Guidelines for Female Pleasure, Eroticism, and Orgasm

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There is more written about orgasm than any other area of female sexuality. The good news is that awareness of the woman's "sexual voice" which includes desire, pleasure, eroticism, and satisfaction is healthy for the woman, the couple, and the culture. The bad news is that sexual performance demands, specifically viewing orgasm as a pass-fail test, increases self -consciousness and reduces sexual desire.

The following guidelines empower the woman (and her partner) to value female desire and satisfaction. Orgasm is integral to the pleasuring/eroticism process. This approach confronts the performance pressure of orgasm as the pass-fail sex test.

1. A female is responsible for her desire, pleasure, eroticism, and orgasm. Developing a unique sexual voice is a woman's challenge. It is not the man's responsibility to "give her an orgasm".

2. Together you develop an intimate, interactive couple sexual style which facilitates desire, pleasure, eroticism, orgasm, and satisfaction.

3. Receptivity and responsivity to pleasurable and erotic touch facilitates arousal and orgasm.

4. Arousal involves both subjective components (feeling sexy and turned-on) and objective components (vaginal lubrication and being physically receptive to intercourse).

5. "Foreplay"-where the man stimulates the woman to get her ready for intercourse-increases self-consciousness and performance anxiety. The experience of "pleasuring"- which emphasizes mutuality and sharing-facilitates desire and orgasm.

6. Pleasuring and eroticism often lead to intercourse, but intercourse is not the test of sexuality nor is intercourse necessary for a satisfying sexual experience. A key concept is to transition to intercourse at high levels of erotic flow.

7. You can develop your unique "sexual voice"-being aware of what facilitates and what subverts healthy sexuality. Take an active role in verbally and non-verbally making requests and guiding your partner.

8. The prescription for satisfying sexuality is intimacy, pleasuring, and eroticism. Traditionally, female sexual socialization has underplayed eroticism. Eroticism is integral to orgasm and satisfaction.

9. Be aware of your preferences-pleasure-recipient vs. mutual stimulation; focused vs. multiple stimulation; when and how to transition from sensual to erotic stimulation; emotional and physical conditions for a vital and satisfying couple sexuality.

10. You cannot say "yes" to healthy sexuality unless you have the right to say "no" to sex. You are free to initiate the transition from pleasuring to intercourse and to guide intromission.

11. Women who prefer multiple stimulation during pleasuring/eroticism usually prefer multiple stimulation during intercourse. You can utilize clitoral stimulation with his or your fingers, request breast or buttock stimulation, enjoy erotic fantasies, and/or switch intercourse positions.

12. Many women hope to use pro-sexual medications when they become available to enhance sexual desire and orgasm. Medication can be a valuable resource, but it is not a stand-alone "magic pill". The pro-sex medication needs to be integrated into your couple sexual style of intimacy, pleasure, and eroticism.

13. Many women, especially after 40, use some form of additional lubrication (usually estrogen or water-based). This facilitates intercourse, but is not a substitute for subjective arousal.

14. Only 1 in 4 women experience the male pattern of one orgasm during intercourse without using additional stimulation. Female sexual response and orgasm is more flexible, variable, and individualistic than male sexual response. You may be non-orgasmic, singly orgasmic, or multi-orgasmic which might occur during pleasuring, intercourse, or afterplay, depending on your unique pattern and preferences. Female sexual response is more variable and flexible-different, not better or worse-than male sexual response.

15. Develop comfort with your desire, pleasure, eroticism, orgasm pattern. Sexuality is about experiencing and sharing pleasure, it is not a performance to have a "G" spot orgasm, multiple orgasms, a "vaginal" orgasm, extended orgasm, or whatever is the new performance fad.

16. Orgasm is a three to ten second experience. Orgasm is a natural result of subjective arousal, erotic flow, and giving yourself permission to enjoy the orgasmic experience.

17. The distinction between "clitoral" and "vaginal" orgasm is not scientifically valid. Whether orgasm occurs with manual, oral, rubbing, intercourse, self, or vibrator stimulation, the physiological response is very similar although the subjective experience of satisfaction varies depending on expectations and preferences.

18. It is unrealistic to expect orgasm during each sexual experience; you are not a sexual machine. Female sexuality is more variable and flexible than male sexuality. On average, women are orgasmic during 70 per cent of sexual encounters. Satisfaction involves orgasm, but is much more than orgasm.

19. Orgasm is integral to female sexuality. Desire and satisfaction are more important than orgasm. You are free to make requests of your partner (prolonged pleasuring, your pace of arousal, multiple stimulation, preferred erotic scenarios, vibrator stimulation, cunnilingus to orgasm, clitoral stimulation during intercourse) to enhance pleasure, eroticism, and orgasm.

20. Remember, sexuality is not about proving anything to yourself, your partner, or anyone else. Sexuality is about sharing desire, pleasure, eroticism, orgasm, and satisfaction.

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