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Making Your Married Sex Irresistible

This is episode #119 of Stay Happily Married, "Making Your Married Sex Irresistible."

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Lee Rosen: I'm Lee Rosen and I'm your host today. Welcome to the show. For a lot of couples, sex after marriage just isn't what it was before. Many of them end up thinking it's just normal for their sex lives to cool down, to slow down after marriage, and there isn't anything that can be done about it.

Well, I'm here today by Skype with Dr. Trina Read. Trina is a sexologist with a thriving sex coaching practice. She's written for a variety of publications. She's done all kinds of lectures and interviews really all over the world, everywhere from North America, U.K., Australia, even New Zealand.

She's going to tell us about her book *Till Sex Do Us Part: Making Your Married Sex Irresistible*. She'll talk about the transition between single sex and married sex and let us know that great sex doesn't have to stop just because you've gotten married.

Trina, welcome to the show.

Trina Read: I'm so thrilled to be here. Thanks for having me on.

Lee Rosen: Well, I have to ask, how did you decide that you wanted to study sex for a living?

Trina Read: You know, a lot of men want to know that, Lee. It's definitely one of those "my occupation chose me; I didn't chose my occupation." If

you met me, you would understand that I am just an average gal in an average relationship with two little kids. And the thing is, because I'm just so average, it gives my perspective on sex -- I'm the perfect person to be a sex expert. But I would never, ever in my guidance counselor's office in high school ever chosen this as my occupation.

But it was just honestly -- it's just one of those things I fell into and it's the perfect occupation for me because I do understand just the average married couple and what they have to deal with. So I'm very good for this job.

Lee Rosen: Well, perfect. You know, it's interesting you talk about meeting you. And I really do feel like I have met you in person. I want to tell people really quickly about your website. It's TillSexDoUsPart.com. If you go visit it, there are all these videos and pictures. And you might want to do that while you're listening because you really will get a fuller sense of who Trina is as a person. I love to have videos that I can go look at.

What made you want to write this book in particular? It's *Till Sex Do Us Part: Making Your Married Sex Irresistible*. What was it about -- what drew you to this topic?

Trina Read: Well, I was traveling around the world giving lectures and I was also attending graduate school. And I had been married for about three years when I came home off the plane one day and my husband looked at me and he said, "We're going to see a marriage counselor." And I sat across from my husband on a marriage counselor's couch, listening to him complain that we weren't having sex anymore.

Now, Lee, I don't know if you can get the irony of being a sex expert of in a sexless marriage. And I'm a very practical, pragmatic gal. I thought, you know what? If we're not having sex, I'm just going to make our sex life better.

So I went into all the books -- and I have a library of books -- and went to all my books and I started looking for ways to spice up our relationship and started implementing them. And nothing was working. And I couldn't figure out what was going on.

And just as my marriage was about to disintegrate and just as I was about to give up this career as a sex expert -- because I thought, how can I tell other people to have sex when I can't even have it in my own relationship? -- it occurred to me that there are millions and millions of people in North America and all around the world

who are experiencing the exact same thing that I did, which was I was in a good, stable relationship, I loved my husband, I wanted to have good sex but sex just didn't interest me anymore. And I had to figure out why.

And so in trying to save my own marriage, I thought, well, this information can help a lot of other people too. And that's how the book was -- that was the genesis of the book.

Lee Rosen: You know, it feels kind of normal. I mean, you were working; you're busy traveling. He's working. You're doing the whole kid thing. Life goes on. And it does feel like it's perfectly normal. I think a lot of people just sort of accept it. I mean, what is it that happens with couples where you've been together for a long time and it just makes it so easy for sex to stop being a priority?

Trina Read: Well, there's a myriad of reasons and each couple has their own unique reason. Generally, though, I find a couple of main points that couples need to look at in their own relationship.

First and foremost, the most important thing is the quality of communication. So I find when couples first get together and you're in the newbie phase of a relationship, communication is really positive. You want to call your friends and say, "We are having the most amazing sex. I can't believe it." You want to scream on top of buildings.

