

## Chapter 6: Exploring Your Sexuality

### Introduction

Now that you have activated your sexual energy, it's time to explore yourself. As you are moving through this chapter, remember it is normal to feel uncomfortable, to have judgements come up, and to flat-out have your inner child refuse to play. However, with compassion, your adult self can lead your inner child out of his/her own understanding and into the new normal of your choosing. I will be sharing some of my own experiences and how I have used some unconventional means to bring about a new normal and to truly discover what turns me on. I'll also share some stories from teachers and clients I have worked with in the past. As you proceed, trust yourself; take it slow. It is normal to have to engage with some of your judgments, fears and 'withholds,' a withhold are desires you do not share or secrets you keep from others or even yourself. As you enter into this practice, I encourage you to go for it, to walk through "the dark forest," and to let go of the fear, worldly perceptions, and judgments that have kept you trapped until now.

### Getting to Know Yourself

This is a common practice and maybe you have done it before. I remember seeing a therapist lead a group of reality TV participants through this practice, so more than likely you have heard of "the mirror exercise." If you haven't, you are about to.

I was in my 20's when cancer took hold of me; the mirror practice became a weekly occurrence. There are different levels of this practice. You will begin with the bathroom practice and then, for women, I recommend taking a mirror to your next checkup to see what's going on inside too. It is fascinating. Men, you can see it all on the outside of you. However, have you ever?

#### **Exploring yourself:**

First, recognize the emotion that comes up when you think about exploring your own genitals. Are you excited? Curious? Nervous? Disgusted? Embarrassed? All these reactions are normal. Do this practice anyway.

Take a hand mirror and choose a private area for yourself to explore. I like putting out a soft rug, some candles, soft music, and taking my time. This isn't masturbation. This is exploring your genitals and forming a new connection with them.

Begin with a shower or a bath.

Then begin exploring by using a hand mirror to take a good look at your genitals. Notice, the color, shape, and the feel. Begin forming a relationship with your genitals; notice how you feel, recognize your judgements both positive and negative.

What do you notice about your genitals?

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What judgments have come up?

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How do you feel while doing this practice?

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Draw a self-portrait of your sexual portal.

The mirror exercise is a powerful tool to help you reconnect and make peace with your body.

Next, I am going to lead you through some sexual exploration practices. Part of this will involve you doing your own research; as you do, stay present. The type of energy and emotions that you experience as you move through these practices are important to recognize. However, for most, the lingam or yoni, will have different responses than your emotions and judgments about some things. Part of this is normal, but for a CSA survivor, many of my clients, it can feel like their body betrayed them—by getting hard or wet when they didn't want to engage in sex, or by not being strong enough to fight off an abuser. It is important to forgive yourself for this, to understand your body's reactions to sexual stimuli, and to separate it from your judgments, values, and moral stance.

In my program Amazing YOU, my clients get very clear on what their own life values are and how they are different from their community, from their faith, and from what they were raised with. This is important to do often as you grow and change. This next practice will help you feel great about how you spend your time, your energy and form your relationships, including sexual partnership.

Make a list of what you value. As you do, recognize where this value comes from, and ask yourself whether you utterly agree with the value, or are writing it down because you want to agree or feel you should agree with it.

One practice I really appreciate, which I learned through my fitness and media coach Charlene Johnson, helps you to get honest with yourself about your values. For 3-5 days, track how you spend your time. You may find out that you say you value fitness or nutrition or family time, but that when you write down how you spend your time: your family time, your workout and food choices come after work, talking to friends, social media—if this is the case, then it may be time to either accept what you are prioritizing now or rearrange your schedule.

**Your Values:**

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The other code that is important to discern is your personal moral code. Write down your moral code, again recognizing whether it is your own by choice or one that comes from your upbringing, culture, or faith. For many, a moral code is much like the 10 commandments, or the Yamas and Niyamas of Yoga.

**Your Moral Code:**

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It is important to develop new trust in yourself as you explore, heal, and create your personal sexuality.

