

Cultivating sexual compatibility

Guests: Celeste Hirschman and Dr. Danielle Harel

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Meagen Gibson - [00:00:09]

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, co-host of the Relationship Super Conference.

Today I'm speaking with Dr. Danielle Harel and Celeste Hirschman, founders of the Somatica Institute for Sex and Relationship Coaching.

Through their coaching and coaches trainings they've helped countless individuals and couples create deeply fulfilling and sustainable emotional and erotic connections.

They're the authors of three books, *Coming Together*, *Making Love Real* and *Cockfidence*.

Celeste and Danielle, thank you so much for being with us today.

Celeste Hirschman

Thank you for having us.

Dr. Danielle Harel

We're excited to be here.

Meagen Gibson

So people come into your offices all the time wanting a better sex life, but don't really know how to even start talking about it. So how do you start that conversation?

Celeste Hirschman

I think we really start, first of all, with having people much more generically understand themselves as erotic beings.

So instead of saying, I want this from you or I want that from you or even starting to complain so much, because I think that's what happens a lot in these initial conversations is like, you did this, and I don't like when you do that and stuff like that. We try to help them get a better sense of their more personal individual desires. Even not thinking about their partner. But if they could just have their perfect fantasy erotic experience, what would that be?

And help get them grounded in what they really do want, as opposed to what they're frustrated with and upset about and having their partner be there and fully like witness and love and feel the intimacy of somebody sharing that depth of their deepest desires, which is a very vulnerable thing to do.

So we try to get it to a place where they can do that without judgment from their partner and with some celebration and excitement about this intimate sharing.

Dr. Danielle Harel - [00:01:55]

And we also try to help the partner see that it's not personal against them, because when you start to share your own story and your desires, it starts to be about your desires, and we constantly help their partner to see that it's not against them. In some ways, it has nothing to do with them, it's just my own desires. And then it allows people to get out of this, you know, like seeing their individuality instead of taking it so personally.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah because so much of what we do in relationship is create these stories that have to do with two people interacting. And so to remember and be reminded that you are an individual and that you have individual needs and desires and maybe expectations and just ground in that and let the other person hear that, maybe for the first time, I imagine.

Celeste Hirschman

Yeah definitely. It's surprising how little people talk specifically about what they really want for themselves sexually. They just sort of hope that it's going to happen. All of these fairy tales tell us if somebody loves me, they just know and you fall into bed in cloud of whatever, that whole story. And it's not really very realistic.

Sometimes at the beginning of a relationship it feels like that because there's a lot of hormones and excitement going on but later on there definitely needs to be more communication.

Dr. Danielle Harel

It is wonderful if you think about it. It's horrible on one hand and wonderful at the same time. You think about it, we all go around, out here people go and think that there's a secret code, like there's something that's supposed to happen in sex, but no one actually knows what it is. So everyone thinks that whatever they envision is the right version of what's supposed to happen until they meet someone else and then they see that's not automatically going to happen. And so then a requirement for communication happens.

And that's something that sometimes people get really upset that they need to communicate about sex instead of it just happening or being this magical thing that they were told was supposed to happen.

Meagen Gibson

And what is that about? Would you say more about that? People getting upset about having to communicate their needs? Let's unpack that just a little bit.

Dr. Danielle Harel

I feel like if you look at romantic movies, if you look at almost any movie that has any kind of sexual scenes or any kind of seduction going on, it's very highly marketed as one way of things supposed to happen. The details around the romantic part, you need to order a restaurant and you need to bring flowers, but there's not much room for variety. Or definitely there's no details about sex. You only see desire because of desire you're somehow pinned against a wall somewhere and then you're pushed into a room and then usually, now I notice that the guy takes the shirt off first, then maybe the woman takes off the shirt next but usually she stays with a bra. All kinds of ideas of how sex is supposed to happen.

And actually, no one knows. If you never had sex before and never had this experience, you would not know. So people are having this idea that that's how sex is supposed to happen. And then it's not how sex actually happens. There's breaks and there's stops and people don't always push each other against the wall. And what if you don't, what are you doing in bed? If you just take your clothes off and get in bed, what do you do then? Like, how do you start?

