

"Sex isn't the answer," American comic Swami X once joked. The issue is one of sex. "The answer is yes."

If only it was that easy! Sex is a perplexing and confusing topic, and the issues frequently don't start until after we've experienced it.

It's understandable. Millennia of biological hardwiring dance with the Freudian psyche and its seemingly whimsical urges in sexual desire. We're pushed to emotional extremes once the sparks start flying. Our sex lives are shaped by a wide range of emotions, some bitter, others sweet. Love, the sting of rejection, vulnerability, and irritation - these emotions may combine to produce a complicated maze that's difficult to navigate after you've arrived at its heart.

Fortunately for us, Alain de Botton, a philosophically-minded polymath who has shed light on themes as diverse as happiness, religion, and architecture, has arrived with a ball of thread that will guide us through this maze.

These chapters address a wide range of topics, from the evolutionary roots of attraction to how our childhood experiences shape our wants. But it isn't simply the theory of the item that de Botton assists us in comprehending. Along the way, he offers lots of practical suggestions to help us live healthier and happier sex lives.

The next chapters will teach you how to:

- Why can something as little as a pair of shoes or a wristwatch turn you on?
- the significance of determining whether you're looking for love or sex – and expressing so; and
- Why do we lose our desire to see someone naked if we've become accustomed to seeing them naked?

Chapter 1 - Biology can explain why we have sex and why we are attracted to one other, but there's a lot more to it.

The way most Westerners thought about sex abruptly altered in the 1960s. Intercourse became a topic of discussion throughout that decade, something that could be discussed as casually as a game of tennis – and, like the racket sport, it grew to be seen as a healthy pastime.

It would seem reasonable to believe that once sex was regarded as a natural biological function, all sex-related feelings of shame and guilt would have vanished permanently. That, however, was not the case. The reality is that sex is still a touchy issue today.

So, why do so many of us still feel self-conscious about it? Asking what sex actually is is a fantastic place to start.

The biological explanation of sex and attraction can only take us so far in this case. We need to go a little further to comprehend desire.

Take evolutionary biology, for example. It provides a persuasive explanation for why brilliance, power, and beauty appeal to us.

For instance, the first attribute signifies the capacity to quickly adjust to a variety of settings - a useful capability for assuring the survival of offspring.

Another appealing characteristic is strength, which indicates the capacity to protect newborns from prospective predators. That's why brawny displays may be so alluring.

Another key attribute that beauty suggests is health. Face symmetry is attractive to the majority of people, according to a large number of researches conducted throughout the world. What is the explanation behind this? A healthy immune system and the lack of hereditary disorders are indicated by evenly dispersed characteristics.

These arguments, while plausible, do not explain for persons who have preferences that differ from the norm.

A merely biological understanding of sex does not provide a complete picture. Why do humans get so much physical pleasure from the act of copulation, for example?

According to evolutionary biologists, pleasure derives from the stimulation of nerve endings in our genitals during intercourse. That, they'd add, is our reward for taking on the difficult but necessary work of species propagation.

Isn't that a convincing explanation? But consider what it excludes. Why is it that masturbation, which is simply nerve-ending stimulation, is never as pleasurable as having sex with another person? Take, for example, impotence. What accounts for the fact that the illness can strike even the most attractive and care of partners?

Such counterexamples show that if we want a more complete picture, we should go elsewhere. We need to look at our psychological development if we want to understand why sex might make us feel weird.

Chapter 2 - Our sexual maturity pushes us against societal conventions and isolates us.

If we're lucky, we'll be born into a home where we'll be showered with unconditional love and dedicated adoration for a limited period of time.

But nothing lasts indefinitely. The lovely time comes to an end, and we are sent adrift from this loving, safe shelter. That's when the issues start.

Growing up is an estrangement process. We get more isolated as we grow older.

Consider making personal touch. Our relationship with our bodies begins to shift after we've outgrown the need for diapers. From the genitals to the belly, neck, armpits, and so on, more and more bodily areas are becoming banned. Eventually, a handshake or embrace will be the sole acceptable form of physical contact with people.

