



**Wild & Sublime® Podcast, Episode 9**  
**“What Is Sex?”**  
**Sept 24, 2020**

**What is sex? Nudity? Bodies? Orgasms? Maybe that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Our panel discusses. Logan Pierce returns to talk about gender pronouns and deadnaming. Deb R. Lewis shares a fantastical fisting story. And Karen’s Sermon on the Pubic Mound about getting out of a sexual straitjacket.**

**Host: Karen Yates**

**Guests: Jera Brown, Caitlin V Neal, Peter/MksThingsHappin, Deb R. Lewis, Logan Pierce**

Jera Brown

[Music under speech] Me starting to question what sex is really means, like, me starting to question, 'What do I want out of this, this interaction?'

Deb R Lewis

Somebody in my social circles declared that the person who does the fucking has all the power, and the person getting fucked has no power. And I decided I couldn't let that stand.

Logan Pierce

I'm not here to change your religious beliefs. This is about respecting one another, professionalism, and this is how this person wants to be addressed.

Karen Yates

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, with spicy additions from storytellers and musicians. I'm Karen Yates. In today's episode, 'What is sex?' a panel discussion from our very first live show. And Logan Pierce returns in 'What's Up with That?' to discuss pronouns. Storyteller Deb R. Lewis recounts a fisting fantasia, plus my Sermon on the Pubic Mound® on sexual straitjackets. Keep listening.

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[Music ends] I guess you could say that today's episode reflects a lot about the shifting attitudes around sexuality, and how we talk about it in society. Now, most folks I know who are listening to this podcast already have an interest in expansive viewpoints around sexuality, or are already comfortable with a more, I guess, liberated view on sex. But I also know that for all of us, some assumptions in culture are so deeply embedded that even when we think we're completely free of various viewpoints, they can really bite us on the ass. So it's always good just to keep talking, keep thinking about some of these more intractable cultural assumptions. So, when I started the live show back in 2018, I thought it would be good to start with some sort of conversation about sex. Namely, what is it? Right? Because if you don't really think about it, you're like, yeah, sex, right? Naked, bodies. Yeah. But like, you really think about it, it's like, 'what is it?' So Jera Brown, the sex and relationship columnist at Rebellious Magazine, our media sponsor — also, a friend of mine — had just published a piece called 'Going off Script' that delved into the sexual scripts that are pretty much baked into culture. You know, namely, like, heterosexual assumptions and norms that most folks don't question, even if people don't even identify as heterosexual. So that article served as the inspiration for this panel. And the link, of course, is in the show notes. So we'll be listening now to Jera Brown, as well as sex and relationship coach Caitlin V Neal, and kinkster and Dom Peter, aka MksThingsHappin at the very first show, October 2018, at Stage 773. And just — I apologize in advance: the audio quality can be a little bit off at certain points. But it's still, definitely — you can hear what folks are saying. And you will also get to hear, at the very beginning of this discussion, my naive opener. And I hope I have improved since then. Have a listen.

[in front of audience] What is sex? [big pause]

[audience laughter]

Okay. So... We live in a world — [dramatically] "In a world..." We live in a world that still thinks of, you know, sort of this hetero model of male penetration as the norm for sex. But so many people are not doing that. And so what, what is sex? Once you get out of that, what is sex?

Peter/Mksthingshappin

Well, first and foremost, it's fun. [laughter] Um... I'll talk about it from the point of view of being in a marriage where there was not a lot of sex, compared to my life now. And I didn't realize it until I was out of the marriage, but sex was about more than the physical act. It was about connecting and balance and being comfortable — not only in the relationship, but within yourself. And it wasn't until I got out of the marriage, got into a kinky lifestyle, got all freaky, that I really found that the actual act of sex is only a small part of it. It's really the connection you have with you and your partner, or your partners, or whatever configuration that works out for you.

Karen Yates  
Okay. Jera?

