WE DON'T DO SO MANY ACROBATICS ANYMORE.
NO. WE DON'T BREAK THE BED.
OH, YES, WE DID.
HA HA HA!
WE TALK A LOT ABOUT HOW CHANGES IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S BODIES AFFECT THEIR BEHAVIOR.
WE RARELY DISCUSS CHANGES THAT OCCUR IN OLDER BODIES.
IT'S LIKE THE OLD CLICHE -- THE OLD SHOE.
WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER COMPLETELY.
AS FAR AS OUR SEXUALITY IS CONCERNED, IT GETS BETTER WITH OLD AGE.
[NARRATOR] WHAT DO AMERICANS BELIEVE ABOUT THE SEXUAL LIVES OF OLDER ADULTS? WHAT PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES OCCUR AS WE AGE, AND HOW DO THESE AFFECT SEXUAL FUNCTIONING? WHAT SOURCES OF LOVE AND AFFECTION ARE AVAILABLE TO OLDER PEOPLE? NEXT, ON GROWING OLD IN A NEW AGE.
AMERICA SEEMS OBSESSED WITH SEX AND LOVE. THE MEDIA OVERFLOW WITH SEXUAL IMAGES AND INNUENDOES, BUT THEY FOCUS ALMOST
EXCLUSIVELY ON YOUTH. LOOKING AT AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE, YOU MIGHT CONCLUDE THAT THE YOUNG ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH LOVE AND SEX, BUT THAT SOMEHOW, INTEREST IN THESE MATTERS DISAPPEARS WHEN A PERSON HITS MIDDLE AGE. IF I WERE TO LOOK FOR SEXUAL STEREOTYPES, I'D LOOK AT TELEVISION AND MOVIES.

16 01:01:50:03 THAT REALLY REFLECTS OUR SOCIETY'S ATTITUDES ABOUT SEXUALITY IN AGING PEOPLE.

17 01:01:54:19 YOU LOOK AT POPULAR TELEVISION, AND YOU HARDLY EVER SEE AN OLDER PERSON INVOLVED IN AN EROTIC, DEEP, LOVING RELATIONSHIP.

18 01:02:02:19 YOU SEE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR 20s AND 30s, INCLUDING MOST SOAP OPERAS.

19 01:02:08:03 IN FACT, IF YOU EVEN LOOK AT TELEVISION COMMERCIALS, WHICH REALLY REFLECT ADVERTISERS WANTING TO BE VERY MUCH AWARE OF HOW TO REFLECT SOCIETY'S ATTITUDES, YOU HARDLY EVER SEE AN OLDER PERSON IN A TELEVISION COMMERCIAL IN AN EROTIC SITUATION, IN A LOVING SITUATION.

20 01:02:26:03 ALL OLDER PEOPLE ARE EVER SEEN ON TELEVISION DOING IS MAKING COFFEE OR WORRYING ABOUT THEIR DENTURES FALLING OUT.

21 01:02:34:04 THAT'S ESSENTIALLY THE IMAGE ON COMMERCIALS.

22 01:02:36:18 IT'S A NONEXISTENT IMAGE, STEREOTYPE -- SEX IS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

23 01:02:40:18 THE EXCEPTION, BY THE WAY, IS WHEN OLDER PEOPLE ARE SHOWN IN A HUMOROUS CAST ENGAGING IN SEX OR IN RELATIONSHIPS.

24 01:02:49:19 A CLASSIC OF THAT WOULD BE, OF COURSE, THE GOLDEN GIRLS, WHICH DOES PORTRAY, OCCASIONALLY, AN OLDER WOMAN BEING SEXUALLY INTERESTED IN SOMEBODY, BUT IT'S DONE IN A HUMOROUS WAY.

25 01:03:02:03 IT'S SAYING, "ISN'T IT FUNNY, ISN'T IT SILLY, "ISN'T IT INAPPROPRIATE FOR AN OLDER WOMAN TO STILL BE SEXUAL?" ALL YOU'VE GOT TO DO IS GO TO A CARD
SHOP, AND IN THERE, YOU'RE GOING TO FIND ALL THESE CARDS TELLING YOU ABOUT YOUR DECLINE, HOW TO DEAL WITH IT, SYMPATHY CARDS ABOUT YOUR LOSS AND ALL THAT, AND THEY BEGIN IN YOUR 30s.

26  01:03:27:19 OF COURSE, OLDER PEOPLE LAUGH AT THAT BECAUSE THEY KNOW SOMEBODY'S DUMB.

27  01:03:32:20 BUT, STILL, IT'S OFFENSIVE TO SEE THAT SOMETHING THAT'S IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE IS MADE FUN OF, AND THEN, I GET TO FEELING SORRY FOR THE YOUNGER PEOPLE.

28  01:03:44:18 IF THEY BELIEVE THESE CARDS, THEY'RE IN TROUBLE.

29  01:03:47:17 BUT TO FIND THE SOURCE OF STEREOTYPES ABOUT LATE-LIFE SEXUALITY, YOU NEED TO LOOK BACK TO THE TIME BEFORE TV AND CONTEMPORARY GREETING CARDS. THE REASON FOR OUR STEREOTYPES ABOUT AGING PEOPLE BASICALLY GOES BACK TO WHAT WE THINK SEX IS FOR.

30  01:04:05:03 MOST PEOPLE DON'T STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT THIS WAY, BUT BASICALLY, OUR CULTURE SAYS SEX IS FOR REPRODUCTION.

31  01:04:13:11 IF YOU THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT ARE PERCEIVED AS APPROPRIATE FOR SEX, THEY'RE PEOPLE OF CHILDBEARING YEARS.

32  01:04:20:18 THEY'RE PEOPLE WHO ARE HEALTHY, ATTRACTIVE -- GOOD BREEDING STOCK, SO TO SPEAK.

33  01:04:26:02 THOSE ARE THE PEOPLE WE THINK OF AS BEING SEXUAL.

34  01:04:30:03 INDEED, THE THINGS THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO DO SEXUALLY ARE SUPPOSED TO LEAD TO REPRODUCTION OR APPROXIMATE WHAT LEADS TO REPRODUCTION.

35  01:04:38:03 WE HAVE VERY NEGATIVE ATTITUDES IN OUR SOCIETY ABOUT ADULT MASTURBATION.

36  01:04:43:03 WHY? BECAUSE MASTURBATION DOESN'T LEAD TO PREGNANCY.
WE REALLY THINK SEX IS CONNECTED WITH PREGNANCY.

WHY DO WE HAVE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES ABOUT LESBIANS AND GAY MEN?

BECAUSE WHAT THEY DO COULDN'T LEAD TO REPRODUCTION.

IF YOU LOOK AT OUR STEREOTYPES, IDEAS, AND VALUES ABOUT WHAT IS APPROPRIATE SEX, IT BOILS DOWN TO WHAT APPROXIMATES HAVING A SOCIALLY APPROVED PREGNANCY, AND THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE OLDER PEOPLE.

TODAY THE EASY AVAILABILITY OF BIRTH CONTROL SPEAKS TO AN OPENNESS ABOUT SEX THAT WAS UNHEARD OF JUST A FEW DECADES AGO. WHEN WE WERE GROWING UP, WOMEN WERE BROUGHT UP, GIRLS WERE BROUGHT UP THAT SEX WAS NASTY, SO, THEREFORE, YOU WERE SCARED OF BOYS.

THEN WHEN YOU GREW UP -- AND I GOT MARRIED WHEN I WAS, WHAT?

DONNY WAS BORN WHEN I WAS 38.

I WAS 32 WHEN I GOT MARRIED.

BY THE TIME I GOT MARRIED AND LEARNED WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE PUBLIC -- BIRTH CONTROL WAS JUST COMING INTO BEING WHEN WE GOT MARRIED, AND IT WAS STILL UNDER THE TABLE.

YOU HAD TO GO TO A DOCTOR TO FIND OUT ABOUT IT.

