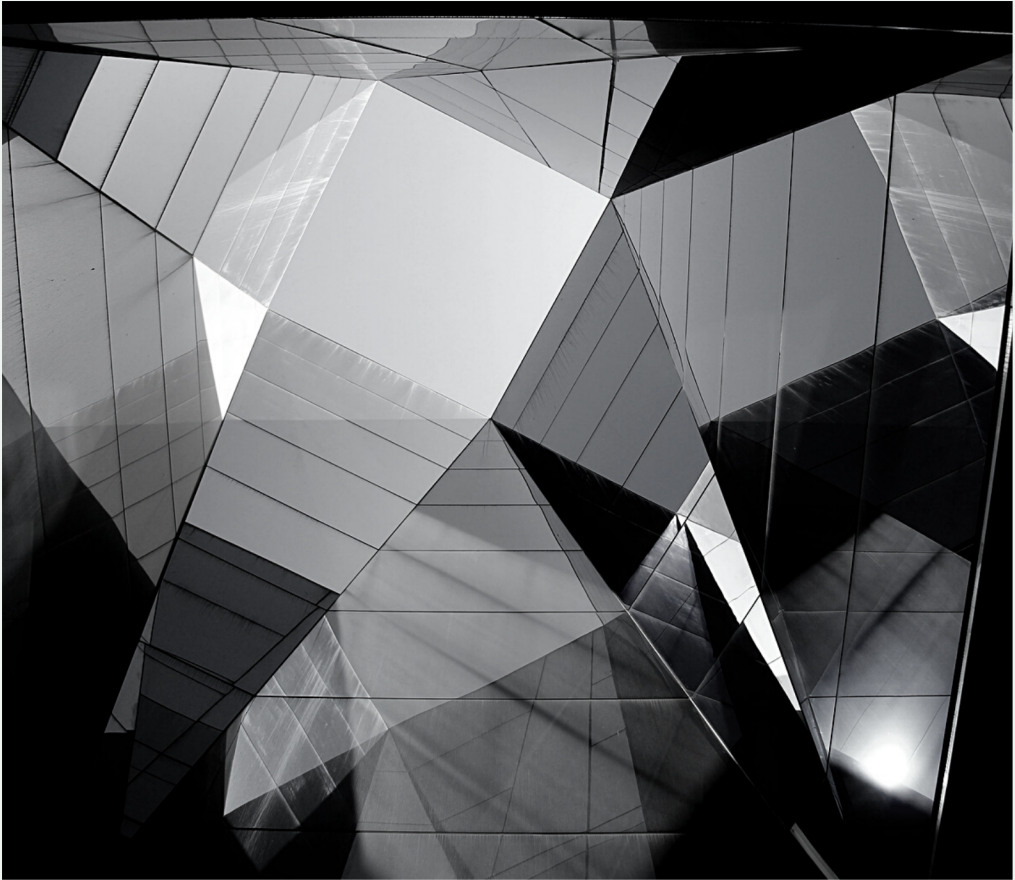


Fighting Internal Self Judgement

A WORKSHEET



By Angie Gunn LCSW CST CSTS

One of the common barriers to sex and pleasure is feeling self-conscious, or self critical in the bedroom.

Some factors that contribute to feelings of self consciousness include:

- Body image and functioning, perception of what a sexual body looks like
- Fear of body functions (farts, queefs)
- Partner's view of your body in different sexual positions or angles
- Cultural assumptions about what "Sexy" means and looks like
- Sexual shame regarding our skills, experience, comfort with our body in sexual roles
- Uncertainty about how to please partner, partner's wants, needs, expectations
- Comparing self to partners' other partners, media images of sex and bodies
- Uncertainty about how your body will respond... will you climax, will you be able to help your partner do so, how long can you last, what will your body do
- Trauma history which makes touch and nudity scary

What to do about it:

- Self consciousness during sex is first addressed in self esteem building within yourself:
- Show yourself love and validation. Explore areas of insecurities and acknowledge ways in which your body is beautiful
- Get your own therapist to work through any deeper patterns related to self hate, problems in self acceptance and/or body image concerns which cause severe distress or trauma history which impacts symptoms arising during intimacy

Whose expectations are you trying to meet? Your partner? Your own? The media's images? When you think about a sexy body, what images come to mind? Can you change this story? Sexy bodies come in all shapes and sizes, sexy is the attitude, not the exterior. How might you show acceptance to your body, your sexual self, and the person your partner is seeking?

- Show your body love and acceptance- masturbation and private exploration is a good place to start. Learn all the nooks, crannies and bit of yourself. How do you like to be touched and where? Try different pressure, texture, tools (toys are amazing) and practice showing your body acceptance and pleasure, try not to focus on climax, but on having fun and giving yourself pleasure in any form.

Involve your partner

- Talk about insecurities and worries, brainstorm ways they can support you during intimacy to feel more comfortable (ie: dimming lights, buying sexy outfits or positions, types of touch that make you feel good)
- Ask for validation in areas that you need (ie: genitals, breasts, stomach thighs)- be creative about ways to compliment your partner and say it enthusiastically and often
- Talk about past sexual experiences that have resulted in shame, self doubt or fear. Telling your story can help them understand your reactions, and how they can support you so you can both be freaky and sexy with comfort and ease

**You are loved.
You are beautiful.
You are worthy of
love, pleasure &
affection- just as
you are!**

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