

A New Look at Sex

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Part I

Introduction

Chapter 1

What We'll Be Covering

We'll start with the basics of human sexual anatomy and response, then continue with a discussion of what can make each of the most popular kinds of sex more pleasurable and comfortable. After a brief discussion of several common sexual health issues we'll move on to gender and orientation, and conclude with an overview of some of the various sex-positive communities which exist today.

The writing is going to be frank and direct, and concise enough for most people to feel comfortable reading this guide from beginning to end.

A fun, safe, and passionate sexual life is one of the delights of being alive, and the goal of this guide is to help make that a reality.

Chapter 2

What We'll Leave to the Professionals

The following topics, however, will not be addressed in this guide. Please understand that this is emphatically *not* because I consider them unimportant, but rather because I want you to have the most current medical information possible: your health is too important to entrust to online advice which may eventually go out of date.

2.1 STD Differential Diagnosis

Since some types of sexually transmitted disease may go *years* before presenting visible symptoms, since some may *never* present visible symptoms, and since when visible symptoms do appear they're often much harder to distinguish than in the extreme cases captured by typical medical photography, there's almost no point as a member of the general public in looking at unpleasant genital photographs of what STD signs can look like: the bottom line is that if you have any reason to believe you or your partner has been exposed to an STD, then in order to know for sure a test has to be done. Period.

Fortunately, tests are available for a wider range of STDs than ever before, tests which used to require an uncomfortable swab can now often be accomplished with a simple urine sample, and if it turns out that you actually have something which needs treatment then the potential treatment options are better than ever.

2.2 Pros and Cons of Specific Birth Control Methods

If you're female and in the process of selecting a birth control method, then chances are you're considering one of the hormone-based methods: they have

extremely high effectiveness rates, nothing can really “go wrong” with them during sex, they don’t require any skill to use, and they’re widely available. However, there are specific questions your doctor will need to ask to determine whether they’re right for you, and since they’re only available with a doctor’s prescription anyway, I don’t believe any good would be served here by reprinting contraindication and side-effect information for specific products that would only go out of date.

Additionally, there’s the fact that new birth control methods become available from time to time (two examples being the 2001 introduction of NuvaRing®, a hormonal vaginal ring which then became an alternative for some women who would have otherwise chosen a hormonal birth control pill, and the 2001 introduction of Mirena®, a hormonal intrauterine device which then became an alternative for some women who would have otherwise chosen a traditional IUD).

So, since I believe you deserve information that is as accurate as it is complete, the pros and cons of specific birth control methods is another discussion topic that will be left between you and your doctor.

2.3 Sexual Side Effects of Specific Prescription Medications

Many popular medications have sexual side effects, and new medications with sexual side effects are introduced every year. Ultimately there is no substitute for discussing your concerns with your doctor in a frank manner, and returning to inquire about alternate courses of treatment if the current one is causing sexual dysfunction or distress for you.

It’s important to remember that even if you live in a small town your doctor still has a medical degree, and is unlikely to be shocked or embarrassed by any reasonable question you might ask.

2.4 “Edge Play”

Even if you’ve never personally tried them, you’ve probably at least heard about kinds of sex that involve one partner consensually tying up the other, or pretending for a few hours that they’re the sexual “servant” of the other, or giving the other a spanking. Within the organized community of people who enjoy these kinds of activities and get together to share their knowledge about them (aka “the BDSM community”), the term “edge play” is often used for consensual play of a particularly extreme nature (including activities for which there’s a risk of serious injury if safety precautions are not followed, and including activities which may not even *involve* sex but which are purely intended to create an unusually high level of pain and/or terror which the participants find thrilling).

It’s true that new forms of advanced BDSM play get invented every year, and then fluctuate in community popularity as the years go by. But to me

that's not the point: to me the point is that for *any* complex physical skill, whether it be Latin dancing, playing the oboe, mountain climbing, or safely suspending another human being from the ceiling using rope, you're better off learning that skill from an experienced and knowledgeable instructor than from a book. Fortunately organized education is one of the cultural cornerstones of the modern BDSM community, to the point where I believe it makes the most sense both educationally and socially to take advantage of the classes offered through established BDSM community organizations and conferences if there are advanced BDSM skills you'd like to learn.

Chapter 3

Why I Wrote This

I feel it's always helpful to know where an author is coming from, particularly when it comes to work that's being made available to you for free. Of course writing can be a satisfying activity in and of itself, but here's why I'm personally drawn to sex as my topic:

A little effort can make a big difference. Sex is one of the greatest sources of pleasure and intimacy in many peoples' lives, often going on to form some of life's most cherished memories. In parallel with this, the misconceptions which make sex less enjoyable than it could be are often very simple ones. So, in sex education, a little effort can make a big difference. In general, I believe it's wise to seek out situations in life where a little effort can make a big difference.

The nature of sex makes it fulfilling to write about. A major theme in popular movies, fairy tales, and novels is what is lost in going from childhood to adulthood (or by extension from the mythical past to the present). In the popular animated film *My Neighbor Totoro* you only see the magical creatures when you're very young. At the end of *The Lord of the Rings* the Elves leave Middle-earth forever. But the one exception to this meta-narrative is sex: the one wonderful thing you lack as a child but gain access to as an adult. As I see it sex is simply how adults play, which to me makes it the most delightful topic basically ever.

But enough philosophy — let's get started.

Part II

Sex

Chapter 4

How the Body Works

If all you cared about sexually was reproduction, then you could probably get by knowing the names and functions of only two body parts: “penis” and “vagina.” But since this guide also assumes you care about pleasure, we’ll be covering the names and functions of several more body parts: for example, “clitoris” and “glans.”

In the spirit of “there are far more things that unite than divide us,” I feel it’s also helpful to know a little bit about what parts of the male and female genitalia developed from the same tissues in the womb, and may feel similar to each other when stimulated during sex: for example, if you’re a male going down on a female, it’s erotic to know what part of your penis getting licked by her might feel closest to what she is feeling as you lick her clitoris.

All of this, as well as the body’s basic sexual response cycle, will be covered in the sections which follow.

4.1 Sexual Anatomy

4.1.1 What’s What

4.1.1.1 On Females

4.1.1.1.1 External Anatomy

Vulva: The term **vulva** collectively refers to the entire external female genitalia, including the labia, clitoris, urethra, and vaginal entrance. In other words, it refers to *everything* “down there” other than the interior of the vagina itself and the reproductive organs the vagina leads to. One common slang term for the vulva is “pussy.”

Labia: The **labia minora** (or “inner lips”) are the thin inner tissues which serve the purpose of surrounding and protecting the clitoris, urethra, and vaginal entrance. To some people they can look a bit like a flower. The (often hair-covered) skin just around them is referred to as the **labia**

majora or “outer lips”, though if somebody just says “labia” they’re generally referring to the labia minora. Women differ in the degree to which the labia majora cover the labia minora, and in the degree to which the left and right sides of the labia minora naturally match. Both sets of labia are very sensitive, and many people claim to find the scent produced by the sweat glands in the labia majora very arousing. At birth, and until such time as it is torn by either some kind of insertion (for example the insertion of a tampon) or inadvertently through activities such as vigorous gymnastics, bicycling, or horseback riding, the area between the labia minora *may* be at least partially covered by a thin membrane called the **hymen**. [Side note: since the hymen can clearly be torn through plenty of ordinary activities other than vaginal intercourse, and since some women are born without an intact hymen, only a very ignorant person or culture would take the hymen’s absence as saying anything about a female’s “virginity.”]

Clitoris: The **clitoris** (or “clit”) externally manifests as a small bump at the top of the labia minora where the two sides of the labia minora meet, and is partially if not fully covered by a small structure just above the labia minora called the **clitoral hood**. As women become sexually aroused the clitoris generally becomes slightly larger and harder (aka “engorged”), duplicating on a smaller scale what the penis generally does when men become sexually aroused. As the clitoris engorges the clitoral hood may also pull slightly back, making it even easier to give the clitoris more of the same attention that got it engorged in the first place. The only anatomical purpose of the clitoris is to provide pleasure, and that it certainly does: direct stimulation of the clitoris is the easiest way for most woman to reach orgasm, and many (if not most) women cannot reach orgasm without the clitoris being stimulated in some way. It’s also important to note that the same tissue which forms the visible clitoris travels a ways inside the body: basically what you see of the clitoris is like the very tip of a wishbone, which splits inside the body and travels along underneath the surface of the body on either side of the labia minora. The physical placement of both the internal and external portions of the clitoris (in relation to the vagina) may impact how much indirect stimulation the clitoris receives during intercourse, and like anything else this will vary from individual to individual: yet another reason why reading anything psychological into whether you or your partner can reach orgasm through vaginal intercourse alone is probably wasted mental effort. When it is necessary to distinguish them, the external portion of the clitoris is called the **clitoral glans** and the internal portion is called the **clitoral body** (before it splits into two parts) and the **clitoral crura** (after it splits).

Urethra: The **urethra** is located between the clitoris and the vagina, and serves as the tiny opening through which urine is expelled from the bladder.

4.1.1.1.2 Vaginal Anatomy

Vagina: The **vagina** is the muscular path which leads inside the body to the female reproductive organs, and which is featured in the style of sex so frequently glorified in poetry and song. The entrance to the vagina is located between the labia minora, below the urethra. It's important to note that the vagina isn't just a "hole" which is somehow always open, or which (in similarly incorrect thought) can somehow become permanently "loose" as a normal result of having an active sex life: rather, think of it as a cylindrical muscle whose walls normally lie against each other unless there is something between them, and which like any other muscle becomes stronger rather than weaker when exercised. With increased sexual arousal special glands inside the vagina secrete a natural lubrication which makes intercourse easier and more enjoyable for everyone involved, though like any natural process the degree to which this happens will vary according to many factors including time of life. It's also important to note that the shape of the vagina will gradually change as a woman's sexual arousal increases (via the **cervix** slightly shifting position) in such a way that effectively gives it more length.

G-spot: "G-spot" is the popularized term for a specific area of the vagina, located a few inches in and towards the front of the body, which many women find offers a pleasurable feeling when it receives firm pressure during high arousal. Although there is a lot of available discussion and research on which anatomical structures are involved in its effects, the term "G-spot" technically refers only to an area of the body rather than to a distinct anatomical structure of its own (in other words, you will not find it in standard medical diagrams).

4.1.1.2 On Males

The **penis** is the part of the male genitalia which becomes erect during sexual arousal. Technically, the term does not include the **scrotum**, which hangs underneath the penis and contains the male **testicles**.

Common slang terms for the penis include "cock" and "dick," while common slang terms for the testicles include "balls" or "nuts."

4.1.1.2.1 The Penis Although this knowledge doesn't play a role in sexual technique *per se*, since this document is going to be published on the internet I'd like to begin by mentioning the three internal parts of the penis which act together to create an erection: the two **corpora cavernosa** and the one **corpus spongiosum**. The significant fact is that these are not muscles which make the penis erect by clenching, nor are they bones which make the penis erect by extruding or moving: instead, they're sponge-like tissues which make the penis erect by filling with blood. This means that the natural length of an erect penis is not dictated by the size or strength of any kind of muscle, nor by any other kind of tissue that is known to naturally grow in a healthy adult, and as such

you should not be surprised to learn that the various penis enlargement pills and lotions advertised via spam e-mail are generally scams.

The **glans** is the head of the penis, which in uncircumcised adults is generally at least partially covered by the **foreskin** whenever the penis is not erect. By contrast, the longer cylindrical part of the penis behind the glans is called the **shaft**. Since the glans contains a higher density of nerve endings than the shaft, it is particularly sensitive. For many men the underside of the glans is the most sensitive part of the penis, though skin-to-skin contact there is usually more pleasurable if the glans surface is at least slightly moist: fortunately nature provides a helping hand in this regard, since with sexual excitement a few drops of **pre-ejaculate** (or “pre-come”) are often secreted via the urethra. Another particularly sensitive area is the **coronal ridge**, the raised ridge of flesh which separates the shaft from the glans.

The thin strip of flesh underneath the glans (where the foreskin is attached on uncircumcised males) is called the **frenulum**, and the similar ridge which extends down the underside of the shaft of the penis is called the **penile raphe** (though this term is in much less common use). Both are extremely sensitive.

In other words, the theme here is that the glans of the penis is generally more sensitive than the shaft, and the bottom side of the penis is generally more sensitive than the top side.

4.1.1.2.2 The Scrotum To recap, the scrotum is the thin pouch of skin and muscle which holds the testicles suspended underneath the base of the penis (the purpose being to lower the temperature of the testicles by keeping them away from the rest of the body, hence increasing the viability of the sperm they produce). The scrotum is a very sensitive part of the body, and can feel very good when handled during sex play: in particular holding the scrotum from underneath (or gently squeezing the testicles) can provide a feeling that may be experienced as sexy and perhaps vaguely comforting, and some men find that gently tugging downwards on the testicles will delay ejaculation. Men differ in how much pressure they like, though many enjoy firm and confident pressure.

4.1.1.2.3 The Prostate Gland The **prostate gland** is an internal structure, behind the base of the penis and just beneath the bladder, which wraps around the duct that leads to the urethra. It produces a portion of the fluid that semen is made out of, and can often be felt about two inches inside the anus if you press your finger towards the base of the penis. Many men find pressure against the prostate gland (which by its nature also slightly stimulates the base of the penis) to feel pleasurable or at least interesting, particular when they are very aroused or close to orgasm.

4.1.1.3 On Anybody

For either men or women, the **anus** is a very sensitive area that is particularly rich in nerve endings. For almost anyone, even light pressure or circling strokes around the exterior of the anus can feel good — or at least interesting. For some,

penetration of the anus (perhaps with a lubricated finger, or in the shower) can carry an erotic charge, especially when sexually aroused. For men, there's the potential for stimulation of the prostate gland during anal penetration, along with indirect stimulation of the base of the penis. For women, there's the fact that the wall of the anus is very close to the wall of the vagina, plus the fact that internal portions of the clitoris may receive indirect stimulation during anal penetration. As a result, anal stimulation or penetration is a popular and pleasurable part of sex for many people.

The short passageway between the exterior of the anus and the rectum is called the **anal canal**, and the area between the exterior of the anus and the genitals is called the **perineum**.

Ultimately almost any patch of skin on the body that has a high density of nerve endings will end up being an "erogenous zone" for some people. The lips are rich in nerve endings, so many people enjoy kissing. The fingertips are rich in nerve endings, so many people enjoy having their fingers licked or sucked. The nipples are rich in nerve endings, so many people enjoy having their nipples stroked, sucked, or pinched. And, ultimately, the anus is no different.

4.1.2 What's Similar to What (and Why)

The biological term is "homologous," in this context meaning that particular parts of the male genitalia and female genitalia actually grow from the same tissue as the human body develops in the womb. For anyone who has opposite-sex partners, I personally feel this is an ideal way to understand what sex may feel like for your partner in terms that you can personally understand.

The best example is the female clitoris, the external part (or "glans") of which is homologous to the head (or "glans") of the penis. As such, for both men and women, these are the most sensitive parts of their sexual anatomy. Also, for both men and women, the underside of their glans is often particularly sensitive. Furthermore, for both men and women, direct contact with the glans may be too intense to feel good (or may just flat out *not* feel good) immediately after reaching an orgasm through stimulation of the glans. By contrast, one difference is that the glans of the clitoris is smaller than the glans of the penis, and hence has an even higher density of nerve endings.

Meanwhile, the longer internal portion of the clitoris (i.e. the clitoral "body" and "crura") is homologous to the male corpora cavernosa (which as was discussed earlier are *internal* structures of the penis).

So, if you're male and want a better sense of what your girlfriend experiences during sex, imagine that the head of your penis was smaller but more sensitive, while the shaft of your penis was surrounded by some kind of insulating fabric to where stroking it still felt sexy and still made you feel desired, but might not be enough to let you physically reach orgasm. With this analogy in mind, stroking the head of your penis with a slippery hand might be a little bit like what your girlfriend experiences during oral sex, and stroking the shaft of your penis through this insulating fabric might be a little bit like what your girlfriend experiences (at least physically) during intercourse.

On the other hand, if you're female and want a better sense of what your boyfriend experiences during intercourse, then imagine that your clitoris were much longer, and although the tip was still the most sensitive part the sensations at the tip were a little more diffuse. Also, imagine that any part of this longer, external clitoris was sensitive enough to where you could easily reach orgasm by stroking it. So, with this analogy in mind, stroking the full length of this imagined clitoris with a slippery hand might be a little bit like what your boyfriend experiences (again, at least physically) during intercourse.

