

**Ep #229: Let's Talk About Sex, Baby
with Danielle Savory and Sonia Wright, MD**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

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This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, Functional Medicine expert, and life coach, Victoria Albina. I'll show you how to get unstuck, drop the anxiety, perfectionism, and codependency so you can live from your beautiful heart. Welcome, my love; let's get started.

Hello, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. We are here today to talk about sex. I'm really excited. It's a new topic we haven't covered on the show. We've talked about pleasure, we've talked about joy, and we've talked a lot about relationships.

I'm here with two amazing experts, who are going to introduce themselves in just a moment. So, we can have this really, really, really important conversation. I want to say up front, if there are folks with you who you don't want to have hear a conversation about s-e-x, this is a really good time to have them put their ear muffs on or put your headphones on. Because here we go.

Victoria Albina: All right, my love's. Hi. I'm so happy to have you both with me here talking to the *Feminist Wellness* fans. Danielle, would you like to introduce yourselves first? I went alphabetically.

Danielle: Yes, no problem. So, my name is Danielle Savory. I always like to say yes, that is my actual last name. I guess I was just meant to do this. But I live in Portland, Oregon. I've got two kiddos, a dog.

As far as it goes with sex coaching, I've been a coach for over a decade now. But specifically on sex for about eight years. My background's in neuroscience. So, I'm super brainy nerd. I love bringing in, of course, the braininess to it. Mostly just because it brings me a lot of pleasure to talk about the brain. But I also find that it's such an easy way for us to get into being more compassionate about ourselves.

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A lot of my background's in mindfulness and mind/body practices and somatics. And so, it's really helping people understand how their brain impacts their body. And, we talk about all the sexy stuff. So, that's me.

Victoria: Sonia, would you introduce yourself?

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, sure. So, I'm Dr. Sonia Wright. I'm a medical doctor. I'm a sexual counselor. I am a Master Certified Life Coach, and I'm a sex toy enthusiast. So, I kind of bring it all together. I'm *The Midlife Sex Coach for Women*. I just love to help women have the best life, inside and outside the bedroom.

Victoria: Yeah, right on. you started us off with something I think is so important. So often, when we're talking about sex, people just think about having sex, right? We all know that the way you relate to your body, the way you relate to self, and to yourself as a sexual animal, impacts every area of your life. So, I think that'd be a really interesting place for us to start.

Dr. Sonia: I think so, too, 100%. When we talk about sex, we talk about relationships. We tend to think about partners and such, right? But I think that when we're talking about sex and intimacy, it really starts with ourselves, and our relationship with ourselves.

I always think that we should be our first and best lover, always. And so, that's how we interact with our body, what we think about ourselves, how we think about ourself as a sexual being, and just how we are in relationship with ourselves. I think that that is something that is very important when we're talking about sexuality.

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Danielle: I completely agree with everything Dr. Sonia said. When we are thinking about our sexuality, it is such an integral part of us. Especially for those of us socialized as women, integrating this part of us does really have such a profound impact on all of the areas of our lives. Because it's something that we kind of push away, or we reject, or we repress, or we feel shame around.

And when we give ourselves permission to actually put this part of us, giving it a proper seat at the table, it does have a ripple effect on everything else. Because how do we expect to show up fully expressed, fully in our power, fully as these powerful women that we are, if there's an entire part of our body, and a part of who we are as human beings, that's not even talked about or not really focused on?

So, it is a huge part of our lives. It's a part of who we are. Just like Dr. Sonia said, so much of what we're starting with, with our sexuality, is that relationship with ourselves and how we are relating to this part of ourselves, specifically.

Victoria: Yeah, and sensuality being such an important part of sexuality. Right? So much of all of our work is about somatics or body-based practices, and connecting in with ourselves as sensual animals. Meaning, connected in with our senses. The brilliance, the wisdom, the knowledge, that comes from knowing what the body is saying, right?

I'm so curious how you both start off these conversations with folks who may be feeling that repression around sexuality and sensuality, maybe feeling disconnected from their bodies. My training comes through somatic experiencing. So, I know how my entrées in, I'm curious about yours.

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Danielle: Yeah. It really depends on what the person is coming to me starting with, and really, what they think the problem is. Because usually that is our entrance point, of what they're thinking the problem is. And for me, when I'm really starting this conversation, it's allowing them... it's kind of like three-prong... It's multiple place approach, right?

