Erotic Intelligence: Raising Your Sexual IQ

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Do we ever achieve a final truth, get to a point of wellness, or wholeness?

- Ken Wilbur – "Sex, Ecology, Spirituality" states that reality is not composed of things or processes.
- Not composed of wholes or parts but composed of whole/parts or holons.

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Wholeness as an ideal…

- This means the universe itself is not whole but merely a part of the next whole
- Therefore, there’s no place to rest in the notion of wholeness
Do we achieve “Erotic Intelligence” or become sexually whole?

- Sexuality is at the core of our personhood
- When our sexuality is tampered with in any way as a child or young person it creates a shame-based sexuality and shame-based sense of self
- Shame is at the core of most sexual dysfunction
- Sexual shame is at the core of sexual addiction
Definitions:

- **Erotic:**
  - of, devoted to, or tending to arouse sexual love or desire

- **Intelligence:**
  - the ability to learn or understand or to deal with new or trying situations:
  - **REASON:** also, the skilled use of reason
Problematic/Addictive Sex

- Sexual addiction: repeatedly engaging in any sexual behaviors that are secretive, shaming, and/or abusive (to self or others)
- Sex addicts lack EI – they are aroused by sexual desire but are devoid of the skilled use of reason

“And your wife called to remind you not to have sex with anyone on your way home.”
Problematic/Addictive Sex

- Addictive sex is rigid and unimaginative
- Reenactment of past trauma
- Sex addiction is an intimacy disorder
We Live in a Sexualized Culture

- Our culture has become more sexualized and also repressed at the same time. This paradox pulls people in two directions.

- The unending conflicted messages from film, television, magazines, billboards, fashion, and our culture at large, coupled with easy access to pornography and family-of-origin trauma have made sex shameful and confusing.

- Virtual connections, no face-to-face contacts, infer that sexual exchanges are happening in one’s head, devoid of any heart connection.
ONE OUT OF EIGHT COUPLES MARRIED IN THE U.S. MET ON-LINE

“Did You Know?” www.youtube.com
Virtual Intimacy…

- Over 200 Million people are registered as users on Myspace

- If Myspace were a country it would be the 5th largest in the world (between Indonesia and Brazil)
  - “Did You Know?” www.youtube.com
What is Intimacy...

- Most private or personal
- Very close or familiar
- Deep and thorough meaning
- What 2 people share who are in an agreed confidence with one another

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How does intimacy relate to sexuality?

- Historically we have no real data about the relationship between intimacy and sexuality.

- In “Constructing the Sexual Crucible” David Schnarch tells us that we “know very little about the evolution of intimacy throughout the course of civilization” and that “one might say that human intimacy is evolution’s most current experimental novelty.”
Intimacy is NOT a euphemism for sex!

Great sex is the result of intimacy.

Intimacy is knowing yourself as well as building a deeper relationship with another person.
Four Cornerstones of Intimacy

- Acceptance
- Connection
- Responsibility
- Empathy
Cornerstone #1 - Acceptance

- Acceptance of yourself without judgment
- Know yourself: what you like, dislike, when you become scared, when you take risks, where your growth edges are.
- Self acceptance means you know who you are and are comfortable with it
Cornerstone #2 - Connection

- Promotes co-regulation which assists with self-regulation
- Allows for a deeper relationship with family and friends
- Requires diligence and discipline
- Connection creates novelty in the brain
- If the connection is sustained a stable relationship can form
Cornerstone #3 - Responsibility

- Responsibility within intimacy is about accountability
- Being assertive, direct, and speaking up for yourself in relation to what you want and need
- Being accountable for your own feelings
- Telling the truth even though it may be difficult to say and for the other to hear
- Listening to your partner’s response rather than reacting because you’re hurting
- Being truthful about preferences vs. being mean and hurtful
- Self-regulating your behavior consistently to reach your goals
Cornerstone #4 - Empathy

