

## Ep #27: How to Have Open Communication Around Sex with Dr. Sonia Wright



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kristi Angevine

## Ep #27: How to Have Open Communication Around Sex with Dr. Sonia Wright

Welcome to Episode 27. I'm your host, Kristi Angevine and today you'll hear my conversation with Dr. Sonia Wright. She's a board-certified Pediatric Radiologist, sex counselor and Master Certified Life Coach. She helps high achieving women feel comfortable with their sexuality, rediscover their libido and revive sexual intimacy in their relationships.

She's also the host of *The Midlife Sex Coach for Women™ Podcast*. And her signature coaching program, Own Your Sexuality Now! is such a groundbreaking and rich resource.

Today, we talk about the importance and the complexity of cultivating a habit of communicating openly when it comes to sexuality and intimacy.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, a podcast for high-achieving women who want to create lifelong habits and feel as good on the inside as they look on paper. You'll get practical strategies for mindset shifts that will help you finally understand the root causes of why you think, feel, and act as you do so you can learn to create habits that give more than they take. And now, here's your host physician and Master Certified Life Coach Kristi Angevine.

Kristi: So, Sonia, welcome to the podcast. I am so tickled to have you here.

Dr. Sonia: I'm so excited to be here, Kristi. Like, "We're gonna do it, I'm like, "Let's do it. Let's do it. Let's do it. Let's Do It." I have been caffeinated. I am ready to go. Let's have some fun.

Kristi: Same here. For all of you who cannot see this and just listening to the audio, we have big, huge grins on our faces. I have a massive cup of coffee because I also like to be caffeinated. And, we are going to just have the best conversation. This is part of the summer season of interviews, on this podcast.

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So, Sonia, for the listeners who don't know of the amazing Sonia Wright, Dr. Sonia Wright, who don't already follow you, can you just give them a little introduction?

Dr. Sonia: Sure. I am Dr. Sonia Wright. I am a medical doctor, a Pediatric Radiologist. I am a sexual counselor, transsexual counselor. And I am a life coach; I am a Master Certified Life Coach, actually. So, I put them all together.

I forgot to mention that I have worked in a sex toy store as well. I put them all together, and I am the midlife sex coach for women. I like just talking about sex, all different sides of it. Like, there's no aspect of it that I don't feel comfortable talking about. I'm pretty excited to be here. So, we can just talk more about this.

Kristi: Well, I love this. And I also love that, you wouldn't expect, at least in my mind pre-coaching, I wouldn't have expected, as a general OBGYN, that I would have encountered you, that we would have crossed paths. But we've known each other for quite a long time.

Dr. Sonia: We have, and it's just been a joy, it really has been a joy. Like, this is a professional podcast, but this is also two friends getting together to shoot the bull and just relax and enjoy each other's company. It's almost like we have to make a podcast appointment so we can spend time together. So, you get to see all of it with us, or hear all of it with us, as we relax and enjoy this conversation.

Kristi: Yeah, and so, one of the things that I will just share is that I think it's a big win on my part, to have refrained from starting just talking and just press record, so we get dive in. Because Sonia, I could, I mean, Sonia knows, I could just talk with her for hours. And then, we would, two hours later go, "Oh, shoot, we forgot to start recording." You will get to hear all of it here.

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One of the things that we are going to talk about, probably there will be lots of things and some amazing tangents that come from our topic, but one of the things that Sonia and I have decided to talk about today is the topic of communication. Particularly communication in relationships, and specifically, communication surrounding sex.

And I think, I mean, you could talk for weeks about communication in general, communication in intimate relationships, communication in relationships in general. But when you get down to communication with sex, it's very specific. So, tell me a little bit about what your experience is with your clients, when it comes to this topic.

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, you know, I spend a lot of time coaching on this. People come to me because they have low libido, or they have different issues going on in their sexual intimacy. And, they want help with that. And, we sort through all the layers. And I tell you, it always comes back to the communication.

And, I like to think of, like sexual intimacy is built on a foundation of overall intimacy. And, overall intimacy is built on a foundation of communication. So, for me, it is like the top thing that we need to work on. But it's also the big elephant in the room.

Like, people are like, "Yeah, I've gone 10 years and I faked orgasms. And yeah, it probably would be good to talk about this. But at the same point, I don't know how to say it." They think that if they communicate a concept or an idea of something going on in their sexuality, then their partner may be hurt. Like, there's so much that goes in there that let's break it down and let's talk about it.

Kristi: Yeah, I think what you said is so key, that there is so much that goes into it. There are multiple layers. It's not just, "Oh. Well, I'm just going to bring this topic up after not talking about it for 20 years." Where the

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precedent is, “My partner and I don't speak about this with ease, like we would talk about who's going to get the groceries or who's going to pick up the kids. So, when that is there, like what do you do? Where do you start with somebody who just doesn't?”

