

# A Week by Week Erotic Recovery Assignment

FOUR STEPS THAT LEAD UP TO YOUR SIX-WEEK EROTIC  
RECOVERY ASSIGNMENT & SIX WEEKS OF EROTIC DATES

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## Introduction

Make a date with your partner for an erotic evening. Erotic dates are an important part of creating spontaneity and special 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 it at some point. And frankly, you can only be spontaneous if you have time for it. Therefore, spontaneity only happens when and if you plan for it, especially if the two of you have a busy schedule, a house to run, children, and jobs. When two busy people try and create and continue a connected erotic life, their day-to-day management of the busyness of their work and their family can get in the way. We have priorities that we place in front of our intimate life. And yet when our sex life gets pushed to the bottom of the list, we start to feel like our relationship is unimportant and therefore we are no longer important. This is when the fun and the intimacy start to erode.

This is a slippery slope. It is more important to plan your sex dates today to prevent that place of disconnection that can happen so easily when your sex life starts to become less of a priority than everything else.

And, 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 can be caused by an affair. There is nothing harder than trying to recreate what you once had after an affair has cracked your foundation. Or, maybe you never had an intense erotic connection, but you want to create one. Either way, you can begin now.

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

perhaps in a better way. It is important to follow the directions closely, without rushing the steps.

The weeks are laid out in a way that will take you slowly from gentle touch that is more sensual than sexual, to get you each used to approaching each other and to add some anticipation to the 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 the feelings that come up, both positive and negative. These six weeks of erotic dates will help you begin again, start fresh and build anew.

## Each Week

Your erotic date night should be an agreed-upon night (or day) that you will each be able to commit to on a regular basis. Make an agreement 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, or angry or frustrated, or down in the dumps. But commit to one another that you will meet anyway.

The erotic date is not about sex, although it usually leads to that by the end of the six weeks. But each week you may have an erotic experience that far surpasses your expectations. Or one week you may feel disappointed and let down. Don't let that 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 the time that 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. And you will remember why you came together in the first place. But

take it slow. Start with the commitment to meet each week for one night, for your 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 to yourself that this is your practice time – for your erotic life together.

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

When the date night arrives, know that you will have some type of sexual contact, even if you don't feel like it at the moment. Sometimes arousal comes before desire, but

don't wait for desire to hit. You are creating an environment where desire can flourish once it is aroused.

Leading up to the date, make sure you put effort into preparing for the date. Starting about four days prior to 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 the first day. Attempt to connect on the second day by whispering in your partner's ear the things you want to do to them on your erotic date. On the third day, bring home a surprise. This can be something like a card or small token gift. The surprise might be something you can use on your sex date.

The fourth day is the big day, so create an atmosphere in the bedroom that will remind both of you that this is a sacred, erotic space for you to play safely in together. Light candles, put fresh flowers by the bed 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 live up to your expectations, remember that this night is a success if it makes you feel connected to your partner. Massage, communication, and sharing fantasies using the Imago dialogue can make this an important night of sensual pleasures.

*Erotic contact can mean many things.*

There are many ways to experience erotic connection including: laying naked together, soft touch, massage, touching your partner in a sensual way, 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 the sexual contact if you are recovering from an affair, or if you have not had sex for a long time.

## A WEEK BY WEEK EROTIC RECOVERY ASSIGNMENT

The next chapters will include some clear direction about what to do each week to begin a new process of intimate connection. Your erotic nights will begin with week one and progress to week six. You may want to honor your partner's desires to take things slowly and read each week's assignment ahead of time or read it out loud on your date night. Either way, you are in for a real treat.

## Step One: Erotic Date



One way to commit to the erotic recovery process without focusing on whether or not you are having sex is to have your erotic date weekly. But remember, the erotic date does not necessarily mean that you have to have a sexual encounter. In fact, in the following exercise, I recommend that you do not have sexual contact at all for the first few dates. The important part of making a date for sexual

and erotic activity is that you set aside sacred space and time dedicated to your relationship.

