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On the VoiceAmerica 7th Wave Network

Episode #13

Show Title: Transcendent Sex: When Lovemaking Opens the Veil

Show Date: December 18, 2013

Guest(s): Dr. Jenny Wade

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Show Description:

Are YOU one of the 8 to 12 people out of a 100 who have spontaneously catapulted into alternate realities during lovemaking (without the use of drugs or intentional practices)? Jenny Wade, PhD, developmental psychologist and consciousness researcher will discuss her research of these often spiritually enlightening, sexually healing, and sometimes disturbing experiences and share stories from her in-depth interviews of 91 people whose lives have been changed by them.

Dr. Wade, author of "Transcendent Sex," will also explore sex as a means for accessing whole consciousness. You will hear the stories of people whose lovemaking was so intense, they attained altered states of consciousness which led to transcendence, spiritual revelations, and the healing of psychological wounds. She'll also give pointers on how to open to transcendent sexual experiences and protect yourself should they happen to you.

Guest Bio:

Dr. Jenny Wade is a lecturer, researcher, and consultant who specializes the spontaneous openings and intentional practices that expand human potential by accessing hidden or unused innate capacities. She is a developmental psychologist who studies processes that open gateways to greater possibility than is considered normal in everyday existence, but that is potentially available to all human beings.

Dr. Wade is the author of *Changes of Mind: A Holonomic Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness*, *Transcendent Sex: When Lovemaking Opens the Veil* and numerous articles. She is on the core faculty of Sofia University (formerly the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology) in Palo Alto.

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Welcome to Extatica: The Way to an Erotic, Ecstatic Love Life. Your host is Ellen Eatough, the Soulful Sex Coach. Our program will take you beyond the sex you have been experiencing and open up a whole new world of intimacy. You've got a lot to learn today, so let's get started. Here is Ellen Eatough.

Ellen Eatough: Are you ready for more a more erotic, ecstatic love life? I am.

Now today, we're going to discuss what my guest calls "one of the best-kept secrets in human history;" that is, opening to other worldly realms through lovemaking. She says 8 to 12 people out of a hundred have spontaneously catapulted into alternate realities during lovemaking without the use of drugs or intentional practices. Are you one of them?

In today's show, my guest, Dr. Jenny Wade, a developmental psychologist and consciousness researcher, will discuss her research of these often spiritually enlightening, sexually healing, and sometimes disturbing experiences and share stories from her in-depth interviews of 91 people whose lives have been changed by them.

Now, since I was one of these 91 subjects in her research, I'm going to share one of my own experiences with this realm of sexuality.

So Dr. Wade is the author of *Transcendent Sex: When Lovemaking Opens the Veil*. This was the result of all of her research. So she'll also explore sex as a means for accessing whole consciousness. She'll tell you stories of people whose lovemaking was so intense they attained altered states of consciousness, which led to transcendence, spiritual revelations, and the healing of psychological wounds. She'll also give some pointers on how to open yourself to these experiences and protect yourself should they happen to you. Now, if they already have happened to you, we'd love to hear about it.

And you'll hear this phone number later, but I wanted to get you started with it. You can actually call into the live show at 1-866-472-5795 or send an email to radioshow@extatica.com. So this address is only for questions or comments during the live show. I don't usually say this right up front but I do get an email from somebody this afternoon who said had these experiences and I just wanted to leave that window open.

So I want to introduce my guest. Dr. Jenny Wade is a lecturer, teacher, consultant, and researcher with a PhD in human development. She specializes in the development of awareness both through spontaneous and intentional practices that expand human potential by accessing hidden or unused innate capacities. As a developmental psychologist, she has studied processes that open gateways to greater possibility and is considered normal in everyday existence but that is potentially available to all human beings.

So welcome, Dr. Jenny Wade.

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Jenny Wade: Hi, Ellen. I'm really happy to be here.

EE: I'm so happy to have you here. And as we'll get into a little bit later, we actually have a history around this realm because I was part of your research.

JW: That's right.

EE: But let's start with what you define as transcendent sex.

