

What Is Goddess Sexuality?

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Imagine living in a culture where sex was sacred and not a sin! The cultures that honored the divine feminine, existing for over 30,000 years, knew that our sexuality was a life-affirming expression of the life force. Sexuality and spirituality was never seen as separate in these cultures and only became split during the patriarchal era. The ancient cultures understood that sexual pleasure was a wonderful way to honor the Goddess, connect with spirit and renew the land, as well as to connect deeply with others.

The rituals performed at **Beltane**, (the Celtic celebration of the rebirth of spring on May 1st) reflected this integration of sex, spirit, and community. Such celebrations were enacted in earth honoring cultures all over the world and continue in areas such as Latvia, one of the oldest intact cultures in Europe (5,000 years or more). On the summer Solstice, every adult Latvian participates in a celebration that is similar to Mardi Gras, with its ribald jokes, libations and erotic costumes, but with added benefits.

One of the central aspects of the ancient celebrations surrounding the Solstices and quarter days (May 1st, August 1st, Nov. 1st and Feb. 2nd) was the enactment of the Great Marriage, which was a sexual union between the High Priestess, who was the earthly representative of the Goddess and her consort. Later, with the new patriarchal cultures, the High Priestess enacted the ritual with the local lord or king. The rite revealed to the people the deeper mysteries of sexuality. The Great Marriage ritual was performed in a beautiful private setting, but the whole community participated in the processions, singing, and prayer that surrounded and supported the success of their magical connection. The powerful energy that the couple generated was released to ensure the prosperity of the community. It was also believed to connect the community with the ultimate life force energy of the universe.

What followed for the entire community was a whole day and sometimes week of great joyous celebrating—feasting, drinking, dancing, singing and open enjoyment of eroticism. The Beltane fires were lit at sundown and after many hours of celebrating and leaping over the fires, couples would melt away into the night to enjoy with each other a night of erotic pleasure that they knew was the best way to honor the Goddess.

Goddess sexuality reflects this ancient erotic paradigm that integrates sexuality and spirituality. The uniting of sex and spirit is an ancient memory that is now emerging in our collective consciousness. We see examples in trainings such as Tantra, Taoist, Quodoushka, Toltec, Egyptian and other traditions. Today, we can re-affirm our deep instinctual understanding that our sexuality is both a healing energy and a pathway to raising our consciousness. Whether practiced with a partner or solo, we can use the preparation of sacred space, breathing techniques and visualization to bathe our energetic fields and release our desires out into the universe. Goddess sexuality is the acknowledgement that ecstatic union with the life force is our birthright. It offers us life-long permission to explore and enjoy sexual pleasure.

Many of you intuitively know the link between spirituality and sexuality through direct experience. One woman, I'll call Carrie, related the following experience. "At the moment of orgasm I knew that I was in a great, golden light and I experienced myself as transparent, luminous energy. I saw seven star-like, golden, swirling points that lined up in my body. I did not know about the chakras at the time but later I discovered that that's what I saw. My energy centers looked like radiant golden lights in my body." What she had visualized was the life force freely flowing through all seven energy centers that were illuminated and energized by her orgasm.

When sexual energy is perceived as purely genital sensations, it can be misunderstood as a simple physical release in order to produce feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. However, sexual energy can move up from the base of the spine, radiating through the whole body-mind system. It can be experienced as healing from the heart as well as psychically illuminating.

Developing Compassion

Sexually, the heart is a source of healing for the self and the partner. The shift from personal attachment desire into selfless love for another is facilitated through communion with the partner. Where personal desire generates sexual attachment, the feeling of "this one is mine," loving communion extends beyond personal attachment. The partner is no longer perceived as "mine," but as a beloved gift of the Divine.

Exercise: In order to experience the generating and receiving of loving energy from the heart with a partner, sit facing each other before you begin to touch. You should each place one hand over your partner's heart and look into each other's eyes. Feel the heat of your partner's hand on your heart and imagine the warmth of a small sun emanating from your heart towards your partner. Visualize this as divine love and imagine it as a beautiful color. If you need to do so, close your eyes at this point in order to focus on the inner sensation of warmth in the area of your heart and to visualize its color. Now imagine this warmth radiating from the center of your heart like the rays of the sun, enveloping your partner as well as yourself in a warm, liquid, colorful light. Stay with this visualization as it changes or moves and breathe deeply. Continue to be aware of this energy from your heart center for a few moments. Then, when you are ready to open your eyes, look into your partner's eyes and tell your partner some of the loving feelings you have experienced.

Self-Disclosure/Telling the Truth

Intimate communication is really the ability to tell our partner the truth about our selves. For most of us, it is difficult to tell our partners the truth about our very vulnerable feelings. One of my patients expressed her fears about being honest with her partner. She wrote, "why am I afraid to tell you who I am? I'm afraid that if I tell you, you may not like me and that's all I have." Thus, the desire to tell the truth competes with the very real fear that if you show your true colors, you will be rejected. As you work with communication skills notice how often fear emerges when you practice self-disclosure.

