

Should she 'fess up' to him about the past?

By Dennis P. Sugrue, Ph.D.
special writer

My fiancée and I are working hard to develop an honest relationship. The one thing I am uncomfortable about is some of my sexual experiences that I had before we met. I want to tell him, but I'm not sure I should. Can there be secrets in a health marriage?

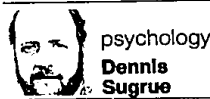
Self-disclosure is a highly personal decision. Certainly informing your partner about every detail of your past is in no way a prerequisite for an honest and open relationship.

If you do indeed decide to reveal all, be aware of the dangers. Frank disclosures about one's past, especially in reference to sexual history, may be emotionally difficult for one's partner to handle.

Such information could also come back to haunt you during future arguments or times when your partner may be feeling threatened or insecure.

Often, when a person desires to "bare all" about his or her past, it is because of some unresolved guilt. Perhaps there may be better ways to overcome the guilt than to use your relationship as a "confessional."

The most important thing is what happens now, in this relationship, not what has occurred in the past.



psychology
Dennis Sugrue

I was shocked recently when I found out that my husband still masturbates. I told him that he must have a problem, but he insists that I'm the one with the hangup. Is it normal for a married man to masturbate?

Despite the sexual revolution of the '60s, most of us continue to be uncomfortable even discussing masturbation.

The myths do slowly. We're all familiar with the warnings we heard as children: masturbation leads to perversion or causes brain damage, warts and diminished sexual capacity.

There is no concrete evidence supporting the belief that it is psychologically detrimental. On the contrary, most experts consider masturbation to be quite normal.

SOMETIMES masturbation causes unfortunate

and unnecessary misunderstandings in a marriage. Often, when an individual discovers that their spouse masturbates, he or she takes personal offense and interprets this as a sign that the spouse no longer finds the marriage sexually satisfying.

This interpretation does not necessarily have to be true. A man or woman can be quite satisfied sexually with their marriage and still enjoy the occasional gratification of self-stimulation.

This is not to suggest that it should be a substitute for intercourse; rather it can be an additional source of sexual satisfaction for both partners.

OBVIOUSLY, there is always the danger that a married individual may use masturbation to punish their spouse or to avoid dealing with intimacy problems that have arisen in the marriage. However, when this is the situation, the real problem is the apparent break-down in honest communication between husband and wife.

Ideally, each individual should be guided by his or her religious beliefs and personal taste, not by the old tales and irrational prejudices. If masturbation does not conflict with one's personal morality, it can serve as an appropriate supplemental form of sexual gratification, even in the best of marriages.

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Dennis Sugrue is a Farmington Hills resident and a clinical psychologist at Henry Ford Hospital. He welcomes questions and topics for future articles, but is unable to answer questions on an individual basis. Questions and topics may be sent to this newspaper.

UM-D plans funding drive

University of Michigan-Dearborn Chancellor William A. Jenkins has formed an eight-member Capital Campaign Strategy Task Force to assist UM-D administrators in establishing a \$2.5 million endowment fund.

The task force will be composed of representatives from management and labor, advising UM-D on major donor prospects.

"As a public-supported institution, UM-Dearborn is dependent upon state appropriations, which are subject to the uncertainties of economic and political change," said Jenkins. "A permanent endowment will provide UM-D with an 'insurance policy' guaranteeing that its most important priorities be financed no matter what."

SEVEN AREAS in which endowment funds will be sought are:

- Named professorships, "an important way of building and maintaining an outstanding faculty."
- Library augmentation, to implement an integrated library system.
- Scholarships.
- Manufacturing engineering and robotics.
- Laboratory equipment in the sciences and engineering.
- Computer Center.
- Environmental study area, to maintain and improve UM-D's 70-acre outdoor laboratory.
- Science Learning Center, to further the development of the center as a teaching tool for students.

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