



SEX & ADD

[Difficulty Focusing & Linger]

Delivered from Distraction

(excerpts from Ch 38)

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Most people do not think of ADD and sex as being related at all. One of the most common problems is lack of sexual intimacy in a couple, not due to conflict around sex but to the inability of the partner who has ADD to linger over anything at all, even sex. This partner is usually male, but not always.

To make love you need to be able to forget about where you are long enough to be where you are. For most people, the prospect of getting naked with another person and stimulating each other's erotic zones is quite enough to rivet their minds. Not so for the person who has ADD. He/she can be in the midst of making love with someone he feels attracted to, and at the same time be thinking about his e-mail. He is all but incapable of being anywhere without simultaneously thinking about being somewhere else.

The inability to linger can ruin a romance. People with ADD are bottom-liners. They are impatient. They want to get to the meat of the matter and move on. People with ADD hop from stimulation to stimulation, and they don't want to wait. They don't want to linger over anything. Savoring the moment is a skill that does not come naturally to him. Once the thrill of a relationship has settled into something a bit more mature, the person with ADD may simply go back to his regular habit of living off high stimulation.

Unless he learns about ADD and his attendant troubles with pausing, lingering and listening, he may lose his chance at sexual intimacy with anyone. He may be a lot of fun to be with, a great date, even great in bed a few times, but as time goes by, he gets bored and moves on, or his partner gives up on him because he is so distractable.

This problem is common and devastating. The person with ADD just can't seem to get as interested in lovemaking as in, for example, working on the computer, making business deals or even watching TV or playing golf. (Those last two combine stimulation and novelty with autonomy and structure, a perfect recipe for focus.)

Learning to linger and even letting it transport you to a serene and pleasure-filled place is a skill that can be learned [see book]. Medication can also help. Indeed, it can make a world of difference in helping someone with ADD to linger in the moment, and to have focus.

At a deeper level, the lack of sexual intimacy in a couple where one partner has ADD may be due to an unacknowledged power struggle. Without meaning to, the non-ADD partner becomes the one in control because he/she is the one handling the responsibilities, which leaves the ADD partner feeling more like a child than a lover. At this juncture, if the diagnosis of ADD does not get made, a low-level depression engulfs the union. Both partners begin to feel that the pizzazz is gone. I have seen relationships break up because of this, but the more common result is simply chronic anger and dissatisfaction on the part of the non-ADD partner.

Another common problem is when the man who has ADD and uses sex as a form of medication. He may flirt constantly, overstep physical boundaries and may have multiple affairs. However, even if he never has affairs, **he is always looking for erotic contact in a way that risks offending others and getting him in trouble.**

Usually if such a person seeks help for the problem, he seeks it from specialists in addictions, relationships, or sex. That's why it's so important for those specialists to understand ADD. What is needed here is for the diagnosis of ADD to be made and treatment to be initiated.

When such a man gets on the right medication, usually stimulant medication or Strattera, then he finds he can give up the wrong medication, i.e., excessive sexualizing of all human contact. Erotic feelings focus the mind, but so does stimulant medication. Essentially, this person has been using sex the way other people with ADD might use coffee, driving fast, or gambling – as a form of self-medication.