

## **Sex- its fall, its rise, or its unprecedented trajectory?**

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The frequency in which one has sex is different for each person. Some of the factors that play into individual sexual frequency are religious beliefs, cultural constructs, the dynamic of a relationship, difficulty finding a partner, finding a partner only to realize you're not sexually compatible but the companionship feels safe, or perhaps you still live at your parents and it's killing your mojo. Either way, why some are and others are not having sex with healthy frequency is unique with each individual and can not be diluted by broad-stroke blanket statements.

One might believe with all the online dating apps out there (tinder and okcupid no longer the sole competitors) that there must be an endless supply of attainable sex. Attainable, available, copious amounts of sexual partners that everyone is engaging with except for...you? Purportedly recent evidence has demonstrated that you may not be alone. The current generation of young adults may live in an era that simulates an allure of limitless options, but in truth has created more of a spectator sport out of dating than one of participation, as is represented in the Atlantic's "[Sexual Recession](#)" piece.

Sex, in addition to marriage and religion, are all inextricably linked to one's overall happiness, reports Wilcox and Stone in their article "[The Happiness Decline](#)". Wilcox and Stone correlate the decline of these three variables in recent years to the decrease in our overall happiness. This begs the question of whether such factors of marriage and religion, as well as sex in the conventional definition, should continue to be used to measure happiness or not, especially in younger generations. If such factors are no longer reasonable gauges for measuring the sexual frequency of current generations the question remains whether our sex lives have truly been on the decline or if our measurements used in the past are unable to gauge the more recent trend of the atypical dynamics of romantic partnerships. If this is the case, perhaps it is rather our sex lives no longer fall into conventional frameworks.

With the advent of gadgets, technology, robots, and other options for forming intimate relationships over the past two decades, we as a species have begun to chart unpredictable territory in terms of pairing up. As the mechanisms for forming interpersonal connections are changing, as are the relationship themselves. In these unconventional times of bonding there becomes a need to re-examine how both the current and future generations will define partnership. Treading the water of binaries is a danger zone, however, with a current dialogue claiming a sexual recession in recent generations, it becomes hard not to sway attention to the simultaneous existence of another sexual trajectory hatching, contrasting the storyline of a culture in sexual decline.

## Sex parties

Community organized sex parties are not entirely new and in fact have provided hedonistic outlets for pleasure seeking adults for much of the developing world. However the ubiquity and their more mainstream accessibility among certain demographics have begun to make what was once taboo increasingly more acceptable. More often than not these are parties that do not discriminate against sexual orientation and invite authentic connection for encouraging safe spaces to explore unconventional ways to fulfill the very human need for touch and intimacy. These generally safe spaces foster conversation of consent, vulnerability, and of course the use of protection if one chooses to move in such a direction although it is by no means necessary.

What was once something taboo, whispered about, or perhaps solely a San Francisco past-time either as an artifact of the 60s or reserved for the filthy rich of the Silicon Valley's [Brotopia](#), has become a global multigenerational movement. The rise in safe and increasingly sober spaces for non-judgemental sexual intimacy among mature adults is perhaps filling some of the void that researchers have alluded to when linking the decrease of marriage and sex to happiness decline. As more people are marrying later in life or choosing different versions of relationship outside of monogamy, it would be easy to equate the evident decline of marriage and sexual frequency that to a decrease in happiness. However, perhaps this might be a bit premature.

Community sex parties are not only a solution for the interpersonal deficit that has been felt with the advent of technology, but it also presents an option for those who are of a generation that appreciate their independence, are happy with their personal work-life balance involving friends, hobbies, and travel, and are therefore seeking different options apart from the commonly trekked trajectory of monogamy and marriage. In fact such events can be seen as an innovative solution for encouraging the next generation to be more authentic about their sexual desires both within and apart from partnership. What in the past has been coined "Monogamish" or polyamorous is perhaps demanding an entirely new and reformed definition.

While some might call this community of hedonists "non-committal", this perspective must be challenged by one of an alternative viewpoint. It is easy to stigmatize that which is unfamiliar, as humans have been notorious of such derisive behavior for centuries. Instead embracing a generation adapting to a new model of companionship could be a healthy solution that contrasts from the baby boomer's often choices of marriage or divorce. What is being asked now more than ever is what lies within the gray area between the two historically diametrically opposed options?

New models such as sex parties challenge what has generally been the status quo. However, like any innovative growing trend, with time and increasing acceptance, such alternative options for engaging in new forms of intimate adult encounters could likely fade from the labeling of "alternative culture" to that of being normalized, as is already becoming the case within small pockets of adults in the US.

As a culture, and a species, we are in a deep need of one another, specifically in the form of physical touch, more than ever before as technology continues to create simulated- two dimensional versions of connections via facebook, video chat, remote office meetings, or google hangouts. Although it's fantastic to be able drop in with friend or a lover halfway around the world at the drop of a hat through a gadget that can fit in the size of our palm, none of these are viable options for substituting for the real thing- human touch. Therefore you might be surprised with the increasingly casual demeanor it could become to receive an invitation to a sex or cuddle party- where you can bring a partner or have no shame joining alone.

### **OMing:**

Apart from the explicit sex parties, another phenomenon has grown dramatically in the more recent generations, known as "[Orgasmic Meditation](#)", or "Oming" for short. This is a nationally recognized mediation group that provides, specifically female, sexual pleasure in the form of clitoris stimulation. Like the sex parties you can opt to go either with a significant other or find a (hopefully dexterous) stranger at the event itself to partake in the activity. Single or in partnership this national trend has become a safe space to explore intimacy and deepen connection.

