



Wild & Sublime® Podcast, Season 2 Episode 56
“Remix! A sex-positive sampler”
January 6, 2022

We’re kicking off the new year with a sampler of segments you may have missed from past episodes. Guests discuss common medications with sexual side effects; nonbinary identities; and techniques for climbing out of a sex rut – plus, Karen’s Sermon on reminders to self for moving through relationship anxiety. We’re taking two weeks off and coming back with a whole new season!

Host: Karen Yates

Guests: Logan Pierce, Ren Grabert, Tazima Parris, Jason Best, Heather Rider

[Wild & Sublime theme music]

Logan Pierce

Growing up in this society — and in the world, in fact — we've been told there are two boxes, and you must fit. There's not just two boxes for anything.

Karen Yates

And it's hard to even get to the communication place if you can't even find yourself inside your anxiety.

It might help to take orgasm off the table.

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, as we finish out Season Two, we remix segments you may not have heard into one magnificent episode. Keep listening. We'll be taking a few weeks off the podcast, but The Afterglow, our membership site on Patreon, is still lit up with lots of benefits and new content. And for the month of January, all \$5 a month members get

10% off all Wild & Sublime merchandise: t-shirts, totes, and mugs. Go to the show notes for more info.

Hey, folks. Well, in the last episode, recorded around Thanksgiving, I made a joke about not knowing what December would bring. And now, one week later, the Omicron variant has surfaced. So I won't be making any more jokes or predictions about 2022. As I line up guests for next month, I am super excited about the next season. Season three will focus a bit more on embodiment, how we can be fully in our bodies to experience more pleasure and sensation. And we'll also be continuing our conversations with our panelists, continuing the Eavesdropping series, and much more. So be on the lookout for the new episodes, which will be starting in a couple of weeks.

Today, I chose a few segments from the past year and a half of episodes that you may not have heard yet. I'll be talking to recurring guest Ren Grabert about the over-the-counter drugs that might be messing with your sex life. Logan Pierce and I will chat about what "nonbinary" means. Then we'll hear a great panel Q&A from our live show on sex ruts we get into. And finally, my Sermon on the Pubic Mound® on anxiety and relationships. A very full episode. Enjoy.

This is an excerpt of a fantastic interview I did in May 2021 with Chicago-based sex educator Ren Grabert about the many, many, many over-the-counter drugs that have sexual side effects that you probably don't know about, and that you might be taking every single day. Have a listen.

Ren Grabert, welcome. It is always awesome to have you on the show.

Ren Grabert

Thanks for having me, Karen. I'm happy to be here.

Karen Yates

So I am really excited about this topic today, because I feel like it doesn't get discussed enough. The side effects, the sexual side effects, from basic prescription medicine — nothing exotic here. So my first question to you is, do you see sexual side effects in just certain types of medicine, prescription medicine, or what areas of medicine do you usually see sexual side effects?

Ren Grabert

Well, it is pretty much everywhere. But I have a list, a non-exhaustive list, that I'm going to read out, just so you get an idea. So anti-anxiety, drugs, anti-epileptic drugs, antidepressants, antihistamines, antipsychotics, blood pressure medications, chemotherapy drugs, any kind of estrogen-containing drugs or anything that contains a hormone or a hormone blocker, finasteride, NSAIDs — so this isn't even prescribed, but NSAIDs like ibuprofen and aspirin.

Karen Yates

What?

Ren Grabert

Yeah.

Karen Yates

Wha... Wait, wait, wait, wait, ibuprofen?! Ok...Aspirin? Ahhh!!! Wait, wait, stop. Okay, what else?

Ren Grabert

Also, oral contraceptives are a huge one. And we see this a lot — and doctors don't talk about it — I mean, we will go on about this at length, but that's one that really gets me. Prostate cancer medications, Parkinson's disease medications. I also have a full list of over 300 medications that just cause vaginal dryness alone. 300.

Karen Yates

Wow. Wow. Wow. Okay. Okay. So. Let's talk a little bit about what are the common side effects that you are aware of, that kind of float among all of these?