And so it goes from this really positive "we're having great sex; my partner's so amazing," to after a couple years there being neutral communication or no communication. And then a couple years after that, communication becoming negative; or at least, if you broach the topic, it's broaching it on eggshells.

So when you're looking at resurrecting your sex life and you want to say, "We have to figure out how to make it better," it's a difficult topic to bring up with your partner. One, because most people can't talk about their biological body parts -- "this is my penis," "this is my vagina." I'm probably not even supposed to say that on this podcast. Because people just can't talk about their bodies and they can't talk about sex and they can't say, "This is what I want." There's egos involved. There's a lot of things that get in our way of having productive communication.

So I think when you're looking at resurrecting your sex life, it's about -- instead of focusing on what's going wrong in your sex life, which is what most couples do, you start focusing on, well, what can

we do to make this better? And it's the "can do" attitude that's going to make the difference.

Another thing is couples just stop trying new things. You'll find in a brand new relationship one of the reasons it's so great is you've got a lot of sexual self-confidence, especially for women. And you're trying new things and you're experimenting and it's so much fun and you can't wait to try new things with your partner.

However, as we go into our long-term relationship, that bringing novelty and newness into the relationship, it starts to slowly ebb away and you always go into the bedroom probably doing the same thing over and over and over again. And what's the definition of insanity? Doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result.

So those are just two things that get in the way of couples having a great sex life. There's probably hundreds and hundreds of more things, but that's probably the top things.

Lee Rosen: Yeah. The biggies. Makes sense. You know, I can certainly hear at least one spouse in a marriage where there isn't enough sex saying sort of, "So what? Why does it matter? Why is it so important to the marriage to keep sex going? I mean, things are rolling along. What's the problem?"

Trina Read: Well, I'm sorry to say that you can have a successful marriage with out sex. However, you can't have a successful marriage without intimacy. Now, intimacy -- sex is just an easy way to get to intimacy. So you need -- if you don't have that intimacy, that bond, you're living with a roommate. And a lot of people find that that's their situation.

But the upside to being in a long-term relationship is you can take your sexual experience to the next level. So there's the basic way to have sex and that's great. I like to call it "maintenance" sex. You can have maintenance sex and that's great. We need to fill in the gaps with maintenance sex. However, when you're in a long-term relationship, this is an opportunity for you to experiment with interesting things.

So for example, if you just meet somebody brand new, chances are you're not going to have a full-on tantric experience with that person. If you've been dating that person for two months, chances are you're not going to have a full-on tantric experience. However, once you've been in this relationship for a long time and you've built up the trust and you've built up this intimacy between the two of

you, you can delve into this idea of tantric sex and have mind-blowing experiences.

I think one of the reasons that people become disassociated from sex and think, "Well, why bother? It's just not worth it," is they're really not getting the full meal deal out of the sexual experience. Part of it is the hype around sex that we've seen occur over the last 25 years. So over the last 25 years sex has really become a part of who we are. It's part of our self-confidence. It defines who we are. So in order for us to be successful people, we've got to be very sexual people.

So people just think, "I can't live up to the standard," and so they just think, "Well, I'm just not going to bother." So if I'm not going to have that kind of sex, why would I bother having it in my marriage? It's kind of sex in marriage often times is a let-down.

But if you actually put some effort into the sex that you're having, you can have this amazing sex life. And you know what? It doesn't take a lot of time. It doesn't take a lot of -- everything. You know, people think, "I have so much going on in my life. How can I add something else? How can I do it?" It doesn't take a lot. But what you get out of it, what you reap -- the benefits that you reap from it are amazing. And not just for yourself, but for you as a couple.

And the thing is, when you're having mind-blowing sex with your long-term partner, I mean, really isn't that what it's all about? When you're spending the majority of your life with somebody, isn't that what it's all about, to have those moments where you connect with somebody at such a level that -- you can't do that with just any person off the street. You really can't.