In table 4.1 you'll find the homologies between the other parts of the male and female genitals, though if your intent is to understand sexual pleasure then the examples we've just discussed are by far the most illuminating ones. Note that many people consider the male prostate gland to be the equivalent of the female G-spot, even though technically one is a term for a distinct part of the anatomy, while the other is the popular term for a *region* of the body rather than the distinct parts of the anatomy which may cause its effects. Note also that the Skene's glands are located within something called the "urethral sponge," and that the Skene's glands are sometimes referred to as the "paraurethral glands" (both terms being commonly used in writings about the G-spot).

Male Anatomy	Female Anatomy
Glans penis	Clitoral glans
Corpora cavernosa	Clitoral body and crura
Corpus spongiosum	Vestibular bulbs
Prostate gland	Skene's glands
Skin on shaft of penis	Labia minora
Scrotum	Labia majora
Testicles	Ovaries
Foreskin	Clitoral hood
Cowper's glands	Bartholin's glands

Table 4.1: Sexual Homology

4.2 Sexual Response

4.2.1 The Sexual Response Cycle

College textbooks on human sexuality usually devote a lot of space to the "sexual response cycle": the physiological changes that take place during the course of a sexual encounter. For example, in their landmark research Masters and Johnson broke the process down into an excitement phase (when the heart rate and blood pressure go up, the clitoris and penis become engorged and possibly more erect, the vagina begins to lubricate itself, and the penis may secrete a few drops of pre-ejaculate), a plateau phase preceding orgasm, an orgasm phase (for both

men and women involving the pleasurable rhythmic contractions that we refer to as “orgasm,” and in men involving at a minimum an increasing feeling of “inevitability” associated with seminal fluid gathering in the upper urethra in preparation for ejaculation), and a resolution phase (in which the body begins to calm down). For men — particularly if ejaculation accompanied their orgasm — their resolution phase will generally include a “refractory period,” in which no kind of sexual stimulation will cause their sexual response cycle to begin again.

However, although I believe knowing sexual anatomy is helpful for everyone, I’m not convinced that for most people knowing all the technical details about the sexual response cycle is equally helpful: on the one hand everyone is a little different and hence each part of the cycle may be differ in intensity or length, but more to the point you probably already understand your own sexual response cycle, through masturbation if nothing else. Hence, at least for those who have opposite-sex partners, I think it makes sense to focus mainly on the **differences** between the male and female response cycles.

In my opinion the “refractory period” described above is the biggest difference, with the biggest implications: it may not always be appreciated by women how quickly (and how for physiological rather than emotional reasons) enjoyment of more sexual stimulation and even the thought of more sex tends to drop off for men after their ejaculation, and it may not always be appreciated by men that their female partners may still be able to enjoy sex after an orgasm. Taken together this suggests that for many mixed-gender couples it may make the most sense for the female partner to have an orgasm first (probably through stimulation that includes her clitoris), before moving on to intercourse.

This is a theme we’ll be revisiting in sections to follow.

4.2.2 The Difference Between Orgasm and Ejaculation

Returning to the male side of things for a moment, there’s an important distinction which needs to be made: the difference between orgasm and ejaculation. Although many men are used to thinking of these terms interchangeably, the difference is that the former refers to the pleasurable rhythmic contractions which make “coming” feel good, while “ejaculation” refers to the actual expulsion of seminal fluid. The point is that by learning to experience orgasm (or something very close to orgasm) *without* ejaculating, it may be possible to avoid most or all of the aforementioned refractory period. Various methods for accomplishing this have been espoused over the years, the simplest of which is to simply pay attention to when you are about to reach the point of “ejaculatory inevitability,” and reduce the intensity of whatever you are doing so that you barely reach that point but do not cross it. This way, you may get to enjoy some of the rhythmic contractions which make orgasm pleasurable, but still retain your erection and be able to continue having sex afterward. This is another theme we’ll be revisiting in sections to follow.

Since the word “coming” can mean either orgasm *or* ejaculation, we’ll use the more specific terms when the distinction matters.

Chapter 5

Masturbation

Most newer sex manuals contain a chapter on masturbation, and a trend seems to be for that chapter to come before any chapters on having sex with a partner. This guide is no exception to that trend, and for good reason: masturbation has real benefits beyond the obvious one (i.e. pleasure), and it represents the one form of sexual release which will be available to you throughout your life regardless of the course your life takes.

5.1 Benefits

5.1.1 As a Form of Sexual Exercise

5.1.1.1 For Staying Sexually Active

Simply put, masturbation is a way to feel sexually active and maintain an erotic dimension to your life regardless of whether you have a regular sex partner or not.

5.1.1.2 For Orgasmic Practice

5.1.1.2.1 For Women: Learning How to Come Imagine there's a trail which leads from your house to a friend's house. The more you travel this trail the more easily you'll remember how the trail goes, until you can clearly remember any part of it, immediately know in relation to both of your houses where you are at any point on it, and instinctively know which turns you need to make to get from one end to the other.

Masturbation is the same way. Although there are obviously emotional dimensions to sex with a partner, figuring out what kind of stimulation most easily gets you off, and learning what the path to orgasm feels like, is essentially like any other physical skill: as you practice it, you get better at it.

The flip side of this, of course, is that you'll be in a better position to guide your partner in what they can do during sex to help you feel good: even if

doing so feels awkward the first time, the benefits can last the lifetime of the relationship.

Masturbation can also be a good way to experiment with different kinds of stimulation that might eventually carry over into sex with a partner (examples might include experimenting with multiple orgasms and/or G-spot stimulation).

5.1.1.2.2 For Men: Learning How NOT to Come Because of the “refractory period” (i.e. the period of time after ejaculation during which you cannot get another erection, and after which it will probably take you even longer to get to the same level of arousal) the orgasmic training benefits of masturbation are a little different for men than for women: you’re still learning what the path to orgasm feels like, and in particular you’re hopefully learning to recognize the physical sensations immediately prior to the “point of no return,” but instead of plowing right through into ejaculation you’ll probably want to hang out for a while just before the “point of no return,” reducing stimulation as needed so that you don’t go over that point into ejaculation.

Then, during intercourse with a partner, you’ll be familiar enough with these sensations to be able to (perhaps) thrust less rapidly or deeply as needed to avoid crossing the “point of no return,” and hence hang out at that especially pleasurable state for even longer.

Your partner probably won’t mind.

Along the same lines, masturbation is also an ideal way to experiment with some of the various “multiple orgasm” techniques for men: you may find them worthwhile or you may not, but there is certainly no harm in giving some of them a shot and forming your own opinion.

5.1.2 As a Tool for Self-Discovery

During masturbation it’s even more obvious what fantasies work for you.

Of course, it’s important to keep in mind that the fantasy world is **not** the same as the real world, just as seeing a documentary about ocean life doesn’t mean you just breathed water. However, in some cases you may be able to identify enjoyable fantasies that there might be some safe and consensual way for you and your partner to sample in real life.

Costume supply stores *do* carry pirate outfits, after all. . .

5.1.3 As an Aspect of Self-Sufficiency

I can’t say it any better than Rachel Venning and Claire Cavanah did in their wonderful book *Sex Toys 101*: “Learning how to get yourself off is as important for self-sufficiency and emotional intelligence as knowing how to cook a meal or make a friend.”

5.1.4 As a Means of Enjoyment

Last but not least: pleasure. Masturbation feels good. In addition to the pleasure of the sex itself, there's the fact that depending on the time of day and how your body responds, an orgasm may leave you feeling energized and relaxed for the rest of the day, or may help you drift off into a wonderful nap (I personally find that in the afternoon a good orgasm can lead to wonderful time-dilated naps with especially vivid dreams).

5.2 Advice

5.2.1 For Women

5.2.1.1 Stuff That Makes Masturbation MUCH Easier

5.2.1.1.1 The Basic Options

5.2.1.1.1.1 A Vibrator Getting a vibrator is the single biggest step most women can take towards an improved sex life, whether on their own or with a partner (though note that for now we're speaking of vibrators meant to stimulate your clit, i.e. ones shaped for external use). Of course you can use your fingers instead, but reaching orgasm is usually easier with a vibrator. Please see this document's accompanying sex toy guide at <http://www.sexuality.org/sextos.html> for specific product recommendations.

5.2.1.1.1.2 A Shower Massager Although vibrators are nice because you can use them while relaxing in bed, and because you can more easily incorporate them into penetrative sex with a partner, there's still also a lot to be said for shower massagers. To start with, you may already have one in your house. But more to the point, if you have a large family or serious privacy concerns, then the advantages of shower massagers are that there's nothing for anyone to find or overhear, and that the bathroom may be the one place in the house where you have some privacy.

5.2.1.1.2 Enhancements to Your Vibrator

5.2.1.1.2.1 Dildos (and Lube) The satisfying feeling of having something just the right size inside you, which your vaginal muscles can bear down on during orgasm, makes dildos an ever-popular sex toy and a great enhancement to the sensations provided to your clit by your vibrator. As with any kind of vaginal penetration, having some kind of water-based lube to use with the dildo can make using it feel even better.

5.2.1.1.2.2 G-Spot Toys Although not all women find G-spot stimulation to be that big of a deal, and not all women find it to be enjoyable, *if* you're going to enjoy it you'll probably find it more enjoyable the more aroused you are. So, masturbation can be an ideal time to experiment with finding and stimulating your G-spot. Special curved, rigid toys have been created to make this easier for you to do on your own.

5.2.1.2 Vibrator Technique

5.2.1.2.1 Basic Focus on the Clitoris Assuming you have some kind of vibrator that's intended for use on your clit, using it is not a complex activity: you turn off the phone if you can, relax into a comfortable position, turn the vibrator on and put it on your clit, maybe move it around in slow circles if that feels good, think about sexy things, and in all likelihood eventually have an orgasm. And even if you don't have an orgasm, it will probably still feel pretty good.

If the vibrations are too strong for your tastes even with the vibrator on its lowest setting, then perhaps use it through panties or even a thin cloth.

5.2.1.2.2 Things You Can Experiment with After a While

5.2.1.2.2.1 Backing Off for Easier Multiple Orgasms If you like, you can play around with different sensations after your first orgasm, just to see what happens. Women vary in the degree to which this works or feels good, but if you move the vibrator just off of your clit but keep it running, you might be able to ramp things back up pretty quickly and enjoy a second orgasm.

5.2.1.2.2.2 Breathing Regularly Breathing just a little more deeply and regularly, while perhaps pursing your lips so that you can feel your breath as you inhale and exhale (nobody knows why that makes a difference but it often seems to), may result in longer and more drawn out orgasms. Of course no two people are the same, so if you find this doesn't change anything for you then don't sweat it (so to speak...).

5.2.1.2.2.3 PC Muscle Contraction The pubococcygeal muscle, or "PC" muscle, is same one as is involved in Kegel exercises. To contract it, just contract the same muscles you would contract if you were urinating and wanted to stop the flow of urine. If you contract them rhythmically as you lead up to orgasm, then the orgasm itself may be stronger. Once again, though, your mileage may vary: as with all of these suggestions, think of them as beginning points for exploration.

5.2.1.3 Later On: Including Masturbation in Partner Sex

Just about everybody finds it sexy when their partner has an orgasm during sex with them. For intercourse, using a vibrator might be particularly easy if

you're on all fours, though if you have a smaller vibrator (perhaps one of the egg-shaped or lipstick-shaped designs) then it might also work well if you're on your back.

5.2.2 For Men

For most men, masturbation is perfectly enjoyable with just one hand combined with mental fantasies, and generally the biggest enhancements are to be found not through the addition of new toys but through the technique discussed earlier of learning to recognize the “point of no return” (again, so that you can then back off a little and enjoy the most pleasurable part of the masturbatory experience for a longer period of time). The one exception to this is the comfort value of some kind of lube or lotion, particularly if you get chafing.

I admit to some embarrassment over the fact that this section is so much shorter than the preceding one, and hope nobody takes it the wrong way: it's just that sometimes life is simple.

5.2.3 For Everyone: Erotica

The primary purpose of pornography/erotica is to enhance masturbation. Of course, some people prefer to shut their eyes and mentally run through their own fantasies, or else to simply enjoy the experience for what it physically is without fantasizing at all. But, if you prefer to masturbate with the help of something sexy to listen to, watch, or read, then in my opinion it's worth spending some time at the beginning figuring out what you enjoy the most. Possible starting points are given in our erotica guide at <http://www.sexuality.org/erotica.html>

Chapter 6

Sex with a Partner

Sex educators love to talk about masturbation, and with good reason: it's an excellent way to learn about yourself sexually, and since throughout our lives we will always have ourselves as a sex partner, in masturbation their audience is never divided into the “haves” and the “have nots.”

However, the reality is that many readers probably breezed through the previous chapters to get to this one, and likewise with good reason: in sex with a partner, to the physical pleasures of sex are added the mind's entire emotional and instinctual apparatus related to socializing and mating. It's tied in with erotic love, which has inspired some of humanity's greatest art. And for most people, over major portions of their lives it's something they deeply crave in a way that no amount of masturbation can completely satisfy.

So, although I understand the desire to skip ahead to this chapter, I would still urge everyone to review at least the earlier “Anatomy” section, as it contains the basic information and terminology on which this chapter is based. I would also urge any female readers who have never had an orgasm to first give their portions of the preceding “Masturbation” chapter a go, and would likewise urge any male readers who don't feel like they have any control over when they ejaculate to do the same.

6.1 Basic Stuff to Keep in Mind

6.1.1 No Two People Are the Same (Hence, Communication...)

No two people are the same, and any stereotype you can think of — however common — might not apply to the person you're with. As such there is just no substitute for paying attention to what your partner seems to like and doesn't seem to like, and there is just no substitute for communicating what you each like and don't like.

In theory I could say that and end this section right there, but in practice

it's often helpful to have a bit of knowledge about what is *common*, so that you at least have a starting point.

However, never forget that whatever your partner says about what they like trumps anything written in this entire guide about what many people *tend* to like: ultimately “normal” means nothing, since you're not having sex with a statistic, you're having sex with a person.

6.1.2 Common Gender-Based Differences

I want this guide to be useful to people of all genders and orientations, but here I need to admit: if you're a man who has sex exclusively with other men, or if you're a woman who has sex only with other women, then you may not find this “Differences” subsection to be that useful.

Unfortunately the differences between male and female anatomy, in a few cases combined with popular myths about sexuality, have created some misunderstandings that need to be addressed directly.

6.1.2.1 What Men Should Know About Women

6.1.2.1.1 Clitoral Stimulation is Usually Needed for Orgasm For their role in perpetuating this misunderstanding I must cite the mainstream porn industry: in many mainstream porn videos the actresses are portrayed as having multiple orgasms, almost immediately after penetration, through intercourse alone.

In real life it doesn't generally work like that way.

I understand completely that porn videos are pure fantasy, but they're also the only chance most folks have to see other people have sex, so it's a pity that what they present isn't always consistent with what enjoyable sex is like for most women.

But, I digress...

6.1.2.1.2 Lube Makes Sense for Penetrative Sex Another thing you don't see in mainstream porn is anybody using lube. The reality is that penetrative sex generally feels better for women when everything is nice and slippery, and although the vagina does produce natural lubrication during sexual arousal, most women find that vaginal penetration of any kind feels better with just a little bit more slathered on whatever beloved toy or body part is going inside them.

Of course, if you're using condoms a little extra water-based lube is basically a requirement, since it helps reduce any chance of the condom breaking.

6.1.2.1.3 Arousal Often Takes Longer When you're actively longing for something, getting it is even more satisfying than it would have been otherwise. And although this is true sexually for both men and women, since on the average it takes longer for women to get aroused than men it's something that's particularly important for men to keep in mind.

In other words, at the beginning of sex (particularly if you two haven't had sex for a while), it's generally good to take your time.

6.1.2.2 What Women Should Know About Men

6.1.2.2.1 Arousal Generally Doesn't Take as Long If you're in a sexually active relationship with a man, surprise contact with his genitals (e.g. initiating sex by rubbing the front of his pants or backing up against him) can feel good in a way that it probably would not for you. So, at least on a physical level taking the initiative sexually is actually easier for you to do than it is for him to do, and particularly if you two have been enjoying sex together on a regular basis it may be a delightful change of pace.

