



**Wild & Sublime® Podcast, Season 2 Episode 5**  
**“Body Confidence in the Bedroom”**  
**Jan 7, 2021**

**What would you do if you had complete body confidence in sexual situations? Our audience responds. Panelists offer strategies for getting out of your head and leading with pleasure. Plus Karen’s Sermon on the Pubic Mound.**

**Host: Karen Yates**

**Guests: Matthew Amador, Niquie Dworkin, Pat Cochran**

Matthew Amador

I'm not saying you have to ultimately be the kind of person that you would masturbate in the mirror to. But if you do... cool!

Pat Cochran

Is that ever really the case, that one thing makes it all better? No.

Karen Yates

[reading] "If I had total body confidence, I would have sex in front of other people."

Welcome to Wild & 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. You'll hear meaningful conversation, dialogues that go deeper, and information that can help you become more free in your sexual expression. I'm sex educator Karen Yates. This week, our panel talks about body confidence and how to get it. We hear audience aspirations. Plus my Sermon on the Pubic Mound®. Keep listening.

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So, I thought I'd put the body confidence episode first in the January lineup, because isn't this the time of the year when we all make proclamations? Now, this year, your intention might simply be survival -- mental, physical, emotional -- and that's valid, coming off of 2020. But this episode is not merely about going to the gym and working out. It's really about how we perceive ourselves from the inside, and how it affects sexual performance. But before we get to our panel, I wanted to share a few audience prompts from that November 2019 show where this subject was discussed. At every live show, we asked audience members to contribute anonymously. This prompt was: "If I had total body confidence, I'd..." Dot dot dot. Enjoy.

[in front of live audience] "So, if I had total body confidence sexually, I would be a bondage model, specifically rope play." [cheers from audience] Riiight?

"If I had total body confidence sexually, I would flirt with more people and feel more comfortable as a sex-positive person."

"If I had complete body confidence sexually, I would actively use my body to seduce, instead of holding my body back and relying on my personality alone. Like, going shirtless and being all like, check this out." Right?

"If I had total body confidence, I would have sex in front of other people." Yes,

"If I had total body confidence, I would do sex work and charge premium rates!" [laughter]

You will hear a few more audience prompts later on. Now, our panel from the November 2019 show at Constellation in Chicago. You'll be listening to a conversation with psychotherapist Niquie Dworkin and reoccurring guests sex-positive psychologist Pat Cochran and Matthew Amador, a psychotherapist for love, sex, and gender rebels. Enjoy.

I'm interested in how much does body image or comfortableness in our own bodies affect sexual performance? And I'm going to start with Niquie. What do you see in your practice -- how much does it affect people?

Niquie Dworkin

I think it affects people a lot. I see a lot of people with eating disorders. And a lot of people with eating disorders have lost their sex drive completely. And it's a

combination of possibly being malnourished, but a lot of it is about body image. If you don't feel comfortable, you can't express yourself sexually, and so that part of their life is often lost to them, unfortunately.

Karen Yates

Okay. How about you, Matthew? Do you see a lot of body image issues?

Matthew Amador

Yes. Yes, a lot. A lot of people, I think, are usually familiar with performance anxiety. And that I think is kind of a little surface-level. Because it's how you'll perform, but it's also how you're going to be experienced -- like, as a human being with the other person. And that all plays into how your body performs. A lot of people think of sex, ideally, as being kind of like that Ariana Grande lyric: "I see it. I like it. I want it. I got it." And that's like, a really linear way of looking at it. And it doesn't always happen like that! It kind of, like, doubles back a few times. It's more like, "I see it. I like it... I think. Do I like it? What does that say about myself if I like it? Wait, what do I look like when I'm liking it? Am I aroused enough? Ooh, do I smell? I don't know." And then you clear that path, and you're like, "I want it. Wait, do I want it?" And that doubles back again. And all of that directly can impact arousal, desire and performance.

Karen Yates

Yeah, right. Pat, what do you think?

Pat Cochran

How can I add anything to that?

