



EPISODE #22

Building Confidence for Talking About Bodies with Harper Defreitas

[Breaking the Silence Podcast by Reach 10](#) with hosts Creed Orme and Crishelle Simons

Most of us grew up feeling awkward about saying the names of sexual body parts and how bodies respond sexually. Creed and Crishelle talk again with Harper Defreitas, a young woman who learned a lot while working for a leading sex therapist for LDS couples, Laura Brotherson. It's really important to be comfortable with these terms and know your body because you're a sexual being - you're in charge of your sexuality and your sexual experience. She says we need to get educated to know these different parts, say the words aloud, and practice by talking with trusted sources. It's so important to know that men and women have different sexual response cycles. It can help single people understand themselves and their partner in order to make better decisions about physical affection. And it helps married couples have a better sexual experience. These are skills that will bless you in your relationships now and later.

Did you enjoy this? Listen to our first interview with Harper Should Young Adults Learn About Sexuality While They're Waiting for Marriage? With Harper Defreitas [21]

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Crishelle:

Welcome back listeners. We are once again meeting with Harper Defreitas and we are so excited to learn from her and to break the silence on how bodies work and keeping boundaries in physical affection. This is one of my favorite topics and I'm so excited we're going to talk about it. Before we get into that, I just have a couple of reminders for you. We are so grateful you have found our podcast and that you are listening and we want more people to find us and to listen. So if you're listening to this and you're loving it, and even if you're just liking it, please like, subscribe, rate, all of the good things on whatever podcast platform you're using to listen because that helps more people find us. It also helps to go find us on Instagram when you follow and like our posts. So please do that so more people can hear these incredible messages. Also, we have an anonymous link that we want to continue to hear your feedback and your stories and your questions so that we can guide our episodes in the future. So please use that link. It's in our show notes and we look forward to hearing from you and back to Harper. Harper, tell us a little bit about yourself, just like reintroduce yourself briefly and then let's get into this wonderful topic.

Harper:

Yeah, I'm so excited to be here. I love this topic so, so much and it's one that my friends know that we talk about and, that if people have questions, they can open this conversation. It's something that I really hope isn't taboo and I hope to kind of break that silence to make it something that we can talk about openly and fully. It's such a wonderful topic. So I'm excited to be here with you guys.

Creed:

Yes. And today, specifically with this episode with you we're talking about how bodies work and keeping boundaries in physical affection, is that right?

Harper:

Yes.

Creed:

Awesome. So what do we need to know about our bodies? Why do we need to know how they work and how do they work? Can you help us out with that a little?

Harper:

Yeah. So we're just going to, I wish we had so much more time to talk about these things in depth, but they're really—these resources are coming from the books that you guys have linked. And so I encourage people to look those up and to get the answers in full since I'm just briefly touching on them and, just kind of sharing my thoughts and what I think is most important. So I think that something that I feel that people should know about their bodies is what's where? And what is it? What does it do? And this doesn't mean that you have to explore your body in a way that's arousing, but it does mean that you should know body parts. And specifically, women need to know that they have a clitoris. It's so important. Men and women need to know that it's only purpose is for pleasure. And that's so important to know because if God made our bodies and our bodies are intentionally made, it means that these things do have purpose. They're not by mistake like we kind of talked about last time in the last podcast and that each piece of us was made specific and intentional. So I really encourage people to look up what's where and what it is and what it does, especially for women who don't seem to know a lot about their bodies and what body parts are for.

Crishelle:

I really love that. And I just want to add my, like, yes, I hope that everyone can and does do that. And the reason why is, I think it's also interesting that so often we're like, "Ooh, penis." And we like kind of like flinch or clitoris and it's like hard to say. And something that I've worked on is making sure that I can say all of the correct anatomical terms as easily as I can say my grocery list. So I just practice saying those words. And so that it's comfortable and to know that it's totally fine that I have a clitoris and it's great and part of me and I have a vulva and I have a vagina and all of these things and that scrotums are totally a normal part of life and that they are just as normal as milk and eggs and cheese and all of those incredible dairy products and everything else on a grocery list. But I think that it's so important for us to know our bodies and to know what's going on in them. So I love that you're sharing that with us

Harper:

And I think, that's a perfect link. Let's talk about one of those last questions. How can we get more comfortable talking about bodies and sexuality because you just transitioned beautifully.

