

# Creating Lasting Sexual Connections with Emily Nagoski

[00:00:00] **Emily Nagoski:** the couples who sustain a strong sexual connection over the long term are the people who reject all of the cultural scripts and narratives and rules and regulations about who they're supposed to be as sexual people and how they're supposed to live in their bodies and they pull the weeds, they eliminate all that stuff from their brains in order to create space for who they truly are as sexual people, themselves as individuals and their partner as an individual and the pair of them as a couple

[00:00:39] **Jill Stoddard:** That was Emily Nagoski on Psychologists Off the Clock. We are four experts in psychology here to bring you cutting edge and science based ideas from psychology to help you flourish in your relationships, work, and health.

[00:01:01] **Debbie Sorensen:** I'm Dr. Debbie Sorensen, a clinical psychologist practicing in Mile High, Denver, Colorado, and author of Act for Burnout, Act Daily Journal, and the Act Daily Card Deck.

[00:01:11] **Emily Edlynn:** From America's Heartland, I'm Dr. Emily Edlynn a clinical psychologist based in Chicago, Illinois, and author of Autonomy Supportive Parenting.

[00:01:19] **Michael Herold:** Calling in from Vienna, Austria. I'm Michael Herold, ACT coach, confidence trainer, and author of an upcoming book on being a better conversationalist and making friends.

[00:01:28] **Jill Stoddard:** And from coastal New England, I'm Dr. Jill Stoddard, author of Be Mighty, The Big Book of Act Metaphors, and Impostor No More.

[00:01:35] **Emily Edlynn:** We hope you take what you learned here to build a rich and meaningful life.

[00:01:38] **Michael Herold:** Thank you for listening to Psychologists Off The Clock.

[00:01:47] **Jill Stoddard:** Hey listeners, I'm going to start this episode with a quick warning that our topic today is going to be about long lasting sexual connections. So if you typically listen to the podcast in the car with your kids,

this might be one that you want to wait until it's adults only. So I'm here to introduce today's episode with Emily Nagoski, with Emily Edlyn.

Emily, what did you think of this episode?

[00:02:13] **Emily Edlynn:** Oh my gosh, Jill, I can't stop thinking about it and I have so much to say about it. I have to start with how it started, which was you in tears, which made me a little nervous about what was coming. You had so much raw emotion from your response to the book and talking to Emily. And then I will tell you.

The first four minutes of the interview had me on the edge of my seat. I was like, I cannot wait to hear the rest of this. This is so important. And when she talked about what most of us believe are the secrets to long term sexual satisfaction, and that they are myths, I mean, she just nailed it. And I will admit when you asked me to do this intro for this episode about sex, I was a little nervous because I'm not one that is super open.

And. talking about sex all the time publicly at all. That's just not what I do. And when I was listening to this episode, I thought, okay, this is not like some dirty, raunchy. I mean, this is again, like some myths, right? Wrapped into this. This is really for anyone who has or wants to have a long lasting sexual relationship and connection.

Well, and I

[00:03:37] **Jill Stoddard:** Well, and your reaction to it just says so much about the messages that we do get culturally in terms of sex being a secret or a taboo or something we're all just supposed to know how to do and do it without ever talking to. Anyone about it or else it's considered dirty or raunchy or some of these kinds of words and yet it is literally a basic human need and something we really should be talking about so much more openly and that's a lot of what Emily and I discussed is really the importance of communicating with your partner and how to do that.

[00:04:23] **Emily Edlynn:** The cultural messages around sexual satisfaction. I had completely internalized those on such an unconscious level. And I think listeners who will get through this interview will really feel validated and the most normal you've ever felt about yourself as a sexual being.

[00:04:45] **Jill Stoddard:** Which is why the interview started with me in tears. It wasn't because I was like sad and upset. They were tears of relief, I guess, of

that, like, thank you for writing something that made me feel unbroken. And her first book that's called *Come As You Are*, this one is called *Come Together*. Um, you know, I remember having the exact same response when I read that book several years ago.

And she is just very gifted at. Educating using science and facts and simultaneously making you feel really normal and validated and just, you know, to get a whole new understanding of yourself, your body, your relationship. She's wonderful. I'm a, I am a huge. And I will say going back to the cultural messages, one thing we did not talk about, because this wasn't really the episode for that and we didn't have enough time for all the things I'm gonna talk about, but we didn't talk at all about, you know, kids or parenting or anything.

But one thing that I've noticed to your point about the messages is my kids are only in.

And I already hear them making jokes about penis size, or, you know what I mean, like things that at such a young age, you can tell this is what the kids are already joking about, the things they think are important. And to my knowledge, you know, they have not yet been exposed to porn. I'm sure they will be at some point, but, you know, even just from watching like the Simpsons.

Or things like that. And, and so it, these messages are pervasive and. They get internalized at such a young age. So of course we are all in this place where we've internalized them many times, I think, without even realizing it.

[00:06:31] **Emily Edlynn:** And what I loved is how You all took that a step further to when things aren't going well, or how we would like them to go in our sexual connection, how we often blame ourselves, and that is because of these internalized cultural messages, when really, there are all these external factors going on reducing The arousal or I forget what she said.

What was the term?

[00:07:00] **Jill Stoddard:** Yeah. She talks about what presses your accelerators and what presses your brakes and learning how to shift your context to make it more likely that you and your partner can both have sex you enjoy, which is. You know, the whole point is not what television says is enjoyable sex, what you and your partner decide is enjoyable sex.

And that is a very wide ranging definition of what is pleasurable for different people.

[00:07:30] **Emily Edlynn:** right and this whole idea I loved about allow the desire to emerge by putting ourselves in Conditions but not expecting ourselves to have desire all the time is another just freeing liberating Relaxing way to think about our relationships.

[00:07:51] **Jill Stoddard:** We get the rules and messages that only spontaneous desire counts when the greater reality, given all of the factors that maybe press our brakes and make us feel not entirely sexy, that it's really responsive desire. And more importantly than that is pleasure is more important than desire.

We get into all of that. And not only is this book educational, it really is a how to for, um, really improving the quality of your long lasting sexual connection. And I love, she kind of, um, I said something about the nature of long term relationships. And if you listen to the end, she kind of gives this mind blowing reframe that really kind of stopped me in my tracks. It was a beautiful way to , end the interview and like you said, I think this interview is for anyone who is, in, has, or wants to have a sexual relationship. A long term sexual relationship.

[00:08:49] **Emily Edlynn:** And I would add really quickly that it really was paradigm shifting. So I think this is one of those interviews that will change a hugely held view you have most likely. And that is just the best feeling. So

nice job,

[00:09:08] **Jill Stoddard:** That's why we do this! Yay! Well, we hope that all of you listeners have your paradigms shifted in much the same way that Emily and I did.

Hey listeners, it's Jill here, and boy do I have a treat for you today. I am talking with the one and only sexpert, Emily Nagoski. Emily Nagoski is the award winning author of the New York Times bestselling book, Come As You Are, and the Come As You Are workbook, and co author with her sister Amelia, Of New York times, bestseller burnout, the secret to unlocking the stress cycle.