Matthew Amador

You could do a dance. [laughter]

Pat Cochran

Maybe if I had somebody confidence, I could.

What are you telling yourself inside that is going to have you withdraw? Have you feel like, "No one would want me, I don't belong here." Feeling like "I'm okay as I am," that's very hard for people to garner. So I think it starts at the very beginning, what it is that we're telling ourselves, even before we get to wherever we're going to have sex.

Karen Yates

So, we get messages from birth, through the media and other channels, about what is normal, good, superior, et cetera. We end up comparing ourselves to the dominant culture's images. So what are some ways that people can break the chains of comparison? And let's start with you, Matthew. Do you have techniques?

Matthew Amador

Sure. Yeah, I think bottom line is, the male gaze destroys everything. Recognizing what in you you find sexy, because there's only so much that waiting for someone else to affirm for us what is sexy -- like waiting for them to affirm for us. There's only so much waiting that we can do as human beings. And I'm not saying you have to be ultimately be the kind of person that you would masturbate in the mirror to. But if you do, cool!

Karen Yates

Hey, I think that's a great idea.

Matthew Amador

That's fine. Find out what's sexy with you. And that can take form in many ways. Recognizing what you wear that might feel sexy, recognizing what you do that might feel sexy -- because it might be a harness, it might be a skirt, it might be a way that you know you laugh, it might be a way that you know you can tell a joke. It's how you feel sexy,

Karen Yates

Cool. I like that. What are your techniques that you tell people, when it comes to comparison to the external, Pat?

Pat Cochran

Well, first of all, you're you. You're not supposed to be somebody else. So try to leave those comparisons behind in that kind of way. But recognizing what you are telling yourself is so important. That takes a lot. I did some writing about that. Is that on your...? Yeah.

Karen Yates

We'll be talking about this later.

Pat Cochran

So there's there's more to that, but in a few words, being aware first, and then engaging differently. So what Matt was saying, about 'What are you telling yourself that's positive? How are you finding out what what could be different?' For example,

I've been a number of different weights over the course of my life, and for nearly my entire life, never was happy with whatever weight I happened to be. I remember feeling like oh, my thighs are way too big and I hate my legs. And at some point, I began to say, no, my legs are the things that allow me to locomote around, allow me to run, allow me to be an athlete. And I began to be grateful for those. So those are some of the ways in which to start to shift, to engage differently with those things that are in your head.

Karen Yates

So Niquie, people have a lot of life changes: they get older, they have surgery, they have children. The body does not stay the same as when we were, like, 21, or when we're 40, or when we've just finished a triathlon. So, do you have some thoughts about people comparing themselves to a former self, and techniques?

Niquie Dworkin

We're talking about all these hierarchies, and of course, ageism is another one. We worship youth. So the first thing is kind of raising your consciousness that these standards are arbitrary, that they're time-bound, that, you know, you don't have to subscribe to them. But then, one thing that's very important is just to get out of your head entirely, and into your body. And ways you can do that is through any kind of mindfulness -- yoga, exercise -- but to try to sort of disengage from this litany of thoughts, which often are negative, and start to focus on the sensations of your body. You know, what am I feeling? And, you know, if you can let some of these thoughts go, and you're in a positive sexual situation, you're usually feeling pretty good. And the more you notice you're feeling good, the better you tend to feel.

Karen Yates

Yeah, I know. Like, in the morning, I'll get out of bed, and sometimes if I'm in a stressful period of life, my thoughts will just be whirling as I'm making the coffee -- whirl, whirl, whirl. And then I'm like, damn, I've got to go -- I'll do like, 10 minutes of yoga. Nothing big, just some stretching, some really easy yoga. And I'm in my body. And my mind has gotten very calm and quiet. And it blows me away. Because every so often, I won't do it, and I'll notice such a difference. Because it really stops my brain, because I'm in my body.

Niquie Dworkin

Yes, exactly. And if you don't have time to do yoga, just notice a couple breaths. Just feeling the breath can disengage you from those thoughts.