- Empathy is your ability to recognize or feel another person’s thoughts and moods.
- Being empathic in relationships helps you to be comfortable with another.
- Can you empathize with how your partner feels?
- Can you understand and validate how those feelings affect them?
- Can you do this without making their feelings about you?
Attachment vs. Autonomy

- Attachment feeds autonomy and autonomous people seek the connection and comfort of attachment in relationship.
- This paradox represents the yin and yang of life, meaning equal and opposite values of control and nurturing, power and virtue.
- Autonomy means you know who you are and you allow the same for your partner.
- This process is called...
...Differentiation

- You have the ability to not overreact to your partner’s upset
- You can operate autonomously even though your partner may want you to do things their way
- You can tolerate the tension that is inherent in every relationship, especially the tension that comes with living with someone and loving them deeply.
The relationship game is about you making you okay!
You have to allow for discomfort in order to grow up emotionally and sexually
Differentiate while connecting closely
Create a healthy inter-dependency
No blame, no shame, no games
How do we get there?

Healthy Sex +
Intimate Sex +
Erotic Sex +
Spiritual Sex =
Erotic Intelligence!
Healthy Sex...
Healthy Sex…

- Adds to your well being
- Is free from behaviors that create destruction to your psyche, feelings and physical body
- Healthy sex can have a tone of innocence and simplicity that feels beneficial, healthful and sound
- May restore your character as a result of the sexual act because it feels good in the moment and leaves you feeling good afterwards
- Healthy sex is free from shame and pain and does not create disorder or drama

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Self-Care for Sumptuous Sex

- Grooming – What practices need to be part of your routine (flossing, etc.)
- Health – visit dentist, have a physical, etc.
- Diet – What are you eating? Where are you eating (in front of TV?), do you take vitamins?
- Exercise – Regularly? Increases testosterone
- Poor general health = poor sexual functioning

- Cleanliness – Do you wash your bed sheets? How orderly is your home (dirty dishes piled up, etc.)
- Clothing – Do you dress for comfort and ease? Are your clothes clean, pressed, professional?
STRESS

- Reduces testosterone
- Irritability or anxiety reduce sexual desire
- Can create erectile dysfunction
- Hormonal related issues such as mood swings, sleep deprivation, etc. affect the sex drive
- Structure a lifestyle around nutritious eating, movement, and sleep - optimal.

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“What’s Love Got To Do With It?” Tina Turner

Love is what we are born with. Fear is what we have learned here. The spiritual journey is the unlearning of fear and the acceptance of love back into our hearts.

Marianne Williamson

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“What’s Love Got To Do With It?” Cont’d.

- Love isn’t what we think or feel it’s a neurobiological state
- We’re hard-wired for love which correlates to three different states according to Helen Fischer in “Why We Love”
- These states are: love, romance, and attachment
- Love is a chemically based chain of emotional reactions that cause us to feel attracted, sexy, romantic, affectionate, and desirous
- Striving to move beyond the temporary attraction and lust stage toward the attachment stage demonstrates a commitment to an enduring relationship
“What’s Love Got To Do with It?” Cont’d.

- Desiring another takes work over time.
- First, you discuss your sexual desires and preferences to assist your move into intimacy and openness.
- All decisions about how to approach your preferences for desire and arousal are “in the moment” and involve mutual willingness.
- Your goals are to stay truthful about what you are learning about your sexuality and your partner’s sexuality while managing the tension you are feeling.
Intimate Sex...
Couple-ship is defined as two adults who choose to commit to relationship with each other. Each chooses fidelity to move deeper into intimacy.

Each person makes an active choice to be the kind of partner they want to be.

You choose your partner because you want *her*, not someone else.

A realistic view of intimate sex is that your sexual desire and that of your partner consistently changes, requiring adaptation throughout the lifespan.
Conscious Connection, cont.

- Know who you are and use good communication. This creates an interdependent, cohesive relationship as opposed to an unhealthy dependent, enmeshed relationship.