Jera Brown

My head goes in so many different directions around this topic. But — I'm grateful I don't look my age, but I'm 36. Some of you will think that's really old, and some of you will think that's really young. [laughter] But as I've gotten into my 30s, and I'm starting to date people that are beyond my age, I run into this issue a lot where either my body doesn't want to do certain things, or their body doesn't want to do certain things, or we want to try new things. And there's always this moment to be like, 'Is that okay?' That like, I don't come, or that my penis doesn't stay hard. Or, like, you know, something doesn't work the way that it's like — we've been taught it's supposed to. And particularly with people — with nonbinary folks, or if I'm dating women that are not used to dating women. It's like, Is it okay? What script do we follow, that sex is supposed to be? And, like Peter said, me starting to question what sex is really means me starting to question, what do I want out of this interaction? And it's almost always either, I want to learn something new about me, I want to connect to this person.. I want to learn something new about me, I want to try something new, or I want to connect to this person. And sometimes what happens ends up being sex. But it it doesn't look like the "Red Shoe Diaries" version that I thought I was going to be looking for when I was in my teens, being like, 'what is sex?' [laughter] You know? Thankfully, it's way better.

Caitlin V

Okay, I'm a really good student. So I spent a lot of time on this question. As soon as Karen gave me the prompt, I was like, oh, I'll just wing it. And then I was like, actually no I won't. It will be a lot of research. And what I found — A: Webster's? Total cop-out. Every definition included the word 'sex.' Or sexuality. 'Of or over pertaining to human sexuality.'

Karen Yates

So it's like a loop.

Caitlin V

Bullshit. Yeah, exactly. Right. I was like, 'prudes wrote the dictionary.' No surprise. Not yucking any prudes' yums, but... Maybe I'm talking to the wrong audience. Um, and then I thought, okay, I don't know exactly what sex is, but like, I know it when I see it. Which is problematic — that definition has come up before. And then I thought, okay, so for me — and this is only my definition that I'm putting forward — sex is something that involves pleasure. [dramatic pause] And...! [laughs] Which, pleasure can be a lot of different things, right? Like, it doesn't have to necessarily be like, super — pleasure is part of the process. It may not be pleasurable, but like, there was a part of it that was intentional. We were trying to have pleasure.

Karen Yates

So it's like taking pleasure from pain, if you're into kinky shit.

Caitlin V

Yes, exactly.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

I agree with that.

Caitlin V

Exactly. Or it could be totally devoid of pleasure, but it was supposed to have pleasure. Like, there was a there was a goal of pleasure. So like, pleasure is somehow involved, not necessarily the make or break point. And then, and this is the hardest part, is that I decided it has to involve the body. And it might have to involve the genitals. Because — because! [audience laughter] Not meaning someone's touching my genitals. Not meaning — like okay, and this is why. This is really the real reason. It's because I thought, I don't really want anyone who I've had, like a really deep, soulful conversation, followed by a really sensuous hug, to be like, "Yeah, we had sex." [laughter]

Karen Yates

Clap if this has ever happened to you, if you've ever been in a situation where you thought you had sex and the other person didn't think, or vice versa. Has that ever happened to you? It's happened to me. [audience claps]

Caitlin V

I know it's limited. I've just been working on it for—

Karen Yates

I mean, it's a Bill Clinton thing. But not really— [audience laughs, groans]

Caitlin V

So, I don't — I'm wrong. I'm sure I'm wrong to at least one person in here.

Karen Yates

But no, but I love it. It's provocative, right?

Peter/Mksthingshappin

There are no wrong answers. But I would disagree with the pleasure, because I know quite a few people that derive satisfaction, even spiritual experience, through pain.

Karen Yates

Right, I think satisfaction is a great word. Yeah.

Caitlin V

Hmm. Okay.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

So there's no wrong way to look at it, and you can go to the dictionary—

Caitlin V

Don't.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

[laughter] But I think — you could. It's not wrong. But I think what matters is what the person feels like on the inside, how you feel on the inside, and how do you derive pleasure, and not necessarily feeling ashamed of it. Because I struggled with that for years, of this stuff I wanted to do. I like causing pain, but it's not socially acceptable, because when you're a little kid, you hear, 'Don't hit your sister. You don't hit girls.' And now I find that that's not necessarily my reality.

