



Tantra: What's Love Got To Do With It?

By Lisa Alpine

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Tina Turner belted out on the car radio, "What's love got to do with it?" Well, as I was driving along, my mind jumped to sex...and asked the same question. Lately, many of my friends seemed to have Tantritis –what I view as a proclivity for orgies veneered with spiritual quest and goddess hype. I think I also felt unnerved by their openness and my more conservative attitude about sexuality. Love, commitment, and intimacy seemed to be lacking in the lustful exploration of their sexual encounters. At least, that was my take on the Tantra scene.

Yet I had forgotten that when I was a teenager 25 years ago, the Kama Sutra (an ancient Tantric text) had shaped my expectations of sex. I found the book in my parent's bedside table and snuck it to my room where it opened my eyes to exotic exploration, mutual consent, and ritual leading up to the sex act. From that instant on, I knew I could never be introduced to sex by a groping 15-year-old boy in the back seat of a car! Unfortunately, there was no one to practice Tantra with in my high school, so I remained a dreamer and a virgin for quite some time.

Margo Anand describes in her book [The Art of Sexuality](#), how Tantra evolved: "Tantra originally developed as a rebellion against the repressive, moralistic codes of organized religions and the ascetic practices of the Hindu priesthood, particularly against the widespread belief that sexuality had to be denied in order to attain enlightenment. Tantra means 'weaving', in the sense of unifying the many and often contradictory aspects of the self into one harmonious whole. Tantra also means 'expansion', in the sense that once our energies are understood and unified, we grow and expand in joy."

We in America have not had this attitude about sex, since we came from a religious and patriarchal background that has punished and repressed sexual and female energy.

If we drop our moral issues and take a straight look at human sexuality, it is here to stay no matter how we try to squeeze our attitudes about it into! Teen pregnancies and abortion are a testimony to the incessant sex drive once hormones kick into gear. Sexual desire is what keeps the human race from extinction. It is the spark of creation. It is male and female energy uniting to create another being. Now that is powerful stuff! Why not harness this current running through us? It is not only for procreation but also for immense pleasure and a feeling of unity with our partner and the Universe. How can we and our children become more responsible and creative with this overt human urge?

I recently decided it was time to shelve my limited view of Tantra (and possibly my own sexuality) and explore this hot topic. My other motive was to possibly improve my own lovemaking skills!

It is truly a growing movement. People who practice Tantra are called Tantrikas. There are more than a dozen Tantra teachers just in the Bay Area (as compared to perhaps one or two ten years ago), dozens of books on the subject, plus weekend workshops galore. Many of the teachers have studied various psychologies and are licensed therapists; others don't have academic backgrounds, but have studied for many years with teachers with teachers in the East and West. After interviewing many of them, I found the common thread leading them into Tantra was their strong sexual drive from a young age and their intuitive

knowledge that there was a spiritual connection that could be developed through sex.

The parents of the Tantra movement in the States might be Charles and Caroline Muir, who have taught and worked with many of the other teachers. They represent a mainstream availability to the information that includes an emphasis on life-long Tantric relationships. As Charles puts it, "Each teacher is teaching Tantra from where they are at, where they need to be healed." And because the Muirs teach as a couple, their focus is on couple's work.

The Muirs are now based in Hawaii but do workshops in the Bay Area regularly. They are the authors of *Tantra: The Art of Conscious Loving* and have created a prolific amount of video and audio tapes on the subject.

Talking with Charles Muir is a stimulating experience (excuse the pun). His enthusiasm for the subject of Tantra is so high that the phone was crackling with his energy.

Charles talked about what led him to the Tantric path: "Yoga was my passion 14 years ago. I was Yoga-conscious, but something was amiss in my bedroom. I looked back on my life, brought up in Bronx street gangs, and didn't see love. Sex was shrouded in incredible darkness, even though I was a child of the sexual revolution. I couldn't bring my whole self into the bedroom. Nowhere in my life was I prepared for the sexual mysteries, there were no role models. The Swamis didn't help; they always talked about Tantra teachers as black sheep."

"I wanted to integrate the spiritual me with the sexual me."

