

Three Styles of Arousal/Eroticism

Arousal/eroticism is an integral component in the desire/pleasure/eroticism/satisfaction mantra.

There are three sexual arousal/eroticism styles (by frequency):

- (1) partner interaction arousal
- (2) self-entrancement arousal
- (3) role enactment arousal.

Partner interaction arousal is based on the principle that the major aphrodisiac is an involved, aroused partner. This type of arousal is portrayed in R-rated movies; each partner's arousal enhances the other's. Partner interaction arousal is like a sexual dance where each partner has an integral role. It is an example of the "give to get" pleasure guideline. Almost all couples utilize partner interaction arousal.

Self-entrancement arousal is the second most common arousal/eroticism pattern. It is best illustrated by the traditional sensate focus exercises. The giving partner touches for himself rather than trying to second guess the preferences of the receiving partner. The receiving partner is actively focused on her pleasure. She is active not passive, and aware of her receptivity/responsivity pattern. As couples age, they are likely to increasingly utilize self-entrancement arousal. They are open to asynchronous scenarios, realizing that not all sex needs to be mutual.

Role Enactment arousal/eroticism is the most advocated (especially on the internet and in self-help articles) and contentious style. Role enactment arousal involves external resources to heighten the erotic charge including X-rated videos, sex toys, sharing and

playing out erotic fantasies, and BDSM scenarios. Clinically, the issue is whether role enactment arousal is the right fit for that couple. It is a good fit for the Emotionally Expressive couple sexual style, and a poor fit for the Best Friend and Traditional couple sexual styles. Many couples find role enactment arousal scenarios are intimidating rather than empowering. It raises self-consciousness, and there is nothing more anti-erotic than self-consciousness.

*A majority of married men and women use erotic fantasies as a bridge to desire and to build erotic flow to orgasm. A common misunderstanding is that fantasy is an indicator of what the person really wants. In the great majority of cases, fantasy and behavior are very different domains. Commonly, acting out an erotic fantasy results in a "sexual dud", and can rob the fantasy of its erotic charge.

The key is making a wise decision of what arousal/eroticism style (s) is the best fit for you. Some couples use all three styles. Commonly, couples use partner interaction arousal and augment that with self-entrancement arousal. On occasion some couples use role enactment arousal, but many others are uncomfortable with that arousal style. Choose what enhances eroticism for you.

