when you're in a relationship with someone who doesn't reciprocate in a way that makes you feel sexually desired, attractive, wanted, loved. And it's so interesting because you might appreciate your partner in so many other ways and they may feel the same way about you. But this sexual peace, this intimacy peace that we all want so badly for a woman, it usually has to do with feeling desired or having your husband or partner pursue you in an interesting and sexual or romantic way. And what this leads to over time, friends, is a wife or partner feeling starved, questioning their own attractiveness, losing self esteem and self confidence, and unfortunately even sometimes questioning their own self worth, especially in the intimacy department or desirability because they are receiving so little if not nothing from their partner. And a little caveat here, you don't have to be starving or have zero affection or zero sexual engagement to feel like you're being deprived.

[00:04:21] Now, a majority of this episode is going to be explaining what it's like when a woman

or a female partner is deprived of sex and intimacy. But of course this can apply to men as well, and to all relationships. Of course men can feel deprived sexually or unloved, and certainly in the same ways that a man can oftentimes unknowingly or unintentionally deprive a woman of sex, intimacy and closeness. So too can a woman deprive a man, sometimes intentionally, of sex, intimacy and closeness. But in this episode I'm speaking in the context of a woman because it seems as though it appears as though ignoring a woman in a long term relationship affects her to her core as a person. And I'm not saying it doesn't affect men in the same way at all, or that it can't. But if you are a woman or you're living with a woman who feels deprived, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about.

[00:05:12] Now, one of the first things you'll come to notice in relationships like this is that there's usually a very large disparity in sex drives. And I don't mean how she might be feeling now, which might be shut down, turned off. Maybe she has no desire to be sexual or intimate. But I mean her core nature, her essence. And your essence. Are you a very sexual person? Is she?

[00:05:36] And I think things wind up getting the most difficult and confusing when the woman is the one with the higher sex drive or has a stronger need to be touched or a need for just some sort of intimacy.

[00:05:49] And usually she'll be the one trying to figure out how to make things work in a more comprehensive way than men often will. Men often just want to increase the quantity of times they have sex, often so that they can just orgasm or have release. And so often when they want help, it's just like, what do I need to do to get more sex?

[00:06:08] But women will often look at the relationship holistically and try to improve in all areas to make the entire relationship work. She'll usually have a willingness to have open and honest communication. She's usually the one who drags the guy into my office, and as such, she'll come to get coaching or therapy. She's even willing to initiate physical touch. She's got a strong desire for it, but it's often not reciprocated. And usually in relationships like this, the woman will have had a lot more sex or a lot more sexual experience than her husband has had. And it may be because she was with an experienced lover or ex partner or ex husband. Or it may be because she's had several partners that have shown her over time what sex can look like. And this already we've talked about in other episodes before, makes the playing field very uneven. A sexually inexperienced man with a woman who has had a lot of sex, whatever that means, and however that looks, she now knows and cannot unknow what hot, great, passionate sex can actually feel like, how fulfilling it can be to be a woman who's sexually satisfied, who has a man who pursues her, chases her, wants to please her, and everything that goes along with that. Relationships of this nature often contain a man who has a very low sex drive or who has had very few sexual interactions in his life. Often these men will feel obviously very frustrated or saddened by the whole thing, or sometimes feel like they think something's wrong with them and they don't know what it is.

[00:07:38] Perhaps they've even had their hormones checked, their testosterone, and everything seems fine. And one simple Answer I can offer to think about. Sometimes we just have very different sex drives and we think about sex and desire in a completely different way. People who are in relationships with vastly different sex drives or libidos or desires have a very, very hard relationship when it comes to sex and intimacy.

[00:08:06] And believe it or not, ladies and gentlemen, sometimes men do not want to have nearly as much sex or sexual interaction or even intimate interaction as women do. And if you really want to hear something interesting, I can tell you that this is what I see 80% of the time or more in all of my clients. So you may have a female partner who has a lot of sexual confidence, who has had a lot of sex, but she's losing confidence in the actual relationship.

[00:08:35] Gentlemen who are listening, I want you to think about that for a moment. Why would a woman lose confidence in the relationship if she's had a lot of sexual experience and technically can get things going just fine all on her own? After all, she loves sex and she's willing to have sex anytime with her partner. Couldn't she just do something, make herself available, initiate herself? Couldn't she just climb on top? Couldn't she get it going? Couldn't she do the things necessary to make it happen? Well, the easy sort of magical thinking answer is yes, of course she can. Just like a man, she has two hands, two eyes, a mouth. She can move, tease, play, flirt, put her hand on him or initiate with him. And in the beginning of many relationships where the woman had the higher sex drive, she was probably just fine initiating in the beginning because that chemical attraction was there. You're going through the romance phase. It's something new and exciting and no one really had an issue or cared about who initiated.

[00:09:35] But we always forget about that one pesky little detail called female nature. And my read on female nature is that in order for a woman to feel truly sexually satisfied, she often needs to be pursued herself. She needs to feel wanted, she needs to feel desired. She needs to feel something coming from the other side that makes her feel desired.

[00:10:02] And when that's not there, her desire begins to wane as well.

