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JUNE 2009



*Plus* Triplets Face a Tragic Past

# “THE SEX SECRET I’VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE”

*Those out-there thoughts you have when you’re in bed with your guy? The racy fantasies that float through your head at the gym? Find out what’s normal, what’s not and what’s worth sharing with him. BY SERENA KIM*

**A**LMOST EVERY WOMAN ALIVE has been to group sex therapy. It’s called cocktails with friends, and it involves dissecting everything from bedroom dry spells to Mr. Took Two Minutes. But be honest—aren’t there some things you just won’t say, even after the second martini? “Generally, women share stuff that they feel is pretty normal, to get reassurances that friends have had similar experiences,” says Ian Kerner, Ph.D., a sex and relationship counselor in New York City. “But anything that’s morally or culturally taboo they’re not going to discuss, because there’s seemingly no benefit, only the risk of embarrassment.” Thing is, it’s good—and helpful—to get perspective on risqué sex thoughts and cravings, too. So we asked readers to open up about theirs, and then we got top experts to make sense of them all. Is *your* secret in here? *Continued on next page* ➔

CHRIS GRAYMER: STYLIST; MARISA CRAWFORD: HAIR; THOMAS MCKIVER FOR BOND ACADEMY: MAKEUP; MATTHEW SKY FOR SARAH LAIRD INC.: MANICURE; SANDRA HOPP ON HER: ELLE MACPHERSON LINGERIE; ADRIENNE LANDAU BOA

**“All right, this is embarrassing, but you know those *Gossip Girl* episodes where Chuck and Blair get close to having sex but never actually do it? Well, I’d love it if a guy wanted to role-play those ‘everything but’ scenes with me sometime.” —Jessica, 24**

**WHAT’S UP WITH THAT:** Plenty of women fantasize about foreplay. “The hyperlusty buildup creates a sense that a guy doesn’t want just the sex; he wants you,” says Katharine O’Connell, M.D., an ob-gyn in New York City. If you’re daydreaming about the foreplay and only the foreplay, though, perhaps you’re not getting enough of it in real life. So don’t hesitate to ask for what you want. “Most guys are happy to do *anything* to make you more aroused,” says Dr. O’Connell. “If he’s not willing to take his time, then he’s selfish and you shouldn’t be in bed with him anyway!”

**“When I read about exotic sex positions, I think, Oh, please. I just want him on top of me!” —Hansoul, 24**

**WHAT’S UP WITH THAT:** There’s nothing shameful about letting a guy take the lead in bed. Some women like being dominated since they assume so much responsibility at work or in other parts of a relationship, says sex therapist Tammy Nelson, author of *Getting the Sex You Want*: “Letting go can be just as empowering as taking charge.” For a lot of women, missionary is the most pleasurable position. “Many female clients say they love the skin-on-skin, chest-to-chest, heartbeat-to-heartbeat feeling,” notes Gale Holtz Golden, a sex therapist in Burlington, Vermont. Men do too—it’s just that some feel pressured to reenact the wild positions they’ve seen in porn. “It’s what they think *women* want,” explains Dr. O’Connell. Bottom line: Great sex is about connecting with your partner, not how many Cirque du Soleil positions you can pull off. If missionary does it for you, enjoy!

**“I can’t be the only one who counts to 100 over and over to get through a blow job.” —Ann, 29**

**WHAT’S UP WITH THAT:** “She is *not* the only one,” says psychologist Michelle R. Callahan, Ph.D., author of *Ms. Typed*, a new book about finding love. “Some women don’t find giving oral sex that interesting.” Especially, say experts, if a woman’s relying solely on her mouth, which can make the act feel painful and prolonged. “There’s less jaw pressure when the man is in a chair and his



## Why It’s Good to Share Your Fantasies

Ultimately, whatever your sex secret, talking to your partner about it is probably good for your love life. “Airing your desires creates intimacy, which can heat up sex,” explains Ian Kerner, Ph.D., author of *She Comes First*. Just don’t get freaked out by his fantasies. “Women often obsess over why a guy’s thinking what he is,” says Kerner. Odds are, he’s not expecting you to act out every last detail, points out NYC sex therapist Joy Davidson, Ph.D. She recalls a woman whose partner told her he fantasized about her dressing sexier at home: “She thought, Oh, he wants me to be his little blow-up doll—I can’t even relax after work. But he just loved seeing her body, and she realized that could mean wearing a tank and shorts—not loading the dishwasher in lace panties and heels!” —Penny Wrenn

partner is kneeling,” says Nelson. It’s good to mix the motion up, she adds: “You don’t have to have the skills of a porn star—but vary things, get your hands involved. Men find that just as enjoyable, if not more.” Also helpful: Start thinking about *your* turn.

**“I have this fantasy where I’m with Barack Obama at my parents’ house. We’re both naked, and he’s giving me a full-body massage. Suddenly my father appears and says, ‘How could you do that?’ And no kidding: In my**

**dream, Obama replies, ‘I’m serving my constituents.’” —Nicki, 34**

**WHAT’S UP WITH THAT:** “A lot of women have told me they dream about our President,” says Callahan. “He’s a star, and people fantasize about celebs whether they’re married or not.” The President’s relationship may even make him *more* desirable. “We have this image of a man with strength, virility and sensitivity,” says Marta Meana, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, “but he also seems happy with his wife—and commitment *is* sexy.” Of course, plenty of women adore the First Lady, too, which is probably why your subconscious sent your dad in there to stop the action.

**“Work has been stressful lately, and sometimes I secretly hope my boyfriend doesn’t want to have sex. Masturbating seems easier.” —Macala, 29**

**WHAT’S UP WITH THAT:** As Woody Allen says in *Annie Hall*, “Hey, don’t knock masturbation. It’s sex with someone I love.” Even in the best of relationships, says Holtz Golden, “there are times when people just want to pleasure themselves.” Job stress is a common sex deterrent these days; in a recent *Consumer Reports Health* poll of 1,000 adults, 29 percent of respondents said they’d avoided having sex because of work-related issues. That’s ironic, because sex actually *relieves* stress, says Callahan: “Compared with masturbating, sex is a more active, physical experience—so it’s a better stress reliever. It’s the difference between a walk and a run.”

**“I don’t see anything wrong with being friends with benefits. But the guy I’m seeing wants more. I just want the sex. Is that so bad?” —Amber, 26**

**WHAT’S UP WITH THAT:** Not bad at all, says Tim Levine, Ph.D., a professor of communication at Michigan State University in East Lansing, who queried 125 undergrads on the topic in the name of science—and found the women had no-strings sex as often as the men did. It’s understandable, though, if you feel like the only girl in the world who isn’t looking for commitment. “In all those romantic comedies, the guy just wants sex, and the woman’s craving love—but Hollywood isn’t reality,” says Levine. Your bed buddy deserves to know your intentions. “If you don’t tell him,” says Meana, “he’ll be thinking things are headed somewhere.” And if he decides to stay even after you’ve told him the truth, that’s *his* decision. ■