Karen Yates

Jera, did you want to say something?

Jera Brown

So many things. It's funny, I think that it's like, we're playing with definitions here. Like, what is pleasure, pain can be pleasurable... And those, I guess those don't have to be like, contradictory. But when — so, if you don't know, Karen's posted this, but part of this conversation came from this this article that I wrote about sexual scripts, where I question, 'Sex is,' question mark. And when I was thinking through this — because part of this issue is like, well, if once you decide like something like, sex, isn't this one thing in this small box that you thought it was in, then like, what the hell is it? I finally got to this point where I realized, I think that there's this thing, like, when you're in the situation where you think, I'm supposed to have sex with somebody, that's when that question of 'what is sex' becomes relevant. But outside of that, or even in that situation, maybe there's more important questions. Like, what do I want out of this moment? And is it to come? Is it to be close to this person? Because sometimes, like, what — sex is really limiting. Like, maybe it feels better to cuddle. And we're not used to saying, 'That's all I want.' Or, when I started getting involved in the kink community, and when I started setting boundaries for myself, I would start to say, I'm not really interested in something sexual, but I am interested in sensual — because I didn't want to involve my genitals. But then someone was like, "Well, what is sexual?" And I was like, "just don't touch my genitals!" [big laughter] And I think there's probably better definitions, but I don't know what they are. But I think maybe the beauty of it is that we get to decide: what is sex to us? What is sexual, what is sensual, what is pleasurable?

Karen Yates

So, for folks that are going outside, how do you open this question up, both for yourself and with a partner?

Peter/Mksthingshappin

The two main characteristics is negotiation and communication.

Karen Yates

Which are pretty standard in the BDSM world, right?

Peter/Mksthingshappin

Yes. So I'll clarify. You cannot get what you want you don't ask for it.

Karen Yates

Did you hear that, folks? [laughter]

Peter/Mksthingshappin

Back in the day, when I would be considered vanilla, the standard was, you would hope that your partner read your mind. Do it this way, do it this way. And it didn't really work out. Even if you had a really good, compatible partner, maybe 50, 60% of the time, you had like, that explosive type of sexual encounter. Now, you know — I'm so much better now. Because, one, I ask my partners what they want. And my favorite question to ask them is, how do you want to feel when we're done? You know, it's the whole Franklin 'Begin with the end in mind.' I'm taking my business stuff and bringing it to kink. [laughter] And then we both know how we want to end up. So then now, it's a matter of just finding the path. And the path absolutely changes.

Caitlin V

I want to go back even further than what you just added — because the question was, how do you begin to open up to your definition of sex, right? And so I would posit that before you even have that conversation with a partner, you have to have it with yourself. And like, go through a road of self-inquiry, understanding that that can have a lot of ups and downs, and a lot of ambiguity. And like, just be good with ambiguity. Invite ambiguity to the table, instead of pushing it away. When you welcome it, it changes the conversation a lot. Journal. Sit in quietness and think, expose yourself to ideas. You know, get on YouTube, maybe — although, cautiously. Read articles, expose yourself to other people's ideas. And do it in a way that is measured, and considerate of where you're coming from, and then where you want to go to. And then involve your partner, and come from a place of, you know, maybe you don't have all the answers, maybe you don't know exactly what it is that you want to redefine sex as, but you at least have a foundation that you can stand on in order to come to that conversation.

Karen Yates

And how do we communicate with our partners about new ideas? I mean, that's a \$64,000 — \$65 million question. How do you...? Yeah.

