



Wild & Sublime® Podcast, Season 2 Episode 7
“Communicating In and Out of Bed”
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Are you saying what you really feel and want in the sexual arena? Panelists offer strategies on communication — before, during, and after sex. Plus Karen’s Sermon on the Pubic Mound on anxiety and what it takes to move forward.

Host: Karen Yates

Guests: Peter/MksThingsHappin, Tazima Parris, Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Peter/Mksthingshappin

You know, over time, when you are consistently saying no to your partner, it really does erode the relationship, and there's going to be a cost.

Tazima Parris

If they're gonna leave, then let them leave. They didn't like you that much anyway.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

I think a lot of the erotic power comes from being witnessed by a partner, being able to share that and say, like, "Hey, I don't know if I even want to do this, but I've been thinking about this a lot."

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. 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. Today we talk about chatting, texting, nonverbal cues and more, in our panel conversation on communication. Plus audience Q&As, and my Sermon on the Pubic Mound® on anxiety. Keep listening.

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Communication. At a certain point, it'll probably break down, we being human and all. But as things start going off the rails, it's very useful to know good techniques that hopefully will keep dialogues moving forward, and your sexy needs being met. Do we really know what's going on with someone else? Or more importantly, do we know how to move our inner communications outward so that they're heard and potentially understood? I'll be getting into that later, with my Sermon. This recording is from our May 2019 show at Constellation in Chicago. You'll hear kinkster and coach Peter aka MksThingsHappin, sex and intimacy coach Tazima Parris, and psychotherapist Brandon Hunter-Haydon. And for context, you'll hear several references to role-playing -- those segments happened earlier in the show, most notably one about consent when making out in the backseat of an Uber. Enjoy.

One thing I like doing on the show is really making sure folks have something they can use. So like one thing I'm a big fan of is saying to a partner, or having a partner say to me, instead of, "Does this feel good?" is, "What can I do to please you more?" Or, "What will give you more pleasure?" Because that kind of creates an open-ended question. So someone can come back to themselves and answer. Peter, what would you suggest in terms of in the moment?

Peter/Mksthingshappin

One of my favorite questions to use is, "How do you want to feel when we're done?" It's kind of the concept of 'begin with the end in mind.' Asking plain questions, it may not be sexy, at least while you're asking the question, but if you can actually get your partner or partners to talk to you, either beforehand, or even during, and say "I like this, a little more to the left" -- right here, right now, once again, it doesn't sound sexy. But when your partner knows that you're listening, that's gonna get a really great reaction from them.

Karen Yates

Right, knowing that.

Tazima Parris

I really like how you were alluding to having a conversation prior to the actual sex act. That does wonders. If you can make a few agreements ahead of time -- these are the

things that I want, I want to do this, this is my 'yes, no, maybe.' So, even categorizing those pieces prior to having the sex that you're going to have. And maybe even creating boundaries. I want to do this, but I don't want to do any of that today, because I have a cramp, or whatever. And then while you're in the situation, yes, you can ask questions, especially if you know your partner, especially if you have a list out. But if you don't know what you want to do next, for example, and you want to try something new, don't ask really complex questions. Don't do the head. You'll take both of you out of the mood. But if you keep it simple, like, "Do you want more of this? Would you like less of that? Do you want more nipples? Do you want more... whatever." You can ask something specific and short, so that you can both stay as engaged as possible. Also, instead of saying what not to do, tell them what to do. So, less is not a "not." Less pressure, for example, or more to the left.

Karen Yates

And one thing that I learned, which is really awesome, is, you don't even have to be verbal about it. You can grab your partner's forearm, and demonstrate -- like this, you know? And do whatever pressure, like scratchy, whatever you would like. And that gives instant feedback, right?

