Masturbation Manifesto

Selflove's the safest form of sex around

July 1, 1997 By Betty Dodson, PhD

A lone warrior extolling the benefits of masturbation for close to three decades, I'm ready to organize a movement with millions of other masturbators against the forces of sex-negativity. What has AIDS got to do with it? Everything. Talking honestly about sex is the key to successful HIV prevention; unsafe sex is the result of all the lies, secrets and silences under which our erotic desires are buried. So if you're a friend of sex who would like to take a stand with me, start today by enjoying your own selfloving sessions without any guilt or apology. The next step is going public by telling a few friends about your favorite techniques. And finally, sharing masturbation with a friend qualifies you as an activist in my book.

The firing of Dr. Joycelyn Elders in 1995 got the word masturbation on networks and in newspapers around the world. The message? Mention this in America and your political career is over. When our former surgeon general responded with intelligence and compassion to a question about masturbation at a news conference -- "I think that is something that is part of human sexuality, and it perhaps could be taught" -- our elected officials went ballistic. Elders was purposely misconstrued as calling for how-to-jerkoff lessons rather than honest discussion of a universal practice. After the story broke, a conservative politician on TV said, "I don't want my five year old walking around with a condom in his pocket." The old political ploy of bait and switch.

Given the bankruptcy of "abstinence" messages and with half of all new HIV infections among people under 25, masturbation is more than ever a meaningful component of safe-sex education. Rest assured, puritanical leaders will continue to deny the existence of self-sexuality until our unified voices singing its praises are heard above their rhetoric of repression.

Why does the acceptance of masturbation seem to threaten the very foundation of our social structure? Could it be that independent orgasms might lead to independent thoughts? An effective way to keep a population docile and easy to manipulate is by prohibiting childhood masturbation, insisting on the procreative model of sex, upholding marriage and monogamy, withholding sex information, making birth control difficult, trying to end abortion, criminalizing prostitution, condemning homosexuality, censoring sexual entertainment and denying the existence of sexual diversity. That makes everyone a sexual sinner.

Ever wonder why sex with ourselves isn't viewed with any pride? My speculation is, we're a nation of brainwashed romantic-love junkies hooked on a myth that promises us passionate orgasms

forever from our very own Prince or Princess Charming. Romance is the drug that leads to monogamous pair bondage that erodes sexual desire. By the time most of us figure it out, children, property or finances keep us glued together as sexual pleasure diminishes or disappears altogether.

Take heart. Partnersex gets better the minute we start improving our own selfloving practices. Start by seeing masturbation as a sexual meditation, and practice regularly for an hour or more. Always use a good massage oil and great music. Focus on your breathing, move your pelvis like Elvis. Although orgasm is a nervous-system function that operates without conscious control, your joyful rhapsody can be extended by building up sexual tension, and right after orgasm, not stopping.

Sex energy is the life force, and my body doesn't care if it's me with my electric vibrator and a dildo, or a lover's tongue, hand or penis. An orgasm is an orgasm is an orgasm. Once we embrace masturbation, we can have all the sex we want on our own terms with someone we love who will never abandon us.

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