

Levels of Sexual Development

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(Rev 4/2016)

In working with couples, I have noticed a continuum of three different levels of what motivates a woman's sexuality to be expressed. It may be helpful for women to understand these levels of sexuality, which also reflect how fully she has embraced her sexual self. As you read through the different levels, see if you can identify which one best describes you, and which one you might want to be working toward.

Levels of Sexuality	
Level 1 Sexuality	<p>Level 1 sexuality is having sex mostly to meet your husband's needs. You don't really want to for your own sake. We might call this "duty sex" or "charity sex" where your body is involved, but your heart and mind aren't. This level represents a fairly negative motivation to be sexual.</p> <p>Level 1 sexuality is motivated either by a reluctant desire to be a "good wife," or because your husband is getting grumpy and irritable, so you feel like it's time to give him sex again. You mostly just want him to leave you alone. Even if you are able to muster a fairly civil attitude, you mostly have a negative mindset about sex.</p> <p>This level is more focused on a minimum quantity of sex needed for the husband to basically get by versus the quality of the sexual encounters. The focus is one-sided toward the husband's needs rather than a mutual attending to the wife's emotional and sexual needs as well. A woman at this level is often unaware that she even has any sexual needs. This level is certainly a beginning step for wives who haven't regularly been sexual with their spouse, but it's generally not the end goal for women.</p>
Level 2 Sexuality	<p>Level 2 sexuality is having sex still mostly to meet your husband's needs, but you do try to be more emotionally engaged and mentally present. You only "sort of" want to for your own sake. We might even call this "lovemaking" where your body is certainly involved, but so is your heart and mind.</p> <p>Level 2 sexuality is mostly motivated by a desire to be a "good wife," and/or as a genuine expression of love to one's spouse. There may also be some mutual enjoyment or pleasure involved in the sexual experience.</p> <p>This level is not as much focused solely on the quantity of sex but includes some focus on the quality of the connection during lovemaking. The focus on meeting needs may be more mutual, but this wife is often still unaware of her own needs for sexual intimacy and expression towards her spouse. It's more something she does for the benefit of her husband and marriage, though she participates much more willingly and happily. This level is certainly a significant improvement over Level 1 but is still hopefully not the end goal for women.</p>

Level 3 Sexuality

Level 3 sexuality is true, enthusiastic, shared lovemaking not just for your spouse, but for you too--to feel more whole, alive and complete. You actually want to for your own sake as well as your husband's. You proactively take responsibility for your desire and enjoyment. Your desire for sex comes from a place of fully embracing your God-given sexuality, and your sexual self. It may include being sure that your hormone levels are correct as well. You see yourself as a sexual person and see sexuality as a powerful gift from God to a husband and wife. At this highest level of connection, not only are you mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually engaged and present, but you work to continually nurture and develop this dimension.

Level 3 sexuality is motivated by a genuine desire to connect completely with your spouse--mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. This is a genuine expression of love toward one's spouse, as well as an expression of your fully embraced sensual self as a sexual being. Not only is there great enjoyment and pleasure in the experience, but there is also an active, passionate, fully surrendered giving of yourselves to each other within the encounter. Instead of a focus on one spouse's need for sex, there is an understanding that what you both really want and need is a deeper and broader mutual connection coming from within. This level of sexuality provides a shared sexual experience. It's a mutually intimate encounter where both partners' sexual connecting needs are realized and fulfilled.

This level is definitely focused on the quality of the connection and intimate communication with little thought needed regarding the quantity. There is a built-in focus on assuring that each other's healthy needs are attended to. There is a conscious recognition that both husband and wife have sexual needs even though the wiring behind those needs may be different (i.e. hers being more emotionally based and his generally being more physically based).

Like a beautiful sunset, Level 3 sexuality is something you both desire to experience together in order to make it its most meaningful. It's a shared intimate experience that comes from a place of wholeness as a true oneness of body and soul. It's a place of giving, receiving, sharing and fully experiencing.