



The Healing Power of Pleasure

Seven Medicines for Rediscovering the Innate Joy of Being

Julia Paulette Hollenberg

ISBN: 9781644113264, September 2021

Also available as an ebook

Paperback: \$19.99, 288 pages, 6 x 9

Includes 12 b&w illustrations

Imprint: Findhorn Press

Contact:

Manzanita Carpenter Sanz, Publicist
manzanitac@innertraditions.com
802.767.3174 x135

NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Excerpt

**From Chapter 5
Pleasure: The Medicine of Sensing**

Being Here Now

If and when we can allow ourselves to be simply and truly in the present moment, we arrive at the healing heart of a relationship. We enter, as if through a portal, a deeper dimension of expansion. A realm of sensuality and pleasure where every detail is in high definition. It is a privilege to experience life like this. It seems—and we seem—precious and pure, rich and tender, brilliant, delightful and peaceful. It is a state of deep, deep relaxation; a level of reality that is always there but which we are usually too busy to experience. Or we are too tense to dare to allow ourselves to relax into this. The silence is loud.

There are no points of reference or labels. No categories of good or bad or adequate or anything whatsoever. When our heads are clear, we are free to really see and feel. Then, we can see the other as a delightful sensual landscape as much as a person named Judy or Jasper. We can really see! We don't know what we will see, as impressions reach us unbidden. We might be struck by the colour of their eyes, the detail of their pores, the colours and textures of their skin, the flash of light reflecting on a lower eyelid rim, the beauty of a wrinkle, the glory of a large nose or whatever else is right there in front of you. There might also be a smell or a touch.

It is a state of receptivity. An opening up, or an opening out, to receiving what is there. It is deeply respectful of the other, almost reverential (without any pompous self-glory or self-abasement). It is the stillness at the heart of the whirring world. A pause in directed action that allows us to take in, inhale, receive and respond to the full sensory impression. It is to be a screen, as it were, imprinted by the image or smell or touch or sound of the other. It is to be affected by another.

It is to know nothing, in the best possible way, in order to receive something directly.

PRACTICES FOR FULFILLMENT

Practicing Receptivity

Real pleasure is not selfish - it is wise. We need to reawaken our body and remove obstructions to our innate sensual intelligence. Our genitals are not tools. We all naturally know what to do when we are in good contact with our body and our inner sense - our innocence, our organic inner sensitivity.

According to Lee Lozowick, the approach to real relationship and pleasure is by 'becoming Woman.' I understand this to mean becoming more receptive. Many great spiritual teachings contain this essential approach to becoming more feminine in relationship to the divine. This means being open to receiving, rather than grabbing - our usual orientation to getting and having. Our capacity for receiving is our capacity for experiencing pleasure. The way to a really delicious relationship is to become more receptive. It is feeling worthy of receiving and a melting of tension, resistance and control.

Pleasure is often encoded within organized monotheistic religion where it can be turned into underground practices. The name of the Kabbalah, a Jewish mystical tradition, literally means 'receiving' and Kabbalistic texts discuss seven levels of pleasure. It is said that Jesus and Mary (who were of course Jewish) learnt sex magic in Egypt. Other cultures had different ways of expressing the wisdom of sexual pleasure: in India, it manifested as tantra, while the shamanic nations had Quodoshka.

Ancient Vedic texts describe the universe and everything in it, including us, as being made of bliss. Can we imagine the food is deeply wanting to be eaten, at the same time as we are wanting to eat it? Bliss is our underlying nature, discoverable through a focus on this moment of experience.

When we attend to our own inner experience in our intimate lives, rather than being distracted by fantasy, to-do lists or resentments, our capacity for sexual pleasure here and now increases...

1. Discover how relaxation opens you up to feeling more pleasure

Doing things with less effort is relaxing, opening up space in us to enjoy more pleasure. In what ways can you simplify? How can you do your work, parenting or gym class with less pushing, striving effort? What can you remove so there is more empty space to be filled with pleasure?

Try decluttering at home or at work and enjoying the pleasurable effect of less is more. Try a physical detox. Can you experiment with doing things with 10, 20 or 30 per cent less effort? Experiment with everyday activities such as picking up a cup, walking, sitting and answering the phone. What is the least muscular effort you need to engage in order to do the task? What do you find when you turn the tension level down?

Try relaxing one part of your body and seeing how that affects you as a whole. Try raising and lowering your shoulders, or shaking your jaw loose, or moving your pelvis. Is there more pleasure?

2. Experiment with how you switch pleasure on and off

With a friend who agrees to explore this experience, decide who will first be the “giver” and who is the “receiver.” This is an experiment in discovering that pleasure and pain are actually the same energy in the body. One at a time, press a spot on the sole of the foot, or on an arm, that gives a tolerable level of pain. The “receiver” tries to breathe more than usual and to relax as much as they can. What do you notice? Do you perhaps feel the sensation change from pain to pleasure? Now swap roles.

You can also experiment with a pleasurable touch and notice how tensing dulls the sensation, while relaxation increases the sensation. What do you discover?

The health benefits of pleasure as a wide and subtle whole-body sensuality in everyday life have not yet been measured, but without doubt exist.

About the Author: Julia Paulette Hollenbery is a bodyworker, therapist, mystic, healer, and facilitator. For more than 25 years she has guided countless clients into deep confidence and self-authority. She is passionate about sharing her life-long love of the mystery, real sensual relationship, and the life of the body. Julia lives and works in London. <http://www.lovinglife.co.uk/>

The Healing Power of Pleasure by Julia Paulette Hollenbery © 2021 Findhorn Press. Printed with permission from the publisher Inner Traditions International. www.InnerTraditions.com