Matthew Amador

I think one thing that's overwhelming for a lot of people is the assumption that it needs to be a big production -- I need to light some incense, and have a meditative spot, and dim the lights, and have nobody around. I'm already exhausted thinking about all that stuff. And a lot of us don't have the luxury of being able to do that. We need to have those moments that we can catch up during a snack break. That we can catch when we have a moment to exhale, as opposed to like, setting up an elaborate scheme.

Niquie Dworkin

Just keep it simple.

Karen Yates

Yeah. So, let's talk genitals. [laughter] Let's go straight to it. So, people with penises are given the message that their dicks aren't big enough. And people with vulvas are given the message that they're not pretty enough, or not manicured enough, or they don't smell correctly, or they don't smell like flowers. Roses, or what have you.

Matthew Amador

Summer's Eve.

Karen Yates

Summer's Eve. [laughter]

Matthew Amador

Scattered petals.

Karen Yates

My vulva is feeling so good right now. Thank you. So, these messages -- I mean, especially around our sexual... our junk -- look, there you go, the word "junk," right? -- around our bits are so negative. What words do you have to say about that? Pat, do you...?

Pat Cochran

Well, I think a lot of times, we end up focusing on one thing. If I could just have this one thing be different, my life would be different. And if you think about that, that's such a narrow point of view. How can you step back from that and think about something other than, let's say, having an orgasm, or having a rock-hard dick, or you know, having the most flowery vulva, or whatever? And begin to think about, what else is sex? All these other things. You don't need to actually have one thing to make it all be

okay. In fact, is that ever really the case, that one thing makes it all better? No. Begin to disengage from, you know, "the orgasm," or you know, "the performance" and begin to be present in your body. These things that we're kind of saying, all together, to get out of that place.

Karen Yates

Do either one of you have something to say about the the focus on genitals?

Matthew Amador

Your dick is perfect. Your vulva is perfect. Your breasts are perfect. Your butts are perfect. Someone doesn't like them? Someone else is going to think that they are perfect.

Karen Yates

Yeah! [applause]

Matthew Amador

These erogenous areas are, like --for many people, they are the face of your sexual identity. And if someone came up to you and said, "Hey, I don't like your face," you would not spend a whole lot of time with them. If they do not like the face of your sexual identity, hit the road. Someone else wants this!

Karen Yates

We will return to our panel in a moment. You heard Pat just now, mentioning something she wrote. Well, at [wildandsublime.com](http://wildandsublime.com), you will find a fantastic article she authored, called "The One Thing That Keeps Us from Our Power," and it is a must-read. The link is in our show notes, so check that out. And if you're interested in contributing some writing on a sex-positive topic, go to the website as well. We have guidelines for submission, and if we publish your article, we will publicize it on the podcast and social media.

This past week, we delivered our December bonus content to our monthly Afterglow subscribers on Patreon. We talked with therapist Matthew Amador, who you've been hearing on this episode, empowered self-defense and somatic educator Diane Long from Minneapolis, and kinkster and coach Peter, aka MksThingsHappin, who appears on the show quite a lot. Our Patreon subscribers asked anonymous questions about dating, trauma, and communication during kink scenes, and it was a very full half hour of goood conversation. If you're interested in getting more, more, more Wild & Sublime, starting at just \$5 a month, plus other benefits, go to our show notes. Much of

our income here at Wild & Sublime comes from listeners just like you, and helps us cover expenses. And you can also give a one-time contribution for our work, too. We here at Wild & Sublime appreciate whatever you're able to contribute. Thank you.

And now, a few more of the audience prompts.

[in front of audience] "If I had total body confidence sexually, I would go braless way, way more."

"If I had body confidence, I'd be a Dom, and submit all those powerhouses in DC."  
[cheering from crowd] Yeah.

"If I had total body confidence sexually, I'd make love to my wife like I used to." Yeah, right on. Love that. Yes.

"If I had total body confidence, I would do burlesque."

