



## **Six Weeks of Erotic Dates – and a Protocol for Erotic Recovery©**

**Four steps that lead up to your Six week Erotic Recovery Assignment**

**And Six Weeks of Erotic Dates for Recovery after Infidelity**

A mini-Ebook by Tammy Nelson, PhD

### **Step One: Erotic Date**

One way to commit to the erotic recovery process without focusing on whether or not you are having intercourse is to have a sex date, or an erotic date weekly. The erotic date does not necessarily mean that you have to have intercourse. In fact, in the following exercise I recommend that you should not have intercourse at all for the first few dates. The important part of making a date for sexual and erotic activity is that it sets aside sacred space and time dedicated to your relationship.

Although it is only a few hours per week, an erotic date is a special time that you set aside to focus on this very important aspect of your relationship. The rest of your hours together during the week can be set aside for your companionship and working on the rest of the relationship issues that you are moving through. But your erotic date time is for the romantic resolution necessary if you are to move forward in your new monogamy. If you don't dedicate this few hours a week to your sexual relationship, then you may find yourselves moving further apart instead of closer together.



That being said, never let yourself feel forced into sex or any erotic behavior that doesn't feel comfortable for you. Sexual coercion is never acceptable even when it is coming from a spouse or intimate partner. Similarly, don't manipulate your partner with your sexual needs and do not expect to use sex as the only way to get your emotional needs met at this time. Though this can be quite effective, it won't help in your overall recovery from the affair.

When you choose a time for your erotic date, plan for once a week and have it be on the same day and time every week; a day or evening when you both have time to relax and when you can responsibly shift your priorities to your partner. If you have children, consider arranging for a babysitter or for them to spend time at a friend's house. Or arrange your date at time when they are asleep or in school. You may feel resistant to this idea at first. Initially you might feel that planning sexual activity means that your love life is no longer spontaneous, that it's no longer romantic or genuine.

Yet making a date with your partner for erotic activity actually allows for more romance and more authenticity. These dates can be an important part of creating spontaneity and special time in your relationship. It shows commitment and intention to your partnership, and adds a caring and more erotic element to your connection. And, ironically, more spontaneity can happen when you give yourselves time and the attention to detail it takes to really plan it. *You can be as spontaneous as you want, if you plan it.*

Notice as you begin to plan your date that you or your partner may feel some resistance that might sound like "we'll be tired then" or "we don't have time." This may actually be some feelings of fear that are surfacing. You may be worried about whether or not you will want to be intimate that night and projecting that you won't. Or you may have fear about whether or not your partner will really want you. Recognize that this resistance is normal and that you still need to go through with your date anyway. The places where you are most afraid are probably the areas where you



feel most vulnerable. Pushing through your fear together can help your relationship grow into a more intimate and connected partnership.

### Anticipation

One of the reasons your date should be at the same time every week is that this will encourage you both to begin to anticipate having erotic time together, even before the date rolls around. I call this *Anticipatory Eroticism*.

You may find that you begin thinking about what will happen several days before the date night arrives. This “erotic anticipation” can create arousal and desire, even if you have not had sex in many years. As you start to reintegrate sensual and erotic experience into your lives on a regular basis, the “practice” of a sex date will train your body, mind and spirit to expect and honor the time you now share together.

If you can move through the initial discomfort or awkwardness, if not at first, then eventually, you will both look forward to this sacred time together when you can explore your erotic connection and regain your sexual confidence.

### **Sex as a Practice**

A good sex life is a practice, just like yoga or meditation or even playing the piano. Engaging with each other on a regular basis means you are committing to the practice of an intimate relationship. The more you invest in this practice the more you will gain as a couple.

Your erotic date is not a “going out” night. It is different than movie night, or dancing night. Avoid heavy meals or too much alcohol. Eating dinner out or drinking too much wine is not likely to make you want to come home and make love; it will most likely just make you want to come home and sleep. Facing each other over a restaurant table while the babysitter sits home watching the sleeping children, trying not to talk about the affair, is actually good practice for your dating life together, but is not a way to begin a sex date.