Dr. Sonia: Yeah. So, you know, like you with the coaching, I start with what are the thoughts? What are the fears? What's the worst-case scenario that you think is going to happen, if you communicate what your wants and needs are? And this is usually, if you can go straight to the worst-case scenario, like they will never have sex again, or they'll breakup, or somebody's going to be hurt, or something like that, then you can get to the reason why people are avoiding it so much.

So, I'm always like; what are the thoughts behind this lack of communication that's happening here? Or, it could be just like, “We don't talk about sex. Sex is dirty,” like, you just don't know what the thoughts are that people have in their minds around sex and sexuality, until you start diving in and like peeling back the layers.

And then very often, they don't even know the thoughts are there either, right? So, it's not like you're peeling back the layers and they know what's there, they're shocked. And with each layer that comes up, they're like, “Oh, my goodness, that was something I was taught when I was 10 years old. And, I didn't realize I was still holding on to that,” you know?

Or, they might realize that, if they're in a heterosexual relationship, and this often happens, where society says that the male pleasure is more important than the female sexual pleasure, and so it's like about catering to the male pleasure. So, when it comes to women asking for their own pleasure, then that becomes like, “Oh, my goodness.”

There's so much ingrained in their brain because of the patriarchy, that they can't even conceptualize that their pleasure and their requests for

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pleasure is not the same level as their male partners. So, there's so much in there, and everybody has a different reason why. And so, it's about peeling back the layer and finding out what's the goose egg that's in the center of all this? And let's like, talk about it, and then break it down, and then get into the actual talking about things.

Kristi: So, and this really gets to the heart of one of the main messages of this podcast, which is; when you understand the root cause of “why” that is behind your thoughts, behind your beliefs, behind your feelings, behind what you do, then you have so much more clarity. And then, you can bring so much more just compassion and curiosity to your habits.

And when it comes to talking about sex, knowing these is just so essential. So, I'm curious, you mentioned that there's a variety of different thoughts that everybody has, and it's unique to each person. I'm curious if there are certain themes, like certain clusters of thoughts, or families of thoughts and emotions, that are present when people do struggle with communicating openly about intimacy, about sex, about what they want, about what they don't like?

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, I think that if we're specifically talking along gender lines, when we put that overlay of gender in this situation, one theme I mentioned a little bit, which is that the male pleasure is more important than the female pleasure. And, it's all about your male partner, and so asking for your own needs to be met is definitely one thing that women have a difficult issue with. Some women.

Another thing might be like, sex is not something that we really talk about, just in general, and so it might be under the sex is dirty, or it could be good girls don't ask for sex, you know, it could be along those kinds of lines. We see that as well.

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There's the theme of not wanting to hurt the partner in one way or another, which requires that there's a certain interpretation about the request. Then there's also like, "I don't even know what I want in the bedroom, so how can I even ask for what I want? Because I have no idea what it is that I want," so there's that as well.

The anxious one that's more about, "I'm not doing it right. I'm not going to be able to ask for what I want. I'm broken, it takes me too long to have an orgasm," so along those lines, as well. And, woven in there is usually guilt and shame. And so yes, and anxiety. Yeah.

Kristi: So, it sounds like, I feel like we could take all of those themes that you see, as they pertain to communication, as they pertain to intimacy and sex, and you could peel them back and/or sort of distill them out. And you can see these happening in other places in people's lives.

Where there's guilt for asking what you want. And for sort of articulating your needs in work. Or, difficulty with prioritizing your own self-care at the same level as, maybe your kids or maybe your co-workers. I imagine people listening, even if it's not on their radar that this may be going on for them in their intimate relationships, I bet you they see it in other places. And, my sense is it's probably in both.

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, it's definitely in both, but it's easier to see it in other things because there's a level of, like a veil over sexuality that people don't necessarily even want to pull back to begin with, right? When you have something that kind of has stigma associated with it, and then there's a layer of shame on top of that, at a higher level than there may be in like asking or negotiating for your wages or something like that. Right?

So, it's there but it could be at a more extreme level or whatever. But how it shows up in one way, it shows up in other ways as well, yes.

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Kristi: I think we could do a whole entire episode on, “I don't know what I want, to begin with.” Because you can see how that can come out in sex, in your career, in your relationships, in your relationships with lots of people, in where you choose to live; “I don't even know what I want.” And, I think we should pin that for a future episode. Because I can just see, like, we could go on and on about that.

But what I'm curious about is, when you encounter this and you're sort of working through all these layers, and you find the thoughts, and somebody realizes, and they go, “Okay, I now see some of the mindset stuff that was driving this difficulty.”

