

Can We Have Sex?

If this question is asked (or even just thought of) when two people are in the middle of passionately kissing and touching those “hot” zones, more likely than not there will be just one answer, “Yes”. However many people after that scenario, wish they had answered “No”.

The problem is that trying to make up your mind about what's OK for you sexually and what is not, is best done before your pleasurable feelings override your logical side. So when you're half undressed and feeling all steamed up is not an easy time to say, “Give me ten minutes and let me figure out what I should do now”.

So it makes sense to think through certain things now rather than when you are faced with the situation. That way when the question comes up (verbally or otherwise), you can be clear about how you want to answer. So what are the things that can help you be clear about whether or not you are **ready** to have sex with **this person at this time**?

Are you ready?

Have you really thought through your values around sex?

What do you truly believe is right for you in terms of sexual activity? Is intercourse only right for you if you are married? Engaged? In a committed relationship? Or is “casual” sex OK?

For you, what do you feel comfortable with when it comes to sexual activities at this stage in your life or in your relationship? Is “outercourse” OK? What if your partner is fine with mutual masturbation without intercourse? Are you OK with this? Are there any sexual activities that you definitely feel uncomfortable about?

Why do I want to have sex at this time in my life?

Because my friends are having it and I feel left out? Because I'm used to having a sexual partner? Because being sexually intimate with someone makes me feel wanted? Many people have sex for these reasons but if this does not fit with your value system then you are likely to have emotional conflict around the whole matter of sex.

Am I comfortable with the idea of talking openly with a potential partner about my values, feelings and beliefs about sex?

Many people still find it uncomfortable to bring up sexual issues with a potential partner or even with the person with whom they have already established a sexual relationship. There seems to be an unwritten code that says, "Sex is something you do, not something you talk about". However this code means there is a lot of misunderstanding between partners. It is very helpful when you feel comfortable enough about sexual issues that you can talk openly with your partner about this before becoming involved.

Have I thought about how I would handle it if I got an STI or HIV from my partner?

We all know that HIV is incurable and contracting this could mean the person will eventually die of AIDS, yet many people still take the risk of unprotected sex. Even when using a condom there is a small chance that it could burst. Other STI's like herpes are also incurable. Others cause infertility. And remember, you can't tell by looking if someone has HIV or another STI. What will you do to give yourself the best chance of being protected from HIV or other STI's?

Have I thought about how I would handle it if I got pregnant? How I would handle it if my partner got pregnant?

How do I feel about having a child now? Would I be prepared for the emotional and financial responsibilities? What do my values say about the use of the morning after pill? How do I feel about abortion?

How does having sex now fit in with my plans for future long-term relationships?

Do I believe that sexual experiences now will help me deal better with my spouse or could comparisons be problematic?

With this person?

Why am I thinking about sex with this person rather than with someone else?

What do I want from him or her? A relationship? Companionship? Someone to be seen with? Just sex?

What does the other person expect from me?

What happens if I want short-term and they want long-term? Will I still feel comfortable relating to him/her after sex?

At this time?

This isn't about privacy for sex. The two issues here are:

Am I rushing things?

Why now rather than later? You can't undo having had sex with someone, whereas waiting gives you the chance to be clearer about whether or not you really want to do this with this person at this point in your life.

Do I have what it takes?

Not the personal equipment (we all have that) but the supplies to protect yourself and your partner. In today's world using condoms each time you have sex is essential. You really don't want to be worrying about whether you have HIV, STI's or pregnancy.

So "Can We Have Sex?" Only you can tell whether or not your answer needs to be "No", "Not yet" or you are truly ready to say "Yes". Be sure though that you take the time to really think this through now. The spur of the moment decisions we make when we are in love and aroused are usually the ones we regret. Well thought out choices though can lead us to both physical and emotional satisfaction.