



Transcript of “Geoffrey Miller on Sex, Power, and Domination”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #138



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Dave: Today's cool fact of the day is only about a third of females experience orgasm regularly through intercourse. About a third of them can achieve orgasm with intercourse, but need additional stimulation. A third never reach orgasm during intercourse but can via some other form of stimulation.

Having orgasms outside of intercourse is normal for women, but historically, people thought orgasms only happened for mature women, which you would find in old literature. Then scientists in the 60's, before I was born, demonstrated that an orgasm is an orgasm, no matter how it occurs.

The way in which you reach it actually doesn't reflect your mental health or you emotional maturity. Hopefully that makes you feel good.

On that note, and very topically, today's guest is none other than Geoffrey Miller. He's an evolutionary psychologist who's best known for his books *The Mating Mind* and *Spent*, which came out a couple of years ago, in 2009. He's a professor at the University of New Mexico, go Albuquerque, I grew up there, and he's a fellow of the Association for Psychological Science and did Experimental Psychology at Stanford.

Basically, I would say that Geoffrey is one of those guys who know a lot more about spirituality and sex than the average guy so I'm particularly interested to talk with Geoffrey today about things that go from more the physical, all the way up to the emotional and psychological side of how people perform well.

I don't mean how people perform in the bedroom, although we may touch on that.

Geoffrey, welcome to Bulletproof Radio.

Geoffrey: It's great to be here Dave. Looking forward to it. Sounds like great topics.

Dave: Now, you're working on a new book. Are you up for talking about it?

Geoffrey: Yeah, for sure. Yeah.

Dave: All right. What's it called?

Geoffrey: It's called "Mate." M A T E, Mate, and the subtitle, we think, is going to be something like "The young man's guide to sex, women, and dating." My co-author is Tucker Max, and we're basically aiming to write the book that we wish we had had as teenage boys trying to figure out this weird, other species, females.

Where we didn't really get very good advice about how to understand women, what they want, how to date, how to appeal to them, didn't get very good advice from our dads, high school health classes, from the media, from porno from anybody.

Dave: My high school, and maybe eighth grade, sex health classes were really enlightening. I'm guessing yours weren't. I also wish that I had a book like that, but you've got Tucker Max. Tucker's a friend. I'm working with Tucker on a project as well, on helping to get the Bulletproof Diet book out and to get it into as many hands as possible where it will help people.

Isn't this going to be like yet another pickup artist book, or are you going to do something different?

Geoffrey: We're going to do something really quite different because our focus is really, most guys aren't sociopaths, and don't actually want to manipulate women into bed the way that some have argued the pickup artist scene tries to do. Most young guys actually want girlfriends.

Dave: Shocking how that works.

Geoffrey: There's a lot of good reasons why it's kind of a good idea. It's just more efficient to get a girlfriend than to chase a sequence of one night stands.

You'll actually end up with more success, more happiness, more sex, and a better woman. Our focus is cultivating the traits that are going to make you a more attractive boyfriend in order to get a great girlfriend.

So guys don't end up alone and frustrated and shooting up a bunch of UCSB campuses or whatever. We basically want to make it easier for young men, and young women, to find each other and to have win win relationships. Mutually beneficial relationships.

Dave: I didn't think we'd go here in this interview, but back when I was a young man, I had a job at a water amusement park. Middle of high school kind of time frame. I was stuck selling tickets in a booth. In this booth, there was nothing but teenage girl magazines and I was bored to tears.

I started reading Young Miss, and Teen, whatever they were called, I don't remember. There was this awesome article. It said "How to tell if a guy is hitting on you." I read this. I'm like "This is awesome. It's like step by step instructions."

So I tried it on the next ticket. I had this little experimental thing. Oh my God. It worked. That was a really good summer for me, given that there were girls my age in swimsuits coming up to the window, letting me hit on them, basically, while I sold them a ticket.

For me, that was actually transformative because I'm like "Oh my goodness. It's actually possible to do something here." Is there going to be advice in this book for women to understand how to effectively understand how to interact with men? Because the advice in that book was actually pretty, it wasn't very accurate, as far as I could tell.

Geoffrey: That might be a follow up book.

Dave: Okay.

Geoffrey: We have though seriously about doing something like that but we probably want to bring a female co-author on board.

Dave: Yeah.

Geoffrey: The challenges that women face are really kind of different. It's easy to get a guy to sleep with you if you are, basically symmetrical, and under eighty. The problem for women is getting a high quality guy to stick around with you right?

