



Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter - Issue #12

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 #12!

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

Announcement: Following up on last newsletter, I've completed the changes in my practice I talked about then. As of July 1, I now offer sessions of 45, 60, 75, or 90 minutes.

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. If you have insurance, check with your plan to see if they offer reimbursement for out-of-network providers. I can give you a statement you can submit to your insurance company with the codes they need.

I do have some openings these days, so if you or someone you know is looking for couples therapy, just [go to my website, brucechalmer.com](http://brucechalmer.com). All the details are there, and you can request an appointment right from the website.

In other news, Judy (that's my wife and podcast co-host Judy Alexander) and I were honored by our synagogue, Temple Sinai in South Burlington, Vermont, in recognition of Judy's 23 years of service as Education Director, from which she retired a couple years

ago. If you'd like to see a video of the performance of a piece I wrote for her, [you can see it here](#).



Today's Relationship Tip

How do you get a reluctant guy to go to couples therapy with you?

Okay, why do I make the sexist assumption that it's men who are reluctant to go to couples therapy? Well, like most stereotypes, it's often inaccurate in individual cases. But, like many stereotypes, there's some truth in it. Speaking as a cis-gendered heterosexual man, I can attest to it: as a group, we're not the ones who want to do couples therapy.

When a man is the one setting up couples therapy, it's usually because the woman in his life is insisting on it. And when a woman is the one setting up couples therapy with a man, it's usually her idea, not his, and he's often coming along reluctantly.

Which means, if you think about it, that there are lots of couples where the woman wants to try couples therapy, and the man *isn't* going along with it, at least not yet.

Why is that? Why are guys reluctant to do couples therapy? And how do you get him to change his mind?

As it happens, I've done a video that explains it! [Check it out](#), and let me know what you think. Is that your experience?



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.

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 Erotic Orientation, and How Does it Affect Relationships?

Our most recent "Couples Therapy in Seven Words" podcast episode was [an interview with Dr. Joe Kort](#). Joe is a well-known psychotherapist, speaker, and TikTokker. And among his recent books is one called *Erotic Orientation: Helping Couples and Individuals Understand their Sexual Lives*.

Wait--you know about sexual orientation. But what's "erotic orientation?"

Well, sexual orientation describes what type of person you're attracted to sexually, with categories defined by societal or individual norms. If you're "straight," you're attracted to the opposite gender. If you're "gay," you're attracted to the same gender. And if you're "bi," you might be attracted to either one (leaving aside the complications of non-binary or other gender definitions). You knew all that!

Erotic orientation, on the other hand, describes what turns you on sexually. And it turns out that erotic orientation doesn't fit neatly into the usual categories. Straight men are often turned on by fantasies (or actual experience) of sex with other men, straight or gay. Straight women often fantasize about sex with gay men, or other women. Some gay men fantasize about sex with transgender men who haven't had bottom surgery. Whatever combination you can think of, there are folks who are turned on by it.

What does that mean for relationships? Well, one of Joe Kort's specialties is working with mixed-orientation couples. In my own experience working with couples with differing *sexual* orientations--e.g., a gay man with a straight woman--the couple usually agrees to separate when they accept that reality, though I've known some exceptions.

But a much more common scenario is when the couple's sexual orientation lines up, but their *erotic* orientations are radically different. For example, both of them are straight, but the man is into BDSM, and the woman is repelled by it. Or the man is turned on by particular fetishes, and the woman interprets his interest as taking him away from her. (Joe Kort points out that men are twenty times more likely than women to be into fetishes.)

What do you do if you're in that situation? Some couples find they can't bridge the divide. But others find that if they can talk about it without freaking out, they can expand their repertoire to enable both of them to have a fulfilling sex life.

The key, of course, is the part about not freaking out when they talk about it. That's where couples therapy can help--but only if the couples therapist doesn't freak out either.

Do you have experience with mixed erotic orientations in a couple? [Let me know](#)--I'd love to hear about it.

Send me a message!



News & Schmooze

A word from our sponsor: As I introduced last time, we 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 (besides the one with Dr. Joe Kort I described above):

[I'm Having Second Thoughts About Our Relationship!](#)

[Empowerment Self-Defense And Healing: An Interview With Christine DiBlasio And Christina Allard Of The Safety Team](#)

[Military Families, Trauma, And Relationships: An Interview With Elizabeth Polinsky](#)

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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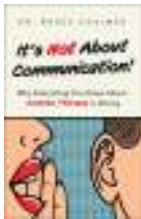
Podcast

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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