[00:10:07] Now, I understand that this is a very, very sensitive and specific concept. There are women out there who are super or hypersexual and who don't mind getting things started or initiating. There are women who don't have hang ups about who initiates and why. And not only are they significantly more rare to come by, but if you were with one, you wouldn't be listening to this episode or you wouldn't need this kind of help because she'd just be down to take the lead more often than not. However, even if women like that were like that in the beginning, they generally get a little more tapped in, tuned in and turned on to their female essence as they get older. And even though many women will say that as they age, they feel more confident and ripe and sexual and ready to play, or they know what they want and they can ask for it, and all of these positive things which are wonderful for both men and women to enjoy. I still would say over time, many women become less and less likely to initiate in the context of a long term relationship.

[00:11:04] So it might be easier for a woman to ask for what she wants, especially in the moment, or talk about it generally at lunch. But this doesn't take away from the fact that she still wants to feel pursued and desired and most likely doesn't want to be the one always or mostly making the first move.

[00:11:21] Anything's possible in the beginning, but give most relationships a little bit of time and you'll most likely come to realize what our true essence is. And that means that your female partner will want or need you to take the lead in order to get something going. I will remind you, as I do in every episode, I love when women initiate. I love seeing women do it with their husbands. I love when women who have been involved with me or want to get to know me more are assertive and help themselves. It's very sexy and attractive. I have no hang up with it. I don't think it has to be this way. I'm not even one of those men who thinks, oh my God, I have to chase and if she's chasing me, I've lost interest. None of that nonsense.

[00:12:01] But what you're going to see is that we keep coming back to this concept of desire. Desire, desire, desire. Feeling wanted, doing things that make her feel like you want her, which consequently opens her up to you sexually.

[00:12:18] Think for a minute if you know how to demonstrate sexual interest. You can pause the audio. What would you do to show your partner that you want her in the same way that I can't

imagine it would be interesting for any man to have sex with any woman who gives him full consent, but then just lays there like a starfish with her head turned to the side and her eyes closed. I also can't imagine that it's attractive for any woman to be with a man, say with a low libido or low sex drive, who says, yes, babe, just initiate with me when you want it. I'M down to sit there and let you ride me while he just lays there on his back with his eyes closed.

[00:12:56] I think that sounds frightening for anyone to imagine. It's the participation, the chemistry, sometimes the buildup, the excitement, the knowing that you're pleasing your partner and doing something to make them feel good, or they're doing something to make you feel good, the mutual exchange. That's what makes it so wonderful.

[00:13:14] Now, initiation is a very easy and also tricky subject. It's easy insofar as I show clients every day, multiple times a day, that all you have to do sometimes is look at your partner, give them a look, walk over to them, get your hands on them, and you can create very easily and in short order some nice hot chemistry that came from nowhere. And by the way, if you want to learn more about that, I created an episode a year or two ago about how to create hot sexual chemistry from nothing with that title. But even if you're with a woman who is sexually ripe and willing to initiate, over time that begins to deteriorate and you'll start to see the woman checking out of the relationship as a result of lack of attention, lack of desire, and lack of sex. I think it would be very natural for anyone to draw the conclusion that if one partner isn't having sex with the other, that it might be because they aren't attracted to each other. And I can also attest that that usually couldn't be farther from the truth. Usually both people, the one who wants more sex and the one who isn't giving enough sex, are extremely attracted to each other. But what you'll see is that the woman isn't interested in engaging due to all of the issues that they're having in the relationship, it actually turns her off. So she might want sex, she might be ready for sex. But because of the lack of sex, and also due to him not initiating it, creates a blockage in her too. And now, even though this is kind of a masked over emotion, sometimes she won't even want it. And this can be very, very confusing for couples.

[00:14:56] Often women feel deprived because of false hope, false promises, and the words that we say to our partner to convince them that things will get better when we really had no intention fixing it to begin with, or our actions could not be farther from our words. So we need to look at words versus action and how we follow through on our promises.

[00:15:18] Simply saying, I love you, I'm attracted to you, I think you're beautiful, I want to have sex with you. You look amazing. Yes, we should do that sometime. All of this while beautiful, when you are also having sex with your partner or have some form of intimacy with her quickly becomes lip service. And when there's lack of action, words stop retaining their value.

[00:15:41] When words stop retaining their value, this leads to your partner not believing you, not trusting you, not trusting you in other areas outside of sex and intimacy, and even her not feeling safe with you guys. If I can offer a little advice, don't promise your women that you're going to do things that you have no intention of doing, or that you can't do, or that you don't know how to do. You can be honest and vulnerable. You can say, I don't know how to do that. I want to, but I'm not sure how to go about it. You can say, can you help me figure this out? But when you make promises like yeah, babe, I'm going to change or yes, I'll do it, or God forbid, and my least favorite of the bunch working on it, and then nothing from there happens, this is where you start to run into real problems.

[00:16:27] In many places, including my own podcast, we talk a lot about how men need to initiate, should initiate, ought to initiate. But very rarely do you hear what men might be going through as to why we don't if you're in a traditional situation where the woman or mother is staying home all day and the man is working, he may be exhausted after work and find it

extremely difficult to switch gears, or be doing something difficult or laborious all day and then suddenly come home and feel sexual or sexy or like he wants to be intimate and engage.

[00:17:02] I've definitely seen some couples where the man or woman might be a superhero. Let's take a man who not only works all day, but he is cleaning the house, helping with the kids, doing things for his partner regularly, and then she also expects sex and intimacy. The man might feel like he's just ticking another box or doing a lot of chores for her, or this is just one more thing that he needs to do. Female partners who can resonate with this may need to evaluate their princess lifestyle and see if there are ways that she can take things off of his plate so that he can give more sexual attention to her.

