

A Week by Week  
Erotic Recovery  
Assignment

*A Step-By-Step Assignment That Leads To  
Healing Your Most Intimate Relationship*

By Tammy Nelson, PhD

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Previous participants have said:

“The first week was amazing. We remembered why we loved each other. The weeks after were harder, but when we practiced each exercise and made this our priority, it changed our lives. It changed everything.”

Frank and Eloisa – Tulsa

“I loved these exercises. They finally gave us the direction we needed to jumpstart our love life.”

Anonymous – NY

“My partner and I had drifted. We had been together forever. I wanted more passion. They wanted more intimacy.

We stopped both. This six-week program was the answer.”

Bill and Larry – Los Angeles

“When he cheated on me, I knew I couldn’t ever go back to the way things were. With Dr. Tammy, we went through all the stages of healing and started a whole new monogamy agreement. It’s like a whole new beginning. We definitely can’t go back. But I feel like we are going forward.”

J. – Oakland, C



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## Introduction

This book is for anyone looking to make a change in their intimate life.

As a sex and relationship therapist for over 35 years, I have seen thousands of couples who have struggled with their sex life and want a more pleasurable, passionate love life. Yet many don't know how to connect with themselves and what they want. Or they feel disconnected and separated from their partner and miss the eroticism in their relationship.

Finding the time and space to connect on your own can be challenging. Even couples who have been in therapy can struggle to recreate the passion they once had. Relationships are like a bridge. On one side is your exploration, history, and narrative – what you learned about sexuality and what it means to be intimate. Your partner is on the other side of the bridge, holding up their end with their history, issues, and self-story. And you each have your own work to do on yourselves to find your sexual self-esteem, your intimate connection to pleasure. You owe it to yourself to heal from your own trauma. You can do this alone or with a therapist, but this is not something your partner can do for you. It is your work, and you must do it on your own.

The bridge between the two of you is your actual relationship.

And it is this bridge where you learn to connect, communicate, and find the space to unite as partners, bringing all you know as individuals and sharing with each other to celebrate your union. You explore what it means to share your experiences of independence and aloneness and what it means to be on your own side that you share with your partner, asking them to validate and empathize with your experience as they do with you. You invite them to come to your side of the bridge and explore your world, and then you visit their side. Most partners find their conflict is created by the desire to agree on which side is the 'right' side and which side should be in 'control' of the bridge.

While it seems so obvious to anyone looking in from the outside that both sides of the bridge are necessary as both sides need to be strong to hold up the center. At times, one side can hold up the bridge for a short while if the other is under repair, and vice versa;

this is the benefit of a relationship. For the most part, it takes both sides to hold up the bridge... and the stronger the sides, the more construction it can take.

### **Your sexual bridge**

Sometimes it can feel safer to just stay on your side of the bridge. If you have tried to cross to the other side and have been rejected, ignored, or even felt some hostility coming from the other side, it can feel frightening and may force you to retreat and hide. Or for others, a frontal attack may deem necessary to protect what they perceive as a danger to the structure at its most basic foundation.

These power struggles and conflicts can shut down a sex life.

### **Self-protection**

It can be hard to climb over the pile of resentment in the middle of the bed. When resentment has been brewing, distance can be a way to protect oneself from harm.

In a society driven by performance and success, with an obsession to get to the finish line, our ability to stay in the moment, appreciate pleasure, and receive it is pushed to the bottom of the to-do list. At best, pleasure is an expensive and indulgent antidote to boredom. At its worst, pursuing pleasure in our society is a sin.

And yet, without a healthy relationship to pleasure, to both receiving and giving pleasure, there is no sexual satisfaction for men or women. Desire, orgasm, arousal, and even sexual dysfunction and pain can be treated with a focus - not on treating the performance issues around sex but - by looking at sex from a new perspective, by focusing on what I call pleasure disorders. What does it mean to be averse to pleasure, to struggle with all types of sensual experiences?

Many of us have been conditioned to associate pleasure with guilt. And that time for its pursuit, along with rest and relaxation, is considered a luxury. But what if our power was rooted in our capacity for experiencing pleasure?

Our society is rampant with successful and pleasure-avoidant people.

### **A note about pleasure**

If you've found that pleasure doesn't come easy to you, then this exercise in erotic recovery may be more difficult than you think.

However, it can also open your eyes to how you have protected yourself from feeling pleasure in your life and yourself.

Let's take a moment to look deeper into your own experience of pleasure and how some people react by actually avoiding it altogether.

We tend to blur the boundaries of sex and pleasure. But they are not the same. Rather than focusing on this book as an exercise in improving your sex life, let's look at it as a way to break through some of the walls you have put up between you and pleasure.

### **Pleasure disorders**

Pleasure disorders are the identifiable ways that people avoid experiencing pleasure in their lives, most commonly by avoiding sex, pathologizing sex, blaming their partner, or in all sorts of ways that may be unconscious. These pleasure-avoidant disorders tend to fall into four categories:

Pleasure denial, pleasure resistance, pleasure aversion, and pleasure rejection.

See if you can find yourself or your experiences in any of these areas, and then watch for how these symptoms may appear as you go through the exercises in your erotic recovery assignments. Try not to pathologize, beat yourself up, or label your partner or yourself. These categories are here to help guide you in self-awareness and toward your own healing.

Let's look at the definitions:

### **Pleasure denial**

I have found that many people deny pleasure instead of enjoying or going with the flow of it. If you are in a pleasure denial state, you might enjoy it, but feeling in control of your urges seems more critical. It's in the control of your own experiences of pleasure that gives you a feeling of being in charge of your body and your life.

### **Pleasure resistance**

Pleasure resistance shows up as a way to control your relationship issues. It's when pleasure is used as currency, as a form of regulation in the relationship. As stated before, sometimes climbing over a pile of resentment in the middle of the bed is not so easy.

### **Pleasure aversion**

Pleasure aversion is when something feels good, but your body finds it aversive, almost as if it has a different story for you. It may react differently than your mind: your mind says yes, let's do it, but your body says it's not liking it and is trying to control the pleasure and what it thinks might happen.

### **Pleasure rejection**

Pleasure rejection is when your mind and body feel pleasure but interpret it as dangerous or as a warning that something terrible could happen. It's when pleasure becomes a signal to shut down and throw up real or virtual walls for protection.

If you are experiencing any four of these forms of pleasure avoidance, you are not alone. Many people feel one or more of these at some point, particularly if they have had trauma, illness, or betrayal.

Ask yourself if you have these experiences. Some of the questions below may help you to narrow down the answers for yourself.

### **Is it pleasure denial?**

1. Do I avoid physical pleasure because I don't like to or can't seem to let go?
2. Do I feel guilty when I take a few moments to relax?
3. Do I find the need to be busy all the time trumps the desire to feel pleasure?

### **Is it pleasure resistance?**

1. Do I avoid pleasure with my partner if I am angry or feel they don't deserve it?
2. Do I use pleasure to gain power in the relationship instead of intimacy or connection?
3. Do I threaten my partner to take away pleasure if I don't get my way?

### **Is it pleasure aversion?**

1. Do I crave pleasure, but my body doesn't respond in ways that match my desire?
2. Do I shut down in the midst of pleasure or refuse physical connection?
3. Do I dissociate or leave my body when I feel pleasure?

### **Or pleasure rejection?**

1. Do I want pleasure, but it frightens me when I feel it?
2. Do I physically push my partner away when they touch me or try to connect?
3. Do I get angry when I feel pleasure?

And what do these pleasure disorders mean in a relationship?  
How do they affect a couple's sexual life?

When we look at an individual's, a couple's, or a family's (and even the culture's trauma history), we look at and include its abuse, betrayal, illness, the environment, and how it relates to the couple's sexual relationship.

All these things can affect how someone lets pleasure into their life. Pleasure avoidance is many times related to trauma.

### **Trauma**

According to the Centers for Disease Control, one in four women, and one in five men, have experienced sexual trauma. One in five reports being raped or sexually abused or both as children. Healing from trauma means understanding that when partners are ready to have sex as consenting adults, it can be hard to let themselves have pleasure with another person. This book aims to help you work with your partner and, as a couple, to empower you to have total agency around your sexuality.

Wanting to have sex and intimacy is 'normal,' although some survivors can be confused about that. These exercises will work with you to help you heal from shame, desire discrepancy, sexual dysfunction, and other related issues with which you may be struggling.

You may want more passion in your lives and need a reboot. This book can help with that as well. More than 80% of clients will complain at some point in therapy about dissatisfaction in their sex lives. Most couples can benefit from learning interventions and strategies for improving their sexuality and breaking through relationship impasses.

With the right tools, healing can make the most significant difference in people's lives. Working over the next six weeks can help you improve your relationship, deal with a low-sex or sexless marriage, balance discrepant desire issues, work through betrayal and hurt, and feel more passionate.

Let's look at what these pleasure disorders are and how they might be interfering with your life:

Pleasure denial – is a form of self-control. It leaves the person unsatisfied and discouraged, often accompanied by guilt. A religious or controlling childhood can cause it. It leaves them and their partner feeling resentful and exhausted. Pleasure denial can also apply to the denial of food or emotion.

Pleasure resistance – is the avoidance or manipulation of pleasurable touch or a pleasurable experience. It can be intermittent and have situational or a responsive arc with a partner. It can be symptomatic of current relationship issues, outside issues, or the past.

Pleasure aversion – is the reaction in a negative way to anything that is remotely pleasurable, either physical or emotional. It is the avoidance of touch, and even a repulsion when touched is common. It can be symptomatic of longer-term problems, usually related to issues unrelated to a current marriage or partnership.

Pleasure rejection – is the refusal of all pleasure, either the experience or the giving of it to a partner. The response to pleasure can be dramatic, angry, or blaming. It may indicate abuse or trauma from the past or current relationship.

If you have any of the above pleasure disorders, it's important to seek therapy. It is not impossible to experience pleasure; in fact pleasure is your birthright. But you may have some critical self-discovery work to do to allow yourself the possibility of pleasure.