JW: Well, I guess the shortest way to describe it is to say that transcendent sex, in the way I define it, is when sex or sexual activity triggers an altered state; and by that I mean some sense of change in your sense of self. Your sense of self may expand. It could be out of your normal body which most of us think of as a part of ourselves. It could be larger than yourself. It could be that you feel interconnected with all beings. It could be a sense of change in time or space.

These are all clinical markers of altered states that researchers commonly use. So instead of being in the here and now, you might suddenly find yourself in another realm, maybe under the water swimming with beautiful sea creatures or in outer space of perhaps in a time and place you don't even recognize. They also do involve slipping in time. Some people find time becomes very plastic, it expands and contracts; or they suddenly find themselves in a past life.

So any of these alterations are considered different from normal consciousness, normal everyday waking consciousness. And when that begins to happen during sex, I call these transcendent sexual experiences because you're transcending your everyday reality and everyday sense of self and your lover to be in some unusual expanded or very different kind of reality.

EE: Right. So what do you think, if any, the correlations between this type of "transcendent sex" with the kind of sacred sex described in tantric traditions or other ancient traditions?

JW: Well, they may be very, very much alike. People have been recording magical kinds of sexual experiences literally since the beginning of time or at least since the beginning of recorded history.

In the Epic of Gilgamesh, which is the oldest piece of writing in human history, there is a story of sex in there where a sacred priestess and the priestesses in those days had sex with different worshippers, was told by a goddess to seek out this man who was half wild beast. He grazed eating grass like the other beasts. He went down to the water hole with the other beasts. He did not walk upon two legs but on all fours. And when he had sex with this priestess -- well, first of all, it lasted for a whole week. They had sex for seven days, day and night, and it was pretty hot. And at the end of it, he suddenly began to walk upright like a man, and the wild beast who had been

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his companions now distance themselves from his body. And when the priestess looked at him she said, "Oh, you have changed. Now, you have become..." And in fact, he had become part man and part divine. So this weeklong sex bout turned him from a beast into an elevated being, and that's the very first record we ever had in human history.

So although we can't say for sure what kinds of practices or experiences were going on out of the quasi-mythical realm back in ancient times, we know that there were a number of sacred sects that were devoted to probably esoteric sexual practices. And because these were secretive, most of them did not leave records. Only the initiates knew what the practices were and what the states were that came out of them. But much later on tantra indeed did become a way of life that cultivated practices that led to elevated kinds of sexual experiences.

What most people don't know today who sign up for a tantra class is that originally in classic tantra, you were only given a sexual partner at the very beginning and these were male practitioners. So they were females who would practice sex with them, but the goal was to eliminate the partner as quickly as possible and be able to manipulate those sexual energies in your own body by yourself just through different forms of meditation and visualization so that it became not only a solitary practice but technically since there wasn't a partner sort of a non-sexual or at least not physically sexual practice that led to enlightenment. And enlightenment, in this case, was the dissolution of the separate self and the body but by using energies that are in the body up through the chakra systems and the meridians to achieve that higher level.

EE: I've never heard you describe all of that and it's beautiful. Thank you so much.

JW: You're welcome.

EE: So you talk about this historical lineage, and yet you've said it's one of the best-kept secrets in human history. So let's discuss why it's such a secret. Why do you think it's been that way?

JW: Well, I think probably for a number of reasons. As religion became increasingly codified and civilized, the priests began to gather power to themselves whoever they were, whatever cult. In tribal or indigenous cultures, you still find a lot of expectation that just ordinary people will have magical encounters during sex. In fact, the Viking or the Old Icelandic word for sex is going on a journey together. It's quite common in indigenous cultures for people to expect to have unusual spiritual experiences during sex and not to think anything about it, but they also don't have hierarchies of priesthoods. We got that with civilization.

As the priests began to gather authority, they began to pass judgment on whether something that some naïve person, somebody who wasn't a priest or wasn't an initiate, if they had an experience, the priest would judge that and say, "Well, yes,

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that was an okay experience," or "No, that wasn't really a holy experience. It was this kind." As they gained more power, interestingly enough across almost all religions, sex became increasingly regulated about what kind of partner was acceptable, what time of day you could have sex, what kind of positions you could use, how often you could have sex, how much pleasure you could have from sex.

EE: That's trickled right down through to our culture, hasn't it?