I can imagine they might say, “So, this is great that I should sort of sift through all this, but like, what's the real benefit? What's the goal of talking about this more openly?” And when they say that, like what do you tell them? Like, what's the real benefit of this? So, they understand, like why even go through the difficult work of finding all the stuff in the way.

Dr. Sonia: So, say you have a person in their 30's, 40's, 50's, somewhere in there, right? And they just think, “Oh, this is just something... It's not perfect, but it's good enough. It's okay. I'll sort it out over a period of time.” And then, I tell them, the odds are you are going to be sexual in some way into your 80's and 90's.

This starts putting it in perspective. Like if you've got to deal with it for a month or two, or a year or two, maybe. But we're talking maybe 60 years, 40 to 60 years of that's going to define your sexual intimacy. Do you want it to go on that long? Are you willing to take the time?

And, I'll admit that it's not going to be one conversation, right? It's going to be more than one conversation, might be a continuous conversation that's put out you know, periodically. Are you willing to do the work? Because this could be 60 years of your life, you know. In terms of, do you get pleasure?

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Do you actually ask for what you want? Are you deserving of this sexual intimacy?

And it's not just for you. If you choose to be in a relationship with somebody, and there's sexual intimacy involved, the quality of the sexual intimacy for both of you becomes important, and always should be important.

But I think the longer that you're together, if there's not one person that's really enjoying it or getting their needs met, then a wedge forms between the people. And then, you have this tendency to have a separation over a period of time. So, we're not just talking about it like something for a month or a year or something like that, this is an extended period of time. And usually, when you put it in that way, people are like, "Oh, yes, it is something I do need to discuss."

Kristi: Yeah. So, for everybody listening if you find yourself thinking to yourself; it's good enough. If it's something that's short, like, you know, my experience this week is good enough, and the thing that you're thinking about is like maybe, your kids' drop-off, and it only lasts for one week, yeah, that might be fine. But if you're referring to something that is going to be in your life for decades, that may be your indicator that some investigation would be really high-yield.

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, and recognize that if you don't deal with it now, it probably goes into the realm of resentment, even if you don't want it to be there. And so, on the surface, everything is looking fine, but underneath, things are happening just because you're not dealing with the issue. If you're avoiding the issue, it does not mean that a decision has not been made. That is a decision. And that has ramifications, and leads to a result that you may not like in like 2, 5, 6 years. So yeah, let's deal with it now.

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Kristi: Yeah, let's deal with it now. That is so powerful, because I think one of the things we notice with habits in general, but particularly patterns of communication. And just things we do in life, in general, are that, if we suppress or ignore or sort of sweep to the side what we're thinking and feeling, those thoughts and feelings are still going on. And they're still having sort of what I call, like a physiologic fingerprint. And they're still making a ripple and having an effect, even if we are not consciously acknowledging them.

Dr. Sonia: So true. So true. Yeah, I like that. That ripple, that fingerprint. Yeah, I think that's important.

Kristi: Yeah. So, could you share a little bit about what it might actually look like, for a relationship with two people, regardless of, you know, if they're heterosexual or not, bringing this to the table and talking about this. Like, what might it look like for somebody to talk about these things, if they've kind of worked through like, "Okay, this is super important. I want to do this, but I've not done this before?" Like, what would it even look like?

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, well, there's so many different areas to start, and I start from a place of; what would you need in order to feel safe to do this work? With yourself and communicate ultimately with your partner? What do you need to...? And, I call it, like the zone of sexual safety. What do you need to put in place in order to feel comfortable with that?

So, that's something that's important to think about and process. And then also, what do you think your partner might need? It's not your responsibility, but if you're in this union with this other person, it does help. And also, talking to your partner as well, and to find out what their needs are, right?

Not making an assumption, but you can like make a basic, like structure or something, in order to build this upon, and then say, "Hey, does this seem

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good? And, what else can we add in here so that we both feel comfortable talking about the subject?”

That means like, not just like, you've had enough, it's 10 years and you like have to talk about it today, right now. It's like, as a doctor, when somebody comes into the emergency room, and they've had this, you know, this pain in the neck for 10 years, and they're like today is the day that they have to come in, and they're just like, “It has to be done today.” We get like that when we finally decide we have to talk about something.

And so, our partner comes home, they're exhausted, they're tired, and we're pouncing on them. We're like, “We need to talk and we're talking now,” right? That might not be the best time.

So, can we like do this respectfully, where we're like, having conversation about, “Hey, I think I'd like to talk about sexual intimacy at some time, but I want to make sure it might be a good time for you. So, when do you think would be a good time? Do you want to wait till over the weekend? Do you have a big project due at work?” You know that type of thing, to give them some downtime. And, to give them kind of a heads up, right?

