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Preface

Late Autumn 1987

It was the early days of our romance. In Ottawa on a clandestine lovers' weekend, we spent most of the time in our hotel room greedily exploring each other. Late Saturday night, we lay side by side breathing deeply, our sweat soaked bodies flung wide, gathering ourselves for another round of life's most joyous dance. I stretched my leg so that my toes rested on Al's instep. As my skin touched his, electric pulses raced through me, from my toes through my legs and groin, all the way up to my head and back down. On the outside, I was barely moving. My body was a lacy ribbon waving lazily on a light summer breeze. Inside, it was as if the entire lava load of an erupting volcano were surging through my veins at incredible velocity. Every fiber of my being was shot through with light, like a time-lapse photo of car headlamps beaming down a dark roadway. I closed my eyes and let the blaze run. The familiar blackness behind my eyelids became a deep blue, vast, open, and welcoming. Huge purple orbs floated by, amethyst geodes trailing light. I lay in ecstatic wonder marveling at the beauty and the glory.

When I moved my foot away from Al's, breaking the spell of our connection, the flowing stopped. When I touched him again, it recommenced. Experimenting, I touched our bodies together at different spots—finger to nipple, hip to thigh, forehead to forehead. Each joining made a bridge for the transporting energy stream. My heart opened. Love poured in with the fire. The laughter of bliss rose up from its flames. Unable to speak, I could only keep trilling "ohs" into the night. Like a kiss from God, the merging came, a melting into Al, the room, the city. I was All, and All was rapture. When daylight found us, I was still flying high on love's ardent wings.

"What was *that*? Where did it come from? Do you think we can do it again?"

"Probably. I think what we experienced was something I have heard about called Tantra," replied Al, my new lover, my seeker of enlightenment, and explorer of all things spiritual.

We set off for the nearest bookstore to find out more about this mysterious Tantra. It was the beginning of a journey that has wrought extraordinary change in our lives, brought us ecstatic pleasure and intimate connection, and freed our hearts and awakened our spirits. It is a journey that continues.

Introduction

“Make love a creation, and life becomes art.”
—Al Link

We are lovers still. Day by day and minute by minute, we recreate our love. It is quite simple, but it is not always easy. We have learned what to do and how to do it with the help of teachers and books, but mostly through our own experiments. We are self-taught lovers. For most of our lives, sex has been a driving force for both of us, as has the desire for connection with God. In our culture, these two forces do not usually go together. When we met each other and fell into an intensely passionate relationship, it satisfied our sexual desire, but not our spiritual longing. Over time, however, we discovered that our relationship itself, our conscious loving union, could become our pathway to divine connection. Modern Tantra, which combines sexuality and spirituality in a practical, down-to-earth way, provided the perfect vehicle. Now, Tantric sacred loving is what we do full time, both in living and in earning a living.

In this book we describe how we teach others and what we actually do to keep our own relationship emotionally rich, sexually passionate, and spiritually evolving. Our purpose in writing this book is to motivate couples to act together to achieve something rare in the world: passionate relationships in which to grow spiritually together into old age, creating love year after year. We want to help you realize your dreams through discovering the four freedoms of Body, Mind, Heart, and Soul.

The 4 Freedoms

The First Freedom: BODY

“Longing, desire and need
melt from our psyches
drip sparkling life—renewal
in these suits we call our bodies.”
—Al Link

Awaken your senses. See, hear, smell, taste, and feel love. Know your body as a divine temple of love, carrier of the soul, manifestation of God and Goddess. Become truly at home in your body—at ease, at peace, comfortable in your skin. Allow yourself to experience physical pleasure. Feed yourself and all around you with sublime, intimate human touch. You are your body. Your body is freedom.

The Second Freedom: MIND

“Our words meet and mingle
like hummingbirds

competing for space at the
scarlet feeder.”
—Al Link

There are no limits. All limits are self-imposed. Change thought from being your master to being your powerful servant, a tool of your liberation. Turn your thinking on, and turn it off, when *you* want to. You have the power over what you think. You also have the power over *how* you think about things. Connect with your higher self for guidance and direction. You are your mind. Your mind is freedom.

The Third Freedom: HEART

“Hearts made sweet by surrender
to each other.”
—Al Link

Heal your broken heart. Open your healed heart. Give and receive love easily, naturally, spontaneously, and unconditionally. Discover your lover within. Love yourself. Accept yourself. Forgive yourself. Know that you are worthy of love. Acknowledge and welcome the love of others. Dare to be the great lover you are. You are your heart. Your heart is freedom.

The Fourth Freedom: SOUL

“Souls made sweet by surrender to God.”
—Al Link

Your body, mind, and heart are windows to your soul. Your soul transcends space and time. It is outside of cause and effect. Your soul is complete and perfect. When you communicate with your higher self, with God and Goddess, you are communicating with your soul. Your soul has your body, mind, and heart within it. Your soul is what you are. Your soul is The Soul. Your soul is freedom.

Tantra helps you explore these four freedoms and make them your reality, not just in your relationship, but in all areas of your life.

What Is Tantra?

“Tantra is where sex is transformed into love
and love is transformed into
the higher self.”
—OSHO

Tantra is a Sanskrit word that can be translated to mean “weaving.” A spiritual belief system that originated in ancient Hindu and Buddhist cultures of India and Tibet, Tantra views the material world as a manifestation of the Divine. Everything is accepted and connected—woven

together. The apparent division between body and spirit, between matter and energy, is an illusion. By consciously uniting perceived opposites (male and female, light and dark) human beings can transcend dualism and know that all is one.

The numerous schools of Tantra employ various forms of meditation, sacred sound, breath control, secret ritual, and prayerful thought as aids to enlightenment. Some also incorporate sexual activity as a means of spiritual awakening. The union of ordinary woman and man becomes the eternal coupling of Shakti (Divine Mother) and Shiva (Immortal Spirit). When connected in sacred, ritualized sex, our human bodies—mirrors of the cosmos—rejoin the wholeness of essential reality. Thus, Tantra weaves together sex and spirit. In much of Western society, Tantra has become associated primarily with this sexual–spiritual component. Most of the religious aspects of traditional Tantric sects, their complex philosophies, rituals, and deities are not included in this modern interpretation. Tantra has become a generic term encompassing a wide range of sacred sex practices. This is how we use the term Tantra in our work and in the title of this book: as an integration of sex and spiritual growth.

British scholars and travelers returning from India first introduced Tantra to the West in the middle of the 19th century. Foremost among them was Sir Richard F. Burton (1821–1890), co-founder of the Kama Shastra Society, through which he privately published his translations of the Eastern texts *The 1,001 Arabian Nights*, *The Kama Sutra*, *Ananga Ranga*, and *The Perfumed Garden*. Given the surface prudery of the time, these works provoked a hostile response.

However, during the same century, a series of Western sacred sex practices emerged. Each of these interpretations was given a unique, and often esoteric-sounding name. Most well known is Karezza, which was conceived by Alice Bunker Stockham, an American doctor who studied Hindu Tantra yoga in India. In Karezza, the sexual elements of Tantra are applied within the framework of Christianity. More recently, Westerners who flocked to India seeking wisdom during the late 1960s and early 1970s encountered Tantra at the ashrams of gurus such as Osho. Inspired by the healing power of these sexual secrets, pioneers such as Margo Anand, Nik Douglas and Penny Slinger, David and Ellen Ramsdale, and Charles and Caroline Muir brought the message to Europe and North America.

Tantra is particular to India and Tibet, but other cultures, such as the Taoists in China and the Cheyenne in North America, also developed sacred sex traditions that encouraged the intentional cultivation of sexual energy for spiritual growth, longevity, and creativity, as well as

enhanced pleasure. Now, there are varieties of Tantric sexual practice evolving all around the world. Most of them share similar points of view and comparable physical techniques. Our work is an eclectic blend of these sacred sex teachings, current Western psychological approaches to well-being and intimacy, and techniques for energy work, both ancient and modern. Our Tantra philosophy can be summarized with four simple, easy-to-remember principles.

4 Tantra Principles

1. Sex is good. This includes physical pleasure and considers sex as a moral force. Sex is good because it is what people who love each other naturally do. It is normal and healthy human behavior. Consensual sex between adults is a primary expression of love. Among our most basic biological needs, sex is essential for reproduction and the survival of the race. Beyond this, it is also a primary way to fulfill healthy human desires for physical touching, deep pleasure, and emotional intimacy.

2. Sexual energy and spiritual energy are the same energy. Both energies are examples of “life-force energy.” There are no words for this “energy” in the English language, but in East Indian culture, its equivalent is “prana;” in Chinese culture “chi.” As the sexual energy charge builds during lovemaking, we increase our access to this basic life force. Sex offers a way to cultivate and use life-force energy for other purposes: giving and receiving pleasure, physical and emotional healing, creating love, and excelling in other areas of human endeavor such as science, business, the arts, and sports.

3. Sexuality is a legitimate spiritual path. Tantra is a form of yoga. Yoga means union. Tantric yoga includes the union of sexuality and spirituality. Sex and spirit are not two separate aspects of our selves. On the contrary, spiritual lovemaking is one of the simplest ways for ordinary people to experience mystical connection—union with themselves, their partners, and the Divine. The arbitrary separation of body, mind, and spirit in most cultures is an intellectual, psychological, and emotional tragedy of incalculable proportions. This error of judgment has been the cause of great suffering for countless generations of people. It is now time for sexual healing that can only be possible by reuniting sexuality and spirituality.

4. We are each responsible for our own sexual fulfillment as well as our own personal and spiritual growth. Despite popular belief, it is not your lover’s job to bring you to sexual ecstasy. No matter how attentive or skillful your lover may be, unless you allow yourself to open fully to sexual pleasure, you will not reach the heights of orgasmic bliss. Performance anxiety is one of the killers of passionate

sexual intimacy. When we each take responsibility for our own sexual pleasure and our own spiritual awakening, the pressure to perform is eliminated.

Elements of Tantric Practice

“How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach...”
—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Our Tantric practice works on four levels, corresponding to our “four freedoms”: body/physical, mind/mental, heart/emotional, and soul/energetic.

✧ On the physical level, you learn very specific techniques for joyous and extended lovemaking.

✧ On the mental level, you learn to shift habitual attitudes to sex, overcoming negative conditioning that may have taught you that sex is bad or shameful. Part of the training is developing the ability to focus, to become totally absorbed during lovemaking.

✧ On the emotional level, you learn to trust, to let go and surrender, and to open your heart.

✧ On the energetic level, you go beyond previously perceived boundaries to connect in ways that are much more than physical.

Tantra is about openness and transformation. Like most spiritual paths, sacred sex teaches a discipline of the mind and body. It does so amid joy and letting go to the sensual aspects of living. As a celebration of life, sacred sex teaches the importance of conscious awareness, of living totally within your actions. By focusing attention on your body and your mind, you become all-around healthier:

✧ Your emotions become more stable and more real.

✧ Your mental capacity increases.

✧ Your physical health improves as you learn to honor your body as the temple of your soul.

As for your sexual life, the glories that await you are beyond your imagination. The exercises and techniques fortify your entire urogenital system; you gain muscle strength, improved circulation, and heightened sensitivity. You shift your approach to lovemaking and learn exquisite new ways to please your partner and yourself. Ordinary lovemaking has a goal: orgasm. If you both come at the same time, you have really hit the jackpot. If neither of you come at all, you may as well have spent your time elsewhere. In Tantric loving, there is no goal. There is a purpose, however, and that purpose is union. Every aspect of your Tantric loving serves that purpose. Your intention is to merge with your

lover in all aspects—body, mind, heart, and soul—not just body. As you let go of the goal of orgasms, you actually begin to have more of them. Tantra is a sure-fire way to keep the purely physical experience of sex exciting, new, and fresh for even the most long-term lovers.

