

Gender Equality on Sexual Desire and Intimacy Behaviour

by Desire Technologies



Report conducted by Desire Technologies, creator of Desire - app for couples.

Leading this report: Marta Plaza

Plaza is co-founder of Desire Technologies, a company with the mission to bring new, smart adult games, fueled with love and gender equality.

Site and contact: www.desire.games

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PURPOSE. To understand if there are differences between genders regarding intimacy, sexual behaviour and sexual desire, and the reasons behind these differences.

METHOD. This report is divided in to two parts. The first part analyses anonymous and public data from women and men that play Desire¹ (intimate mobile game for couples—Android and iOS application). The report analyses data from 253,205 users to demonstrate key insights such as which gender creates an account more often, the differences between the top 50 predefined dares by gender, the differences in public comments on the app and more.

The second part of the report consists of findings from 17 interviews conducted with professionals on human sexuality in six different countries and their personal point of view on the differences and similarities between genders on sexual desire and intimacy behaviour.

FINDINGS. The outcome of the analysis is that sexual desires are very similar for both women and men with no significant differences.

However, there are evident differences between genders in regards to intimacy behaviour that arise from personal experience of culture, history, religion, schooling and sex education. All of these factors determine and dictate how people behave in their sexual and intimate life.

Finally, the analysis also shows that long standing stereotypes about men being more sexual and women more romantic are changing and that on an individual level, sexual desires, the desire to connect and have great sex with our partners, is universal and not limited to gender or culture.

¹ Desire is a competition between partners. One partner dares the other partner to do something, and when this is done, the person dared receives points in the game. An example of a predefined dare found in the app is: *'This is your chance to give me the massage of my dreams. I'll wear my sexiest underwear and you can bring oil, soft towels and your strong hands.'* This report analyses the top 50 most used predefined dares.

Quantitative analysis based on 2.2M public messages and 934,072 predefined dares.

Data analysis

When it comes to playing the game, there are some indicators that we can anonymously analyse differences and similarities by gender. We analysed 2.2M public messages and 934,072 predefined dares sent thru the game. Below are the indicators that were analysed of the performance in the game and the results.

DIFFERENCES & SIMILARITIES OF MESSAGES SENT BY GENDER

In the game there are short predefined messages that one member of the couple can send to the other by shaking the phone. Some examples of these messages are, '*I love you*', or '*You turn me on*'. The game contains a total of 92 predefined messages that have been sent more than 2.2 million times.

The analysis shows that the two genders send a similar number of these sweet and spicy predefined messages to each other. Apart from the frequency of messages, the study wanted to see if the types of predefined messages were similar. In order to analyse this, the top 50 predefined messages were grouped in four categories: *sweet* (e.g. I love you), *hot* (e.g. You turn me on), *compliment* (e.g. You are wonderful) and *other* (e.g. Send me a dare). The differences are almost nil. Women *compliment* their partner slightly a bit more than men, and men send slightly more *hot* messages than women. However, differences are insignificant: for example, both women and men send the same proportion of *sweet* messages to their relative.

Taking the top five messages that are sent with more frequency, there is no difference between them. Women and men say, '*I love you*', the same number of times.

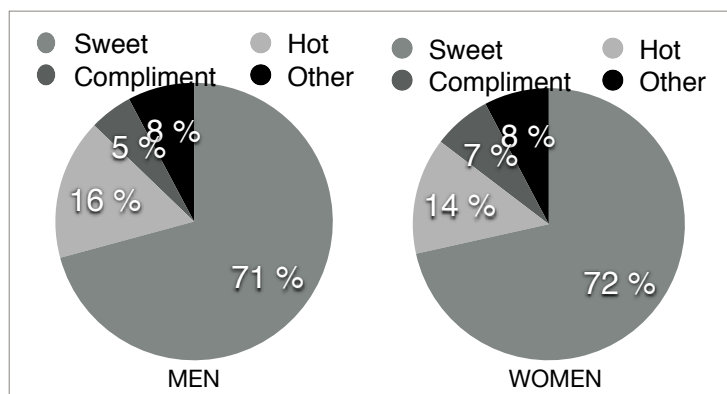


Figure 1 | Analysis of the top 50 most sent messages out of 2.2 million messages sent. The left graphic shows the percentage of predefined messages sent by men grouped by type. The right graphic shows the same data sent by women.

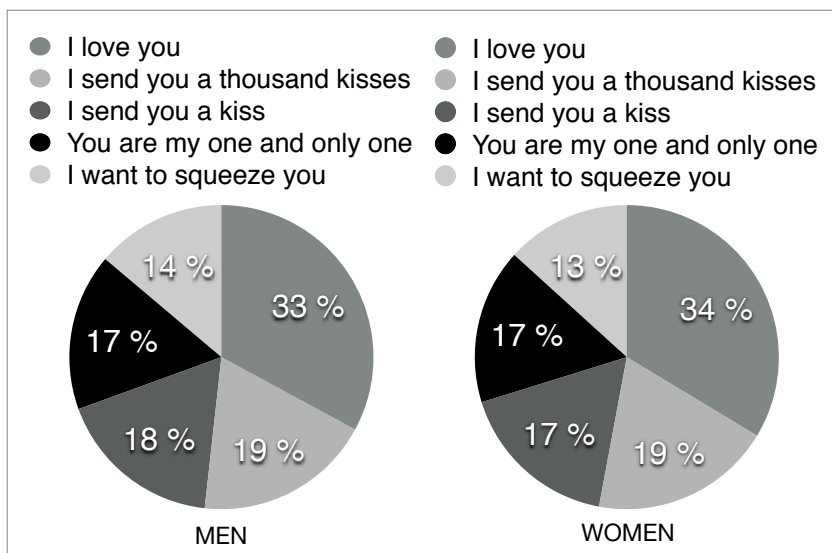


Figure 2 | Analysis of the top five most sent messages out of 2.2 million messages sent. The left graphic shows the percentage of times the top five messages are sent by men. The right graphic shows the same data sent by women.

