Ultimate Intimacy

Connect With Your Man – Mind, Body, and Soul

Module Three, Part 1
Seeing the Future: Family Planning



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Seeing the Future: Family Planning

Probably the single biggest game changer to a relationship is adding kids to the mix.

Whether you are planning on having a child together or are going to be blending families with children from prior relationships, your relationship will be affected.

And some of this stuff just doesn't get talked about all that much. So I'm going to give you the low down.

Pregnancy and having a child together

Your body goes through tremendous changes during pregnancy. That's kind of expected given that you are growing a whole person:)

A lot of women discover their libido goes into high gear during pregnancy. Enjoy it! After the baby arrives, you'll likely have very little interest in sex for awhile.

Part of this has to do with the massive hormone changes that occur post-partum. You also have a huge new responsibility taking up most of your focus. And there is one other reason that few people know about. Remember above when I mentioned how humans have a need for skin to skin contact? When you have a new baby, especially if you are breastfeeding, you will be getting a lot of skin to skin contact. This can actually affect your sex drive. Because your need for skin to skin contact is being met through bonding with your child, you aren't seeking that connection in a sexual way.

Reconciling your sexual identity with motherhood

After becoming a mother, it's not unusual to experience an identity crisis of sorts.

Before baby, your body was your own domain. And your sexuality was (hopefully) something you reveled in! Your sleep patterns weren't compromised, you didn't have to worry about little ears that might hear

you get busy. You could be spontaneous and get down with your guy whenever the mood struck.

After baby, it changes. Your body may take awhile to feel like yours again. If you nurse, you might feel like your boobs are now off-limits for sex. You are likely tired and sex definitely becomes something that takes a little bit of forethought, especially as your baby grows and learns how to walk...and open doors.

The biggest change to your identity is that you are somebody's MOTHER now.

A lot of us have a difficult time thinking of our own moms being sexual beings, right? (ewwww!) And now you might be struggling thinking of yourself as a sexual being. It's totally normal to have this new role cause you to think of yourself differently when it comes to sex.

Your guy might think of you differently, too. Because you are now the mother of his child, and perhaps he's put you on a bit of a pedestal.

The same guy who thought of doing dirty dirty things with you now sees you in a different light. Maybe one with a halo and that motherly glow.

The good news is that's it is possible to reconcile your role of motherhood alongside your identity as a sexy woman. It may just take some time and intentional thinking.

1. Treat yourself in sensual ways

One of the bizarre things I did after I had my first child is to abandon everything sexy. I cut my hair off, bought ill-fitting mom jeans, and started wearing ugly granny panties. I went full frump. I was a mom, now, so I thought this was what I was supposed to do.

It took me a few years to realize what a bad choice that was and to start to reclaim my sexy side. I don't want you to make the same mistake I did!

Even if you aren't feeling sexy (or desiring sex) take care to still treat yourself with sensual care. Wear pretty underthings when you can (even nursing bras are better looking these days). When you have the chance, take a long shower or bath and shave your legs and slather on sweet smelling oils and lotions.

Make the effort to spend time alone with your man. Date nights can be hard to plan with an infant, but try to get out of the house for one-on-one time. Dress in something other than sweats, do your hair, and slap on some makeup. And if you can't find a sitter, after baby goes to bed, you can watch a show or even just enjoy a glass of wine together.

2. Do your affirmations

One of the easiest ways to keep your sexual identity from totally falling off the radar is to do some mindful affirmations. I know sex is on the back burner, and that is totally fine right now. But you don't want it to fall off the stove completely!

- I am a sexually confident and beautiful woman.
- I feel free to express my sexuality.
- I am in touch with my sexual desires.
- I am a mom and a sexual being.
- I let go of any sexual insecurities I may have.
- I celebrate my sexuality.

3. Practice body acceptance

A lot of women freak out at how their body changes after having a baby. Stuff just sort of shifts around, and for many of us, it just doesn't go back together the same way.

Your tummy might look a lot different. You might have stretch marks or even a C-section scar. Your boobs might look like a totally different pair of girls. And your hips and feet might be wider.