And then, I always talk about; how do you want to show up? You know, do you want to show up in like an accusing manner and say, like, “This has sucked for the last 10 years. And I've been faking orgasms because you don't know shit.” That might not be the best way to combat it.

So, how do you want to show up? How do you want to be? Do you want to be kind? Do you want to be respectful? Do you want to be curious; you know? How do you want to feel in this situation, right? So, that's also another thing that I look at.

Whatever is going on, and whatever is happening, this concept of working together as a team and focusing on what the end result is, and nobody's

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wrong or right here, but how can we work together to get to this place where we're like, mutually satisfying, mutually connecting. I always say, for sexual intimacy to be "good."

Like, some people say, like, a sexual intimacy episode is not good unless there's an orgasm. Like, that's a goal-oriented type of way. I prefer to think of it as Sonia's Sexual Triad, right? Sexual intimacy triad, where it's like; is there satisfaction? Is there a connection? Right? Like, is there connection? Satisfaction? Is there pleasure?

Those are the things that I like to focus on, more so than; did you have an orgasm? Because you could have a wonderful sexual experience and not have an orgasm and you're fine with that, right? Or, you can have like a quickie dickey, that's not much fun. But there's orgasms and that doesn't necessarily mean... But for the quality to be there, that connection, that satisfaction, the pleasure, I think that, that is something that's kind of important.

Kristi: So, just to emphasize, because I think when people are listening to this, and they're driving, they're exercising, repetition is really useful. So, public service announcement from Sonia; is keep in mind the, you know, Sonia Sexual Triad. Which, I think, if I heard you correctly, was, you know, sort of incorporating and making space for satisfaction, connection, and pleasure. Are those your three? Yeah.

Then, just also to put this in sort of like almost stepwise fashion, if you're going to take on this work because you recognize you really want this, more intimacy, more ease with communication with your partner, things you can do are: Number one, ask yourself what you would need to do to feel safe, psychologically safe. And, what needs to be in place for you to feel comfortable to have these conversations. And then, almost as bonus, if you want to think about what will be useful for your partner to feel safe, that can go a long way. And, people are not going to fix this in one conversation.

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And, we should know how we want to show up. And then, keep in mind that working as a team can help us. Anything else when you think about all those things?

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, and just understand that it doesn't like, you don't control your partner's reactions. They can have whatever reaction they want; they can be happy, they can be like, "This is the best news, babe. Let's do it." Or, they could be, "What the hell? I've been enjoying my sex the way it is, and I don't want to change it," right?

It's only the beginning of the conversation, they can have whatever reaction they have. If they have a reaction that you think is wrong, or one that you're afraid of, then you're going to shut the whole process down. If you allow for them to have whatever reaction, whatever feeling that they want to, and understand that this is just the starting place. And, you get to go from there.

And also, understand that it's not a one-and-done; it's not going to be perfect. It's going to take some work and some effort here. But if you're looking at 40 to 60 years, it is worth it.

Kristi: Totally. So, what might you say to somebody who's like, "Okay, so I get it, I can't control their reaction. But I'd like to. And so, how do I actually allow for them to have whatever reaction they have, without ending up coming into conflict?"

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, so first of all, you may come into conflict, and that's okay. Also, go back to the place where you're like; how do I allow them to have whatever feeling they have? Also, allow yourself to have whatever feeling that you have. Like, if you would like them to be happy and whatever, and it doesn't work out that way, and you're kind of a little miffed, it's okay, as well.

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Like, as long as we can make this whole process okay, we will continue heading towards what we want to head towards. As soon as we start judging ourselves, judging our partner, getting upset or mad about something, this is where the process will end. So, whatever we can do...

If we can come from a place of allowing; whatever happens, happens. Yeah, we don't want to control our partner, and they don't exactly do what we want them to do, right? Where do we go from there? We have already made an intention, hopefully to be loving and kind and respectful to ourselves and to our partner.

And so, it could be a matter of like; how are you feeling right now? What are your thoughts around this? What's happening here? You know, you seem like you might be a little upset, and I care about you. So, I'd like to, you know, see what is affecting you. You know, we're going to work on this together as a team.

So, it's okay. We don't want to hide our feelings because that's not going to solve the problem. But what can we do now? Continuing to keep that zone of sexual safety for yourself and your partner, as you do this work. That's something that's pretty safe, and pretty important as you do this work. And yeah, just not necessarily judging yourself or judging your partner.

Kristi: So, this is, you know, another public service announcement: That you are not alone, and whatever comes up for you when you're doing this. And, I'm imagining that, that is a very common message you have for your clients.