A sex date is dedicated time carved out of your week where you simply close your bedroom door, turn off the TV and set up the room as a sacred, erotic space to practice erotic recovery. This may mean lighting a candle, turning on music and/or just holding each other. Or it could mean taking a bath together and lying together or sleeping naked. Or it may mean a specific and guided practice of exercises like the ones that follow.

After you have chosen a particular day and time of the week, commit to it. Whether you are tired, annoyed or unsure, prepare the space. And prepare your mind for the idea of connection. When the date night arrives, know that you will have some type of sexual contact, even if you don't feel like it in the moment. Sometimes beginning contact with each other can create arousal or even just an emotional and physical closeness that begins a new experience for the two of you. Exploring what feels right can begin within the context of the sex date.

### **Step Two: Preparing for your Date**

Leading up to the date, make sure you put effort into preparing for the special time together. Starting about four days prior to the sex date, use small acts to help create anticipation for the evening you will spend together. And remember, it doesn't matter who initiates the date night. Or who reminds the other that it's time. If one of you forgets, it doesn't mean they love you less or that you want it more. Just continue the pattern of once a week dates. The routine may change over time. Resistance is normal and your relationship issues will be triggered and conflict will arise in this as in everything else you maneuver and negotiate in your lives together. Try and let arguing or power struggles be off limits during the date night.

To lead up to the date, try to show your partner physical affection *at least three times* during the week leading up to the sex date. For example, attempt to connect by whispering in your partner's ear the things you are looking forward to on sex date night. Bring home a surprise that you may use on the date. This might be a card or small token gift. Or the



surprise might be something you can use for sex if you are planning a more erotic date, for instance a bottle of massage oil or lube.

The day of the date, if you have time, try and create an atmosphere in the room that will remind both of you that this is a sacred, erotic space for you to play in together. Light candles, put fresh flowers by the bed, and put soft sheets and blankets on the bed. Pick out music you both like.

Think about what you need to be happy and comfortable in your surroundings. Do you like warm air on your skin, a light scent in the air, softer music? Think about how you can make this an erotic and sensual experience for yourself. Is there something sexy you want to wear because it makes you feel good about your body? Try not to only think about how to please your partner; think about pleasing yourself, as well. You are creating an environment where desire can flourish, once it is aroused.

When the time for the date arrives, keep your expectations open and reasonable. Your sex dates never have to go perfectly. If you have an intention that you want to set before each one, speak them out loud. Make sure that your implicit expectation is spoken so that there are no misunderstandings. You will have less of a tendency to blame your partner when your needs are not met when you can share before the night begins what you are wishing for.

If the evening goes as you envisioned it, then great. Process it together by telling your partner that night and the next day what you appreciated about it. Leave him or her a note in the morning or even in their lunch or briefcase. Or send them a text telling them what you liked about the date.

If the date does not live up to your expectations, which is likely to happen on many occasions in the beginning, (remember this is a practice and it takes time to get good at it) try and reframe the experience by reminding each other that if you actually showed up for each other the night was a success. If you felt at all connected to your partner, it was



a big step in the right direction. If you practiced a new intimacy skill or even revisited a tried and true one then the date was a step in the direction of a new life together.

If you are ready for sensual contact, this sex date can include many things. It is most likely that one of you may feel hesitant and less ready than the other. Go slowly and take your time. Remember that this night is a success if it makes you feel connected to your partner. A sex date may simply be a night of talking and lying together for the evening on one bed. Or it may mean watching a sexy or romantic movie together lying intertwined and touching.

There are many ways to experience sensual connection including: laying naked together, soft touch, massage, touching your partner in a sensual way or rubbing your hands lightly over your own body while your partner watches. Massage, communication, and sharing fantasies using dialogue can make this an important night of sensual pleasures.

### **Step Three: A Change from “Goal-Oriented” Sex**

Many times the focus of sex is on getting to the “finish line” or the orgasm. Sometimes when we take away the goal of getting to the end zone, the process becomes more enjoyable and less stressful. The benefit of being focused on the moment and not on the end result is that it creates less stress for the male partner and less anxiety about performance. Fewer stress related sexual performance issues means a decrease in sexual dysfunction and anxiety.

