



Wild & Sublime® Podcast, Episode 16
“Taming Jealousy”
Nov 12, 2020

Thinking of opening up your relationship? Planning a three-way? Or just chatting with new people at a virtual party? All great and highly recommended, but... what happens when jealousy enters the room? Our panel offers strategies for talking down the green-eyed monster. Plus, a storyteller’s forays into nudity on the internet, and Karen’s Sermon on the Pubic Mound on sex-positive community.

Host: Karen Yates

Guest: Caitlin V Neal, Tazima Parris, Brandon Hunter-Haydon, Terri Lynne Hudson

Caitlin V

My greatest advice is: Remember that no feeling lasts forever. Good feelings, bad feelings — however you judge the feeling that you're having right now, it's going to pass.

Tazima Parris

This takes practice. This is not easy. Even years and decades into a relationship, or even decades into practicing, it's still difficult.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

So, breathe. Honestly, that's the first thing. Getting back in touch with the body. It's such a visceral experience that can really take us out of both the moment and our bodies, and we need to reclaim that first.

Karen Yates

Welcome to Wild and Sublime, a sexy spin on infotainment®, no matter your preferences, orientation, or relationship style. Based on the popular live Chicago show. Each week, I'll chat about sex and relationships with citizens from the world of sex positivity, with spicy additions from storytellers and musicians. I'm Karen Yates. Today, jealousy and how to cope with it. Our panel discusses. And a storyteller describes being naked on the internet. Plus, my Sermon on the Pubic Mound®. Keep listening.

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[music out] Last week, the night before the US election, which has now thankfully been resolved, I had the great pleasure of hanging out on Zoom with the folks that are part of the VIP level of the Wild & Sublime membership program, plus their guests, as well as recurring panelists Tazima Parris and Brandon Hunter-Haydon, who are also a part of this panel today that you're about to hear. We had a long conversation about erotic creativity, which was the subject of Episode 12. And I got to hear everybody's thoughts. And I gotta tell you, it was so amazing and wonderful to have this big, gorgeous adult conversation about sexuality, especially the night before something that was basically on everyone's mind, everyone was on edge. And it was just so wonderful to be able to commune with each other on these deep topics. One of the things that came up during this conversation — because it wasn't just like... it wasn't just a very intense and deep — is about the erotic nature, for some people on the call, the erotic nature have a well put together spreadsheet.

Today, our panel from the December 2018 show at Stage 773 is going to talk a little bit about jealousy, which is a deeply uncomfortable feeling for most everyone, because in those moments we usually feel so vulnerable and exposed and powerless. This conversation and then the audience questions cover a lot of ground, including jealousy that can arise from open relationships. This episode is an overview with some practical advice, and I'm sure we will be returning to this subject in the future, since it plagues most everybody. The audio is a little off at times, but I felt this conversation was important enough to present to you today. You'll be hearing from sex and intimacy coach Tazima Parris, sex and relationship coach Caitlin V Neal, and psychotherapist and intimacy coach Brandon Hunter-Haydon. Enjoy.

So let's talk about the root issues of jealousy. Tazima, why don't you start us off. In your estimation, what is one of the root issues of jealousy?

Tazima Parris

The root issue, as I see it, is actually the pain that we already have inside of us, that whatever the event that's happening that's stimulating that pain — it's triggering it. So all humans, who have lived a number of days on this planet, have some kind of pain, hurt that has happened. And so when you see something that looks like something that hurt you in the past, that's the pain that gets stimulated. And I think that is one of the root causes of our jealous feelings, and we want [inaudible] the other person and have them pay for it.

Karen Yates

So it has nothing to do with the partner, really.

Tazima Parris

It can be stimulated by the partner, but usually it has a root in something that happened prior to that partner's birth.

Karen Yates

Okay, Caitlin, what do you think?