Some women can take these changes in stride, but for others, it's cause for mild panic. You might worry about what your partner thinks of your new body. And you might feel self-conscious, like a stranger in your own skin.

Plus it doesn't help seeing magazine covers shouting headlines about such-and-such celebrity who is in a bikini three weeks after having a baby. Ugh...that just needs to STOP!

If you are feeling uncomfortable with your post-baby body, I want you to know that it's normal. And I also want you to give yourself some grace here.

You just GREW A HUMAN inside of you. That is an amazing feat of nature! And it's going to change things around for a little while. Maybe even permanently. But rather than bemoan the changes, celebrate them. Be in awe of what you've created. It's an amazing and wonderful thing.

If you are a new mom you are probably laughing with scorn at what you just read. Trust me, I know what those first few months are like. I was a

stained-yoga-pants-wearing-zombie. And I'm not trying to add to your long list of things to make you feel guilty, either.

But taking a bit of time to feel attractive and remember that you are a sexy woman (even as a stained-yoga-pants-zombie) WILL do wonders for how you feel about yourself.

Blending families

If you met your man after already being married previously, there's a good chance one or both of you come to the relationship with children in tow.

On the one hand, it makes things easier if you aren't having a child together, because your sex life won't face the hiccup that pregnancy and a new baby gives you. But blending families isn't without its challenges.

1. Give your relationship time

No matter the age of your kids, give yourselves plenty of time to explore your relationship alone without introducing the kids. You want to make sure this person is someone you want in your kids' life. In the new flurry of love, it can be tempting to want to rush in and play "happy family." And some people argue that they want to make sure this person is good with their kids before deciding to get serious.

But here's the thing, your kids aren't dating. YOU are. And kids can quickly get attached to someone new. A few months or weeks down the road, you might realize the relationship won't go the distance. And it's hard to explain why this new person won't be around anymore.

Save yourself the stress by giving the relationship space to evolve. My recommendation is to wait at least three months at a minimum before introducing kids to someone new. And if you want to wait as long as six months, that's great too! By that point, you likely have a good idea of who they are and whether a future together is really possible.

2. Consider the co-parenting

Maintaining as civil a relationship as possible when co-parenting should be everyone's goal. Despite the breakup, she is still the mother of his children and ought to have some level of respect from both of you. In reality, custody battles, child support squabbles, and differing parenting styles can lead to bad feelings and turmoil. Not everyone can develop a harmonious co-parenting situation, despite their best efforts. However, when these issues exist...look out. You might be walking into a Jerry Springer situation.

Being realistic about the state of the co-parenting relationship is critical. Your first instinct might be to take his side and join in the bad mouthing of the ex. But remember, there are two sides to every story.

And even if you discover that she really is as awful as he's described, you should NEVER bad mouth her in front of his children. It might take your best Mother Theresa impression to pull that off...but she is the mother of those kids, and you talking bad about her will surely backfire on you.

3. Discuss the discipline boundaries

When my mom remarried, one of the smartest things she did was to decide that disciplining me was solely her territory. My step-dad was not part of those conversations, maybe not even part of those decisions (he is a bigger softie than my mom). I'm sure there were times he had to bite his tongue when I was acting out, though. If I was in the path of a speeding train, of course he would have stepped in. But when it came to things like being grounded or getting chores doled out as punishment for breaking the rules, it all came from my mom.

I realize now that it took a tremendous amount of commitment to that agreement. But it allowed me to forge my own relationship with my step-dad without feeling like he was trying to step in and take over the role of my father. Now in my case, my biological dad was still very much in the picture. So this arrangement might look different under different circumstances.

But my point is that when blending families, the two grownups need to discuss ahead of time how discipline will happen and who it comes from.

You may discover you both have different views on how to parent your kids. And those differences can cause issues in your relationship. If both sets of kids are living with you, even part of the time, it will require you to compromise and negotiate. It's not possible to have two sets of rules for the kids. Talking these differences out and agreeing on the ground rules ahead of time will help.