



## **The Art and Science of Lovemaking**



# **Lesson 4**

## **Initiating and Refusing Sex**

THE GOTTMAN INSTITUTE

# Gott Sex?

## **Lesson 4: Initiating and Refusing Sex**

Communication about sex is often fuzzy or murky because people want to save face; they want to avoid outright rejection. However, research indicates that among couples, *clear bids* for affection and sex are highly likely to be accepted, especially if they are personal (I desire you) rather than impersonal (I'm horny). So this is worth talking about.

This exercise can help you and your partner to decide on how you prefer to communicate your physical desires to one another. It can also help you create a method for refusing sex that will be gentle and respectful, not hurtful.

**Directions:** Look over these ideas for initiating sex. Then each of you individually choose 2 to 3 ideas that you like on the list, and discuss your favorites with your partner. Together, try and arrive at one method for initiating sex that you both like. If your preferences are clearly different, however, no worries. Just create a method of your own, one that is perhaps not listed below that is comfortable for both of you. The key here is talking together about it, and understanding each other's needs.

### **Ideas for Initiating Sex with Your Partner**

- Simply tell me you want to make love.
- Rub my back in a circle when we're in bed.
- Kiss my neck and say "I really want you."
- Put your arms around me and ask me if I'd like to make love.
- Use our Korean dolls (lie down your doll if you want sex and I will lie down mine if I also want sex).
- Leave me a note telling me you want me tonight.
- Leave me an email or text me that you want me tonight.
- Your idea:

Now take some time look over these ideas for turning down sex. Each of you individually pick 2 or 3 ideas that you like from the Refusing Sex list and discuss your favorites with your partner. Then, try to arrive at one method for gently refusing sex that you both like. Again, if your ideas differ from your partner's, no worries. Just create a method for refusing sex of your own that you agree is comfortable for both of you. The key here is talking together about it, and understanding each other's needs.

## **Ideas for Refusing Sex Gently with Your Partner**

Use a scale of 1 to 9 for how amorous you feel, with 1 meaning "not at all amorous," 5 meaning "I'm convince-able," and 9 meaning "I'm very amorous." If you don't want to make love, say "Right now I'm a 1."

Say, "I usually would love having sex with you, but I need to take a rain check. Right now I'm really not in the mood. But I still find you very attractive."

Say, "I'm sorry honey, but it's not the right time for love making for me. I still love you a lot, and you are very beautiful."

Say, "Sorry babe, I'm going to have to pass right now, but how about me giving you an orgasm through oral sex instead?"

Your idea:



“ *the  
key here  
is talking  
together  
about it,  
and  
understanding  
each  
other’s  
needs* ”