For women, the goal of having an orgasm can add extra pressure to a situation that may already feel stressful after infidelity. Approaching sex in a less “goal-oriented” (i.e. “orgasm-oriented”) approach can be a whole new way of experiencing sex for both men and women. It is important to slow down the process and relearn what sex and sensuality is really about.

An erotic injury means your sexual ego, or identity as a sexual person, is challenged. You may be wondering “am I still attractive to my partner?” and “do I still have what it takes to be in a sexual relationship?” or any other questions



that come up normally around sexual self esteem. After your partner cheats, it may take time to recover your own power in bed. One way to recover that power and balance in your relationship is to find a way to slow down the process and reconnect to each other without the pressure of performance.

A couple working toward a healthier and more connected sex life can benefit from an exercise that removes the routine of sex in the traditional heterosexual pattern: kissing, foreplay, intercourse, orgasm, snuggling, and sleep.

Slowing down the process and focusing on the experience of lovemaking and working together to make it feel positive and healthy can help both partners after the ambivalence and insecurity that occurs after an affair.

#### **Step Four: Arousal and Desire**

For women, arousal comes before desire. Don't wait for the desire to hit. You may not feel desire first. Once you are physically aroused and turned on, you may then feel some desire, and your feelings can be confusing. Don't let the feelings in your body decide for you either way. Your arousal or lack thereof can make you feel betrayed by your own sexuality. You may be upset that you feel nothing when you really want to, or you may feel the opposite – how come I am turned on by my spouse after what/ he did to me? Don't be angry with yourself for either reaction. Your body is responding in the way that it needs to in the moment. Continue with the weekly date and let yourself work on the environment.

#### **Protocol: Six Weeks of Great Sex Dates**

Sex that refocuses both partners on sensuality and connection can help change the dynamic and the relationship for the better. If you are having trouble connecting sexually or want to reconnect, but want to go slowly and carefully,



use this **six week protocol**. Take this six week exercise seriously. Follow it and plan your nights together. Read the exercise completely first.

You have read the four steps leading up to this exercise. Establish the weekly date and time of your erotic date. Integrate the idea into your schedule. Begin to practice intimate connection weekly.

For this six- week protocol, you will purposely and consciously avoid intercourse for three to four weeks prior to your first sexual intercourse on week four, five or six on your erotic date night. By that time your sex date will have been firmly established in your schedule. Focus on activities on sex date night that promote eye contact, sensuality, and each other's pleasure, both giving and receiving. This can help you work through any feelings and thoughts that may come up during lovemaking.

Many times anxiety, anger, sadness, grief, or a need to prove oneself can come up during sex. This may trigger all types of reactive behaviors in bed. Things I call pleasure aversion behaviors are hiding under the covers, keeping the lights off and your clothes on, not wanting to be touched, fighting off your partner's touch, feeling anger and even rage during the touching part of the exercise. Other times you may find yourself crying before, during and after touch. These are all normal reactions and unless you are hurting yourself or your partner, make space for all of your feelings, and have some tissues handy if you need them to wipe your eyes.

The following exercise allows time and space for you to focus on the idea of pleasure and to slow down the process and take the focus off of the performance of sex.

This exercise is adapted from the Masters & Johnson Sensate focus exercise (Masters, W., Johnson, V., Kolodny, R., 1982, *On Sex and Human Loving*, Little, Brown and Co., Canada) It is a reworking of the concepts of their sensate focus work and includes my erotic recovery concepts. The exercise will slow the erotic reconnection process down and integrate your new monogamy into your affair recovery.





This exercise will take place over six weeks, but you can extend it and slow it down as well, perhaps making each night a two week exercise. This is the first exercise that you will practice on Erotic Date night, when you have uninterrupted time to practice your erotic recovery. Later you can use Erotic Date night to practice other erotic expansion activities.

Decide who goes first. You will each have a turn, so choose who will be the *Sender* first and who will be the *Receiver*.