Ren Grabert

Yeah. A lot of the common side effects are decreased libido, orgasm difficulties, erectile dysfunction, vaginal dryness. We hear these ones more than any others. And I think part of that is also the fact that more people are concerned about them, or that they're more debilitating than other side effects. But we also see priapism, which is that erection lasting for more than four hours. Priapism is the actual medical term for it.

Karen Yates

So it's not just, like, Viagra that can do this for people. This can be a side effect.

Ren Grabert

This can be a side effect. Absolutely.

Karen Yates

Okay. I know some people out there like, "Which medicine??" [laughs] But to have an erection for four hours, not good.

Ren Grabert

It can get really uncomfortable. And not the safest thing in the world. An erection, when you think about it, is really, really high blood pressure in one area. So having it be that way for an extended period of time could be less enjoyable than one might think.

Karen Yates

Right. So beyond that symptom, what other kinds of sexual side effects are there?

Ren Grabert

Another one that I heard a lot when I was researching for this class and had conversations with people about was heightened sexual arousal and libido. I think it's less common that that happens. And a lot of times people aren't bringing that to their doctor's attention. But I spoke to some folks who identify as asexual, and all of a sudden they were experiencing sexual desire, and it was a bit distressing for them. And so it's not something that I think the medical community is really considering as a potential side effect that could influence and impact somebody's life pretty greatly.

Karen Yates

Yeah, I mean, it's interesting, because I think that's always — you know, when you see any sort of drug, prescription or otherwise, that enhances libido, it's like, Oh, I want that. I want that. But if your baseline is not that, that can be extremely disruptive. Wow. So you talked about aspirin and ibuprofen. Are there other super-common over-the-counter drugs that cause sexual issues?

Ren Grabert

Definitely. Antihistamines are one. So, your allergy medications. Also, antacids can cause issues as well. So that's important to think about. And I also think, you know, it's not necessarily over the counter or prescribed, but we're seeing a lot more medical cannabis patients these days. And that's very likely to cause vaginal dryness. Think of people who get dry mouth from smoking weed. That causes dryness elsewhere.

Karen Yates

Yeah. I'd like to move into: how do people start becoming attuned to the fact that it's not them? It's the drug. And I know that might sound like a really simple question. But given the fact that we're leading, many of us are leading stressful lives to begin with, and stress is a factor in sexual functioning, what can you tell folks about honing in on, yeah, it's the drug.

Ren Grabert

Yeah, it can be tough to figure that out. But I think the first thing I want to focus on is if it's not the medication you're taking, it's not necessarily you. You don't have to take on the blame. Your body's fine. There are fluctuations in sexual experience and drive, regardless of medication or other experiences, just bodies change over time. It's just what it is. So having these experiences are very normal. If you are on a new medication, and you're noticing the symptoms coming up, it could definitely be the medication. But I would definitely say to think about what else is going on in your life. As you mentioned, stress can be a huge component for some folks, depending on where they are in their menstrual cycle and hormonally, it can really change how they experience sexual desire and function. Focusing on, are there any big changes in my life right now? Do I have a lot of stress at work? Did I start a new job? Did I lose my job? Am I moving? Is there any kind of familial or relationship stress? And just tracking each day of what's going on can really help you pinpoint what else might be at play — if it's not just the medication, or if it is.

Karen Yates

So would you say that basically, within that first week or two, that's when maybe you're going to have more of a heightened awareness, once you start taking a drug, that's when you're going to be noticing some of the side effects coming into play? Would that be a correct assumption?

Ren Grabert

I think it depends on the medication. You know, sometimes it's two weeks to have it settle in for you. I know for antidepressants, that's the common timeframe, but each medication is different. So if you're already on that medication, it can be a little bit more difficult to parse everything out. If it's brand new, if you haven't taken this medication yet, if it's just a conversation you're having with your doctor, that's the best place to start, for your baseline, and recognizing where you are at baseline. But unfortunately, we don't always have that opportunity ahead of time. So just thinking about it that way, you know, what's the earliest I can start paying attention?

Karen Yates

Yeah. So before we move on to the conversation with doctors and nurses, I do want to get back to the aspirin and the ibuprofen, because I'm like, What the hell? What would people typically be seeing with those two?

Ren Grabert

I mostly see this is one where you're getting decreased libido, and either ED or vaginal dryness. But there are so many things that can happen from taking those medications. So I don't want to just box it into those few things.

