

## **Sex and Money: Tackling the Taboos and Creating a More Passionate, Satisfying, and Abundant Life**

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*Before marriage, Daniel and Susan had a good, even a great, sex life. Things happened naturally for them, and as their relationship deepened, their physical relationship only intensified.*

*Within three years, they married and before long they were a family with two children. Daniel soon got a well-deserved promotion at work that kept him at the office later and was constantly bringing work—and stress—home with him. In addition to Susan’s day job, she also became involved with their kids’ activities and was happy and busy with driving carpools and making cupcakes for birthday parties.*

*Without even noticing, Daniel and Susan became so consumed by their own lives, that there was hardly any emotional intimacy between them. Susan felt disconnected from her husband and with so many other things racing in her mind, couldn’t even think about having sex. Daniel, on the other hand, constantly craved sex as a way to relax after a demanding day.*

*Tensions began to increase, and to compensate for the lack of partner relationship Susan planned extravagant family vacations, causing additional financial stress on Daniel to work harder and make more money to keep the family from sinking deeper into debt.*

While Daniel and Susan are not a real couple, their issues are not fictional. Every day, real couples wrestle with similar challenges that eat away at their relationships, causing anger, frustration, anxiety, and resentment.

Feelings about money and sex are actually closely entwined. That’s because at the heart of our financial and sexual behaviors with a partner lie deeper issues of power, self-confidence, self-esteem, and trust. When money and sex are connected below the surface like this, a ripple in one can flow through to the other.

For example, in the story above, Susan felt physically and emotionally disconnected from her husband. To fill this void, she spent money on lavish trips, which led to further strain on the relationship.

When money and sex are causes of friction, healing our relationships means first digging deeper to look at the underlying issues.

### **Understanding Your History**

Money and sex are both powerful topics that conjure distinct emotional—and yes, physical

—reactions. Does your gut twist when you think about paying the bills? Does your stomach flutter when you're excited about being with your partner? Pay attention to how you *feel* when the topics of money or sex are raised.

These feelings offer clues. Over the years, an orchestra of external voices and experiences has influenced how we now think and feel about ourselves, our values and our attitudes.

As children, we may have been taught that money and sex were shameful and that it was impolite to discuss them. Our culture sends many messages about money and sex that are not necessarily healthy, accurate, or even complete, such as:

*Money doesn't grow on trees.  
Never ask someone how much money they make.  
Don't touch yourself, it's dirty.  
If you talk about sex, you're not getting any.  
Men need to have sex or they'll die.*

Girls may have been taught that their role was to be the demure wife and to let the man take care of them; in exchange, they needed to satisfy their husband sexually. Boys, on the other hand, may have been taught that as the provider controlling the purse-strings, they were entitled to control other things and to have what they wanted, when they wanted it.

Our culture bombards with images of how wealth, sexiness, and promiscuity equal power. Subconsciously, we may even have connected those ideas with love and acceptance, believing that if you had money or sex appeal others would want to be around you. If you didn't, you were destined for an unfulfilled and lonely life.

**What messages did you hear and see when you were growing up?  
How do you feel about those ideas today?**

Our personal experiences with sex and money helped shape us. Whether it was the circumstances around our first sexual experience, or the financial environment we grew up in, these life moments have challenged us and will forever have an impact on the kind of person we are.

Like sponges, we absorbed all of these ideas and experiences and allowed them to seep into our subconscious, shaping our attitudes, values and feelings of self-worth. We cannot change the past, but by acknowledging it, we can better understand the role it plays in our actions today.

### **Raising Your Awareness**

Armed with an understanding of your past, you can be more aware of your feelings and attitudes towards money and sex in your present life. Think about what makes you happy,

motivated, excited, comfortable, sexy, secure.

Ask yourself some key questions:

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Money</b>
How do I feel about my body?	How do I feel about money?
What does sex represent to me?	What does money represent to me?
Do I know what I need to have sexually to have the relationship I truly want?	Do I know what I need financially to have the life I truly want?
Does my sexual behavior line up with my values and priorities?	Does my use of money line up with my values and priorities?
Am I living a sexual life truly without regrets right now? What would need to change?	Am I living a financial life truly without regrets right now? What would need to change?

While you have explored these questions separately, you should see some themes emerging. The emotions that drive us influence our actions towards sex and money equally.

Like bouncing on a trampoline, a jump in one area causes a ripple throughout the whole fabric of the trampoline. The harder you jump, the more dramatic the ripple elsewhere. You are probably seeing now that our relationship with sex and money is the same: one jump causes a wave in both.

For example, a person who has had a painful sexual experience may feel insecure and hurt, withdrawing from people and finding it difficult to open up to other partners. Financially, the insecurity and hurt may manifest as feelings of anxiety about finances and a desire to be closed and careful with money.

Or, a person with low self-confidence may overspend, constantly buying things he doesn't need to help make him feel better. On the relationship side of the coin, he may frequently look for new partners and new experiences to achieve the same feeling.

### **How do you feel about yourself as a person?**

#### **How do your feelings connect to how money and sex are reflected in your life?**

Knowledge is power, and raising your personal awareness about these issues is critical to understanding the role they play in your life.

### **Talking About It**

As you walk through these exercises and learn more about yourself, you can then welcome

your partner into the discussion. While this may seem challenging, it's necessary to help you both understand your perspectives and to be more sensitive to each other's needs.

Talk about sex. Talk about money. Discuss your feelings around these topics and how the two of you are the same or different in your reactions. Dig deep to uncover the underlying issues, such as trust, self-confidence, and the balance of power in your relationship.

Simply opening up the lines of communication on these topics may be enough for you and your partner to gain a greater understanding of each other.

If you find the issues are more complex, you may want to consider speaking with a trusted advisor such as a therapist or counsellor. This person can be a moderator to help you and your partner communicate your thoughts and put into words ideas you've been grappling with.

By exploring your emotional roots, you'll have a better appreciation of how your feelings are expressed through money and sex. Then, by tackling these taboos and discussing them with your partner, you can help minimize friction in your relationship. You'll be creating a life that is satisfying, passionate, and abundant—together.

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