



Clinical Basics of Sex and Love
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What's love got to do with it? 

Neural development
is an experience
dependent process

- Contact
- Closeness
- Communication

Love serves so many purposes...

- Socialization
- Motivation
- Makes us care
- Brings out the best in us
- Makes us seek relationship

Loneliness is lethal

- Loneliness has a greater chance of shortening your life than:
 - Being obese
 - Having high blood pressure
 - Smoking
 - Being inactive

On the contrary,

- Having close personal relationships is one of the greatest predictors of a long life
- Spending time with people we love and who love us is the single greatest predictor of happiness and contentment.

So, what is love?

- Caring
- Fondness
- Enjoyment
- Delight
- Affection
- Regard
- Attraction
- Interest
- “The wish to make someone happy.”

There are many types of love

- We can love in a myriad of ways
- Passionate/romantic love: attraction, chemistry, lust, fusion
- Platonic love: friendship, companionship, respect
- Pragmatic love: commitment, attachment, connection

One reason why love doesn't last is, it isn't meant to.

- Some types of love, that is...
- Romantic love is a stage
- It is time limited
- Designed to get you to: meet, mate, procreate
- *Wait a minute, what about gay, lesbian, bi...?*
- Chemistry is about your DNA

Stages of romantic love

- Attraction
- Post-rapture
- Discovery
- Connection



Love doesn't last because...

- We don't hang in there long enough if the relationship doesn't start off with high chemistry and romantic passion
- The stages of romantic love aren't always linear or predictable
- We confuse passion with pragmatic love (you can have chemistry with a very bad match!)
- We confuse desire with love
- We don't have the skills to move past the post-rapture stage

Love doesn't last because...

- We don't understand infatuation
- There is an arc



Love doesn't last because...

- We don't understand the power of attachment/connection



Love doesn't last because we underestimate the effect of financial stress.

- 2021 statistics
- 40% of Americans have less than \$300 in savings
- 40% of student loan borrowers aren't making payments
- Average household student loan debt is \$47,634
- Average household credit card debt is \$6,741
- Only 39% of Americans have enough cash to cover a \$1000 emergency
- 70% of Americans' retirement plan is keep working
- 21% of Americans have no retirement savings

Pew Research Center—impacts of the pandemic on personal finances

- Half the adults who lost a job due to Coronavirus are still unemployed
- 25% of adults have had trouble paying their bills
- 33% used money from savings to pay their bills
- 25% say someone in their household was laid off due to Coronavirus
- 38% of individuals live paycheck to paycheck
- 18% consistently spend more than they earn
- 1 in 4 Americans do not pay their bills on time

Americans rank personal finances and money as their #1 cause of stress

34% of Americans don't believe they'll recover from the financial setback of the pandemic

There were 34 million people below the poverty line in the U.S. in 2019

Housing, medical, food, gas, clothing, and education costs have increased dramatically in recent years and wages have not kept up.

Stress can make you feel like you are not in love anymore

- Love is a serotonin high and leaves a mental footprint.
- Stress can deplete serotonin and make you feel like you are not in love anymore.
- This is why credit score is one of the strongest predictors of contentment and longevity in relationships.

Take a deep breath...

from the US Bureau of the Census and Social Security Agency

- 38 percent of all American workers made less than \$20,000 last year.
- **51 percent of all American workers made less than \$30,000 last year.**
- 62 percent of all American workers made less than \$40,000 last year.
- 71 percent of all American workers made less than \$50,000 last year.
- The federal poverty level for a family of five is \$28,410, and yet almost 40 percent of all American workers do not even bring in \$20,000 a year.

Another deep breath...

- 25% of Americans have a negative net-worth.
- “If you’ve no debts and have \$10 in your pocket you have more wealth than 25% of Americans.”

