



Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter - Issue #7

Everything about relationships! Be kind, don't panic, and have faith.



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Welcome to Issue #7!

If you want to catch up on earlier issues, you can find the archive [here](#).

I'm going to lead with some podcast news. I wrote in Issue #5 about Jack Morin's book *The Erotic Equation*, and his concept of the erotic equation: $\text{ATTRACTION} + \text{OBSTACLES} = \text{EXCITEMENT}$.

Well, Judy and I did a podcast (episode 109, available [here](#) with all of our other episodes) about it. And, while I wouldn't exactly say it went viral, I will say that compared to many of our other episodes this one was wildly popular, especially on [YouTube](#). As I noted in the episode, when you talk about sex, pretty much everything is a *double-entendre*, to the extent that Judy was wondering if we should just go ahead and invite Beavis and Butthead on the show. (I commented that we don't have to, since we have me.) Anyway, we had fun with it.

The other thing we talked about in the same episode was a listener comment on an episode from quite a while ago called "My Wife Found Out I Cross-Dress. Help!" The listener, Shad (who kindly gave me permission to quote her) said this:

"As a wife, you articulated a lot of what I am feeling right now so well. Something not touched on though was that you feel so alone and that you can't talk to anyone because how bloody embarrassing and it's not really my secret to share is it? My husband has been wearing women's thongs and shaving his body hair (which is a huge turn off) for a few years now. He started wearing the odd women's track pants and sweaters along the way, then girly socks. A couple of days ago I found that he is trying to grow breasts with herbal supplements. That was a huge slap in the face for me, like wow, he's just going to keep getting worse and there is no way I'm ever going to be able to be attracted to him again. The struggle is where to go from here, it's a scary place."

Judy and I talked about Shad's comments on the podcast, and I'm wondering what you think. Do you have any similar experience, or know people who have? [Let me know](#) your thoughts.

In other news, we're still looking for ratings and reviews for my book *It's Not About Communication!* So I'm once again asking for a **big favor**:

Even if you aren't able to take the time to write a review, please give the book a rating. (Of course, I'm hoping it's five stars!)

It's easy: Just go to [this link](#), scroll down to "Review this product" and push the "Write a customer review" button. You don't actually need to write anything--just assign a rating. It'll take less than a minute. Thanks!



Today's Relationship Tip

Differences in Libido Call for Grace and Compassion

Are you in a relationship in which you and your partner have considerably different levels of libido? Actually, this is more the rule than the exception, as far as I can tell from my practice. (Of course, the couples that have no serious problems don't make appointments to see me, so I'm sure I have a biased view.)

Incidentally, it's not always the man in a heterosexual relationship who has the higher libido. When I meet a couple having difficulties in their sex life, I never know which one has the higher level of sexual interest until they tell me.

Any couple in a sexual relationship, if they stay together long enough, will inevitably encounter a situation in which one of them wants to get it on sexually, and the other isn't in the mood. How a couple handles that moment is both an indicator of how they're doing, and a causal factor in how they'll do going forward. If the couple handles that moment with

grace, they're probably doing well in all sorts of ways. And the experience of handling that sort of thing with grace reinforces their ability to do so in the future.

What does it mean to handle the situation with grace? Well, for the person being disappointed, it means, essentially, not being a jerk about it. And for the person doing the disappointing, it means being compassionate.

This particular situation is just a specific instance of a more general phenomenon. If you can talk about any sort of difficulty between you, sexually or otherwise, with grace, you're probably doing okay. If not--if one of you bringing up a problem leads to nasty fights or icy silences, then you're probably having all sorts of intimacy problems.

Of course, that's what couples therapy is for. And with or without therapy, what this situation calls for is maturity--which leads to today's Big Idea.



What's the Big Idea?

In this section, I tell you about one of my favorite Big Ideas—at least, / think they're Big Ideas. These are the ideas that guide me in my work, and get me all excited. Of course, I'm a recovering nerd with frequent relapses, so what I find exciting might be, well, less so for you. But I know a lot of the folks I've worked with have found these ideas helpful, so maybe you will too.

These Big Ideas are pretty much what I write about in my books and talk about in my videos, so [check them out](#) if you want to explore these in more depth.

Today's Big Idea:

At What Age Do Women and Men Reach Their Sexual Peak? It's Not What You Think!

Credit for this Big Idea goes to the late sexologist David Schnarch. Schnarch used to ask that question of audiences when he was giving a talk.

How would you answer it? Think about it for a moment before you read on.

What did you say? The most common answers Schnarch would hear were something like, "Men reach their sexual peak in their 20s, women in their 30s or 40s."

Schnarch's answer might surprise you. He said that both women and men reach their sexual peak in their 60s and 70s!

He was obviously not talking about hormone levels or sexual gymnastics. What he meant was that the ability to explore and experience the deepest levels of intimacy, sexually or more generally, requires the ability to tolerate anxiety without panic. And that's a hallmark of maturity.

When I talked in today's relationship tip about handling problems like differences in libido with grace, I'm talking about that kind of maturity.

How do you develop that sort of maturity? It's not the fact of getting older per se that does it. Rather, it's the crap you go through along the way. When you go through a crisis and manage to survive it, you're that much more able to cope with crises in the future without panicking. That's why I often hear people express gratitude for the crises they've survived.

What do you think?

Send me a message!



News & Schmooze

Book news: I already put in a plug for ratings and reviews--thanks!

In other book news, I'm still working on another short book, this one focusing specifically on the issue that leads hundreds of people per month to my blog: *My Husband Complains About My Cleaning. What Should I Do?* I'll let you know when it's available. In the meantime, if you have any stories to share on that topic, I'd be very interested--please let me know.

Podcast news: We have several fascinating guests lined up to interview, so watch for that.

As you might recall, we're always looking for some more listener questions for our podcast guests. So as I did in the last couple issues, I hereby dangle before you an offer.

The first three people to write to me with a question for us and our interview guests to handle will receive a code for a free download of the audiobook version of *It's Not About Communication!*, narrated by yours truly. Such a deal!

As always, if you have ideas for guests (including yourself) or topics you'd like us to include, [drop me a line](#).

That's all for now—bye!

--Bruce

Send me a message!

P.S. If someone forwarded you this message, and you'd like to subscribe yourself, [go to my website](#) and watch the magic box appear that says "Click here to sign up for Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter!" And if I don't already have your email, don't forget to look for the confirmation email--that's an anti-spam thing, which is why I do it. I'd love to welcome you on board!

Please take a moment to make sure these emails actually make it into your inbox! The easiest way (at least for those of us in Google-land) is just to add me to your contacts.

[Here's a link](#) that tells you how to do it for various email services. Please let me in--it's lonely in the Spam or Promotions folder!

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Couples Therapy in Seven Words



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It's Not About Communication!

Why Everything You Know About Couples Therapy is Wrong



Reigniting the Spark

Why Stable Relationships Lose Intimacy, and How to Get It Back

Dr. Bruce Chalmer

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