SO THERE'S AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ATTITUDE ABOUT SEX IN MY GENERATION OF THE 80s -- 80 YEARS OLD -- THAN THERE IS IN THOSE THAT ARE 60, WHO HAVE ALREADY HAD THIS EDUCATION.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE TEEN-AGERS IN THE THIRTIES AND FORTIES WERE MIDDLE-AGED PARENTS IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES. MANY WHO LIVED THROUGH THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION WERE LEFT UNCHANGED, BUT THE ATTITUDES OF SOME OLDER ADULTS
EVAULVED WITH THE TIMES. MY THOUGHTS ARE VERY
DIFFERENT THAN OTHER PEOPLE.

I THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT PEOPLE LIVING
TOGETHER AND NOT BEING MARRIED -- THINGS LIKE
THAT.

I GO ALONG WITH THE TIMES.

THERE MIGHT BE A CIRCUMSTANCE THAT THEY CAN'T
GET MARRIED, OR THEY WANT TO FIND OUT HOW
THEY FEEL ABOUT EACH OTHER.

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG IN THAT.

A MARRIAGE IS BLESSED AND ALL THAT, BUT TRY IT
OUT BEFORE YOU GO INTO IT.

A NEW ACCEPTANCE OF SUBJECTS THAT WERE ONCE
CONSIDERED TABOO CAN BE FOUND EVEN IN PEOPLE
WITH VERY TRADITIONAL BACKGROUNDS. LET'S FACE
IT. EVEN, YOU READ THE BIBLE -- THERE WAS
HOMOSEXUALITY, ALL THE REST OF IT.

EVERY METHOD OF SEX THAT EVER HAPPENED HAS
BEEN GOING ON FOREVER.

SO WHAT THE HECK?

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE IF IT STILL GOES ON?

THEY HAVEN'T CHANGED THE REST OF THE WORLD
THAT MUCH.

MAYBE THEY NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT OTHER
THINGS IN THE WORLD, LIKE FEEDING HUNGRY AND
SO FORTH.

BUT SOME FEEL THAT AS TIMES CHANGE, OLDER
ADULTS DID MORE THAN JUST REACT. I'M CONVINCED
THAT OLDER PEOPLE IN FLORIDA, FOR EXAMPLE, IN
THE SIXTIES BEGAN COHABITATION AND THAT THE
YOUNG PEOPLE LEARNED FROM THEM, NOT THE
OTHER WAY AROUND.

BECAUSE IF THEY MARRIED, THEY LOST THEIR
SOCIAL SECURITY.
NOW, THAT'S BEEN CHANGED, BUT MANY COUPLES LIVED TOGETHER BECAUSE MARRIAGE WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION FINANCIALLY, AND THIS WAS ACCEPTED IN THAT SUBCULTURE IN FLORIDA.

BUT GOVERNMENT -- OR EVEN SOCIETY -- ARE NOT THE ONLY FORCES TRYING TO DICTATE APPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR FOR OLDER ADULTS. SOMETIMES COERCION IS CLOSER TO HOME. I KNOW IN MY OWN FAMILY, I HAVE ADULT SON AND DAUGHTER, AND I HAD REMARRIED AFTER 50, AND -- TWICE.

ONE WAS VERY GOOD, AND THEY LOVED HIM TO DEATH, AND THAT WAS VERY APPROVING, AND HE DIED SUDDENLY.

AND SOME TWO YEARS LATER, I MARRIED AGAIN, AND THEY DIDN'T LIKE HIM.

NEITHER DID I.

HA HA!

SO THAT ONE ENDED, AND WHEN IT ENDED, MY SON AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW TOOK ME OUT TO DINNER.

WHILE WE WERE OUT AT DINNER, WE WERE DANCING, AND HE SAYS, "MOTHER, YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT."

YOU'RE A GOOD DANCER." I SAID, "THANK YOU, SON." HE SAID, "MOTHER, I LIKE THAT DRESS." I SAID, "SINCE YOU WERE 6, "THAT'S THE WAY YOU GOT WHAT YOU WANTED.

WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?" HE SAYS, "MOTHER, I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO OR HOW YOU DO IT "OR WHERE YOU DO IT, BUT DON'T EVER GET MARRIED AGAIN." HA HA HA!

SO I SAID, "YOU GO HOME AND TELL YOUR 16-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER "THE SAME THING.

WILL SHE HAVE THE SAME FREEDOM?" "NO!" I SAID, "WHY DO WE HAVE TWO SETS OF MORALS?" ANYWAY, HE DIDN'T WANT MOTHER TO GET MARRIED AGAIN, THAT THAT HAD BEEN TOO MUCH.
DESPITE THE COMPETING INFLUENCES ABOUT WHAT IS APPROPRIATE AND WHAT IS NOT, THE FACT REMAINS THAT OLDER ADULTS ARE SEXUAL BEINGS. WHAT THEY'RE DOING AND HOW THEY'RE DOING IT IS AS DIVERSE AS THE POPULATION ITSELF. YOUR FATHER WAS, WHAT, 80 SOMETHING, AND HE NEVER LOST HIS INTEREST, SO I HOPE HE NEVER LOSES HIS EITHER.

I HOPE NOT.

FRANKLY, THAT'S PROBABLY A SHOCK.

I'D JUMP OFF THE BRIDGE THEN.

YEAH. SO THAT'S ALL PART OF LIFE, TOO.

YOUNG PEOPLE THINK THAT THEY'VE INVENTED SEX.

I THINK THAT IT'S BEEN HERE, AND IT'S GOING TO STAY.

SEX IS AN ONGOING THING.


UM, EVERY MONTH, A MATURE WOMAN WHO IS OVULATING WILL PRODUCE AN EGG, AND IF THAT EGG IS NOT FERTILIZED, EVENTUALLY WILL MENSTRUATE.

THE OVARY PRODUCES, ALONG WITH THE EGG, HORMONES THAT ARE NEEDED BY THE FEMALE BODY TO MAINTAIN THE REPRODUCTIVE STRUCTURES IN A FERTILE SITUATION, AND THESE ARE ESTROGEN AND PROGESTERONE.

WHEN A WOMAN AGES, THE EGGS WITHIN THE OVARY BECOME RESORBED, AND, EVENTUALLY, THE OVARY
STOPS PRODUCING SUFFICIENT ESTROGEN TO CONTINUE ON WITH THE NORMAL CYCLING, THE NORMAL PROCESSES THAT AN ADULT WOMAN EXPECTS, AND, EVENTUALLY, SHE WILL STOP MENSTRUATING.

WHEN THIS CONDITION PERSISTS FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, THE WOMAN IS TERMED MENOPAUSAL.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES ASSOCIATED WITH MENOPAUSE ARE AFFECTED BY A WOMAN'S ESTROGEN LEVELS. ESTROGEN LEVELS VARY FROM WOMAN TO WOMAN. THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF ESTROGEN IS THE OVARY, BUT WOMEN ALSO PRODUCE ESTROGEN FROM THEIR ADRENAL GLANDS, AND, UH, AS I SAY, THERE IS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF VARIATION FROM INDIVIDUAL TO INDIVIDUAL.


THERE ARE SOME CHANGES IN THE BREASTS, ALSO SOME CHANGES IN THE SKIN BECAUSE THESE ORGANS AND TISSUES REACT TO ESTROGEN, AND WITH THE ABSENCE OF ESTROGEN, THERE ARE CHANGES THAT ENSUE.

ESTROGEN REPLACEMENT THERAPY IS OFTEN PRESCRIBED BY PHYSICIANS FOR MENOPAUSAL WOMEN. THERE ARE BOTH BENEFITS AND RISKS. THE MAJOR BENEFIT OF TAKING ESTROGEN REPLACEMENT THERAPY IS IN THE CONTROL OF HOT FLASHES.

THERE'S ALSO ANOTHER BENEFIT IN THAT ESTROGEN REPLACEMENT THERAPY HAS BEEN LINKED TO A DECREASE IN RISK OF CARDIOVASCULAR CONDITIONS AMONG POSTMENOPAUSAL WOMEN.

