

Video #1 Script

Low Libido Isn't a You Problem- It's a Culture Problem

If you've been trying to figure out why you don't want sex and you keep landing on, "there must be something wrong with me but I don't know what it is" this video is for you.

Maybe you've spent hours googling "causes of low libido in women", or talking to your doctor, or trying to find magic libido pills online, or researching how menopause impacts desire, or trying to spice things up with lingerie, or maybe just making yourself do it because your husband is a good guy and sex is apparently good for your marriage.

But underneath all of it is that sinking feeling that something is wrong with you. That you're broken somehow. And that's a lonely feeling. Especially if you've tried all the things and nothing has worked. And it happens whether you used to like sex and now don't or you just never have,

I get it. That was my story for years. And I thought I was the only one.

I'm Janna Denton-Howes. I work with women and men and couples who love each other, but sex feels stressful, confusing, and is sometimes non-existent. As a Marriage Coach, I specialize in helping heterosexual individuals and couples in which the woman has the lower desire for sex. Partly because that was my experience and partly because it's the most common sexual challenge heterosexual couples are facing in this time of history. And you'll see there is a reason for that.

For years, I struggled with not wanting sex. I blamed myself. I felt like a bad wife. I tried everything I could find and nothing worked. All it did was make me feel more ashamed and more confused and more broken.

So if you're in that spot, I get it. I remember that anxiety and the pressure. And I want to walk you through something today that I wish someone had told me years ago.

Here's what you've probably heard about low libido:

It's your hormones.

It's your stress.

It's your relationship.

It's your trauma.

It's your medications.

It's your exhaustion.

The cause of low libido is framed as something wrong with your personal health that is then impacting your arousal- the physical system in your body that prepares you for sexual activity (aka the tingly feelings down there).

But what if desire for sex has nothing to do with your personal health or even arousal and has everything to do with having sex worth wanting.

And to be really clear, your personal health matters. Making sure your hormones are balanced or that you're managing your stress levels or that you are on the right medications are important for your happiness and living a good life. But they are not the cause of you not wanting sex.

Because even if you did figure out the missing puzzle piece and suddenly felt horny more often, it wouldn't last because, again, humans only desire and want things in the long run that add to our lives, that bring us some joy, happiness, relaxation, satisfaction or connection.

So the problem is, we're asking the wrong question. Instead of "Why isn't this individual woman wanting sex? What's wrong with her?", we should be asking "Why aren't women having sex that they want?"

The first question blames you. Which puts you on a never-ending, exhausting, lonely hunt to fix yourself. And when you can't figure it out, often women will resign to the fact that they just aren't sexual.

And after working with thousands of women just like you, I can solidly say, that is not the truth.

So, what's the solution? Why aren't women having sex that they want?

Why are women having sex that feels uncomfortable, inauthentic, painful, full of pressure and obligation, unsatisfying and, frankly, often miserable. Sure, sometimes it feels physically good once you get started but the overall experience is not enough to continue to want it.

The culprit is culture. A culture that has taught both men and women really harmful messages about entitlement and obligation.

As women, we're taught what I call the "Good-Woman Script". This is the very specific and rigid way that girls and women are expected to behave through cultural messages delivered through the media, our parents, misinformed members of faith communities, and friends and family.

This script teaches us to:

- Put everyone else's needs above our own.
- Be responsible for men's feelings and experiences.
- Prioritize productivity over pleasure.
- Keep the peace.

Be nice.

Be agreeable.

Be desirable to men but don't have desires.

Be ashamed of our own bodies.

Be nice to look at.

Always be available for our husband's touches, looks or comments.

And... not to be difficult.

This script is so ingrained in us that we don't even know it exists. But it informs so much of our actions.

This script trains you to override yourself.

To ignore what your body is saying.

To perform instead of feel.

To tolerate instead of expecting comfort and safety.

To manage other people's emotions instead of noticing your own.

So you aren't learning about yourself and what feels good and it doesn't feel right to express what you need or say "no".

So you have sex that doesn't work for you which leads you to avoid it, which anyone would do, and then you are diagnosed with having "low libido".

And, meanwhile, your husband has been taught, by culture, his own version of these toxic messages which puts him in the Man Box, a term coined by Tony Porter.