There is help out there for you on this path. You deserve the support.

Please see the resource section at the end of this book for references and places to find more help beyond the book's scope.

This book can help you if you are struggling with a pleasure disorder. You can still continue your assignments even if you have a pleasure disorder. In fact, these exercises are designed to help with intimacy in all these areas. We will focus on a pleasure model of healing going forward. It's not about having great sex or improving your sex life, although that may happen naturally. Instead, let's add more pleasure to your intimate life.

The pleasure model of treatment means you will have a giver and a receiver, and no longer will it feel like there is a taker or that anyone owes anyone sex. We will focus on appreciation as a way to

grow and expand your intimate life. As a couple, you will learn to reward one another by expanding on what has gone well and building on increased levels of pleasure and connection.

Let's discuss sexuality as 'pleasure' and see how often you would like to have 'pleasure' with your partner. What would pleasure look like, and how often would you like to have pleasure? What would it feel like? If you could have more of that, would you do it every month? Every week? Several times a week? Every day? More than once a day? Would it vary monthly and weekly? Would it differ depending on your hormones? Your work life? Your relationship issues? Your health?

### **How do you define pleasure?**

Take stock of your relationship and how you define pleasure in that partnership. Answer the following:

*What is pleasurable for me?*

*What does my partner find pleasurable?*

*How can we add more pleasure to our relationship?*

*If every time we had a sexual encounter, it was pleasurable, would we do it more often? Does it matter how often we do it if it's pleasurable?*

### **What is important for you?**

Think about the importance of planning to get your sex life moving again. Whether you have had trauma in your relationship, like a betrayal, illness or separation, or you have neglected this part of your life and need a reboot? None of the exercises in this book can help if you haven't committed to carving out some time in your schedule.

No one can determine how often you should have sex. Or what sex is for you and your partner or as a single person. Only you can define the meaning of sex, and only the two (or more) of you can determine how often sex should happen in the relationship to keep you both happy and satisfied.

If you wanted to learn to play the piano or get better at it, you would have to schedule time for practice. You might feel like 'spontaneously' playing and occasionally walk by and feel the 'urge' to play. But if you're busy and don't use the room where the piano is located very often, then it's not likely that urge will strike with any regularity. And if every time you sit down to play, you must start at

the beginning of where you learned to play chopsticks, you might feel discouraged and lose your enthusiasm for the piano.

What is more likely to help and to bring you pleasure and even joy is to commit to a regular practice of playing and learning. Scheduled time to learn new songs and see improvement will give you confidence and inspire you to continue to improve. It will simply be more fun.

Sex and intimacy can be the same. While you shouldn't look at it as a chore to be struggled through or a lesson that has to be dreaded, it is essential to plan and to create space in your lives to practice.

Sex should be a sacred time in your relationship, a destination that you can arrive at, a place on the bridge where you can connect and escape from everything else in life, bringing your experience from your own lives to meet together and in harmony.

Sex dates can prevent the disconnection that can happen so easily when your intimate life becomes less of a priority than everything else.

If you have been through a crisis in your relationship – the loss of a job, an illness – or a betrayal that creates real hurt, like an affair, then this six-week erotic protocol is important for the two of you. Creating sex dates once a week will enable you to reconnect and become sexual again after the intensity of the pain that an affair or a breakup can cause. There is nothing more complicated than trying to recreate what you once had after betrayal has rocked your foundation.

Or maybe you never had an intense erotic connection but want to create one. Either way, you can begin now.

Within six weeks, if you follow this simple plan, you can connect or reconnect, with your partner and begin the healing process. And you may find that you connect in a whole new way.

### **How does it work?**

It is important to follow the directions closely without rushing the steps.

The weeks are laid out in a way that will take you from gentle connection and nonsexual touch to one that is more sensual than sexual, to begin to give you each the space you need to get used to approaching each other in a way that allows you to trust each other and trust the process.



It will also allow for what I call erotic anticipation. Waiting for each date night can add anticipation, bringing new energy to the date night.

As each week progresses, you will find that the exercises take you into more intimate and erotic places, and the sexual energy will increase between you.

Make sure to talk about any feelings that come up, both positive and negative. These six weeks of erotic dates will help you begin again, start fresh and build anew.

Let's talk about conscious repair and long-term connection in a relationship. No matter where you are in your relationship life, it's important to practice, repair and move toward erotic recovery.

Time, Attention, Affection, and Sex – your language of relating

These four resources in a relationship are time, attention, affection, and sex. They are like your languages of love, but with erotic recovery; they are your language of relating. Think of these four areas as an unlimited 'pie' of your relationship. The more you give, the more pie you get. There is an unending supply of each resource, although it doesn't ever feel that way. It feels as if we are lacking in some areas, as if our partner is not 'giving' us what we need, and therefore we can starve in some ways. Sometimes they can give us as much of their resources as they think we need or want, but it does not fill us up; we are forever empty and asking for more because it's not really what we are longing for.

For instance, we would be okay with less affection but may need more time. Your 'pie' may have uneven slices of resources, and you may feel you have lots of attention, but it's not the kind you are looking for. You can resent your partner because you think you give them lots of attention, yet you aren't getting back what you give. But your partner wants sexual attention and doesn't need daily texts and phone calls, which is the kind of attention you crave. Your slices don't match theirs; your pie looks different.

If you need more time with your partner, while they may need more affection, your arguments might be confusing. You can ask for one thing while pushing for something you don't want.

When you say you are not happy in your intimate partnership, what are you really looking for? Is it that you don't have enough sex, or do you crave affection?

These areas actually build upon each other. Time spent together is necessary for there to be attention to the relationship. When there is attention to each other, affection can follow. Affectionate touch can lead to sex. We can also see how lacking these resources can lead to a low-sex or sexless relationship. Without sex, there can be a withdrawal of touch and physical affection, and without the affection, couples can withdraw emotionally and become distant. This can lead to separate lives and less time spent together as a couple.

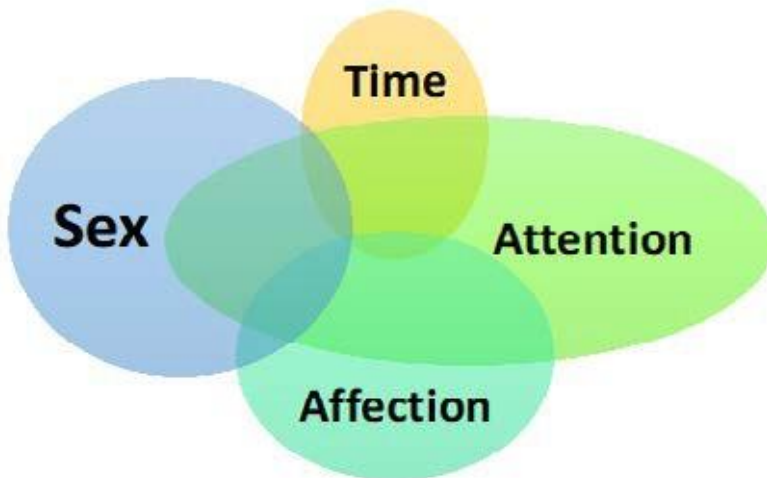
The good news is that you can enter these resources at any point of the pie/circle and increase the resources to the relationship. What does the relationship need more of right now? Is it purely just the sex that is missing, or does it go deeper than this?

It helps to identify our needs so that we can teach our partner what and how we need it.

What do you need more of: time, attention, affection, or sex?  
What do you long for: time, attention, affection, or sex?

What are you good at providing: time, attention, affection, or sex?

How do you show up for your partner: through time, attention, affection, or sex?



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*How do you need to improve in these areas?*

## **Erotic Resources**

Let's look at each of these areas and consider how you relate to these resources and what you need more of or less of.

What do you need more of?

What do you long for?

What are you good at providing?

In what ways do you show up for your partner? How do you need to improve in these areas?

Time – How much time do you spend with your partner? Do you want more time, more quality time? What does that mean to you or a partner? How can you increase time, or does time 'spent' make you uncomfortable?

Attention – What does paying attention to mean to you? Does 'paying' attention cost you? What is the cost? How do you 'pay' attention? Do you focus? Do you use eye contact? Is talking your form of attention, or does it mean some- thing else?

Affection – Do you like to be affectionate, to touch, to hold hands, to cuddle, to snuggle, to be held, to wrap your arms around your partner? Do you miss affection when you don't have it? Does affection always lead to sex for you?

Sex – Do you need the three other resources first to feel sexual? It makes sense that you might need to spend time with a person to give and receive attention, touch, and affection before you are in the mood for sex. These resources tend to build on each other.

Most people like all these things in a relationship, and you're most likely appreciating some more than others.

As you create a vision of your ideal relationships going forward:

*What are the resources you want, and in what balance?*

*What are your languages of relating?*

*Can you draw a pie shape and decide the sizes of the slices so that they reflect what you desire? What would your ideal partner desire?*

## Each Week

### Get out the calendar

Now that you've determined you need more time/attention/affection, and/or sex in your relationship, let's schedule it. This will help you to feel that your relationship is, at the very least, getting the time and attention it deserves. We now have the space to add in some affection and maybe, eventually, sexual connection because now there will be space for it.

Get out your calendars. Sync a date once a week, the same time and day, and mark six weeks of them. Find dates that work for both of you. Imagine you registered for a Pilates class, art class, or piano lessons, or you've decided to meditate. Adding it to your calendar and having it in your schedule will make it much more likely that you will show up and get it done. If you promise each other and commit to the time and space in your busy lives, it's more of a guarantee that you'll both be available for the date and for one another.

It takes at least three weeks to create a new habit. Especially one that feels awkward or uncomfortable, so make sure these dates on your calendar are written in ink, not pencil.

Your erotic date night should be an agreed-upon night (or day) that you will each be able to commit to regularly. Agree that every week on the same day, you will meet at the same time, regardless of how you feel. You may be tired one week, angry, frustrated, or even discouraged. But commit to one another now that you will meet on your date night... even if you don't feel like it.

Is Sex ever spontaneous?

