

Vanessa Marin

SEX THERAPY



WHAT'S
YOUR
SEX DRIVE
TYPE?

When you hear the words “sex drive,” “libido,” or “desire,” you probably just think of one thing - being in the mood for sex.

But it's a bit more complex than that.

There are actually two completely different sex drive types:

SPONTANEOUS LIBIDO

RESPONSIVE LIBIDO

If you want to have an active and exciting sex life - without constantly fighting about sex with your partner - it's crucial that you each understand which type you are.

YOU HAVE A SPONTANEOUS SEX DRIVE IF:

- You feel the desire for sex at seemingly random points throughout the day.
- Sometimes you feel the desire for sex before your body responds (i.e. you're horny, but you don't have an erection, or aren't wet).
- You're typically the one who initiates sex in your relationship.
- You tend to want sex more frequently than your partner.
- You can feel turned on in a lot of different situations.

YOU HAVE A RESPONSIVE SEX DRIVE IF:

- You rarely think about sex.
- Sex doesn't sound tempting until you're in the middle of it. Sometimes at the end of sex, you think to yourself, "that was fun. Why don't I want that more often?"
- You rarely initiate sex with your partner
- You tend to want sex less frequently than your partner.
- The situation needs to be "just right" in order for you to feel turned on.

THE NUMBERS

You're capable of experiencing both types of desire, but most of us tend to experience one type much more frequently than the other.

In general, men tend to have more Spontaneous desire, while women tend to have more Responsive desire.

According to researcher Emily Nagoski:

75% of men
and
15% of women **IDENTIFY AS
SPONTANEOUS**

30% of women
and
5% of men **IDENTIFY
AS RESPONSIVE**

(the remaining people fall somewhere in the middle)

THE DETAILS

There are actually two separate elements to getting turned on:

MENTAL DESIRE

Is when you have the thought that sex sounds good.

PHYSICAL AROUSAL

Happens when your body gets ready for sex. Women get wet, men get erect. For both men and women, nipples get erect, heart rate speeds up, breath deepens, and so on.

You've probably experienced some of the ways that desire and arousal can function separately from each other.

You may have had an experience where you were really in the mood for sex, but noticed that you were dry. Or maybe there was a time when you were wet, but weren't at all interested in sex.

IF YOU'RE A WOMAN

You may have had an experience where you were in the mood, but you couldn't get an erection. And I'm sure there have been plenty of times when you had an erection at a time when sex was the last thing on your mind!

IF YOU'RE A MAN

THE DETAILS

Now, let's talk about the difference between Spontaneous and Responsive desire.

SPONTANEOUS LIBIDO

mental desire first;
physical arousal second

RESPONSIVE LIBIDO

physical arousal first;
mental desire second

Spontaneous libido is when your mental desire comes first. You're just going about your day when you realize that you're in the mood. You go and initiate sex with your partner, and then get physically aroused once you get going.

Responsive libido is the exact opposite. You don't feel mentally interested in sex until you're already physically aroused. You might be watching a sex scene in a movie, and start to have the thought, "hmmm, that sounds good right now." Or you might be kissing your partner, and start to feel interested in taking it a step further. Sometimes you don't feel mentally interested in sex until you've already had sex and it's over!

THE DETAILS

Here's another way to sum up these two types:

SPONTANEOUS SEX DRIVE:

Feel turned on,
then start having sex.

RESPONSIVE SEX DRIVE:

Start having sex,
then feel turned on.

THE DETAILS

Neither type of desire is “better” than the other; they’re just different.

Here are the main challenges for each of the two types:

IF YOU HAVE SPONTANEOUS DESIRE

Sometimes your body may not respond to what your mind wants. You may have a hard time getting wet or getting an erection, even if you really want to have sex.

IF YOU HAVE RESPONSIVE DESIRE

Sometimes you think that you have low or no sex drive because you’re expecting to feel mental desire out of nowhere. You may not understand that you need to get physically aroused first before sex starts to sound interesting.

HERE'S WHY THIS MATTERS

Most people think that desire is supposed to be spontaneous, because that's how we see it on TV and in the movies. A couple will both spontaneously feel desire in the exact same moment. They also happen to have the time, space, and privacy to have sex in that exact same moment. They immediately dash into the bedroom together, and live happily ever after!

If you don't know that Responsive sex drive exists, both partners in a relationship can be frustrated, sad, or confused that the Responsive partner never feels spontaneously turned on, out of nowhere. You may end up thinking the Responsive partner never wants sex.

But that's just not true! The Responsive partner does want sex. They just need to feel physically aroused first, and then their mental desire will follow.

HERE'S WHY THIS MATTERS

Now that you understand that there are two types of desire, you can stop feeling frustrated and stuck, and start creating a sex life that incorporates both types of sex drive.

There are LOTS of different ways to do this, but here are the most important things you can do:

IF YOU'RE THE SPONTANEOUS PARTNER

You should be willing to make the time and the effort to get your partner physically aroused

IF YOU'RE THE RESPONSIVE PARTNER

You should be open to being physical before you feel mentally interested in sex (since you now know you'll rarely feel mental interest before being physical)

BOTH OF YOU

Have to respect that you have different types of desire, and be willing to work as a team to create the sex life you both want.



**HI THERE!
I'M VANESSA MARIN!**

I'm a sex therapist, coach,
and writer.

I've been featured by The New York Times, O, The Oprah Magazine, Real Simple, Esquire, Cosmopolitan, Glamour, Jezebel, Lifehacker, and many more. Buzzfeed called me The Orgasm Whisperer.

I have bachelor's degrees in Human Sexuality and Sociology from Brown University, and a master's degree in Counseling Psychology from the California Institute of Integral Studies.

**FOR OVER A DECADE, I'VE HELPED COUPLES
JUST LIKE YOU HAVE INCREDIBLE SEX.**

Ready to learn more about how to align your sex drives and have a sex life that feels satisfying and exciting to both of you?

Sit tight! Over the next few weeks, I'll send you more information on how to get started.



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