How Many Times Is Considered Normal? Transcript

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Welcome to the Summit

All right, everybody. Welcome to the Solving Sexual Dysfunction Summit. I'm one of your host, Dr. Betsy Greenleaf, and. I'm your other host, Dr. Diane Mueller.

And we are so. Excited. You are here with us. This is going to be such an amazing week. Yeah, I'm looking forward. So I have to say, as we've been going through this summit, just so much information has been coming up.

I know myself, I've been learning tons from these interviews. Yeah, I'm already getting so many new ideas on how to frame things with climbing, as in how to talk about things in a little bit different ways.

And, you know, some of this stuff I know some of you guys have heard a few of these things before, but what you're going to hear, even if you've heard something before, is is hearing something just that slight different way that can sometimes unlock a new level of understanding with sexual health, with well-being, anti-aging and so much more.

You know, and I have to say, You know, and I have to say, I think, you know, I have to, first of all, congratulate anybody who's signed up for this, because, number one, you're the type of person who really is looking out for your own care and knows like to seek that kind of education.

And it's one of those things where you're going to look back on this like weeks, months, years to come and realize just the fact that being here has put you in a completely different playing field when it comes to this subject.

Defining Whatu2019s Normal

So the other cool thing I think about that is like so many times these summits, like so many times we get health information and it's all about like helping ourselves, right?

And that's awesome. Awesome, awesome, awesome, awesome. And this summit is including that, like a lot of help for yourself about getting to root causes of imbalance, but also helping your relationship.

So the trickle down effect from what's going to happen this week, I'm just I'm so excited for everybody. It's so wonderful. And I find that like just this topic and talking about it has for me has opened up new conversations in my relationship because it's been great like and I think that's what you guys are going to be able to do too.

You're going to watch one of these sessions and you're going to kind of take it in and come up with your own translation of it. But it's also going to be something that you can talk to your partners about and be like, Hey, listen, this is something I learned today.

Like, what do you think about it? Yes, yes, yes, yes. And if you can watch with your partner, definitely do. But if you know, if not, take that information later.

And I think it can really transform relationships. I'm talking to my partner about, you know, these kind of conversations, too. It's been really, really fun.

You know, one of the things that we wanted to start out with, what is what is normal, because this is where I think is very tough because as humans, we tend to do a lot of comparison.

And, you know, I don't know about you, but I've been on the line at the supermarket and looked over like a Cosmo magazine. And it's like the title is like, you know, are you having sex like ten times a week or something like that?

Like how many times a week or, you know, all these sex topics and you start going like, Oh, wait, that's not me. Like, am I normal? Like, maybe I'm not normal.

Maybe there's something wrong. So yeah, it's so easy to do. And I had a friend in my twenties who was really adamant about this whole thing of Never compare yourself to what you read on the cover of a magazine.

And that was one of her taglines. She would say that all the time. So I feel like I had that drilled in my head. And it's so true, like in this conversation, like what is normal?

It's so easy to take the Cosmo or take our friend that's in a new relationship, right? And when we're in a new relationship, the dopamine is flowing. You know, oftentimes we're having a lot of sex and it's so easy in longer term relationships or not even having a partner to compare ourselves to that dopamine rush that we get a new relationship and compare normal to that.

So this what is normal is, you know, our topic of this conversation. And I think it's such an important thing because of that, because what we are comparing ourselves to is all of this information that's coming in from our surroundings and and the media.

So what would you say, Dr. Betsy? What would you say normal is? You know, I think normal changes changes over a lifetime and changes over the course of a relationship.

And just like you said, because sometimes I'm going on be married for 20 years, which when I say that out loud, I go, oh my God, it's been 20 years. And you know, there are there are times I fall into that trap, too, where I go, oh, my goodness, you know, our sex life is not the same as it was the first year that we met.

And and that's a known fact, like you were saying before when you first meet. We have a we're driven by a lot of hormones, sex hormones one, but dopamine being another.

A dopamine is that hormone that you get that high from. And so many first beginnings of relationships. Things are hot and heavy and it cools down over time.

And I'm finding that, you know, as going on in a 20 year relationship, what is normal is normal now starts to shift. And so my biggest thing is what is normal falls into what works in your lifestyle and what makes you happy.

So if normal for you is having sex once a day, that's great.

Communication and Relationship Dynamics

If it's having once a year and your relationship is still going great, then that still normal. That's fine. But if having sex like one time a day is stressful or having sex one time of year is stressful.

Now that's where it falls out and are normal. And that's that stress that's created with it now is an invitation for a conversation. I really think as you're talking, it's really fun because I don't think you and I in like all of our times hanging out and producing this this event, I don't think we've actually had the conversation on how we would, you know, individually define us.

And what's so cool about listening to you is how similar we are in this definition, right? I, I sometimes talk to people about like the medical definition of low libido, which of course in medicine we diagnosed the label is hypoactive sexual desire disorder, which is I feel like a lot of a lot of words for what we're saying.