Erotic dates are important in creating spontaneity and memorable time in your relationship. It shows commitment and intention to your partnership and adds a caring and more erotic element to your connection.

Some people complain that if they have to plan sex, then it's not spontaneous. When is sex ever spontaneous? One of you is planning sex on the calendar or in your imagination at some point during the day.

So, in reality, you can only be spontaneous if you have time for it.

Therefore, spontaneity only happens when and if you plan for it. If you have a busy schedule, a house to run, children, and a job or career, or anytime two (or more) busy people try and create and continue a connected erotic life, the day-to-day management of the busyness of life can get in the way.

We can all have other priorities that we put in front of our intimate life. When our sex life gets pushed to the bottom of our to-do list, it can start to feel like our relationship is unimportant, and then we make our partner and ourselves feel like we are no longer important.

This is when passion and intimacy can start to erode.

Making our sex life a task that goes to the bottom of our list is common, but it can be a slippery slope. It can lead to resentment, boredom, and a sexual ennui that can be hard to break out of. It doesn't mean you don't care about your partner or that you don't desire more passion and pleasure in your life. But habits are hard to break. The habit of ignoring your sex life is a rut that both partners must work on together to break out of it to restore or create a more exciting love life.

It starts with a sex date. You might not want to schedule sex. You might feel like scheduling intimacy takes all the fun out of it. You might be under the illusion that passion should be spontaneous.

And you're not wrong.

But if you haven't had a passionate sex life, for whatever reason, it's most likely that finding the time has not happened up till now, and you are looking for a change. If you keep doing what you're doing now, you might not find the change you want. In fact, things could get worse. You may have noticed that the longer you go without sex, the less you want it. That's your body's way of saying, "ok, I guess we are shutting this part of our life down?" The body will slow down the production of sex hormones since it believes you no longer need them.

When you start having sex again, those hormones will come back, and your body will respond to the message that you're sending... "it's time to get up and running again."

Sex is the best aphrodisiac. The more you have it, the more you want it.

The more you have it, the more connected you feel to your own sexuality. Your desire increases, your inner fantasy life will become richer, and you'll be more open to trying new things. But to be in what I call the "pleasure space," you have to be having sex on a regular basis.

### **Your erotic date is not necessarily about sex.**

Let me repeat. Your erotic date is not necessarily about sex, although it usually leads to that by the end of the six weeks. Each week's assignment is designed to help you move toward an erotic experience.

The difference between sex and eroticism is that sex is an act. It's a physical, anatomical act that requires a release of energy. Sex can be defined as something physical between two people but does not necessarily require more than one and is not restricted to only two. Sex is something one does, or has or a place one goes...it is an active word.

Eroticism is a feeling. It is an energy that makes sex more sensual, exciting, passionate, and arousing. It is a turn-on, a way to create an atmosphere, a way to hold space for sex, and a fertile soil from which all types of things can be produced. Eroticism is enriching, empowering, and enlightening in a unique way to each person and each couple.

### **Weekly Erotic Dates**

Erotic dates will look different for each couple reading this book. Following the directions for each week, feel free to modify for your abilities and desires. If you are differently abled, you may need to use props or adapt in ways that work for your body. As aging or illness affects how we connect, we may need to adjust our physical ways of being. This is to be expected and welcomed. We can discover new things about ourselves and our sexuality when we flow with what is instead of fighting our current reality.

### **Expectations**

During each date in each week, you may have an erotic experience that surpasses your expectations. Or you may feel disappointed and let down. Don't let any of these feelings stop you. Your erotic date night is a special, sacred time that the two of you are

carving out of your busy week together. It is when you are together, without distraction, where you can focus on one another and your erotic relationship. Your erotic life together is the one place where you are not just roommates and friends or co-parents; you are lovers. It is a time to remember why you came together in the first place.

Take it slow. Start with the commitment to meet each week for just one night, for the erotic date night.

Finding a time to meet can sometimes be the hardest part. Find the day, mark it on each other's calendars, and promise to each other and yourself that this is your practice time – for your erotic life together.

You can have contact on the other nights besides your sex date night, but make sure you plan your erotic date for the same time each week. This does several things. It creates consistency and shows your partner that you respect and honor them. It also creates erotic anticipation. Your bodies will start to look forward to when you are together, even if your minds are on other things.

When the date night arrives, know that you will have some sexual contact, even if you don't feel like it. Don't wait for the desire to hit. You are creating an environment where desire can flourish once it is aroused.

### **Preparation**

Leading up to the date, make sure you put effort into preparing for the date. Starting about four days before the sex date, use small acts to help create anticipation for the big night. For example, show your partner physical affection at least three times, four days before your date. Attempt to connect the next day by whispering in your partner's ear the things you want to do to them on your erotic date. On the next day, bring home a surprise. This can be something like a card or a small token gift. You can use the surprise on your sex date, like massage oil or a candle.

The fourth day is the big day; it's time to create an atmosphere in the bedroom that will remind both of you that this is a sacred, erotic space for you to play safely together. Light candles, put out fresh flowers, and put soft sheets and blankets on the bed. Make an extra effort to pick out music your partner will like.

When the big night comes, keep your expectations open and reasonable. If the evening goes as you envisioned it, then great. If it

doesn't meet your expectations, remember that this night is a success if it makes you feel connected to your body, your own needs, and/or your partner.

### **What is in store?**

We will cover several interventions to add to your sensual toolbox: Imago dialogue, mindful breathing, sensual touch, massage, and sharing fantasies can make this an important night of sensual pleasures.

Erotic connection can mean many things.

There are many ways to experience an erotic connection that don't necessarily include traditional forms of hetero-normative intercourse, including lying naked together, soft touch, massage, sensually touching your partner, or pleasuring your own body while your partner watches. There is no wrong way to have an erotic date night. However, you don't want to push direct sexual contact if you are not ready. Some people may be coming to these exercises after long periods of abstinence, intimate distance, or are healing from trauma. These exercises can work even if you are re- covering from an affair, have experienced a physical or mental illness, or have not had sex for a long time.

The following chapters will include some clear direction about what to do each week to begin your new process of intimate connection. Your erotic date nights will start with week one and progress to week six.

You will want to honor your partner's comfort level and take things slowly. Read each week's assignment ahead of time or read it out loud on your date night, and follow each step, one by one, or if you're ready to skip ahead, make sure you both agree on combining dates or pushing through to the next one. It's fine as long as you agree and plan for it together. However, it's recommended that you follow the week-by-week plan. Most couples report positive results when complete, and many return to the plan year after year.



## Step One: Erotic Date

**T**he critical part of making a date is to set aside this sacred space and time dedicated to your relationship.

Although it is only a few hours per week, an erotic date is a particular time that you set aside to focus on this essential aspect of your relationship, although, I recommend that you do not have direct sexual contact at all for the first few dates.



The rest of your week can be set aside for your companionship and working on any other relationship issues you might be working through.

Your erotic date time is for the romantic resolution necessary if you are to move forward in your new erotic connection.

Think of it as an resolution you make that will change your relationship drastically, help it evolve, and create a transformation in your monogamy toward a new beginning.

If you don't dedicate these few hours a week to your sexual relationship, you may find yourselves moving further apart instead of closer together. Think of this time together as a practice time, like a yoga or meditation practice. This is when the two of you will focus on your erotic practice. This is an important time together and a sacred time.

No matter what, just showing up is the most important thing you can do for one another.

Some nights you may have to push yourself to get to the date and the bedroom. You might feel resentful or angry with your partner or not in the mood. You might be tired or not feel well physically. Show up anyway. Showing up sends a strong message to your partner. It says that you care for them and honor your commitment to this process (at least for six weeks).

This is NOT, let me repeat, not about 'just forcing yourself' to have sex. Never do something you don't want to do or feel coerced

into. Don't do it just because your partner wants you to do it. This is not about having sex when you don't feel like it. This is not a 'just do it' message. This is about showing up for a sensual date to begin to shift and change your relationship together, as a team.

### **Never let yourself feel forced into sex**

Never let yourself feel forced into any sexual or erotic behavior that doesn't feel comfortable for you. Sexual coercion is never acceptable, even when it comes from an intimate partner. Similarly, don't manipulate your partner with your sexual needs, and do not expect to use sex as the only way to get your emotional needs met if your partner is not ready to be sexual right now. Take things slowly.

Although sex can be an effective way to heal emotionally and feel intimately connected, if you are feeling angry, distant, or hurt, forcing sex won't make you feel better. In fact, it will probably make you feel worse.

Push yourself to show up but follow the protocol for each week carefully. It is a well-thought-out plan to help you reunite with your partner while still feeling in control and joyfully reuniting with your own sexual and sensual self.

### **Be consistent**

When you have chosen your date and time for the weekly erotic date, make sure you stick to the consistency of the same day and time every week; a day or evening when you both have time to relax and when you can responsibly shift your priorities to your partner. If you have children, consider arranging for a babysitter or have them spend some quality at a family member or friend's house. Some couples arrange their date when the children are at school or asleep.

Initially, planning your erotic connection might feel like your love life is no longer romantic or genuine. Yet making a date with your partner creates an opportunity for more romance and more authenticity. As you will experience, these dates are an important and special time in your relationship. Respecting this time together shows an intention for your partnership and adds a caring and more erotic element to your connection. And ironically, more spontaneity can happen when you give yourselves time and the attention to detail it takes to plan it.

## RESISTANCE

As you begin to plan your date, you and/or your partner may feel some resistance. You might find yourself saying things like, “this will never work” or “we don’t have time for this” or “there is no night that works; we are always tired.”

Don’t take this personally, either of you. It is normal to have this reaction. It can be scary to consider really committing to going deeper into your erotic life. Think about what might be surfacing for you. Are you afraid this won’t work and you will be disappointed in yourself and your partner? Are you worried that the sex, when it happens, won’t be rewarding or that there will be physical problems with performance?

Be honest with yourself.

