

No One “Gives” Anyone an Orgasm

By Michael Castleman

Many people have difficulty having orgasms, especially during partner sex. Only 25 percent of women are consistently orgasmic during intercourse. An estimated 5 to 10 percent of men have trouble with orgasm. Their lovers often make an erotic project of “giving” them fabulous orgasms—and wonder how to do that.

On the one hand, the wish to “give” great orgasms is laudable, especially for men who hope to “give” them to women. In the Western world, until the early-20th century, sex was something for men to enjoy, and women to tolerate. Men “took” sex from women. Women were considered merely fleshy receptacles for men’s lust. Many people believed that women were unable to experience sexual pleasure, so men had no responsibility to provide it.

Today, we know that women are just as capable of sexual pleasure as men are, and that good lovemaking involves both lovers taking turns receiving and giving erotic enjoyment. Compared with how men felt a century ago, the wish to “give” women orgasms represents sexual progress.

But no one “gives” anyone else an orgasm.

Orgasms: Like Laughter

Orgasms emerge from deep inside us when conditions are right. Comedians can tickle our funny bones. But they don’t “make” us laugh. They *allow* us to. They create the conditions that encourage us to produce laughter from deep within ourselves.

Orgasms are similar. They, too, emerge from deep within us when conditions are right. For most people, the conditions that encourage orgasms include: trust, comfort, relaxation, love, and whole-body massage that eventually focuses on tender caresses of the genitals.

Lovers create the physical and emotional context that allow orgasms to happen. A lover can be trustworthy. A lover can help you relax. A lover can caress you the way(s) you enjoy, the way(s) that allow you to dive deep enough into your own sexuality and sexual fantasies to produce your own orgasms.

A lover can also destroy the conditions that allow orgasm by being untrustworthy and causing grief instead of relaxation and comfort.

But lovers don't "give" each other orgasms. Each of us is responsible for our own orgasms. We produce them ourselves.

How to Make Erotic Requests

That's why it's so important for lovers to tell one another what they enjoy, what turns them on. Of course, this is often not easy. Here are some suggestions:

- No one is a mind-reader. Forget all the romantic Hollywood nonsense about knowing instinctively which erotic moves your lover wants. Being in love doesn't confer magical powers that allow people to read each other's sexual minds. Your lover *doesn't* know what turns you on unless you say so.
- You don't have to be didactic. You don't have to say: I love having my nipples sucked gently, but I hate having them squeezed, pinched, or bitten. Instead, when your lover does something you enjoy (or close to it), just say "yes" or "ahhh." When your lover's moves don't thrill you, simply remain silent. Most lovers quickly provide more of what elicits a "yes" and less of what greets them with silence. Over time—usually a month or two—you can get a lot more of what you want, and less of what you don't, simply by saying "yes" and/or "ahhh."
- Review sex afterwards. It's often difficult to direct a lover's moves while you're in the throes of lovemaking. Even "yes" or "ahh" can be difficult. But afterwards, it's often easier to comment. Begin with compliments. Highlight what you enjoyed, and ask for more of it. For example: "Remember when you were giving me oral and you circled my clit with out your tongue? That was great. I'd love that every time."
- Be positive about negatives. If a lover does anything you really can't stand, feel free to say so, but give it a loving spin. List a few moves you enjoy, then criticize the one you don't. For example: I really love the way you stroke my

penis and suck me, but when you squeeze my balls, it kinda hurts. Can we leave that out from now on?

- Be experimental. As marvelous as sex can be, the same old moves can get boring after a while. You might try a new place, for example, a romantic weekend getaway. You might try candles, music, or sex toys.
- Be patient. It takes some people—both men and women—quite a while to work up to orgasm. Sometimes, it's situational. If you're feeling anxious, tired, ill, or unhappy about your relationship or sex, it can take longer than usual. But some people always take quite a while. That's just who they are. That's fine. If your lover takes what you consider to be a long time, or if he or she has ever apologized for "taking so long," reassure the person that you're there for them, no matter how long it takes. Invite them to relax and focus on their own erotic feelings, not on how impatient they imagine you to be. The anxiety people feel about thinking that they take too long actually *interferes* with orgasm ability. So be patient, and tell your lover you're patient. That should help with their orgasms. (Vibrators often help people have orgasms more quickly.)

If you incorporate these suggestions into your lovemaking, your lover should feel comfortable, relaxed, trusted, accepted, and loved enough to have orgasms. But remember, you don't "give" orgasms. You're the catalyst. You help create the conditions that allow them to emerge.

The question is not: How can I give my lover wonderful orgasms? The question is: What can I do to help my lover relax, feel accepted, trusting, comfortable, and loved so that his or her orgasms will emerge?