

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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Q What is tantric sex?

A. Although Tantric traditions have sparked recent attention in the West, they are anything but new, having been developed in India more than 6,000 years ago. Despite its long history, the practice of Tantra still represents a philosophy that remains revolutionary, even today.

Unlike contemporary views of sex, which largely center on pleasure and orgasm, followers of Tantra see sex as a transformative experience that has the potential to unify male and female elements into a singular whole, expanding intimacy and consciousness in the process. In the Hindu pantheon, this is often represented through the conjoining of the male god Shiva with the goddess Shakti. True to its name, the word "Tantra" is derived from the Sanskrit word to "weave."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are differing takes on what Tantra actually means, depending on who you ask. As the practice has become more widely known in the West as a form of "spiritual sex," traditionalists claim this viewpoint separates one part of the belief system from many of its other dimensions, including the practice of yoga, meditation, rituals, rules of conduct and the guidance of a guru.

Given this background and the existence of competing perspectives, Tantric sex is most commonly seen as a way to prolong a shared and heightened sensuality through the sustained delay of orgasm. Followers of Tantra note that this act of "lasting longer" during sex is not an end in itself, but rather a means to more fully connect with your partner.

Tantric techniques include a strong focus on breathing in unison with your partner, relaxing during high states of arousal to delay climax (especially for men), connecting through eye contact to enhance intimacy and exploring ways to induce orgasm without ejaculation. Through these methods as well as others, Tantra embodies a unique philosophy that emphasizes the importance of intimacy.

Whatever your take on Tantra may be, it seems apparent that whatever we expect from sex – pleasure, procreation or something else – is often what we get in return.

For more information on the Tantric way, check out "Tantra: The Art of Conscious Loving" by Charles and Caroline Muir.



Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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