Meagen Gibson - [00:05:42]

Right, it's just one social, cultural normalization of this one type of and aspect of sex and it sure doesn't show the life of parents who are trying to be quiet at the perfect time when their children are distracted. And it's just, you know, that's just not what it looks like realistically long-term.

And even something as simple as, I was talking with a friend the other day about the difference between hard touch and soft touch and being able to communicate that to your partner. And how we all just go around touching each other how we want to be touched instead of actually communicating or asking the other person, how do you want to be touched? Just as simple as like, I don't like to be lightly stroked. I want to be touched in a firm way.

Celeste Hirschman

Yeah and I've taught so many men feather touch, and then they come back to me and they're like, it's like crack. It's like suddenly this woman is melting in my hands and I had no idea because it's like learning how to touch really, really lightly. Some people like that, some people like more grabbing and holding touch, but I've heard a lot of success stories about learning how to do this very light, seductive touch across the arms and the back of the neck. So it's really, really helpful to learn those specifics.

Meagen Gibson

So, what does it mean to be sexually compatible?

Celeste Hirschman

Yeah. I mean, I think so many people fall in love, and I think that actually, well, I don't think anybody's perfectly sexually compatible in the sense that everything that the person actually wanted in every moment is exactly what the other person did. And it was like nobody had to say a word, and they both have the same fantasy going through their mind.

So there's a discrepancy in any relationship in terms of what they actually want. And sometimes it's very minimal so no problem. They both have really similar ideas. I think this is actually a smaller percentage of folks, though.

And then most people, I think, have a pretty good disparity in what they would actually want if it was just completely up to them how sex goes. And I think when you start to talk more about those specifics, people's eyes open, when you said romantic, I didn't know that you meant that or just something that you would never even imagine your partner wanted.

I had this one woman she's like, you know what I wish my partner would do just, I wish she would just sneak up on me, start wrestling me, and then just suck on my nipples, and then suddenly we're having sex. We don't have to think about it. We don't have to stare deeply into each other's eyes. And her partner feels rejected because she starts her slow energy stuff and the woman's like, ah, this is too much intimacy, too fast. You're in my face, let's wrestle.

So just to start to have those conversations can create much more understanding and create more compatibility because it's like, whether you try to find something that merges them or whether you do some turn taking, it's just you have a much better idea of what your partner wants. So compatibility can be increased.

Meagen Gibson - [00:08:53]

And just to reflect on what you said too, we can get in routines and ruts as well. And just because you express a need or desire doesn't mean that that is the only need or desire that you have or the only way that you want to have sex or the only way you want to be intimate. It's just saying, here's the full picture.

And I think maybe if you could talk about that a little bit too, is that what we have portrayed in the movies is one thing, but it also conveys this level of psychic ability that we're all just going to discern what our partners want and need. And it really minimizes how we just change. For me, what I would want at 9am is going to be different from what I want at 3pm, which is going to be different than what I want at 9pm. Maybe I'm just a little extra.

Dr. Danielle Harel

No, but I think that's exactly, did you see what you said? Maybe I'm a little extra. But I think that's the feeling that people come out with because my desire changed. My desires change exactly like yours. If you ask me at 8am or 3pm or at 11, it's all going to look very different, in terms of how much seduction I need and how on board I am. If I had sex yesterday, do I want the same thing today? It's not always going to look exactly the same.

But I think people start to make like, oh, I'm too much. I'm too complicated. And then because it's not simple, the same way that you wouldn't want to eat the same meal. You have breakfast, lunch and dinner, and they're kind of different.

Meagen Gibson

Right. Exactly.

Dr. Danielle Harel

And sometimes you do want to have dinner for breakfast or stuff like that. But this conversation is really important.

And what we help people do is also find what is the, you had a magic feeling that you wanted to have. Well, for me, magic clearly isn't something I want to have. You wanted to have some sort of feeling that you wanted to feel that becomes this common denominator. This is the main thing that you would want to go to again again again, but you want to have all kinds of variations to the theme, and then all kinds of variations to the way that you would want to be touched in different ways at different times of the day. But usually people want to go to some sort of a feeling. We call it core desires. And this is the feeling that people want to continuously or feel again and again and again during sex. It's not one feeling, it's like a batch of feelings.

So when we help people extract that and really understand it, it's much easier to communicate the variations of the theme later on.