Many people experience occasional, spontaneous moments of blissful oneness with their partner, with nature, with the Divine, during peak sexual experiences. With practice, you can learn to consciously create this rapturous spiritual union. As you master moving the sexual energy between your two bodies, you experience altered states of consciousness leading to ecstasy. In order to create enough sexual energy to move them into euphoric states of Divine connection, practitioners of Tantra make love for long periods of time, experiencing extraordinary levels of pleasure along the way. Tantric lovemaking involves conscious breathing, muscle contraction exercises, sound, visualization, meditation, sensual massage, sexual play, creating a sacred loving space, and other rituals. Largely through ceremony and ritual, we access our deepest consciousness and the soul. This aspect of Tantra, perhaps more than any other, transforms ordinary friction sex into *energy* sex and ultimately, if love is truly present, into what we call *soul sex*. As John Ruskin expressed it, “When love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece.”

Extending far beyond the bedroom, sacred sex helps you open fully to your partner in trust and love through all facets of your relationship. Your relationship itself becomes a vehicle for spiritual growth and personal awareness. As you learn to open to yourself, to your own inner lover, you naturally open to others around you. You begin to understand that surrender does not mean submission or loss of self, but rather a loving expansion into something much greater than you.

The techniques and exercises we share in this book are what we actually do. Our essential approach is neither religious nor dogmatic, but spiritual. Playfulness is woven into the fabric of our loving—laughter and lust come hand in hand to the true lovers’ bed. While we cannot guarantee that what is in this book will be effective for you, it is for us and for hundreds of couples with whom we have worked. We encourage you to experiment in order to discover what works and what does not. Keep the things that do and discard the rest. You have your own inner guide who knows what is best and what is needed. Pay attention and trust yourself to find what is right for you. Part of the delight of Tantric loving is that not only will you feel immediate results, such as more pleasure and closeness with your lover, but you can also continue to learn and advance throughout years of practice. Tantra is never-ending in its potential for personal and spiritual growth.

Who Should Read This Book?

If you think that sexuality can be more than what you learned in high school, if you are interested in combining sexuality and spirituality, if you want to take your relationship to a higher, more spiritual level, if you want a relationship that satisfies through and through, if you want to graduate from falling in love to creating love, and if you want to keep on creating love as you grow old together, then this book is for you.

Wanting to take your relationship to a higher level does not mean there is anything wrong with it now. On the contrary, it likely means there is something very right about it.

This is not a book on finding love or falling in love. Rather, it is a book about creating love. Because our emphasis is on Tantra in relationship, both beginners and skilled Tantric practitioners will find value here. We offer ourselves as a role model for a successful long-term relationship in which we are each happy, fulfilled, and spiritually awakened.

We help you learn how to:

- ✧ Create love together over many years.
- ✧ Keep sexual passion very hot to any age.
- ✧ Keep focused on your personal growth so that spiritual (even mystical) experiences are regularly available to both of you.

Here you will find an abundance of practical tools and techniques for combining sexuality and spirituality in your daily life. Reading about Tantric relationships will help to expand your knowledge and awareness, but you must actually do the exercises to really make a difference.

You will notice as you read that we use the terms “he” or “she” in various instances rather than the awkward “he/she” or “(s)he,” “He” and “she” are used interchangeably to refer to both men and women unless we are speaking of decidedly male or female situations.

Benefits of Relationship Tantra

As you work with this book, you will continually be encouraged to reach a higher logical level. You will be invited to be fully present in every moment, completely aware of what you are doing and fully immersed in it. For example, you will not only breathe, you will breathe intentionally in specific ways. You will not only make love, you will use Tantric lovemaking techniques in full awareness of what you are doing and what you want to create. You will learn to dress and undress deliberately, to speak consciously, to notice the mood you are in, the expression on your face, your body language, and how these things affect your

lover and yourself.

If the practice of Tantric sacred loving works for you, as it has for us and for many couples, then how you experience each day can be transformed dramatically. Everything you do will gradually become more real, regaining a significance that may have gotten lost in your daily living. You will start to feel connected to your environment, to the people around you, and to your lover. You will start to feel fully alive, awake, and alert. You will be energized and motivated. Your libido will increase, perhaps sharply if you had previously been suffering from a lack of sexual desire. You may feel such strong desire for your lover that you leave work early to come home for a surprise visit of passionate lovemaking, even though you have been married for years.

You may notice that you start to hum and sing and whistle again with the sheer happiness of your being. You will start to think creatively and apply this in your art, your family, your business, and your community. You will be delighted and amazed at the moments of “Aha!” as your deeper consciousness offers up solutions to problems you have been struggling with. Your face will glow and your spirit will radiate an inner beauty that magnetically attracts the people around you. Laughter will return to your life. You will start playing and having fun. You may even allow yourself to be foolish, acting like a kid again. You will smile. You will want to get out of bed in the morning and you will want to get back into it with your lover. You will experience the pleasure and connection you have dreamed of.

Excerpt from Chapter 1: Relationship as Spiritual Practice

“Someday, after we have mastered the winds,
the waves, the tide and gravity, we shall harness
for God the energies of love. Then, for the
second time in the history of the world, man
will have discovered fire.”

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Our extraordinary sexual pleasure and intense mystical connection continued to grow as we went deeper into our Tantric practice. We progressed steadily, but unevenly, along our sacred sex path—sometimes making great strides forward, other times falling back. Although our personal vitality and individual learning capacity affected our headway, the most noticeable influence came from the state of our relationship. When we were in sync emotionally and feeling good about each other, we could often reach the heights of bliss. If issues arose between us or if one of us was preoccupied with something else, the magic would not happen.

Tantra stresses the importance of conscious awareness and intention, as well as opening your heart. As we focused on becoming more aware, we saw that our lives outside the bedroom had a huge impact on what occurred in it. We realized that if we wanted to connect totally in our Tantric sex, we had to make our relationship the best it could be—all the time. After talking it over carefully, we decided to make our relationship the most important thing in our lives. The only thing of greater importance is our individual connection with the Divine, but because our relationship is also our spiritual path, this does not create a conflict. It is through our relationship that we come to God and give love to the world. Putting our intention into practice—daily remembering and acting on our importance to each other—visibly accelerated our mastery of Tantric skills. *As you commence your own sacred loving journey, your best possible starting point rests in a relationship that is your top priority.*

When we say our relationship is the most important thing, we mean that it takes precedence over our work, our children, our family and friends, our community, and our own needs to control or to be right. This does not mean that those other things are not important to us or that we ignore them. We are not promoting ego *à deux*, wherein we become so absorbed with one another that we lose concern for anyone or anything else. On the contrary, when we give more to each other, we have more to give the world. When our relationship is strong and vital, all aspects of our lives benefit because we have more patience, stamina, and enthusiasm.

How Important Is Your Relationship?

“Time is a created thing. To say, ‘I do not have time’ is like saying, ‘I do not want to.’”

—Betty Elliot

Ninety-three percent of Americans say they hope to form a lasting, happy union with one person.¹ Perhaps you also long for a fulfilling relationship. If you do, what really matters is not what you say or what you think you believe, but what your *behavior* demonstrates. Many couples tell us, “Oh yes, our relationship is the most important thing,” and in the next breath add, “but we cannot find time for each other in our busy lives.” Careers, children, community, and individual needs may often seem overwhelming in their immediate demands for time and attention. All too frequently, the primary relationship takes second place. As we explore these aspects of life that can draw attention away from your relationship, do you recognize any of your own behaviors?

Career: There is no getting around having to pay the rent. Most of us do have to work to earn a living, and career choices are undeniably some of the most important decisions we make. However, is your career more important than your relationship?

People begin their careers wanting to be successful, to achieve advancement, and gain recognition. Competition with others can be severe, even ruthless. Therefore, you work very hard, putting in lots of hours. Perhaps there is stress involved, and you may become anxious and worried and begin to take it out on your partner. Alternatively, maybe your creative juices are flowing, and you are so wrapped up in the process that you cannot let it go. You begin to think about your work all the time and start to bring it home with you. On the other hand, perhaps you are a small business entrepreneur in a home office, and the job never leaves.

Another possible scenario is that you may not really like your work, but you absolutely need the income. You have chosen a standard of living that requires toys—computers, DVD recorders, digital cameras, sport vehicles—and you have run up debts. Now you have no choice but to work even harder, and the relationship suffers.

Maybe you know people, we certainly do, who have been in this situation: Career is everything. They seem to be living to work rather than working to live, and then suddenly their lover dies or simply leaves the relationship. Only then do they realize what their priorities have been and what it has really cost them. In the face of the loss of their love, the work that was so important does not mean anything anymore—they may not even go to work. The toys they had to have now mean nothing.....

Excerpt from Chapter 2: Creating Love

“For one human being to love another; that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks, the ultimate, the last test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation.”

—Rainer Maria Rilke

“Let’s fall in love,
Why shouldn’t we fall in love?
Our hearts are made of it
Let’s take a chance
Why be afraid of it?”

—“Let’s Fall In Love,” 1933

Words by Ted Koehler, music by Harold Arlen

Modern Western society adores falling in love. Songs—from hard-driving hip hop to crooners’ ballads—extol its pleasures and passions; movies and plays entice us with its mystery; magazines and books give us advice on when, where, and how to do it; and advertising of all sorts uses the extraordinary appeal of falling in love to sell us everything from coffee to cars. Because falling in love is something that happens *to* you, it is ephemeral. It only lasts for a short time, then it stops happening to you. Unless you graduate to creating love, you experience the disappointment and disillusionment of falling out of love. We all know what is at the bottom of any fall—pain. As author Marilyn Peterson says, “You do not die of a broken heart, you only wish you did.” Nevertheless, falling in love feels so wonderful that we can become addicted to it, rolling from one relationship to the next looking for that feeling again and again.

Although there are numerous examples of falling in love, over and over again, models of exciting, fulfilling long-term love are exceedingly rare. Models exist for stormy long-term, and companionable long-term, and emotionally dead long-term but not hot *and* stable long-term. Therefore, we are designing our own version of lusty, lasting love and hope to inspire you to do the same.

Graduating from falling in love to creating love requires desire, awareness, and effort. You must yearn to bring about a profound connection with another human being. You must be cognizant of those beliefs and behaviors that undermine you and those that assist you in your quest. In addition, you must be willing to take action, repeatedly, to support your dream.

Recognizing Relationship Fallacies

“You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff.
Like if you like sports, she should
like it that you like sports, and

she should keep the chips and dip coming.”

—Alan, age 10

“No person really decides before they grow up
who they are going to marry.

God decides it all way before,

and you get to find out later

who you are stuck with.”

—Kirsten, age 10

When you set out to learn about creating love, you will discover and confront a whole range of relationship fallacies and negative models that influence your beliefs about what is possible. Dismal examples abound from high profile, highly esteemed role models, such as political and business leaders, and film and sports celebrities. For example, according to *The New York Times* former U.S. President Bill Clinton will receive an advance of more than \$10 million from publisher Alfred A. Knopf Inc., for the rights to publish his memoirs—an amount believed to be the largest ever for a nonfiction book. “In agreeing to pay the extraordinary advance, Knopf is betting that Mr. Clinton will continue to be regarded as one of the fascinating personalities of the second half of the 20th century, captivating readers both in the United States and abroad.”¹ Not a small part of Mr. Clinton’s attraction is the fact that he was caught having an affair during his term of office and survived the political fallout. Whether intended or not, this sends a strong message to the world about marriage, commitment, and fidelity. It is not harmless that Mr. Clinton has become a powerful relationship role model, reinforcing fallacies about what relationships can and should be.

Here are some common relationship fallacies. Which ones form part of your personal arsenal, sabotaging your capacity to realize the fulfilling love you want?

✦ Because falling in and out of love is something that happens to you, you cannot do anything about it. You are not responsible for helping love to continue.

✦ Passion dies over time. Although you may have a loving relationship, the intensity will wane and it will become boring sexually.

✦ If you do have a passionate relationship—one that is hot and sexy—it will not be stable. The passion will spill over into all aspects of your relationship and you will have lots of fights. Such a stormy relationship will not last.

✦ Infidelity is inevitable—monogamy is just too monotonous in the long term.

✦ Wives and mothers should not look or act too sexy. Men have affairs for the satisfying sex they cannot have with the mother of their children.

