

Married With Benefits

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Episode 2: Why Can't My Wife Focus More on Sex?

Guest: Dr. Juli Slattery

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Brian: From the Podcast Network here at FamilyLife® this is *Married With Benefits*. I'm Brian Goins and we're on a relentless pursuit to help you love the one you're with and discover all the benefits that came with saying, "I do."

Once again, I'm joined by Harvard trained researcher, Shaunti Feldhahn, who is helping us live with our wives in an understanding way by giving us straight forward answers—giving us the "Aha!" moments that we as husbands need to help us understand our wife better. In our season, this season it's called Questions Every Husband Is Asking.

Shaunti: We had to do the other side—

Brian: We did.

Shaunti: —of the story. Absolutely, we did.

Brian: You and your husband, Jeff, have done a ton of research on this, especially with a lot of men. You have two great books: *For Women Only—For Men Only*. You have a lot more books, [Laughter] but you have those two *specifically* for these two seasons—I think are great companions and everybody needs to get them. If you don't have them on your bookshelf, you need to have *For Women Only* and *For Men Only*.

Shaunti: Can I take you on the road with me, Brian? I appreciate that.

Brian: I have recommended your books to so many people because they're incredibly helpful and insightful. So we appreciate it.

How many men do you think you've talked to over the past few years?

Shaunti: I've probably interviewed and surveyed it's well over 10,000 men. It's probably closer to 15 at this point.

Brian: My goodness.

Shaunti: I know; it's been crazy. It's been an amazing situation for the last number of years.

Brian: And for women as well, I would say it's been about the same?

Shaunti: Yes; pretty close. We've done—we just finished our tenth big national study.

Brian: Okay. So if you've interviewed 10,000 men let's say—at least—what do you think the most common question those men have asked you? I want you to think about it because I'm going to wonder if it sounds anything like the question we got from a real husband, right here. Listen to this.

Marcus: My name is Marcus. I've been married for nine years and here's my question. I wonder why I'm so sex driven and when it comes to my wife, she's just not as interested. It's frustrating. I think I take care of myself pretty well and she's just not into it. So why doesn't she want sex as much as I do?

Brian: Ever heard that question, Shaunti?

Shaunti: Just a couple of times, just a couple of times. Actually, it's such a common question I've invited a good friend of mine, Dr. Juli Slattery, to join us. Juli's really an expert on this question. She's a clinical psychologist, and she's the founder of the ministry Authentic Intimacy and several amazing books on this topic. You can find more about those at AuthenticIntimacy.com. Juli, I'm so glad you're joining us today. Thank you.

Juli: Thanks for having me on. It sounds like you guys are having a great ongoing conversation.

Brian: It's been fun. Juli, my wife and I call you a sexpert. I don't know if you've ever gotten that before.

Shaunti: She's probably heard that just a couple of times.

Brian: Just a few times. I don't know how you become that but that's not something I would think that you thought about doing when you were in college.

Juli: No; it definitely isn't. And I do cringe just a little bit when people call me that.

Brian: For you, just briefly—just tell us a little bit—how has this been a journey into these issues and how did you come about talking about these things?

Juli: I think originally, I started talking about sexuality because when you address women's issues and marriage issues you have to address sexuality. So many women are dealing with things like sexual trauma, body image issues that relate to sexuality, and then—certainly when you get into marriage—this is one of the major topics that people come to counseling for, and it's a major pain point. So that's how I originally got interested in talking about sexuality.

But in the last eight years or so, it's taken kind of a whole new focus for me. The Lord just really called me to address the sexual brokenness that I was seeing all around me in ministry, so I started this ministry about eight years ago with Linda Dillow, and now—I guess full time—my job is to teach on the topic of sexuality.

Brian: Wow. That's quite a full-time job.

Shaunti: It is and that's the reason I'm like, "Okay, we have to talk about this with Juli." We can't just have it be the two of us because we absolutely need to have some of this wisdom that you bring to the table. Especially because, Juli, one of the most common questions that men ask is this question of, "Why can't my wife focus more on sex?"

Juli: Yes, it's really true and there are so many different answers to that. Everything from biological to emotional to relational and we'll hit on a few of those, but I think it even starts with the idea that men are just wired to experience sexual desire—for the most part—more than women are. Partly because they have about 10 times more testosterone in their bodies than women do.

