



EPISODE #27

Learn More on the Difference Between Healthy and Unhealthy Sexuality with Laura M. Brotherson Part 2

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

We continue the conversation with Laura Brotherson, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) and Certified Sex Therapist (CST). This time we talk about relearning healthy sexuality and overcoming the taboo on talking about sex. You'll love part 2 of her conversation with Creed and Crishelle about her insightful list of 20 characteristics of healthy and unhealthy sexuality.

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Crishelle:

Welcome back listeners. Oh, we are so excited to once again be breaking the silence with Laura M Brotherson who is a licensed marriage and family therapist and a certified sex therapist and I happen to be one of her biggest fan girls. I am so grateful that we get to hear from her. She has done some incredible work in this area and written three books. The first one is, *And They Were Not Ashamed*. The next one is *Knowing Her Intimately* and her latest book, which I think everyone should own and give to everyone that they know is *From Honeymoon to Happily Ever After: 23 Keys to Prepare for a Sextraordinary Marriage*.

Such a good book. I'm so grateful I finally got my hands on it and it's so wonderful. So shout out to that book. And today we are going to be continuing our discussion on raising the bar in our intimate relationships. And this is a handout, a discussion, something that we will link in our show notes that Laura has created where she breaks down the characteristics of healthy versus unhealthy sexuality. And this is such a powerful list and such a powerful document that we wanted to make sure that we dedicated at least two of our episodes to it, as well as make sure that it's in your hands. And so we will make sure that that's linked in the show notes. So check it out and on our website and yeah, Laura, we're so grateful to have you with us.

Laura:

Wonderful to be here.

Creed:

So continuing our conversation from the last episode, one characteristic that I really wanted to touch upon because on this podcast we talked a lot about connecting, how connection is so powerful as human beings. It is so helpful in all aspects of our lives. And characteristic number five says that healthy sexuality is connection based, focused on the person, focused on connection and quote unquote good enough sex. While unhealthy sexuality is performance-based, focus on physical acts and or on outcome, climax, efficiency, performance and so on. So could you describe that one for me? I love this, this topic of connection. So how can couples connect truly in sex?

Laura:

Yeah, I mean, we really just, I mean, this kind of shortened piece of characteristic here is just, we're trying to make this something that we share and we mutually kind of connect over. Not something that like a woman, a wife does for her husband to get her off her case. You know, it's not something that we're doing that's performance. So one thing that a lot of couples run into is just, so for example, a lot of women struggle to even have an orgasm that's a little more difficult for women than it tends to be for men. And so even just sometimes being performance-based where we're so focused on, okay, did she have an orgasm? Okay. Did you know just performance issues, performance anxiety, performance focus, goal oriented sex, all of that fits into the unhealthy sex category. Whereas we're

looking for connection, something we share, you know, and even someone that's even a couple that's working on trying to figure out how to have an orgasm for her, we're focused on just connecting and the climax is an involuntary response anyway. So it's something that's going to happen from kind of a relaxed... It's a concept that also I call surrender, where you totally have faith in everything turning out exactly how you want it to, you just don't need it to, so you have total faith, total surrender. And that's kind of what that also talks about where you're letting go of the focus on a certain outcome of any kind. It can also be an issue if we're dealing with premature ejaculation or erectile dysfunction 'cause we're thinking so much about performance that we're in our heads and not just present.

Creed:

I love that because I think our bodies kind of know what to do. It knows what it likes. And if we just let go and just focus on connecting with our partner, that just sounds amazing and just everything will unravel the way... Well, as naturally as it as it should and could and you can just enjoy that aspect of it. Could you explain what it means to you when it says quote unquote good enough sex?