✦ As men and women age, they lose interest in and capacity

for sex.

✦ A true mate is someone who completes you, brings you what you want in life, fulfilling all your needs. You are two halves who only become whole together.

✦ If your mate really loves you, then he or she will know what you want.

✦ There are clearly defined roles for men and women in relationship, for example responsibility for housework, childcare, making money, and initiating sex. Although these roles are often assumed rather than openly discussed, they are strictly followed.

✦ Parents should hide their sexuality from their children.

We have done our own fair share of succumbing to relationship fallacies. Al was convinced that the delight of our relationship was too good to last. Based on his previous experiences, he feared it would sooner or later become boring or unstable. He did not believe, for example, that we could continue to have magical candlelit dinners with stimulating conversation that led to fevered lovemaking. At some point that magic would fade. But, when he shifted from assuming that the *circumstances* generated his enchantment to knowing that his *intention* and *active participation* did, that constricting belief disappeared. Wining and dining and loving each other remains a favorite and wonderfilled pastime.

Pala fell into the “I have found the one to complete me” trap, the myth of love described in Plato’s *Symposium*, wherein original man was split in two by an angry and vengeful god and so is always searching for his other half—“human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love.”² She found in Al a wonderful lover, a provoking intellect, a thoughtful nature, and a spirit for growth. She believed these attributes of his would satisfy her needs—because he was a good lover, they would have great sex; because he had a challenging mind, she would be creative in her thinking; because he wanted to continually learn, her intellect would expand. It was a short step to making him responsible for the quality of their sex, the liveliness of their discussions, and the creativity of their learning. Now she understands that what makes a whole relationship is two whole people, each responsible for contributing all they can, individually, to grow together.

Carefully examine your own ingrained assumptions about relationships and how they affect your hopes and your actions. Recognizing your self-limiting beliefs is a first step toward changing them.....

Excerpt from Chapter 3: Celebrating the Differences

“Sometimes I wonder if men and women really
suit each other. Perhaps they should live next
door, and just visit now and then.”

—Katharine Hepburn

“You like potato and I like potaeto,
You like tomato and I like tomaeto;
Potato, potaeto, tomato, tomaeto!
Let’s call the whole thing off!”

—“Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off,” music and
lyrics by George and Ira Gershwin.

“Love is grand; divorce is a hundred grand.”

—Unknown

Early on in our relationship, we made a pact to celebrate our differences. After all, opposites attract, right? What originally drew Pala to Al, aside from his deliberate sexuality, was his articulate intellect with its focused, methodical thought processes. It’s at a 180-degree angle from the way she moves through life, and it intrigued her from the outset. However we have both been through enough relationships to know that what starts out as intriguing often ends up as annoying, exasperating, or threatening.

You know, in the first blush of love, John’s slow moving approach to life is revered as mellow and laid back and taking time to smell the roses. Sooner or later, he’s just another lazy guy. Or a new lover’s eyes may see Barbara’s need for order and security as competency, efficiency, and astounding preparedness. With just a little shift in perception she’s just another controlling woman.

We do not want to do that with each other. We want to build on what we have started, not tear it down, thus our bond to celebrate our differences. This means that whatever drives us nuts about each other, we attempt to use as a way to learn something about ourselves. This is one of the most important ways that we consciously use our relationship as a spiritual practice. It is *not* always easy. In fact we do occasionally just lose it and throw a petulant tantrum. Who wants to keep working on your own stuff all the time? It is easier and more fun to try and fix other people. For the most part though, we keep to our bargain. Our relationship gets stronger because we do. And we each learn to look at the world through bigger eyes.

Higher Logical Level—The Observer/Witness Consciousness

“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,
there is a field. I will meet you there.
When the soul lies down in that grass,
the world is too full to talk about.

Ideas, language, even the phrase *each other*
doesn't make any sense."
—Rumi

In Chapter 1, we suggested that a good place to begin your Tantric journey would be to make your relationship the most important thing in your life. In that chapter, we explored some of the things people make higher priorities than their relationship, for example, children, careers, and community projects. In addition to these external distractions your own ego and its baggage can pull you away from a relationship focus. While disagreements are normal in the healthiest relationship, how you handle them can continue that health or lead to relationship terminal illness. Common illness-inducing behaviors in disagreements are:

1. Conditioned responses in which you act as if the current situation were a different one from your past.
2. Protecting your self-identity through winning and always being right—even when you are wrong.

Conditioned Response

"All marriages are happy. It's trying to live together afterwards that causes all the problems."
—Shelley Winters

During disagreements, strong feelings may arise that subconsciously remind you of a previous experience. Without being aware of it, you begin to react in the present as if you were in that past situation. Perhaps you have heard of Pavlov's famous experiments with dogs. Each time he gave the dogs food, Pavlov rang a bell. When the food appeared, the dogs salivated. Eventually the dogs salivated when they heard the bell even though no food was presented. This is a conditioned response—one thing is associated with another and a certain behavior occurs. Every time that condition is matched closely enough, the same response happens automatically without thought or conscious intention.

Sometimes conditioned response is a good and useful thing—for instance when Pala looks at Al a certain way, he knows she's thinking sexy thoughts about him. He becomes turned on and excited about going on to making love. However, if a current situation reminds you of some negative past experience and you automatically respond now as if you were still in the past, it is not useful at all—in fact, it is detrimental.

For instance, Cecile's first husband, a possessive, jealous man, strenuously objected any time she went anywhere at all without him. Now she's married to Luc, who trusts her implicitly, and she knows it. However, when she wants to go away for the weekend with her women friends and he wants her to go with him to his business conference instead, her conditioned response is triggered and she reverts to Marriage Number

One. Rather than discussing their differences calmly, she immediately becomes defensive and angry, snarling, “Can’t you ever let me out of your sight? Don’t you trust me to be on my own without you always around?”

Always Being Right

“If a man speaks in the woods, and there is no woman to hear him, is he still wrong?”
—Unknown

Being in relationship can be overwhelming. It can seem difficult to maintain your individuality. Your sense of self, who you are, and what you stand for may be threatened when your mate has a decidedly different opinion or exhibits behavior very different from yours. An unconscious desire to maintain your self-identity urges you to make the other person agree with your point of view—conflict results. When you are in a conflict situation with negative feelings running high, you may want to win, to be in control, to protect yourself, to punish the other person, and so on. At that moment, winning can become an all-consuming desire. You may say or do completely irrational things that cause longterm damage to your relationship.

Later, when you have cooled down and gained some emotional and psychological distance, you can see that the little thing (or even the big thing) you were fighting about was not really that important. At the time however, you acted as if it were the *only* thing that mattered. Or you may realize that your response was just a conditioned reaction that was completely inappropriate to what was really going on. How can you remember at these times that your relationship is the most important thing? We use a process we call *jumping to a higher logical level*.

Although the higher logical level process is easy to understand, like many simple things, it is not necessarily easy to do. Jumping to a higher logical level is a matter of gaining emotional distance from the source of your internal disturbance so that you can give it a name. Then you are no longer caught in it because some part of your awareness is witnessing events as they unfold. Calling on your internal observer is part of the Tantric path of becoming aware, of learning to use your mind as a tool for your spirit rather than allowing it to be your master. Once your witness, or observer, is turned on, you move out of the realm of powerlessness into the realm of freedom, where you have choices and options.

When you are feeling powerless, you have no choice—you are stuck. You carry an emotional weight of fear and inadequacy. It seems as though events just happen to you and everything is arbitrary. You have

no way to influence outcomes. Behaviors tend to be automatic, conditioned responses. However, when you jump to a higher logical level, activating your observer consciousness, you do have choices. You can choose *what* to think about and *how* to think about it. You have the options of focusing your attention on something other than what you were caught in, and you can change how you were thinking about what you were caught in.

For example, if you notice yourself worrying about money, you could instead stop, listen to the sounds that you hear, the aromas you smell, the sights you see, and so on. Paying attention to your senses will always bring you back into the moment, out of the never-ending labyrinth of your mind. Or you can decide that instead of thinking about money right now, you will think about the rendezvous later this evening with your mate. Or you can decide to repeat an affirmation over and over to yourself, such as, "I can learn to create abundance in all areas of my life. I can learn to easily attract all the money that I need and want."

Jumping to a higher logical level is a meta-strategy, a strategy that enables you to manage other strategies in your life. It is generally useful in any situation where 1) the contents of the process are less important than the nature of the thought process itself, and 2) the thought process exhibits increasingly negative side effects and fewer tangible benefits. For example, what I worry about is less important than that I am engaged in the process of worrying. Why I am hyperactive is less important than that I am hyperactive. What I am procrastinating over is less important than that I am procrastinating. What I lose my temper over is less important than that I am losing my temper.

Jumping to a higher logical level does not mean you pretend that you do not have any problems or ignore your responsibilities of relationship, parenting, finance, employment, health, and so on. This is not an avoidance strategy. Rather it helps you handle your difficulties in appropriate ways at appropriate times.....

Excerpt from Chapter 4: Sex and Spirit – Reuniting Heaven and Earth

“Those who realize true wisdom, rapt within this clear awareness, see me as the universe’s origin, imperishable. All their words and all their actions issue from the depths of worship; held in my embrace, they know me as a woman knows her lover.”

—*The Bhagavad Gita*

“There are two kinds of love. Our love. God’s love. But God makes both kinds of them.”

—Jenny, age 4

As children, we were both intensely passionate about God. Raised as a Roman Catholic, Al found a spiritual home in the church, devoutly performing the duties of altar boy and praying to be a priest some day. Every Sunday, with her parents and siblings, Pala absorbed the Christian message at St. Columba’s Anglican Church. There, in adolescent fervor, inspired by her mother’s faith and the promise in God’s words, she ached to become a missionary, to spread salvation around the globe.

At the same time, we were feeling the effects of another need as powerful as our spiritual longing—the inherent sexuality of our bodies. From the moment of his earliest memories Al had been enamored of girls, taking every respectful opportunity he could to kiss and caress them. Pala was compelled by the sensual pleasure of touch—as a young girl through the mystery and excitement of playing doctor with other neighborhood children, then in her early teens by discovering the exquisite euphoria of masturbation.

Throughout our youths and into adulthood we each explored the intriguing byways of these two elemental forces—spirit and sex. But they were always quite distinct aspects of life, or so we were told and so we believed, at least on the rational plane. Yet somewhere deep in the knowing center of our selves was the awareness that in fact they are united, for early in our life together we encountered a profound spiritual fulfillment conceived through loving, liberated sex. Likewise we experienced the astonishing pleasures of a sexuality elevated by spiritual awareness.

Although we now live a reality of integrated sex and spirit, most others, particularly in the Western world, do not. Yes, there are eloquent arguments for separating the two, but primarily they are based on fear, not free will. The power of sex has overwhelmed humanity since our earliest days. The raw aching need it provokes, the vulnerability and loss of control it demands, the mystical heights it propels us to, not to mention its undeniable connection to survival of the human race, create such turmoil that societies from ancient Egypt to modern America

feel obliged to contain it.

Sex in History

“Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old,
seek what they sought.”
—Basho, Zen Poet

“When authorities warn you of the sinfulness of sex,
there is an important lesson to be learned.
Don’t have sex with the authorities.”
—Matt Groening

Degrees of sexual license have varied from culture to culture across the centuries, but for the most part, unwritten societal mores and officially prescribed regulations regarding sexual conduct have been oppressive to say the least. Just about every sexual practice, from simple touch between men and women to choice of sexual partner, from all manner of foreplay to particular styles of intercourse, have been banned at one time or another. Punishments for perceived sexual transgressions range from mild ostracism to imprisonment and physical mutilation to death.

Women particularly have borne, and in most cultures continue to bear, the brunt of sex-repressing beliefs. The ancient Hebrews stoned women to death for adultery. Early Romans could kill their wandering women as well. Later they were simply obliged to divorce them, as were husbands in classical Greece. Europeans kept their women from straying by the use of chastity belts, which first appeared there during the 12th century and became quite popular during the 1400s and 1500s. Even in today’s so-called civilized times sexual horrors, purportedly in the name of decency, are rampant. Amongst the most pervasive of these is female genital mutilation.