So that's a very long explanation to your very short question. Why should people care about sex so much?

Lee Rosen: Well, it certainly got my attention. Sounds pretty good to me. Where do I sign up for that?

Trina Read: Well, exactly. That's why it's worth it.

Lee Rosen: Let me ask you this. In the book there's a concept you talk about. You talk about single woman sex and you talk about married woman sex. And I'm wondering, what are those and what is the difference between single woman sex and married woman sex?

Trina Read: Well, if you take a look at how most of us learn to have sex, it's usually during our teenage years. Now, you might not have had

intercourse when you were a teenager, but this is our time to experiment and fumble around and so this is the knowledge that we take with us for the rest of our lives. And the thing is, it's a very finite time period and it's also a very finite knowledge.

So what we learn when we're experimenting with sex is three things, basically. The first is that to get the maximum amount of satisfaction for the minimum amount of effort, you start grabbing at the goodies.

Now, the goodies are the breasts, the penis and the vulva. And so when you start fumbling around and petting, you know that you need to grab at the goodies. And really, when you are a teenager or when you're in a brand new relationship and somebody starts grabbing at your goodies, it feels good. So you know what? If it ain't broke, why fix it?

The thing is, because that's all that we've learned, it's like a Pavlovian response. When we go into the bedroom, we start grabbing at the goodies. There's a lot of other things on the body that create just as much great sensation but we've been trained that's all that we do.

Second, our society especially is very Orgasm-focused. And you're probably saying to yourself, "Well, if I'm not going to have an orgasm during sex, why should I bother?" And the thing about orgasms, people pay a lot of money and time to get one. And when we have an orgasm in its full experience where it's physical, it's mental, it's spiritual, all those things, it is -- there is nothing like it.

However, you will find that with women especially, we've been told that we are sexually fulfilled once we have our orgasm. And that's not necessarily true because a lot of women who are in longer term relationships, they have their orgasm but they're still walking away from the sexual experience going, "Well, that didn't do anything for me."

The problem with this is men have been trained that when they go into the bedroom it is their duty to do everything they can to give a woman an orgasm. And they understand that once he gives her her orgasm, she is sexually fulfilled. Something that we don't really talk about too much is a woman can have an orgasm and not be sexually aroused at all. She can have a bodily reaction and have an orgasm but still not be sexually aroused. So there has to be something more to the sexual experience than just having an orgasm.

So we go into the bedroom, we grab at the goodies, she has an orgasm or doesn't have an orgasm. But no matter what happens in the sexual experience -- and this is my third point for single woman sex -- no matter what happens in that sexual experience, she must have an orgasm.

Now, this is not a feminist statement; or at least, it's not intended to be a feminist statement. The whole reason that we have sex is to procreate. And so by procreation, the man orgasms, ejaculates into the vagina, hopefully he impregnates the woman. Nine months later she has a baby and extends their lineage. So it's been intuited by human beings for however long we've been on this earth that in order for sex to be successful, the man must ejaculate.

So when we're single, this formula absolutely works because for the first two years of a relationship we're hopped up on love drugs -- endorphins, dopamine. It's almost like we're on speed or cocaine when we first meet somebody. And really, we don't have to do anything -- anything at all -- to become aroused by this person that we are attracted to.

So when we walk into the bedroom, your partner grabs your goodies, it feels really good. He gives her an orgasm, which means he's a really great guy. He's being thoughtful. He's doing everything he can. And at the very end he has to ejaculate. Of course he does. I mean, that's just part of the sexual experience.

However, once we go into our longer term relationship and it goes from the honeymoon sex into the long-term sex, this formula of having sex stops working for a lot of woman. A lot of men -- and I am an advocate for me. Men think I'm a big feminist. You know what, Lee? I'm not. I'm actually really advocating for health sexuality for men and women. So please bear that in mind when I say this.