Laura:

Yeah. Before I go there real quick, I just have to comment on why. I chuckled with what you were saying is because I was just telling my son and his roommates, I've got a college age son, but I was saying, think about it guys. Guys are a little bit more familiar with their sexuality because they touch their sexual body parts all the time when they go to the bathroom, women don't. If we don't think about it and you know, learn about it, we don't know that much about it. And so it isn't quite as natural as we would like to think it is. If you get what I'm saying, Creed, you probably know what I mean here too. But there is a little bit of learning and there is kind of a lot of trial and error and kind of, I mean it's a little bit easier for a man to know what they're going to like and what to do because it's kind of simple. It's a little bit harder for women because, you know, because we've got this, focus where, you know, male sexuality is very penis focused whereas female sexuality is clitoral focused. And so a lot of women aren't super familiar with that and a lot of men aren't super familiar with that. And so that's why it's not quite as simple as we'd like to think it is.

Creed:

No, thank you so much for explaining that. That's why we have you, we need to know this stuff. Right. This is an education we have to get learned. The skill might be bumpy at the start, but can be still great and then it's all a process. So thank you very much for expanding on that.

Laura:

And real quick, the answer to your other question is, but enough sex is just a model that a couple of other sex therapists have created. And it's good. It, I struggled just a little with it just because I'm always trying to go for awesome. That's kinda my thing. That's another really important part of that model as well is that it's good enough. It doesn't have to be perfect every time.

Creed:

Love that. I think that definitely helps with the, with the focusing on what's most important aspect of it, which is connection. Thank you for explaining that.

Crishelle:

Yeah, that's what I love about that is it focuses it more on the connection and like the being together rather than the outcome, which is really good. And if you're competitive like me, you like to win. Totally. So coming back to another one of these, which I think you've led us right into this in such a good way, is multi-dimensional versus one dimensional, right? What does that look like?

Laura:

We're trying to not have it just be a physically based experience. This isn't just a sexual release for the husband for example. We're trying to make it multidimensional and so we're just trying to, this kind of leans toward the woman's or the woman's side. I guess it isn't necessarily, but the multidimensional nature of it. I think you guys have talked about this before as well, where we're talking about emotional intimacy. We're talking about spiritual intimacy. I'm thinking about, I've got multiple clients I can think of that they just said, Laura, I just don't think my husband understands how much our spiritual connection plays into the sexual relationship for me. And for a lot of men, that's like a foreign language we're talking

right now. And so that's kind of why I had to have this as a separate item is so that people understand that emotional, spiritual in addition to physical.

Crishelle:

That was so beautiful. As a single person, how could a person develop this?

Laura:

So this is, I mean this is really just, and that's kind of why I wrote the From Honeymoon to Happily Ever After book because I walked through all of the things that people need to be doing before marriage. I mean, we still haven't made the shift to understand that we actually can work on this and prepare for this before marriage in very healthy chaste ways. And part of it is just working on your own sense of self. Maybe because, especially as a woman, you know, if you don't have a pretty solid sense of self, it's pretty hard to get naked for your husband, FYI. You know. And so even just working on things like that, working on the comfort with sexuality, with the sexual, you know, being able to talk about sex for heaven sakes, we can't really do much with something if we can't even talk about it. And that's why I love, love, love what you guys are doing with breaking the silence because I've, you know, I've been doing this for close to 20 years now and just trying to get us to change the air about sexuality is one of the ways that I've spoken about it. So embracing and learning about sexuality, getting comfortable with the, with the content or the topic of it and getting knowledgeable about it and just working on your own differentiation is one of the words. We call it your own wholeness. I have told my kids, I mean, and anyone that ever asks, how do I find a great spouse? And I say, well, work on yourself, work on being your best self because you are then more likely to attract someone else that's being their best self. And don't just wait for marriage to work on all these things. You can do it before.

