

The Pervocracy

Sex. Feminism. BDSM. And some very, very naughty words.

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

How To Have Sex On Purpose.



Captain Awkward. Or Sue. I might have gotten my notes switched.

I had an amazing time in Chicago this weekend. Everyone at the University of Chicago was absolutely wonderful to me, and the talk went great; the room was packed, the audience was great, and besides my little monologue, we had a really good discussion about negotiating sex and relationships. And then I got to go to the Field Museum and meet Captain Awkward (the blogger) and Sue (the dinosaur). It was so ridiculously awesome that I'm all out of eloquence and just going "so ridiculously awesome, you guys!"

This is a (rough) transcript of the talk I gave. It's on a separate page because it's quite a bit longer than my usual posts. And that's saying something.

How To Have Sex On Purpose

The first time I had sex, it was by accident. I don't mean I tripped and fell on a dick. But I didn't know I was going to have sex that night, and I don't think my partner did either. Neither of us really knew what we wanted besides "uh... I think we're supposed to touch this part to that part," and all we ended up with was "well, we sure did touch those parts together!" Of course we were young and naive and clumsy and all that, but our real problem was that we were trying to have sex the way you're *supposed* to do it. We didn't know what that meant. I still don't know what the hell it means. But back then we were very concerned with doing it, anyway.

We didn't worry so much about what we *wanted*, as about what was *correct*. Like the official Sex Judgment Committee was going to be there awarding points and making deductions for incorrect sexing. "7.3. You got off to a good start, but we had to deduct for incomplete gender performance and poor showmanship at the climax. But you really stuck the dismount!"

This is how bad it got: I'd watch porn and not jerk off, just so that I could see how Sex Experts did it. These people were professionals, they must be doing it right! I lost about three years of my sex life to that mentality. And you know the only thing worse than trying to have sex like a porn star? Trying to fall in love like a romance novel heroine.

What saved me was that I turned out to be a gigantic fucking pervert. I realized I had some weird-ass fantasies, and read up on them because that's the kind of person I am, I imagine getting chained up by a mysterious stranger and I go "I need to *research* this!" - and I actually spent about a year just reading and lurking online before I did anything in real life. And then I fell in with these kinky and polyamorous crowds and everything changed.

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Suddenly sex wasn't one thing. It wasn't this challenge that you did right or you failed at. It was a big, beautiful, *terrifying* universe of possibilities. It could involve your whole body or nothing but your mind. It could be you by yourself or it could be with a roomful of people. Sometimes it wasn't actually sex at all but it still felt pretty awesome in, y'know, the vagina kind of way. And in the beginning I kind of tumbled through all these types of sex but when I got to know what I liked, I got what I liked, and that was nice. That was really nice. In the vagina kind of way.

And relationships weren't divided into "boyfriend" or "not boyfriend." I learned words like "metamour" (that's your lover's lover, sort of a lover-in-law) and what it means to be in a committed poly relationship versus being in an open relationship and how overlapping bonds of love and sex can build a network of intimacy in a community. I also learned concepts like "hot bi babe" and "unicorn" and "one penis policy" and "AT LEAST WE'RE NOT SWINGERS," because every group's got its problems.

But the things I want to share with you aren't really about having kinky sex or having multiple partners, because, y'know, you're wired for that or you're not. I don't think you can learn it. A lot of people just aren't wired for it and that's okay. What I do want everyone to learn is the philosophies that the people who do these things have developed. When your sex doesn't follow the traditional model to begin with, you have to - well, at least you *should*—put some extra thought into what you're doing, and a lot of really good ideas have come from that. That's what I want to share. Because whether you're into latex Boy Scout Uniforms or not, you can still learn to experience sex as being made of possibilities and choices. Whether you want to have twelve lovers or just the one, you can still learn to *build* relationships instead of just letting them happen.

So. Relationships. Where do we even learn to have relationships? It's funny, we give kids sex ed, there's a lot of problems with that but at least we teach them the basic parts involved - I don't think we've reached the point of "we'll tell you what an ovary is once you're married," - but... raise your hand if your high school had a class on "relationship ed."

[One guy raised his hand. I asked if he'd gone to public school. He went to private school. In Canada.]

So we sorta learn from movies and books, sorta from our friends, maybe from our parents if they have an okay relationship, maybe from our parents if they *don't*, and that doesn't work out well—and we never do get a super coherent idea of what we're supposed to do. But it's all supposed to be very dramatic and torrid and one partner's supposed to be womanly and hard-to-get and the other's supposed to be manly and pushy and you prove your love via sex or money respectively and by being super possessive and then you get married and never have sex again—and despite this being a *very specific* set of circumstances, it's supposed to magically happen all on its own because if you do any of it on purpose then it isn't romantic anymore.

Polyamory throws a lot of that out the window. Again, this isn't really about the "dating multiple people" part, because you can totally do that and still be terrible at relationships (oh my God I have stories), but poly communities, the people who really geek out about polyamory, have gotten really good at normalizing the idea of *deciding* and communicating about what kind of relationship you're going to have. Because you can't just waltz in one day and say to your partner "oh, by the way, this is Susan, she'll be moving in with us, don't worry, you'll still have a spot in the bed on odd-numbered nights." They will have *questions*.

And the answers to those questions are reached by communication and mutual agreement. There's no conventional path-of-least-resistance way to date three people, so you have to work it out among yourselves. Which is, I'm not going to lie, *really painful* if you've soaked up any of the traditional ideas about relationships. The first time I sat down with my boyfriend and his girlfriend and said, "we need to get some clarity about what we want this relationship-thingy to actually be" I was putting my heart down on the table. I mean, less poetically, I felt like I was probably going to barf. But when we started really talking, and we could tell each other what made us feel lonely and what made us feel loved, and then we went out and *did* the loving parts—that was worth it. It was so worth it.

(I know I'm saying "stuff and things" a lot here, and some of it was fuzzy-wuzz like "I need to know I'm important to you," but a lot of it actually turned out to be very down-to-Earth, like "we need to start sharing a Google Calendar" and "you need to spend quality time with me when we're at parties together." I seriously don't know how anyone ever did poly before Google Calendar. If they had a whiteboard or sent carrier pigeons or what.)

The best thing we ever did for our relationship was to schedule these talks every month. Which is a pretty common thing among poly people, and it's great, because it lets you check in when there isn't a crisis. It turns the dreaded "we need to talk" into a routine thing and it stops being scary. We can bring up the little things, or even just say "actually, I'm pretty happy right now," and that's still a talk worth having. I mean, even if it's just that, *damn* that's a load off your shoulders.