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, definitely. And then also, the message that when you're doing this work, you can remind your partner, if they're upset about something, that you really want to work together on this. Because ultimately, you know, it's going to make for a better experience overall, right? So, it's okay that it's might have some difficult features right now.

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But overall, if we can get that satisfaction, the pleasure, the connection, to be up and, you know, same level or better for both partners, then it's more likely that sexual intimacy is going to happen. If it goes in the opposite direction, you know, where the connection feels like it's off, or like one of the things feels like...

If there's no pleasure, if there's no satisfaction, if there's no connection, then that's what leads to like less and less sex. And eventually, getting to a sexless marriage, which is sex, like, less than 10 times a year. That you're like, at risk for a sexless marriage, that type of thing.

Now, having said that, if it's the case that you have sex three times a year, and both of you are happy at that, I'm not here to mess that up. Like, you're not having a problem with that, they're not having a problem with it, so it's not a problem. If there's dissatisfaction there, if there's no pleasure, you know, if there's no connection, and you want that to change, then yes, you do this work.

But if you have the connection, and the satisfaction, the pleasure, and you don't have like sexual intimacy that often and you're happy with it, hey, there's no problem here.

Kristi: Oh, so good that you just said that. So, I'm wondering, how do you see, like, in talking about how to cultivate this intimacy, and how to have these conversations, how do you see self-acceptance or self-love influenced the willingness and ease of these conversations? Or, do you?

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, I think that it's very important, because when we... Usually there's an element of judging ourselves in here. When we start feeling panicky, or anxious, or shame or something like that, there is some point we are judging ourselves in some way. And so, if we can have that self-love here, and we don't go to that self-critical place, we accomplish much more.

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When we start feeling the shame and whatever, we will shut down, we will like shut it down so fast. But if we can stay in a place where we're not criticizing ourselves, and we're like, "Hey, I'm learning and growing. And, we're gonna figure this out together. And, we're gonna come from a place of curiosity. And, we're gonna do this work." Then, that gets you so much further than, "Oh, my goodness, I got somebody upset. I didn't do this right. I'm taking too long," or whatever those critical thoughts are. That actually puts you in a place where it all shuts down so quickly.

Kristi: Yeah. And that makes me just think, too, when people are considering, like the timing and the way they can feel most comfortable with having these conversations with their partner. If they, perhaps, this hasn't been literally integrated as their norm.

That if you are feeling shame, and if you're feeling shut down, if you're feeling highly anxious, and you're feeling really highly stressed, or really pressured, those are probably not the best emotions to bring with you into that conversation. Unless you have a little space from them.

Like, when you have space and you're like, "You know, I noticed that I had shame or I was experiencing shame in the setting," and you can talk about it with that sort of distance that's beautiful. But in the thick of feeling shame and shut down, it's probably one of the hardest places to have a nice open conversation about something that's difficult.

Dr. Sonia: Yeah. And so, that's why you do the work ahead of time. That's why you're like, "Okay, I want to be intentional about this," but you also allow for your own feelings, and then take that time to process it, and then go into the talk.

Because if you go into the talk, thinking that there's something wrong, or from a place of shame, then you could get triggered very rapidly by the

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response, by your partner or something like that, or your own thoughts that are in your own head.

Kristi: Absolutely. So, there is one thing I don't think you mentioned, when you introduced yourself, is that you've done a variety of trainings. But you've done advanced training and feminist coaching. Which is, you know, it's a very rigorous training. And, I think it does inform the work and your perspective. And I'm curious, if you notice a theme of sort of the patriarchy influencing people's ease with communication, when it comes around intimacy?

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, I think so. Because the patriarchy... Definitely we have a concept of what's right and wrong with sexual intimacy, right? It should be the case that the male gender, person, individual, their pleasure is much more important than the woman's. A good woman is somebody that's a sexual object; not a sexual subject that has their own wants and needs, that's not focused on pleasing somebody else, but more thinking about themselves, you know. So, there's that as well.

The concept of a good woman is somebody that's selfless, you know, that focuses on all. And then, you get this theme where, a subset of that, where like, the good woman transitions into being the good mother, who is asexual. Like, does not think about sex at all. Like, once you become a mother, you can't actually want to be sexual, maybe until they leave home or something.

But you know, these kids aren't leaving home now. It's gonna be like 25-30 years of not having sex and things like that. So, there's so many different levels that we have to look at this, in terms of from a feminist perspective. And also, equally, has to look at what society says how the male gendered role, in terms of their sexuality. Like, they always have to be ready, right?

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They always have to have, you know, an erection. That is part of what defines them. They always have to be wanting sex, you know, those types of things. And there's not necessarily room in, and an allowing, for them to be whomever they are sexually, as well. So, it's not just women that are stuck in these roles. There are also men that are stuck in these roles, as well.