Crishelle:

I really loved that so much because that's so true. That is so, so true. I think that in our culture and I think a lot of young single adults feel this where we had such an emphasis on marriage and it is such an important part of our doctrine, of our plan, of our progression in this life that if that doesn't happen in your life, then you're not progressing. And I think that's such a harmful state of mind. And for me, when I was single, I often felt very devastated and stuck and like I couldn't move forward because all of my other friends like

were having kids and like had this relationship but that they were always building and working on. And I didn't have that for so many years and I'm so grateful that my therapist kind of slapped me in the face and he didn't actually slap me in the face because we A) met over Skype and B)...but like yeah, with the idea of no—work on yourself, like this is the perfect time to continue to invest in who you are and who you're becoming and everything that you just talked about Laura, because that is, that helped me to get to a place where I love myself enough to own who I am and to really be present in who I am. And again, I think that's a life journey, but it's not like, Oh I did it. Check mark. Like I'm good. But that's so, so true that who we are is not like ...our value isn't dependent on our relationship status or any of those kinds of things, but that we can work on all of this and develop healthy sexuality wherever we're at in whatever stage of life we're in.

Laura:

And just remember, especially for singles that are listening, 'cause you know that the more you can just work on your healthy wholeness, the better off because it changes two things. It gives you a better, healthier, more awesome life. But it also changes who you attract. So, you know, I tell my kids, I've got two that are still not married, two sons eligible bachelors, FYI, who're going to kill me again because I've said that twice. But work on being your best whole self and there's a lot of work. I mean I'm thrilled that you went to see a counselor. I think everybody can use a counselor, especially before marriage. Don't wait for marriage. Marriage, will definitely bring up stuff that you need to work on. But boy, the more you can work on stuff before marriage, the better off you are.

Creed:

Yeah, completely agree. And your book, your latest book, but all your books help with that. I really like how your latest book has before marriage, before-after marriage and after marriage sections. And it just lists so well and in such a good way just all these different aspects, like you said, I feel like will empower singles and couples to be more whole with all parts of themselves. I'm such a fan of people like you so that we can kind of change this culture to change and make sexuality something that we learn about on a regular basis because it's such an integral part of us and it just makes us more whole. If we don't focus on it then we're not whole.

Laura:

Well, and especially to take the taboo away. That's my main goal is just, you know, you guys talk about the shame and the secrecy and the fear, but I just want people to be able to talk about it and not faint and just be normal and have a conversation, you know? And that's tough to do. They've got to actually learn some things and then practice talking to people. You guys tell people, go out and tell 10 people. I say go out and talk to people, you know? And that's kind of the same thing, but you know, do a book club with your roommates and you know, bring up the conversation about something sexual, you know, there's so much to talk about that isn't inappropriate.

Crishelle:

I really love that. And that leads me into the next one I wanted to talk about, which was passion versus lust.

Laura:

Ooh, I love that one.

Crishelle:

Yeah, so tell us about it.

Laura:

Okay, so I just love that because you know, there's so much new discussion out there, especially in the social media realms about passion. If you at all try to look into the doctrine of the gospel and look into the scriptures, you can see that lust is used in a negative, unhealthy light. That all we're saying is passion is the healthy version of what people want to say lust is. Lust is just a little bit more in that objectifying, self-serving, carnal appetite for a physical experience alone. You know, there's a desensitization that comes with lust where you need more and more of it. It's just kind of never enough. Whereas passion is exactly what I'm talking about with sexual ordinary. This is not, we're not talking boring sex here. This is great fun stuff, but we're just putting it into a different tone, a different space than lust. Because passion is that definitely still energetic, ardent enthusiasm, desire, love for one's spouse sexually. So it's all of the things that you dream about or even see in unhealthy ways, but it's in God's context is what passion is.

Creed:

Yes. That's just like, gets me passionate just thinking about that and talking about it. 'Cause that's, he wants us to, well, God wants us to feel to the fullest our experiences in a good way because that's what he gives us. And as

Speaker 3:

Possible, sex is God's wedding gift to a husband and wife. You know, we forget the God is a big deal here. He created this and we just, we've kind of let Satan, and this is what you guys, your whole organization is about, but we've kind of let Satan just run rough shot over this whole topic and it really ticks me off. Actually. It makes me mad because it's just, he's found a way to take, to get really good people to stay away from this topic and just give Satan full access to it. That makes me crazy.