The other thing you get from poly is that you can't take anything for granted. There's a lot of people seem to take as just understood in relationships—like, "well, he should have *known* that was wrong." But that only works—well, *never*, actually—but it only *kinda* works when you're both taking your relationship cues directly from the dominant cultural narrative. Once you go off the tracks, even a little bit, even just like being in a long-distance relationship or a relationship that doesn't have conventional gender roles, you've got to set your own ground rules. Which is great, because you don't have the "you *know* what you did" conversations, and scary, because you have to talk about things like jealousy and cheating and having emotional needs.

I really, really recommend every couple or group figure out a working definition of "cheating." For my partner and me, that's having sex without telling each other. He lets me know what he's planning, he can have sex with the starting lineup of the

Quizzical Pussy

Scarleteen

The Dirty Normal

Yes Means Yes

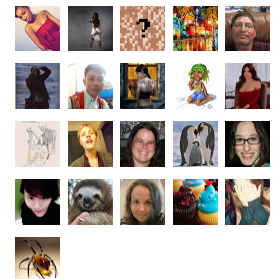
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Green Bay Packers, and I might have *opinions* about that (those opinions might be “fistbump.”) but that fundamental feeling of broken trust that comes with cheating won't be there. Then again, for you, that might be a hard limit. You might be a Bears fan. Or you might feel like your partner kissing another person is too much and gives you that sad feeling in your stomach. Either way, if you both know where the line is—and you have enough fundamental trust that nobody's going to rules-lawyer it with “we said hugging was okay, so I hugged his penis!” - it's a lot easier to avoid accidentally hurting each other and a lot more clear what happened if someone does break that trust.

Jealousy's a thing we talk about a lot in poly. There are some people who genuinely don't seem to feel it, but most of us? We're human, we get jealous. Even if we're monogamous, even if we don't have to process our partners actually having relationships with other people, there's usually *some* way that you have to share their attention that you have some feelings about. Whether it's about friends or work or their hobbies or Christina Hendricks or even just the idea that you could be losing touch with them. Jealousy's not a good thing, it's not like in *Twilight* where “ooh, threatening murder over me is how he shows he really loves me!”, but jealousy is not evil. It's just an emotion, and how you express it makes the difference. Bottling it up until suddenly you're really upset and you get into a big nasty fight: that's bad. Bottling it up *forever* to try to be the Perfect Undemanding Totally Chill Partner and eventually your head explodes: also bad.

So just say it. Just lay your emotions out there on the table so you can work on it together. “I feel lonely (or neglected, or jealous) sometimes when you do X, and I would feel a lot better if you did Y or reassured me about Z.” Like everything you've got to do this in good faith and have some flexibility - you're getting into some real bad-news territory if you ask your partner to never make you jealous about anything ever - but there's a *lot* of things in between that and totally stifling yourself. Sometimes you just need to hear from them that you're not losing them. Sometimes you can make compromises like “going out to dinner with your ladyfriend is fine, but you're going to owe me dinner next week,” or “okay, you can watch *Mad Men*, but no freeze-framing.” There's just a lot you can do when you talk about jealousy before it's a crisis.

The last thing I want to talk about in relationships is gender roles. *Fuck gender roles*. Your gender is who you are, it's not what you have to do. Let's move on.

Let's talk about kink and sex.

If I'm going to do one thing in this part, I'm going to completely tear to pieces the idea that sex is only passionate or romantic or whatever if it's completely spontaneous. That great lovers just fall into bed together and know what to do. And that if you're not a great lover, you're *still* supposed to fake the “just knowing”. So maybe you read sex books or Cosmo sex tips or whatever —do read Cosmo sex tips, by the way, they're fucking hilarious, but for God's sakes don't actually *do* that stuff until you've *checked* if your partner likes shoelaces tied around their balls—but in “everything has to seem spontaneous” world you're not supposed to let your lover know you're reading up. (Hell, a lot of those sex books are actually titled “don't let him or her see this,” because shoelaces on your balls is only really pleasurable if it's a complete surprise. Obviously.) You're supposed to come to bed completely like “Oh, a female body? I know how to work these!” and then either all your moves are perfect or you're bad at sex, sucks to be you.

You can't do that if you're kinky. Even though kinksters are about the only people who *would* like shoelaces on their balls. Because kink is so polymorphous. You've got people who want to be turned into ponies and harnessed up to carts in the same general category as people who want to suck on someone's toes. You can't come to a kink scene going “don't worry, I know your gender, I got this,” and then start applying some kind of general principles. That's going to end badly. Might involve horseshoes. You've got to know what the *specific person* you're playing with is into, and let them know specifically what you're into, or it's just not going to work. Well, I don't think that's any less true for people who aren't ponies.

A moment to talk about consent. Consent in BDSM is a *really* big deal, because the stuff we do would be *torture* without consent. It's sad that it's any different for sex, but not a whole lot of people could convince themselves “well, they *seemed* like they wanted to be dressed up like a ballerina and smeared with mashed potatoes, they did go up to my bedroom after all” to themselves. You've gotta be sure when you're doing kink. It's not just about having a good experience but about not committing a felony. Wait... isn't that true for sex too? Again. If you wouldn't punch a person because you were *kinda* sure they wanted it, don't have sex with them either. Just be like, “So... wanna fuck?” Gotta tell you, I haven't gotten a lot of “Oh, I was wet and humping your leg and imagining the things I'd do to you, but now that you *asked*, forget it,” from that. I *have* gotten “no,” but thank God for those “no”s! I'm *especially* glad I asked then! But consent is a bare minimum standard. That's what makes your sex *not rape*. Which is very necessary but rarely sufficient. Not a lot of people go home and write in their diary “oh my God, that sex we had was so *consensual*.” So when you take your communication beyond yes/no consent, what you've got is what kinky folk call “negotiation.”

Negotiation does not sound sexy. It sounds like you might want to bring your lawyer along. “We're prepared to offer up to ten minutes of manual stimulation in exchange for valuable consideration in the form of that thing you do with your tongue.” But it can be sexy as hell. It can be something you do cheek to cheek, bodies pressed together, whispering dirty thoughts heavily in each other's ears. Or maybe it isn't that sexy, but it's simple. “Touch me here,” and then they touch you there? That's negotiation, right there. That's all it takes sometimes.

Or sometimes negotiation isn't sexy or simple, but it's something you do three hours ahead, get to anticipate the whole evening, and then you can have that feeling of just falling together and being swept away, without the risk of “oh shit actually I didn't want to be swept away like *that*.” A lot of people who aren't used to it complain that explicit negotiation sounds really

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awkward and boner-killing, and I'm not gonna lie, it can be. But sex where you have no idea what the other person's getting at and they put their hand on your butt and you don't know if they want to spank you or put their finger up your ass or just grope you or what? And they don't really know what you want either so they just sort of creep their finger toward your anus and then you sort of scoot your butt away to be like "nuh-uh, buddy, not there?" and then they just grope your cheeks like that's what they meant to do all along? *That's* awkward.