She is here today to talk to us about her new book, come together, the science and art of creating lasting sexual connections. Emily earned an MS in counseling and a PhD in health behavior, both from Indiana university with clinical and research training at the Kinsey Institute. Now she combines sex education and stress education to teach women to live with confidence and joy inside their bodies.

She lives in Massachusetts with two dogs, a cat, and a cartoonist. Emily, welcome to Psychologists Off the Clock.

[00:10:19] **Emily Nagoski:** Hello, it is so thrilling to be here.

[00:10:21] **Jill Stoddard:** I'm so glad to have you here. We have been talking amongst us, uh, co hosts for a while about wanting to do an, an episode on this topic. And of course, your name was the name that came to mind, so I was very excited when we were able to get you on.

And I have to say. Oh, I might get choked up sharing this with you. And this probably happens to you a lot. I am getting choked up, loved this book. And I was sitting next to my husband as I was finishing it. And I just, I shut the book and I said, Oh, it was so good. And I started to cry. Like I'm crying right now.

And I think I, I shocked him and maybe even scared him a little bit. You know, the poor, the look on my poor husband's face, like, Oh my God, why is a book about sex making my wife cry? And I said to him, I just feel so validated and anything that makes me feel seen and normal makes me cry. And he said, yeah, I know. The exact feeling when I read *Come As You Are*, your first book. And so I just wanted to start the interview by saying thank you. Thank you for writing something that truly makes it feel like nearly all the things are normal, you know, that we're not broken. And I think there's so much healing in that alone.

And I bet that you hear that a lot.

[00:11:37] **Emily Nagoski:** you're the first person to cry because of *Come Together*, as I know. I mean, apart from like, people I actually know in my day to day life. So it's truly, I, it feels a little sick and wrong to be like, truly, it's so great. To see you cry, but like to know

[00:11:56] **Jill Stoddard:** therapist and that's how I feel whenever my clients

[00:11:59] **Emily Nagoski:** you. You're like, yes, right? Like, I did it. Like I reached the place inside you that I was aiming for. Hopefully you felt validated and normal. And also like, if you're ever having struggles, you've got a tool that you can try so you feel empowered to create the sort of sexual connection that you want for yourself.

[00:12:21] **Jill Stoddard:** yes. And that's the other word empowered that comes to mind is, you know, this really feels like a way forward for people who just

know they're not in the place they want to be and need some guidance for how to start moving in that direction. And. This is a thick book. There is so much valuable information in this book.

I mean, I think we'd need a whole day to get through it all. So I really recommend people pick this one up and buy it. Um, you know, I read all the books when I interview people for the podcast, but admittedly, I don't all, I know, I know. I, I, you can tell as an interviewee, I can tell when someone has read or not read my books, but I will admit, I don't always get through like the last Two chapters, sometimes two chapters, and this one I read straight to the last page and it is not a short book.

So I truly, I mean it when I tell listeners, pick this one up. Um, let's start at the beginning. So I really loved that you started both the intro and chapter one. And I thought, I bet she kind of repeats this in chapter one because so many people skip the intro.

[00:13:23] **Emily Nagoski:** People don't read the introduction.

[00:13:24] **Jill Stoddard:** they, right? They don't read the introduction.

So you're like, shoot, I can't say all the important stuff in the intro. And so you start by naming many of the things we might think matter about having a satisfying sex life, but actually don't. So can you share just a few of those and then tell us what are the three main characteristics you've found of partners who do sustain satisfying long term sexual connections?

[00:13:50] **Emily Nagoski:** So, the main thing people think it is is frequency. People think it is having sex often, whatever their definition of often is. Uh, the next thing they think it is, is desire, horniness, spontaneous, out of the blue, craving for sex. Uh, the third thing people think it is, is novelty or adventure or trying new things or doing things that are beyond their sort of standard understanding of quote unquote normal sex.

And Any of those things can be fine, but none of the things on that list are the things that are associated with the couples who truly do sustain a strong sexual connection in the long term. Um,

[00:14:34] **Jill Stoddard:** And let me jump in here too real quick and say, you are a science nerd. Like this is not just based on you seeing couples in therapy. This is based in science that has looked at what matters to sustaining long lasting sexual connections and what doesn't.

[00:14:50] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah, where I got the answer is, so, the origin story of the book is that, uh, writing *Come As You Are*, my first book, uh, was so stressful that even though I was thinking and reading and writing and talking about sex all day, every day, I had Zero interest in actually having any sex with my husband. Uh, and then I went on book tour, and that was so stressful that I would follow my own advice.

So my own advice for lots of people, responsive desire. You allow desire to emerge. So you put your body in the bed, you let your skin touch your partner's skin, and a lot of the times your body's gonna go, Oh! Right. I really like this person. I really like this. This is a great idea. But I would put my body in the bed, let my skin touch my partner's skin, and I would cry and fall asleep.

And I was like, this is not it. So, uh, I did the nerdy thing. I went to Google Scholar. I looked at the peer reviewed research on how couples do this, how they sustain a strong sexual connection over the long term. And the answers I found there were Entirely missing from the broad cultural conversation about sex and long term relationships, which was really like all about frequency and cultivating desire, how to keep the spark alive.

And if I could eliminate one sentence from the English language, it would be keep the spark alive. Because it turns out, okay, so it's pretty simple and yet controversial. Three characteristics of couples who sustain a strong sexual connection. One, they're friends. They have a really strong relationship at the foundation of their sexual connection.

They admire each other and they trust each other. And let me say that a lot of my early readers read the admiration section and felt like, oh, this is too aspirational. To like, you know, hear the garage door open and you know your partner's coming in home and have a little zing of joy inside you, that's too aspirational.

And ah, it was, I felt so sad.

[00:16:57] **Jill Stoddard:** Yeah.

[00:16:57] **Emily Nagoski:** that people felt that that simple baseline, well, I'm really lucky to have this person in my life. How fortunate am I that this person chose me? There must be something remarkably great about me. Cause this person wants to be around me like every day. Wow. Um, But it truly is like a foundational element to having a sexual connection that lasts a long time.

I feel like it's not ultimately controversial that liking the person you have sex with on a regular basis is better than not liking that person. Yea,

[00:17:32] **Jill Stoddard:** sort of common sense.

[00:17:33] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah, and we are all going through something in our lives. Most of the time. And I get that the thing we're going through might be conflict with our relation, with our partner.

And the ability to resolve those conflicts is one of the skills that we need in order to like keep the doorway open into a strong erotic connection. So that's number one. Number two is that these are couples who prioritize sex. They decide that it matters for their connection that they stop all the other things they could be doing.

And God knows there are plenty of other things we could be doing, right? Maybe we have kids to raise. Maybe we have jobs to go to. Maybe we have degrees to finish, puppies to house train, parents who have needs, other friends and family we want to spend time with. Why would we stop doing all those other things and just like put our bodies in the bed and let our skin touch this other person's skin?