Karen Yates

Right. As I'm asking this question, I'm aware, you know, it's not just about taking it once for a headache. There are people who take aspirin or ibuprofen religiously every day, because they're in pain, or because that whole thing about 'Take an aspirin every day, it's good for you,' all of this stuff. So people have no clue that there is a potential side effect. So before we talk about the doctor conversation, or discussing with your medical practitioner, talk a little bit about percentages. Because I know with any drug that is prescribed, there are percentages. Like, you know, 90% of the population taking this will have this sort of response, or 10% of this population. And I suppose that rolls into the conversation with the medical practitioner. Do you find medical practitioners, if it is a lower probability that a patient might have a side effect, even discussing it?

Ren Grabert

I think that can play into it. If fewer people are likely to have that side effect, it might feel more distressing to bring that up to the patient. But I also think that in general, doctors are not super comfortable talking about sexual side effects. So I wouldn't pin it just on these percentages. I think it's more they feel that taking the medication is more important, and the patient will be happy to feel healthier, and that'll help their libido or their sex drive. But that's not always the case.

If you'd like to hear the full interview, where we talk about a lot more stuff, like doctor-patient relationships, and also how cancer drugs can inhibit sexual response, check out the show notes for the link to the episode.

Wild & Sublime is supported in part by our Sublime Supporter, Full Color Life Therapy, therapy for all of you, at fullcolorlifetherapy.com.

Next up, we had a very fun series in the first season called "What's Up with That?," which was a recurring segment about sexuality terms that might need more explaining.

Logan Pierce joined us for some of that as we talked through gender identities. 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. Here, he and I chat about the word "nonbinary." Hey, Logan, welcome back.

Logan Pierce

Thank you for having me. Happy to be here.

Karen Yates

So glad to have you. Okay, nonbinary. Logan, what's up with that?

Logan Pierce

This is a great term that we're probably seeing more and more in media and TV shows, internet, maybe in the classroom. I've got tons of friends that identify as nonbinary.

Karen Yates

Absolutely, absolutely. So what is nonbinary? What is up with that?

Logan Pierce

Yeah, so nonbinary. Well, let me just say that nonbinary folks, people that identify as nonbinary, have been around since the beginning of time. And this is a term that we can typically see under the transgender umbrella. So last time I was on we talked about transgender being an umbrella word. Well, nonbinary is under that word. Okay. And I think the simplest definition I could give for nonbinary is, sometimes folks can see as being, you know, a man or woman on sort of a scale. And so someone can see that scale and say, Oh, I fall somewhere, maybe closer to the man side, maybe I fall somewhere in the middle, maybe I you know, wherever that might be. That is someone that could identify as non binary, right? Or it could be someone that sees that scale, and goes, I see your scale and I'm working over here, totally off that scale. I am a human, I don't identify as a man, I do not identify as a woman. I am just a person, non binary.

Karen Yates

So if you would say it's, it gets back to our very first conversation about gender identity. So within yourself, you don't feel like you don't identify in your inner self as a man or a woman, you feel completely separate from those identities. Would that be non binary?

Logan Pierce

That could be nonbinary. I think that's one way that someone could identify as nonbinary. There are other people that feel like they may be leaning more towards one gender over another. Binary being that binary of man and woman. So maybe they feel that they are closer to one another or maybe not at all. And it's going to be it's going to be up to that individual person to describe how they feel,

Karen Yates

Do you feel sometimes this is a political statement? Or does it always come in your mind, in your experience as a deeply felt sense?

Logan Pierce

Can I say both? Because I think it very much is a deeply felt sense of self that you are going to be the expert on yourself. And I can't tell you who you are, right. So of course, this is going to be your deeply felt sense of self. And I think anything that we do that is beyond a binary is beyond what our social norms that we were taught, is going to be a political action as well. No while it is your deeply felt sense of self, even existing in the world that we live in, is going to be political. Absolutely.

Karen Yates

And so is it the rule that most nonbinary people like to be like to use "they" pronouns, they/them, or is that you know, again, it's based on the individual person?

Logan Pierce

Yeah, I would say it's definitely based on the individual person. A lot of folks that identify as non binary will use they/them/their pronouns. Um, but there are so many. We could even do another show on pronouns. There's so many pronouns out there.