[00:17:36] Sometimes men are flat out uncomfortable speaking about their needs or wants in the relationship, or they don't even know what they are or what they should be outside of penetrative sex. We're also not so great at speaking about our own shortcomings. Sometimes men don't have the skillset or even the know how to even begin to broach a conversation about sex, intimacy. And these are very hard, fragile, delicate subjects to bring up with your partner or husband. Usually you can't just say, babe, why aren't you having sex with me? Why don't you reveal your deepest, darkest fears and insecurities and let's work through them together? That's generally not a man's M.O.

[00:18:14] however, I personally think that we now live in a day and age where all of that can change very easily, especially if your guy is driven to make the change.

[00:18:24] You don't even have to invest in programs. You could just start with YouTube videos and podcasts. As long as you apply the content. And that really is the key. You can listen to things till the cows come home, but if all you're doing is listening to podcast after podcast after yet another podcast, but you're not applying, it's just rattling around your brain. You have to think about it. You have to do something about it. I always talk about this. It's not how many times you listen to something, it's how many times you recall it, think about it, put it into action and look down at those two bear paws of yours and get them onto your partner. Look at her, talk to her, smile at her, wink at her, play with her. You've got to give her some attention.

[00:19:07] So I do believe that change can happen fairly quickly if, and it's a big if, both people are ready to do it and the man is willing to do the work in this case. But it does require a couple very key secret ingredients from a woman, and that would be patience, putting your pride aside temporarily, and your need to feel desired, hunted, pursued, seduced, and even putting aside your need for the moment not to be ruined or for you to lose it, or to fall back into being in your head for a little while while he figures things out. You want to think of it like you're in training mode or you're practicing or you're working on something. You're trying to reach a common goal together instead of having the hottest sex you can, or even any sex that you can. And this has to happen for most couples while he sorts things out. But a woman needing it to be a certain way or having to feel a certain level of desire, it really can get in the way of a man trying to practice. She might laugh at him, make fun of him, put him down, not take him seriously, make it hard for him, not show any kind of physical response or reaction when he initiates.

[00:20:17] So many women want to not have to teach her male partner, to not have to be verbal or explain herself in sex, to not have to show him what she likes. But as he's growing into becoming this new person, it really does require that patience and that verbal generosity on her part to make it stick.

[00:20:40] That feels really good, babe. Keep going. Maybe you open your thighs, maybe you lean in. Maybe you do let him give you that kiss. You're allowed to communicate, and you're allowed to say, ouch, that hurts, or I don't like that, or too much tongue. But you also don't want

to be blocking him at every. Ooh. Ow. That doesn't feel good. Harder. No, not there. Softer. I said softer. Get on top. Okay. No, that's not it. And if you're with someone who is that exhausting and challenging and frustrating sexually, he's going to have to get that knowledge from somewhere. And presumably most women don't want to send him out in the world, though some do, to go get laid 50 times for him to acquire that knowledge. So he's got to get it somehow. And usually it needs to be with you, even if you've been married for 20, 30, or 40 years and he's never done it before.

[00:21:27] For most couples, when a man takes control of this part of his life, the first couple times usually are not going to be this hot, passionate, explosive sexual interaction. He needs to see it, understand it. This is usually why I recommend working with me in person, so that you guys can model the behavior and then take it home and practice it. He's got to see from your end that you want this too. He needs to see a little bit of reciprocation.

[00:21:52] So many men report that their female partner just sits there or lays there or waits for him to do things or continue the sexual process, which is also not very attractive and helpful. But usually men, when you see that, it's because you're not doing enough and she's waiting for you to do more. But women, if he's initiating and you remotely like what he's doing, like just a little bit, parting your legs a little bit more, leaning into him, giving him that kiss, putting your hands on him, showing him that, yes, what he's doing is okay, can go a long way to making a big change.

[00:22:28] So during some of these growing pains, know that it might be awkward, silly, playful, fun. He may not be taking it as seriously as you like, and you could let him know that. In fact, for most men, I'd say it takes a lot of time and a lot of practice to kind of get things back on track. But as long as your woman is willing to be patient, receptive, and participate with you, I think a lot of good progress can be made.

[00:22:53] Many people can't imagine going a day or a week or a few weeks without some sort of intimacy and closeness.

[00:23:02] Well, now try to imagine that you've gone years without affection or physical touch and how badly that must hurt your partner year after year, day after day. How deeply painful it must be for them or both of you to have never had the chance to explore this kind of relationship since the beginning. It's extremely painful to have the same conversations over and over again, Especially with little or no change. Imagine beating your head against a wall trying to get the one physical thing that you're supposed to get in a marriage. Physical touch, closeness, sex, intimacy.

[00:23:43] Unfortunately, one of men's bad habits is that we promise it and we say we're going to work on it, I'll do it, I'll do it. We're going to make the change. And then there's no follow through. Nothing happens, nothing changes.

[00:23:58] What this does is it makes a woman wonder if you are attracted to your wife to begin with, if you feel any desire for her, if you want her. Because most women are used to a lifetime of men pursuing them, even if she's only had a few partners.