6.1.2.2.2 Firm Contact Can Feel Good Men differ in how firm contact can be with their penis and scrotum/testicles and still feel good. Sometimes a light teasing touch can be very erotic, inducing quite a bit of desire for more, and sometimes firm contact (i.e. much more than would probably feel good to you on your clit) can feel fantastic. The two big tips are:

1. A lot of men like firm contact, at least sometimes.
2. Whether it be firm or light/teasing, "confident" is always a good characteristic for touch to have (i.e. in contrast to "tentative").

6.1.2.2.3 Sex After Ejaculation is Generally Less Fun This was touched on in the earlier section on sexual response, but to recap: after ejaculation men tend to go through a "refractory period," during which the sexual response cycle that begins with arousal and generally continues with erection can't begin again. Men differ in how long this period of time will last, but it does represent a difference between men and women that it's good to stay aware of.

Cuddling, of course, is fine: it's just more *sexual* contact that can sometimes feel like it's "too much," at least immediately after sex.

6.1.2.3 What this Means for Men and Women Together

With slightly different physiology and sexual response, there's a potential for frustration in male-female sex that may not arise elsewhere. So considering all of the above, let's state the "Big Secret" of male-female sex: It Usually Makes Sense for the Female Partner to Come First.

6.1.3 Suggestions for Having a Good Time

The elements of enjoyable sex exist as much in the mind as the body: after all, if that weren't the case then few pleasure-seekers would pursue anything other than masturbation. . .

6.1.3.1 Good Memories are Important

For many people, reminiscing on past sexual experiences is a popular daydreaming topic. So, good sex doesn't just enhance your life in the moment it's happening: memories of that experience have the potential enhance your life in the future.

With that in mind, the following are a few basic tips for improving the memories you end up with.

6.1.3.1.1 Wait for Someone Considerate Particularly if it's your first time having sex, consider waiting for someone you like who likes you back, and who treats you with respect. If this *wasn't* the case for you way back when then don't sweat it, but since our first sexual experience is usually one we remember with special vividness, it's a nice bonus if your memories of it and the person you were with are positive ones.

6.1.3.1.2 Don't Be Too Intoxicated Particularly if it's your first time with someone and there are limits you'd prefer to stay within, it's a good idea to avoid being too intoxicated: habitually regretting what you did the next day is a poor way to live just in general.

6.1.3.1.3 Know Where the Condoms and Candles Are Keep your sex stuff (lube and condoms at least, and maybe a towel) where you can easily find it. Also, note that a few candles can make a *big* difference in how sexy a room looks: just be sure to keep them away from anything flammable, and be sure they can't either tip over or cause problems once they burn down.

6.1.3.1.4 Stick With Your Limits There are plenty of fun things to do together other than intercourse, which for some is a bigger step than they're willing to take at the moment. Additionally, for many people a commitment to stick to safer sex is both necessary and important.

If you decide ahead of time what your limits are and then let someone talk you into lowering them in the heat of the moment, it's likely whatever extra fun either of you had at the time will end up being colored later on by feelings of worry or guilt. So, from both a pleasure-positive perspective as well as (e.g. in the case of safer sex) a health and safety perspective, it's wise to stick with the limits you've decided on.

6.1.3.2 Honesty Keeps it Fun

6.1.3.2.1 Make a Suggestion When Something Doesn't Feel Good This takes a little self-discipline, and if it's something you haven't done with your partner before then it would probably be a good idea to mention it beforehand. But the idea is that *any* time something feels uncomfortable for you, to make a sexy suggestion as to how whatever it is could feel better.

Unfortunately it's easy to get into the habit of gritting your teeth and waiting for something to be over, or hoping it gets better, because you're afraid of disappointing your partner or hurting their feelings. In the long run this really isn't good for you, or fair to your partner.

Asking your partner to do something differently, if what they're doing doesn't feel good at the time, can be awkward the first time. It's less awkward the second time. It's much less awkward if you can find a sexy way to make the suggestion. And before long, discomfort during sex may be only a memory.

I'm not sure who first came up with this, but I've heard many local sex educators repeat it as a guiding principle: "endure nothing."

6.1.3.2.2 Make a Suggestion When You Realize What You Want

Sexual communication isn't just about speaking up when something is uncomfortable: it's about being able to talk to your partner about what you like. Making your partner *guess* what you'd enjoy can be frustrating to him or her, but if asked in the right way the request can be sexy for both of you: a win-win situation.

Once again: it may be awkward the first time, but most people find it gets easier very quickly.

6.1.3.2.3 A Sense of Humor Keeps Everything in Perspective

I'm not talking about making fun of your partner or anything concerning them, but rather of keeping a sense of humor about sex in general. In a situation that feels a little bit awkward or tense, acknowledging the situation in a funny way can help both of you relax and go back to enjoying the sex.

6.1.3.3 Anticipation is Sexy

Looking forward to something increases the enjoyment of it when it actually happens, and in the case of sex keeps you thinking about sex until it happens.

A sexy phone call to your partner doing the day, a sexy note, going to a dance club and teasing them on the dance floor, or anything else that reminds your partner of what they'll get to enjoy later on that night, can all be good things.

6.1.3.4 Self-Confidence is Even Sexier

Self-confidence is one of the sexiest characteristics you can bring to sex: if you know your partner wants to be with you, and that he or she considers sex with you to be a treat, then you might as well act like it.

To me, this means a few extra things:

1. Hot talk is almost always appreciated.
2. Don't put yourself down: no flaw you could perceive in yourself or your body is likely to be as unattractive to your partner as you putting yourself down for it.

6.2 What There is to Choose From

There's no shortage of sexual acts for you and your partner to choose from: the following will only cover the most popular ones, starting with "touchless sex" (stuff that's sexual but which doesn't involve actual contact), continuing with "outercourse" (sex that doesn't involve penetration) and "intercourse" (sex that *does* involve penetration), and concluding with "everything else" (role playing, BDSM, and more).

6.2.1 Touchless Sex

Although I can imagine "touchless" forms of sex being good for partners in long-distance relationships, or for people who have extreme concerns about STDs that cannot be addressed in any other way, or for people who are forgoing sexual contact for a period of time for personal or religious reasons, I can't help but mention one other possible use for it: extreme teasing. Basically, if you're accustomed to having intercourse with your partner on a regular basis, then after a few weeks of being continually teased, and coming *so* close to being touched (but not quite), you'd probably be pretty much ready to explode.

Anyway, here are just a few possibilities:

- You call each other on the phone, and masturbate while talking about what you'd like to do to each other.
- You write each other letters telling each other in graphic detail what you'd like to do to each other, maybe setting a specific date in the future to live that out.
- If you're female, using a vibrator (possibly through your clothes if you don't even want your partner to see you naked yet) while your partner lies very close but doesn't get to touch you.
- Getting very close to your partner, as if you were going to kiss their neck or go down on them, and murmur nasty things to them without actually touching them (this can be pretty cruel, particularly if the recipient *loves* oral sex but has gone without it for a while).

6.2.2 Outercourse

Although there's some disagreement about whether the word "outercourse" should include oral sex or not, as used here outercourse refers to all common forms of sex which do not involve penetration of the vagina or anus.

Although (particularly with oral sex) the risk of STD transmission doesn't completely disappear, all other things being equal most kinds of outercourse tend to be lower-risk activities. They don't involve loss of "virginity" (as traditionally defined in the heterosexual world), and they ordinarily carry no risk of pregnancy.

Even for partners who have long-since moved into enjoying penetrative sex, these can be wonderful forms of foreplay.

6.2.2.1 With Your Body

Also known as “frottage,” this amounts to rubbing your body against your partner’s genitals (possibly while wearing clothes, possibly not).

Sexy dancing at some of the less inhibited nightclubs can amount to this, as can (for women with male partners) finding a moment of privacy to back up into your partner and rub your butt against them. For women with female partners, it can amount to rubbing yourself against your partner’s thigh. Another popular form of frottage is taking a shower together: between the water and all the slipperiness it’s a perfect opportunity to rub your body against your partner’s in sexy ways.

6.2.2.2 With Your Hands

The fingertips are one of the most sensitive parts of the human body, and the hand one of the most versatile. I like to think that hands are to sex what eyes are to everyday life: they’re how you “see” your partner.

6.2.2.2.1 Relaxation Massage Although this isn’t necessarily sexual, it’s definitely *sensual*: being able to give someone a relaxation massage is a wonderful skill, and in the case of a lover can be wonderful prelude to sex (or possibly a wonderful thing to do *after* sex, if you’re feeling especially indulgent. . .). There’s no shortage of books and classes on how to give someone a relaxing full-body massage, but here are a few basic tips:

1. There’s just no substitute for having a massage table: it makes things *much* easier for the person giving the massage, as well as more relaxing for the person receiving it. They aren’t that expensive.
2. Although you can use vegetable-based or nut-based oils from the grocery store as a massage oil, you might want to look into massage therapy lotions: they feel very similar, but are less likely to leave oil stains on sheets. Either way, using a small squeeze bottle that won’t spill is wise.
3. Don’t let your partner get cold: having a sheet on top of the massage table, while they’re lying underneath a second sheet and perhaps a thin blanket, is a good idea (they can stay mostly covered up except for where you’re working). Alternatively, you can crank the heat in the room way up, or more luxuriously yet put the massage table in front of a fireplace with the room lights dimmed.
4. Confident touch is good touch.
5. For long gliding strokes down the back, lean into them a bit with your body weight rather than depending up upper arm strength: the result is smoother, and feels more reassuring to the person receiving the massage.

6. Particularly if your partner has long hair, or spends a lot of time on their feet, giving them a scalp massage or massaging their feet may provide an experience so pleasurable that it's almost erotic — no massage table required.

In general, the feeling of relaxation you get after a good full-body massage from your partner isn't *that* different from the feeling of relaxation you get after sex with your partner: in each case the body's basic need for touch is being satisfied, which authors such as Ashley Montagu have argued is a basic human need.

6.2.2.2.2 Erotic Touch Think of the organization of this entire chapter as follows: we're running through the common sexual acts from the outside of the body inwards (or as some folks will probably think of it, from "light" to "heavy"). So, we'll cover penetration a little later, and this section on erotic touch is just about the outside of the body: helping your partner feel good by using your hands on his penis, or on and around her clit.

6.2.2.2.1 On Women They say the secret of show business is "always leave them wanting more." With sex, perhaps, the secret is a bit different: "don't rush." Particularly for women, genital contact before they're at least slightly turned on generally isn't fun, and can be kind of annoying.

But once you two are turned on, there are two directions this kind of sex can go:

1. With the intent of it leading to orgasm.
2. Without the goal of it leading to orgasm, but rather as a fun and arousing form of touch in and of itself (and possibly as a prelude to other kinds of sex).

The distinction is that in the first case the best way to proceed very much depends on what your partner likes: frankly, the best approach is probably to ask her to show you how she likes her clit touched. After all, the feeling of *almost* getting the right kind of stimulation to get off can be frustrating.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Women differ in what kinds of clitoral stimulation they like, in whether they prefer fingertips or a vibrator, and in how easy it is for someone *else* to get them off this way: as always, people differ sexually just as they differ in what kinds of foods they prefer.
2. If your partner prefers a vibrator to fingers, then lucky you: most bedrooms have electrical outlets, and the vibrator can do its magic endlessly without getting tired. Additionally, since strong vibrators can still feel good through clothing, this provides a way to have a satisfying sexual experience for folks who aren't ready to get totally naked together yet.

3. If your partner prefers fingertips to a vibrator, then it would probably make sense to have a little bottle of water-based lube on hand: a small amount on the fingertips can make them feel quite a bit better as they slide over the clit. Note that this once again brings up a basic principle of good sex: slippery is sexy.
4. If your partner prefers fingertips to a vibrator, then keep in mind that different parts of the clit feel different: if direct contact on the tip of the clit feels too intense to your partner, then sliding along the sides of the clit might feel just right.
5. Particularly as your partner approaches orgasm, it's usually best not to change whatever you're doing.
6. The fun thing about this kind of sex, in comparison to oral sex, is that your mouth is free to say sexy things to your partner, or kiss her.
7. If your partner is very specific in the kind of stimulation she needs to get off, and if even after some practice together she has trouble getting off with your fingers rather than hers, then there's nothing wrong with cuddling, smooching, or spooning while she gets herself off: that can be sexy too, and it's a reminder of the fact that there are countless fun ways to have sex.

6.2.2.2.2 On Men Of course learning more about what feels good to the man you're with will make everything better, but in general there are really only two ways you can go *wrong* when taking your lover's penis or testicles in hand:

1. Being incredibly timid and hesitant in what you're doing.
2. Using too much friction (e.g. your hand firmly sliding over the skin of the shaft of his penis for far too long when both surfaces of skin are completely dry): slippery good, chafing bad. [Note: for an interesting change of pace, try using silk gloves rather than lube...]

Beyond those two basic suggestions, it's more a question of taking something that already feels good and making it feel even better. Here are some tips:

1. Always remember the big benefit of this kind of sex: your mouth is free for saying nice things. General sexy talk, perhaps a lurid description of what he gets to do with you after this, or perhaps nothing more than general patter about how good his hard dick feels in your hand, is always a good thing to try. It doesn't have to be anything complex, and in fact it barely even needs to make sense: just hearing sexy words are often enough to add to the experience. If you have your face close to his penis when doing this it can add an extra charge, by adding implicit oral sex fantasies (if not the reality) to the mix.

2. The simplest position for your hand is simply to have your fingers and thumb make a “tunnel” shape that can travel up and down the shaft of the penis.
3. If you two are using this as the “main course” of sex rather than as a prelude to something else, then it would definitely be best to get hold of some kind of lubricant intended for sex, such as the omnipresent water-based lubes; this way you can do long, firm strokes as much as you like without anything feeling like it’s chafing. If that’s not possible, then use shorter strokes such that the skin covering the penis slides with your hand rather than against it, and go a little faster (this can feel best closer to the head rather than the base of the penis).
4. Remember that you have two hands. For variety, you can try any of the following: using your other hand to cup and support his balls, using your other hand to firmly squeeze the base of the shaft of his penis while your other hand concentrates on the rest of the shaft of his penis, or using your other hand to stimulate the head of his penis (perhaps with your palm once the head of the penis is nice and slippery with a few drops of pre-ejaculate).
5. Good, long, repeated, confident strokes that start at the head of the penis and travel its entire length can feel wonderful, particularly after you’ve been doing something else for a while.
6. If you’re female, then you may want to take the opportunity to squeeze your partner’s penis between your breasts as part of this kind of sex: many men find that image very sexy.
7. Here’s a decadent tip: if you and your partner regularly use this kind of sex as the “main course” of sex (e.g. doing it until he ejaculates) then it can be a nice touch to have a warm, wet washcloth on hand for cleanup afterward. That can feel great.
8. If your partner is willing to either show you how he masturbates, or describe it to you, then you may have a good start in learning what feels best to him.

6.2.2.3 With Your Mouth

Like the fingertips and hands, the lips are an incredibly sensitive part of the human body. Additionally, with the mouth there’s the added charge of this being the same part of the body we associate with eating: another pleasurable, sensuous activity. Plus, oral sex combines touch with taste, for an additional sensory dimension.

For these reasons my guess is that kissing and oral sex will always be popular erotic activities.

6.2.2.3.1 Kissing This is true of just about any aspect of sex, but is particularly true for kissing: it's best when you're enjoying it in and of itself right in the moment — at each indivisible instant — rather than thinking ahead about the next activity or even about the rest of the kiss.

Personally, I like to think of a good kiss as a microcosm of sex itself: it starts light, as both people lose themselves in the experience of each other it gets heavier, and it has a lingering, glowing ending.

6.2.2.3.2 Oral Sex Oral sex is a very, very popular pastime. Not *everyone* loves it, but most people do. And, just on a physical level, oral sex has a lot going for it:

1. The giver gets to enjoy the sensuous feeling of their lover on some of the most sensitive parts of their body (i.e. their lips and tongue), along with their partner's smell and taste.
2. The receiver gets to enjoy nice, wet sexual contact. And as has been mentioned a few times so far: slippery is sexy.

However, I don't believe either of the above represents the biggest reason oral sex is so popular: rather, I believe it's because — psychologically — putting your mouth on your partner's genitals, or taking your partner's genitals into your mouth, is just about the most carnal act imaginable. It's primal, it's impulsive, and it's sexy.

