

Between the sheets INMIDLIFE

Role-play, sex toys, multiple partners – three women speak about their sex lives



Karen says that she has rediscovered sex

‘Nothing is off limits’

Karen Weiner, 56, is a divorce lawyer who lives in Borehamwood with her husband Marc, 56.

I met my ex-husband at uni when I was 19 and we got married just before my 25th birthday. After two children, now aged 24 and 17, and the untimely death of my father, I realised how unhappy I was in a marriage where we were basically just friends. For years, there hadn't been any intimacy between us and we even slept in separate bedrooms.

Then, in 2018, I decided I wanted a divorce and a year later, I finally moved out.

During this time, I joined a Jewish dating app and a whole new world opened up to me. Men were suddenly paying me attention and I felt my confidence soar. Once I went on five dates in two days. It was so much fun.

Having sex again, though, was absolutely terrifying. I hadn't taken my clothes off in front of a man for a long time and, like most women, I'm quite body conscious. To help me feel good about myself, I splurged on lacy lingerie and finally I felt desired and attractive.

It felt so natural

In 2019, I met Marc, then 53, on the Plenty of Fish dating app. We hit it off immediately and spent the entire evening talking. It felt so natural – that's how I knew I was falling in love.

The sex was amazing. He is very physical and as I can be bossy at work it's nice to let go in the bedroom and let him take charge. We went to Ann Summers and he bought me a matching black bra and pants. The first time I put it on in front of him, I was so



The couple met on a dating app and hit it off at once

nervous. But at the same time it was incredibly exciting. Through Marc I've rediscovered sex. We talk openly about everything and I'm not shy about expressing what it is I want. Nothing is off limits and we love to use role-play.

Marc and I moved in together during lockdown 2021 and on Valentine's Day, he got down on one knee and proposed. We were married in a civil ceremony then, in May this year, we had a big Jewish wedding. Marc is my best friend, lover, partner and soulmate.

To experience so much passion in a partnership has made me feel like a woman again. Today I'm enjoying a much better sex life and I couldn't be happier both mentally and physically.



Abbey says she enjoys her empowered position

'I can do what I want, when I want'

Katreen Hardt, 54, is a journalist who moved from London to Lübeck, Germany

My boyfriend abruptly ended things after 18 months in July 2020 during lockdown, so I had to come to terms with the break-up on my own. I went on long walks in search of clarity. I spent a lot of time alone and at one point joined the dating app Bumble, but quickly deleted it.

Then, out of the blue, an ex-lover messaged me, which led to us rekindling what we once had and having sex online via Zoom. In May 2021, we met and had incredible sex, but I soon realised we both wanted different things. Since then, we haven't spoken and I've been happily single.

Self-care routine

I can do what I want, when I want, and I don't have to clear my plans with anyone. If I want to go on a holiday, book a spa, or go out to dinner with girlfriends, no-one can tell me otherwise.

I can also spend a quiet weekend at home reading and watching Netflix – or masturbating. Solo sex using sex toys is pleasurable and nourishes my mental health, helping me to relax. Now it's a regular part of my self-care routine.

Being single has given me the space to take better care of myself – I eat well, exercise daily and practise mindfulness. I even 'date' myself by buying myself flowers and jewellery. Yet for some reason society seems to create this shame around people not finding a partner.

Having had this past year to really focus on myself has taught me what I want, and don't want, so I'm in no hurry to find a new lover.

Should I meet someone who ticks all the right boxes, I'm not sure how much of my single life I'd be willing to sacrifice. I'm proud of how confident I've become, knowing I can navigate my way through life – and the bedroom – on my own.

'I can navigate my way through life on my own'

Happily single, Katreen is not looking for a partner

'I know how to ensure my sexual needs are met'

Abbey Robb, 43, is an integrative therapist who lives in London

It wasn't until I moved to London from Australia in 2016 that I became solo polyamorous, which means that I'm drawn to, and engage in, meaningful connections with different men. I'd just come out of a series of toxic relationships and felt I had to stop looking for that idealised notion we all have of what a relationship should look like.

Sometimes I have several relationships concurrently – at other times I spend long periods single. I use the dating app OK Cupid, which has a large polyamorous community. Everyone does it slightly differently so it's important to talk about expectations. I dated a man whose wife was asexual and

they'd decided to open up their marriage so his sexual needs were met. It was going well until she said she wasn't comfortable with the situation, so he ended things.

Fulfilling sex

Right now, I'm seeing two-and-a-half men. I refer to the one man as 'half' as there's nothing physical between us. We meet for dinner or to see a show. But I'm having sex with the others, not necessarily on the same day, and they know about each other.

There is this culture around sex that says you're supposed to save yourself or sleep with just one person but if you're careful about who you have sex with, don't spread

diseases or randomly have babies, who cares who you're sharing your bed with?

The sex I have now is more fulfilling as, with age, I've learnt how to communicate to ensure my sexual needs are met. When you approach sex from an empowered position and engage in the act because it's something you want, rather than thinking it will give you something else, like an emotional bond, sex becomes so much better.

It is not to say I never want to give somebody more than just sex, because I do. I'm not in love – which is why these two-and-a-half relationships are unlikely to translate into being anything else – but could I ever be in love? Maybe. Who knows what the future might bring.