Crishelle:

Yeah. So how can we get more comfortable with talking about our bodies and sexuality and even saying those names, I guess I just gave an example with the whole, last thing, but what are some of your ideas?

Harper:

Yeah, so I love that you talked about this and from things that I've read and from a chat that I had with Laura the other day, just to kind of get her viewpoints, she really gave, she boiled it down to three, these are her three recommendations is first to get educated to know these different parts. So that's so great that you know the difference between a vulva and vagina because a lot of people don't. And so just knowing these different anatomical terms knowing about your body is so important to get educated from these good and reliable sources like Jason Carol's staff or things that come from BYU and others. There are so many great resources and Laura and other ones we mentioned are just some of them. The second one is to say the words aloud. So I love that you say that. Practice saying them. And third, it's to talk about them with trusted sources and to talk about them with people because then you get practicing these words and it doesn't feel so foreign and it doesn't feel weird or funny or, and I mean it's still can later, but it becomes something that you just get educated on and with that you're not fearful or anxious or it doesn't become this awkward thing to be able to talk about our bodies. And it's like talking about any other body part or like any other topic, like how you mentioned all of those great dairy products. So I think getting educated, saying the words aloud. If you're not ready to say them with someone else, say them to yourself, say them in front of a mirror practice, just say the word. If you, if you haven't before, it's okay. You're not wrong or sinful or bad for saying those words. They're just the titles of those things. So that's really great that you do that. And I encourage other people to do that as well.

Crishelle:

Totally. I also, I thought was so interesting because growing up and like with my little sister growing up, we always had like weird words for it is like our Chachi or like just like super weird made up words, but we never called it what it was. And so I think being able to call things as they are, again, just brings it to the light and I can be like so much more honest

with myself and know what's actually going on rather than just like putting it all together as one vague Chachi term.

Harper:

And then also, it shows a lot, especially with children and with others that we talk about this with, if we can't even say the words, what kind of message does that give to kids? If it's like, wow, if mom and dad who I'm pretty sure are doing this, like, and they know about these things, if they can't even talk about it, wow, it must be so bad or so adult or so weird or so something that I just don't even know. And so I can't talk about it with them. So I'm going to go find out from someone else. I'm going to talk to my friends, I'm going to look it up. Because if they can't even say the right word for this, for sex or for different anatomy, then it must be something so embarrassing and I feel embarrassed and I can't turn to them. So how sad that our sources of truth and, and people that we should be trusting the most, that we can't have these conversations openly. So I also think that it doesn't mean that we're going to share all the details about sex with our six year old. And and so there's definitely, okay, we're not going to say we're going to go screaming penis throughout the store. So there's definitely places that we're going to talk about this and people that would talk about this with. And so we just, we teach different things and there's a lot of great books. There's one about how to teach kids about sex. But I remember from my time at BYU and so that is such a great resource that I'm sure we can talk. And so it talks about how to teach it too, it's important to be able to teach it to the different stages of where people are at in different age groups.

Creed:

Totally. I totally agree with all that's being said and just a little PSA. I think it's really important for people to know too that your kids should know how to say the words in the language that they grow up in. At least for me. And my mom is amazing. She taught us Italian, but the scary words of anatomy, like I didn't really know how to say penis for like a long time and I thought it was taboo or wrong because we called it in the Italian language and we didn't do that for much other things. There was, it's kind of like the Oh, hide these things a little bit. At least she probably didn't mean to do it like that. But that was just my perception. And I think that's what's important for parents to understand is that what matters more is your child's perception of what's happening, not your intention. So if they

perceive something as this way as hidden or not talked about openly, they'll fear it and not dive into it or at least not get educated healthily about it. So, so important for us to use the correct terms and get educated and teach our kids