Tazima Parris

Yep, definitely. But stay on the side of making requests, rather than telling them not to do -- unless you need them to stop immediately. And that's completely understandable.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

Go back to your roleplay scenario. In the Uber? [Karen laughs] It really stressed me out, because I remember those days! You know, "Hey, I'm gonna get lucky." You start the things going. The cab -- back in the day, it was the cab, there wasn't Uber back then -- and then things didn't really go well, because there was a level of miscommunication. Now, my wiser self would have had some type of conversation even before taking the person home. And it could be something like, "Hey, I'd like to see you naked." It might have been a little sexier than that when I'm saying it. But "Hey, I'd like to take you home." Even in the Uber, saying something like, "Hey, you mind if I unbutton this button?" Asking, but giving the person the empowerment to say yes or no. And if they say no, that's fine. At least I'm now guided how far I can go in the Uber.

Karen Yates

Brandon, what do you have to say?

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

I love this, because we're covering great moments in time -- which is before, during, and after. And I think that is so powerful to do that. There's actually a really cool website that you can visit that will help you do this. It's called mojoupgrade.com. It's free. And it's really fun, because you can input all of your "yes, no, maybes," or "wants, willings. won'ts."

Karen Yates

Oh, like a checklist.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

And there are specific acts.

Karen Yates

Oh, wow.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

So you can fill all that out, and then you can share the link after you complete it. You share the link with your partner--

Karen Yates

I heard of this! Yes! You actually have the conversation. Isn't that so 21st century?

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

The robots know everything. [audience laughter]

Karen Yates

Yeah, that is awesome.

Tazima Parris

How will they market to you after that list?

Karen Yates

Oh, man. Wow. So, one thing we were talking about was, before you can listen to your partner, you have to listen to yourself. And Tazima, you want to talk about that a little bit?

Tazima Parris

Yeah. So one of the things I learned coaching people on sex, about emotions and relationships and stuff, and then I was a complete emotional denier... So -- I know, right? What that ended up doing for me, before I learned about how much data I could get from my emotions, is that I wasn't very empathetic with my partners, or with other people in my life. I couldn't hear them, because I couldn't hear myself. And so whether it's emotions, or whether it's desires, or whether it's something that is in your gut, of like, "Oh, I don't feel quite..." Or you might not even have the words for what doesn't feel right. It's really critical that before you do anything else, that you hear what's going on for you. And then you seek to hear what's happening for the other person. And sex is really -- it's sensitive. And people get sort of scared about that stuff. Staying with your body is a really good place to be.

Karen Yates

Like, if you're starting to get really overwhelmed, which can happen, it's enough -- in the bed or outside of the bedroom -- to say, "I'm freaking out." Like, "I don't know what's going on." Like, you don't have to know more than "I'm freaking out."

Tazima Parris

I'm having a feeling. Time out. And that's okay. And it may not feel sexy, but then again, it would feel less sexy if you felt obligated to do something, or if you did something more than what you really desire to do. Because when you're with the desire of your body, and you're relaxed, and it feels good, everything's great. If you're less turned on, then hell yeah, you want to back off, or take some time. It doesn't matter what's happening in your life. Like, it's not that critical to keep going. Like, there's no race. It may feel that way sometimes, but there's not a race. And you can always slow down and come back, and keep coming.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

You know, and even if you are not 100% sure what you're looking for, if you are fortunate enough to have a open-minded partner, you can go on that exploration together. No one says you have to do this alone. Most of the time you're doing it alone because you need to have the ability to communicate to your partner. But if you're deciding to go into more kinky activities, swinging activities, poly activities, and you're not sure internally, just have a conversation with your partner and say, "Okay, what do we want to accomplish? What is this going to work for us?" And then you'll feel if it's right for you. If you feel that a threesome is not right, you'll know internally. You may still do it for your partner, or for other reasons, or the excitement, but you'll know. You know, I'm a big fan of believing that the things that turn you on are internal. It's not

external. You might find something that excites you and you were not aware of, but the things that turn you on are already inside you. You just have to discover what they are.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Yeah, I think part of the actual thrill underneath it, part of the power of it, is not just "Can I do this thing? Are we going to do this thing? Is it going to play out this way that I have planned, and like, hyped up in my head, and I've never spoken it to anyone else?" I think a lot of the erotic power comes from being witnessed by a partner, being able to share that and say, like, "Hey, I don't know if I even want to do this, but I've been thinking about this a lot." Right? And to witness your partner hear your fantasy, right? Even if you don't enact it in the way you've always thought about it, that's really leaning in. That's the vulnerability in the sexiest way.

