

## Episode 018 Transcript

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### **How to Take your Intimate Life from Basic to Simply Great**

Meredith: Hey there and welcome to episode eighteen of the Simply Great Relationships podcast. We're so glad you could join us today. I'm Meredith Silversmith and this is Marina Voron and today, we are talking about "How to take your intimate life from basic to simply great". It's a good topic. Near and dear to Marina's heart especially.

Marina: Yes.

Meredith: Today, we're gonna be covering how you know when your intimate life becomes too routine, how being stuck in an intimate rut affects the rest of the your relationship, why who initiates matters and that's a big one, and how to take your intimate life from basic to great. So, some good topics we're gonna cover today. Make sure you stay with us until the very end because we've got a great bonus for you and we'll tell you how to get it.

Marina: Alright. So, I'm super excited for today.

Meredith: I know you are!

Marina: So, what does it look like when your love life and your intimate life get too routine?

Meredith: Boring, right?

Marina: Yeah.

Meredith: Boring, very little intimacy, it's really just about the sex and the sort of mechanical sense.

Marina: Mhmm!

Meredith: Not a lot of spark or excitement. How would you describe it?



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Marina: Yeah! It's too much buffet sex, not enough gourmet sex. And it's also same place, same time, same position. There isn't a whole lot of exploration, there isn't a whole lot of fun, there isn't a whole lot of attunement, there isn't a whole lot of connection. It's more to check the box as opposed to really get enjoyment out of it. It's predictable, it's a limited repertoire, you're doing a limited amount of stuff that's all the same. It's almost like your love life turns into pumpkin spice latte of sexual experiences.

Meredith: The "PSL". We know it's PSL season.

Marina: Yeah.

Meredith: And everyone's on that but you don't wanna be basic.

Marina: No!

Meredith: You don't want a basic PSL love life. You want a simply great one! I don't know the comparison would be.

Marina: For me, it would be like, I don't know, there's a coffee shop that I really love in the city that I always tell you about.

Meredith: Oh, yeah!

Marina: And they have this draft latte that's like on the nitro and it's like amazing and it's like having it it's so frothy and rich and it's like such an experience to have it vs. a pumpkin spice latte. You know what I mean?

Meredith: Yeah!

Marina: That's what I want you to have.

Meredith: Alright! So, there you go! So, Marina's gonna help us today. She's gonna help us learn how to take it from pumpkin spice latte to the draft latte at the coffee shop in the city.

Marina: Yeah! Colombe!

Meredith: There you go! So, tell us Marina, how does being stuck in an intimate rut affect the rest of the relationship?

Marina: The first thing that comes to mind and the first thing I hear couples talk about when they come in and talk about this is it's just like it creates a lot of frustration that trickles into all areas of your relationship. You know, frustration is one of those things that's hard to contain in its segmented little compartment. So, when you're experiencing that sexual frustration, we're not always super good at being like "ding (3x)! That's the one! That's the box that's not being checked off for me!". It's like we become just more reactive and irritable across the board and it can cause you to be moody for no reason.

Meredith: Yeah!



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Marina: You know, just a lot of aggravation, snappiness.

Meredith: That makes sense. I know, something I hear from a lot of my couples is almost this feeling of like once that “goes”, right? Like “once the sex life goes”, then, they can start to question fit and compatibility as a couple. Question the relationship as a whole because their intimate relationship isn’t where it used to be or where they’d want it to be. That’s something I’ve noticed.

Marina: Mhmm! I think going along with that, it’s like this feeling of almost resigning to a mediocre relationship. Giving in these notions of “Oh, well, this is just what married life is like.”, “Oh, well, this is just what sex after kids is like.” It’s like that Debbie Downer like, “Well, this is just what it’s like” and you’re stuck in this place that you know isn’t working for you and most likely for your partner but you almost are like accepting of it.

Meredith: Yeah like it’s normalized. That’s what I would think, it gets normalized. And especially like in the media. We talk about that sometimes. Like the messages that are portrayed in the media and sort of the societal joking, half joking messages and like on the sitcoms on TV. You know, it’s like this message that’s put out there that isn’t necessarily true. It’s not necessarily normal. It maybe common but that doesn’t mean that it’s normal and the only way to live to have sort of the predictable, boring as Marina said, buffet sex life.