Crishelle:

Totally. And I think it's really important not only for our future kids, I think we've kind of focused on like the kid aspect of like, one our children are going to need to learn these terms as are so true and so accurate. And I would also say it's really important to be able to know these terms and to be comfortable with it and to know your body because you are a sexual being and you are in charge of your sexuality and your sexual experience. And if you don't know yourself and if you don't even know like what's going on down there, then you cannot have a, well, it's very difficult to have a positive and pleasurable experience. And so getting to know yourself helps you to understand and really creates a holistic view of your sexuality because there is that physical piece of it. And then there's also the spiritual and the emotional and the intimate and all of those different things. But without the physical it doesn't really work.

Harper:

Right. And I think what you just touched on is so important because being able to have the skills to communicate about topics that we're kind of unsure about or that are kind of outside of our comfort zone is so important because that's not just sexuality, that's finances, that's religious beliefs. That's how we want to reach goals. Those are the skills that are going to help us in so many different aspects. And so really learning and being able to be open and to talk about these important things. It's not just for the sexual, it's for the whole process. Like how you just said that it applies to so much more. It applies to the emotional and the spiritual, but also being able to talk about these things in depth it just helps us to be clear communicators, which is such an important tool and something that can be overlooked, especially in this arena.

Crishelle:

Yes, yes, yes, yes. So what do you think the young adults should know about the sexual response cycle and what value does that bring to relationships?.

Harper:

Yeah, I think that's really great. So what they should know and we're just going to go over this briefly, but I'm referring a lot to Laura's information, but they should know about men and women's. How men and women's bodies work differently and how the arousal works for those two. And so there's an analogy that Laura likes to use and I think it's so spot on with how, in regards to how men and women's bodies work differently and it's kind of the analogy of an oven versus a microwave. And this ties also to arousal, that women take more time to kind of heat up or to turn on or to go throughout that process towards orgasm or towards sexual fulfillment. And men are quicker to reach those different stages. And so I think it's important for us to know, especially as single people, about the sexual response cycle and how people's bodies are different because it helps us to make better decisions now to know, okay. And there's more self-awareness. There's more, I know what this is like for most people. How does this work for me? Okay. I'm feeling like I'm moving towards this different stage as. And there's like the biological components of this sexual response cycle that is found really in depth in the book *Sexual Wholeness In Marriage*, but to know, okay, why am I feeling like I'm just wanting to throw my inhibition to the curb and why am I feeling kind of cloudy? And it's because physically your blood is leaving your brain and your internal organs and it's going to your sexual organs. And so when those different stages happen and different things that happens physically, you can know, okay, wow, I'm moving towards orgasm. I'm entering a different stage. And you can know those different signs of what your body is telling you before you might even be able to recognize it or accept it spiritually. So it really just helps you to know your body and to be able to make different decisions and just better ones. And really it helps me to be more introspective and reflective of, okay, what am I feeling? Kind of pause. And to be able to know yourself better. It helps me to have those skills of knowing how you're feeling, being able to process that, I think through it and make those decisions.

Creed:

So how does that look specifically in a dating relationship where we can get physical, we like each other and then, you know, we can feel these awesome feelings starting to arise. What would you say? You talked a little bit about it, like being mindful, right, about what's happening to our bodies. Just being knowledgeable and being educated about what is

happening so that we can make proper decisions. Any other thoughts based on what we can do in a dating relationship and when things start to get heated up?

Harper:

Yeah. I think something that Laura really knows on the head and just different writers on this too, is that it's more about the principle than it is about the practice. And so not only does it help you to be mindful and introspective, but it helps you to connect better and in a deeper way than maybe in just like that physical, like, let's go and it's so hot and heavy and more and more like, okay, what would be best for our relationship, where we're at and kind of allow the spirit to really come in and to kind of pause. And instead of you taking that driver's seat, it really allows what's best and what God knows is best for you, where you're at with that person in relationship and to be able to know what's happening, where you're at, where you want to be and to be able to get there together.

