

Interview with Martina Hughes of *Tantric Blossoming*:

The Tantra Approach To Intimacy

In this interview we explore the relationship of men and women to intimacy and the similarities and differences in their approach.

CD: Hi Martina, it's great to have you here and to get another viewpoint on that age-old 'mars and venus' debate regarding the differing approaches of men and women to intimacy. Before we even start though, can you define the term 'intimacy' so we are all really clear about what we are actually going to be talking about!

MH: Sure, and thank you for asking me. I see intimacy as the willingness to be vulnerable, transparent and to be able to expose the self to another. The more deeply one knows themselves and has explored their inner self, the more willing they are to be 'naked' with another – emotionally, physically, spiritually. Knowing yourself deeply means you have more to offer to the other in terms of feeling and ability to connect.

CD: Is there really a difference between the ways a man and a woman experience intimacy?

MH: There are certain things that are more important to women and men. Within a woman, there is a need to know that her partner is physically close by, and that's how she experiences intimacy.

Whereas in a man, he likes to be free and feels most loved when a woman offers him love without expectation or agenda. It can create conflict when a woman needs that physical closeness in order to keep the intimacy alive.

If both partners are fully present when they are together it becomes easy to leave each other free when they are apart. If they are incomplete and unavailable when together they will be grabbing for something that is intangible from the other person.

CD: How should couples approach these conflicts?

MH: Okay, I will use an example from a practice we use at Tantric Nights (*a monthly gathering for men and women run by Martina*).

We first have all the men in the group make a circle.

1. The women are gathered around the men and the first thing they do is move around them, sensing and feeling the man.

2. The next exercise is for the women to move around pulling and manipulating the man energetically.

3. The third exercise is to have the woman fall back into her own centre and feel her own space and give from her heart to the man.

It was from this place, the third exercise that both the men and women experienced more joy.

That is why working on the self and being comfortable with the self is so important. Even if you don't know these differences, if a woman can fall back into herself and stop pulling on him, not looking for him to validate herself, then the relationship can still work.

Likewise for him, if he gives himself the opportunity to be present with himself, to feel his own energy, power and desire and to receive the woman, he's not looking for her to become his mother or take care of him – this is often where people live in relationships. If he knows himself and is comfortable with himself then he is happy to fall back into his own core without needing to grab at a woman.

Also, when he can be really present and she feels like she is being received, she is less likely to be clingy. Women constantly come back to that place 'he doesn't see me/ feel me....' If that's her constant experience then she's not being transparent with herself, and thus not transparent with anybody else.

CD: What would your advice be for people who find themselves unfulfilled like this in their relationships?

MH: My advice for a woman in this situation would be to get comfortable with who she is, and with dropping into her own feminine essence.

I would instruct her partner in what it means to fully receive a woman, because most women have never been fully 'received' by a man.

CD: Can you explain what you mean by 'being fully received'?

MH: Being fully received is being in the company of a man who is present and is able to drink in the essence of a woman. He is feeling her from the inside – calling out the deeper aspects of her because he is constantly feeling into her, causing her to open.

CD: I am gathering that this is more than simply an emotional experience!

MH: The experience of 'presence' when a man is receiving a woman, is a physical, emotional and even a spiritual experience. He is seeing beneath the exterior of her – which is what most women long for.

CD: Ah, she speaks the truth! I remember in a previous conversation I had with you Martina, that you said ' a woman longs to be loved for her essence'. Can you speak more about this.

MH: Most women long to be loved for their essence – this is true, and it is a catch 22 situation. We put up so many barriers and thus men identify with the stories we have about ourselves- she gets upset that he doesn't get her from a deeper place. It's up to the woman to call herself on the games that she is playing.

Women express a higher level of dissatisfaction with men, and feel unhappy and think 'he' should change.

She needs to take responsibility, if she's expressing unhappiness, she needs to take responsibility for why she's unhappy. If there is something unacceptable about her relationship, she needs to ask herself, can she accept him for who he is, his truth? If not, then she can choose to leave.

We live in a world where we think the other person needs to change, we need to get present to reality. If that's who he is, she needs to take responsibility – can she accept that? If not, she needs to leave.

The essence of tantra is knowing what your truth is. There is no right or wrong. It's about having the integrity to be true to your own deeper truths.

CD: Yes, this makes a lot of sense. Can you discuss the positive and negative polarities that exist in men and women?

MH: As I said earlier, a woman longs to be loved for her essence. Her positive polarity is her heart. His positive polarity is his penis. Men often experience themselves as driven by their penis because that's their positive polarity, and then for the woman her positive polarity is her heart.

CD: (laughs) Sounds like a recipe for conflict!

MH: ...So a man is looking for sex, and the reason he is looking for sex is to know his own heart. This is his negative polarity, and this is where he receives a woman.

Men are often accused of thinking with their penis as a 'bad' thing. , it is simply where his energy arises and he moves towards a woman in order to know his feeling nature through the energy she brings in her heart. When we refer to positive and negative we are talking in magnetic terms – attraction and repulsion. So the man's positive polarity, the penis, penetrates the woman's negative polarity, the vagina, so that she can feel sex move through her body. And her positive polarity, the heart, penetrates his negative polarity, the heart, supporting him to feel love, connection and intimacy.

When a woman is having sex with a man and feels the sexual energy moving in her body, she has the experience of her heart overflowing and he feels that as well. In this way she draws him into his heart space.

CD: Can this be the result of a purely physical experience, or is this 'love'?

MH: My experience is that love is who we are, our essence, when we fill ourselves up and look after ourselves we overflow with love. It is nothing to get or to give. However the experience of deep sexual union will restore each to their essence and their essence is love.

CD: Okay, so in summary.....

MH: In summary, My advice for a man is to be as present in his own body as he can, to feel into and receive her, and not to deny his own masculine nature.

My advice for her is to surrender and relax into her own feminine so that she is always reflecting back her softness to the man.

CD: So, get comfortable with who you are, the more awareness of 'self' that you have, the more you will be open to expose to another your realness, your rawness and your vulnerability. There is such beauty in vulnerability! Thankyou, Martina, this is very enlightening!

MH: You're welcome.

Martina runs Tantra workshops and works individually with clients. For more information about Martina and Tantric Blossoming, you can visit her website: www.tantricblossoming.com

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