[00:24:15] Because every time she steps out in the world, someone's looking, someone's checking her out. Every time she walks into a coffee shop, maybe someone says hello or looks her up and down or winks at her, offers to buy her something or asks her out. Now, I realize this doesn't happen to all women all of the time. But almost no woman is a stranger to what it means to get attention and sexual attention from other men.

[00:24:41] So how does a woman show up when she feels undesired? What does it look like in

relationship? Here are some telltale signs to look for. She may go to a different room to change her clothes. She may not want you to see her naked anymore. She may get ready by herself or hidden in her bathroom or closet. She may stop putting in effort with clothing or makeup or trying to look or feel sexy. She may not joke around with you anymore in a seductive, sensual or sexual manner. It is almost as if a man's lack of attention and lack of desire, care, compliments, love for her. It diminishes her light and makes her feel less desirable and attractive as a woman. How sad is this? How sad is this to even listen to and imagine going through it? Yourself and men, just think about the startling difference between that and what happens if we get rejected. It sucks. We don't like it. We might get angry or sad, but we don't let it define us as a person. We don't change the way we dress, we don't go hide ourselves from our partners, and we don't behave strangely or awkward or distant if our partner does decide to touch us after a long period of time.

[00:25:52] Some men think they're doing the bare minimum or damage control, or that they have intimacy with their wife because they're giving them a hug, or they're giving them a little peck hello or goodbye or a good night or good morning. And unfortunately, men, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but this also is not doing you any favors. In fact, it's causing more damage than good. The hug, a once beautiful thing, often becomes a reminder to her of the total lack of sex and intimacy and closeness that you have to the point where she won't even want that from you, or it won't be pleasant, or it won't be connected. And as a husband, as a man, you should really be able to tell if she's phoning it in, if she's allowing you to hug her but she's not really there, if she puts her hands on your body, but they're sort of limp, or she just has a hand there, or she just leans in a little bit or doesn't lean in at all. All of those signs should let you know that something is amok.

[00:26:51] I know this is already a lot emotionally already, but it actually can get worse from here. The more a woman feels undesired and the more lack of affection and sexuality that there is in the relationship, the more she begins to shut down herself to the point where even if the man did 180 degree turnaround and became the most seductive, sensual, delicious, loving seducer of all time, the strangest thing happens. A woman actually begins to question if she herself wants it, if she wants it from him, if she'll allow it to happen, and if she's so bitter, angry, frustrated, sad, hurt, resentful, insecure, whatever it is, if all of those emotions have been building up inside of her, she may actually start rejecting you. Even if you're trying really hard. And now you're at a stalemate, you're in a situation where neither side can progress, no one can win, and you kind of just feel stuck. This usually puts men in an even more awkward space because now it feels like your wife doesn't want you either. It feels like she's definitely not receptive to your touch, even though she's dreaming about it and complaining about it and wanting it so bad. When you try something, it feels like she's disinterested or she just sits there or she doesn't really put any effort back in. And again, this can be a really, really dark spiral. You may feel attracted to your wife. You may want her to feel good, you may want things to work and you may feel like she's super sexy and you desire her, but because of how awkward you feel and how maybe unconfident and awkward it feels to make a move, you wind up not doing anything. And then sometimes, many times, husbands wind up treating their partner like another item on their to do list. I have to tick the box of having sex with my wife or tick the box of making her feel good instead of having again this wonderful connected experience.

[00:28:51] All of that sounds like a lot of doom and gloom, but I do actually believe that there's a very simple way out of it. You have to put your money where your mouth is. You have to live up to your promises. If you say something, you need to do it and you need to follow through. And your wife needs to see that you genuinely desire her and want her. She may have some knee jerk reaction, she may say, no, that's not true, or oh, I don't feel like you love me. She may not even behave in a way that shows that she wants you to. But if you show her desire and you actually take action on these things, you can start to see some change. But it's the lack of trust,

it's the fallen promises, it's the getting all excited and getting her hopes up and then falling short or feeling like maybe you go on a date and something's going to happen and she waits and waits and waits and nothing does. Or she leaves the ball in your court because she's tired of initiating and you're on the couch watching a show and you fall asleep or you go upstairs and you say goodnight. And even if she has her, I've seen all sorts of things, you know, dogs in the middle, cats in the middle, birds in the middle, fortress of pillows and stuff, or you have two different size mattresses or whatever the situation is. If you don't, as a man, move into her space and show her that you want her, she's always going to feel that distance between the two of you, that disappointment and that lack of love and feeling desired.

[00:30:20] A lot of men listening might be saying to Themselves. Yeah, this all sounds great. I would love to do that with my partner, but I don't have the drive or the big three. I feel like I'm acting. I feel like I'm role playing. This doesn't feel natural. I feel like it should happen naturally. I find all of those three things to be excuses. There's absolutely no acting, role playing, or inauthenticity that needs to come through to take your hands or your eyes and gently place them onto your wife to move forward in a way that makes her feel wanted and desired. Why are we so comfortable as men to understand that if we want something in life, we have to take specific action? We have to go after it if we want to get a degree. It takes work and studying and effort and planning. If you want to go to the store and get something, there's a whole process of putting on shoes and going to the store and taking the thing off the shelf and buying it. But when it comes to actually putting in some effort with our partner, oh, no, no, no, no. I can't possibly feel like I'm having to do something that just doesn't unfold naturally. Or if I actually have to be present and put effort into this, it just feels funny or awkward. In all other areas of life, whatever we do, it takes effort and work. The same thing applies here.

