

Chapter 7: Reclaiming Your Pleasure and Sexual Fun

Introduction

One thing I have learned over the past twenty years helping people heal, is that childhood abuse is like no other kind of abuse. As I shared with you in previous chapters, during your childhood, you're learning how to be human. You learn this from your parents, your community, and your experiences. For most CSA survivors, home was not a safe space and there was truly, most likely, little choice.

For me, the ability to choose things has been challenging. Learning how to say no and stick to it has been difficult. Letting go of my fear of being punished for not pleasing someone else ran deep within my subconscious. And in more recent years, I have noticed that this subconscious training to accept whatever came at me, and to do what I was told and keep my mouth shut about it, has had a large effect on my ability to earn and choose what I want to do with my money.

As you move through this chapter, you will also be raising your vibration to claim your worth and your power to choose. There are no right answers in this chapter, and you can change your answers at any time, but be honest with yourself and often refer back to the previous chapter—your values, morals, desires, likes and dislikes.

I had a client once who hadn't had sex with her husband of thirty years for over fifteen years. She said she wanted to, but she didn't think he did, and this scared her, so she didn't do anything. "I don't want to cause any trouble." After practicing self-exploration, she realized that she didn't want to approach her husband because she found out she really liked sex and she didn't want him to think she was a slut. I asked if she had had any sexual relationships during her fifteen years of distance from her husband. She answered, "not one." I then asked her if her abuser called her a slut and she affirmed it. By the end of us working together, and some vulnerable heart-to-hearts with her husband, they began exploring sex again and, fortunately for them, they both liked her sexual appetite!

Another client of mine was single and felt horrible because he wasn't interested in sex. He liked to talk and connect with his ex-wife and girlfriends but just wasn't that into actual sex. He reported that he felt like less of a man and that something was wrong with him because he didn't have much of a sexual appetite. After exploring himself and his sensual nature, he could accept that intercourse wasn't his main course. Releasing the stereotypical thought that "all men want is sex," and accepting his sensual nature, gave him freedom. He later reported back to me

that his new girlfriend had quite an appetite and he was fully engaged, bringing her pleasure, and allowing himself the boundaries to have intercourse or to simply give as he felt instead.

Questions

If you had it your way, how often would you have intercourse?

Do you have any judgements about your answer?

It is important to understand where your desire comes from. In chapter six, you discovered when your body gets turned on. What you may have also noticed is that your mind did not always agree with your body. At times, you are just not in the mood—even if your body and mind agree. In this next section, take a moment and allow yourself to get quiet. Allow your power zones to give you deeper insight, answering for themselves how high or low your sexual appetite is.

How often does your physical body crave sexual contact?

Sexual contact _____ per day/week/year

Intercourse _____ per day/week/year

Do you think this desire for sexual contact would change if you knew how to navigate some of your triggers and self-judgement?

It is important to understand and to even accept that triggers are going to arise as you reclaim your sexuality. Before moving on to define your sexual desires, likes and dislikes, let me share a story of cellular memory with you: Many of my clients don't remember their abuse or fully remember it due to age or blocking out the event in order to cope with it.

To learn more about how your body stores memory and how you release it as you heal, you can read books like [Your Body Keeps the Score](#) by Bessel Van Der Kolk or [Messages from the Body and their Psychological Meaning](#), by Michael J. Lincoln, Ph.D.

The basics of the science are that (a) your nervous system is directly related to the connective tissue in your body, and (b) your subconscious and unconscious memory reactivity are storied in your nervous system (and, therefore, in your connective tissue). This creates cellular memory. Cellular memory creates a surge of energy—emotion in your body—as it is released. When not expressed, it can create reactivity (as explained in chapter two).

When triggered, you have a reaction to the experience you are having in the moment. However, you simultaneously have a release of old memories, which makes the reaction more intense than it would be without the repressed memory.

A Personal Example

Over the past few years, two of my primary abusers have died, and my reaction to their passing was shocking to me. Without knowing what I know about cellular memory and healing, this reaction could have had a negative effect on my body and mind.