These are some things that we need to take into consideration. This definitely has an impact on us. And yeah, we get to look at this work. And then, I'm doing a lot of work now, on the pleasure gap in, you know, being like women, and are they allowed to have pleasure in the bedroom? To just pleasure overall, right?

Do they have to earn pleasure? Like, certain marginalized groups have to earn pleasure. They don't automatically... Aren't allowed to have pleasure; they have to earn it. Or, they have to provide something valuable enough in the world to maybe access pleasure. But maybe, they don't get permission to access pleasure, as well, right? Maybe the society sees it as a problem.

If anybody's having fun and something in your mind says something's wrong, then there's probably the patriarchy in there somewhere. And there's like judgment as to what is allowed and what's not allowed, right? And I mean, just the fact that the word... There's like, so many words for slut, in terms of slut shaming. But is there an equivalent if we're talking about the male gender? No, there isn't. Like, so that tells you something is going on here, too.

Kristi: Yeah, and I think it's so great that you pointed out that patriarchal messaging and socialization doesn't just impact or hem in women, it affects all of us. It's every human out there, regardless of gender or gender identification, who lives in a society who has, you know, white supremacist messaging, patriarchal messaging. It's living in there, in our minds, and affecting so much about what we do.

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Dr. Sonia: It's limiting us definitely, and we don't even recognize it. And when we start to peel back the layers, sometimes it might feel overwhelming, as well, and you just don't even want to go there. Because, like, you keep pulling out and there's another and there's another and there's, you know.

But I think it's important to do the work for yourself, because it's not even about just you or your partner, it could be about your children and your children's sexuality, what you would like them to experience in their future, right?

If you have sons, how do you want them to be in the world? You know, I have a son, he's 22 years old, I would love him to enjoy his sexuality. But now he's like, "Please, mom, why do we have to talk about my sexuality?" But that's okay. But like, I would love him to have a loving, caring, enjoyable, pleasurable, like relationship, right?

And, society might say; as a male, this is what he has to do, and this is how it has to be. And, I don't want that for him. I want him to be able to just be himself and to enjoy himself, right? I have a daughter, and I would love her to be able to have as much pleasure in her life, sexually or just in general, you know, in her life. Without feeling like she's not a good woman, or you know, or she's like a bad girl, or any of that shit. So, sorry, I swear.

Kristi: No. I think my listeners are used to me doing that.

Dr. Sonia: All those things are something to take into consideration. And that the work that we're doing now for ourselves. It's not like... When I work with women, they tell me that the stuff that I'm teaching them, they're then talking to their daughters about. Like, we're reading books, and then they get the book for their daughters, you know, their adult daughters, or teenage daughters, whatever, and they start having the conversation.

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I had a woman that was in her 60's that just got her first vibrator. And she's like, "Oh, my goodness, I have to get this for my daughter." She's like revolutionized; her daughter probably has 10 of them. But she's just learning about these things, and she wants that for her daughter, as well, her adult daughter. So, this is not just work for you, this is work that's going to impact generations.

Kristi: So, there's so many reasons that I love you, Sonia. And this is definitely one of them. This idea that this work is worth it. And, this work isn't just for every individual. It has a huge, you know, range of impacts with your relationship, with your intimate relationships, and with your kids.

So, if you find yourself, if you're listening to this, and you're thinking, "Okay, this is all very overwhelming. Yes, I completely identify with having some guilt when there's pleasure, whether it's sexual pleasure, or just pleasure in general. Yet peeling back all these layers just seems like way too much." This is why there are guides for you out there. This is why there are those of us who coach because it can feel a little bit overwhelming, but it is so worth it.

And it's so much easier when you have somebody in your corner helping you and shining a flashlight to help you see things, and reminding you that it doesn't mean that you're broken, it doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. It just means that you're human, like the rest of us. And, we all are doing this work.

This isn't like, you know, like you and I both know, there's not a destination at which we get to, and we are just the serene, you know, Buddha walking around unbothered and feeling pleasure all the time. But it's a work in progress, always evolving.

Dr. Sonia: Always, always. Like, our work has evolved so much over the last couple of years, right? If we think back to where we were, and the

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things that we're dealing with, and now what we're working on now, yeah, definitely. Definitely in different layers of the same concept, right?

Kristi: Yes. I feel like for me, I will, and I see this in my clients too, I will get so much clarity after investigating one small facet, that goes very deep, and you know, I learned so many things about it. And sure enough, like a week later, a month later, a year later, almost very similar version, or the same thing pops up, but in a totally different context, where I wouldn't expect it.

