

Redefining Health & Wellness

#29

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Jamie J. LeClaire

Shohreh Davoodi: Ooh y'all, I have a got a spicy one for you. You're listening to Episode 29 of the redefining Health & Wellness podcast and today's guest is Jamie J. LeClaire, sex educator, freelance writer and consultant. We talked all about pleasure, from sexual boundaries and masturbation to butt stuff, and ethical porn. So, prepare to learn all the sexy things!

To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to shohrehdavoodi.com/29. That's shohrehdavoodi.com/29. All of my episodes are rated explicit, but this one in particular is probably not so great to listen to around small children. So if you're going to be around any of those, put those headphones in. Additionally, I do want to give a trigger warning for some discussion of Jamie's eating disorder. All right, let's do this then.

[Music plays]

Hey y'all, welcome to the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. I'm your host, Shohreh Davoodi. I'm a certified intuitive eating counselor, and a certified personal trainer. I help people improve their relationships with exercise, food, and their bodies, so they can ditch diet culture for good, and do what feels right for them.

Through this podcast I want to give you the tools to redefine what health and wellness mean to you. By exposing myths and misconceptions, delving into all the areas of health that often get ignored, and reminding you that health and wellness are not moral obligations. Are you ready? Let's fuck some shit up.

Friends, today I have the super badass, Jamie J. LeClaire here on the podcast. I have been following them on Instagram for some time now and I learn so much from their posts, so thank you for being here Jamie, I can't wait for you to educate my audience on some really important sex topics.

Jamie J. LeClaire: Thank you so much for having me, I'm super excited to be on. I'm excited to get into it.

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Shohreh: Yeah, so first, I just wanna hear all about the path you followed to become a sex educator and writer in the first place, 'cause what a cool job.

Jamie: Yeah, definitely. So, I kinda started, I kinda knew for quite some time that I wanted to go into sex education, at least from like my first couple of years in college, but it definitely has changed over time, like the way that I approach sex education and the way that I wanna be in this space and show up in this space has definitely changed, and grown, and developed in such a wonderful way, I think.

So I kinda like started taking my first human sexuality class, it was probably one of the most formal ones that I've ever gotten. I did get a little bit in high school, but it wasn't, it was definitely shame-based, it was so rooted in like STI prevention and in scare tactics, and all of that. And so when I had took a class, I was taught by like a queer, I'm pretty sure now is non-binary, at the time was identifying as non-binary, but was definitely a queer professor.

And that the way that they had approached sex education was just so inspiring to me. They were also a therapist and it was mind-changing. And I took it with a partner at the time. That wasn't a super great relationship, but we actually took it together, but it actually kind of was the stem for a lot of me realizing what was so broken in that relationship and how my sexuality was stifled in that relationship.

So it was kind of strange to go through that with that partner, but it was kind of the starting point for me realizing that this was something I wanted to go into. And so I kind of thought that I wanted to do sex therapy for a little while. And then after a lot more time studying therapy and kind of understanding therapy, I kind of realized, I don't actually wanna do therapy! [Laughs]

I did some therapy work on myself, realizing, you know, I'm better suited for education. But yeah, I just realized through therapy that that wasn't speaking to me as much as education was, and especially with the way that I can show up in the education space and the way that I can do that from kind of an entrepreneurial way, especially with the help of Instagram,

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and social media, and all of that, and the incredible people that are helping educators like us kind of structure our businesses.

That kind of also morphed how I approached sex education and hoped to make it accessible for others. What I'm doing currently is I'm a graduate student at the Widener, it's at Widener now, it used to be at Philly, but it kind of like hops around. But it's essentially the Center for Human Sexuality Studies, and it's kind of like the one and only, although there's others popping up, formal kind of educational program for sex education.

They also have sex therapy, but this is kind of the only one that there is for getting a degree in sex education, whether that be a master's degree or PhD--I'm going for the master's--and wrapping up in probably, I think this coming fall. So yeah, that's kind of what I'm doing to formally become a sex educator, although I've been kind of doing sex education in different ways, in different spaces, kind of for, I would say six/seven years.

Shohreh:

That's so cool. It really brought me back when you just mentioned that very first human sexuality class that you took 'cause I think two of my favorite classes in college were Human Sexuality and then, at the time I think it was just called LGBT studies, but that's probably been expanded since. And I loved those classes, of course at the time I'm like a baby closeted queer.

I don't know why I loved them, now it makes a lot more sense. At the time I had no idea that something you could do with classes like that would be to go on and become like a sexuality educator. That wasn't in the purview of possible careers that I even knew really existed. And it's so awesome, I know so many people doing it now and I think the work is so important.

Jamie:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean especially when you sit and you take those classes and you realize how little you and so many other people know, and you realize how important it is, and then you're just like, why? Why didn't I get this in high school, to the level that they're teaching it to you in college, which you're absolutely old enough to understand and to need. And I was like, oh, you can do this and get paid for it? Albeit it's difficult [laughs] and it's not all that much all the time. It's just so fulfilling, yeah, definitely.