Although it is only a few hours per week, an erotic date is a special time that you set aside to focus on this very important aspect of your relationship. The rest of your week can be set aside for your companionship and working on the rest of the relationship issues that you are working through.

Your erotic date-time is for the romantic resolution necessary if you are to move forward in your new erotic connection. If you don't dedicate this few hours a week to your sexual relationship, then you may find yourselves moving further apart instead of closer together. Think of this time together as a practice time, similar to a yoga practice or a meditation practice. This is the time that 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 right now.*

Some nights you may have to push yourself to get to the bedroom. You might feel resentful or angry with your partner, or just 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 that you honor the commitment that you made to this process (at least for six weeks).

*Never let yourself feel forced into sex.*

Never let yourself feel forced into any kind of sexual or erotic behavior that doesn't feel comfortable for you. Sexual coercion is never acceptable even when it is coming 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 with one another, 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. Force 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 safe.

When you have chosen your date and time for the weekly erotic date, make sure you try and 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 at a time 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. These dates are, as you will experience, an important and special time in your relationship. Respecting this time together shows an intention to 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 really plan it.

## RESISTANCE

Notice as you begin to plan your date that 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 think about really committing to going deeper into your erotic life. Think about what might be surfacing for you. Are you afraid that this won’t work, and you will be disappointed in yourself and in 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 of this resistance are normal. Go through with the date anyway.*

Where you feel most afraid is probably 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 as well. It is fine to have both feelings – some fear and some joyful anticipation. This anticipation can feel like nervousness, but it might be excitement. Many times, they feel the same.

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 lots of arousal and desire, even if you have not had sex in many years. As you start to reintegrate sensual and erotic experience into your lives on a regular basis, the “practice” of an erotic date will train your body, mind, and spirit to expect and honor this new intimate time you are sharing together.

If you can move through the initial discomfort, fear, or awkwardness you will 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 you will start to anticipate some new ideas of what 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.

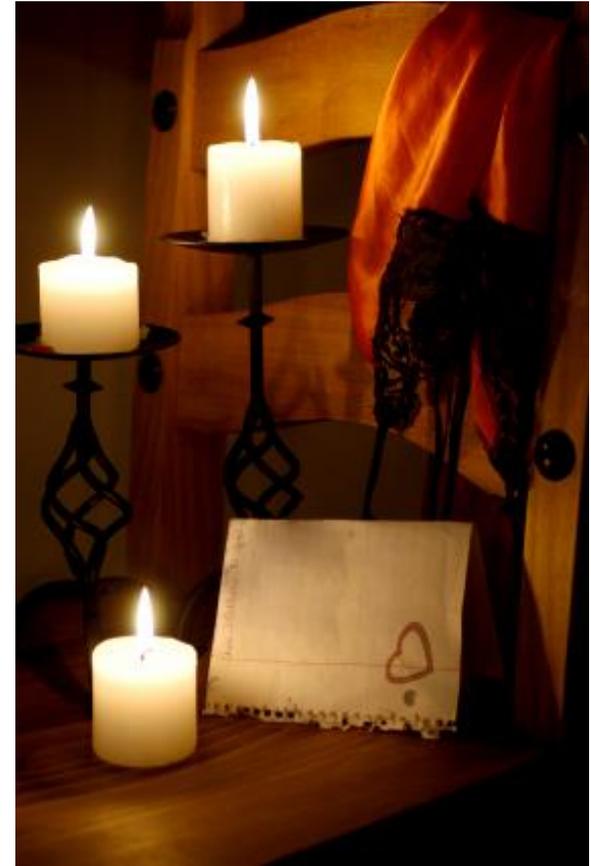
An erotic date is dedicated time carved out of your lives where you can close out the world by closing your bedroom door, turning off the TV, shutting off your phone (an

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 could 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.