Caitlin V

Actually, I had a conversation earlier today, with someone, about how do I — after 15 years of being together, how do I introduce the idea of having a threesome? I thought, well, if you really have never — no one has ever mentioned that in 15 years, no one ever brought that up, like, okay, that's a great place to start then. And I think that the way that you you bring up anything is, for me, playfully. With a lightness. Not making light of, but bringing lightness into the situation. So if it's really heavy, and it feels really dark, and you know, those situations, most people, you find that you're not breathing, your chest is collapsed, you're scared, you're caving, right? If you can roll your

shoulders back, and take a deep breath, and say, hey, there's something that I want to talk to you about. And I want to introduce it in a way that doesn't cut off your response. And I want to make it so that we don't have to have this all in one conversation. Right? I think a lot of the time, when we talk about exploring new sexual territory, it's like, black or white, we've got to know right now, by the end of this conversation — like, are we gonna invite someone into the bedroom or not? And you can begin, like, by having a conversation. You begin in your own play with that person, maybe while you're in a sexual space, whatever that looks like, bringing in the idea of — hey, what if we, what if you were tied up right now? Like, how would that be? What would that be like? Right? Like, there's ways to introduce it playfully and lightly, and with an air of lightness, so that you can safely explore those things.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

How about porn? Watching porn together? And you know, you could use your threesome example and go, "Hm. That looks interesting. What do you think?" To spark a conversation. And you can kind of you know, cue up the things that you might be interested in. "Oh, look at that, bondage! Thoughts?" And just go from there.

Karen Yates

We're going to take a break now — intermission. See you in 10. [applause]

For more information on Jera, Caitlin, and Peter, go to our show notes. If you liked what you heard just now, the audience Q&A that followed this panel discussion is now on Patreon, as a bonus for our members starting at the \$10 per month level. The group fielded questions on three ways, nonbinary dating, and more, consider joining our membership program on Patreon, where members get discounts, content, and other benefits. Monthly subscription start as low as \$5 a month and are flexible. You can find the link to Patreon in our show notes. Please consider helping this podcast out. I would greatly appreciate it. Our next storyteller has been a recurring guest on the show. An interesting fact about the following story, which was recorded at our November 2019 show: an audience member fainted right afterwards. I am not sure if it was due to this story of sexual magic realism or not. You be the judge. Deb R. Lewis is a Second Story company member, a teaching artist for the Goodman Theater's Community Education and Engagement programs, and Wild & Sublime's favorite leather dyke. Enjoy.

Deb R Lewis

So years ago, somebody in my social circles declared that the person who does the fucking has all the power and the person getting fucked has no power. And I decided I couldn't let that stand. And I got so drunk on the power of writing this story that I broke

the laws of physics, so don't try this one at home. I took it in, helpless thing that it was, even with you to push it. Yeah, I took your dildo inside me, clamped myself around it. My incredible pussy muscles trapped you, my legs wrapped around yours. So all you could do was wiggle your hips, and only a little bit. I didn't blush about it. We both knew it was big, and I was bigger. I told you I wanted more. I told you I wanted bigger, and saw that flash in your eyes. That told me you were afraid of my appetite, afraid I was going to swallow you whole. You said so. I told you, I'll do my best. And I did. You pulled that silly rubber cock out so you could work your fingers into me. You started with two. I asked for four. I said, Give it to me. You slid four fingers in together up to the knuckle, up to where it becomes time to decide: the thumb. You've been there before. I was certainly wet enough. Yes, yes, your fist! Your eyes brimmed bright. You were touched, amazed I dared demand what you hadn't realized until just then you'd always wanted. You pulled your thumb in close, your fingers and thumb forming a cone, pressing until that magical moment, that point of decision where the knuckles either slide in or the walls refuse to admit them. I took you in. Your warm, wet fist curled inside me. You shivered, as if the rest of you were cold. I hugged you with that gorgeous vaginal hug. Delighted with your bravery, I laughed. It's all right, I said, because you needed reassurance. You kissed my belly with wide open eyes, and asked quietly if I'd rub my clit. I swear I could see the youth of your soul. I touched your cheek, pushed your hair behind one of your ears. I was waiting for you to say that. I squeezed your hand again, the best of handshakes, wrapped one leg around your side, got comfortable. You were so quiet, so afraid to move. You thought you might break me. Turn it, I said, warming my clit with broad strokes from my fingers. Twist it. Open your hand. Darling, you were petrified. You wanted so much to do these things, and yet didn't want to make me bleed, rupture, die. You pulsed your fist a bit, and I told you yes, yes, more, I said, pushing my hips at you. More. Spread your fingers. You hesitated, then overcame your fears. I was proud of you. I knew then we could go the distance together. Push harder. I want more of you. You froze a moment, as if considering the whole thing logically, trying to figure out what organs would have to give for you to do as I asked. I finally told you pointedly, I can take you to your elbow. It was then I saw you really struggling with doubt. You were truly afraid, not only for me, but for yourself. You fancied at such depths you might actually lose a hand. It might get dissolved or digested. Perhaps I would eat you alive. I thought to myself, if I could have, I would have, just simply not to disappoint you. Knowing if anyone asked if it was worth it, you'd have said yes. I kept perfect faith in you. Slowly, you took me up on this. Laying your head on my lower belly as if listening for your own pulse. And I swallowed your arm, inch by inch, from your wrist to the middle of your forearm, watching as you developed a taste for me, helpless to act on it because of the kinetics of your own shoulder and elbow. You couldn't get your face close enough. It was this hunger that