So they experience sex more as a physical need than the average woman is going to—and certainly, there are exceptions to that—but in about 80 percent of marriages, you're going to see men just naturally saying, "Hey, sex is really important to me. I experience it as a real physical desire," and their wives kind of say, "Eh, not so much."

Brian: Now I have heard—just a caveat—because there are some women that are spies—that we call them spies—that are listening in on this and they're sitting there going I wish my husband desired it more.

Shaunti: Yes.

Brian: So there are—I just want to be careful that we're not lumping all men, that they're sex craved and that's all they think about all the time. Speak just briefly to that, Shaunti, that there are women who say I desire more than men.

Shaunti: Yes. Actually in our last study—believe it or not—this was one of the things we were trying to tease out a little bit and we found that 18 percent of couples are flipped on this. So in other words, close to what Juli was talking about with about 80 percent—20 percent. So we found roughly the same thing.

Brian: We're going to talk to the 82% of men—if I got my math right—that are sitting there going, "I've got Marcus's question. I want to know, 'Why is it she's not thinking about it or desiring it as much as I am?'"

Shaunti: Yes, and this is one of the things that Juli has heard me talk about *many* times is, there's two pieces of a puzzle. I'm really curious to hear what Juli says about this

because there's two things going on in terms of the needs. There's sort of the physical need—which Juli is talking about—and there's an emotional need.

In the last season we were helping the women understand that for men there is a huge *emotional* component to them—of this feeling of being desired by their wife gives them a sense of—really—a confidence and sense of well being in the other areas of their life, not just in the bedroom. I'd love to reverse that, Juli, in this one I'd love to understand what are the things that the men aren't understanding about their wives.

Juli: Yes, really good question and I think there are a few key answers to that. Number one—and this is kind of cliché—but it really is true that men look to sex as a way of connecting emotionally to their wives and women look at sex as a celebration of emotional connection.

So, as you're going on a date with your wife, you're thinking, "Okay, I hope that there's sex in here somewhere because that's how I really feel close to my wife. It's what I have fun doing with her—it's just how we connect." But she's thinking, "If he's really sweet to me and we connect, and we look in each other's eyes and he listens to me and we connect emotionally, then maybe I'll be ready for sex. But if that doesn't happen, then I'm not so interested."

They're coming at it from two very different perspectives, that's really the first thing—that even—guys if you've heard this over and over and over again, you tend to forget it—that your wife has to feel safe with you and connected with you usually, until she starts to feel some sexual desire.

I would say the second thing is that, just like sex for a man fills that need of feeling competent—feeling wanted—the same is true, but it's varied with women, where a woman's—one of her greatest needs is just to feel like, precious to you—to feel cherished—to feel like you're her number one. So a lot of times she'll view sex in terms of, "How is he focusing on me? Am I just an object that he wants a sexual release with because I don't feel loved that way? Or is he really in love with me as a person?"

That's why foreplay can be so important—and not just foreplay in the moment before sex but in the week before sex—of telling your wife that she's beautiful, how much you love her, how much you love being with her. Because she only wants to be with you sexually if she's really feeling like you desire all of her—not just that this is a duty she needs to engage in. So I think those are two main things men usually forget or have never heard about women related to sexual needs.

Shaunti: One of the things we talked about—Juli, it's interesting you said that—is the very last episode we were talking about how important it is to help men understand that their wives need to know that they're beautiful for them. Like to help her realize that she's beautiful, that she's loved, that she's special and lovely, and I think Brian ended that episode with saying "and that could bring some benefits."

Brian: Yes, it could. It might. [Laughter] I mean like if a husband is actually understanding his wife—living with her in an understanding way. That’s our verse for this whole season, 1 Peter 3:7. Like, if I understand how she’s wired, it might actually help me, and I hate to say it—it sounds selfish—but to help me get what my needs are.

And if I die to myself and understand her needs, it actually might help my needs get met. So what I hear you saying with that is understand that it is something that we need to help nourish her to the place where she wants to be receptive.

Shaunti: Now here’s a question though—and this is something that, Juli, when Jeff and I were writing *For Men Only* and helping men understand women—one of the things that was a common—like what the heck is going on kind of question—was guys saying, “But I do do those things,” right. “I do. I’m sweet I help around the house. I text her that I love her every day. I scrub the toilets—and she’s still not interested.”

One of the things that I was fascinated to learn about, and I’m curious your perspective on it, was that there was certain desire. There’s sort of a different way that men and women are wired physiologically. I’m curious how you would explain that.