Because first, we're coming in like, what do you think is a problem? What do you think is standing in the way? But really, the way that I like to think about it is, yes, we're going to pay attention to all of their thoughts, all their beliefs, all of their things that they already are thinking: Obstacles. I work with a lot of mamas, so it's time, I'm exhausted, having to make dinner and then my husband might be grabbing my ass. How am I supposed to manage all of this stuff?

And so, let's really look at the circumstances here. But then also, how are we creating, what I like to call a "container for pleasure", or a place for pleasure to enter? The way that I like to think of a container is, yes, it has to do with our environment, our space, also what's going on in our mind, and what's going on in our body. For so many of us, we are living most of our time from the neck up.

So, that beginning, of creating that container, is like, what's even going on with your nervous system right now? Is that even conducive to being able to receive pleasure? Then we'll kind of come in through it that way.

Creating a receptive environment in their body, and then at the same time, touching on what's going on mentally and in their brain and what they think is the problem, and just starting to pick apart and question that. To be like, "Really? Is that really what's going on here?" Just starting to untangle it in a playful and loving and really compassionate way.

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Because for so many of us, sex... even though we're starting to talk about it more... it can create more stress, and more pressure on the nervous system that we're trying to relax. So, bringing humor and the playfulness and that love to not really go in harsh with the thinking and the beliefs. I would say, it's kind of my tactic for starting those conversations.

Victoria: I feel like no matter what ails you learning to map your nervous system is pretty much the place to start, right? If you don't know you're in sympathetic activation, if you don't know that you're in dorsal, you don't know you're in a mixed state, like functional freeze, how do you know where to start?

How to start soothing. How to start calming. How to hold space, or bring in a resource or a glimmer, so that you can come back into ventral vagal. Right? Or stay in the activated state and do some healing. Because that's wildly possible, too. I mean, what is subspace for -- if not -- for example?

Dr. Sonia: I love what Danielle was saying. Because we complement each other. We are in the same area. She focuses on women that are younger, I focus more on the midlife and a little older. So, it just flows. But you start having issues usually around the time you're having kids and things like that. Things manifest over time, and then you're dealing with it in midlife as well.

I call it "creating the zone of sexual safety," in order to make this container so the work can be done within it. Create a space where the body can calm down, where the mind can calm down. Where you can talk and process and feel the emotions. Get to a place of, what do you need in order to feel safe, in order to do this work, right? So, I love how we may have different names for it and stuff, but we're doing similar work. It's so beautiful.

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Victoria: It's super beautiful. I love what deep nerds you both are. We are big nerds over here. Such big nerds.

Danielle: If you saw, over here I have my brain things. And then, back here it's the vulva and the boobies. So, it's just all the anatomy of all the places in my office.

Victoria: The perfect balance. I love it. I love it. I love it. One of the big things I try to do here is give folks really tangible tools, actionable things they can do. So, I've taught so many ways to start to calm and ground the nervous system, and I have a feeling that you two probably have something really unique and interesting to add to the conversation.

For folks who are like, "I don't know that I can even listen to this. My nervous system is getting activated. My shoulders are collapsing. My back is rounding. I don't know what to do." What tips would you have for them?

Dr. Sonia: Well, when I work with anybody, and they might be activated and they may not be feeling in a place of safety, part of it is talking, slowing it down, working on the breathing, but also, as I said, creating that zone of sexual safety. I do bring in humor, as well.

I let them understand that nothing needs to be sorted out within one session or two sessions. We've been dealing with this for 10, 20 years, or whatever, but we think that we need to unravel and sort it out within a month or something like that. And to get people to realize that it doesn't have to be that way, and that work is being done behind the scenes. Even when we may be talking about it.

As we're talking about it, we're relaxing just a little bit more. We're able to breathe a little bit more. We're able to sense what's going on with our body.

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If we need to do some work with healing around that, we can take our time and the space to do that work. So, a lot of this is about connection. As I said before, it's about that safety.

Also, recognizing it's okay, wherever you're at, at this moment. It's okay, whatever you're feeling in your body. The important part is to establish that safety. What do you need in order to continue to do this work? And if it's not right now, for doing that work, we take breathers. We can slow this down. There's nothing that says it has to be done.