The values and morals you hold close to your heart that feel good to you, that feel freeing, and that you consider your own, are all important to honor during the next phase of this course. The values and morals that have been placed upon you, taught to you, and programmed into you, are ones that are important to explore more, and it is also important to allow yourself to decide if you truly feel free and safe, or if you feel caged by these codes and beliefs instead.

The next series of questions are to help you begin to open to new curiosities, to work through some of the hidden or judged expressions, and to make peace with your past.

For many of my clients, it's uncomfortable, at first, exploring their true sexuality. Things like fantasy can feel like a bad word—mainly because it brings up images of their abuse—and it is hard to work past it. To understand this more, and to allow yourself to heal through this process, it is important that I explain, in a new way, PTSD and the body-response to suppressed memories.

PTSD is a response to a past situation in a present moment. Your body may respond to a trigger in a way that you did at the time of the experience, or it may respond in a way that is new and that may have been more appropriate in that situation.

For instance, I was molested at the age of 11 for a few months, and most of the nights, this interaction began in the kitchen as I was doing my chores. Then it would move to the couch, where my perpetrator allowed me to watch tv as he fondled me. For years, I hated being in the kitchen with my now ex-

husband because my body filled with anxiety. If he would come up behind me to kiss my neck, I flinched and wanted to hit him. For years, I stifled this response, grinning through it, much like I did as a child. Then, as I learned about PTSD, I began to allow my adult self to respond. In these instances, I flinched, punched, and even screamed. I allowed my body to fight and to set boundaries—something that was not allowed for me as a child. I made sure that my ex was protected, and then I usually used the power of imagination to trigger myself, and to allow myself to go through the automatic responses my body really desired to go through. Over the years, my PTSD diminished, and is now gone; I can receive neck kisses, and when I am working with my man (or anyone) in the kitchen, it no longer creates anxiety for me.

The other instance is being molested in front of the TV. For me and many of my clients, being molested wasn't an experience of being threatened, hurt, or rough-housed. I have had those experiences as well, but I feel they are talked about more and treated more often in general. Many of my clients, and myself, who suffer decades after being molested, continue to suffer because a part of us feels guilty for enjoying being touched. While I was being molested, my stepdad was nicer than normal, and I wasn't being spanked, which was a normal nightly occurrence all other times. In a way, I was being loved, even if it left me feeling dirty, confused, and full of what I call "creepy crawlies."

My body was often blamed for his advances, as he told me I wanted it because my yoni was wet. He also told me things like, "He couldn't help himself," "he married my mom for me," and, "he loved me." In later years, I had a hard time trusting men's turn-on, and their words of love felt very inappropriate and dirty. Recognizing this was key to healing my relationship with my partners and beginning to trust the closeness and protection I desire in relationship is now possible.

The confusing part of this all was my body's response, both to the memory of being molested, and to watching TV, because I got turned on physically even when my emotional body felt ashamed. Over the years, I have made peace with my body-responses and even play on this fun edge; I rarely get through a movie or a show when my lover is nearby. I have accepted that TV and sex are a great combination for me because my body's response to TV is arousal. I have also accepted that my body isn't the master of my sexual desire and I forgive it for its animal responses to sexual stimuli. Just because you are wet or hard does not mean you are engaged sexually. To truly have a wonderful relationship with sex, it is important to have your body, mind, and energy all in agreement before engaging.

Use this practice to get curious about—and to become aware of—your body's responses to sexual stimuli, your mind's responses, and your feeling/energy around them. Make a note about where you are aligned and notice what triggers bring up which areas you are ready to heal and work through.

## Exploring Right and Wrong

There are no right or wrong answers when it comes to exploring sexuality with one or more consenting adults. Be honest with yourself, and even list things that may feel a little edgy to you or that may have happened to you, that you have been feeling bad about but that now turn you on. Ask your inner child and survivor-age what they like and let yourself be free.

What is unacceptable sexually?

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What is acceptable sexually?

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What fantasies do you have? List even the ones you have but that make you feel a little naughty.

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You have the power in all these situations to choose to lean in or to move away. You can change your mind at any moment and that is important. In later chapters, we will go over safe-words, communication, and setting boundaries. For now, let this chapter be one of you exploring you.

