

Meditation, Mindfulness, and Orgasm

FROM MY PERSONAL ORGASM TRAINING JOURNAL

This is part of my personal journal documenting my years-long journey to understand and heal my orgasm difficulty after seeing four sex therapists over more than 30 years. These writings capture my experiences, reflections, and discoveries as I lived them and as I began creating my own path toward healing.

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Meditation and Orgasm

I had meditated for a long time, but only recently had I started listening to Jon Kabat-Zinn's mindfulness meditations on YouTube.

I began experiencing meditation in an entirely new way.

For example, I felt as though my body was actually meditating, not just my mind. I was becoming better able to quiet my thoughts during meditation and bring myself back into a feeling state.

Perhaps most surprising to me was the meditative state itself. I began experiencing pleasurable sensations in my body in a way I had never experienced before.

At first, I could only feel these sensations in my arms and legs.

A few weeks later, I found that I could focus my attention on my pelvic area and begin to feel sensation there as well.

I felt like my body was becoming alive through meditation.

My new experience with meditation led me to begin researching whether meditation and mindfulness had been studied in relation to women's sexual function and orgasm.

To my surprise, I found research examining mindfulness-based approaches for women experiencing different kinds of sexual difficulties.

What I Was Discovering in the Research

At the time, I was beginning to understand that women's sexual difficulties were much broader than orgasm alone.

The research I found addressed concerns including low sexual desire, difficulty with arousal, sexual pain, sexual distress, and orgasm difficulty. It also explored the relationship between psychological states, attention, body awareness, and sexual response.

What interested me most was the idea that a woman's body could respond sexually while her conscious experience of that response might be very different.

A woman could have a physiological response and yet not necessarily experience those sensations as pleasurable or sexually arousing.

That caught my attention.

It sounded familiar.

Psychological Factors and Sexual Response

I began reading the work of Dr. Lori Brotto and others studying mindfulness and women's sexual function.

The research I was reading suggested that mood, stress, relationships, self-judgment, body image, anxiety, and other psychological factors could affect how women experienced their sexual response.

Stress and self-monitoring could interfere with the ability to remain engaged with sexual sensations.

Mindfulness offered a different approach: bringing attention back to the present moment and to sensations occurring in the body.

That idea fascinated me because I was beginning to experience something similar in my own meditation practice.

Mindfulness and the Body

The mindfulness approaches I was reading about included practices such as:

Attention to Breath

Bringing attention back to breathing.

Body Awareness

Noticing sensations in the body.

Observing Thoughts

Allowing thoughts to arise without automatically following them.

Nonjudgment

Experiencing sensations without immediately deciding whether they were good, bad, right, or wrong.

These practices appeared to help some women become more aware of their physiological sexual responses and more connected to what they were feeling in their bodies.

That was particularly interesting to me.

For years, I had spent so much time thinking about orgasm.

Was I going to have one?

Was it going to feel pleasurable?

Why wasn't my body responding the way I wanted?

What was wrong?

Meditation was giving me an entirely different experience.

Instead of trying to make something happen, I was practicing noticing what was already happening.

Mindfulness, Trauma, and Sexual Experience

I was also interested in research involving women with histories of sexual trauma.

Some of the work I found examined whether mindfulness could help women become more aware of their physiological responses and remain connected to sensations in their bodies.

The idea that trauma could contribute to a disconnect between bodily response and conscious experience made sense to me.

Mindfulness appeared to offer one possible way of practicing staying present with bodily sensation rather than disconnecting from it.

Again, this felt personally significant.

I had spent years trying to understand why my body could sometimes have an orgasm while my experience of that orgasm could feel completely different.

Learning to Stay With Sensation

Another idea that stood out to me was the role of attention.

Rather than evaluating the experience —

Is this working?

Am I getting there?

Will I orgasm?

— mindfulness encouraged attention to what was actually happening in the body.

Sensation.

Breathing.

Movement.

Feeling.

The present moment.

The research suggested that this kind of attention could help reduce some of the self-monitoring, worry, and distraction that interfere with sexual experience.

Mindfulness and Pain

I also found research examining mindfulness for women experiencing sexual pain.

The purpose was not necessarily to eliminate pain. Instead, mindfulness could change how a person related to sensations, thoughts, fear, and anxiety surrounding pain.

Women were taught to notice sensations with curiosity rather than immediately recoiling from them.

The research I was reading suggested that mindfulness might help reduce hypervigilance, catastrophizing, distress, and anxiety while increasing the ability to stay present with bodily experience.

This expanded the way I was beginning to think about sexual healing.

Perhaps changing sexual experience was not always about forcing the body to produce a different response.

Maybe part of the process involved changing how we paid attention to what the body was already doing.

What Meditation Was Teaching Me

I had originally begun meditating without any expectation that it would have anything to do with my orgasm.

But something was happening.

I was learning how to bring myself out of my thoughts and back into feeling.

I was learning how to direct my attention toward sensations in my body.

I was beginning to feel pleasurable sensations in places where I had not previously noticed them.

And for the first time, I was beginning to wonder whether learning to experience sensation itself might be part of learning to experience orgasm differently.

At the time, I did not know where that question would lead.

I only knew that my body seemed to be teaching me something.

References

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