So often, women will come to me and they're like, "My partner says I'm not having enough sex. I need to..." they're focused on the number, right? And they're like, "If I could have sex three times a week, that would make my partner happy. And then, my marriage or relationship or whatever, would be better."

In that whole scenario, I'm not hearing about them, what they want, taking their heart, their soul, their body into consideration. What is that you want in this situation? Getting people to slow down and figure out that they get to be part of it... especially, women. We have a tendency to be focused on everybody else. We're not even recognizing what's happening in our mind, what's happening in our body, and that we are valuable enough to take the time to do this work for ourselves.

So, all of those things become important factors, and recognizing that nothing has to be rushed. This work can focus around you, pleasure, release, relaxation, reestablishing that relationship with your body, finding the oxytocin flow, and other things, right? It can be that type of work that we do, and it doesn't have to be in a specific way, it doesn't have to be done in a specific timeframe, and it doesn't have to be focused on somebody else's wants and needs.

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Victoria: That's all so important. My work, my focus, is on emotional outsourcing or codependent, perfectionist and people-pleasing behavior, and the mindset that belies it. And so, yeah, that's all part and parcel, right?

Thinking, "This has to be perfect. I have to do it today. I have to do it the right way. I have to people please. That is the goal of my sexuality, is to keep other people pleased." And I love that you're starting us off by saying no, it doesn't need to be about that.

Dr. Sonia: No, we're not doing that. [Crosstalk]. You can only go so far when your sexuality is focused outside of you. At some point, it has to become part of who you are. I often talk about it as having a learner's permit versus a driver's license, right?

When you're a student, there in a car with a learner's permit and somebody else has the wheel and they're doing the driving, you're not really feeling like you're in control. You're not really that interested. You don't know exactly where you're headed on the road. You're just kind of, "Oh, I'm here," and you get to your destination.

But it's a whole different thing when you're the one that's driving, you finally take control of the situation, and you take ownership of your sexuality. And then, once you take ownership, you start to really ask yourself, what do I want in this situation?

Victoria: Right. What I hear from my clients, day in and day out, and I'm sure it's the same for the two of you, is a real distance between themselves and knowing what they want, ever.

I hear this all the time, "I don't know who I am anymore. I'm 30-something, 40-something, 50-, 60-something and I don't know who I am. I've been in

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these relationships, across all areas of relating, where I've put everyone else so far ahead of me that I don't know who I am or what I want. I don't know if I want coffee in the morning, I'm just drinking it. I don't know what I want for dinner. And I certainly don't know what I want around sex.”

Danielle, I'm curious, what you would say to a client who presents and is like, “Argh, I just don't know.”

Danielle: Well, I was thinking about that first question you asked. Like, if we're feeling kind of like this... My approach I think is a little different, because everybody just goes straight to that part that's crunched like this. So, that's always where I'm first going with somebody that's like this.

For me, we work on finding a lover name towards themselves. But for me, mine's “baby girl”, because it's usually the baby girl in me that's doing that part. And really, having them sit there and hold their heart and be like, “Aw, baby girl. Of course, this feels off limits. Of course, this feels like a scary conversation. It's okay, let's just dip our toe in a little bit. We don't have to do anything. Let's just listen.

Or maybe it's the next part, you're willing, “Maybe we are willing. Can we be willing to just go over and grab their hand? Or maybe we could just start kissing a little bit?” And so, wherever they're at, just starting with, “Of course. Of course, you're feeling nervous right now. Of course, you've been feeling like all crunched up. When has it ever felt safe for you to talk about this?”

When have we ever been encouraged to sit here and explore our desires? And really, first, just acknowledge that part that's freezing up and really having that hard time, and just meeting them in their body. Usually by then,

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I'll just start to see their shoulders dropping away from their ears, and then we can open it up a little bit.

I always do a lot of shimmying with my clients. So, there's a lot of shimmying, there's a lot of shaking, there's a lot of shaking all the way down. Feel it in your vulva. Feel the energy going on. And so, when you're like, "Oh, I wonder if there's something different?" There is a lot of those type of practices, where we're going really from the heart straight to the vulva straight to the clitoris, opening up this space.