It must do something. It must contribute something to our relationship for us to choose to make it matter. And let me clarify that it is 100 percent normal for there to be seasons in any relationship when sex drops off the priority list. And it's, there are absolutely relationships where sex is not important, where it just doesn't contribute something important, and that can be normal too.

People's relationships vary, and people's relationships change across time and seasons. And then the third characteristic is I'm going to be honest, the most difficult one, and that is the couples who sustain a strong sexual connection over the long term are the people who reject all of the cultural scripts and narratives and rules and regulations about who they're supposed to be as sexual people and how they're supposed to live in their bodies and they pull the weeds, they eliminate all that stuff from their brains in order to create space for who they truly are as sexual people, themselves as individuals and their partner as an individual and the pair of them as a couple. Because man, we have been told so many lies starting literally often from before the day we're born, we're being told a specific narrative about who we're supposed to be and what rules we're supposed to follow, who our partner is supposed to be and what rules they're supposed to follow. And all of them are just getting in the way of our access to the kind of deep erotic pleasure our bodies are capable of.



[00:20:04] **Jill Stoddard:** Yeah, absolutely. And there were a lot of those kind of mind blowing moments and in my margins writing, wow, you know, things I think I wasn't even aware of because it's just so ingrained. And so I think we'll get to some of what those messages are. But in what you were just talking about, you brought up a couple terms that I want to define.

You talk about this idea of this, that stupid spark that you, you wish that phrase would go away. And you talked about, I think you used the term responsive desire. So let's talk about that. So you say that low desire is one of the most common reasons couples seek therapy. And part of that is like this message, this brainwashing almost, like we've been brainwashed to believe that spontaneous desire, that spark, that horniness, that that is what matters most, but what you talk about in the book is that what really matters is pleasure when it comes to long term sexual satisfaction. So, let's talk about the difference between desire and pleasure. So first, can you define both spontaneous and responsive desire and then talk about how that's different from pleasure?

[00:21:09] **Emily Nagoski:** Yes. So spontaneous desire is the kind of desire that when I was learning about sexuality, you know, in my teens, the, it was the way that I thought desire was supposed to happen, which is that it happens sort of out of the blue. You have a stray, sexy thought, you see a sexy person. And, um, Erika Moen, the cartoonist who illustrated *Come As You Are*, draws spontaneous desire as a lightning bolt to the genitals.

Just. Kaboom! You just want it. And so you take your kaboom to your partner and fingers crossed, they also have a kaboom. And so if you believe that spontaneous desire is necessary for sex, then you're waiting for some sort of magical moment when both of you remarkably have the kaboom at the same time. Which in some relationships happens often and other relationships will happen almost never. Fortunately, that's just one of the normal ways to experience desire. Uh, the other one is called responsive desire because where spontaneous desire emerges in anticipation of the pleasurable things that happen with sex, responsive desire emerges in response to the pleasurable things that can happen with sex.

So this is the, you know, you Schedule sex, and I know scheduling is not for everyone, but just imagine a world where, uh, you're really busy, and anything that's gonna get done in your life has to go in the calendar, or it's not gonna get done, you know what I mean? So, you put sex matters, and so you put sex in the calendar, and here it is, Saturday at 7pm, you arrange the childcare, you throw the last dishes in the dishwasher, and you set it to run, you, Stomp up the stairs, you start taking off your clothes, you get in the bed, your partner comes in and

they take off their clothes, and you let your skin touch your partner's skin, and you talk to each other in a sweet and affectionate way, and your body goes, oh, oh, this is, this is a good idea.

I'm glad that we did this. This was worth scheduling. It is worth doing this instead of just watching The Queen. The Crown. It's called The

[00:23:11] **Jill Stoddard:** Yeah, the crowd,

the crowd.

[00:23:14] **Emily Nagoski:** even better than watching Only Murders in the Building, right? Like, hooray! I'm so glad we're watching this instead of Star Wars.

[00:23:23] **Jill Stoddard:** And I think, you know, to your point that there are two things going on here. The idea of, oh, scheduling sex, boo, I shouldn't have to schedule sex. We schedule everything else in our lives. And the thought that we shouldn't have to schedule sex, that it somehow doesn't count if we have to schedule it or it's not sexy.

That's one of those rules. Like that's one of those societal roadblocks that gets put in front of us that it may be required to create a context. And I want to talk about kind of creating that context, but I think that's, that's a perfect example that if I'm telling myself I have to have spontaneous desire and it's not okay for me to schedule sex and I have kids and a job and all these other things, guess what?

I'm never going to have sex.

[00:24:05] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah.

[00:24:06] **Jill Stoddard:** So it's like

having to really get past some of those

[00:24:09] **Emily Nagoski:** You have, you have this ruling, this is how you think it's supposed to be. And because you're trying to follow this rule that somebody made up and they convinced you that it was true. And so you're following this rule. And this rule is just like eliminating every opportunity you might have to enjoy sexual pleasure with somebody you care about.

[00:24:29] **Jill Stoddard:** what's

[00:24:29] **Emily Nagoski:** if that rule's not true? What if what matters is that you show up and you only, and like, I get that sometimes, because sometimes when people hear responsive desire, like the, pleasure comes before the desire. You mean I should have sex I don't want? Never, under no circumstances should you have sex you don't want.

What I'm saying is only ever do things you like. So when you show up, whether it is because it was on the calendar or because it's bedtime and you're both there and you're snuggling, follow the pleasure and pleasure. So desire is wanting. It is a longing for something that does not currently exist. In a way, it's a kind of dissatisfaction because it's like something is missing that I would like to pursue.

Pleasure. is enjoying the sensations that are happening in this moment. Noticing the sensations of your body, and being in a state of mind where your brain assesses those sensations as like, Mm, yum, I like this. And that pleasure leads to the motivation of like, I would like to go get a little more of this.

Now, if you've been in a relationship where initiation has been like a tangled knot and there's sort of like a power struggle around initiation. You begin to experience just a little bit of pleasure because you're snuggling. And then maybe like a thing comes in and hits the brakes in your brain because it's like, well, just because I'm experiencing a little bit of pleasure now doesn't mean I want sex now.

It just means I'm enjoying this sensation. So if people are beginners at responsive desire and allowing pleasure to be the leader? Make sure you have an agreement that just because you're doing this pleasurable thing, doesn't mean any other pleasurable thing is guaranteed to happen next. But you follow the pleasure.

Something feels good and it motivates you to lean a little closer. to use a different part of your body to touch your partner or to ask your partner to use a different part of their body or to touch you in a different way or in a different place or say, would it be okay if I touch you in this place?

Or don't talk about it. Not everybody feels comfortable talking about it. That's allowing pleasure to take the lead. And the thing is, when you let pleasure grow, it can go to really big places and I would love us to imagine a world where all of us Only ever has sex that we enjoy. And, I think this is the hard part, we don't even feel bad about not having sex that we don't like.

Because how many people have you talked to who have sex because they feel like they're obliged to? Or just to make their partner happy even though they don't like it? And that's an important second part, like, having sex because it makes your partner happy? Cool, as long as you're also like, This was a good idea.