Caitlin V

I've been thinking a lot about control. That jealousy has, as part of its roots, a desire to control. To control what we're experiencing, to control what our partner is doing, their literal behavior. Even insecurity also has its roots in what we can and cannot control, what we perceive as out of our control, and what we'd like to [inaudible]. There's a really strong correlation between jealousy and possessiveness. I have a lot of like, personal experience, and I had to draw a line between where am I being possessive of my partner, trying to control what they're doing? Where am I being just jealous and wanting to take something away from someone else? And where am I being insecure? And how do those tie together?

Karen Yates

If a person is kind of in the clutch, in the moment of it, of a real jealous episode, either live at a party, or you know, you're texting with someone — Brandon, what advice would you give?

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

So, breathe. Honestly, that's the first thing. Getting back in touch with the body. It's such a visceral experience, that can really take us out of both the moment and our bodies. We need to reclaim that first. So whether it's at a party, or in a conversation, or looking at social media, whatever the impetus is — just breathe first. And it might give you enough of a moment to realize that you are in an altered state. I think jealousy can be considered an altered state. That doesn't mean it's a bad state. But it is an altered state. It's a highly activated state, because it's centered around a fear of loss, essentially. [Inaudible] fear of loss, which I think differs it from envy, which is wanting something someone else has. They can be [inaudible], but I think it's important to realize that we all fear losing something. We either have a need that's gone unmet, maybe we got that need met and we're afraid of losing it again, or we have a deep

wound around not having it, and so we're reaching really hard to hold on to any semblance of that.

Karen Yates

Tazima, what's your best advice?

Tazima Parris

Yeah, so I slow it down. Because usually, there are a mix of emotions that sort of stir up all at the same time, and we don't slow down enough. I love that you mentioned breathing. Our body will let us know exactly what's happening. But if we slow it down, sort of frame by frame, we can see, okay, this is the place where I felt hurt. Here's the place where I felt scared. Here's the place where it turned into anger, because I'm still afraid that this other person is going to do that. And let's do a reality check. So if I have the luxury of having a person who is there to talk about it, oftentimes, it's a misperception of what happened. Because they saw something that, like I said, looked like something that happened before. If you slow it down and look at the emotions that are there, you can actually use the emotions to get traction. If you know you feel afraid, you can actually name that, and start offering that to your partner, or to the person in the situation and say, Hey, I feel afraid that you might be looking at someone else, or you appreciate your ex more than me. You can just literally say that. And that usually takes the teeth out of the sting of what's happening, and it slows down the spinning of what happens when we feel jealous.

Karen Yates

And it also lets your partner know what story you have, which I think is hugely important, for partners to really understand, what's the narrative going on in my lover's mind? Caitlin?

Caitlin V

My greatest advice is to remember that no feeling lasts forever. Good feelings, bad feelings. However you judge the feeling that you're having right now, it's going to pass. And appreciating that, recognizing that, buying yourself the time so that you come down from that altered state before you start making decisions. Right? And then getting okay with being uncomfortable. If we have the same idea — and I think it's because we live in a place where we have, like, running hot water, flushing toilets, and all these like really — and penicillin. Like, it's great! [laughter] I would choose this time to live over any other time, for sure. But we don't have to be very uncomfortable very often. We don't have to put up with that much, you know, walking two miles uphill in the snow without shoes on, or whatever, right? We have a lot of comfort. And we live in

this instant gratification society, right? So our ability to just sit in discomfort for an extended period of time, more than it takes to load a browser — we're limited in that. And I think we can all practice that, and that helps.

Karen Yates

So when we were talking the other day, and we're talking about here are your solutions in the clutch, and what do you do long term, are there things you can talk about with your partner, or exercises you can do by yourself? One of the things we talked about that was critical [inaudible], in partnership to begin with: is there goodwill? because that really helps the ability to relate to your partner, to have open and honest communication, which is all about if you want to open your relationship up, or if you want to do different sex acts with different people, to have this incredible communication [inaudible]. Brandon, do you have anything to say more on that?