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Shohreh: I love that. Well, before we get into some of the specific topics, I feel like we should definitely talk about pleasure more generally. And like the very taboo nature of pleasure, because it's been coming up a lot on the podcast about how society tells us we're not supposed to get to experience pleasure, whether in a sexual context, or like a food context, or even just like a resting from working context. It's this thing that we're just not supposed to have. And I know you feel strongly about pleasure, so I'd love to hear some of your thoughts.

Jamie: Yeah, definitely. I mean so much of that all has to do, I feel like, with white supremacy and capitalism, and all of that. That mentality that you have to go-go-go, you can't stop to rest, or you always have to be grinding, and whether that mentality is toxic, and you have to try to, people are then telling you to kind of like detach from that mentality. Then you have the people who are like, but I literally can't because I can't survive unless I'm not working because that's how this capitalistic world is set up.

And that's total BS, to be perfectly honest [laughs] and it sucks. Because yeah, it does affect so many different aspects of our lives, including our sexual pleasure, and that is intertwined with so many other things. Like you can't detach how you deprive yourself of things like food and rest, or just being gentle with yourself. I'm recovering from an eating disorder and so much of that, the cornerstone of that eating disorder was depriving myself and getting this sick sense of pride after doing that.

And feeling like I was doing good, I was fitting into society, honestly, because so many of those things were like health behaviors that are so commonly celebrated, even though they're toxic. So yeah, that definitely extended, if it wasn't as a result of like the eating disorder and having low energy, and just being lethargic, and not being interested in romanticism or pleasure in general with other people. I was just; I definitely didn't want to engage in that, because I didn't think I deserved it either. Because I didn't think you deserve anything that feels good.

Shohreh: I think that's such a good point too, about having that feeling of not deserving pleasure, because I think it really does come down to that for a lot of people. And then the question is, well, who the fuck does deserve pleasure then, right? I think all of us are worthy of having pleasure, just by

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our very nature of being. But that's not the messaging that we get from purity culture, white supremacy, as you said, and other places.

Jamie: Yeah, definitely, and I think when you're talking about being undeserving of pleasure that affects so many more people who may not have the access to that. People who are disabled, who may rely on other people for their pleasure, and then if you're living in a world where it's hard enough to prioritize your own pleasure and give that to yourself, then if you're relying on other people, and a whole world that is just very, very uncomfortable with the thought of someone who is like disabled, or someone maybe who is intellectually disabled, and being uncomfortable with them receiving pleasure. It makes it even more difficult for people like that to access it. And yeah, I think it's unfair, and it's really sad.

Shohreh: In a minute we will pivot to kind of talking about solo pleasure and how to cultivate that in our lives, which I think is a little bit easier than when we're talking about figuring out what we want from pleasure when there are other people involved. So if you have any thoughts about that, and what to do when we're talking about partners or other people, to make sure that you are getting the pleasure that you need, I'd love to hear those too.

Jamie: Yeah, so I think something that is really important is setting boundaries, of course, and that can be easier said than done. I think we also talk a lot about setting boundaries without talking about figuring out what those boundaries are. And figuring out the kind of grey areas of those boundaries and just kind of wading through that, and kind of figuring out what's best for you before just learning even how to set them.

And so I think something that's really important, something that's been really important for me is I've noticed in the more recent times that I've had partnered sex as an eating disorder survivor, like it can definitely be easy for people to make comments about your body in the midst of sexual intimacy, or you're sexting, and things are getting really hot, and you're sending nudes, whatever it is. And you feel great, but--and I love to say good things about my body to like myself, and that makes me feel good--but when it's somebody else saying those things sometimes, one, they're not saying it exactly how I would feel comfortable, or how I'm saying it to myself, and I've learned to feel comfortable relating to my body and talking

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about my body. It can definitely be extremely triggering in the way that they talk about your body. They can be fetishizing of it. It can feel like oh, my body is great in this moment and they like my body, but what if it changes?

Just that thought can completely make me disassociate from the situation. From whatever, if I'm currently having sex, if I'm sexting, whatever it is, I would like completely shut down.

So, something that I have to do is set boundaries around talking about my body. I specifically ask my partners kind of not to dote on my body, talk about my body in very super sexual ways. And I think there's so many other ways to talk about what you're going to do to somebody, how you're going to make them feel--all these other sexy ways to relate to people when you're being intimate with them without talking about their body and kind of glorifying it, or whatever it is. Because I think that can feel a little tricky for a lot of people.

So that's definitely one thing that I've done as far as having sex with other people. That has helped my mental health greatly, and it also, I think, helps me focus on the pleasure at hand. Like I was saying, I'll disassociate, so I think kind of removing that from the situation helps me stay more present and helps me stay more in my body and more like, okay, it's about the pleasure rather than a performance, because that's what's so much of sex was for me for a really long time.

Shohreh:

I can really relate to that sex as performance aspect. I definitely think that's how it was for me a lot when I was younger too. And something that came up for me when you were saying that, and I know that these originated from the kink community, is like a yes/no/maybe list. I've seen a lot of these floating around online and I think that there are more general versions now that aren't necessarily kink-specific. These are something that you can fill out as an individual, or you and a partner can fill out separately and come together, and look at it.