DIFFERENCES & SIMILARITIES OF DARES SENT BY GENDER

In the game, sending *dares* to the partner is a way for the partner to get points if he or she successfully completes these *dares*. Examples of *dares* that can be found on the app: ‘*I want you to sneak up behind me, whisper in my ear and tell me how much you love me!*’ or ‘*Next time you see me, spank me ten times with lots of love*’. Through the game, a total of 934,072 dares have been sent at the time of this report.

The study analysed the top 50 predefined dares sent by women and the top 50 predefined dares sent by men, and they were grouped into two categories: *sweet* (e.g. I’m feeling romantic. I want to spend the night with you, a night with a lot of love. Please light candles in our bedroom, play some sensual music, and melt me with your kisses) and *spicy* (e.g. Be as naughty and demanding as you like for this one night stand. Don’t worry, you’ll never see me again. You don’t know anything about me and an air of mystery will shroud our fantasy...).

The data analysed shows that there are no significant differences between the types of predefined dare sent by women and men. According to the analysis, 60% of predefined dares sent by women are tagged as *spicy*, while for men this constitutes 66% of the predefined dares sent. Both genders have a similar performance when it comes to asking their partner to do something *sweet* or more *spicy*.

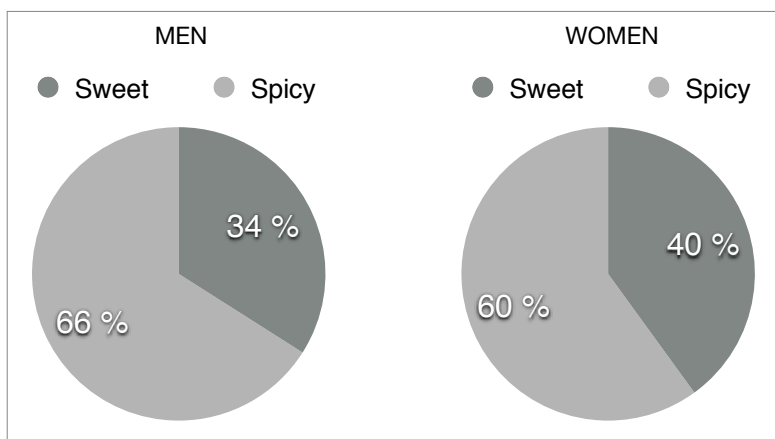


Figure 3 | Analysis of the top 50 most sent dares out of 934,072 dares sent. The left graphic shows the percentage of times a dare tagged as *sweet* and a dare tagged as *spicy* was sent by men. The right graphic shows the same data sent by women.

DIFFERENCES & SIMILARITIES

IN SHARING PERSONAL FACTS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BY GENDER

To answer this question, we analysed the last 20% of public comments on the game on Google Play (out of a total of 2,205 comments) written in English and Spanish to see if there were differences when it came to sharing information openly about one's private and intimate relationship online. We grouped the comments into two categories and by gender. On the one hand, we grouped the comments that explicitly mentioned their sex life, their relationship, the connection they have or how much fun they are having together. These are comments that focus on their own relationship. On the other hand, we grouped those comments that were written in the third-person—they recommend the game to others, they talk about couples and relationships but not in a personal and first-person way. The results are similar by gender: 28% of public comments made by women mention their personal and intimate life while this is 22% in the case of men.