Meagen Gibson

If you wouldn't mind, if you could expand on what some of those core desires might be, for example. I imagine one of them might be connectivity or safety, but I would love if, I don't want to just make them up, I'd love if you told me.

Celeste Hirschman

There are so many different things that people want to feel. It can be everything from, adored and treasured to punished and teased. So it's like there's just a very wide spectrum.

And I think when you get it, the feeling, when you actually, your partner gives you exactly what you want and you get it it's so transcendent. It's like ah, you go to a whole other level. I've been with my lover this weekend and I got some of that a couple of nights ago, and it was just like I felt so precious and adored and cared for. And it was just like, ah, it's like I get to be a part of myself that I want to feel so much. It's like, oh, there I am when somebody gives it to you in that way.

Dr. Danielle Harel - [00:12:43]

And that's why really it's worth taking your clothes off, seriously. Like, you know sex can be so many things but when you get this feeling, it is so amazing. It does really feel like for me, it feels like, really like coming home into my body, everything feels very merged and connected and very, that is enlightenment for me if you ask me.

Meagen Gibson

Well, and I imagine a lot of the people that you talk to, they're not at the beginning of their relationships, because at the beginning, we have all these endorphins and all these chemicals and all of this that's adding to the fiery or the spark or the connection or exaggerating it because there's so much intensity. So then once things settle down and those chemicals wear off, as they do in every relationship, then you're just left with that like, okay, who are we now, now that that chemical reaction is gone?

And so I imagine that that's a really great way to tune back into that intensity and that feeling and that spark is to just be met, to state a need and be met in that way.

Celeste Hirschman

And honestly, I wish, Meagen, that people would come into our offices as soon as that starts to happen. And also as soon as they start having the little fights, because I think the sooner that you have that conversation the less time you spend getting into really negative vortexes and habits and being misunderstood and thinking that person doesn't really care about you and fighting in ways that doesn't at all help elucidate what needs to happen for sex to get better.

So, yeah, I don't know. I mean, the earlier, the better when things start to get a little friction-y, because if you start putting those vortexes in the right direction and making it much better and deeper sex or emotional intimacy, all of that is part of our sexual connection, too. If we're not emotionally connected often, it's hard for people to feel sexually connected.

So to start to face those patterns right away as soon as those chemicals start going down and then really get excited and creative about the communication piece and how to be playful and how to try new things and how to teach each other things, be willing and open to learn.

I think when people are in more fresh relationships there's a lot more willingness to learn. And when people have been together for a long time, it's like, oh, my God. Now I have to do another thing besides all the other things.

So I try to teach people very quickly what is most important and most of a turn on for me. And I encourage people to try to have that conversation while a lot of the juiciness is still there instead of waiting.

Dr. Danielle Harel

I really feel like, yes, the more you do it at the beginning, the better it is. But there's something also, sometimes you didn't make it, you're married already for 12 years, and you didn't hear this podcast, so it's never too late.

Sometimes it is too late. Some people went too far in terms of resentment and anger, and it's much harder to bring it back to gentleness. But if people are still in this place that they can go and be gentle with each other and see that it's not personal, the less personal you make, it, the more likely you are to see the other person.

It's really a process of curiosity and learning who your partner is and really being able to see them where their most vulnerable place is and then show yourself in the most vulnerable way. It's so amazing. It's really amazing. I have yeah.

Meagen Gibson - [00:16:26]

I love what you said as well, because that curiosity element. I don't know who said it, but there's the old adage that you don't treat anybody worse than you treat your intimate family and partners because that's where we can get the most complacent and sometimes the laziest. Because we have to do all of this work out in the world to just be socially acceptable people. And then when we come home, we're like enough already. I want to just be in the safe place where I can put it on autopilot. And that curiosity and cultivating it over time is so important.

Our needs change, our bodies change, our physiology changes. So of course, our desires, our core desires, our fantasies, those things might change along with those relationships.

Celeste Hirschman

Absolutely. And to keep it fresh and to keep curious. I mean, I think sometimes couples come in and they're mad that their partner isn't the person that they married 20 years ago. And it's like, how did you think that your partner was going to be, stay this static for their entire life? Don't you want there to be growth and change and new experiences and new excitement?