It's more about mate retention than mate attraction. The way that guys are choosy about the women that they stick with is like, we're not that choosy at first, but we're really choosy about who we settle down with, who we marry, who we offer a ring to, and women call that commitment phobia.

The way that guys are like "Oh, if you won't sleep with me in a one night stand, you must be sex phobic." Each sex derogates the other as being choosy.

That would be a different book.

Dave: Okay. I want to see a book someday that has printed in one direction on the top half instructions for boys and printed upside down on the bottom half the instructions for women because I got so much value from looking at it from the women's perspective when I was trying to learn how to date. It seems like you read they guy's part, go "Now I get it" and turn it over and go "Oh, that's what they're thinking."

Kind of like in a negotiating class, where you negotiate with someone and when you're done you get to know what they knew, which never happens in a real world negotiation. There would be great value there.

So drop a few tidbits for women who are going to pick up that book, even if they're not meant to.

Geoffrey: I think they'll enjoy reading it anyway because a lot of it will probably help them kind of clarify their mating goals and what traits they're actually paying attention to in guys, and how to assess those.

Particularly young women don't know their own preferences that well, so I think the framework that we offer to young guys might also be helpful to them.

Dave: This is going to be a book that helps a lot of people, I think. Your comment about being less of those UCSB shoot-em-ups, when you read that guy's postings it was really clear he was lacking guidance and understanding and was a total nutter in other ways.

Geoffrey: Yeah.

Dave: Let's go backwards. I mentioned how I got my education there from a teenage magazine. How did you get involved in studying human sexuality?

Geoffrey: It was actually a little bit more roundabout than you might think. The honest answer is, it's a little bit weird. When I started grad school at Stanford, I intended to study cognitive psychology, which is all about learning, and memory, and categorization, and how we think, and the most abstract forms of thought.

Within six months I was bored to tears with it. I couldn't stand it. I wanted something a little more grounded and real life. I met a couple of my advisor's post docs, Leda Cosmedes [00:08:20] and John Tuby [00:08:21] who were really the founders of my field, evolutionary psychology.

They said "Hey, there's a way to study human nature, and emotions, and preferences, and the way people actually interact, socially and sexually, that's completely grounded in cutting edge evolutionary biology that combines the behavioral sciences, and the humanities, and the biological sciences, and wraps it all up in a really powerful package." That was super appealing to me, intellectually.

But a lot of those early evolutionary psych folks, they kind of neglected sex, they neglected sexual selection. They didn't pay that much attention to Darwin. Darwin said this back in 1871. Darwin said the reason why we evolved language, and music, and morality, is to attract mates. Most people don't know that.

Dave: Wow.

Geoffrey: He actually made that argument in *The Descent of Man*. I read Darwin and I read the other biologists and I thought "Oh my God. Sexual selection is a really powerful evolutionary process. It doesn't just explain differences between males and females."

Dave: Right.

Geoffrey: It can actually explain all kinds of extravagant traits, and behaviors, and ornaments. Animal song, and plumage, and yeah, potentially human language and music.

And I had girlfriends in grad school who I talked about this stuff with. Right? They were like "Yeah. Female choice is pretty important and most guys don't appreciate it, or how it works, or what we look for."

I also was running a lot of evolutionary computer simulations where we would actually simulate how sexual selection works in these bits of software called genetic algorithms. Even there I was blown away by the power and creativity of sexual selection. Kind of exploring the space of possibilities in an evolutionary process.

It's kind of a combination of the personal, the hacker, the coder in me that was impressed by just sexual selection as a computational process, and the intellectual excitement of evolutionary psychology.

Dave: Now I've got to ask this. Chris Ryan was on the show. You know, *Sex at Dawn*.

As an evolutionary psychologist, what's your take on multiple partner versus single partner way we're wired?

Geoffrey: I used to be really skeptical of *Sex at Dawn*. I'd read some pretty critical reviews of it by evolutionary psychology folks I respect. But then I saw Chris Ryan give a talk at Paleo f(x) Conference a couple of months ago. I hadn't seen him talk before.

We had dinner. We had chats. I stood up after his talk and said "I bet we're equally surprised that I actually agree with everything you said." Which he thought was hilarious. I think there's big individual

differences. I think a lot of humans are very strongly wired to find a long term partner, and be pretty happy with a long term partner.