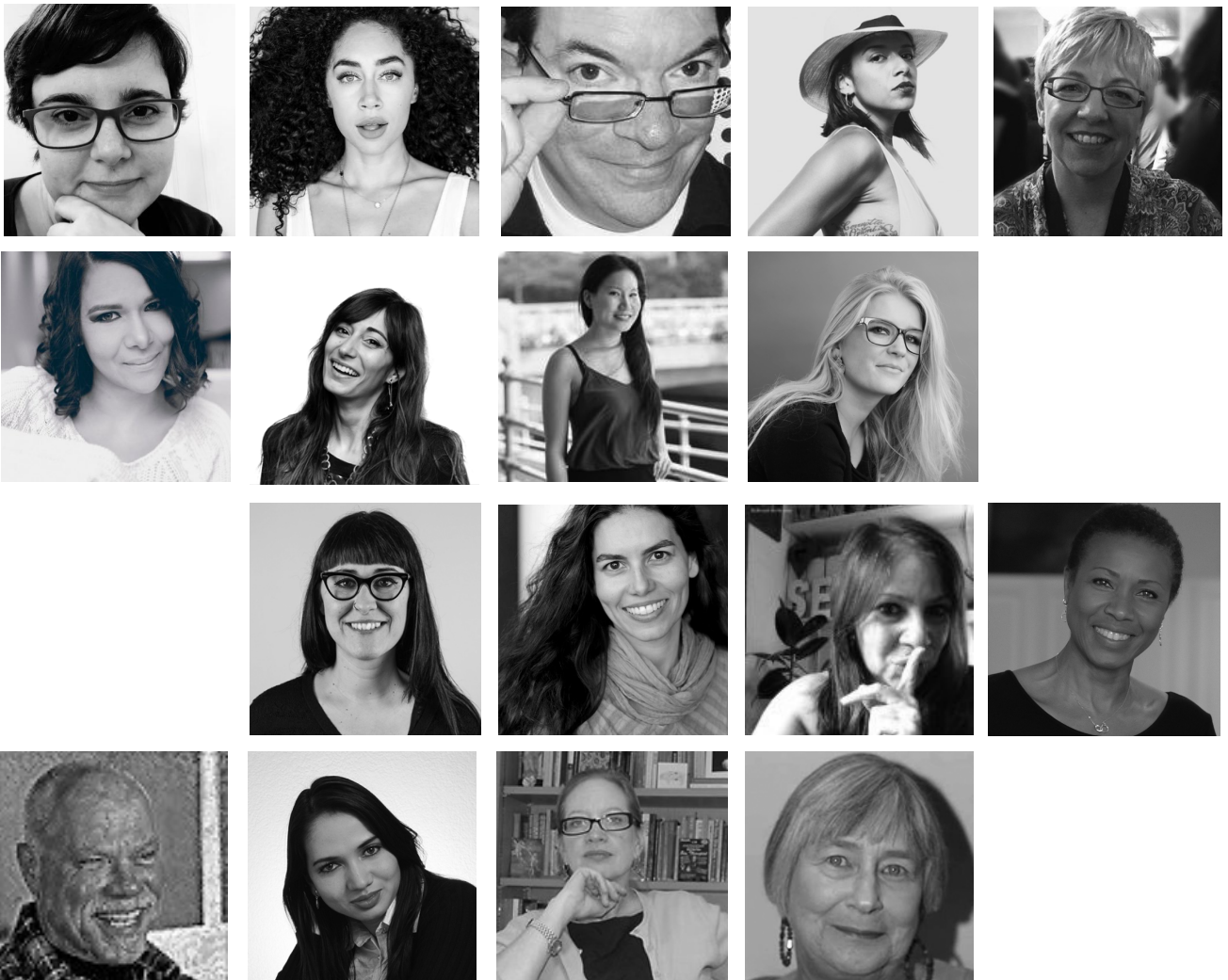
DIFFERENCES & SIMILARITIES

BY GENDER ABOUT LEADING

For the purpose of this report, the 'leader' is deemed to be the gender that creates the account for the game for both him/herself and the partner. There is one person leading this sign-up process. The data show that there are no differences between genders when it comes to signing up for this intimate game. According to data, 51% of users creating the account are men, while 49% of them are women. Based on this, we can say that both genders look for this type of game for couples, and the two genders have similar needs for trying new intimate games with their partner and having fun in their sex life.

Qualitative analysis asking sexologists, couples therapists, sex educators, relationship experts.

Experts' point of view



We conducted 17 interviews with sex therapists, couples therapists, sexologists, human sexual professionals and sexuality experts in six different countries. Interviews were based on their own opinion about the differences and similarities between genders when it comes to intimacy and sexual behaviour. Two aspects were greeted with an almost universal response: the professionals interviewed agreed that there are no significant differences between genders when it comes to sexual desires; however, it seems that culture and society dictate how we act and the roles we play when it comes to intimacy and sexual behaviour.

We as women and men have biological differences when it comes to some aspects of sexuality, the most obvious being the difference in sexual organs of the two genders. But is this directly related to partners' intimacy and their sexual behaviour? Are there differences in sexual desires? How have these changed through history? How do culture and mass media portray women's and men's intimacy and sexual desires? Are things related to intimacy and sexual behaviour equality changing? These are some of the questions that we wanted to understand, which is why we asked experts in the field. In the following section of this study, the views of the experts are explored to help summarise and articulate their opinions on the interviews conducted.

INTRODUCTION

There is one truth that no one can refute: no two people are alike. However, it seems that as humans we categorise things so we can better understand and study them. As mentioned, we do hold biological differences, as sexologist Mari Carmen López Martínez explains: *'Desire is what leads us to have a sexual encounter with our partner. This desire is present in both men and women and works with testosterone. Is there a difference? Yes, men have higher levels of testosterone. However, women also produce it at a lower level, and what's interesting is how at a lower level of testosterone, women can trigger the same sexual desire as men.'*

This leads us to understand what the differences and similarities are in intimacy behaviour and sexual desire.

DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN INTIMACY BEHAVIOUR AND SEXUAL DESIRE

Usually there is no black or white answer to any question: grey is the in-between colour that allows us to explore and issue and explain the reasons behind it. However, after all the interviews were conducted, it

would be true to say that there is a consensus on equality when we talk about desire, specifically about sexual desire. Al Vernacchio has been a human sexuality educator and consultant for over 20 years and he explains: *'There is no difference that gender creates around those things. We are*

'There is no difference that gender creates around those things. We are socialised to think that there is a difference.'

socialised to think that there is a difference; we are often taught to think that men are more interested in sex and women are more interested in romance; however, I haven't seen a lot of good evidence that suggests that there is a difference around desire simply based on gender.'

Sílvia Catalán is a sex therapist, sex educator and a couples' therapist and she specifies the difference between behaviours and desires. She states that we have differences in behaviour

because of society gender roles, but not in desire: *'Desires are very similar: there are no differences between men and women'*. So, it looks like our inner selves are equal, and that is what

'Desires are very similar, there are no differences between men and women.'