But it basically is like a long list of all different kinds of sexual sexy activity and it gives you a chance to kind of think through, is this something I would be interested in? Yes/maybe, whatever it is. And then potentially

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talk about that with a partner or partners, or just for yourself, for your own knowledge. And I discovered some of those recently and I was like, oh, this is such a neat tool, especially for people who don't have as much knowledge. And so some of the things on these lists maybe wouldn't pop into your head, but then when you see them, you're like oh, maybe I would be interested in doing that.

So I can definitely link one of those or a couple of those if there are any specific ones that you like Jamie, in the show notes too.

Jamie:

I'm really in love with a few, now that you mention it. I think there's actually one by Bex Talks Sex. I can send you a link to that after, and so your listeners can get their hands on those. I really like that one because it includes something that I think is so wonderful, which is words around your body parts. And I think it includes some ideas for words, so then you can kind of mark off which ones you're not comfortable with.

Because regardless of if you have like gender stuff going on, there's just some words that some people just may not be comfortable with, some slang words that can cause dysphoria, that can just cause icky kinds of feelings that can be triggering, for whatever reason. And I think that's a really good thing to have on those lists. And I think the Bex Talks Sex one has that.

And yeah, just like you were saying, it can really help you learn things that you didn't even know existed, or kind of intimate things that you didn't realize were kind of a sexy thing. Or I think a lot of times they include sensation play and things like that, how sexy, just tickling somebody with a feather can be, while they're blindfolded, sometimes you just don't think about little things like that.

So I think those really open your eyes to a lot of different options, and definitely I think the more you can find, they have a lot that are just focused on kind of less BDSM type of things. So you're not going to find like blood play on like every single one of them [laughter]. But you'll definitely find some that do. If you're looking for that, Pleasure Chest has a really great one too.

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And I also think they're really good to kind of revisit, for sure, every so often, see what you're feeling. You can use those on your own. You can use them with a partner. I also think they can give you insight into oh, right now I'm really into this thing, I wonder why that is. And I just think learning about your interests and your body in those ways, whether or not you have some sort of concrete reason for knowing. I think it's just really cool to get inside information on the dips and waves of your interests and your pleasure throughout your life.

And like oh, when I was like this age I was really into this thing and I've been really interested in that lately, especially with the invention of toys such as Lioness, where you can track your orgasms and literally see the waves. And I think there's so much you can learn from that, in how you're pleasuring yourself, whether it's, oh I used a different setting on my vibrator or, oh, this was from oral versus this one I did with a butt plug in or something like that. I think there's so much you can learn from seeing that, so I think that's really cool too.

But yeah, yes/no/maybe lists are a great resource. I guess we're talking about resources, something you can do, if you don't have the hundreds, I'm sure, dollars to shell out for a Lioness vibrator, and also you would have to use the Lioness vibrator if you were tracking, it would be only with that. I think it's really cool to kind of track and keep tabs on your orgasms, your sexual intimacy experiences, and kind of like keep a little journal. And kind of talk about how many times you orgasm, what you did, how many partners you had, just keep little stats.

And I saw a sex educator who does this, I think every year. And the most recent year they just put out their most recent one and had done one for 2018, and then was able to compare the two and kind of see what trends they had in each year. So I thought that was really, really cool, and it was able to teach them a lot of stuff about themselves, and how their body is changing, especially as they age. So I thought that was really awesome too, and a really good idea for people.

Shohreh:

I love that you said that because it's very reminiscent of what I do with clients with food, where one of the things I teach them is that all of our eating experiences are data, right? It's just a chance to learn more about

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you and your preferences, and your triggers, and all these different things. And some clients will keep a more formal food and mood type journal, where we just kind of see how different foods and eating experiences make them feel, and other people just kind of note it in their heads.

But for some reason, in our culture, I know the reason, sex is not one of those things that we ever think of like, hey, it would be nice to track some things and have some data, and learn more about ourselves. I think especially women are really taught that your pleasure doesn't really matter and you don't need to be thinking about this, and tracking this, and doing these things.

Like when I was growing up, I never would have thought about any of this stuff, because I very much thought that my role was to pleasure men, right? Like my pleasure didn't matter.

Jamie: Yeah, absolutely and I'm sure for so many of those people, the idea of tracking their orgasms wouldn't even come to mind because they're like, am I even having any? [laughs]

Shohreh: That too! That too! [Laughter]

Jamie: Sadly, yeah, yeah, I think that's awesome. I'm a total geek for that kind of thing. I think there is, like you said, so much to learn from data and yeah, I think that regardless of if you've been having sex for a long time, if you're having partnered sex, if you're just having solo sex, whatever it is, I think that it can give you really valuable information.

Shohreh: And speaking of boundaries and data, and all this stuff, I wanna jump right into talking about solo sex and masturbation. And I know even me just saying the word 'masturbation' out loud is making some of my listeners squeamish [laughs]. And I think to even enjoy masturbation and solo sex, like truly enjoy it, something really important that has to happen is learning to deal with the shame and guilt that so many of us were taught to associate with masturbating.

