Dear Alice,

My boyfriend and I have been dating off and on for two years. We have been having sex for about a year now. The problem is I want to spice up our sex life, but I don't have any imagination. He says he's willing to try anything but he won't give ideas. We've done it in different positions, used sex toys but I can't think of anything fun to try. Please help, give me some suggestions.

Signed,
Unimaginative

Answer

Dear Unimaginative,

No need to fret! It's common for couples to go through phases where their sex life doesn't seem as exciting as it was when they first started being intimate. Having the confidence to express yourselves freely and experiment with your sexuality without feeling embarrassed is critical before you invest in more toys or costumes. You may find it useful to start off by asking yourself questions about why you want to spice up your sex life. You may also want to talk to your boyfriend about exploring each other's fantasies. If your imagination needs a creativity kick, read on for more on how to start the conversation with your boyfriend and resources you can use to really make your sex life sizzle!

When you're looking to add more spark to your sex life, sometimes starting off by figuring out your personal preferences is the best bet. To explore this more, you can try asking yourself a few questions. Do you feel satisfied with the amount of sex you and your partner are having? Are you able to focus on your partner during sex? Do you have certain expectations of what sex is supposed to look or feel like? Do you feel shy talking about what you want with your partner? These questions and your answers may lead you to consider exploring your own sexual needs, preferences, and desires which may help move along your conversation with your partner.

Once you've thought about what you're interested in and what you want out of your shared sex life, it may be time to bring your boyfriend into the conversation. You might start the discussion in a number of ways. One method could be discussing your comfort levels with partaking in a
variety of activities. Although this isn't an exhaustive list, it may help you get started:

- Masturbating in front of or with a partner
- Manual sex (hands or fingers)
- Ejaculating (cumming) on or in a partner's body
- Using sex toys (such as vibrators, dildos or masturbation sleeves) with a partner
- Oral sex (to vulva, penis, testes, or anus), vaginal sex, or anal sex
- Using food items as a part of sex
- Cross-dressing during sex
- Biting or scratching
- Wearing something that covers the eyes
- Having movement restricted
- Being slapped or spanked by a partner in the context of sexual pleasure
- Pinching or having any kind of clamp used on your body or your partner's body during sex

List adapted from the Scarleteen Sexual Inventory Checklist [2].

You could also pick out and watch some adult sexuality education videos together or view some erotic movies if that's more your preference. You could talk about what you see in the movies, and how you both feel. What turns each of you on and off? What's appealing to you in fantasy, but might be unappealing to you in real life? If film isn't helping you feel friskier, how about some books to spur your imagination? There are a plethora of how-to books and erotic literature available that offer ideas for re-sparking the flame in your sex life. Maybe you could read them together and see what’s inspiring, appealing, or arousing to each of you.

Another avenue to explore is your (day or night) dreams. Have you had sex dreams about your partner? About others? About specific acts? The point isn’t to necessarily act on every dream or desire you've ever felt, but to start sharing your fantasies with your partner so that you might build intimacy and excitement into your sex life. Who knows, maybe the intimate nature of this conversation will be a new turn-on for both of you!

Want even more ideas to help conjure up some sexual creativity? You can take a look at the related Q&As. Once you're able to identify your own preferences, desires, fantasies, and talk about them with your partner, your sex life could reach new climactic heights. Enjoy getting there!

Alice!

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