Rebecca Lowrie, a creator of Sexual Alchemy, agrees on—that we don't hold differences based on gender: *'At the core, everybody, regardless of gender, wants connection and intimacy, they want hot sex, and to feel free to be who they really are and be accepted like that.'* Women and men do share the same goals; regardless of gender, we want the same things when it comes to intimacy. Kate Moyle is a relationships and couples' therapist and she explains: *'Intimacy is often the common goal for everyone. Every one wants to feel loved, to feel close: this kind of intimacy is not gender specific. It can be expressed in different ways, by the different genders though, perhaps according to what they may feel is more socially appropriate or acceptable.'* As humans, sometimes we try to hide our core desires, maybe because of shame or because of standards - for some reason, we don't always reflect what we feel. Elena Crespi, a sexologist who specialises in couples' therapy, explains that when she talks about apparent sexual desire. *'Culturally, men are taught to talk more about sex and women are taught to be quiet about it; that's why apparently men show more interest. But we are not as different as we are taught that we are'*. Lisbeth Hernández is a sexologist who fights against the differences created around gender: *'We are not 100 per cent men or 100 per cent women: we are a combination of both and that's why we look for pleasure, desire, connection with the eroticism, regardless of gender. Both genders have sexual fantasies, both have interest in feeling attractive. We are always looking for differences; however, we hold more similarities.'*

So, if we as human beings like categorising, and it makes no sense to categorise based on gender, what categorisation can we make? Jaiya is an award-winning sexologist and, instead of differences by gender, she argues that we are different according to the type of things that we like sexually, regardless of being a man or a woman. She has created a blue-print for sexual categorisation: *'energetic, sensual, sexual, kinky, shapeshifter. Not all women are sensual: there are men that are sensual and women that are sexual.'* This can help people to understand themselves and their intimate behaviour, and also help them to understand their partner and their connection.

'We are still wrapped up in the belief that women are sweet and don't seek sex. Things are changing, but society still judges a women that seek for sex or that is open about their sexuality.'

SOCIETY'S POINT OF VIEW

We could have asked people to fill out a long questionnaire to find out about intimacy behaviour and sexual desires; however, this would depend on people's willingness to give honest answers about their sexual life, and our cultural roots can push men to answer one thing and women another thing. We therefore asked the experts to share they thinking about society's point of view from their own perspective. Sexologist Hernández explains: *'We are still wrapped up in the belief that women are sweet and don't seek sex. Things are changing, but society still judges a women who seeks sex or who is open about her sexuality.'* It seems that society has roles predefined not only for women, but also for men. Sexologist Jaiya says that there is this belief about *'men being more easy and more sexual and women more complicated and less interested in sex, which is not true'*. Melanie Davis, PhD, is a sexuality educator and she summarises this idea efficiently: *'Generally people assume that guys are hornier than women'*. So it seems like *'society perpetuates the myth that gender has a role a to play in desire'*, as Vernacchio explains.

WHERE DO THESE MYTHS COME FROM?

When reality and society's beliefs don't match, then we have myths. Where do those myths about the differences in sexual desire and intimacy behaviour come from? They come from a long time ago, and we have been passing those myths on generation after generation. Here are some of the reasons behind them.

Sexologist Catalán explains that men have more contact with their sexuality, while for women, it's more hidden. She adds that *'sometimes women don't realise about their sexual desires, because no one has explained them about them, about how to get aroused'*. Biology can be one factor behind these differences created around gender; however, there is also how we are taught about our body and sexuality.

This leads us to better understand education concerning sexuality—first education and then sex education—because the way we educate in general probably has something to do with the way kids learn about sexuality, too. Richard Wagner is a psychotherapist and clinical sexologist who explains that to understand why women and men behave the way they do, we have to go back to how we socialise kids into expressing themselves and about the permissions we give them: *'If I reward a little boy for*

doing something and I punish a little girl for doing the same thing, because it doesn't fit a gender role, that's education and also cultural pressure.' One of the popular beliefs or myths is that men are less emotional than women. Kat Smith, an

intimacy expert, explains that this is due to how we program boys to separate themselves from their emotions from as early as four years old: *'We tell them that boys don't cry, etc. and we push the into more physical expressions (i.e. competition, strength and power). Most men grow up emotionally undeveloped therefore not understanding a woman's emotional communication. This*

'We tell kids that boys don't cry, so we separate them from their emotions and they grow up separating themselves from understanding their emotions.'

in turn creates a breakdown in effectively express what they need from their lovers, other than physical. They may feel uncomfortable, awkward and even powerless with emotional situations'. There is also a historical assumption of women having to be virginal while for men it is okay to have a lot of sexual experiences. Carol Martin-Sperry, a couples and sex therapist, explains that even though things are changing, 'There is still an echo from that historical perspective. It shows in the school, where girls are bullied for being not responsive to it and if they do respond, they are called sluts, while for boys, having sexual experiences is considered wonderful.'

Education is a way to break the myths, so to understand sexual myths we should understand sex education and what the role it has when it comes to the conception of those popular beliefs. López Martínez explains that schools only explain sexology from a reproduction perspective. *'Girls aren't taught about their genitals or about masturbation: they don't receive information about their bodies other than having a reproduction function.'* Men's genitals are made for reproduction and for pleasure; however, the clitoris is made only for sexual pleasure, so it remains unknown to both genders if schools only teach about reproduction and safety when it comes to sex. About the myth that boys lead more or that they are more advanced, sexologist López Martínez says that *'boys learn to play with their genitals because it is an external body part, it is visible. It is common for boys to meet up to watch porn at the age of 14. It is very rare to see the same situation in the case of a group of girls.'*

Understanding education and sex education is important to understand where myths about differences in sexual desires come from, but there is also another factor that could explain them, and this is religion. Sexologist Crespi says that most of Christian countries have a common idea *'where man is the only one that can have sexual desires'*. Sexologist López Martínez adds, *'Women are supposed to be a wonderful wife outside the home and be very sexy for their husband.'* Religion can be understood in a lot of ways, and for some people, the understanding of these assumptions also dictate how a woman and a man should perform or should think about sexuality.