IT ALSO SEEMS TO HELP WITH BONE LOSS.

THAT'S AN AREA OF GREAT CONCERN TO SOME WOMEN, OSTEOPOROSIS BEING SOMETHING WE ALL WANT TO AVOID.
IT IS ALSO PURPORTED TO HELP WITH VAGINAL DRYNESS.

SO THESE ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE THERAPY.

NOW, THE RISKS ARE THAT THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS AN INCREASE OF BREAST CANCER IN WOMEN WHO TAKE THIS MEDICATION BECAUSE IT IS A HORMONE.

AND THEN THERE'S AN ISSUE OF HOW LONG TO TAKE THIS MEDICATION.

SOME DOCTORS PRESCRIBE IT INDEFINITELY.

OTHERS SAY JUST FOR THE DURATION OF THE TRANSITION INTO MENOPAUSE -- ABOUT A YEAR, A YEAR OR TWO.

UM, IF THE ESTROGEN IS TAKEN ALONE WITHOUT A PROGESTERONE BUFFER, WOMEN RUN THE RISK OF UTERINE CANCER.

PROGESTERONE BUFFERS THE ESTROGEN AND WILL DECREASE THE RISK OF UTERINE CANCER, AND IT'S -- HOWEVER, APPARENTLY, THE ESTROGEN ALONE IS MORE EFFECTIVE IN RELIEVING THE HOT FLASH THAN THE BUFFERED PILL.

SO IT'S NOT A LOW-RISK OR NO-RISK SITUATION.

THERE IS A RISK.

THERE ALSO IS A BENEFIT, AND EACH WOMAN HAS TO DECIDE FOR HERSELF WHAT RISK SHE'S WILLING TO BEAR FOR THE BENEFIT THAT SHE MIGHT OBTAIN, AND THAT SHOULD BE DONE IN AN INFORMED SETTING WITH A PHYSICIAN, AND SHE SHOULD BE ROUTINELY SCREENED BY THAT PHYSICIAN IN TERMS OF UTERINE AND BREAST CANCER IF SHE DECIDES TO TAKE THE MEDICATION.

MOST WOMEN EXPERIENCE MENOPAUSE IN THEIR LATE 40s OR EARLY 50s. WOMEN VIEW THIS EXPERIENCE DIFFERENTLY. FOR MANY, IT'S A WELCOME CHANGE. MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS MENOPAUSE WAS VERY POSITIVE.
I felt that it was a very natural process, um, and, um...

I went through it very well without any problems.

Um, I think -- I can speak only for myself, but for some women, it's a very traumatic experience.

If I can add, I think that the nice part about menopause is that once a woman has gone through that process, then I think that she can start enjoying her sexual life more because the anxiety or the fear of becoming pregnant has now, uh, ceased, and I think that that's something worth mentioning.

I read in the paper that they're doing this research on older women, uh...

To enable them to carry a child.

Have you heard that yet?

I thought, "Oh, my God! How awful!" I don't think I'd -- I think menopause is great.

Yet some women do experience problems with menopause. Some of the physical symptoms include hot flashes, night sweats, difficulty sleeping, and higher levels of tension and irritability. The major physiological symptom is the hot flash, and that has to do with the abrupt change in the estrogen secretion of the ovary during the transition from normal cycling to the menopausal situation.

Some women are apparently more sensitive to this, or, in some women, the abruptness of this cessation of the secretion of estrogen is more pronounced.

It's important to emphasize that menopause, in many ways, is the companion to menarche, or the adolescent phase.

It's just part of the life cycle, and, of course,
WE ALL KNOW THAT SOME YOUNG WOMEN GO THROUGH THIS PUBERTY VERY EASILY WITH VERY LITTLE COMPLAINT, NO PROBLEMS, AND OTHERS SEEM TO BE DEVASTATED.

119 01:17:45:18 SO WHO'S TO SAY WHETHER IT'S THE ACTUAL EVENTS THEMSELVES OR THE SITUATION WHICH THE PERSON IS IN THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE?

120 01:17:54:17 BUT I THINK, UM, AS A PROFESSIONAL, WE HAVE TO TAKE SERIOUSLY SYMPTOMS AND COMPLAINTS THAT PEOPLE BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF PHYSICIANS AND HEALTH-CARE WORKERS AT THIS TIME BECAUSE IT'S ALSO A PERIOD OF TIME WHEN OTHER CHRONIC DISEASES BECOME MORE PREVALENT, AND IT'S POSSIBLE TO OVERLOOK OR IGNORE OTHER HEALTH CONDITIONS AND SIMPLY SAY, "OH, IT'S CHANGE OF LIFE.

121 01:18:22:18 "LET'S DISREGARD IT. LET'S NOT PERFORM THAT TEST.

122 01:18:25:18 LET'S NOT CHECK INTO IT." AND THAT WOULD BE REALLY EGREGIOUS ACTION ON OUR PART.

123 01:18:32:17 PERCEPTIONS OF MENOPAUSE VARY WIDELY. [MADELEINE GOODMAN] WELL, THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN THE WAY WOMEN PERCEIVE MENOPAUSE, AND THESE DIFFERENCES MAY HAVE TO DO WITH THEIR SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, WITH THEIR MARITAL STATUS, WITH HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT THEMSELVES.

124 01:18:51:19 THERE'S EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT WOMEN THAT LEAD ACTIVE LIVES, THAT ARE CONTENT WITH THEIR WORK SITUATIONS, THAT ARE NOT IMPOVERISHED, THAT ARE ABLE TO GET AROUND AND GET OUT AND LEAD FULL AND ACTIVE LIVES TEND TO REPORT FEWER SYMPTOMS THAN WOMEN WHO ARE POSSIBLY WIDOWED, NOT WORKING, UM...

125 01:19:16:03 POSSIBLY IN ILL HEALTH FOR OTHER REASONS.

126 01:19:20:02 SO THERE CERTAINLY ARE LIFE FACTORS THAT WILL INFLUENCE A PERSON'S PERCEPTION OF THE MENOPAUSAL TRANSITION.

127 01:19:28:19 IF YOUR IDENTITY IS BUILT AROUND YOUR ABILITY TO
HAVE CHILDREN, TAKE AWAY YOUR ABILITY TO HAVE CHILDREN AND NOT REPLACE IT WITH ANOTHER MEANS OF SELF-ESTEEM, AND YOU FIND A VERY VULNERABLE HUMAN BEING.

128 01:19:45:18 SO IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT SOME WOMEN, UM...

129 01:19:51:09 ARE VERY ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE SITUATION.

130 01:19:56:13 PERCEPTIONS OF MENOPAUSE ALSO VARY BY CULTURE. THERE WAS AN INTERESTING STUDY OF WOMEN IN JERUSALEM FROM DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES, VERY TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES, AND, I BELIEVE, AMONG THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY, WHEN WOMEN ACHIEVE MENOPAUSE, THEY ARE NO LONGER WORRIED ABOUT UNWANTED PREGNANCY, AND THEY ARE ACCORDED GREATER POWER AND GREATER AUTHORITY WITHIN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY.

131 01:20:23:03 SO THAT IS SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

132 01:20:26:03 FOR WOMEN IN ANOTHER SOCIETY WHERE THERE IS NO SUCH ROLE TO LOOK FORWARD TO, THE LOSS OF THE CHILDBEARING ROLE OR FUNCTION TAKES ON QUITE A DIFFERENT SIGNIFICANCE.

133 01:20:37:18 SEXUAL RESPONSIVENESS CONTINUES AFTER MENOPAUSE. GIVEN ALL THE NORMAL PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES THAT TAKE PLACE IN WOMEN, THE CHIEF THREAT TO A FULL SEX LIFE IS THE SCARCITY OF OLDER MALE PARTNERS. MENOPAUSE IS A FEATURE OF THE LIFE CYCLE.

134 01:20:54:17 IT'S PART OF LIVING.