But it's typically defined, you know, as not having desires for six months or more or having a low desire for six months or more. And then but then it takes us back to like, well, what does a low desire mean?

Is a low desire mean? It's less than once a day. It's less than once a week, it's less than once a month. So it's still so subjective. So in my mind, I think it's important because it's so easy to say, okay, well, libido is not important.

Sex isn't important to me at certain points of life. So I think the biggest thing I really encourage people to do is to really think about where you're at in your relationships and what would do you feel like after learning everything throughout the summit, do you feel like improving your libido could improve your life and your relationships and if you feel after learning everything like a better libido could improve your vote, your relationships and your your personal health, then I would say that your libido is probably low, right now.

But if you listen to everything and you're like, all of this is pretty good and you're just here because maybe your partner wants you to be here, or maybe you're just interested in general.

You're probably pretty good. And I think it's it's really what I've been learning is it's it's that conversation, it's the communication. And so that's where things change over time.

And it's kind of been a theme among all the experts I've been talking to. I was kind of like waiting for like the magic pill and somebody was going to like, Give me this amazing, like, knowledge to the secret of this crazy sex life.

And it was really kind of came down almost every conversation down to communication with the partner. And just because, you know, whether you've been with somebody for a month or you've been with that person for 50 years, I think the the communication almost gets harder as we go along because we make more assumptions as we go along.

Because you've been with that person, you're like, all right, yeah, this is the way it is. But I think do you have to have more conversations about sex the longer you are with the person?

Because people's desires and where they're coming from and maybe the stress that they're under changes. And so you got to get all these other factors lined up to have that healthy sex life.

Yeah, really. You know, what I like about that psychological way of looking at this is that law of familiarity. The law for really talks about like the more we're with somebody, the more we're with a situation, the more something happens over and over and over again.

We start making these almost like psychological types of assumptions about behaviors, about action to the law, familiarity with, you know, say basic things like, oh, you know, I'm used to my partner getting home at 5:00.

We have dinner at 5:15. And so we, you know, start expecting these things. And when that happens, what winds up happening is we almost start feeling like we just know our partner inside and out, which in some ways we do after a long periods of time and in some ways like we're changing constantly as human beings, like we're always changing, we're always growing.

That's like the one constant is change. And yet we can still be looking at a partner due to the lack of familiarity with this, almost like old I, right, as I've known them for so long.

And it's so easy then to not look for these new things, these new ways of conversing, these new ways of asking questions. And because I agree, I've seen that throughout the summit as well.

And the people that I've interviewed of, oh, the conversation, how do we have the safe conversation? How do we bring it back to making sure that both people are feeling heard and their needs met and are done?

Variety, Sensuality, and Pleasure

You know, things are done in a safe and respectful and loving way and really, I think the law of familiarity says a lot about that around like, okay, let's continue to be curious about our partners and not assume which is so easy and I have definitely fallen into this trap of, Oh yeah, I've been with this person for a long time.

I know how they feel. I know how they're going to react. It's so easy to fall into that. You know, I started to think about when you were talking about like the saying that variety is the spice of life.

And then I was like, well, that doesn't necessarily I mean, depends on your situation. If you're single, that variety could be come in many partners. But if you're somebody in a long term partnership, it made me think of the analogy or the metaphor like, I like to eat chicken, but if I had to eat like a grilled chicken breast every single day of my life, I think I would lose my mind.

So I think now the variety comes in. Well, like with a partner, let's find different ways to do things with that partner. Like, let me not just eat grilled chicken breast.

Like let me chicken catch a artery chicken parmesan, stir fried chicken. Like, like, shake that partner or or even if it's, if it's if it's like libido when it comes to self-pleasure, if you're doing things the exact same way every single time as that's your grilled chicken, that's like it's healthy for you.

And it's good. But it gets really boring real fast. So find new ways and explore things. And that's why I think we're kind of gifted with an imagination.

And imagination and fantasy is great because it lets you explore things that maybe you would or wouldn't do normally, but it gives you you know, it gives you that playfulness in life that can add to some of that spiciness.

Yeah, I love that so much. And I think that's another thing we see, you know, throughout this summit is like libido and sex drive and sexual health really in some ways is related to our underlying like same way we can express in the world.

It's also it's information about our ability to say be present with a partner to feel pleasure to as well as like physical things that are, you know, abnormal.

So sometimes it's so easy to fall into these, you know, these things like you're saying like the chicken every day. It's I mean, I do that with food sometimes just for busyness sake.

Like how many times in a week can I eat the same meal? It's so easy for this to happen as humans, right? And it's easy. I think the libido is kind of sometimes a reflection on that in that it's a way of looking at what's happening, say, in the bedroom and saying, oh, where other areas where maybe I've just gotten busy and overwhelmed and in the groove and just going through the motions because life is so busy and not taking the time to add that novelty, that newness, that excitement, which is true in the bedroom.