made the rest possible. This lust quelled your terror at what we were doing. In order to get closer, you had to give more of your arm to me. In that, I took your choice from you. Your eyes met mine. I could tell you were serious in this asking, as you didn't use words. I returned my answer with a barely given smile. Your eyes asked, Are you sure? I squeezed your arm with all my might, pulling in another half inch in the process. You swallowed. I heard, you and pressed slowly into me. If I could take one inch, I could take an eighth of an inch more. If I could take that, I could hold yet another. My clit stayed warm for you. But I kept myself from coming until you were in well past your elbow, until I could feel the flex of your bicep and your breath in my bush. It was then I began to marvel at my own strength, as your lips pursed around the hood of my clit and your tongue sought out that nub of hardness. Full as I was, I felt certain I could take you to the shoulder, though that would strain your neck as you prayed to me and for me, for my pleasure. I stretched to feel your presence inside me. I arched my back, the arc of pleasure traveling the whole of your arm inside me like a second spine. Coming was never so incredible, never so holistic. Never was an arm so well loved as yours, every inch wet and warm within me, this thrashing woman, this woman crinkling the sheets, this woman's straining back against the mattress, this woman who can swallow you whole. Thanks. [applause and cheers]

Karen Yates

For more information on Deb R. Lewis, check out our show notes. Today, we have a new edition of What's Up with That?, a recurring segment about sex terms that might need more explaining. Logan Pierce returns to talk about pronouns, in the last of this series on gender expression. Logan is the program coordinator of TransMentor, the first mentorship program for trans youth in the United States, at Lurie Children's Hospital, here in Chicago. Through Lurie, Logan frequently teaches sexual health education, facilitating gender inclusivity trainings and leading groups for transgender, nonbinary, and gender-expansive youth.

Logan Pierce

How's it going?

Karen Yates

Hi! [laughter] We are laughing because actually, Logan has not flown in from Paris for just this little segment. We've just been rolling through these segments from the beginning and now we're getting punchy. Okay, Logan. Wow, pronouns. Help. Help. So much. There's so much in here and for — if y'all have been living under a rock and don't know what I mean, when I say 'pronouns,' I mean people identifying — and you see it in emails underneath their name. I identify as — 'please use the pronouns

she-her-hers.' 'My pronouns are he-him-his.' Some people like they-them-their. Or some people do they-them, she-her. Or other — there's other pronouns...

Logan Pierce

Yeah. Like ze-hir-hirs.

Karen Yates

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, Logan, kick it off. Let's talk about pronouns.

Logan Pierce

First and foremost, just want to say, we love pronouns. Now, we love talking about pronouns. We love teaching about pronouns. We say, you know, throw them at us. We want to get them right.

Karen Yates

Now, wait, wait! let me ask, do you identify as "we"? Do you use singular pronouns?

