



WELCOME TO

Down There Talk: Introduction & How to Get Started

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"I never had an orgasm till date, but it will be wrong if I expect everything to happen in a day. But after talking to you, I felt so good. I am really happy I got to know this information from you, else I would have kept struggling without knowing what to do and how to do?"

Down There Talk Circles are a way for women to support each other around sexuality and relationships. Women have been at a disadvantage vis a vis men when it comes to gaining comfort and familiarity around their genitals. Most men have grown accustomed to touching their penis multiple times during the day because of they have to pee or straightening the bulge. Women did not have a biological reason to touch their vulvas and look at it. Thus there is a higher likelihood of a woman struggling with genital shame and sexual inhibition than a man.

- Down There Talk Circle meetings are a place to break social taboos around sexuality and becoming more comfortable with sexuality by share intimate experiences in a trusted setting. They offer a place to be heard and inspired.
- Meetings are free and peer led... no expertise required other than being brave enough to ask your friends if they want to talk about sex! Here's how to get started:
- How can I start a circle? Find 3-5 friends and ask them "Hey – I know talking about sex is taboo, but it also means we have made pleasure tabooed and I want to break this taboo. Would you like to join me?" It's as simple as that.
- What will we talk about? Try spend the first hour of each 2-hour meeting listening to intimate life experiences (with self or partner) from everyone and what they hope to get out of the meeting. The second hour should be a group discussion around the following planned topics:
 1. **Meeting #1: "Debunking Myths: Social Messages Around Sexuality"**
 2. **Meeting #2: "Cultivating Desire: Embodiment, Masturbation, and Turn Ons"**
 3. **Meeting #3: "Exploring Fantasy: Stories that are Creative and Sensual"**
 4. **Meeting #4: "Embracing Passion: Censorship in the Bedroom"**

- Where should we meet? You can either keep designated time to meet at a group member's home or carve out a time in your regular social get togethers after tea, over dinner or drinks at a restaurant or bar.
- When should we meet? Each circle will meet once a month. Host should not reschedule even if one of the members is unable to attend a particular meeting.
- How can I make my circle awesome?

- 100% sharing and vulnerability. Encourage members to share their own personal experiences and welcome all kinds of feelings (joy, excitement, fear, anger, hopelessness, etc.)

- 100% confidential. Circle members should pledge not to share names or stories of anyone in the group outside of the group... this is important for the privacy and safety of all

- 0% domination. Timed shares help ensure everyone has an equal chance to share without interruption and that no one person dominates the conversation
YES... set a timer

- No judgment and advice. Last but not the least, encourage members to listen without judgment and avoid giving advice...

- What if something comes up? In the event that something comes up that you don't know how to handle, reach out to me! I'm here to handhold you and your group.

I sincerely believe the world will be a better place when people get comfortable and not embarrassed and ashamed about sexuality. Sexuality is a life force! A creative force. An expression of pleasure. If you've read this far, my guess is that you believe this too. So thanks for joining this movement in creating a better world. Once you've got a group formed and dates set, reach out and I'll share all the materials you need.

Talk Themes for DTT Meetings

Meeting #1 - Debunking Myths: Social Messages Around Sexuality

Silence is a statement. We get a lot of messages about sex from a very young age. It might be that naughty whisper before wedding night of a cousin or a girl silently crying because of her period pain. This meeting is about bringing awareness on how these messages have negatively impacted our sexuality so we can make conscious choices about whether we want to continue carrying these shame ridden messages or release them. Because choice is pretty awesome.

To kickstart this discussion, here are some common myths around sexuality and reality:

- Myth: “If I have higher sexual desire than my partner, something is wrong with me.” I had a partner who had lower desire than me. I thought there was something wrong with me for years, until I learned that a majority of couples experience a discrepancy in desire. I am normal. My partner is normal. You are normal.
- Myth: “Men are always ready for sex.” I am approached by so many women whose husbands have nil sexual desire.
- Myth: “My partner should know how to turn me on.” I wish! Turns out, your partner or for that matter anyone’s is not a mind-reader. We have a much greater chance of getting what we want if we ask for it.
- Myth: “Pornography sex is real sex.” Porn shows women who have no pubic hair, also called as barbie vulvas, who love vigorous anal sex and orgasm easily and quickly through penetration. But in real life, women have “pubic hair” and diverse vulvas. Some like anal, some don’t. And most women orgasm from clitoral stimulation, not penetration.

Discussion Prompts

- What messages did you receive as a child around sexuality? In the home, in the society?
- What messages do you receive now? How do these impact your sex life today?
- What experience as a teenager had the most impact on your sexuality? In a negative way?

Meeting #2 - Cultivating Desire: Embodiment, Turn Ons and Masturbation

Cultivating Desire: Embodiment, Turn Ons and Masturbation

You remember that warm tingly feeling when you waited with anticipation before your first kiss or when while your partner accidentally touched you as you two walked off the street...? Yeah, that thing. We often think of desire as something someone else arouses in us, but the reality is that we are in charge of our own desire.