[00:31:38] The low sex drive is a valid and interesting one. Now, having done this for so long and worked with so many men, I can absolutely understand what it's like to not feel in the mood. I personally am not always in the mood to have sex. When a partner wants to have sex with me, it's very understandable how frustrating it can be when your wife is feeling upset that things aren't moving forward. And it's even more frustrating to know that you don't know what's wrong with yourself, but you just don't have the desire. You don't have the urge. You're not drawn to doing it. And I will say that is a path as men that you can explore in a men's group, with a personal therapist, with your own journal and writing things down with me, with a group of friends. It's something that is very near and dear to you personally. But it doesn't have to mean that you no longer ever have intimacy with your wife. I mean, this has got to be one of the most important messages that you can understand as a man. Just because you're not horny, aroused, turned on, in the mood, or feeling sexual does not mean that you can't authentically interact with your wife intimately and not have penetrative sex.

[00:32:52] Now, I'm not drawing a comparison to having sex with your wife and washing dishes or doing laundry. But I will say that you don't have to be in the mood to do laundry and wash dishes well in order to get it done. And you don't have to act or role play to take your kid outside and play a game with him or her, even if you're not in the mood to do it. Now, everything obviously is on a spectrum here, right? If you're feeling depressed and horrible about yourself and you're questioning your desire to even get out of bed in the morning, that's a very different story than just not being in the mood or not feeling a strong desire.

[00:33:27] But listen carefully. You don't have to be in the mood for sex. You don't have to be rock hard. You don't have to be turned on to have an intimate experience with your wife, to interact with her for 2 to 20 or 30 minutes or 5 minutes and have a wonderful time. But you do, and this is of paramount importance, have to authentically want her and desire her. That means you're not pretending, you're not role playing, you're not acting, you're not doing any number of other tricks that men do. You're just being with her sincerely. If you can look at your wife and at

her breasts and her thighs and her ass and her neck and her arms and her fingertips and her eyes and her hair and find something that you genuinely are attracted to. You can just start there and you can focus on that quality of her, that aspect of her or something you appreciate about who she is and you can show desire.

[00:34:25] All of these things don't have to be terribly complicated. You can compliment her. Wow, babe, you look amazing. I love your hair. That dress looks incredible. Oh my God, your chest looks amazing in this outfit. You can walk over to her, touch her, engage her, initiate something that feels different than what you've been doing every single day for the last X amount of years.

[00:34:49] Even if you don't wind up having sex, even if you don't even try to have sex, even if sex doesn't even feel like it's something that might unfold from the interaction. So how does that look? You could have a low sex drive and go down on your partner in the same way that a woman could not be in the mood to have sex but is happy to give you a blowjob. You could have a low sex drive and learn to finger her like a pro. You can get curious about how her body works, which triggers other areas of your brain. Like, why does her body respond when I touch her this way? What happens if I touch here or gently massage there? Can I figure out what tiny part of her clit responds even more if I touch it in the right way? What parts of her inside trigger a response that makes her even more wet? You could absolutely have a low libido or a low sex drive and use a toy on her in the same way that if you're tired or not wanting to work out, you can still go to the gym, even if you're not in the mood. And you could still have a great workout. You could have a low sex drive and not really be hard or be mildly hard, or have your erection wane. Come and go a little bit. You could not be terribly excited, but still press your thigh between her legs. You can snuggle her, spoon her, massage her hips, give her a massage. I'm reluctant to say massage because I think a lot of couples do this. They just kind of rub on each other a little bit. But it doesn't progress into sexual territory, or sometimes guys just get a little grabby. The massage is nice to use as a way to transition into intimacy sometimes, but I don't recommend it as your default go to or else it becomes like every other thing that you try to turn into an easy button.

[00:36:30] You can create moments of intimacy that doesn't have to lead to sex and penetration and still give her a hot experience of making her feel desired. Now, you can't be watching the game with your fingers in her. You can't be glancing down at your phone or texting while you're eating her out. You have to be present and in it in the same way that you have to be present with anything that requires care and your attention.

[00:36:52] And then in this process, assuming that you do feel attracted to your partner, most men are going to get a little more excited and want to continue, or at least progress it past what they thought they wanted to do. You don't have to, but this is a beautiful part about being a man, is that you get to make choices, decide, make decisions, lead. Let her know how you want it to be. Let her know what excites you. Do you want to put her in a different position? I say put her in a different position, and I sometimes wonder what you all think out there. I don't mean, like, fumble over her or stumble or just kind of twist her at her shoulders and hips. I mean, like, actually Bend her over something or put her up against something, or set her on top of you, or get on top of her or draw her legs up or her thighs up or move them to one side. So much fun to be had. You could take more clothes off of her or leave her clothes on. You could take clothes off and leave her heels on. If as a man, you don't know what turns you on, Play, explore, touch her, move her around. You might be surprised. Wow. The way she looked at me when I was above her, or when I was beneath her or when I was on the bed and I put her in this position, it excited me. Look for those things and remember them.

[00:38:03] Now, if you're listening to this and none of it is really resonating with you, in fact, it

maybe feels extremely intimidating or off putting or disgusting or a turn off, or you can't even imagine yourself doing any of these things to your partner, you may have to ask yourself some very simple and hard questions.