There, he is expected to:

Never feel, never need anything and stay in control.

To be the initiator, the leader and the one who knows.

To be valued through his performance.

To be validated by his partner.

And to avoid anything that looks like weakness.

So while you are taught to override yourself, he's taught to override obstacles- he pursues and you accommodate.

And then in a world where he isn't allowed to feel anything, sex becomes the only place to experience connection and emotion which leads to a tremendous amount of pressure on you to provide him those needs through your body.

And then sex isn't about mutual fun anymore. It's about duty and obligation.

So when you put this all together, it makes complete sense that you don't want sex. It's not because you are broken or that you're not a sexual person.

It's because culture has created an environment that has led to you not having sex worth wanting. You are simply not looking forward to something that doesn't work for you. And that's human.

When sex is shaped by obligation, pressure, emotional labour, performance or the fear of disappointing someone- of course you don't want it.

And that is why we are seeing so many women in your position. It's happening on a large scale because it's a societal problem.

The great thing is that now that you see it and can stop putting your focus and energy on trying to "fix" yourself, your attention can move towards reclaiming the essential elements of desire that culture has disconnected you from. Not so that you can get your husband off your back but so that you can, if you want, experience the benefits of a healthy sex life, for you.

In the next video, I'll talk about what a healthy sex life can look like. What it is, what it isn't, so that you can start to understand what possibilities await you, if you want it.

Video 2 Script

Why the Sex We Were Taught Doesn't Create Desire

Welcome back to video 2. In video 1, we talked about the real reason why so many women, like yourself, don't want to have sex. We explored why it's not about personal health but rather because of the cultural messages that both you and your husband have been taught.

You don't want sex because you aren't having sex worth wanting! It's not your fault, there isn't anything wrong with you. In fact, your body is responding appropriately to an environment not conducive to your relaxation, nourishment and enjoyment.

Before we get into how to feel desire again or for the first time and create a sex life worth wanting, we need to examine what sex is and what sex isn't.

Let me begin by saying that according to my professional experience over the last 9 years, most of what couples are having can't be classified as sex as it doesn't meet the requirements of a true sexual experience.

What most couples are having is the Intercourse Model that follows a playbook of experiences defined by culture as “sexual”.

The 2 main features are: 1) the penis goes in the vagina and 2) it ends in male orgasm. Outside of that, a few other things are deemed acceptable- and you know them well. Things involving the genitals, breasts, bum and mouth are okay if used before the main event, intercourse. These acts are traditionally called “foreplay”.

The idea that “sex equals intercourse,” and that intercourse ends when the man orgasms, didn’t come out of nowhere. It has very deep historical roots.

For most of human history, the only socially acceptable reason to have sex was procreation. Sex was about creating children- specifically, legitimate children for inheritance and lineage. And because pregnancy requires a man’s orgasm, his orgasm became the centre of the entire experience.

For centuries, many misconstrued religious teachings framed sex as a duty inside marriage, with wives expected to satisfy their husbands. And legally, only penile–vaginal penetration “counted” as sex which meant that anything centered around women’s pleasure wasn’t even recognized.

Then later, Victorian culture taught women to be pure, modest, accommodating, and basically uninterested in sex. Men were taught to need sex, and women were taught that meeting his needs was part of being a “good wife.”

And in more modern times, porn took that same old script and just magnified it. Penetration at the centre, male pleasure as the goal, with women performing and being harmed in the process.

So when you put those layers together you end up with the version of sex which is constantly perpetuated in the Media Sex Formula which makes up the sex scenes we consume in TV shows and movies today.

You’ve seen it a thousand times:

kissing → groping → clothes off → intercourse → male orgasm → everyone’s happy.

And because we’ve seen this formula so many times, we end up believing that this is what sex is.

But is it?

Why do we have sex. What is the point of it? Right now, you may be having sex to make your husband happy. To put him in a better mood. To do your duty as a wife. And while I completely

understand why you do that and it makes sense, that is not sex. Sex is not one-sided. And that is not what I'm here to help you want more of.

I'm here to help you want sex that is worth wanting.

So let's put him aside, for now, and talk about the components of true sex.