According to Amnesty International, approximately 135 million girls and women have been subjected to this barbaric practice that ranges from clitoridectomy—removal of all or part of the clitoris—to infibulation. The most brutal form of mutilation, infibulation includes clitoridectomy, removal of the inner vaginal lips, and fastening the outer lips together to form a barrier over the vagina. Excuses for female genital mutilation run from maintaining cultural tradition to enhancing a girl’s femininity, from ensuring fidelity to guaranteeing cleanliness.¹

Secular approaches to sex are inextricably linked with a culture’s prevailing religious beliefs. Religious thinkers have long pondered the role sexual urges play in relation to humanity’s spiritual life, and most have determined that the one is a definite obstacle to the other. Few, primarily Taoists and Tantrikas, have entertained the idea that sex can be an actual gateway for spiritual awakening. Some religions, including Judaism, Islam, and modern Hinduism, consider sex a distraction from

spiritual attainment but tolerate it, within strict confines, as a necessary and even pleasurable duty to be performed as part of a reverent lay person's life. Others, most notably Christianity, denounced sex, not just as a diversion to rise above, but as a truly damning pastime.

Christianity, more than any other force, has profoundly influenced Western society's relationship to sex. Its intensely anti-sex viewpoint has less basis in the actual scriptures than it does in the personal struggles of a handful of early churchmen. As Anais Nin says, "We do not see things as they are. We see them as we are." During the 4th and 5th centuries, Fathers of the Church such as St. Augustine and St. Jerome, repentant of their formerly active sex lives but still tormented by desire, decided that sex, because of its uncontrollable power, was wicked. St. Augustine, the same St. Augustine who prayed, "Lord give me chastity...but not yet," reinterpreted Adam and Eve's fall from grace in the garden of Eden, changing it from an act of simple disobedience to disobedience fueled by lust. Through his arguments, sex evolved from a troublesome distraction away from the godly path into a sin that infected all of humanity.²

Although the majority of Christian religions dramatically redefined their position on sex during the latter part of the 20th century, the oppressive weight of 1,600 years equating sex with sin confines our culture's current perceptions. Even as sex is now more openly displayed, more freely accessible, and almost obsessively examined, on a grand societal scale it remains at heart soul-less—separate, fleeting, and essentially physical. While sex may be an expression of genuine love, it is just as often a means to gain power, a bargaining tool for self-worth, a routine tension release, or a hedonistic escape. Sex may feel good, but for many, down deep it is still bad, as is most pleasure.

Even though the pursuit of pleasure is part of the American dream—an unassailable right—it is a guilt-ridden hunt, filtered through the notion that what comes from the body or pleases the body is against the soul. People are caught between choosing one or the other—diving headlong into hedonism—where only pleasure is important and all else falls by the wayside—or denying themselves pleasure to save the spirit. It is understandable that in order to explain why there is such suffering in the world religion needed a scapegoat and was able to easily find one in the arbitrary willfulness of the flesh. The body was seen as unruly, shameful, and unworthy, so of course it should suffer. The way to salvation therefore is to focus on your spiritual side, sublimating or rising above physical wants so that you can escape the prison and pain of life.

Many have come to spiritual peace and awakening through just such a path. But there is also another route, albeit not often traveled, that

allows for a different perspective.

Pleasure as Healer

“Men are admitted into Heaven not because they have
curbed and govern’d their passions or have no passions,
but because they have cultivated their understandings.”

—William Blake

This path asserts that our task here on this worldly plane is to manifest the soul through the body, to bring out the Divine by truly uniting our physical and spiritual selves. You set your soul free by celebrating your body, not by denying it. Pleasure then becomes a universal, uplifting and healing experience that brings you closer to each other and to God, not an individual craving that sets you apart and drives you deeper into selfishness. Indeed, in this view it is the absence of pleasure that brings about suffering. For instance, developmental neuropsychologist James W. Prescott advanced the theory that deprivation of bodily pleasure has a direct impact on the amount of warfare and interpersonal violence. “The reciprocal relationship between pleasure and violence is such that one inhibits the other; when physical pleasure is high, physical violence is low. When violence is high, pleasure is low. This basic premise...provides us with the tools necessary to fashion a world of peaceful, affectionate, cooperative individuals.”³ Sacred sexuality is one of those tools. By reuniting these two most powerful motivators—spirit and sex—we can heal the damage their separation has caused.....

Excerpt from Chapter 5: Mastery and Surrender in the Art of Love

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all. Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature.”
—Helen Keller

“Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained.”
—William Blake

“I regret to say that we of the FBI are powerless to act in cases of oral-genital intimacy, unless it has in some way obstructed interstate commerce.”
—J. Edgar Hoover

Control

People love to be in control; it makes them feel safe and secure. Very few are attracted to what may be perceived as its opposite—being *out of control*. Being out of control can be scary, frustrating, even terrifying, and so people expend much time and energy trying to keep themselves, each other, and their environment under control. They develop many strategies, from the subtle to the overt to help feel they are in command, for example, keeping belongings and furnishings in precise order; maintaining strict schedules for waking, sleeping, and eating; making love in the one right place at the one right time in the one right position; or insisting on trying to win an argument whether their point is valid or not. Control can also be a subtle dance of manipulation appearing in the guise of helpless need, or alternatively, as solicitous concern for others—making certain everything runs smoothly and all are happy; taking responsibility for everyone’s well-being, so that ultimately everything is under control.

We see the opposite of control not as out of control, but rather as surrender or letting go. Being in control is simply an illusion; when it comes right down to it, no one has absolute control over anything. You do however have a choice—you can choose to try and make things happen precisely as you want them to (and get frustrated when they do not turn out that way), or you can let go, surrendering to the ebb and flow of life.

Surrender

“He who bends to himself a joy
Doth the winged life destroy,
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in Eternity’s sunrise.”
—William Blake

Surrender is essential for creating love and for spiritual union. Perhaps you are afraid of surrender because you equate surrender with submission, but the two are very different. Submission exists in the context of power in relationships; it implies domination. Someone submits when they are overpowered or overwhelmed, but surrender is not submission, nor is it passivity, losing, or being inferior. Surrender is an active process of conscious, courageous choice, because although you are not submitting, you do have to give something up. Your ego knows and fears this. Your ego likes things as they are. If some change is required, it wants to take credit—to feel the pride of accomplishment and success. But in the spiritual quest, you give up this self-importance. You give up the claim “I did it on my own, my way.”

The fear of surrendering can be so strong that you may feel as if you will be diminished, even annihilated—you will disappear. The actuality is very different. Instead of diminishing you, surrender makes you bigger, expanding and connecting you to something so much greater than your ego could ever have imagined.

If surrender is not giving up, giving in, or being dominated, what is it? It is:

- * Trusting that there is a larger life process that you are part of and can be in alignment with.
- * Showing vulnerability, admitting when you do not know what to do, and when you feel fear and insecurity.
- * Making choices and taking risks—acting in spite of your fear and insecurity.
- * Letting go of attachment to the results of your choices.
- * Suspending judgment when things do not go the way you want them to.
- * Being open to surprises—allowing that there may be more possibilities than you thought or could have imagined, and that these may be better, not worse, than what you wanted.

As you begin to explore the meaning of surrender, in terms of actual behavior, you will come to a critical distinction. On the one hand, there are those things in your life that you make happen, that you take from life, or that you achieve with willpower and as the result of acquired talent. There are others that come to you as gifts from out of the mystery, the Universe, or from God, wonderful surprises, beyond anything you could have imagined, better than you could have planned or even hoped for.

“Once in awhile,
right in the middle of an ordinary life,
love gives us a fairy tale.”

—Unknown

Spiritual gifts often come to you after great effort during which you apply your intellect, knowledge, and skill, but these spiritual gifts are not the *result* of your effort. For example, the rooster crows just before the sun rises, but certainly, we all know that the rooster does not cause the sun to rise. As Joan Baez says, “It seems to me that those songs that have been any good, I have nothing much to do with the writing of them. The words have just crawled down my sleeve and come out on the page.”....

Excerpt from Chapter 6: Be Here Now

“Many thousand kisses have we strewn along
our way,
each fresh as the first,
more powerful than the last.”
—Pala Copeland

Although we have made love at least 2,000 times in our years together, our lovemaking is fresh and immediate, because each time we make love we are fully in the moment. With 100 percent of our senses zeroed in on exactly what is going on at that moment, we are able to see and feel everything anew. By learning to *be here now*, you too can have a dynamic and vital connection with your lover, not just during sex, but also in all your activities, and you can extend that zest over a lifetime together. It’s likely that you have already experienced being wholly in the moment, for example, when you were enraptured by music, or the setting sun, or immersed in dancing, running, creating, or lovemaking. In such moments, time and space seem to disappear. Your senses are hyper-alert. Your heart is at peace. All is right and complete. As the poet Margaret Sherwood says, “In great moments life seems neither right nor wrong, but something greater: it seems inevitable.”

Although you would like more of these experiences, you may believe that you have little or nothing to do with creating them, that they are occurrences completely outside your realm of influence. Yet being here now is a state of consciousness. It is only marginally related to the circumstances of a situation, and in no way dependent on them. You can learn to be in the *now moment* at any time or place, under any set of circumstances, positive or negative.

Being in the moment—totally immersed in your actions—is a simple concept; one you would think should also be simple to do. Unfortunately, for most adults it is not. Children do it, moving effortlessly from one total experience to another, but by the time you are grown, you have learned to bring into most situations the unnecessary baggage of previous incidents, present responsibilities, and future pursuits. Your mind pokes its interfering nose in when it need not, luring you into thoughts of the future, or of the past, or into analysis of your current actions so that you miss what is actually happening.

Getting There vs. Being Here

“Generally people spend their lives in activity and rarely, if ever, take time out for contemplation, or to simply be in their own presence, unaffected by outside distractions. Perhaps we are not human beings but human doings.”
—Deepak Chopra

Because so much of human behavior is goal-oriented, people's attention is usually engaged in *doing*, with each action taken primarily to lead somewhere else. Actions then lose their intrinsic meaning—their only importance is to move you closer to your goal. But when you are truly *being*, you are not concerned with reaching somewhere else—you are already there.

For instance, a goal orientation in lovemaking makes orgasm the focus. When you are *doing it* rather than *being it* there is an arbitrary separation between orgasm and “all the other stuff.” The other stuff, although pleasurable, is second best, for unless you reach climax, what's the point? All other lovemaking activities are simply the sensual means to reach an orgasmic end. With this perspective, you deny yourself the potential of bliss that waits in every touch and caress. Tantric lovemaking, however, teaches you to realize that potential, because being and doing become one. The separation between the person doing the act and the act itself disappears—the dancer becomes the dance, meditation becomes contemplation, and lovers experience disappearance of all boundaries.

Tantric lovemaking is our favorite way to enter into the contemplative state, because, not only is it a spiritual practice, it is also a source of great pleasure. We do not make love only because we yearn for spiritual awakening; we make love in order to “make love.” Nor do we make love just to experience the thrill of orgasm—every moment of our sexual union is an end in itself, and by immersing ourselves in each moment, we experience connection with the Divine.

The Curse of Memory

Memory can rob you of being in the moment. Memory is quick to fill in the blanks, completing your thought, or your sensory impression, before the whole has been received and integrated into your experience. You remember the last time you saw something and you see it as you remember it, rather than as it is *now*. You do the same with all the senses—smelling what you have always smelled, hearing what you have heard before. You do not walk up the stairs *now*, you walk up the same stairs you have walked up countless times, without any awareness of what you are doing. You touch your lover's body from memory. It is not real skin, it is the skin you remember having touched hundreds of times before.