Juli: Yes. I think what you’re probably alluding to is there is a desire that—most men can relate to—which is, “I’m going to initiate sex. I’m thinking about it. I want it. I’m looking forward to it.” That’s the majority of how most men think about sex is that initiating desire.

So the second type of desire is what we call receptive desire, and this is really what most women can identify with, with sexuality, is if you first initiate it. You ask me if I want it. I’m like, “No, I’m not thinking about it. I’m not interested, but I might be able to get in the mood if I can get my mind there—if I can get my body there—if I can stop thinking about the other 10 things that I need to get done.” Women have like sexual ADD. They can’t keep their mind focused there.

Brian: Is there—is there—sorry Juli—is there medication for that? I mean, if there’s sexual ADD. I mean we’ve got Ritalin. Is there anything we can do there for that?

Juli: Not that I have found, but you need to understand that about your wife. She’s not rejecting you when she says, “Wow! Well, I thought I was going to do laundry tonight. That throws my whole plan off.” That’s just how women are wired and that’s why it’s so important.

Kevin Leman once wrote a book called *Sex Begins in the Kitchen*. What he’s getting at with that title—and the whole book—is that’s why it is so important to give your wife a lot of notice that you’re thinking about sex. Giving her time to get her mind and her body there so she can be responsive and she can have that receptive desire, because a good percentage of women, who would go through the average day and say, “I didn’t

think about sex at all” will say, “If I’m primed the right way by my husband, with love and with care and knowing that he’s thinking about sex—if I plan it that way, then actually I can end up enjoying it. But I need a lot of lead time.”

Brian: So I can hear right now—husbands are listening right now going “Oh, okay. So give me that playbook. What I need to prime her. I need to get her ready. What do I need to do? Is it flowers? Is it doing the laundry? Is it—” Like they’re looking for the script, and I’m sure every woman is different. So how can a husband help know, “this is what it means to help her be receptive”?

Juli: Yes; it’s as simple as asking her. I think sometimes we make this more complicated than it needs to be, but couples rarely have the honest conversation, of first of all, talking about why sex is important or not important to them.

A husband really saying, “I know you don’t understand this, but this is really how I feel close to you and I want to be with you. It’s important to me. I feel like sometimes when I initiate, I catch you off guard and I’m actually getting to the place where I’m afraid of initiating because I’m afraid you’re going to reject me. So, let’s talk about how we can work that through.”

My husband and I have had many conversations like this. One of the ways that we worked it out over time was him giving me a signal. For a while we called it a requisition order. It was kind of dopey but— [Laughter]

Brian: What type of business is your husband in—

Juli: I know.

Brian: —that he would know requisition order?

Juli: Well, I think it came from—he was in the Marine Corp. I told him like, “Hey, when you put in a requisition order it takes you a long time to get what you’re asking for but you get it eventually.” For me that was saying to him I need to know you’re thinking this, but then I need you to give me time to initiate when I’m ready. That was super helpful for us in navigating this.

Other couples work this out by actually scheduling sex in the beginning of the week saying, “Okay, when are good times for us to be together?” But I think you should also ask your wife, “What helps you get ready for sex?” And if she says, “Hey, if it’s our night together and you’ll put the kids to bed, that really gives me a lot of time and space to get ready.” Or she might say, “I just want you to text me throughout the day and help me think about it.”

So lean on her to give you those cues instead of feeling like you’re trying to push all these buttons and not knowing which one is going to work.

Brian: Boy, that's good. I think that's what—I think that's really the key problem. I know when I'm talking to guys—and unfortunately our culture reinforces this idea—that men have a ton of expectations about sex or what I like to—Jenn and I call sex expectations—but we have few conversations about sex—because our culture's great at showing and watching sex—but to actually talk about it.

I mean, you just mentioned a couple of things—Juli—that were so helpful. Using phrases like, “I feel close to you when we have sex.” I wonder how many guys have actually said those words.

Juli: That's an *incredibly* common thing among most men. I mean that's one of *the* most key emotional kind of groundings—foundations—and I'll bet most—the vast majority of men have never said those words.

Brian: Right.

Juli: And if I could point out one of the reasons is many men may not have been able to articulate it that way—

Brian: Right.

Juli: —even to themselves much less to their wife. They just know that there's this deep kind of feeling—longing—and they don't know how to put that into words. But those are the words.