When each of my abusers passed on, the sadness and pain I experienced triggered uncomfortable emotions and personal judgments. I felt my body release the pain of my abuse. My body's reaction to the abuse began releasing from my tissues: my labia swelled, my throat hurt, the anxiety of fear and terror coursed through my body, and I felt all the feelings that had gone unexpressed during the abuse itself. If I had made myself wrong, felt shame, or suppressed these feelings from expressing themselves, then their hold in my nervous system would have grown stronger. Instead, with the knowledge I am sharing with you now, I accepted what was, allowed the feelings to come up and, with curiosity and acceptance, I felt them fully. When my adopted dad passed, this process took two weeks. During that time, I took time off work and honored this process. When my grandfather passed, the process was faster, lasting only one day. Yet since this abuse happened when I was a toddler, the visual memories were fewer, and my cellular memories were stronger. It was as if each event I had been suppressing showed itself like a story as it coursed through my body. To witness this, I sat with it, honored it, and accepted

each memory as fact—even though I may never know exactly what happened all those years ago.

This has also happened in situations when I was triggered during sexual relations. At times, for no conscious reason, I had felt an urge to push my partner away, fight them and close down.

Learning how to accept what happened allows you to recognize what is a suppressed memory (PTSD) and to separate it from the person or event happening in the moment. Sometimes these events are warnings to change your situation or to set powerful boundaries for yourself and your partner. In other instances, they are opportunities for you to heal, to release the cellular imprint of unexpressed emotion, and to find the freedom and healing you have been seeking.

Client Examples

I had a client who wanted to restore intimacy in her marriage but every time her spouse came close to her to touch her, she felt a surge of fear and wanted to pull away, to isolate herself, and to push his advances away. I asked her if he had been abusive with her and her answer was a certain no. This showed me that her reactivity and response was a form of PTSD to her previous abuse. By giving herself permission to pull away and isolate herself, she felt some relief, but her goal of restoring her relationship would not be possible if she continued to pull away. While her impulse was to deny the “creepy crawly” feelings that she felt she had to push through in order to accept his advances, to help her heal through her cellular memory, she first needed to honor her feelings and separate her reactions from her spouse so as to properly place them with her abuse instead. Next, she and I went through some “reparenting” so her body could use the power of understanding and thought to reclaim her nervous system. This process of shifting your cellular response is called “epigenetics.” With the help and understanding of her husband, and her own self-compassion, she allowed her body to express her feelings in a safe way, which restored her connection with her husband both emotionally and sexually.

Another client also had the “creepy crawly” feelings when being intimate with his partner. He had not experienced this before with previous partners and so he hired me to help him find a solution. In this case, he found that this response was an indicator that he was not fully open to the relationship being one of a sexual nature. At first this was hard for him to accept ~~since~~ because they were such great friends, and he felt betrayed by his body. As he allowed himself to feel his feelings and honor his emotions however, he realized that this was his own self-betrayal and his body’s signal showing him he was not honoring his truth. After deep contemplation, he chose to honor this signal and utilize his body’s response to honor his truth, ending the sexual relationship with that particular partner. In his past, he had put others’ needs in front of his own, weakening his self-trust, which left him feeling used, betrayed, and resentful towards women.

When he put himself first, by learning and honoring his desires, he was able to see this cellular response as a cue to step back and ask himself if he was being honest with himself and his partner; this allowed him to be more intimate than any previous relationship.

Self-Analysis:

Creating a safe container for you to explore your sexual desire is possible. To begin creating this sacred space for yourself, understanding your triggers and responses to sexual interactions is key.

Often, we think of sex as a physical desire only, however, sexual desire is also mental, emotional and spiritual in your nature. In this practice, think about these aspects of yourself as separate powers. I will give examples of some common desires and responses to get you started in each area. Then you will do the same for your desires in relationship and how you would like to be valued within a sexual relationship. By separating your desires, responses, and triggers in this manner, you will be able to more easily determine what your needs are or what is being triggered. This will help you communicate with your partner and feel sexually fulfilled.

