

**Ep #71: How to Improve Sex and Libido for Women with
Dr. Lyndsey Harper**



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Ep #71: How to Improve Sex and Libido for Women with Dr. Lyndsey Harper

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Hey, this is Dr. Priyanka Venugopal, and you're listening to *the Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast*, How to Improve Your Sexual Desire and Pleasure with Dr. Lindsay Harper. She's a board certified OB/Gyn physician, and she's a women's sexual health specialist. One of the things, and one of my intentions with this podcast is for high achievers, specifically working moms to feel more comfortable with their bodies, to have more of what they want, and that also includes having more pleasure.

I love that Lindsay is going to be sharing specific skills, tools, and strategies for how to overcome some of these really, really common obstacles that working moms are experiencing.

Before we get started in today's podcast episode, I also want to make sure that you know I have a brand new resource for you that is seriously “fire”. One of the biggest misconceptions that I see for high achievers is we think we need more time to lose weight. This is going to be totally dispelled for you if you follow my five day email training.

In five minutes or less per day, I'm going to help you start hitting your body goal faster, and it's not going to take you more time. You can go and grab this email training over at theunstoppablemombrain.com/email. Okay. Let's get into today's conversation with Dr. Lindsay Harper.

Hey Lindsay, welcome to the podcast. I cannot wait to have this conversation. You are not only a board certified OB/Gyn, but you are a women's sexual health specialist, which I think is so important for the women that are listening to this podcast. I wanna just dive in. I feel like we have so much to cover on sexual health and how we can help women improve their sex lives.

So let's just start with, can you introduce yourself? Tell us all about you, how you came to being an OB/gyn, and then more specifically how you started focusing on this specific field.

Lyndsey Harper: For sure. Yeah. Thank you so much for having me. So excited to be here and I love you know, chatting about all things women's sexual health, so always glad to do that.

So I have always wanted to be a doctor since I was a little girl. And so went down the very traditional path of, you know, pre-med, then straight to medical school. And then while I was in, actually while I was in college, I had the opportunity to be a labor and delivery technician, a job for which I was not qualified at all.

But I learned very quickly to just be, I just loved labor and delivery. And the person who got me the job was an OB/Gyn at the hospital. And he sort of spread the word that I was gonna go to medical school. And because of that, they all like, talked to me about what they were doing during deliveries.

I remember I was, you know, a tech for a c-section one time and the physician who I'll never forget, was like, Lindsay, this is a double footling breach. And actually it was a vaginal delivery. Like, don't forget that it's really cool. And I was like, okay. And at the time I really had no idea what it meant.

But then when I got to medical school I was like, wow, this is really amazing. So then, and you know when you get to medical school, I love kids and so I thought maybe I'll be a pediatrician. Very quickly on my pediatrics rotation, I was like, absolutely not. This is not the field for me. Got to OB/Gyn.

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Loved it for the same reason that I think so many of us do. We were sharing before we got started that, you know, we both love surgery. I love, love, love surgery. I love also the idea that you get to be a surgeon, but stick with people long-term. I spent two weeks, actually, this is really funny. I spent two weeks in an erectile dysfunction clinic at the VA in medical school and decided I never wanted to see another male patient again.

So sexual health actually got me into women's health.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: That's so crazy.

Lyndsey Harper: Isn't that, it's just ironic.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I love it.

Lyndsey Harper: So what I learned that I really loved about OB/Gyn is that we just have, it's such, I mean, I always like makes me emotional, but it's such a gift to be there for women in those really vulnerable times.

You know, like if there's a loss or if there's a trauma or if they're just scared because you're about to do something ridiculously invasive. You know, like it's just such an honor to be able to like be there and try to make that the best it can possibly be. And I, so that's what I ended up really loving, loving, loving about it and still love about it today.

And I think that that's really where my love of sexual health came in because we were, you know, participating in those moments of vulnerability in the office. And I was not, receiving that moment with, with the help that I thought that I should, right? So if someone's having an issue, like it kept happening in my private practice where people would be like, oh, I don't know what's wrong with me.

I never feel like having sex or, you know, like this over and over and over and over. And I'm like, oh my gosh, why are so many of my patients feeling this way? And I literally have no idea how to help them. Like I don't, I don't even know the first thing to tell them to do. So I started really kind of paying attention to that because it was an area that I felt like I really wasn't confident about. And so I started asking.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And in residency we don't really spend too much time on that to be fairly frank. Like in, in residency we focus on skills and, you know, surgery, surgery and like all these and we don't focus on this piece of it, which I, I love that you're bringing that It felt like there was a gap basically.

Lyndsey Harper: It's a huge gap. And what's interesting about it is beforehand, I didn't even recognize that it was a gap. Like I wasn't like, oh, I didn't have any sexual health training. My residency sucked. I didn't realize it until my patients needed it and I didn't have it. Like I didn't know what to do or say. And then I started reflecting and I was like, wait a minute.

