Hey Alice!

My old boyfriend and I used to have sex in three or four different positions, including sitting, me on top, doggie style, etc. My new boyfriend and I are a lot closer, and I have much better feelings for him than my old guy. Yet for some reason, we can only have sex in the missionary position, because I can't get him to go in me when I've tried to have sex on top. When we sit (me on top) it doesn't go in either. What could be the problem?

? Positioning

Answer

Dear Positioning,

Variety can be the spice of life? your sex life, that is! So, when happenings in the boudoir start to seem a little bland, it can feel frustrating. As you try to pin down the recipe for sexual success, keep in mind that there could be a number of reasons other positions aren't working. It could be physical, like erectile issues, genital size (yours or your partners), or a lack of lubrication. Or, the issue may be emotional or relational: perhaps your partner is only turned on by the missionary position or is feeling shy about trying something different. Whatever the case, the bottom line is that there are two key ingredients for you to consider when spicing up your style: communication and creativity.

If you think the issue might be physical, it can no doubt feel awkward to bring it up. One reason why non-missionary positions might feel particularly challenging could be an erectile issue, such as erectile dysfunction. While some men might feel ashamed of erectile problems, they are not all that uncommon, and there are several medical and psychological treatment options (tip: check out Can't stay erect [2] for more details!). Or, your partner's penis might simply not be built for certain positions, like ones in which you're on top. For example, if his erect penis points downward (which becomes more common as men get older), you might want to consider creative angles to try so that the two of you can fit together. Another potential physical issue to consider could be size. Does he have a particularly large or small penis that makes it difficult to get inside or stay inside you? Is your vagina (or anus) particularly tight or wide? Bodies are a bit like unique puzzle pieces, and some experimentation with ways to stimulate each other with hands, toys, genitals, or whatever else might help you overcome any size mismatches and slide into that perfect fit. As you see what works for the two of you, a little (or a lot!) of lubricant can go a long way in helping you have a wet 'n' wild time. Consider
perusing the Q&A What is lube? [3] in the Go Ask Alice! archives for tips on choosing the right lube for you.

Once you've sorted out any physical explanations, you might want to consider reflecting on emotional or relational reasons. First, what types of positions are you looking to try? Have you made it clear to your partner exactly what you're hoping to try, and why you think it might feel good? Communicating your desires with your partner can present a challenge, especially if the two of you are not used to talking openly about your sex life. When it comes time to talk, you may want to approach the topic at a time when you and your partner are feeling relaxed and comfortable. This is especially good to consider if your partner is shy about bedroom experimentation (read: maybe don't bring it up in the heat of the moment). Ultimately, having an open and honest conversation about your desire for different positions could bring the two of you closer and crank up the electricity of your sex life, too!

Now that you're armed with some ideas about what might be going on, it's time to get creative with the coitus [4]. To make changing positions a little easier, perhaps you can start out in the missionary position, and then try to move around from there with his penis inside you. To attempt a position with you on top, you can try to lean forwards and then fit his penis inside of you. Using your hands or asking your partner to use his to help guide his penis inside you might also help things along. In the end, it may simply be a matter of angle. With patience and good communication, you can try it with you on top, standing up, rear entry (doggie style), spooning, on a soft bed, on a hard floor? whatever tickles you and your partner's fancy.

Finally, remember that penile penetration isn't the only way to feel sexually saited. You can still fan the flames of desire within by mixing in other ingredients. For example, you might consider foreplay that titillates the nipples [5]. Or, perhaps oral or anal sex will fit the bill. Just like adding salt and pepper, passion and creativity may add a bit of spice to to your sexual repast.

Remember, enjoying the ride and having fun, rather than emphasizing the challenges, may help the two of you enjoy sex in a variety of positions. With a whole menu of options ahead of you, who knows what you'll discover!

Alice!

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