



“THERE ARE VARYING CYCLES OF INTIMACY IN A MARRIAGE AND THAT’S NORMAL. IT’S LIKE FOOD – WE MAY LOVE PIZZA, BUT AFTER AWHILE WE GET BORED OF IT. WE GET BORED WITH THE FAMILIARITY, NOT NECESSARILY THE PERSON.”

– Lynn Dorfman-Volin, licensed marriage and family therapist, Delray Beach

ing love in different parts of the house. Don’t be afraid to experiment. One thing couples shouldn’t do: use their kids as an excuse not to be intimate. “I tell couples all the time – hire a babysitter, send them to their grandparents for a night or just lock your bedroom door!” says Sarvis.

Of course, great sex starts in the brain. Sarvis suggests building anticipation throughout the day with suggestive texts and e-mails, or with sexy whispers when the kids are not nearby. “A man should romance a woman, and a woman should stroke a man’s ego,” she says. “Men, pinching her butt does *not* apply here – give her a sincere compliment. Women, give him a peck on the cheek and tell him you appreciate all he does.”

Engaging in new activities also breeds passion. “Doing new things gives you

more to talk about, and this stimulus leads to intimacy,” Sarvis explains.

And whether you have sex once a week or once a year, it’s crucial that partners be on the same page. Otherwise, you may fall into what Sarvis calls the *relationship dance*. “This is when one partner wants sex, but the other’s always too tired. At first the apprehensive partner gives in, but over time may feel resentful and say ‘no.’ The other partner feels rejected, which may lead to straying or other negative patterns.”

Talk to each other.

“Some couples agree to minimal or no sex and still others agree to open relationships,” says Dorfman-Volin. “As long as you define it the same way – whether it’s once a year, once a week or not at all, it’s good. It’s about mutual agreement.”

Finally, says Dorfman-Volin, when confronting sensitive issues, be tactful but truthful with your partner – even if it hurts. “Infidelity and betrayal are much worse than having a difficult conversation,” she says. “If there was a spark there once, chances are you can get it back.” ○

• Name has been changed to protect privacy

Sarvis, a licensed clinical social worker and sex therapist in Deerfield Beach. “You panic because you can’t choose – none of the loving words apply anymore. So you buy a funny one instead of a mushy one. That’s when you realize, ‘Wow, this is worse than I thought.’” (Talk about your Hallmark moments.)

If any of this rings familiar, don’t panic. Rather, take a cleansing breath and prepare for a heart-to-heart with your partner (assuming you want to revive your sex life; if not, that’s an article for another day). Communication is crucial. The longer you wait, the harder it may be to turn things around.

“I see couples who haven’t had sex in a year or two – by then, it’s very difficult to be comfortable with nudity and touching each other. So they put off talking about it, but it’s always the elephant in the room.”

When approaching your partner, Gross suggests using what are known as “I Statements”: That is, you should say “*I feel like we’re roommates*” rather than “*You make me feel like we’re roommates.*” Framing your

feelings in this manner can prevent your partner from feeling attacked. Gross also recommends engaging in active listening: “You have to hear and comprehend what the other person is saying, whether you agree with them or not.”

Next, it’s important to define the problem. Is it a matter of attraction? Are anger and resentment in the way? Does one of you have a decreased – or nonexistent – libido due to a physical condition or side effect of medication? Is it a matter of frequency? It’s common for one partner to want sex more often than the other.

Perhaps the problem is just cyclical. “There are varying cycles of intimacy in a marriage and that’s normal,” explains Lynn Dorfman-Volin, a Delray Beach licensed marriage and family therapist. “It’s like food – we may love pizza, but after awhile we get bored of it. We get bored with the familiarity, not necessarily the person.”

To spice things up, sexperts recommend everything from atypical date nights (steer clear of the standard dinner and a movie) to mak-

FAN THE FLAME

Tips To Spice Up Your Love Life

Try sex toys and lotions (go to the adult store together; pick your favorites, then tease and flirt on the drive home).

Rent or buy **costumes** for role-playing.

Watch adult videos or visit **erotic Web sites** (there’s something out there for everyone’s taste, from instructional to fantasy – and beyond).

Read passages to each other from an **erotic book**.

Tell your partner what you plan to do to him/her later.

Perform a **slow striptease**.

If you’re really adventurous, **have sex in a parked car** (but do so in a place you’re certain you won’t be arrested!), go skinny-dipping late at night or visit a nude beach together.

Share fantasies and break up the routine: If you always have sex on Saturday nights, switch to Tuesday mornings. If you always shower separately, hop in together (or take a bubble bath). Try different positions (work your way through the kama sutra).