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The Sexual Sentence-Completion Questionnaire

The purpose of this exercise is to enhance your sexual self-awareness. As you do this exercise, work quickly and write down your first, most spontaneous thoughts. Try to be as relaxed and open as possible as you answer these questions. There are no right or wrong answers.

SEXUAL SENTENCE-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE

My very first memory of being a person is

I was _____ years old.

_____ was with me.

This is what happened: _____

I felt _____

My earliest memory of sex is _____

I was _____ years old. I felt _____

I think women are _____

I think men are _____

I like women who _____

I like men who _____

Darkness is _____

Shame is _____

Sex is _____

Intimacy means _____

Love means _____

Fun is _____

Pain is _____

It makes me angry when _____

I'm ashamed of _____

I feel guilty about _____

I think it is sinful to _____

Marriage is _____

Divorce is _____
My greatest problem is _____
The anus is _____
Obscenity is _____
Touch is _____
Comfort is _____
My face is _____
My body is _____
My mind is _____
I wish I could change _____
My good points are _____
My weaknesses are _____
My ideal is _____

Maybe it will help you understand this questionnaire better if I give you an example of how one of our patients filled it out. Gloria, age thirty-five, was a vice president at a large public relations agency. She had a confident and forthright personality and was known as a person who could get the job done. Her husband, Matt, age thirty-seven, was a professional photographer.

Gloria and Matt sought help because of a difficult and unsatisfying pattern of bedroom behavior. The two would fight, and then Gloria would deliberately withhold sex for a few days to get back at Matt for disagreeing with her. As time passed, Gloria began withholding sex for longer and longer periods.

Here's how Gloria answered the first few questions of the Sexual Sentence-Completion Questionnaire:

My very first memory of being a person is: It was cold outside and I was playing with a dish of water. I was three years old. My Aunt Monica was with me. This is what happened: My mother came out of the house and scolded me for playing with water when it was so cold because she said I would get sick. My Aunt Monica answered, "No, she won't." Then I repeated, "No, I won't!" I felt defiant. Mom smiled as if she thought it was cute.

My earliest memory of sex is: kissing my schoolmate, Freddie Parkerton, on the playground. He got afraid and ran away like a baby. I was eleven years old. He was twelve. I didn't care if he told the teacher or his mother. I felt defiant.

A few questions later, Gloria completed the following sentence. "It makes me angry when: people stand in my way."

As she went over her answers with her cotherapy team, Gloria saw for the first time that the feelings of defiance she had learned in her childhood were still with her as an adult. She realized that she now expressed her defiance of Matt by withholding sex from him. She wanted him to fight with her about it. She would wait for days, but he would never take the bait. That realization helped Gloria see how a pattern of defiant behavior that might have been useful in childhood now prevented her from having a satisfying relationship with the man she loved.