

A SHORT GUIDE

When “Low Libido” Doesn't Explain It

*How to recognise when what you have been calling low desire
may actually include intimacy shutdown*

Carrie Cohen

PSYCHOTHERAPIST · INTIMACY SHUTDOWN

WHO THIS IS FOR

This is not about how often you want s*x

It is for you if you love your husband, and something changes when physical intimacy becomes possible.

- Affection feels good until a kiss lasts a little longer
- His hand on your leg is fine until it starts moving
- You find reasons to stay downstairs, without quite deciding to
- You feel a surprising sense of relief when you know intimacy is not happening tonight

If you have been putting all of that under *low libido*, I want to show you why low desire may not be explaining your whole experience.

The question is not only how often do I want s*x. It is also what happens in me when physical intimacy gets close.

THE DISTINCTION

They are not the same question

Low desire is real. Hormones change it, perimenopause changes it, exhaustion changes it, and for some women that is genuinely the whole answer. I am not going to talk you out of it.

But it is answering a different question than the one you may actually be living with.

LOW LIBIDO ASKS

How often do I experience desire?

INTIMACY SHUTDOWN ASKS

What happens to my experience as physical intimacy gets close, or as it goes on?

You may have lower desire. You may have intimacy shutdown. **You may have both, and finding one does not mean the other was imaginary.**

But low desire on its own does not explain bracing. It does not explain anticipating where a touch is going, pulling away, avoiding the situations where intimacy might happen, or feeling relief when it is off the table. **Not wanting something and bracing against it are different experiences.**

I missed it in my own marriage

I am a psychotherapist. I have been doing this work for more than twenty-five years, and for ten of them I was experiencing intimacy shutdown in my own marriage.

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I was already a psychotherapist when intimacy shutdown happened in my marriage, and I still couldn't figure out what was happening.

Knowing a great deal about relationships did not make the mechanism in my own obvious to me. If anything it made it harder, because I kept looking for the explanation in the places I had been trained to look.

And the explanation I settled on for a long time was low desire. It was available, it was respectable, and it accounted for some of what was happening.

It did not account for the rest of it. Eventually I understood that I needed to stop asking how much desire I had, and start paying attention to what was happening in me when intimacy actually got close.

TRY THIS

Look at one moment, not your whole marriage

Bring to mind one recent time intimacy became possible

BEFORE

How were you feeling before you thought intimacy might happen?

THE MOMENT IT CHANGED

What happened right before you noticed yourself becoming less comfortable?

WHAT YOU DID

Did you move closer, stay where you were, slow it down, stop, pull away, get it over with, or something else?

AFTERWARDS

And once you knew it was not going to happen, what changed in you then?

You are not trying to decide what label you have. You are looking for something more useful than that, which is whether low libido actually explains your whole experience.

YOUR NEXT STEP

If “low libido” hasn't explained the whole story

If you recognised yourself in this guide, there may be a reason that trying to want s*x more has not changed what happens when physical intimacy actually gets close.

You can love your husband. You can want your marriage. And still find yourself bracing, pulling away, avoiding intimacy, or feeling relieved when you know it is not going to happen.

That is the experience I call intimacy shutdown. And it is what I teach in my free masterclass.

IN THE MASTERCLASS

- Why loving your husband and shutting down around physical intimacy can exist in the same marriage
- Why low libido may not explain the anticipation, the avoiding, the bracing or the relief
- What I believe is happening when you can feel fine one moment and want to pull away the next
- What needs to begin changing for physical intimacy to feel different, without making yourself push through something you do not want

[WATCH THE FREE MASTERCLASS →](#)

I'm Carrie Cohen, a psychotherapist who specialises in intimacy shutdown in women who love their husbands. I also lived with intimacy shutdown in my own marriage for ten years. This is the explanation I wish I'd had much earlier.