But at least to me, that kind of psychological component means this sexual act makes almost no sense whatsoever unless the person giving it genuinely enjoys and looks forward to doing it for their partner.

So, by all means: if you fundamentally don't enjoy giving oral sex, then don't do it. Instead, pick some other sexual activity that you might enjoy doing with your partner more — after all, it isn't as if there aren't dozens of different kinds of sex to choose from.

However, if you *are* going to do it, then look towards your own enjoyment: if nothing else pick a position that's comfortable for you, think about what you like about your partner, and think about how good this must feel to your partner.

So, that's the first secret of giving good oral sex: if you choose to do it, then enjoy yourself.

The second secret of giving good oral sex is even simpler: keep your hands busy.

6.2.2.3.2.1 On Women Here's what matters:

1. That your partner knows you're enjoying what you're doing.
2. That you figure out where her clitoris is, asking your partner for guidance the first time if necessary. That's where most of your attention will be focused.

3. That you keep a fun attitude: if your partner offers you a suggestion for something that would feel better (i.e. “Honey, just a *little* more to the left...”), understand that it’s probably something that will make a *big* difference to her, and it’s nothing you could have known about otherwise.
4. If your partner starts getting close to coming, then don’t change what you’re doing: keep doing exactly the same thing.
5. If your partner is OK with this, then after a while it might feel good to tease the opening to her vagina with your fingers while going down on her, or use two fingers for vaginal penetration (more on that later).

6.2.2.3.2.2 On Men Here’s what matters:

1. That your partner knows you’re enjoying what you’re doing.
2. Despite the fact that “blow job” is one slang term for going down on a man, it really has nothing to do with “blowing.” Whether you’re taking your lover’s penis in your mouth, or running your mouth along the shaft of your partner’s penis, it’s all about the pressure of your lips and your tongue against your partner. Together with whatever you’re doing with your hands for the lower shaft of his penis or for his testicles, that’s pretty much it.
3. Avoid scraping your teeth against your partner’s skin: that doesn’t feel good to most men, and can make your partner nervous...
4. Particularly after a few minutes of oral sex, spending a little time focusing on the head of your partner’s penis, or the bottom side of his shaft, can feel good: those are particularly sensitive areas.
5. It feels good if you can give all of your partner’s genitals at least a little attention: if nothing else running your hands around and under his balls can make everything feel nice and “included.”
6. Using your hands is one of the big secrets of going down on men. For example, you can use one hand towards the base of his penis, moving in unison with your mouth, to make it feel like you’re taking all of him in your mouth. Alternatively, you can mainly use your mouth and tongue around the head of his penis, and use your hand on the rest of his shaft with a smooth stroking motion. Finally, you can use one hand wrapped around the base of his shaft, and let him thrust: this way there’s a limit to how far into your mouth your partner can go, which may increase your comfort level if you’re concerned about gagging, or if your partner loves receiving oral sex and sometimes gets carried away. In any case, those are just examples: explore and figure out what feels good for you and your partner.

If you're not using condoms as barriers, and if you're using oral sex as the "main course" of sex and don't plan to move onto something else later, then there's the age-old question of whether to "let your partner come in your mouth" or not.

To start with, don't do anything you don't want to do, or that you find distasteful: that's really a bad path to travel just in general when it comes to having a good time with sex, or when it comes to building up trust with your partner. Having said that, if having your partner come in your mouth *doesn't* appeal to you, here's what you can do instead:

1. Make sure you give your partner some kind of stimulation all the way through his orgasm — stopping early tends to produce an orgasm that's only a fraction of what it would have otherwise been. Along the same lines, slow down to a stop rather than stopping abruptly.
2. Since (obviously) in this case you're going to want to want to take your mouth off of your partner's penis before he comes, it's nice to find a way to keep ramping things up even while doing this. One possibility is to use your hand the same way you were using mouth (ideally covering some of the same area your mouth just was), but to start saying nasty things to your partner about how you'd love to see him come. Hot talk goes a long way towards making up for whatever your mouth used to be doing, just in general.

6.2.3 Intercourse

Here we use the term "intercourse" (distinct from "outercourse") to mean any kind of sex involving penetration of the vagina or anus.

One thing should be addressed up front: the fact that we're going to be talking about some very intimate activities here, activities which for many people carry a lot of emotional impact. As such it may seem strange to talk about them in such a clinical way, but the thing to remember is that — ultimately — sex is about people. So, when reading about an unfamiliar activity, don't just follow along in the abstract: instead, perhaps imagine yourself experiencing that activity with an attractive partner whom you like and trust — in other words at least *trying* to imagine a circumstance in which you might find that activity enjoyable.

6.2.3.1 Vaginal

6.2.3.1.1 General Tips

6.2.3.1.1.1 Using Lube As was discussed earlier, the vagina produces its own lubrication when a woman is sexually aroused. However, the degree to which this happens varies with any number of factors, including ones that are outside anyone's control (e.g. age). So, going back to the "slippery is sexy" principle, the first big tip is to have a little bottle of water-based lube (without

Nonoxynol-9) on hand for sex. Simply apply a little to whatever is going to be inserted, and reapply whenever things start to feel uncomfortably unslippery.

6.2.3.1.1.2 Taking Your Time This act in particular tends to be more fun for women the more aroused they are, so take your time getting there: any of the activities described earlier in this chapter might be good appetizers.

6.2.3.1.2 Different Ways People Do It

6.2.3.1.2.1 With Their Partner's Fingers For women who prefer sex with other women, having their lover's fingers deep inside them while simultaneously enjoying full body contact and deep kissing may be at the absolute top of the sexual intimacy thermometer.

For women who prefer sex with men it doesn't have to mean anything less, and there's a lot to be said for it just in general: you're absolutely free of concerns about contraception failure, you're essentially free of concerns about receiving STDs (assuming your partner's hands have healthy, intact, and clean skin), you can experiment with direct G-spot stimulation in a way that penis-in-vagina intercourse doesn't easily allow, and if you're either multi-orgasmic or else just have enormous stamina, then (partner willing) you can go ahead and enjoy sex for hours on end. And of course, there's nothing stopping you from having your partner turn around so you can go down on him while he's finger-fucking you, or from treating him to his favorite kind of sex afterward.

A few tips:

- To reiterate, fingers are the best possible way to experiment with G-spot stimulation.
- Remember the water-based lube.
- Maybe start with one finger, and before that perhaps begin by teasing the outside of the vagina. But ultimately, after sex has gone on for a while, most women find penetration with the first two fingers of one hand to be just the right amount.
- For a change of pace, while your first two fingers press upward into the vagina, you can use your thumb to strum or trace circles over your partner's clit. That can feel nice.
- Make sure your fingernails are clipped.

6.2.3.1.2.2 With Their Partner's Penis In one sense, it seems strange to relegate this form of sex — the subject of so much poetry and song in the heterosexual world, and the overwhelming interest of many of the people who seek out information about sex — to just one subsection in one enormous outline. But keep in mind the bigger picture: that even for heterosexual couples, this is still just one possible form of sexual intimacy among many other

possibilities, and that the intent of this entire chapter is to present the full menu of delightful things to choose from.

6.2.3.1.2.2.1 Positions New books on sexual positions get written every year: from a marketing perspective it's a fantastic excuse to publish books containing dozens full-color pictures of attractive people having sex, and probably amounts to a sure bet at the cash register.

However, from a practical perspective:

1. Most of the sexual positions are just slight variations on three or four basic ones.
2. None of the more bizarre and/or athletic ones tend to add anything in terms of pleasure over what the basic ones do.

This isn't to say that working through one of the "positions" books can't be fun (a subject we'll revisit a bit little later), but chances are the positions you'll find the most enjoyable and comfortable in the long run will be one of those described below.

In general, it's worth repeating that as enjoyable as the sex may still be, most women cannot reach orgasm without some kind of stimulation directly to the clitoris. Of course, one perfectly viable way to approach sex is for the woman to have an orgasm first, then the rest of intercourse amounts to the guy having his turn. But, the thought of "simultaneous orgasm" (even though in my opinion it's perfectly fine to take turns enjoying them) is important to a lot of people, and admittedly it can be fun when it works. So, with that in mind, we'll be sure to mention it if there's a variation on one of the following positions which allows the clitoris to get some direct attention during intercourse.

6.2.3.1.2.2.1.1 Man-on-Top In other words, the classic "Missionary Position," and several variations on it.

This can be a lot of fun, particularly for couples who like to enjoy deep kissing or nasty talk along with their sex. You get full body contact, you get easy and close eye contact, and the person on the bottom can enjoy a nice "enveloped" feeling.

Variations include:

1. The woman wrapping her legs behind her partner's back a little further up, for a different angle and a slightly different sensation (or alternatively putting a pillow or two under her bottom, which can achieve largely the same thing).
2. The man supporting more of his weight on his hands (or better yet fore-arms), particularly if it's hot or his partner is starting to feel squished.
3. The woman can reach her hands over her head and push back against the headboard of the bed, or the wall, for a little extra force in vigorous fucking (not to mention less sliding towards the head of the bed).

4. For especially passionate and vigorous thrusting, the man can press his feet against the foot of the bed so that less energy is wasted sliding around the bed when thrusting (note that it's good to keep these kinds of things in mind when buying a bed — as much as I love the minimalist style in furniture, beds lacking something raised and solid at their foot are less attractive for this reason). Alternatively, holding your partner's shoulders from underneath, or grabbing something on the headboard, can serve the same purpose.
5. If the man can raise himself up a bit, perhaps supporting his weight on his knees, then although this might not allow thrusting that's quite as deep, it does free the women to rub her clit with her fingers, or apply a vibrator to the same. Then, after an orgasm, everyone is still in a perfect position for more sex.

6.2.3.1.2.2.1.2 Woman-on-Top This position provides the woman with a great deal of control, and for women who find themselves able to reach orgasm through intercourse alone this position may be the easiest one for that to happen in. For women who have a healthy amount of sexual self-confidence, and are so inclined, it's also a great position to tease and talk dirty to their partner in.

If you and your partner are going to be having sex for a long period of time, it also makes sense to switch between this position and one of the others so that everyone gets a turn lying down.

Of course, the partner on the bottom doesn't have to be completely inactive: rhythmic thrusts, as long as they're in rhythm with what his partner is doing, can be a positive thing.

Obviously this position provides good opportunity for clitoral stimulation, as the woman can simply lean back a little bit, supporting herself with one arm and working her clit with her other hand. And who doesn't enjoy a nice, sexy show from time to time?

6.2.3.1.2.2.1.3 Rear Entry This position (also known as “doggie style”) is popular for a number of reasons:

1. It has a raw, animal edge to it that many people find very sexy.
2. The woman can easily change the angle of penetration for different sensations.
3. This is by far the *easiest* position in which the clitoris can also be stimulated: the woman can finger her clit, or apply a vibrator to her clit, all without needing a change in position or disturbing anything her partner is doing.
4. Men who love the look of their partner's bottom get to see their partner's bottom.

5. If it's summer and you don't have air conditioning, this position offers less skin-to-skin contact than other positions, so there's less of a chance anyone will start to feel uncomfortably hot or sweaty.
6. Nobody is lying on anybody, so there's less chance anyone will either feel squished or worry too much about whether they're making their partner feel squished.

Obviously one disadvantage of this position is that both people are on their knees, which is why for lengthy sex it may make sense to alternate this position with one of the others.

The other disadvantage is that you don't get to enjoy eye contact with your partner, though I suppose you could arrange a mirror near the head of the bed if you want to take care of that in a nice, sexy way.

Unfortunately (and I hate to have to bring this up) there's one possible disadvantage to this position when having sex with someone new: if you expect your partner to be using a condom, then this position allows him to more easily take the condom off without you noticing. If you trust your new partner and have reason to trust him, then obviously this is nothing to be concerned about, but for casual sex with someone you don't know that well, or while intoxicated in a "party" setting, it might not be the wisest position to pick unless you're keeping a very close eye on things.

6.2.3.1.2.2.1.4 Edge of the Bed The man stands up, and the woman lies on her back either on the bed (if it's the right height), or on a massage table, or on one of those special slings especially designed for this kind of sex. To change the angle of penetration, she can either put her feet up on her partner's shoulders, or else (if the edge of the bed or table is close enough) press them against the wall.

Obviously it's incredibly easy for the woman to reach her clitoris in this position. This position also removes any pressure from her stomach or knees, and as such might be ideal for women who either suffer from back problems or are in the early stages of pregnancy.

6.2.3.1.2.2.1.5 Everything Else As we mentioned earlier, there are far fewer sex positions in everyday use than some books might lead you to believe: honestly, even if they've tried many others, most people eventually gravitate towards one or more of the positions described above, simply because they're easy, comfortable, and work well.

Having said that, there *is* still value in picking up one of those illustrated sex positions books and spending a silly evening trying to go through all of them in order with your partner. Since in doing this the focus has shifted from trying to please each other to just trying to accomplish something together, some of the pressure that might otherwise make one or both of you nervous about sexual communication will hopefully be released in a fun way.

6.2.3.1.2.2.2 Enjoying it Longer Within reason, sex is often sexier the longer it goes. In the case of sex between men and women, the reason may often be that women often take longer to get aroused (perhaps especially if she and her partner aren't having sex regularly), and hence the longer sex goes on the more time she spends in the zone where it's the most fun.

With that in mind, what follows are a few tips on how to enjoy sex for lengthier periods of time.

6.2.3.1.2.2.2.1 For Women Here are the big tips:

1. For any kind of penetrative sex, make sure you have some water-based lube, and reapply a little if things start to feel unslippery.
2. Speak up if anything is making you uncomfortable: for example, if your knees are getting sore from the "doggie style" position, then suggest a switch to your partner being on top.
3. It's helpful to keep a water bottle nearby: a nice cool drink at the right time can be very refreshing, and it's silly to have to go all the way to the kitchen to get it.
4. If you're using safer sex supplies, then make sure nothing you're using contains Nonoxynol-9 (this stuff is now considered by the CDC to be a bad safer sex idea just in general, but for sex over extended periods of time it's probably fair to assume it's an even worse idea).
5. If you can queue up several albums in your music player beforehand, and set the entire group on repeat, then do so: going from music to silence can break the mood a little, but hearing the same album over and over can also be a drag.
6. Start earlier in the evening.

6.2.3.1.2.2.2.2 For Men Since after an ejaculatory orgasm men generally go through a "refractory period," which has to be waited out before their sexual response cycle can begin again, what may be most helpful for extended sessions of sex (or at least, any kind of sex that involves their penis) is a high level of body awareness so that their ejaculatory orgasm can be truly saved for the end of the evening.

This was discussed earlier in the chapter on masturbation, but it's worth repeating: using masturbation to learn exactly what your body feels like just before it crosses the "point of no return," and then during sex with your partner either pausing or thrusting more slowly if you're about to cross over this point, are what may make the biggest difference.

In the context of a relationship where you can easily communicate during sex, this opens up potentially any form of sex to be enjoyable for as long as you like.

6.2.3.1.2.3 With Their Partner’s Strap-On For women who have sex with other women and would like to try using a strap-on dildo, the critical first step is selecting a quality harness and dildo combination: patronize a shop which caters to women and carries a variety of high-quality harnesses with matching silicone dildos, and which can provide advice to you about proper fit for your body type.

After donning their strap-on, but before continuing sex with their partner, some women find it helpful to spend a few seconds getting used to the toy: perhaps feeling the length of the attached dildo, lightly pressing it back against the pubic bone, and in general letting the mind start becoming aware of this new object that it’s going to be expected to use as if it were a body part. This may have a positive impact on how natural using the strap-on will feel.

Other than that, it’s all about practicing: even if you select quality gear that’s adjusted properly, it may be a little while before using it feels completely natural to you.

6.2.3.2 Anal

Although it isn’t everyone’s cup of tea, there are several good reasons why anal penetration (or even stimulation of the anal opening without actual penetration) is such a popular sexual activity:

1. The anus is very rich in nerve endings, resulting in intense and interesting sensations whenever it is intentionally stimulated.
2. Some men find that anal penetration can stimulate their prostate gland, which (especially when they are already aroused) can put an interesting new spin on the sexual sensations they receive from stimulation of their penis.
3. Some may find an erotic charge in anal sex because they think of it as being somehow “naughty.” Others may find an erotic charge in anal sex because the sensation of taking something inside their body may feel so unusual and/or intimate.
4. Wearing a specially-designed toy such as a “butt plug” during sex results in different sensations when you move your pelvis. Alternatively, if you practice PC muscle contraction during sex for orgasm enhancement, then you’ve probably also noticed when you clench your PC muscle the muscles around your anus tighten as well: having something for them to clench around just makes you even more aware of this clenching, in a way that you might find erotic and interesting.