Crishelle:

I love that. I want to just add that I think it also gives space in your relationship for your relationship to develop in other ways because I think often that physical attraction can be like pretty quick and you're like, man, I just love making out with him or her. And that comes pretty quickly in relationships. And I think having boundaries where you're like bridling those passions and you're holding back and you're recognizing when to do that. And you're really listening to the spirit that can help you to develop the spirituality in your relationship that can help you to develop the emotional intimacy and the intellectual intimacy and just the different aspects of your relationship that so desperately need to be developed before you're going to have ultimately the connection that you're wanting physically. Right?

Speaker 2:

Yup. I completely agree. And especially too, the research shows that women are most often... That desire is more emotional and relational and desire more often for men is more physical. And so it's such a great skill to be able to learn these things now for men and for women because then you can focus more on the emotional and the relational and the spiritual and then those things enhance later—The sexual and that kind of intimacy because that comes before for a lot of women in order to even feel that desire and that arousal. So

those are skills that will really bless you in your relationships now, but also later too, when it moves to, when the sexual becomes a part of the relationship as well.

Creed:

To add onto that, just today I was listening to the book *Man's Search for meaning* by Viktor Frankl. And he actually talks about how he's a therapist and there was a woman who came to him to, you know, figure out why can't I just achieve orgasm better? What's going on? What's happening? What can I do to fix this? And what he realized, well, what she needed to realize was she was focusing so much on just the physical aspect of things, right? As she forgot about her partner completely and focusing on her partner and the meaningful connection that she was supposed to be making with her partner allowed the orgasm to freely come and more abundantly. And so he talks a lot in his book about allowing things to ensue instead of pursuing specific things. But at least pursuing meaningful connection with your spouse in sexual ways can let all the other wonderful things about sex happen. And I know that was just this one person's experience. But from what I've read, that also is the case that we have to focus on the meaningful connection and then everything can happen with that.

Harper:

Yeah, definitely. Oh yeah. For sure. I love that you brought that up.

Crishelle:

So is it okay to talk with friends or even someone that we're dating about sexuality and how do we do that in a way that's appropriate and safe?

Harper:

Yeah, that's great. So yes, it is, it's important to talk to friends and trusted people and even people we're dating and to know what's appropriate. So there are definitely—I just want to be clear that there are some things that are not appropriate to talk about, like positions or specific techniques or what you want to do if you're engaged, and talking about those things in ways that it's arousing to yourself or to others might not be the best way to talk about it. But other than that, it really does depend on who you're talking to, the condition, and the condition of your heart and kind of on your physical arousal scale too. And so

talking about these things and talking about the principles and over the practices really is going to help you. It's going to help you to be able to grow and to be able to fully understand and to get different insights and perspectives and views on what people think and how they're striving to live it better or to understand better and what that looks like for them. It doesn't have to be this focus on the physical. So we're bringing it back again to healthy sexuality is, it's more than just the physical act, the mechanics of what your body does in sex. It's more than that. It's the unity, it's the connection and the spiritual and emotional and those things. Definitely we can talk about and should be talking about it. And I love that Laura has some really great books. I'm referencing her From Honeymoon to Happily Ever After book. And not only do these questions help you to be able to grow and to learn about other people, but they also help you to learn about yourself and so some of these questions like, what are your beliefs and feelings about sex? What are some of your positive thoughts and feelings? What are some of your negative thoughts and feelings? And then to add onto that, where have you learned about sex? What is your perception? Does it make you uncomfortable? Does it make you feel awkward? What do you feel? Just kind of unwrap that a little bit, just uncover to go a little bit deeper with what you're feeling and what you're thinking. And it'll tell you a lot about yourself and maybe where you have learned to grow or room to grow and to learn and to be better, to feel comfortable and to be able to have these mature conversations that we should be able to have with others. So I think yes, we definitely need to be talking about it with friends and with people we're dating and engaged to. And to be able to have it in a mature way is important.