Brian: Those were great words. The other words you said were, “When I initiate and I don't get a response, it makes me more afraid to initiate.” So I think what you're doing, Dr. Slattery, is giving us words that we can use to say, “Hey, how can I have a conversation about this?” Because I think that's what so key in this whole thing is that, you know, “Let's talk about this as husband and wife.”

Shaunti: There's another piece here—which is also—understanding—because part of what you're doing is understanding what's going on in you—for the men listening to this—what's going on in you as a guy. One of the things that we have heard men say when Jeff and I have done marriage conferences and we've shared some of Juli's stuff, right? We've talked about some of these things that we've learned to help men and women understand and navigate this topic, and we have guys coming up and going, “You mean I need to warn her?” Like, that doesn't feel so good.

Brian: Right.

Shaunti: One of the things that we as women—when we were talking in the last season to help the women understand their husbands—is sort of this recognition that he is going to run everything that happens in this area, and guys you're running this whole

conversation through the grid of, “Well, I’m just not desirable to her—like I’m not enough for her. In the movies the guy never has to ask.”

Brian: No, she wants it. She’s looking for it.

Shaunti: And, it’s because, you know, “I’m such a stud, so *clearly* if it’s not happening and I have to talk about it ahead of time, and you know she has sexual ADD” [Laughter] “and I need to have a requisition order, that clearly means I’m not desirable.” Juli, I’d love to hear you talk to the men about that.

Juli: Yes. You know, as you’re describing it, I think it’s so important to realize that’s part of God’s design. Because our temptation is—I think particularly, a *man’s* temptation is to separate sex from a person—to say, “I have this physiological need. Sex feels good. I’m married now so I should be able to have this need met.” We see through culture the influence of pornography and other things that you’re trained over and over again to separate your sexual desire from the relationship with your wife and actually loving your wife.

The fact that God has made your wife to be complicated—to have sexual ADD—to need to be prepared and primed for sex means that you continually have to “woo” her. You have to connect your sex drive to actually loving a person and that feels very frustrating, but if you can see it in terms of that’s part of how God is growing you—growing you together—but also growing you as a lover. Then you won’t be as frustrated.

I think women have that fear—every wife has this fear that, “my husband is separating sex with me from loving me”. Women have been so objectified with their bodies and sexuality that even if they can’t say it out loud, that’s a lot of times why they reject their husbands is because down deep they’re feeling, “You don’t want *me*, you just want to have sex with me.” So that “wooing” that you feel frustrated having to do every couple of days is actually what ties you to understanding your wife and to really loving her in a more profound way.

Brian: You know, Juli, you mentioned something there about porn, and while we’re going to have another episode where we talk specifically about this—and we’ve done it in the last season—but why is that such a saboteur for men? Where does it really inhibit the very thing they long for—which is intimacy with their wife?

Juli: There’s so many ways that it sabotages intimacy, but I think one that I just alluded to is that porn trains you to make sex about *you*. Porn is always available for you. It doesn’t require anything from you. You can have a response exactly how you want it without having to be sensitive or patient or forgiving.

So guys who have grown up using porn—they think of their sexual desire as, “Of course, this about me and my wife needs to give me what I want.” To the point where a

lot of guys actually have trouble sexually responding to their wives because their sex drive has been trained to respond exactly when they want it—how they want it.

Shaunti, you mentioned in your research that about 18% of marriages have that flip dynamic of the women wanting sex more. We're starting to see that increase over time, not because men have a low sex drive, but because they don't know how to perform sexually in a real relationship, so they're just avoiding sex. I think with the 20's and 30's when we see guys that have been raised on porn, we're seeing that dynamic play out more and more. That's the first reason.

The second reason is really, it teaches you to objectify women. You can say, "Oh no, no, no. That doesn't impact me," or "It doesn't impact the way I see my wife," but it *does* because now you're comparing your wife—who is God's provision for your needs—to unrealistic images, and whether you ever speak that out loud or not, those images are competing with the beauty of the wife that God has given you. Again, even if it's unspoken, that dynamic exists within your marriage bed when porn is a part of your sexual habits or relationship.

Brian: That's great. That's all good stuff—and sobering. It's a reality of where most guys are right now.

Shaunti: Yes.

Brian: I think it was a great opportunity for us as men to realize too, as husbands, so much of sex as something—as a gift from God and every gift—every good thing usually comes with a sense of, "it's not necessarily going to be easy." Every good thing that guys pursue, whether it's work—whether it's a hobby—it all involves some type of preparation, and most guys I know are incredible preparers.