You may be worried about whether you want to be intimate with your partner or whether they want to be intimate with you. You might be concerned that creating intimacy will send a message to your partner that you forgive them or are ready to move on when inside, you are not there yet. Or you may be afraid that your partner won’t physically desire you.

Know that all these thoughts and all this resistance are normal. Go through with the date anyway.

Where you feel most afraid is the area where you are most vulnerable. Pushing through your fear can help your relationship grow into a more intimate and connected partnership. If you can, share your fears with your partner. Tell them the things you are concerned about before you start. Make the erotic date night an emotionally intimate experience by taking turns sharing some of your resistance.

## ANTICIPATORY EROTICISM

You are probably both excited and looking forward to the date nights. Maybe some fear and some joyful anticipation. It’s okay to have all these feelings. This anticipation can feel like nervousness, but it might be excitement. Many times, they feel the same.

Talking about any concerns before the date night can help with emotional distress or anxiety leading up to the time together and give you each more ways to prepare. This can increase your confidence

that the date will work out well. Anticipatory eroticism is a big part of planning your ‘spontaneous’ date night intimacy.

Anxious anticipation and erotic anticipation can feel very similar. To distinguish the difference, let’s see if we can first talk about anxious anticipation and know how that feels.

### **Anxiety Dialogue**

Prior to the date, use the following sentence stems and dialogue with your partner. A dialogue is a back-and-forth form of communication where each of you listens fully and asks questions if you need more clarity.

Read the following sentence stem out loud, finishing and sharing each sentence with your partner. Your partner does not need to answer, only have them mirror back what they hear, “so what I hear you say...” and reflect on what they hear.

Then switch; you be the listener and let them know you hear their statements by repeating back exactly what you heard, checking in with them to see if what you heard is correct, asking them to repeat themselves if you didn’t quite get it all and letting them know you understood their intention.

When you’re finished, make sure you send appreciations to each other. This helps to close the dialogue. Start with the following:

SENDER: I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about our upcoming date night because \_\_\_\_\_. My concern is that \_\_\_\_\_

LISTENER: What I hear you saying is... (repeat what the sender just said)

SENDER: What I look forward to about our upcoming date nights is \_\_\_\_\_. One way I’m preparing is \_\_\_\_\_

LISTENER: What I hear you saying is \_\_\_\_\_

SENDER: One way you can help me to prepare is \_\_\_\_\_

LISTENER: What I hear you saying \_\_\_\_\_

SENDER: One thing I appreciate about this dialogue: \_\_\_\_\_

LISTENER: What I hear you saying is \_\_\_\_\_

## **Erotic Anticipation**

One of the reasons your erotic date night should be at the same time every week is so that you both will slowly begin to anticipate your erotic time together. You will notice after three or four weeks of your weekly erotic date that you are starting to feel what I call *Anticipatory Eroticism*.

You may find that you begin thinking about what will happen several days before the date night arrives. This 'erotic anticipation' can create arousal and desire, even if you have not had sex in a long time. As you start to reintegrate sensual and erotic experiences into your lives regularly, the 'practice' of an erotic date will train your body, mind, and spirit to expect and honor this new intimate time you are sharing.

If you can move through any initial discomfort, fear, or awkwardness, you will find you both look forward to this sacred time together, and, when you begin to explore your erotic connection, you will not only regain your sexual confidence but will start to anticipate and create new ideas of things you can add to your erotic life together.

## SEX AS A PRACTICE

A good sex life is a practice, just like yoga or meditation or even playing the piano. Engaging with each other on a regular basis means you are committing to the practice of an erotic, intimate relationship.



The more you invest in this practice the more you will gain as a couple.

Your erotic date is not a “going out” night. It is different than movie night or dancing night. Avoid rich food, heavy meals, or too much alcohol before your erotic date. Eating dinner out or drinking too much wine is likely to make you want to come home and sleep. It won’t make you want to come home and connect erotically.

An erotic date is dedicated time carved out of your lives where you can close out the world by closing your bedroom door, turning off the TV, shutting off your phone (an important part of the evening), and setting up the room as a sacred, erotic space to practice your new erotic recovery. This may mean lighting a candle, turning on music, and/or just holding each other. Or it may mean taking a bath together and lying together or sleeping naked. Or it may mean a specific and guided practice of exercises like the ones that follow.

## Step Two: Preparing for Your Date

**L**eading up to the date, make sure you put good effort into preparing for your special time together. For several days prior to the sex date, create anticipation for the evening you will spend together. Remind your partner of your upcoming date, and which week you are on. Leave them a note or send them a text.

Don't get caught up in who reminds who about the date. It doesn't matter who initiates the erotic date night. If one of you forgets, don't take it to mean they love you less. Just show up anyway. Resistance is normal, your relationship issues will be triggered, and conflict will arise in this as in everything else you experience and try to negotiate in your lives together. Try to make arguing or power struggles off limits regarding the date night.

### **Create space for yourself**

It would be lovely if your partner could prepare the room for the date, but if they don't, think about what you need to be happy and comfortable in your surroundings. Do you like warm air on your skin, a light scent in the air, softer music? Think about how you can make this an erotic experience for your partner and for yourself. Is there something sexy you want to wear because it makes you feel good about your body? Try not to only think about how to please your partner; think about pleasing yourself, as well. You are creating an environment where desire can flourish, and you want to be comfortable and feel sexy and excited to be there.

See if you can focus on your own sensual needs and let go of expectations that they will create the scene for you. Set it up in the way you want it, in the way you need it, and enjoy your night in the style that works for you.

### **Set an Intention**

If you have an intention that you want to set before each date night, it can be important to say them out loud to each other. Make sure that your intention is explicit, and your expectation is spoken out loud so that there are no misunderstandings.

You will have less of a tendency to blame your partner when your needs are not met if you can share them directly before the

night begins. An intention, however, is different than a wish or an expectation. An intention is a desire to feel a certain way. Intentions are what we create for ourselves, something we long for that what you are wishing for that is personal to us. We might also long for this for our partner as well, but not necessarily.

An intention might sound like, “My intention is to feel calm and relaxed,” or “my intention is to feel closer to you,” or “my intention is to remember my sexual turn ons.”

If the evening goes as you envisioned it, then great. Process it together by sharing what you appreciated about the night with your partner. If the date does not live up to your expectations, which is likely to happen on many occasions in the beginning (remember this is a practice and it takes time to get good at it), try and reframe the experience by reminding each other that you actually showed up, you were here for each other, and because of this, the night was a success.

If you felt at all close to your partner, this is a step in the right direction. If you practiced a new skill, then the date was an important step in the direction of a new life together.

When you are ready for sensual contact, your sex date can include many things. It is most likely that one of you may feel hesitant and not as ready for sex than the other. You will probably be at different places at different times.

Go slowly and take your time. Remember that this night is a success if it makes you feel connected.

There are many ways to experience sensual and erotic pleasure.



## Step Three: A Change from “Goal-Oriented” Sex

**M**any times, the focus of sex is on getting to the “finish line” or the orgasm. Sometimes when we take away the goal of getting to the end zone, the sex can be experienced as more joyful because it is less stressful.

Focusing on the moment allows you to experience pleasure without pressure to perform or achieve orgasm. You prevent the cycle of anxiety and sexual dysfunction when the stress of performing is taken off the table and out of the bedroom.



When there is a trauma in your relationship such as infidelity, the goal of having to achieve an orgasm during sex can add extra pressure to a situation that may already be tense. Trying to approach sex in a less “goal-oriented” (i.e., “orgasm-oriented”) way can be a new and more rewarding experience of sensuality. It is important to slow down the process and re-learn what touch, pleasure, and sensuality are really about.

### **Erotic Injury**

When there has been an affair, or even a rejection, the betrayed or rejected person feels hurt, deceived, angry, and experiences what I call an erotic injury. An erotic injury means that your sexual ego, or identity as a sexual person, has been challenged. You may be asking yourself, “am I still attractive?” and “do I still have what it takes?” and other questions that relate to your sexual self-esteem.

If your partner rejects you after you approach them for sex, especially after numerous tries, it may take time for you to recover your own power in bed. One way to recover that power and balance

in your relationship is to reconnect to one another slowly, in a sensual way, without the pressure of added sexual performance. Don't worry if you get it right or do it well.

This isn't about doing it perfectly or forgetting or forgiving. It's not about reaching the ultimate orgasm or giving your- self or your partner multiple orgasms, at least not now. You might find you can reconnect with each other and after six weeks, you may be ready to take your erotic life to a whole new level. For now, relax, take it gradually, take orgasm out of the equation, and learn to touch one another again, and be touched. Remember what it feels like to feel your partner's skin, share their body, and be with them in this very intimate way.

Sharing your body is a very generous act. Be open to it in whatever way you can for now, and trust that in this process you can go as gradually as you need to.

Focus on the experience of touching one another and working together to make that touch feel positive and healthy. If there is ambivalence, insecurity, resistance, which often occurs after an affair or hurt feelings, this six-week plan can help.

## Step Four: Arousal and Desire

**F**or some, arousal comes before desire. Don't wait for the feeling of desire to hit before you decide you want to be with your partner. You may not feel desire first. Once you are physically aroused and turned on, you may then feel some desire. Some recognize this experience and say things like, "I'm never really into sex and I have to push myself to do it, and then right before I orgasm, I tell myself wow, why don't we do this more often!" This means that the desire for sex may not be there prior to the physical and sexual arousal in your body. However, the level of arousal just prior to orgasm reminds you that you are sexual, you do like and want sex with your partner, but it can be difficult sometimes to remember that feeling when you are not aroused.

If you are feeling physically aroused and you want to make love but find that you are angry or resentful at your partner, it can feel like your body is betraying you and that reaction can be confusing. Don't let the feelings in your body decide for you either way. Your arousal or lack thereof can make you feel confused by your own sexuality. You may be upset that you feel nothing when you really want to, or you may feel the opposite: "How come I am turned on by my partner after what they did to me?" Try not to be frustrated with yourself for either reaction. Your body is responding in a healthy way, and you are feeling the feelings that are natural to you in the moment.

Continue with your commitment to your weekly erotic dates and eventually your desire and arousal may catch up with one another.