Karen Yates

Yeah, and you were talking about -- really one of the key things is not to be outcome-driven when we're having these intense conversations.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Sure, yeah. Don't attach to the outcome, attach to the process,

Karen Yates

Right. Because that'll get you straight into your head and out of your body, and not in the now. Right?

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Yeah.

Karen Yates

Let's talk about texting. What happens if you're having a text conversation -- maybe it's sexy, maybe it's not -- and things start going off the rails? What do you do?

Peter/Mksthingshappin

Define "off the rails." [audience laughter]

Karen Yates

Well, like it starts to get muddled, and ambiguous, and you're not really sure what your partner's meaning. What do you do?

Peter/Mksthingshappin

Ask for clarification.

Karen Yates

Ask for clarification.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

You know, because you're talking about sex, there's almost an expectation of reading the person's mind, which is never the case. That never goes well. So if someone says something that you take the wrong way -- "I always wanted a big dick." Well, "Wait -- what's wrong with my dick?" Hey, what do you mean by that? Can you clarify what's going on? Because I didn't like the way that came across. That little interaction will save you the big fight later that evening,

Karen Yates

Right. And perhaps assuming the best of the person you're texting with. Right?

Tazima Parris

Yeah. And the thing about text to remember is that there's no face in a text. Yeah, you can get an emoji. But even the emojis don't quite cover all of the emotions that you can experience. And what is being said has a meaning that lands in your mind, and in your awareness of like, what that means. It's a really great question: What did you mean by that? Even one particular word can mean something different to you than it means to the next person, or your partner, or whatever. So asking for clarification, and realizing I'm making this mean something that it might not mean, and assuming the best or emphasizing the positive.

Karen Yates

Brandon, you said something that I loved, which was about the two biggest fears. And that's really kind of in play, I think. Everything really comes down to this, essentially,

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

That the two biggest fears that we all face in being known at all, to ourselves and to others, is the fear of either abandonment or obliteration. That somebody will say, "You're unlovable, I didn't sign up for this, what the fuck was that?" And peace out. Or they're going to come at you hard and tear you down. You shouldn't be that way, how ashamed you should be, what's wrong with you, things like that. Most of us have a deep-seated fear, I would say a core fear, that centers around those two things. And sex is so healing for that. The erotic is so powerfully healing for that, in a dynamic where you have this living communication,

Tazima Parris

I love that you said sex as a communication, because it is a dialogue. It is a way of us connecting and communicating with each other, sharing who we are, and really revealing -- and you were saying about sharing your fantasy, or sharing who you are. Sex is the one place that we can get really naked -- literally, and emotionally. And we're showing the actual -- there's no hiding that you can do in sex and have it feel good. Those two don't go together. And so, because it's such a vulnerable space, and if you get the feedback that's like, positive -- "Oh, I did a good job," or "I'm enjoying this, we're enjoying this, this is great" -- it can be that healing, that validation. It's massive. It's massive. It's an opportunity.

Karen Yates

Peter, did you want to wrap us up here?

Peter/Mksthingshappin

I was just gonna kind of add to that, in terms of someone coming at you and really breaking you down. I've had that experience more than once. And something that helped is, I created a form -- like, if I'm playing with someone brand-spanking-new, and we haven't really interacted that way. It's similar to your your checklist, but it's actually an essay form. So I give them homework before we play. And the big positive there is, before we even start, the scene has been created in their head, and there's very little chance of miscommunication because it's very detailed. And so there's less chance of a bad experience, or someone walking away from the scene with the abandonment, or breaking you down -- "Hey, that was the worst experience I've ever had." There's less chance. And it really does put both people in the right headspace before you get naked. Assuming the person wants to get naked -- because that's actually on the form as well. It is really detailed. And it goes right back to both parties, or multiple parties, are very comfortable with what the outcome should be. Not actually where it ends up, but where it should be. You least have a starting point, where you both know where you're coming from, and you can take it from there.

