

“Feeling It:”

Links between elements of compassion and sexual well-being.

THE GIST: Several components identified with compassion were measured, including mindfulness, compassionate attitudes, and compassionate behaviors. These were compared to measures of sexual well-being including sexual harmony, sexual frequency and orgasm consistency. Women’s sexual health positively correlated to husband’s relational compassionate attitudes (accessibility, responsiveness, and engagement) when investigated at a single point in time. Also, when compassionate behaviors (forgiveness & gratitude) increased, so did sexual well-being - this was true over several points in time. This was different from men, as their sexual well-being consistently correlated to compassionate behaviors from their wives, whether just at one point in time or even when measured over the two years that the study was conducted.

THE TAKEAWAY: An important element of maintaining sexual satisfaction over time in a marriage is to engage in compassionate behaviors of forgiveness towards and gratitude for your spouse. A simple ‘thank you’ or an ‘I forgive you’ really can go a long way. While women associated attitudes most strongly with sexual well-being at initial study, it was compassionate behaviors that really stayed relevant in the long run.