135 01:20:57:02 IT'S PART OF GROWING UP, GROWING OLD.

136 01:21:01:06 IT'S A VERY POSITIVE FEATURE OF THAT EXPERIENCE.

137 01:21:05:19 IN MY OWN CASE, AS I APPROACH MY MENOPAUSE, AS I AM A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN, I SEE THIS NOT AS SOMETHING TO BE AFRAID OF, OR I DON'T VIEW IT WITH TREPIDATION, BUT IS SOMETHING I'LL GO THROUGH AS ONE MORE ADVENTURE.

138 01:21:24:04 AND SO I THINK THAT SOMETHING LIKE MENOPAUSE
CAN BE VIEWED IN HORRIFIC TERMS, OR IT CAN BE VIEWED AS SOMETHING THAT YOU WILL SIMPLY GET THROUGH.

139 01:21:35:18 YOU GET THROUGH ACNE, YOU GET THROUGH PUBERTY, AND YOU GET THROUGH MENOPAUSE, AND YOU GET ON WITH YOUR LIFE.

140 01:21:44:19 DR. VINCENT DeFEo DISCUSSES NORMAL AGE-RELATED CHANGES IN MEN. THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO THE MALE, UM...

141 01:21:53:17 WITH AGING ARE PRIMARILY THINGS RELATED TO THE PENIS.

142 01:21:59:19 THE ERECTILE ABILITY IS COMPROMISED.

143 01:22:03:19 ERECTIONS MAY NOT BE AS FIRM.

144 01:22:08:10 THEY MAY NOT BE AS EASY TO ACHIEVE, AND THIS HAS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE ASPECTS WHICH IN SOME MALES WILL CAUSE THEM TO REDUCE SOME OF THEIR MOTIVATION BECAUSE OF THIS FEAR OF THEY CAN'T PERFORM WHEN THE PENIS ISN'T WORKING PROPERLY.

145 01:22:29:03 UNLIKE WOMEN, MEN DO NOT EXPERIENCE ABRUPT HORMONAL CHANGES AT MIDLIFE. RATHER, TESTOSTERONE DIMINISHES SLOWLY OVER THE LIFE SPAN, AND FERTILITY IS RETAINED EVEN THOUGH THE SPERM COUNT IS LOWER IN OLDER MALES. MEN CAN FATHER CHILDREN LATE IN LIFE. [VINCENT DeFEO] THE OTHER THING FOR MALES THAT IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT HAPPENS TO THE PROSTATE GLAND.

146 01:22:54:17 ANY MALE WHO REACHES AGE 60 -- OR I SHOULD SAY...

147 01:23:02:02 '8dm 80% OF THE MALES WHO REACH AGE 60 -- THE PROSTATE GLAND -- THIS ORGAN HERE, LOCATED BELOW THE URINARY BLADDER -- THIS ORGAN TENDS TO HAVE ENLARGED BY THAT TIME, AND THE URINARY CANAL THAT RUNS THROUGH THE PROSTATE GLAND TO EMPTY INTO THE URINARY CANAL...

148 01:23:31:27 THAT URINARY CANAL THAT RUNS THROUGH THE
PROSTATE GLAND BECOMES COMPRESSED BY THIS ENLARGED PROSTATE GLAND.

149 01:23:42:18 NOW, THIS IS NOT CANCER.

150 01:23:44:19 THIS IS CALLED BENIGN PROSTATIC HYPERTROPHY.

151 01:23:47:10 **ENLARGEMENT OF THE PROSTATE RESTRICTS URINATION SO THAT SURGICAL REMOVAL OF PART OF THE GLAND IS SOMETIMES NECESSARY. SUCH SURGERY DOES NOT USUALLY PREVENT MEN FROM HAVING AN ERECTION. REMOVAL OF THE PROSTATE WILL NOT NECESSARILY SEXUALLY DISABLE AN OLDER MAN, BUT THERE MAY BE RISKS INVOLVED. THERE IS A RISK THAT, UM...**

152 01:24:11:02 THE MORE EXTENSIVE THE SURGERY TO THE PROSTATE, THAT THERE MAY BE SOME IMPAIRMENT OF THE NERVES WHICH GO THROUGH THIS REGION THAT CONTROL THE BLOOD FLOW INTO THE SPONGY TISSUE OF THE PENIS.

153 01:24:29:17 AND IF THAT SHOULD HAPPEN, THEN THERE MAY BE IMPOTENCE -- THAT IS, A FAILURE OF THE ERECTILE PROCESS.

154 01:24:36:19 BUT WITH THE SURGICAL TECHNIQUES NOW, GREAT CARE IS TAKEN TO AVOID DAMAGE TO THOSE NERVES, AND THEREFORE, THERE IS A GOOD LIKELIHOOD THAT ERECTION WILL STILL BE ABLE TO OCCUR.

155 01:24:50:14 **EVEN THOSE WHO ARE IMPOTENT CAN EXPERIENCE AN ERECTION THROUGH USE OF IMPLANTS OR INJECTIONS. MANY MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS ARE AVAILABLE. IN GENERAL, MALE SEXUAL ACTIVITY DECLINES WITH AGE, BUT WITH CONSIDERABLE INDIVIDUAL VARIATION. THERE ARE MEN IN THEIR 70s WHO WILL HAVE A HIGH MOTIVATION AND A HIGH ABILITY TO CARRY THAT THROUGH, WHO ARE HAVING INTERCOURSE AT A FREQUENCY WHICH IS COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF MANY YOUNGER MEN.**

156 01:25:25:19 SO IT REALLY IS AN INDIVIDUAL THING THAT WE NEED TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN WE THINK OF SEXUALITY OF THE AGING.

157 01:25:34:17 **HOW DO THE PHYSIOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGES**
IN OLDER ADULTS’ LIVES AFFECT THEIR SEXUAL EXPRESSION? AS FAR AS OUR SEXUALITY IS CONCERNED, IT GETS BETTER WITH OLD AGE BECAUSE WE’RE AT A TIME NOW WHERE WE HAVE NO CHILDREN AT HOME, AND, UH, IT’S...

158 01:25:55:02 WELL, WE JUST HAVE A GREAT TIME TOGETHER.
159 01:25:58:04 WE HAVE A WONDERFUL TIME.
160 01:26:00:06 I MEAN, IT’S LIKE THE OLD CLICHE -- THE OLD SHOE.
161 01:26:04:23 WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER COMPLETELY.
162 01:26:06:24 WE DON’T DO SO MANY ACROBATICS ANYMORE.
163 01:26:09:23 NO. WE DON’T BREAK THE BED.
164 01:26:12:08 OH, YES, WE DID.
165 01:26:14:03 HA HA HA!
166 01:26:15:18 SHE WAS -- HA HA!
167 01:26:18:19 ONLY TWICE.
168 01:26:20:04 YOUR BED WAS OLD.
169 01:26:22:03 WE WEREN’T.
170 01:26:23:18 HA HA HA!
171 01:26:27:18 OH, WELL. THAT’S LIFE.
172 01:26:29:18 I KNOW. WE NEED A NEW BED, THOUGH.
173 01:26:32:19 PHYSICAL CHANGES IN OLDER ADULTS CAN LEAD TO BETTER SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS. THE OLDER MAN MAY BE BETTER ABLE TO PROLONG EJACULATION.
174 01:26:42:18 HE MAY BE BETTER ABLE TO PROVIDE PLEASURE AND SATISFACTION TO HIS PARTNER, AND, THEREFORE, MIGHT REPORT HIGHER SEXUAL SATISFACTION THAN YOUNGER MEN.
175 01:26:52:19 ANOTHER INTERESTING POINT THAT’S COME OUT OF MY RESEARCH IS THAT OFTEN OLDER MEN REPORT THAT THEY ARE MORE SEXUALLY RESPONSIVE TO THE WHOLE PERSON, AND THEY’RE NOT FOCUSED
JUST ON GENITAL CONTACT, JUST ON THE ORGASM.

176 01:27:09:04 SO THEY MAY BE, IN FACT, BETTER LOVERS THAN THE YOUNGER MAN.