Like I think so many of us have these memories of childhood where we would masturbate, or maybe we got caught masturbating, or any number of things that may have happened where we were made to feel badly

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about experiencing this pleasure in our bodies. So, are there some ideas you might have for people who are still struggling with that, so that they can start to enjoy their solo sex practice?

Jamie:

Yeah. So, I think the idea of shame can be such a difficult kind of thing to pinpoint and to really wrap your head around like how to address. So I think something for me actually has been, and something I've noticed for so many other people, is kind of like following a lot of these sex-positive accounts. Surrounding a lot of your media consumption with sex-positive podcasts, for instance. I know there's so, so many that really helped me and have helped so many other people based on how they talk about the people that write into them.

The people who are asking questions, the people who review those, have really expressed how much that those have helped, especially because they are constantly having conversations with people who may have been in similar positions as them. Maybe were growing up like Mormon. You grew up super, super Catholic. But yeah, I think following accounts on Instagram, I think following, especially ones that are kind of more focused on youth actually, even if you're not youth.

But because so much of them are focused on sex positivity for young people and giving them the experience that we never got. I think also for me it was being involved in learning about this for such a long time and kind of doing a lot of research and realizing, oh, kids are literally masturbating at age five all the time, and that's totally normal. Based on a literal data standpoint, and for me that confirmed a lot of what I had thought. And for me that kind of made me feel more comfortable with it, that everyone is doing it [laughs]. It can't be all that bad if we're all so inclined to do this thing because it is natural and healthy.

Shohreh:

I love what you said there about how everyone is doing it. Something that was really affirming for me was talking with some of my close friends about their early masturbation experiences, because you realize there's such a wide range of experiences, and it's all normal, and it all makes sense. For me, I will fully admit, some of my first masturbation experiences were like; do you remember the game, The Sims? You can make the characters have sex on the love bed or whatever -

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Jamie: Whoo-hoo!

Shohreh: Yeah, like I totally would masturbate to that as a child because that was one of my only instances of seeing sex in any context, mostly because I'm pretty sure my parents didn't know that that was a thing that you could do [laughs] in the game.

Jamie: A hundred percent, yeah, just like I was saying, my parents had no idea when the internet was just starting out, they put a Mac in my bedroom and I have the room to myself. And so of course, I find my way onto some chat rooms or like, yeah, literally websites where it would be for kids and then you could message people. And I would be messaging, who knows if they were adults or other people my age, but it was just so clear to me when I was able to start going on those websites and things like that, oh, other people my age are just as horny as I am! [Laughter]

That was really helpful when I did start to realize that because I had been exploring it for so many years before that, thinking it was so, so wrong, especially as someone who realized I was queer very, very young, I was pulling out pictures from lingerie magazines at literally probably six years old and stashing them in places around my bed. And I got away with that, thankfully, because that was like what I was so terrified of being found out.

I'm trying to think of what helped me when I was younger, but now that people have, I think, access to the internet and to social media and to things like that, I think it really helps. And I think my experience would have been far, far different if I'd had the access that people have now.

Shohreh: I definitely agree. I think there's also this pervasive idea that if you're in a relationship, you shouldn't be masturbating anymore. Like it's something that you only need to be doing if you're single and that is ridiculous. But I want to hear your thoughts.

Jamie: Absolutely, yeah, I definitely think it can be a sign of insecurity and jealousy for a lot of people, but that's because we've learned that. That's because of TV, and social media, and movies, and our culture has really drilled that idea into our heads. I think that that can be quite toxic. I think that our actions are what determine our 'commitment and loyalty' to

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people. And also people can orient their relationships in whatever way they please.

It's absolutely okay if certain couples are not comfortable with their partners looking at specific things like while they're masturbating, and they can come to certain agreements about things like that. But for the most part, denying yourself self-pleasure just simply because you're in a relationship, it doesn't really make much sense because when you're not learning about yourself, and your body is constantly changing, and your hormones are changing, whatever it is. You're going on and off medications, whatever it is.

I think that's going to be affecting your sexuality, and your sexual health, and how you are in your relationship. And so I think to deny yourself the ability to get to know your body as it changes and just to give yourself that pleasure whenever you want it and whenever you need it, not relying on another person, I think is so important. I think something that can be really toxic in relationship is expectations, especially without communication.

And so I think expecting somebody to refrain from connecting to their pleasure, it's difficult to navigate, but I think if somebody is in a situation like that where they're being shamed for masturbating, that's definitely something that they need to talk to their partner about. And to discuss why it is they feel like that's making them uncomfortable. If it's an insecurity thing, whatever it is, because then that's obviously something that's a little bit deeper and that they probably would want to talk to their partner about.

It's empowering to be able to pleasure yourself when you're in a relationship, I think, especially because we're building relationships in so many different ways now. People have long distance relationships, people are in poly relationships, whatever it is. I think we're expanding our idea of what it means to engage in pleasure and be in relationships. So, I hope that's changing.