## Protocol: Six Weeks of Great Sex Dates

Sex that focuses both of you on sensuality and connection can help change the dynamic of your relationship for the better, regardless of where you are in your partnership. If you are having trouble connecting sexually or want to reconnect, but want to go slowly and carefully, use these six weeks of exercises. Try to take all six weeks in the order they are intended and take the six-week exercise seriously. Follow it as closely as you feel comfortable and plan your nights together. This is your chance as a couple to create the next six weeks of intense sensual and erotic closeness.

Read, touch, enjoy!

### **DIRECTIONS**

You have read the four steps leading up to this exercise. You have by now established the weekly date and time of your erotic date and integrated the date night into your weekly schedule.

Begin to practice the intimate connection in each exercise weekly. Read each exercise completely first, or read them all prior to beginning the six weeks. Both of you should talk about what is going to happen before you arrive at your designated date night and decide how the night will go, in general.

As you read along, you will notice there are certain things you can decide in advance. You will want to decide who will be the Sender, and who will be the Receiver, and you will want to know if you are going to switch on the same night or split the date night into two separate weeks. Any way you do this is fine. It is totally up to you.

There are suggestions in the following chapters for how to make each erotic week happen, but feel free to improvise. If your partner does not feel comfortable going outside of the guidelines, then make sure you follow them closely.

You should both agree on how you work each date night, so that you are both comfortable and there are no unwanted surprises. Sometimes, however, things do happen that are unexpected in a sexy and wonderful way. Be open to those spontaneous moments when things fall into place. Let yourself feel good and enjoy the moment.

For this six-week protocol, if you have not had sex for a while, if there are performance or sexual dysfunction issues, or if you are recovering from infidelity, you can purposely and consciously avoid sex. This may be difficult for some of you, and for others it may be easy.

(NOTE: For other couples, there are more advanced options in weeks four, five or six, if you want to integrate sex and are comfortable taking it to that level.)

By week five or six of your erotic date night, you will have firmly established your schedule. You will be focusing on activities that promote eye contact, sensuality, and each other's pleasure, both giving and receiving. This can help you work through any anxious or negative feelings and thoughts that may come up during lovemaking.

### **Reactivity**

Surprisingly, for some, feelings of anxiety, anger, sadness, grief, or a need to prove oneself can come up during sex. This may trigger all types of reactive behaviors in bed. You may feel averse to the pleasure you feel and do things like cover your body, hide under a pillow, giggle, push your partner off you, ask not to be touched, cry, or rage. You may want to put your clothes on, pull the covers over you, and turn the lights off. Other times you may find yourself crying before, during and after touch. These are all normal reactions and unless you are hurting yourself or your partner, make space for all your feelings, and talk to your partner before and after the experience.

Process your feelings and reassure your partner that you are okay if you are and take a time out if you need one. You can resume the activity when you are feeling less reactive. Meanwhile, have your partner hold you and lie together until the feeling passes. Most feelings pass like waves on the ocean. If you let yourself experience them, they usually dissipate. Even the positive ones.

The following exercises allow time and space for you to focus on receiving and giving pleasure and will slow down the process of sensuality and erotic connection and take the focus off the performance of sex. The exercises will slow the erotic reconnection down to help you integrate your new monogamy into your recovery even if you are recovering from infidelity. The exercises will take place over six weeks, but you can extend the six weeks and slow this

process down as well, perhaps making each night a two-week exercise. Or you can revisit each weekly exercise to replay over and over, whenever you feel the need or desire. In this way you can enjoy these exercises for as long as you'd like.

The following is Exercise One, Week One. It is the first exercise that you will practice on your Erotic Date Night, when you have uninterrupted time to practice your erotic connection. Later you can use Erotic Date Night to practice other erotic expansion activities.

Decide who goes first. You will each have a turn, so choose who will be the Sender first and who will be the Receiver. The Sender will be the more active participant, doing most of the active touching, and the Receiver will lie back and be receptive to the Sender's touch, noticing their own feelings and being aware of their own reactions. You will each get a turn to be both Sender and Receiver.

Option: You can split this night into two date nights. For this date night, there can be one Sender and one Receiver. After the exercise the Receiver can simply drift off into sleep or relax fully, without having to switch to a Sender role. The following week, you can switch, and the Receiver becomes the Sender for Week Two.

## Exercise One, Night One

The goal of Night One is to massage each other without touching the intimate areas. The Sender will be the massager, giving the Receiver the experience of being massaged.

This means that the Sender can touch the Receiver in a soft, gentle, massaging touch, using any way that feels good, massaging the whole body.

But the Sender will avoid any touch of the genitals and avoid orgasm as the goal. In fact, orgasm and sex are off limits on Night One.

The Sender should lie on a soft bed with a sheet or blanket spread out underneath them (one where massage oil will not damage it), a massage mat on the floor, or a massage table with sheets.

You may want to set a timer for 15 minutes to start, to give you both a limited time to begin your practice. Later on, you can extend the practice as you feel more comfortable.

The Sender should begin massaging the Receiver's body, using massage oil that is non-perfumed, to avoid irritation.

Starting at the extremities and moving inward, or beginning at the neck and shoulders, and moving down to the hands or feet work in a sensual manner, touch your partner in a way that you think your partner would appreciate.

Using your whole hand, with flat fingers, extend your hands over your partners muscles and push deeply and consistently, repeatedly in one direction. Your moves can be sexual, sensual, or erotic, but keep in mind that your partner's intimate areas are off limits. Work toward relaxing your partner, imagine their body is stressed and it's your job to try to put it to sleep if you can.

You may be surprised how the restriction of "no sex during this exercise" takes the pressure off of you and your partner and allows you to explore each other's bodies in ways that are simply pleasurable with no other goal.

It may also create some nice erotic tension, when you realize you can't touch places that you might want to touch.

And being the Receiver, you might long to be touched in places where there are restrictions. Focus on this lovely feeling of sexual tension and sit with it, feeling the energy of it.

Do not try to change it, evaluate it, or judge the feelings. Just notice them. Notice what is pleasurable.

If you are the Sender, notice what feels pleasurable under your hands. Revisit the landscape of your partner's body, remembering that this is a very generous experience, both the giving and taking.

Feel your partner's skin and the smooth, cool texture of their body. If you are the Receiver, feel your partner's hands on your skin and let yourself stay focused on the moment.

Notice if your mind is drifting and let yourself focus again on the feelings of their hands on your skin. And remember the only goal is to be as much in the moment as possible.

See how much pleasure you can allow yourself in the moment without worrying about where this is going or what your partner is thinking.

*Notice any thoughts in your head and let them pass through, without holding onto them.*

The sender or massaging partner moves their massage to the back of the receiving partner, with firm strokes going from slow to fast, or soft to hard.

The receiving partner works on breathing and receiving, noticing what feelings surface.

Is there resistance, anger, frustration? Is there sadness, love, longing? Just notice the feelings without trying to change them. Let the feelings come through and do not judge or hold onto a desire to accomplish anything.

You may notice that there are frozen or resistant parts of your body as you feel the massage strokes, or you may not feel anything at all. Perhaps you are numb. You may resent the strokes or welcome them. Feel and welcome all the feelings without judgment.



## One to Five Feedback Scale.

**A**t some point, whenever you decide, the Receiver can offer feedback, but only a One to Five Feedback Scale.

Using words can be tricky as you run the risk of judging, critiquing, or demanding or even saying what you want more of.

Using the *One to Five Scale*, describe the sensations you are experiencing during the sensual massage.



1. One means that you are not comfortable, or it feels almost painful, and your partner will know to move away from that stroke or touch.
2. A two is somewhat uncomfortable but by no means is it unpleasant.
3. A three is very nice but more neutral feeling.
4. A four is very good and feels wonderful.
5. A five means that you are experiencing intense pleasure and that you want the touch to continue. It feels marvelous and they should do more of it, perhaps even on other parts of your body.

Let the One to Five Scale describe the experience of the sensation you are experiencing and try not to use words. The use of numbers instead of words will allow you to fully experience the sensations without the added complication of trying to think of words to respond. This will free up your brain to just feel the experience instead of trying to make sense of it and assign it meaning, translating it into language and speak. All that neurological functioning will take you out of your body and keep you from experiencing the massage.

A number is a quick assessment and an even easier response, and it gives your partner feedback that is hard to misinterpret or give

added meaning, like a sentence. They can't misinterpret the number "3" where they might misconstrue it if you say, "A little to the left."

If you are the Receiver, you can simply lie back and experience the strokes without shifting too thoroughly into that part of your brain that controls language. And your partner doesn't have to think too much to respond to you either.

They can adjust their strokes, accordingly, eventually learning the language of your body. No words or explanations are necessary. Only receiving and giving and feeling the sensations and communication of those feelings through numbers 1 to 5 are needed.

The Sender focuses only the sending of the sensation through the massage stroke.

Working on trying to get the receiver to experience a 4 or 5 is desirable but not necessary. Noticing the feelings internally is more important. Is there resentment, guilt, wonder? What is going on inside as the feedback is given about the massage? Can you change the strokes so that they feel better to your partner? Are you surprised that your partner is reacting to the strokes the way that they are? Would you have thought otherwise?



### *Breath*

Without judgment on your performance or on your partner's receptivity take in as much information as you can and continue your movements, noticing how the stroking feels to you. If you have music playing, try to move with the rhythm of the music.

Or move your massage to your breath, breathing in and out as you move your hands back and forth on your partner's body. Try and time your breathing with your partner's breath.

Breath is an important part of this exercise. If you can time your breathing to go in and out as you move your hands, this will give you more power and awareness in the massage, and with your partner.

You may feel a deeper and more intense connection with the receiver as you massage them if you are connected to your own breath and with theirs. And, if you can connect to the rhythm of their breath as you are inhaling and exhaling, you may feel a unique circular rhythm to the experience.

As they breathe out, you breathe in. As they breathe in, you breathe out. At some point you may feel that the massage is almost a meditative experience.