Karen Yates

Okay.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Can I get a version of that form in a D&D character sheet format? [audience laughter]
For reasons?

Karen Yates

Okay.

[narration] You'll hear audience Q&A from that show in a moment. Right now, we're planning for the exclusive monthly question and answer that happens in The Afterglow, our members-only club on Patreon. For as little as \$5 a month, you can post questions to our revolving group of sex experts, and hear their deep -- yet sassy -- answers in bonus audio content. You'll also receive other goodies. Consider joining. The link is in the show notes. Or give a one-time contribution. We rely on Afterglow subscribers and one-time contributors to help us with the expenses of putting together this podcast. If you join, you'll have the warm, tingly feeling that you're helping this sex-positive podcast live on! And don't we all want a warm, tingly feeling? Thank you. And now, for the audience Q&A with Brandon, Tazima, and Peter. [music]

[in front of audience] Wow, again, we've had so many questions -- so many questions! I'm going to mash the first two together, because they're similar, but they're slightly different. And hopefully I can catch the nuance. So the first question is, [reading] "I often feel like I'm empathetic in a bad way. I always put my partner's needs before my own in order to avoid awkwardness, not wanting to kill the mood, not wanting them to feel bad about doing something I don't like. What can I do to work on putting myself first without feeling mean?" And the other one is, [reading] "I often find myself unable to say no, especially if something that makes my partner feel good is uncomfortable for me. How do you start a conversation around pleasure when one partner's desires are at odds with the other?" So, "How can I not be mean?" And, "How do I start a conversation about disparate ideas of pleasure?"

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Boundaries! Man, I can really relate to this. Boundaries are really difficult, because we need them the most. And it's actually -- they're really sexy, because sometimes the hardest thing to do is to be able to say, even in the moment -- and I'm a fan of saying things in the moment, like, narrating your experience out loud -- "There's a part of me that doesn't really like what's going on, I'm not really interested, and I kind of want to say no, and that's really hard for me right now."

Karen Yates

Boom. Simple truth.

Tazima Parris

Say what's so, for sure. And the other part is, there's a spectrum of pleasure, and there's a spectrum of activities. So something might be slightly uncomfortable at one point during sex, that could feel totally awesome at a different point during sex, depending on how turned on -- there might be something that never feels better. And you've got to be aware and self aware enough, and care about yourself enough that you're not taking one for the team. I took a lot for the team for a while. Now, as I have put what I need first, the hope on the other side of that is that I can now negotiate with people from a level playing field, rather than from a one-down position.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

I'm just gonna put it into a more kinky context, because that's what I do. That's what I do. One, there's a lot of power in saying no, and it is your right to say no. And you know, there's a misconception in kink that when there's the top, the person who's quote- unquote, in charge, is running the show. And the reality is a good Dom top, you know, big letter, understands that it's really the bottom, sub, little letter, that is really driving the whole scene, process, play. Because if one or both partners, but typically it's the little letter, is saying no to something, it kind of stops the scene. And if that's not respected, then you have to question, are you really playing with, being with, partnered with the right person for you? It's totally fine if it's negotiated that there's 100% full consent, and they can do whatever they want to you, or the other way around. But if that's not the type of relationship you're in, it's okay to say no.

Karen Yates

Right. [reading] What should I do if my partner is being a total dick, but it's not a good time for a fight or discussion? For example, the week of the LSATs, big job interview, funeral, et cetera.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

"You're being a total dick. But it's not a good time right now."