Certainly, as a species, we're kind of built to do a lot of pair bonding. Human males are built to do a lot of heavy investment in kids, and to stick around. Women are built to try and get that investment and keep guys around. But, religiously imposed, lifelong, monogamous marriage is not natural. That's kind of a cultural invention since civilization, agriculture, inheritance, money.

I think there are other people who are kind of naturally polyamorous and like to just form social relationships with lots of people through sex, the way that the Nobos [00:12:25] do. I think we just have to respect that diversity and not pretend that there's just one, natural, proper way for human sexuality to be expressed.

Dave: I have a lot of polyamorous friends. A lot of them are transhumanous [00:12:42]. Most of them aren't that happy in relationships. It's like a swirl of chaos around them. I have a few who have been happily polyamorous for a long time. I was really fortunate that Chris came up to my house.

We actually filmed a live, both of us in the same place and got to hang out for a bit. I met his, I want to say wife, but it might have been his fiance or girlfriend, but his mate. It was enlightening because he's a solid guy. I didn't see a lot of fluff in there. His arguments made sense.

Your argument that maybe some people are just wired that way, maybe even from a evolutionary perspective, there may be an advantage that some of us are more monogamous and some of us are less monogamous. For survival, maybe that's a good thing.

Geoffrey: Yeah. People differ in their kind of attractiveness. Some people can kind of get away with having a lot of partners and not, well, they provoke jealousy, but their partners kind of have to suck it up and deal with it. Then other people are not as attractive and if they find a mate, then they're happy.

This is still under debate. We're still trying to figure out an accurate picture of human sexuality. Not just what was typical, but also what the whole range or variety would have been among our prehistoric ancestors.

Dave: Well said. I think the debate's out for sure. I'm seeing this at a lot of the conferences I go to, where there's often times not just men, but women, who are talking about this. There's an opening up of people being willing to talk about it. Even the fact that I can talk about orgasm preference at the beginning of a show and not have it censored.

Isn't that, twenty years ago that wouldn't have happened actually. Things have changed.

What else has changed in our sexual culture though compared to where it used to be? It seems like the change is happening really quickly today. What are you seeing?

Geoffrey: Well, online dating is a huge thing. A lot of people now are finding boyfriends, girlfriends, serious long term partners through the wonder of the Internet. It's weird. In a sense it's a lot more natural to find a partner that way then to go to a bar and get drunk and try to talk to somebody when there's a lot of background noise, and when everybody's anxious, and everybody knows it's a meat market. Right?

At least with online dating you can kind of say "Hey, here's me. Here's my preferences. Here's what I do. Here's what I'm looking for." I think that is more similar to a natural mating style because remember, in pre history, you would have hardly ever met a stranger.

Anybody you meet, you would have heard about already, sort of indirectly through family or friends or "Oh, there's this cute guy in the clan on the other side of the hill." Right? "You should go meet him because he's an awesome hunter, or drummer, or whatever."

You would have had almost the equivalent of an online dating profile through the social gossip network. That's cool. It's exciting. I think it's a much more efficient way for people to find each other, particularly

people who have rare traits like super high IQ or if they're polyamorous or if they're ...

Dave: Right. The bar scene never works that well for me just because it's super loud. You basically look at someone, you're pretty drunk, and then great. What happened that was particularly fun? I don't know. It was never cool. I had these business cards made when I was a young, relatively angry, egotistical guy.

I became an ordained minister at a young age, mostly because it was convenient. I had this card. It said "Reverend Dave Asprey, The Church of the Bean." It had a little cup of coffee on it.

I went to school in a farming town, so I could "Oh, look. Here's my card." Then if I got this look like "You're the devil" I was like "Oh, I probably wasn't interested in dating this person anyway, because they don't have a sense of humor." Then if they laughed I was like "Hey."

It was kind of like the filter that would have gone into online dating except we didn't have it. I maybe didn't have those social skills to just go "Oh" and say who I was or whatever.

Okay, so we have that filtering thing now. How does that change happen compared to what would have happened when you go back to cavemen. When it comes to things like STD's? I suppose you get down-voted on some of the sites for online dating, but how did we handle STD's from an evolutionary perspective?

Geoffrey: Well, this is one of the big problems, I guess, with the Chris Ryan view of everybody fucks everybody all the time. That's really a great environment for pathogens. That would be delightful to gonorrhea and herpes. That would be the perfect environment for them to spread. There'd be real cost.

A lot of those STD's cause infertility in women, they cause all kinds of health problems. A lot of them, like syphilis, affect your brain, your behavior. I have a pet theory that certain personality disorders might actually be sexually transmitted infections.