As that process progresses, we begin to feel ashamed of our bodies.

Consider clothes. Isn't it worn in even the hottest climates? Why do people behave in this manner?

Its goal isn't just to keep us safe from the weather; it's also to hide our bodies from prying eyes.

Obstacles and barriers abound in everyday life, such as clothes, which stand in the way of connecting with others. The majority of our encounters are governed by self-control and traditional politeness.

That's why the vast majority of the individuals we see on a daily basis aren't simply disinterested in having sex with us but actively opposed to the concept.

We're also generally quite conscious of our personal space. When engaging with people, most of us automatically maintain a certain distance (typically between two and three feet) to avoid being too close. Strangers have no right to touch our bodies in most cases. Doctors and dentists, for example, who we allow getting near to us, are exceptions to the rule.

So, what's the deal with self-control getting in the way of intimacy?

Sexual urges, on the other hand, are at odds with how we want to be perceived by others.

Consider a puberty-aged boy. He fantasizes about stripping down to his underwear his instructor or a student. As fascinating as the idea is, it is plainly at odds with the formality that governs a classroom, and he ultimately wants his teacher's approval and his peers' respect. He aspires to be a "kind" person.

As a result, he maintains self-control and suppresses his urges.

A "good" individual is allowed to act on his wants - but only if they are deemed socially acceptable. As a result, holding hands or kissing may be acceptable. What about sucking someone's toes, hitting them, or yanking their hair? That's not the case.

As we grow into sexual beings, we become increasingly at odds with cultural norms. We turn to sex to help us cope with these stresses and break free from solitude.

Chapter 3 - Sex helps us to be ourselves and avoid social expectations.

All of this discussion about isolation and taboos may seem bleak, but don't worry — there's also some good news!

Sex allows us to embrace who we are and what we really want. Self-acceptance like this is an excellent basis for more honest, trustworthy relationships.

One of the reasons sex makes us feel good is that it allows us to reconcile our public image with our "shameful" inner selves.

For a moment, let's return to our narrative about the adolescent kid to throw some light on this.

He starts going on dates as he gets older. His date appears to enjoy him as much as he likes her one evening, so he takes a chance and kisses her. Rather than withdrawing in disgust, she greets him warmly and allows him to continue. More than only the activation of nerve endings in the lips contributes to the enjoyment of a first kiss, which is why it remains so vivid even decades later. It's the result of that accepting emotion.

But the narrative doesn't end there. They eventually get to her house and begin undressing one another. Every time that they implicitly agree to overlook the strangeness of one other's bodies, the sexual tension rises. As they hug, he welcomes her yearning and she accepts his.

They proceed to explore one other's genitals with their hands and lips as they enter the bedroom. They enjoy it because the most private, forbidden, and "dirty" portions of their bodies are recognized and given value.

Sex can give an outlet for the more aggressive aspects of our natures that we effectively conceal in everyday life, in addition to helping us reconcile our public persona and private self. This can assist us in our development.

Consider a pair in love. The lady communicates to her lover, without saying anything, that he should pull her hair. He's uncertain at first since the deed doesn't fit his definition of "pleasant." But, in the heat of the moment, she appears to be unconcerned with what society considers appropriate. And when he chooses to give in to her wish, she is ecstatic.

This is true in both directions. Every time something previously concealed, whether physical or not, is disclosed and is received with warm acceptance, the lovers both enjoy pleasure.

In this method, the trust may be built up gradually. Maybe the next time the pair sleeps together, he'll feel comfortable enough to tell her he wants to spank her, and she'll accept.

Approval implies we don't have to disguise our genuine sexual selves, which is a wonderful feeling!

In the following chapter, we'll examine the attraction in more detail to see if we can figure out why we prefer one sort of relationship over another.

Chapter 4 - Who and what turns us on is ultimately determined by our psychological makeup.

Physical attraction is frequently regarded as a flimsy relationship. We're taught not to judge a book by its cover and that personality takes precedence over appearances. However, we've previously shown that we're biologically built to find some qualities, particularly appealing for evolutionary reasons. As a result, it's not surprising that attraction is linked to deeper psychological elements.