As a side note, I’m told that some heterosexual men are hung up about whether anal penetration will somehow “make them gay.” Obviously, having something in your butt doesn’t make you gay: being sexually attracted to other men is what makes you gay, and so far nobody has found a way to make that happen for straight men any more than they’ve found a way to make gay men

straight. Put in another way: if having had the experience of, during oral sex, your female partner putting her finger in your anus and you liking the sensation could somehow make you gay, then there would be far, far more gay men in the world than there currently are.

6.2.3.2.1 General Tips

6.2.3.2.1.1 Going Slowly Especially with a partner new to any kind of anal play (or who may have had bad experiences with it in the past but wants to give it another try with you) it's important to go slowly, and let the person being penetrated decide when they want more.

Also, keep in mind that anal play doesn't have to mean anal penetration: the outside rim of the anus is very sensitive in and of itself, and running a lubed finger around it can be plenty arousing for some people.

So: start slowly, go slowly, and listen to what your partner is saying.

6.2.3.2.1.2 Using Lube Unlike the vagina, the anal passageway doesn't produce its own lubrication. So, when inserting anything into the anus, lube is in order. The usual water-based lubes (once again, without Nonoxynol-9) are perfectly fine for most kind of anal play.

One caution, however: under no circumstances can I recommend that you purchase any of the anal lubes which are marketed as containing "numbing agents." If anal sex is uncomfortable for you, then examples of *productive* responses might include asking your partner to go slower, using more lube, using a smaller dildo, or maybe even just skipping the anal play altogether for the time being. By contrast, an example of an *unproductive* response would be deadening one of the body's natural warning signals.

6.2.3.2.1.3 Stopping if Anything Hurts Anal penetration shouldn't hurt: the tissues involved are delicate, and sharp pain in particular shouldn't be ignored.

6.2.3.2.1.4 Keeping Clean Although Hepatitis A would be a concern if one partner has it and the other isn't vaccinated against it, for many people general cleanliness is their biggest concern about anal play.

Even if so, it isn't necessary to go through anything as drastic as an enema before ordinary kinds of anal play if you want to feel clean. Simpler measures for fastidious folks include:

1. Saving anal play for when you and your partner are in the shower together (note that this isn't a substitute for safer sex barriers if they're needed — rather it simply may be perceived by some as a cleaner and more comfortable setting for anal play just in general).

2. Donning latex or Nitrile gloves (available at most drugstores) before putting your fingers in your partner, and peeling off/discarding the gloves afterward.
3. Putting a condom over any toy that you're about to insert into your partner's anus (note: this is something that's a good idea just in general for any toy that cannot be sterilized, regardless of your personal cleanliness preferences).
4. Using a condom, whether or not it is needed for safer sex reasons.
5. Using a sheet of saran wrap (perhaps with a bit of water-based lube on your *partner's* side of the barrier) to cover the anus if you'll be engaging in rimming (i.e. stimulating the external part of your partner's anus with your tongue).

6.2.3.2.2 Different Ways People Do It

6.2.3.2.2.1 With Their Partner's Fingers Fingers are endlessly versatile when it comes to sex, and anal play is no exception. Here are just a few examples:

1. A lubed finger is an easy way to stimulate and tease the exterior of the anus.
2. A soapy finger in the shower, or a lubed finger around the behind during oral sex, are easy ways to start experimenting with anal penetration.
3. Fingers are also one of the easiest ways for men to experience prostate stimulation: once you're aroused, if your partner presses towards the root of your penis from inside your anus, then they'll probably be able to feel the gland itself (and if not you could certainly tell them once things start to feel interesting).

One important point: fingernails should be short if you're going to use them for anal penetration. Remember that the tissues of the anus are extremely sensitive, so any bumps or sharp edges to your fingernails, even if they look small, are best avoided.

6.2.3.2.2.2 With Their Partner's Penis Fingers and/or toys are actually the best way to get started with anal penetration, but for some people who have male partners the thought of penetration by their partner's penis may be a potent one.

Lube is always in order, as are condoms (particularly if there are any possible STD concerns, or if one of you has concerns about cleanliness).

It's also especially important for the penetrating partner to listen: if your partner asks you to slow down or stop, and you don't listen, then at a minimum you're risking spoiling this activity for the two of you in the future.

6.2.3.2.2.3 With a Sex Toy The big safety virtue of toys specifically designed for anal play is that they can't get "lost" inside the anal passageway, no matter what kind of mishap may happen: they generally have flanged bases which prevent anything like this from happening.

And, of course, they're given shapes meant to feel good — perhaps involving small bulges that provide a fascinating sensation as they slip past the anus itself.

6.2.3.2.2.3.1 Butt Plugs For most couples (or individuals who simply want to add a new dimension to masturbation), the simple "butt plug" will be just about the ultimate anal toy: not only are they designed not to go too far in, but they're also designed to easily *stay* in without anyone's hand there to keep them in. So, you can put a condom over one, apply some lube, insert it, and then go on having sex the way you normally do, but with the addition of an interesting new sensation in your pelvic area that accompanies every pelvic thrust, PC muscle squeeze, or orgasmic contraction.

6.2.3.2.2.3.2 Anal Dildos The distinction between these toys and butt plugs is that anal dildos aren't meant to stay in on their own once they're inserted: rather, they're intended to be slowly thrust in and out, by either you or your partner, for a sensation of movement within the anus that's quite distinct from the insistent/consistent pressure of the "stay in place" butt plug.

6.2.3.2.2.3.3 Strap-On A strap-on harness allows one to hold an anal dildo in place against the pubic bone, hence allowing "hands free" anal penetration. Although in theory there are some circumstances in which men might choose to wear a strap-on (perhaps using a different harness design that holds the dildo against the upper thigh rather than against the pubic bone above the penis), in practice these toys are mainly purchased and worn by women for use with their partners.

6.2.4 Everything Else

This section covers several popular forms of sex that are just a little less common than most of the ones we've discussed so far.

Personally, at least when it comes to anything safe, I feel there's a lot to be said for cultivating a mutual "Sure, why not? Let's give it a try and see if we like it..." attitude:

1. When it comes to kinds of sex other than the ones you and your partner usually have, you'll probably have to communicate at least a little bit just to make the new thing work. This may make communication easier even for the kinds of sex you usually have — and never forget what a big difference it can make if you're able to say "Mmmm... Just a little more to the left..." or "Just a little softer, sweetie" or "Oh wow keep doing *exactly* that" or "God yes, fuck me harder!" to your partner and then get what you're asking for.

2. Life often seems to go by more quickly than we'd like. If there's anything you and your partner might enjoy together beyond what you're currently doing, then it's probably better to find that out sooner rather than later so that you have even more years to enjoy it together.

6.2.4.1 Role Playing

“Role Playing,” for example where one partner agrees to be “in charge” of what happens during sex that evening while the other partner agrees to assume a submissive role, or where one partner agrees to play the role of the pillaging rogue while the other plays the role of the fair maiden, is a very popular and perhaps even beneficial kind of sex play:

1. In its “power play” or “Dominance and submission” forms (i.e. where one partner agrees to do what the other tells them for a certain period of time) it can serve as good practice for the “dominant” partner in learning to communicate about what they want sexually, while the “submissive” partner may get to enjoy a brief respite from the stress of having to make decisions.
2. In the case of other kinds of roles it can serve as a creative outlet, as well as an erotic opportunity to experience your partner acting and dressing like a completely different person — perhaps almost like having an affair *without* having an affair?

Either way, it's important to keep in mind that the following principle should infuse any form of role playing, just as it should infuse any other form of sex with your partner: ongoing consent. In other words, any of the people participating in the role playing “scene” should be able to stop it at any time, and there should be a way to easily distinguish acted-out pleading in the context of the scene (e.g. “Oh no Mr. Pirate please don't put that in me *it's so big!!!*”) from a real request to slow down or stop (e.g. “OK, this is seriously not working for me, we need to stop right now.”) Generally, the clearest way to be sure there are no misunderstandings is to pick a “safeword”: an unusual word or phrase like “red” or “safeword” or your partner's middle name, which when used by either of you means you both stop what you're doing and either quit for the evening, take a rest break, or discuss/resolve what was going wrong and resume.

6.2.4.1.1 Discovering Your Fantasies Figuring out what kinds of fantasies you or your partner have (and ideally have in common) is a good first step, so that you can make an initial guess as to what kinds of roles might be fun to play out with each other. There are two general approaches to finding them: the “on your own” approach and the “with your partner” approach.

Of course, there's no reason you can't try both.

6.2.4.1.1.1 On Your Own: Thinking Back on Your Best Experiences Personally, I'm of the opinion that we have more to learn from our best sexual experiences than from our worst ones. So, which do you consider your best sexual experiences? Is there anything they all have in common?

Alternatively, what scenarios do you fantasize about when you masturbate? If you're not used to fantasizing when you masturbate, then at least try to imagine some of the common sexual activities and fantasies you may have at heard about, in the hopes of finding something that's an obvious hot button for you.

At this point we should probably pause to address "fantasy vs. reality." In general, fantasies can be strange things. Personally, I have erotic fantasies involving being crowned emperor with complete dominion over the entire earth. Yet, ironically, in real life I have no serious attraction to a career in politics, and in general can see no relation between this fantasy and what I actually do (or even *want* to do) in real life. Nevertheless, my fantasy is no less potent for this.

In other words, it is your actions in the real world which matter: as long as you're sane and can distinguish between "fantasy" and "reality" as easily as you can distinguish between "fiction" and "non-fiction," then I personally wouldn't worry too much about the level of "political correctness" in your fantasies. And, if you and your similarly consenting adult partner can find a way to act out something like them in a safe way that involves only each other, then more power to you.

6.2.4.1.1.2 With Your Partner: "Keep Talking or I'll Stop" Ah yes... The classic game called "Keep Talking or I'll Stop."

You could probably figure out how it's played just from the name, but the general idea is for you to give your partner his or her favorite sexual act, and as long as he or she continues to stream-of-consciousness babble about various fantasies he or she finds arousing, or has masturbated to in the past, then your partner gets to continue to enjoy what you're doing. Otherwise, you stop until they continue.

The thing to emphasize going in is that there are essentially no standards for grammar or story cohesion: babbling is all you expect, and if they can't manage to think of anything at the moment it's OK to simply repeat "oh fuck" or "yes" or "god that feels so good" until they do.

The other two important factors are the degree to which your partner can trust you won't judge them for whatever they say, and believes you're enjoying listening to them even if they fantasize they're describing isn't one you personally share.

In my opinion this is a fantastic way to become more comfortable communicating during sex, if for no other reason than that it directly associates using one's voice with pleasure. It's also a great way to break through any worries as to whether your partner would judge you for harmless parts of your inner life.

6.2.4.1.2 Acting Out Fantasies With Your Partner

6.2.4.1.2.1 The Four C's of Role Playing

6.2.4.1.2.1.1 Clarity As we've already mentioned, it's good to select a "safeword": a special word, which wouldn't come up in the role you're playing, that you and your partner agree will mean you'll pause whatever you're doing and talk to each other "out of role." If nothing else you can just use the word "safeword" itself.

If you two have never done any kind of role playing before, then it might also be helpful for each of you to think over and share whether there's anything you could conceivably be asked to do that you know you'd never want to do (also known as a "hard limit").

6.2.4.1.2.1.2 Creativity You may find that erotic role playing with your partner can be a real creative outlet. If so, then feel free to brainstorm, and let your mind dream up variations on fun things you've done before: it's like planning a fancy date, or a vacation, and it's another way to show your partner they're important to you.

6.2.4.1.2.1.3 Clothing Think about how you might feel directing traffic wearing pajamas, and then think about how you might feel directing traffic wearing a full policeman's outfit.

Clothing can be a fantastic way to help you feel as if you're really living your role, and likewise it's a great antidote to feeling self-conscious about your role (i.e. since with the costume you're projecting the role even without saying a word).

I'm not even necessarily thinking of costume supply places here: black leather conveys a mixture of sexual confidence and comfort with sexual power, a nice suit (whether male or female) conveys a more generalized form of power, an expensive dress with sultry tones may be perfect for a "high-priced call girl" fantasy, etc.

6.2.4.1.2.1.4 Confidence Self-confidence enhances almost any role, and is sexy in almost any circumstance.

But in my opinion, particularly when you're just starting out with role playing, confidence is a house that's built on a foundation of trust.

So, be generous with praise, and look for positive (and sexy) ways to offer suggestions to your partner if such are necessary. Remember that it isn't just sexual vulnerability which is being offered here, but a sort of character vulnerability: so, be especially kind to each other.

6.2.4.2 Expanded Orgasms

People love orgasms. So, if the pleasurable muscular contractions of orgasm can be made to last longer, or be even stronger, then that's just more of a good thing.

6.2.4.2.1 Basic Tips for Stronger Orgasms

6.2.4.2.1.1 Teasing Think of how much better food tastes when you're really hungry.

The sexual equivalent of that is teasing — giving someone just enough sexual stimulation to stay very aroused and erect/engorged but not enough to actually pass over into orgasm.

The result of the above-average level of sexual tension may be an above-average orgasm, once the teasing is over the recipient is finally getting everything they've been craving.

6.2.4.2.1.2 Kegels The pubococcygeal (“PC”) muscle, which is so directly involved in sex and orgasm, can be exercised like any other muscle: simply mentally recall the muscle you would tighten to stop the flow of urine if you were urinating, and tighten it as if that's what you were doing. Perhaps tighten, hold for a second or two, relax, and repeat: these “Kegel exercises” are something you can do anywhere, and for both men and women a stronger PC muscle may result in stronger orgasms.

You can also experiment with rhythmically tightening your PC muscle during sex as orgasm approaches: particularly for women, this may lead to a stronger orgasm.

Men may find that strongly contracting their PC muscle and leaving it tightened can help them avoid ejaculation, if they're right on the edge of the “point of no return” and feel like even completely stopping wouldn't be enough.

6.2.4.2.2 Some Different Ways Multiple Orgasms Can Happen To start with, multiple orgasms aren't necessary to enjoy sex: it's perfectly valid to just enjoy one big one.

Also, people differ in how well the techniques described below will work for them, and if any of them *do* work how enjoyable the subsequent orgasms will be in comparison to the first.

As such, don't get too hung up or goal-oriented about any of this: it's fun to try the different techniques, but if none of them work well for you then don't sweat it.

6.2.4.2.2.1 For Men As it stands, most of the published methods by which men can attempt to experience multiple orgasms fall into one of the following categories:

- Paying close attention to where you are in your level of arousal, and slowing down, stopping, or changing your thrusting as needed to keep yourself just under the “point of no return.” This doesn’t result in multiple ejaculations, but if you get close enough to the point of no return without going over it, then you may get to experience some of the pleasurable contractions of orgasm without ejaculation and the subsequent loss of your erection (in other words, you can then keep on enjoying the sex). The downside is that the attention required to *almost* reach this point without going over it may be more effort than it’s worth: you might prefer to stay well below the point of no return and enjoy sex just at that level without going for any non-ejaculatory orgasmic contractions. Either way, if you want to learn any of this, it’s generally recommended that you first learn to do it through masturbation — that way you have complete control over the stimulation you’re receiving, and are free to pay full attention to exactly what things feel like at each point.
- As a variation on the above, firmly contracting your PC muscle or firmly squeezing the base of your penis (or else having your partner squeeze the base of your penis) just at the “point of no return.” The contraction or squeeze should continue until the physical urge to ejaculate has passed. This technique can help prevent ejaculation if you’re at a point where it would otherwise be unavoidable.
- Doing something to fool the body into dodging the point of no return, by quickly releasing a lot of overall physical tension (or at least that’s how I interpret this approach — it’s usually couched in much more exotic jargon. . .). One published technique involves a quick vocalized exhalation from the diaphragm just before ejaculation is about to become inevitable: you then get to experience a feeling of “relief” which is akin to orgasmic release, but which backs the sexual response cycle away from the point of no return.