"I opened myself up to love, and I prayed to the Goddess, 'teach me the art of love.' Seven years of women teachers, including my wife getting breast cancer, which was hell, and heart opening at the same time. Then came a series of women who taught me sexual healing. I chose to say yes. If someone said Tantra or love—I would say 'yes'. I said yes to a 500-pound woman, 2 gay women. I learned a lot about processing and needs, but most important, I practiced Tantra three to four times a day. This was my grad school."

"If I were a Tarot card, it would be the Fool. I was willing to be a fool for God and love. The part of me that was conscious was watching and seeing the incredible healing that happened from Sacred Spot (G-spot) work. (Charles is one of the first teachers in the West to teach about the G spot.) Seeing women orgasm frequently, I could then go into my classes and say, 'Here's what I observe, here's what I see happen—try it Saturday night with your partner'."

"In the 1960s the astrological configuration brought on the sexual revolution. Information on the clitoris and women's sexuality started coming out. Now in the 90s, the same three planets are together, bringing on the next step in the sexual revolution. The knowledge is coming out about the G spot and that women can ejaculate. Doctors come to our seminars and leave with their mouths hanging open because their wife can now ejaculate! This is a big change in sexual knowledge. Partners can now go into the psychology of each other as teammates and, through knowledge and love, heal each other in sexual wholeness. Making love aligned with all the chakras—intimate, close, high-octave Shakti energy. How do we integrate that with spirit and heart? If we make love this way...what kind of people will we be transformed into? There is an energy shortage on the planet, not just fossil fuel but energy. Tantra regenerates energy and is youthful."

Charles continues, "Most people wait for the time they feel like doing it. It's a rare moment when both people have that desire...kids, work, moods. All these get in the way of sacred sharing. The Tantrika says 'I want to consciously practice love daily. I can get more love by practicing love.' We get our students to commit to connecting twice a day for 10 minutes. Not

just sticking the penis in, though we recommend that once a day."

MY EXPERIENCE

How can you write about something you don't know anything about? So at the invitation of Charles Muir, I took their weekend workshop. I can honestly say...it changed my life forever!

It created a deeper level of communication and intimacy between my partner and myself. I learned a whole new, respectful language for sex that didn't beat around the bush (excuse me again!). Charles has a true comic side to him and one of the biggest belly laughs we experienced was when he read a list of words we use in our society for a penis that all show a lack of respect. Here are a few examples: jack hammer, pecker, dong, prick.

One of the many touching moments was in the woman's circle when we discussed our sexual issues and fears. I was surprised to find many were similar to mine. It is wonderful to be with women of all ages and types who want to awaken and heal their sexuality.

The Muirs led many pujas (sacred circle exercises) between the men and women. In one, we faced a man and released all the past sexual traumas with men. The men and women gained a new understanding and respect for our mutual vulnerability and need for love.

It was scary to open up doors in myself that I had never opened with my partner. Much of their work is focused on sexually healing the man and women through sacred spot massage, which is done as homework with your partner at night or if you are single, the women can choose a partner from the single men or women. One night is for the woman and the man serves her in the sensual techniques and sacred spot massage, then the next night is for the woman to serve the man in massaging and stimulating his genitals without him ejaculating if possible.

Up until two weeks ago I had never given the G spot much notice; in fact I doubted its existence. Well, that has changed! After doing the Muirs' homework assignment, I definitely know where my G spot is and that

it needs to release a tremendous amount of blocked energy in order for me to open up to my true orgasmic potential. Because of the attention my partner gave to this newly discovered area of my body, I became completely aware of how I need to reconnect the electrical circuitry, as Caroline Muir puts it, so I can FEEL. I also found I have to really TRUST my partner, which was a big stretch for me, as I have covered up very strong abandonment issues all my life, having been given up for adoption.

I feel my original question of "What's love got to do with it?" got a satisfying (excuse me!) answer...EVERYTHING! Make love, generate love, heal with love by uniting our sexual energy with our heart, power and higher consciousness centers.

As Charles Muir puts it: "Let's bring more heaven to Earth."



Charles and Caroline Muir teach weekend seminars in Atlanta, Georgia—Boulder, Colorado—Houston, Texas—Santa Cruz, California—Ashland, Oregon—Philadelphia, PA—Boston, MA—Washington, DC — along with weeklong vacation seminars in Maui, Hawaii. Contact their office for a free brochure about seminars and their home study course, book, audio and video programs:

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