Let's talk about sex, baby[1]

Dear Alice,

Do women talk about sex as much or in the same manner as guys do?

Answer

Dear reader,

In reality, every person has a different amount of experience, comfort level, and interest in talking about sex. So to answer your question? well? there?s no right answer! To get a sense of what's going on would require some snooping around and eavesdropping on people's conversations. However, it is probably best to respect others? privacy ? no matter how tempting it would be to listen in on these juicy conversations!

While pop culture might suggest that men talk about sex more frequently than women, a study from Penn State suggests just the opposite. Researchers found that undergraduate women talked more frequently than men about their relationships, including the pros, cons, and implications of sex, as well as their sexual behaviors. The researchers also suggested that how parents speak with their children (particularly girls) about sex shapes their ability to openly communicate with others about their experiences as adults.

Moreover, an informal online poll found that while men are interested in talking about sex, they are unlikely to do it in non-anonymous spaces. That is, men may be uncomfortable discussing the intimate details of their lives, and thus be unlikely to partake in sex talk as they belly up to the bar. However, there is one exception; it appears that conversations about masturbation occur more among men than women.

When talking about sex, men and women may have differences in communication style, use of language, and comprehension. Such differences may be less reflective of gender differences, and more based on individual differences in experiences and perspectives. Therefore, the amount of sex talk that men and women participate in (and what they include in the conversation) is likely influenced by their upbringing, conditioned gender roles, exposure to media, and societal values. In addition, with changing attitudes and norms surrounding sexuality, gender roles, sexual harassment, and gender equality, gender differences in rates of conversations about sex is likely shrinking even more.

In order to help promote healthy relationships and positive attitudes about sex, it is important to be open to communication (and to prevent miscommunication) between and among
genders. So get out there and start talking? you never know what you might find out!

Alice!
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