You may notice that your partner's heartbeat begins to slow. You may feel their pulse slowing, and notice they sigh, and you may feel their muscles relax, and their whole body settle into the bed or the floor. Can you get them to relax even more? What makes them relax? Is it the hard, deep strokes or the light, caressing strokes?

## **Emotions**

You may notice that you feel some of your partner's emotions as you massage them. If suddenly you feel sad, or you feel anxious, ask yourself if this is your emotion or are you picking it up from your partner? See if you can feel your partner's emotions through their skin, through the tilt of their head, or their shoulders, or their thighs. What do you think they are experiencing right now? And can you calm them down; shift their emotional space through your touch? Can you be more loving, more holding, more caressing? What do you think they need right now?

Normally, when we are making love and focusing on intense sexual pleasure, our own and our partner's, we don't think about the subtleties that we may be missing in our partner's emotional experience, or the many signals that their body is sending us.

See what you may have been missing by focusing deeply now on their inner selves, right beneath the skin. What can you tell about them right in this moment?

You may feel some sexual or erotic feelings coming from them. And you may feel those feelings of desire and arousal yourself. Because you have committed to your partner that this week, Week One, there will be no overt sex, you can let yourself focus on feeling those feelings, and just breathe.

Notice these feelings and do not judge or act on them at this time. Let yourself inhale the feelings and feel their power. Feel how you appreciate your partner in this way and let yourself bathe in the

attraction to your partner. Let yourself love them in this moment and send them your feelings through your hands. Remember, try not to cross the boundary that you have both agreed to, and don't touch any intimate or bikini or bathing suit areas.

### **White light exercise**

It can be a very powerful addition to this exercise to hold in your mind appreciative and positive thoughts and feelings about your partner as you touch them and as they touch you. Imagine them surrounded by white light and think only clear and kind thoughts about them.

While they are touching you or you are touching them, feel their energy mingling with yours. You want this energy to be clear, and without conflict, to be loving and healing. By visualizing the energy as white light and thinking about your partner in a positive loving way, you can clear the energy between you, at least temporarily.

### **Ending the massage**

Let this exercise end with the Sender slowing down the strokes. Both of you can focus on deeper breathing.

As the Sender, you may want to, with permission, slowly lie on top of the Receiver, with your full body, breathing deeply and closing your eyes, to seal the experience. Breathe for at least several full breaths, or up to three minutes. Check in to make sure your weight is not too much. If you can hold your partner's hands or open your palm and lay it flat upon their hand, while you do this, it will seal your energies more completely.

Taking a last deep breath, move off the receiver, and either switch places, or let yourselves drift into sleep, ending the date until the following week.

(NOTE: Some couples like to do two massages in one date. I recommend one massage per date so that the receiver can totally relax and let themselves fall asleep right after the massage).

Thank the RECEIVER for letting you touch them and ask them if they are ready to switch (if you are going to do massage on the same date). You may both need a moment to rest.

You might also discuss the option of waiting for Week Two to switch and processing the feelings that came up from the date.

Note that no overt sexual activity takes place in this week, and yet you may both feel aroused or desire something more erotic. Hold onto that desire and sit with it. Honor that tonight is not the night.

### **Date Night Review Exercise**

One way to process date night is to dialogue about some of the things you have learned. You don't have to discuss the date, you can relax or fall asleep, and talk about it another time, or with a therapist. Or you can use these questions as a way to journal your feelings after the date and keep the journal entry to yourself.

This date made me feel \_\_\_\_\_

Some of the things it brought up for me \_\_\_\_\_.

I realize I need to work on \_\_\_\_\_.

What I'd like to focus on for next time \_\_\_\_\_.

What I appreciated about my partner \_\_\_\_\_.

What I appreciated about myself \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise Two, Night Two

In Exercise Two for Date Night Two, you can follow the same directions as Night One, but now you can add in touching and massaging of the chest and genitals, with the same amount of attention and direction as the rest of the body. This should happen only with consent. Touch in bathing suit or bikini areas should happen only after you ask, “is it ok if I touch you here?” Once you get consent, you may continue.

Pre-consent: If you both agree before the massage that you have consent to touch anywhere, and you agree to follow the rules of the massage, then you can continue without checking as you go along with the massage. Or you can agree to ask for consent or a ‘check in’ as you go along. For instance, you can grant consent, but ask for a check in when massage goes below the waist.

Other than consent, the only feedback for the Sender from the Receiver should be the use of the One to Five Feedback Scale. (See last chapter.)

When the Receiver uses the one to five directions, they can direct the Sender to places and to touches that feel pleasurable, and away from areas that feel uncomfortable.

Even though you can touch your partner in all places, there should be no orgasm and no insertion. Reminder: Using massage oil without perfumes or additives can prevent infections and urinary issues.

### **Breast massage**

When you are massaging breasts, male, female or trans, keep in mind that breasts are sensitive, and massage should be careful and purposeful.

With consent, slowly massage breasts starting from outer edges, moving closer to nipple area, staying soft and gentle, and then moving away from that area to rest of the body.

Do not focus on the breasts for a continual amount of time. Respect your partner’s body and give them time to adjust to total body massage.

Resistance would include a One to Five Feedback Scale number lower than a 3. If your partner says “2” as you are beginning to

massage their genitals, move away, and come back again later, in a gentler and less intrusive way.

Do NOT attempt penetration of the vagina or anus. This week is only about massage, and the massage should be for sensual pleasure. The goal is only touch. There should be NO penetration or ORGASM.

If orgasm happens accidentally or as a matter of course, it is only polite to stay with your partner while they orgasm and help them to finish, and to listen to anything they may ask of you to help them have a pleasurable experience.

However, do not coerce, force, manipulate or trick your partner into giving you an orgasm. This should be an experience where there will be no threat or worry of crossing the boundaries set prior to this week's exercise.

### **Genital massage**

Move to genitals only if there is no resistance. Genital massage for women, men or trans folx should be only with consent. If there is consent, start with clean, lubricated hands, or gloves. Start on the edges of the genitals, and move toward the more sensitive areas, including the inner labia and clitoris or the head of the penis. Remember that the goal is not to provide orgasm although you can massage to pleasure if its consensual.

For more details on how to give a genital massage, see the Index at the back of this book for more resources.

Enjoy the sensual touch and notice what you enjoy, and what you might want to work on to decrease your anxiety. Talking together about some of the feelings that come up after the date can be helpful. Use the Date Review to dialogue about your experience or let it go and get some rest.

If you want to take turns this week, you could switch and try being the Sender as well as the Receiver.

If you want to divide the Exercise into two weeks, which is the suggested protocol, let the Receiver relax after the exercise, and the two of you can drift off into sleep, perhaps holding each other in your arms.

#### **Date Night Review Exercise**

One way to process date night is to dialogue about some of the things you have learned. You don't have to discuss the date, you can

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relax or fall asleep, and talk about it another time, or with a therapist. Or you can use these questions as a way to journal your feelings after the date and keep the journal entry to yourself.

- This date made me feel \_\_\_\_\_
- Some of the things it brought up for me \_\_\_\_\_.
- I realize I need to work on\_\_\_\_\_.
- What I'd like to focus on for next time \_\_\_\_\_.
- What I appreciated about my partner\_\_\_\_\_.
- What I appreciated about myself was \_\_\_\_\_.



## Exercise Three, Night Three

In this week's assignment, the same directions apply as in Week One and Two.

Choose who will be the Sender and who will be the Receiver. You will continue with the sensual massage and conscious touching.

You will massage each other and touch one another's skin. This week however you can include breast and genital touch, with consent, and include verbal instruction, using the responses from 1 to 5.

This week, massage should still be gentle and sensual and whatever parts of the body are the most rewarding to touch. You can spend extra time giving them pleasure this week. You, however, will need feedback from your partner to know if this is rewarding to them.

Now that we're moving into Exercise Three, Night Three, it's important to remember the One to Five Scale. Here it is again.

Using the *One to Five Scale*, describe the sensations you are experiencing during the sensual massage.

One means that you are not comfortable, or it feels almost painful, and your partner will know to move away from that stroke or touch.

A two is somewhat uncomfortable but by no means is it unpleasant.

A three is very nice but more neutral feeling.

A four is very good and feels wonderful.



A five means that you are experiencing intense pleasure and that you want the touch to continue. It feels marvelous and they should do more of it, perhaps even on other parts of your body.

Pay extra attention to the 1 to 5 reporting and remember that words are still off limits. If you are the Sender, encourage your partner to give you a number by asking, simply and gently, “Number?” Also, listen carefully to their reactions to your touch. Listen for their breathing – does it get deeper, faster, and shallower? Listen for their moans, groans, and other sounds that may indicate they are enjoying what you are doing and how you are touching them.

The key this week is to give them as intense a pleasure experience as you can, but WITHOUT bringing them to orgasm. It may seem mean, but you can even bring them to that pleasurable plateau right before orgasm, but do not bring them over the edge. The goal is to stop right before orgasm. Do not bring each other to the place of no return, to the threshold of ejaculatory inevitability. The goal is to avoid orgasm, but to give a pleasurable experience.

This week you also continue to avoid insertion or penetration of any kind.

### **Date Night Review Exercise**

One way to process date night is to dialogue about some of the things you have learned. You don’t have to discuss the date, you can relax or fall asleep, and talk about it another time, or with a therapist.

Or you can use these questions to journal your feelings after the date and keep the journal entry to yourself.

This date made me feel \_\_\_\_\_  
Some of the things it brought up for me \_\_\_\_\_.  
I realize I need to work on\_\_\_\_\_  
What I’d like to focus on for next time \_\_\_\_\_.  
What I appreciated about my partner\_\_\_\_\_  
What I appreciated about myself was \_\_\_\_\_.

## Exercise Four, Night Four

**W**eek Four should be a repeat of Week Three if you are switching every week. You can talk prior to the date to discuss what worked from last week and what you appreciated, and what you would like to add this week.

