Kinky sex [1]

Dear Alice,

My girlfriend and I have been dating for over a year now and so far, the sex has been great. Recently, however, she's suggested that we become more experimental. She wants to tie me to the bed and do things to me like drip candlewax on my nipples and attach a string to my penis that she can tug on. She thinks that such things will be able to "heighten sensitivity" and make our sex even more stimulating. I don't have anything against these goals, but before I get into something unusual, I'd like to know whether this type of behavior is healthy.

?Straight and Narrow

Answer

Dear Straight and Narrow,

It's great that you are open to exploration with your girlfriend. You say you have nothing against the goals of "heightening sensitivity," but have you thought about what specific activities sound fun to you and which activities sound less fun? Or which ones would be completely off the table? It is true in that many people enjoy the activities your girlfriend proposed (and other forms of kink) for a variety of reasons (check out S/M roleplaying? [2] for more on this). But regardless, the question is whether or not you would enjoy them.

Your question about "health" hinges somewhat on your answer to this. There is nothing inherently unhealthy in sexual experimentation, as long as all activities are consensual. This means that the both of you are actively interested in trying a new thing. Consent is an active process of saying "yes" to a particular activity. But how do you know if you want to try something new? One way to test this is to try fantasizing about it. Does the thought or fantasy of being tied up, for example, turn you on? Does it scare you? Is it a turn off? Or does it make you feel simply uncertain or curious? Your answers to these questions may shift, depending on your mood, your partner, and of course, the activity itself. It may be that being tied up is a turn-on for you, but the candle wax is not. If you feel comfortable trying it, go for it, as long as you both agree to stop at any point if either of you aren't into it. It may be that during the course of the exploration you find that you love a variety of activities you haven't even thought of. You may be surprised by your likes and dislikes, or you may experience and feel exactly what you were expecting.

Many people struggle with feelings of shame about liking certain types of sex or sexual activities. These feelings can certainly make trying new things difficult. Talking them through
with your girlfriend, a therapist, or other trusted confidant can help. Regardless, know that there is nothing unhealthy about kinky sex and creative exploration, as long as you are both into it.

Happy experimenting,

Alice!

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