Because this is such a part of our body that we are so disconnected from. So, even when you are asking how do we know what we want, we're disconnected from our desires. But somatically speaking, we're very disconnected from this part of our body. And so, being able to start to train from the very beginning, that when we're meeting ourselves, we're meeting all parts of ourselves. How do we feel all these parts of ourselves? How do we really increase this sensitization? By paying attention to these other parts of our body.

Victoria: I love that. I love the normalizing use of, "Of course." We do that so much in my work because it's so easy to believe that we are broken, we need fixing, there's something wrong with us. And to step into that total b.s. story that I think social media, and the media writ large, really propagates of 'everyone else has this easier. This is easier for everyone else. Everyone else has a robust sex life. They're super in touch with their passion and their pleasure.' It's, often, b.s., right?

Danielle: It is. Just to say something else on that, I think this is so important. I do actually know who I learned this part from, but then extrapolated it into the sexual realm. But when I did a training years ago,

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with Kristin Neff, when it was one of the first trainings she ever did in person... She's the one that wrote the book on self-compassion.

One of her pieces in there is talking about bringing in our common humanity, or acknowledging part of the human experience. I think that's part of the reason we become so isolated, when it comes to our sexuality, is because it isn't something that is broadcast over the media or over what we're going through.

So much of suffering happens when we feel like we're in isolation, just like what you're saying. When we're feeling like we're in isolation we must be "other than". We're isolated. We're like, "This is probably fine for everyone else, but it's not fine for me."

And so, really bringing in that element "of course", when we're talking about our sex life, can be so healing. Even if you did nothing else. Because it is helping us bring us back into that experience of "I belong, and I'm not alone in this. I'm not broken in this. I am not in this isolated experience that nobody else is experiencing.'

These kinds of conversations that we are all are having, that I know Sonia is having on her podcast, there's so many other people that are bringing this light to sensuality and sexuality. I think what it's doing for so many, especially women through the world, is giving them permission. And it's giving them this tool to see themselves in the fabric of humanity, how this is playing into the human experience, and not feel so isolated in it.

Victoria: It's a beautiful point. It's really vital when we think about our liberation, and liberation writ large, right? Not just for human socialized women and AFAB animals, but for all of us. Connecting in with our senses, with our soma, with our sensuality, and our sexuality is vital. It's a vital

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portion of seeing ourselves in our fullness and our richness. Anything to add Dr. Wright?

Dr. Sonia: No, that was beautiful. I'm just enjoying the conversation. I'm like, "Yeah! Yeah!"

Victoria: Voyeurism is participation. We will mark that.

Dr. Sonia: Whoop! Whoop! I'll just continue the conversation in terms of community and the commonality. I think that's an important aspect of this. So, I love the fact that we're coming together on this podcast and talking about this. So, if people are listening, they're like, "Oh, I'm not in isolation. This is happening, and other women are experiencing this."

I think this is part of the beauty of what we do with our work with podcasts, but also with our work with individuals and with groups. Is that we can make this a common thing. This happens all the time, or quite frequently. And so, when you think that you're isolated, there's nobody else that's going through this experience, and you don't want to talk about it, you're so focused on the shame aspect of it.

When we're in shame, we just can't go forward and do something. So, when we continue to have these conversations, women recognize that this is happening to a lot of people, and this is something that we can talk about. There's so many aspects. Like, what percentage of people have that textbook type of sex?

Victoria: What even is that, though?

Sonia: Like, the male P in the V. What is this?

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Danielle: I know Dr. Sonia and I don't think of it that way. Right? But in our brains, we're like, "Oh, it's got to be this way. Everyone's orgasming at the same time." And it's this and that. We really do think it's a textbook. That is part of the reason so many people have shame around it.

Victoria: Right, which throws us into dorsal. Which makes us not want to have sex. Which makes sex not enjoyable. We're not present.

Danielle: We're not in the zone of safety.

Victoria: Right. Not even in the literal room. You're like, gone. Totally. I think the other really important thing having these conversations does, is... I call my work Buddhist light, right? It's like a spritz of Buddhism here and there; but the second arrow, right? So, the first arrow is what life throws our way. And then, the second arrow is the suffering we create about that thing, right?