**Making fantasies come alive:**

What turns you on physically? (Maybe being touched a certain way, for example.)

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What images or scenes turn you on? (Maybe candles and baths, or having sex outside, for examples.)

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What energy turns you on? (Maybe a soft tender lover, or being taken with powerful presence, for examples.)

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It is common for you to feel nervous and to have some things come up that turn you on that are not healthy. As a survivor, it is important to understand that the more you try to deny a sexual tendency, the more power it has over you. Getting radically honest with yourself is freeing – allow yourself to get clear, with both the things that you see as safe, right, and aligned with you; and the things that are present but that feel dirty, wrong, and confusing to you. It is especially important to face these things so you can claim your sexual freedom.

What fantasies do you have that feel edgy, wrong, or that turn you on physically or mentally, but not energetically?

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**Visit these shadow fantasies.**

This next practice came to me by accident, and I think it is so powerful. But before I introduce you to it, let me share my views on porn with you. I have seen it be very misused. It is a billion-dollar industry that breaks all the rules of morality. This makes it a wonderful tool to safely explore your reactions, responses, and fantasies. However, there are many free porn hubs that promote child abuse, sexual abuse, rape, torture, and more. It is never clear who is doing this against their free will and who is a professional choosing this as their career and lifestyle. Use your own discernment when watching porn.

**Things to know when using this tool to explore and heal your sexuality:**

First, it is a fact that prolonged porn use makes it harder for you to feel connected and turned on with a physical partner. Many men and women who use porn on a regular basis have trouble getting hard and/or wet while with a lover. And porn paints an unrealistic picture of sex. Porn is physical and mental stimulation only; the spiritual and emotional connection are not available to you when these aspects of your sexuality are not active, and when that happens, sex loses its power. For many abusers, and for most of the world, this is how sex is viewed, which makes it an animalistic act for pleasure and procreation rather than a powerful expression of creation energy.

Back to this practice: Porn is the best way to explore your fantasies—both the shadow ones as well as the positive ones—in order to allow your body and mind to align with your conscious awareness as you reclaim your sexuality.

Look up some of your fantasies and explore your physical, mental, and emotional reactions to them. Journal about it. Do you enjoy the feelings, or are they ones you can use some of your coping skills to heal this part of you. For instance, I was watching a gang-rape because this is a fantasy that came to my mind when I masturbated that I knew would successfully lead me to climax, and yet, I always felt dirty and ashamed after I finished. So I used the tool of porn to watch many gang rapes. As I did, I allowed my body to respond without judgment. Then I allowed my judgments to come up and I journaled about them. After a while, I noticed an edgy rebellious energy that I had within me; this energy turns me on. I also decided that I never wanted to experience even a controlled gang rape. In the process, I discovered my boundaries, and I was able to isolate the energy within me that is edgy and that likes to be submissive and taken. This allows me to imagine new fantasies now that are more aligned with my morals and values and that allow me to be submissive, edgy, and raw.

If you feel comfortable and if you don't have a porn addiction, I recommend allowing yourself to use porn as a tool to explore your responses. For CSA survivors, you respond in two primary ways to abuse and sex: either by blocking pleasure, or by re-enacting pain. For this practice, I recommend you to create a safe space and to move as slowly as your inner child is comfortable with, as you explore where you are blocking pleasure or re-enacting pain.

**A review of terms:**

**Blocking pleasure:** Closing off and avoiding any triggering factors, including risk-taking, sexual relationships, and other social behaviors. When you are blocking pleasure, you may avoid sex all together, make excuses, create distance, and use control-dramas in your relationships to stay “safely uncomfortable and upset.” You may avoid taking risks and going for your dreams, feeling insecure and fighting low-self-esteem. You may also attract controlling and abusive partners.

**Re-enacting pain:** Recreating what happened to you in healthy and unhealthy ways through porn, sexual relationships, and other social behaviors. When you are re-enacting pain, you may abuse another or be controlling and fearful, living in a state of anger and rage. You may like role-playing or rough sex, porn, or other kinky behaviors. You may take risks and be reckless with your money and your relationships.