#### **EXERCISE**

**Night One** – The goal of Night One is to massage each other without touching the “bikini” areas. This means that you will touch each other in any way that feels good. But you will avoid focusing on the genitals and avoid orgasm as the goal. In fact, orgasm and intercourse is off limits on Night One.

Lie on a soft bed or blanket on the floor and begin by taking turns massaging and exploring each other's bodies. Use massage oil that is non-perfumed, to avoid irritation. Start at the extremities and move inward, or start at the head and move down to the feet. Work in a sensual manner, in a way that you think your partner would appreciate.

You may be surprised how this restriction takes the pressure off you and your partner and allows you to explore each other's bodies in ways that is simply pleasurable with no other goal. Revisit the landscape of each other's body, remembering that this is a very generous experience, both the giving and taking. Feel your partner's skin and feel their hands on your skin. And remember the only goal is to be as much in the moment as possible.

The sender or massaging partner starts on the back of the receiving partner, with firm strokes going from slow to fast, or soft to hard. The receiving partner works on breathing and receiving, noticing what feelings surface. Is there



resistance, anger, frustration? Is there sadness, love, longing? Just notice the feelings, without trying to change them. Let the feelings come through and do not judge or hold on to a desire to accomplish anything. You may notice that there are frozen or resistant parts of your body as you feel the massage strokes or you may not feel anything at all. Perhaps you are numb. You may resent the strokes or welcome them. Feel and welcome all the feelings without judgment.

At some point whenever you decide, the Receiver can offer feedback, but only a **One to Five** feedback scale. Using words can be tricky as you run the risk of judging, or critiquing or demanding. Or even avoiding saying what you want more of.

Using the **One to Five scale**, describe the sensations you are experiencing during the sensual massage.

**One** means that you are not comfortable or it feels almost painful and your partner will know to move away from that stroke or touch.

A **two** is somewhat uncomfortable but by no means is it unpleasant.

A **three** is very nice but more neutral feeling.

A **four** is very good and feels wonderful.

A **five** means that you are experiencing intense pleasure and that you want the touch to continue. It feels marvelous and they should do more of it, perhaps even on other parts of your body.

Let the **One to Five scale** describe the experience of sensation reception, and don't use words. -The use of numbers instead of words will allow you to fully experience the sensations without the added complication of emotional response.



If you are the Receiver this can help you to lie back and simply experience the strokes without shifting too thoroughly into the part of your brain that controls language. In other words, you don't have to think too much before you respond. No words or explanations are necessary. Only receiving and feeling the sensations and communication those feelings are needed.

The Sender focuses only on the sending of the sensation of the massage stroke. Working on trying to get the receiver to experience a 4 or 5 is desirable but not necessary. Noticing the feelings internally is more important. Is there resentment, guilt, wonder? What is going on inside as the feedback is given about the massage? Can you crank up the strokes so that they feel better to your partner? Are you surprised that your partner is reacting to the strokes the way that they are? Would you have thought otherwise? Without judgment on your performance or on your partner's receptivity take it in as information and continue your movements, noticing how the stroking feels to you, as you listen to the music and breathe.

Breath is an important part of this exercise. If you can time your breathing to go in and out as you move your hands, this will give you more power and awareness in the massage, and with your partner. You may feel a deeper and more intensive connection with the receiver as you massage them if you are connected to your own breath.

And if you can connect to the rhythm of their breath as you are inhaling and exhaling, you may feel a unique circular rhythm to the experience that you might not have noticed before. You may notice that you feel some of your partner's emotions as you massage them, or you may feel some sexual or erotic feelings. Just breathe, notice these feelings and do not judge or act on them at this time.

The receptive partner turns over now onto their back and the same thing continues. There is no breast or genital touching at this time.



It can be very powerful during this exercise to hold in your mind some appreciative and positive thoughts and feelings about your partner as they touch you. Imagine them surrounded by white light and think only clear and kind thoughts about them while their energy is going into yours. This is a way to clear the energy between you, even if it is temporary.

The exercise ends with the slowing down of the Sender's strokes, and deeper breathing. Slowly lie on top of the Receiver, with your full body, breathing deeply and closing your eyes, to seal the experience. Breathe for at least three minutes, or 10 deep breaths. If you can hold your partner's hands, palm to palm, while you do this, it can seal your energies more completely. Taking a last deep breath, move off of the receiver, and switch places, or move into sleep.