One of the things that can get you is, there is kind of a default script for two-person non-kinky non-LGBTQ-anything sex. (And to some degree it can slop over into other kinds of sex.) He initiates, they make out, there's groping above the waist, there's groping below the waist, there's maybe oral sex on him, maybe oral sex on her, then vaginal intercourse missionary that *might* switch to cowgirl or doggy-style and then everyone rolls over and fall asleep. And there's nothing wrong with that! Sometimes that is, for real, all you want out of sex. I'm not trying to force everyone to discover your inner desire to be strung from the ceiling by a woman dressed as a stegosaurus here. Maybe your desires really are simple and you really just want to have the default sort of sex, or your desires aren't terribly specific and anything sorta sexlike will make you perfectly happy. That's fine. Then that's what you share in negotiation. If nothing else, it's going to reassure your partner that you aren't secretly yearning for something you're not getting.

So talk. Seriously. Talk. All of the hottest and wildest sexual experiences of my life have started with talking, because some of them involved, like, pee or dog cages, and that's shit you sure as *hell* don't whip out without talking about it first. If talking's hard, write shy little letters. Write an email and pretend no one's going to see it and at the last minute send it to your partner anyway. Bring along some erotica and point to it and be like "I want to do like that. Um, I'd be Dumbledore in this picture."

There's a couple other things you can take from kink too, besides negotiation.

For example, in kink one of the umbrella terms for What It Is That We Do is "play." We play together, we have play parties. *Age play*, *ass play*, *sensation play*, *pony play*. Nobody wants to go to a *work* party for some ass *work*. (I take it back, that sounds kinda hot.) Anyway, play is a really good way to look at sex. It's grownup playtime. It's something you're doing (generally) for purposes purely of pleasure. It's supposed to make you happy, it might make you laugh, it's something that lets you live out fantasies and move your body in ways you don't normally get to, and you get to feel like you're having a big adventure right in your own bedroom. I don't want to be all prescriptivist with this part, if sex means something else to you I'm not saying "NO! IT MUST BE PLAY!", but... if you ever find yourself approaching sex with grim determination or with that massive "I have to do this and do it right or I'm a loser" ego investment, it can help to step back a second and realize that the whole thing where people rub their crotches together to get happy is really kind of ridiculous.

Another thing to think about: in kink circles there's sometimes kind of this rush to be the very shockingest, to get all competitive "if that other guy had an acorn squash up his ass, by God I'm going to take a pumpkin," but the truth is that the *most* kink (whatever that even means, it's not like you can check on a kinkometer) is rarely a worthy goal, compared to the *best*. Some people's kink is entirely conducted by talking to each other, pants on, hands above the waist, and yet for them it's pervy and hot as hell. You can take this across to sex; you can have an encounter that's not intercourse that's still entirely satisfying sex. You can switch your sex life up without feeling like you have to make it "spicier" each time—sometimes something that's not at all "spicy" ends up creating a wonderful intimate moment between you. I mean, I've talked—okay, bragged—a lot in this talk about all the wacky stuff I've done, but some nights my partner and I just lay on the couch together and make out like high-schoolers and that's still completely awesome.

Last thing. I know that a lot of the stuff I said about negotiation can be kind of daunting, because it seems like it would only work for someone who really knows what they want. I mean, if you're one of those people who can be like "I need exactly 6.5 pounds of pressure applied at a 38 degree angle to my vulva," that's great, but a lot of people aren't. I'm not. So what do you say? Exactly what you're thinking. "I'm not sure what I'm into yet. Let's experiment." Some of your experiments won't work out and that's okay. I've tried a lot of kinky shit in my day that made me go "GAHHH, no, *not* for me," and that was okay. I proved the null hypothesis, is all. And then I tried other things that I ended up *loving*. I explored the boundaries of what my body could do and what it could make me feel, and I discovered some wonderful, completely unexpected new ways to experience joy.

(One caveat, though: this is something you do for yourself, not something you push your partner to do. "You don't know you won't like it until you try it" is how you feed vegetables to small children. It's not something you want in your sex life.)

When we talk about negotiation or we talk about consent, it's not just about "yes" or "no." "I really don't know," "let's try a little bit and see" and "not today but maybe later" are all good answers too.

In the end, no matter who you love or how, it all comes down to: humans are really fucking complicated and really fucking different. And the cultural mainstream has set some pathetically simple one-size-fits-all rules for how we're supposed to love and fuck. But fuck those rules. You only get one life. You only get to spend so much of it making love. And there are so, so, many wonderful and amazing ways to make love and I think some of them haven't even been discovered yet. (We found a new permutation just last Thursday.)

You owe it to your lovers and to yourself to toss out what you're supposed to be like or what you accidentally ended up with, and fuck and love in the way that brings you joy.

Posted by Cliff Pervocracy at [7:24 PM](#)

Tags: dating, kink, poly

91 comments:



Fade February 20, 2013 at 7:35 PM

Damn. That is one awesome speech. I don't have a lot of specific comments, but wanted to put that right out there:

This post = Pretty darn awesome

Reply

Miri February 20, 2013 at 7:36 PM

I'm so fucking glad I got to hear this in person. :D

Reply



Srsly February 20, 2013 at 7:52 PM

Fantastic speech! I'm holding on to this one for future reference :)

Reply

Anonymous February 20, 2013 at 8:11 PM

This made me happy in so so many ways. I'm super-glad [and also highly jealous] that you met Captain Awkward, because you 2 are the bloggers that I stop and read before almost anything else in my Google Reader.

You are rad! I love your humor above all else :-)

Reply

Kathryn Scannell February 20, 2013 at 8:24 PM

What a great talk. You crammed so many important points into one talk/post, it probably had people's heads swimming.

I came at this sort of backward. My wife and I did a *lot* of talking before we tried anything - we dated for six months before we got into bed the first time - and I think that has made a huge difference. The funny thing was that I didn't realize that *wasn't* normal until a couple of my close friends had breakups after being married for years and realized they didn't know things about their spouses that Beth and I had talked about 2 months into our dating relationship.

One point I'd add - I'm not sure if you can have that kind of emotionally honest conversation about a relationship at 20. I'm darned sure I couldn't have. I'm not sure what you can do about that.

Reply

Replies

Anonymous February 20, 2013 at 8:53 PM

For what it's worth, I'm 20 and my boyfriend's 22 and we do have these conversations, we're always honest and upfront. Of course being monogamous makes it simpler, but figuring out what that means to us is a negotiation itself. I'll admit some things in relationship seemed to just fall into place, but we always end up discussing them at least afterwards; and we usually plan sex especially if we want to try something new because talking about it is hot itself and it's best to get the technical details out of the way beforehand. But I probably wouldn't have been this easy a few years ago so your point still stands.

