

Flood, Michael 2001 "Hot and Healthy Sex", in Wayne Martino and Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli (eds) *Boys' Stuff: Boys talking about what matters*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin



One of the keys to having healthy, loving and exciting relationships, as Michael below points out, is to honestly communicate about what you're feeling and what you really want. Understanding and listening to the other person are the other side of this and that's what decision-making in a relationship is all about.

### **HOT AND HEALTHY SEX**

**I FIRST HAD INTERCOURSE** at eighteen, about six months into one of my first long-term relationships. Now I'm 33, I've had six lovely relationships, and I'm with a woman I'd love to stay with for life. But I think back to when I was first wandering through the exciting, complicated world of sex and relationships, and I wish I'd known then some of the things I know now. Things which have helped me have sexy, blissful, loving sex and good, healthy relationships. I've made mistakes, and I've learnt crucial lessons.

#### **I HOT SEX IS CONSENTING SEX.**

Maybe the biggest mistake some guys make is to pressure or force a girl into sex. I did this once to a woman who was my girlfriend at the time. I didn't hold a knife to her throat or physically attack her. But I pressured her. I made her feel guilty that we hadn't had sex in a while and I really wanted to, and I kept showing her that I wanted to have sex (by touching her) even though I knew she didn't want to do anything sexual, until she gave in. My actions hurt her and hurt our relationship.

She said later that she felt 'used' and treated 'like an object', and she didn't trust or like me as much after that.

These days, I make absolutely sure that what I and my girlfriend do in bed is fine with her. I check out whether or not she is consenting—whether she is happy with and agrees to whatever sexual activity we're about to do. I don't just go on her body language, as it's easy to get this wrong. I say what I'd like to do (in cute, playful or sexy ways) and I ask what she'd like to do. And I take no for an answer.

Consent—both person's agreement to sex—is the bottom line of good sex and a healthy sexual relationship. Consenting sex is hot sex. You're both into it, you both want it, and you both feel safe and in control of your choices. And this builds sexual closeness and intimacy.

#### **2 THERE'S MORE TO SEX THAN PENISES IN VAGINAS.**

One of the best things I've learnt about sex is that there's a delicious range of sexual and sensual acts you can get into with your partner. Lots of guys focus on penis-in-vagina intercourse as the best kind of sex, as the ultimate goal of all other

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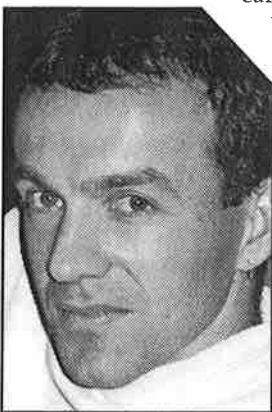
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sexual activities, and as the very definition of 'sex'. But most women don't have orgasms from intercourse.

In my experience, women get 'turned on' by lots of kissing, sensual touching and caressing, as well as by



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being masturbated or oral-sexed—or doing these things to you. So one good reason to broaden your definition of 'sex' is to enhance your partner's pleasure and enjoyment of what you're both doing.

Another is to expand your sexual appreciation of your whole body, not just your dick.

### 3 GO FOR QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY.

Some guys at my high school used to talk about 'how far they'd got' with such and such a girl. They'd say they'd 'squeezed her tits' or 'gone all the way'. I never knew if they were bullshitting or not. But I knew that some guys exaggerated and some guys boasted, and I felt pressure to do the same.

Some guys think that it's important to lose your virginity as quickly as you can, and to have sex with as many girls as you can. There is pressure on guys to gain sexual experience, and some guys get status from doing so. There are two problems

with this stuff. First, it treats girls just as notches on a guy's bedpost. Men's sexual 'conquests' become proof of macho status. Second, this stuff limits guys' choices. Some guys want to have sex early on, others want to wait until they're older or in a relationship or in love or with the right girl (or boy), and either choice is fine.

If a girl has had sex with a few guys (or people say she has), sometimes she gets called a 'slut'. But if a guy has had sex with a few girls (or he says he has), sometimes he gets called a 'stud', 'legend' or 'player'. The girl gets criticised, but the guy gets praised. Why is there one standard for guys and another one for girls? This is sexism, pure and simple.

The way some guys talk about girls, it's obvious that they don't give a shit about them. Some guys are happy to discuss girls as collections of body parts rather than people with minds and feelings. Some guys are happy to use put-downs about girls like 'whore', 'bitch' and 'slut'. Unless these guys change their attitudes, they're not going to have good relationships with girls. Because a good relationship depends on each person respecting, trusting and liking the other. Disrespect, sexism and inequality are the enemies of good sex.

I've learnt that the most effective way to have hot sex, whether one-off casual sex or as part of a relationship, is to show respect, make sure there is consent, communicate about your desires and listen to hers, and build trust and closeness.

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