Crishelle:

Definitely. I love that. I also just want to add, I think it's really important when you're engaged to talk about your expectations when it comes to your wedding night, to your honeymoon to even like the first year. So that you are on the same page because there can be so many assumptions made where you're like, Oh, they totally are on the same page as me because we feel the same way. We love each other. No, talk about it because it's so important to know what the other person really wants and thinks about everything and of course to do so in a safe way and in keeping the boundaries that you have set together. And I mean if you need to, a resource would be to meet with a therapist and have that conversation or to have that conversation in a public place where you're not going to be— And by public, I mean like public, private, right? Cause you're not like having that

conversation in the grocery store line. But but like in a place where you're out in the open and again, just like really listening to what your relationship needs and where you're at and having those conversations so that you can really learn about each other and really understand one another.

Harper:

A hundred percent. And that really ties into how it's detrimental if you don't start talking about it. And I think that's something that I hear often is, well, why do I, you know, I can figure this out later. And yeah, like there's a lot of physical things that will just come naturally, but there is a lot, there is a lot that you need to talk about and to understand and to be on the same page about before because your partner can't read your mind before or after you're married. And it really does alleviate a lot of fear and anxiety going into your honeymoon and into that different stage of your relationship that could be potentially traumatic if you hadn't talked about it and you're just kind of like, we'll figure it out. And it's like you're figuring very different things and so I think that foundation of trust and safety and being able to talk about that will also just deepen your relationship to have these hard conversations with the person that you're going to be married to and intimate with it. It creates a lot of trust. And so I love what you said, like have it on the, have this conversation on the phone, have it via text, like just talk about it somehow just because you don't know how doesn't mean you should avoid it. So it really goes a long way in preventing too a lot of unhappy marriages that Laura, as a therapist, she does education, but she also does the therapy. And so she sees the detriment behind not talking about it. And just assuming that you'll figure it out at some point.

Crishelle:

It can create a lot of resentment. It can totally be traumatic. Yeah. If you're not on the same page, it's really difficult to figure it out, honestly. And so really just creating a space for each other to figure it out and to understand what you want. And I think often we call these conversations quote unquote hard conversations because I feel uncomfy and because they make us nervous. But they're actually really wonderful conversations. They are so filled with joy and understanding and belonging and they can be. And it's a really good way to learn about yourself and it's a really good way to learn about your partner.

Creed:

And as a single person, just learning and getting educated is also just so fun and amazing. I feel a spirit when I read these books, when I learn about, wow, this is how my body was made and this is how we can make it work completely and wholly. It just feels good and it's fun and it's exciting. And like in a whole good way. So getting educated as a single person, as an engaged person, as a dating person, just get educated and have fun with it. This is God given.

Crishelle:

Totally. Harper, is there anything else that you want to share with us or maybe just like hit home?

Harper:

I feel like this, what we're doing right now, is so powerful. It's so important to be able to talk about this openly and to be able to navigate this. It's crucial and it's fun. It's important and it's wonderful and there's so many things that I just, well, I just wish we had more time to chat, but I really encourage people to learn to become comfortable and better educated and prepared and that learning and discussing these principles have helped me to be a better, more informed, confident, peaceful person. And I know it can for everybody that embarks on this too. And, so I wish the beauty and power of this knowledge for everybody.

Creed:

Amen. Thank you so much Harper for sharing all of this wonderful insight with us. Once again, take a look listeners at the show notes for all the information about Laura Brotherson's books as well as the other things that Crishelle mentioned at the beginning of the podcast. Thank you so much Harper, for being with us. You're amazing. Good luck on the rest of your journey to become a therapist yourself.

Harper:

Thank you.

Crishelle:

And I just want to invite any of you who, if this message resonated with you or you're like, wow, I really like this, or you have a takeaway from it, share it with someone. Share it with a friend, share it with your significant other. Share it with a family member. Share it with someone and reach out because as you share it, you're going to learn more about this. You're going to learn more about yourself and you're going to be breaking the silence.