All I can say is that my boyfriend is awesome and that this blog really helped me see clearly, and not just about relationships.

Thank you Cliff for all you do to make the world better!

A.



Cliff Pervocracy February 20, 2013 at 9:39 PM

People mature at all kinds of different ages, it seems like. I know people who are 18 and seem to have their relationship shit completely together; I'm 27 and I've really only started to get it together in the last year or two. And of course there are plenty of people who make it to old age and still don't know how to have this kind of talk. So I don't think it's an age thing.

Anonymous February 21, 2013 at 9:48 AM

Agreed. Which is why people should read/hear things like this as soon as they can.

A.

Lain February 24, 2013 at 11:12 AM

Not me...my partner and I went into rather awkwardly, and we sucked at communication. I wish I'd had this blog then! But it was fun, and we were both honest enough to work through it and figure out which areas needed improvement. It's still a work in progress. Actually, I find it WAY easier to talk about sex because it's a specific category...you can easily SAY "What kind of sex would you like to have?" But you can't always predict what will come up in everyday life. You're not always going to think to ask "Hey if I talk to my friend really loudly in the living room for an hour is that going to annoy the crap out of you?" You just do it and find out later. So I guess it's important to be able to continue to be honest with each other and yourself, to be able to apologize and compromise -- because let's face it, no matter how much we all want to negotiate and communicate everything, we're probably going to screw up once in a while (but as Cliff has said - it's actually VERY simple when it comes to sex, much more than other ways).

Reply

Anonymous February 20, 2013 at 8:43 PM

Negotiation can actually be worth a lot of laughs, sometimes.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuWGVmlkLKo>

Reply

Anonymous February 20, 2013 at 8:51 PM

Oh, and:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww08qxUit00>

Reply

Ros February 20, 2013 at 10:05 PM

Excellent point about the use of the word "play".

Also part of the reason why my husband and I use "do you want to play/can I play with you now/etc" as a check-in (with the answer being what form of play you're up for and what your limit is - his answer last night was "I'd like make-outs and you can grope but I'm not really up for anything more"), instead of "wanna have sex" - because, for us, "play" can mean anything from make-outs and gropes before sleeping, to gentle PIV sex, to having my breasts whipped with his belt and getting off on that... Not all of it is sex, but it's all FUN, and it's fun on the same spectrum, so... "play" seems to sum up the fun.

It does make the women at work talking about "setting up play-dates" sound a lot more wonky than it is, though!

Reply



Nobby February 20, 2013 at 10:06 PM

Such a great talk! You taking a trip to Arizona anytime soon? >>

Reply

Comrade Physioprof February 20, 2013 at 10:12 PM

Sounds like an awesome talk! And you had some fantastic laugh-out-loud cracks in there that I am sure had the room in stitches! I really wish I could have actually heard it.

Reply

Rebekah Jaunty February 20, 2013 at 11:52 PM

Go Cliff! I always love your posts, but this one's extra special.

Reply

Anonymous February 21, 2013 at 4:20 AM

This post is brilliant. I'm gonna make it mandatory reading for all future partners!

Reply



Unknown February 21, 2013 at 5:10 AM

This was brilliant! Kids should be taught this in sex-ed. Maybe they wouldn't be so fucked-up when they get older. :-)

Reply

Anonymous February 21, 2013 at 5:52 AM

Add another voice to the praise chorus here - although I do now want to start a diary, just to fill it with comments like: "Last night was TOTALLY consensual! High five!!" and "Non-rapists do it consensually". This might make me a bad person.

Reply

Replies



Cliff Pervocracy February 21, 2013 at 6:56 AM

I think it makes you the reverse of a bad person.

(The forwards of a bad person is the people who write in with "but one time I asked a girl for consent *and she said no*, what good is this feminism crap")

Reply

Lolly February 21, 2013 at 6:27 AM

Reading this should be mandatory school-level sex ed. Thank you so much, Cliff, for just having your head screwed on right and knowing that's something you need to get out in the world.

Reply



NessieMonster February 21, 2013 at 8:16 AM

Awwww yay, so much good stuff in this speech Cliff. Also, thinking of the wonderful Captain as a dinosaur called Sue... :D

I'm still working on the negotiating thing with my partner but it's working out well, I think. I'd love to get to the point of regular chats about our relationship but eh, it feels kinda daunting. Phrasing it in the positive, rather than negative is the way forwards I guess.

Reply

Replies

Anonymous February 21, 2013 at 2:01 PM

NESSIEEEEEEE!!!! You monster :) Hello :)

Reply

Anonymous February 21, 2013 at 11:49 AM

Is there anything better in this world than reading the Pervocracy whilst being absolutely high on an Robusta espresso doppio listening to old-school-breakbeat-bootlegs (Cut & Run! :)) from the 90ies? :-)

Do you have any suggestions on how to introduce friends to the concepts and thoughts presented on the Pervocracy? I feel that simply linking might be a bit too much to grasp at once for some...

Reply

Replies

Lain February 24, 2013 at 11:16 AM

Lol yeah definitely...I happened to be reading this before class one morning and a friend looked over my shoulder and saw the tagline "Sex. Feminism. BDSM. And some very, very naughty words." and her eyes got as big as saucers LOL. In an ideal world people would be OK with that, but it usually takes a while to bring them around to it rather than just dropping them in cold-turkey. Then again it makes for a great conversation starter right there...

Reply**Anonymous** February 21, 2013 at 1:23 PM

It amuses me greatly, looking at the comments on this, that Mr. Anonymous of 21st Feb @ 11.20AM links to his wonderful wonderful site on 'dating advice for guys', which includes the article 'How to make out with a girl within 40 seconds'. Not, I suspect, the usual fare for most readers of this site...

On topic: wonderful talk. Damnit, being on the wrong continent!

Reply

Replies**Cliff Pervocracy** February 21, 2013 at 1:31 PM

Oh, those spambots think they know me because of my keywords...

Really wish Blogger had better spam control tools.

**Cliff Pervocracy** February 21, 2013 at 1:43 PM

Captcha is on for the moment. I hate to do that, but the spam has been completely out of control lately and I'm getting very annoyed with the task of constantly having to pull the Internet weeds out of my nice comments garden.

Reply**Hershele Ostropoler** February 21, 2013 at 1:45 PM

Mostly commenting to test the captcha for non-anonymous comment at Cliff's (presumably not sarcastic) suggestion, but I want to reiterate my love of the regular relationship discussion, and I should try to implement that in my relationship.

My girlfriend sometimes reads Pervocracy, so maybe we can do that without having to actually communicate about it ...