I was glad to be here, but if you're doing it because you have to, that's a great way to train your brain that sex equals my pleasure doesn't matter. Sex equals drudgery and that will only make it more and more difficult to like or want the sex that you're having.

[00:27:55] **Jill Stoddard:** Absolutely. And you just alluded to the word break, puts the breaks on and you give this incredible metaphor and the metaphor, I think it's even more expanded to come as you are. It's been a while since I read it. But,

[00:28:07] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah, there's a whole chapter in Come

[00:28:08] **Jill Stoddard:** There's a whole chapter, right? And it's an accelerator and brake metaphor.

And like any great metaphor, it's like totally simple, but also kind of mind blowing and life changing at the same time. And so I think what, you know, to your point where you're, where you're saying, we want to create a context where we're having sex we like to be having, and one of the ways, one of the tools that you give us to figure that out is through this accelerator and brake metaphor.

So can you kind of walk the listeners through that and maybe give a few examples?

[00:28:37] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah, my favorite thing is that it's It's not even just a metaphor, it is an actual literal description of the mechanism in your brain that controls sexual response. This is literally how it works, is that there is an accelerator in here, it's called the dual control model. And the dual control model, surprise, has two parts.

And the first part is the sexual accelerator, which notices all the sex related stimulation that's happening. So that includes, yes, all your extra receptive senses, your, everything that you see, hear, smell. touch, and taste that your brain codes as related to sex. It's also everything that you think, believe, or imagine.

All of your fantasies, all your beliefs and ideas about sexuality, and it is all of your internal body sensations that your brain codes as being related to sex. When your brain receives these signals, it sends the turn on signal that a lot of us are familiar with. And it's happening subconsciously all the time, including right now.

Here we are talking about sex in these general terms. That's a tiny little bit of sex related stimulus. So you have a tiny little bit of turn on signal happening. Fortunately, at the same time, there is a second part of the dual control mechanism, which is the brakes. It notices all the good reasons not to be turned on right now.

And it's the same thing. All your extra receptive senses, everything that you see, hear, smell, touch and taste, everything that you think, believe, or imagine, and all of your internal body sensations that your brain codes as potential threats. And that sends the turn off signal. So arousal is necessarily a dual process of turning on the ons, yes, sending sex related stimulation to your brain, and also turning off the offs which is making sure your brain has access to some sex related stimuli, great, and it's the process of turning off the offs, which is getting rid of all those things that your brain codes as a potential threat. And when people are struggling, most mainstream sex advice is about adding stimulation to the accelerator.

Um, Lingerie, and roleplay, and handcuffs, and porn, and toys, and those are great if you like them. Go for it. And, it turns out when people are struggling, sometimes it's because there's not enough stimulation to the accelerator, but much more frequently it's because there's not enough stimulation to the brakes.

Figuring out like you think about some great sex that you've had in your life. If you've ever had great sex, what were the things that were activating your accelerator? What were the sex related stimuli that were really making the engine rev? And what were the things that were not interfering that might have typical stress, very common.

Not everyone finds that stress hits the brakes, but a lot of people do find that stress hits the brakes. Um, body image stuff. Relationship struggles. If you are feeling still frustrated with your partner over some conflict you had that day, probably going to hit the brakes. Um, Trauma history, which is distressingly common for everybody.

And not even necessarily just specifically sexual trauma, but early childhood abuse, neglect. Um, issues. Trauma and abuse and neglect, TNA, is the very silly,

[00:32:02] **Jill Stoddard:** Especially in the sex world.

[00:32:03] **Emily Nagoski:** like, like, yeah, when you, when you talk about these things, I try to bring a degree of lightness because it can get, like, pretty dark and into the serious stuff. But trauma, neglect, and abuse absolutely is the kind of thing that hits the brakes. So when people are struggling, But it doesn't have to be big stuff.

It can also just be simple stuff. Uh, Peggy Kleinplatz in her research on people who experience optimal sexual experiences. Uh, Talk to, uh, an elderly woman who said that the most important accoutrement anyone needs for a great sex life is Vaseline.

You put it on the doorknob so that kids can't turn the handle.

[00:32:45] **Jill Stoddard:** Oh my gosh, that's brilliant, I love it.

[00:32:47] **Emily Nagoski:** Right? It's the, the worry about being interrupted. It's the worry about being overheard. It's literally your feet are cold. These are Easy to fix. It's the

[00:32:56] **Jill Stoddard:** Your dog is whining

outside the

[00:32:58] **Emily Nagoski:** fix. Your dog is whining outside the door. We literally, that is one of the things that we addressed in our own life is like, how do you deal with the dogs?

[00:33:06] **Jill Stoddard:** There is a skit, a Saturday Night Live skit, that is, like, it's basically a sex hut for couples to get away from the dogs who are basically interfering with their sex lives. I'll link to it on our show notes. I can't remember what it's called right now, but I'll link to it in our show notes. I'll send it to you.

You'll love it. It's hysterical. Because it's so true!

[00:33:26] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah. Yeah. Our dogs are not just dogs who want, who will like sit and watch. Our dogs want to be like up on the, like, there's a game where we want to play too.

[00:33:35] **Jill Stoddard:** Right. Ooh, are we wrestling? I want to be involved. So when you were talking about that sex that feels like it's obligatory, that you're just there because you feel like you have to do it for your partner. I think, you know, what's happening there is there are a lot of things that are pushing on the brakes and not enough things that are pushing on the accelerator.

And, and that is why this being able to identify those factors goes such a long way in the beginning of this journey and that the factors can be totally different. Like, you know, my fear of being walked in on might hit my brakes, whereas it could hit somebody else's accelerator, the excitement of being walked in on.

And so really understanding your own accelerator and brake triggers and your partner's accelerator and brake triggers is huge.

[00:34:22] **Emily Nagoski:** And what a great, simple conversation to begin with. Like, it's especially like, it is so warm and supportive to be like, here are the things that activate my accelerator that you know so well because you are really good at making sure these accelerator activating stimuli are present in my life.

Lots of people, I'm sure, are just going to use the phrase, pleasure activating stimuli or. This is. Accelerator activating stimuli, like these are the things that feel good. Like that's a great positive place. And many of the things that hit the brakes have nothing to do with sex or your partner. It's, I was stressed and overwhelmed and exhausted from the kids or work or school or my boss or like the state of the fricking world.

Right. So many of the things that are hitting the brakes are not anyone's fault. It's just that life is complicated, and the way we live our lives is not organized to make it easy for our brains to access pleasure. Like, the world wants us to be very stressed out, and it takes an act of defiance to be like, you know what, no.

I'm gonna decide that sex matters in my relationship, and pleasure matters in my body, and in my connection with this person, and so I am going to deprioritize other things. all that stuff that's hitting my brakes, I'm gonna pick some of those to get rid of. I mean, you can't, like, you can't sell your kids to the circus, right?