Like, "I'm not having sex in my life. What's wrong with me that I'm not having sex in my life?" And then, I talk about the third arrow; and I'll do a show all about this. But it's getting mad at ourselves for getting mad at ourselves for the thing that life did, right? "God, I'm such a feminist. I shouldn't be upset because I'm not having sex. I should be wanting to have more sex, but I don't want to have more sex. But I should because I'm a good feminist. I shouldn't be embodied. I should..." And we just spin and spin and spin our little wheels, and make it worse and worse. Right?

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, we can't even untangle it, even if we want to. We're so confused that you just want to go to sleep. "My head hurts. I really am tired."

Danielle: I actually am tired, now.

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Victoria: I am too tired for sex right now. So, how do we bridge it? What do we do? Yeah, Danielle.

Danielle: Oh, I was just going to say, the arrows. I love that you brought that up because that's actually one of the core parts of my teaching. Because my background, like I said, is in Buddhist philosophy and psychology. But I explained it kind of like... That thing about when we catch it, is like, you could be all the way at arrow number 150. But if you notice 150, you don't get to 151.

And so, it's really giving them permission that sometimes we don't catch it until we're way down into like absolute anger, frustration, shutdown sexuality land. But you still notice. You still notice it then. Let's celebrate that we noticed that, because then we can still meet ourselves wherever arrow that we're really at and approach ourselves like what does my body need right now?

How can I put my hand on my heart and be like, "Of course. Of course, my brain even spun all the way off to that. I've had three cups of coffee this morning. On top of the fact that I've been socialized like this," right? And so, this really gives me permission to be like, "You are going to go real fast with this stuff."

Victoria: I recently did an episode. The topic was "I will no longer allow substances to dysregulate me." Because I realized I was having a little thimbleful, too much caffeine. And all the sudden, sympathetic activation and everything was terrible. And everything was a nightmare. And I'm the worst. I'm just not available for it anymore.

Danielle: Substances and sex, that's a big thing, too.

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Victoria: Let's get into it, then. I mean, if you want to. I am available. Let's go. What do you want to say about it?

Danielle: Let's do it. Well, I just think that it's interesting how closely associated we have alcohol with our sexuality and with our sensuality. Not that there's anything "wrong" with it. But really, for so many women, what we notice, is in order for us to kind of give ourselves permission to be that turned on woman that we want to be. To drop our inhibitions and show up how we want to in the bedroom.

So many people talk about, "I need that lubrication, that comes from that buzz of alcohol, to be able to do that. To be able to say yes. To be able to initiate. To be able to do that sexy dance I've been wanting to do for my partner forever, and I'm just too scared to do it."

The irony of that is, yeah, it can really help calm those voices down. But acknowledging, too, that we do have the power to do that with our own mind. Just seeing, "Okay, well, what am I not thinking when I've had a glass of whiskey versus what I am thinking when I haven't?"

What I was going to say, is the irony of it then, is it dulls our body, it dulls our senses. So, it might lower your inhibition to get it on, but then once you get it on, it requires so much more stuff because we just don't have access to our sensuality in that moment.

When I discovered that I was like, "Okay, I'm going to work on the brain stuff. I'm going to work on my mind stuff to get out of my own way. Because I really do want to twerk on top of him, and I also am not available to have sex with alcohol anymore. Because I want to have amazing sex. And amazing sex is available to me when I am present in my body, and alcohol doesn't allow for that."

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Victoria: Amen, followed by hallelujah. [Crosstalk]. No judgies around here.

Dr. Sonia: I love that disinhibition aspect of the substances being on board. And taking off the substances, but keeping the disinhibition. What is it that you need to do and think about? I also go to this place where substances sometimes are used when you don't actually want to do something. And that's the part that concerns me. Where there's questionable consent there, but we're focused so much on people pleasing, that we're utilizing the substances in order to do something we don't necessarily want to do.

So, on the one hand, it's important to find out why people are putting these substances on board. Some people are putting them on board so that they have that pleasure. They give themselves the permission for the pleasure, and that's great. So, then it's like, "Okay, let's shelve the substance, but keep all the rest and see how we can tap into that. What do you need to think in order to give yourself that permission? So, that you can go and have the pleasure that you want."

But when it's the other side, where it's like, "I don't really want to have sex. I don't really want to do this, but if I take the alcohol, then I'll do whatever they want. And then, I don't have to deal with the bullshit," or whatever. So, on the one hand is the substance for one area, and then there's a substance for the other.