Because it just, it's sort of like my collection of themes that show up in different costumes, in different scenarios. And you solve it for once. And then, you know, I like the idea of an internal family systems. Instead of talking about the onion, where you peel back the layers and you get to the core, and then you're healed. They talked about the cloves of garlic, where you peel back through one, and that's great. You've solved you've healed that one, but then there's all these other pods of garlic and they will come up as long as you're alive.

Dr. Sonia: Exactly. So good. I love this.

Kristi: I'm wondering, Sonia, if you'd be comfortable to share, like what drew you to this work. Particularly as you're coaching about all things related to sex. I mean, you're a Pediatric Radiologist. I don't know many pediatric radiologists who have a passion for sort of empowering women when it comes to their sexuality. So, what brought you to this work?

Dr. Sonia: Well, you know, so many different reasons, right. And I think the main reason was I ended up being in a sexist relationship for a number of years. And I was in a bad place where I was like, crying all the time, but like I would hide it. And I had these concepts, you know, "I'm a doctor. I'm supposed to know how to deal with..." We don't learn this in medical school.

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But like, we have this concept that we're supposed to know it all and be able to sort it out. And so, after many years, finally went into and got like sexual therapy, like couples counseling with sexual therapists. But I was like, I'm gonna take me into another relationship at some point, I still need to work on this, I still need to figure this out.

Because, like, I have not learned... I'm going to do the work to be comfortable with my sexuality. And, along the way, I was like, you know, I was also doing the life coaching racket, as a physician life coach. And my clients were encountering this stuff, and I got to that point where it's like, I want to do this work more, and so I went, and I got training for over a year as a sexual counselor. And then, kind of brought it into my life coaching practice.

I couldn't save my relationship, but if I can help somebody save theirs, like give them whatever they need, like a place where they can process and feel safe to do this work, then that's really what I'm about. So, there's that side of things.

And then also, I like to think of like, my family is from the Caribbean. And, my dad grew up in Jamaica. And seeing relatives like young women getting pregnant in it, he was always really fearful of his daughters getting pregnant at a young age.

From the time I got my period, at 10, I would have to have the talk every year, and it also involved like ice cream. Like, you got ice cream, but then you had to sit through a contraceptive talk, right?

I remember being like maybe 12, and having conversations about a diaphragm or different things like that. But he was very much into it. My mom was not one to talk about sex. And he's like, "My daughters need to learn this information," right.

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When I went off to college, I started doing things with the Contraceptive Information Center. And I was like, the diaphragm woman on Wednesday evenings. So, I've been doing this like a long time. There are many different things that inform the work that I do, but I'm comfortable talking about sex. I'm like, if you're uncomfortable talking about it, let me be the one to help in some way.

Kristi: That is so beautiful. And sidenote, your father sounds amazing. Like, he sounds so cool. And I want to emphasize something that you said, just sort of parse it out just a little bit, for some people who are listening, who may be suffering, whether it's in their sexual relationship, or with certain habits. That they just feel kind of like, buried underneath, and can't change. Or, they're possibly in a job situation that just feels too heavy, unchangeable, nothing's going anywhere, and they're hiding their suffering.

If you're suffering, and you notice that it's there, but you feel like, "I have to hide this. I have to put my best face forward. You know, I live a life where like, I have all these wonderful creature comforts. But even though I feel empty and awful inside. I'm not allowed to sort of let that out." I think this is an invitation to, just to let you know, you can address that. It doesn't have to be as scary and as intimidating, or is fixed as it might seem.

Dr. Sonia: Yes, 100%. Yes. If you're suffering, you have the right to do something about that. And, to take care of yourself. You don't have to be in a place of suffering. It was needless suffering for me, for so many years. And coming to the realization that I could actually do something about it. Right?

But what I had to first do, is admit that there was a problem. Admit that I wasn't perfect and recognize that that was okay. I was going to do something about it. So, value yourself enough to take care of yourself. Really.

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Kristi: Yeah, I think that's one of the habits that I see in so many of my clients, that I discovered in myself, too, is that habit of insidiously devaluing yourself. Like, "I can't last. I can't just enjoy this, for enjoyment's sake. I need to do X, Y, and Z prior to..." that sort of putting off, and not even recognizing you're devaluing yourself. It's because it's sort of woven into your identity at this point. But then, once you start seeing it, it's hard to unsee it, and then you can change it.

And then, the sort of seed of hope I like to plant for everybody here, is that if we can change something in ourselves, we are modelling, not just the possibility of change for our kids, or for our friends, or for our family. But we are showing that like, you can go for a really long time, and it's never too late to pivot.

I mean, you can always pivot, you can always you know, go back, and do a do-over, have a repair. Like, you have a conversation that does not go so well, not the end of the world. Not be an all-or-nothing, black, or white, like this is terrible. You can always adjust and pivot in life and in conversations.