- Have honest, crucial conversations. This requires discipline, stretching to the edge, entering a nonjudgmental state, talking consciously while managing your anxiety.

- Explicit talks may bring up resistance.

- Develop a variety of friends who you can practice talking honestly to. This will teach you about intimacy experiences. Find common interest groups that appeal to you such as spiritual organizations, hobbies that involve others, social events or organized sports.
Integrating Love & Lust

“Let there be spaces in your togetherness, and let the winds of the heavens dance between you.”

Kahlil Gibran – The Prophet
Implicit/Explicit Strategies

- Speak what’s on your mind in a clear and practical way, this is an absolute necessity in relationships.

- Implicit means to hold your thoughts inside, which is great if you are considering your chess moves.

- When you make your thoughts explicit in relationships, you start the critical conversations. This challenges you to stay present with the process.

- Extend your generosity to your partner in all ways.
Create Sexual Agreements

- Sex is relational
- Bring a sense of play and joy to your sexuality
- Notice and compliment your partner. Speak your appreciations aloud. Sensuality desires and calls for a lavish abundance of words, thoughts, and feelings.

- Can you give and receive compliments without shame?
- What does it feel like to be seen as a sexual being?
- Can you revel and delight in that?
Play!

- Play with each other in loving, adoring, respectful, raunchy ways
- Raunchy meaning earthy, sexual, and explicit.

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Challenge Your Sexual Limitations

- **Men** often say, “I wish she was more wild and animal like”
- **Women** often say, “I wish he was more relational.”
- Look at the **disowned parts of yourself** (shame) and challenge yourself to change.
- The goal is to **meet in the arena of eroticism**, which is different from the arena of intimate love, but includes it.

- Being able to use **sexually explicit language** is arousing to the brain and is important in the language of eroticism.
- You must have your **hearts in place** in order to talk in these ways or to try new things.
Pillow Talk

- Your quiet privacy is a good space for pillow talk—straight sharing, dynamic discussion and honest chats.

- Two aspects of pillow talk are essential to your well-being. 1) Being able to say “no,” mean it, and have your boundaries respected. 2) Saying “yes,” being heard and following through.

“It’s a shame there isn’t a pill to stimulate conversation.”
The principle of “redirection” –

Barnaby Barrett, Ph.D. *Ten Keys to Successful Sexual Partnering*

- The principle of redirection means to offer an alternative plan if you say “no” to your partner’s suggestions.

- There are three keys to honest pillow talk: Using the language of *I-statements*, saying any *statement from the heart*, and asking about your partner’s *feelings*, which opens the door for an empowering conversation about the topic.
Sex with your partner is associative, connected, and embodied.

Happiness is your gauge for knowing how well you are communicating and interacting with one another.

Happiness is the sum of your best and hardest moments together.

Erotic relates to having the intention to arouse sexual desire in oneself and the other.

Arousal is a verb, and erotic translates into actions and insinuation, which can be subtle, solitary or shared.
Erotic Sex...
Erotic Sex

- Erotic sex begins to happen when both people have self-differentiated, meaning you have truly taken a stand for who you are sexually and have revealed it to yourself and your partner.
- Differentiation is the balance between individuality and being together.
- Erotic sex allows a freedom to unleash the ravenous while staying relational.
- Touching each other is one key to erotica.
- If you were creating a seductive, romantic evening with your partner for hot sex, how would you write this part of your script?
- Sex is never a thing we just had. Sex is the intercourse, the merging or convergence of who we are.

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Essence of Eroticism

- Setting the erotic stage by evoking the five senses is a good platform with which to begin.
- A slow pace during erotic sex keeps the entire body stimulated rather than going for brain stimulation, the dopamine surge and “getting off.”
- The man must understand how to slow to the women’s pace.

“No matter how familiar we are with each other, with our surroundings, we cannot get bored if we truly pay attention.”

Philip T. Sudo
Our brains are stimulated by what we see. The more novel it is, the more interesting and arousing to the brain and body.