And so, I think it's important when we're working with the women to have an idea of what exactly, and ask them to explore it. What exactly is this substance being used for?

Victoria: Yeah, I love the question: "What are you asking this substance to do for you, that you don't think you can do for yourself?" That was a kick in the teeth. I've got to tell you. Because we don't realize we're asking a

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beverage or cannabis or molly or whatever it is, to do work for us. Because we don't trust ourselves.

Danielle: Yeah, absolutely. Especially, what I noticed with a lot of my clients, is the substance isn't necessarily directly related to, "I'm using this to get into this. But at the end of the day, I'm so exhausted. I've got to make dinner, just like shut up in the house, right?" All of that. So, it's like have a glass of wine to bring it down a notch and to chill out, right?

What you're talking about with this idea of what are we really trying to cover up, that is so much of it. Because it's creating a container of pleasure, but you're using alcohol to "regulate" your nervous system. Only because maybe, it feels more regulated for those first few minutes, and then you realize later, nothing is actually getting helped.

Dr. Sonia: It's faster. It's bypassing the self-care that we need to do, instead of the sleep that we may need. And to get the things with the children or whatever. Like, "If I drink this glass of wine, it'll get me in this place faster, than actually tapping into my body and really having an idea of what's going on and what I need, in order to get me to that same place."

Victoria: Which may be true, but what's the actual result you're creating for yourself? Do you want to have unintentional sex or sensuality? Do you want to not be fully present?

Danielle: A lot of them would say yes. That's what crazy. It's not a yes, actually, from a real place of true understanding, I would say. It's just yes, because like what Dr. Sonia just said, it feels easier, right? It's easier and we don't want to rock the boat. I think so many women, they're not thinking about it like, "I'm not consenting. I don't really want this," there's a whisper of that.

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But it's almost scary to even take a look at because they're afraid if they really gave themselves permission to be, "I actually really don't want this," what that would mean, right? Talking about the arrows again. "Well, maybe it just means I'm not regulated." But our brain goes to what the media has told us.

Maybe I'm not attracted to my partner. Maybe my marriage is doomed. Maybe that's going to end with us breaking everything up. Which it could be..." We go to these very extreme worst-case scenarios. So, it is hard to even take an honest look, because we're so afraid of what we might find if we asked ourselves: Is this something I really want?

Because for so many women, right now, it's no. And it doesn't necessarily mean no, but we're asking ourselves this question from a place of usually, very extreme dysregulation that's been going on for years. I always like to remind them, the answer that you might get might be from this very stressed out, overwhelmed, burnt out place. But it doesn't mean that it's going to be the answer forever.

And to give them that safety to really take a look, but also know that this isn't a forever answer. It might be right now, because of what went on today, or what went on this last year, or the couple of years or whatever it might be.

Victoria: And change sucks, right? What's that saying? The only person who likes change is a wet baby, right?

Danielle: I've never heard that. But that's so great.

Victoria: It's so good, right? Yeah, change sucks. Doing this deep work sucks. It's terrible, right? At the end of the day, it's always better. For me, in

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my life, and what I hear from my clients, and I'm sure from yours... At the end of the day, I would so much rather wade through the muck and the pain and take a hard look at my shadow and my psyche and my relationships, and live life really intentionally.

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, I think that part of the work that we do is helping our clients to understand that emotional discomfort is not necessarily a bad thing. I mean, it might feel that way. But it's also part of the journey that you have to go through this if you want a different result. There will be this level of discomfort there. Your ability to tolerate it is what is directly proportional to getting the actual result that you would like.

Victoria: Right, and the capacity you have in your nervous system to be with change. To be with yourself and to stay with yourself. Which I think is really one of the core things we're talking about here is presence. It's going to keep coming back to Buddhism, and coming back to presence, back to present moment awareness and mindfulness. Because if you're not present in sex, are you really even having it? You know what I mean?

Danielle: Yeah, a lot of people, no. I think it's really true; there's so many people. Maybe there are moments. I think it's good for us to help them remember these moments where they were really present. Even if you have those moments, even when you have the most loving partner, even when you have a really great relationship.

When we were talking about this relationship with ourselves that we like to go to, and where a lot of a lot of shame and fear gets inserted, is thinking that there's something really wrong in this container between you and your partner. When really, it could be something completely unrelated to your sexuality or your sensuality.