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

I think going forward, jealousy can really be an opportunity. As awful as it can be in the moment for most of us, usually, it gives us an opportunity to point to a need that we have, either in ourselves, something that needs to be acknowledged, something that if it were known, if it were speakable, or capable of being witnessed, especially by a partner, that could potentially be healing and intimate. So I think having a sense of possibility around the healing potential of jealousy, if it's held in a relationship, it's turned in.

Karen Yates

One thing you said, I absolutely love. Consider pain versus suffering.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Oh, yeah. I would say, choose pain over suffering. That's really important. Because there's a difference, right? you have choice around that. Often, saying the harder thing will prevent you from saying the meaner thing. So choosing to do the painful thing, have the hard conversation, say the painful thing... What I feel like when that waitress looked at you in this way, that's my experience, and being able to name that with somebody, that's embarrassing. It can be really vulnerable. And that's inherently courageous.

Karen Yates

Yeah, I mean, the vulnerability, that's the heart in a relationship. You know, for me, it's like, if I can get to a vulnerable place, it's like, oh, yeah, I got here. I don't want to get

there. Usually, it takes a little struggle inside. But that is it. Caitlin, we were talking about things you can do on your own. What would you suggest for solo work?

Caitlin V

Journaling, 100%. Keeping track of your thoughts, giving them a place to go. I often find that letter writing to my partner, well before, I'm going to have a challenging conversation with them, so that I can get out some of that mean yuckiness. For real. I'm good at it. I will hurt you! But I will regret it later! [laughter] So I think that taking that time, sitting with your discomfort, writing things down, processing on your own, and then recognizing also that jealousy is — you have adapted it from somewhere. It protected you. You didn't make that shit up. I mean, you got it from your culture, for sure. Right? Your culture told you that that was normal and it was healthy, and that was how you showed someone that you actually cared about them. You were jealous. And you have to unlearn that, and unlearning that takes time. And it is a process. And you can be patient and gentle, and assume the best from yourself, assume the best from your partner.

Karen Yates

And Tazima, do you have any concluding remarks here, before we go to intermission?

Tazima Parris

This takes practice. This is not easy, even years and decades into a relationship, or even decades into practicing, it's still difficult. But one thing I try to remember: one of my mentors says that truth is verbal orgasm. [laughter] Like you were saying, the hard thing, say the hard thing. When you do that, it's extremely vulnerable, but that truth is actually really attractive. And if it is really, deeply truth, you'll be more deeply known, and that intimacy can grow. Which is the hottest.

Karen Yates

Yeah, intimacy is totally hot. Okay, everyone got pencils and paper. You can feel free to write a question for the panel at the break. We'll have a basket up here... [fades]

We'll return in a moment. You just heard me tell the audience to write down their questions. Well, now, just like the live show, all Wild & Sublime monthly members, starting at \$5 a month, can get a chance to ask anonymous sex and relationship questions that a wide variety of knowledgeable sex-positive folks will answer in a monthly panel session. Just like the one you're about to hear. Lounge Level members can watch this live stream, and all levels will receive the bonus audio from that recording each month. And we now have merch! So if these monthly Afterglow benefits

sound like something you'd be interested in, check out the link in our show notes. You'll also have the ability to give a one-time contribution to our work as well. Any amount is sincerely appreciated. And now, back to the Q&A portion of this show. And by the way, you will hear the word "compersion." If you don't know what that means, it means taking pleasure in your partner's pleasure.

[reading] "I struggle with jealousy. How can I work on translating that jealousy into compersion?"