COMMERCIALS, MEDIA AND HOLLYWOOD

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? When we talk about the media, we could say that it reflects reality or that it show us some gender roles, and we tend to copy them. Psychologist and sexologist Leidy Constanza Montoya Patiño explains: *'The commercials and the*

media are a reflection of the cultural stereotypes we hold. What they do is to emphasise those and when we have a movie, for example, that portrays the opposite, it generates debate; it is criticised because it is different,

'Main stream media stills portrays the old stereotypes.'

not what it was expected'. Even though society is changing—faster or slower, depending on whom you ask—Professor Vernacchio states, 'Mainstream media stills portrays the old stereotypes', and he also mentions that this applies to 'a lot of the adult filming industry too'.

We could discuss where kids get their sex education and if adult movies have a role to play. Apple, Facebook and a lot of other brands limit and ban sexually explicit content, but kids still have access to the rest of the internet and to porn. Do they get their sex education from adult content they find online? Or do they get it from public shows, commercials and the media directly? Psychotherapist Wagner points to *Game of Thrones* as an example to explain that porn is not the only way kids get their sex education.

‘Kids go online for more information about sex, but no one tells them how to process what they see. This generates a difference on sex expectations.’

‘Game of Thrones is the classic example

of female and male sexuality that we can see in the movies and in the media in general. We see a sexuality based on penetration. The depiction of which is always without any warm up or foreplay; it is astonishing. We don’t get our sex education only from porn, now the popular culture and loads of cable shows provide misinformation for both kids and adults’. It seems that we don’t get information from those same channels about how to relate with our partner. Sex and intimacy educator, Erin Chen agrees that kids learn from what they see online and how this affects their sex expectations: *‘When it comes to sex education, kids learn about protection, but not about healthy sexuality or about how to communicate. So they go to the Internet for more information, but no one tells them how to process what they see. This creates very different realities for boys and girls and the kind of sexual experiences they can expect to have.’*

One of the stereotypes that doesn’t reflect equality in gender intimacy is sexual interest. Sexuality educator Davis states that *‘in movies, it is unusual for women to be portrayed as being as interested in sex as men are’*, and sexologist Michelle Hope adds that the idea of intimacy is lacking in general and that inequality is not just when it comes to intimacy, but before getting

there: *‘We do have movies that portray women being independent and strong, but then their personal life is very bad. It is like it is not possible to have it all, which is not true, of course.’* If intimacy is missing in the movies and the sexuality we see is very basic, which is not a reflection of reality, we should understand it as pure

‘When we watch Star Wars we know it is fiction, but when we have a romantic comedy we believe love is like this and relationship are like the one we are watching.’

fiction. Sex and couples’ therapist Catalán explains that what happens in the movies is just this, fiction, even though it can look real: *‘When we watch Star Wars, we know it is fiction; but when we have a romantic comedy, we believe love is like this and relationships are like the one we are watching. Movies show us how easy things are when it comes to sexuality: there is no need to make an effort, there are never any issues getting to orgasm. And the same happens when it comes to porn: the sexuality portrayed is very simple, based on penetration with no emotions.’* Again, fiction.

A lot of the time we can see how bad these differences shown in the media and in movies are for women, but we don’t tends to focus on the effect that this has on men. Sexologist Lowrie states: *‘stereotypes are damaging to people of all genders. Men are portrayed as having to be*

strong, rich, etc, as if this is what it takes to be a man. It's hugely misleading and harmful. There is no right or wrong way to be a man. Just as there is no right or wrong way to be a woman'.

However, it looks like something is changing. Relationships and couples' therapist Moyle explains that even though the media and the Hollywood industry still don't portray men and women's sexual desire and intimacy behaviour equally, *'We are getting there, moving away from the traditional model of 'man wants sex' 'woman wants love' but there is still a way to go. Women's sexuality is getting more attention and it is something media is talking a lot more about, we are educating about sexual pleasure and it's now something everyone feels they deserve which is how it should be'.*

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN INTIMACY BEHAVIOUR

What proportion of these differences in intimacy behaviour portrayed by popular belief are based on the culture we live in? If the environment we grow up in shows us some stereotypes, we will end up believing them, even though we might experience and learn that they are not based on real assumptions. From the interviews conducted, professionals agree on the existence of cultural differences. Dehra Mitchell is a psychotherapist that works with couples and individuals and she explains that cultures do have differences: *'Sex, desire, intimacy are the same, because this is biological, but it depends if from you come from a culture that is very religious or very patriarchal, that would make a difference.'* Couples' therapist Moyle gives some examples of differences: *'Some cultures have strong beliefs about not having sex before marriage, or that vaginal intercourse is something that should be saved'*. This dictates intimacy behaviour between two people, and impacts for example how people are intimate, or are allowed to show desire for each other.

We also hold similarities between cultures. As sexologist Hernández explains, we do have the same desires for experience. For example: *'We find some practices like BDSM and swingers in all cultures: what changes is the state and the acceptability of each practice in each culture. In some countries, BDSM is a well-known practice, while in other cultures it might be something more taboo'*. Sex and intimacy

educator, Erin Chen, also makes similar observations: *'I think on an individual level, no matter the culture, people are scared of being judged. But, the desire to connect,*

the desire to have good sex is universal'. This fear to be judged differs from one culture to another and is based on what one particular culture understands of being acceptable or not, and in the end, it dictates in general how we perform intimately according to what it is expected from us, to avoid being judged.

'No matter what culture, people is scared of being judge. The desire to connect, the desire to have good sex is universal.'