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It really comes back to our nervous system and our capacity to actually receive, receive touch and be present in our body. And for most people, I would say, the sex part is way less of the weight that keeps them from this present connection, versus all the other stuff that has compounded, got shoved down, been really dispersed, and activating their nervous system for so many years.

I mean, it could be financial stuff. It could be childhood stuff. It could be like not ever getting acknowledged at work. I mean, there's so many factors that come into this. And so, when it comes to sex, it's just fascinating how we assume it's got to be a relationship thing or a sex thing or a me thing. When it really isn't, often, have to do with any of that. But it is our ability to be present. And our ability to be present does require us to take a look at these other elements.

Victoria: That's deeply holistic. I remember when I was a primary care provider, I'd get so many folks coming in, and when I was doing functional medicine, like, "I need you to run a Dutch test and test my hormones, and see what's wrong with my hormones. 'Cuz I don't want to have sex with my partner." I don't think that's usually the issue, right? It's usually way, way bigger than that. And older than that. And deeper than that.

Dr. Sonia: There's such a wish that it is the hormones, right? That there's some sort of magic pill or shot or something, and then they can go on their way without having to work on all the rest of it.

Danielle: Probably the most disappointing news that Dr. Sonia's clients hear, "This isn't a hormone thing," and inside, you're like, "What the hell? I can't just shove one of those like jelly things up my hoo-haa? I'm just beyond self." It's just like, "No, I'm sorry. We're going to have to do a little bit of getting in your body."

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Victoria: Masquerading? A little rebuilding needed there, for sure.

Danielle: "This isn't a vitamin thing? Dammit."

Victoria: "Dammit! Man!" If only. Well, my loves, I want to be respectful of your time. What else do you want to make sure that our listeners hear from you? Any messages you want them to take away that you haven't shared?

Dr. Sonia: For most of the women that I'm working with, they're in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and beyond, that it really is a holistic approach. We do have to look at what's going on with our body, as well as our mind. What aspects of safety... We kind of work it all together.

So, it's not all hormones, but that may be affected. We do have to have an understanding of perimenopause and menopause and post-menopause, and what's happening in our vulva area and things like that. So, definitely, the work that I do, I do it in conjunction with gynecologists and making sure that things are being checked out.

The same with sex, working on that aspect as well. Also recognizing that the part that's in there about the thoughts and actions and feelings and things like that. But then, we need to kind of make sure that the health is in line too. So, it's kind of like a combination.

Victoria: Yes, and. I think that's really important. Please, get your progesterone checked. Maybe get some Vagifem or those little jellies, those Beswecken cubes, intravaginally. Those are magical. Checkouts and pelvic floor PT, right? Particularly postpartum.

Dr. Sonia : Also recognize, we talk so much about the vagina, like that's the center of the world. It's not. I'm just going to put there.

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Victoria: I mean, it's pretty important, doc.

Dr. Sonia: Yeah, but there's something called the vulva, which is a whole [crosstalk] I just really need women to understand that your pleasure point at the hole is helpful.

Victoria: The hole is helpful. Can we get that on a t-shirt? "The hole is helpful." Yes, your clitoris is enormous. It is most... Yes. So much more than a hole.

Dr. Sonia: Yeah. So, when we talk about estrogen and things that we put localized within the vagina, often we forget about the conversation about the vulva. Sometimes we need some creams for the vulva, and different things that are happening there as well.

But just really to recognize there's a reason why we have been socialized to focus on the vagina. If we're talking about what's analogous to the penis, it is the clitoris. Nobody talks about the clitoris. We spend all this time talking about the vagina. I wonder why? People are not putting penises in clitoris; they're not.

So, people are putting this focus on the vagina, and the vagina is all great, but really do recognize that a lot of pleasure for women comes from the clitoris. That needs to be in the discussion, if not the center and the focus of the discussion if we're talking about our pleasure zone. Women don't know about their vulvas. I do bring that into the conversation.

Victoria: I love that. Would you say that the clitoris then, is the center of the universe?

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Dr. Sonia: The clitoris should be every woman's best friend. Let's just be clear about this.

Victoria: I love it. I have this bracelet that looks like it. Well, to some eyes, it looks... For folks listening, and not watching the video, both of our esteemed guests just held up plastic replicas of the clitoris with great fanfare. It was pretty awesome. I think we'll put that part on the ground, so folks can see that video. That's right.