Remember how you spent two weeks in the erectile dysfunction clinic as a medical student? Not even as a urologist. But I have had less training in women's sexual health than I did in men's sexual health, even though I'm an OB/Gyn, like, it's just mind blowing. Anyway, that made me start to feel really mad because I'm like, wait, why does no one care if we have pleasurable sex?

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If we wanna have sex, what our orgasms or arousal pathways are like? Like literally why does no one care in the field of medicine, but also kind of in a more general society? So, got mad. That was my first step. Then I went and joined IS Swish, which is the International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health.

Became like, so engrossed became a fellow of that organization and I came to a decision point which was, do I wanna open like a sexual medicine clinic here? I live in Dallas. In Dallas? Or do I want to, I had this idea that maybe there could be an opportunity to sort of change the narrative for OB-GYNs and for patients around sexual health, where we could share evidence-based information where it could help physicians feel empowered to talk about sexual health.

Right? If you don't even know what you're supposed to do for patients, then you're certainly not gonna ask them if they're having sexual health problems, right? But maybe if you know that there's a solution or at least a next step for them, then maybe if it can, if it comes up, certainly you'll have something to say, but maybe even we could encourage OBGYNs to ask.

So really decided that was gonna be the path for me and changed gears about four and a half years ago, and I've been working on that ever since.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I still remember. So the way that I discovered Lindsay is we're both in an OB/Gyn Facebook group. So shout out to anyone from the group that's listening. But I remember I was in practice as an attending when I first remember you sharing with the group that you were doing this and the work you were doing, and I remember just thinking, finally.

Finally, there is this step for patients and for women when they learn about your resources, which we're going to get to at the end today, but when they learn about the resources that you have created, like what an amazing gift. And I think ever since then, it kind of just piqued my interest. So whenever I would see your name in the group, I'm like, oh, what's happening?

What's happening over there? Because this is such an important topic. And then I think maybe what, like a month ago you might've posted something and I was like, Okay, this is the time the universe is telling me it's time to have this conversation. And again, a lot of what we do on the Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast is really how can we serve women to level up their life?

And I think for me, the biggest thing that I noticed when I was in practice, women that would start having babies and probably like the 10 years, like they would have a baby, and then the 10 years that followed, the three biggest complaints would be fatigue, weight gain and low libido, like time and time again.

It was, it was kind of the cycle that I would notice and the, the reason that it really struck me was the tone and tenor that my patients would come in with was, this is my fault. I'm doing something wrong, I'm missing something, there's a chip that's missing because I just have this low libido, this fatigue in this weight gain.

And I think what struck me. More with my journey was the weight gain and the fatigue. That was my personal story, and that's kind of what led me down that path. But the sexual health thing is, I think, so important that I'm so glad that you're here and we get to talk about it and just go down the rabbit hole.

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So, We know how you went from being an OB/Gyn, to really focusing on this piece. What is it that you think in your experience over the last four and a half years is the real problem? Like, why are women busy working moms? Why are women having this problem to begin with? What, what would you say? What, what, what are your thoughts?

Gosh, it's a loaded question.

Lyndsey Harper: So it, yeah. How long do we have?

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: We have forever. Let's go. Okay.

Lyndsey Harper: So I think, you know, the basic fundamental tenet, well, there's several of them, but there is a very, I would say, pervasive and general to most cultures, sort of role of women and our relationship to sexuality, right?

So in the beginning of our relationship with sexuality, we're not taught about women's pleasure. We're not taught that 87% of women experience orgasm through clitoral stimulation. And so then we're always chasing this penis and vagina orgasm and feeling broken if that's not our story, and you know, reaching out to our OBGYNs about why we can't have one.

Then we get to motherhood and we're assigned a new role as a mother, and we're fed all of this information about what motherhood looks like. How does it look to show up as a professional mom, right? Like not only do I give everything I've got to my work, but I also am required to give that to my children.

What's not modeled for us is how to continue to sustain our relationship with our own sexuality, our intimate relationship with our partners. That's sort of told, if you're a good mom, then everything, all of these other things are gonna take a backseat, right? And so we prioritize everything else at the cost of this piece of ourselves because we weren't taught that it was that important to begin with.

And it wasn't really maybe ever that. I mean, I think for many of us it is very important and it is very fulfilling, but I think it can kind of be put on the boat of the first thing to go because we don't have any ownership of it in the first place. Right? And so when our lives are feeling overwhelmed, a bit out of control, and we're trying to grasp at control and structure and success that we, we go for the things that we're told will sort of mean the most in that, in that, uh, picture.

And that includes like, you know, being an unstoppable mom, right? Like, how can I win at momming and how can I show up in my professional career in a way that would make myself proud, would make my patients proud, would make my parents proud?

Unfortunately, none of those things involve having great sex or pleasurable sex. And so then we just lose a little bit of ourselves or a lit a big part of ourselves for a long time until maybe we ask about it, or maybe we start to wake up and, you know, think of other thoughts. Or maybe we become very unhappy with our intimate, you know, relationship because that's missing.