You mentioned that your husband was in the Marines. I don't know what his profession is now—what does he do now?

Juli: He works with retirement plans.

Brian: Okay, so he's helping people prepare for the future—

Juli: That's right. [Laughter]

Shaunti: There you go.

Brian: —and invest and I think men by nature are incredible preparers. Like, if they want to do something that they enjoy, they'll prepare for it.

Shaunti: Yes, it's part of being the provider—protector.

Brian: Yes. One of our producers, Jim, he's great at making barbeque. Juli, you need to come in and we're going to have some barbeque for one of our lunches when we have you here live. He will stay up all night making sure that the wood is just right, that the meat is on there at the right temperature—so he will prepare for 24 hours just to have a good meal. People that are hunters will get up early. They'll get all their equipment—their gear and everything ready to go. But yet, when it comes to sex, guys just expect it to be easy.

Shaunti: I think the reason is because unfortunately, it's *just* what Juli said—we've been conditioned. The men—and the women to some degree—but especially, I think you as men—there's a lot that has been conditioned in you to think sort of what I said earlier, like it's just supposed to happen.

Brian: Right.

Shaunti: Like, it's just, “she can't keep her hands off of me.” You know, she's saying “Well, honey, I'm just really tired.” “Well, if I was enough of a stud, she wouldn't be tired.” Like, there's this misconception about this and I would love for us to help the guys go, “Well, okay, if I need to prepare—if I need to plan—if I need to understand things differently—what are those things that I need to do differently? How do I need to shift my mind?”

Brian: Yes. You ladies have done a great job in giving us many of those things. So let's boil it down for an ordinary husband—where can I depend on God to help me in these matters? It seems like number one—I'm hearing conversation. Have a conversation about it, just to talk about it and share a little bit about your feelings—about what this makes you feel when you don't have sex or when she's not initiating. So, have a conversation.

The next thing I'm hearing is, “Start preparing.” Maybe even speak to some of those practicalities there.

Shaunti: Well, I love the—I mean, I'm not sure that we want men to go out and say, “Honey, I have a requisition order.” [Laughter] In *For Men Only*, we call it give her anticipation time—whatever that is; right? Like Juli was talking about—it's the text during the day—it's the little flirty comment at breakfast—it's something that is waking her mind up to what you'd love to have happen later.

Because otherwise—I know it seems strange to you guys—but she's literally just not thinking about it. She's has receptive desires. She's physically different from you.

Brian: Yes. Some sort of signal. I also heard Juli say scheduling—

Shaunti: That's another option, yes.

Brian: —which seems totally counter intuitive to spontaneous sex—but I hear you saying, “No, that actually helps me prepare as a woman.”

Shaunti: For some maybe, Juli, not everybody; right? But for some couples that’s the way they handle it.

Juli: It is and the research—you’ll appreciate this, Shaunti—shows that couples that schedule sex have more sex.

Shaunti: There you go guys.

Brian: Wow! Did we write that down in the show notes? [Laughter] Couples who schedule sex have more sex. Man, I like that.

Then, consistently “wooing,”—which I think that’s where husbands roll the eyes and go, “Okay, I’ve got to romance my wife.”

Shaunti: Well, I love the way Juli put it. I actually wrote down a quote, “Show her you want and love *her*, not just that you want to have sex with her.” I think every guy can understand that concept.

Brian: That’s good. Any other tips that you’ve got for us ordinary husbands out there? Okay, I’m going to have a conversation. I’m going to think about preparation and realizing that she has more of a receptive response to sex than I do and then I’m going to be wooing—I’m going to be romancing. Anything else that we’d say?

Shaunti: I would say one thing—and I’m curious what Juli would say—but guys, you can take your ego out of it—she’s different. She’s physiologically different from you. If you go to the gym together, you wouldn’t expect her to bench press the same amount that you do; right?

Brian: No, Jenn bench presses *more* than me. [Laughter] You’re exactly right.

Shaunti: So, you could take your ego out of it. Alright, Juli; what else do guys need?

Juli: No, I agree with you. I think one other thing that we probably never talk about with married guys—and married women—is that there’s still an element of self-control with your sexual drive when you’re married. We talk about this all the time with singles, but God is still in the refining process of us when we get married and sex can be a big part of that. So, really wrestle with those expectations that you’ve brought into marriage that, “because I’m married, I should get all my needs met. This is a right; I demand this.”