I had a client who did not orgasm. She shared that she liked sex, and that she enjoyed all the physical aspects of her partner, but for some reason just could not get there. After reviewing her desires in each of her 6 personal power zones, she became aware that she did not feel like sex could be spiritual and she felt like she was sinning when she was having sex with her boyfriend. After she realized this, she shared her desire to be in a deeper relationship with her boyfriend and for them both no longer go against her personal spiritual desires. A few months later she was engaged and was thrilled to tell me all about her multiple orgasmic evening. Even though they were not married yet, her engagement let her fully relax and open to herself to her man.

It is important to be clear about your intention and what you desire before entering a conversation about what you desire. Without this, it is common—especially for abuse victims—to shrink into the people-pleasing or good-girl/good-boy role and lose themselves. Many of my clients begin their sessions with me not knowing what they want. If this is you, take time to open up to this amazing energy of desire within you. Pleasure and desire has been abused and it can even be scary for your nervous system, to be too much. Ease yourself into this practice, tell yourself it is now safe to feel pleasure and connect with your heart's desires. In this practice you will gain clarity and reclaim your pleasure by tapping into what you desire. You can do this for all things or just focus on what you desire in your sexual partnership/s.

Desire is your creative force and the most beautiful energy to share with your partner; reconnecting with it will increase effectiveness in all areas of your life.

What do you desire?

Monogamy or Polyamory

Long foreplay or short

The use of toys, or a few, or none at all

Sex every day or _____ (Be specific.)

A certain body-type, or you don't care

These are just a few ideas to get you started. Go ahead and make this list and allow yourself to get specific. You can set desires for yourself, for your relationship and, if you don't have a partner, you can even set your desire for them. If you do have your partner, you can set your desire for the connection and for the relationship.

Desire is a fabulous opening for greater communication because it helps you to get clear on your intention, which you will expand on in the next chapter.

In this next section, write down your desires as well as your triggers and responses. Next, as you engage in sexual exploration begin with yourself, then with your partner.

Physical desires: (What you like physically—kisses, oral, anal, touching, cuddles...)

Responses: (actions)

Triggers: (memories or bodily sensations)

Mental desires: (your communication styles, beliefs, and fantasies)

Responses: (actions)

Triggers: (memories)

Emotional desire: (To be emotionally accepted, for my partner to understand my fears, safe)

Responses:

Triggers:

Spiritual desire: (Have the same religious views, energy alignment)

Responses:

Triggers:

Relationship desire: (This section is not about your partner or yourself – it is about what the relationship of the two of you – monogamous, open...)

Responses:

Triggers:

Purpose/Value desire: (This section is about how you want to be valued in a sexual relationship and how you value or purpose (sex for fun, sex for procreation, sex for exercise).

Responses:

Triggers:

Now you know your sexual hunger and your known responses that may stand in the way or that might influence your sexual desires. You are on your way to a freedom-based sex life.

Creating a Safe Sexual Container for Your Partner and Yourself

When engaging in sex, it is always healthy to set boundaries, know how to make requests and be aware of your tolerances. In the next chapter you will go learn new skills to help you communicate your pleasure and set yourself up for fun in the bedroom. The desires practice you just did is intended to bring you new awareness about yourself. This next section will help you to further define your intimacy and sexual preferences so you can relax and be yourself.

Which energy style are you more comfortable in when engaging in sex?

There are two energies that are expressed in every sexual encounter. The first is the receiving/feminine energy and the other is the giving/directing masculine energy. In a healthy and balanced relationship, there will be times when you take on both energies. However, it is natural for you to have a preference to one or the other that comes more naturally to you.

The receiver/responder is most commonly the female role, but not necessarily. The art of surrender is a beautiful and fun practice when done properly. This energy is submissive: You enjoy your partner setting the scene for your interaction and fully showing up with curiosity to experience pleasure, and you enjoy being told or shown what to do, aroused more when your partner is in control and leading the experience. Your orgasms are stronger and more effortless to reach when you can relax and focus on receiving pleasure, rather than focusing on giving it.

The giver/provider is most commonly the male role, but not always. The art of being in charge is fun to play with in healthy relationships. This energy is dominant: You are more aroused when your partner allows you to direct the show, their turn-on is the foundation of your turn-on, and you enjoy pleasuring them. Your orgasms are stronger and more effortless when your partner is aroused and enjoying themselves BECAUSE of your pleasure-giving to them.