Crishelle:

What would it look like in your perfect world for us to be focused on the passion and to create a culture of passion?

Laura:

Mmm. I think even just the one thing of removing a lot of that taboo-ness around the topic would do a lot for it. 'Cause it's not like people are walking around being sexually passionate. It's not, that's not even what we're asking for. We're just, we're just making space for it. We're just making it an option. That passion is what we're shooting for. Passion is what this looks like instead of all the young women and some young men too, but couples coming into marriage kind of being mortified by the concept of sex and you know, having sex for the first time. It's sort of just a familiar, comfortable, sacred still topic, if that makes sense.

Crishelle:

Yeah, I really love that and I love that you included that. It's still sacred. It's still very beautiful. But it's no longer like secret or off-limits or awkward.

Laura:

Yep. That's a great word for it. Yeah, that's a good word for sex. I mean, I just want people to not have to be awkward. And that's why I'm so grateful for people like you. And I love that Brooke Walker, you know, KSL studio five, has me on all the time talking about sex because we just need enough people out there in the air putting healthy, affirming sexual air out there so that people can just, I think Rachel talked about this where she just, you know, when other people are being just normal and natural and healthy about sexuality, you kind of, everyone gets a piece of that almost.

Crishelle:

And I think it creates space for that to continue on. Whereas if we just keep silent and we fix it, hopefully in our own lives or like we have that in our own lives that we don't create that space, then it doesn't grow and Satan still wins. Jerk. So I love this and that's exactly why we created this podcast. Like coming back to that is we wanted to not only focus on how harmful and horrible pornography and unhealthy sexuality has been, but how do we then create the opposite, right? How do we shift that? And that's probably my next question for you is say you've had human experiences and you notice that you have unhealthy sexual patterns in your life of whatever type. Yeah. Pick your 17 of them. I'm just kidding. Maybe it's not 17,

Laura:

Hopefully just three

Crishelle:

Yeah, probably three. What do you do or what can you do as a single person and in a relationship, what can you do to work on that and to shift that and have you to view sexuality in more of a light, a healthy light?

Creed:

To tag on to that Crishelle. I, yeah. If you can talk a little bit about, 'cause a lot of our listeners have struggled with pornography and that has been our sexual script. That has been what was taught to us because we didn't have any other teacher at the time. What can people like that do? Like us?

Laura:

Yeah, I love it. Just comes to mind. You know, a therapist who, you know, had called me to get a bulk order of books because he was having his men's group read my book. This was my first book at the time because he just wanted them to get a feel for what healthy sexuality looks like. I mean, any of these books, you're just starting to relearn what that looks like. And so when you've been kind of pornified, which we all have been just, you know, even just in our society, even if you haven't officially, you know, seen a lot of pornography, it's kind of everywhere a little bit. And so just having a way to kind of relearn sexuality. And so that's kind of that education process. That's that learning process. Part of the reprogramming. So in my first book, *And They Were Not Ashamed*, you know, chapter two is every single scripture quote from prophets and apostles that I could find everything. I just, I basically, when I wrote that chapter, I just said, okay Heavenly Father, we don't have a lot to go on about what sex is, what healthy sexuality is. Whatever. Show me everything you can find. You can direct me to the stuff I can put in one place so the people can—I have clients where I say you just listened to chapter two of that and they were not ashamed over and over and over to program out, pull out all those mental weeds and plant in all of those flowers, mental flowers regarding sexuality. So that's one is just get that reprogramming in there. I love what Crishelle talks about too. Just you know, having a counselor that can help you with this because they can help you pull out—even a good counselor that isn't a sex therapist 'cause we're kind of hard to find, can help you undo some of these negative patterns, habits and pornography or whatever the kind of drug of choice is. Well, we all have things that are kind of a draw for us and they really are just ways that we manage stress, manage mood. So everybody needs to work on that. And sometimes we need the help of a professional who kind of knows how to do that to help you with that. So there's a couple tools right there.