Shohreh:

The other thing too is I think this idea that you don't need to be masturbating. The suggestion there is that masturbation alone is not valuable and that the only reason that people masturbate is as a replacement until they can get in a partnership and have partnered sex.

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And I think, at least for myself, I know I like both of those things, for different reasons, and in difficult circumstances. And so it's not that partnered sex replaces solo sex for me. They both have value to me.

Jamie: Exactly, yeah, they're completely different experiences, and I think it's really healthy for both partners to continue to engage in masturbation, and knowing their bodies, and making sure that they're prioritizing their pleasure in whatever ways they need.

Shohreh: So speaking of engaging in masturbation, let's talk a little bit about different tools that people can use to aid themselves in that process and make it even more enjoyable. Specifically I'd love to talk about both toys and porn. If we talk about toys first, I know you already mentioned the Lioness, but do you have any other favorites right now that you might recommend?

Jamie: Ooh, so I guess for toys, I think there's so, so many, it really depends what you're interested in, what you're looking for.

Shohreh: Or great companies too.

Jamie: Yeah, so I think some great companies, one is, one of my favorites is Unbound.

Shohreh: Oh my god, I love Unbound. [Laughter]

Jamie: They're truly, I mean their marketing, everything is just chef's kiss about Unbound. And their toys are truly, one, they're just gorgeous and two, they are so great for whatever kind of level you're coming at it. And they just look really good on your bedside table [laughs].

Shohreh: I'm a fan of pretty toys, and their toys are pretty, and smooth, and they're great. [Laughs]

Jamie: Yeah, they're very high quality. They have my favorite toy ever, which is a ring, the vibrating ring, the Palma. I really do like that. It's like if you are looking for something more fun and you're looking for a wearable, there's necklaces or things like that, but I really love the ring because I think it's pretty powerful. It's very chic and stylish. I wear it all the time.

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And then it also has like a really cool mode on it that I really think is kind of revolutionary, and I'm like super surprised that other companies haven't used it yet or done something similar. But you basically, it stops vibrating when it's parallel with the floor, and when you start to tip it, and it goes vertical, it essentially goes up in power to full power. So you can kind of create, literally create your own orgasm or create your own waves to create a wonderful orgasm for yourself.

And I think that's super cool because the closest thing I can think of is people like programming a certain specific vibe to then send to the vibrator, but being able to control it in literal real time has been amazing. So that's a really cool toy that I would suggest. And then just everything from Unbound, especially if you, I know we're going to get into it maybe a little later, but if you're looking to explore a little bit of solo butt play, I think they are such a great company too for that. They have really great butt toys.

For like general, toys, if you're looking to shop from somewhere super ethical that curates amazing toys is Spectrum Boutique. That one is run by Zoë Ligon, who's @thongria, who's also an incredible, awesome sex educator on Instagram.

And then also Nox Shop and I think their website is shopnox.com. They have really beautiful toys. Their whole belief system around sourcing their toys is very ethically sound. They're very conscious of that, they try their hardest to package everything sustainably. So I think they're really wonderful, and they're based in Canada, but I think they ship everywhere. I've written for them a few times. Their journal is also really great. That's a really good one.

And something I love from them is their restraints that I've had on my wish list for quite some time. And they're basically just like silk handcuffs, but they're just beautiful. They come in really wonderful colors, there's like a pewter color, this olive green color, like a light, very light millennial pink, and those are super fun, especially if you're kind of looking to get into light BDSM or you just kind of wanna explore that a little bit and you want something that looks very, very chic, and could honestly just hang in your bedroom and look like part of your décor.

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For me something that's really important is having toys that can improve the experience of pegging for the wearer or anyone basically giving penetrative sex with a strap-on and making sure that the wearer can get pleasure from that. There is a horribly named product [laughter], but I really like it. Is it the Bumpfer, eye roll! [Laughs]

It's basically a little squishy silicone cover that you wrap around the base of a dildo and you can also put it through a strap-on harness as well, and just slip that on through and it basically provides, you can also pop a little bullet vibrator in there if you wanted to add vibration. But it really just takes the experience up a notch if you're giving penetrative sex and you're using a strap-on, it definitely improves the whole experience. Especially if you're dealing with a base of a dildo that isn't the most comfortable, it really just takes that whole issue away completely. I really like that product. There's just some that I really, really love.

Shohreh: I feel like if we're going to talk about toys too, we should at least briefly talk about toy hygiene, because it's very important to take care of your toys.

Jamie: Definitely. So, I think something that is important to note, number one, if you're ever travelling between holes, just like you don't want to wipe back to front, you don't want to travel back to front with your toys. I think something that can be helpful is using all different sorts of protection for my toys, whether that's me using an internal condom while I'm using toys, or using an external condom on toys.

And that could just be like the head of the massive Magic Wand vibrators, putting a condom on that. It really takes half the work out of having to physically wash your toys. Because if you don't, it's important to know that you need to wash your toys. And the best way to do that is usually with warm water. If you're going to use a soap, like a gentle, mild, no-scent, no nothing, nothing fancy soap and gently kind of washing it. If it is one that is waterproof, then you're good to go, I would just also be a little bit careful around any of the buttons and the area that you're going to plug it in.