If we talk about culture, religion has an important role to play. Intimalogist Smith explains some of the differences that religion holds. *'Some Christians believe they should not touch themselves, because a good Christian practice masturbation or sexual indulgence other than for procreation. Indian men practice sex before marriage but women are expected to abstain. When it comes to religion and tradition, we do hold differences'*. Couples and sex therapist Martin-Sperry gives a further example: *'In Muslim cultures sex is something that you do when you are married.'* Catholic traditions shape what are the right things to do for women and men, and these stereotypes or roles are taken by society and form part of our daily lives. Education can help debunk these stereotypes shaped by religion and, of course, sexual education too: *'if we don't get any sexual education, if in the culture sex is taboo, you will never speak about it'*, according to sexologist Jaiya, *'so we can say that culture affects your sexuality, your level of satisfaction, and affects your life too.'*

Sex and intimacy educator, Erin Chen, adds that *'the opportunity to be curious is different from one culture to another. In the Indian culture, for example, there are not a lot of access to opportunities to talk and learn about sex. There is less education or even main stream events related to it. In America or Germany, there are more opportunities and access. That's the cultural difference. Without the space to be curious, how do you know what you don't know?'*. There are also other matters we see in our culture that shape the way we act intimately and how we behave with our partner. Sexologist Hope affirms that *'the hyper sexualisation and the minor representation of women of colour combine with things like machismo shape the way we communicate and relate with our lover.'*

We can say that those cultural differences in intimacy behaviour also change from generation to generation; and as for any other aspect of life, each generation tries to leave their changes behind for the ones that are to come. *'Currently, there is a new generation that is*

'Currently, there is a new generation that is breaking the stereotypes.'

breaking the stereotypes,' states sexologist Leidy Constanza. YouTuber and sexologist Boodram explains that what is masculine and feminine is differently understood in

different countries, and contends that *'countries where female sexual revolution is at the front page, will be the countries that will be leading any other area of progression. Women sexual liberation is the answer to a lot of other issues'*. That leads us to the next chapter, about the future of sexual desires and intimacy behaviour.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE FOR SEXUAL DESIRES AND INTIMACY BEHAVIOUR?

When it comes to the future, we don't know where we'll be and what will happen, but we can hazard a guess, considering the evolution we have had in the last years and picturing how society will evolve in terms of sexual desires and intimacy behaviour equality. Psychologist and sexologist López Martínez explains two possible options: *'We can go towards a hypocritical society with a double morality, where we can see gang rape, repressed sexuality and toxic,*

dependent and abusive relationships. That's an option if we don't offer a proper education, where kids don't learn about porn and where the focus is on men and his desires uniquely. On the other hand, we can go through a more healthy and positive sexuality, understood as a human dimension where you can enjoy within values, with justice and equality. Right now, we are at a point in time where we can go down one path or the other.'

Sexologist Crespi sees this moment in between two paths with more conflict and tension. *'Imagine two trains about to collide: that's the moment we are living right now. On the one hand, we have those with a more traditional view about sexuality, and on the other hand, those with a*

'Imagine two trains about to collide, that's the moment we are living right now.'

more progressive understanding. There are those who follow a more equal and intimate relationship, but also those who defend the traditional model.' We live in an age where we can talk more freely about sex and about desire, and we can communicate more openly about those things, compared to years ago. Sexologist Lowrie

explains that it is evolving, but hasn't completely evolved yet, and agrees that *'as a strong movement grows towards change, there is another group that tries to keep things more like before. As things progress and move on, there are always those that like to resist change and want to cling to the old paradigms'.*

There are some things that have already changed when it comes to sex if we look at older generations and compare them to younger ones. Couples and sex therapist Martin-Sperry states that *'men and women are more equal now. We are in the middle of the change right now.'*

YouTubeur and sexologist Boodram explains the *'orgasm gap' when women wouldn't seek their own pleasure, but now 'a women's sexual revolution is happening now, defending women's orgasm and women's pleasure'.* Sexologist Hernández adds that women are now more interested in their own sexuality and pleasure. She adds that women should not be judged for doing that and for wanting to look for their own pleasure. This is something that needs to be addressed through education.

'A women sexual revolution is happening now defending women's orgasm and women's pleasure.'

However, when we talk about equality, it is men and women's equality. We tend to think about women being empowered, but we also must think about men being able to be more emotional in the eyes of society. Intimalogist Smith explains: *'Once we start to understand that relationships are a balance, that our energy is balanced, we'll be talking about equality. We can't continue to beat each other: we have to support each other. I think this is what's going to work to heal the stereotypes we currently have.'*

Women are learning about their own body now more than ever before, but kids generally are also receiving a different education also. Therefore, depending on age and generation, we are talking about understanding this change. Professor Vernacchio works with kids and he can see a change already happening with younger generations. *'Part of the reasons for this change is that*

the younger generation has a more open and fluid concept of gender that we ever had before. Young people have fewer stereotypes: it looks silly to them to assign these things to gender. There are people more emotional or more sexual, but the differences don't connect with gender to them. This is a great thing that is happening.' Psychotherapist Mitchell has experience with the younger generation, too, and specifies the differences between desire and intimacy. *'My experience with the younger generation is that they understand desire but they don't understand intimacy. Both, men and women are encouraged to think of themselves as being sexual, having desires, and it is a good thing. However, they don't learn how to be intimate with someone. I think it has a lot to do with dating apps and social media. We are not teaching our children about being intimate.'* This is a change already happening with sexual desire, but maybe we are missing other things related to sexuality.

'My experience with younger generation is that they understand desire but they don't understand intimacy.'

This change is something that might be happening, but when will we be able to look back and say that we and society see sexual desires and intimacy behaviour equally? Sexologist Hope explains that even though there is a change going on, we'll need years to see the change: *'We are seeing a shift, for example we are seeing a change around the idea of what relationships are. We'll continue to see more evolution, but you consider how long the traditional idea of marriage has been around and how long that's taken to shift - that took centuries. It will take a long time until society sees intimacy as completely equal between the genders.'* Sexuality educator Davis believes this change is happening more in the communities that work around these issues, *'in the field of sexuality education, therapy and sexology, progress has been made; however, in mass media and in the eyes of much of the general public, women are still shamed for being sexual'*. This change will not happen all at once; in some communities it is stronger than others, but it is changing.