So when the man -- men tend to initiate. Not all the time, but men tend to initiate. So how does he initiate? He grabs her breasts or does something like that. And she goes, "Oh, gee wiz. Do we have to have sex now?" And then go into the bedroom and there's that infinitesimal moment of "what do I do?" So clothes come off. There's no seduction. There's nothing. They grab at each other's goodies. He gets her off. She gets him off. And at the end of it she feels -- he's rolled over, falling asleep and she feels unsatisfied.

So instead, women have to look at a new way of having sex, which is what I call married woman sex. And there's three things and I'll just go over them really quickly with you.

Lee Rosen: Okay.

Trina Read: So the first one is women have to know what they want out of the sexual experience. And usually it doesn't have to do with intercourse or orgasm; it usually has to do with intimacy. So this idea of -- the best analogy I can give is a lot of women say, "You know what? I'd like to," for example, "take a bath with my partner." And the guys are going, "Hey, I love baths too."

The thing is, once the bath is done and you walk out of the bath and you dry each other off, it's not on to the main event of intercourse. So a lot of women just want to have an intimate experience without intercourse. Now, this is a complete shift of ideologies of what sex is supposed to be.

But I promise you, when women can say to their partner -- and this is the crux here, Lee -- that women can't say to their partner, "I want to take a bath and I don't want to have intercourse afterwards." Because they can't communicate that to their partner, they sit and stew and are dissatisfied with the sex. So women have to figure out what they want out of the sex.

Two, they have to become a lot more connected to their body. Women are numb from their necks down. And especially with their private areas -- their vulva -- they just don't have a relationship at all. And because we're living inside our heads and we are disassociated from our body, it's really hard to feel sexy and sexual.

And the third thing is, a lot of women -- not all women, but a lot of women -- need to become a lot more proactive in the bedroom. So most women tend to wait for their partner to initiate. They wait for their partner to orchestrate the fun. They wait for their partner to do all the things during sex. And ironically -- I think this is so ironic -- they sit and complain afterwards that they're not sexually satisfied. So they are a passenger. They don't do anything to help the sex -- get the sex better -- and then they complain that they're not happy with their sex life.

So women really need to figure out what they want out of the sexual experience and then proactively make it happen.

And the great thing about women being a lot more proactive in their sex is it gives them a sense of sexual self-confidence. And this idea of sexual self-confidence transcends to all areas of her life. The feeling of being sexy and having that mojo and just feeling good

about yourself, when you're a lot more proactive in your sex life, that is just going to come through in your every day living.

So these ideas aren't difficult to implement. But what it does mean is something we discussed already, Lee, is communicating with your partner. "You know what? Things have got to change. Here's what I need out of the sex. I'm going to help start make it happening and we're going to try new things in our bedroom." So it's communicating and bringing new ideas into the bedroom and having an open mind to that happening.

Lee Rosen: Right. Oh, that makes a lot of sense. And it sounds like there are a lot of differences between the single woman sex and married woman sex.

Let me ask you this. Do you find more men or more women reading your book? Or both? Do couples read it together?

Trina Read: Well, my book is written for women, just in the way that I language it and whatnot. And I've had a few men be offended by how I write this book. And what men need to realize is that I am trying to help women get their sexy mojo back so that they are a more enthusiastic bed partner.

And the thing is, I find that men -- what they really want out of the sexual experience is to have a partner that walks in and, woo-hoo, is there and is present and really wants to be there. So I wrote this book for women to get that emancipation in their sexuality. So it's written for women.

But if men -- honestly, it's like reading *Cosmo*. If you want to find out the secrets, if you want to be in her little secret society, you read my book, even though it's in a female language.

Lee Rosen: Right. Yeah. It sounds like it might not be a bad gift item, huh?

Trina Read: For your guy. So the number one thing I hear for women when I give lectures is, "I wish my husband was here to hear this." Because they don't feel confident enough to tell them exactly what they are going through. So men, if they can't be at my lecture, should be reading this book because this is how women feel.