God wants us to surrender those kinds of attitudes in every area to Him and loving your wife may mean—at least in the short term really—having some self-control; meeting with some other guys you trust to address just frustration and issues related to sexuality

because God is in the business of growing us. That's difficult when we're single but it's also difficult when we're married.

Shaunti: One of the things that that brings up, that we probably should say is—Juli, what are the steps—one or two key steps—for those men who recognize, “I have been dysfunctional. I have had strange expectations because of having looked at pornography since I was a teenager—” or whatever those issues are in your past. What is it that a guy can do to start over?

Juli: Yes, a few things he can do. Number one is be in community with other guys. Everybody that works with sexual integrity ministries will say guys need other guys to heal and to be honest and to just ask each other difficult questions and to journey with the Lord. So fortunately, pretty much in every church and every city, there's some great groups and curriculum you can go through just connecting with men that are on that journey of integrity. So that would be one thing.

I think another thing is don't have an “all or nothing” perspective about this. The reason I say that is because even in the midst of this conversation some guys are so discouraged because they feel like, “Hey, I've tried that. I keep failing. I keep falling.” But the maturing process that God does—the way He disciplines us—is we take a few steps and we fall down. We take a few more steps and we fall down again. We keep getting back up.

The Scripture talks about how the righteous keep falling but we keep getting up. So I would tell you even if you're discouraged, bring this before the Lord, get a band of brothers around you, and keep fighting it.

I'd say the other thing is, don't be afraid of taking a timeout sexually in your marriage. That sounds crazy, especially as we're talking about how do I get my wife more interested in sex, but in 1 Corinthians 7 when Paul talks about don't neglect sexual relations with each other except for a time where you're praying—like you mutually agree to pray.

I think in every marriage relationship there should be seasons where you say, “You know what? Let's go a week or two weeks, or even a month where we just pray about our sex life.” We pray together. We pray individually. We ask God for healing—and some real strongholds can be broken during that time, even in terms of God rewiring our sexual response.

Brian: Man, those three things are great. I mean each one of those. I wonder how many guys have ever prayed together with their wife for their sex life.

Shaunti: Well if I'm a guy—I'm not a guy—but if I'm a guy, I'm listening to that and going, “And as soon as I'm done praying, guess what I'm thinking about?”

Brian: Right.

Shaunti: But I guess this is where you trust God to change your heart; right?—And to give you that perspective.

Brian: I think that's where she's saying put a boundary on it from 1 Corinthians 7. It's like, "Let's agree to a week or two—or maybe even a month—depending on what the situation is—everybody's going to be different—but we're going to pray about this so there is no expectation."

Shaunti: Yes, that's good.

Brian: So, for a guy he can step back and pray. And then the other one about this, "not all or nothing perspective." It reminded me of 1 Corinthians 13—you were quoting 1 Corinthians 7—Love is patient and kind; it does not envy or boast; it's not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful. You know, we talk about that passage as a love chapter that we tend to think of it more as a feminine thing.

But yet—right after this—Paul talks about how when he was a boy, he thought like a boy. But now that he's become a man, he acts like a man—he pursues man. This is a manly type of love that says we need to maybe sit back from our expectations, not get irritable or resentful—

Shaunti: Aw, that's good.

Brian: —not envy or boast, but I'm going to actually be patient. I'm going to be kind. I'm going to understand my wife. I think that first one that you talked about being in community—that guys need other guys to lead and—as a guy, I know where guys are right now. Like, they don't want to have this conversation. There's a lot of fear—you know this, Juli—but it's amazing that I know for me when I finally confessed my sexual brokenness in areas of my life, that it uncorks the dam in other guys lives.

Shaunti: Definitely.

Brian: So the very thing they fear is what's going to get them to true intimacy and true community—and that when one guy shares where he's broken, everybody else starts sharing and all of a sudden, he finds, "Man, this is so much better to be here." They say the power of addiction is secrecy and what's keeping so many guys back from growing in this area is that they're not willing to be honest. But then, when they're honest, they grow.

Juli: Very true.

Shaunti: Man, I just get the sense that there's some men out there who are listening to this that are going, "I want that. Like, I'm scared to death of it, but I want it." Listen guys, I'm not a guy. I don't know what it's like to be living in your mind and your heart every day but man—I have studied a lot of men and I've spoken to a lot of men over the years and I do hear the heart behind this which is, "I love my wife. I just want to be with her."