Like, you, you can't get rid of your kids, but you can get childcare. You can decide that having that, like, that sense of life. So one of the stories I tell in the book is actually, uh, a woman And her husband and their three kids. Uh, every year they'd go on vacation in the Mediterranean, it's a European family.

And they would rent this same house on the Mediterranean. Uh, this very old house that they would rent. And she and her husband had amazing vacation sex every single year. One year, the usual house was not available, no worries, they rent a different house. Somehow or other, vacation sex. Only just okay. And the beautiful thing they did, they didn't think, well, what's wrong with me, or what's wrong with you, or what's wrong with our relationship.

They went, what went wrong? What was different about this context, this situation? And what they realized is in the house they usually rent, in old Mediterranean houses, the beds are literally built into the wall, which means there is no squeaking or bumping, which means there's no worry about waking up the kids and being interrupted.

And in this other house, they didn't have that. They had the squeaking and the bumping, and that, just that worry was enough to keep the brakes on and make the sex not as amazing as it was. So when they went to build their own house, they built the bed into the wall!

[00:37:19] **Jill Stoddard:** Yeah.

[00:37:20] **Emily Nagoski:** would never think to give that advice, right?

Like, you would never, like, this isn't generic. This is, you need to think about what works for you and your relationship, and it's so liberating because it frees you up from blame and shame, and it's just like, that noise was distracting and it hit my brakes, so let's get rid of the noise.

[00:37:38] **Jill Stoddard:** Yeah. And, and that's that creating a context that allows you to like the sex you're having. And that's what great sex over the longterm is about. And many of those contextual factors that hit the brakes or the accelerator are easy to fix. Not the state of the world, you know, right? Not the stress, but.

Maybe the squeaking of the bed, or the time, or, you know, my husband and I are lucky enough to work from home and I think this will be true for many couples in a post COVID world.



This completely changed our context because we're both home all the time when our children aren't here. Right? And so there are things that in the past felt like they were less controllable in terms of factors that hit, well, let's be honest, my breaks.

And, you know, now a lot of those have lifted because the context has changed.

[00:38:26] **Emily Nagoski:** Yes, you are not the first person that I have talked to who has expressed pretty much exactly that. Our house is currently under construction. So we have to be over at our office all day, even though we are, we both work from home and we don't have kids like any time, but like we have to work for a window of time.

And the time that we have to work is when our house is under construction during the day. And so our context has changed a whole lot, but we know it's temporary. And here's the thing, a lot of the breaks hitting contexts that happen in our lives are temporary. We know that it has an end date. And that means that there's always like, let's wait until this is done and we will negotiate a different way for this to happen with us.

[00:39:10] **Jill Stoddard:** That was another thing I really loved in this book and you gave a few examples, whether it's, you know, after having had a baby or like your personal example of writing the book that, that relationships go through seasons and there will be times where it's just not happening. And this book is about creating long lasting sexual connection.

And when you have a long time, We can be patient. We can know that a lot of these, these things are temporary and not necessarily a reflection on something that's wrong in the relationship.

[00:39:43] **Emily Nagoski:** crews

[00:39:43] **Jill Stoddard:** have two just

[00:39:51] **Emily Nagoski:** crews

[00:39:52] **Jill Stoddard:** I'm going to kind of,

[00:39:53] **Emily Nagoski:** porn

[00:39:54] **Jill Stoddard:** it could be a whole book by itself, no doubt about it, maybe short, We have these like emotional

[00:40:05] **Emily Nagoski:** itself.

[00:40:10] **Jill Stoddard:** to be having sex. So those states are care, curiosity, and play. And then there are emotional states that are further away from that lust space.

And those are panic, grief, fear, and rage. And so the goal is to notice the space you're in and to find ways to move closer to lust through care, curiosity, and play. So, because there's so much there and it felt really important to cover, so I was trying to figure out like, how do we

do this in a Time Time limited way.

So I thought maybe the best way to illustrate might just be if you could walk us through an example and you give a great one in the book of your own example with your partner, or give any other example if you prefer. Does that work?

[00:40:54] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah, absolutely.

An example, I think, is the clearest way to think about it. So, these are You're the basic emotional states of all mammalian brains. It's based on the research of Jaak Panksepp, the father of affective neuroscience. And it was this research that was the breakthrough for me in my situation. Uh, so remember this, I was like, I would get in the bed, I would touch my partner's skin and I would just cry and fall asleep.

What I realized is that when I needed to cry, I was in the fear space. So fear is one of those pleasure adverse spaces. It is very far away from lust. It's, it's the flight of fight or flight. It's a stress response. And I was so stressed out that I was, I was just bouncing against the walls right in that fear space.

Like I couldn't get out. So when I cried, that was one of my body's ways of escaping that, that emotional state. I would complete the stress response cycle, which is both chapter four of come as you are and chapter one of burnout. Like I talk about it. Thank goodness I wrote a book about stress. I know how to get out of that.

fighter flight state, where I'm just stressed and need to run, right? So I cry and I escape that space. Okay, but then where am I? Well, the next thing that happened was I would fall asleep. It turned, I would find myself in what I call in my emotional floor plan, my utility room, which is not an emotional state, but just like my bodily needs, I was exhausted and I needed straight up rest in order

for my body to be well enough to get to any of the spaces that do have a doorway into my lust space.

Now some people, if they are well enough, they can get to their lust space just like that. I'm not one of those people. But play, if I'm well enough, I can get to play. Play is the mammalian motivational system of friendship. play is a behavior you engage in for its own sake, for the fun of it, and there is nothing at stake.

Laughter and jokes are play. Rough and tumble play is play. Object play is play. Story play is play. Object play is one of my favorite examples, especially for sex, um, because So, we see kids engage in this all the time, especially young kids. They'll come across a new object and they'll be like, What is this object?

And they're exploring and they're in the The seeking space of like, what is this thing? And eventually it transitioned into, what can I make this thing do? When kids discover water in the bath and they pound their hand against it, what can I make it do? What if oral sex and manual sex were object play?

What, what is it? What can I make this do? And there's nothing at stake. There's no doing it wrong. It's just exploration. And like, if something accidentally goes a little bit wrong, the person goes out and you go oops, I'm sorry, and you can continue on because no harm was meant because you're playing a game together.

Object play, story play, that state of like joking and laughter, I was taking myself so seriously. I as a sex educator, I should be able to do this. I'm beating myself up all the ways failing. And I had to lighten. Uh, and when I discovered that when I was well en when my body was well enough, could to a

[00:44:25] **Jill Stoddard:** makes

[00:44:26] **Emily Nagoski:** is really e My husband is a cartoonist.

He writes jokes for a living, right?

Like, the

[00:44:32] **Jill Stoddard:** process

sense

[00:44:34] **Emily Nagoski:** And when I go to that play space with  
could

[00:44:38] **Jill Stoddard:** makes

[00:44:38] **Emily Nagoski:** A big wide open doorway into

[00:44:41] **Jill Stoddard:** yes it

[00:44:42] **Emily Nagoski:** from Does like the

[00:44:44] **Jill Stoddard:** process

sense

[00:44:46] **Emily Nagoski:** And

[00:44:46] **Jill Stoddard:** sense. over the outcome. I think we

[00:44:56] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah.