[00:38:24] Am I still physically attracted to my partner?

[00:38:31] Am I attracted enough to her that I'm willing and want to do things with her? I feel want inside of me and there are times when my body actually does respond sexually to her, whether or not I get hard. Do I actually desire her or do I just think she's beautiful, pretty, cute? In the same way you can see a deer in the forest and think, wow, that's a beautiful animal, but you don't want to sleep with it. Am I attracted to my wife or girlfriend or partner? Am I sexually attracted to her? Do I want to be inside of her or have something inside of her?

[00:39:11] Do I actually want to physically please her? Does it turn me on to see her orgasm or get excited or to have her look at me in that way like she wants me? Do I fantasize about other women? When I pass other women on the street? Do I get excited or do I get a rush, or am I curious about everyone else but my wife, or do no other women do it for me? Am I curious what it's like to be with a man? Am I curious what it's like to have some sort of sexual interaction with a man, but it, you know, doesn't really make me gay? Do I have curiosity to explore or experiment with a man, but I don't particularly want to be sexual?

[00:39:52] From my clinical experience, it's far more likely that a man has some other untapped desires than it is for him to be asexual or just have absolutely no desire to have sex. Even though it is possible so another question.

[00:40:08] Do I have zero desire to be sexual? How many days, weeks or months could go by where I wouldn't care whether or not we had sex? What's there? Do I never, ever want to be in a dominant position with a woman? Does being confident, assertive or dominant offend me, turn me off, make me feel weird or awkward? Does the idea of her being dominant with me and forceful with me or leading the entire experience turn me on? Am I not turned on by that? But if given the choice of me initiating or her initiating, I would infinitely rather it be her. Am I terrified of initiating? Am I a little more in my feminine side, where I really don't feel confident at all and I need someone else to initiate?

[00:40:59] Do I need a female partner to initiate with me and lead the entire sexual experience while I lay there, or while I'm told what to do? What's going on that is preventing you from moving forward?

[00:41:15] Does sex make you feel so uncomfortable that you would rather only do cuddly things? That you'd rather only put your head in your wife's lap or lean into her for a little snuggle, or be mildly affectionate with some gentle touches and a little bit of playfulness or silliness? Do you never want to take sex seriously? You only want it to be this sort of silly, playful thing? Does the idea of sex frighten you or make you so nervous that the maximum interaction you can ever see yourself having with your partner is maybe spooning, kissing, hugging, maybe being a little bit undressed and under the covers together, but not really wanting or needing to move it past that?

[00:42:03] These are phenomenally important questions to ask yourself when you come in to see me looking for answers. We go through these and more together.

[00:42:12] But if you find yourself saying yes to any of these questions doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you. Doesn't mean that you need to go take some sort of drastic action.

[00:42:22] But what we've done together is come to what the truth is. And knowing your truth, especially your sexual truth, is game changing when it comes to your relationship because it lets you and your, especially your female partner know where you are. It helps them understand. Do you want to keep spinning your wheels? Do you want to spend year after year after year going through the same old routine? Or do you want to evaluate? Can you give your wife what she wants and can you get what you want? Do you want anything? If she wants something that's significantly more than what you have to offer, what do you want to do about it?

[00:43:05] Now if your answer is, I don't want to give my wife any of these things, or I'm not capable or not interested or don't want to, or it frightens me so much, I'm not going to take action. Far be it from me to tell you what you need to do in your relationship, however you may need to evaluate. Is this relationship serving you both and how important is it to you to stay in it? And do you have so many things going on in your life that it's impossible to exit even if you wanted to, such as kids and property and everything that goes along with long term committed relationships? Do you have religious beliefs that make you say, oh, I could never do this or would never do this? Do you have a rock solid belief in your marriage that you made this promise and this promises for life, or is it malleable for you? Whatever the case, it's extremely important that you evaluate what other options you have. What areas are you willing to look down? And these are very, very sensitive and tender conversations. And I help people to find answers to these questions every day. I know this isn't the easiest. In fact, it might be the hardest conversation you ever have with yourself or your partner. But if it means not spending another 5, 10, or 20 years suffering in the same way, making a decision in this area may very well be one of the most important ones you ever make.

[00:44:30] And now, speaking of difficult questions, another question that both men and women can ask themselves is, is the lack of sex or sexual intimacy in this relationship a deal breaker?

[00:44:45] That means, and it's just a question to explore, would you personally want to bring your relationship to a close as a result of the lack of sex, intimacy, love and care that you receive?

[00:44:59] Now, I certainly am not advising you to take any kind of drastic action, but the exploration of these questions, I think is really important. Even if it inspires you to fully stay and recommit, ideally. Or if it shakes something up inside of you where you realize, I don't want to be alone, I don't want to feel lonely, I don't want to start fresh, I don't want to go meet someone else, I don't want to do this all over again. I do want to make it work with my partner.

[00:45:26] That's definitely a step in the right direction.

[00:45:30] But I really do invite you. Anyone who's listening. Is lack of sex, intimacy and closeness a deal breaker for you in your relationship or a relationship that you see yourself being involved in?

[00:45:44] Do you know what most people say?