JW: Yes. And this is pretty much true across almost every religion and particularly in the more esoteric branches. Buddhism, for example, is a very heady not in the body kind of religion. Even in tantra and in many Hindu branches, it's about getting beyond desire, getting beyond the needs of the body and certainly in the Judeo-Christian tradition that's true as well. But in the Jewish religion, sex always had a part more so than the other religions. Even rabbis and scholars were supposed to be married and part of being married was carrying out your conjugal duties. In fact, they're supposed to have sex on holy days unlike most Christians who are not supposed to have sex on holy days. The Jews are supposed to. And husbands have an obligation to satisfy their wives.

So, sexual satisfaction is also built into their religion but not in most. In fact, in most it's not okay. And so most of us have grown up feeling ashamed or not okay or it's not right to talk about sex, certainly not with our spiritual leaders or spiritual guides unless it's a way to control sex.

To me, one of the saddest things in doing my research was uncovering these wonderful spiritual moving stories from people in almost every case, and I was the first person they'd ever told because they didn't feel safe telling anyone else that they'd had these absolutely magnificent mind-blowing experiences while they're having sex.

EE: Yes. And you know, I was once in a -- it was a breakout room from a larger conference with sex therapists and counselors and so forth, and the subject came up of these transcendent sexual experiences. I don't think you were there at the time but it did come up. And one of these therapists who is actually quite well known, I won't mention her name, but she had not had these experiences but in hearing the subject matter, she said, "If my partner had that kind of experience and told me about it, I would say, 'What am I when you were having this experience? What am I, a chopped liver? You're having this ecstatic, transcendent experience and I'm here with your body.'" So I can see why some people might be afraid to share with their partner. That's a prevalent attitude. I don't know if it is.

JW: It's some of the attitude. What I tended to hear more was that people were afraid that their partners would make fun of them. Well, near-death experiences, for example, those are now pretty well known in the culture, but many people are afraid to disclose that they've had one because they feel like other people would think they're crazy or wouldn't understand or especially might belittle or mock the

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experience. I think that's one reason many of us keep some of our most sacred moments to ourselves. They are so important.

If we do bring them to the light of day with another person, we want that person to be highly respectful of it and not to say, "Well, you were just drunk," or "That was just a hallucination," or "Are you kidding? That's not real." We're afraid to show those things that are so precious and so personal a lot of times to others. When it is a lover, when you had it in a situation like that and you don't even know if your lover has perceived that you've had it, it can be really off-putting to think that should I disclose this or not? I don't think so. It's a little bit too close to the bone for me.

EE: Yes. So it's about time to take a short break. Maybe when we come back, you could discuss sort of how you got into this realm and what your personal experiences were that sets you on this journey, and I'll share something myself.

JW: Good.

EE: So this is Ellen Eatough and my guest is Dr. Jenny Wade, the author of *Transcendent Sex: When Lovemaking Opens the Veil*.

You're listening to *Extatica: The Way to an Erotic, Ecstatic Love Life*. You can catch the replay of this show and all of the other *Extatica* radio shows streaming online or you can download the MP3s, the podcast, and you can get the show transcripts at extatica.com/show.

So stay tuned for more on transcendent sex.

[Commercial Break]

This is Extatica: The Way to an Erotic, Ecstatic Love Life. Do you have questions or comments for Ellen Eatough or her guests? Call in live at 1-866-472-5795 or send an email to radioshow@extatica.com. Now back to the program.

EE: Welcome back. This is Ellen Eatough, the Soulful Sex Coach, with my guest, Dr. Jenny Wade, consciousness researcher and author of *Transcendent Sex: When Lovemaking Opens the Veil*.

Before we resume, I'd like to offer you a free gift, my 69-minute audio and e-book called *Beyond Orgasm: How to Have a More Deeply Connected Sexual Experience*. You can get it free at beyondorgasm.com.

So when I first met Jenny Wade, I was in grad school and I was taking a class called *Transpersonal Perspectives on Sexuality and Relationship*. She came as a guest speaker. I had been wondering about my own experiences thinking my partner and I were just like totally out in left field. And then she starts describing these experiences people are having at the beginnings of her research I guess and I'm

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going, "Oh, my God! We're not the only one. This is so exciting." So it can feel very alone since people aren't sharing this. Ever since all of this came about, wherever I've gone around the world actually, people have come up to me and wanted to tell me their private stories of these unusual life-changing experiences.