Reply

sinister agent February 21, 2013 at 2:05 PM

Harry Hutton once wrote a line that I just adore, which you've reminded me of: 'Every adult must at some point have paused during some slapstick piece of debauchery and thought, "Christ, this is ridiculous". Having testicles is like being chained to the village idiot. Sad, but there it is.'

It took me a while to relax into sex. I just couldn't get into it because it all felt so damned absurd. Eventually it occurred to me that just about everything that is fun to do is ridiculous. The reason kids have fun all the time is because they don't care if they look foolish, and yes, sex absolutely looks foolish. I wouldn't be surprised if seeing people fucking is where laughter came from in the first place.

Excellent talk, Cliff. It's good to hear you're reaching other audiences, you really speak too much sense.

Reply

Replies**Anonymous** February 24, 2013 at 1:43 AM

"Christ, this is ridiculous". Having testicles is like being chained to the village idiot. Sad, but there it is."

Oh my Ceiling Cat, I'm glad I wasn't drinking anything when I read that.

- The Kitten's Unpaid Help

Reply**Anonymous** February 21, 2013 at 2:26 PM

> Um, I'd be Dumbledore in this picture.

That would be this picture then:

<http://zani-alone.deviantart.com/art/Dumbledore-s-MagicalSpankDance-189617729>

He looks sooo happy! :D

PS: The actual blog entry was - as usual - awesome and inspiring. It even helped my relationship right now since a discussion about it triggered an exchange of a crucial bit of information that one of us was supposed to "just know". Thank you, Cliff.

Reply

Replies



Cliff Pervocracy February 21, 2013 at 5:39 PM

I am so glad I clicked on that.

Reply

Katie February 21, 2013 at 2:44 PM

"Nobody wants to go to a work party for some ass work."

I LOLed IRL and it was great. This speech is amazing! I wish I'd been there to hear it. You are a sex genius.

Reply



Plymouth A February 21, 2013 at 3:54 PM

I haven't gotten a lot of "Oh, I was wet and humping your leg and imagining the things I'd do to you, but now that you asked, forget it," from that.

I've been the person who basically HAS said that, on a number of occasions, and I think it's worth talking about why and how that doesn't mean to never communicate or never ask questions. The times I've said no it has largely been because the question was asked in a bad way. The way it was asked was some combination of a few overlapping factors:

- 1) It was done in a totally non-sexy way that took me out of the moment
- 2) It was done at an inopportune time that took me out of the moment
- 3) It was done in a way that put the spotlight on me in a group situation (suddenly I felt like all 3 other people present were on pause waiting for my answer)
- 4) It was done in a way that implied a lack of trust in my ability to express my boundaries (checking in on something I already said yes to - not that those things can never change but please trust me to tell you if it does)
- 5) It was done in a way that implied the person really couldn't tell if I was having a good time (which is not unreasonable - I mean not everyone has the same signs of pleasure and if you can't read someone's on an early encounter that's not a failure of you as a person - but it IS a turnoff for me as the person expressing that pleasure to learn that the message isn't being received).

There are good and bad ways to check in with someone and talking about what those ways are BEFORE the clothes come off is better. And getting it wrong isn't usually a dealbreaker forever (in some of the above bad examples of communication we talked about it once the clothes were back on and went on to have enjoyable future encounters. But it was usually a bummer for the night in question.).

Reply

Replies



Cliff Pervocracy February 21, 2013 at 5:15 PM

What you're describing is your own preferences, and it's important to make that clear, here and to your partners.

How they asked was not sexy *for you*.

It was not at an opportune time *for you*.

You do not feel trusted when people check in while you're having fun.

And that doesn't mean it isn't real or is evil or whatever. But it's an individual preference, not a universal, and I hope the message your partners are taking home is "Christa likes to deal with consent in certain ways" and not "asking for consent could ruin everything."

Anonymous February 21, 2013 at 6:23 PM

I'm kind of unclear how you'd be getting, from that comment, the idea that she's saying that asking for consent would be bad / ruin everything, as opposed to, "asking for consent in an awkward and off-putting way may create a speed-bump, but we can still have fun that evening or another one; and oh BTW it's really helpful to have some meta-conversations about how we like to be treated in bed _before_ going to bed".

**Cliff Pervocracy** February 21, 2013 at 6:35 PM

I don't think she is saying that, on second glance, and I hope I wasn't too snippy.

I just get really skittish around even the *idea* that asking for consent can ever be unsexy, because I've seen it too often in contexts where the next chain in the argument was "so clearly people should have sex by just jumping on each other out of nowhere." So it kinda gets my hackles up. But I don't think Christa is going there, you're right.

**Plymouth A** February 21, 2013 at 8:36 PM

Yeah, pretty much that. I feel like a lot of the time the message comes across as "always ask! you can never turn people off by asking!" And then the first time someone turns another person off by asking in an awkward way they conclude "asking doesn't work, I should stop trying!". I'm pretty sure that's where the idea that asking is a big turn-off comes from. I think the message should be more "ok, you might turn them off by asking but it's totally possible to recover from that and it's sure gonna turn them off less than NOT asking and then doing something they don't like will". Ok so that doesn't quite fit on a bumpersticker :)

Anonymous March 11, 2013 at 5:52 AM

I read that situation more as "I would prefer to negotiate about sex privately, before I'm naked and around other people, and I didn't know/express that until I was in this awkward situation." To me, the answer is more negotiation not less, so you have a chance to say to someone "if you're not sure how I'm doing, I'd prefer that you check in with me like X, so I don't feel like I'm put on the spot." Also, I do recognize that some people use public 'negotiation' as a pressure tactic, when you feel like you have to give the right answer so everyone's happy. That's not okay, but I'd be more skeptical if you were being asked about something you hadn't agreed to previously.

It may be disappointing that your enthusiasm isn't getting across to your partner, but tops also get to consent. A check-in is sometimes what I need, in order for me to consent to continue. I'm not comfortable progressing with a scene if I'm not certain it was being enjoyed according to plan.

Reply**Lib** February 21, 2013 at 5:49 PM

I was at your talk and loved it too! One really, really, REALLY, silly comment: you used the phrase "prove the null hypothesis" at one point. First, in a real statistical test, you can never "prove" a null hypothesis, you only "reject" or "fail to reject" it. Second, I'm pretty sure you meant to say "reject the null hypothesis" anyway, as the null hypothesis would be "I like this new sex act" vs. the alternative "I do not like this new sex act." Since we are talking about your personal feelings toward something, statistical test concepts don't translate perfectly (since you can probably make a decision as to whether or not you like something), but in general, you set up a test to look at one very specific thing, so if there isn't evidence against it, the null might still not be true in all cases. Just to spread general statistical knowledge :)

Reply

Replies

**Cliff Pervocracy** February 21, 2013 at 6:03 PM

I think the null hypothesis would be "I do not like this sex act." I thought the null hypothesis was generally the no-change, status-quo one, and the alternative hypothesis was the one that changed things?