[00:45:47] Most people feel that their Want and their need for sex, intimacy and closeness lands a bit like some ancillary desire. Or that it's not as important as the other things. You may have family together, or you love each other so much, or you're best friends, or you've built this life together. And I, even as a sex coach, I'm not here to suggest that sex is the end all, be all of your relationship, or that you can't have a wonderful life or a wonderful partnership without sex. But for most people, and I would go so far as to say almost all people in a long term relationship want more than just company. And I've met several people who are completely happy with company. You're sitting on the bed, they're sitting on the couch or the computer, and just

knowing that you're in the same room is enough to make them happy. But most of us want and need physical touch, care, a snuggle holding someone, kissing someone. We all know this. We know that children don't develop properly without it. We're the same way. However, suddenly, when people are asked a question like is it a deal breaker? All of their needs, all of their emotional needs and physical needs, everything suddenly takes a back seat. And very, very, very few people have ever answered yes to this question. Or if they do, it's usually accompanied by a disclaimer, one that says, yes, it's a deal breaker, but I feel bad or I feel guilty or I feel ashamed for thinking this way. And isn't that interesting? I am ashamed to feel that my wants and my needs and my desires have a strong priority. I want intimate or sexual fulfillment, but I feel bad to ask for it.

[00:47:40] Very thought provoking.

[00:47:46] Well, as we start to pivot in this episode and we try to look at some of the ways to make things work, sometimes men have a hard time getting intimacy started because they feel like they need to ask permission every time they feel bad or guilty, or like they're being maybe even hyper masculine or domineering, if they don't ask their own wife, who they've been married to for 3, 5, 10, 20, 30, 40 years, if it's okay for him to touch her, he feels like this is a sign of respect or a sign of care. It's about being a good man or a good person. And anything other than this somehow veers from that narrative and is not okay.

[00:48:27] Whereas, and I'm not speaking for all women here, you certainly may be a woman who wants your husband to ask you permission every time he breathes on you, but I would venture to say that the vast majority of women do not want that. Which is completely different from whether you should initiate sex or intimacy with a perfect stranger or someone you just met at a restaurant, at an event, at a bar, at a party. It's your first time having sex, you're dating. This is a whole different animal. And if you're with a woman who wants that level of checking in and presence with you, even then, and I'm more than happy to be proven wrong, but even a woman who wants you to ask her consent, very, very unlikely that she also wants you to say, may I touch you? Can I kiss you? Can I breathe on you? Can I go down on you? Is it okay if I take your bra off? At some point you need to know when it's okay for you to take the lead and when she's given you that permission to move forward.

[00:49:28] I would normally never want to have a conversation like this, me as a man, telling the world what maybe a woman might want or not want in terms of moving forward with and without consent. It's a dangerous subject, right? But if I hadn't had almost a decade of experience, well, a lifetime really, but a decade in a clinical setting, I wouldn't be speaking so confidently time after time after time. Again, one of the number one complaints that I hear from women who are in committed long term relationships is that their partner continues to ask permission and he won't take charge of the situation.

[00:50:06] Women don't just prefer it. Women don't just hate when a man asks. They often detest it or even cringe when their partner says, do you maybe want to go have sex right now? Do you want to go do it? Do you want to go upstairs?

[00:50:22] Almost all women prefer. And please check in with your partner, by all means, don't take my word for it. Don't just do it. If this is a new relationship for you, you haven't been married for years and years, get all the consent you want.

[00:50:36] But in a long term relationship, most women don't enjoy a lot of talking. They want touching, messing around. And so many times, if you fall into the category of the kind of man we've been talking about so far today, maybe you'd much rather have your partner initiate herself.

[00:50:55] And you may feel this way because you don't know what you really want or how to really give it to her, or how to go about giving it to her in a way that she likes.

[00:51:03] But men, even if you're in a situation where your female partner has to initiate or you want her to. It's also really healthy for you to then immediately take the lead.

[00:51:14] You could even take the lead as soon as her hand touches your leg, as soon as she bats her eyes at you, as soon as her breasts press up against you, as soon as she sits on you, you're more than welcome to jump in and start to do it in your way. Take her on a journey so it doesn't feel, number one, like she's getting rejected, number two, like she's doing all the work, number three, like you don't desire her. You show her right away. Oh, wow. She gave you this opportunity and you knew how to take the lead from there.

[00:51:42] Man, you really got to think back to a time when you were single. Could have been years and years ago, and you wanted to maybe approach a woman at a party or a restaurant, wherever.

[00:51:52] If she isn't even looking at you, if she hasn't smiled at you or given you any single indicator that she might be interested in you, are you going to make a move? Are you going to make a sexual move or an intimate move? You're certainly not going to go try to kiss her or be intimate with her, but you likely won't even speak to her.

[00:52:13] How hard then is it for you to understand that your wife is not likely to initiate anything with you? Because there seems like there's just disinterest, the exact same kind of disinterest that a woman who's not interested in us at a bar or restaurant is showing us. We're not going to move forward and neither is your partner when you seem like you couldn't care less.