Then for any other toys that are non-porous materials, that don't have any sort of vibration or any sort of electronic aspect to them, you can boil them,

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that's the best way to get them pristine. I don't do that every time, it's not necessarily 100% of the time. I definitely do it after I'm engaging in any sort of, I would do it if you're engaging in anal penetration with toys, but other than that, yeah, I think that is the most important thing.

It's also important to store them in safe places, and that is in a cool, dry place. You can always wipe them down, it's been very helpful for me, I'll keep in my bedside table, or in my little sex bag some wipes, and I can use that to wipe down my toys in a jiff.

Shohreh: I've seen some disinfecting/cleaning sprays that are intended for toys as well. The other thing I was going to say was about lube, because you're not supposed to use silicone lube on silicone toys, is that correct?

Jamie: Yes, I think the best bet is to use a water-based or an aloe/water-based lube. Aloe has been a lot more popular because it is basically like the same as water base in that you can use it with condoms and you can use it with toys. But it does have added moisturizing properties. So if you see aloe-based or anything like that, don't be discouraged, I think that's pretty much the same as water-based. Or you can use it the same, and it's, I think, a little bit better, in my opinion.

So, I think Unbound's jelly is aloe water based. That is really great. So you don't want to use silicone with silicone toys. You can technically use silicone lube with condoms, latex condoms, if that's your jam and you do wanna use something that isn't gonna dry out so quickly, because water basically does dry out a little bit quicker. And then as far as lube goes, if you're engaging in sex with toys or you're engaging in sex with a condom and you can get your hands on a non-latex condom. One of my favorite lubes is The Butters lube. I know we're going to get into it later, but I also think that's a premium, number one favorite lube for exploring anal penetration.

Shohreh: I feel like you've opened the door perfectly for us to talk about butt stuff [laughs]. So, you did a series last year that you named Anal August, where you talked all about butt stuff all month long. And something that I took away from that was how you talked about how experimenting with butt stuff can be just for you as part of your solo sex practice. And it doesn't

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necessarily have to lead to partnered anal sex. And I felt like that and all the other posts that you did made the idea of anal play so much more approachable as it's starting to be seen as more of a kind of mainstream bedroom activity. So, what are some things people need to know if they're interested or thinking about getting started with anal play?

Jamie: Awesome. Yeah, I definitely think the future is anal [laughs]. So -

Shohreh: Yeah, that's a bumper sticker right there! [Laughter]

Jamie: Right, absolutely, I'm going to make it, I'll be selling them, just wait! [Laughs] Yeah, I think for me, I had a really awful [laughs], I wanted to say 'shitty' but I felt like that was just too perfect, [laughter] experience with, actually it wasn't, but experience with anal. I just had a very overly eager partner who kind of had no concern for my comfortability or my safety, or whatever it was.

And we kind of just went all in [laughs] and like really didn't use any lube and that really scarred me from ever wanting to engage in any sort of anal from then on out. And I also only saw it for such a long time as partnered activity because when you think of anal, like you're literally just seeing people penetrating. You're seeing porn where people are being penetrated anally and by like a partner, or they're pretty much using a toy that's just as big as a partner. Or they're using toys, but they're pretty much engaging in partnered sex.

And so that's like all I ever saw. And then I ended up taking a little class because Pleasure Chest--I think I mentioned them before, they do one of the yes/no/maybe lists--have amazing classes on all different sorts of things. And they had one on butt stuff 101, and that was such a life changing experience [laughs] actually. Because it taught me that anal can be simply just for you, and actually there's many reasons why it is pleasurable, like physically pleasurable, to engage in anal play, for pretty much anyone's body.

Whether you have a penis or you have a vulva and whether or not you have a prostate, there's a lot of stuff going on down there. So yeah, I think it's important to know that you have tons of nerve endings down there, regardless of your gender, your gender identity, that are just wonderful.

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You have a lot of nerves down there, there's one called the pudendal nerve that's very important for anal pleasure.

And then if you have a prostate, even better, that's like your sweet spot. So yeah, it's definitely important to know that you can do it just for yourself. It never has to lead to penetrative anal sex. If it does, then great, and also engaging in solo anal pleasure is probably the best way to work up to pleasurable anal penetration where it can actually be for your own pleasure, if you want it to be, and knowing how much you can take and what your comfort levels are.

And yeah, I think it's been so, honestly mindblowing for me that I've even decided to give it a second chance. And that I've kind of fell in love with it basically. I really didn't expect to at all. I think it's important to know what you're getting into, and to kind of look up articles ahead of time and kind of know all of the tips and tricks for pleasurable anal.

I mean I can give folks a couple of the most important things that I think I've learned. And that is one, lube of course is a non-negotiable. The Butters lube, I'll send you a link to that, that's been a really good one. It's super moisturizing at the same time. But yeah, lots and lots and lots of lube, because the ass doesn't self-lubricate like the vulva does. I mean regardless, I think people should be using lube, no matter what you're penetrating, but you're definitely going to want to have that on hand.

