



NEW SEX

Should You Make A Sex Tape? How Amateur Adult Films Can Build Intimacy And Lead To Better Sex

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Lights, camera, action!

In a relationship, we've all once thought about closing the curtains, getting undressed, and hitting "record" on the camcorder. Videotaping ourselves having sex with our partner sounds naughty, especially for the modern couple looking to

do more than the conservative. But while standing in front of the camera, possibly stricken with performance anxiety, have we ever wondered why we're so desperate to film our carnal acts? Even more so, why do we enjoy watching them later?

1. The Birth Of The Sex Tape: Celebrity Overnight

We have actor Rob Lowe to thank for bringing one of the first sex tapes into mainstream media in 1988, possibly giving way for a new American sex norm. A video leaked of the actor with two women, one underage, in an Atlanta hotel room. Fast forward to nine years later, Pam Anderson and then-husband Tommy Lee's raunchy vacation movie became one of the first viral sex videos.

These "leaked" celebrity sex tapes subsequently became an object of fascination, and even inspired some of us to record our bedroom encounters with the risk of the uninvited world tuning into our private time.

"I think that celebrity itself has a powerful influence in the general public," Dr. Fran Walfish, Beverly Hills psychotherapist, author of *The Self-Aware Parent*, and expert panelist on WE TV's *Sex Box* told *Medical Daily*.

Kelly Chisholm, a certified sex therapist and intimacy coach, says aside from celebrity sex tapes, porn usage has also influenced couples to film sex tapes.

"[W]ith the increase of porn usage, many couples are intrigued by being a porn star in their own home," she said.

Who suggests the dirty flick, however, may often be the male. But why?

2. Visual Sexual Stimulation: Men Vs. Women

It is known sexual stimuli differ for men and women, because they respond more strongly to it than women do. This is why pornographic magazines and videos are more directed at men, since they consume it on a greater scale. Out of

approximately 40 million adults who visit porn websites annually, 72 percent are male, while only 28 percent are female.

So, does this make men inclined to pitch the idea of a sex tape?

Man holding camcorder and cigarette. *Jing Qu, CC BY 2.0*

“Men are visual. All you have to do is take a quick glance at the profits for the porn industry to know I’m right. And if they have a partner who’s ready and willing to make a sex tape, which is porn, it doesn’t get much better for them. They get to have sex and watch the sex, while possibly having more sex, creating levels of pleasure.” April Masini, relationship expert and author, told *Medical Daily*.

A 2004 study published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience* proved this theory, showing brain activity indicated males are more interested in and responsive to visual sexually arousing stimuli. The researchers recruited 14 male and 14 female participants to view several types of sexual and social interaction images for 30 minutes. The fMRI scans revealed the amygdala (controls emotion and motivation) and hypothalamus are more strongly activated in males compared to females, even when both sexes expressed similar assessments of their arousal levels after viewing the images.

So why exactly do women experience less activation than men in these areas of the brain?

In a 2012 [study](#) published in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, Dutch researchers scanned the brains of 12 female participants between the ages of 18 and 47 to observe the activity in brain areas linked to sexual arousal. The scan results revealed out of three videos shown — one neutral, and the other two “women-friendly” erotica (one low-intensity and the other high-intensity) — the high-intensity erotic video resulted in far less blood being sent out of the primary visual cortex. This suggests women’s brains are focusing on sexual arousal as more important than visual processing during these erotic scenes.

However, in Walfish’s clinical experience, she’s found although men tend to be more visually stimulated creatures compared to women, both are equally likely to initiate a sex tape. “It is balanced, but in most cases that I’ve seen, when one wants to do a sex tape, the other is resistant,” Walfish told *Medical Daily*.

That resistance may stem from wrestling the idea of a sex tape versus a porno.

3. Sex Tape Vs. Porno: What’s The Difference?

Celebrity sex tapes may be borderline pornography because they feature real sex and other imagery with the intent to arouse the viewer. However, there are differences between what constitutes a sex tape and a porno. One clear distinction between the two is “the paycheck,” according to Masini.

Initially, sex tapes are amateur videos shot by a person or a couple without the intention for later distribution or sale. Whereas in pornos, they are filmed by a third party, multi-angled, and contain professional adult film stars with extreme close-up shots of their genitals.

Although the consumption of the two is done in a similar fashion, there’s a clear distinction when we’re watching strangers versus when we’re watching ourselves.

“The boundary lines are very clear with porno and they’re extremely smeared when you’re making a sex tape. It’s like going over the line with incest. There is no separation between you and the *other*. You are in it. It is you,” Walfish said.

4. Exhibitionist or Voyeuristic? Watching The Sex Tape

Watching our own sex type can resemble certain characteristics of paraphilic disorders, a DSM-V umbrella term that includes exhibitionism disorder and voyeurism disorder. However, labeling couples who want to do their own sex tape as exhibitionists or voyeurs may not be inaccurate.

Voyeurism has more to do with watching other people's sex tapes than it does watching your own, or making your own, according to Masini. Whereas, exhibitionism really depends on the level of needing to show off for the camera that a person in a sex tape requires.

Meanwhile, people who send tapes and pictures to their significant others may be considered exhibitionists.

“I would apply the term to individuals who send tapes and pictures to their significant others. Especially if they were not requested and/or the sender gets some gratification from knowing they are being seen,” Eboni Harris, a relationship therapist, educator, and podcaster told *Medical Daily*.

5. Pros And Cons Of The Sex Tape

So, are there any benefits to reap from this naughty and forbidden act?

Similar to other sexual activities, filming personal sexual experiences can be considered an exercise of trust and intimacy. Couples can discuss their sexual interests and fantasies and feel closer, which will improve the likelihood of a satisfying sex life. It gives couples a bird's eye view for improvement.

“If you think about watching the tapes like a game tape, you can use the footage to honestly share the moments that were most enjoyable. It is also interesting to note what you were focused on during certain positions or any particular acts that took you out of the moment,” Harris said.

Man pressing remote control to watch TV. *Chris Brown, CC BY-SA 2.0*

The sex tape becomes a memory part of a video scrapbook. It allows couples to think about how great they look now, and how they will want to preserve that because their bodies will change.

“Taking a risk and making a memory together, as well as doing something that you don’t do with others, are all factors that bond a couple together,” Masini said.

6. The Sex Tape: To Do Or Not To Do

The desire to film ourselves can simply remain a desire. It’s best to talk about it extensively before doing it. Both partners need to be in a comfort zone, so they can understand why they want to do this, the implications, and the consequences of what to do if it ends up disastrous.

For example, in some states, revenge porn is an issue. This happens when a couple who makes a sex tape, splits up, and the sex tape is used publicly as revenge by the spurned partner, according to Masini. This has happened enough to inspire legislation and criminal laws, especially in California.

“It’s easy to get into things in the excitement of the moment, and then have a real issue in the relationship because it wasn’t thought through,” according to Harris.

If we’re curious as to how we look like in bed, Walfish suggests an alternative to the sex tape. She believes this method doesn’t take away the imagination aspect of sex, since it’s a huge part of sexual arousal.

“If you’re curious, it’s better to have your mate describe what you look like.”

However, for couples who are willing to push the envelope and invite a new pair of eyes into the bedroom — enjoy it. The important thing is to communicate and discuss why you are interested in filming yourself, along with any concerns. Don’t be afraid to discuss deal breakers when it comes to how the footage is handled.

“Most importantly,” Masini says, “if you are going to do it, enjoy it. If nothing else you will have a good laugh when it is all over and feel more connected to your significant other.”

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