

Learn to Talk About Sex

by Mike Danchak

The email was to the point,

“Hi Mike, Jerry and I need help with our sex life. For him, he would like sex everyday, sometimes twice a day. For me, once a week would be great. As a result of the difference, we frustrate one another and end up saying hurtful things. I know that Jerry wonders what’s wrong with me, and to be honest, I think the same thoughts about him. I guess the right question is, ‘Is there something wrong with us?’ Neither Jerry or I know what to do. Sex is driving a wedge between us.” Thanks, Kathy

Kathy and Jerry have a common sexual problem...a lack of understanding male and female differences!

The key to sexual intimacy is understanding that sex is complex, and a variety of things that weave together to create a good sex life. Ultimate sex is when there is physical, emotional, and spiritual intimacy. Sex is not about the intensity or frequency of the orgasm but the quality and depth of the day to relationship of the couple.

What is “normal” when it comes to sex?” That’s a question that I frequently hear in coaching. Failing to understand gender differences is a basic cause for sex problems in marriage. Even though equal, we are different, we are male and female. The lack of understanding our sexual differences frustrates couples. Husbands think their wives are *frigid and mechanical* and wives think their husbands are *sex fanatics (zealots)*.

Husband’s and wives both want love, but the way they experience love in the sexual relationship is different. Problems develop in a couple’s sex life because the husband loves his wife the way he needs to be loved and the wife expresses love to her husband the way she needs to be loved. When that happens, neither the husband or the wife feels the love their spouse wants to give them because it is not delivered in a way that connects with their needs.

There is a complex interplay between our body chemistry and our sex drive. Testosterone, one of the hormones responsible the sex-drive, is 20-40% higher in husbands than in wives. The hormones that impact the husband’s sexual arousal accumulate quickly and are also quickly released after orgasm. When your husband is aroused, he immediately thinks of sex. Men are by nature compartmentalized beings. They see work, recreation, family, disagreements and sex as standing alone. Men go through the day with each box being unconnected. So when it comes to sex, wait, go slow, talk, or take more time is not part of his mantra. Husbands are sexually aroused visually and they can just look at you and have an erection. Because you are not wired like him, when you refuse his advance, he is disappointed and his masculinity is challenged.

In contrast, arousal for wives is a prolonged process that can take several days to develop. One reason for the length of time between arousal and sex, is that your wife’s

sex drive, instead of being compartmentalized, is part of a relational network that is connected to her heart, mind and body. What happens in one part of her network sets off a chain reaction that impacts the other networks. If your wife has had a tough day at work or with the kids, or had an argument with you, a chain reaction is released that impacts her heart, mind, physical energy and her sexual desire. This makes the response, "It's been a tough day and I have a headache. I'm not in the mood for sex," understandable.

1. Couples often find it difficult to talk about sex. Research shows that it is **IMPORTANT** for couples to be able to openly discuss their sexual needs, what they like, want to explore, and dislike. Use the above article to help you begin to talk about sex. What new insights did you learn? What insights were reinforced? Share these together.
2. Talk about two things you will work on to improve sexual intimacy.
3. Make a mutual commitment to become open about talking about sex. Make sex talk a primary topic this week. Men, because you are wired differently, don't use this as an opportunity to get your wife in bed. The objective is for each spouse to develop an understanding of the sexual desires of the other. If the discussion ends up in bed by mutual agreement, great!