Logan Pierce

I was saying, you know, yeah — I was actually using the royal 'we.'

Karen Yates

[laughs] Your Highness!

Logan Pierce

I myself use he-him-his pronouns.

Karen Yates

Okay.

Logan Pierce

Yeah. But when I say we, I think I mean Lurie as an institution. And in our teaching, sometimes people go like, you know, you have these wild notions! You don't want anyone to use he or she. And that's a lie. I myself fought really hard to be a he-him-his. So I'm really proud of using those pronouns.

Karen Yates

Mm hmm. Yeah.

Logan Pierce

And for those that are unfamiliar with the term or the word pronoun, that's simply just how I'm going to refer to you when I don't use your name.

Karen Yates

Yeah. I have a friend who really just doesn't — kind of wants to dispense with pronouns altogether, and prefers that you call them by their name always. And it's a very interesting, you know, it's an interesting way to approach it,

Logan Pierce

Absolutely. Yeah. There are some people that say, you know what, I don't feel good with any pronouns given, so please use my name. And that is totally fine, and up to them. It can take a little while to get used to someone's pronouns. And as we said prior, mistakes can happen. And so we apologize, correct ourselves, move on and practice, A really great website that we refer to folks when you want to practice, especially using they-them-their pronouns — a lot of people don't know how to conjugate that in a sentence. So we bring them to the website minus eighteen dot org. And that's M-I-N-U-S 1 8 dot org. It's an Australian website, so you get to listen to people with really wonderful accents.

Karen Yates

Cool.

Logan Pierce

Yeah. But they'll help you conjugate different pronouns in different sentences. And I know a lot of people get tripped up on they-them-their pronouns.

Karen Yates

Yeah. So where would you like to go with this?

Logan Pierce

Yeah, I would love to give you a couple of examples if that's okay.

Karen Yates

Sure.

Logan Pierce

Yeah. And I bring up they-them-their pronouns, even though there are many other different sets of pronouns. But this is one that I see typically people getting tripped up on. We're seeing this a lot in media and things of that nature, as we mentioned before.

And really, Shakespeare used they to describe one person before we ever used she or he.

Karen Yates  
Yes, nice!

Logan Pierce

It's been around a lot longer than we think this is, this was, I believe, the American Dialect Association word of the year, this has been in the New York Times, all as a pronoun. And even though it's from the way, way back, we say language is evolving. And so, sometimes we come back to words, and they mean something slightly different to us now, and they evolve. We actually use they-them-their pronouns all the time to describe one person, without ever thinking about.

Karen Yates

Yeah. And in fact, I remember years ago, before — well, and it's still the case in some areas. But before it was really cool to talk about, if you were in a same-sex partnership, when you wanted to be sort of covert, people would use, 'Oh, yeah, my partner, they're at home.' To really kind of skirt around the fact that it was the same-sex partnership, which is, you know... So yeah, pronouns are — they're very fluid.

Logan Pierce

I'm guilty of that. Yeah.

Karen Yates

Okay, there you go. Okay.

Logan Pierce

You know what, I don't want to describe my business. So I'm just gonna use a neutral term, right?

Karen Yates

There you go.

Logan Pierce

But also just bringing it back to — using it all the time without thinking about it. If you and I were together in the same room, and we were with a group of people, and I left my cell phone there, everyone would be so kind, they would pick up my cell phone and say, "Oh no, someone left their cell phone here. Oh, they're gonna be so mad when

they get into their Uber and realize they forgot their cell phone." We don't know how that person identifies, so we're not going to make an assumption, and we're going to use they-them-their. So now it is just saying that this person feels best, feels most affirmed using these pronouns, so now I'm going to very consciously use they-them-their to describe them.

Karen Yates

So would you say the best practice is to — you see this a lot, like when meeting is starting, where everyone's going to be chatting with one another, you've got name tags, like — you're seeing it a lot, where people just identify, or they say, "Hey, my name is Bob, I identify as she-her-hers or whatever. Is it just best practice to — should we be asking people's pronouns?"