177 01:27:16:12 HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INTIMACY AND AFFECTION FOR SOME OLDER ADULTS. GAY AND LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE FOUND IN ALL AGE GROUPS, AND, LIKE MARRIAGES, SOME ENDURE FOR MANY YEARS. SOMEHOW WE FORGET THE FACT THAT MAYBE 5% TO 10% OF CHILDREN HAVE HOMOSEXUAL FEELINGS.

178 01:27:38:18 5% TO 10% OF ADULTS WE KNOW DO, BUT 5% TO 10% OF OLDER PEOPLE DO, TOO, AND THEY DO NOT SUDDENLY DISAPPEAR.

179 01:27:47:18 THEY ARE THERE.

180 01:27:49:03 AND ONE OF THE REASSURING RESULTS OF RESEARCH IS THAT OLDER GAY PEOPLE OFTEN MAKE A VERY GOOD ADJUSTMENT.

181 01:27:57:02 THE REASON FOR THAT IS BECAUSE THEY'RE A MINORITY GROUP AND THEIR SEXUAL AND INTIMACY PATTERNS ARE DIFFERENT.

182 01:28:04:03 THEY HAVE TO BE VERY CONSCIOUS OF PLANNING AND THINKING THROUGH HOW TO LIVE THEIR INTIMATE LIVES.

183 01:28:11:03 AS A RESULT, THEY ARE SOMETIMES BETTER PREPARED FOR AGING THAN HETEROSEXUALLY ORIENTED PEOPLE.

184 01:28:17:05 DR. DOUGLAS KIMMEL'S RESEARCH HAS REVEALED TWO PATTERNS AMONG OLDER GAY MEN. AND THE PATTERN BY WHICH MEN COME TO BE OLDER GAY MEN IS A VERY INTERESTING ONE.

185 01:28:30:06 SOME HAVE BEEN GAY ALL OF THEIR LIVES, RELATING WITH OTHER PEOPLE OF THE SAME GENDER, AND HAVE HAD VERY LITTLE HETEROSEXUAL EXPERIENCE, BUT A NUMBER HAVE HAD CONSIDERABLE HETEROSEXUAL EXPERIENCE.

186 01:28:46:03 SOME ARE, IN FACT, PARENTS, GRANDFATHERS.
SOME HAVE, IN FACT, BEEN MARRIED FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME AND DID NOT DEAL WITH BEING HOMOSEXUAL, UH...MUCH UNTIL AFTER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF MARRIAGE -- FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN THE CHILDREN LEFT HOME.

NOW, THIS IS PARTLY, I SUSPECT, NOT ONLY A PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL, BUT ALSO A CULTURAL ISSUE, BECAUSE IF WE THINK BACK TO THE ERA IN WHICH THESE MEN GREW UP AS GAY MEN, THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF NEGATIVE ATTITUDE WITHIN OUR CULTURE.

I GREW UP ON A FARM AND WENT TO SCHOOL INTERMINABLY.

I DID HAVE SOME SAME-SEX EXPERIENCES WHEN I WAS IN EIGHTH GRADE AND THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL, BUT I WAS ALSO VERY INVOLVED IN A RATHER FUNDAMENTALIST CHURCH AND FELT THAT WAS WRONG, AND SO DECIDED, WHEN I WAS ABOUT A JUNIOR, TO BURY THAT PART OF MY LIFE AND PRETTY MUCH SUPPRESSED IT.

BUT IN MY 30s AND 40s, I FELT A VAGUE DISCOMFORT OR A LACK OF FULFILLMENT WITH MALE FRIENDS, AND I HAD GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEN, BUT WHEN WE WOULD SAY GOOD-BYE TO EACH OTHER, THERE WAS A FEELING OF FRUSTRATION.

"GEE, THAT WASN'T ENOUGH." I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THAT WAS.

HOWEVER, WITH MY HEART ATTACK AT 52 -- I WAS VERY ANGRY ABOUT HAVING A HEART ATTACK BECAUSE IT SEEMED LIKE A CLOSURE ON MY LIFE, UH...

AND AS I BEGAN TO RECOVER, I, UH...

I THOUGHT, "WELL, OLIVER, WHAT WAS IT THAT...

"WHY WERE -- WHY WERE YOU SO ANGRY?" AND IT CAME TO ME THAT I -- THERE WERE SOME THINGS I HADN'T DONE.

WELL, THE NEXT QUESTION WAS, "WHAT HAVEN'T YOU DONE?
YOU'VE DONE A WIDE VARIETY OF THINGS, MANY SUCCESSFULLY." AND GRADUALLY, THE ATTRACTION FOR MEN CAME TO THE SURFACE, AND, UH...

I ALLOWED MYSELF TO, UH...

EXPERIMENT SOME, AND THAT WAS A MIND-BLOWING EXPERIENCE.

I TOLD MY WIFE IMMEDIATELY ABOUT IT, AND, UH...

WHICH WAS UPSETTING TO HER, AND TRIED OVER A SIX-YEAR PERIOD TO WORK OUT A COMPROMISE, AND NEITHER OF US COULD COMPROMISE.

THE DISTANCE WAS TOO GREAT. WE JUST COULD NOT DO THAT.

AND SO I DECIDED TO LEAVE AND CAME HERE TO PORTSMOUTH AND HAVE NOT RETURNED.

AND IT'S BEEN -- IT'S BEEN INTERESTING AND REALLY VERY REWARDING.

SOME OLDER PEOPLE FEEL A REDUCED NEED FOR SEX. A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK THAT IT'S ALWAYS THE THING, AND MAYBE IT IS FOR SOME PEOPLE, BUT THERE'S A LOT OF CASES WHERE PEOPLE GET TO A CERTAIN POINT, AND, WHAT THE HECK, YOU DON'T WANT IT.

YOU DON'T FEEL THE, UH...

THE NEED.

THE NEED, AND YOU DON'T FEEL, UH...

WELL...YOU'RE TIRED.

THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.

AND, I MEAN, WHAT DOES IT MATTER AT THIS POINT?

IF YOU WANT IT, FINE. IF YOU DON'T, FINE.

WHY DO PEOPLE STOP HAVING SEX?

ONE OF MY FAVORITE ANSWERS WAS GIVEN, I BELIEVE, BY ALEX COMFORT, AND HE SAID THE
Why do older people stop having sex? Are the same reasons they stop riding bicycles.

Why do older people stop riding bicycles?

For one thing, many older people don't have any place to ride bicycles.

A lot of older people lose their privacy.

They live in institutions and with adult children.

They are in situations in which they have no privacy, and that certainly curtails the sexual experience.

Why do older people stop riding bicycles?

Sometimes they're physically unable to.

They've lost their strength, or they're ill.

That's a relatively small minority.

Relatively few older people really are incapacitated by chronic illnesses.

Another reason is they think they look ridiculous riding a bicycle, that they have been brainwashed by our media that makes us think that older people who are sexual are cute or funny or, in some ways, weird.

And they feel inappropriate that they should be "acting their age," so to speak.

Another reason they stop having sex is they feel bored.

That's an important area to consider.

A lot of people have been having sex with one partner for 20 or 30 years in the same way at the same time of day with very little variety, and frankly, after 20 or 30 years of riding the bicycle up and down the same block, day after day, just about anybody would get a
LITTLE BIT BORED OR TIRED.

231 01:34:08:12 THE LAST REASON WHY PEOPLE STOP RIDING A BICYCLE IS THAT THEY NEVER LEARNED TO RIDE IT PROPERLY IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND THAT IS SO TRUE IN OUR SOCIETY.

232 01:34:19:27 WE ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH SEX IN OUR SOCIETY, BUT WE'RE VERY POOR AT COMMUNICATING IDEAS ABOUT ENHANCING AND ENJOYING ONE'S SEXUALITY.

233 01:34:28:13 FOR SOME WIDOWS, THE IDEA OF DEVELOPING NEW SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS IS TROUBLING. I THINK, AFTER MY HUSBAND DIED, MY BODY WENT THROUGH A DIFFERENT CHANGE.