You can do both sending and receiving in one night, or you can take turns. You may want to split up the experience to fully experience either giving or receiving. One night practice being the Sender and the next erotic date night practice being the receiver. You will need two nights if you are taking turns being both the Sender and Receiver in this exercise.

Note that no overt sexual activity takes place in this activity, and yet you may both feel aroused or desire something more erotic. Hold onto that desire and sit with it. Honor that tonight is not the night.

**Night Two-** Follow the same directions as Night one, but now add in the breasts and genitals, with the same amount of attention and direction as the rest of the body. After a while the receiver can use the 1 to 5 directions, but the goal here is NOT orgasm or penetration.

**Night Three-** The same directions apply – massage, including breast and genital touch, including verbal instruction from 1 to 5, but now extra focus can be on the genitals and breasts, or whatever parts of the body are the most rewarding to touch. This time, the 1 to 5 reporting is optional, but words are still off limits. If you do not want to use the 1 to 5



exercise, you can use moans, groans, and sounds to indicate positive enjoyment. The goal is to stop right before orgasm. Do not bring each other to orgasm. Do not have penetration to orgasm.

**Night Four** - Now you can repeat all the above steps and if both partners desire it, you can add orgasm, but without penetration of any kind. Only non-penetrative orgasm and manipulation are permitted tonight. If you are a heterosexual couple, the female should go first, to have her orgasm prior to the male orgasm.

**Night Five** – If desired, you can add penetration to this sensual and erotic experience. But the night must start with giving and receiving massage. You can decide who the receiver is and who the sender is first. Take note of any emotions that you feel.

**Night Six** – Penetration and massage are permitted, massage is included. Now you'll another element is added: emotional disclosure. Talk about any feelings that come up at any time. Check in with one another, including asking question such as “how are you feeling now?” If at any point either partner has an emotion that creates withdrawal or shutdown, you can call a time out and start over. The start over does not mean the night ends. It only means that you start back at the massage portion of the night, until your emotions calm down or changed to allow for orgasm.

Talk about your before, during and after intercourse emotions, if you decide to have intercourse. Don't attempt to intellectualize either person's feelings or to get out of the emotional state. Only make validating and empathizing statements. For example, “It sounds like you are feeling----”or “It makes sense you are feeling---”and “Do you need a break?” And if your partner says “Yes” then go back to massage until they are ready to move to genital massage, penetration (if you choose) and orgasm.

After the evening of sexual connection and pleasure, share with your partner what you appreciated about the night. You might say: “One thing I really appreciated about this night was----” and then switch, and receive one



appreciation from your partner. See if each of you can share three things you appreciate about the night and about each other.

This exercise is a six week exercise. Or you can make it a twelve week exercise. Or you may want to use this exercise over many months or a year, in order to establish a deep and connecting base of trust that brings your bodies and hearts into alignment.

Or you may be like some couples, who last about two weeks and are ready to move into a full erotic life together, sharing their deepest sexual fantasies.

No matter how you work this **Six week Protocol**, remember this is an exercise in intimacy, closeness and finding a way back to each other. Clearing the space between you starts with a desire to be together. Whether you do so with hesitancy or with full enthusiasm, it eventually will lead you to the same place. Try not to judge your partner or yourself for the way that you approach this exercise. What matters is that you show up for one another.

Remember - this is a practice. The more you practice, the better you will feel about your intimate and erotic life. Have some fun; try not to take any of it (or yourselves) too seriously. And most of all let yourself have moments of joy – most of us have a hard time even tolerating joy. It's easy to be sad, mad or frustrated. We are all familiar and even comfortable with those emotions. Joy can sometimes be uncomfortable at first. Let yourself feel joy and hold onto that feeling for at least fifteen seconds longer than you might normally allow yourself to experience it. Allow your brain to integrate the emotional experience. Let your neurological pathways really form, like a deer path in the woods, so that you can come back again and again to the feeling.

You deserve it.



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**Thank you.**