Whether it's your own or another one, I just would like to have you share a couple of people's experiences and how you ended up on this path of this research.

JW: Well, thanks. I ended up because one of these things happened to me. I was in my late 40s. I had had I think a reasonably exciting and very positive sex life up to that point, but I was with a new lover who also just as it happened was a researcher of altered experiences as I was. When we were making love one time, the walls of the room that we were in seem to dissolve and I suddenly found myself on a beach looking into a bright sunset. I knew intellectually that I was still in almost a bare white room in a very cold climate with snow outdoors, and I thought, "What is the matter with me? Am I hallucinating or what?"

This beach seemed to change. I was seeming to have to squint to look into the brightness of the sun. And then one of the next things was that I found myself underwater swimming with all kinds of sea creatures. But as I continued to look at them, I realized they weren't actual sea creatures. They were very stylized. In fact, they are the kinds that you see in Cretan wall paintings like the Palace at Knossos. I've never been there, I need to say immediately. I think the only time I've ever seen pictures of Cretan art was maybe when I was six or seven years old. It's not an area of study for me but I recognize them. I had a great sense of peace and tranquility and wonder. But when I sort of found myself back in the room with my lover, I thought, "What in the world was that?" I really felt like I just somehow lost it for a few minutes that I was crazy. So I didn't say anything to him. I didn't say anything at all.

So months went by and then another time when I was in bed with him, I had a complete breakdown of all categories of reality. Everything that was in the room, everything that was in my mind disappeared in a very soft sort of fountain of white light and I went into nothingness. It was exactly like the void that is described in Buddhism where there was nothing there: no thoughts, no time, no categories, no nothing... just this perfect extensionless nothing that also contained everything.

Eventually, the white light receded and I found myself back in reality. I started doing what a lot of people do after having a Samadhi or Satori experience or any experience of enlightenment. I started laughing, and I couldn't control my laughter. Well, this brought things rapidly to a halt with my lover who didn't know what was going on. And then I had to explain what had happened when I could finally speak, and so I told him about it. And because of his own studies and spiritual path, he recognized it. He said, "That's so strange. You know, I always have altered states when I have sex with you." I said, "You did and you never told me?" He said, "No. I thought I was crazy." He was a much older gentleman, so he was in the 60s when this was happening. He said, "I never had anything like this in my life." And he said,

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"I was afraid to talk about it." So then he told me about his experiences, which were completely different from mine.

So I became curious about this and started asking different people, "Have you ever had anything sort of strange in terms of your consciousness or your awareness happen during sex?" I began to gather a lot of stories. I wrote several articles, academic articles about it, and then wound up finally writing a book because of the number that I had collected. It's a popular book, but it is based on some hard research.

So there are wonderful stories and so many different kinds of experiences out there. In fact, what I found is that people can have true sex almost every other kind of experience that has been explained or is considered desirable on different spiritual paths whether those are indigenous spiritual paths or the esoteric paths that are branches of major religions like Sufism which is mystical Islam, like mystical Christianity, like Cabbalic Judaism, many faiths that are described in Hindu and Buddhist text. The exact same kinds of faiths are possible through sex.

EE: Yeah. As I recall, you said that people don't necessarily have experiences that match their religious perspective at the time. It could be a totally different religion that they have an experience of, one that they don't --

JW: That's absolutely right, and that's very confusing to some people. It was confusing to me. It's like one of my first thoughts was "Why am I having this Buddhist experience? I'm Episcopalian." But that is pretty typical. People get surprised.

EE: Yes. By the way, I just want to tell listeners to get your book because Jenny Wade is a great storyteller, so it's a very entertaining read. It's doesn't feel like you're reading someone's research or reading stories. And then there's conclusions drawn and so forth. It's just really an enjoyable read. So again, that book is called Transcendent Sex: When Lovemaking Opens the Veil by Dr. Jenny Wade. And what is the publisher, Jenny?