Dave: There's some good data backing that up. I've seen a couple studies on it.

Geoffrey: Yeah. That's a big problem. You know some of the dangers that women face from mating more promiscuously, pregnancy, STD's, sexual reputation damage, they're kind of serious problems. The reputation damage depends on the culture and what's normal and what's expected, but getting pregnant is an objective issue that leads to heavy, heavy maternal investment. Pregnancy, breastfeeding, childcare.

You don't want to be indiscriminate about who you get pregnant by.

Dave: Yeah. So that probably leads against that argument.

Well, let's chat a little bit about exercise and sex. Is sex good exercise? Cavemen didn't really need exercise because they had to eat. They had to kill stuff to eat, et cetera, et cetera, but what about now? Can I replace my cardio with sex?

Geoffrey: We don't know. This is the hilarious thing right? There was one study done on this back in the early 80's trying to measure the calorie output of people having sex. It was a pretty good study for the time, but not that many subjects. That is the one study that gets repeated and repeated third hand, seventeenth hand, at least once per issue in Cosmo magazine, probably once per issue in Maxim.

We don't really know the calorie cost of sex and we don't know how long or how often people have sex. We know that we didn't actually ejaculate twenty times a day, like poor male lions have to do to get a lioness pregnant, but we do copulate longer than almost any other primate.

Chimpanzee and Bonobo copulation's just a few seconds. Human copulation, even back in the day, back before people understood about female orgasm, it's at least a few minutes, which is super long by most animal standards. And it's vigorous. It's a kind of test of, at least, the aerobic equivalent of sprinting, if not marathoning.

Dave: High Intensity Interval Sex. Is that going to enter Crossfit any time soon?

Geoffrey: Well, Crossfit's become pretty doctrinaire in certain ways so I don't know. But I will say one thing though, about erectile function, if I could.

Dave: Sure.

Geoffrey: Doctors nowadays recognize that erectile function, how hard your penis can get, is a really sensitive, and very accurate, indicator of a man's cardiovascular health. If a guy goes into a doctor and he says "I've got erectile dysfunction" the first thing a doctor wants to do is a bunch of blood work and cardiovascular disease tests because the doctor knows "Wow. That never happens by itself. It's a reflection of your systemic blood supply, and blood function, and we need to get that checked out."

The implication is a woman can use erectile function as a kind of proxy for male cardiovascular health. If he can get a nice degree of firmness then she's pretty confident, even if he's whatever, fifty years old, he's still pretty fit, at least in terms of his blood system.

I'm fascinated by these things that you can tell about somebody through sex that might not be obvious.

Dave: One of the funniest things I've heard in a long time, the most popular class at UCSB, where I actually went to school, was called "Human Sexuality." It was taught by a husband and wife couple who's names I forgot, it was twenty something years ago. The last day of the class you could hand out questions.

They would answer any question of any type on stage. Since it was a couple it was screamingly funny half the time, but the one question that stood out the most was "I'm on a very, very low calorie and my boyfriend tells me that there's no calories when I swallow."

You can imagine a thousand college students laughing for five minutes after the question right?

Geoffrey: Yeah, yeah.

Dave: It's really funny because the calorie burned thing, they're like "Do I get this? What calories in, calories out?" I'm not a fan of calories in, calories

out as a way to lose weight. It never worked for me, but that was probably just the best, it wasn't meant as a joke but probably the best joke I'd ever heard. It was awesome.

The answer by the way was thirty six calories on average. Still accurate?

Geoffrey: That sounds about right.

Dave: Not five thousand like some rumors that are out there.

Geoffrey: No. Yeah, that sounds like a great class. Actually I use, one of those professors wrote the Human Sexuality textbook that I use when I teach my students.

Dave: Oh, wonderful. Okay.

Geoffrey: Yeah.

Dave: It was a pleasure to take the class because I actually learned quite a lot. It was one of the best taught classes I'd had. I'm forgetting their names now, but if you know their names, drop them for sure. I'm sure they might appreciate knowing that their work had impact.

Geoffrey: Yeah, sure.

Dave: All right. Let's talk about common myths around female orgasms.

Geoffrey: I'm working on a paper with a sex researcher now where one common myth we're trying to dispel is that there's a clear and distinct difference between clitoral orgasm and vaginal orgasm.

Now, there's been a long debate, ever since Freud. Freud said "When a woman is a girl, she might have clitoral orgasm through clitoral stimulation, but if she becomes a sexually mature woman, she's supposed to start having vaginally centered orgasms just through intercourse, without clitoral stimulation."

