



ü how other parts of me can ultimately fill the gap. The lack of touch has been incredibly hard for me and I've had to give myself space to grieve for that loss.

I'd like to think that I'm open to being in some form of committed partnership, but since making a conscious decision back in October to take myself out of the marketplace to focus on my own healing and growth, I've been fairly content in my solonement.

J How old were you when you received sex and relationships education (if any)?  
10 or 11 (in the final year of primary school). Had already been given a *Where Do Babies Come From* book by my mum at the age of 7. I read it with interest and astonishment. And took it to school to show all my friends. From what I remember they were interested and astonished too.

J Is there anything you can remember that sparked your sexual / intimate desires?  
\*That\* Jack and Rose scene in *Titanic*.

J Roughly, at what age were you when this happened and how did it feel?  
About 9. I got a fluttery feeling in my tummy and couldn't look away, but also was confused as it seemed like in the film it was something that they weren't supposed to be doing. But they seemed to really like it, and were brought closer together by doing the things they did in the car.

J How old were you when you had sex with someone else for the first time?  
One week shy of 19.

J How many significant relationships have you been in?  
Urm...  
Romantic involvements, 2. Significant sexual arrangements, like, maybe 7, so probs 9. Fulfilling hook-ups, around 50. Dozens of encounters which were a complete waste of everyone's time too.

J Do you have guilt or shame around desire / sex / pleasure? Please explain why / why not?  
No. And as a teen I sometimes tried to initiate sexual encounters with the peers that I fancied. I was often met with fear and confusion, which then led to a bit of shame. But when I left school I found lots peeps who were interested in sharing sexual pleasure with me. The last time I felt guilt around desire / sex / pleasure was in 2007.

19. Do you enjoy sex?  
Absolutely, 100%

**20. Please can you explain your answer to the above question**

I believe that we all have an tremendous capacity for pleasure, but sadly, the weight of conservative social norms and existing sexual scripts have done a good job of preventing us from fully enjoying this innate part of ourselves. I think I'm really lucky in that I was able to shake off all that baggage at the beginning of my sexual career. I've had many truly transcendental physical experiences and hope that others have, too.

**21. If your answer to question 19. was "No", what is stopping you from enjoying sex?**

N/A

**22. How do you think your own sexuality is perceived by others (e.g. do you think people perceive you as a sexual being? Do you think people see you as someone who is / isn't very into sex?)**

Because of my work, I'm perceived as someone who's very into sex, which is true. But sometimes it can feel like there's lots of pressure to be "excellent" at sex. Sometimes I can be really turned on and attracted to someone, but the energy between us is somehow a bit off, so the physicality can feel forced rather, than natural and flowing.

**23. Have you ever taken steps to gain more of an insight into your sexuality?**

Yes. In 2019, I attended a three-hour group Tantra workshop with someone I was dating.

**24. If your answer to question 23. was "Yes" how useful was this?**

It was a wonderfully eye-opening experience and was more about intuition, intention and authentic communication, than physical intimacy.

**25. Do you have children?**

No

**26. If your answer to question 25. was "Yes", at what age did you first speak to them about sex and relationships (if at all)?**

N/A

**27. If your answer to question 25. was "No", do you think you'd like children in the future?**

Yes, but I'm not sure how it would be possible within the current confines of mono-heteronormativity.

**28. Do you support compulsory sex and relationships education? Why? / Why not? NB. The 'Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education' curriculum became compulsory for all schools in the UK from September 2020.**

Yes. However... Despite the three-year drafting process (which saw input from a public consultation where over 40,000 people contacted the Department for Education)

the new curriculum still gives undue precedence to the marriage model centred in Western Anglo-based cultures.

The catalyst for its update was a campaign run by Laura Bates (of Everyday Sexism fame), one of the most influential UK voices on sexism<sup>i</sup>. However, as always the way when it comes to British changemakers her activism has centred voices like hers: Bates is a privileged, Caucasian, University of Cambridge alumna. I can't help but imagine what the curriculum could look like if alternative sexual identities and sexual experiences weren't minoritised by the elites.

**29. Any other comments that come to mind? Do share!**

Everyone should have more solo sex! Obligatory caveat: But not so much that it becomes a problem.

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<sup>i</sup> The Everyday Sexism Project is a website founded on 16 April 2012 by Laura Bates, a British feminist writer. The aim of the site is to document examples of sexism from around the world. Entries are submitted directly to the site, or by email or tweet. <<https://everydaysexism.com/>> [accessed February 17 2021]

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