JW: It's by Simon & Schuster and they're Paraview Pocketbooks Imprimatur.

EE: Right, okay. So back to the time when we first met, so she was speaking at this class when I was in grad school and she said at the very end, if anybody had these kinds of experiences, she'd love to chat with us. So of course, after the class I met up with her and we ended up, you know, she and I getting together and she interviewed me for a couple of hours.

Now, she did use pseudonyms in the book and gave everybody different names. However, she gave one person the name Ellen, only that one isn't me. So what I'm going to do is I'll tell you a story of just a little experience that has happened -- I

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had many experiences after the interview and after the book was published and after we had last discussed it.

So one of them I'll tell you because it's not in the book and that is that -- and by the way, my partner also had transcendent experiences, but they were not the same ones I was having. Mine had a lot more visual quality and his didn't so much. But this was an occasion which I felt was for me was very powerful, and I didn't ever have these experiences where I totally lost contact with my partner and where I was. I always had a dual perspective. I was never 100% out of the room or 100% in the room. It was all happening at once.

So I don't know how typical that is but in this particular case, we're making love and all of a sudden I started perceiving myself as being different women of different races and different cultures and different ages. I might be like an Irish woman who would have like scrubbing clothes on a washboard or a tall, beautiful African woman with a big bundle on her head as she's walking, swaying her hips or a very old Chinese woman or a very young, lovely woman running through the forest somewhere.

So it was really all these different women making love to my partner from all these different perspectives. And then he started to change. He started to morph. It was like morphing in the kind of 3D, kind of a special effects they now have easily done on television or film, and he started morphing into younger and older men and men of different races. It was like wow! I was just sort of fascinated with the experience of being all women sort of making love to all men and then it shifted; and I became all men, and he became all women. Now that was a total new one for me, and it just kept morphing to these different experiences.

So I felt I was having this sort of universal experience of lovemaking and sexuality from all these different perspectives, even though I don't recall what we were doing physically but we were definitely having intercourse at the time. In my recollection, we were face to face at the time because I did at times open my eyes to kind of look and see if it was still happening and it was.

So for me that was just a very powerful universal perspective, which I hold dear to this day.

JW: That sounds wonderful.

EE: Yeah, it was. So do you have any other particular -- let's discuss a bit about -- because you might want to tell a story that relates to this. But you talked about how transcendent sex can heal psychological and emotional wounds, leaving a person with a greater sense of peace about their place and role in the universe. I love to hear what you have to say about that, and maybe you have an example of an experience someone had that reflects that.

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JW: Yes. Interestingly, almost every one of the stories that I gathered had some kind of positive result from it; and this is what we find with a lot of the altered states that people have during meditation or as part of a spiritual practice is that the altered state, whether it feels positive at the time or negative, ultimately produces a positive effect where the person feels more spiritually in tune, feels a larger, much more peaceful, expanded sense of self or where they're actually healed where some wounding has taken place.

Yes, I've got a story that I like to tell. This is not one that's in the book, but I think it can show two sides of things that I'd like to bring out including sort of the dark side of these sexual experiences or some frightening material.

There was a couple. The man had been in one of my classes and although he'd never had a transcendent sexual experience, he'd heard me talk about them and lecture about them. And so he called me because he said his girlfriend needed some help. She had a frightening altered state episode when they were having sex and he knew enough from going to the class that he knew how to respond to her in a way that helped her out. She had begun trembling violently in his arms when they were making love. What she was experiencing was that her soul was going out of her body, and it was accelerating faster and faster the farther away it became.

She really thought she was dying. She was having an out-of-body experience, and she was shaking. So drawing on what he remembered from the class, he had the presence of mind to tell her to relax and realize that she was safe in his arms, not to try to take her out of the state but just to relax and close her eyes and understand that she was safe and just give herself to the experience, to trust it rather than fight it.

So her trembling subsided and he could see that her eyes were moving very, very rapidly under her eyelids, the way they do in REM sleep. So when she came back, when she had calm down, instead of just being out of her body and afraid she was going to die, she suddenly felt surrounded by the presence of God. She could feel throughout her entire body how totally precious and beloved she was and how beloved everyone is and that everything she regretted in her life, all the things she thought she'd done wrong made absolutely no difference in his flood of unconditional love; meeting God with nothing like she thought it would be. She always imagined that if she ever saw God, she was going to tell her how she didn't measure up. She's been given this big to-do list for life and somehow she hadn't done what she was supposed to do. But that was not the way her experience was at all.