After you have chosen a particular day and time of the week, commit to it. Whether you are tired, annoyed, or unsure, prepare the space. And prepare your mind for the idea of connection. When the date night arrives, know that you will have some type of erotic contact, even if you don't feel like it at the moment. Sometimes, beginning contact with each other can create arousal or even just an emotional and physical closeness that begins a new experience for the two of you. Exploring what feels right can begin within the context of the sex date.

## Step Two: Preparing for Your Date

Leading up to the date, make sure you put some 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. And 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 negotiate in your lives together. Try to make arguing or power struggles off limits during the date night.



To lead up to the date, try to show your partner physical affection at least three times during the week leading up to the sex date. For example, attempt to connect by whispering in your partner's ear the things you are looking forward to on sex date night. Bring home a surprise that you may use on the date. The surprise might be something you can use for sex if you are planning a more erotic date, for instance a bottle of massage oil or a candle.

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.

When the time for the date arrives, keep your expectations open and reasonable. Your sex dates never have to go perfectly. If you have an intention that you want to set before each date night, it can be exciting to say them out loud to one another. Make sure that your implicit expectation is spoken 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 before the night begins what you are wishing for.

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 if you actually showed up for each other, then the night was a success. If you felt at all connected to your partner, it is a big step in the right direction. If you practiced a new intimacy skill then the date was a step in the direction of a new life together.

If you are ready for sensual contact, this sex date can include many things. It is most likely that one of you may feel hesitant and less ready than the other.

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

An erotic date might be an intimate night of lying together in bed and talking. Or it could mean watching a sexy or romantic movie lying intertwined and stroking one another's skin. There are many ways to experience sensual and erotic pleasure.

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



Many 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 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, betrayed, 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. After your partner cheats or 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 reaching the ultimate orgasm or giving yourself or your partner multiple orgasms, at least not now. Wait until 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, slow it down, take orgasm out of the equation, and learn to touch one another again,

and be touched. Remember what it feels like to slow down, 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. Open to it in whatever way you can for now, and trust that this process will go as slowly as you need it to go.

Focusing on the experience of touching one another and working together to make that touch feel positive and healthy can help both of you if there has been some ambivalence and insecurity, which often occurs after an affair.

## Step Four: Arousal and Desire



For some people, arousal often comes before desire. Don't wait for that 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. Women especially recognize this experience when they 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 is wonderful!" 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 is 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 it 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 date and eventually your desire and arousal will catch up to 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. Integrate 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 will 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.

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 pillow, giggle, push your partner off of you, ask not to be touched, cry, or rage. You may want to put your clothes on, the covers over you, and 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 of 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 of the performance of sex. The exercises will slow the erotic reconnection down to help you integrate your new monogamy into your affair recovery 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.

## A WEEK BY WEEK EROTIC RECOVERY ASSIGNMENT

Option: You can split this night into two date nights. 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. 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, in a way that you think your partner would appreciate. Your moves can be sexual, sensual or erotic, but keep in mind that your partner's intimate areas are off limits.

You may be surprised how this restriction 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.

At 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, translate it into language and speak. All of 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 to like a sentence might be. They can't misinterpret the number "3" where they might misconstrue it when you say "A little to the left."



Because 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? 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 intensive 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?

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, 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 sex, you can feel 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 intimate areas.

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, their energy is

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.

The exercise ends with the slowing down of the Sender's strokes and deeper breathing. As the Sender, 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 three minutes, or ten deep breaths. 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 of the receiver, and either switch places, or let yourselves drift into sleep.

If you are switching and going from Sender to Receiver, thank your partner for letting you touch them, and ask them if they are ready to switch or if they need a moment to rest. You might also give them the option of deciding to wait for Week Two to switch if that was talked about as an option prior to beginning your date night.

If you are switching now, the receptive partner turns over and the same thing resumes, with the Receiver now becoming the Sender. Remember, there is no breast or genital touching at this time. Stay away from the intimate areas and no sex.