Karen Yates

Maybe we will do another segment on pronouns, you just put that idea in my head. Let's do another segment on pronouns, for sure.

Logan Pierce

Anyway, I can get back. But we're, and you know, someone can still identify as non binary and maybe they say, you know, she/her/hers feels good to me right now because of where I am in my life and their own personal reasons. So your pronouns don't always have to align with how you see yourself on the inside. It's just whatever feels good for you.

Karen Yates

I was just online looking at a video of someone being interviewed who identified as nonbinary but used, I think she/her/hers pronouns. And that was a little confusing for me. And is it? Is it more do you see?

Logan Pierce

I'm not the one. Right.

Karen Yates

But I guess my thought is, Oh, is this a fluid decision? Is this something that this person, you know, changes? I mean, I had, I have one friend who does change pronouns actually, you know, based on, like, based on how they're feeling or phases that they're in. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Logan Pierce

For sure. Yeah. And I think, you know, it's kind of like what you said, it's up to that individual person. I know people that that identify as cisgender, like we spoke about in previous episodes, and so they align with what the doctor assigned them at birth, but they say you know what? Pronouns? I'll use them all. Because none of them feel bad to me, and I think it's, you know, we're in 2020, language is ever evolving. And also, we're always changing and evolving. I'm not the same person that I was yesterday, I'm definitely not the same person I was five years ago, and I'm not going to be the same person, you know, tomorrow.

Karen Yates

For some people who are cisgender, who don't question their cisgender-ness, and they're moving to the world and they're trying to make sense of, of gender — nonbinary is the most mysterious.

Logan Pierce

Yeah, something that trips people up. And it's almost like people are like, why can't you choose one or the other?

Karen Yates

Right, right. I mean, again, I go back to this, you know, exercise we had to do in school of just doing our gender journey. And it really helped me understand the non binary perspective a lot more because in seeing the fluidity of my internal identity, and understanding like, yeah, this isn't something you quote unquote make a decision

about, you know, one way or the other that like, in life. We are, like you said, language is constantly evolving. We are always evolving.

Logan Pierce

Yeah. Yeah. And I think when we, you know, growing up in this society, we, you know, and in the world, in fact, we've been told there are two boxes. And there's not just two boxes for anything.

Karen Yates

Yeah, yeah. It would be awful if there's just two boxes for everything. Right, that'd suck?

Logan Pierce

Well, and you know, what, not only that, but like, even what you brought up before where you were saying, you know, we're seeing this term more and more, and we're seeing more people identify as non binary, and we're putting language to feelings. That's all that is.

Karen Yates

Yeah, you brought this up earlier language to feeling you know, when you first say it said it I was like, what's he talking about? And now like, Oh, that's, that's right. [laughs]

Logan Pierce

Yeah, I would, I would love to pull up a quote real quick. But it just reminds me of, you know, my own experience in school and my own experience of feeling different. Personally, this is not always every transgender person's experience, but feeling different and feeling like I didn't fit in, but not really having any words to describe how I felt. And so, as we go through this, and as we teach in our classroom settings with our parents, and outside organizations, and we have this really beautiful quote, it is by the poet Adrian rich. And the quote is, "When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium as if you were looking in a mirror and saw nothing."

Karen Yates

Huh. Say that again – saying say the whole quote again, because it's really beautiful.

Logan Pierce

“When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, and there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing.”

Karen Yates

Yeah.

Logan Pierce

So how am I supposed to know that I exist in the world if we never talk about nonbinary people, or transgender people? And you know, the first time myself, I heard the term transgender was in college.

Karen Yates

Whoa!

Logan Pierce

Yeah.

Karen Yates

And you're pretty young.

Logan Pierce

[laughs] Yeah, yeah. Mm hmm.

Karen Yates

Wow. Okay. So I mean, even even looking at today, you know, when we see all these terms, transgender nonbinary popping up, even 10 years ago, finding those resources, finding that language were not as easy to find. Thank you. Thank you. As we wrap this segment up, what are some key points about being nonbinary that you've we might not have covered yet?