Running on memory is like running on empty. There is just not enough juice in memory to sustain excitement, motivation, and passion. You want something new; you want *variety*. If you touch new skin, if you see a different body, you pay attention in a way that makes you aware that you are alive. After all, as the saying goes, “Variety is the

spice of life.” But you do not need to find variety and newness outside. Variety does not just come from what you see, but rather how you see it. If you really pay attention, you can train yourself to take in information through your senses as if for the very first time. Once you learn to consciously stay in the moment, then no matter how many times you have touched, tasted, smelled, or seen your lover’s skin, it will be unique and new.

“Love, ageless and evergreen
Seldom seen by two
You and I will make each night the first
Everyday a beginning”
—“Evergreen,” music and lyrics by Barbra
Streisand and P. Williams

Learning to Be Here Now

“Life is not a matter of milestones but of moments.”
—Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy

We try to bring into the rest of our lives the capacity for being in the moment that we have found in Tantric lovemaking. We want to be truly present always. Sometimes it seems hopeless. At others, when we are in the rhythm, the beauty of *being* tells us that everything is possible.

There are simple tools—techniques common in meditative practices the world over—that we use as we are learning to be here now. You already have the equipment you need; all that is necessary is to put it into action. You can:

- ♣ Train your mind to focus—make it your servant, not your master.
- ♣ Get out of your head by going in to your senses.
- ♣ Utilize the extraordinary power of breath.

Mental Awareness and Focus

Stop! Are You in the Moment Now?

What do you do while you are jogging, washing dishes, making love, and so on? If your answer is anything other than jogging, washing dishes, or making love, you are not in the moment.

Try this exercise three times a day. When you are engaged in a particular activity, such as writing a report, playing catch with the kids, washing your car, weeding the garden, chopping wood, eating food, or hugging your mate, stop and ask yourself “What am I doing?” For example, while you are hugging your lover, ask, “Am I doing anything in addition to hugging?” You may find that you are worrying, dreaming, or thinking about something else, talking about unrelated events, rushing

to get out the door, and so on. If so, then you are likely missing out on the full sensual pleasure of your two bodies touching. You may miss the deep emotional connection that happens when you focus on opening to another, and you will not receive all the energetic nourishment that hug could give you. As you practice pausing and asking, you will begin to recognize when you are really immersed in your activity and when you are distracted by other thoughts or actions.....

Excerpt from Chapter 7: Energy Delights

“Ecstasy is our very nature.”

—Osho

From the moment of our first Tantric lovemaking experience, we knew we were dealing with something beyond our regular understanding of our physical bodies. We experienced what we could only describe as an energetic phenomenon. This was foreign to us not only in its manifestation but also in its very idea. As children of a Western culture, “energy” was the electricity that powers our TVs and telephones and food processors, the stuff that was in increasingly short supply to fuel our cars and planes, and an element of some vaguely remembered Einstein equation from high school physics. It had nothing to do with how we moved through life, understood ourselves, or connected to others.

In Eastern societies it has everything to do with these and more. The idea that all of life is expressed in energetic flow is an underpinning of much of Eastern philosophy. Not only do human beings interact with this flow, it is part of their spiritual duty to conscientiously do so. There are numerous interpretations and classifications of “life force energy.” The Taoists of China call it “chi,” “ki,” or “qi,” and for them specifically, sexual energy is “ching.” From India we have “prana” (from Sanskrit terms: “pra” meaning forward or before, and “ana” meaning breath), “kundalini,” and “shakti”—the elemental life force in Tantric practice.

There are countless methods of working with energy, and Westerners are becoming increasingly familiar with them in areas as diverse as exercise, interior design, medical care, and sexuality:

✧ Qi Gong (Chi Kung), Tai Chi, and HathaYoga, all methods of exercising and balancing your energetic as well as your physical body, are becoming the work outs of choice for everyone from executives to retirees to film stars.

✧ Even conservative matrons are decorating their homes based on the harmonious principles of feng shui, which considers the combination of interior and exterior space, light, sounds, aromas, materials, placement of buildings and furnishings, and the energetic effect these combinations create.

✧ Nurses at hospitals throughout North America regularly perform Therapeutic Touch, a healing process based on the assumption of a human energy field that extends beyond the skin.

✧ Acupuncture, acupressure, Reiki, and a host of innovative therapeutic procedures, such as Awareness Release Therapy and Emotional Release Therapy, are gaining popularity, even

with some medical doctors.

As modern science moves farther away from a Newtonian model of the universe as a giant machine and closer to an Einstein-influenced perception of it as energy in constant motion, the Western rational mind is more likely to accept the concept of “vital force” and the practices that accompany it. However, you do not have to understand it or even believe in it to begin to work with energy. Just jump in and see for yourself.

Try some of these energy exercises that we employ in our life together and teach in our workshops. They are drawn from diverse traditions, ancient and modern. Some are general while others are specific to sexuality. As with all of the practices we present, we encourage you to thoroughly experiment, then retain those that work for you, and leave the rest behind.

Starting Out

You have already experienced your energy body, you just may never have thought of it that way. Whenever you know someone is coming up behind you, but you haven’t seen them, heard them, or smelled them and they haven’t touched you, you’re feeling them with your energy body.

A simple way to begin to get in touch with your energy body is to briskly rub your hands together for about a minute. Then with your hands in front of you, palms facing each other, an inch or two apart, concentrate on the center of your palms. You may feel a tingling, or a pressure, or some other sensation. If you do, see if you can shape and play with this force. Move your hands farther apart, then closer together. What do you notice about this force as you mold it in your hands?

Grounding

Grounding, a simple, yet highly effective, practice that centers and stabilizes you, will change your life for the better. Through grounding, you direct energy down into the earth. You can do this through your root chakra (an energy center that runs from the base of your spine to your pubic bone), through your feet, through your whole body if you are lying flat on the ground. There are many ways to ground, but this one is our favorite. We learned it from an extraordinary man named Denis Chagnon, whose loving touch has restored many to health.

Grounding Exercise

- Sit or stand comfortably—back straight but not rigid.
- Take a slow deep breath in through your nose.

- Let your breath flow slowly without pause—in and out.
- Focus your attention on your root chakra (your genitals to the base of your spine—more about chakras follows).
- Imagine a connection opening between your root chakra and the earth. This can take many forms and can be different each time you practice. Some see a tree trunk or roots, a hollow bamboo, a silver tube, a beam of light, a flow of menstrual blood, and so on.
- Visualize this connection extending from you down into Mother Earth, passing through the crust, the bedrock, deep into the molten core.
- When you have your connection formed, allow any overwhelming sensations, any negative energies—anger, lethargy, hyperactivity, grief, anxiety, fear—to flow through your connection down into the center of Mother Earth.
- There, in a fiery blast, the energy is purified and returns back
- to you as safe, strong, peaceful life force. Maintain your flowing connection—overwhelming energy down and calming energy up.
- We encourage you to practice grounding regularly. Try to do it consciously as you move through your day. Keep reminding yourself to ground, and then do it. Notice what difference it makes in your stability and calmness.



But I Don't Feel Anything!

“And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

“Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.”

—Bobby, age 5

Some people are more sensitive to energetic phenomenon than others. As you begin your energy practices do not look for particular “special effects,” rather be an observer of what is happening within you. If you do not notice anything at all while you are doing the exercises, be patient with yourself and keep going, even though your rational mind may want to conclude that this energy is not real and that nothing is happening.....

Excerpt from Chapter 8: Ejaculation Mastery and Male Multiple Orgasm

The chicken and the egg were lying in bed one night, when one turned to the other and said,
‘Well, now we know.’”
—Unknown

One of the best-kept secrets of our time is that men (not just women) can be multi-orgasmic. Not only can a man have several orgasms during one session of lovemaking, but he also can do it and still have lots of energy and desire. “Oh sure,” you may be thinking, “maybe Superman or super stud, but not me.” Actually most “ordinary” men can, you can—the key is learning to separate orgasm from ejaculation. Because ejaculation follows orgasm so closely—within a split second—most people think they are one and the same, but they are two distinct phenomena.

In Tantric loving, you learn to experience the pleasure of orgasm without the accompanying letdown of ejaculation. There are only two things you need to learn in order to be able to separate your orgasm from your ejaculation:

- * Stay relaxed no matter how aroused you are.
- * Move your hot sexual energy up and away from your genitals.

Any man who does this and makes love long enough to build a very high sexual charge will eventually spontaneously experience non-ejaculatory orgasm.

3 Types of Orgasm

The Ejaculatory Orgasm

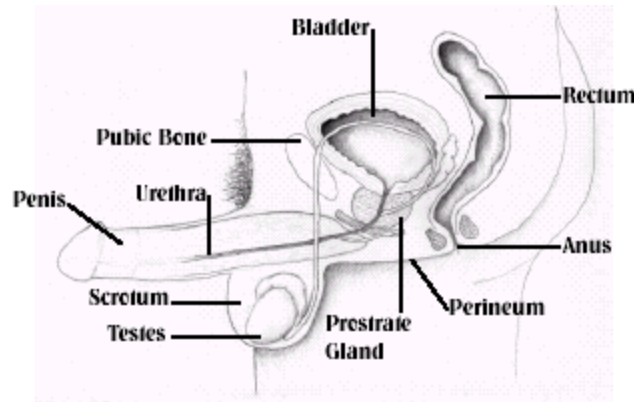
Most men are happily familiar with a regular ejaculatory orgasm during which the whole body tenses, and the prostate gland vibrates strongly, propelling semen forcefully out of the penis. For a few seconds there is intense pleasure, and then a refractory (or recovery) period sets in. The body relaxes; the erection subsides and with it goes interest in further sexual activity. Sleepiness sets in. How long it takes before energy and interest return depends on a man’s age, health, libido, and frequency of ejaculation. Some men, usually young and strong men, may be able to retain an erection in spite of ejaculation by continued thrusting, or they may regain another erection almost immediately.

No matter how good it feels, repeated ejaculation with its accompanying loss of sexual energy can deplete your body’s strength and vitality. If the energy drain is extensive, it can lead to unconscious resentment of your partner for “exhausting your manhood.”

The Prostate Orgasm

Although the prostate orgasm is also accompanied by ejaculation, less fluid is expelled. Because the contractions of the prostate are much less powerful, the ejaculate dribbles out and pleasurable sensations are felt more internally.

The usual tiredness following orgasm is noticeably reduced.



Male Anatomy Side View

Some men experience prostate orgasm occasionally and unexpectedly. For those practicing the art of Tantric loving, it is a sign that you are learning to keep the muscles around your genitals relaxed even during high arousal and vigorous activity. It is a marker along your road to mastery.

The Non-Ejaculatory Orgasm

By building a high sexual charge and moving it up through your body rather than releasing it through ejaculation you can discover nonejaculatory orgasm. Your whole body can become an orgasmic erogenous zone, with orgasmic sensation in your toes, for example, or intense orgasmic rippling through your entire body rather than just your genitals. There are no limits to how many of these orgasms you can have, with the intensity of each one varying from mild to overwhelming. A nonejaculatory orgasm does not result in any loss of energy. On the contrary, your energy can build indefinitely to higher and higher intensities. You may experience the opening of your higher spiritual centers, specifically your throat, third eye, and crown chakra energy centers. Furthermore, you can build up reserves of sexual energy and use it for other purposes, such as physical healing, spiritual awakening, enhanced creativity, or excellence in science, business, and sports. Any man who learns to do this will gain a serious competitive advantage.

A non-ejaculatory orgasm usually feels different from a regular ejaculation orgasm, although sometimes the sensations that accompany a normal ejaculation are also experienced in the non-ejaculatory variety. That familiar intense pleasure that starts in the vibrating prostate and

typically travels out the end of the penis with the ejaculate instead travels upward along the energy meridians of the chakra centers to the top of your head. As this energy moves, you may experience intense sensations of pleasure throughout your body. These sensations are not the same as the sensation located in the genitals during ordinary orgasm, but they are superb. My body often contracts and jerks involuntarily with the force of this flow of energy. This rush of sensations lasts much longer than a genital orgasm, for example from several minutes up to a timeless, continuous bliss state.