There is a definite connection between auditory stimulation and the experience of sexual pleasure. Studies show that focus on sounds of your bodies during sex increase arousal and orgasm.

Taste and smell are intertwined sensory modalities for stimulating pleasures and fragrant memories.
Sex is about inviting a kind of nervous excitement where there’s no rush to cover it up or push it away. You accept that part of your adult sexuality, and you recognize it as the engine that arouses you and your partner.

Speak your love, your carnal desire, what you are seeing, would like to see or do with your partner, whether it be lovely, lustful, or lascivious. This kind of connection flames your partner’s physical arousal.
“Sexual fantasies may call forth new life in the guise of new sexual experiences, and so the motive for repressing these fantasies may not be as much moral sensitivity as fear of life’s irrepressible abundance.”

- Thomas Moore
Sexual Fantasy

- Erotica happens when your heart and soul are your guides, and you and your partner resonate as one.

- Fantasy is healthy, especially when you’ve reached a level of trust in yourself and with your partner.

- Sensual toys, not necessarily sex toys, are in order if they are appropriate to you and your partner.

- Use your imaginations and clarify about your boundaries, your willingness to hear invitations and to say and hear “no.”
In adult sexuality, you pay attention to your current fantasies and discuss them with your partner and listen to his or hers without reaction or judgment.

In a healthy relationship, sexual fantasies keep desire alive.

Both partner-replacement fantasies and mental wanderings are an escape from emotional connection with your partner.

Fantasies that include your partner and that you invent together increase your erotic styles.
You and your partner build your sexual fantasies together, about, and with one another, means you have no secrets, no shame and no abuse.

In erotic sex, we invite the spiritual.

When fully naked and vulnerable, sexual potential comes from surrender and not trying.

You are willing to give up control, be in a state of not knowing, and make a space for your eroticism to emerge.

Erotic sex requires the maturity and responsibility for oneself and the other that only an adult can muster.
Spiritual Sex...
“Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone – we find it with another. The meaning of our life is a secret that has to be revealed to us in love, by the one we love.”

- Thomas Merton
Spiritualizing Sex

- Spiritual sex combines how you express your love with your intentions or blessings you bring to your partnering.
- Spiritualizing sex is willingness…we create a spiritual bond through a commitment to completely know ourselves with our partner.
- To be true to the nature of your gender, the feminine opens to energy and invites the masculine in. The masculine directs the energy to empower the feminine to feel it, be warmed by it, to glow in it.
Spiritualizing Sex - Breathing

- During sex, stop, relax and notice the sexual excitement in your bodies. Breathe together and feel the warmth as it radiates throughout. Notice what you feel in this engagement.

- Breathing is not a one-breath event, but a conscious, circular experience. You relax and focus on the breathing, you’ll flow in and out; sensations heighten, and tensions release. You are fully present with your partner.
Rituals prepare each of you to meet the sacred in each other. Breathing, prayer or meditation sets the stage for inviting your highest selves to a sexual feast.

Rituals start as simple acts of preparation or kindness. Repeated rituals are a means to train your body and your mind to focus fully on the event and engage the person with heart and respect. Rituals create the time, space and energy to connect with each other.
Spiritual sex is about the attitude of respect and actions of kindness. It can also be fun and reverential, giving you the freedom to try things your way, not in the prescribed ways we learned or how our culture determines it.

Spiritual sex suggests that you move beyond orgasm into the connection with yourself, your partner and the divine, recognizing them all as one.
Erotic Intelligence is…

…the ability to make sexual choices that affirm life in healthy, imaginative, and exciting ways. In healthy sexual relationships, eroticism is the deliberate seeking of pleasure for the sake of connection with oneself or others without sex or orgasm necessarily being the end point.

One of the great challenges of living a recovered life is to experience this kind of sex with a partner with whom one feels safe, secure and connected with, while revealing the depths of our erotic, sexual selves.

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