And always be re-applying, and also knowing that you don't need to do anything fancy to prepare. You don't have to douche. If you want to, you can, if that's something that makes you feel more comfortable, that's totally fine. It's not a necessity, honestly, like most of your, that junk kind of like hangs out in the upper half of your anal canal anyway, so for the most part you're safe if you're exploring with a finger, or a little plug, or whatever it is.

So those are some important things to note. And just take your time, breathe, making sure that your muscles are as relaxed as possible. You're as relaxed as possible, is probably the most important thing. I think I realized that pretty quickly in that a lot of the pain that you perceive is your body kind of restraining or pushing up against it, or being like nervous and

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not wanting to let those muscles relax, because I mean, they're there for a reason.

But once your body gets used to that, those sensations, literally getting your body used to those sensations, that was super important. Pulling it out, pushing it in, and getting used to both of those because it does feel a little like you're shitting [laughter], like you're about to. Getting used to those feelings without, I'm gonna shit [laughs], and knowing that you're not. Knowing you're safe, like oh, this can give me pleasure, just lean into it.

Shohreh: And I think just asshole anatomy 101 is that it is designed for things to come out, so in order to get things in requires, like you said, relaxation, making sure that those muscles aren't tensing etc. Because otherwise whatever you're trying to put in there is just going to come back out.

Jamie: Yeah, well, not always. Actually that you mention it, that's another thing that I want everyone to note is that things can get sucked up -

Shohreh: Yes, important [laughs].

Jamie: Yeah, so if you're getting any sort of toy that you're going to put in your anal canal, you're gonna want it to have a flared base, or some sort of like handle base. For the most part, if you're buying an anal sex toy, they're going to have that. It would be wild if they didn't, but yeah, don't be trying to stick up a little vibrating bullet up there because you may not get it back [laughs], or you will after a trip to the emergency room.

Shohreh: They've seen it all before, but yeah, you don't want that to be you.

Jamie: Yeah, definitely [laughs].

Shohreh: All right, so we'll go back to porn consumption, and we can just have a general conversation about can porn be feminist, and if so, how can we consume porn ethically?

Jamie: Yeah, so I definitely think porn can be feminist. I think so much of the dangers around porn or these perceived dangers around porn are that one, it's kind of often the only place that kids, a lot of the time, are getting their education about sex. And assuming that that's what sex is supposed

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to look like, and depending on where they're getting that, it's mostly mainstream porn, which often isn't the ethical 'feminist' porn.

So that's kind of like where a lot of the issues are with it. And then too is that they, like you said, it's not being ethically made. It's not being ethically consumed. The performers are not getting their due diligence, are not getting paid what they should. They're not getting the residuals, or whatever, from these videos, and so I think making that a really important part of your porn consumption, if you are going to consume porn, is super important.

And ways that you can do that are by seeking out ethical porn companies and purchasing directly from them. If you're really not paying for your porn, then you're not really ethically consuming porn. So, understanding that if you want to have that as part of your pleasure toolkit, if that's something that you like, then it's important that you pay for it. If Netflix is something that you like and that's something that brings you joy and pleasure, then if you're willing to pay for it, then you should be just as willing to pay for your porn.

Because if you're not respecting your porn performers or your sex workers as much as you're respecting directors, and actors, and everything, there's something a little wrong with that. Because all work is work and sex work is work.

Another really good way to do that is also directly supporting porn performers. That's something that I do like to do. There's often couples that have porn accounts, I'm not sure if people are using Snapchat anymore, but only fans and all of these different platforms that are essentially like Patreon, but for porn performers and for sex workers, these have been a really great way.

Because one, you get to have access to the porn performer in a way that they want to give you access. They have like full control over everything. They're in full control over their content. They're often uploading directly themselves, they're sending messages, they're posting messages on their wall, and everything. They're interacting with their patrons, or whatever

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you want to call them, and so I think it can actually be so much cooler, and feel a lot better of a way to engage with porn.

But if you are looking for something that's more direct videos that are kind of filmed with a production company and that level of production is something you're looking for, then Crash Pad Series is a phenomenal production company. It's pretty much just like queer, all queer, all feminist porn. And another one is Pink Label; I think that's also by the same people who do Crash Pad. But yeah, those are some really great options.

Shohreh: And I'll say, too, that if you identify as queer, or you like queer porn, you're going to have so much better options if you pay for your porn because so much of what's free is very male gaze-y with all of the thrusting and that nonsense. So if you're looking for porn that you can actually enjoy, paying for it is the way to get that.

Jamie: Absolutely, yeah. A really good option is also audio erotica. And also that's like usually [laughs] on the more ethical side, because they tend to be paying their actors well, or the writers, or whatever it is. A lot of the time it's like directly by the person, so whether that be like a podcast, I know there's definitely a couple of audio erotica podcasts where people submit and are paid for those submissions.

So that's a really good option if you're definitely more audio inclined. I've noticed that that's been something I've explored more in the recent year, especially because I got myself a 30 day trial to Dipsea, I don't know if you've heard of them?

Shohreh: No, I haven't.

