Dear Alice?

My boyfriend sometimes gets frustrated, saying we don't have sex enough. It can be difficult to find time, since he lives off-campus and works at night, and sometimes, by the time I see him at midnight, I'm just too tired. We don't usually go more than a week or a week and a half without it, but when he gets on my case about it, it's the last thing that's going to put me in the mood.

What's the average frequency of sex for couples (is there one?) and what can I tell him so he won't think I'm just rejecting him physically or something stupid?

?No excuses

Answer

Dear No Excuses,

Discussions about sex and frequency of sex can be loaded. The sensitive nature and vulnerability these types of discussions present can make it challenging to truly communicate beyond simply "I want it" or "I don't" statements. The sexual part of a relationship sometimes get lots of other issues displaced on it too ? there may be other problems in your relationship being played out under the "how often" umbrella.

We often take struggles about money, power, time, other relationships, etc. from our daily lives into the bedroom. Just knowing this might make the two of your more objective and can help you both decide whether this concern is a simple sexual mismatch or whether there is a deeper root to the discrepancy.

It is very natural for couples to be in different places from time to time on how horny they are and/or how much they want to have sex. In any given relationship, this is a recurrent theme, and will certainly ebb and flow the longer a couple remains together. Think about the contexts in which you and your boyfriend have had discussions about sex frequency. Are tension levels already high around the issue (i.e. when you're both in bed)? Initiating closeness and conversation with your boyfriend in a comfortable and neutral setting will help open up lines of honest communication ? meaning you may consider taking the discussion beyond the bedroom walls. Remember that people fluctuate in their sexual expressions and amounts of desire ? it could be that this is a particularly busy time, but there is hope for more synchronicity later on.
You also have lots of other choices apart from intercourse that may meet both of your sexual needs. Perhaps massages twice a week will do the trick, or having sex more during less hectic times, like weekends, may relax you both and take the pressure off weeknights/working nights. You might encourage him to masturbate with you watching, thereby giving him sexual release and allowing you to take a more passive role in lovemaking. Try to be true to however hot or cold you may be feeling, and let your boyfriend know what you’re in the mood for. The honesty and newly found comfort around this topic may even make you hotter than usual!

Periods of high and low sexual intensity, which may or may not synch up between partners, are an expected and common aspect of couple-hood. With a fresh take on communication and some creativity, you and your boyfriend may be on your way to in-sync sexual bliss.

Alice!
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