That's sort of the definition of sexual maturity in the Freudian world. Ever since then, there's been a back and forth where a lot of the feminists have sort of tried to reclaim the clitoris as the center of female pleasure and satisfaction and tried to educate men about that.

The last ten years we've learned "Oh my God. There's a lot more to female sexual anatomy than we ever imagined." If you actually look at the homologies, the anatomical similarities between males and females, there's parts of the clitoris that are actually wrapped around the vaginal entrance.

They kind of correspond to the blood inflated sacs in the penis. What I think is happening with a lot of women, is those vestibular bulbs, as they're called, which are their erectile function, often they don't get engorged enough during sex. For a woman having sex without those vestibular bulbs being engorged would be kind of like a guy trying to have sex without an erection.

It just wouldn't work very well. It wouldn't feel exciting or good.

The anatomy is far more complex than just clitoris versus vagina. We've got data showing women can't really distinguish where an orgasm is localized that clearly or reliably.

Dave: Is it the average woman? It seems like some women are better at that than others.

Geoffrey: Yeah, the more sexual experience a woman has, probably the more partners she's had, the better the sex she has, the brighter she is, more articulate. The better she can probably localize what's happening.

That's one issue. There's a mystery about female orgasm, which is why such a high proportion of women not reach orgasm during intercourse with men. Some people have argued "Oh, that shows female orgasm is not an adaptation. It's just a kind of side effect of males being able to have an orgasm in order to ejaculate."

Elizabeth Lloyd at Indiana University made that argument in her 2005 book. I think that's wrong. I've argued, in *The Mating Mind* for example,

that if you think of orgasm for women as a mate choice system, it should be discriminating. It should separate the men from the boys.

If a woman had an orgasm given, any sex, with any male lover, no matter how young, or incompetent, or unhealthy, or low status, she always orgasmed, then having an orgasm wouldn't give her any information about the guy. Right?

So what you want is awesome, world shaking orgasms, with great males, who have great traits and to be left completely cold by bad males with bad traits.

Dave: So a guy who's more attentive to your needs might give you better orgasms and might make a better partner. Okay. Great evolutionary argument.

Geoffrey: Yeah, and it still hasn't quite made it into the sexual medicine field, which still classifies women not having orgasms as a medical dysfunction, and they're still looking for pharmaceutical drugs that could quote "cure that" like Viagra tries to cure erectile dysfunction.

But they might just be, frankly, with the wrong men. Or they might not have enough sexual experience with different men to know what really clicks for them, works for them.

Dave: When I was doing research for the Better Baby book, this is a book that my wife and I wrote about epigenetics, and about three months before pregnancy, and what to do during pregnancy to have better gene expression in your kids and less risk of certain diseases like autism, one of the things that came out is that when a woman is on the pill, her pheromone receptors change subtly.

She ends up basically thinking that her mate smells good. But when she goes off the pill, the smells change and all of a sudden what would have been a good phenotype match, isn't a good phenotype match. Does that have anything to do with a change in orgasms? Are pheromones and phenotype sensing between the sexes a part of this equation that you're aware of?

Geoffrey: Certainly that's a striking concern. When I teach my students about these ovulatory cycle effects and how women's preferences for male traits actually shift a little bit, when women are at peak fertility they're a little more attracted to guys with slightly more masculine facial features. More height, more upper body muscles. Guys who are a little more assertive and socially dominant.

I actually had a couple in one of my classes where the woman was on hormonal contraception, on the pill, and she heard this lecture. Then a week later decided to go off the pill. Her boyfriend was also in the class. They were both research assistants in my lab. Lo and behold, a month later she breaks up with him because she decides he's too feminized and too wimpy.

Dave: Wow.

Geoffrey: For her taste. He was not pleased with me, but there is some evidence now that yeah, the pill disrupts female choice mechanisms. What that means is, if a woman meets a guy when she's on the pill, then goes off the pill, her attraction to him, it might go down, it might go up. It's pretty unlikely to stay exactly the same.

Dave: Another thing that came out in the research for this book was that women who are off the pill, when they're ovulating, if they're smarter than average, their IQ actually drops when they're ovulating. If they're less intelligent than average their IQ actually goes up while they're ovulating. It's allegedly to attract a better mate.

What's your take on this? Have you come across any research like that?