Caitlin V

I like this one a lot. This is a technique that I use, have used, I'm still using! To do with my own experience of jealousy. Which is really deeply putting yourself in the other person's shoes. And I don't mean that like a surface level, kind of see through their eyes, what this might be like, but like, spending time with yourself, actually imagining what that person's lived experience is. If this is a partner of yours, chances are that you know their preferences, you know what they like, you know what kind of household they grew up in, what their parents' relationship, how they demonstrated love for them. If you do a good, deep sit with: what does that person love? What really turns them on? What really excites them in life? What kind of relationships do they really get the most out of? Why is it that they are in this other relationship? Why is it that they have another partner? What is it that they likely get from that other partner? If you go if you really go there, and you assume the best intentions from your partner, which I think is super important — we glazed over this earlier. But if you remind yourself your partner is not doing this to hurt you, they're not in another relationship to cause you pain, they're in another relationship because it brings them pleasure. And if you sit with that long enough, I think you can find the map from jealous to understanding always.

Karen Yates

Yes, it's like a deep empathy. I'll also say there's a fantastic workbook that is meant for people in open relationships. But you can use it if you're in monogamous relationships, suffering terribly from jealousy, and it's called The Jealousy Workbook, by Kathy Labriola. And it has so many valuable exercises that you can do on your own. It takes you through, for example, meditating on your partner having sex with their other partner. Or — it's like your worst nightmare, to actually walk through it and see: what is the actual moment that is the worst part about this fantasy? And really be like, oh, that! That is what really sets me off. Just having that understanding of what the actual pieces are helps immeasurably. You're getting to know yourself better as well.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Literally in my backpack right now.

Karen Yates

Yeah, it's a must-read. It really is a must read. [reading] "If you're in an open relationship, how easy or hard is it to make it closed?"

Tazima Parris

The first thing that sort of pops up for me in this question is like, what is the impetus for wanting to close it? Where is it coming from? Not necessarily whether to do it or not to do it. Where's that coming from? Is it from a place of fear, or wanting to — and, what's the update? What has changed? And I think that that's actually what cools all relationships, is that we're not getting consistent updates from our partners. Stuff is happening, they're living their lives, you're living yours, and you're not updated. Updates are hot! Like, it's like your phone is more responsive when you update it. [laughter] So what's the reason? If you're in this situation, what's the reason that you want to close it now? What was the actual stimulus? And like, be with the feelings that are showing up as a result.

Karen Yates

[reading] "What is somatic sex?" Well, what is somatic sex education, is more the thing I can talk about. Soma is body spirit, or being able to live inside your body and understand your body from the inside out. So it's more about, rather than looking at your body, like when you go to the gym, and I'm getting bigger muscles, and your body is sort of outside of yourself, and you're sort of objectifying your body — you're actually inside your body, and you're like, what am I sensing? Am I feeling pleasure? Am I feeling cold? A lot of times in our society, people aren't really fully in their bodies, they're really in their heads. So somatic education helps return people to their bodies and understand sex and communication from a body standpoint. Body gets hijacked by trauma, so the nervous system can get kind of shut down. And somatic sex education can help to open it up. But unlike talk therapy, which is sometimes about the narrative and the story that gets us to this place, somatic sex education really just deals in a very immediate way. Sort of like coaching, with the issue of the body.

The link to our guests is in the show notes. And if you're interested in the Jealousy Workbook by Kathy Labriola, you can get it through Bookshop. Bookshop is an organization that helps independent booksellers and Wild & Sublime when you purchase. That link, along with an article I wrote about how to get through feelings of jealousy when having a three-way, is also in our notes. Now time for our storyteller. Terri Lynne Hudson is an actor, storyteller, multimedia artist, and disability activist. She

was part of our April 2019 show that unfortunately never got recorded. But she was kind enough to re-record "I'm naked on the internet, and you can too!" Enjoy.