Our psychological urges, like physiologically programmed drives, are frequently concealed under the surface.

From a biological standpoint, beauty is a matter of good health. However, from a psychological standpoint, the French author Stendhal's words "Beauty is nothing but the promise of pleasure" seem to be closer to the mark: "Beauty is nothing but the promise of happiness." After example, if we unconsciously identify other traits – such as patience or kindness – with a well-shaped nose, it stands to reason that we could associate other attributes – such as patience or compassion – with the curve of a person's eyes or the curves of a pair of lips

But what is it that makes certain characteristics appealing in the first place?

We, on the other hand, are drawn to what we lack.

Consider how we respond to works of art. Paintings appeal to us because they possess psychological qualities that we lack. A worrying disposition, for example, could prefer the tranquil simplicity of a Mark Rothko picture to the baroque activity of Goya's.

Consider the actresses Scarlett Johansson and Natalie Portman for an example of what this may mean in terms of sexual desire. Both ladies emanate healthy energy, yet the majority of people will choose one over the other.

This is due to the fact that their appearances imply distinct traits. Consider Johansson's cheekbones, which convey arrogance and a theatrical disposition. A youngster who has been traumatized by melodramatic parents may find her less appealing as a result. Someone who is always misplacing his house keys could find Portman's sharp features appealing because they imply the awareness and attention he lacks in his own life.

We may comfort ourselves that we aren't being shallow if we understand why we find certain persons more appealing than others. That's also an excellent technique when it comes to fetishes, as we'll learn in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 - Fetishes might be windows into our hearts.

The term "fetish" brings up thoughts of leather goods, masks, and the like. Fetishes, on the other hand, aren't always intense. In truth, we're all fetishists of some kind or another, even if our specific turn-ons are "milder" at times.

Trying to figure out what one's fetishes are is a wonderful method to figure out what one's unconscious mind is up to. And confronting one's unconscious desires has a distinct advantage: it tends to reduce emotions of sexual deviancy.

So, where do you begin?

Personal obsessions may be traced all the way back to childhood. Both positive and negative events shape us later in life.

Take, for example, the couple we previously met. He feels aroused while eating dinner with his companion when he discovers that she is wearing basic black loafers, the type of shoe that a librarian could be meant to wear.

He begs her to put her shoes back on later, as they're laying nude in bed prepared to make love. He'd have to narrate his whole life experience to understand why this specific style of footwear excites him.

He may start by saying that his mother wore high heels every time she went out for a night on the town and never gave him a bedtime story. Only by identifying his loafer obsession as a representation of the affection, he craved from his mother but never received can he comprehend it.

But let's pretend she has a fetish as well. His wristwatch, an antique clock with a worn leather band, is what truly gets her going.

What may be the cause of her outburst?

It makes her think of her father, whom she adored and who died when she was still a teenager. Her arousal is stimulated by the watch, which sends a subconscious message that the man she's with may share the same attributes she does with her father.

That's a fantastic way of putting fetishes into words. They're the crucial nuances that can pique the desire of the wanting component of human nature.

Visual cues may trigger desire, as we've seen in prior cases, but it's not just a case of us obtaining what we're seeing. The image represents deeper aspects that we normally only see unconsciously.

When we look at fetishes in this light, we can see that a wristwatch or a pair of shoes shouldn't be discarded as meaningless trinkets since they might "merely" provoke sexual desire. They should be taken seriously because they lead us to higher, intangible traits that cause us to love other people.

Fetishes aren't exclusively for "sexually deviants" anymore!

In reality, becoming comfortable with our urges begins with understanding our own obsessions and following them back to their roots.

Chapter 6 - The need for love and the urge for sex should be treated equally.

When it comes to making a relationship work, which is more important: love or sex? We're inclined to prioritize one requirement above the other, but this is a mistake.

The urge for love and the desire for sex is usually at odds with one another, resulting in attraction.

Consider a man and a lady sharing a train. They start communicating and find each other appealing, but their motivations are different. The guy notices something in her that he takes as evidence of a soft, loving disposition, and he fantasizes about presenting her to his parents. Love is the most important thing to him.

