



Wendy Trainor
communication and healing

Good sex depends on many factors

Good sex, given that there are no medical problems, depends on a number of factors:

1. **Knowing oneself:** This includes being comfortable with our own sexuality and knowing our conditions for good sex. E.g., adequate birth control, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, privacy, feeling safe with our partner, feeling well rested, etc.
2. **Good communication:** Expressing our own sexual needs and wants, acknowledging those of our partner and being able to negotiate with our partner. This might mean the difference between saying: "Not tonight." and rolling over, or saying: "I'm just too tired tonight. Here, let me hold you for awhile. I would like to get to bed earlier tomorrow so we have some time to be sexual. Would that be O.K. with you?"
3. **The ability to be intimate in the relationship:** Sex is one component of a good relationship. Sharing interests, developing our own interests and bringing excitement back to the relationship are also important. It is also important to express our feelings and listen to those of our partner. Companionship (doing things together and simply hanging out together) is also critical. Being affectionate with each other: touching, spontaneous hugging and kissing, and sitting close, all enhance the feelings of connection necessary for intimacy in relationships.
4. **The ability to resolve conflict:** We do not always have to agree. We need to feel heard and acknowledged. Unexpressed anger and resentments create wedges between partners and foster disconnection and distance.
5. **Focus on pleasuring:** Good sex is not just about intercourse. We need to take our time to enjoy giving and receiving pleasure.
6. **Our sex life is a metaphor for what is happening in our own life and in our relationship:** If we are having sexual problems, and are willing to pay attention to ourselves and our relationship, we can find the solution. Resolving our sexual problems can also be the window to resolving other problems in our lives.

Having a sexual problem in the course of your lifetime is just as likely as having a medical problem like a sprained ankle or a broken arm. Sexual problems are often multifactorial. They may have a biological cause that needs to be treated medically, yet have a psychological component that will require therapy to sort it out, or, conversely, have a psychological cause that requires medical intervention to precipitate change. There is help available. Don't be afraid to ask for it. Stick with it until you get the results you want.

For the most part, when people are in committed relationships, sexual problems can best be sorted out in relationship therapy.

Wendy Trainor, MSW, RSW, RMFT, offers individual and relationship therapy and specializes in sex therapy. For more information or an appointment, contact Wendy at 416.204.0336 or wtrainor@sympatico.ca.

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