So when she came back to the ordinary world, she was absolutely euphoric. She just couldn't say enough about how wonderful she felt, but then she started being violently ill. Her boyfriend had eaten exactly the same meal at home so they knew she didn't have food poisoning. But she was vomiting and didn't stop for hours and that was one of the reasons they called me.

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As I was talking to her and asked her what did she think was going to be on God's to-do list or how had she imagined that she had fallen short? She told me about an experience where she had been working overseas with orphans and that she had been asked to leave this nonprofit organization even though she thought she was doing good work and how humiliated and bad she felt. The metaphor that she kept using was that "So I just had to swallow my guilt. I had to leave that assignment. I just had to swallow my guilt, and I had to just keep pushing it down, pushing it down. That's the only way I got through those years after that overseas assignment."

Recently, she said the guilt had been overwhelming because she really felt that she had failed in this God-given mission to work with these orphan refugees overseas. So I said, "Well, do you think that the reason you're sick now is because your guilt is all coming back up? You don't need to feel guilty. God showed you that you're loved unconditionally. There's no need to hold on to this." And she recovered within just a few hours, and she was still ecstatic weeks later.

EE: Wow!

JW: So I think this is the kind of thing that can happen because she have had it on the meditation cushion or praying, maybe so. But for her, it came while she was making love with her partner. I didn't have anything to share with her except to say, "Hey, you're not delusional. This is your own truth." And that was what she discovered through this experience.

EE: And that is such an important piece for someone to acknowledge -- that you're not delusional, that these are, if not totally common, they're not uncommon, and they're not abnormal.

JW: Absolutely not. So she had a level now of peace of mind and personal acceptance of self-love that she had never had before. To me, as exciting and interesting and blissful as some of these altered states can be and fascinating, some of them, the real value is the fruit that you come up with when you integrate those experiences because you do see a lot of healing. This was clearly some psychological healing that she needed and what an extraordinary and beautiful way for it to come to her.

EE: Really, absolutely. And oddly enough, as you put it that way about the fruits of the experience, to be honest, one of the big fruits of my experiences ended up being this whole body of work Extatica. I'll get to that later, but we're going to take our last break.

This is Ellen Eatough with my guest, Dr. Jenny Wade, on Extatica: The Way to an Erotic, Ecstatic Love Life. We'll be right back.

[Commercial Break]

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EE: Welcome back. This is Ellen Eatough discussing transcendent sex with Dr. Jenny Wade.

You had told a wonderful story about the potential life-changing, transformative experience that this one woman had with her transcendent sexual experiences. I wonder if you can talk about some other kinds of positive transformation, especially I know you've dealt with people who've healed from sexual abuse. Maybe we could explore how these transcendent experiences might differ from the kind of dissociation that a lot of people who have been abused have when they're making love.

JW: Yes. Many people who have been abused sexually do have a sort of an altered state during sex that is called dissociation. It usually means taking their mind as far from their body or as far from what's going on sexually as possible. It's a kind of numbing. Sometimes they seem to be out of their body just away, so their body is somewhere else doing this thing that's been horribly frightening to them and very painful at some time in their life, even though it may no longer be. They may have a loving partner, but they just can't stay in their body and be present during sex. So they dissociate and they go somewhere else and numb everything down and are seldom genuinely orgasmic. They tend to be in a flat fantasy kind of place.

The altered states that people have during transcendent sex are extremely different, and interestingly enough about 10% of my sample had been people who had been abused as children, males and females both. They had always had difficulty with sex. But when they were talking in voices of amazement about these transcendent experiences, which happened in spite everything, to them, they would be making love, expecting it to be the same dismal thing that it has always been for them, and yet suddenly something else would open up. They would be interconnected with their partners. They'd be able to be here and now and feeling pleasure and joy in their bodies and oftentimes just incredibly linked with their partners.