I suppose it depends if you figure "I like everything except certain acts" or "I like nothing except certain acts" is the default state.

I spose I failed to reject the null hypothesis, then. :)

Lib February 21, 2013 at 10:32 PM

Yeah, you're right, depends how you think about it. The only general rule is that the null hypothesis is a specific value, and the alternative is a larger class of values defined in opposition to it. So it depends what you think you're testing: whether the act is not part of the class of things you like, or not part of the class of things you don't like. Woah, exposing my own biases through theoretical statistics...

Lain February 24, 2013 at 11:22 AM

Statistics is confusing. lol

Shadow Puppet Duck March 3, 2013 at 10:02 AM

This was exactly my reaction -- "Wait, wait, you can never *prove* the null hypothesis!"

But if your null hypothesis were not "I don't like assplay", but instead, "I *do* like assplay", then you could go about falsifying that. Or, um, failing to falsify that.

Mmmmm, Science.

Reply

Anonymous February 21, 2013 at 7:10 PM

My mom's family is from the Chicago area, so we used to visit there all the time. I love the museum and the planetarium there; the museum in particular has an awesome exhibit on native people's art that includes all these cool totem poles...it's been so long since I've gone, i miss it.

Reply

Kai February 21, 2013 at 9:06 PM

"Either way, if you both know where the line is—and you have enough fundamental trust that nobody's going to rules-lawyer it with “we said hugging was okay, so I hugged his penis!” - it's a lot easier to avoid accidentally hurting each other and a lot more clear what happened if someone does break that trust."

- I've found even with negotiation, issues still crop up of unrealised assumptions, previously undiscussed (and therefore unrealised) differences in worldview, or small but important differences in semantic understanding. A crucial skill seems to be to be able to have this conversation: "I was upset when you did X, why did you do that?" "I thought that was ok because of Y..." "Nooooo" "Ah, ok sorry." Then further discussing of whatever X and Y were, and both parties' understandings of such. In the end it seems to come down to trust that the other partner doesn't actually want to hurt you and the acceptance that sometimes negotiations will need more conversations than you initially expected.

Reply

Anonymous February 21, 2013 at 11:32 PM

"well, he should have known that was wrong."

Oh, this phrase. Expecting someone to be psychic rarely works out well.

(ok, caveat, if you have stated your needs [large x] number of times, and he/she/zie/they still doesn't know, well then one has a point and a few additional issues.)

Reply

Replies



Cliff Pervocracy February 22, 2013 at 4:07 PM

There are a few things that I would consider bleeding obvious, like if they're sleeping with other people and you never agreed that was okay, or if they scream at you when they're mad, where "I didn't know that was a problem" is kind of a crappy excuse. I don't want to be completely exempting people from basic decency because you forgot to specifically negotiate they weren't allowed to sell your dog.

But when it comes to "he should have known not to go to lunch with another woman," or "she should have known I don't like always having to plan our dates," then yes, absolutely.



SatchelofSparkles February 23, 2013 at 2:08 PM

<http://www.egscomics.com/?date=2012-11-19>

Reply



ShifterCat February 21, 2013 at 11:48 PM

Off-topic, but I thought you and your readers would be interested:

Pick-up artists try to proposition a Twitterbot. The results are as hilarious and revealing as you could hope.

Goes back to read actual post

Reply

Replies

ReanaZ February 22, 2013 at 5:18 PM

I can't decide if that is the best or the worst thing ever.

Anonymous February 24, 2013 at 1:29 AM

At least while they're trying to work their *cough* charms *cough* on a robot, they're not inflicting themselves on women.

With any luck, that is.

Richard March 6, 2013 at 4:27 AM

It might be interesting to actually say "bla bla" if you recognize one of these routines, and see if they notice :)

Reply

Anonymous February 22, 2013 at 12:19 AM

Great speech, Cliff! One thing though - as one of those girls who would gladly work my way through the Packers starting lineup, I initially thought, "Oh, lucky Rowdy!" Then I realized that you gave this talk in Chicago. And in order to win your audience, you were insulting the Packers by insinuating that they're all gay. That's just so... UnCliff, you know?

On the other hand, I may just hold you to unrealistic standards because I'm generally fascinated by how your mind works. We're all human :)

Reply

Replies

misspiggy February 22, 2013 at 3:40 AM

I didn't get that at all from the piece, I have to say - and why would the Packers need to be gay, necessarily?



Cliff Pervocracy February 22, 2013 at 9:03 AM

What's insulting about being gay? :p

Actually I just wrote that because Rowdy's from Wisconsin, so if there's one sports team he would sleep with, it would have to be the Packers. I didn't mean it as a "Packers suck!" thing at all.

The "you might be a Bears fan" was Chicago pandering, but only in the sense that perhaps they'd prefer their boyfriends to sleep with the Bears instead.

Anonymous February 22, 2013 at 9:09 AM

Ah, gotcha. I guess I took it as an insult because unfortunately for many football players the insinuation of gayness is highly insulting - and is often used by fans of opposing teams. Also, as the daughter of a gay man, I might be a little sensitive on the issue. But yeah, that was my point exactly - why is it considered insulting to be called gay? Anyways, knowing now that he's from Wisconsin, I go back to my original "Oh, lucky Rowdy!"

Go Pack Go!

ReanaZ February 22, 2013 at 9:33 AM

Don't feed the troll? I'm not sure what's happening in that post either.

ReanaZ February 22, 2013 at 5:20 PM

Ah, makes more sense now. Also, my post didn't appear before it was clarified. Consider it redacted.

Reply

Anonymous February 22, 2013 at 12:38 AM

Not a lot of people go home and write in their diary "oh my God, that sex we had was so consensual."

>> I am totally one of those people. It's mostly a result of the fact that the vast majority of sex I've had was non-consensual (although that's changing!), so it's really exciting when it meets the baseline of "I said yes to that". Although, my current partner is unhappy that that's my baseline, as he is so far above that (asking! negotiating! making sure I not only say yes, but I want things! checking in as we go even if I don't say anything!) and thinks he should be the baseline.

Reply

Replies

Anonymous February 24, 2013 at 8:28 PM

I am also one of those people. I just started sleeping with someone new and THE thing I love most about fucking him is that it is the best consent I've ever, ever had.

Anonymous February 26, 2013 at 7:24 PM

I wanted to add for variety/perspective that I've never had non-consensual sex, and my boyfriend and I still sometimes tell each other things like 'That sex, it was so /consensual/. Hawt.'