So, how about the opposite side of the coin? She considers the man she's just met emotional and uninteresting, but she finds him physically appealing and can't stop picturing him nude. She is just interested in sex.

These two eventually become a relationship, but they never come clean about their genuine goals. This is a tragedy waiting to happen. Because they can only achieve what they want by being evasive and dishonest about their intentions, their relationship will inevitably result in a great deal of shame and pain.

But being open and honest about our aspirations isn't easy. Both types of desire are constrained by the same set of rules. The male risks coming out as weak and sappy if he expresses his longing for love, for example. And admitting that sex is the only thing she wants would make her appear cold and rude.

So, in the absence of clear, socially acceptable norms, how do we negotiate these complicated and frequently competing desires?

The idea is to regard both sex and love desires as equally genuine and prohibitive.

If the only way to obtain sex is to appear to be in love, we'll undoubtedly act dishonestly, fleeing when the time comes to fully commit. And if we seek love by acting as though all we desire is sex, we'll be setting ourselves up for terrible abandonment experiences.

From a moral standpoint, neither alternative is greater than the other because both are defined by dishonesty. However, if we look at it from a different perspective, we may see that these impulses are likewise bound by great prohibitive taboos.

Honesty is the safest route to take. We'll be better equipped to minimize suffering and relieve our guilt if we're clear about what we want and avoid making fast judgments when others tell us what they desire.

This isn't simply true when it comes to sex and love. Being open and honest might also help you cope with rejection.

Chapter 7 - It's like the weather when it comes to rejection. It's not anything we should take to heart.

As we've seen, attraction frequently indicates a greater awareness of another person's non-physical characteristics. But, for the sake of our own sanity, that is not how we should see rejection.

It hurts to be rejected. It confirms our pre-existing sense of solitude. It doesn't have to be that way, though.

It might be disheartening to hear someone declare they'd "rather just be friends." We perceive rejection as a confirmation of all our nagging doubts and self-loathing, and we see ourselves as disgusting beings unworthy of love as a result. Rejection can even call into question our right to exist at its most severe.

However, it's beneficial to take a step back and consider what rejection truly entails. What happens when one person rejects another's romantic advances?

Simply expressed, it signifies that one individual isn't attracted to their potential wooer. That isn't a vindictive judgment; in fact, it isn't even a choice. It's a natural and unstoppable reaction. We have no control over who turns us on, just as we have no control over what flavor of ice cream we want.

We all realize this, even if it provides little comfort in the face of rejection. After all, when we're rejecting, there's no doubt in our minds that we're acting on our instincts.

That's why it's crucial to understand that rejection isn't a reflection of our value.

It's not anything we should take personally. Consider how ancient cultures viewed the weather throughout history. Drought was viewed as a punishment for previous wrongdoings, whereas rain was viewed as a favor offered by the gods.

However, contemporary science – in this example, meteorology – came along and established that the weather is influenced by the interaction of many atmospheric components. It's merely poor luck; terrible weather isn't the result of mysterious and vindictive forces. Rejection is the same way.

Psychoanalysis simplifies our own and others' behavior, showing us that our decisions are determined by hidden forces long before conscious reflection has a say in the matter, just as meteorology dispelled myths that attempted to explain weather patterns and replaced them with a scientific explanation.

That should give us some solace. It simply indicates that "no" doesn't always mean "no."

We may take things more lightly if we pay attention to the bigger context and the deeper origins of attraction (or its lack). Such a mindset is motivating, and it will also assist us in maintaining the relationships we have built.

Chapter 8 - Long-term partnerships do not guarantee regular sex or rejection-free relationships.

In an ideal world, every long-term relationship would ensure regular sex and rejection immunity. We do not, unfortunately, live in a perfect world. Long-term partnerships are just as likely as singles' life to be defined by sporadic sex and rejection.

Worse, when we're in a relationship, the anguish can be even more profound.

The problem is that sexiness is the result of reciprocal arousal, and the longer a relationship lasts, the more difficult it becomes to get both individuals in the mood.