The interest that women have in knowing more about their own pleasure and bodies, the education kids are receiving and the access to information are some of the things leading this change. Technology—within access to information—is one of these pillars too. Sex and intimacy

educator, Erin Chen, sees society becoming more aware: *'Female empowerment is a reality. People are also having more conversations about gender roles and gender diversity too. The involvement of the tech industry helps. Apps made for communication*

'Progress has been made; however, in the eyes of much of the general public, women are still shamed for being sexual.'

can help break myths. There are also people like Cindy Gallop and her site, Make Love Not Porn, which help bring authentic sex into adult sex education'. When we talk about education, we are usually thinking about educating youth. And as Chen says, *'Parents are looking for ways to explain sex to their kids. Sometimes this is a way to teach parents too. When they learn how to teach their children, parents learn as well'*.

There is a change going on. We might not be sure where we'll be in ten years, because a lot of things might happen, but maybe in the future, to say publicly that you are going to a sexologist will be accepted by society. Chen explains that the wellness trend we are experiencing - yoga, interest in nutrition, mindfulness and so on - is helping sexuality. *'Ten years ago, saying that you have a nutritionist was weird. Now, it's normal. I believe this is where sexuality and intimacy is going. It's all about living well and living healthy.'*

Many thanks to all professionals that dedicated their time to do an interview for this report.

Experts' biographies

Below are listed all sex therapists, sexologists, human sexual professionals and sexuality experts interviewed for the report (by alphabetical first name order).

Al Vernacchio

Al Vernacchio teaches at Friends' Central School in Wynnewood, PA. He is the Upper School Sexuality Educator and chair of the English department.

In addition to his classroom responsibilities, Al organises sexuality-themed programs and assemblies, provides parent education, and is one of the faculty advisors for the Gender and Sexual Orientation Alliance.

A Human Sexuality educator and consultant for over 20 years, Al has lectured and offered workshops throughout the country. His work was featured in "Teaching Good Sex", a November, 2011 cover The New York Times Magazine. He has been interviewed on such national programs as NPR's "Morning Edition". In addition Al has given four TED Talks, and is the author of numerous publications. *Sex: Changing the Way We Talk to Young People About Sexuality, Values, and Health* published by Harper-Collins.

Al earned his BA in Theology from St. Joseph's University and his MEd in Human Sexuality Education from the University of Pennsylvania. He is a member of The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality (SSSS), The American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counsellors, and Therapists (AASECT) and Advanced Sexuality Educators and Trainers (ASET). A native Philadelphian, Al and his husband, Michael, live in the Germantown section of the city.



Carol Martin-Sperry

Carol Martin-Sperry is a couples and sex therapist who has been working for 30 years. She has also done a lot of media work, both in television and in print. Carol has written a professional textbook, an online book about sex and her latest book "Sexual Healing", which tells some of the fascinating stories of her clients. She is based in London. Her website is www.shrinkrap.co.uk



Dehra Mitchell

Dehra Mitchell is a Psychodynamic and Jungian trained psychotherapist with over 15 years experience and former Chair of the Foundation for Psychodynamic Couples Therapy. She has experience in delivering Continuing

Professional Development and training courses that include subjects such as bereavement, couples and sex, money, and conflict resolution. She is also a Lecturer at the Counselling Foundation in St. Albans. She is an Accredited Therapist by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). She is based in London, UK.



Elena Crespi Asensio

Elena Crespi Asensio is a sexologist that holds a number of masters and postgraduates on the field: Master in Clinic Sexology and Sexual Health (UdL), Master in Sexual Therapy and Couples (UB), Postgraduate in Couples' Therapy (UdG), among others.

In 2005 she started working at Instituto de Estudios de la Sexualidad y la Pareja de Barcelona. She created a service for young people with sexual difficulties and couples' problems. She ended up working with young and adults. She is now building Meràkia a new space built by women sexologists. She is based in Barcelona, Spain.



Erin Chen

Erin Chen is a sex & intimacy educator for women and couples. She is also the founder and chief maven of Lila Sutra, a female and couple-friendly sexual wellness company leading the disruption of sexual taboos in Singapore.

As part of her passion for creating sex positive



communities, Erin is also co-emissary of the Sex Geekdom Singapore hub. Her education includes a BA (Hons) in Business from the Ivey School of Business, and a Masters of Science in Medicine, Sexual Health/ Psychosexual Therapy from the University of Sydney.

Jaiya

Jaiya is an award-winning sexologist, 4 time author, and the creator of the Erotic Blueprint Breakthrough Course. She helps men, women and couples learn more about their sexuality so that they can have deep connection and hot juicy sex! She is based in Los Angeles, California.



Kat Smith

Kat Smith is a Doctor of Human Sexuality, Intimalogist (Intimacy Expert), Certified Loveologist and Certified by the American College of Sexologist, it is Dr. Kat's desire to inspire others to embrace the decadence of what love and intimacy has to offer. And it's more than sex. Although sex is a delicious part of intimacy, it encompasses many wonderful expressions of affection, trust, emotional, mental and physical sharing. She is based in Dallas, Texas.