Over the course of your relationships, it is good to practice utilizing both of these energies. Experimenting with each will help you to determine which role you find more comfortable in. This will also help you express when you are uncomfortable and needing more direction or needing to lead more during sex. Furthermore, it will help you in eliminating the common struggle that happens when both parties are wanting to receive or give at the same time, which creates a stalemate situation where it is unlikely either party will be fully satisfied. Being able to communicate your desired role will help you each have your needs met and to reach climax more effortlessly.

Which sexual energy do you embody most? _____

Your Love Language:

You have probably heard of the famous book the 5 Love Languages by Dr. Gary Chapman in my studies about these love languages we each have a primary love language and a secondary. It is also very important to understand how you most openly receive love, allowing the love to sink into your very being and how you show love to others may not be the same language at all.

For instance, physical touch was the last love language I though was my primary language when I first began to study them. In fact, I had trouble hugging people. But as I healed my sexuality and got out of a marriage where I was disrespected and vilified, I found that physical touch is my primary love language. Now a hug, pat on the back and hand holding create peace and security in my body and put me at ease. Before, I had created a safe container for me to love however and be loved in, I protected myself from touch and even turned off love in my life. I share this

with you so, as you heal, you can continue to explore these love languages as your capacity for intimacy expands.

Quality Time: Do you love to plan your next outing with your love? Do you value taking time out of your day to spend with people you love? Do you feel appreciative and value the time others free up in their schedule for you? If so then this may be one of your primary love languages.

Gift Giving: Do you love to shop for your friends and family? Do you find yourself making gifts and thinking of what your loved ones need? Are you filled up with joy and love when someone brings you a gift? If so then gift giving may be your primary love language.

Acts of Service: Do you love helping out, fixing the shelf, doing the dishes and helping your friends out? Is it such a turn on when your man or woman does something for you even the simple things like bringing you a coat or coffee in the morning? Then this may be your primary love language.

Words of Affirmation: Do you love sharing with your friends and love just how amazing they are? Do you love hearing how someone was touched by your words or inspired by what you said? When someone complements you do you let it soak in and fill you up? If so then this maybe your primary love language.

Remember you very well may receive and give love in two very different ways. I have one client who loves giving gifts, making things and going the extra mile to send thank you cards and birthday presents. When I asked her if she likes getting gifts she was not that moved. However, when I asked her what she wanted for her birthday, she replied, "Just lunch with my daughter and Grandbabies." That told me she effortlessly buys gifts to say I love you and to receive it she would prefer quality time.

Which of the five love languages is it easiest for you to recognize love from your partner through?

Which love language do you find yourself expressing love to your loved ones most?

Love creates intimacy as does attachment. Understanding your attachment style will help you in many ways communicate with your partner, understand your own triggers and create a safe container for you to open up to love in new ways.

There are 4 primary attachment styles

I believe they fit very well with the reactive styles "control dramas" and interact with the human fear of abandonment. Our fear of abandonment is a human fear, civilization has always lived in packs, tribes and communities. Today more than ever our world is more alone than ever when it comes to safety in numbers. It is natural for you to always have some fear of abandonment, and this is healthy. Not letting it stop you from loving is the key to creating intimacy. If you like myself and many of my clients have felt or been abandoned by parents, friends or even God, accepting

and recognizing this natural fear may set you free. Attachment styles are programmed into your nervous system much like many of our beliefs, as you move through this information analyzing yourself, remember you are rewiring your nervous system and brain in this program, seeing an unhealthy pattern allows you to lovingly relearn a healthier one.

Secure Attachment: This style is confident, secure, and healthy. You have an interdependent relationship. In conflict it is common for you to look within, figure out how to respond and then compassionately respond to any issue. You know that if the relationship ends, it is ok, and you will grow from it. You are there for your love and believe they are there for you.

Preoccupied Attachment: This is an anxiety driven attachment. You are in fear of losing the relationship and making that mean something bad or negative about you. You are dependent, or co-dependent seeking the approval of your partner. Your focus is on the outside world for your value and worth, making your emotional response very much out of your control.