Consider a married couple getting ready to go to bed. The just bathed wife sits on the bed, her breasts exposed, covered in a loose towel. When they initially started dating, the husband was enthralled by the prospect of seeing his future wife's breasts. However, they no longer seem as interesting or spectacular as her thumbs or shins.

Long-term couples will not necessarily have frequent intercourse, even if they are routinely nude near each other, because the naked body quickly loses its sensual attraction and so no longer sparks excitement.

Rather than being an attempt to thrill or attract, this pair sees nakedness as an integral part of their daily routine. Casual, unsecured nudity, such as that found on a nudist beach, is frequently unappealing.

Sexual rejection is a common occurrence in long-term partnerships, and it hurts much more when it comes from the person you love.

The notion that marriage will protect us from rejection is a ludicrous promise. In truth, rejection is common, and it's extremely hurtful when it comes from someone close to us, rather than a stranger — we're never startled when that happens. There are many ways to get over being rejected by a stranger, but being rejected by someone who is dedicated to loving and remaining with us for the rest of our lives is a far stranger and humiliating experience.

So, how can we deal with this inevitable aspect of long-term relationships?

Although dealing with rejection is never easy, a good place to start is to try not to take it personally. Once we accept that some rejection is unavoidable, we can go on and it won't be as painful as before.

Marriage definitely does not provide a solution to the more difficult parts of sex. However, as we'll see in the following chapter, dealing with those features may be simpler if we understand the strains marriage may place on our sexual lives.

Chapter 9 - Switching between ordinary and sexy registers is a difficult task.

Sex and ordinary life don't always get along. When we decide to share our home lives with a sexual partner, tension develops between these two worlds. This might be problematic.

This is because sex and domesticity are incompatible.

Why? Well, sex is all about having fun and letting go of control. Day-to-day living, on the other hand, is about self-control and discipline. Sex has always threatened to destroy our ability to care for the most basic areas of our lives.

There is, however, a silver lining to this bleak prognosis. We avoid sex not because it is unpleasant, but because its joys interfere with our ability to focus on household duties.

Allowing oneself to initiate sex is what initiating sex is all about.

We must acknowledge to desires that may appear insignificant or unpleasant. It can be difficult to manage the shift in registers between that and a practical chat about, say, which washing machine to buy.

That's why it's probably simpler to put on a rubber mask and a ball gag in front of a total stranger than it is to do so in front of someone we've promised to love forever. We're not going to have breakfast with this strange sexual partner every morning for the next 30 years, after all!

And the clash between the sexual and the domestic isn't the only issue. There's also a conflict between the people we love and the ones we meet.

People are typically divided into two types. The Madonna-whore complex is commonly associated with males, but women are just as prone to adopt a similar lens — call it the nice guy-bastard complex — when it comes to possible relationships.

Domesticated couples' sex lives may suffer as a result of our inability to fulfill both roles at the same time. It's better to start by being honest about our aspirations and expectations for these two positions if we wish to handle this tension.

It's a difficult task to strike a balance between home and sensual spheres of existence. Couples' sex life might dry up when they face a seemingly insurmountable difficulty. We'll take a deeper look at the threats in the upcoming chapter.

Chapter 10 - Our attitude toward our partners determines whether or not we are attracted to them.

We spend so much time with our relationship that the role that person plays in our sight alters with time. We now see a family member where we formerly saw a lover. Domesticity may stifle sexual desire and make our spouse appear as mundane, practical, and unattractive as the desk where we file our taxes.

But, as much as they may appear to be at times, our spouses are not our parents.

It's vital to keep this in mind because it's not unusual for a spouse to start looking like one's mother or father. This leads to the incest taboo, as defined by psychologists.

Early on, the seeds of the incest taboo are sown. We learn about love as children from persons with whom we are forbidden to sleep because of societal taboos. Then, as adults, we frequently select partners who unconsciously resemble those we adored as children.

But, aren't our partners from outside of our biological family? Yes, but there's a catch: the more we love someone, the more they feel like family to us. That is the crux of the matter. The taboo is reintroduced since they now feel like family. It's natural to feel uncomfortable discussing and communicating our sexual urges.