Geoffrey: I haven't come across that research. The only thing I've seen kind of along those lines is that there's a couple studies showing that women get more verbally fluent and creative at peak fertility, as if they're kind of making more mating effort to poach the genes from the best, brightest guys. They need to up their game, in terms of their sense of humor in order to do that.

I haven't heard about any effects on intelligence.

Dave: This came from my wife. She's a [inaudible 00:31:09] trained physician. Smarter than I am to be perfectly honest. When she ovulates, she kind of swears sometimes. She's like "I can't remember things. I feel dumb. My brain's not working." It's an effect that she really feels, which is funny. I can see it in her. The normal behaviors aren't there.

Just the normal mental quickness that you recognize in someone, it changes. That's an n=1 observation, not a study, but she's mentioned the study multiple times. I find it fascinating. There's also Bree Chaff [00:31:44] was on the show, a professional athlete, and had shut down her ovulation using a very strong ketosis diet because she wanted to perform at top level and when you're ovulating you don't always perform at top level.

The monthly variations in performance were just too much of an inconvenience, but instead of using hormones, it was just nutrition to do it. What's your take on using nutrition to turn off ovulation?

Geoffrey: Well, that's what anorexic women do. That's what long distance runners do. Right?

There's even a theory in evolutionary psychology that women kind of manipulate each other and each other's body images in order to do a kind of reproductive suppression.

Dave: Oh, that's fascinating.

Geoffrey: If a dominant, kind of alpha female can convince all her underlings that they're all total losers and need to lose weight and become anorexic, then they'll run around doing that and stop ovulating, leaving all the reproductive opportunities for the alpha female.

Dave: No way.

Geoffrey: Yeah.

Dave: The alpha female of course, publicly is eating only lettuce but then goes home and eats a stick of butter and some Ben & Jerry's and goes on their way.

Geoffrey: Yeah.

Dave: I had no idea.

Geoffrey: There's some pretty good analog to that in some other primate species actually.

Dave: No kidding.

Geoffrey: Yeah. The female status has a lot to do with which females are ovulating and fertile and getting enough to eat versus which are kind of reproductively suppressed.

Dave: Wow. I had no idea. This is just fascinating.

What about onetaste. Tim Ferriss wrote about in the Fifteen Minute Orgasm Experiment, in 4 Hour Body. There's a group of people that say orgasms multiple times a day for women, increase Oxytocin, make people happy, what's the evolutionary psychology perspective on those practices?

Geoffrey: I'm only just learning thirdhand about them because I have a sex researcher colleague who's working with the onetaste group.

Dave: Out at Rutgers or ?

Geoffrey: She's based at UCLA.

Dave: Okay.

Geoffrey: So I'm not familiar with the techniques. I am highly confident there's not much scientific research on it yet, in the academic journals, but that's a fairly typical state of affairs. Academia lags about twenty or thirty years behind.

Dave: Behind the bedroom?

Geoffrey: Behind the bedroom and the cutting edge. It takes a certain critical mass of demand, and knowledge, and familiarity with those things for

research to get done. Also bear in mind, the federal government in America is not keen on funding sex research.

Dave: Yeah.

Geoffrey: Right? If you go to the National Science Foundation and say "Hey, I've got a great way to increase Gross Domestic Product by half of one percent." They'll be like "Yeah, here's ten million dollars. Go do that."

Dave: Right.

Geoffrey: If you're like "I could double the orgasm rate in America." They'll go "Not interested. Nope. The senators will object." That will be a problem.

Dave: Okay, got it. I had one of the, I think the head researcher for onetaste on the podcast. I believe she was at Rutgers. Fascinating guest. They had done some statistical analysis of you know, what quadrant of the clitoris is most sensitive in the average woman, and can you go to one o'clock versus noon.

I've actually had a chance to meet Nicole Dadone [00:35:19] and chat with her about it. She goes very quickly into esoteric Buddhist practices, Daoism, things like that. What's your take on the sexual meditation side of things and all of that? You do delve into shamanic realms as much as you go into just sex, which is what we've talked about for a lot of time so ...

Geoffrey: Well, I'm maybe ninety percent sex, ten percent shamanism. But this is another instance where there are, no doubt, a lot of cultural traditions around the world that have taken sex a lot more seriously than American society and that have built up a body of wisdom. Probably most of which is bull shit but some of which probably has some merit.

It's also pretty clear that increasing almost any aspect of mental health, whether it's overcoming depression, or schizophrenia, or anxiety, just practicing mindfulness, or doing almost any kind of meditation is really helpful. The same is very likely, in my humble opinion, to be true for sexual dysfunctions.