But it can be scary, especially if you find out that your partner's desires are things that you didn't know about early on, you're surprised by, they're not necessarily what turns you on. So we help a lot of people process through those new information cycles.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah and that's such a good point because as much as we would like to believe that we're totally honest with people when we first start dating, I mean, we're putting our best self forward. And it's like an 80/20. We're 80% here I am, and here's what I'm about, and here's what I like, and here's what's important to me. And then, 20%, I don't trust you yet, we're not in a committed relationship so maybe I'm not going to tell you the 20% of the stuff that I'm holding back until I know that you're safe.

And that cue might never come. So you're holding, and then finally, if you're disconnected or resentful, we find ourselves in your office and you're like, alright, let's talk about the 20% that we haven't put on the table ever.

Dr. Danielle Harel

Yeah. And also there's so much that we don't know about ourselves when we are 20 and 30. And if people do personal work and personal growth they do learn more and more things about themselves. And those things going to shape who they are.

And many times when I work with couples, sometimes one person is doing this growth and they're just like, oh, my God, I can be in a much more gentle relationship than I am now. And it's not like, usually when you're young, you take on the defenses that were given to you that you had to adopt in order to survive. And then as you grow and do your personal growth work, you don't have to anymore, and you start to shift and be more gentle. And then you want to have this in a relationship as well. And that also shifts how you're going to present yourself or long for it to be with your partners.

Celeste Hirschman - [00:19:37]

And I think a lot of times that 20% is in the realm of sex, especially if people have sexual desires that aren't as common as others. They're much more likely to not share those early on because of the social stigma and all of the shame around sex. It's like such a vortex of shame that we have around sex, so they might be more likely to hide that part of themselves, especially, and not necessarily feel like it's safe to share that.

Meagen Gibson

Exactly.

Because your partner's bring all of their stuff as well. And I can imagine how hurtful it might feel to present your vulnerabilities, or present your desires that you haven't ever spoken, and because that other person is a fully formed person with their own stuff that they bring, often can't help but react to that information. It's just that knee jerk reaction of like, oh, that's unexpected, that's not in the realm of what I'm comfortable with, and unintentionally I'm going to make you feel rejected.

It's not that I'm moaning that that's uncomfortable for me or I don't share that desire, how can we work through this and re-establish connection and safety? It's that's a turn off to me, or that's unacceptable, or what does that say about you that you want that when all of these things are really just desires, not necessarily actions, right?

Celeste Hirschman

Exactly. And if you can create a safe space for desires, that's what's so important, which is why you also have to create a safe space for boundaries, just as you were saying. The partner has to be able to say, oh, my God, that's a beautiful desire but I don't want to share it. I don't want to take part in it, but there's nothing wrong with it. If you can come with that attitude like, it's okay to have my boundaries, and then you don't have to be so judgmental.

I feel like people become very judgmental because they get scared. They get scared that they're going to have to do something that they don't want to do. They get scared that their partner won't want them because they're not going to do that or something like that. And so working with those fears also is really important to create that safe space.

Meagen Gibson

And it goes back to what you said about emotional maturity and security as an individual first, as we talked about right at the beginning, because if you don't have that piece, I can imagine situations where there would be coercion or manipulation of if you want to stay in relationship with me, this is my desire, and I need you to meet me there. But if both people come with that maturity and agency and can say here's my desire and the other one can say, that's wonderful. I am not interested in that. So how can we both still get our needs met and maintain our safety and security as individuals?

Dr. Danielle Harel

Yeah. And you imagine that that's why many times people seek to work with us because they need this third person to both help them untangle the intensity of this conversation and offer gentleness and offer gentleness, teach them to be gentle with each other as well as teach them normalize desires. Because people do come with a lot of judgment for different desires and especially because they feel pressure that they need to fulfill it.

So we really help navigate this territory, which can be super challenging. And sometimes people are just like, I'm not saying it until I'm meeting with Danielle. I'm not saying I'm coaching you because they want to make sure they have the safe space, they're going to be held and both of them, or whoever comes to the session, is going to be held and supported.

Meagen Gibson - [00:23:13]

Yeah. I can imagine that that container is super important and that that's really why they're there. I need a third neutral party to normalize this and give my partner a place to express their fear around it or their hesitation around it and then help us work back to the middle, which is why we're here in the first place, right?