Your sexual curiosity, fantasy, and memory that keeps coming up, and your reaction to it. (You can do as many as you like; start with three.)

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Circle one - Blocking   Re-enacting   Aligned

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Circle one - Blocking   Re-enacting   Aligned

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Circle one - Blocking   Re-enacting   Aligned

Making peace with your abuse is accepting what was and letting it go. It is also accepting what was and being radically honest with yourself about what parts of you were shaped by it. Personally, I felt like I wanted to be in control during sex for many years. I did not orgasm; pain was normal during sex, and I felt rejected often. In actuality, I was reacting to my abuse, by taking control, which turns me off (normally) and tenses me up, which makes sex painful. To heal, I made peace with surrendering to my lover. This allowed me to learn to relax and to trust my body's responses to turn-on, which has allowed me to orgasm and have pain-free sex.

Many of my male clients had similar experiences when exploring their sexual responses. They reported not getting hard or staying hard when their partner experienced pleasure. This was confusing to them because they wanted to please their partner, but their body was blocking their own pleasure. Their body rejected their response to pleasure because as children, they were forced to give to someone they did not want to. To get through this reaction, many ignored their partner's pleasure and pushed through to their own, eliminating the connection for them both. After making this connection, they could heal their inner child and enjoy giving and receiving pleasure, which created a connection they had not experienced with their partners before.

Understanding your abuse and your response to it, and your response to your fantasies, will help you to connect and to have more meaningful and fulfilling relationships.

### **Masturbation and its bad name.**

Masturbation has been very misunderstood; in many religions it is looked at as bad or harmful. In many relationships, it has caused distance, much like porn. However, utilizing this tool as a way to discover how your body works, and what you like, is amazing.

Things to gather: a soft or comfortable place to rest your naked body on. A hand-mirror and a full-length mirror, your favorite smells and candles or lighting of your choice. Bring together different material to feel on your body: feathers, silk, leather, something hard and something soft; set the tone with music that turns you on. If you have toys you would like to use as you explore what you enjoy or not, bring them out and make sure they are working properly. Lastly, make sure you will have plenty of time; I like to schedule at least an hour.

For this practice, you can combine both the mirror and the porn practice if you like.

Setting up your space:

### **Sensation at play:**

Many CSA survivors have a hard time with sensation because they had no choice to say no when they experienced over stimulation. You may also be very intuitive and easily over-stimulated because your nervous system has been locked most of your life. To reclaim your pleasure and have more orgasms and ejaculate with more ease, it is important to begin playing with your sensation.

The 12 Ways To Orgasm for a wonderful chart with which to begin to explore your ideal levels of sensation. You can do this yourself while masturbating, or with a trusted partner using a safe word. For this chapter, I suggest practicing by yourself.

**Setting the scene of sensations:** To be sensual is to surround yourself with things your five senses like.

What are your favorite smells?

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What smells turn you on?

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What are your favorite textures and which ones turn you on?

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What lighting do you like most when feeling frisky: candles, sunshine, lights off, lights on, dimmers?

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If you could taste sex, what would it taste like? Chocolate-covered strawberries is one taste I commonly use during sexual workshops, to help you to sensually eat—feeling and savoring every bite.

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Set up your room or space according to your sensational likes and then explore your amazing body and sexuality. Be aware of your inner child and your morals and values as your breakthrough judgment to find out exactly how you like to be touched, and what turns you on physically, mentally, and energetically.

One of the most common blockers for CSA survivors is to tense up, which blocks blood flow to your brain, as well as to your genitals. The art of relaxing is the final tool I am going to share in this chapter and it is perfect to practice while you are exploring your likes and dislikes.

To consciously relax is especially important for women to master to have the pleasure of multiple orgasms, body-awakenings, and ejaculations as you move forward in your multi-level orgasm. For men,

the art of relaxation is a beautiful way to connect with your partner and to allow yourself to experience full pleasure after ejaculation, and it will help you as you have sensational orgasms on your way to full climax.

## The Art of Relaxation Practice

Begin creating sensation and pleasure within your body. As you reach the peak of sensation, take a deep breath, and invite yourself to relax into the pleasure, surrendering to it.