[00:44:58] **Jill Stoddard:** down road. And what these chapters did were really kind of talk about where you are, where you wanna be, and how to think about getting there. What is the path to get there? And it really laid it out in a way that I just hadn't thought about before. And, and the role, that emotion of course, obviously

[00:45:15] **Emily Nagoski:** of course, right? When you think about it. And for me, writing those chapters made me realize, like, of course we don't just spontaneously want sex all the time. We spend so much of our time in the fear space worried about Money, and the kids, and the state of the world. We spend so much time in the rage space, frustrated with our partner about the ways they are not showing up for us.

Enraged at the world for the ways the world does not show up for us. We spend so much time feeling, uh, panic grief is isolation, loneliness. So in addition to writing this book, I also have long COVID and the worst, well, there's a lot of terrible things about long COVID, but for me, the worst thing about it is the ways that it's really isolating to be so fatigued and to have so much pain.

And to like, the only thing I can do is lie still and wait for my energy to recharge itself. And I have this excellent, loving, supportive partner who cannot join me in my pain and my fatigue. And it's just, like, just this past weekend, we were like, It's our day, this afternoon we're gonna have a date night.

And he was about to get in the shower and a migraine hit me.

[00:46:36] **Jill Stoddard:** Oh

[00:46:36] **Emily Nagoski:** And the worst thing about it was how isolated I felt by just being sick.

[00:46:44] **Jill Stoddard:** yeah.

[00:46:46] **Emily Nagoski:** when we can recognize how much our

[00:46:50] **Jill Stoddard:** you too

[00:46:50] **Emily Nagoski:** often our lives and the world

[00:46:55] **Jill Stoddard:** fast There

[00:46:56] **Emily Nagoski:** being able to the emotional states easy to to the lust space, of course,

[00:47:01] **Jill Stoddard:** one of you too

[00:47:03] **Emily Nagoski:** to state

[00:47:04] **Jill Stoddard:** the

[00:47:04] **Emily Nagoski:** And of

course do not spend a

lot of our

time hot

[00:47:07] **Jill Stoddard:** fast There

[00:47:09] **Emily Nagoski:** my tongue

in your

[00:47:11] **Jill Stoddard:** Right.

So I want to ask you about this thing you call the third thing and what the third thing is But I want to talk about it specifically in the context of chapter 11 where you talk a lot about Traditional gender roles. This is the book, uh, the chapter that's about, like, heterosexual

[00:47:24] **Emily Nagoski:** It's the one chapter where I assume the reader is cisgender in a heterosexual type relationship.

[00:47:29] **Jill Stoddard:** right, and otherwise the whole rest of the book is incredibly inclusive of all different types of people and relationships.

[00:47:37] **Emily Nagoski:** But I'm really, I'm really, worried about the straights.

Like

the research is very clear that they are struggling more than people in not straight relationships.

[00:47:47] **Jill Stoddard:** and part of what this chapter is about is really the way patriarchy has, I don't know that you ever use that word, but really it's about like the way patriarchy has kind of ruined our sex lives. And this chapter specifically, in addition to crying after I finished reading it, this chapter made me cry the same way I cried when America Ferrara does her, um, The monologue in the Barbie? movie.

It's literally impossible to be a woman and I'm sobbing. Sobbing, sobbing. And it was the same thing as I was reading this chapter and feeling so seen and just thinking every person of every gender needs to read chapter 11 of this book. And so what it made me think of is the many, many women I know personally, my own clients, friends, family, et cetera.

Who are, you know, working outside of their home, often the primary breadwinner, and yet still carrying the great majority of, you know, domestic and caretaking responsibilities. And so they spend a lot of time in the rage space. Very far from the lust space. And to be honest, I was one of those

women. And, you know, doing everything did not make me want to have sex with my partner who was not doing as much.

And I actually found Eve Rodsky's Fair Play. And we've

had her on the podcast and talked about her many times. And, you know, she has a system for a fair division of responsibility. Um, at home. And this both saved my marriage and my sex life, um, you know, and, and having a husband who shared in those tasks moved me closer to the lust space.

So can you summarize what the third thing means and then how we can use it with this very common example of couples having different responsibilities or gender roles?

[00:49:22] **Emily Nagoski:** take the language of third thing from an essay that Donald Hall wrote about his marriage with fellow poet Jane Kenyon after she died. And he's talking about the subjects toward which couples turn their shared gaze. It is a shared gaze of Interest and fascination and exuberance and ecstasy. It is the things that we are interested in together.

It's the stuff you do when you're not having sex or sleeping or like most of the time in your relationship, what do you even do? Most of what you do is turn your shared attention toward third things. For a lot of couples, it's going to be your kids. Uh, for some couples it's going to be like your sports team that you really love.

It is your favorite artist. It is cooking and culinary stuff. Like, there are so many It is your garden in your backyard. It's your special needs cat. It is your dogs. In my family, it's It's the dogs. And in my family, it's actually like my career and job is a third thing that we turn our attention toward because he helps me with all the parts of it that I am not good at.

[00:50:33] **Jill Stoddard:** Yes, and I got to interact with him a lot behind the scenes and he is lovely. He's doing a very good job of that.

[00:50:39] **Emily Nagoski:** Thank you so much. He's the best. I'm so lucky. I say that, but also I had 15 years of therapy before we met, so I earned him. So I think.

[00:50:51] **Jill Stoddard:** at the right time.

[00:50:52] **Emily Nagoski:** Yes, I think our erotic connections with our partners deserves to be a third thing. It is not just something that, you don't just like, have some sex and then it disappears from your relationship.

It is a subject that you talk about on a regular basis, the way you talk about your kids on a regular basis. Not just when things are going wrong, but because they're fascinating and it's thrilling. You talk about your favorite sports team, not just when things are wrong, but because it's fascinating and thrilling to you.

You talk about the play you're both in together because it is fascinating and thrilling. You don't just go to rehearsal. You talk about it. You run lines together. Is that a very niche example? The play you're both in together

[00:51:38] **Jill Stoddard:** Probably fairly specific, but people will get it.

[00:51:41] **Emily Nagoski:** And for some people it's not a thing, you just barely, like, we feed ourselves. But for some people, like, you talk about the meal planning, and which ingredients to buy, and who's gonna cook on which nights, and which dinner was really great, and what you'd really like to try differently the next time you use this recipe.

It is a third thing toward which you turn your shared attention. It's not sexual desire, it's sexual interest. It's being interested in your sex life and in your partner's internal world as a sexual person and being just, like, thrilled to share your internal world as a sexual person with this person with whom you behave sexually together.

[00:52:22] **Jill Stoddard:** Yeah,

and

[00:52:23] **Emily Nagoski:** thing.