*What did you appreciate about last week?*

*What worked that would you like to add more of?*

*What would you also like to try this week?*

Notice that in these questions we are building on what is working, not focusing on what doesn't work. This is a great way to change your sex life. Instead of saying "I don't like this," we focus on saying what we like and want more of. This is an excellent way to begin to shift your communication from a critical form of dialogue to a more mindful form of connecting.

Afterward, you can journal your experience. You can use the Date Night Review Exercise or add appreciations of your own.

*This date made me feel \_\_\_\_\_*

*What I appreciated \_\_\_\_\_*

## Exercise Five, Night Five

**C**ongratulations. You have reached a crucial stage in your Erotic Recovery Assignment. So far, you have practiced sensual touch, you have practiced restraint, you have also practiced a new form of communication by using the One to Five Feedback Scale instead. This week, in Exercise Five, you get to add something exciting.

This week you will repeat all the previous massage exercises and all the above steps and, if both partners desire it, this week you can now add orgasm (but still without penetration of any kind). Only non-penetrative orgasm and manipulation are permitted in this week's exercise.

Decide who will be the Sender and who will be the Receiver, and if you will be switching on the same night and if you will take turns, or if you will divide up this exercise into two separate nights.

If you are going to switch on the same night, decide who will be the Receiver first. (Note; if one of you is typically sleepy or becomes disinterested after orgasm, that person should be the Receiver last.)

If you are the Sender help your partner, find a comfortable place to lie down, let them settle deeply into a comfortable place to receive massage and have perfume free massage oil handy at the side of the bed, or next to you on your floor.

Take your time, and using the techniques in previous weeks, give the Receiving partner a slow and sensual massage.

Using techniques from last week, focus on the chest or genital region, with permission, and listen carefully to their feedback, one to five, so that you know what is working for them and what they are enjoying. If you need additional feedback, ask for more information.

### **Pleasure signs**

Notice if you, the Sender, are now more aware of the signals of your partner's pleasure. Do they make sounds, do they sigh, do they move their body? Are they shifting their breathing? Does it indicate discomfort or pleasure? Can you tell the difference in these subtle signs?

Notice that you have come to know your partner's pleasure signs in even deeper and closer ways than you have in the past.

When your partner appears to be enjoying the touch, is relaxed, and aroused, ask if it's okay and would it bring pleasure to continue with the genital massage.

When massaging a penis, start with a light stroke and slowly move to a firmer stroke as you go along. If you are massaging a vulva, begin with the extremities of the outer labia, then move to the inner labia, and slowly move toward the clitoris. (NOTE: For bodies in transition check out the resources in the back of this book for a more detailed description of the importance of respect and communication in massaging sensitive areas.)

(For more detailed description of orgasm through manual manipulation, please see *Getting the Sex You Want* in re- source section.)

### **Pleasure Zone**

Recognizing your own pleasure signs is an important part of this experience. What do you do when you feel pleasure in your body? When you are enjoying a romantic or emotionally pleasurable moment? Do you notice that your breath deepens? Can you feel your pulse becoming more rapid or slowing down? Do you feel your body move toward your partner or do you dance to your own music or the music in the room? Do you get cold or warm?

When you tune in to the pleasure signs in your body, you may begin to recognize your pleasure zones.

What are your pleasure zones? A pleasure zone are the places where you can recognize the signals in yourself that give you a feeling above a 3 and leading you up to a 5 in pleasure, you are reaching a pleasure zone in your body and in your mind. When you find that zone, usually after some time of relaxation and a feeling of trust in the moment and in your partner, you will start to let go of the control that may have prevented you from feeling pleasure in the past.

Recognizing your pleasure zones (fill in the blanks):

When my body sends the following signals, I know I am in a pleasure zone:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

- 4)
- 5)

When my partner signals their pleasure, I know they are in one of their pleasure zones. Some of their pleasure signals appear to be:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Share these with your partner after your date, either right away or during the week, before your next date. If you can't find those pleasure signals yet, that's okay... it's not a test. You will find you are more in touch with your pleasure as the exercise continues.

### **Orgasm**

If it is consensual, useful, pleasurable, and doable, you may bring your partner to orgasm manually. It is important to provide aftercare after a climax.

Ask you partner if you can hold them and find a comfortable way to lay with them or sit and hold them closely, letting them come down from the heightened sexual experience, letting them feel the flood of pleasure in their body with no pressure to reciprocate or perform in the moment.

Let them just feel and experience the moment. If at that time, when they are ready, you both want to switch and begin again as Sender and Receiver, or you may decide to split this exercise into two separate nights. If this is the case it is a good idea to drift off into sleep holding one another and letting the pleasure of the moment be what it is, without asking more of one another or of the experience.

### **Date Night Review Exercise**

You don't have to discuss the date; you can talk about it another time. Or you can journal your feelings and talk about it with your partner later.

This date made me feel \_\_\_\_\_

Some of the things it brought up for me \_\_\_\_\_

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I realize I need to work on\_\_\_\_\_.

What I'd like to focus on for next time\_\_\_\_\_.

What I appreciated about my partner\_\_\_\_\_.

## Exercise Six, Night Six

**Y**ou have reached Week Six. For those of you who are ready and if desired, this is the week where you may add not only orgasm, but penetration to the sensual massage. Penetration can mean different things to different couples. Discuss between you what is consensual and what might be pleasurable. The penetration should be manual digital penetration only, and adding this to sensual and erotic date night experience should feel like a bonus.

The length of the massage can be longer this week. If previously you have been doing 15 minutes with a timer, try 30 minutes. See how you each tolerate the longer intimate touch. One of you may enjoy the experience more than the other. This may be something to discuss or it may be of no consequence at this time.

If at this point one or both of you is not ready to take this step, go back to week two. Repeat until you are comfortable with insertion. Inserting anything into your partners body or having something inserted into your body can be incredibly intimate. You must trust your partner to let them in. Some days that might not work for you. You might not want to let them in. You may never want to let them in, and that's fine too. Use this dialogue to talk further about what this might look like for this date, this week.

### **Penetration dialogue**

*Penetration for me feels safe this week and I am open to it*

OR

*Penetration for me this week is not something I am quite ready for. Or I can be more specific:*

I am open to penetration with your fingers

In my mouth only just beyond my lips

All the way in my mouth but not in my throat In my mouth all the way

In my ear

In my belly button

In the opening of my vagina only All the way into my vagina



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In the opening of my anus only All the way into my anus

*I may not be open to full penetration but am open to Your fingers under my arm*

A finger or fingers in the creases of my legs

A finger or fingers behind my knees

A finger behind my ear

A finger between my toes

*Other things I may be open to at this time:*

Once you have agreed upon what feels comfortable, you can start the date with deciding who is to be the Receiver and who is to be the Sender. Don't forget that the same directions apply, you will set up the room to be warm, comfortable, sensual and as a sacred space to give and receive.

Be extra careful and show extra attention to the Receiver this week, letting them know that this is a big step. Regardless of what happened last week, this is a new date, and you will both have feelings about what this might mean in your on-going sex life. You can leave behind what happened and begin new today, just staying in the moment, using your breath to come back to this place and time if you find you are feeling anxious or worried about your partner's experience.

In a way, this is an important new form of meditation. When you find you have intrusive thoughts, bring yourself back to your breath and breathe in, and breathe out. Let yourself acknowledge that your feelings may include some nervous excitement, some tension or even some boredom. All range of emotions are welcome. Just breathe through them and let them go. Emotions pass if you let yourself experience them and let them pass through you.

Focus on the moment and the feelings of your partners skin, their touch, or the feel of their body.

You may think about these questions as you are in the massage and noticing your own and your partners pleasure signs:

*What are you appreciating about this moment?*

*What can you do to make it even more pleasurable for yourself? What can you try to make it more pleasurable for your partner?*

*What do you need to do to reach your own pleasure zone? What can you do to move into your partners pleasure zone?*

*You don't have to love the massage to get something important out of the intimacy. If you find it off putting, stop and ask each other the following:*

### **Stop and Dialogue:**

*What are you appreciating about this experience? What works that would you like to add more of? What would you also like to try?*

*If you are both fine with continuing, start again with massage. Find the place where you are both relaxed and in your pleasure zone.*

This is the week that a good lubricant, one without warming, cooling, heating, smell, or taste, is important — as plain and gel-like as possible is important. A water-based lubricant is best for clean-up. Make sure your hands are clean, and that you have both agreed prior to the date night that manipulation of the genitals is welcome, and that insertion of fingers will be okay if there is sufficient stimulation. Make sure that there is enough relaxation, preparation, arousal, and lubricant so that the vagina/anus is prepared to receive insertion if desired by the Receiver.

Penetration should be *with fingers only*, and only after the massage and enough manual stimulation to be sure that penetration of the vagina and/or the anus is welcome. (NOTE: some may need or prefer penetration of the mouth or ear, etc. That is all fine.

### **Eye contact**

You can continue to integrate orgasm this week as well. When giving your partner an orgasm, you may want to include finger penetration simultaneously. And if you want to take the exercise to a whole new level, maintain eye contact throughout the orgasm.

As you send your partner your touch, breathe with them together, and try to keep your eyes locked on one another if you are facing one another. Gaze into your partner's left eye if you cannot simultaneously maintain eye contact with both eyes. It is easier sometimes to gaze into one eye rather than both. The left eye is also the receptive eye; the energy of the left eye gaze can make you both feel the receptive energy of the exercise, and the moment of orgasm can be a shared sensual moment through many levels of connection.

It is not necessary to have eyes open to have an orgasm. Many find that they cannot climax if they feel someone is watching them or that orgasm is purely an internal experience, and they are not

interested in looking at their partner or being looked at. There is no rule about this, and there should be no judgment one way or the other.

**Use all of your senses.**

What is essential here is to be mindfully aware of all your senses. Be acutely aware of what you are touching, hearing, seeing, watching, and smelling, and use any other senses. Focus on all of what you are experiencing as you enter your partner, and are entered by your partner, feel the moment as fully as possible, and be one with your partner.

Be fully with them in as many ways as possible, opening yourself wholly to their pleasure. Giving pleasure can be as powerful a gift as receiving, and both of you may find a new level of being receptive and open to pleasure.