So guys, just my encouragement to you coming from the perspective of a wife and a researcher is just to recognize your wife wants to be with you too—she's just different than you—and this is such a good opportunity for you to take that time to really recognize God designed it this way so that you would focus on her.

Brian: Well, Juli—you may not know this Juli—but we've quoted you on our new version of *Weekend to Remember*. Which by the way, if people have not gone—if you, a guy—have not gone to *Weekend to Remember*—or Shaunti's conferences—or Juli's conferences—it's great to just get away and reset because that's where you tend to have these deep conversations is when you give yourself space to do them.

FamilyLife puts on *Weekend to Remember* conferences and Juli, you're quoted a lot now in our new guide book that we have for the guests when they come to the weekend.

One of my favorite quotes from you is where it talks about this different—these incompatibilities—where you say, "For men, sex leads to feelings of love. For women, feelings of love lead to sex. Men are quickly aroused and satisfied; women, not so much. Men want direct stimulation in one place and women want to be touched everywhere, delaying direct stimulation. Men want sex in order to relax; women must relax in order to enjoy sex. Men tend to be visually aroused while women are aroused through emotional connection."

How in the world do we get together in the first place? That's what I want to know. We are different and it requires us to die to self and to understand and live with our wife in an understanding way.

Well, as we wrap up this episode, guys, you're probably doing some things that you're doing well in this area and there might be one of the areas that I think about for you. One of those last things that we talk about from having conversation to preparing to pursuing and then to address your own sexual brokenness, but when you do have those great feelings and those times of intimacy, tell your wife that and say, "Hey, that was great!" Because when we reinforce that, I mean your big—

Shaunti: —and, "I love you so much."

Brian: Right.

Shaunti: —and, "I feel so close to you."

Brian: —you’re a big proponent of that. Keep reinforcing that. So, think about the area where you might be doing really well and go, “Hey, let’s keep doing that.” And maybe there’s one or two things out of this podcast that you go, “That’s where I feel like I need to go. That’s where I need to have the conversation.”

I want to thank you for listening to this edition of *Married With Benefits*. Juli, thank you so much for joining us.

Juli: Thanks for having me.

Brian: I hope you had a great time. Would you be willing to come on again?

Juli: Definitely; anytime.

Brian: We’re going to talk about sexual ADD and how to solve it. [Laughter]

Shaunti: You’ve got every guy subscribing.

Brian: That’s right and if you haven’t—speaking of subscribing, if you have been subscribing to us, we *really* appreciate it and we’d love for you to leave a review and tell us what you think especially about this episode. I do want to remind you a great way to build sexual intimacy is to build your spiritual intimacy with one another.

I want to remind you about *I Do Every Day*. It’s a 365-day devotional that we’re going to send right to your inbox. You’re going to receive titles like, “So I Married a Bank Robber,” “The S Word,” and “Putting the Man in Manipulation.” It’s great; guys like it. Not only that, I think it’s a great conversation piece for you and your bride. These devo’s offer quick help for the messy heart and beautiful I Do’s you’re trying to say to one another every day. You can sign up for free at FamilyLife.com/IDo.

Man, that was great to have Juli on. Thanks for inviting her.

Shaunti: Oh yes, she’s amazing! I have loved her work for years and years and years and you know guys, her stuff is helpful.

Brian: It really is. One of our favorite books—Jenn and I have read this and use it a lot—it’s called *25 Questions You’re Afraid to Ask About Love, Sex, and Intimacy*. So, if you’re intimidated by that conversation, that’s a great book to go.

Shaunti: There you go.

Brian: And of course, your book *For Men Only* is fantastic here—

Shaunti: Oh, thanks.

Brian: —and *For Women Only*. I highly encourage that, and so for Juli, again, her website was AuthenticIntimacy.com. You're going to want to go check that out.

I do want to also thank Shaunti Feldhahn for joining us and we appreciate that and want to thank CJ3, the entire *Married With Benefits* crew for helping us pull this off. And, speaking of sex and marriage, we want you to join us next time. We're going to find out just how important a husband's physical appearance is to his wife. Does he have to be a stud—a body builder in order for her to desire him? Don't answer that ladies. They'll have to find out next time on the podcast.

Until then, I'm Brian Goins. Thanks for listening.

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