Marina: Yeah because I think, actually, long-term relationship, you have more opportunity to experiment, to broaden your repertoire, to really tap into fantasies, to do all that good stuff but the social narrative seems to be so the opposite of that. And I think the unfortunate thing is people buy into it and then they’re just like “Oh, this is what it’s supposed to be. I’m not supposed to have a hot sex life after 10 years”. I’m here to tell you today, you can, are allowed to and will!

Meredith: There you go!

Marina: So, let’s switch gears a little bit and talk about, because this is something I hear a lot of couples talk about and a lot of couples come in with, initiating. I think, one of the biggest impasses and a lot of the areas where couples get stuck is with initiating. So, let’s talk about why who initiates and how things are initiated matters.

Meredith: Yeah. I mean, I guess what, I tend to see when it comes up as an issue is that one person always initiates, right? It’s always one person’s job and that that can really lead them down the path of feeling like a lot of different things. They can feel resentful, they can feel like very responsible like it’s entirely on them where they get the blame if sex happens because they initiated it, when sex doesn’t happen it’s because they didn’t initiate it. Everything’s on them. And then they’re not getting that reciprocal interest from their partner so they can feel kind of not rejected but like not desired, not loved, like it’s a one-sided interest which is really not ideal.

Marina: Yeah! And it’s almost like the more you are locked into roles and kind of un-polarize each other, totally opposite ends of the spectrum of like initiator-recipient or I don’t know what you title the other person. It’s rigid. It’s not fluid, it’s not flexible. A lot of the richness of intimacy comes from there being a lot of flexibility and open-mindedness and not this very narrow clear cut role definition.



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Meredith: Mhmm!

Marina: Another thing that matters about who initiates is that it can make the initiator feel less desired and discouraged and feeling like “Well, if my partner wanted me, they would initiate because I know I initiate because I want my partner”.

Meredith: Yeah! Like the meaning they put on the lack of action.

Marina: Yeah and that brings up insecurity, self-doubt like the “why am I not good enough?”. All those really hard to reconcile feelings that again, contribute to the snappiness, the shortness, the frustration, the irritability. But that can be a really, really shitty message to internalize, really impactful message to internalize that your partner doesn’t want you or doesn’t find you as attractive.

Meredith: Yeah! That would be very hurtful. And I’m just thinking like another dynamic that plays out in that case is one person, you know, we talk about power and power differentials in relationships, if one person’s initiating all the time, that means the recipient holds 100% of the powers to whether or not sex is gonna happen.

Marina: Mhmm!

Meredith: Right? So, you sort of end with more opportunities for one person to be rejected than the other.

Marina: Yeah! Definitely! Also, the person on the receiving end, for them, again, they’re not in an easy position either. It’s not like the initiator is just being vulnerable all the time and the other one’s the meanie. For them, what I hear is they can feel really suffocated, really smothered, really overwhelmed in a very genuine way, very overwhelmed and have this, this is where they self-doubt and questioning comes in of like “Why am I not feeling as sexual? Why am I not, why can’t I meet these sexual demands or expectations or why are we not on the same page? Why am I not feeling how I’m supposed to feel in this relationship?”. So, it’s not easy for that person either because a lot of times, they feel a huge sense of guilt and shame that they’re not necessarily on the same page and it’s a burden to be the gatekeeper. It’s not a fun role to be the gatekeeper. It can be really emotionally tolling because you know when you’re saying “No” like you’re rejecting your partner. You know that that’s not an inconsequential action.

Meredith: Mhmm! Yeah! Definitely challenging.

Marina: Yeah.

Meredith: What else do you feel like can come from that? Because I know I’ve heard a lot of that, a lot of this sense of pressure like if I say, then I’m doing something I don’t necessarily feel like I want to do but if I say no, then I risk an argument happening or feeling bad or what’s that gonna lead to, “is my partner going to seek sex elsewhere?”, I get that a lot. “I don’t feel like I’m doing my job as a partner”. So, it really leads down a lot of different paths.



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Marina: Yeah! And I think the common thread between a lot of these is this inherent sense of insecurity that because the initiation, reception kind of balance is off that there's a disruption in the whole relationship.