234 01:34:40:20 IT SEEMED THAT...

235 01:34:42:21 ANYTHING TO DO WITH SEX HAD DRIED UP.

236 01:34:45:21 IT SEEMED I HADN'T MET THE RIGHT ONE.

237 01:34:48:19 AND THEN I...

238 01:34:50:04 DID MEET THIS FELLOW THAT I WORKED WITH, BUT IT WASN'T LOVE.

239 01:34:55:03 IT WAS JUST A GOOD RELATIONSHIP.

240 01:34:57:18 I COULDN'T HAVE THAT LOVE I HAD WITH MY HUSBAND.

241 01:35:01:18 AND EMOTIONALLY, IT WAS A DIFFERENT THING.

242 01:35:04:21 I SHOULD HAVE GONE TO SEE A PSYCHIATRIST BECAUSE I THINK THAT'S MADE ME A LITTLE MENTAL.

243 01:35:11:05 PEOPLE SAY THEY SHOULDN'T GO TO PSYCHIATRISTS, BUT THEY SHOULD.

244 01:35:15:19 BORN IN AN ERA OF SEXUAL MODESTY, THE OLDER GENERATION WAS NOT ENCOURAGED TO LEARN ABOUT SEX. AND, UNTIL RECENTLY, PHYSICIANS, NURSES, AND SOCIAL WORKERS HAD LITTLE TRAINING IN THIS ASPECT OF AGING. TODAY THE SITUATION IS CHANGING. PAT NICKERSON IS A NURSE WHO HAS WATCHED THE EVOLUTION OF HEALTH WORKERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD OLD-AGE SEXUALITY.
ABOUT 10 OR 15 YEARS AGO, AS FAR AS OUR NURSING ASSESSMENT IN THE HOSPITAL WHERE WE DID AN ASSESSMENT ON A PATIENT, WE STARTED ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT SEXUALITY.

245  01:35:49:19 WE FELT VERY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH OLDER PEOPLE IN PARTICULAR, ASKING THEM QUESTIONS, AND THE OLDER PEOPLE FELT UNCOMFORTABLE BEING ASKED, BUT AS TIME WENT BY, THE WAY WE ASKED THE QUESTIONS CHANGED SO THAT IT DIDN'T SEEM WE WERE PRYING.

246  01:36:05:22 IT SEEMED THAT WE WERE NEEDING TO KNOW, AS FAR AS THEIR GENERAL HEALTH WAS CONCERNED, AND THEY WERE MORE COMFORTABLE, AND WE WERE MORE COMFORTABLE ASKING ABOUT SEXUALITY.

247  01:36:16:23 SO THAT'S HAD A TURNAROUND IN THE LAST 10 OR 15 YEARS.

248  01:36:21:24 MISCONCEPTIONS AND ANXIETIES ABOUT SEXUALITY SUGGEST A NEED FOR SEX EDUCATION AND COUNSELING. THE FIRST THING THAT'S IMPORTANT FOR A COUNSELOR TO KEEP IN MIND IS MANY OF THEIR OLDER CLIENTS FEEL EITHER ASHAMED OR EMBARRASED TO ADMIT THEIR SEXUAL FEELINGS, THAT IT WON'T BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE COUNSELOR, THAT HE OR SHE WILL BE SHOCKED OR DISGUSTED, MAYBE, BY THE THOUGHT THAT THE 65-YEAR-OLD WIDOW IS STILL INTERESTED IN SEX.

249  01:36:53:19 SO I THINK THE FIRST RULE FOR COUNSELORS IS, IN THEIR OWN MINDS, ACCEPT THE POSSIBILITY THAT ANY CLIENT OF THEIRS, ANY PATIENT OF THEIRS, DESPITE THEIR AGE, MAY STILL BE INTERESTED IN SEXUALITY BUT FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT IT, AND, THEREFORE, AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR THE COUNSELOR IS, ESSENTIALLY, TO OPEN THE DOOR TO DISCUSSIONS ABOUT SEX, ESSENTIALLY TO GIVE THE OLDER CLIENT PERMISSION TO STILL BE SEXUAL, TO STILL HAVE THESE DESIRES.

250  01:37:23:14 THE SECOND RULE IS TO GIVE THEM THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR BODIES THAT MAY BE ESSENTIAL.
There are tremendous changes that occur in the body.

There are as many changes that occur in the body between ages 45 and 60 as between, say, 10 and 25.

We talk a lot about adolescent changes and how that affects their behavior.

We rarely talk about the changes that occur in an older person's body that psychologically and physically affect their expression of sexuality.

Important as it is, the physical aspect of sex is only one part of a person's total emotional life. Also important is our need for closeness, intimacy, affection, and caring. These needs can be met in many different ways. When you get older, you want all the love, attention, and feeling, and when you're younger, so many activities keep you busy that you're just not pinpointing that.

But as you get older, you have more time.

You want more attention, more love, and more understanding.

There are five different words for love in Greek -- five or six.

There's eros, agape, philia. There's so many things which fall into play, but when a person's married for so many years, as we have, we find -- it seems as though it's, uhm...

Natural.

Natural, that's all.

It isn't the actual -- it isn't the sexual act that's important to us.

It's being together.

Yeah, and it's...
265  01:39:00:16  HOLDING HANDS.

266  01:39:01:28  YOU KNOW, THOSE ARE THE THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT.

267  01:39:05:29  THE FREQUENCY OF SEX IS NOT THE ISSUE HERE, UH...

268  01:39:12:04  BUT I THINK THAT WE KNOW -- YOU KNOW, WE FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND JUST BEING TOGETHER IS WHAT IS IMPORTANT.

269  01:39:23:03  UH...

270  01:39:24:18  I THINK THAT WHEN YOU'RE YOUNGER, IT'S DIFFERENT.

271  01:39:28:19  YOU KNOW, IT'S, UH...

272  01:39:30:19  THERE'S A DIFFERENT KIND OF ATTRACTION TO ONE ANOTHER.

273  01:39:35:02  BUT WITH US, THE CHEMISTRY IS STILL THERE, AND THE ATTRACTION IS STILL THERE.

274  01:39:41:03  THE FREQUENCY MIGHT NOT BE THERE...

275  01:39:43:17  HA HA!

276  01:39:45:04  BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER TO US.

277  01:39:47:24  I CAN'T BE ANY MORE CANDID ABOUT THAT.

278  01:39:51:02  MARY SUE AND ROGER WONSON SEE THEIR RELATIONSHIP AS IMPORTANT FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN AS WELL AS FOR THEMSELVES. WELL, THE WAY THAT OUR OWN CHILDREN AND OUR GRANDCHILDREN SEE US AS A LOVING COUPLE, UH, I THINK IS POSITIVE BECAUSE THEY...

279  01:40:10:06  THEY LOVE TO SEE US KISS EACH OTHER, HOLD HANDS, OR DO OTHER THINGS THAT SHOW THAT WE ARE STILL CARING AND LOVING.

280  01:40:21:09  AND IT'S A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR THEM TO HAVE THIS BECAUSE THEY ARE GOING THROUGH CHANGES IN THEIR TEEN-AGE YEARS AND WONDERING WHAT IS
LOVE ALL ABOUT AND A LASTING RELATIONSHIP, AND A LOT OF TIMES, THEY DON'T GET THAT FROM THEIR FRIENDS OR FROM THE TEACHINGS.

AND OUR OWN CHILDREN ARE GOING THROUGH CHANGES IN THEIR OWN MARRIAGES, AND SO THAT IF THEY SEE US AS A STABLE, LOVING, AND CARING COUPLE, I THINK IT HELPS.

WIDOWED PEOPLE OFTEN FIND THAT FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS BECOME THEIR MAIN SOURCES OF AFFECTION AFTER THE DEATH OF A SPOUSE. MARIAN COWAN'S GRANDCHILDREN FILLED THE EMPTY PLACE IN HER EMOTIONAL LIFE AFTER HER HUSBAND'S DEATH. EMOTIONALLY...