Consider a family with children. After the kids are in bed, one spouse may refer to the other as "mom" or "dad." A Freudian slip is an unintended utterance that discloses our genuine subconscious sentiments. It's difficult for the pair to switch roles with one another since they've become accustomed to playing mother and father.

The incest taboo is a catch-22 situation from which there is no way out. Finding a new spouse isn't an option.

We frequently think that those who break up with a long-term partner and shack up with someone considerably younger are attempting to reclaim their youth. But that isn't the case. It's far more likely that the previous relationship had been mired in the quagmire of the incest taboo, making intimacy impossible.

Finding a new spouse, on the other hand, isn't a viable alternative. They, too, get familiar with time, and we find ourselves back where we started.

So, what's the solution?

We may start reconnecting with reality once we become aware of our subconscious notions. That involves avoiding the need to seek fast solutions and instead focusing on improving our present partner's connection. We don't require a replacement; rather, we must develop a fresh perspective on the individual with whom we are conversing.

Chapter 11 - We may alter our perceptions of our relationship without abandoning them.

The embers of desire fade from time to time. However, this does not need a move and the purchase of a new fireplace. Even burning ashes may be reignited with a little effort. Here are some suggestions for getting the sparks flying.

One approach is to add another log to the fire, which will help to open up the connection.

Many couples try to spice up their sex life by enlisting the help of a third party. That's clearly not a good option for couples who have jealousy issues, but it may stoke the fires of love in more daring sorts.

Couples that do this may find themselves watching their spouse have sex with a stranger. That isn't only a gesture of goodwill. It's a method of reviving the old excitement of desiring a companion, rather than a present to relieve one partner from the humdrum of married life. Seeing another person be attracted to our mate may sometimes rekindle our own attraction.

There are, however, less dramatic solutions. Getting a room is an easy solution!

Checking into a hotel for the night – and so removing your partner from the mundane backdrop of daily domesticity – can help you rediscover your companion's sensuality.

Finally, we might go to the great still-life artists of the past for inspiration.

We're already on our way to rescuing our relationship from monotony and complacency when we actually look at our spouse in the way an artist looks at his subject.

Take, for example, the 1880 artwork Bunch of Asparagus by French impressionist artist Manet. Until Manet came along and showed them how wonderful the spring vegetable actually was, few people in nineteenth-century France would have thought asparagus especially noteworthy or intriguing.

Showing these features to his audience wasn't about creating something; it was about reminding them of the genuine qualities of his topic. Boring old asparagus was turned into something magnificent in Manet's hands.

Every day, we should strive to see our topic — the person we've selected to be our partner — in a new light. We'll remember why we fell for that individual in the first place once we start doing it.

So that's how you may liven up a stale relationship. There are, of course, many other, less difficult channels, such as adultery and pornography. However, as we'll discover in the coming chapters, better solutions aren't always available.

Chapter 12 - Pornography is a waste of time, but it may not be if it were inspired by sacred art.

Every day, huge volumes of pornography are consumed all around the world. That is an issue. Every minute spent viewing porn would be better spent raising children, producing a masterpiece, or just cleaning up the attic.

Pornography diverts our attention away from our goals and ambitions. We undermine our ability to bear the types of suffering that we need to be able to withstand in order to live a normal life when we watch porn. It reduces our tolerance for anxiety, stress, and boredom in the same way that drugs and alcohol do.

It's because it's a quick fix. We're no longer concerned with attempting to find out what's upsetting us or riding out our boredom while waiting for inspiration to come once we start seeking its transient pleasures. When we're faced with fears or boredom, we frequently turn to porn.

Pornography, on the other hand, does more than merely distract us; it actively saps our drive to be moral.

Consider an average pornographer. The plot is dreadfully boring, the dialogue is ridiculous, the performers are poorly exploited, and the interiors are just obnoxious. Compare that to a stunningly filmed picture with outstanding performances and a very touching plot. The latter appeals to our higher ideals, appealing to our sense of ethics, intelligence and beauty. Those are the principles we must set aside if we are to appreciate porn.