But like you said, with the chicken example, like we can extrapolate this, this libido topic and really use it as almost an analogy for so many areas of life.

It's very fun. Here is what I just heard a phrase today, and I think I'm going to take it on that. Life gets life sometimes and I'm like, that is so true.

And you're right. And we get to, you know, we have to figure out how to adjust. And, you know, the other thing that, you know, has come up for me, too, with this is not just what is normal, but what is sex.

And sometimes I think maybe because I grew up during the Bill Clinton era and I go, oh, sex means penetration, you know, and if you grew up during that era, you know, the joke. So, you know, and I'm like, it doesn't always have to be penetration.

Like, there's so like I always joke. I'm like, you're looking at my sex organ right now, right? Like our skin is our largest sex organ, and any part of our body can be responsible for pleasure.

And so, you know, sometimes we get stuck in that rut of if you're, you know, in a cisgendered relationship, you get into this rut of like just I'm going to say it vagina, penis, vagina, penis.

But, you know, and there's so many other the other areas and that in and also tonight is taking the penetration between the genitals like out of the equation to just experience pleasure and just touch each other like that's a

great that's a great expression of of closeness and togetherness that we sometimes forget about.

Yeah, I agree. I was just talking earlier to one of our speakers, Dr. Nicole Marcione, and we were talking about sexuality versus sensuality and really talking about.

Yeah, it's it's so important, right, that sensuality and in many ways, we could define it in in in one way with the ability of or the capacity to experience pleasure.

Right. And so that's one way we could define sensuality. And so with that, it's like like you said, the skin is there's so much erotic tissue on the skin.

Right. And so where can we say even from the conversation of what is normal, like like what is normal could be defined as taking the time on whatever basis feels healthy for you in your individual life or in your relationship to ballet and just like stroke each other's arms and your back and your breasts and your chest and all the different areas, and just enjoy the sensuality of the pleasure and the touch and the sensation.

And that can be part of, you know, defining for you and making up your own rules on what is normal. You know what that actually reminds me of a story that because sometimes we get so hung up on the genitals and we forget about other areas, there, you know, is social media.

Everybody's got a voice nowadays.

Redefining Sex and Sexual Function

And I don't want to downplay somebody's, you know, bad lot in life, but there are a number of outspoken individuals on social media who've experienced botched surgeries when it comes to the genitals and basically are very angry with the world in blaming this affecting their their sex life.

But what I want to do is reframe that. I mean, not that I'm saying the genitals aren't important, but it's not the only thing because our brains are our most important sex organ.

And guess what? You can't have an orgasm if you don't have a brain. Now, that also doesn't mean if you're not orgasming that you don't have a brain like like I'm not.

That's bad math, but it just means that we have unlocked your brain to be able. Everybody's brain has the ability to orgasm and it has the ability to orgasm without genital genital contact.

You know, there are so many different areas of the body that can induce an orgasm. I mean, there's also studies showing that people who are paraplegic, like they have no feeling, they have no movement from the waist down, from the neck down.

They are still capable of orgasm because they have a brain. So we have to also get away from the focusing so heavily on the genital because that can really affect people's sense of identity, especially when we're dealing with men with erectile dysfunction or women who've had, you know, surgeries or genital immune relations or whatever, like, and this sense of loss and like, Oh, there goes my sex life.

Now that just changes your sex life. Then we're going to figure out a different way to now still get you a great orgasm in sex life, but not in the traditional way that you thought of before.

It just gives you more ways to pivot and use your imagination again. Yeah, that's so great. I think that's I'm really glad you brought that up. And I know we're supposed to keep this one kind of short, so I'm thinking I'll leave a last thought and let you leave a last thought, and we'll wrap up our what is normal conversation.

So my last thought here really is I just really hope everybody is going into this summit with kind of the intention of defining and maybe redefining with your partner if you have one.

What a healthy sexual life and sex the function sexual function is for you. And the cool thing about this information is how individualized this is, right?

Like we started this conversation like, you know, maybe a healthy sex life and maybe what your relationship needs is once or twice a day, maybe it's once or twice a year, but you get to make your own rules.

And we're just here to really help guide you into defining your own normal for your health, your life and your relationship. So that's what I want to leave us with from this conversation.

How about you? Oh, my goodness. I think that's so well said. I think that this is just funny. Like, I think we share a brain sometimes because I agree.

I mean, this is your life. You're the one in control. You're the one with the power. You get to define what is normal and what's not. And that's some stupid magazine at the supermarket, not some, you know, TV show.

Nothing you see on social media. It's what is your what is normal for you and what feels good for you. And that's where we need to figure things out and that's where you need to be.

And guess what? I think you've already made that amazing step forward just by being here. So I'm looking forward to where you are at the end of this summit.

So yes. Yes. Stay tuned and will check back later. And thank you so much, Dr. Betsy. Thanks you so much for this conversation. Thank you, everybody, for listening.

And stay tuned for more fun conversations coming up next.