Oming is not necessarily a place to find a relationship or a romantic partner, although I personally have heard of such things happening, but rather it is a safe space to connect intimately with another person by enjoying the giving or receiving of pleasure without being goal oriented. Orgasmic Meditation does not place priority on climax, as it's not about "getting or going anywhere". More so it's about connecting to one's body and oneself while being witnessed and held in a supportive container to do so.

One of my favorite poets- John O'Donohue has mentioned that "Nothing in creation is ever totally at home in itself". In being witnessed by another in one's pleasure without the need to sexually reciprocate or perform, the being seen by another at moments of esatic pleasure can aid in this sense of wholeness alluded to in O'Donoghues writings.

Pleasure is just as essential as food, shelter, and water. Yet, even in contemporary culture sex and pleasure can feel taboo and obligatory, as though there is some holy scripture saying one has obligation to sexually satisfy thy partner. Often times this false sense of responsibility held in sexual dynamics remove us from our own bodies and pleasure centers, making what is meant be erotic more like an arduous task. Oming is a movement that eliminates the need to "do anything" and allows for one to simply feel the experience. The Orgasmic Meditation movement has carved out a place for fine-tuning the art of receivership in a goal-oriented world cultivated around the constancy of optimization and doing.

## **Tantra:**

The Tantra movement, which in recent years has been given the epithet of Neotantra, has had a revitalization. Tantra, with its origins in the the word tanoti meaning “to expand or to liberate” offers philosophies and methods for connecting to oneself more deeply and allowing that personal connection to the self to be a place from which connection in then made with others. As modern Tantra programs, coaches, and mystery schools continue to arise and disseminate their interpretations of traditional Eastern texts, the core of what is being focused on in such derivatives of the teachings are different forms of authentically relating as adults. While Tantra is often considered a practice of sacred sexuality, the sexuality that is explained in the practice is not entirely oriented in the physical act of sex. In fact, the mechanism of sex itself could be considered more of a happy byproduct than the purpose of the practice. The current tantra schools and coaches host workshops to provide tools for adults in cultivating more fulfilling sexual and loving relationships with self and others.

What the philosophies of (neo)tantra is offering in an era of supposed sexual paucity is a practice and school of thought where both women and men can communicate fears and desires around sex in an open non-judgemental forum. The encouragement of such open conversations potentially can deconstruct deeply ingrained acculturated beliefs and habits around sex that have historically subjugated both men and women. The most predominant voice on the scene right now in the creation of sex educators is ISTA- the International School of Temple Arts. ISTA is a non-profit educational organization that focuses on cultivating fearless and shameless relationships with self and others through sexuality.

## **Sex doll Robots:**

A far newer trend that has arose more recently and appears to be growing, as demonstrated by researcher Kate Declon in her new book [“Turned On: Science, Sex, and Robots”](#) are Artificial Intelligence sex dolls. This has probably been, and will continue to be, the most taboo of all the current sex trends in response to technology and the changes it’s had on human companionship. Kate says that while there are many critics in response to the growing market, she cautions those who are not within the community to hold off from jumping to conclusions and stereotypes. Herself having received access not only to Abyss Creations in California, which is where the company’s warehouse that make the dolls is located, but she was able to meet some of the purchasers of the product and found they are probably opposite from what may be assumed. Rather than being socially isolated, a hallmark characteristic that generally makes it hard for someone to form companionship, she instead found they were a very social, close knit community and often engaged with one another in supportive ways.

It is easy to pigeonhole technology being the culprit for eccentric desires such like this, yet ancient Mythology that Kate shares throughout her book, demonstrates that the ideolozation

and desirous behavior for effigies or inanimate object is far from a recent behavior. Even apart from mythology she provides an example from the 1700s where sailors were given bundles of clothing made to appear like a women for them to have sex with while out to sea for long periods at end. Long story short, it's not a new trend.

Those that buy the dolls are also not always doing so for sex. Many purchase the artificial lovers for the companionship. In this sense, what is so different from one's choice the companions of a cat versus a companionship of an AI dolls? It might just be a matter of preference. Due to it's unfamiliar terrain it's easy to criticize such behavior, however Kate believes the fear around this "soon to be growing market" is a result of that which is unfamiliar. The unfamiliar, as she mentions, is very uncomfortable and there has yet to be a collective construct around how to respond to such a product for people to take any comfort in.

The AI sex doll is our generation's response to meet a human desire that far predates dating apps. It is meeting the desire for the deep-seated need for longing and human companionship, in the new era of convenience meets romance.

### **Sexual Recession or renaissance?**

Our culture's relationship to sex, marriage and the role in which each play in our lives are showing evidence of declining perhaps due more to the dynamics for exploring intimacy changing in recent years, with a few detours from how previous generations approached romantic encounters. As new trends for adult connection become increasingly traversed-through apps, workshops, private and public sex parties, erotic mediation groups, tantric trainings, and human sized robots- the way in which conversation will be held around topics of sex and happiness will need to become much more nuanced than the conventional understanding of the classic dyad of the traditional coupling. In a world that has been built in the direction of convenience, our definition of what it means to be supported by a romantic partner has broadened to an uncharted domain.

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