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SAVAGE LOVE

ORPHEUM THEATER
BY DAN SAVAGE



I was honored to appear with Esther Perel at the Orpheum Theater in Vancouver, BC, a few weeks ago to discuss her new book, *The State of Affairs: Rethinking Infidelity*. Questions were submitted on cards before the show — some for me, some for Esther, some for both of us — and we got to as many as we could during the event. Here are some of the questions (mostly for me) that we didn't get to.

I've never slept with anyone. My current boyfriend has had sex with many, many partners. He knows I'm a virgin, but I'm worried. Any tips on how I can avoid performing like the amateur gay man that I am?

Give yourself permission to be bad at it — awful at it, inept and halting and awkward. And remind yourself going in (and out and in and out) that whatever happens, *this isn't the last time you'll ever have sex*. Some people are good at sex right out of the gate, but most people need a little practice before they catch a groove. But nothing guarantees a bad first experience (or bad millionth experience) quite as effectively as faking it. Faking is always a bad idea — faking orgasms, faking interest, faking confidence — so don't fake. Just be.

How would you help a woman who has never experienced an orgasm?

I would gift her a mild pot edible and a powerful vibrator.

I'm a woman in my mid-30s. Sometimes I want to bang it out in 30 seconds but my husband wants 45 minutes. What do we do?

Your husband has a nice solo stroke session for 44 and a half minutes, and then you climb on top or slide underneath for the last 30 seconds.

Have you ever thought about moving to Vancouver?

Frequently between January 20, 2001, and January 19, 2009, and constantly since January 20, 2017.

I'm a 34-year-old woman. My 40-year-old boyfriend used to date his sister-in-law. One time he said he thought it would be funny if I asked her who was better in bed: him or his brother. Is this weird or is it just a man thing?

It could be both — a weird man thing — but seeing as your boyfriend asked only once, he's clearly not obsessed. The question presumably made you uncomfortable (which is why you're asking me about it), and here's how you shut it down if he ever asks again: "I could ask her who's better in bed or I could go fuck your brother myself and report back."

What do I do if my wife doesn't want an open relationship and I do? We haven't had sex in 11 years, but we are still in love and have two young children.

I don't understand monogamous but sexless marriages. Because if your relationship is monogamously sexless... wouldn't that mean you *don't* have sex only with each other? Setting that aside... Your wife probably and perhaps reasonably fears that opening up your marriage could result in you leaving her for some woman you're fucking. But if you're unwilling to go without sex for the rest of your life, you're going to wind up leaving your wife in order to meet some woman you can fuck. So the thing she fears *might* happen if you open the relationship up is *definitely* going to happen if you don't.

I'm a 34-year-old gay man. I've never had a long-term relationship. Are long-term relationships even necessary nowadays?

Long-term relationships are nice — I'm happy with mine — but not strictly *necessary*. They're not oxygen, iodine, or cannabinoids. The pressure to pair off can make LTRs feel not just necessary but compulsory, and the negative cultural messaging around being single and/or enjoying a series of successful short-term relationships (single people are losers, serial daters "just can't commit" or are losers) certainly doesn't help.

Do you believe the hype about Vancouver being a hard place to date? Any advice for a single lady searching for a long-term hetero partnership?

Everywhere I go — New York, Chicago, Toronto, Dallas, Los Angeles — I hear the same thing: [Name of city] is a uniquely hard place to date! I also meet happily partnered people everywhere I go, which leaves me disinclined to believe the hype about Vancouver or anywhere else. "This city is a hard place to date!" is often said in frustration by people who haven't found their .64 yet (the motherfucker they can round up to "The One") or by people who are doing something wrong — they're sabotaging their relationships somehow (unresolved personal issues, too many deal breakers, irrational expectations) — and instead of working on their own shit, they're blaming the city where they happen to live.

How does someone in a straight-presenting, long-term relationship come out as being bisexual/pansexual?

Someone opens a mouth — preferably their own — and says the words "I'm bisexual/pansexual."

My partner and I are in a super fantastic LTR. Totally committed. But we do talk about reopening our relationship (it was open in the early years). My fear is losing control of myself and falling for someone else. How can I explore opening the relationship without detonating it?

If you define "falling for someone else" as a bomb that has to destroy your super fantastic LTR, and you inevitably catch feelings for someone you're fucking, well, then you'll have to either refrain from fucking other people or convince yourself that you can love more than one romantic partner at a time.

Is there a way to compromise if one partner wants kids and the other does not?

There's no such thing as half a kid — at least a live one — so there's no room for compromise here. Someone has to give or someone has to go.

I'm in a relationship that involves BDSM and Japanese-style bondage. I often have marks left on my body: bruising, scratches, rope marks, etc. I am afraid my children and friends will notice. Any suggestions for how to explain this to people? I don't want to wear long-sleeve shirts for the rest of my life.

Wear long-sleeve shirts and lie to your kids — you're taking a martial-arts class while they're at school, you fell into a blackberry bramble — but tell your friends the truth, lest they think you're in an abusive relationship.

On the Lovecast, trans talk with Buck Angel: savagelovecast.com.

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Hours: Fri-Tu 11am-6pm • Closed Wednesday & Thursday



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