Logan Pierce

Yeah, that is a super great question. The general rule is, it is okay to ask someone their pronouns when doing so in a respectful way.

Karen Yates

Okay.

Logan Pierce

And what that looks like — a very simple way to do that is, when you introduce yourself, introduce yourself with your pronouns first, before asking. So I go into a room, I meet someone new, I go, "Hey, my name is Logan, I use he-him-his pronouns, can I ask your name and your pronouns?"

Karen Yates

Okay, "Can I ask your name and your pronouns?" So it's like, again, this practice idea of like, Hey, what are your pronouns? Okay.Cool.

Logan Pierce

By offering that information about yourself first, it shows that you're probably a safer person to be around, right? Because you have that consciousness of offering that information before poking and prodding and asking someone else, right?

Karen Yates

Right. And also I'm seeing a lot on Zoom now, since we're all living in a zoomy Zoom world — people putting their pronouns next to their name in parentheses, just as an easy way to just like, Hey, this is this is how I want to be addressed.

Logan Pierce

Absolutely. This is what to call me when I don't use my name. Right?

Karen Yates

So my question is... I get this from folks, the anger of like, having to... The irritation, anger, at like, you know, of the language evolving, of being asked to make, you know, different choices, of like, having to think, instead of being on autopilot about language and pronouns. What do you have to say?

Logan Pierce

I don't know if we have enough time for that. [laughs] But what I will say is, you know, there are people that are going to be stuck in their ways, there are people that are going to refuse to listen. And that's a shame. I've been in trainings myself where I've been facilitating, and someone said, "I refuse to use any of my brain space to learn they-them-their pronouns." That is a real quote that someone said to me.

Karen Yates

Wow.

Logan Pierce

Yeah. And so, I think it's all about creating that safety for yourself, what being in that situation can look like. Because being a transgender person, being nonbinary using they-them-their pronouns in a public space, unfortunately can result in violence from some people.

Karen Yates

Yeah. So what do you... So... What would you recommend for people who — and we can even take this out of the they-them arena. What do you suggest for people, if they are consistently being — the pronoun that they have, obviously put forth that they want to be called by is being not used?

Logan Pierce

Yeah.

Karen Yates

In a very disrespectful way.

Logan Pierce

Yeah, absolutely. So that is what we call a 'microaggression.' But really, I would call that a macroaggression.

Karen Yates

For sure. For sure. Yeah.

Logan Pierce

Yeah, it's called misgendering. And when someone uses the name that you previously went by, but no longer feel good about, that's called 'deadnaming.'

Karen Yates

Deadnaming. Okay.

Logan Pierce

So misgendering and dead naming, we use those terms, whether you do it on accident or on purpose. This can cause a lot of psychological distress and harm to a person who's constantly being misgendered or deadnamed by another person. And so, you know, what we say when we go into schools and other organizations is, I'm not here to change your political beliefs. I'm not here to change your religious beliefs. But what I'm here to tell you is, this is about respecting one another, professionalism. We're in an environment, we're out in public, it comes down to respect. And this is how this person wants to be addressed. And I always give an example too. You know, if you're in a classroom, and you have someone named John Michael, their middle name is Michael, and they say, "Hey, you know what, can you just call me, Michael? We wouldn't think twice about it.

Karen Yates

Right. Or if someone gets an MD degree, and wants to have "doctor" in front of their name. It's like, oh, okay, yeah. Or some doctors, when you go see them, they don't want to be called doctor. They just want to be called by their first name.

Logan Pierce

Yeah. That sounds great.

Karen Yates

Anything else you want to say?

Logan Pierce

Yeah, I think you know, just what I've been saying in these other segments, is that practice is key. And you can teach an old dog new tricks. And for me, when I first started using they-them-their pronouns, it was incredibly hard, incredibly hard.

Karen Yates  
Me too.

Logan Pierce  
And you know, I took that that work on for myself, that I need to do this, so I can fully see the people around me and respect the people around me.