I do love to have an ejaculation, but I do not enjoy the accompanying energetic letdown and loss of desire. After an ejaculation I do not even feel like cuddling—I want to roll over and go to sleep. I experience this depletion whether my ejaculation is involuntary or voluntary, and it gets worse with each passing year. By comparison, a non-ejaculatory orgasm leaves me relaxed, but not tired. I do not lose my capacity to keep or regain an erection. I still have intense desire, which I do not experience as discomfort but rather as vitality and vigor. I bask in an afterglow of high energy, an intensification of sensation, and creative potential. This does not interfere with sleep, because there is a sublime combination of aroused excitement with complete relaxation.

Ejaculation Mastery

“The archer strikes the target—partly by pulling;
partly by letting go.”
—Unknown

With regular lovemaking, there is a steady buildup of sexual excitement to ejaculatory orgasmic release, which usually ends the sexual activity. Tantra sacred sex is high-energy sex. You make love for a period of hours, building higher and higher concentrations of energy, stopping before you let go into ejaculation, relaxing a little, then building excitement again and again. By delaying ejaculation, you accumulate enough sexual energy to open your spiritual centers, plus you last long enough so your lover may experience multiple orgasms.

But don't make the mistake of putting all your effort and attention into simply preventing ejaculation, as I did at first. When your focus is on *not* ejaculating, your mind is still locked on *ejaculation*. Remember the Doer consciousness from Chapter 2? The Doer consciousness only notices the object of your attention. If you focus on “I do not want to ejaculate,” the object of your attention is ejaculation, and you are going to get more of that. Instead, your effort should be positive, on learning to accumulate and then circulate more and more sexual energy. Using your imagination to think about and visualize working with your sexual energy is one of the positive methods you can use to replace the negative

idea of not ejaculating.

Mapping Your Sexual Arousal Process

There are a number of techniques you can use to successfully prolong lovemaking and build a high sexual charge. The first is to create a scale from 1 to 10 for your sexual arousal cycle—one being the lowest level of arousal, and 10, the highest level. Ten does not mean ejaculation, but is the level where you may experience whole body orgasms, profound connection with your lover, and altered states of consciousness. At 10, you may have direct experiences with the Divine.

Ejaculation may take place at any level on the scale and it is important that you know where on your scale ejaculation becomes unpredictable. Unpredictable does not mean imminent. For instance, you might find that any time you get to a seven on your scale you cannot control when ejaculation will take place. One second you are fine and the next second you have lost it. You could last two more minutes or another hour, but you cannot tell which it will be. By the way, do not worry about how your scale compares with anyone else's; the important point is to know your own number.

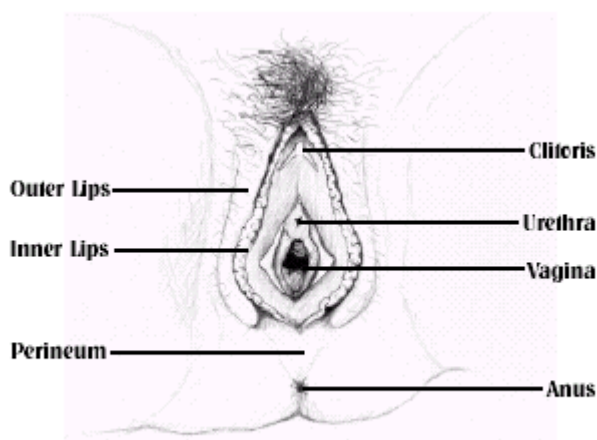
How can you identify this “point of no return” on your scale? Learning about your arousal cycle is a little like potty training. As a young child, at first you did not pay any attention to the signals your body gave that you had to go to the bathroom. In fact, you did not even know that your body was giving you these signals until someone taught you what to look for. Once you knew what you were supposed to do, you became so sensitive to the signals that you could always get to a bathroom on time and avoid embarrassing mistakes.

In a similar way, you may not know what signals your body is giving you that ejaculation is very close. You will not know what to do to delay ejaculation unless you become aware of these signals. What are some of the signs your body uses to tell you how excited, turned on, and close to ejaculation you are?.....

Excerpt from Chapter 9: Freeing the Female Orgasm

“When mom found my diaphragm, I told her it was a bathing cap for my cat.”
—Liz Winston

Women are blessed with an extraordinary capacity for physical pleasure. When we are fully awakened sexually, we can experience a veritable cornucopia of orgasms—genitally and beyond. We have even got a special body part, the clitoris, whose only function is to make us writhe and moan with delight. Why is it then, when nature has kindly endowed us with such intense possibility, that so many of us only ever realize a fraction of our pleasure potential?



Female Anatomy Front View

Quite simply, our heads get in the way. “The mind,” which one workshop participant reproachfully described as “not the friend you think it is,” interferes. Its attitudes, assumptions, and conditioned beliefs are your biggest blockages to sexual fulfillment.

But take heart, you can pass through these mental barriers to emerge fully orgasmic. There are only two things you really need: permission and time—permission *from yourself* to allow your sexuality to blossom, and enough time during lovemaking for your body to become thoroughly aroused.

Permission

“I wrote the story myself.
It’s about a girl who lost her reputation
and never missed it.”
—Mae West

There are a variety of strategies you can employ, on your own and with your partner, to open your mind to “yes”:

1. Accept that *you* create your orgasms.
2. Drop shame and guilt.
3. Cultivate your erotic self.
4. Communicate what you want.
5. Befriend your body.
6. Build your yoni power.

7. Play with self-pleasuring.
8. Welcome your lover's support.
9. Stay focused.

It's Up to You

“The older one grows, the more one likes indecency.”
—Virginia Woolf

First, we women must take responsibility for our own sexual satisfaction. We have to give up the idea that a Prince Charming will come along and do it for us—despite how enticing or preferable romance novels make that seem. Yes, you do want an attentive lover, but no matter how skilled or caring he may be, unless you are willing to allow yourself to surrender to orgasmic pleasure, it will not happen. Although bliss is your birthright, it cannot flow through you if you are tightly trying to stay in control.

To welcome ecstasy, it is also necessary to relearn that your sexuality is a *good* thing, in the face of a culture that constantly tells us the opposite. Despite the progress that's been made since the sexual revolution of the 1960s, a double standard still exists. It's not quite so flagrant, but it's there. Even today, a young man who actively explores sex is an adventurous stud, but a young woman who does the same is a promiscuous slut. A woman who engages lustily in the delights of the body is somehow morally questionable. On an intellectual level, we know that is nonsense. We can tell ourselves quite rationally that we have left behind such outdated thinking, but underneath, in our heart's core, that nasty message still holds too many women hostage. The virgin or whore split is alive, well, and feasting on each of us.

How do you step out from under this ancient yoke? Retrain your mind; make it your tool, not your master. Learn to identify and alter any sex-negative messages you give yourself. For example, notice what you say to yourself about:

- ** Initiating sex.
- ** Asking for what you want in bed.
- ** Your children hearing you make love.
- ** The sex appeal of your body.

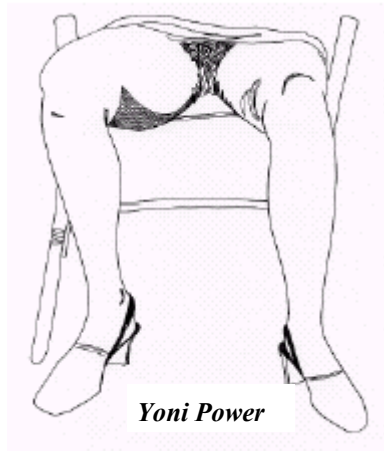
Drop Shame and Guilt

How loud are your voices of shame and guilt? Negative messages can be subtle as well as overt, so be vigilant, and catch those thoughts as they start to damn you, gently release them, and replace them with sexaffirming concepts. Remind yourself that your sexual fulfillment brings benefits to other aspects of your life and to the people around you. Remember that your partner wants you to be satisfied, through and

through. So, for example, if you are like many women who fret about how your lover could possibly want to have his face at your genitals for as long as you need to reach orgasm, replace that thought with the knowledge that female pheromones, male attractants called copulins, are only produced in the vaginal canal. Of course he'd want to have his face there as much as possible—he's chemically programmed for it!

Cultivating the Erotic You

“Good girls go to heaven,
bad girls go everywhere.”
—Helen Gurley Brown



Besides simply substituting sexually expansive messages in place of restrictive ones, you can go a step further and deliberately cultivate your erotic imagination. Everyone has moments of daydreaming—make some of yours a conscious focus on kindling your sexual nature. Indulge in fantasy, imagining all the wonderful things you would like to do with, and to, your lover.....

Excerpt from Chapter 10: Planning and Ritual in Sacred Loving

“The very best impromptu speeches are the ones written well in advance.”
—Ruth Gordon

Your intention is the key to transforming regular sex into sacred sex. Intention affects emotions, energy, and consciousness, which govern how you perceive your lovemaking. You can be engaged in exactly the same actions with your body—deep kissing, hungry licking, wild thrusting—but have vastly different experiences depending on your intention. If you are simply concerned with releasing pent up sexual tension, that is likely all you will get. If you are making love because it’s your Friday night routine, then routine sex is probably in store. If you are filled with the desire to merge wholly with your lover, then you may elevate your lovemaking to holiness. That is the intention of Tantric sex—to unite with your beloved in all ways, and in so doing connect with the divine.

Planning

“Failing to plan is planning to fail.”
—Effie Jones

Planning assists intention. When you want to create a fantastic event, you prepare ahead. You make careful arrangements for cocktail parties, business meetings, touring holidays—your sacred loving time deserves the same attention.

We schedule a lengthy Tantra session once a week. Day and time are slotted into our planners and as soon as that date is set we start getting ready. Couples often say to us, “Doesn’t planning for lovemaking take away its spontaneity?” It could if you orchestrated every detail and held rigidly to that prescribed scenario, but that is not what we are advocating. Approach your Tantra date as you would an intimate dinner party with close friends—select the menu, arrange the setting, consider a few topics for conversation, then bring your guests together and let the evening magically unfold. Sacred loving sessions are similar, you can be spontaneous precisely because you have put thought in beforehand.

When everything you may want for your romantic play is close by, you can relax and go into a loving flow. When you have prepared for different types of activities, you have plenty to choose from to suit exactly how you are feeling in that moment—passionate, tender, playful, quiet, lusty. Remember, sacred loving includes much more than explicit sex. It incorporates a wide variety of intimate, loving connections that are limited only by your imagination. Suggestions for activities follow in this chapter and appear in Chapters 7, 11, and 12.

Here is a short list of elements to include in your loving plan:

1. Location: at home or elsewhere and in which room(s)?
2. Physical properties of the setting: lighting, music, scents, and furnishings.
3. Food and drink: for nourishment and sensual arousal.
4. Clothing: to put on and take off.
5. Loving activities: games, rituals, massage, bathing, dancing, and energy play.
6. Shutting out the world: no phones, no visitors.

Sometimes your planning may be elaborate, at others very simple and open-ended. Always it provides a framework within which your exquisite union can blossom. Consciously preparing for your Tantra date helps build anticipation and excitement, readying you emotionally and energetically for your day of love, plus, if you have become unaccustomed to spending several hours together only as lovers, a basic outline can help relieve anxiety about what on earth to do.

Ritual

The rituals of Tantric loving help you keep focused on your intention of absolute union with your partner, and because ritual acts reach beyond your conscious mind deep into your unconscious, they increase the *power* of your intention.

At first, you may be uncomfortable about deliberately bringing ritual into your sex life. Most likely your participation in rituals has been in the context of an organization—probably a religious organization, but perhaps also in clubs, fraternities, military or sports associations. You may feel that those organizations are the only authorized and valid places for ritual expression. You do not have the right to do it yourself. Because ritual is so powerful, any practice outside formal institutions may also be subconsciously associated with danger and evil—black magic. As well, if your experience with ritual has been solely within a formal framework you probably have not learned how to create any on your own.

