



Sister Ruth is a nursing sister with over 10 years of experience working in the field of sexual health education. She teaches in schools, facilitates workshops for adults and writes about sexual health issues. Visit her website: www.sisterruth.co.za

Sr. Ruth's Wordz "Sexy" and "Sensuality"

I am fascinated at how words morph through time. Top Car presenter, Jeremy Clarkson sometimes speaks about which car is 'sexy'. Ads use the word to describe pretty much anything. I was rather disturbed to hear that Kate Moss and some of her peers refer to each other as 'rexy' – a fusion of 'anorexia' and 'sexy'. It is supposed to be a compliment! Back to 'sexy' – it's different things to different people, but generally it seems to include smooth / sleek lines, curvy / sculpted, fresh / neat, funky / 'with-it'. I guess my functional 'brick' cell phone is not sexy, but at least I can hear it and find it!

In the same way that the meaning of 'sexy' is different for each person, 'sensuality' is experienced differently by each person. *All* our life experiences are lived through our senses. We can discuss nutrition / food but it doesn't replace that experience of soft, sweet, melting chocolate in your mouth!

Senses need to be nurtured. Exercised like muscles. So often we go through life on auto-pilot, not aware of what we are feeling, thinking or doing. Getting in touch with your senses and giving them a 'sexy sensual' workout will heighten your self-knowledge and in a partnership, can facilitate healthy communication.

Sexy Sensuality Exercises

Here are some sensual games that can be played together. The goal is to really get in touch with what you feel about various sensations and communicate these to your partner. As with many things in life its *different strokes for different folks!* What is pleasurable for Percy may be disgusting for Dee! Talk about what senses are pleasurable and what is dis-pleasing. Don't take the negative responses personally!

1. **Eye Candy** – Go to an art gallery, page through some magazines or watch a DVD. What forms, colours and pictures do you find fascinating, attractive and relaxing; which ones create disturbing feelings or disgust you.
2. **Sound Bytes** – write a poem or short story that you read to each other out loud. How does it feel to read loving messages out loud? Some people find it fun or pleasurable to read a book together and discuss it. Be aware of the tone of voice and body language in daily communication. Careless words can damage a relationship.
3. **Tasty Titbits** – share a milkshake, cocktail or fruit salad. For a more sensuous experience, make them yourself from 'scratch'. Feed each other and for an extra thrill, blindfold one person so they can't see what's coming!
4. **Smell and Tell** – smell, at a subconscious level, is the sense used by the humans instinctively to attract someone who will be a strong 'genetic' match. Smell can trigger good and painful memories. Stroll through the fragrance

section in a department store and 'sniff'! If someone asks you what you are doing, tell them 'research'!

5. **Tender Touch** – Stress builds up tension in our muscles and makes it more difficult to relax and enjoy tender moments. De-stress with massage. Small hand held 'massagers' are available and good to start with. Move on and learn to give a great back massage. This area is easy to start with and usually enjoyed by most. Use aromatherapy oils for extra 'smell' sensation. This takes a little practice but can be a wonderful extension of 'touch' in relationship. For some tips visit: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Partner-Massage---How-to-Do-a-Back-Massage&id=1863138>

Dare to Share! If you try some of these exercises out, tell us of your experiences. Email Sr. Ruth at ruth.loubser@gmail.com or post your response on the website.

Q&A – “HIV testing and the law”

“Has it become the law of the state to get yourself tested for AIDS or any type of sexual disease before marriage? And is it a good idea to?”

No. The law is clear that HIV testing is voluntary. VCT is the acronym used and stands for “Voluntary Counselling and Testing”. You need to give permission for testing to be done.

Yes. It is a good idea for anyone who is going into a sexual relationship to have testing done before the relationship starts.

Cyber-clinic: “Female Condom” (V-Amour)

The Female Condom (FC) was first launched in the United States in 1993. This polyurethane 'vagina-like' sheath worked well but 'made noise' during sex and, in my opinion, quite tricky to insert correctly.

I popped into *Clicks* this morning to check out the price of FCs and was thrilled to see the V-Amour™ FC available. It is made of latex and therefore softer, quiet and stretchy. The silicone based lubricant allows easy insertion. The top is a 'sponge' that secures the condom comfortably in the vagina.

Image taken by Sr. Ruth!

Using the FC: Fold the sponge and insert it into the vagina. Use your fore and middle fingers to push the sponge deep into the vagina. The larger 'ring' remains outside and covers the vulva. Guide the penis into the vagina, using extra *water-soluble lube* if necessary. After intercourse twist the end of the condom to keep the semen inside, then remove the condom carefully. Wrap it in a tissue and throw away.



Pros: It can be used by women who cannot negotiate use of a male condom. A woman can take ownership of protection. It will stay in position and not affected by changes in erection (i.e. male condoms slip off if the erection weakens). It is 'one size fits all' and can be bought over-the-counter. Cost: R29.99 - 2 condoms in a box.

Cons: Some women are a little self-conscious about it.

How safe?: For prevention of pregnancy it carries a similar effectivity rate to the male condom. With perfect use 5% will experience pregnancy and with 'average' use, this increases to about 20% in 1 year. It is effective for prevention of many STIs, including HIV, but less effective where the organisms are on the surrounding skin, not covered by the condom e.g. Herpes, HPV (genital warts).

SPECIAL NOTE: Do not use a male condom and a female condom together. The increased friction can cause the condoms to break.

“Hot Debates” – Have your say!

TOPIC OF THE MONTH: *Sexual Violence – breaking the silence!*

I was disturbed today, when I went to a school where a number of the girls had experienced sexual abuse of various kinds. I am acutely aware that many, many women *and* men have been sexually violated in some way. Date rape and sexual harassment are reported daily. The secrecy surrounding sexual violence perpetuates the situation.

- Share your opinion or your story about sexual violence
- Why do men and boys keep *extra quiet* about sexual violence?
- What do you think causes 'date rape' to occur?
- Where and how can survivors get support within your communities?

NEXT MONTH: *Sr. Ruth Speaks Out*

Sr. Ruth shares her personal story about sexual violence and suggests resources for support.

END QUOTES:

“The truly sensuous takes time and a feeling for the deliberate, undulating rhythms of the body and of nature.” (George Leonard)

“I like nonsense – it wakes up the brain cells. Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living. It’s a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope...and that enables you to laugh at all of life’s realities.” (Dr. Seuss)

Sr. Ruth’s Website: www.sisterruth.co.za

Send ideas for upgrading Sr. Ruth’s website!

Web Resources: For ALL of those 'hard to ask' questions!

Teen Sexuality: www.sxetc.com

LGBT Support: www.out.org.za

Sexual Information & Education Council of the US: www.siecus.org

Dr. Eve: www.dreve.co.za

SA Sexual Health Association: www.sexualhealth.co.za

Sexual and Reproductive Health Services:

DISA Health Centre: 011-7871222 or visit www.safersex.co.za