"If I had total body confidence sexually, I would enjoy jiggling unselfconsciously." I like that.

"If I had total body confidence, I would jiggle everywhere." I love the jigglers! This is great. I think people are feeling like they gotta be constrained.

"If I had total body confidence sexually, I would embrace aging without fear, and without fear of losing my sex appeal and magnetism."

"If I had total body confidence, I wouldn't be afraid to have a relationship with more than my partner in the bedroom." [audience hoots] Oh, yeah. Okay.

And now back to our panel -- Niquie Dworkin, Pat Cochran, and Matthew Amador.

"How do I best support my partner as they are having body confidence, size, and sexual prowess issues?"

Niquie Dworkin

Just give them lots of love and compliments. You know, tell them how sexy you think they are.

Matthew Amador

Also, ask them what they might need. Because you might think that they might want to hear one thing, and they might need to hear something else, or feel something else.

Pat Cochran

Say "thank you" a lot.

Karen Yates

So, one of the things I noticed -- and that was actually the only question we got, which I found kind of interesting.

Matthew Amador

Boo-yah. Sexual confidence fixed!

Karen Yates

Yeah! One of the things I was noticing, there was a lot of talk about jiggling. So it was about this idea that we're totally constrained, and then we're let loose, and we're bouncy, and we're shoving our pussy in people's faces, and all this stuff. And I don't know -- does anything strike you in there that you'd like to chat about? This idea of constraint, and how to help people get more unconstrained...? [big pause] I can see I've stumped them.

Matthew Amador

I was gonna say that there's so much that happens with our body, like how it really kind of dictates how we kind of lead our lives. Like, just think of when you wear a really -- if you put on like a really nice suit, or you have like, a really sexy set of heels, it changes how you feel about your body. It changes how you use your body. Your daily wardrobe, and your daily living. Like what do you do? Do you think, "You know what? I can go to work, I can still wear this bustier underneath this. It's completely okay." And any gender can do that, by the way.

Karen Yates

Yeah. It's like pleasure -- being very pleasure focused. I talk a lot about that. Like, we endure. We endure in our daily lives, we don't give in to the pleasure. It's funny -- like, right before I got here, I was getting dressed. And I have this new bra that I bought for this top, because of the way you have to do that. And I put it on, and was like, there's this little tag. And I was like, it kind of feels like, eh. I'm like, oh, it's okay. And I'm like, stop! Remove the damn little tag. What are you doing? Stop that!

We can all do that, you know. If you're wearing the too-tight jeans that you bought 10 years ago, when your body was different, get rid of the too-tight jeans! Right? Any other thoughts?

Pat Cochran

Well, I think it's really great to pay attention to what you are right now, and start to try to accept that. So maybe you could stand in front of the mirror naked. And if that's hard for you to do, just say, "Yes, I could be different. I could be more, I could be less. But this is what I am right now." And try to really live into that idea of, "I am fine as I am."

Karen Yates

Right. And you don't have to do it with the fluorescents on! You can do it with, like the little ambient light, take your glasses off, so kind of like, you get the fuzzy... Like, you can start slow and work up to the bright fluorescent lights that make everybody look like shit, right?

Niquie Dworkin

I think the burlesque dancers have a great lesson, which is just put on the music, distract yourself, get into the rhythm, think about how your body is feeling, how it's moving, rather than how it might look from the outside. Feel it from the inside.

Karen Yates

Right. And this is applicable to everyone.

For more information on our panelists, go to our show notes.

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And now it's time for my Sermon on the Pubic Mound. This sermon was recorded at the same show, November 2019, and it is one of my favorites. Enjoy.