I'll kickstart this discussion with listing activities that I did to cultivate my own sexual desire:

- Pelvic floor opening movement. Women are so used to walk in a “ladylike” way. The sitting posture has to be legs closed, since spread legs are unlady or man like. You can't gyrate your hips as that seem to be sexual. It is this imposed restriction on movement that inhibits sexual expression in women. And this is exactly what I recommend you to do to allow sexual energy flow in your body. Move your hips, do free flowing movement that involves movement of hips.
- Turn Ons. Instead of thinking I am not in the mood, let's change the narrative to what gets in the mood? Having a clear vision of what gets you in the mood and what turns you off is an essential part of understanding your sexuality.
- Masturbation to self pleasuring. Porn has taught us that masturbation is a quick rub of genitals in a hard and crude way. In reality masturbation is a way you touch your body sensually or otherwise to feel pleasure since your genitals have tonnes of nerve ending that are loaded with sensations if stimulated. If the language embarrasses you, drop the word masturbation and embrace a refined language self-pleasuring. For me, masturbation is a fantastic way to learn more about my body and is also a super sexy activity to share with a partner.

Discussion Prompts

1. How comfortable and at home you feel “in your body”?
2. What did you know about masturbation before this?
3. Have you ever tried masturbating?
4. Why do you think masturbation is such a taboo?
5. What is your history with masturbation? Do you carry any shame messages around it?

Meeting #3 - The Lump in Our Throats: Talking Trauma

Take a deep breath. Reliving trauma is not fun, and I don't want anyone to feel as though narrating their experiences means living it again. However, it is good to talk about it, especially when we're trying to understand our own sexuality better. We don't always realise how much trauma of sexual abuse can mould our own sexualities but let's start on an important point: your trauma does not define you. You are more than your trauma.

I'll start with my own experience.

When I was younger, a minor, my sister had some friends over. There were boys and girls and they were all drinking and partying it up and I wasn't really allowed to participate after a point. I was allowed one glass of alcohol from my sister and nothing more. For some reason, I started feeling woozy later. It didn't make sense to me because one glass of extremely diluted vodka should do nothing to you. Only the next day did I realise that I was actually drugged and abused by my sister's friends.

For a while after this, I couldn't come to terms with my sexuality. I felt uncomfortable thinking about my body and thinking about anybody's hands over it. Some time later, I was hypersexual. Trying to overcompensate for how helpless I felt. And finally, after talking to myself about it in depth, here I am, completely comfortable in talking about that night and absolutely comfortable with my sexuality.

Thinking about it might be painful, but it's important to let the bandage off and let your wound out for it to heal.

Discussion Prompts

1. **Have you been through incidents of sexual abuse? Are you comfortable to talk about it?**
2. **Do you think trauma shapes the way we perceive our sexuality?**
3. **How can survivors become more comfortable and feel more in control of their sexuality?**

Meeting #4 - Understanding desire: Embrace your Needs

Understanding yourself, your body, and your sexuality in a cultural context where people would rather not have an orgasm their entire life instead of talking about these things is difficult, but it must be done. Your body is yours and no one else's and unless you know her and treat her right, how is anyone else going to know any better?

But let's start small. Let's not jump into something that we might find uncomfortable. But, have there not been times when you're simply watching something, maybe looking at your partner do something, or just observing something completely random and you begin to feel, well how better to put it, turned on?

This is obviously an extremely natural thing and there's no shame in embracing that warm feeling at the pit of your stomach, actually, unless you embrace it, you really can't know any better. Here's three things to keep in mind when you do venture into this endeavour:

- Don't assume for yourself: Popular culture and porn are riddled with stereotypes of what should turn on a woman, do not fall for it. We especially see women in very submissive sexual roles in movies and porn and while that may work for many people, don't try to fit in a mold that isn't for you. If you don't feel it, don't force it.

- Read and watch: There's a plethora of erotica to be found online that is not as ridiculous and scripted as porn and gives you many different ways to understand your sexuality better. Consume that content and see what feels right for you. As you watch different themes, your body will begin to respond to some things more favourably than others.

- Start exploring your body: Spend some time to get to know your body. There are touches that it likes, touches that it likes a lot, and touches it won't respond well to. Take out some time in your day, and sit with that erotica and feel yourself up. Once you get a hang of it, you will also be able to guide your partner better. And remember: there's absolutely no need to feel embarrassed, your body has done so much for you, there's nothing wrong in serving her a few times in a week.

Discussion Prompts

1. What are some subtle things that have turned you on? (I for instance find hands strangely attractive!)
 2. What is a sexual dynamic you like to see in movies or read in books?
 3. Have you tried to spend time with your body before? If you haven't why is it that you haven't?
 4. After having consumed erotica, what do you think is something you would like to try with a partner or your significant other?
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