Celeste Hirschman

Absolutely. I think this is one of the key, as we're training new coaches, we're definitely teaching them this is such a central part, whether individuals are working with them, or couples are working with them, it's really about making sure that people feel accepted and celebrated for their desires. We talk about it all the time. Deshame-yify, normalize emphasize to help them make that safe container.

Meagen Gibson

And we've talked around this, but when people are looking for a partner, how can they bring this knowledge into their dating life?

Celeste Hirschman

I think that's the best place to bring it in. To start early and often with having these conversations. Danielle probably does it on the first date. I don't know. I'm maybe a little bit more nervous maybe to bring it in on the third, fourth, I don't know, I ease it in.

Meagen Gibson

I can imagine, just to name that, I can imagine how intimidating it might be in a dating scenario for somebody to say like, what do you do? And you're like, well, here's what I do. And they're like, oh, okay. You're like, I'm not going to come out to you like a fire hose. Let's gradually, just like, a normal date.

Dr. Danielle Harel

Yeah, I definitely try from the first date to really figure out what people's desires are, because I think that for me is going to be like, I check for compatibility really early on because I'm super specific about what turns me on. I really super specific and need to see that there's something going on in there for me to keep going with that.

Celeste Hirschman

Yeah. I think I'm just more like maybe overly flexible acrobatic in my life around being with other people's desires, but Danielle has taught me to be much more clear in what I want, actually. So being her business partner has helped me have way better sex because I do communicate it much earlier and much more often.

Dr. Danielle Harel

Early and often.

Meagen Gibson

I mean, how relieved are you not to be 20 anymore, right?

Dr. Danielle Harel - [00:26:03]

Totally. But also just think about it, so many people in their 40s, 50s, 60s, they don't do that. It's not only about age, you can be as old as you are, but I see people in the 20s start to do that because they learn the lingo and they start and they say, oh, wow, I can start asking for it early in my life, early in dating. And then some people in their 60s or 50s never did it and might never will unless they actually get exposed to the idea that that's an option. It's an option to start asking people about what turns you on. Most people don't do that. It's not common knowledge yet, unfortunately. That's our mission, make it common knowledge.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely.

And I guess what I was saying is I'm glad I'm not my 20s anymore. But just to have, I mean, although I do wish I had the hindsight then that I have now being able to communicate early and often.

And also people come into dating through different circumstances. You don't have to be 20 to be dating. You can be our age or you can have lost a spouse or a partner and be back in the dating world.

I have several couple friends whose marriage did not survive quarantine, and all of them are very happy about that. All parties involved are happy about it. But now they're finding themselves in this brand new world. And some of them that was a point of sexuality discovery as well. So they're exploring completely new territory.

So regardless of your age, as we've already established, it's a wonderful opportunity to really know yourself, know what you want, express it early and often.

So let's talk about what does turn people on and why it turns them on. So we've talked really around desire. But what turns people on and why?

Celeste Hirschman

I mean, that's the most amazing thing about humans. I feel like one of the things I love about my work is that it's endlessly fascinating what turns people on. And I always am hearing new things.

In the training we really talk about romance, passion, dominance and submission, kink, spiritual erotic connection. There's just such a wide variety. And then with each of those sub-categories, there's also sub-categories underneath them. Some people love to be tied up, and other people want to be...

Dr. Danielle Harel

Humiliated.

Celeste Hirschman

Humiliated, under kink, right.

And romance, some people want lots of grand gestures, and other people want certain kinds of touch and looks and whispers in their ear.

So it's like, even if you say, oh, I'm a passionate person that doesn't mean that somebody knows exactly what to offer you.

Meagen Gibson - [00:28:59]

What that means.

Celeste Hirschman

Yeah. Does that mean I want you to throw me down in the woods and make love to me. Or I was like, wait a minute, I'm not ready for public sex, but I do want you to just look at me across a room at a party like you can't wait to get me home. Those are both expressions of passion but really different kinds of expressions.

Meagen Gibson

Yes. So it's the desire and the action having to match up. What is this desire? And what is the action that I would actually desire out of this desire?

Dr. Danielle Harel

It's like really learning a new language. The language of yourself and your partner's language. It's just learning a new language and putting together new sentences and new words in a different way.