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But we didn't ever really invest in it for a long time in the first place. So there's lots of downstream, really sad, and, um, you know, uh, world changing effects that, that a lot of this can have on us. And that information is not conveyed to us really early enough in our journey, uh, to help us take control over it.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. I love what you're saying about it not having been modeled to us. Like we, we are modeled, you know, being a mom, we're modeled being, you know, how we show up in the workforce and in the workplace, but we are not modeled self-pleasure and really like caring for ourselves at the highest level. And I think the other thing, I'm curious what your thoughts are on this.

The other thing that I think is modeled, and this is just society like with movies and books and what you see on social media is that women are an object for the desire of men. And I think that what I would notice, at least with some of my patients, is like they would just have sex. Just to have sex because their husbands or their partners really wanted to, but they did not experience pleasure.

And so then they felt forced or they felt pressure to do so, but they were just like willing to do it because they thought they had to. So it's like a double whammy. So not only are they not experiencing pleasure, but now they're feeling the pressure and the stress of like, this is how I have to sustain my marriage.

I have to do it. And that just, I think adds on this layer of, I mean, just terrible. It's terrible. And. Yeah. Yeah. So how do you speak to that? Like that piece of I have to do it, and like how do you take that piece off so that people can even access pleasure for themselves?

Lyndsey Harper: Absolutely. Yeah. I think there's so much to what you're saying, and like I could have a big philosophical conversation about how really women's sexuality has been boiled down to reproduction and men's pleasure.

Right? And if it doesn't fall under one of those two categories, society hasn't prioritized it. And we actually, even as a medical community, in our training, haven't prioritized it either. So I think there's like clues there as to why this is missing from our curriculum. Um, but if, and so what happens is we have a kernel of a problem, right?

So maybe it's low desire, and then over time what gets put on top of that is guilt. Is shame is this, you know, icky layer of, um, responsibility for the failure of a relationship, right? Because you're not doing your part or having this idea of what's called duty sex, or if you are, then it's like begrudgingly.

And that adds a whole other layer of resentment within a relationship. And I think it's just important to understand, to maybe take a step back. Right? Because the thing about sexual health, because it's shrouded in all of this secrecy and shame is that any conversation about sex can feel really overwhelming to people.

Right? Especially if it's within their partnership because there's so much kind of built on top of it, on top of that little kernel of a problem. Is my partner not attracted to me? Am I, I'm having a body image like concern. But we don't think about it like that. We just talk to ourselves really negatively about all the things wrong with us.

You know, is there something going on outside of this? You know, an agreed upon relationship, like all these other thoughts and emotions and insecurities really swirling, swirling, swirling. And so sometimes what it

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takes is for us to take a step back and, and start to really educate ourselves just like we're doing on this podcast to say, wow, these are not just my problems.

43% of women have a sexual health problem. Right. 38% of women describe themselves as having low desire. So these, this is not an individual issue. This is a, a large common really, um, you know, pressing issue that we as gynecologists hear about all the time, but we are not allowed to share like, Hey, did you see the three people in the waiting room right before you all told me the same exact thing?

You know, like, I know that's what we wanna say, but that, but obviously we're not, that's not right. And so the point is, is that there's no talk about this at the societal level, and that makes us as individuals feel like we're struggling alone. But when you really take a step back, start to learn and be educated, You can understand how common and universal these issues are.

Also, the, um, different ways that they can be addressed that really have nothing to do with your relationship, but more about how you, your self-concept as a sexual being and how you relate to sex. And whenever you're allowed to bring back some of the power to your own, you know, um, way of thinking about sexuality and the future of your sexual health, that takes away some of those yucky, insecure emotions.

And allows us to be in control of our future rather than feeling like, you know, it's a, it's an out of control issue that's sort of hopeless and we're helpless in and we're just gonna keep it aside because we can't possibly start to deal with it.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I love that, and the nugget that I'm taking away from what you're saying is that by educating ourselves about our body, it's like the first step to normalizing and validating our experience.

One of the things that you and I were talking about before we hit the record button is my mission on this podcast is for women to feel seen and heard, and for their greatest insecurities and their greatest obstacles to feel validated that you're not alone. I mean so many high achievers who are surrounded by, by humans all the time feel really alone in their problems around their bodies, around hitting their goal weight around their sexual health.

And I think my mission with this podcast is to bring a voice to those obstacles. And I love that we're they're, that we're getting to do that. So when you think about somebody that is listening to this podcast and they really are feeling like they either have low desire or they, um, maybe they have that layer of guilt or shame or embarrassment, like something is wrong.

What's, like, what's the very first thing that they can do to educate themselves? Is it understanding? 'cause again, as you and I both know, there are different types of diagnoses that can create a problem for someone. So maybe we can start with that. What are the different types of diagnoses that you see most commonly that's affecting, generally that's affecting like the busy, the busy woman.

Lyndsey Harper: Yeah, I would say, you know, the number one killer of libido is stress. And so if you're a busy person and identify with this idea of stress, which I think all of us.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Everyone listening. Everyone listening, yes.