Exercise: The most important communication skill in intimate relationships is the ability to listen without judgment. The best way to learn listening skills is to summarize what your partner is saying. Here is a way to practice listening to each other telling the truth about your selves. Sit comfortably, facing each other and let one of you begin talking. The other will be the active listener. Summarize what your partner is saying at least once every two minutes. You might say something like, “just let me make sure I understand you, before you go on.” After you have summarized for a while, using his or her words, you can begin to ask clarifying or open-ended questions. For example if your partner says, “I need to feel respected,” you could ask, “when you say, ‘respected’ can you tell me what you mean by that?” “Can you tell me more about that?” or, “could you give me an example of what you mean by that?” Open-ended questions help you gather information more efficiently about how your partner feels. When it is your turn to talk for about twenty minutes and you are aware that your partner is not listening to you, try saying, “would you be willing to tell me what you just heard me say?” Remember that you must not invalidate each other’s feelings by saying, “you shouldn’t feel this way,” or “that’s ridiculous, how could you feel like that?”

Your goal should be to communicate deeper truths about yourself, outside your comfort zone. You can be truly *known*, once you have faced the fear that is responsible for your discomfort. Your ability to tell the truth about yourself deepens your capacity for intimacy and intensifies sexual desire. Practicing conscious loving connects us to our partners and can serve as a pathway to the next level of sexual expression, consciousness expansion.

Visualization

In ecstatic, sexual states we can perceive data beyond the physical senses. It is the source of spiritual visions during a particularly powerful release of energy. This stimulates the psychic senses to reveal information with extraordinary clarity. In addition, one can also visualize a desired goal at the moment of orgasm. In this way, creative ideas have a greater chance of becoming manifested. It is an ancient practice of shaping reality with extraordinary results.

Exercise: You can try this alone with self-stimulation, or with your partner. If you are working with a partner, you should practice the heart exercise, above, for several sessions, and establish intimate communication with active listening and self-disclosure. Set aside one hour or more and set up a *sacred space* with candles, incense, beautiful colors, and your sacred objects. Begin to breath together, generating and receiving loving energy from the heart. As you move slowly into lovemaking, gaze into your partner’s eyes and acknowledge the God/Goddess within. Bring your awareness into the visual image of your desired goal. Hold that image as you release energy with your orgasm. You may want to experiment with using sound as you release the energy as well.

Inspiration and Guidance

There are transcendental, sexual experiences that produce a sense of merging with the source of energy, losing physical boundaries at the moment of orgasm. It is often described as “being in the moment of boundless bliss.” Many ancient and modern visionary experiences are described as feelings of being “bathed in pure light.” It is cosmic orgasm, the direct experience of the self as pure energy, in union with a divine source. Experiences of sexual energy that go far beyond ordinary reality can be terrifying without any preparation. It may evoke disbelief or fear in some because it involves loss of the sense of the physical body. Sometimes developing conscious rituals and meditation techniques allow you to be more open to such transcendent experiences.

Exercise: If you choose to practice this with a partner, you will need to communicate clearly with each other about your expectations. It is important to recognize that your experiences of transcendence will be unique from your partner’s. Attaining ecstatic states through sexual interaction is very personal; however, it is helpful to feel a conscious bond with your partner. Your rituals need to be infused with your own creativity. You can borrow from ancient rituals, such as honoring the four directions of the Native American Medicine Wheel. The Wiccan tradition uses rhythmic poetry and movement. You may want to work with the Yoga practices of meditation and chanting. Kundalini Yoga, Taoism, Tantra and Native American Quodoushka all teach specific techniques to move the energy up from the base of the spine, through the genitals and the heart center to the crown at the top of the head. The effect of all these techniques is to energize the body-mind-spirit interaction.

The ancient cultures that worshipped the Divine Feminine perceived universal energy as a pulsing spiral. The spiral of energy moves up and down the body through all the energy centers in a continuous, pulsing current. In essence, we are plugged into a cosmic “electric outlet” through the energy center near the top the head. Continuing the analogy to electricity, our bodies cannot function well if energy is not grounded firmly in the energy center near the base of the spine.

It may seem outrageous to view sexuality in such lofty terms. Yet, it no longer makes sense to deny the spiritual dimension of our sexuality, as if we had “lower,” physical urges and “higher,” spiritual functions, disconnected from the body. Since sexual energy is the source of our connection to the life force, the benefits to physical, emotional, and mental health are obvious. There is truly an endless supply of loving sexual energy. Consequently, there are more unlimited playful moments, times of communion with our partners and spiritual ecstasy than most of us can ever imagine.

Linda E. Savage, Ph.D. is a licensed psychologist and sex therapist who has been exploring the mysteries of sexual healing for over 25 years. Dr. Savage is the author of *Reclaiming Goddess Sexuality: The Power of the Feminine Way*, which presents a view of women’s sexuality that blends the ancient wisdom of the Goddess cultures with current clinical knowledge.

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