We really break it down in the training, what are the feelings that people want to feel? What are the energy that they want to experience around them and coming towards them? And what are the words they want to hear? What are the acts that they want to experience? All those things that are components that people can really build a new picture with all those words and images and sounds too.

Meagen Gibson

Because we stop short so often. I want to feel connected. What does that mean? How do we get there? What is point A to Z on the journey to feeling connected so that I can express my full sexuality and desire with you?

Dr. Danielle Harel

Exactly. That's what it is. What is it? We help people really put all those building blocks together and give it names and be able to share it. And we try to take the attention out of it as much as possible, because again, circling back to the beginning, the more you understand that you are a unique individual with unique desires, the more you're able to not take it personally when your partner doesn't know exactly what it is.

And also your partner can stay not frustrated by trying to meet that need, because there will be a lot of learning. There's a learning curve in learning that, both for partner and yourself. Even if you have an idea of what you want there's an involvement that happens over time. I know what turns me on now way more than I knew 10 years ago when we started to develop this idea, in much more preciseness than I used to.

Meagen Gibson

And I think as human beings were just predispositioned to try something once and if it doesn't work beautifully then we give up. Well, I tried it. What I hear you guys saying is that it's going to take time and effort on both people's parts to express that desire all the way through the A to Z and then be like, actually, turns out that wasn't quite right. We need to maybe modify, adjust. What I thought I wanted is maybe just a step too far. Maybe I need to reel it back in a little bit. There might be some trial and error.

Celeste Hirschman - [00:32:12]

I think it's so important, and we definitely tell couples to think about it as workshopping. Not necessarily like having sex, but let's take some time and learn each other and have it be a little bit more communicative. Or maybe if they don't want to do it during sex, then they talk about it beforehand. They have sex and then they have feedback afterwards where they can say honestly, this felt so good to me, but this was a little bit rough or this was a little too gentle. That they want something more or something a little bit less, and to be able to have that learning curve happen over time.

Because nobody learns how to dance perfectly with someone else. It takes years to do a good choreography with someone else if you think about dancing. So why don't we think about sex like that? Like, how do you choreograph this amazing erotic connection over time with someone?

And I think you really have to be dedicated to it. If you just put sex on the back burner and think, oh, I hope it's gonna happen, but I'm really too busy. It's gonna go away. I don't see how it doesn't, honestly, especially if you have kids and you each have your own jobs and you're working all the time.

So I feel like unless you say we're committed to our erotic connection and we're willing to learn and grow and communicate around it, I think it's much more often than it goes away then it stays. And I think that's something that we don't realize in our society. We look around and think, oh, everybody else is probably having sex but me. But in long-term relationships I think it goes away more often than it stays unless people are really dedicated to it.

Meagen Gibson

While you were talking, what I was thinking is that I wish everybody, when quarantine started, had paid less attention to their sourdough starter and had paid more attention to their romantic relationships. Had we had less of that and more of this.

So when it comes to sexual compatibility, what is it? What isn't it?

Dr. Danielle Harel

I feel like, how do we say it in a way that's going to be the most precise because it's so complicated. That's what it is, right.

My experience with sexual compatibility is that some people really naturally, as I said earlier, very naturally are compatible. And that means that one person's movie and emotions work well or they match. They're not the same.

Usually it's not a great idea if they're the same because then two people want the same thing, and the other person doesn't want to give it to them because they want to receive the same thing. That would be like a puzzle, like they need to fit together.

So one person's desires are working well or matching the other person's desires, and they're compatible. For example, if someone gets pleasure from giving someone, I'm gonna make it personal. If my lover gets pleasure from giving me pleasure and my core desire is to be delighted in and to feel like he's really enjoying touching me. And he's really getting his turn on just because he sees my turn on, that's compatibility. Okay. That's what compatibility looks like. That's what it looks like in my life.

Celeste Hirschman

And I think it can be as simple as two people both really wanting to be desired. And then one of them, they're both waiting for the other one to make the move so that they can feel desired and nobody's making the move. And they're both resentful. But you don't even want me. They both actually want

each other but the proof of being wanted comes from the initiation, and neither one of them wants to initiate.

Where if it's compatibility, one person really wants to be desired and the other person really wants to go after them. That's a very compatible connection.