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Lyndsey Harper: Hello, hello out there. Yes. Yeah. And then that is likely, you know, for, I wouldn't say it's common because also on the other, on the other side of this, we hear from women who have high sexual desire and they feel othered as well, right?

Anything sort of outside of the, I am attracted to my partner and we have sex regularly is considered weird, right? And or not normal, right? So we really just wanna take into account that, um, you know, if we're talking about low desire, specifically stress is a major, major problem. And then it's like, well, yeah.

Newsflash, like stress is a major problem for everything. Right? For our physical health, absolutely. For our mental health, for our sexual health, for our sort of attitudes. So, um, I think it's sometimes a little bit dismissive to be like, reduce your stress, you know, and be like on it.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Absolutely.

Lyndsey Harper: You know, like, okay.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. It's kind of like gaslighting like, oh, just go get some stress management so we can solve this problem, for sure.

Lyndsey Harper: Yeah. Right. Yeah. It's like, oh great. I'll just, Schedule another massage, except I have no more time for that, you know?

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Right.

Lyndsey Harper: Um, and so, but I don't think that means you necessarily have to like, do anything, but I think the knowledge of that, it's like, you know, there's a, I'm sure on your podcast and, and in life we talk a lot about seasons of life.

Like if there are different seasons and that's okay. I think what I really love to talk about and to share with people is like if you're missing the intimacy part of your life, whether it's with yourself, with your partner, intimacy sex does a lot for a partnership more outside of just the sex itself, right?

It can bond emotionally and it's not as a transaction, it's as a true bonding experience. Just like we might think about going on vacation with our partner. It's not, we don't go on vacation with them to get something else. We do that to build memories and to build experiences, and I think intimacy is a lot like that, right.

And so if you're missing that intimacy with yourself or your partner, then I think there's certain ways to start to work on that. And, education is a really important one, right? So if you are a woman who's not regularly experiencing orgasm with intimacy, that's a definite place to start, right? And there's so many women that aren't.

There's this huge thing that we talk about in sexual health called the Orgasm Gap. Where, you know, in the high 80 percent, uh, of men experienced an orgasm in their last sexual encounter, and it's mid sixties for women, right? So what we know is that men are having orgasms nearly every time, and women are having orgasms almost half the time.

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It's like, well wait, if my pleasure isn't prioritized, I'm probably, that is duty sex. You know, like I'm doing it as a right. I'm doing it for you, bro. Like, or, or other partners, like, good, you're welcome. You know? Right so it's like if it's meant to be an intimate situation, we have to prioritize both partners' pleasure.

It has to be an equal sharing of creating that intimacy. But then there's also another really important topic, which is called responsive desire. And this is something that is game changing for, like, I would say, you know, of the women that have low desire, 90% of them respond to this idea of responsive desire.

So whenever sexual sort of, uh, the sexual pathway was first being explored, we thought desire came first and then arousal. And then this plateau, and then orgasm, and then resolution. But what we learned over time is that for many women, actually arousal, which is in the physical body, comes before desire, and then it sort of kicks off the pathway.

So you don't always have to feel desire in your brain. And then act on it to achieve arousal, achieve, achieve orgasm. We can flip it where we say, okay, my [00:21:00] goal is intimacy and in order to achieve that goal, I'm going to, I'm gonna start doing things that get my physical body aroused. And so some examples of that are reading erotica.

It's actually a super powerful tool to kind of get back in touch with desire because it kicks off physical arousal and then your brain's like, oh, actually sex doesn't sound so bad. Like maybe that's something I'm interested. . And so then you can meet your intimacy goals with your partner or with yourself, and then you have, you start to build over time the positive association in your mind with sex and pleasure, right?

What happens when we have a negative association, when we think about sex interrupting our sleep, when we think about sex as a duty, you know, to our relationship or to our partner? That's really ingraining a negative association with sex, right? So these negative thoughts, swirling, swirling, swirling.

But when we can flip the script and say, okay, my goal is intimacy. I know if I can do something to arouse my, you know, body first, then my, um, desire will kick off. Then you can move over to this positive pathway, and that can lead to sort of greater and greater opportunity for reestablishing intimacy in your life. Where before it was dwindling, dwindling, dwindling.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I really like that. And you, and I also really liked how you started with how stress is the number one blocker of that. And I think I agree with what you're saying. Sometimes we can just say, okay, just like reduce your stress. Yeah. But we can't actually do that.

But I think just being aware that. Oh, it turns out like I really do feel stressed all the time, or often, or it's this low buzzing thing that's happening in the background. And I wonder if that is playing a role and I think just being aware of it sometimes aware, takes the mystery of it away or takes the, like, I wonder why I have low libido.

Well now I know it's maybe because it's low, low buzzing stress. And with my stress, I almost think of it like, you know, if I'm on this journey, I'm in a car and I'm driving on the road and like stress is just maybe part of my life for now. What if we like to put it in the backseat? We just make a spot.