Lee Rosen: Right. And it is good. I mean, I was joking with a friend yesterday, we could have a long conversation about women but a very short conversation about things men understand about women.

You know, in talking about the difference between single woman sex and married woman sex, you've given us a lot of advice and tips. I'm wondering, are there other good relationship habits that people really need to get into if they're going to make this adjustment to the married sex life?

Trina Read:

A couple easy things that couples can do. First of all, make sure at least once a week to set aside time with your partner. Now, this is not about sex; this is just about 10 minutes face-to-face with your partner where the TV's turned off, the kids are in bed and you're just talking with your partner.

A lot of times the week flies by and we really don't have a connection time with our partner where we're just holding hands. And touching is really important. So just sit down for 10 minutes, hold hands, maybe cuddle, have a nice little chat. That 10 minutes will do so much to help put your mindset into having sex later on.

Another thing busy couples need to do -- and everybody hates when I bring this up. They hate it, so be prepared to hate this next one. It's schedule your sex. So the thing is, people say, "You know, Trina, I'm scheduled up the wazoo and now you want me to schedule sex too?"

The thing about being proactive and saying, "We are going to have sex on the weekend," is your mindset is "some time this weekend we are going to have sex." And you make it happen. And I have to bring the research in.

Research proves that when you schedule sex, you will have sex more frequently and the sex will be better. So just putting it on your radar makes a big difference.

And the irony is, when people are dating, it is the ultimate of scheduling sex. The whole dating routine is scheduling sex. "Oh, we're having a date tonight. And after our date, we're going to have sex." So make sure to do that.

And finally, a nice idea -- if you are completely beside yourself and you want to bring new ideas in and you don't know how to bring it up with your partner, a very easy thing to do is to write out a list with three categories. So each of you have a list and the three categories are: things you would like to try, things you would be willing to try, and things you just don't ever want to try.

And what this does is it starts a conversation of these are things -- it gets your mind thinking, well, what would I like to try in our

bedroom? What would I be open to trying? And it's setting the boundaries and limits to what you wouldn't be willing to try.

So I hope I can mention this, Lee. But something that's a big deal for a lot of men is anal sex. So men want to -- that's their big fantasy and they want to try it. And some women just are completely turned off by this idea. There really isn't any communication, per se, around it.

But if you had this type of list where you're saying, you know what? I want to do this and I'd be willing to try this, and this is something that I'm really not comfortable with, you give that to your partner and they understand there's a lot of -- there's a big, big list of things that you would be willing to do and here's one or two things that you're just not comfortable with. So you should be focusing on all the things that you could be willing to do.

And if you are just so keen -- and of course, this is the best case scenario -- is you swap this list with your partner and once in a while your partner surprises you with something that is on your list. Now, wouldn't that be fun?

So for women who aren't really confident about initiating sex, about "what does my partner want to do?" If he hands you a list of things saying, "Here's what I would like to do," and once a month or once every couple months you pick something off that list and you initiate it, you're making your partner happy. You're being proactive in the bedroom. There's a lot of good things that could come out of it.

So that's a very, very easy way to bring in novelty that you know that your partner will like.

Lee Rosen:

Terrific advice. I'm sure that all of you are thinking, where do I get a hold of this book? Let me just mention it again. It's *Till Sex Do Us Part*. You can find information about it at the TillSexDoUsPart.com website. I'll put a link to that in the show notes. Obviously, you can buy this book at Amazon.com; any of the big book sellers are going to have it.

You can also get a lot more information about Trina and all kinds of articles, tips, resources at her website, TrinaRead.com. I'll put a link to that in the show notes. A ton of material.

Trina, thank you so much for being with us today. I really appreciate it.

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Trina Read: It's been fun. Thank you.

Lee Rosen: And thank all of you for listening today. I hope that you will join us again next week. We'd love to hear your comments and your feedback in the meantime. You can reach our listener comment line at (919) 256-3083. You can also e-mail us at comments@stayhappilymarried.com.

Until next time, stay happily married.

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