6.2.4.2.2.2 For Women Almost no men have multiple orgasms “naturally” (i.e. without the help of some specific technique, such as one of those described earlier). By contrast, many women do. Obviously, that’s a difference.

The following are some suggestions which may foster multiple orgasms for women, though once again: if none of them work for you even after a little practice, then it’s still nothing to get hung up about. Probably the best attitude is to simply think of the following as fun things to experiment with during masturbation, and if one of them consistently leads somewhere good and can be incorporated into partner sex, then think of that as a nice bonus.

1. During masturbation (particularly with a vibrator) try using lighter pressure, but after your first orgasm don’t just turn off the vibrator: instead move it just to the side of your clit, or to another part of your vulva, and keep moving it around. Some women find that this allows their level of arousal to just dip down a bit rather than going down towards zero,

making it easy a few minutes later to return focus to the clit and keep going. It's worth a try.

2. Particularly as orgasm approaches, start breathing more regularly and deeply (emphasizing the exhalations), while contracting your PC muscle in time. Women vary in their experience of this kind of thing, but it's possible it may result in a prolonged orgasm or else a shorter time period until your next one.
3. Try G-spot stimulation. First, start with some warm-up on your clit. Then, if you're with a partner, perhaps enjoy some circular sweeping motions around the inside of your vagina using the first two fingers of your partner's hand, alternated with firm, insistent, circular pressure against your G-spot with those same fingers. Continue to stimulate your clit, or not, as the mood strikes you. Alternatively, if you're masturbating, firmly pressing into your G-spot with a curved, rigid sex toy while maintaining the vibrator's focus on your clit using a "low" setting.

6.2.4.2.3 Spirituality-Influenced Approaches to Sex

6.2.4.2.3.1 What We're Talking About Here You may have heard the term "Tantric sex" before, and if you've ever been in a New Age bookstore you may have seen flyers for workshops promising to teach "ancient sexual wisdom" or "sexual secrets of the east." You may have wondered what all this is about.

For the most part, these books and workshops tend to be at least indirectly inspired by (generally Eastern) esoteric spiritual writings. And, we should be clear that "esoteric" and "inspired by" are indeed the key words: in no case I'm aware of does what is being presented in these books and workshops represent the everyday practice of any of the world's major religions (including mainstream Hinduism or Taoism), and in some cases it either bears little resemblance to the original source material or else extracts only the sexual material from a much larger whole.

There are many branches of this type of thought in North America and Western Europe today, including:

- Ones which refer to themselves as "Tantric," and borrow language from esoteric Hinduism. These typically concern themselves with the mystical connection between both partners, and the value of slow eye-gazing sex.
- Ones which borrow language from esoteric Taoism. For men, these tend to emphasize the value of sex which includes orgasm — perhaps even multiple orgasms — but not ejaculation.
- Ones based in Wiccan culture or other forms of neo-paganism. These tend to emphasize the symbolic meaning of sex in the Earth's cycle of life, the value of setting up an environment for sex that is pleasing to the senses and

filled with symbolic items, and perhaps involve the “sex magick” concept of “dedicating” your sexual activity toward some real-world result you both hope to achieve.

- Non-denominational and (essentially) secular approaches which do not claim direct allegiance to any one form of historical religious thought, though they may have originally derived their inspiration from any number of sources. The best example of this more modern approach is currently the Body Electric School.

There are many other examples, but those given above are the ones you’re currently most likely to encounter.

6.2.4.2.3.2 Is All This For Real? If by “for real” you mean “effective,” then the answer is generally yes: beneath all the exotic jargon (which may or may not be to your taste) you will often find ideas that are perfectly sound. For example, who wouldn’t enjoy their lover taking the time to set up a sexy bedroom environment, who doesn’t enjoy lovemaking that takes its time, and who doesn’t like being treated as if they’re valued?

However, if by “for real” you instead mean “true to our best historical knowledge concerning common sexual behaviors in the cultures or faiths whose names these books and workshops share,” then to be perfectly honest the record is mixed. Yes, in a few cases people are merely borrowing a few exotic words from another religion and inventing something out of whole cloth that would be unrecognizable and/or profoundly offensive to essentially any real follower of that religion. But in other cases, perhaps in the best spirit of multiculturalism and the information age, people are drawing on the best of the past and the present to create something completely new: something which they do not then claim has any relationship to other religious faiths or cultures.

As an admirable example of the latter, I would put forward the Body Electric School.

As a particularly egregious and offensive example of the former, I would submit a certain nationally-promoted series of workshops purportedly based on the sexual practices of a specific Native American tribe, practices which as far as any legitimate researchers have been able to discern were all *completely* made up by the workshop promoter. Furthermore, the individual who created and promoted these workshops apparently had no real connection to the tribe he claimed to represent — including not even being able to speak their language. These workshops have, rightly, earned angry protests by real members of the tribe in question.

As in all things, perhaps much of the rest falls somewhere between these two extremes.

6.2.4.2.3.3 Non-Religious Suggestions Anyone Could Enjoy Assuming their beliefs are sincere, I do not feel it’s my place to sit in judgment

of anyone else's claims concerning higher powers, higher planes of existence, spiritual "energies," etc.

So instead, what follows is an attempt to summarize the most common **secular** ideas which may be found in the spirituality-based sex workshops offered today. They are all perfectly sound ideas which do not involve any form of spirituality in any way, or require any change in one's religious beliefs.

6.2.4.2.3.3.1 Before Getting Together

6.2.4.2.3.3.1.1 Making Time for Your Partner In other words, making a date with your partner and setting aside time specifically for sex just as you might set aside uninterrupted time to attend a fancy dinner with friends or a sporting event. This lets your partner feel valued, allows him or her to look forward to the experience as the day goes on, and insures that you two actually *do* have an opportunity for sex during the week: an important consideration for couples who either have demanding careers or children.

There is nothing esoteric or controversial about this: it's just common sense, particularly for people with busy lives.

6.2.4.2.3.3.1.2 Creating a Sensuous Atmosphere Everybody looks better by candlelight, and the fact that you took the time to light some candles, to put on some nice music, to make sure you know where all of your sex supplies (e.g. lube and a towel) may be found, are all nice ways of showing your partner you look forward to your time together and that you value sex with them. There is nothing religious about this: once again it's just common sense, and it's an expression of the same sensual attitude that can make any part of life more enjoyable.

6.2.4.2.3.3.1.3 Clearing Your Mind of Other Thoughts Sex is more enjoyable if you can first clear your mind of other worries from the work day, or of what chores you should do afterward, and focus fully on the experience you're having with your partner.

This doesn't have to be anything fancy, and there doesn't have to be anything religious about it: a minute or two of calm and deep breathing with your eyes closed while you think about nothing other than the feeling of the air moving in and out of your lungs, followed by a minute or two of thinking about nothing other than your partner while you continue to breathe in the same way, would probably be more than enough to make a big difference for most people.

Hot baths are a great place to do this: since they make your skin feel differently afterward, they serve as a physical reminder that you're going to be focusing on something sensual for a while.

6.2.4.2.3.3.2 The Physical Side of Sex

6.2.4.2.3.3.2.1 Making the Whole Body Feel Cared For and Good

For example, by giving your partner a full body massage before sex, his or her whole body will feel good to him or her during sex. Who could argue with that?

6.2.4.2.3.3.2.2 Having Sex that’s Fun for Everyone Across all of the different “spiritual sexuality” books and workshops that I’ve ever heard of, there’s one common theme: intending sex to be physically fun for both of the people involved. In other words, the tiresome pattern of “Person A crawls on top of Person B, has an orgasm after two minutes, then rolls over and falls asleep leaving Person B frustrated” isn’t considered a desirable norm. There’s generally a high level of awareness on the part of the educators about female anatomy (including the clitoris), the sexual response cycle for both men and women, etc: in other words, many of the things we’ve discussed so far in this guide.

6.2.4.2.3.3.2.3 Breathing Rhythmically and Attentively Instead of tensing up and breathing quickly and shallowly as orgasm approaches, breathe calmly and deeply, stay aware of your whole body, and try to keep your whole body relaxed. The claim is that this can result in you spending more time in a very pleasurable pre-orgasmic state which makes your whole body feel good all the way to the fingertips.

One guess as to why this works is that tensing up with rapid, shallow breathing triggers orgasm early, and that doing the opposite somehow tells your body, “There’s no rush, enjoy yourself!” Another guess is that it’s giving the body enough of the oxygen it needs, given that it’s exerting itself. Personally, I suspect both explanations contain an element of truth.

But regardless of the underlying explanation I think it’s fair to conclude that it’s not a religious matter, since whether it works for you or not doesn’t seem to depend on your personal spiritual beliefs.

6.2.4.2.3.3.3 The Emotional Side of Sex

6.2.4.2.3.3.3.1 Paying Attention to Your Partner The down side to books on sexual technique is that they can sometimes make it seem as if good sex amounts to “doing” certain things, i.e. that “the technique” takes precedence over whatever their partner’s body language is suggesting they enjoy or don’t enjoy. I’ve said this before, but it bears repeating: everyone has different tastes, and there is no sexual “technique” that takes the place of paying attention.

And, I think that’s where the whole spiritual sexuality movement perhaps has its greatest value: although sometimes the endless “eye gazing” exercises can be a bit much, their emphasis on staying focused and paying close attention to the person you’re with is sound.

6.2.4.2.3.3.2 Focusing on How Much Your Partner Means to You This works particularly well if you're in love with your partner, and it's an especially nice thing to do while kissing.

Basically, just try to fill your mind with nothing other than the thought of how much you love your partner and how much he or she means to you.

This kind of thing is found in various forms throughout much of the spiritual sexuality literature. Sometimes it's cast in religious terms, or alongside a lot of talk about "energy," but at its core I see it as simply remembering what is truly important to you.

6.2.4.2.3.3.3 Staying Aware of Your Body At least to me, this seems akin to some of the "visualization" techniques used by competitive athletes.

Basically, if you feel yourself losing your level of attentiveness during sex (i.e. your mind seems to be wandering) then turn your mental attention to your body, starting at your feet and methodically working your way up: try to let your entire mind be filled with the sensation of whatever your skin is feeling in each area as you move upward.

Some people get a lot out of this and some don't, but if it works for you then you'll probably leave the exercise feeling refreshed, and more aware of the pleasurable sensations you're enjoying during sex.

6.2.4.3 BDSM

The term "BDSM" is an acronym that stands for "Bondage Discipline/Dominance Submission/Sadism Masochism." In theory that includes quite a lot. In practice it includes even more, as play styles such as "sensation play" (i.e. creating a sort of art form of touch with different sensations from different toys — typically intended to be interesting rather than "sadistic") have become increasingly popular within the BDSM community.

We covered role playing in an earlier section, so in this one we'll only need to cover the most common forms of physical BDSM play, including movement restriction (e.g. "bondage") and sensory input restriction (e.g. blindfolding).

There are several points which should be emphasized before we proceed:

1. Everything we're discussing in this section is assumed to be engaged in with the full consent of each person involved. [In fact, I don't believe it's appropriate to use the term "BDSM" to refer to anything else: as I understand it that acronym didn't originate from criminal code or the study of abnormal psychology — rather, it was invented by the community of adults who engage in this kind of play consensually, to refer only to the kinds of consensual play they do together.]
2. As was discussed in the "Role Playing" section of this guide, it's wise to have a "safeword": an unusual word that, when used, stops the entire "scene" immediately. This completely removes any ambiguity as to

whether someone is pleading or struggling just because they find it erotic to do so, or whether they're actually wanting everything to stop. If nothing else, the word "safeword" itself can be used.

3. In my observation, educational workshops are one of the cultural cornerstones of the modern BDSM community. So, if this kind of erotic play is something you'd like to learn more about, then provided you live anywhere near a major city you should have no trouble locating a group which offers nominal-cost workshops on a variety of BDSM techniques.
4. This stuff isn't everyone's cup of tea, and just because you find you like one aspect of it (perhaps bondage) doesn't mean you'll like another aspect of it (perhaps spanking). That being said, it's also true that many kinds of BDSM play feel very different than they look, so don't be surprised if you try something new and find yourself liking it more than you thought you would.

To me, poetic license is very much in the spirit of the modern BDSM community: its participants have always reminded me of nothing more so than a collective of eccentric artists, who simply happen to use the body's sense of touch and the mind's most primal drives as their medium.

So, I hope you don't mind my own poetic license, but I've taken the liberty of categorizing the most popular forms of BDSM play into "The Way of Subtraction" (sensory and movement restriction) and "The Way of Addition" (unusual or intense sensations). In general, only the most straightforward and common types of play will be covered below: anything more exotic is probably best learned from a workshop rather than a book.

6.2.4.3.1 The Way of Subtraction Sometimes it can enhance your enjoyment of one sense to focus *only* on that sense: imagine closing your eyes while listening to a favorite piece of music, or while enjoying a particularly scrumptious piece of chocolate.

Not being able to move can have a similar "focusing" effect. Additionally, depending on how you're bound, you may have the option of sex being even *more* physical since you can struggle as much as you like without fear of hurting your partner: in this context, struggling may feel invigorating, and the subsequent exhaustion may feel sexy.

On top of all this, as the recipient (aka "Bottom," distinct from "Top" in BDSM slang) you don't have to worry about *doing* anything, simply because you can't: so, you're completely free to enjoy whatever your partner is doing with you, with no need to even think about what you should do to reciprocate.

6.2.4.3.1.1 Blindfolding Blindfolding is a classic bedroom game, which even people who have never *heard* of "BDSM" are probably familiar with. And, it's a classic for good reason: without the sense of sight time seems to go more slowly, and the sense of anticipation of touch only increases since you can't see it

coming. Many people find blindfolding to be sexy, and even kind of a romantic gesture (perhaps especially if the room is candlelit — the whole *Phantom of the Opera* thing...).

One thing worth mentioning is that traditional cloth blindfolds never seem to work as well as they do in the movies: they'll often work themselves loose once tied, or slip up or down, and you always seem to be able to see a little bit out of them. More practical, although unfortunately without the classic "blindfold look," are the designs with foam padding and an elastic strap that goes around the back of the head: these shut out *all* light and don't fall off. Failing this, the blindfolds which people use when they want to sleep during the day are another option.

6.2.4.3.1.2 Bondage Bondage often seems to end up going in one of two main directions:

1. A "passionate" direction, in which the person who has been bound is expected and/or encouraged to struggle (at least a little). In addition to the adrenaline rush of struggling, this kind of play seems to fire up the mind's primal response to being unable to move despite trying (which for some people feels similar enough to sexual arousal to be, well, arousing...).
2. A "meditative" direction, in which the receiving partner generally prefers to be relatively still and quiet, and experiences the state of being unable to move as meditative and peaceful. For this kind of bondage the act of being tied up is itself an important part of the experience, and it's generally considered perfectly fine if doing so takes a fair amount of time. This commonly means bondage using rope and knots.

The important thing to understand is that bondage doesn't have to specifically mean *rope* (since rope bondage actually takes a fair amount of practice to do effectively and safely), and as a beginner it *shouldn't* mean handcuffs (since the receiving partner can hurt themselves if they struggle the wrong way, plus it's easy to lose the key).

The easiest way to start is with a quality set of leather wrist and ankle cuffs, as sold by the better sex toy supply shops.

An even easier and less expensive way to see if this is something you two might be into (at least for "passionate" bondage as discussed above) is for one partner to consensually hold down the other's arms during sex, though this obviously works best if the partner on top has enough physical strength such that partner underneath can't move. And, equally obviously, if the "safeword" gets used everyone lets go...

6.2.4.3.2 The Way of Addition This is about heightening sensation and creating mildly altered states of consciousness, not by restricting one of the senses or the ability to move, but rather by creating intense or unusual sensations to focus on or endure.

In the case of “painful” sensations, the big tip (which applies regardless of the type of play) is to ramp up to them gradually, so that the body’s natural responses of adrenaline and endorphins have a chance to help transform these feelings into something qualitatively different — and hopefully more meaningful — than stubbing a toe.

Of course, please keep in mind that this stuff doesn’t *have* to be painful:

- In the case of floggings with a soft multi-tailed flogger with broad and heavy tails, it can feel almost like a comforting (though admittedly unusual) form of massage.
- The “pain” can be kept very light in comparison to whatever sex may be going on at the same time, and possibly ramped up in intensity along with the sex for a very primal experience that, as intense as it may be, isn’t *exactly* painful — at least not as we normally think of the term.
- This stuff doesn’t have to be about pain on any level: the intent can be something closer to creating an interesting symphony for the sense of touch, which to date lacks any other art form that I know of.