So, if we're not going to completely eliminate pornography, what has to change? Pornography, on the other hand, should take a page from sacred art.

That isn't as far-fetched as it may appear. Consider how religious paintings like Botticelli's Madonna of the Book embody transcendent characteristics like compassion and self-sacrifice while remaining — at least occasionally — seductive. That might serve as a blueprint for a new breed of enlightened pornography.

This new pornography, like Botticelli's, should use sexual attractiveness to boost our spirits rather than degrade our higher ideals. That would be a huge step forward; we wouldn't have to choose between sexual desire and survival. However, some form of censorship may not be a terrible idea.

When we turn on the computer, our self-control often goes out the window. It just cannot compete with the internet's supposedly limitless resources. A little censorship and repression might help us stay focused on the tasks at hand, as well as produce a more productive and compassionate society - in other words, it could encourage the very things that porn hinders.

Admitting that we're more vulnerable to the seductions of pornography than we'd like to believe might be beneficial to us. Once we've admitted our flaws, we could well discover that the way has been cleared for a new, more constructive kind of sexual art.

Chapter 13 - Don't be too harsh on adultery, but give faithfulness its due.

Adultery isn't well-liked — at least not publicly. It's commonly regarded to be "wrong." Many of those who consider it a vice, on the other hand, would be lying if they said they didn't find the prospect of cheating fascinating.

Infidelity isn't always considered "wrong."

That may seem paradoxical, but isn't the desire to cheat an indication of life interest? After all, life is a finite resource. Our biological hardwiring and cravings are incompatible with a complete lack of interest in having an affair.

There's also the issue of accountability.

It's customary for the betrayer to apologize, but there's a strong case to be made that the betrayed should do so as well. They, too, allowed the relationship to deteriorate to the point where an affair seemed appealing. Sexual wandering isn't the only way to betray a relationship; surliness, being uncommunicative, or just failing to grow or inspire are all examples of betrayal.

But there's another person to blame. By requiring our partners to meet all of our demands, the contemporary structure of marriage generates its own motives for adultery. From a

historical standpoint, the idea that our relationships should pander to our sex, love, and family wants is a relatively new phenomenon.

Nonetheless, we should honor integrity and applaud those who practice it.

This is due to the fact that remaining committed is a significant cost. It entails foregoing thrilling sexual experiences.

Magical thinking is at the root of adultery.

It thinks that by having sex with someone outside of our marriage, we may fix or leave a troubled relationship. But that just helps to sabotage the relationship's positive aspects. While there are a variety of marriage templates available, such as open relationships, these are almost always guaranteed to cause us, our partner, and our children even more pain.

Because loyalty is so difficult, we should honor those who practice it. Those who remain faithful to their partners have transcended the inherent human urge for sexual pleasure. While restraining sexual desires isn't ideal in and of itself, it does reflect a significant degree of self-sacrifice and kindness.

That is to say, we should evaluate the possibility that both parties are responsible for an extramarital affair. However, if our spouse remains faithful, we should express our gratitude for their efforts.

How to Think More About Sex by Alain de Botton Book Review

We're hardwired to need sex, and it may provide both extreme pleasure and excruciating suffering. Most of us feel we think about sex plenty, yet the topic is typically more embarrassing than we'd like to admit. We begin to comprehend our genuine impulses and wants as we learn to think more about sex. As a result, we are in a better position to pursue relationships that are healthier, happier, and more productive.

Long-term partnerships have their benefits, but they can have drawbacks. Sexual drive fading is one of the most typical downsides. It's difficult to keep previous passions alive if we've grown so used to our spouse that we perceive them as family members rather than lovers. Learning to fully view our partners in the manner that an artist's eyes concentrate on his subject is one easy method that might help reanimate slumbering passions. So, every day, take a minute to glance around and forget about the practicalities of household life. It's possible that you'll soon realize why you fell in love with your lover in the first place.

<https://goodbooksummary.com/how-to-think-more-about-sex-by-alain-de-botton-book-summary-review/>