

Couples Therapy: Should I tell my husband I've been fantasising about other women?

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Couples Therapy

Thinking of others during sex adds to pleasure, and isn't something to worry about, says couples counsellor and psychosexual therapist Cate Mackenzie



After eight years married, our reader has been having fantasies about other people (Photo: Brauns/E+/Getty Images)

By [i Team](#)

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*Each week **i** asks experts to answer readers' questions about love, sex and relationships*

I've been married for eight years, and with my partner for 12. We have two kids and a pretty good life together. Since we had the kids, the sex isn't that regular and when we do it's pretty formulaic stuff. More and more I'm relying on fantasising about other people to get off when I'm having sex. It can be someone from work, or someone I saw on the train. Lately a lot of my fantasies involve women too. Should I tell my husband that this is what I'm doing? Is this something I should be worried about?

Couples counsellor and psychosexual therapist Cate Mackenzie says

First of all, this is normal. It is not easy to feel aroused when you are under stress or busy all the time. Women often need a lot longer than men to get aroused and one of the ways you get there is through fantasy. Congratulations on finding what works for you.

You ask if your fantasies are something you should be worried about. They are not. Fantasies are there for pleasure and they do not necessarily represent something you want to act on, nor do they mean you no longer love your partner.

Thinking of others and of women brings in a juiciness that you may feel is lacking in day to day life, and the taboo of thinking of others can feel hot too.

There is nothing wrong with any of this, however I hear your concern and wonder if you feel uncomfortable about keeping this private life from your partner and so my suggestion would be to think about ways you can slow down and connect to yourself and your partner, or perhaps include him in your fantasies. It might also be helpful for you to look more deeply at your fantasies and see if there are things or qualities that you might want to include in your intimate life with your partner.

But before you think about your husband, I would suggest finding ways to cultivate your own pleasure. Even just a few minutes of self-pleasure or enjoying the feeling of a hot shower can help you relax and come into your body, which will help you be in touch with your own sensuality.

Then, you can think about finding moments to connect with your partner. Start small; take time to look into each other's eyes, tell them the things you appreciate about them. So many of these things go out the window in the rush of family life. I like "romance snacks" such as making tea for each other, or taking a shower together. If at all possible, arrange a babysitter and go on a date together where you get dressed up. These things can do a lot to revive the connection between you.

How do you feel about including your husband in your fantasies? People may get upset if they feel that imagining someone else is a way of rejecting them, so you will need to be very reassuring about your feelings for him before explaining that this could be something for the two of you to do together.

It's all in the way you tell it, so you could start by saying that you love and want to be with him (if that's true) and that you also find it fun to imagine other people. He might enjoy talking through a fantasy for him too as you give him some touch and pleasure – if you are up for that.

You might talk about creating scenes together where you possibly dress up and ask him to play characters in your fantasy and maybe do another for him. And if all this feels too much for the moment, I am a big fan of the three-minute game from sex educator Betty Martin. The basic gist is this: your partner asks you to touch them how they want to be touched for three minutes, then you let them touch you for three minutes how they want to touch you. Then you switch.

It could be that you do three minutes of hand massage. For three minutes, you massage your partner's hand as you would like to do it and then three minutes in the way he is asking you to do it. Then you swap so your partner is massaging your hand how you ask them to, and then they massage your hand as they would like.

Everything is a request, not a demand – so you use the words 'May I?' and 'Would you?' As in 'may I touch you like this, would you touch me like this?' Throughout this process, whether you are the giver or the receiver, you communicate what you want more of or less of, or how you would like your experience of touch to shift.

It's a great way to slow down and to start communicating again. It helps us to learn new things about each other and what each wants and not to assume. Many people don't want to let their partner know their needs so that's why the three-minute game can be fun.

It's good practice, and it might help you to be more open about what you would like sexually – or even in your life.

As told to Marianne Power