I have a bracelet, I wish I was wearing it right now, that could look like a wishbone. But for folks in the know, are like, "Ah, that's a big old clitoris bracelet." It's so good. Yeah, I've worn it on many a first date, just to see who would pick up on it and be like, "Oh, curious what that is?"

Dr. Sonia: They get extra points if they know what that is.

Victoria: Oh, for sure. You're maybe going to get a second date. "I don't think that's a wishbone, is it? I don't think so. I think that something else I don't entirely."

Danielle: You know they did their research, that's a good one.

Victoria: Right. It's true. You're a keeper. Danielle, parting words of wisdom from you and your brilliance?

Danielle: Yeah. I agree, absolutely, with everything Dr. Sonia said. The other message that I would say, is that we really, as women, need to... Well, really, for all humans... is to understand the importance of pleasure. And specifically, sexual pleasure plays in our overall wellbeing and our own health. That it isn't just something that is, "Oh, I should take a look at this,"

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as if it's a problem. It doesn't have to be problematic. It doesn't have to be a sore spot. It doesn't have to be a pain spot.

But when you really learn the power and all of the elements that go into being a truly *pleasured* human being, to this optimal level of sexual pleasure, we open up so many more opportunities for our entire wellbeing, for our entire lives, and the power.

It's why I always say, "A pleased woman is an empowered woman," because it really does give us so many skill sets that you learn on your way to becoming more pleased, that serves so many areas of our lives. It really is like; I live a pleasure first life. I live a pleasure priority life. And living that way resources me in so many ways.

I think that we underestimate the potent and impactful power that pleasure holds. When you really start to dip into this, it's so much more far reaching than just, "Oh, I'm having more orgasms," which is amazing. Yes, please have all of them. And the way that it can, again, the word that I like to use from the somatic world, is being well resourced.

It really does create this wealth of resource in our brain and our bodies and our physiology and our nervous system. I like to look at this as it is the balm to our busy. It is the sparkle to our soul. It is the glitter that gives this brightness and this vibrancy to our life. And it is not something to sleep on. So, I mean, go sleep *with* it, take it to bed. But don't sleep on the power of it

Victoria: Touché. I could not agree more. Yeah. Embodiment, empowerment, agency, intentionality, right? Living interdependently means, the root of it is living in our bodies, and being interdependent with ourselves. Having that true, deep self-knowledge of what turns us on sexually, sensually, emotionally, energetically, intellectually, in all the ways.

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So, yes, thank you so much for that. You both are so magnificent and so wonderful. And I'm so glad you're here. I hope we can do this again.

Danielle: Definitely.

Dr. Sonia: That was fun.

Victoria: Oh, right on. Great. Could you tell the good people... I know everyone wants to go follow you and learn more about you, and definitely listen to your podcasts. We started with you, Danielle, last time. So, Sonia, will you tell the folks how to find you?

Dr. Sonia: I'll share the easiest way to find me is my website. SoniaWrightMD.com. You can always find me there and see all the work that I'm doing. My podcast is *The Midlife Sex Coach for Women* podcast. And then, I have a community called The Lit Clit Club, so that we can talk more about sex.

Victoria: I love it. I love it. Danielle.

Danielle: Yes. So, on Instagram, I'm @thepracticeofpleasure. I am currently on there, sometimes I get banned. I will come back if I get banned, but it hasn't happened in a long time. So, fingers crossed. And then, my podcast is called *It's My Pleasure*. Which is always about how we can incorporate more pleasure into our lives and really take it for ourselves and our own ownership. And then my website, DanielleSavory.com. You can find all of the courses from Giving Dreamy Blow-jobs to opening up to being able to receive more.

Victoria: Magnificent. Ah, how wonderful. Thank you both so much. I'm so grateful.

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Danielle: Thank you.

If you've been enjoying the show and learning a ton, it's time to apply it with my expert guidance, so you can live life with intention. Without the anxiety, overwhelm, and resentment, so you can get unstuck. You're not going to want to miss the opportunity to join my exclusive, intimate, group-coaching program. So, head on over to VictoriaAlbina.com/masterclass to grab your seat now. See you there; it's going to be a good one!