You can do both sending and receiving in one night or you can take turns and divide the exercise up into two nights, Week One and Week Two. You may want to split up the experience to fully experience either giving or receiving. One night, practice being the Sender and on your next Erotic Date Night practice being the Receiver. Remember, you will need two nights if you are taking turns being both the Sender and Receiver in this exercise. This may stretch out your six weeks of erotic dates. But enjoy them all!

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.

## Exercise Two, Night Two

Follow the same directions as Night One, but now add in touching and massaging of the chest and genitals, with the same amount of attention and direction as the rest of the body. The only feedback for the Sender from the Receiver should be the use of the One to Five Feedback Scale.

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. Because this week we are adding in more sensitive areas of the body, it is important to note that the touch should be gentle, and that the massage should be only about pleasure and about sensual touch. This is not an erotic massage, it is a sensual massage. When the Sender massages the Receiver, they should use all the parts of the body except for the breasts and the genitals and only move to those areas when all of the rest of the body is relaxed and seems open to the idea of further touch.

Using massage oil without perfumes or additives, slowly massage breasts 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 – I REPEAT – do not focus on the breasts for repeated amount of time. Respect your partner’s body and give them time to adjust to total body massage. Move to genitals only if there is no resistance. 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 – I REPEAT- 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.

## A WEEK BY WEEK EROTIC RECOVERY ASSIGNMENT

Enjoy this week, and the sensual touch that you can each enjoy, both as the Sender and the Receiver. If you want to switch this week, take turns being the Sender and the Receiver. If you want to divide the Exercise into two weeks, let the Receiver relax after the exercise, and the two of you can drift off into sleep, perhaps even holding each other in your arms.

## 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 touching. The same directions apply – you will massage each other's body and touch one another's skin, including breast and genital touch, and including verbal instruction from 1 to 5.

This week, you will add an extra focus on the genitals and breasts, or whatever parts of the body are the most rewarding to touch. If you enjoy massaging the breasts, 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.

This time, pay 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, “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. And REMEMBER, no penetration.

## Exercise Four, Night Four

Congratulations. 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 Four, you get to add something exciting.

This week you will repeat all of the previous massage exercises and all the above steps and if both partners desire it this week you can now add orgasm, but 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 week one and give your Receiver partner a slow and sensual massage. Using techniques from last week, focus on their chest or genital region, and listen carefully to their feedback, so that you know what is working for them and what they are enjoying. If you need additional feedback, ask for a number.

When your partner is enjoying the touch, is relaxed, and aroused, 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 the inner labia, and slowly move toward the clitoris. (For more detailed description of how to give an orgasm through manual manipulation, please see *Getting the Sex You Want; Shed Your Inhibitions and Reach New Heights of Passion Together*, 2008, Quiver, Rockport, MA).

Bring your partner to orgasm manually and then 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 only 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, you may or you may decide to split this exercise into two separate nights. In which 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.

## Exercise Five, Night Five

You have reached Week Five. For those of you who are ready and if is desired, you can add manual penetration to this sensual and erotic date night experience. But the night must start with giving and receiving a massage. You can decide who the Receiver is and who the Sender is first. Take note of any emotions that you feel. 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.

This is the week that a good lubricant, one without warming, cooling, heating or 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.

You can integrate orgasm in this week as well. When you are giving your partner an orgasm, you may want to include finger penetration at the same time. 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 keep your eyes locked on one another. Gaze into your partner's left eye, if you cannot maintain eye contact with both eyes at the same time. It is easier sometimes to gaze into one eye, 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.

You will be touching, hearing, seeing, watching, and smelling and perhaps other senses as well. Focus on all of your senses as you penetrate the moment as fully as possible, as you also penetrate your partner. Be with them in as many ways as you can, opening yourself fully to them and to their pleasure. Giving and sending pleasure can be as powerful a gift as can receiving and being receptive and open to pleasure.