Terri Lynne Hudson

So this is the story of how I ended up naked on the internet. I spent 1997 to 2003 in a less-than-satisfying romantic relationship with someone who I do love very much, and who is still in my life as a friend, but we had zero sex life. If at all possible, we had negative sex life. And I'm not really wired to be happy with that. We'd opened our relationship — and believe me, if we hadn't, the relationship wouldn't have lasted that long. The relationship was sexless for a few different reasons, but a big one was ableism on my ex's part, having a hard time seeing someone disabled as a sexual being, especially since we cohabitated, and she therefore had firsthand experience with some aspects of my disability that I'm usually able to conceal from sexy-time partners. So I did some googling and found some online space in the form of a disability and sexuality Yahoo group, where I got to talk to other people with similar and worse issues. It felt good to find community and understanding around the issue. And it was a happy and safe space for me. Then one day, a woman from the group slid into my DMs — long before we invented the term, but that still what she did — and basically said, Hey, I run an adult modeling — euphemism for "sexy naked" — website where all the models are disabled, and I think you're really cute, and would you like to model, would you be interested? I was completely stunned and flattered, and immediately accepted. My first pictures were really bad. Someone I was dating at the time took them in their bedroom, and they were nowhere near a professional photographer, and we didn't know anything about angles, or lighting, or what sort of clothes and lingerie were flattering, on or off me. I was also kind of shy, and didn't strip below the waist at that point. I had boob confidence, but not so much love for my persistent tummy and mighty thighs, you know? So really here, I was only half-naked on the internet. But we sent them in to a site, and they got posted, and I came up with a cute modeling name, and voila, there I was. And then the fan mail started. Yep, this particular site set up dummy email addresses so that we could receive fan mail. Mostly what you get is people begging you for free pics, and for that there's a canned response, like, "I'm so glad you already purchased all my galleries! More coming soon!" Seriously, y'all that's tacky. Don't do it. So about once a week, I got a new message from a gushing fan going on about how hot they thought I was. And it was just the ego boost I needed at the time. I really started feeling more confident. It was fun. But unfortunately, the messages weren't always fun. You did have some fetishists asking really weird questions about how paralyzed I was, and if I had any control over my legs, and it did get kind of squicky. But my faaaaavorite — and yes, that's sarcastic — were the rescuers. Oh yes. I remember the first time I got a message from a woman, and

seeing that's the direction my queerness most usually points, I was really excited. I was not expecting: "You know you don't have to do this, don't you? There are programs that can assist you in finding employment or financial assistance. Please let me help you."

Wow. I was like, first of all, bitch, I have a BA from the number-four university in the country, and I've got a full-time gig with salary and benefits, and anyway, I'm doing this because I want to, and I'm enjoying myself! The next time I was naked on the internet, I'd had major brain surgery and had lost my job — not related, just unpleasant coincidence, Saturn return and all that. And so, I was actually looking for a way to make a little more money. And I picked up a Chronicle, which is the Austin, Texas version of Chicago's Reader, and was looking through the want ads for part time work, and then I flipped to the back page. Now, I don't know if y'all ever saw a similar ad up here, but it's one that says, "Figure models wanted. Cute, hairy, pregnant, girl next door. Inquiries, call." So I look at it and go, Well, I'm not pregnant, I guess I'm cute. I don't know what they mean by hairy, but hey, it can't hurt to try. So I call the dude, and he says the deal is that he's a photographer who works for a number of porn sites, and that he'll need to meet me in person, take a look at the goods, and take some test shots, and then he'll send them all to the sites he works for, and see if any of them want to pay for me to do a full modeling set for them. The dude shot out of his home, which initially gave me pause. I asked if I could bring someone with me, and he said absolutely yes, as a matter of fact he preferred it. So I recruited a guy friend, and we made my appointment. The guy took shots of me fully clothed, and in all various stages between that and fully naked. I was quite flattered when I took my bra off and he said, Wow, those are really good. Considering what he does for a living. The rest of the test shoot was actually pretty uneventful, and he told me he'd get back to me in a couple of days. And then he calls me later that week, saying that there are two sites that want to buy sets, and that they pay \$300 each. I was stoked. He sent me a list of potential costumes, stuff like housewife, corporate-slash-business, teacher, college student, et cetera. Basically, the deal with these sites was that they both wanted the models to start in a theoretically real-life situation that would then melt into porn. Okay. Now, one of the sites that wanted me was called Texas Natural Girls, and apparently they were willing to pay extra for me because I don't shave. This amused me to no end. I was actually going to make more money for leaving my cooch alone. Okay! Apparently shaving is so common in the industry that an unshaved mound is basically a fetish, and although I consume my fair share of porn, I hadn't really thought about that much, because it's not something I care overly much about. Anyhow, back to me. So, I went back to the dude's house with a different friend, who brought a book and a snack, and spent a couple of hours getting progressively naked, redressing, and getting