A lot of what people are frustrated about in their sex lives, they could probably resolve a lot of those problems by just paying attention to their breath for ten minutes a day. You know? Or being here, now, being in their bodies.

A lot of sex therapy is quite consistent with that. It's all about sense eight, focus, right? Pay attention to what your body is sensing rather than anxieties, or the past, or the future, or how you look under candle light or whatever. I think just the way that that kind of Buddhist tradition has now really taken over clinical psychology.

The irony is the best evidence based practices, in psychotherapy now, are all derived from mindfulness, which is derived from Buddhism.

Dave: Which itself is probably derived from shamanic practice.

Geoffrey: Yeah.

Dave: If you believe the bone people came over and were the precursors of Buddhism.

Geoffrey: Yeah.

Dave: That is amazing and I want to delve deeper on that. I read a Daoist text a while back. Actually I should say my wife translated a check text that she had for some reason. It was a Buddhist text written in that language. It said that the equation, or the number of days between ejaculations for men was actually an equation. This is amazing.

They said "Take your age minus seven and divide by four." That gives you the number of days and you should abstain from having ejaculation. Not an orgasm, just ejaculation, for that number of days if you want to maintain your health. If you want to live essentially forever, which is one of the goals of Daoism, then once every thirty days and make sure that the length of the orgasm slash ejaculation, although I think they meant orgasm, keep it under an hour.

This is the male orgasm, not the female. B.S. or not B.S.?

Geoffrey: I don't know. I think certainly semen production and sperm production falls off as guys age. There are a lot of hidden costs to producing sperm and semen.

Dave: The prostate gland.

Geoffrey: Beyond the thirty six calories. It's not just about the energy. There's a lot riding on sperm. Your genetic legacy, literally. Semen also, some people have argued, contains dozens of complicated chemical compounds, some of which are specifically evolved to be psychoactive, to kind of manipulate the female nervous system in a sense.

They're these claims that if you have sex without condoms, versus with condoms, the women who have sex without condoms are happier, allegedly, because the semen contains psychoactive antidepressant chemicals.

Dave: Wow.

Geoffrey: Which makes total adaptive sense. If you're a guy and you want to keep that woman having sex with you, and if you can biochemically manipulate her nervous system into being happier when she's around you, then you'll do that.

So, yeah. Sperm and semen are kind of costly to produce. We don't know how costly. I've never seen any studies on optimal ejaculation rates, as guys age. This is probably one of those domains where the quantified self movement could gather the data and just millions of guys could report how they feel, given different systematic variations in this. Then we'd know.

Dave: I did a talk at the Key West Conference a couple of years ago on this and for about a year I tested that equation. I tracked my daily life satisfaction, in terms of my career, my home relationships, things like that, came up with a number. Yes, it's subjective.

I tested the once every eight days. I tested the once every thirty days. It was a terribly difficult experiment to do because all it takes is one little

slip up. I was twenty one days into a thirty day period and I've got to start over. It's a little frustrating, as you can imagine.

Geoffrey: Yeah.

Dave: But what I did find, which, really I kind of thought this was going to be B.S., but what I did find was that all of those cases, my general satisfaction with life went up. The frequency of sex went up dramatically because when you don't finish, like "Can we go again tomorrow?"

Geoffrey: Yeah, yeah.

Dave: Which, okay so the number of female orgasms goes up when you do that and the number of intimate encounters goes up, even though you're not finishing. At the end of that year, I had definitely learned a new level of nervous system control that I didn't have, and in order to have that level of, whatever staying power, I had to do the heart rate variability exercises.

I'm a certified heart math coach. I use with my clients to reduce anxiety in board rooms and everything else just to allow people to do more in the zone, in a flow state. Without the breathing techniques I don't know that it's possible to do that.

When I was done, I ended up at the end of the year, I felt like I've learned how to control the part of my nervous system that's responsible for hunger, like I'm not going to die if I'm a little hungry. I used to at some biological level think I was going to die. Another level, you think you're going to die if you don't have sex because it's species survival. We're wired that way.

I'm done with that. Whether I have sex or I don't have sex, I'm not going to die. I don't feel like I'm going to die. The anxiety that comes with it is gone. It was a great experiment. I'm happy I did it and I'm sort of amazed that there isn't more data on this, but now we've got like a million no fappers out there.

Are you following the no fap kind of thing?

Geoffrey: No. What's the no fap?

