

Getting it together

Sex in marriage needs variety

Sex has attracted more than its share of social taboos and expectations. In '58, when I was a teenager, sex was reserved for marriage. Physical intimacy was associated with commitment, family-building and mature love.

Today some young adults believe that sex is still meant to be an expression of romantic feelings. They feel sex that is not an expression of love is cheap and even improper. Others today are less traditional and view sex in a broader perspective.

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Actually, sexual expression takes many forms and little study, functions. Those forms that are not purely an expression of love are not innately bad or wrong. It is focusing exclusively on just one of them that causes trouble.

The non-love varieties of sex are many. For single adults, there are married people who often take on the characteristics of a sport. Participants score points when they successfully attract and seduce a sexual partner. Higher points are given when the sexual prize is especially attractive or a difficult conquest.

IN SPORT-SEX, the ultimate sexual gratification is actually secondary to the feelings of scoring and winning. Attracting a desirable partner is seen as proof of one's personal worth, a reassuring pat on the back for an achievement.

Behind the scenes for a sport individual is the person who sees sex as an avenue to exciting sexual experiences. Pursuing sexual adventures, the sexualist is always trying new techniques, looking for new highs. For the sexual adventurer, sex is fun, fun, fun and has a strong element of fun.

Love is equally irrelevant to individuals who see sex as a way of cementing a marriage relationship. A perfect example of this is the belief that a marriage is not consummated until a husband and wife have sex.

Used in this way, sex becomes a sort of ritual symbolizing commitment and mutual obligation. For many married couples, rituals make up their entire sex life.

Finally, sex is often used like a back rub to relieve tension. Sometimes it's sexual tension, but usually this kind of sex is related to emotional stress like job pressures and the demands of parental roles. While sexual back rubs may be given lovingly, love is not a necessary ingredient.

You may see such lawless sex acts as seductions from the "real thing." Even traditional psychological theories would label most of them perverse evidence of serious personality flaws.

BUT THIS VERY popularity of these variations suggests that this may be a hasty judgment. The variety of ways in which sex is used speaks for the actual diversity of human sexual needs. The fact is all of

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us have insecurities about our self-worth at times, and sexual conquests can be very reassuring.

Similarly, we all need a certain amount of pleasure and excitement in our lives. We all need the comfort and stability that symbolic rituals can provide, and we all need the special feeling that comes from having someone massage away our tensions. These are not needed as substitutes for love, but as additions to it.

Finally, sex is a human sex act. Sex is a way of meeting human sex needs. It is easier to understand why many people feel stifled by narrow sexual relationships.

It isn't surprising that so many married partners turn to outside relationships to meet sexual needs which have been ruled out at home. Even the most normal relationship can become boring and stale.

THE KEY to preventing sexual boredom in a monogamous relationship is diversity. To begin with, partners can experiment with a variety of sexual expression. Marriage is not the only place to see that makes an person to be attracted and desired. Sexual encounters don't have to be sure things. There ought to be a certain amount of effort required in order to score with your spouse.

Sexual sexual adventures don't have to leave home to find excitement. Sexual experimentation and sensuality can be an exciting supplement to sex in marriage. Books on gourmet sex like "Joy of Sex" are good additions to a bedroom.

Bob Trenz is a Rochester marriage counselor and psychologist. Questions for Dr. Trenz may be sent to the Rochester Observer & Eccentric, 110 N. Main, Rochester, 14603.

Volunteers

This column describing volunteer needs in Oakland County is co-sponsored by the Junior League of Birmingham and the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau.

Inquiries regarding volunteer needs listed here should be made to the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau at 642-7772. Requests for volunteer listings also should be made through the bureau.

BIRTHRIGHT Oakland County in Royal Oak needs volunteers 18 years and older to answer telephones, make appointments and act as counselors. Volunteers must be sympathetic to problem pregnancies. A

three-hour per week commitment is required. Training is provided.

LAKER HILLS NURSING CENTER Southfield needs volunteers to drive patients short distances. Volunteers must be 18 years or older. On the job training is provided and schedules can be arranged.

NEW HORIZONS, Oakland County has bureaus in Madison Heights, Pontiac and Farmington needs volunteers to tutor on a one-to-one basis, to work with clients on pre-arranged programs and to help develop materials for learning centers. Volunteers 18 and older also keep written progress reports. Training is provided.

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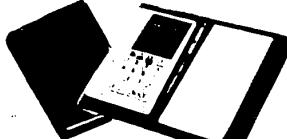
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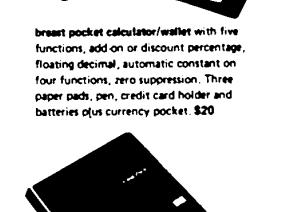
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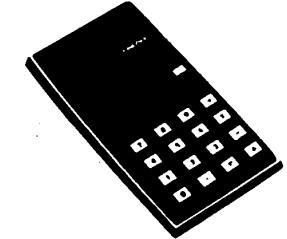
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