6.2.4.3.2.1 Soft Sensations Running a mitt of soft fur, or silk, over your partner’s back or buttocks can be both sexy and engaging. It’s also a nice thing to reward them with after some heavier stuff, along the lines of some of the examples below.

6.2.4.3.2.2 Medium Sensations

6.2.4.3.2.2.1 Scratching Some people find it sexy when sex gets so passionate and out-of-control that one person gets their back scratched without their partner realizing they did it.

But on a more conscious level, fingernails are just one more interesting and potentially intense sensation that can feel either invigorating or startling, as you wish.

6.2.4.3.2.2.2 Pinching Plenty of people (whether male or female) love having their nipples firmly pinched. You probably hadn’t thought of this as “BDSM,” but technically it counts.

6.2.4.3.2.2.3 Spanking Spanking is extremely popular, not only because of the “you’ve been naughty” connotations that some people find sexy, and not only because it’s a form of skin-to-skin sensation that can either be “thuddy” or “stingy” as the person doing the spanking wishes, and not only because it wakes the body up with a nice physical buzz, but also because the buttocks are near the genitals: when one shakes, the other shakes a little as well, for a tiny extra thrill.

It can also be extremely easy to use your other hand to pleasure your partner’s penis or clit while you’re spanking them — making them “work” for their orgasm, in other words.

6.2.4.3.2.3 Heavy Sensations The problem with spanking, if you and your partner really get into it, is that your hand eventually gets tired and sore. Fortunately, a variety of solutions are available.

6.2.4.3.2.3.1 Paddling Using a wooden paddle doesn’t *have* to be painful: it depends on you, and it depends on the paddle. Within the BDSM community, for example, it’s easy to find vendors and craftspeople who make a wide range of paddles of varying intensities, including some flexible ones covered in soft fake fur.

But regardless, I suppose with the introduction of paddles we’re now getting into the area where if you were extremely forceful and stupid you could theoretically hurt your partner, e.g. perhaps by slamming the edge of the paddle against their tailbone.

So, now that we’re into the “Heavy Sensations,” section, the implicit rule becomes even more important: don’t play when you’re drunk or otherwise out of control of your behavior, and use common sense.

6.2.4.3.2.3.2 Flogging The classic BDSM community-designed flogger is very different from the kind of “whip” you may have seen in the movies: it has many flat tails rather than one long braided strand, and it’s not designed to break skin. Depending on its weight, construction material, level of tail stiffness, etc., it may be experienced by the person being flogged as either “thuddy” or “stingy” (those being the two basic classifications for this kind of sensation).

Some recipients prefer “thud” while some prefer “sting,” though for variety and refreshment’s sake it can be nice to alternate between those two extremes at least to some degree: this is one of the big reasons why most flogging enthusiasts tend to have *many* different kinds of floggers.

Here are some basic play and safety tips for flogging:

1. As with all forms of potentially intense physical play, if you and your partner want to go from light flogging up to a very intense and heavy experience, then build up to it slowly over the course of your session.
2. The big target areas are the left and right sides of the upper back: hitting lower than this (i.e. into the area of the kidneys) doesn’t feel good and medically may not be a good idea, and hitting higher such that the tails wrap around the tops of the shoulders is typically experienced as annoying.
3. As the person delivering the flogging, getting a good rhythm going will help your partner have a better experience.
4. If you do manage to come across one of those long single-tail whips (i.e. the kind you can actually crack), then don’t even *think* about using it

without some in-person training from someone who knows what they're doing, along with eye protection while you're learning. These things are hazardous if used improperly, and their use is far beyond anything we're going to cover here.

6.2.4.3.2.3.3 Caning Although it's tempting to think of caning (i.e. hitting someone on the buttocks or the backs of their upper thighs with one of those long English-style rattan sticks) as just another form of paddling, there are significant differences:

1. The sensation is fundamentally different. With caning the pain comes in two waves: one with the actual strike, and the second a few seconds later.
2. Rapid, hard strokes quickly become overwhelming, and mess up the "two-wave" sensation mentioned above. Soft, "tapping" strokes can be done quickly and rhythmically, but anything hard enough to produce the "two-wave" pain sensation deserves a good pause before and after, so that the experience can be fully savored.
3. Canes produce a particularly intense sensation, which you may not fully appreciate if you've never personally experienced it. So, if you want your partner to ever do this with you again, make sure you don't get carried away and hit too hard. In fact, before you hit someone with a cane you should get hit once with a cane yourself, so that you have a reference point as to how little force produces how much pain.

When buying a cane (ideally at a BDSM community vendor fair or convention, where they're being sold for use on other people), it's wise to sight down the length of the cane to judge quality: although the cane should have a curve it's helpful for this to be in one plane. In other words, it should look like a very shallow smile that would lay flat against a wall or piece of paper.

The history of caning seems to invite a certain level of formality, and going slowly and asking the recipient to count the strokes up to a certain number are popular amongst enthusiasts.

6.2.4.4 Fisting

Fisting (the act of inserting most or all of your hand into your lover's anus or vagina) is definitely an advanced form of sex play: if the receiving partner is intoxicated to where they're not noticing pain signals, or if the inserting partner ignores what their partner is telling them, then particularly with anal fisting it's definitely possible to seriously hurt someone.

In the case of anal fisting you may need a different kind of lube (regular water-based lube is considered by many serious anal fisting enthusiasts as not being slippery or long-lasting enough for this specific purpose), and for both kinds of fisting you would also need to learn how to make the little "duck"

shape with your hand for easier entry (i.e. with the thumb over the palm of the hand, and the two outer fingers over the inner ones).

And, above all, as the inserting partner you have to be patient.

In other words this kind of sex isn't for everyone, and on top of everything else the size of the inserting partner's hand may dictate whether or not this can become a comfortable part of sex for them and their partner at all.

But having said all that, I felt it was important to mention fisting in this guide for two specific reasons:

1. The people who enjoy fisting speak of it in almost reverential tones for the kind of "cosmic" experience it can produce. Very few other sex acts get described this way.
2. Anal fisting may essentially be a new sex act, which did not exist in any real capacity prior to its emergence in the United States during the 20th century. Unless you count sex toys (new designs for which are invented all the time), you must admit it's not that often a completely new act makes its way onto the sexual menu: oral sex, anal sex, and every imaginable sexual position are all as old as the hills, but not this. To me that makes it significant: anal fisting just may be an American original, the sexual equivalent of jazz, baseball, or apple pie.

Right now (barring an actual workshop on the subject, which even in the BDSM community is surprisingly rare. . .), the best way for you and your partner to learn about fisting is from one of the available books on the subject: there's one currently in print on anal fisting, and one currently in print on vaginal fisting.

Chapter 7

Common Sexual Health Concerns

7.1 Safer Sex

Since this is such an important subject, we've split it out into a standalone guide which can be linked to separately, and which is available at <http://www.sexuality.org/concise.html>

If I could offer only one reminder, though, it would be this: that non-procreative sex is about pleasure, and worry is one of the most effective pleasure *hindrances* around. So, the peace of mind that comes from behaving safely ultimately leads back to pleasure.

7.2 Birth Control

New birth control methods aren't introduced *every* day, but occasionally a new one does make it past testing and onto the market. Additionally, the popular hormonal methods all require a prescription, meaning you would need to see a health care provider to obtain them anyway.

So, it's my position that on the subject of selecting a birth control method I should avoid presenting data that will eventually do you the disservice of going out of date, and instead urge you to consult with the experts to get current information on your available options — if nothing else by giving Planned Parenthood a call on their toll-free hotline.

In other words, if you have any reason to believe you may need birth control in the near future, put down the keyboard and pick up the phone: this is another example of an important decision which should not be left to random advice picked up off the internet.

7.3 Body Image and Lifestyle

7.3.1 The Difficult Balance

It's difficult to enjoy sex if your attitude towards your body is so negative that you don't even like being reminded that you have it. I've been there.

But by the same token, it's also difficult to enjoy sex if your lifestyle and/or general level of physical fitness is so unhealthy that you're continually too tired to even want sex. I've been there as well.

It's not difficult these days to find particularly strident activists who seem to believe that there are no negative consequences to extreme obesity, and that any discomfort you may experience as a result is purely the result of societal discrimination. Similarly, it's not that difficult to find people who are unhappy with their bodies no matter what they look like or how physically fit they may be.

Having personally struggled with both sides of this issue, the only solution I've found so far involves a little bit of effort on each side: getting regular muscle-strengthening exercise (e.g. weight lifting or cycling) and following a nutritious diet, *simply because these are fundamental aspects of self-care necessary for physical health*, and then once I've made those things habits to work on "feeling comfortable with my body as it is" — because at that point I've separated the legitimate health concerns from the aesthetic judgments.

7.3.2 The Benefits of Regular Exercise

Although how you live your life is a personal matter, as a sex-positive activist I feel it's my duty to point out the positive effects which regular exercise (particularly something which makes the body's muscular or cardiovascular systems stronger) can have on one's sex life:

- In the long term, getting regular exercise may help combat the kind of low-level physical weariness which might otherwise leave you too tired to have sex at the end of the evening.
- Some studies suggest regular exercise can help combat mild (i.e. non-clinical) levels of depression, which may mean you get back some of the libido which persistent mild depression could otherwise cost you.
- Staying active can help improve overall health, which is significant in that eventually poor overall health (especially poor cardiovascular health) can negatively impact sexual functioning.
- Keeping your body strong can help you maintain bone and muscle health well into old age, meaning that you presumably have a better chance of maintaining a healthy sex life well into old age.
- It has been my experience that exercise makes my body *feel* better, and more alive. This makes the thought of doing anything physical with it,

including sexual activities, more appealing: unlike any of the “aphrodisiacs” you’re told about via spam e-mail, or which you may have heard unfounded rumors about, exercise appears to be something that actually *works*.

7.3.3 Feeling Better About Your Body

The following are several different techniques people have used to start feeling better about their bodies. I should reiterate that in *my* experience techniques such as these work best when you’ve already made steps towards more healthful living, so that you’re not mired in potentially legitimate concerns about how you’re living your life at the same time as you’re hoping to deal with any cruel and unfair judgments you may have about how your body looks. Obviously, the following techniques are intended only to address the latter.

This was just my own experience, of course: your mileage may vary.

7.3.3.1 Participating in Clothing-Optional Events

There’s nothing like a clothing-optional resort to help you reset your image of what real human bodies look like, and gain comfort with how your own body looks.

7.3.3.2 No Longer Putting Yourself Down

Speaking from experience, there’s an attitude which often comes with poor body image to the effect that “I’d better put myself down before anyone else thinks I actually feel *good* about looking this way.” The problem is that not only does this just practice the same negative feelings about your body which you hopefully want to free yourself of, but it also puts the people you talk to in an uncomfortable position: involving them in your discomfort without their consent. Additionally, it’s worth noting: putting yourself down is not sexy . . . ever.

7.3.3.3 Taking Your Partner’s Point of View

When you fantasize about making love with someone, is part of your fantasy that person being glum and putting themselves down? Or would you prefer to imagine that person happy with themselves and sexually confident?

7.3.3.4 Getting a Therapeutic Massage

There’s something about non-sexual therapeutic massage (specifically a relaxing full-body massage) that makes the body feel more “connected,” and helps combat whatever distorted image of it you may have. Granted, this may not be a permanent solution, but everyone needs a break now and again. . .

7.3.4 Feeling Attractive and Sexually Satisfied at Any Size

7.3.4.1 Attitude

Confidence means much, much more to how attractive other people find you than you probably imagine. As over the years I've watched some of my more confident — but less “traditionally” attractive — friends get all the partners they can handle, and some of my less confident friends with more “ideal” body types end up struggling to find dates, this is the only conclusion I can come to.

7.3.4.2 Style

There are flattering clothing styles for any size, and in fact some styles which work *better* for larger folks (think of the voluptuous look of some of the actresses in old movies, or of Tony Soprano in some of his tailored suits). It's actually surprising what a difference it can make to have clothes which fit you, and which you feel you look good in: putting this off for later is usually a mistake.

7.3.4.3 Sex

With so many sexual acts and positions to choose from, there's no reason to get hung up on what your body *doesn't* find comfortable: just pick the things you *are* comfortable with, and don't judge yourself for it.

Part III

Orientation

Chapter 8

The Three Basic Questions for the Questioning

Here are three helpful questions to ask yourself in sequence:

1. Which Gender(s) Do You Fantasize About When You Masturbate?
2. How Do You Self-Identify?
3. If Your Previous Two Answers Were At Odds, Why?

Of course, there are several communities where one can find people who enjoy same-sex erotic behavior despite sincerely claiming a heterosexual sexual identity: certain segments of the BDSM community (specifically individuals whose enjoyment of their kink is so strong as to trump their underlying sexual orientation) can be one example, and same-sex behavior between straight-identified women in the swing community (where the same-sex behavior is limited to parties at which it is seen simply as playful rather than as a real statement about anyone's orientation) can be another example. However, these are comparatively rare situations, and furthermore in each situation the behavior is basically compartmentalized to only one part of life.

Chapter 9

Coming Out

Coming out has traditionally been one of the most powerful ways to break small-minded stereotypes of what it means to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Unfortunately, the accompanying risk is that if the other person is enough of a bigot they may choose to let this information damage their relationship with you. You can steel yourself by telling yourself that if they reject you it's their loss and their choice, but it still hurts, and may still disrupt your life.

There are no easy answers to this decision, particularly if bigotry runs in your family or if you live in a conservative small town.

In general, the only food for thought I can offer is the following: that you have only one life, and time goes by quickly. As such, think carefully on how bad short-term pain and disruption (up to and including that of moving) would really have to be in order to make up for a life of lower-level dissatisfaction. [And, perhaps that's something good to reflect on when faced with *any* major decision...]

Part IV
Gender

Statistically, I realize that the majority of people reading this guide will personally identify as either male or female, will feel no everyday conflict over their gender identity, will have a gender identity that matches what they were physically classified as at birth, and that they will be basically comfortable with most of the mainstream cultural expectations concerning behavior and dress which attach to the gender they identify as. Statistically, that's just going to be a reasonable assumption.

However, just as physicists learn more about ordinary particles by studying rare particles, so I feel the example of people who have gender identities or histories outside of the two most common ones can teach everyone else something about themselves: specifically, illuminating that some things are choices which we may not have believed could be choices, and that some things we may have thought were binary are actually more of a spectrum.

Chapter 10

The Three Conceptual Gender Leaps

10.1 Not Everyone is Born with “Textbook” Male or Female Genitalia

“Intersex” conditions are much more common than you might have thought.

So, this is a clear, physical example of something gender-related which you might have thought of as binary (i.e. only being either “textbook male” or “textbook female”) not always being so.

10.2 Some Aspects of Gender are Separate from Sexual Biology

10.2.1 External Presentation

In large cities, you may have seen advertisements for “Drag King” performances. With very few exceptions, these aren’t enormously profitable commercial events. In fact, much like the current burlesque revival, these performances are almost as much for the enjoyment of the performers as for the enjoyment of the audience: they provide a formal opportunity to experience, in a safe environment, what it’s like to publicly present as the opposite gender from the one you normally present as.

The point is that it’s tempting to think of all the small behavioral mannerisms which seem either “male” or “female” as being completely dictated by biology, but looking at the example of people who comfortably adopt ones they may not have grown up with suggests that gender presentation just in general may be something more like a “performance,” in the most general sense of the word. Perhaps, it only seems otherwise because the only side you’ve ever done is the one you’ve had the most practice at.

Perhaps.

10.2.2 Personal Identity

It's one thing to act or dress in the style of a gender different from your biological one. It's quite another to feel at your core that your physical body does not match what your brain seems to be telling you your biological gender should be.

“Transgender” is the general term for this state of being, and it's worth noting that transgender can be a form of gender identity in and of itself: that is, some folks identify as “transgender” instead of identifying as “male” or “female,” suggesting yet another circumstance in which a form of identity which some folks might have assumed to be binary is in practice something closer to a spectrum.