progressively naked again. That's fully naked, with spread-eagle shots this time, to be clear. The photographer made friendly, off-topic chatter the entire time, and wrote me a check as I walked out the door. The last two sites didn't have a fan mail setup. I used my same modeling name and wrote a cheesy fake bio — too many detailed facts apparently take away the fantasy-woman illusion — cashed my check, and went on with my life. Every once in a while, I'd be in public and someone would look at me, and their expression would be kind of curious, kind of tentative, and maybe a touch lascivious. And I'd have to suppress this urge to yell out, "I know where you know me from! You know me from porn!" The only porn movie I've ever been in, versus still photo set, is a low-budget lesbian porno called "How to Pick Up Girls." I am not, however, in the porn part. Another friend, who also acts, and I were both hired to do some comedic bits for the non-porn scenes. Although we both enthusiastically requested actual porn parts, we were informed by the director-slash-producers, who had previously bragged about how different and inclusive their casting was going to be, that they didn't think their target audience would buy the movie if all the porn stars weren't "fit." I bitched to a friend about this, who was over in Iraq at the time, and he offered to have a petition signed by his entire battalion saying they'd be by a porn if I was naked in it, but only one of them was a lesbian, so maybe the producers had a point. In any case, I'm in it, and I'm funny, but I am, alas, not naked. And now you all know why I use "Live your life as if you're naked on the internet" as a personal motto. I am, and ain't no shame in my game.

Karen Yates

More information on Terri Lynne Hudson is in our show notes.

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What I was just struck by tonight, as we continued to talk, is this idea of community. The piece of this is, we are in a holiday season, and we are seeing our loved ones. And it's a really joyous time of year. And that community is the heart of the season right now. And you know, I feel like right now I'm in a really enviable position. I do this show, so I come across really awesome people, that I get to talk with — not only on the phone, but I get to go out and have coffee with them, and then we talk on the stage, and then we talk afterwards, and we're talking about sex. And it's great, it is so great, to talk about sex openly, without censorship, without shame. It's really remarkable. And

as a somatic sex educator, and in my training, I have the opportunity to be on like, four community calls a week, if I wanted to. Where the same thing happens. And it's even more specific, because it's specific to what I do. And that's great.

When you look at marginalized on sex communities, like say, the kink community, the gay community, they all have really built-out communities where there are social events, there are bars, there are, you know, munches — which is basically, everyone's wearing street closing, and they're just like, talking with each other. And these are ways to get strength. In regular life, let's say you're someone who is not in one of those communities, there is not a lot of ability to connect with other people and talk about sexuality. It just doesn't happen. And I'm going to tell you, there is such a blessed relief in being able to talk about sex with other people. And what I've noticed is that if I'm in a crowd, and I don't know what people are up to, I don't know what their thing is, and I just kind of mention that, you know, I work in the field of sexuality, something happens. People are like "Really!!? Oh, well, let me tell you about my..." [laughter] It's almost like a pimple getting popped. Like "Oh thank god!" And I think we're all in the same boat. We all think we're weirdos. We all think there's something crazy about us. We're afraid to talk about it. We're afraid to talk about this itch we got. We're afraid to talk about the fact that we can't ejaculate. You know, it's like... ugh! I just — I'm so excited we're all sitting in this room. You know, because it tells me that people just want to be together and discuss these things. I think it is really healing. And I'm so glad you're here. And that's all I really have to say. Thank you to all of the guests.

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