

The Relationship Center of Colorado

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Having “The Talk”

by Pam Babbitt, S.I.

Whether you are 20 or 60, when things are heating up sexually in your new relationship, it is time to have **The Talk**. The talk that I propose has two components, and both are essential for a healthy relationship.

Are you feeling anxiety or embarrassment? That’s normal; just breathe deep for a few minutes and contemplate your options. If you choose not to have The Talk, you are sabotaging the intimacy potential in your relationship. You may also be putting yourself and your partner at risk physically and emotionally. In initiating The Talk you are showing courage, honor and respect. And lastly, I believe that the Universe brings us similar circumstances to experience until we gain the lesson. Getting the lesson now would be my choice.

The Talk ~ Part One ~ Safer Sex

Start by reading some current safer sex information and suggested precautions. Then decide on your own comfortable and safe boundaries and safer sex intentions. Create a safer sex plan that will meet your level of safety, regardless of what your partner shares regarding their health status or sexual history, unless you both agree to STD and HIV testing. Do not yield to persuasion, compromise or negotiation. If you value your sexual health, don’t make any assumptions, be clear with your boundaries, and walk your talk.

Setting boundaries actually promotes freedom and playfulness. It defines the options giving you full permission to enjoy, be creative, savor, delight and tease. Mentally there is no guilt to dampen your experience, and your mind is more likely to be focused on the present rather than on the possibilities – an essential for fully enjoying any sexual experience.

The Talk ~ Part Two ~ What Does This Mean?

The second component of The Talk is equally important and often overlooked. Making assumptions here may trigger pain, feelings of betrayal and lack of trust, along with putting your sexual health at risk. You may be expecting a monogamous relationship with your partner, now that you are engaging sexually. Your partner may have other ideas, or may not have contemplated the form of your relationship at all. Any relationship path may entail loyalties, responsibilities, obligations, expectations and guidelines. You and your partner may see your path quite differently. In today’s culture, there are many relationship styles, including traditional monogamy and polyamory (ethical non-monogamy). Avoid those painful misunderstandings by asking “what does this mean to our relationship, now that we are being sexual?”

Suggestions for Having The Talk

Be conscious of your timing. Having The Talk is best done when you are totally sober, not angry or tired, and definitely not in the heat of passion. Choose a time when you will have total privacy and no time restrictions. Do not allow interruptions from the phone, pets, etc.

To start, sit facing your partner and make eye contact. Take your partner's hands in yours to engage their full attention. Silently create an intention for honesty and understanding. Stay present and fully hear your partner. Consider employing the mirroring communication technique (repeating back what you've just heard).

You may choose to start with some thing like:

I am a little nervous talking about this, but it is important for us and I don't want to avoid it.

I am really looking forward to being sexual with you, and think it would be good to talk about some things first.

Be conscious of your feelings after the talk. Are you feeling respected and cared for? Are you feeling more unclear than you did before The Talk? Are there hurt feelings? Is there a lack of trust? Was your partner fully absorbed in the conversation, and did they share their thoughts comfortably? Are you feeling more intimacy, safety and comfort, and eager anticipation? Notice any red flags that may be waving at you – avoidance, control tactics or conflicting statements.

This is a significant turning point in your relationship and you may feel confident that you want to move forward or you may have reservations. Check in with your body and see if there is anxiety or muscle tightness. Are you holding your breath? Bodies have wisdom that we don't always recognize. Take the time to honor your body's message, and proceed accordingly.