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I love that. Like, hey, welcome stress. I know you're here. Like, you know, we're gonna figure you out eventually, but you're in the backseat of the car. How do I want to achieve this end goal? Which is what you're talking about, this intimacy. I want more for my sex, my sexual health. I want more for my desire.

So with my stress sitting in the background. I wonder how I might create that. So do you think that someone that's experiencing this low buzzing stress, maybe they don't have the tools to manage their stress, which is really what we do in coaching, but if they don't have that, can they read, read erotica and notice that they get, get to the arousal phase even if they're stressed? Or do you feel like they need other tools in addition to that?

Lyndsey Harper: Yeah. You know, for some people they can, I think it just depends on how much that stress is, um, interfering really in their everyday life. If, if you're experiencing a level of stress that's distracting your attention from your tasks, work, you know your relationship with others, and that's I mean, I would say that that's something that needs to be worked on. Um, and, and in this case, the, probably the same is true, I would say erotica for the most part. Some people are, are visual, whether it's written, some people are audio, they wanna listen. But a nice way to approach that is like you could, you know, listen or read erotica in the bath at night, like while you're winding down after you've gotten all the kids to bed.

This is like my personal MO, by the way. Um, and that's a great, like, space making activity, you know what I mean? It's like nine o'clock. Everybody's in bed. Hopefully if they're not getting up again, which you know, a lot of them do. And it's mom's time. Do not talk to me. There's a candle like there, you know, I'm reading whatever.

Um, but for people who are having a little bit more trouble with that, another evidence-based tool for desire particularly, but it also has effects on orgasm, is mindfulness. And I know I feel like everyone probably talks about mindfulness all the time, but in this situation, you can really understand how it applies.

Because if your brain is always busy with the laundry that's mildewing, and the washing machine, and the lunches and the birthday gift that you forgot to get, you know, like all the mom things, then you can never be present, even if you have kicked off your arousal desire pathway, when it's time for sex, you're not in your body.

You're still in your brain, right? And so, yes, your partner may be doing things to try to please you. You might, there might be things that are normally pleasurable, but in this context of that stress of that list, it's not, it's just not gonna happen. Right? And so if that's you, or if you're finding that you know, you're not able to get where you wanna be through, uh, reading erotica or whatever it is you choose to do, then, you know, I think that mindfulness has a huge component and that's evidence-based. That's not an, I think statement. That's an I know statement.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, absolutely.

Lyndsey Harper: Um, where, where it can really help to improve in that particular situation.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: So how does somebody become more mindful, like in your words? Yeah, tell me about, I mean this is something we talk about on this podcast all the time is mindfulness effectively, but I'm

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curious in your words, if, you know, like, the visual that I have is someone who has done all the things, like they, they're like listening to this podcast.

They got the erotica, they are like ready to go 'cause they know this is a priority. They have their stress and they're like, you know what? This is a priority. But then the moment, like the time comes and all they can think about is the things that they have to do for tomorrow. The project deadline that's due on Friday, their kid that's driving them crazy, like as you were saying, their mind is going, how can they use mindfulness to calm that down in your words and then come back to the present moment.

Lyndsey Harper: Yeah, I mean you're probably, it sounds like more of an expert on this than I am, but we work with a lot of psychologists and mental health professionals on the platform and have learned so many tricks and, uh, tips that I have found to be very personally effective. And so sometimes it is as easy as, you know, for me, like listening to and paying attention to my breath.

Right. So say you've set the stage for all of these things that you know are positive for you and you're invested in, but you just can't get there mentally. You know, taking some time to do some box breathing or to do some straw breathing or whatever the tool is for you, I think can really, really be helpful.

For other people though, it's more about changing something from a sensory perspective, whether it's something very cold or something that smells really good or something you can kind of find a way for your brain to tap into a complete change. Maybe it's turning your favorite song on really loud, right?

So something that's a change that sort of jolts you out of your current sort of stressful circumstance. I think that there's, you know, a lot of, a lot of strategies, another that we have on the platform are more, um, they're kind of like, I would say, like intimacy meditations. So one of them is called Honoring your Vulva, which you know is a lot for people who are, even new to the word vulva.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I know, but it's like, you usually should be surprised how many people call like, 'cause they're teaching their daughters, they say vagina. I'm like, and I go and I'm like, I'm sorry, the OB/Gyn me is coming out, but it's vulva. And it's a conversation every time. It's called a vulva. Yes.

Lyndsey Harper: Okay. We've had that conversation. Now we can do, yes. The external genitalia is called the vulva. Yes. So everything you can see on the outside is a vulva. Yes. So it's really just about like, okay, say you've mastered the breathing or you've mastered the, you know, whatever embodiment meditations. I love insight timer.