[00:52:24] **Jill Stoddard:** that's the third thing. And when we were talking in the beginning about Uh, the three most important characteristics, one of them is that sex is important to you. One of the things that I realized is when my husband and I were kind of going through a harder time, he assumed it wasn't important to me because I had never said otherwise.

So the fact that we weren't Having a lot of sex or having the sex that we both wanted, or whatever it was, made him assume it just didn't matter to me. That it



mattered to him and it didn't matter to me. And that was just patently false. And it wasn't until we could talk about it as a third thing,

[00:53:00] **Emily Nagoski:** Yes.

[00:53:00] **Jill Stoddard:** and I didn't have that language at the time, of course, but, in reading the book, I went, oh, that's what was happening during that time.

And that just opened up everything. You know, to be able to have that conversation as a third thing that this is something that matters to both of us. How can we create a context where we can make it important in our lives. We feel that it is important. Now, how can we like that talk basically

[00:53:27] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah,

And the hard part is it does mean you have to deprioritize other things.

[00:53:32] **Jill Stoddard:** Right? Yes, absolutely.

[00:53:34] **Emily Nagoski:** And how easy would it be for him to take it personally and to think his assumption that it's not important to you means that he

[00:53:41] **Jill Stoddard:** was a reflection on him. He

did think that.

[00:53:43] **Emily Nagoski:** yeah, right? And like, it's not like, it's not that at all. And that's when it turns into like blame and shame.

But the reverse is also true. I talked to writer Steph Oteri, who like loved *Come As You Are*, loved the idea of responsive desire, but the pandemic destroyed her interest in sex as it did for so very many people, um, and so like sex dropped away from her Relationship with her husband but She finally, like, talked to her husband about it, and it turned out his depression had gotten seriously activated by the constraints of early in the pandemic, and he, too, was like, yeah, I don't, I'm not feeling it either.

So she was beating herself up, thinking her husband was wanting way more sex, and he was like, actually, it's sort of a relief to have it just go away for a while. So

[00:54:32] **Jill Stoddard:** beauty of communication. And, you know, one of the things that I was thinking about as a Therapist, you know, so I have an anxiety clinic. So I run a center in San Diego called the Center for Stress and Anxiety Management. And so as the title says we treat all stress and anxiety conditions.

And so that means we do a lot of exposure therapy, right? You face your fear and as you do that over and over it tends to get easier over time and you learn Oh, this actually isn't all that dangerous. It's uncomfortable, but it's not dangerous. Bad things don't really come of it, and I can handle it. And I was thinking about this model as I was thinking about communicating with your partner about sex.

Yes, it's uncomfortable. You know, many of us have grown up in these, like, in cultures with, like, puritanical roots that tell us we should be ashamed and, you know, all of the, the

[00:55:19] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah. And if you have to talk about it, that automatically means there's something wrong

with you or your partner or your relationship. Having to talk about it equals

problem. Right. Yep. Another one of those rules. That the research is very clear is the opposite of true. Couples with great sex lives talk about it all the

[00:55:35] **Jill Stoddard:** Talk about sex. Yeah, and so, I think if you're willing to be brave and practice willingness to make space for that discomfort knowing these are just feelings and you can handle feelings and I don't say that to be invalidating but that like it's not gonna harm you and If you try, even if it doesn't go well, and you keep trying and keep trying, eventually it will get easier.

And of course there are caveats to that if you have, you're in an environment, or in a partnership that isn't safe or is abusive. I mean, of course there are caveats. But assuming, you know, we're talking about a relationship with a generally good and healthy and safe foundation, even if it's struggling, that just like anything else we're scared to do, if we're willing to do it scared, it gets easier and less scary.

Over time.

[00:56:22] **Emily Nagoski:** And it can be very helpful to have a conversation about the conversation. People ask me all the time, how do I talk to my partner

about X? And like, if you can say X to me, then you are capable of saying those words to your partner. So the question is, what is it that you're afraid will happen if you do?

What is the barrier between you and talking about it? So talk to your partner about that part. Talk to your partner about like, our sexual connection matters to me. I believe that. As good as it is now that there are places we can go together that I want to go and I am worried that if I talk about it you're gonna feel hurt or personally attacked when that is not at all what I mean.

Or I'm worried that I'm gonna confess to a fantasy and you're gonna react with shock and horror and never be able to look at me the same way again. Go ahead and say those things and see if you can work out together a way to create a container for the conversation where if those things come up, you have a plan in place for what to do to make sure you don't hurt each other in the process of trying to deepen your sexual connection.

[00:57:29] **Jill Stoddard:** Yeah. And so much of our fear boils down to a fear of breaking an important bond. And if we can keep that in mind, like this bond matters so much to me, and that's why I'm afraid to have this conversation and also exactly why I must.

[00:57:45] **Emily Nagoski:** Yes, that's, that's the irony, right? When I, one of the beta readers for the book, uh, was a therapist living in the Midwest. And when I wrote that everyone would agree that bodily autonomy and pleasure matter more than like almost like, so like being able to be your true authentic self is absolutely essential and who would trade that for just to be in any relationship?

And she was like, I see lots of clients, mostly women, who would gladly trade their basic bodily autonomy for the security of knowing their partner will never leave them. And that is why they tolerate painful sex day after day, month after month, because they want their partner to feel like He's getting what he needs, and therefore he's going to stay.

People will sacrifice their whole identity on the altar of security, not losing that bond even though that bond is secured at the cost of their own self.

[00:58:56] **Jill Stoddard:** Right, right. And, we hope that there's a context of interdependence. Not strictly independence or dependence,

[00:59:05] **Emily Nagoski:** Right. And it's because They're measuring things based on these external rules of like, wives are supposed to behave this way, and so if I behave this way, and the husband believes that too, wives are supposed to behave this way. Therefore, like, wife is following the rules, and that should be It? When, like, the deeper rule is, what is my internal experience?

Am I enjoying this experience?

[00:59:33] **Jill Stoddard:** so how can we, I want to go back to this third thing question. So when we talk about the, these are the rules for the wife, if we're, if, if we're talking about a heterosexual relationship, these are the rules for the wife, these are the rules for the husband. Um, you know, I I'm feeling very bitter and resentful cause I'm doing everything and, and you're doing nothing.

And this feels like it must change before anyone's going to be able to have sex that they like. So how could people treat that as a third thing to try to get some progress there?

[01:00:01] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah, that's, that's the thing. If you can be like, okay, we were both raised according to sets of rules that told us who we're supposed to be. I got rules that said who I was supposed to be, and I got rules about who you were supposed to be. And you got rules about who you were supposed to be, and rules about who I was supposed to be.

Let's imagine that all of that was optional. We can choose which of those things we want to be true in our relationship and make our relationship our relationship. So you treat, I call it the gender mirage in the book because it is a gentler way to talk about it. And like, if you want to shut people down and get them to stop listening, talk about the patriarchy.

[01:00:45] **Jill Stoddard:** patriarchy, right? Yeah. That's why I said, I don't think you ever said that word in the book. And I had a feeling that was exactly why.

[01:00:51] **Emily Nagoski:** When people hear patriarchy, they think we're saying men,

[01:00:55] **Jill Stoddard:** Right.