Most people in the US

- Can't cover a \$500 crisis
 - Car breakdown
 - Trip to the hospital
 - Heater/AC replacement

Let alone

son's senior trip
braces

Sobering fact

- Nearly 25% of Americans have less than \$250 in their bank account on any given payday.
- 20% of those who earn \$200,000 a year say they save rarely or not at all and
- 25% of those of those with graduate degrees said they couldn't miss a month's salary without having to borrow money or sell assets.

But stress and financial hardship aren't the only reasons why love doesn't last.

- Love doesn't last because we cannot move beyond infatuation and the initial optimism of the relationship,
- into connection, trust, attachment

Why do we need sex?

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Mother Nature's goal:

Meet

Mate

Procreate

Raise healthy
offspring

Advantages of sex

- Comparable to vitamin D and broccoli
- Relieves stress; improves sleep
- Boosts immune system
- Increases oxytocin promoting bonding and protectiveness
- Natural pain killer
- Boosts testosterone (if frequent)
- Bottom-line: it's the glue that holds many relationships/families together.

Sex is also

- Pleasurable
- Fun
- Exciting
- Entertaining...for many

So, if sex has all these obvious advantages,
why doesn't it last?

- Sex, using the term to describe having sexual contact,
doesn't last because we lack factual information

The Stages of Romantic Love

Infatuation

Post Rapture

Discovery

Connection

The Post-Rapture Stage

Discovery Stage--good news—or bad

Connection

Requires information, skills, experience,

What information?

Relationship contract:

roles

rules

expectations

- Chemistry
- Compatibility
- Commitment

The Three C's of Relationship

Information from three studies

- MNS vs. TPJ
- Positive sentiment override
- Lack of alternative monitoring

80% divorced/separated say:

“We grew apart...”

Relationships that grow apart often lack
passion

Long-term passion comes when you are

- Naugthy
- Nice
- Novel

Now it gets tricky

- Naughty, nice and novel are open to interpretation.

