

SEX TALK

60 QUESTIONS TO IMPROVE
YOUR
ROMANCE, INTIMACY & SEX LIFE

DR. TABITHA JOHNSON, PHD, LMFT



Be sure to pick a time and place that is private, intimate, and even romantic. Plan a picnic, date at a private beach, or grab dessert and close your bedroom door to have this chat. Set aside plenty of uninterrupted time, so neither of you feels rushed.

1. What can I do right now to help you feel most comfortable with having this conversation about our romance & sex life?

Meaning of Sex & Intimacy:

2. What does sex mean to you?
3. What does intimacy mean to you?
4. In your opinion, what does the quality or quantity of our sex life mean about our relationship as a whole?
5. What are the lessons or messages you learned about sex growing up?
6. How do those lessons or messages impact you now? How do they impact us as a couple?

Friendship & Emotional Intimacy:

Research has indicated that 70% of a couple's romance, passion, sex and intimacy is connected to friendship.

7. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being best friends and 1 being not friends at all), how close friends are we?
8. Has the closeness of our friendship changed over time? If so, how?
9. Are there things we need to do to improve our friendship?
10. Communication is a big part of friendship and emotional intimacy. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you feel we communicate?
11. What needs to improve with our communication?
12. What can I do to improve my communication? What can you do to improve your communication?

Factors to consider:

Our sex life is impacted by numerous factors. The following questions are aimed to help you identify and discuss what factors might be currently influencing your sex life.

13. Are there outside factors that are negatively impacting our sex life? (i.e., job stress, children, extended family demands, etc.)
 - a. If so, are there ways for us to better manage those outside factors?

14. How does technology hinder our communication and closeness (i.e., cell phones, tablets, TV, internet browsing)?
15. Are there ways we could use technology to better our emotional and/or physical intimacy?
16. Are there internal factors that are negatively impacting our sex life? (i.e., sickness, health issues, past sexual traumatic experiences, medications, menopause, erectile difficulties, etc.)
 - a. If so, are there ways we need to address these internal factors (i.e., medical check-up/talk to doctor, therapy, signal to one another when we're having these issues and aren't interested in sex, etc.)

Romance:

As couples are together over time, romance and passion may change. Limerence is a state of mind resulting from romantic attraction, and is characterized by feelings of euphoria and strong sexual desire. This is often what comes to mind when we think of passion. Passion and limerence are shown to be the first to arrive on the scene in a relationship, and also the first to leave. This is a normal transition in relationship, and to be expected. Romance, however, is a way to keep the "slow burn" of a relationship going over time, and help you maintain a sense of connection with your partner.

17. What does romance mean to you?
18. What feels or seems romantic to one partner may be completely different for the other person. What does romance look like to you?
19. Are there things I could do more (outside the bedroom) that would put you in the mood? (i.e., sending sweet or racy text messages, leaving notes for one another, helping with household chores so there's more time for us, etc.)
20. Are there ways that you'd like me to be more romantic inside the bedroom?
21. Are there ways we could create more romance with our senses? (Sight, smell, touch, taste, & sound)
 - a. Sight: Lingerie, candlelight, etc.
 - b. Smell: Fresh breath, cologne/perfume, scented candles or pillow sprays, scented body oil.
 - c. Sound: Soft music, set the mood outside of the bedroom by creating a soundtrack inspired by your early days of dating and play it for your partner.
 - d. Taste: We as a culture love food. Have a glass of wine together, or share dessert

while you're in the bathtub or hot tub together.

- e. Touch: Playing with your hair, rubbing your head or shoulders, massages, leg rub, back scratches, take a bath together & wash one another.

Initiation:

Sometimes couples miss signals when one person is interested in sex and is attempting to initiate, because the signals are not direct and clear. When other person misses the message and doesn't respond, it can feel like rejection to the initiating partner.

22. What are the ways you initiate sex with me? Do you think we've missed each other's signals of initiation? If so, what can we do to be clearer?
23. Are you happy with how often you initiate sex versus how much I initiate sex?
24. Are there other ways you'd like me to initiate sex?

Foreplay:

Foreplay involves touching and kissing prior to sex, which normally creates sexual stimulation. Foreplay is important to sexual intimacy, as it releases bonding hormones such as oxytocin, and reduces the levels of stress hormone cortisol. In addition, sexual touching is important psychologically, as soft touching and stroking are linked in our minds to safety, love, and improves emotional connection.

25. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being amazing and 1 being downright pitiful), how happy are you with the amount of foreplay that we have?
26. Has that number (between 1-10) changed over time? If so, how (i.e., gone up, or gone down)?
27. What are the reasons that your rating number (1-10) has changed?
28. What are the things you'd like me to do more of during foreplay?
29. What are the things you'd like me to do less of during foreplay?
30. What are the different things you'd like to try during foreplay?
31. Are we incorporating enough of our five senses during foreplay or our lovemaking, or are there ways we could do better? (sight, smell, touch, taste, & sound—examples listed below, discuss with your partner which ones you would like)
 - a. Sight: Lingerie, candlelight, soft lighting, lights on or lights off, etc.
 - b. Smell: Fresh breath, cologne/perfume, scented candles or pillow sprays, scented body oil.
 - c. Sound: Soft music, make a romantic playlist for while you're making love, talking to

one another.

- d. Taste: Bring some of your partner's favorite foods into the bedroom, wine, flavored oral sex gels, etc.
- e. Touch: Massages, more sensual touch around erogenous zones (many people are gently aroused when their eyelids, eyebrows, temples, shoulders, hands, arms and hair are subtly touched. Gently touching or stroking of these zones stimulates a partner during foreplay and increases the arousal level. Also, the gentle massage or stroke of the abdominal area along with kissing or simply touching the navel can be a type of stimulation). This also includes touching more sexual erogenous zones, such as the nipples, and around the genitals.

Quantity & Quality of Sex:

Researchers have discovered that the quantity of sexual interactions between a couple varies. In short, there is no "normal" regarding quantity; it's more important that you both can compromise regarding sexual activity and meet one another's needs.

- 32. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being amazing and 1 being horrible), how happy are you about the quantity of our sex life?
- 33. How has the quantity of our sex life changed over time? Why?
- 34. Has the change (if any) been problematic for either of you? If so, discuss why.
- 35. What quantity of sex would make you happy (i.e., 3-4 times per week)? Be realistic! ☺
- 36. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being amazing and 1 being horrible), how do you feel about the current quality of our sex life?
- 37. Where would you like the quality of our sex life to be on the scale between 1-10?
- 38. What's one thing we could do in the next week or two that would increase your score one point? (i.e., from a 7 to 8)
- 39. Are there things we do during lovemaking that you would like to do less?
- 40. Are there things we do that you'd like to do more?
- 41. Are there things that we have done in the past that you'd like to do again?
- 42. Are there things we haven't done that you'd like to try?
- 43. How can I better show you love during our lovemaking?
- 44. How open are you to communicating about our sex life during sex?
- 45. When is the best time to tell you if I want something to be different—before, after, or during sex?
- 46. How important is orgasm for you during sex? For me?

47. How does it impact you if you or I don't have an orgasm?
48. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being completely satisfied/fulfilled, 1 being not at all), how satisfied/fulfilled are you overall with our sex life?
49. What needs to change to improve your score regarding overall fulfillment?

Rejection:

50. Rejection can be a big issue for couples surrounding sex. Are there ways if I'm not in the mood, that I can let you know gently?
51. Should we use a code word ("I'm in the mood for dessert") or signal (turning over a pillow, lighting a candle) for when it's not a good time for one of us?
52. Research suggests that using humor can be a way to "soften" the conversation about sex, and particularly if you aren't in the mood. Is there a joke we can say to one another, that would be a funny way to communicate to the other that we aren't in the mood?
53. What does sexual rejection mean to you?
54. Does your partner's disinterest in sex cause you to feel rejected?

Communication about Sex:

55. As we continue conversations in our relationship about romance and sex, when is a better time to talk about this? (i.e., before sex, during sex, after sex, over a glass of wine sitting on the couch, on a date night, etc.)
56. Sexual desires and needs change over time, as well as seasons of life. Are there upcoming factors that might impact our sex life, in a negative or positive way? (i.e., having children, children leaving the home, menopause, pregnancy, hysterectomy, hormone therapy, job changes, schedule changes, increase in children's activities, increase in travel/less time together, etc.)
57. If there are upcoming factors or changes that could impact us sexually, what can we do to best prepare and manage these changes?
58. How often would you like to have these types of conversations about our sex life?
59. What is a good way for us to remember to have these conversations (i.e., reminders in your calendar/phone)?
60. Who should initiate these conversations? You? Me? Both of us?