Logan Pierce

Yeah, I think that's a great question. Um, I, myself am not nonbinary. I don't identify as nonbinary. But I would just say, you know, as we spoke about with the term transgender, we want that person to come out when they feel comfortable, and if they ever want to come out, and we want to respect their name and pronouns, and if we make a mistake, we have those four easy steps to practice.

Karen Yates
Right. Apologize.

Logan Pierce
Correct yourself...

Karen Yates
Correct yourself, and move on.

Logan Pierce
And practice!

Karen Yates
And practice. Okay, thank you so much, Logan.

Logan Pierce
Thank you.

Karen Yates
For more information on Logan and the TransMentor program, go to the show notes.

In addition to producing Wild & Sublime, I am also a somatic sex educator who works in person with couples to help improve their intimate communication and to blossom pleasure in a process that can be embodied, meaningful, and fun. If you'll be in the Chicagoland area and are interested in exploring how to get out of limiting patterns and rev up your relationship, contact me. Go to karen-yates.com, or the show notes for more information.

The following is an audience Q&A that was part of our "Bust out of Your Sex Rut" episode, initially recorded at Constellation Chicago. You'll be hearing sex educator and founder of Course Magazine Heather Rider, and recurring guests therapist Jason Best of Best Therapies, and sex coach Tazima Parris.

And now, here are some audience questions the panelists received. Again, Heather Rider, Tazima Parris, and Jason Best. So, here are some questions. "Jason suggested focusing less on performance. Can he or anyone offer some tips on how to do that?"
Focusing less on performance?

Jason Best

Yeah, I think sometimes it's about — you know, we've talked about introducing play, and really focusing on playful elements. I think that, you know, if you sometimes play in themes, as we were talking about with the orgies earlier, you know, hell, have "flogging and filthy things" on your schedule. Put scheduled dates where you're going to have something that's there, we know it's gonna happen — so that that's the night where you don't eat the refried beans, you don't do the — you know, like, you're going to work extra shifts, and then you know, come home smelling like everything at work, and be super stressed and do your taxes right beforehand, you know, so that you can actually be in a right space and then just like really enjoy it. And really try to just be in the moment.

Karen Yates

Yeah, cool. Anyone else?

Tazima Parris

I think it's the presence and play element will take performance away. So if you're present, and that literally means what are my toes feeling right now?

Karen Yates

Yes.

Tazima Parris

What are my eyelids...? What's happening with my buttcheeks? Like, really be super present in the moment, so that you can feel whatever you're feeling, and then that becomes sensuality. Also, it might help to take orgasm off the table. It's a suggestion I've made to several clients. It often opens up to more kinds of activities. Because if you're not on a race to get to the end — orgasm doesn't have to be the end either! Then you can also do other things. So if there's no end, then you have more that you can play with.

Karen Yates

Right Absolutely.

Jason Best

I will say, just on that topic too, sometimes I've had couples where I've said, "Take orgasm off the table," or even genital contact off the table. And then the hilarious thing is, they'll come back the next week and say, "Uh, okay, so we kind of screwed up. And

we had genital contact. And we've been inorgasmic, and we actually orgasmed... Sorry." Yeah. [laughter] And we're like, "...Okay. I guess you get a demerit."

Tazima Parris

Maybe some spankings.

Karen Yates

Okay. "At first the sex was so kinky. Now that we love,"— oh, this is great—"LOVE each other, it's very much less so. She wants it. I want it. But how do I make it happen again?"

Heather Rider

Okay, so I'll speak from personal experience on this one. So this was a big part of our relationship recently, is that we started out as kinky little motherfuckers. So that being said, so like we live together, it's been awesome, but also, we fell in like a little rut. It was, like, rough. And it took some really scary moments in conversation of becoming really, really truthful about different aspects of ourselves, and realizing like, what we might have lost when we got together, and like, how comfortable we got. And we're like, holy shit, what were these like little kinky fantasies that we had before we met that we were fulfilling with other partners, or with porn, or with like, online photos? And like, how do we bring that back to our relationship? And having this like, really raw conversation, crying a lot, being really scared to tell each other what we want. That really opened us back up. And we were able to fulfill a lot of things that we forgot we were missing. [applause] Also, I'm very sorry, honey.