First off, I believe the only purpose of true sex is fun. To leave this difficult world for just a brief period and explore your senses in a relaxed and comfortable setting with someone you love. In order for that to happen, the opposite of the Intercourse Model needs to take place.

It can't have any goals.

It must be a mutual experience.

There needs to be an ongoing dialogue about consent.

A curious attitude is super helpful.

And nobody's pleasure can ever impeach on someone's comfort.

Sex is something you create together, not something you perform for someone or even something that you do.

Anything else is not true sex.

So let's come back to your husband because he is part of this equation.

I know what you might be thinking:

"That sounds great... but my husband would never want this kind of sex."

I hear you. Men have been conditioned to believe that the Intercourse Model is what gives them validation that you love and want them. Many think that it's the only way to feel connected. But connection is a two-way street. You can't have a connection if one person isn't feeling connected. And connection definitely can't happen if the other person is uncomfortable, in pain, or just not enjoying themselves.

Regardless of what he likes or not, it is everyone's basic human right to feel comfortable, safe and 100% in their pleasure during a sexual experience. This is your body and you get to decide what is okay and not okay. This is so basic it's what we teach kids in kindergarten.

And while I hope he'll do the work on his end to be able to explore true sex with you, I'm only talking to you right now. And I know, without hesitation, that without making the switch away from the Intercourse Model, authentic desire isn't possible.

So it begins, here, with you making the decision about what you want to do with your body and finding a model that will actually work for you beyond just doing it out of duty and obligation.

To recap before we move to video 3. The reason why you don't want sex isn't because you are broken or "just not sexual". It's because of the "Good-Woman Script" and the Man Box Messages that you and your husband have been impacted by which has led to having sex not worth wanting.

The Intercourse Model perpetuated by the Media Sex Formula even further made sex not worth wanting for you because it doesn't take female pleasure into account, is full of pressure and lacking the essential ingredients for authentic desire.

What are those ingredients, you may ask? That is what I'll cover in the last video, video 3 where I'll walk you through my framework called Your Desire Blueprint. I'll see you there.

Video 3 Script

The Three Ingredients of Real Desire

Welcome to Video 3 of the Low Libido Myth video series. My name is Janna Denton-Howes and I'm a low libido expert. So far, I hope I've adequately convinced you that not wanting sex isn't a you problem, it's a cultural problem.

It happens to so many women because culture disconnects us from ourselves and the essential ingredients of desire which I'll be talking about today.

We're taught that wanting sex comes from arousal- those horny feelings that seem to come out of nowhere. That's why the main focus of fixing women's low libido tends to be around personal health issues.

But even if you have perfectly balanced hormones and live a stress-free life, if you aren't having sex worth wanting, it won't last and you'll end up back in the avoidance cycle. As humans, we want things that give something to our lives. And if your sex life is simply about doing your wifely duty, it makes sense that it would feel like a chore and become something that you dread.

So let's put arousal aside for now and talk about how to create a sex life worth wanting. Something that you would actively choose to experience.

Before we get started, a warning. Because culture has worked very hard to disconnect you from these elements, when I start talking about them, it may feel a little bit uncomfortable or it may feel like you are doing something wrong.

This simply means that culture has done a good job convincing you throughout your life that your enjoyment and experiences don't matter. It simply means that the "Good-Woman" script is real and now you are facing it with courage because you don't want to live like that anymore.

Okay, now that we all are on the same page- here are the 3 essential elements of a sex life worth wanting.

SPP

Safety
Play and
Pleasure

A reminder, if any of these words make you squeamish, it's because you've been taught that, as a woman, you shouldn't have or want these things.

Let's start with safety.

First off, I'm assuming that you aren't experiencing overt physical, emotional or sexual abuse in your relationship. That said, safety is a very big spectrum and I've found that, because of culture, most women who I support are not getting 100% safety.

They still feel subtly coerced, pressured, or guilted into having sex. They are avoiding getting undressed in front of their husbands for fear of being oogled at, they are hearing comments about their bodies that make them uncomfortable and tolerating touches that they don't 100%, enthusiastically want.

If we are looking at low libido as an individual woman's issue, we would say that there is something wrong with her that she doesn't like all of that. That perhaps it's her trauma or that she is too inhibited. But what's really happening is that she doesn't like it. She has preferences like any other human being.

