



## Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter - Issue #11

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



Please tell your email app to display images--if you're not seeing my smiling face, your email isn't cooperating!

### **Welcome to Issue #11!**

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

**Announcement:** I'm leading off today with a professional announcement--at least, that's what they used to call it when someone is announcing a new practice, or changes to an existing one.

As you might know from other communications, as of the end of June (a few weeks from now as I write this), I'm restructuring what I offer in my couples therapy practice.

I'm no longer differentiating between 45-minute sessions and "Couple Intensives" (i.e., longer sessions). Instead, I'm offering couples sessions of 45, 60, 75, or 90 minutes--you can decide when you make an appointment.

And the other big change is that I'm leaving all the insurance panels, which means I'll be out-of-network for all insurances.

I'm doing this because I continue to love the work I do--and at this stage of my career, simplifying the administrative load will help keep it that way.

When you make an appointment with me, you'll be invited to a client portal where you'll fill in your basic information and put a credit card on file. If you have insurance that might cover some out-of-network benefits, you'll be able to get a statement you can submit to them for reimbursement.

I do have some openings these days. All sessions are by telehealth, so you and your partner can be in the same room or in different locations, which often helps with scheduling.

So if you know of people who are looking for a couples therapist, please feel free to send them to my website, <https://brucechalmer.com>.



## Today's Relationship Tip

### What's okay in your intimate relationship? You'd better talk about it!

Judy\* and I did a podcast a couple episodes ago called "[Erotica, Toys, Porn: What's Okay in Your Relationship?](#)" And I mentioned in issue #10 of this newsletter that we're going to be interviewing an expert on "erotic orientation," which can differ between a couple even when their sexual orientations line up fine. (Watch for that episode in a few weeks.)

My tip for today is that you and your partner need to be talking about issues of what you're okay with, what you're not, and what you're not sure about and might want to explore further.

Because if you don't, two things might happen:

1. Your intimate life (and I don't just mean your sex life, but your intimate connection more generally) will cool off. Over time, you'll start to wonder why you're together.
2. This can lead to a crisis when one or both of you do something about it. Such as have an affair, or leave precipitously, or get deeply depressed.

As always, talking about things when you're unsure of how your partner will react is a scary prospect. In other words, intimacy requires that you tolerate anxiety, rather than avoiding it. (There's one of my favorite catch-phrases again. I'm like a borsht-belt comic.)

Yes, there is a genuine risk that your partner might hear what you have to say and conclude, "OMG--there's no way I can be with you if you're into *that*." But if that's what happens, you've been suppressing some important differences, and if you don't talk about them you'll end up in a crisis anyway.

But when you do risk bringing up things you might want to try, the potential rewards are enormous. You might discover a whole new dimension to your intimate life together--and when that happens, your relationship will be stronger than it ever was.

\*That's my wife and podcast cohost Judy Alexander, for those who are new to this newsletter.



## What's the Big Idea?

In this section, I tell you about one of my favorite Big Ideas—at least, I 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:

#### What is Monogamy Anyway?

Huh? Surely you know what monogamy is, right? (Yes, I know--"And don't call me Shirley.")

Well, I want to point out something that might surprise you. Most people in monogamous relationships don't actually know what they mean by monogamy--because they haven't talked about it.

Some couples might call themselves monogamous, but also do three-ways, or allow "hall passes," or are okay with using sex workers. Some couples, on the other end of the spectrum, consider it a violation of their monogamy if one of them masturbates, or watches porn, or even thinks about someone else while they're having sex.

It's always been true that monogamous couples vary in what they consider to be acceptable. But in the world of the internet, the possibilities have expanded exponentially.

So if you haven't talked with your partner about what you mean by monogamy, you might not be as monogamous as you thought!

What do you think?

Send me a message!



## News & Schmooze

**A word from our sponsor:** I'm happy to announce that I have a sponsor for this newsletter. Laria Zylber, an author Judy and I know, has released a new book called *The Blue Tent: Erotic Tales from the Bible*. It's available in paperback and eBook versions--just go to Laria's website, <https://lariazylber.com>.

And soon, *The Blue Tent* will be available as an audiobook, for which Judy did the narration.

Having read the book, I'm delighted to endorse it enthusiastically--of course, that's if you like explicit erotica. Not only is it very sexy, but it also shows a deep knowledge and love for the biblical narratives and the midrashic stories that have surrounded them over centuries.

Tell your friends! And if you liked it, please give it a rating and review on [its Amazon page](#). Thanks!



**Podcast news:** Here are some of the topics and guests Judy and I have covered on our "Couples Therapy in Seven Words" podcast since my last newsletter:

[Co-Parenting with a Narcissist or Other Difficult People: An Interview with Teresa Lodato](#)

[Erotica, Toys, Porn: What's Okay in Your Relationship?](#)

[Collaborative Reproduction: An Interview with Leslie Schreiber and Angela Paoli](#)

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!" 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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## Helpful Links



### Podcast

Couples Therapy in Seven Words



### Website

Dr. Chalmer's website: Books, couples therapy practice, blog



### 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



## Seven Words to Jump-Start Your Love Life

What You Need to Know About Relationships, in One Sentence



## My Husband Complains About My Cleaning! What Do I Do?

Hint: It's Not About the Cleaning

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