Crishelle:

Really love those tools. I think that's so helpful and such a great place to start. And I also, I was just thinking as you were sharing this, just to remind, as you go through life, as you find things that you're, as you learn about yourself, as you learn about maybe new ways of doing things, please give yourself so much grace. You've been through heck and back. You've experienced life, you're living life and that's why you're feeling whatever you're feeling. And that's why I a savior came and that's why there is so much hope. You don't

have to be stuck anymore. You can shift that and change that. And I hope that that's your takeaway. As you listen to these episodes and you're like, wow, that really hit home for me. Remember that there is so much hope that whatever your experience is, you can rewrite that. Whatever the story that has played out in your life so far that can be resolved, that can be made whole again. And that's one of my favorite messages in all of your books. I've read them all now. I love them so much is that wholeness is so possible. And it's maybe not something that you feel all the time, but it is something that is available all the time.

Laura:

And Crishelle, with that too, just to a distant—put a star on that is, you know, even though maybe a lot of your listeners are struggling with a particular issue like pornography, every one of us has something that kind of has us. And I think the Lord does that on purpose so that every one of us on a day to day basis have to turn to the Lord and say, I need you. I can't do this alone. And that's exactly what you've said. And so I want to normalize whatever the particular issue is that your particular, any particular listeners having is that everybody's got something and everybody needs the savior, a partnership with the savior. So much more personally and intimately than we sometimes teach in Sunday school class. And that is how every one of us can be whole. And that's how every one of us can actually have or create a sextraordinary marriage.

Crishelle:

Love it. Hallelujah. Thank you so, so much Laura, for sharing your wisdom, for sharing your passion, for sharing all of these incredible things. And listeners, please check out her books if you don't already own them. Buy them for yourself and for everyone that you know, give them at every wedding you go to. It's the perfect wedding gift. If you're like, Oh, I don't know what to get this person. They don't need more bowls. They actually need these books.

Laura:

And before they get married, don't wait until after! We don't need any more honeymoon horror stories. Okay. And then they come see me 15 years later and it's just, we're trying to prevent all of that.

Crishelle:

So share! Share these wonderful resources with the people that you care about and love because it is so, so worth it. So worth it. So thank you. And thank you listeners.

Laura:

Love it guys.

Creed:

Thank you so much Laura. So good.

Laura:

So glad. So glad you guys do this. Seriously. It's so awesome. Thank you.

Crishelle:

So good Laura. So I just wanted to tell you this like one quick story. So I, your book has like, And They Were Not Ashamed. My mom like buys them in bulk because she loves you and because they're great and she's literally given them away since they were like made. Right? And so I've been surrounded by them forever. So of course as a curious teenager. I like read it, you know, I was like, this is a safe way and I don't have to talk to my mom, so this is great. And so I had that experience with it when I was young and then I went through hell with my family and I was like so mad and angry and my therapist assigned me to read it and I was furious. I was like, no, I already read it. Like I literally know everything and that's, and because my family like didn't abide by those principles, that's why my life is screwed up and it's just how it is. Anyway. Thankfully I humbled myself and I read it and again. You have helped me to have so much hope and it took like years and years for me to like get married and find my husband so it was not like it automatically fixed things for me. Really set a foundation and I'm just so grateful for you.

Laura:

Wow, that's wonderful. This literally to do this work is like what I feel is like walking on sacred ground all the time. That's why I love what I do. I love counseling with people and Crishelle you can see now why for most people that walk in this door, this office, they have to do, I usually send them home and say, I need you to write out minimum 50 sentences of

things that I hate. I'm frustrated about, I'm resentful about, I'm bitter about regarding sex. And you see why even for you, without that, we'd have a hard time making a lot of good progress. Everybody kind of needs a little bit of that housecleaning, you know, so, so good to share this.