[01:00:56] **Emily Nagoski:** and the deal is, the patriarchy, the system, damages everybody. And when it comes to our sexual connections, a lot of us want to

have sex with men. I am married to a man I want to have sex with, and he has been damaged by the patriarchy just like me.

All of us. I want him to heal from the damage done to him by the patriarchy. I don't want to follow somebody else's rules about who we're supposed to be with each other. I want to follow rules that he and I chose for us, because it's what works for us in this season of our lives, given that this season will probably change. When you can treat The structure of the relationship itself as a third thing. It is a joint of sight. It's a site of joint fascination of enrapturement just like curiosity and exploration like I want us to be Exactly the thing that we choose in the same way You want the recipe you cook tonight to be exactly the recipe you choose and you can try following the rules But it turns out like you can't get the ingredient that the recipe said to get So you try something else.

You try a thing that works for you in your situation. that make

[01:02:17] **Jill Stoddard:** And one of, it, it totally makes sense and I think one of the things you say in that particular chapter, and I, I didn't write it down so I'll probably get the quote not exactly right, but it's, it's like, let's know who the actual common enemy is.

I'm not the enemy, you're not the enemy, it's, it is these

[01:02:34] **Emily Nagoski:** This

somebody else's opinion. I know who the somebody else is, but somebody told us that we're supposed to be a particular way with each other. That somebody is not in bed with us.

So what if we decide that their opinion does not matter and we can follow whatever rules are right for us?

that

[01:02:53] **Jill Stoddard:** with

[01:02:53] **Emily Nagoski:** each that somebody

[01:02:55] **Jill Stoddard:** is

enemy

[01:02:57] **Emily Nagoski:** Oh can third thing. Like, it is not

[01:03:03] **Jill Stoddard:** rules

[01:03:03] **Emily Nagoski:** with us and

[01:03:04] **Jill Stoddard:** that there Yeah, big part of fighting that fighting all gender, aside, all of the sex right, that, that are desire about and about all of the other things that really make it

[01:03:23] **Emily Nagoski:** Performance and novelty and variety and

like all the ways you're suppo

Even

like the order of operations of like which thing you're supposed to do before you do the next thing Like whose clothes come off when

[01:03:35] **Jill Stoddard:** yeah

Right Or you take your own Like, are you doing wrong if you're just taking

[01:03:39] **Emily Nagoski:** operations of like

[01:03:42] **Jill Stoddard:** person's and

endless. And when

[01:03:47] **Emily Nagoski:** It's totally how cool to just, like, dump your clothes on the

[01:03:50] **Jill Stoddard:** what is

[01:03:51] **Emily Nagoski:** off jeans.

You know the thing where you step on your to get your pants off?

[01:03:55] **Jill Stoddard:** television

[01:03:57] **Emily Nagoski:** When you take off your clothes, there is no script, you're allowed to do anything you want as long as everyone there is glad to be

[01:04:02] **Jill Stoddard:** what sex is

And stop off television know, regular television and porn tell you what sex is supposed to

[01:04:11] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah, those

entertainment they not And about

floor like stomp

stomp 500, Like those, those drivers learning a about with pit

[01:04:32] **Jill Stoddard:** big

[01:04:33] **Emily Nagoski:** true for

are 500 just

crews

learning

a

[01:04:42] **Jill Stoddard:** Right. one of I realized we're,

[01:04:45] **Emily Nagoski:** state

[01:04:46] **Jill Stoddard:** the

[01:04:46] **Emily Nagoski:** And

[01:04:49] **Jill Stoddard:** so

[01:04:49] **Emily Nagoski:** hot and

heavy

[01:04:52] **Jill Stoddard:** more in this I mean, whole chapter

based on motivational interviewing for creating change.

I loved body image. I mean, all of the things,

[01:05:06] **Emily Nagoski:** Just

a master's degree in public health. You'll be fine.

[01:05:08] **Jill Stoddard:** right. Yeah. You'll know everything. And, and I think too, because we're talking about long lasting sexual connections, there's a lot in there about change and how,

over time and our bodies will change and you know, that so many things will change.

And, you know, I guess if I had to kind of summarize my main takeaway on top of your normal, is normal is we're looking to create a context that increases accelerators decreases breaks to create sex you both want to have, and that so much of creating that context also involves noticing and breaking those incredibly unhelpful societal and cultural rules and to be patient.

You have a lifetime. There's no rush. We go through seasons, changes, and we can roll with those. It's an ongoing process, an ongoing communication. Is there anything, I mean, there's so many more important things, but is there anything that we didn't get to talk about that you feel like, Oh, there's just this one last thing I really wish that I got to say.

And if not, that's totally fine. And I really hope people buy this book. It is incredible. I'm begging my husband to write it, read, not write it, read it. He's, he's not a reader, but he's also a very fast reader, so he can read it in a day or two days. Oh yeah. Maybe

[01:06:25] **Emily Nagoski:** Yeah.

[01:06:25] **Jill Stoddard:** audio book. That's a good idea.

[01:06:26] **Emily Nagoski:** I, I narrate all my audio books, but I'm particularly proud of this one. I will just add, so you said we have decades, um, two weeks before this book was due, a good friend of mine died of cancer. She was right



about my age. She'd been married for about as long as I had. Um, and it is the first time I've ever missed a book deadline

[01:06:46] **Jill Stoddard:** You're right

[01:06:47] **Emily Nagoski:** the book because what I recognize, and I was in the middle of like the stress of writing this book and recovering from long COVID, and I realized that we are not promised a great deal of time together. We are only promised time. And that is what makes being kind to each other in the days that we have. Like, I woke up today and I get this day with this person. And even if we are frustrated as heck, can we find a way to stay kind and gentle and supportive and warm and connected, even if we can't find our way to an erotic space today?

Because The more we can be kind and supportive and build that

[01:07:31] **Jill Stoddard:** love that That is

[01:07:32] **Emily Nagoski:** together the easier it will to get an erotic connection, which isn't there every

[01:07:37] **Jill Stoddard:** conversation

[01:07:38] **Emily Nagoski:** wish, because infinite time, I wish

[01:07:44] **Jill Stoddard:** love that That is

[01:07:45] **Emily Nagoski:** And I can't. there are things I can do every day with my

[01:07:50] **Jill Stoddard:** conversation

[01:07:50] **Emily Nagoski:** wish because infinite more regularly.

could

[01:07:55] **Jill Stoddard:** people And It's an

book Oh I'm getting choked up again. Thank you so much for being here. find they want to get more Emily?

[01:08:11] **Emily Nagoski:** EmilyNagoski.com is the website. It has links to all the socials and links to all the places you can buy the book absolutely anywhere books are sold. Again, I do recommend the audio book for this one. Pretty darn proud of it. Um, and the website. You can sign up for the newsletter, which is the main thing where you'll get, like, I answer people's sex questions.

[01:08:31] **Jill Stoddard:** I love it. That's fantastic. Thank you so, so very much.

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