But um, you know, then you're ready to move on to more like intimacy focused mindfulness. We have those opportunities on the platform as well, so that you can marry the mindfulness with sort of the, you know, self-discovery and self-appreciation and sort of sexual, you know, connection. Um, and the two can kind of start to cross paths.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And one thing I'm just gonna add here is the other thing I've noticed, and this is true not just for intimacy, but really for being present in the moment, again, I think ruminating or worrying about tomorrow is actually just a habit that high achievers especially have because we used to think it was useful at some point, and so it just turned into a subconscious habit.

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But one of the things that I have found to be super effective for that is actually to respond to the worry rather than trying to distract myself from it. One of the things that I find is to like to talk, talk to the worry, like, Hey, I know you're worried about the kids, or, I know you're worried about that dentist appointment.

I promise you tomorrow at five o'clock we're gonna handle it. And it's like actually closing the loop and responding to it. I think the worry is like, oh, okay, thanks. Just wanted to make sure that like our life was handled before you go off and have sex. Like while you're doing that thing. That's not responsible.

I'm here to be. I think that's what it is. Like we ruminate because we wanna be responsible in our life, and I think what we're talking about is maybe our sexual health and paying attention to it is like the most responsible thing that you could be doing for yourself simply because it will make you feel better. Yeah. I so kind.

Lyndsey Harper: But also like a long-term investment in us as individuals and in your relationship, right? Yeah. It's almost like it's this idea of compound interest. It's like, okay, well you may not understand what this investment means on the day that you make it, but over time as a habit, that interest in yourself, that investment in yourself, that investment in your partnership, Grows and grows and grows rather than spins and spins and spins until there's really nothing left in the bank.

Right? Yeah. And so not only is it responsible to feel and prioritize pleasure, but it's a responsible investment in not losing ourselves fundamentally and not you know, uh, taking that intimacy in our relationship for granted fundamentally. So I think that there's lots of different ways to think about it as a really responsible and, you know, time worthy, um, use of, use of our energy and, and our hours as well.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I love that, and I think that that's important because I see so often that when women are talking about their bodies, whether it's to reach their, their body goals, lose weight, or for their sexual pleasure, I think sometimes there's this flavor of like, it's indulgent. Like it's, it's an indulgence for me to focus on myself and my body, and it's not the quote unquote responsible thing to do.

There's so many higher priorities, and I think what we are wanting to bring a voice to and bring some attention to is that what would it be like to prioritize your body and your pleasure? Like how might that actually level up every area? Every area of your lived experience because like this is, there's just one you, if you're right, feeling better in your body if you're having more pleasure in your life.

I'm just getting the spidey sense that we will show up more as the human we want to be as moms, as wives at, at work. I mean.

Lyndsey Harper: A hundred percent. Yeah. Uh, I mean, yeah, it's like if we, if we recognize, like I think intellectually we can recognize that we are, you know, human beings and at the core essence of being a human, sexuality is a part of that, right?

And if there's a part of us, a huge part of us that we're repressing, we're ignoring, we're not paying attention to, then we are in a way, neglecting a piece of ourselves, right? And so if we're trying to show up as a whole person, as a, with a whole heart and ready to share who and what we are with the world, that has to be a fundamental component to it, for sure.

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. So this podcast is effectively give, giving yourself, giving you permission to like let, let it all go and just like really prioritize. So like, circling back to one of the things you said was, you know, how prioritizing your pleasure and your desire can improve the bond that you have with your partner over time.

How do you, how do you recommend someone that's listening to this who feels embarrassed? Especially if it's been a quote unquote taboo topic in their household? Yeah. Or they feel embarrassed to talk about it, or maybe there's some like guilt around it. How do you recommend somebody approach this conversation for the first time with their partner and really share like, Hey, I want to prioritize my pleasure too.

Yeah. Like absolutely curious. Absolutely. Like what are your, what are your thoughts on that?

Lyndsey Harper: A hundred percent. So first of all, if that, if, if someone is listening to this, they're like, oh my gosh, I'm so glad she asked that. That's me. Like, this is the story of so many women Yeah. Who have been in a sexual partnership for decades and literally never talked about sex one time. Like it's, you know, that's just how, how it happens a lot of the time.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And so if that's you and we're changing it now, it's like, I don't wanna pull out the rug from our, like our relationship has been going this way, and I'm like making a change.

Lyndsey Harper: Exactly. Like, is everything gonna be okay? You know? Yeah.

And so I think, you know, just how we were talking at the beginning or earlier, which is about like the first place is education. The same stands true here. If you kind of can build some confidence through education, then you can come to a place where, The conversation becomes less emotional and more intellectual, you can start to own that power.

And it's not really about, I mean, it's power within us. It's not necessarily power within the relationship, but I think sometimes if we don't feel empowered, then we are not gonna move forward with any type of conversation. Right. Because it feels too vulnerable and scary. So, you know, one tactic that I like to talk about is, Just talking to your partner and saying, Hey, like, I just listened to this crazy woman on this podcast, and she was saying some stuff, and I would love to just download with you.

You know, like another, another intro is like...