At first you may find this hard; you may be accustomed to following your body's tension. This tension may bring you to ejaculation faster, but it only stops sensation. To create more of it and allow your pleasure to continue to rise, relax more.

- Breathe into your genitals.
- Relax your muscles.
- Breathe the sensation into the rest of your body, expanding it.
- Continue masturbating as you do this or have your partner continue giving you pleasure.

You can do this as many times as you like, until your final relaxation after ejaculation. After ejaculation, practice this breathing and consciousness exercise again, allowing the release and positive hormones to flood your nervous system with good energy. Take 5-10 minutes resting, relaxing, touching, and connecting before moving on with your day or going to sleep.

No matter which role you are taking in the bedroom—the feminine receptive role or masculine activity—this practice will benefit you. When ending your self-discovery practice, allow yourself to journal or reflect on what you have received and what you may need more of. Ask yourself what needs to be protected and what you need to provide for yourself to feel safe and secure during sex. Where do you feel open to surrender and where was it more challenging for you? These awareness's will help you to balance your masculine and feminine energies in the bedroom and to be fully able to communicate your desires with your partner in the future.

When you feel comfortable, begin feeling your body from your head to your toes. As you do, you are welcome to use different textures around you to bring more sensation to your skin. Notice where you are more or less sensitive to each new texture.

First, begin to touch yourself—first outside and then, for women, on the inside. Explore what you like.

Do you like it when you touch yourself softly?

What about roughly?

Do you like it dry, or with lube?

What kind of stroke do you enjoy, long or short?

Men:

Do you like your anus played with?

What about your “think-spot”—the perineal tissue between your anus and your genitals?

How do you like your genitals touched—gently or firmly?

What part of your lingam is most sensitive?

Do you like a fast or slower pace, and does it change when you masturbate opposed to having sex?

Women:

Do you like your anus played with?

How do you like your clitoris stimulated—hard, soft, fast, slow, in circles or with straight strokes?

Can you find your “G-spot,”—the back side of your clitoris on the inside of your vaginal canal?

What changes as you tighten or relax your yoni?

Do you like shallow or deeper sensation?

What areas are sensitive?

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What areas turn you on when you touch them and by what texture are you most turned on?

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What feelings come up?

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What judgments come up?

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What makes you feel uncomfortable?

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What did you learn about yourself that you did not realize before?

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There are 12 types of orgasm, according to sexologist Tiffany Yelverton, who teaches at Your Own University. Often, because orgasm is so often misguidedly related to ejaculation, you may have missed 90% of the pleasure, including softer orgasms, along the way. Associating ejaculation with orgasm also limits many men from allowing themselves to feel satisfied when they don't ejaculate. As you explore yourself, also explore these other ways to experience orgasm. An orgasm is a heightened sensation that turns on your nervous system, allowing your body to bring blood to your sexual organs, and to *eventually* ejaculate, if that's what you choose.

Many of my married clients have been married between 15-30 years and because one or both had experienced sexual trauma, sex had become challenging. Each of my clients wanted to have a better sex life, but usually had stopped having, or had never, "orgasmed." Yet after more discussion, I found out that while they had a hard time ejaculating, they had in fact experienced pleasure during their sexual encounters. After taking ejaculating off the table for a few weeks and having practiced 10-15 minute

"sensation play sessions," all my aforementioned clients have come back to me reporting that they had deeper connections and more fun not ejaculating—not to mention that they also happened to find themselves orgasming much more.

## Types of orgasms:

1. Clitoral
2. Vaginal: G-Spot, Anterior Fornix, Posterior Fornix, Cervical
3. Nipple
4. Oral (through kissing)
5. Anal
6. Blended
7. Skingasm: extreme pleasure from skin sensation
8. Coregasm
9. Mindgasm: mental connection, imagination, fantasy
10. Penile
11. Prostate
12. Urethral

After you finish exploring your body, begin to look at and explore your lingam or yoni. Notice how the outside feels, and how numb or sensitive you are. As you feel comfortable, begin exploring your turn on—for men, stroking your lingam and playing with the rhythm and sensations that turn you on, and for women, exploring the inside of your yoni to find the G-spot (back side of your clitoris) and as deeper as near your cervix, and as you let the pleasure centers expand.