And we might be half-joking, but I'm also partly serious. I really want to work against the stigma that /asking for consent/ is awkward or not-sexy, so I've decided that it is sexy, and I'm going to treat it like that. Sort of the same way I kept telling the boyfriend 'I like a /clean/ man ;D' after he got his routine STD test.

Reply

Anonymous February 22, 2013 at 2:56 PM

I love this post, and wish I could have a relationship like this. I have a bit of a question though, just as different people are wired for monogamy or polyamory or for different kinds of kink, do you think some people are wired to need to communicate and others are wired to find it unpleasant? My partner really hates this sort of thing and thinks that after a certain time period of time couples should just know this stuff about each other, I'd like to be able to talk about my feelings more but have tried to respect the fact he finds it unpleasant. I just wonder if this is an intrinsic part of his makeup or if communication is something vital to every relationship? I'm just not sure how compatible we are anymore

Reply

Replies



Cliff Pervocracy February 22, 2013 at 3:59 PM

I'm sure the wiring to find communication unpleasant exists, but unfortunately it isn't connected to wiring for ESP. The pertinent question isn't *should* you just know everything you need to know, but *do* you? It sounds like there's a lot about you he doesn't just know.

Communication is also something that tends to suck the first few times and get easier as you go. And sometimes reframing it as something quick and casual, as a "hey, just wanted to let you know" or "hey, just wanted to check in with you" rather than a "sit down, we need to talk" can get someone to communicate who isn't interested in capital-C Communication.

Finally, I think this is just up to what you can be happy with. If you're okay with it, then you don't need to know that it's wiring, only that it works for you; and if you're unhappy with it, then what matters is if he *will* change, not if he's "wired" to.



Plymouth A February 22, 2013 at 7:14 PM

I think this was addressed (albeit briefly) in a recent article "5 Myths About Polyamory": <http://www.livescience.com/27125-5-myths-about-polyamory.html>

Isn't all that communication and negotiation exhausting? It's true that polyamorous relationships take lots of time...

But people who thrive in polyamory seem to love that job

Of course this doesn't say anything about it being nature or nurture but it's definitely something that seems to mean some people are drawn to more complicated communication-heavy relationship styles than others. Anyway, people are studying this! Albeit such research is in the very early stages...



Jeppsson February 23, 2013 at 4:40 AM

"Finally, I think this is just up to what you can be happy with. If you're okay with it, then you don't need to know that it's wiring, only that it works for you; and if you're unhappy with it, then what matters is if he *will* change, not if he's "wired" to."

Yes THIS. Wired this and wired that, who cares how you're "wired"? Just do what works for you and what makes you happy. One doesn't have to go on exercises in introspection where one finds out about one's "wiring" first.



Jeppsson February 23, 2013 at 5:07 AM

Adding: I think what bugs me about this wiring talk is that it often is so... defensive. Either people go "don't condemn me for being poly/kink/whatever because I'm simply WIRED this way and can't HELP it", or "I'm not boring or conservative just because I'm mono/vanilla/whatever, I'm simply WIRED this way". But these justifications are unnecessary. "This works for me/is what I want/makes me happy" is SUFFICIENT justification for doing something as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else.

Plus, if by "wiring" one means something like "genetically determined to be this way", or perhaps "determined by really early childhood experiences to be this way", I think it's terribly implausible that people would have that much and that specific "wiring" in their brains.

Dee February 23, 2013 at 5:42 PM

Some people definitely do enjoy communications, while others find it tedious at best - I have a cuddle buddy who's the former, and a partner who's the latter. I've taken to likening it to messing with computers - some people recompile the linux kernel and write their own drivers, others just want their damned internet to work.

For me what works best when communicating with main partner is keeping it clear and concise. When I want to do rambling explanation of my relationships needs, I go to cuddle buddy, and with partner I just go, like, "Tell me I'm hot/cuddle me more/hey, is [specific act] a violation of mongamy?" and work from there, and trust him to tell me what he needs when he needs it.

Reply

Anonymous February 22, 2013 at 8:36 PM

I love this post, Cliff.

Also, you didn't know this, but Sue has been my Facebook profile photo for about the last 8 months. We are commonly mistaken for each other.

Reply

Replies



Cliff Pervocracy February 23, 2013 at 9:52 PM

I didn't even know that! That's awesome.

Reply

Virgin February 23, 2013 at 3:47 AM

You make it sound so exciting, but I'm terrified. I don't want to mess up. I want to make the other people happy; they know so much more than I do. I also think I'm unattractive, ugly even, and see no reason for someone else to want me, and have nothing to offer.

Reply

Replies

Anonymous February 24, 2013 at 8:04 PM

If you just go out and meet enough interesting people -- at a book club, or a soup kitchen, or whatever situation makes you feel like you're having fun, doing something useful, or otherwise making good use of your time -- sooner or later you _will_ run into somebody who shares a lot of your interests and sees the beauty in you.

Reply



Unknown February 23, 2013 at 7:57 AM

If I ever have children, I am going to crib heavily from this for The Sex Talk.

Especially the whole thing on consent, and "gender is who you are, not what you have to do."

Reply

Replies

Anonymous February 24, 2013 at 10:25 AM

You and me both. This was awesome....

Reply

Djuna Tree February 23, 2013 at 2:00 PM

Although I found little to actually disagree with here, I felt really unhappy and excluded having read it. I feel like this post is totally written in a way that only includes people who are not single, and especially who are not trans. Constructing sexual pleasure as things feeling good in "the vagina kind of way" felt like it was reinforcing this idea that people's experiences, especially of sex, are intrinsically different depending on our genitals. I was also really bothered by the line "a female body! I know how to work these," because it's pretty clear that my (apparently disorienting) female body is not what you had in mind. It's a shame, because Pervocracy is usually awesome.

Reply

Replies



SatchelofSparkles February 23, 2013 at 2:23 PM

I felt that the "a female body!" attitude was what was being skewered by that part - and that, for Cliff, his sexual pleasure is closely related to his vagina. I mean, I kinda think that was a part of the point he was making - that not all men see him, Cliff, as more complicated than the sum of his parts.

I dunno - I have cis- and coupled-privilege, and I'm not gonna say that your feelings about this are wrong. I think that relationship-negotiating posts are speaking specifically to people who are in relationships and that's something I've found isolating about our culture in the past.

And looking back, there's perhaps some ambiguity, but I thought the "vagina kind of way" was referencing [i]Cliff's[/i] personal experience of sexuality.



Cliff Pervocracy February 23, 2013 at 9:55 PM

I did mostly intend it for people who are in relationships, or at least people who are having repeated sexual encounters with the same partners. Negotiating stuff as a single person is a whole 'nother area, and frankly one I don't have as much experience/success with, and I should have acknowledged that more.