Meredith: Yeah.

Marina: And I think what that leads to is this... and this is a very real thing and the reality is any two people are different so they're gonna have different senses of desire but this desire discrepancy, that's from my observation a lot of times is not like this... it's more tied to being in these locked roles then a true lack of desire or like a low libido or an extremely hyperactive libido of one partner which totally happens and is an issue that's really important to address but it's more of like a desire discrepancy that happens because of these fixed stack roles and all this internalize to guilt, shame, frustration that happens from being locked in these roles.

Meredith: Mhmm. So, it's really important to do something about this.

Marina: Sure is! It sure is!

Meredith: What would you recommend?

Marina: I think it's really important to create that room for both partners to initiate and what I mean by that is initiation looks really different between people. And sometimes, when you have two people that are locked into pursuer distance or initiator-recipient, it is very clear how the initiator initiates.

Meredith: Mhmm.

Marina: It's not as clear and it can be a lot more subtle and a lot more covert how the recipient may initiate it. Maybe a much more turned down type of initiation. It may not be like an eggplant emoji with a 7pm question mark. It may just be like an extra caress or a more amorous type kiss or, you know, it's like about having that conversation and creating more attunement into what each of your initiation styles looks like because for somebody who hasn't initiated, you're not just gonna be like super overt with it. And having that conversation about how do you initiate? How does your partner initiate? Are you attuned to each other? And to the more subtle cues of initiation is really, really important and picking up on those cues.

Meredith: Making it more explicit so it's less likely to be missed if it's a subtle cue.

Marina: Yeah, exactly. And I think it's really important if your partner has been locked into being the recipient and you've been locked into the initiator and now you want your partner to take a bit of initiative in initiating to give them that room.

Meredith: Yeah, definitely.

Marina: They need that platform, they need that room, they need that time and space. You can't say "Well, you have 24 hrs and if this is not done by 24 hrs, that's it. You have failed." You know, like it's, you've been locked in this roles for a long time.



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Meredith: Mhmm. Makes sense.

Marina: So, they might need some time and space to get into that groove.

Meredith: Cool.

Marina: So...

Meredith: So, how do we take our intimate life from basic pumpkin spice latte to great?

Marina: So, I think the first thing is, and I always start with this; self-exploration.

Meredith: Mhmm.

Marina: It's knowing... it's asking yourself the kind of questions of "What am I missing in our sex life? What do I want to try? What do I want to bring back from stuff we used to do? What are my sexual interests? What turns me on? What does it for me? What am I curious about? I saw this movie and there was this sex scene, what intrigued me about it?", you know. Doing that, knowing your sexual self. Really, really important.

Meredith: Mhmm.

Marina: And then being able to discuss that with your partner.

Meredith: That's the hard part, right? They're both, nothing's really, it's not that it's that easy to do the self-exploration but talking about it can be challenging because you have to be vulnerable and you wanna make sure that you're creating a safe environment to discuss it so as always, we're gonna send you back, episode one. Be sure to download the communication tip sheet before you get into this conversation. And also, I would say is it episode five? Creating more pleasure in your relationship? Quite sure it's episode five.

Marina: I think it's episode three.

Meredith: Three? Maybe it's three. We'll put it in the show notes below where we get really specific about creating safety when talking about your sex life and making sure everybody feels heard and not judged and we want this to go well so definitely go back and listen to that as well.

Marina: Yeah. And it's about just like, again, of always finding what you have in common.

Meredith: Mhmm.

Marina: A great, great, great place to start is with the stuff you have in common.

Meredith: Mhmm! Not hard to agree there.



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Marina: Yeah! So, I think it's doing the exploration and being vulnerable and that's a huge turn on for people. This is the thing I really want people to internalize. Yes, this can be vulnerable but it's also really sexy and it's also really fun and it's also a great way to bring more intimacy and almost like have it as a little foreplay. Have it as a little sensual way to connect as opposed to just do your good ole pumpkin spice latte. You know, thursday night missionary position type process so...

Meredith: Yeah! For sure! So, what do you think would be helpful to make sure that this happens?