One of the women in my sample had actually been so traumatized that she had a condition called vaginismus where the vagina and the cervix muscles are so traumatized they tighten absolutely closed. So the woman cannot be penetrated without great pain. She was with a man she adored. He had always been nothing but kind and patient and a skillful lover with her, but still she had such tight vaginismus. Penetration was just not possible.

Finally, after working very slowly over many, many months with her, she was able to break through that fear and pain in making love with him to the point that she is so sexually healed now that she actually took courses to become a sexual surrogate, to help other people who are traumatized with sex. She is by far not the only one in my

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sample. People who had been sexually abused became orgasmic, fully sexual beings, capable of having and repeating these kinds of transcendent sexual experience.

EE: So what you're saying is that she actually wasn't having intercourse when this occurred because she wasn't able to at that time. And then after the fact, she was able to open to that.

JW: Yes, yes. Her whole body began to open up and then to the point where this was something she could share with others.

EE: Yeah. So what do you think causes it? I mean we've discussed this before, but I'm sure the listeners are going to want to know what do you think causes these altered states or this sudden catapulting into this other realm?

JW: Well, anybody is capable of this. This seems to be a capacity that all human beings have. It's not that women have it more than men. It's not related to the way women have sex versus the way men have sex. It's not related to orgasm. Some women can chain orgasms forever and men usually they have one and there's a real spike of arousal, but it doesn't seem to be related to that either. People have these experiences sometimes way before orgasm or they didn't even realize they've had an orgasm. They couldn't even remember because the altered state was so compelling and so intense.

One woman said, "I don't even want to have an orgasm because it's like a distraction when that's going on." And many men said, "I'd try to wait as long as possible because I don't want this beautiful state to end," which often it does for men. But it can start just when you're holding hands. It can start when you see somebody across the room. It has no relationship to abuse.

Surprisingly, or at least this was surprising to me when I began my research, is it's not necessarily about a special relationship. It's not about your true love or your partner of 30 years. It might be with that person, but people also had it during transient sex, somebody that they just picked up in a bar. So it's not about the nature of the relationship. It doesn't have to do with how accomplished a meditator or a yoga practitioner you are or anything. It has no relationship to any of that.

I have to say, I was talking to people who were not prepared for this. They were not taking tantra classes to try to bring this about. These were people for whom it was a spontaneous and unexpected experience because I wanted to talk to people who didn't know what had happened and didn't have a box to put it in.

EE: Right. So as an aside or actually maybe it's totally relevant, about this whole issue of what has not led to these experiences, after Dr. Wade published her book, she calls me and says, "My publisher wants me to do workshops." She goes, "I'm a consciousness researcher. I don't do sex workshops." So she called me and we ended up doing our shared dog and pony show. In fact, the first one was that we did

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separate workshops at the International Conference on Sacred Sexuality in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She presented her research and these kinds of things that we're talking about today, and then I was asked to do a half-day workshop on how to open yourself to transcendent sexual experiences.

To be honest, I've been really trying for years to research and put all this together. I've been researching the ancient sacred sexual practices. There's a lot of contemporary sex research and the psychological research because I was getting my master's in East-West Psychology at the time. So I took an academic approach as well as taking other people's classes. So I did kind of come to -- it all came together that I felt there were four keys that people who had these experiences were spontaneously using, unconsciously using that through the ages may have been the roots of these various ancient practices.

So I came up with these four keys. As a result, people started saying -- I remember at the next day one woman came and grabbed me in the hallway, she goes, "Oh, my God. In the scale of 1 to 10, our sex life went from a 6 to a 26 overnight." So it led me to do more with these four keys. I'm thinking I might actually do an entire show. It became known as "The Four Keys to Sexual Ecstasy," and I do have a product and a program on that.

So I know this all sounds very exciting, but let's talk with what little time we have left about some of the dark side, like what are the possible hazards of transcendent sexual experiences?

JW: I'm glad you asked about that because particularly for people who are not planning to have these experiences, they're not cultivating them consciously, when you have an opening like this, it can be very dangerous, I say, in two different ways. One is that your ego boundaries, your sense of self can become so blown open that you have trouble reconstituting your sense of self and your normal boundaries when sex is over or when you come out of that state. It's almost as though you don't ever come out of it quite all the way. So this is very difficult for some people.