Tazima Parris

I want to piggyback on what you said, because what you're demonstrating beautifully is actually the vulnerability. And I think we end up getting "safe," we do this safe thing when we're in love with the person, because we feel like relationships are fragile, and they're not. Okay, people are not actually fragile. We're extremely resilient. And if it's a true vulnerability, it's literally something that is true for you, and it is vulnerable, that is super hot. One of my mentors says, "Truth is verbal orgasm." And I love that, because it speaks to how hot vulnerability can be, even though it can be super scary. And if you're already in love, like, this person should be a safe person. And if that person is not safe, get support. And you know, do what you need to do to be safe.

Karen Yates

Yeah, there's something about, you know, as you get deeper into a relationship, it's like the hook in. It's like a fear hook, like, Oh, I can't, I can't change this, because then I'm

going to lose them, if they really understand that I really want this particular thing. That wasn't just a one-off. Like, I really want that.

Tazima Parris

And we want to be known. And you can't be known if you're not telling the truth. That's what we want the most in our relationships, is to be known and if you're withholding anything that is actually true about you, then you're not fully known.

Karen Yates

Yeah, absolutely. Jason, did you want to say something?

Jason Best

Yeah. Esther Perel talks about the tension between this desire for emotional safety — you know, that we are driven in relationships to be emotionally safe — and to feel warm and connected, but that that's oftentimes not sexy. You know, at the beginning of relationships, we have this tension, like, is this person going to leave, you know, are they going to bring chickens in? And I also have to clarify, I'm using chickens as a joke. Many people asked in a concerned way about chickens during the break. But you know, that is this kind of natural tension. And I think particularly in kink, sometimes with sadism, what can happen is that people feel this sense of love and tenderness, and they go like, "Oh, great, I really love this person, I want to protect this person, and oh shit, should I hurt this person anymore? Even though that's super hot and it really gets me off? Ah, damn, I don't really know." And so sometimes I think you have to really push that barrier. And then sometimes that means you change the scenery. I know some people have found success like, going on camping trips, or, you know, doing something in a hotel, going to a dungeon, doing something that's really different. Sometimes it's forcing people to try a different scene, to go to a different place, to really explore their fantasies. Sometimes it's getting people to have those honest conversations about, what are you masturbating to now? Like, you guys had those early scenes, and they were really hot. But now what are you into? Because maybe that's really changed, and you guys haven't updated for a while.

Karen Yates

Yeah, exactly. Like, especially if you're in a real long -relationship. There might be things bubbling up, and you're never talking about them because you're watching TV, and they don't come up. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. "Why are we sexual?"

Tazima Parris

Because we are human. Done. And that sexuality doesn't have to mean a specific thing. I really feel like — we're all here because of sex. Every one of us is here because someone had sex with someone at some point. And whether you choose to act on your sexuality is your choice, whether you choose to act a lot on it, or whether you choose to ratchet it down, or when you want to act more on your sexuality, it's part of who you are. These genitals aren't decorations. They're here for a reason. All of our parts are our sensual skin, our neurons, mirror neurons, every part of us has an aspect that plays into our sexuality. And when we leave some of that stuff off the table, we leave some of ourselves hidden.

Heather Rider

It's interesting to also bring into — a lot of people are demisexual or asexual. And it's just, they're not interested, or they're very specifically interested in one type of sexual touch or contact, and anything else doesn't do it for them. We were all talking about Emily Nagoski, and I think something in her books that she points out is, sex drive is fucking made up. Like... you can live a life without sex, you're not gonna fucking die. You can live a very fulfilling life without sex. And intimacy can be something different, as well. Yeah, so why are we sexual is... maybe I could also see the question being framed, like, "Why am I sexual?" And going there, and digging in deep and trying to understand. because you know, there's a lot of people out there who aren't sexual. And that's, you know, sometimes by choice, and sometimes it's just the way that they are.

Jason Best

I just think that question would be really different for every person.

Karen Yates

Absolutely.

Jason Best and Heather Rider, and the earlier part of their conversation, go to the links in the show notes.

Next, this following Sermon on the Pubic Mound aired on the "Communicating in and out of Bed" episode, and was recorded at our live show May, 2019 at Constellation Chicago. And for clarification: in 2019, the show's name was still Super Tasty. Enjoy.