At birth

You were given a sexual set point

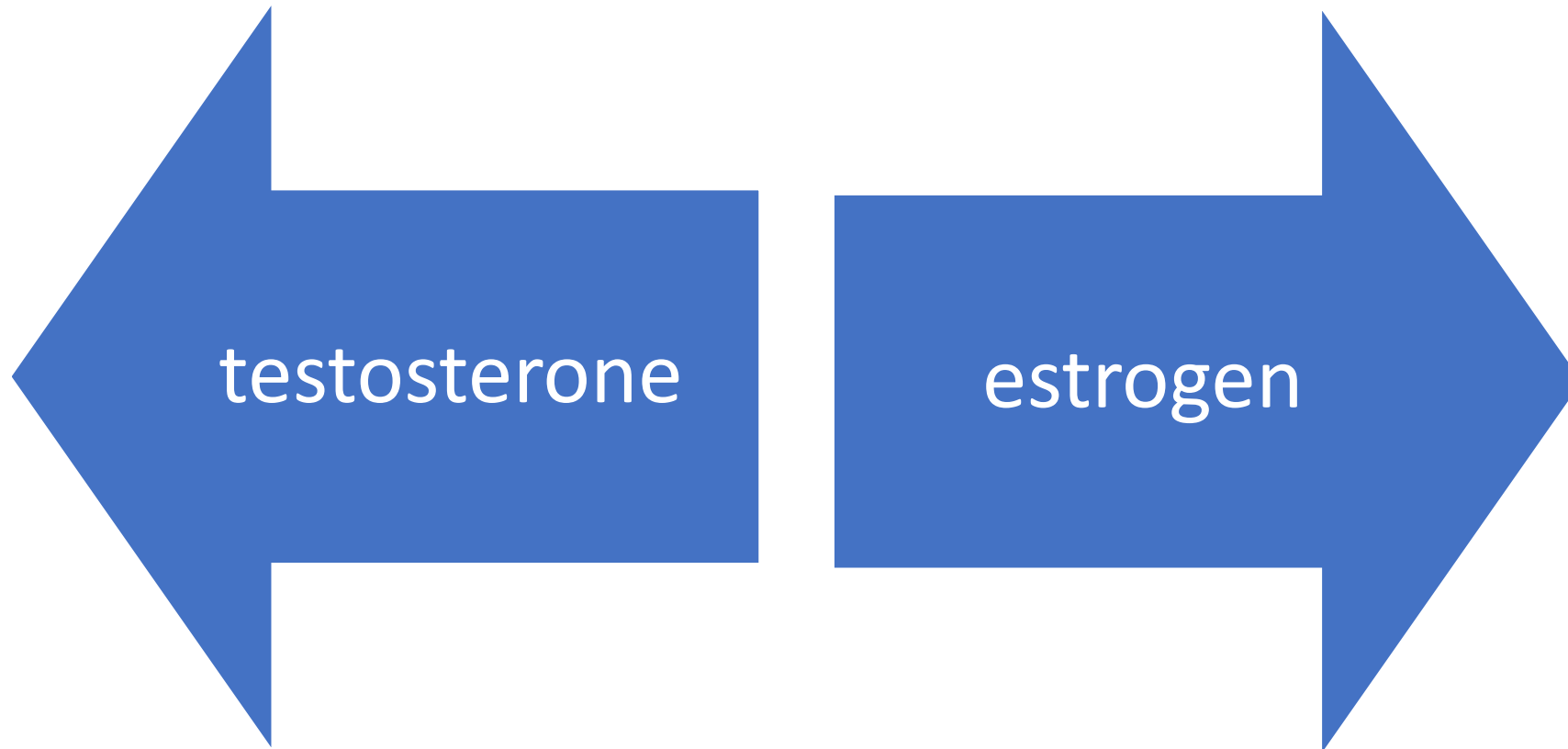


*Sexual Set point: moment at which
you desire to have sex*

Set point influenced by hormones

- Testosterone Dominance

- Estrogen Dominance



I call this continuum

- Sexy Body

- Sexy Brain



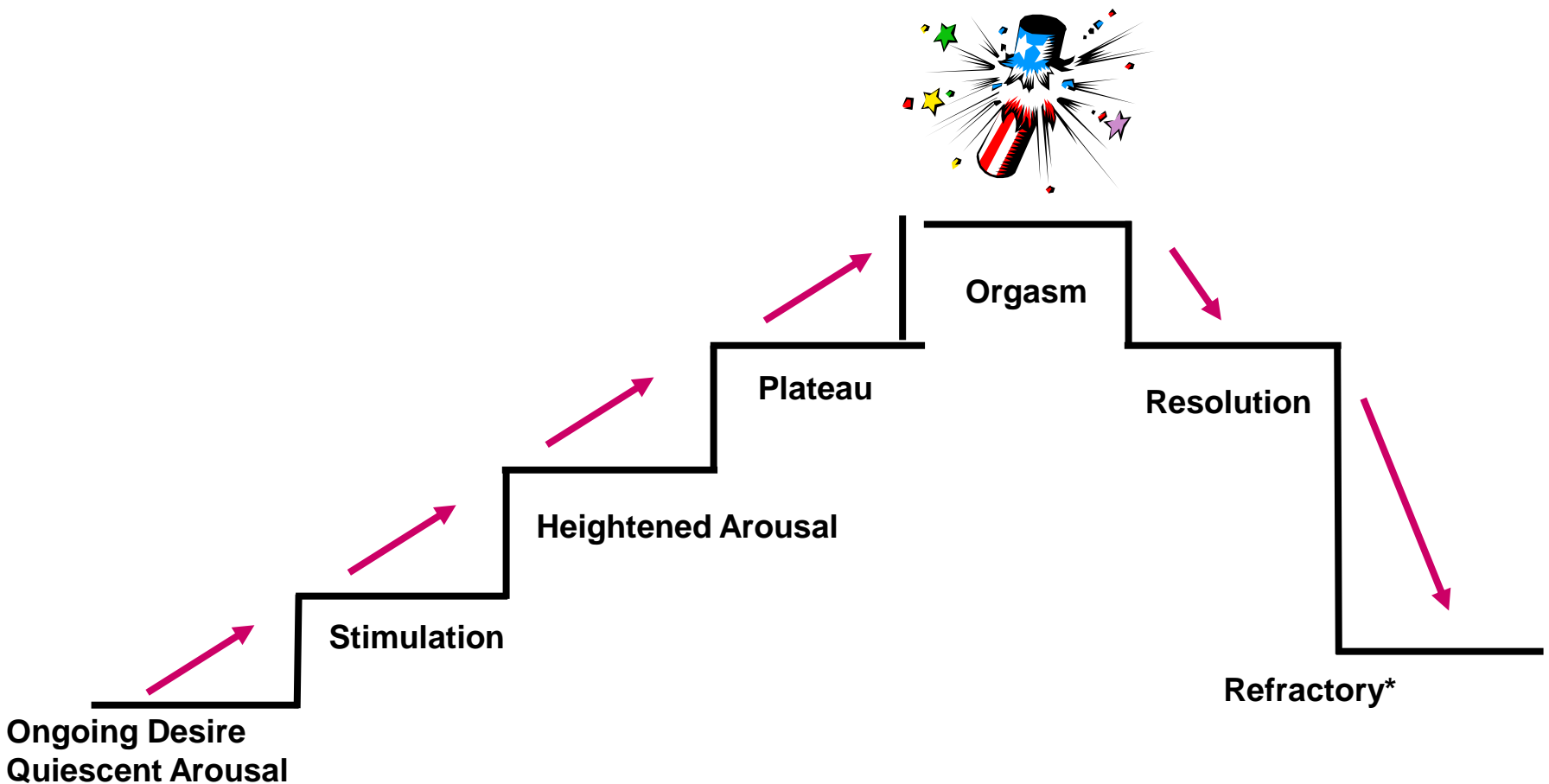
Sexy Body folks

- Have walking-around sexual energy
- On-demand sexual desire
- Sexual vigilance and awareness
- Ongoing sexual ideation
- Growing sexual tension with abstinence
- Desire positively correlated with stress
- Stress relief with sexual relief
- Distinct separation between love and desire