UM...

I REALLY DON'T -- I REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW I COULD MANAGE, YOU KNOW, AT THIS POINT, WITHOUT, UH...

WITHOUT THOSE CHILDREN.

THEY HAVE TAUGHT ME, UM, WELL...

IF I'M DISTRESSED ABOUT SOMETHING, UM...

THOSE TWO JUST SEEM TO SENSE MY NEEDS IN A WAY THAT NO ONE ELSE DOES, AND, UH...

FOR THEM TO COME, EITHER ONE -- AND THEY'RE VERY DIFFERENT, YOU KNOW.

IN TERMS OF PERSONALITY, THEY'RE VERY DIFFERENT.

BUT, SAY, FOR ONE OF THE GIRLS TO COME PUT HER HEAD IN MY LAP, IT JUST SEEMS TO JUST ERASE A LOT OF THE THINGS THAT REALLY HAPPEN TO ME, AND, UH, IN THIS, PARTICULARLY, THEY SEEM TO HAVE HAD A SENSE OF -- OF MY PARTICULAR NEED, THROUGH THE PASSING OF MY HUSBAND, IN A WAY THAT NOT EVEN THE BOYS SEEM TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD -- THAT I NEED TO HAVE -- I NEED TO HAVE SOMEBODY CLOSE BY, BUT I NEED, UM...

BUT I STILL HAVE TO WORK THROUGH THIS MYSELF.
AND, UM...

THE VERY FACT THAT THEY CAN, WITHOUT SAYING A WORD, JUST COME UP AND GIVE YOU THE BEST HUG, JUST THE BEST HUG, AND NOT SAY ANYTHING -- I LEARNED THAT TO LOVE SOMEBODY DEEPLY AND OPENLY, YOU KNOW, AND SINCERELY, IS JUST ONE OF LIFE’S RICHEST BLESSINGS, REALLY.

YOU HAVE TO HAVE LOVE, AND YOU HAVE TO SHOW LOVE.

IF YOU DON’T SHOW LOVE, THEN YOU DON’T RECEIVE LOVE, AND I FEEL AS THOUGH MY DAUGHTER’S BEEN MY...

BIGGEST THING IN MY LIFE... AND MY GRANDSON.

YOUNG, MIDDLE-AGED, OR OLD, ALL OF US ARE REACHING OUT FOR A CLOSENESS THAT OFTEN SEEMS HARD TO FIND. CREATIVITY IS VERY IMPORTANT AS WE GET OLDER IN TERMS OF HOW TO MEET OUR EMOTIONAL NEEDS FOR CLOSENESS, AND THERE ARE MANY, MANY PATHS FOR THIS.

UNFORTUNATELY, A LOT OF OLDER PEOPLE WITHDRAW.

THEY HAVE BEEN CONDITIONED, AGAIN, TO BELIEVE THAT INTIMACY MEANS FINDING, MARRYING, AND SLEEPING WITH ONE PARTNER UNTIL YOU DIE.

UNFORTUNATELY, THAT ISN’T HOW IT HAPPENS FOR MANY PEOPLE, THROUGH DIVORCE, DEATH, OR PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER HAD A PARTNER.

WE ALSO HAVE TO RECOGNIZE THAT INTIMACY MEANS MORE THAN JUST SEXUALITY.

IT MEANS HAVING A CONFIDANT -- HAVING SOMEBODY WHO ACTUALLY LISTENS AND CARES ABOUT YOU AND WILL NOT TURN THEIR HEAD AWAY WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT FEARS OF DEATH AND LONELINESS AND ANGER, FRUSTRATION, AND DISAPPOINTMENTS -- ALL THOSE DEEP FEELINGS EVERYONE FEELS.

AND AS WE GET OLDER, WE DO NOT LOSE THAT NEED
FOR SOMEONE TO TALK TO.

305 01:44:22:03 THE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY OF A CONFIDANT MAY BE EASIER FOR WOMEN TO FIND BECAUSE WOMEN LIVE LONGER AND HAVE MORE PEERS AND OFTEN HAVE DEVELOPED SOCIAL NETWORKS, WHILE MANY MEN LIMIT THEIR INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS TO WIFE AND FAMILY. THERE IS ONE MAN IN MY OPTIMIST CLUB THAT I TALK TO A LOT, AND WE DISCUSS ALL SORTS OF THINGS AND THE FAMILY.

306 01:44:48:12 HE’S YOUNGER THAN I AM, AND HE’S HISPANIC, ?

307 01:44:51:12 AND OUR CULTURE IS, YOU KNOW, PRETTY MUCH THE SAME, AND WE BELIEVE IN CERTAIN THINGS, SO I’M BEGINNING TO THINK OF HIM AS A CONFIDANT BECAUSE WE TALK ABOUT THINGS, AN OF COURSE, NEITHER ONE SAYS, "I WANT YOU TO KEEP THIS QUIET," BUT IT’S UNDERSTOOD, YOU KNOW.

308 01:45:12:18 LIKE, HE’S A COMPADRE. I HAVE A FEW FRIENDS WHOM I FEEL I CAN BE VERY OPEN WITH AND SAY ANYTHING TO, AND I DON’T HESITATE TO SAY WHAT IS ON MY MIND WITH THEM, AND THEY FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT ME, BUT IF THERE ARE NEGATIVE FEELINGS OR NEGATIVE THOUGHTS, WE’LL EXPRESS THEM, BUT ONCE THEY’RE OUT, IT’S FORGOTTEN, AND WE DO SOMETHING THAT GIVES US ENJOYMENT, LIKE GOING TO A MOVIE, PLAY, OR CONCERT, OR GOING OUT FOR LUNCH OR DOING ANYTHING THAT GIVES US SOME RELIEF FROM THE PROBLEMS, AND WE ALL HAVE PROBLEMS.

309 01:45:52:11 IT’S GOOD BEING ABLE TO SHARE WITH FRIENDS.

310 01:45:55:12 SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE LESS NEED FOR PERSONAL CONTACT. I’M A LONER, I’M SORRY TO SAY. I’M NOT AT ALL GREGARIOUS.

311 01:46:04:22 I DON’T REALLY LIKE PEOPLE VERY MUCH, I’M AFRAID.

312 01:46:08:09 I’M PERFECTLY HAPPY HERE. I HAVE A LOVELY VIEW.

313 01:46:11:23 NOW HAVE A CAT.

314 01:46:13:23 I LOVE TO READ, WHICH IS VERY FORTUNATE.

315 01:46:16:23 I AM INCAPACITATED, SO I CAN’T GO OUT VERY MUCH.
I CAN'T WALK ANY LENGTH OF TIME, BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER.

I MUST SAY, I'M VERY SELFISH. I'M PERFECTLY HAPPY.

I LIKE PEOPLE TO COME TO SEE ME.

I ALMOST NEVER GO TO SEE ANYBODY ELSE, AND YOU MUST CONFESSION, THAT IS SELFISH.

IT ISN'T SO MUCH THAT I LIKE ME.

I DARESAY, IT DOES HAVE A LOT TO DO WITH THAT.

ELIZABETH ALLEN IS HAPPY IN HER OWN COMPANY. HAVING LED A FULL LIFE AS A MUSICIAN, AND LATER, A SECRETARY, SHE MOVED TO A HOME FOR ELDERLY WOMEN, GIVING HER THE SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE SHE WANTED. AS WITH MANY OLDER ADULTS, A PET IS IMPORTANT IN HER LIFE. CATS ARE MY DARLINGS.

I'VE ALWAYS HAD A CAT.

NOT ALWAYS AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOU, BUT PRETTY NEAR.

CATS ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR THIS KIND OF A HOUSE.

IT HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US HERE.

I THINK THERE'S ONE PERSON ONLY WHO DOESN'T LOVE THIS CAT, AND I DON'T SEE HOW ANYBODY CAN HELP IT.

IT MAKES A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFERENCE.