Karen Yates

Are you role-playing with me? [laughter]

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

We can go there. [laughter]

Tazima Parris

Say what so! You're being a dick. It's LSATs, fuck you. Or you can totally pick a fight. Pick a fight! What are they gonna do? My husband is over there. I threw him in the

deep end, every date. And he was like, "Okay, cool. Okay." It's the riding the relationship hard that I think, we get afraid that the person is gonna reject us, or they're gonna stop liking us, or whatever.

Karen Yates

The two big fears Brandon was talking about, like obliteration, or--

Tazima Parris

Fuck it! If they're gonna leave, then let them leave. They didn't like you that much anyway. [applause] And you can find someone who's into what you're into. So there is hope on the other side of that rejection in a relationship is not as hard. It's tough. But it's not the end of the world.

Karen Yates

[reading] "When I have turned down a partner's request for sex, she has usually taken this as a personal rejection. I've had little success in explaining it is not personal. Any suggestions about what might be helpful to say?"

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

So the thing that comes up for me, I think, across the board with all these things, is I'll make an assertion -- I'm not sure if it's foolproof, but I feel pretty strongly about it -- which is, you are not responsible for anyone else's pleasure.

Karen Yates

Thank you! [applause]

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

You're never responsible for anyone else's pleasure, and they're not responsible for yours. What you are responsible for is negotiating the correct boundaries, and committing to being together, and process through good open communication, saying no when you need to, saying yes when it's right, and staying connected through that. That's the responsibility. The responsibility isn't to make an outcome happen. It's to commit to a process that you've agreed to. And so, most of what happens with other people that gets kicked up when they come at us is about them. I would say the vast majority of it, we can be accountable for certain things we've done to participate in that. But most of it has to do with them. And they need the chance to take responsibility for that. That can also be really hot, and somebody gets to that point, of owning their shit.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

I'm going to take a different stance. As usual, it is personal. It's personal, when you're trying to be vulnerable, in this case, with sex with your partner, and they shut you down. Even if it's for the best possible reason, it's going to sting. It's going to sting. So I think the conversation should go a little bit further, and go, okay, it's not happening now, for reasons, doesn't matter what the reason is. Let's either revisit this conversation, let's schedule it for Saturday night, let's have a date. But you just don't shut them down and then end the conversation. You shut them down, because you have the right to say no, and then find out what the other outlet is going to be. You know, over time, when you are consistently saying no to your partner, it really does erode the relationship. And there's going to be a cost. What that looks like could differ, but you need to make sure that that connection is maintained, even if it's postponed.

Karen Yates

Okay. [reading] "If you grew up in a sex-negative household, what are your suggestions for resetting and reframing?"

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Pretty sure all three of us, all four of us, did, based on our previous conversations.

Karen Yates

Pretty sure most everyone in this room did.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Maybe a few other people.

Tazima Parris

Hypothetically... So my encouragement, invitation, is to one, decide that I'm a grown-ass person now -- because is there anyone under 18 in here? Anyone under 21? [silence] Okay, great. You're a grown-ass person. [audience laughter] Fuck that shit. You're not going to run your life -- and you have to kind of come at it from a teenager standpoint for a minute. You got to be like, "You're not the boss of me." You gotta have your tantrum first. That's the first step. Second step is, well, what am I interested in? And then you start exploring those things, checking them out. No one's gonna bust you. I bust myself, so that no one else can bust me, by the way. I just tell people now. "I'm into BDSM. Yeah, that's what I do. I'm into it." So I just tell them now. And it feels easier, now that I'm saying it, because now I'm not keeping a secret. So no one's gonna bust you. Your parents are not -- they might be here, but... But no, you're

not gonna get busted. You're a grown-ass person. So it's time to get some new experiences around exploring your own sexuality. And you can only do that by starting.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

I mean, you are a product of your upbringing. But you are not locked into that person. I do believe your upbringing puts recordings in your head that play over and over and kind of help define who you are. It really, at some point, it's up to you to replace the recordings that are doing you harm, and change your personal narrative. So yeah, it's gonna affect you. The things my father and my mother have said to me will always be a whisper in the back of my head -- but I know what they are, and I can change that narrative in my head.