Some of the people in my sample, for instance, would be so open to their partners that if their partner had a physical condition like a bad cold or something, the person would immediately pick up the cold symptoms even though they'd been fine before. They would immediately get all the same physical symptoms that their partner did. And this was true particularly for partners who were using intoxicating substances like drugs or liquor.

There was one man in the study who was very health conscious. He had a health-based body practice that was his profession, but he had fallen in love with this woman and he found that he could not make love to her when she was on drugs, which I guess she was fairly frequently, or using alcohol because he would immediately become intoxicated just for making love to her. His self-boundaries were not sufficient any longer to keep her out. This can be devastating when it involves emotional or psychological boundaries that you just can't separate.

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One man actually became celibate because his boundaries got so poor that as much as he craved intimacy with his partners, he could not keep out negative emotional dynamics that were in their lives from intruding on his psyche.

The second kind of negative experience is becoming overly bonded with a partner who is not really a good partner for you. It seems as though some of these ecstatic states occur more easily with partners who represent the dark, emotional dynamics of our early childhood, maybe a bond with a caretaker that might have been appropriate with a good father or a very powerful father, let's say, for a woman or a very powerful mother for a man. Maybe that dynamic is okay when it's a kid and a mother. But if you bond, and we all do, we all bond in some ways to people who remind us of our parents or our primary caregivers, if that power imbalance remains in a relationship or if the relationship wasn't a very healthy one, if you begin having these altered states, it can lead emotionally highly dependent on somebody who's not really very good for you.

People can regress very, very drastically. And the sex then almost has an addictive quality because it's the only time that the person feels good as well. When we're having this ecstatic sex, that's what makes this whole relationship worth it and then they begin to ignore the more destructive aspects of the relationship. People can become very addicted to sex or sex can become what they live for or the only part of their relationship that works, and it can be extremely destructive.

EE: So how do you recommend people avoid these kinds of hazards? Would it be just in your selection of a partner or something else?

JW: Some of it is in selection of a partner, yes. That's easier said than done. We'd all like to make wise choices when it comes to our love partners, and some of us are more able to do that than others. But in particular, it's important to watch about the power of differentials in the relationship. If you're trying to bring about these states or cultivate these states, you can always go to a tantra class or one of your workshops, Ellen, or something to learn how to do it.

One thing I would say as a voice of caution here is that many practitioners or teachers of this are abusive teachers in effect. They wind up getting people who are in their classes hooked on them. So they're sort of energy predators or sexual predators in a way. So it's important to choose your partner or your teacher in these things to be someone with a lot of integrity and someone who is not trying to get their own power needs, relationship needs, or sexual needs met through the people that they are doing business with.

EE: Absolutely. And you know, by the way, when you talk about that, I just wanted to say that although I do have this program, I do believe you can help open yourself to transcendent sexual experiences but it's still a matter of grace. I think you can set

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the stage but you can't force it to happen in my experience, and I just wanted to underscore that.

JW: That's true. That is very true. You can talk about the four keys. There are certainly many things people can do to increase the likelihood that they'll have these experiences. I just would like to give another couple of cautions. If you find yourself slipping into an altered state and it's frightening to you or you don't feel like it's safe for some reason because of the partner or because of anything, if it just doesn't feel right, there are ways to stop it. One, of course, is most immediately to stop whatever it is you're doing. Repetitive motion, repetitive sound, keeping your eyes closed -- all of those things can conduce to an altered state and can push you farther into it. So stop those things. One of the best things you can do is open your eyes and change the way you're moving. If at all possible, stop making it in a rhythmic manner.

EE: Very good. So thank you so much. I'm afraid we're going to have to wrap it up. I want to thank you so much for being here. It's been such a pleasure having you on the show.

JW: Well, thank you, Ellen.

EE: If people want to reach you, should we just send them to your website?

JW: Yes, that would be a good idea.

EE: Okay. So that's transcendentsex.org, right?

JW: Yes.

EE: Okay. And be sure to get her book, *Transcendent Sex*, by Dr. Jenny Wade. And if you'd like a transcript of this show or any of my other shows, be sure to go to extatica.com/show.

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