What images or thoughts come up for you as you explore yourself?

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Did anything feel physically or mentally uncomfortable?

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What did you like about your sexual organ?

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Are you aware of any judgments you have about yourself, or insecurities about being with your lover?

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The final part of this exploration is to play with your masculine and feminine energy while pleasuring yourself. You can do this through imagination or through physical stimuli. Embody your personal expression in both, and see where you are most turned on. Be aware that being turned on isn't always comfortable, and sometimes it is natural to be turned on by things that are more edgy or fierce. This expression can be fun and safe in the bedroom—just as gentle, sweet, loving can be. Find your pleasure zone in this practice.

The feminine energy of sexuality is to surrender and receive. To surrender to your lover is to surrender to pleasure, allowing your body to react and your voice to engage with the ecstasy you are opening to receive. Allowing the masculine to direct the experience and be in control of how the sexual session goes, as well as the positions, place, and even the setting up of the space. The feminine energy is not one of disconnection and laying there as your man gets off. This is faux-feminine energy that has been a pain-point for many of my male clients. This is the active role for many women that can get confused as a masculine energy—think of this vibe as nurturing energy. This is often embodied, as an example, when a woman is riding her lover and enjoying pleasuring him, simply to see him experience pleasure through his body.

The Masculine energy of sexuality is to provide and protect. The masculine is about preparing and directing the space within a relationship; this includes the bedroom. Masculine energy is about presence, which includes the presence of directing the flow of your love-making session, be it kinky or tender—this is the gift the masculine provides. The faux-masculine is a man making the experience all about himself, just getting off; not pleasuring his partner with his presence is a common complaint of my female clients.

**Review your numbers from chapter 4 and find your pleasure center:**

For this practice, notice: Which energy you are mostly in when engaging in sexual pleasure?

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When you imagine your best sex ever, which energy where you in?

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In future chapters we are going to be discussing relationships and sex with your lover. For today, begin to think about how satisfied you are with your sex life. *If you have not been so satisfied(—and that is probably why you are in this program—)here are some tips with which to begin to explore.*

If you are a heterosexual woman, or the more feminine energy in your partnership, and have not been satisfied sexually by your lovers, learning how to surrender and receive will allow you to feel more pleasure, especially as you allow yourself to go within and to bathe in your lovers presence. If you are a heterosexual man, or the more masculine energy in your partnership who has not been satisfied sexually, step into your power and direct her pleasure, talking to her may help her to remain present and aware of her body's responses, and allow yourself to provide her a safe space within which to fully surrender. You will feel more pleasure and satisfaction in the process as well.

*At the end of your session, feel free to bring yourself to orgasm and to allow yourself to rest in the feeling of release it brings to you.*

What does your orgasm feel like?

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What type of orgasm did you have?

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Types of orgasms: In review – I added this list here again to simplify you answering this question.

- 1) Clitoral
- 2) Vaginal – G-Spot, Anterior Fornix, Posterior Fornix, Cervical
- 3) Nipple
- 4) Oral – through kissing
- 5) Anal
- 6) Blended
- 7) Skingasm – extreme pleasure from skin sensation
- 8) Coregasm -
- 9) Mindgasm – Mental connection, imagination, fantasy
- 10) Penile
- 11) Prostate
- 12) Urethral

Orgasm comes when we experience an intense level of sensation, usually causing the body to contract and then release in pleasure. This release can be through ejaculation, but you do not need to ejaculate to qualify as an orgasm. When my male clients realize this, they begin to notice how much more satisfying and fun sex truly is. Many of my female clients who have not recognized an orgasm, begin to ride the waves of the more subtle orgasms, thereby helping them to feel more satisfaction and to begin awakening their orgasmic energy.

Before I ask you to bring this all into the bedroom with your partner, it is important to define sex for yourself, to create a safe space, and to feel comfortable expressing your sexual desires, likes, and dislikes in all six of your personal power zones. In the next chapter, you will begin to define sex for yourself, which will expand your capacity for pleasure, sensation, and fun.