Marina: So, I know people are not gonna like hearing this one but I'm really gonna make a case for it. I'm gonna put my lawyer hat on. Scheduling. Scheduling is the complete opposite of basic.

Meredith: Yeah.

Marina: Scheduling is really exciting. Think about the things you put on your schedule. The things you put on your schedule are the things that are really important to you.

Meredith: Yeah. Definitely!

Marina: Is that the message that you wanna send to your partner about your sex life and about your intimacy that it's really important to you?

Meredith: Sure!

Marina: That it's a priority, that you wanna invest more time, effort, energy into it? Meredith: Yeah! That's a good message!

Marina: Then schedule it!

Meredith: I believe you. I am a believer. But yeah! You know what? I've heard that same thing. I've brought this up to many couples and some people's immediate reaction is "Ew! No! That's so boring! That makes it like a chore! That makes it... I like spontaneity!" I hear all of these reasons why it's not a good idea.

Marina: Oh, sure! I think you can name a 101 reasons as to why anything is not a good idea. I think you can... if you have somebody who's, I don't know, manipulative with words enough, you could come up with 110 reasons why Kale is bad for you. But the reality is if you schedule something, you're prioritizing it and you're looking forward to it. The reality of our busy lives especially in New York, we don't always have time for spontaneity. We don't always have the opportunity for spontaneity. If you have kids, again, not a lot of time, not a lot of opportunity. If you're holding your breath for sex to be spontaneous and curated and like a movie love scene, you're gonna be holding your breath for a really long time.

Meredith: Yeah!



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Marina: When you're scheduling something, you're looking forward to it. A part of that, your own turn on process is looking forward to it.

Meredith: Mhmm!

Marina: It's knowing that there's gonna be this date night and this thing that you're gonna share that's gonna be really exciting and turn you on and maybe you're gonna try something new. So, I think, yes, spontaneity is lovely when you have an opportunity to embrace it but again, if you're holding your breath for it, you could be holding your breath for a really long time.

Meredith: Yeah. And I do always, you know, when those concerns come up, I know something that you and I have talked about is just you can prepare. It gives you the opportunity to prepare mentally, emotionally, physically. You can be your best self going into that night or that morning or whatever you have it scheduled, you're ready. You can do your individual work to be mentally in that place.

Marina: Yeah! Definitely! And I think scheduling also allows you to divide initiation and kind of make room for co-initiation where it's not so much pressure for maybe a person who hasn't been the initiator to pick a random time and just go for it. It's like you know there's gonna be a date night, you know it's gonna be sexy so your partner maybe more attuned to your subtle ways and it's not like all the ball is 100% in your court. It's a little bit more of a like co-initiation because both of you know that this is coming so you're more prepared, your partner's more attuned. It just takes a lot of pressure off.

Meredith: Yeah! That make sense! I know that we had a freebie a couple of episodes ago that would be really good. How would you recommend using that? It was from episode ten, "Bringing sexy back". The freebie was how to have a sexy reminiscing conversation on date night. How would you integrate that?

Marina: So, I think, again, reminiscing about sexy times is a really great form of foreplay.

Meredith: Mhmm!

Marina: I believe Schnarch who's a researcher-therapist had this theory of quantum arousal where a total arousal is physical arousal plus emotional arousal. So, you need both and a lot of times, we really need that emotional arousal and we don't focus on it but having that sexy, reminiscent conversation, talking about really positive, really great sexual experiences you had with your partner, that's that emotional arousal.

Meredith: Yeah!

Marina: That's a big part of the overall arousal.

Meredith: Makes sense! Makes sense.



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Marina: So, I think it's a great ritual and I think the reality is the more comfortable you are talking about sex and talking about intimacy, the more comfortable you are with sex and intimacy over all.

Meredith: Yeah!

Marina: Communication around it is a really big part of just being comfortable with it over all.

Meredith: Yeah! Makes sense!

Marina: So, I think that's a great way. I think if you wanna level up from there, sharing fantasies is really, really great. I don't remember what episode we talked about this but a fantasy doesn't need to be a story where a beginning, middle and end. I think a lot of people put pressure on themselves to be like "Oh, well, my fantasy is... this happens and this happens and this happens" and then it ties up in a neat little bow and then it's done. A fantasy can be like a little snippet you have in your mind that just really turns you on. That's enough of a fantasy to share.