Sexy Brain profile

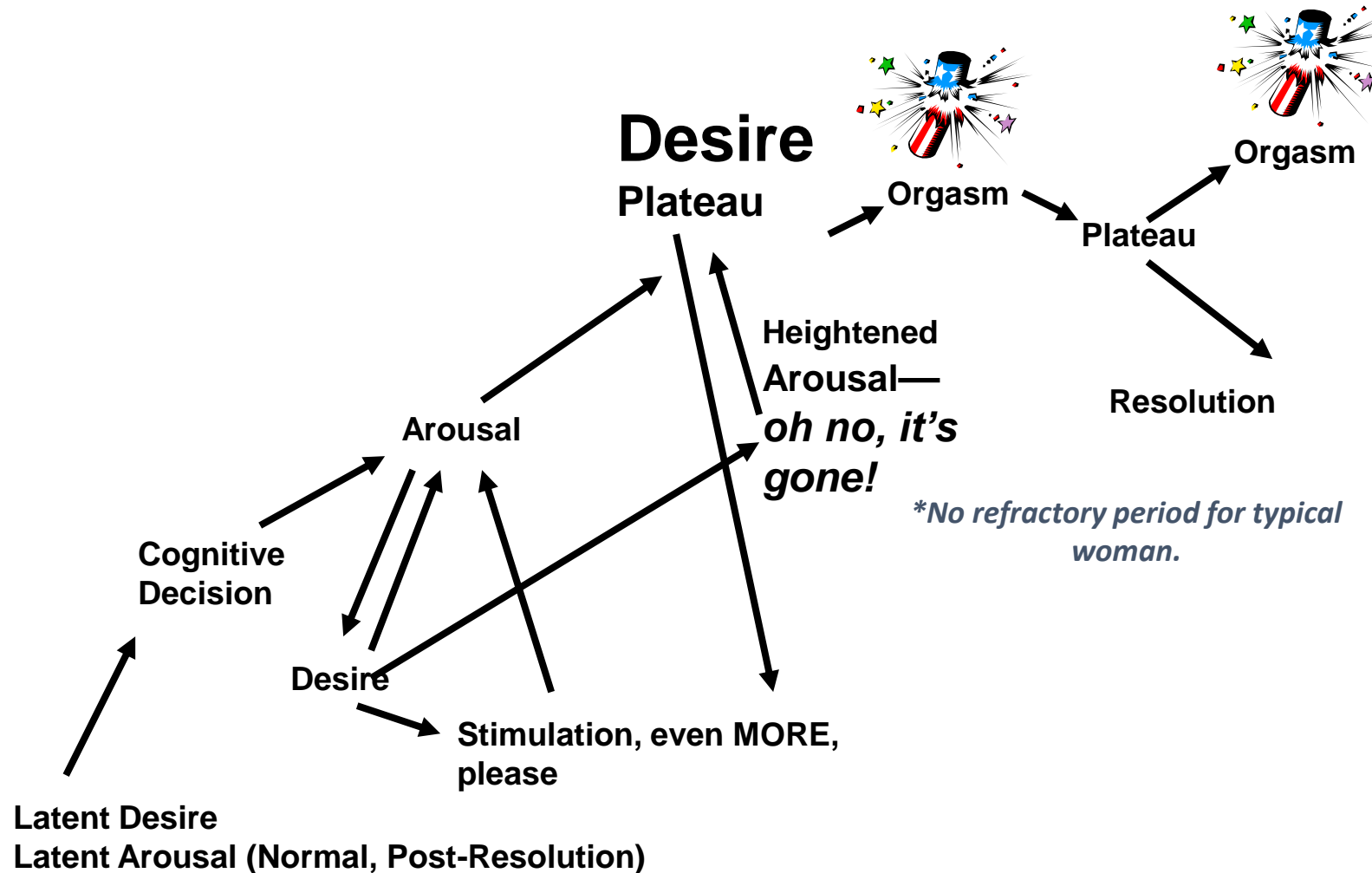
- During infatuation, looks, acts, and feels like a Sexy Brain person
- CANNOT feel desire without lowered stress
- Connection is a strong pre-requisite for desire
- Kindness and caring are a turn-on
- Most effective foreplay is support, attunement, helping, sensitivity to needs
- Most often has to consciously make time for sex
- Sex is seldom the driving force in their life
- Most often has subtle sexual desire cues

Autogenic Response Cycle



**Refractory period, a time following orgasm during which a man cannot be aroused, only applies to males.*

Psychogenic Sexual Response Cycle



Can you overdo it?

- *Depends*

Signs to look for...

- Control, compulsivity, consequences
- Obsession interfering with daily life
- Life/relationship strain
- Time loss
- Compromising values
- Inability to function normally w/o sex
- Anger/anxiety w/o sex
- Unsuccessful attempts to control sex
- Must increase behavior for effect desired
- Loss of interest in relational sex

Sex sucks and love doesn't last because hormones also effect our behaviors



Hormone-influenced behaviors can including talking patterns

- Talking about anything releases dopamine
- Dopamine is a motivational neurotransmitter
- Dopamine gives us a little hit of pleasure
- Dopamine is enhanced by estrogen
- Testosterone offsets the effects of dopamine



I could go on and on about continuums...

- Apologize with words versus apologize with deeds
- Asking for directions versus not asking for directions
- Introversions versus extroversions
- Neatniks versus relaxed organizers

Here's the confusion

Under the influence of infatuation

We all look

And we all act

Like we have a sexy body
and sexy brain

Like we are talkers

Like we are comfortable
being intimate

Like we make our partners
a priority...

In addition to information...

We also need skills

Many have lost the skill of
Sustained attention

Attachment Skills

- Show up
- Tune in
- Comprehend
- Act congruently

Love doesn't last because we are not happy

- Happiness is an inside job...