But I only meant "in a vagina kind of way" in relation to *my* vagina, not trying to say that everyone experiences sexual enjoyment that way. And with the "a female body!" thing, I was trying to make fun of the idea that every female body is the same, because obviously they are not.

Reply

Vicky February 23, 2013 at 9:59 PM

Thank you for this. I'm definitely going to use this talk with my children when they are ready to start dating. I also wasted years trying to have sex "correctly" instead of trying to enjoy myself.

Regarding your point about how we figure out what relationships are supposed to be like from porn and romance novels: I was thinking about that a couple of weeks ago. I figured that a lot of the reason I sucked at sex and relationships for so long was that I most learned about it from giggling over romance novels at sleepovers, and secretly watching cinemax on Saturday nights after my parents had gone to bed. My pondering led me to discover a great blog called Romance Novels for Feminists. I highly recommend it for anyone interested in the romance genre.

Reply



UntrustUs February 24, 2013 at 12:28 AM

"In the end, no matter who you love or how, it all comes down to: humans are really fucking complicated and really fucking different. And the cultural mainstream has set some pathetically simple one-size-fits-all rules for how we're supposed to love and fuck. But fuck those rules. You only get one life. You only get to spend so much of it making love. And there are so, so, many wonderful and amazing ways to make love and I think some of them haven't even been discovered yet. (We found a new permutation just last Thursday.)"

I just love this part, and reading it made me feel emotional even. Really hit the nail on the head. You only do have one life to live, and it should be spent having the sex you do want to have. Even if that's no sex. There is no right way to have good sex.

Reply

Anonymous February 24, 2013 at 1:22 AM

"It could involve your whole body or nothing but your mind."

This. My sex life (hope this isn't TMI, but on this blog, mebbe not) is nonexistent in the sense most people probably think of sex. No other earthly person/people involved, no masturbation, nothing obviously physical at all, ever. But I have memories that get me squirming with pleasure. Not dreams: memories of time across the veil with my man, as fulfilling as I could wish for. Doesn't matter if it's sexytimes or cooking breakfast or digging in the garden, everything we do there is making love, and damn, that's the sex life for me.

- The Kittens' Unpaid Help

Reply

Cindy Gallop February 25, 2013 at 7:05 PM

LOVE LOVE LOVE.

This is precisely why <http://makelovenotporn.com/>

Reply



BiLikesSciFi February 25, 2013 at 7:39 PM

What a fantastic article.... I admire so much in this. I've just gone through a revolution on my own sexually in the past couple of years. From trying to follow the script and realizing it didn't work to coming out as a kinky bisexual woman... I cannot stress the emphasis of communication enough!

Reply

Justinas February 26, 2013 at 10:40 AM

Vicky wrote: " I also wasted years trying to have sex "correctly" instead of trying to enjoy myself. " - this. My first response to this magnificent speech was like - why do I get to know such liberating and healthy way to engage in sex life when I am 25 and not when I was 14-15. Though as also Vicky put it "I'm definitely going to use this talk with my children when they are ready to start dating." - I will try to pass this knowledge to contemporary teenagers in my country so that they avoid the miserable experience I had in my past. So that they could engage in sex life being informed and on their own terms, not on what is supposed to be "the right way" to do it. Thank you, Cliff, for making this world a better place again.

Reply

Anonymous February 27, 2013 at 11:18 PM

Gee, I wish I had read this when I was 20-something instead of 40-something. A recent relationship (last year) tanked because he wanted to talk about these things but was afraid I would reject him when his kinks and poly-a came out. I wanted him to talk, and may have rejected him for some of his kinks and when I learned more about his poly-a, but never got a chance to get used to them. The result, we tanked because of a lack of trust and a lack of communication. Sigh.

Anyway, my new guy is more emotionally honest and more communicative but also into poly-a. Me, I am more open and more relaxed and taking more time to learn and to consider. And am really happy that someone trusts me and my church going self to be open to whom they are.

Reply



Slytherclaw March 3, 2013 at 12:32 PM

I could cry right now. I don't have words for how good it feels to be validated... Just... Thank you, Cliff. One of these days, I'd love to be able to hug you if that's alright. <3

Reply



jill March 8, 2013 at 4:02 AM

wish i could have been at your talk!

Reply

SparklPonyPants March 12, 2013 at 5:27 AM

Dear Cliff,

I really fucking love you for this blog. I've been reading for like... a week. A good friend posted this piece and then I

shared it and found myself talking about it often and then I went back and read a bunch of older posts. I loved going back to your first post and reading where you started this from. You've become quite a prolific and talented writer!

Anyway, I'm 25 this year and that means I've been having sex for 10 years. Woo! However most of it has been pretty bad to mediocre with a sprinkling of awesome. I'm turning over a new leaf this year and figuring out a lot about what I want and how to get it and how to communicate it. So far it's been going pretty well and this blog is so awesome and reassuring and just.. gah. I love it so much.

I was slut shamed BIG TIME during my teenage years to the point of near torture and it turned me off big time for being "sexual person". The last thing I've wanted was do something that would make people treat me badly because they thought I was being slutty so I shut it all up and it's been pent up for years and years.

I was just laying on the hammock outside and the thought popped into my head, "who cares if I do anything slutty anymore? Who is even there to take notice or give the slightest fuck about my sex life?". Wow, what an epiphany. I know that seems obvious but I hadn't had that exact thought before now. I think I've realized that everything from how I dress to how I talk to people in social situations to how I behave around lovers has a lot to do with what I think other people might think about my sexuality and character.

I'm letting go of that and reclaiming my inner kinky slut. Yep. I said it.

Sorry to write a journal entry here but I just really wanted to say THANKS. It sorta nice to just write this out publicly :) Keep on doing what you're doing. You're awesome.

Reply

Anonymous July 3, 2013 at 3:13 AM

Wow. i just discovered this blog on the reddit sub r/INTP. The part about your need to research and experiment is ME. i've never had a boyfriend, but when i do i'm making him read this. honesty and openness is everything to me, and i feel like that will be a priority when i eventually discover and accept my inner slut. :)

Reply

Alasdair November 7, 2013 at 5:47 PM

This is a wonderful speech. I found this blog ages ago and then forgot about it, I'm glad I've come across it again.

I've still never actually had sex myself, but when I do I'm going to make my partner read this first. :)

Reply

Wild Nutmeg March 17, 2014 at 12:28 PM

I love everything about this post. Funny, smart, and spot-on. Can't believe I only just came across it now, but I'll be sharing it with others regularly henceforth :)

Reply

Anonymous March 17, 2014 at 12:59 PM

Polyamoury is WRONG.

It's MULTIAMOURY or polyPHILLIA!

Stop mixing Greek and Latin roots!!! ;)

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