Meagen Gibson - [00:36:10]

And that can change over time. Something that happens at the beginning of the relationship, as far as that dynamic goes, can change. And I'm thinking of heterosexual relationships. The initiating partner might be the woman, and then they go through pregnancy and childbirth and child rearing, and then all of a sudden they're like, I want no one to touch me, everybody's been touching me all day.

That polarity might shift or might change, or those desires might change, or their ability to receive might change over time, which actually brings up something that I wanted to ask about, which is once people, is there ever a situation where people are talking through this, they get to know their individual needs and desires, they've expressed them and then once they start receiving them, they have trouble actually receiving and accepting that gift and the fullness of that experience.

Celeste Hirschman

I think it's so amazing that you say that because I actually just had that experience this morning where I was getting exactly what I wanted, and I was like, it's strange to even say it, but it's almost like I was a little bit nauseated. Not in like something's wrong with this, but, oh, my God, my system is so overwhelmed by how amazing this is. It doesn't even actually know how to process it. And I was just like, okay, breathe through it Celeste. See if you can take this into your body, because here it is, you're just complaining that it wasn't there. Here it is. Take it in.

But it took me a minute to breathe into it and really accept it because it's such a proof of love. And there's always, I think so many people have a fear that they're not actually loved or they're not actually desirable. That when that proof actually comes, it's hard to take it in, and you sometimes have to learn how to receive.

Dr. Danielle Harel

Yeah, I see it a lot also around body image. When one partner is just like, really doesn't like, one person doesn't like their body, and their partner really likes their body. And they keep telling them, oh, my God, I just love this. Look at this belly it's so gorgeous. And this person is like ew, but their longing is to get this love and acceptance. But they're going to be rejecting it because the inner conversation is not ready for it as much.

Meagen Gibson

Loosening up the, like you said it's like, notice the edge and breathe through it. And just get curious about that, not rejection in yourself, but your inability to hold the fullness of what you asked for and what you deeply wanted.

Just initiating the first time or trying to give your partner what they want the first time might not work beautifully. It might work beautifully. And you also have to just do some work and be gentle around your acceptance and receipt of that.

Celeste Hirschman

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Meagen Gibson - [00:39:15]

Maybe we all encounter this problem.

Dr. Danielle Harel

It's also like, what a beautiful gift it can be to actually be able to work on those edges with your lovers. It's just amazing. If you're growing edges to receive more love and trust love, what an amazing place it can be. Then do it with someone who really offers that to you. And be willing to stay there with you with gentleness.

And same with body image if you don't like yourself and your partner's just like, oh, my God, you're so gorgeous and you can let yourself take it in, eventually it'll work, it might take years though.

Meagen Gibson

I have a very unscientific personal belief that it doesn't matter what, because everybody's got something about their physical appearance that they've got to hang up about, everybody. It could be your ears, it could be your knuckles, it doesn't matter. They're all irrational, right.

But whatever it is, that is your favorite part for the partner, the partner's like, that is my favorite part of you. And you're like, why? But that's just my personal torture. So working through it, breathing through it, accepting the love of the part you don't like.

So I know everybody that watches is going to want to work with you two now. So how can people do that? How can they find out more about you?

Celeste Hirschman

I think there's two things. One, some people might actually want to do this work and be coaches. And we actually train coaches. And we also have a training where people can, for personal growth, come in and get totally immersed in all of this information.

So if you go to somaticainstitute.com you can find out about the training. And on that website, there's also 'find a sex coach near me'. We've trained amazing coaches all over the country and all over the world, and we're encouraging people to work with them. We're not taking a lot of new clients right now, but they are amazing, and they understand all of these things that we've been talking about, and they're helping people every single day. So that's been wonderful to see.

Meagen Gibson

And we actually have several of your trained coaches in the Relationship Conference. And we happened upon that from we were talking to people, and I said, oh, you know Somatica. You know Celeste and Danielle. Of course that's why you're so great at what you do. So I contest to several of them. Your work is in the world for sure.

Celeste and Danielle thank you so much for being with us today.

Celeste Hirschman

Thank you so much for having us. It was a great conversation Meagen.

Dr. Danielle Harel

Thank you Meagen. It was delightful.