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: You know, that partner's gonna be like, I love the person that created this podcast because you, if you listen, if you improve, I, I mean, I've seen this happen as in practice, when you improve your desire and you want to have sex, your partner will love it.

And they're gonna be, where did you discover this? Like, let's get, like, let's get you more of that.

Lyndsey Harper: What's going on? Exactly.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Keep going.

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Lyndsey Harper: That's, that's the same exact idea. The second opportunity or way you could possibly do it is to be like, Hey, I am so thankful for our relationship. Like I wanna make sure I'm investing in as much in this relationship as I'm investing in our children, in my career.

Um, and part of that I think is our sex life. Like, I know we've never talked about this before, but I would love to see if it's something that we could start to kind of connect more on. And I, I was wondering if you were open to like, having more conversations about that. You know, so like opening the door to like we're in a partnership.

This is an area that I see that I could put more into. What do you think about that? You know, like kind of just, yeah, opening the door for conversation. Another way it, because sometimes people are like, I really wanna have this conversation. I'm so motivated. Like we get 'em all pumped up.

And then they get in front of their partner and they're like, literally like the words cannot come out. It's like it's not gonna happen. Yeah. Yeah. So if that's the case, you can take one of these ideas or one of your own and you can write it down and give it to your partner in a letter. And I think sometimes that's just so much less in the moment pressure.

It still might feel very nervous to put it in a place they might find it or whatever. But that's one option. And then you know also, there's always opportunity for support through a coach or through a therapist, um, who really can help facilitate these conversations and help keep them. You know, the one thing that can happen sometimes is people have a, some couples, this is not the majority, but will have a hard time because it might feel threatening in some way.

Or it's just they're not able to get past a barrier. And if that's the case, there's also hope for that, but you just might need some extra help and that's totally fine. And those resources are available too.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I just think it's so important. I wanna just kind of normalize that talking about this for the first time with your partner might feel vulnerable because it is, right?

You're saying something and you're sharing something deeply personal that you haven't shared before. So if you feel that feeling, it's okay and normal. And also it might be possible, and this is not true for everyone, but it might be possible that vulnerability is just a gateway to intimacy and connection.

And the thing that we have actually been desiring with our partner is actually intimacy. And I think that the way we get there is vulnerable honesty. I, and this kind of reminds me actually, I remember I used to want my husband to be able to read my mind. I'm like, we've been married for 15 years.

I mean, as of now we've been married for 15 years. I'm like, doesn't he know that? Right? I want him to do this and I don't want him to do, like does he should know me better by now. Yeah. And I remember I used to kind of assume that he should know what's in my brain, and unfortunately that's just not reality that, so I doesn't happen that way.

I think just wanna kind of like, I just wanted to kind of put that out there that, you know, that thought that they should know me or I want them to guess. I mean, we can keep trying that game, but I have a feeling that

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they're going to keep guessing and you're not going to get what you truly want. So whether it's Valentine's Day or your birthday, or what you want to experience in your sex life or how you want to be, I think using words to communicate it while it feels vulnerable is also a gateway to connect and get more of what you want.

Lyndsey Harper: Absolutely. I love that. And I'm on the same boat as you. I like, yeah. Send my husband. I'm like, listen sweetheart, my love language is words of affirmation. And so he went and bought like cards for years and on whatever occasion it is, he'll just write a card and that's literally, that's all I need.

I'll buy myself. You know, whatever. I don't really need gifts or flowers, but I just need you to tell me like, you see me. Do you know what I mean? Yes. Yeah. And so just communicating that and being like, literally all I need is a card. He went out, was able to arm himself with the cards and just writes in them, pours his heart out to me and then that's we're good.

Do you know what I mean? Like that's...

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And you totally what you needed. Yes. Yeah. I remember for me it was like I used to, this was like when I was at my heaviest, I weigh like around 200 pounds and I remember my husband who's like a naturally thin person, can eat four dinners and not gain weight.

Every night our routine used to be like Netflix binge, cheese and crackers, and a glass of wine. That was just like our routine. Yeah. This is after having a full dinner and I remember I was like trying to lose weight. This would happen time and time again. I would try to lose weight and every night he'd bring out the cheese, his like little plate cheese and crackers, glass of like bottle of wine.

He'd be like, oh, do you want some? And I remember being so mad, like, don't you know that I'm trying to lose weight. Why are you sitting there offering it to me. And also on the flip side, if he didn't offer it to me, I'd be pissed. Like, yeah, why aren't you offering me?

Lyndsey Harper: Do you think I'm fat?

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, yeah, exactly. You know, like, why aren't you offering it to me? So like, I remember I used to have this like inner monologue of irritation, like, doesn't he know me better? Yeah. And I, it it, I had to come to the point where I would say to him like, listen, Me hitting my body goal this year is really important. I'm taking so many steps to get there.

Yeah, I would really appreciate it. I love that you know, you can enjoy your cheese and crackers and whatever you wanna do, but I would really appreciate it if you didn't keep asking me about it. Yeah. And it was so crazy. He actually just needed me to give him the permission to not ask.