If something makes you uncomfortable, you don't need to know why. It just does. And it needs to stop. You understand your body the best.

Many women I serve don't like their breasts being grabbed or their bums slapped or even being called sexy. And that's okay. Trying to make yourself like something that you don't will shut your desire down immediately.

In order to move into pleasure and play, you need to feel 100% safe and free. Otherwise, you will always be on the defensive and on the lookout for how to protect yourself from unwanted looks, comments or touches.

Now let's talk about pleasure. I know that this word can feel icky. The word "pleasure" has been associated with female sexual pleasure in our culture and that has been deemed wrong. If you pursue this you are a slut, a whore, lose, easy... all sorts of lovely things.

I have chosen to reclaim the word pleasure and I define it as sensations in the body that are slightly more positive than neutral. So when I say pleasure, I'm not necessarily talking about mind-blowing orgasms or any of the arched-back, heavy panting variety. I'm talking about nice, enjoyable feelings that may or may not involve your genitals.

Because of the Intercourse Model and the Media Sex Formula, we have a very narrow understanding of what is possible when it comes to pleasure. And if we don't like those things in that tiny little box, apparently you're sexually broken.

This is tragic because it bars so many women from the unlimitable experience of pleasure. Pleasure that can be obtained through your 5 senses- touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing. For example- the cozy, warm, comforting experience of resting your head on your husband's chest and listening to his heartbeat or laying in bed next to each other and feeling the smooth texture of the inner part of his arm. Or having your head scratched. Or even humming together.

These are all pleasurable sensations that are legitimate sexual experiences. Pleasure can't be placed in a hierarchy with any more important than the other. In order to create sex worth wanting, all forms of pleasure must be welcomed within the context of safety.

And lastly, play. Safety provides the structure, pleasure is your intention and play is the approach. It's how you go about exploring pleasure. Play means that there are no goals to achieve- it's an ongoing experimentation, exploration and learning process. And it's supposed to be fun!

I know that in our culture, we scoff at play for adults. We're supposed to be productive and selfless. But what if we need play and fun? What if that's the point of sex in the first place? To shut out the world for a bit and explore pleasure together with safety at the forefront so that it's a great experience for everyone? Does that sound like sex worth wanting? Something that would add to your life rather than take from it?

As someone who experiences this, I want to let you know, it's pretty great. It's not something that you have to show up ready for with all the sexual energy and positive vibes. It's something that can restore you, nourish you and give you energy, creativity and connection.

And to circle back to arousal- which everyone says is the necessary part of wanting sex- I say, we don't need it! It may come or not during your exploration but it's okay to simply experiment

with sensations in the body that are slightly more positive than neutral with no goals to achieve. If orgasms happen, great! If they don't, great too!

Just like with any opportunity to play, it's very helpful to have a time dedicated to it. This isn't scheduling the Intercourse Model. This is setting aside some intentional time to explore together with no goals. In my program, Doing It Together, I teach something called an Exploration Date, so that you don't need to do the dreaded initiation dance or go months or years waiting to feel horny enough.

With SPP on board, safety, pleasure and play, you can design an experience of sex worth wanting.

Now, I'm guessing you may be thinking, but how can I even begin to move from the Intercourse Model to true sex with safety, pleasure and play.

I feel uncomfortable with my body, I feel shame, I don't know what feels good, I don't know how to communicate this to my husband, I don't know how he'll react to this new information, I don't want to hurt his feelings.

I absolutely get it. This is a big leap. Which is great news because it means that there is so much to change that doesn't involve changing you. Which means, you aren't broken. This isn't a you problem. It's the whole structure of intimacy that doesn't work.

If you are looking for help to implement what I've shared in these videos and how to explain things to your husband, I will put my current offers on this page. You can start with a short workshop or more involved group coaching programs. I offer support for women and also for husbands who want to learn how to create safe spaces for their wives. I also have a popular podcast if you want to listen to more. I'll provide all the links below and on my website, www.jannadentonhowes.com

If you would like to send a quick hello or just let me know what helped you in this video series, please email me at janna@jannadentonhowes.com. Only I will read your emails and I really love making this a 2-way conversation.

It's been a pleasure supporting you in this format and I hope I get to speak to you soon.

Bye for now,
Janna