[00:52:35] It's not even about rejection. If you're not even showing her that you want her or that you have some kind of curiosity about her or her body, why would she put herself out there as a woman who's already more likely to be more insecure, more nervous, more timid, more shy about this sort of thing? If it seems like you, her husband, who loves her, doesn't want it in the first place, you'll hear me say in other episodes, a woman is only as sexual as you will allow her to be. And what that means is she has an entire treasure trove chock full of sexual gifts, of lucky charms, of things that she's willing to do to you, for you, with you, of things that she'll let you do to her. But if you don't show interest or initiate or show her desire, none of this comes out sometimes, ever. It just gets put away and locked away until, well, sadly, for some people, it's forever. For other people, they may split up and then she meets another man who maybe brings that side out of her. But for a select few, for men who listen to this and want to take action, for someone who comes in and gets actual help and is willing to apply it. For someone who's willing to put in the effort, the energy and the work, which, by the way, really is not all that hard compared to manual labor or even washing dishes. I mean, we are talking about fucking your wife or your girlfriend here. Yes, for that man, things can take a turnaround for the better.

[00:54:12] Most women will say that even if they're in a sexless marriage, even if they haven't had sex in a month or a year, they still fantasize and want their man to be dominant, assertive, confident, aggressive, forward. I don't define these words in the most extreme version that I can. I don't mean uber or hyper aggressive or hyper masculine or domineering, but I do mean significantly more confident than you've been demonstrating at home.

[00:54:39] What else does she desire? Maybe a man who is decisive, a man who takes the lead, someone who can take charge, someone who can be a little firmer in his touch and in some cases be a little more intense or even a little rough with her.

[00:54:54] So often in session, I make these suggestions purposely in front of the man and the woman sitting there. And the man looks at me dumbfounded, like what? And the woman goes, yeah, that'd be great. Just like nothing. Yes, please do that stuff.

[00:55:08] Notice her more, give her more attention. Move her around the room or the bed. Tell her where you want her to be and how you want her to put her legs. Take it past cuddles, past some caressing, past kisses. You can get sexual quickly. And by the way, sexual does not mean penetrate quickly. It just means doing things that are sexual in nature. And there's a big difference between trying to get your clothes off as quickly as possible and being inside of her versus being overtly sexual in your actions. A man may want to take a little more time before you penetrate her, but not so much time before you get sexual. He could last longer in bed or be more affectionate outside of sex. There's so much. And these things I'm describing here, they just sort of tip the iceberg on what your partner is capable of sharing with you. Indulging in. She's a treasure chest or a pleasure chest of exciting things to open and discover. But you have to unlock her with the right key. And the key isn't always your cocktail. It might be, sometimes it is, but it's not always the answer. And as her man, the man who she chose to marry, the man who she loves, the man who she's living with, you do have the key. It is you. It's not hidden somewhere. It's not outside of you. It just takes confidence. That means being sure of yourself, not waning, not being wishy washy, not darting your eyes, not being too nervous, not shaky when you touch her, knowing what you want. That means having a clear picture in your mind of what you'd like to experience with her, even if ultimately it never winds up happening. And remember, you don't have to penetrate her every single time that you're intimate with her or are being sexual with her. I know this may sound like revolutionary knowledge, but you just don't. In fact, most women would be happy to have any kind of sexual or intimate contact, any kind of attention, desire, playfulness, any kind of intimacy to get things started while you get yourselves sorted out. It simply takes the willingness to step into the role of being the man, to move things forward and to take her hand and say, follow me.

[00:57:22] All right, I know this was an unusually intense episode. If you and your partner are listening to this and it's really hitting home and you want to get some real help, you want to solve your issue or at least work towards an amiable solution, there are options and resources. You don't have to live with this forever. You don't have to go at it alone. I strongly recommend booking a couple sessions together because so much can be understood by having both people in the room. But you're also welcome to book solo, especially if you have some things you want to get off your chest. And let's figure it out. At the very least, you'll walk away knowing what the truth is, where you stand, what you want to do, what you want to step into next, what you're willing to do as a partner. And that's huge for knowing where and how to navigate your relationship next.

[00:58:11] But on the flip side, and on the brighter side, you can solve this. You can get this handled. We can show your man or your woman how to pursue you, please you, satisfy you, take care of you, and make you feel wanted and desired.

[00:58:27] We're all human. We all have these same needs. They just play out differently in different relationships. Even successful relationships don't always get it right. They don't always know how to do all this stuff either. You don't need to be suffering for five or ten plus years in order to come in and get some help. I think it's extremely important for everyone to have a sense of what can happen in long term relationships when there's a lack of intimacy. When we start something new, it's very easy. It feels fresh and alive and like this could never happen to you. But you'd be shocked. You'd be shocked how easy it is if you don't know already for intimacy to take a backseat as soon as you start making important life decisions, where to move, whether one or both of you will be working. If you have animals and kids and a farm and parents who

come to stay with you, it's very easy for intimacy to lose traction and for it to become a sad state of affairs. And yet it can be so fixable. It's so easy if both partners want to take action and usually someone just needs to get over themselves. Yes, there are some extreme cases where perhaps you both are fundamentally incompatible, but you can't get out of the relationship anytime soon. But most of us can make a few simple changes to make our partner happy. The other useful and often unspoken tool that you get when you come in for professional help is clarity. Even if, heaven forbid, you solved nothing else, you'll know where you stand and where your partner stands and the work that they are willing to put in or not to make things better. All right, if you'd like to get started with me, please log on to cravecloseness.com and you can fill out an intake form or skip all of that and book a session immediately. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised by the progress we can make otherwise. Please continue listening to other episodes of the podcast and I'm looking forward to helping you on your journey. Thanks for spending one of your hours with me. Have a great day.