Lyndsey Harper: To stop. Yeah.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And it just changed. I mean, it was just one small example, but saying it, I felt weird. I'm gonna be honest. I mean, we've been married forever at this point. I'm like, I know this feels kind of awkward that I'm asking you to not ask me, but like can just not. Right. It was so helpful.

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Lyndsey Harper: Can you do me a favor? Totally. It was helpful.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: So I think this, that's awesome. This is kind of a plug to just like, you know, it is vulnerable to speak up and to say what you want, and maybe there's a fear of rejection there. I think that that's a big one. Like a fear of rejection for what the partner might say. But otherwise you're just kind of rejecting yourself along the way. If you don't say what you have to say.

Lyndsey Harper: Wow. No, I think that's so important and so, yeah. Such a good reminder for all of us because there's so many, to your point, there's so many like micro examples of that, right? That we could practice every day and I think definitely sexual health is one of those opportunities for sure.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I love it so much. So I mean, we've been talking about so many, so many things. I feel like this conversation, we could probably do parts two and three, which we should. But can you tell everyone about your platform and what you've been creating for women that is just going to help them level up their sex life and really bring this to the forefront if it's something that they want.

Lyndsey Harper: Totally. So the name of the app that our company sort of thought of and runs is called Rosy. And it's available in both app stores on Android and in the Apple App Store. Our mission of the company is to erase sexual shame and isolation for women everywhere. And we really take a personalized approach to sexual health.

And we have created an evidence-based place where women can access personalized education. So we really support sexual health from, um, learning about sexual pleasure, just basic sex education, which so many of us missed out on all the way through the reproductive lifespan. So if we're talking about someone who's experienced sexual trauma, um, someone who has sexual pain, someone who is experiencing infertility, who is pregnant, postpartum, menopause, sex and children is a big topic on the platform. Um, menopause all the way to sex and aging, breast cancer and sexuality. So if you're a woman, oh, we have support for trans women.

So if you're a woman, identify as a woman and you're having a sexual issue, we hope that Rosy has evidence-based resources for you. And that's how we've created it. So we have created a bunch of support with physicians, with pelvic floor, physical therapists, mental health, um, experts, um, and, you know, other, uh, other professionals in the field to really support people in a holistic way.

Right? So from the medical standpoint, from a mental health standpoint, and also really understanding cultural nuances or overlays because sexuality there, you can't avoid that. And, and we really don't want to. We're not trying to create a sort of, you know, person's experience in Rosy, we're trying to meet each person where she is.

So we have resources specific for Muslim women, for conservative Christian women, for Jewish women, um, who that can speak to, Hey, in your faith. And they are women of those faiths who are sexual health, um, experts who can say, Hey, in our culture, in our religious text, these are some things that, you know, we know are, are present.

Like, how can we maybe reshape that in our minds to become something that's positive for our sexual relationships or for our sexuality. We have a library of sex positive, uh, female pleasure focused erotica. Um,

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that is our erotica editor is a sex therapist turned erotica writer. We have written erotica and audio erotica really to kick off that arousal desire pathway that we talked about.

And that's extremely efficacious. We have a community where women can talk to one another and we have coaching on the platform as well. And these are like you sometimes physicians turned sex coaches, nurse practitioners turned sex coaches, physician assistants turned sex coaches. We do groups on the platform, so if you wanna learn about sex positions or you know, something like that, there's opportunities to anonymously learn in a group setting.

And then we also do individual coaching as well. Well, so we're there to really try to provide holistic support so that physicians can feel comfortable talking to patients about sexual health and patients. And just women generally can feel, um, that there's a trusted place to get the help and the community that they need and deserve.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Oh my gosh. I, it's, I mean, everything you just shared, it's, it doesn't sound like it's just a holistic approach, but it sounds like such a robust arsenal of tools that I think a woman can just have in her back pocket, so whatever is coming up for her. It sounds like you've, I mean, everything you said, I was like, oh, I, oh, like that.

Every single scenario is covered, which I just love, so thank you. I think that Rosy is a brilliant app. Thank you so much, Lindsay, for being on the podcast and having this conversation and really bringing a voice to something that I think high achievers, especially working moms need more of.

And I hope to have more of you on the podcast in the future, but thank you so much for coming.

Lyndsey Harper: It's been my pleasure. I've had such a great time just chatting with you all about this and thanks for the invitation and I'm very, very honored to be here.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Love it. Bye. I seriously loved today's conversation and I hope you did too.

You can learn all about Dr. Lindsay Harper over at meetrosoy.com and of course in our show notes page where we will link everything for how to find Rosy and how to get more information about this topic. And if you wanna hit your body goal with less time this year and you really want to make it a priority, I highly encourage you to grab my email training over at theunstoppablemombrain.com/email. In five minutes or less per day, you can start turning this boat around where you start hitting your goals with way more ease and more importantly, start maintaining results. I cannot wait for you to give it a try, and I will see you in your email inbox.

Okay, have a great week. Bye.