Avoidant Attachment: You don't need anyone and are emotionally cut off. You may need to be control, feel confident about your own ability but not so much about other peoples. You don't attach so narcissistic or controlling distant behavior is common.

Fearful Attachment: No one loves me, I am broken, and need fixed. This attachment style is afraid of the world, it is common to both do not like yourself or the world and therefore have difficulty attaching. Fearing and yet yearning for attachments, making this style needy. Scared of having love and losing it.

Is there an attachment style you see yourself in more than another? Many survivors have trouble trusting love after being sexually abused, especially if you were abused by someone who was supposed to protect you. Be patient with yourself, as you grow to love yourself more and trust the world more, you will find secure attachment.

Now you know your likes and dislikes, desires, responses and triggers, your intimacy styles, the final aspect that we are covering is your sexual preferences is to understand what kind of sexual personality you have.

There are 5 main types of sexual personalities.

You most likely will have a combination of them of them, like your love languages, but in this case mixing and matching maybe fun. This will help you have clear communication of your desires with your partner/s and it will help you accept your natural sexual personality.

For me when finding this work, I finally knew how to explain myself and my sexual style to my partner as well as find his, so we could meet and form a fun and fulfilling connection. I hope you embrace this clarity too. The definitions I share here are the best I have found, Tony Robbins shares them, however, many coaches, therapist and sexologist have been helping people form deeper relationships and self-acceptance with them for years.

Sexual – “Aroused by the simple act of intercourse. Sex is fun and they use sex to relax. Those with this sexual style are ready to get down to business whenever there’s time or a willing partner. However, they can get stuck in a limited view of sexuality and can be goal-oriented.”ⁱ Many people get stuck in this personality because they don’t know there is more enjoyment to be had.

Energetic – “Aroused by space, anticipation and tease. They are very sensitive and need time to assimilate to sexual touch; too much too fast turns them off. If you enjoy a lot of foreplay and like to experiment with different toys, massage oils and other props, you probably have this blueprint.”ⁱⁱ If you like long baths, romantic texts throughout the day, time to get ready, lingerie, this may be one of your primary sexual personalities.

Sensual – “Aroused by sensation: touch, sound, taste, smell, etc. They bring beauty, comfort and whole-body sensuality to a sexual encounter. Their biggest turn off is being stuck in their head and living in tension. A Sensual Type needs to be relaxed to open to sexual connection and turn-on. If you need to create the right environment to be turned on and get excited when the right lighting, music and smells are present, this might your blueprint.”ⁱⁱⁱ This personality can be downplayed, but so very powerful when let out to set up the scene and create a beautiful environment, planning dates, weekend getaways centered around connection, and filling your room with good smells is such a turn on.

Kinky- “This type is aroused by the taboo. But they oftentimes have deep shame about their taboo desires and, if they don’t have a supportive partner who deeply listens to their needs, they can suppress their type and become distant or develop self-esteem issues.”^{iv} For many survivors this is a common denied sexual personality, this does not have to mean whips and chains, it can be sex in risky places, dirty talk, phone sex, wearing no underwear under you dress and only you and your lover know, liking toys and being held down, told what to do or spanked.

Shapeshifter- “Aroused by all of the above. They are endlessly creative but need a partner who is also equally adventurous. Sometimes they shift to be what others want them to be instead of owning their own sexuality, needs and desires. Shapeshifter types often have to take time to reconnect with themselves so they can be more authentic and vocal in their sexual preferences.”^v If you can see yourself getting down and turned on in all of these categories you are a shapeshifter. Talking and directing is another quality shapeshifter have in spades.

What sexual personality do you relate to most?

All of this helps to create a safe container for you to explore and express your newly defined sexuality. As you do, you may find that some of these things shift and change as you feel more comfortable and safer in new situations. Be open to exploring not only your desires, but also your partners as well. In the next chapter, you will continue to explore including your hard no's, setting boundaries and communication tools that will help you to open up and feel safe as you continue to expand your personal sexual expression.

ⁱ <https://www.tonyrobbins.com/love-relationships/pleasure/>

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