



## Prioritizing Pleasure

What are you feeling in your body reading “Prioritizing Pleasure”?  
What are you thinking?

I ask because as women<sup>+</sup>, most of us been taught quite strongly not to trust our pleasure, much less prioritize it. In fact, we’re often taught that we have to earn even simple pleasures, like delicious sleep, rich conversations and time to read, paint, or garden.

While each of us individually experiences this, there’s a much bigger issue. It’s through our bodies that we’re fully connected to our power. Suppression of women<sup>+</sup> happens in large part through the suppression of our connection to our bodies, including the connection to our pleasure. **Being taught to fear much of what brings us pleasure – sex, food, dancing, being naked, raucous laughter, following our desires – is key in separating us from our power.**

We’ve been taught to fear, hate, distrust and/or be embarrassed by our bodies. Instead of listening to them (and hearing our intuition and inner truth), we try to control them through diet and exercise, or we ignore them and try not see them. We judge our bodies and those of other women<sup>+</sup>, and do our best to conform.

When I imagine a world where women<sup>+</sup> are empowered and untamed, the term “guilty pleasure” doesn’t have any meaning. Following true pleasure gives us energy, clarity, joy and vitality, which we can then share with others. Why would anyone feel guilty about that? But that’s not the world we live in, and guilt often accompanies our desires.

**Following our desires – even recognizing what they are! – is an act of rebellion.**

Though we need to be grounded in our body to fully experience pleasure, we can also have mental, emotional and/or spiritual pleasure. All are important and enriching. In fact, being mindful and fully present is also key to experiencing pleasure. Feeling guilty about a pleasure leads us to distracting ourselves *while experiencing the pleasure we crave*. Instead of thoroughly enjoying a piece of cake, we distract ourselves by watching TV, and then eat four pieces because we haven’t actually satisfied our initial desire.

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\* I’m using *women*<sup>+</sup> in acknowledgement that (1) gender exists on a beautiful spectrum rather than a binary, and (2) many individuals who do not specifically identify as women have received as much or more conditioning and oppression around these topics as those who identify as women. Cis-gender men are not immune either, though they’ve overall had much less/ different pressures than women<sup>+</sup>.

Pleasure requires presence. In fact, being fully present can turn very “mundane” experiences into near ecstasy. At one Leadership retreat, we went 24 hours without speaking. We were encouraged to eat very, very slowly during this time, relishing each bite and noticing the different flavors. The food was already delicious. Deep attention and slow savoring turned meals into near orgasmic pleasure.

Focusing on pleasure not only gets us more into our bodies, but it also gets us out of our ruts and off autopilot. We become mindful again, aware of and appreciating what’s happening here and now. As in the example above, it doesn’t necessarily take any more time or energy. It does take awareness. One powerful way to do this is to practice asking yourself:

### **How can I make this more pleasurable?**

“This” is whatever you’re doing in the moment. It could be cooking supper, working on your business, sending emails, paying bills. Anything at all. Simply asking the question can be powerful and bring you into more awareness, which is pleasurable.

To add or increase your pleasure, consider things like:

- Adding movement, anything from slow sensual to quick celebratory.
- Slowing waaaaay down, like in the example above of savoring each bite of a meal.
- Turning on some music, whatever fits your mood or the mood you want to have.
- Taking a few deep breaths and sinking deeper into your body.
- Taking a moment to touch your face, your skin, or a soft blanket, or fuzzy plant.
- Smelling something you love, like an essential oil or a flower.
- Taking care of your physical needs. Does your body need water, to pee, or something else?

Months ago, I started doing hip circles and dancing while brushing my teeth. (Tantric toothbrushing, as a friend called it.) The more I get into it, the more I enjoy it.

How many times have you had the thought to do something like that, only to have your next thought be, “*I don’t have the energy for it*”? What I’ve found is that **when it’s something that really appeals to me (not another “should”), if I can summon the energy to *start* it, it begins to generate its own energy.** I end up having more energy after than before.

Another example is that I now start each day by brushing my teeth, washing my face, dry brushing my body, and then doing a breast massage. I try to be fully present with my body during this time. I thank it and tell it how beautiful it is. Most mornings I *feel* into my sexiness.

Denying our desires depletes our energy. Turning away from ourselves like that leaves us feeling unheard, unseen and unappreciated *because we’re not seeing, hearing and appreciating ourselves.*

Taking time for pleasure, on the other hand, increases our magnetism and vibrancy. It leads to more creativity and more boldness. (Watch out, world.) It helps us to know ourselves better, to feel more confident, to enjoy the time we have on this planet and in this body.

I believe that spending more time with pleasure connects us with our intuition and inner knowing, and opens us to greater inspiration. This is because it helps move us out of our heads and into our bodies, and into a receptive, feminine state. We'll still get our work done, maybe in less time and with less effort.

When I started out writing this, I realized that while I've taken some time for pleasure lately, I hadn't really today. To be in integrity, I stopped, turned on some sexy music, and danced. I kept the music going as I wrote, sometimes noticing that I was moving my body as I typed. It felt good, and the writing came more easily.

**I invite you to do the following practice this month and just see what happens.**

### **Identifying Your Desires**

This is a simple 3-step practice, and you may not find it easy. I've had a hard time prioritizing it myself. And when I do it, I feel more expansive and grounded. It feels very pleasurable.

Set a timer for 1-5 minutes. You'll do each step for that amount of time.

#### **Step 1: Get present.**

That's it. Just sit and breathe, and let yourself settle in.

#### **Step 2: Say aloud, "I want" or "I desire" followed by whatever comes to mind. Talk for the entire time.**

Try not to judge or censor yourself. No one else is listening. No one is going to make you do anything you say. This is a time to be playful and to say *whatever*.

You might say things like:

- I want more clients.
- I want more time to myself.
- I desire to be outside more.
- I desire to be outside with no clothes on.
- I desire a piece of chocolate.
- I desire to feel my body is strong and healthy.
- I want clothes that bring out my playfulness.

See if you notice any difference when using the two phrases.

#### **Step 3: Journal**

Just write.

Please feel free to share in the Facebook group whatever you'd like about this practice.

Are you ready to explore your relationship with pleasure a bit more deeply?

I'm going to keep this section short this time. It's important, and I'd like you to focus on simply adding more pleasure into your life.

*What do you feel in your body when you put your attention on prioritizing pleasure?*

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*What thoughts do you have about prioritizing pleasure?*

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*How does your family view pleasure and prioritizing it?*

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*What's most exciting to you when you think about including more pleasure in your life?*

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