

Checking In with My Sexuality Today

Let's begin by identifying how you feel about your sexual life as it is right now. After completing the *Awaken Your Sexuality Workbook*, you will be encouraged to return to this assessment to see how your feelings have changed.

Rate the following statements on a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 indicating no agreement and 5 indicating very strong agreement.

1. I am actively engaged in a form of recovery, such as therapy, a support/process group, Twelve Step group, harm reduction group, etc.

0 1 2 3 4 5

2. I have experienced a substance use disorder, eating disorder, compulsive or addictive behaviors with spending, gambling, screen time, self-harm, work, relationships, sex, or something else that caused harm to myself and/or my loved ones.

0 1 2 3 4 5

3. I believe that recovering sexually is important for my well-being.

0 1 2 3 4 5

4. It seems like it has been a long time since I felt genuine sexual pleasure, or maybe I never have.

0 1 2 3 4 5

5. As a child, I felt afraid to ask questions about sex or gender because it seemed like there could be negative consequences. As an adult, I feel avoidant or nervous talking about sexuality or gender.

0 1 2 3 4 5

6. I have survived sexual trauma: sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, or another form of sexual violence, such as workplace sexual harassment.

0 1 2 3 4 5

7. I am not comfortable having sexual contact without alcohol or another substance.

0 1 2 3 4 5

8. Sex with my partner(s) often doesn't feel good or gives me intrusive thoughts and/or memories.

0 1 2 3 4 5

9. I haven't had a new sexual partner since I started recovering, and it makes me nervous to try again.

0 1 2 3 4 5

10. I have experienced a relationship that diminished my self-worth and made me feel undesirable.

0 1 2 3 4 5

11. My solo sex, or masturbation, is unsatisfying. Sometimes I avoid touching and exploring my own body.

0 1 2 3 4 5

12. I have shame about how I have behaved sexually.

0 1 2 3 4 5

If you answered almost all of the above with zeros, please feel free to put this workbook down and do something self-congratulatory! The rest of us still have plenty of work to do to honor our painful experiences, unravel negative beliefs about our sexual selves, and nourish our pleasure.

What we offer here is a gentle exploration of the ways sexuality can be a positive force in your life. In part 1, you will get reacquainted with your body, your feelings, and your memories, and you will consciously engage with your experience of desire and pleasure. In part 2, you will revisit your history and gain deeper understanding of how your sexual self has come to be and what changes you are making now. In part 3, you will practice articulating what you want, like, and dislike, and you will explore your current beliefs and values about sex, all with an eye toward your own pleasure. In part 4, you will develop the skills of connection and intimacy with yourself and others.

You do not have to eliminate your fear in order to be honest about your sexual feelings. Courage is acting honestly in spite of fear, knowing that the rewards of authentic self-knowledge will carry you forward on your journey of change. These rewards have a rhythm and momentum all their own—all your own.

So take courage. Please treat yourself with gentleness and patience and allow yourself to move at your own pace.



Excerpt from *Awaken Your Sexuality Workbook*.

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