In Tantric loving, you learn to associate ritual with pleasure, playfulness, and spiritual awakening. Give yourself permission—it is okay, it is fun as well as profound, and it has great benefits. Ritual helps your consciousness create results. The more you believe, the more likely you are to create the results you want. At first, you may have to suspend your disbelief (just like you do when you watch a movie) in order to practice ceremonial lovemaking, but when you do, because ritual is so powerful, the positive feedback you will get will encourage you to go on.

At the outset of our Tantric practice, we were nervous and shy about

ritualizing our sexuality. Pala, who has a natural ceremonial orientation, most often prepared and led our rituals, but she had to overcome her fear that Al would judge her or refuse to participate. She was afraid he'd think, "What is this crazy woman doing waving incense and chanting? No way am I making a fool of myself." However, fortunately he respected her enough, had a good sense of humor, and a powerful intention of his own for sacred loving to act despite his self-consciousness. Now rituals are second nature to us—a joyous and essential aspect of our loving.

For your practice, begin with the rituals we have included here or borrow some from other cultures: native North American, Asian, and African. Alter them, if you wish, to suit your circumstances, your traditions and your sensitivities. Then when you are feeling more confident, when your imagination has awakened to the possibilities, dare to create your own.

Creating a Temple for Love

When celebrating sacred sex it helps if you create the proper atmosphere. Set up part of your home, bedroom, living room, or den, as a "Temple for Love."



★ Begin by giving each other a warm embrace then proceed in silence to arrange the space you have chosen.

★ Make sure it is tidy—vacuumed, dusted, and general clutter removed. Do not spend more than five minutes cleaning up. If it is messy, straighten up beforehand. This is your time for loving not housework.

★ Soften hard surfaces with beautiful fabric. If there is a TV in the room, hide it under sensual cloth. Better yet, if the TV is in your bedroom take it out, permanently. TV is one of the biggest distractions from each other.

★ Bring in plants or flowers and other beautiful objects that have special meaning for you: pictures, sculptures, and craft pieces. Arrange them artfully around your space.

★ Include plenty of pillows for supporting your bodies in delightful sexual positions.

★ Ensure that the room is warm enough for comfortable nakedness.

★ Pay special attention to the lighting. Drape colored cloth over lamps or use candles, red lightbulbs, dimmer switches and if you have it, firelight. Watching flames of a fire can bring on alpha and theta brain states. Alpha brain waves are associated with relaxation, visualization, and creativity. Theta brain waves evoke deep trance states, sexual ecstasy, shamanic visions, out of body experiences, and other profoundly altered states of consciousness.

★ Aromatize your temple with incense, essential oils, scented candles or fresh flowers. Use scents that you both like.

★ Set out an assortment of music to accompany your moods of love.

★ Arrange close to hand any oils, lubricants, and sex toys you may want to use.

★ Bring in drinks and light snacks.

★ When you have finished, take a few moments to admire the transformation you have wrought.

Arranging your temple should take 20 minutes or less—you have thought about and gathered most items earlier. Move deliberately, and gracefully, with your intention always in mind—to create a beautiful space for sacred loving. Each time you set up a loving temple, make it somewhat different. You want it to be freshly appealing, not a familiar habitat that you no longer really see.....

Excerpt from Chapter 11: Erotic, Relaxing, Healing Touch

“Touch-A, Touch-A, Touch-A, Touch Me”
—Music and lyrics by Richard O’Brien,
from *Rocky Horror Picture Show*

“And when I touch you
I feel happy inside
It’s such a feeling that my love
I can’t hide”
—“*I Want To Hold Your Hand*,”
music and lyrics by John Lennon
and Paul McCartney

Close your eyes and feel:

Sensitive, knowing hands firmly kneading the ache from
your shoulders.

Soft, moist lips gently nuzzling the excitable nape of your
neck.

Strong, loving arms enfolding your grief-shaken body.

Tantalizing fingertips tracing fire up your eager inner
thighs.

Touch, glorious touch, one of the greatest bodily pleasures, is an extraordinary resource for conveying love, relieving stress, and nurturing health. The North American medical community is gradually recognizing what millions of people worldwide already know—touch can heal. Touch Research Institutes lists more than 70 scientific studies that show massage therapy has helped more than 30 types of ailments from asthma to diabetes, high blood pressure to multiple sclerosis, depression to migraine headaches.¹ Responding to the positive effects of the 60 million visits Americans make to body workers every year, major insurance companies are slowly adding massage to their coverage.²

When you are touching and being touched your body secretes endorphins and oxytocin. These powerful chemicals make you feel good and at the same time build the desire for more of that marvelous holding and stroking. You can literally take your lover’s well being into your own hands simply by touching more. Through your touch you can offer comfort, relaxation, arousal, and healing—separately or in imaginative combinations.

One of the most stress-relieving gifts you can give your mate is the solace of touch for comfort’s sake. When Al falls into his insecurities, bombarding himself with self-criticism and self-doubt, Pala’s reassuring words cannot break through those barriers. His doubts are not rational thought that can be set right with ideas, no matter how heartfelt and real her ideas may be. But her “comfort touching,” not sexual, but quiet holding, pressing him to her bosom, stroking his hair, rubbing his back

and legs, massaging his shoulders, makes it through every time. It lets him know he is safe and okay—*he* is all right.

For a man who is really stressed and tired a loving massage is better than sex. Firm, deep pressure in the large muscle groups—neck, shoulders, back, and thighs—relaxes him, allowing him to slow down, slough off the weight of the world, and rest. Giving your man a relaxing deep massage can let him know that you are not always expecting him to perform sexually. Your loving ministrations might lead to arousal but you are not expecting or demanding it. On your Tantric journey it is essential to learn to touch each other without assuming it will lead to sex. Your touch is not a means to an end but a mutual pleasure freely given. When there is no pressure your partner can open and relax and arousal might or might not occur.

In the early days of our Tantric learning, as Pala's sexual appetite was burgeoning and Al was still learning how to delay ejaculation so he could maintain high sexual stamina, Pala would sometimes be eager for sex when Al was worn out. She learned that one way to satisfy her hunger was to thoroughly work Al's body lovingly and sensually but without expectation that her massaging would turn him on. Often, he revived under her unconditional stroking and then, because he was relaxed and energetically open, his interest and stamina intensified. Crucial to his awakening was the fact that her touch was not conveying a demand to do so. The quality of your touch reveals your intention, so, in this, as in all Tantric connection, your intention is to unite with your lover and bring pleasure to you both. You are not caressing him to get something else.

This is true for women as well as men. Affectionate touching without obligation reaches a woman's heart. It makes her feel adored and, more importantly, respected. Sadly, many men have not been on the receiving end of much physical affection as they were growing up and really do not know how to touch a woman. Women can help themselves and their partners if they let go of the expectation that he does. Assume you must teach your man how to touch you and assume, *without judgment*, that because he's not had much previous instruction, the lesson may take awhile. Let him know playfully what you want him to do, with encouragement and love, not a chastisement that makes him feel what he is doing now is wrong. When he does touch you in ways and places you like, give lots of happy feedback, with sounds or body movement or words of appreciation.

Al's advice to women is, "If you are not getting what you want you are probably not asking for it. Most men would give their woman anything if they just know what she wants. They would love to be heroes

and satisfy her through and through.” As a basic starting point, the song “Slow Hand”—“I want a man with an easy touch”—is excellent guidance for any man. The slow tender approach works, whether it is during massage, explicit sex, or an everyday hug.

Most women have body image issues so combining appreciative sounds or words with your touch helps her get out of her thoughts and into her sensations. Tell her you love to touch her and be specific in what you admire about her body. Comment only on what you like—the softness of her skin, the curve of her hip, the shape of her nipples. Never, never be critical—especially about her weight.

Men usually enjoy it when women take the lead and initiate touching. An exception to this general rule is touching in public. Some young men may use public touching as a sign of their power, but because of long-term conditioned behavior, for many men public displays of affection, particularly around other men, can be acutely embarrassing. It can mark a man as soft or a sissy. Do not take it personally and do not challenge your man about it, but instead share with him your own desire for affection. Help him understand that his loving attention to you makes you feel wanted and respected. Begin to slowly acclimate him with small doses of affectionate touching in places and situations where he feels safe.

When a man rejects his woman’s touch, especially if it is a sexual overture in private, it can seem to her that she herself is being rejected and judged. Men, over years of making passes through the teens and beyond, some of which were accepted but many of which were turned down, are accustomed to “no.” They may not like it, but it is familiar. For a woman, being refused when she has taken the bold step of being overtly sexual can be devastating. Feelings of shame and guilt may arise, so it is important to let her know it is not her or her behavior that is unwelcome. It is about you right now, not her, and even though you may not be feeling particularly sexual, you would welcome her affection. Do not berate yourself either—let go of the idea that you should be a “sex machine” and allow yourself to simply enjoy the comfort of touch.

Right now start adding more touch into your life together with simple things like cuddling while you watch TV, holding hands when you go for a walk, embracing in a full body hug—toe to toe, groin to groin, heart to heart—when you depart in the morning or return at night. Also, explore some special touching with the techniques below, either as part of your weekly Tantra date or at another time, just because you love each other and want to feel fabulous.

With all of the marvelous practices discussed here, **the most important point for the “toucher” to remember is to focus on what you are doing.** The beneficial effects of your touch are magnified when you put yourself completely into sending love, or healing or arousal, as the case may be. Your lover deserves your full attention and you will get more out of it too.

Massage

Massages are easy to do as well as fun to give and receive. You do not have to have any training to give your mate a thoroughly satisfying massage, although if you would like more guidance, there are some excellent books, videos, and courses available. You will find some in our reference section.

Giving each other a massage as a first course of sexual play adds to your entire experience. Both partners are able to relax, leave the world behind, and be in the moment together. With massage, a woman’s body begins to awaken for arousal—her erotic side receives the time and attention she needs to “get in the mood.” A man whose body is relaxed so that his energy can flow more freely is able to last much longer.

You can perform massages just about anywhere—bed, floor, couch—but most comfortable for the masseur is a table at about hip height. It is not likely you have a portable massage table at home, but you do have a kitchen or dining table. With firm cushions, a foam mat, or even an air mattress on top covered by a sheet, they make great massage surfaces. If the kitchen or dining rooms do not afford you as much privacy as you would like, move the table into your bedroom.

Give a dry massage without oil, or a wet one with oil. The market is flooded with wondrous potions, lotions, lubricants, and oils—scented, unscented, edible, warming, cooling—take your pick. You can also make your own with a light vegetable oil, such as safflower, sunflower, jojoba, or canola-grapeseed, and add your own essential oils to create a scent you prefer.

This is Al’s refreshing, and lightly spicy recipe, for the massage oil we supply in our lover’s kits at our Tantra weekends:

4 oz. canola oil (or substitute as above)

4 drops YlangYlang essential oil

1–2 drops Black Pepper essential oil

(1 in summer, 2 in winter)

1–2 drops Clary Sage essential oil (1 in winter, 2 in summer)

Whichever products you choose for general body massage, it is best to use water-based lubricants for massaging a woman’s genitals. Other

lubricants may clog her pores and encourage vaginal infection.

Massage Strokes

If you are unsure how to begin to give a massage, there are a few simple strokes you can learn to master easily:

- ✿ Long, smooth, firm strokes following the line of muscle up and down his body.
- ✿ Circular motions, especially at joints.
- ✿ Kneading—slowly and firmly squeezing muscle between fingers and palms of your hands, then letting go and repeating—particularly in large muscle groups like shoulders, back, buttocks, and thighs.
- ✿ Feathering—very light fingertip strokes—primarily for erotic massage, the arousal of skin-to-skin contact.
- ✿ Rocking—with one hand on either side of your partner's body, or a particular part of it, her buttocks for example, gently rock back and forth.

You cannot go wrong by starting out with slow, gentle pressure in your strokes. Ask your partner to tell you if she would like more intensity as you go. The more massages you give each other, the easier it will be to know what is needed through the messages your hands give you. Nevertheless, whenever you are receiving a massage, communicate your desires and sensations with loving requests and appreciative sounds—give your masseur informative and thankful feedback.

Starting Your Massage

An excellent starting point for a relaxing and invigorating massage is the back.