If you are unable to give your partner an orgasm or your partner does not reach a climax for whatever reason — they may be tired, shy, sore, full, frustrated, or a variety of other reasons — do not worry, do not take it personally, do not force the issue, and do not create the idea that this means either of you has failed.

You can take the exercise in several directions. You have several choices.

You can let them bring themselves to orgasm, with their hand guiding your hand, with them bringing themselves to climax through their genital manipulation with your hand on top of theirs.

You can both close your eyes, one of you close your eyes while the other watches, or both maintain eye contact the whole time as they bring themselves to orgasm with you holding their hand as they orgasm.

Or you can let go of the goal of orgasm altogether.

Remember, orgasm is always optional. It is never mandatory. It is never the goal of the exercise. So, orgasm can happen or not.

If you have a penis and you lose your erection, do not chase it, fight it, or try and force it. Let it go, and let your partner enjoy the feeling of your flaccid penis in their hand. Let go of the need to be hard.

If you are being penetrated and choose not to or do not have an orgasm, you may want to bring yourself to orgasm as your partner

penetrates you manually with their fingers, or you can choose to let it go.

You may find you are happy with gentle massage and minimal penetration.

Value the moment for what it is and what it has brought you. Maintain eye contact, hold positive thoughts about your partner, and end by holding one another until you fall asleep or decide the date is complete.

### **Express appreciation**

*If you don't want to sleep directly afterward, it can feel nice to show each other appreciation.*

*One thing I really appreciated about this date. One thing it helped me to feel.*

*One way I feel closer to you*

Make sure you have decided before you begin the date if you will switch Receiver and Sender in the same evening or split the experience into two nights.

*(NOTE: For advanced Erotic Date Night practitioners: For those who want to add "sex" — because they feel ready or have been practicing sex all along — it is essential to integrate each of these weeks into your erotic practice and take your time. Sex (however you define it) is not the only way to achieve closeness, and these six weeks may be a nice break for you as partners to experience new ways to feel close and new levels of connection.*

*Try the exercises without "sex" (or how you have previously defined sex) and see if you can hold off for the assigned six weeks. Create a more sensual experience by focusing on the moment and less on the finish line.)*

## WHAT NOW?

If you have switched and each partner has experienced each week, it may feel like, “Okay, what now?” Let’s add two more bonus weeks.

### Bonus Week Seven

Penetration by manual manipulation, orgasm, touching breasts and genitals, and sensual massage are all permitted this week. The key to this week is that you have a choice of how you spend Week Seven. You, as the Sender, get to do whatever you like, with the consent of the Receiver. You can give your partner a massage. Or you can give your partner a sensual massage with an orgasm at the end.

This week we will add a new element: emotional disclosure. It is vital that both of you talk about any feelings that come up at any time. Check-in with one another, including asking a question such as “How are you feeling now?”

If at any point either of you has a positive or negative emotion, try and describe it at the moment. It might sound like: “Right now, I feel happy and relaxed.”

Or you might feel withdrawn or shut down. You might say, “I need a time out,” and “Can we start over?”

Even if you feel negative feelings at the moment, sharing them does not have to mean that the night must end. It may mean that you are connecting at a whole new level and combining this new level of emotional disclosure with a sensual touch.

If you need a break, you might stop the sexual touch and return to the massage portion of the night until your emotions calm down or change. At some point in the massage, you may relax, your feelings may change, and you may feel ready for more intensive experiences, like an orgasm or sensual touch with eye contact.

Try not to judge each other about whether or not you are ready to move on, to get back to, or to start having the sex that you want. Don’t attempt to intellectualize the other person’s feelings or try to get each other out of your emotional state. Don’t try to fix your partner. Do not say, “Don’t feel sad,” or “You shouldn’t be angry.” This can make your partner feel like their feelings are wrong. It is more important to respond with validating and empathizing statements.

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Talk about your feelings before, during, and after the experience. If your partner says something like, “I am feeling stuck; I am unhappy.” A validating response is, “I hear you are feeling unhappy.”

You might ask them at that point, “Do you need a break?” If your partner says “Yes,” then slow down to a stop and hold them until they are ready to go back to a general massage or until they are prepared to move to genital massage, penetration (if they choose), and/or orgasm.

## APPRECIATION

**A**ppreciation is an important part of these exercises. You always get more of what you appreciate, which is why it is so important to integrate it into your communications and your erotic date nights. After the evening of sexual connection and pleasure, share with your partner what you appreciated about the night.

You might say:

*One thing I really appreciated about this night was...*

Then switch and receive one appreciation from your partner.

See if each of you can share three things you appreciated about the night and each other.

You might share appreciations whenever you have a sensual experience or practice appreciations daily.

Saying three things you appreciate about your partner daily can bring your relationship to a whole new level and keep the connection you have built over these six weeks.

## Exercise in Intimacy

**T**his exercise has been a six-week (plus bonuses) exercise. Many of you may have made it into a twelve-week exercise instead by splitting each week into only one of you being the Sender and the following week switching so that you could have a whole date night where you got to concentrate fully on either Sending or Receiving without changing roles.

Some couples use these exercises over and over throughout the year to establish a deep and connecting base of trust that brings their bodies and hearts into alignment. You can come back to these exercises anytime you want to feel connected or re-align with one another.

Or you may be like some couples who last about two weeks into the exercises and, by Exercise Two, are ready to move into a full erotic life together, sharing their deepest sexual fantasies and having sex.

No matter how you work this Six Week Protocol, remember this is an exercise in intimacy, closeness, and finding a way back to each other. Agreeing on how you want to use these exercises is integral to the process. Talking about and negotiating how you want to work these messages into your lives is the beginning of clearing the space between you and preparing for lovemaking.

### **Clearing the space**

Clearing the space starts with a desire to be together. It can eventually lead you to true intimacy, whether you do so with hesitancy or with full enthusiasm. Try not to judge your partner or yourself for how you approach these exercises. You may make mistakes; you may push your partner too soon or sometimes act without permission.

Be patient with one another and act kindly when boundaries are unintentionally crossed. Talk about your feelings and work through anything that happens as a result of these exercises. And remember, what matters the most is that you show up for one another.



## Sex as a Practice

**T**his sexual pathway is a practice. Your six weeks (plus) of erotic dates are the beginning of a long journey toward a more spiritually fulfilling sexual life together. The more you practice, the better you will feel about your intimate and erotic life. Have some fun; try not to take any of it (or yourselves) too seriously. And most of all, let yourself have moments of real joy.

It's easy to be sad, mad, or frustrated with our partner. Most of us, who live with someone, particularly if you have been together for a long time, will find many reasons to feel frustrated or angry with our partner. We are all familiar and even comfortable with these emotions. Instead, let yourself feel pleasure and joy in these moments of deep connection with yourself and your partner. Hold onto those feelings of joy. See if you can feel them for at least 15 seconds longer than you usually allow yourself to experience them. Allow your brain to integrate your emotional experiences. Do not move after you orgasm or make love to your partner. Lie in the same place; don't move your body. Let your neurological pathways form, like a deer path in the woods, so that you can come back again and again to the same feelings of love, joy, and connection. Don't change the way you feel too quickly.

*Imagine that you could feel this way all the time – whole, in love, in joyful love.*

*You can if you practice.*

## Closing

**T**his *Week-by-Week Erotic Recovery Assignment* guides you to a lifelong practice of sensuality, intimacy, and connection. For a spiritual practice that begins with a once-a-week erotic date, these six weeks of exercises (plus bonus weeks) can guide you back to your partner or arouse a sex life that needs shaking awake.

Find yourself, your sexuality, and your partner with these slow and simple exercises that can help any couple reconnect. Whether you have been in a sexless relationship and wondering if you can ever feel desire again or if you have been betrayed and hurt by an affair or the infidelity of your partner, these exercises can help you recover your eroticism and bring you together in the ways that matter, in the relationship of your dreams, in a long term passionate and connected loving partnership.

You deserve it.

### **For More Information**

For more information or more books on increasing intimacy, please get in touch with [tammy@drtammynelson.com](mailto:tammy@drtammynelson.com) or go to <https://drtammynelson.com>. You can find Tammy Nelson's books:

Getting the Sex, You Want: Shed Your Inhibitions and Reach New Heights of Passion Together

*The New Monogamy: Redefining Your Relationship After Infidelity*

When You're The One Who Cheats: 10 Things You Need to Know

*Open Monogamy: A Guide to Co-Creating Your Ideal Relationship Agreement*

at Amazon.com or Barnes & Noble. Or buy a signed copy at [www.drtammynelson.com](http://www.drtammynelson.com).

To find a workshop, retreat, or set up a session or intensive, contact Dr. Tammy at [tammy@drtammynelson.com](mailto:tammy@drtammynelson.com). For more eBooks, mini-books, and worksheets and to sign up for her monthly newsletter, go to

[www.drtammynelson.com](http://www.drtammynelson.com)

Thank you.

## A Week by Week Erotic Recovery Assignment

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Comments? Corrections? Please send them to us. Feel free to write us with comments about how this eBook helped you:

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Tammy Nelson, PhD, is a sex and relationship expert, a TEDx speaker, and host of the podcast *The Trouble with Sex*. She is an international speaker, author, and licensed psychotherapist with over thirty years of experience working with individuals and couples. In private practice, she focuses on helping people of all ages, orientations, and genders find love, healing, and passion.

Dr. Nelson is a Board-Certified Sexologist, an AASECT Certified Sex Therapist and Supervisor, a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, a Certified Imago Relationship therapist, a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor, and an ISTI Certified Sex and Couples Therapist. She is the Director of the [Integrative Sex Therapy Institute](#), teaches at several universities, and is the author of six books, including *What's Eating You*, *Getting the Sex You Want*, *The New Monogamy*, *When You're The One Who Cheats*, [Integrative Sex & Couples Therapy](#), and her most recent, [Open Monogamy: A Guide to Co-Creating Your Ideal Relationship Agreement](#).

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