If you are unable to give your partner an orgasm for whatever reason - they may be tired, shy, sore, full, frustrated, or a variety of other reasons - you have several choices. Let them bring themselves to orgasm, with their hand guiding their own genital manipulation but your hand on top of theirs. Maintain eye contact the whole time as they bring themselves to orgasm with you penetrating them and holding their hand as they make themselves 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 or 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 cannot have an orgasm, either bring yourself to orgasm as your partner penetrates you manually and uses their hand as you guide them, or let it go. Be happy with some gentle massage and gentle 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.

Make sure you decide before you begin the night if you are going to switch Receiver and Sender in the same evening or if you will 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 because they have been practicing sex all along - it is important to integrate each of these weeks into your erotic practice, and take your time. Sex 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 of closeness and connection. Try the exercises without sex and see if you can hold off for the six weeks. If not, do the work in each week and then add sex. Create a more sensual experience together by focusing more on the moment and less on the finish line.)

## Exercise Six, Night Six

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 Six. You as the Sender get to do whatever you like. You can just give your partner a massage. Or you can give your partner a sensual massage with an orgasm at the end. And this week we will add a new element: emotional disclosure. It is important that both of you talk about any feelings that come up at any time. Check in with one another, including asking question such as “How are you feeling now?” If at any point either of you have an emotion, either positive or negative, try and describe it in the moment. It might sound like: “Right now I feel happy and relaxed.”

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

Even if you feel bad feelings in the moment, sharing them does not have to mean that the night has to end. It may mean that you are connecting at a whole new level and

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

Talk about your feelings before, during, and after the experience. Try not to judge each other about whether or not you are ready for sex. Don't attempt to intellectualize the other person's feelings and don't try to get each other out of the 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.

If your partner says something like, "I am feeling stuck, I am unhappy." A validating response would simply be, "I hear that 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 being or giving massage or until they are ready to move to genital massage, penetration (if they choose) and orgasm.

### APPRECIATION

Appreciation is an important part of this exercise. You always get more of what you appreciate, which is why it is so important to integrate into your communication and into 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...” and then switch, and receive one appreciation from your partner. See if each of you can share three things you appreciated about the night and about each other.

You might share appreciations with each other every time you have a sensual experience, or practice appreciations every day. Saying three things you appreciate

about your partner every day can bring your relationship to a whole new level, and keep the connection that you have built over these six weeks.

## Exercise in Intimacy

This exercise has been a six week 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 next week switching so that you could have a whole date night where you got to concentrate fully on either Sending or Receiving without switching roles.

Some couples use these exercises over and over throughout the year in order 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 in 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 the most important part of the process. Talking about and negotiating how you want to work these exercises is the beginning of clearing the space between you and preparing for lovemaking.

Clearing the space starts with a desire to be together. Whether you do so with hesitancy or with full enthusiasm, it eventually will lead you to true intimacy. Try not to judge your partner or yourself for the ways that you approach this exercise. You may make mistakes; you may push your partner too soon, or act without permission at times. Try and be patient with one another and act kindly when boundaries are crossed unintentionally. 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

This sexual pathway is a practice. Your six weeks of erotic dates are the beginning of a longer 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 even joy in these moments of deep connection with yourself and with your partner. Hold onto those feelings of joy. See if you can feel them for at least fifteen seconds longer than you might normally 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 really 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 love, joyful.*

*You can if you practice.*

## Closing

This *Week by Week Erotic Recovery Assignment* is your guide to a lifelong practice of sensuality, intimacy, and connection. For a spiritual practice that begins with a once a week erotic date, this six weeks of exercises 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 from 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 for more books on increasing your intimacy, please contact [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*** and ***The New Monogamy: Redefining Your Relationship After Infidelity*** 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 Tammy at [tammy@drtammynelson.com](mailto:tammy@drtammynelson.com). For more eBooks, mini-books, worksheets and to sign up for Tammy's monthly newsletter go to [www.drtammynelson.com](http://www.drtammynelson.com)

Thank you.

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This book is dedicated to Peggy Vaughan.

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