Meredith: Yeah.

Marina: Fantasy can be something you wanna try. A fantasy can be whatever. It's not so broadly defined but again, it's like letting your partner into who you are as a sexual being. It's connecting more with your own sexual self and it's creating that atmosphere of intimacy that breaks that routine of pumpkin spice latte love life.

Meredith: Yup! For sure! Now, I know you created a really good freebie for today, a really good bonus. What's it you put together?

Marina: So, I put together an intimacy calendar to do at date night.

Meredith: Okay.

Marina: So, basically, what you're gonna do is you're gonna plan a really nice date night and you're gonna look at your intimacy calendar and you're gonna go "Hey, the kids have a sleepover and I'll be decompressed, I'll finish the health work and you'll be back from your golf game and we have this chunk of time so let's schedule here and let's talk about what we'd really like to get out of that experience".

Meredith: Mhmm!

Marina: "Let's talk about what would make it really hot. Let's talk about what would make it really sexy. Let's talk about what would break that routine. Let's talk a little bit about fantasies. Let's talk a little bit about exploration. Let's talk a little bit about like all those hot things we used to do."

Meredith: Yeah. There you go!



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Marina: Then you throw in on. And the thing here, the important thing is this is not a legally binding contract.

Meredith: No.

Marina: Not a legally binding contract. This is just almost treated as like a little bit of that emotional foreplay and just know that the goal of this is really to evaluate and then kinda get turned on and then prioritized and then that's it.

Meredith: That's awesome! Thanks Marina!

Marina: You're welcome guys.

Meredith: So, be sure to get that bonus. You can get it on our website at [www.simplygreatrelationships.com/018](http://www.simplygreatrelationships.com/018), intimacy calendar for couples. Let's talk about takeaways. What's your takeaway?

Marina: My takeaway for today is that when you're stuck in this rut of kind of a monotonous sex life, there is no advantageous role. Both people are stuck in a pretty disadvantage, frustrating, vulnerable, not-feel-good position. And it's really important to show your partner empathy because they're probably feeling a lot of the same feelings as you just from the opposite side of the table.

Meredith: Yeah! That makes sense. That was actually going to be my takeaway as well. I'll try to think of a different one. But that really was my takeaway. Maybe I'll just have a different spin. Just how impactful it is on both sides. And really to expand it even beyond this particular topic like any dynamic at play in your relationship where one person is always and one person is never is gonna lead into a similar situation of this sort of disconnective responsibility and blame and rejection and, you know, just everyone sort of not feeling so great and not feeling like a team at the end of the day. You feel like disconnected and you don't feel like you're on the same page. So, I think that that plays out a lot in a sexual relationship and that's a really big takeaway.

Marina: Yup!

Meredith: Well, that's all for today. That was a lot! Thank you Marina! Marina: You're welcome guys!

Meredith: So, no more pumpkin spice lattes for any of our SGR listeners!

Marina: No more!



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Meredith: No more! Actually, if you have one, I think it would be funny when you're tagging #PSL or #simplygreatrelationships. Tag us because we'd like to see you just kind of an inside joke for our listeners and it'd be funny. So, that's all for today. We hope you'll take these tips and start using them right away. Be sure to grab the freebie. You can get it on our website and you can use it on date night. So, that would be great! And we'd love to continue the conversation with you in our Facebook group where we're gonna be sharing more tips, tricks and live streams exclusively for our members. And Marina will be in there answering some questions if you have questions that come up after this episode or you just wanna talk a little bit about it. She'll be popping in and commenting and getting back to you as well. You can join us at [www.facebook.com/groups/simplygreatrelationships](http://www.facebook.com/groups/simplygreatrelationships) or you can go on our website and click the link. It's at [www.simplygreatrelationships.com](http://www.simplygreatrelationships.com). And that is today's episode!

Marina: Yeah! Hit me up in the group and I have plenty of great tips for kind of upping and leveling up your love life but you gotta come into the group.

Meredith: Yup!

Marina: Because I don't wanna disseminate it everywhere.

Meredith: No! Awesome! Alright, well, until next week! We'll see you then!

Marina & Meredith: Bye!