Thank you all for coming tonight. I feel really wonderful being here with you all. You know, I didn't know what I was going to talk about tonight. And I thought, uh... And it

was like, you know, I usually know a couple days in advance or whatever. And, you know, when I first started doing Super Tasty last year, I was cleaning my apartment and I came across this piece of paper. It brought back a lot of memories. And I thought, wow, someday I'm gonna do a Sermon on the Pubic Mound and I'm going to talk about this piece of paper. And tonight is that night. Okay, so we're talking about 20-year relationships. Last month, I was talking about getting divorced, after a 20-year marriage. And I was put out in the world again, as a newly minted single person. And I got involved with someone like, right away. Like, immediately! And what ended up happening was, I started having profound levels of anxiety, the likes of which I haven't had in years. And it really frightened me. And so when I was with this person, he would say something offhandedly, and I would get profoundly triggered. But you would never know it if you were with me. [grandly] Because I'm an actor!

And I also have really good defense mechanisms built in from childhood — when you just, impassive face, impassive face, when confronting anything in the family. And so, I would melt down inside. And so, we were talking about communication — and it's hard to even get to the communication place if you can't even find yourself inside your anxiety. And there was nothing wrong with this guy. I mean, he wasn't saying anything crazy. It was just like, I would just have these countless amounts of anxiety. And so I went to a health care professional — mental health care professional — and we worked out this little piece of paper that I kept in my wallet. And when the guy I was seeing would go out of the room, or go to the bathroom, and I'd be triggered, I would pull this motherfucking piece of paper out. And I would read it. Because it was a point-by-point thing for me to keep my sanity. And I just want to share it with you tonight. Not to be like "Meee and my crap!" But more like, the process sometimes it takes — because we're giving a lot of information about how to make your life better, and how to have better sex — but it can be a real micro-movement kind of thing. And I don't want anyone to get fucking discouraged about the journey it sometimes takes to get to the point where you can say, "Hey, can you eat me out? I'd really like that," or "Hey, give me a blowjob." Or, "Hey, don't do that. I don't want to do that tonight." Like, it takes a lot of effort sometimes.

And so, the first thing — and this is so tattered and worn, but it was so important. One: I'm triggered. Just realizing — like, I'm triggered. Two: Why? What message is lurching to the forefront? Three: What happened back then? What's going on right now, from then? I wrote "No voice, not seen. No power. Decisions being made for me." Right? Four: how do I help myself? And then there was a menu of options: Talk to him now. Talk to him, later. Process with myself later. Find someone else to process with. Be here now.

The next one, five: Because only you can give yourself your undivided attention and regard. Only I can give me undivided attention and regard. I'm interested in myself more than anybody else. It's me. That's the way it should be. There's no one else that can be as interested in me as I'm interested in me, because I'm fucking in this body, living this life. So to put it on someone else is bullshit.

Six: He can help me celebrate my life. But he's not the sole answer. Only I am. Only I am, because seven: You're wonderful as you are right now. You're wonderful as you are right now. I don't need to be fixed. You don't need him, or you, or... [inaudible] So, this is a long list. And sometimes I was just so triggered I'd be like, "Whatthefuck! Ahh!" But something would shift. And there's a happy finale to the story. actually. I broke up with this person. Because it was time to. But I was able to, in the wrap-up, say joyfully who I was, without fear. Like, this is what I want. He was like, "Yeah, I can't give that to you." I'm like, okay, it's okay. And the other happy part of the story is, I don't have this anymore. Like, I don't have to do this anymore. Because I kept practicing. I practiced next on the next person I dated. And then the next person, or with my friends. I would just get back to myself. And it got easier, it gets so much easier. And I'm not saying I don't ever get triggered, I get triggered like everyone else. But it's like, I've started climbing out of this place. And now I don't have to have this impassive mask. When someone's saying something where I'm like, "It's cool. Everything's cool. You're saying something's triggering the shit out of me, but it's cool..." Now I'm like, [noise of anxious exasperation] But I'll do something. So I just wanted to say that.

Thank you for listening. And thank you all for coming. And hang around afterwards. Let's all chat. Have a drink. Bye-bye! [applause]

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