WHAT COULD BE NICER THAN THAT BEAUTIFUL FACE?

SHE SEEMS TO HAVE DRAWN THIS HOUSE ALL TOGETHER.

WE ALL LOVE THE CAT. WE ALL LOOK FOR IT.

IT MAKES THE ROUNDS EVERY DAY.

I HOPE YOU TOOK KITTY'S PICTURE.
WE DID.

OH, ALL RIGHT.

SHE GOES -- I THINK SHE GOES TO EVERYBODY’S ROOM THAT IS OPENED, AND I DON’T THINK ANYBODY PUTS HER OUT FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME.

IT’S AN HONOR TO HAVE HER COME IN BECAUSE, WELL, SHE LIKES YOU, AND YOU LIKE HER.

I EVEN HAVE A VASE OF WATER IN THE HALL SO SHE HAS SOMETHING TO DRINK.

YESTERDAY SHE SPENT THE DAY IN THE BACK OF MY CLOSET.

I COULDN’T SEE HER. SHE DIDN’T WANT TO BE SEEN.

YOU KNOW HOW CLOSETS ARE -- DARK.

WELL, SHE WAS PERFECTLY HAPPY ALL DAY, AND SHE HAS INTEGRATED US.

WE ALL LIKE EACH OTHER MUCH BETTER BECAUSE OF THE CAT BECAUSE WE HAVE SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT.

IN OTHER WORDS, I LIKE CATS, IN CASE YOU WONDERED.

PETS PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION FOR MANY OLDER PEOPLE.

MANY OF US ARE CONDITIONED THAT ONE OF OUR PURPOSES IN LIFE IS TO TAKE CARE OF, SHOW LOVE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE DEPENDENT ON US.

OF COURSE, PARENTS GO THROUGH THIS.

THEIR ROLE, THEIR SATISFACTION COMES FROM FEELING THEY ARE TAKING CARE OF SOMEBODY WHO IS DEPENDENT ON THEM.

WHEN CHILDREN GROW UP AND LEAVE, PETS CAN TAKE THEIR PLACE.

PETS ARE DEPENDENT ON THEIR MISTRESSES AND MASTERS.

PETS, WE'RE FINDING MORE AND MORE, ARE PROVIDING A LOT OF THE FEELINGS OF IMPORTANCE, WORTHWHILENESS, INTIMACY THAT OLDER PEOPLE NEED.

HOWEVER IT IS EXPRESSED, THE NEED FOR TOUCH AND COMPANIONSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US. ONE OF THE ASPECTS OF SEXUALITY THAT IS VERY IMPORTANT AND OFTEN OVERLOOKED IS JUST THE NEED TO BE TOUCHED, HELD, STROKED.

TO FONDLE SOMEBODY YOU LIKE.

NEVER MIND -- WE'RE NOT, AGAIN, TALKING ABOUT GENITALS.

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE NEED FOR TOUCH, WHICH SEEMS TO BE A UNIVERSAL PHENOMENON, AND WE DO KNOW THAT THE OLDER YOU GET, THE LESS LIKELY YOU ARE TO BE TOUCHED, HELD, OR FONDLED.

IN A WAY, WOMEN SOMETIMES GET AWAY WITH MORE THAN MEN IN THIS AREA.

FOR EXAMPLE, OLDER WOMEN -- IT'S SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE FOR THEM TO PICK UP LITTLE CHILDREN IN THE PARK, EVEN STRANGERS, AND FEEL WARMTH AND CLOSENESS.

IF AN OLDER MAN DOES THAT, HE'S IN TROUBLE.

SO THERE ARE WAYS PEOPLE ARE...

SHOW THEIR SEXUALITY THAT THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH AND OTHERS THAT THEY CANNOT.

YOU KNOW, IT'S THE COMPANIONSHIP AND THE REASSURANCE OF A HUG THAT IS IMPORTANT.

AND, UH, I DON'T KNOW.
There's something about it. People that you’ve never hugged or kissed before, if you see them in a nursing home, that's what you do. It somehow reassures them of, you know -- it reassures you, too, of how you feel about them, and so forth, so I think it's a very necessary part of growing, if you're going to grow old gracefully.

If you're going to get to know people and be close to them, it doesn't hurt to put your arm around their shoulder, or even touching people is important because they open up and tell you what their problems are.

One of the problems is a lot of professional helpers -- social workers, nurses, and doctors -- who are in positions to pat people on the back are afraid to in our society because they don't want to be misinterpreted, but I think professional helpers have to be educated about the need that people have to be touched and that talking is not enough frequently.

That just -- that hug, that can matter so much, is so desirable.

In a world where there are five times as many older widows as widowers, what are the implications? I think, given the sex imbalance, the increase in two things is very likely.

This is a sociologist's view.

One is an increase in homosexual relationships, and two is polygamy, and we're not quite ready in our views of one-on-one to accept polygamy.

We do it serially, so that we really have, over a lifetime, polygamous relationships.

If you put in one room all your relationships -- don't blush. That's true -- you would know
HOW POLYGAMOUS YOU WERE.

376 01:52:49:23 SO THAT WE'RE CAPABLE OF LOVING MORE THAN ONE PERSON, AND I THINK THAT'S A LIMITATION WE'VE PUT ON OURSELVES, TO THINK WE CAN ONLY LOVE ONE.

377 01:53:00:25 DR. PAYNE HAS FACED THESE ISSUES IN HER OWN LIFE. WELL, I HAD A MIDLIFE MARRIAGE, AND I MARRIED A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIST WHO WAS ALSO A GERONTOLOGIST, AND WE WERE SO HAPPY OVER THIS NEW LIFE, AND HE KEPT SAYING, "I FEEL SORRY FOR OTHER PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY WOMEN.

378 01:53:20:29 "THERE ARE SO MANY MORE WOMEN THAN THERE ARE MEN -- AVAILABLE PARTNERS -- BARBARA." HE SAYS, "WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO THINK THROUGH THE FACT THAT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SHARE OUR LOVE." NOW, AT THAT POINT, RIGHT AFTER WE GOT MARRIED, I WASN'T REAL HAPPY TO SHARE, BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT HE MEANT COMPLETE INTIMACY.

379 01:53:43:28 HE DIED VERY SUDDENLY ABOUT SEVEN MONTHS LATER, SO I DON'T KNOW HOW WE WOULD HAVE DONE THAT, BUT HIS CONCERN WAS THAT WOMEN HAVE SOME HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND I DON'T THINK THAT ALWAYS MEANS SEXUAL INTIMACY.

380 01:53:59:20 IT MEANS THAT WE NEED BOTH SEXES IN OUR LIVES.

381 01:54:03:20 WE NEED SAME-SEX FRIENDS, AND WE NEED NONSAME-SEX FRIENDS, SO THAT WE ARE WHOLE PEOPLE. THE WORLD IS THAT WAY.

382 01:54:13:21 SO THAT CONTACT -- AS ONE WOMAN TOLD ME, "JUST TO BE AROUND AND SMELL A MAN'S SHAVING LOTION IS A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE." SO THIS IS WHAT HE HAD IN MIND.

383 01:54:26:05 HOW FAR HE WAS GOING TO TAKE IT AND HOW MUCH I WOULD HAVE ENJOYED THIS, I DON'T KNOW, BUT HE WAS A WONDERFUL MAN, AND I HAVE AN IDEA THAT WHATEVER HE DID, I WOULD HAVE LIKED IT.

384 01:54:41:20 SEXUALITY CAN BE CONSIDERED FROM VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES.
IT'S CERTAINLY VITAL TO REPRODUCTION, BUT IT'S ALSO VITAL TO COMMUNICATION AND TO EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS.

I THINK THOSE NEEDS NEVER CHANGE, AND, UH, SEXUALITY PLAYS IN A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN A PERSON'S ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH A MATE, WITH A PARTNER, AND TO RECEIVE LOVE AND AFFECTION, AND THAT NEED JUST SIMPLY NEVER GOES AWAY.

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