- ✿ Begin at the base of his spine with your palms on his sacrum (just above his tailbone).
- ✿ Inhale.
- ✿ As you exhale slide your hands up his back on either side of his spine.
- ✿ With a firm touch, follow the line of his shoulders out from his neck.
- ✿ Slide your hands down the outer sides of his back, coming to rest again at the base of his spine.
- ✿ Do it again and again and revel in his sighs of pleasure.



- ✿ Move on to his buttocks or shoulders or neck or arms—wherever your hands feel compelled to go.
- ✿ If you are giving your lover a full-body massage, make sure to cover every part of his body—ears, toes, eyes (very softly), fingers—not just the major sections like legs and back. His whole body has skin hunger.....

Excerpt from Chapter 12: Sexual Play

“A kiss is a lovely trick designed by nature to stop speech when words become superfluous.”
—Ingrid Bergman

Tantric loving is serious business. After all it brings you face to face with profound issues such as: “How do I welcome God?” and, “Am I living my life to my full potential?” Because it deals with weighty matters, you might assume that Tantra is solemn, even grave. You may also suspect that even though Tantra includes sex, because it is “spiritual” sex, it is likely sedate—a polite sexuality with much earnest eye-gazing and not lots of juicy bits. Well, you would be partly right. There is much about Tantric loving that is thoughtful and decorous, but the Tantric scope encompasses *all*, uniting seemingly disparate polarities into an integrated whole, so reverence and raucousness, piety and playfulness are equal partners in your lover’s bed. You engage in all sorts of wild and wonderful acts to build your sexual charge then focus your thought to elevate that charge, thus connecting your animal body with your ethereal spirit. In this expansive view, you push your limits, allowing and encouraging each other to be imaginative, vulnerable, and bold.

Perhaps you feel you aren’t innately daring or sexually adventurous—well, the best suggestion we have ever gotten for this self-sabotaging argument is: Make it up! You might not think you are particularly wild but, ask yourself, *if you were*, what would you do? Then do it. You may surprise yourself, and your lover, with your ingenuity. Use the suggestions in this chapter to kick-start your creative process. An effective approach is to each assume responsibility for investigating a different activity and then share what you have learned. Select something that appeals to you and plan how you will include it in your next Tantra date. Take turns from week to week or both pick one treat to contribute. Remember to be flexible as you create your scenario—you are simply setting the stage and providing the necessary props for an inspired improvisation.



Location

In Chapter 10, we outlined elements of creating a sacred space for your Tantric lovemaking. Most likely your love temple will usually be at home and probably in your bedroom, but a change of scene can add excitement and mystery. If you have the privacy, move around from

room to room, christening your tables and countertops, rugs and window seats, infusing every part of your home with the electrical charge of your blissful connection. When our house was being built, we would slip in at night and consecrate specific areas with our fiercely magical mating, until we had covered the entire building. We have continued the practice, regularly blessing every delightful nook and cranny through our ceremonial sexuality. You can feel the love as soon as you step in our door.

Occasionally making the shift to a locale away from home injects the spice of newness into your sacred sex time. Slip off to a nearby motel for a lovers' afternoon rendezvous. Set up a love nest in a tent in your backyard or trade apartments with your friends for the weekend.



Outdoor Romance

Food and Drink

Sex and food are inseparable, or they should be. Palate-pleasing food and drinks are essential elements of extended loving sessions. For one thing, you need them to keep up your stamina, but besides that, their aromas, flavors, textures, and appearance nourish your senses. They also remind you to be grateful for the many bounties of the earth.

Cooking is an erotic experience for us, so sometimes preparing food together is part of our sexual play. Eating definitely is: tenderly feeding each other tasty finger foods; slurping succulent tidbits off each other's bodies; enjoying a formal candlelight dinner with amorous interludes between courses; sharing sacramental dishes during reverent ceremonies.



Love Snacks

If you are not into cooking, order in, buy some frozen gourmet specials, or go minimalist with raw fruits, nuts, and vegetables escorted by intriguing sauces. Whatever your method, be sure to give yourself

the sensual delights that can accompany fueling your body.

Ancient Tantric rituals incorporate food and drink—grain, fish, meat, and wine—and sexual union as sacramental symbols of the five elements. Grains represent earth, fish-water, wine-fire, meat-air, and coitus-space—the all-pervasive element that is part of all the others. In traditional Tantra, various intoxicants were also employed: alcohol and drugs, such as marijuana. They were included as enhancements to lovemaking—aids to alter consciousness, not escape from reality. Moderate consumption of wine or spirits over an evening of high-octane sex is pleasurable and manageable; too much dulls your senses. The same restraint applies to eating—not to your enjoyment of the food—but to the amount you consume....

Excerpt from Chapter 13: Soul Sex Simple Summary

Tantra, sacred sex, is a practical key to unlock your potential for an intimate, passionate relationship. The approaches and exercises you have just read about can bring great meaning to your life, as they have to ours and to hundreds of our students. All that's required now is some effort on your part. You can try as many or as few of the techniques as you want to. Even if you only add daily PC pumping—which doesn't take extra time, just a little discipline—you'll see a noticeable difference. But to receive the maximum benefits you deserve, we suggest you take the following steps as well. They will likely require some shifts in attitudes and behaviors, but you and your relationship are worth it!

Appendix B: List of Exercises and Practices

- Chapter 1: Relationship as Spiritual Practice
 - Important of Relationship Exercise
 - Sorting Our Your Priorities
- Chapter 2: Creating Love
 - Creating a Relationship Vision
 - Step 1: Individual Desires
 - Step 2: Your Shared Picture
 - Step 3: A Symbolic Rendering
 - Creative Tension Exercise
 - Step 1: Your Relationship Vision
 - Step 2: Your Current Reality
 - Step 3: Creative Tension
- Chapter 3: Celebrating the Differences
 - Jumping to a Higher Logical Level Exercise
 - Your Lover as a Mirror Exercise
 - Calling Each Other on “Stuff” Exercise
- Chapter 4: Sex and Spirit: Reuniting Heaven and Earth
 - Sexual Beliefs Questionnaire
 - Sex-Positive Statements
 - Sex-Negative Statements
 - Sharing Your Answers With Your Lover
- Chapter 5: Mastery and Surrender In the Art of Love
 - Heart Talk
 - Heart Talk Steps
 - Heart Talk Example
 - Life Reflection Exercise
 - Discovering and Asking For What You Want In Bed
 - Anatomical Mapping
 - Ask and Ye Shall Receive
 - Masturbating While Your Lover Watches
 - Anal Penetration for Men
- Chapter 6: Be Here Now
 - Stop! Are You In the Moment Now?
 - Time and Space
 - Seeing the for Very First Time
 - Death as Advisor
 - Thought Backtracking
 - Perception Without Naming
 - Enliven Your Senses
 - Loving Body Discovery
 - Deep Belly Breathing
 - Harmonizing Your Breathing
 - Counting Breaths
 - Immersion Exercise
- Chapter 7: Energy Delights

- Grounding Exercise
- Opening the First Chakra
- Opening the Second Chakra
- Opening the Third Chakra
- Opening the Fourth Chakra
- Opening the Fifth Chakra
- Opening the Sixth Chakra
- Seven Chakras Meditation Exercise:
 - Colors and Affirmations
- Hands to Heart
- Merging
- PC Pumping
 - Squeeze and Hold
 - Squeeze and Push
 - Fluttering
 - Back to Front
- Sexual Fire Breath
- The Passion Pump
 - Breathing
 - PC Pump
 - Head Action
 - Moving Energy
- Lovers' Scissors

Chapter 8: Ejaculation Mastery and Male Multiple Orgasm
Masturbation Ceremony for Men

Chapter 9: Freeing the Female Orgasm
Looking at Yourself through the Eyes of a Lover
Masturbation Ceremony for Women

Chapter 10: Planning and Ritual in Sacred Loving
Creating a Temple for Love
The Lovers' Purifying Bath
Honoring Your God and Goddess
Mantras
A Lovers' Ritual

- Purifying
- Relaxing and Energizing
- Harmonizing
- Focusing
- Honoring the Feminine
- Honoring the Masculine

Renewing Your Vows

Chapter 11: Erotic, Relaxing, Healing Touch

Massage

7-Minute Massage

Up and Down

Erotic Massage

Perineum Massage

Anal Massage

Yoni Massage

Lingam Massage

Acupressure

Reiki

About the Authors



Pala and Al have been practicing Tantra since 1987 and teaching since 1997. Hundreds of couples from all over the world have attended their [Tantra weekends](#) because of the emphasis on Tantra in the context of a hot monogamous relationship. They have been featured in magazines, newspapers, radio and TV talk shows in Canada and the US. They live near Ottawa Canada

and have six children and three grandchildren between them. Pala has also produced [Apertio: Tantra Energy Meditations](#), a best selling CD on Amazon.com since publication in 2000.

For more information about Pala Copeland and Al Link visit our biography webpage: <http://www.tantra-sex.com/bio.html>

Take a peek at our Love Nest, our beautiful retreat on the Ottawa River, where time stands still and nature beckons at your doorstep:
<http://www.tantra-sex.com/tantranest.html>

Much to our continued delight and gratitude the many couples who have come to our weekend seminars have been lavish with their praise:

- It was the best thing we have done for ourselves since we said 'I do'.
- We have many fond memories of the workshop, what we learned there has really transformed our lives and the lives of those around us.
- You make miracles happen.
- A wonderful weekend! Delightful, educational, erotic... This is what sex education should be, but isn't. I would suggest Pala and Al's workshop for any couple who wants to expand their love and enliven their sexual relationship. *Dr. Patricia Rockman, BA, M.D., CCFP*

You can read more comments and also see some photos of workshop participants at these webpages:

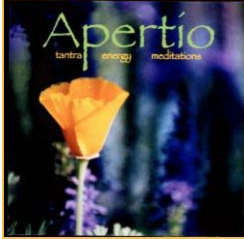
<http://www.tantra-sex.com/testimonial.html>

<http://www.tantra-sex.com/testimonial-photo.html>

Links to More Sacred Sex Resources

[Apertio: Tantra Energy Meditations](#)

Compact disc, by Pala Copeland and Jeff Davies



“Apertio is lovely, a doorway to deeper pleasure and peace, a constantly available guide to energy stimulation and focusing. Pala Copeland, as guiding goddess in the flesh, has fashioned inner doorways to the tantric energy states, ones that are opened in one individual and then shared lovingly with another. A beautiful mix of spoken guided words and peaceful music. Overall the CD gives off a feeling of a very empowered Pala, sharing her discoveries.”

Paul Ramana Das Silbey

Composer, Muscisan, and Tantra Teacher

[Sex Toys](#)

Today there are an amazing variety of sex toys and sexual aids for men and women. In fact, so many that your choices can sometimes seem overwhelming. Use our free **Guide to Sex Toys** (which also includes links to products) to help you decide which toys are right for you. You can view it in html or download a PDF file.

HTML: <http://www.tantra-sex.com/sextoyguide.html>

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Webpage: <http://www.tantra-sex.com/erotic-books.html>

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At our online **Videostore** you'll find a large selection of videos about sexuality, spirituality, and personal growth—everything from entertainment to sex education. Some topics include: sex guides for couples, oral sex, erotic dancing,

tantric sex, using sex toys, spirituality and healing, meditation, relationships and body work.

Webpage: <http://www.tantra-sex.com/erotic-videos.html>

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When you subscribe to our Tantra mailing list you'll be informed of new developments at **4 Freedoms Tantra**, for example: upcoming workshops, special offers, articles and books published by Pala Copeland and Al Link, a tantric exercise or two and "What's happening in the world of Tantra" on and off the Internet.

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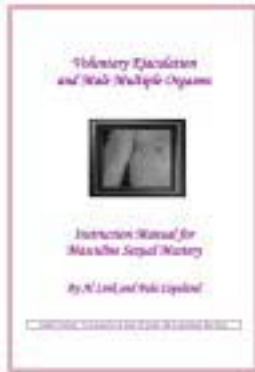
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