Karen Yates

Final question. [reading] "I appreciate what the panelists said about discussing things ahead of time, but that seems to me to eliminate spontaneity. Any thoughts?"

Peter/Mksthingshappin

Definitely. [laughter] All right, so I was married for about 15 years. And you know, when we first got together, hot and heavy, tons of sex, tons and tons -- I mean, a lot of sex. And I was like, "Oh, great. The rest of my life was gonna be all about sex with my wife!" And, you know, awesome, I'm doing it right. You know, in the vanilla world, I'm doing everything right. Then, you know, work, got a house, had kids. And for some reason, the sex just took a backseat. And it's, okay, we're too tired. Okay, we'er laying there in bed. Both of us were horny in our head, but our bodies are tired. Have you ever been that way? When you really want to do it, but, eh. And what I would have done differently, because it really did have an ultimate negative impact, is, we should have scheduled date night. We should have scheduled sex time. Lock the door at 5am, and go, "Wednesday at 5am, I don't care what's going on, but we're doing this." And it really would have made a difference. Probably still would have been divorced, because there was other issues. But that would not have been as big a factor.

Karen Yates

Yeah. And even if you're exhausted -- because obviously, you know, parents' exhaustion, well, that's a whole other thing that hasn't been explored. Like, just laying in bed naked, close to each other -- that can be a thing.

Peter/Mksthingshappin

And I find myself now, if I have a date, and I have worked a 12-hour day, I'm not going to cancel the date because I'm tired. You know, the capacity to do it's still there, it's just the will.

Karen Yates
Right.

Tazima Parris

There's no such thing as spontaneous sex. There just isn't, okay? Because you planned. You put on your little outfit, you combed your hair that certain way, you planned the date, you plan the time you are going to meet them, make that happen in your ongoing long-term, committed relationship. Make the time. Sometimes it's hard, I agree. But that tired thing -- you work too many hours, working opposite schedules -- any number of things. But when you were in the beginning of your relationship, the reason NRE -- new relationship energy -- ends is because you're not making the effort that you used to make. You're not adding the level of interest you used to have. If you add that into even a 20-year marriage -- y'all grew up together, and you've been together 50 years -- if you get a system update, by planning something new, and talking about something other than your regular-ass life, you're going to have a hotter night, you're going to have a hotter moment, you're going to have a hotter early morning across the table with coffee.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

I think riffing off of what both are saying is, treat your sexuality like a resource. And that's what boundaries do. Boundaries are about protecting what's important. And so when you have good boundaries -- and it's a boundary to say, "Hey, we scheduled this date night," or "We scheduled this night together," and no matter how you feel you show up today, you don't have to have a particular outcome, but you show up. That's part of holding boundaries. And when you see somebody hold that with you, they're in it with you. And that, in and of itself, is intimacy. You can turn that into whatever you need.

Karen Yates
Cool. Thank you, panel.

[music up]

For more info on Brandon, Tazima, and Peter, go to our show notes. Wild & Sublime is also sponsored in part by our Sublime Supporter, Chicago-based Full Color Life

Therapy, therapy for all of you, at fullcolorlifetherapy.com. If you would like to be a Sublime Supporter, showcasing you and your business and supporting us at the same time, contact us at info@wildandsublime.com. And now it's time for my Sermon on the Pubic Mound®. This Sermon took place at the same show, May 2019, at Constellation. And for clarification, in 2019, the show's name was still Super Tasty. Enjoy.

[music out]

[in front of audience] 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 newlyminted 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.

Unknown Speaker

Six: He can help me celebrate my life. But he's not the sole answer. Only I am.

Unknown Speaker

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]

Karen Yates

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]

[music] 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. Follow us on social media @wildandsublime and sign up for newsletters at wildandsublime.com.