So I've been thinking about this show. I've been thinking about it a lot, actually. And, you know, I was thinking about history. And how, like, in the 1600s, nobody was thinking about their fat ass, or six-pack abs, or if they were wrinkly, or anything. They were worried, like, will the king chop my head off? Will I have enough grain to get

through the winter? Will my kids live to adulthood? Will I get captured and sold to the captain of a slave ship? Like, this is what people were really, really worried about back then. And then you flash forward to the late 19th century, when advertising started. That's when advertising started. And companies realized that they could play on our fears in order to get us to buy stuff, to hopefully make us feel better. And Elizabeth Arden, the great cosmetic manufacturer in the 1940s, said something. She said "Lipstick is hope in a tube." And she got that, she understood. She understood why people buy what they buy. And in the '70s when I grew up -- this was pre-computer, obviously -- I would look at the billboards, and I would look at the magazine ads. Someone told me at a certain point, "Hey, you know, what you're looking at isn't real." And I'm like, "What are you talking about?" And they're like, "Well, they take the arms from one model, and the head of another, and the torso of another, and the legs of another, and they, like, airbrush them together to get this perfect body." And I was really freaked out as a kid by this knowledge, because I was like, that's not reality? And I started being like, what is real? So now, in 2019, we, from the moment we get up in the morning and start looking at our phone or a screen, to the moment we go to bed, are being bombarded with these highly staged, highly crafted images of this idea of so called perfection, that tell us nonstop that what we have, what we are, is not good enough. Because the idea, really, is that we will buy things in order to feel better. We feel like shit, and then we'll buy things so hopefully we don't feel like shit again -- and hope, again, is the optimum word. And it doesn't matter, really, what demographic you're from -- if you're a person of color, if you're old, if you're young, if you're wealthy, if you're not wealthy -- we're all living in this invisible image-state. It's invisible, we can't see it. And worst of all, we are now complicit in it. Because we have phones that can take pictures, and we can filter, and we can do work on ourselves so that we can push out images of ourselves. And it's basically a hypnotic state we're in right now. But we don't know it. Because if we actually stopped being focused on our bodies, and how we feel like shit, then we could take that energy and put it elsewhere. We could deal with things like climate change, and the fact that this species might be ending soon, or gun violence, or hey, education, what's wrong with that? Or, hey, let's build a community, let's interact with each other honestly, one on one, face to face, instead of maybe a filtered, selfie FaceTime screen, looking at each other. Because to wake up out of this state we're in, to deal with these very pressing concerns -- and honestly, I don't know a single person that is not flipped out about the state of the world right now, seriously -- for us to do that, we would have to be totally empowered and self directed. We would have to be totally woken up to what is going on. And taking that energy that we use to feel bad about ourselves, and make a different choice. And I think right now, you're thinking, "Wait, I came to a sex show. And what in the fuck does this have to do with sex?" And, well, frankly, it has everything to do with

sex. Because if we're dealing with messages that tell us we're not worthy, it's very difficult to feel deeply in our bodies, to feel deep pleasure, because these messages are very effective jamming devices. It's hard to find a pleasure if you don't think you are worthy of pleasure. And I'm talking about just even touching yourself, or drinking a cup of tea, taking time out, or having sun on your face. If you don't think you're worthy of that, then you're not going to do it. And here's the thing: people who are connected to their pleasure, we can't be controlled. It's very hard to control people who know who they are and what makes them feel good. You can't make them do things they don't want to do, because they know what's real. Those in power don't like that. So what do you do? How do you wake up? Well, you've heard some things tonight. And I hope they were very helpful. But most importantly, as a first step, as you're scrolling through the phone, as you're going on social media, as you're looking at ad after ad, just wake up for a single second and say, "Motherfucker, you're not real. I'm real. And I'm committing to myself." Thank you very much.

Next week, what non-monogamists can teach monogamists: lessons from the front lines of polyamory. Thank you for listening. If you know someone who might be interested in this episode, send it to them. And please, if you like what you heard, give us a nice review on your podcast app. I'd like to thank Wild & Sublime associate producer Julia Williams and design guru Jean-François Gervais. Theme Music by David Ben-Porat. Our media sponsor is Rebellious Magazine, feminist media at [rebelliousmagazine.com](http://rebelliousmagazine.com). Follow us on social media @wildandsublime and sign up for newsletters at [wildandsublime.com](http://wildandsublime.com).