Karen Yates  
Absolutely. Absolutely. And when you mess up someone's pronouns, just apologize, correct yourself, move on, and practice.

Logan Pierce  
Practice.

Karen Yates  
Thank you, Logan.

Logan Pierce  
Thank you.

Karen Yates  
You'll find information about Lurie Children's Hospital and their TransMentor Program in our show notes. While that was the last "What's Up with That?" with Logan, I will be interviewing him in a few months about the TransMentor Program at Lurie and other topics. In a few weeks, Sarah Sloane will be jumping in for a new series of What's Up with That, dealing with sexual orientation. And to remind folks: on Tuesday, September 27, at 7pm Central Time, I'll be appearing with Heather Corinna and Omisade Burney-Scott, host of the podcast "Black Girls' Guide to Menopause," to talk about sex, health, relationships and community during perimenopause, on a Facebook Live stream hosted by Rebellious Magazine. It's going to be pretty cool. I will be talking about somatic work, energy work, Tantra, and a lot more

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business and supporting us at the same time, contact us at info at wild and sublime dot com. And now it's time for my Sermon on the Pubic Mound.

One of the things that I really loved about Jera Brown's column on 'going off script' is that it pretty clearly examines many of the underpinnings of how we look at sex in modern life. And as I was thinking about these various constructs, I thought about how they all in some regard serve to limit us. And that's why I, when I put this together today, thought about this idea of a 'sexual straitjacket.' One of the things she talks about is this idea of orgasm meaning that sex has occurred. And I started thinking about the expectation of orgasm. And that if you have orgasms, or if you don't have orgasms, how much that impacts one's perception of sex. And the conclusion I came to is that, at a certain point, if that is your standard, you're going to be very disappointed, because there's no way to get around it at one point or another. When you have sex, somebody is not going to have an orgasm — either you're not going to come, or your partner's not going to come. This is inevitable. And this idea, this idea of orgasm is a a great expectation. If you look at the idea of penetration, as the litmus test of sex, again, you will be disappointed, because at some point, either you're not going to want to be penetrated, you're not going to be able to be penetrated or have someone penetrate you, you're not going to be able to penetrate... Something is going to occur where it's just not going to happen. If it's about love, that love needs to be present, or romance needs to be present for sex to occur, what happens if you have sex with folks that you have no feelings for whatsoever? What does that mean? Do you think of yourself less? If you're having sex with people that you have absolutely no regard for? Are you bad if you don't really care very much about your sexual partners, if you're just in it for the sex? So really, when you look at it, all of these ideas — penetration, orgasm, feeling— what is it exactly? These are just ways that we limit ourselves. And sex is more than that. I agree with what Caitlin Neal said in the panel, that it's about the body. That it is about, at the end of the day, a type of arousal, and whether that arousal is a type of pain or a type of pleasure, there is a body involved. And as we've said before on the show, sex with yourself is sex. So maybe, really, what sex is is a kind of exploration. And if you look at it as an exploration — nothing more, nothing less — a type of physical exploration, that can go a long way to liberating yourself, to breaking free, to going off script when it comes to sex.

I'll leave you with this thought. Imagine, if you will, being in bed with someone with no expectations, without recalling the performances you've witnessed in pornography, erasing all of that, lying next to someone with nothing to prove, nothing to do. No outcome in mind, and being in the now. Touching as the beginning point. Moving only from impulse. What would that look like? Who would you be? Imagine that

[Music under] Next week, so what if you want to start talking sex with your therapist, but you're not sure your therapist can handle the truth about your kinky, pervy self? Is it time to get a new therapist? We will have on sex-positive therapist Carrie Jameson. She'll be chatting about kink-affirming guidelines for therapists, and what that means for you. And much more. 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-Francois Gervais. Theme Music by David Ben-Porat. Our media sponsor is Rebellious Magazine, feminist media at rebellious magazine dot com. Follow us on social media at wildandsublime and sign up for newsletters at wildandsublime dot com.

[Music ends]