I feel like we could go on for probably weeks, and we would probably just take breaks to go to the bathroom and to fill up our coffee, and maybe to sleep. But as we sort of wrap up here, is there anything else that you want to share when it comes to the work that you do? Or, to this topic of communication?

Dr. Sonia: True. 100% Yes. Yeah, I think it would be to look at your assumptions around this. Like, take the time to really look. Like, what is it that is like underlying all this? Like, is it that you don't necessarily feel valuable enough? Is it that you don't necessarily think your pleasure matters? Is it that, all along gender lines, are we doing one thing and then we do something else? You know, another gender does something else?

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Like, look and see what thoughts are underlying it. Maybe the thought is like; Oh, this is too much work to do this. But underlying that there is a thought about valuing somebody above yourself, or whatever it is. Like, look and see what the underlying assumptions are, and question those assumptions. Ask yourself; really, is that true? You know, is it 100% true? Or, maybe it's not?

And, maybe we can come at this a different way and surprise yourself. You'd be surprised as to, when you're processing and thinking things, what comes up for you and what comes up for your partner, or partners. You can always have more than one.

So, just question everything and come from a place of curiosity. And be okay with the process, knowing what your long-term goal is. To focus on what the long-term goal is. Because if the long-term goal is more intimacy and more connection, then this work is just 100% worth it. And it's okay. Doesn't have to be perfect from day one. And, it can get better over time.

Kristi: Yeah, and I think what many people will find when they do that, when they ask themselves; what assumptions do I have about communication? About sex? What are those? They may find that one of their assumptions is that communication is supposed to be perfect, or sex is supposed to be perfect. And, they might notice that.

And, I would just encourage everybody listening, to really take what Sonia says to heart, and just sit down pen and paper or with your phone to dictate and just say; what assumptions do I have when it comes to sex? When it comes to communication?

And when you're investigating those, I also think it's useful to do what Sonia said and say, Okay, so once I find them, can I ask myself like, where did that assumption come from? Like, is that a message that I maybe got from society, from culture? From my, you know, my family of origin? Where

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might that have come from? And, do I want to keep it? If I want to keep it, great. I love what it creates. Amazing.”

You don't have to like, eradicate everything just because you find it. But if it's not useful, or if it's not true, that's when you can do what Sonia says. And, just question everything. Just interrogate it from a place of love and curiosity, and like; what the heck is this all about? And then, decide if you want to keep it or not. What else would you add?

Dr. Sonia: If you can't decide, and you're not sure how to approach it... “Because we love our children so much,” It's like, is that a message you want to pass on to your children? And often we won't do the work for ourselves. And, that's a whole other story. But you know, usually, if you say; is this a message that you want your daughter to receive? Most people say, no, this is not the message.

So, if you need to start the process, because you don't want to give it to the next generation, then start it there. But at some point, get back to you. And. you are valuable enough to do this work on you.

Kristi: That's immensely powerful. I'm so glad you brought that up because I do think many of our clients will share the idea that perhaps, it's maybe a little bit indulgent, or if it's self-centered, or just focusing too much on me to do this work. But, it's not.

But if you kind of need that little hack to be like; okay, but I'm doing this for the next generation. I'm doing this because I don't want to pass this to my sons and my daughters. Yes, totally use that. And then make your way back to you.

Dr. Sonia: 100% 100%. I love that. Yes.

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Kristi: Thank you for bringing that up. That was so good. So, tell me like, we'll have this information in the show notes, but where can people find you and how can they find you and all the places?

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, the easiest thing to do is go to my website, [SoniaWrightMD.com](http://SoniaWrightMD.com). And you can always email me at [Sonia@soniawrightmd.com](mailto:Sonia@soniawrightmd.com). That's always the easiest way to get a hold of me. I love doing this work, and I look forward to be doing this for really the rest of my life.

Kristi: That is amazing. Well, thank you so much for coming on. I love that we had this as an excuse to just get together and caffeinate, and chat.

Dr. Sonia: Good.

Kristi: Awesome. Well, thank you so much.

Dr. Sonia: Thank you so much.

If you want to learn more about how to better understand your patterns, stop feeling reactionary, and get back into the proverbial driver's seat with your habits, you'll want to join my email list which you can find linked in the show notes. Or, if you go to [www.HabitsOnPurpose.com](http://www.HabitsOnPurpose.com) you'll find it right there.

If you're serious about taking this work deeper and going from an intellectual understanding to off the page implementation, I offer coaching in two flavors: individual deep-dive coaching with the somatic and cognitive approach, and a small group coaching program. The small group is currently for women physicians only, and comes with CME credits. You can be the first to learn more about the individual or group coaching options by getting on the email list.

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