Jamie: Oh, okay, awesome, I'll tell your listeners about them really quick. I actually just started writing for their journal, their blog journal, The Skinny Dip. Basically they are an app of audio erotica stories. It's not like reading, like an audio erotic novel. They're literally like acted out, but it's just audio.

Shohreh: Oh, okay, I gotcha.

Jamie: Yeah, they're like really sexy scenes, there's so many you can choose from. They have multiples, as in like threesomes and foursomes and group

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stuff. They have all different pairings of genders and all that, and really cool scenarios. People who are like, have obviously been in a relationship for a long time. People who just met, like a sexy rendezvous at a yoga studio. All these really fun little stories that I didn't realize how powerful audio is for me, in particular, as far as unlocking feelings of pleasure and eroticism. So, I think a lot of your listeners, if they like listening to things [laughs], which I'm sure they do -

Shohreh: Right! [Laughs]

Jamie: Might wanna give Dipsea a try and I definitely think you can get 30 days for free and beyond that it's like a monthly subscription, but I'm honestly considering getting it, because it's very erotic and I've been finding myself kind of reaching for something like that instead of porn half the time, or visual porn recently. So that's another, definitely ethical way to get your rocks off. [Laughter]

Shohreh: One more tool that I will recommend too for the vulva owners out there, is OMGYes, which is essentially, they're like masturbation tutorials, kind of. It's a paid product, and you listen to and watch real people show you different ways that they masturbate, and they've kind of broken it down into different categories of like Edging, for example, is a category, if you guys have heard of Edging. Different sort of techniques that you can use.

So if you're new to masturbating or you just wanna learn some new things and like learn different ways that you can touch yourself, it's a really cool tool.

Jamie: Oh, awesome, that's great.

Shohreh: If you have not checked it out, I highly recommend it because it's very cool. It's, like I said, it's not porn, it's not intended to necessarily get you off while watching, but it's like an educational to show you here's what I do and how it works for me. And what's really cool is if you use it on like an iPad or an iPhone, it actually has like an interactive vulva that you can practice on. Which sounds weird when I say it out loud, but it's very cool [laughs].

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- Jamie:** Definitely, I mean if you don't have a vulva, like that's an incredible resource.
- Shohreh:** Exactly, it's not even just for vulva owners, it's if you are hooking up with anybody who has a vulva, it can teach you as well, like how to provide pleasure to your partner.
- Jamie:** Yeah, that was one of my things on my little post of 2020 sex intimacy resolutions, like get to know all the genitals of every body. You never know who you're gonna end up being intimate with, so.
- Shohreh:** Yeah, exactly. We're declaring it here y'all, 2020 is the year of personal pleasure. Get after it.
- Jamie:** Yes.
- Shohreh:** Awesome! Well, thank you so much Jamie, this has been wonderful. I have one final wrap-up question for you, which is, how do you define health and wellness for yourself at this moment in your life?
- Jamie:** Hmm, I would say I define it as, for myself I think health has become so wrapped up in so many problematic aspects of my past, I think. So, kind of navigating that and relearning what health and wellness mean to me is something that I'm still working on. I think that is something that I'm like always going to be working on and working on that relationship with myself, and with the world, and with healthism and ableism and all of that.
- I don't know, I don't think I have a specific answer to that. I think that's definitely something that has defined how I am going to approach my life and approach life every day, I think.
- Shohreh:** And I think that's okay too because sometimes part of defining is un-defining, right? Realizing what you don't want it to be and what has held you back in the past. So just realizing that can be enough to give you steps to go forward and kind of figure out, well, what do I want this to be in my life?
- Jamie:** Definitely. I mean so much of my work is helping people unlearn, helping people divest from and yeah, unwrapping all of that entanglement that we've been in with the health and wellness industry, so yeah.

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Shohreh: Absolutely, and speaking of your work, how can people find you and work with you if they want to?

Jamie: Awesome. So you can find me on social media, on Instagram and Twitter, my handle is @JamieJLeClaire. And the same with my website, it's just jamiejleclaire.com, and you can find my writing there. You can book a consultation with me, all different sorts of stuff. And I would love for people to follow me and reach out, DM me on Instagram, I'm always trying to be super active on Instagram and engage with followers. So yeah, interact with me.

Shohreh: Yeah, Jamie's Instagram is great. So definitely go follow them, it's one of my favorite accounts on Instagram.

Jamie: Thank you.

Shohreh: Awesome. Well, this was wonderful. I so appreciate you making the time for this.

Jamie: Yeah, this was awesome; this is my first podcast, baby's first podcast [laughter].

Shohreh: Yay! Baby's first podcast, [laughter], well, I'm proud to have you here. I'm sure you're going to do many more after this.

[Music plays]

And that's our show for today. I appreciate you listening to and supporting the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. If you enjoyed this episode, it would mean so much to me if you would subscribe and leave a review with your podcast provider of choice. It will really help other people who might benefit from the podcast to find it more easily.

I also love chatting with listeners, so feel free to screen shot from your podcast player, post on social media, and tag me. And if you're looking for more information on what I'm all about, and how to work with me, head on over to shohrehdavoodi.com. I hope to see you for the next episode.