10.3 Some Things Which Appear to be About Gender Identity Are Not

People who simply get an erotic charge from occasionally dressing in the style of their opposite gender (i.e. from “crossdressing”), but who do not at their core feel they *were supposed to have been* that opposite gender, will not generally consider themselves to be transgendered.

Chapter 11

A Contemporary Concern: The Risk of Physical Violence

A certain small percentage of the population seems to be driven a little crazy by the thought of people who live and pass as something other than their original biological gender — as in, violently crazy. Perhaps what passes through their backward minds is the nagging thought that someday they might have enjoyable casual sex with someone else and later find that person wasn't the gender they thought they were, hence "threatening their sexuality" in some vaguely-defined way. They then dwell on this thought to the point of becoming consumed by it. Pathetic, obviously, but still a real concern and a real danger.

Chapter 12

The Bottom Line: Courtesy

When it's all said and done, courtesy is what makes the world go around: it's what lets people of wildly different backgrounds and perspectives show basic respect for each other.

And fortunately, when it comes to gender basic courtesy is easy: just go with whatever pronoun (e.g. "he" or "she") someone prefers you use, and find a polite way to ask if you're unsure.

This may seem like a small thing, but it means a lot to people, and is always appreciated.

Part V

Community

Chapter 13

The Point of All This

The bottom line is that people naturally enjoy the company of others who share their interests and views: it's relaxing to be around people who won't judge you for your interests, it's simpler to learn new things when you're part of a community which organizes events to help you learn those things, and it's easier to make friends who share your interests when you've surrounded yourself with people who share your interests.

So to me, it seems perfectly natural that “sex-positive communities” would appear and thrive — honestly this seems no more mysterious to me than bicycle enthusiasts wanting to form a bicycle club.

Chapter 14

What's Currently Out There

Just as was the case with our safer sex guide, the guide we wrote on “finding local sex-positive community resources” has been split off into a separate document, so that it can be linked to separately. The URL is <http://www.sexuality.org/other.html> and it represents our best attempt to summarize what's out there and how to find it.

Unfortunately, with the exception of the suggested internet searches (which may have meaning for some other English-speaking countries) this guide will be of use primarily in the United States, and to a lesser degree for Western Europe.

14.1 The Traditional Stuff

14.1.1 Swinging

For male/female couples — and to a lesser degree single females — who find the thought of recreational sex as a social activity to be appealing, the “swing” community (also somewhat confusingly known as “The Lifestyle”) may be exactly what they're looking for. It's also without doubt the safest way for couples who have an exhibitionist streak to satisfy that urge.

Swing clubs exist all across the country, even in many smaller towns. In terms of overall participation level, it's probably the most active sex-positive subculture out there.

One thing is worth noting about swing events: if they prefer, it's generally perfectly acceptable for a couple to attend and interact sexually only with each other (a practice sometimes referred to as “soft swinging”). This way the sexually charged atmosphere can be enjoyed without taking the extra step of having sex outside the existing relationship. For many couples this is a fantastic place to start, and may be a great place to stay.

It's also worth noting that swinging is largely a phenomenon amongst male-female couples who enjoy socializing with other couples, and that as it stands female bisexual behavior is widely accepted but male bisexual behavior generally is not.

14.1.2 BDSM

The BDSM community is the probably the second-largest of the mixed-gender sex-positive communities. In a way, the story of the swing community and the BDSM community is a bit like one of those science fiction novels where two worlds develop in parallel until they finally meet: each community began in the United States around the same time (though admittedly the BDSM community was originally a male-only phenomenon), each has a need for space to host their events in, each has national conferences and a culture of their own, and each has sex-positivity as its basis.

Cultural highlights of the modern BDSM community include its emphasis on inclusiveness (i.e. it's difficult to think of a sexual behavior, sexual orientation, or gender identity involving consenting adults which could not find a place *somewhere* within it), safety (i.e. through "safewords" and extensive safety / safer sex precautions), and education (i.e. to the point where workshops and discussion groups often seem every bit as important to a local community's social fabric as its BDSM parties).

14.1.3 Polyamory

The "polyamory" community consists of people who are open to the possibility of at least some form of responsible non-monogamy (or possibly even additional long-term love relationships) within the context of their existing partnerships. For example, rather than two people presenting themselves socially as a "couple," you might see three people presenting themselves socially as a "triad." Or, you might meet two people who have a "primary" relationship with each other (and who may be married and live together), but who each have the ability to more casually date another person if their partner is OK with their choice.

Two of the cultural cornerstones of the polyamory community are honesty and communication: it's expected that you and your existing long-term partner(s) will have talked over what you're comfortable with and what you aren't comfortable with, and that nobody is going around behind anyone else's back.

It's worth emphasizing that this is a bit different from some of the other communities mentioned in this guide, as it's based more on sharing a particular life perspective than it is on specific events or venues. Also, sex isn't necessarily the focus: it's common to find groups of more than two people who are living together, and seeking to build a long-term future together, of which sex is only one part of their relationship.

14.1.4 Same-gender Sex Events

14.1.4.1 Men-only

14.1.4.1.1 Bathhouses and Sex Clubs These venues are controversial even within the gay community, and there remain concerns about the degree to which they serve as a vector for STD transmission (at least when safer sex is not being practiced). At a minimum, the following is clear: neglecting safer sex at one of them can be a very, very bad idea. At best think of them as fantasy venues, and stick to your safer sex standards like glue.

It's worth noting that there are several "well lit" venues of this nature in San Francisco which may be a little different than the typical norm: "Eros" is currently one popular example.

14.1.4.1.2 "J/O" Parties Many cities have clubs that host men's "Jerk Off" parties, which may serve as a safer alternative for men who would have otherwise been inclined towards the baths. It's a chance to be in an all-male, sexually charged environment, where typically the rules forbid the kinds of sex which would put anyone at risk.

One later innovation was the emergence of mixed-gender versions of these events, originally hosted in the San Francisco area (at the time known as "Mother Goose" parties, a pun on "Jack and Jill" in the sense of "Jacking Off and Jilling Off"). Although the original "Mother Goose" events are no longer held, in the Portland, OR area Darklady's annual "Masturbate-a-thon" events are a contemporary equivalent.

14.1.4.2 Women-only

These are comparatively rare, and are typically either private events or events associated with the women's BDSM community. In Seattle the few times men's bathhouses have been rented out to fundraising organizations which sponsored women-only events of this nature the response has been incredible, so clearly this kind of event is viable in large cities, or at least when the draw is something extraordinary (e.g. the chance to play in a venue that you might not otherwise have even seen the inside of).

14.1.5 Fetish Communities

For the most part it isn't helpful to spend too much time worrying about whether a particular fetish is "normal": it's a wide, wide world, and it's hard to see how whether the people who (inevitably) share your interest happen to live anywhere near you has anything to do with whether your interest is inherently healthy or not.

Perhaps the only meaningful questions are whether it's objectively harmful to your physical health, whether there are any possible scenarios in which anyone other than another consenting adult could be impacted, and whether your basic

peace of mind remains intact (i.e. you aren't constantly wishing to be free of thoughts of your fetish, and you aren't doing things you regret the next day).

14.1.5.1 The Most Common Ones

14.1.5.1.1 Clothing Leather, rubber, latex, or PVC clothing, and corsets, are some of the more common fetish clothing items. In the case of leather and rubber/latex/PVC this is a popular enough interest to where there exist entire conventions for people who share it.

If you're into exotic clothing you may find your area's BDSM community events to be a good place to dress up, though if you feel you fit in with a 20's crowd the goth club scene might be another possibility.

14.1.5.1.2 Shoes and/or Feet Entire stores and mail-order enterprises support people who are into shoes, and "foot worship" is a very common fetish activity for people who are into either shoes and/or feet. It may not be common enough to easily support conventions devoted just to this one interest, as may be the case with leather or rubber clothing, but it's close.

14.1.5.2 Everything Else

The reality is that there are more different kinds of fetishes described just on the internet than can be easily numbered, and by the time you enumerate them all even more would be invented.

In fact, I believe it's pointless to even try to list them: if there's anything outside the mainstream that occurs in *your* fantasies, then it probably occurs in the fantasies of others, and if you search the internet long enough you'll probably find a whole online community with its own jargon and FAQs which shares that particular fetish.

Seriously, it almost feels like a principle from quantum mechanics: creation through observation.

14.2 Emerging Trends and Future Predictions

14.2.1 The "More Things Unite Us than Divide Us" Trend

In a way, it seems silly for the swing community and the BDSM community not to pool their resources and share physical venues: each needs space to host their events, and it's rare for an organization of either type to host events *every* night of the week. I realize that some of the equipment commonly found in BDSM facilities is heavy (e.g. sturdy racks, spanking benches, etc.), but with a few volunteers it's not unreasonable to move these items into and out of storage as the evening's schedule warrants.

In any case, by doing something like this not only would each community get to enjoy a larger facility than they might otherwise, but the opportunities

for socializing increase along with the organization's base of financial and volunteer support. And furthermore, smaller sex-positive organizations and groups — ones which could never dream of supporting any kind of dedicated facility completely on their own — would then have a supportive meeting space which they could rent at a reasonable fee, thereby furthering the interaction amongst and development of the local sex-positive community as a whole.

To me, these economic practicalities encourage the “big tent” or “community center” mode of thought: that the cultural differences between each of the major sex-positive communities pale in comparison to the core values which unite them.

14.2.1.1 The CSPC Example

I must give credit to Seattle's non-profit Center for Sex-Positive Culture (formerly known as the Seattle Sex-Positive Community Center) for being the ideological leader in this regard, and for serving as such a fine example of how this approach can work. They now have two large, permanently-dedicated facilities of their own, with multiple events every night of the week, annual flagship events such as an erotic art festival and a large-scale campout (which traditionally has served as the organization's best example of how swing-oriented and BDSM-oriented folks can get along), and a wide variety of other member resources including an extensive library.

I can personally think of no better illustration of the concept that sex-positivity itself is a sufficient principle to unify most of the organizations in a large metropolitan area which need sex-friendly space.

14.2.1.2 The Dark Odyssey Example

Although this is an annual event rather than a facility, I must also give credit to the east coast's Dark Odyssey, which demonstrates not only that the “sex-positivity as unifying principle” concept works there as well, but also serves to regularly expose nationally-known authors and educators to the same concept. They also deserve props for their skillful management of volunteers, as well as for the fact that their evening events have often demonstrated that restriction on the basis of gender or orientation is not necessary for even mixed-gender events to work perfectly well.

14.2.2 The “Cuddling” Trend

Another recent trend is that of the “Cuddle Party,” in other words events where people mainly just cuddle. It's my understanding that this trend started in New York City, but a Portland, OR organization called “Love Tribe” seems to have put a particularly wonderful community-based spin on it.

This is an appealing concept to a lot of people, and I expect this trend to continue both in and out of sex-positive culture.

14.2.3 My “Strange Rebirth of Anonymous Sex” Prediction

Here's my prediction: that eventually someone is going to figure out a popular way to host mixed-gender events which offer truly anonymous sex such that there is no risk of STD transmission, and it's my guess that those events are going to look a lot like some of the more adult-oriented “furry” events do today (i.e. where people dress up as fictional animals with human characteristics). Costumes will make everyone completely anonymous (in fact revealing your identity will be forbidden by the event rules), grinding against someone will be safe because you're in a costume, the costumes themselves will look sexy (i.e. not being limited to the usual “furry” motifs), and body anxiety and/or age will be a non-issue since the costumes will be all-enveloping.

I realize that's a long shot, but I wanted to make at least one very specific and outrageous prediction in this guide just to see if I could get it right. So, I guess we'll see...

Chapter 15

Supporting Your Chosen Community

If you feel your life has been enriched through whatever community you've chosen to participate in, then you may feel the desire to give something back.

Please note that not all of the suggestions below would be appropriate for every organization or venue: for example, for-profit businesses don't generally expect volunteerism.

15.1 Volunteering

Within non-profit organizations, or smaller unincorporated organizations, volunteering is typically the best way to make new friends while simultaneously feeling good about giving something back.

15.2 Coming Out

Just as it's harder for people to stereotype gays and lesbians once a long-standing friend of theirs comes out to them as gay or lesbian, so it's harder for people to stereotype swingers once a long-standing couple of their acquaintance talks to them about this side of their life.

Obviously this is not a decision everyone will feel they can make, particularly if they have children, work in a conservative (or public) profession, or live in a conservative (or small) town, but every sane person who *can* do it makes it that much better for everyone else.

15.3 Political Activism

Two examples of organizations which have material that could help you as a sex-positive activist include the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom, and the

Woodhull Freedom Foundation.

15.4 Philanthropy

We maintain a separate guide to this subject, at <http://www.sexuality.org/money.html>

It provides suggestions as to several charities which support some of the freedoms that sex-positive culture as a whole depends on, any of which might be possibilities.

Chapter 16

Creating Something New

If you're in an area that has very little by way of sex-positive communities or venues, the perhaps the best way to give back would be by creating something new.

16.1 Deciding What is Needed in Your Area

What are your interests? What are your partner's interests? What is available in your city right now, and what have you heard about in other cities which you suspect could work well in yours?

16.2 Talking To Your Partner About It

Creating anything larger than informal get-togethers at lunch spots or a discussion group can take a considerable amount of time, which it is only fair to talk over with your partner. However, it's worth noting that working on a new project with your partner can (if you treat each other well) bring you closer together, as well as giving your project a better chance of success: if nothing else it makes it more clear that you have altruistic reasons for wanting to start this new organization or resource, and that you aren't starting it purely out of a desire to find a partner for yourself.

16.3 Experiencing the Best of What's Out There

You may wish to arrange a few weekend trips in order to experience the best events of the type you want to create. This can be inspiring, and provide ideas which might never have occurred to you otherwise.

In the case of organizations in distant cities (and *particularly* in the case of non-profit organizations), feel free to introduce yourself to that organization's

leaders as someone who wants to create something similar in your city, and ask for their advice.

16.4 Making the For-Profit/Non-Profit Decision

Obviously this probably doesn't apply to something like a book discussion group, which in addition to being low-risk should never bring in significant amounts of revenue, but in the case of an organization which will host events involving hundreds of people, or in the case of an organization which will eventually want to secure a permanent physical location as its clubhouse, this is a critically important matter to address even before bringing on other organizers.

Basically, if you have no plans to quit your day job and do not feel any need for you or your partner to personally profit from the organization you are going to create, then you might as well be clear from the start that your organization is going to be legally incorporated as a non-profit. Since for large organizations you will want to incorporate anyway as a form of personal liability protection, clearly stating your plans to any additional organizers will remove any possible misunderstanding concerning whether they should eventually expect to personally profit from their term of service on your board of directors.

Down the road being a formal non-profit will also make it easier to attract volunteers, and properly portray your organization as the altruistic effort which you intended it to be. In other words, for a large organization that will need to be incorporated, making it a non-profit should be the **default** choice unless you personally intend to profit from what you are creating.

Going a step further, if you're creating a membership-based organization whose primary events will be open only to its members and a select number of their guests, then you may wish to file for 501(c)7 "social club" tax-exempt status with the IRS in addition to legally incorporating as a non-profit organization with your state. This is the approach that the Seattle Sex-Positive Community Center took from the beginning, which so far has served it quite well.

16.5 Finding the Next Few Organizers

For an unincorporated entity such as a discussion group, this may be as simple as asking a friend if he or she would be willing to host the group's discussions whenever you're out of town. For an incorporated entity such as a non-profit, this may amount to asking people to serve on the organization's first board of directors.

Keep in mind that there are probably specific skills which you will want represented on the organization's board of directors: for example, if you know the organization will need to do serious fundraising, then you'll probably want at least one person with a proven track record doing serious fundraising for other nonprofits. It's also good to have at least one very organized person with

prior experience on other boards of directors who can help keep things running smoothly.

In each case, the people you invite should be enthusiastic about your organization's vision, and you should be clear both on why this organization is important to your community as well as on what the service expectations will be for board members.

Part VI

Closing Words

Chapter 17

If You'd Like to Learn More

Although in the case of exotic forms of BDSM real-life workshops are probably the best way to learn, for everything else books are still how to go. We've broken down this guide's bibliography by topic, and made it available at <http://www.sexuality.org/books.html> so that no matter what part of this guide piqued your interest, you can easily select amongst books which cover that topic in more depth.

Chapter 18

Best Wishes!

And so we reach the end.

Thank you for listening, and best wishes for a life overflowing with achievement, health, pleasure, and love.

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