Kate Moyle

Kate Moyle is a Qualified Psychosexual & Relationship Therapist in Central London. She works with an integrative and homeodynamic model which aids her clients in getting to a place of sexual health, happiness and wellbeing and understands psychosexual and relationship issues in terms of their personal meaning to the client. She has a BSc in Psychology, Post Graduate Diploma in Integrative Psychosexual Therapy, and an MA in Relationship Therapy. She is a Founding Partner of Couples Intimacy App Pillow Play and is also an Advisor at PureEros. You can find Kate at: www.katemoyle.co.uk



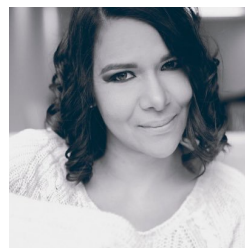
Leidy Constanza Montoya Patiño

Leidy Constanza holds a degree on Psychology. She is specialised in education sexology and sensibilization and team leader. She also holds a title in Clinical Sexology by the IMESEX. Leidy is cofounder of Red de Sexólogos de México. She leads the radio show 'Estrategia intelectual.com' and she has her own Youtube channel Del Dicho Al Sexo. She has been in a number of media shows, running conferences and educational workshops. Individual and couples' sex-therapist. She is based in Mexico. You can reach her at: sexologa_leidy@hotmail.com



Lisbeth Hernández

Lisbeth Abased in Venezuela. She is an activist on sex positive, sex education and erotic development of couples. She holds a diploma on Sex Education and a diploma on Couples Therapy by the Instituto de Formación e Investigación Científica Asoc-Ayuda (IFICA) in Venezuela. She also hold a Master in Sexual Education and Sexual Counselling by the INCISEX, Madrid, Spain. She is also specialised on Sexual Development and Couples by the Institut Gomà Barcelona in Spain. She is the founder of SexoEsSalud, an international company about sex education from a positive and natural perspective. You can reach her at info@sexoessalud.com



Mari Carmen López Martínez

Mari Carmen López Martínez holds a degree on psychology and sexology. She is very passionate about her job and she would not change it for anything. She holds a master on Clinical Sexology and Couples' therapy by the Universidad de Almería in Spain. Currently she is collaborating with the Asociación de Sexualidad Educativa (ASSEX) as a board member and she is actively engaged. Also, she is co-founder of SexToB, a web platform for psychosexual consultancy for individuals and couples. You can contact her at info@sextob.es She is based in Murcia, Spain.



Melanie Davis

Melanie Davis, PhD is an AASECT-Certified Sexuality Educator and Educator Supervisor. She teaches graduate courses in human sexuality and is a partner in the New Jersey Center for Sexual Wellness. She is co-president of the Sexuality and Aging Consortium at Widener University. She is based in New Jersey. You can contact her online at www.MelanieDavisPhD.com



Michelle Hope

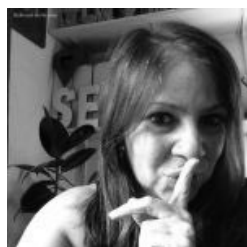
An award-winning, passionate edu-tainer, Michelle combines her love of pop culture, entertainment, and sexuality into events and media content that educate and motivate. Michelle has developed a unique voice in helping people identify how sexuality is impacting their everyday relationships. A veteran speaker with over 15 years of experience, she has delivered lectures around United States, working to help contemporary millennials understand those interactions and make healthy decisions for their sex lives in pursuit of successful, holistic living. It is Michelle's goal to reach the masses to engage in real, raw and unapologetic conversations about sexuality. Over the course of her career, she has trained and facilitated national programs for Harlem Children's Zone, Community Health Network, NYCDOH, Phoenix House, LAPD, Pacific Oaks College, among many others. In the media, Michelle has appeared on NewOne Now with Roland Martin, CentricTV, Revolt TV, Power105s The Breakfast Club, Dr. Brenda Wade's Modern Love, Lip Service, Brilliant Idiots, and many others.



Rebecca Lowrie

Rebecca Lowrie, the Sexual Alchemist, is a catalyst for deep transformation and sexual awakening.

Using her innate, intuitive sense of sexuality along with formal training and years of personal exploration, Rebecca is able to help you connect to your sexuality, your sexual power, in deep and mysterious ways. Her Sexual Alchemy Programs will awaken a deeper aspect of your sexual self than you have ever experienced before, so that it will flow through you for



your continued pleasure, health, wellbeing and expansion. Rebecca is based in London, UK and you can reach her at rebecca@rebeccalowrie.com

Richard Wagner

Richard Wagner, M.Div., Ph.D., ACS — psychotherapist, clinical sexologist in private practice in Seattle. Richard has been a practitioner of sex therapy and relationship counselling for over 35 years.



He has also been involved in all sorts of sex education and sexual enrichment projects. One such outlet is his online sex advice column, which he's been writing for well over 15 years. During that time it's been syndicated on a number of sites.

Now his column and weekly podcasts have a home of their own: drdicksexadvice.com. He also contributes to several other websites as a guest columnist. Contact info: dr_dick@drdicksexadvice.com He is based in Seattle, Washington.

Shan Boodram

Shan Boodram is a sex/love expert certified as a sexual educator and as a clinical sexologist. Her book, LAID: Young People's Experiences with Sex in an Easy-Access Culture (Seal Press), sold thousands of copies across North America. She has worked as a sexual educator on BET, CNN Radio, Fox News, KTLA, ABC, CBC, CBS and most recently as the host for MTV's Guide To series. She is based in Los Angeles, California.



Sílvia Catalán

Sílvia Catalán holds a degree on psychology by the Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona. She holds a Master on Clinical Sexology and Sexual Health by the Universitat de Lleida. Since then she has been a sexual therapist, sexual educator and couples' therapist. She currently does consulting from her own office in Barcelona where she serves to all people with problems or difficulties on their sexual relations. She is based in Barcelona, Spain.