Dave: This has been about the last three years. These are guys who give up, I don't remember what fap stands for, but they're essentially doing a similar experiment. They give up porn. That would be the P there. And they give up masturbation. Basically, I'm not going to masturbate. I'm not going to do porn.

There's various flavors of who's how extreme and all, but there's a very large number of people who do it and they're, I think the reason it works is they're resetting dopamine sensitivity, because porn just whacks your dopamine receptors to the point that nothing is going to satisfy you.

They're reporting, especially younger guys, just profound improvements in energy and motivation, and, frankly, I grew a lot of the Bulletproof company when I was not ejaculating all the time. I had this just intense energy. Like [inaudible 00:43:11] writes and boxers and all that. Is there any academic evidence that says limiting ejaculation makes you perform better, lift heavier, kick harder? Anything like that or is this just kind of something that martial artists do?

Geoffrey: It makes total sense to me, right? I mean, my whole career is built around analyzing male mating effort in all it's manifestations. Mating effort is the time, energy, attention you invest in trying to attract and retain women.

Now, if you're ejaculating all the time, your body is sending your brain signals that you're succeeding. There's apparently some mate, even if it's only a virtual porno mate. Thus you can down regulate your mating effort. You don't need to be ambitious and get up early and exercise and accomplish shit.

I suspect that the more often a guy will ejaculate, the less mating effort, and for me, that means the less creativity.

Dave: Yeah.

Geoffrey: The less ambition, the less extroversion, the less social networking. Probably your body is also getting the signals that say I don't have to bother looking that attractive. Right? I don't have to look like hot single guy anymore.

It makes complete sense, but here again, we academics are completely failing the rest of humanity. People are not studying this. I've seen zero research on it. That's sad, because what gets reported, for example, in sports medicine, is people say "Oh, there's no research that having sex the night before the big game has any effect on big game performance."

Well, there might be no research, but that does not mean there's no effect.

Dave: There's no research that the sky is actually blue either, but we're pretty sure it is.

Geoffrey: Yeah.

Dave: There's also no research that jumping out of an airplane, double blind research, jumping out of an airplane without a parachute will kill you, but I don't want to be in that experiment. There's some things.

I'll tell you, my data was unequivocal. There is an orgasm or an ejaculation hangover for men. At least for me. I didn't feel it, but in my data I'm like "Good God. The day after I'm always ... "

My satisfaction, I don't like my job, I don't like my wife. I mean I like her, but not as much. All that sort of thing, nothing's as good. Women, I think they know this, they've noticed this in their mates forever, so maybe it's an old wives tale, but it seems to be based in reality, at least for some people some of the time.

Geoffrey: Yeah. It makes sense.

You know, also there is research on what's called the Affective Shift, which is that when guys are kind of gearing up towards orgasm, having sex, they're really into the woman. She's more beautiful than anything,

they're completely focused on her, she's amazing and wonderful, and they feel love and romance.

Then boom. About five seconds after ejaculation, the woman's attractiveness to the guy plummets and he gets grumpy and he doesn't want to talk and he's like "Oh my God. I was so deluded. Why did I think she was special?"

The shift from before to after ejaculation, in terms of his relationship to her, is sudden and dramatic and pretty well documented. This post ejaculatory hangover, yeah, probably just a kind of continuation of that.

Dave: One of the side effects of that experiment was during the times when I wasn't ejaculating as regularly as normal, it was that Lana said basically, "You're nicer to me." I mentioned this onstage at Quantified Self Conference. Afterwards there was a group of twenty or thirty people.

Several couples said "Oh, yeah. We've done a similar thing but maybe didn't gather the data the same way." All of the women said the same thing. "Yeah. Actually they are a lot nicer this way."

I was kind of surprised by that too because apparently there's some kind of variance that's very well hidden from us as men, but it appears to be there. I would really like to see more research on that because that could shed a lot of light on relationship behaviors.

Geoffrey: Oh, for sure. Guys being nice is just another form of mating effort. Right?

Dave: That's a tweet right there.

Geoffrey: Yeah, so I'm not surprised women notice. None of us notice our own moods as easily as our spouses do. Right?

Dave: That's very true. Well, let's talk for a couple minutes before we come to the end of a show about how shamanic practice comes into play as an evolutionary psychologist focused on sex.

How did you get into that? Why is that a part of what you do?

Geoffrey: It's not a big part. I mean, it's been an interest of mine. I just happened to get invited, for reasons I am still slightly baffled by, to talk on a panel about shamanism at Paleo f(x). I think it might have had something to do with a paper I wrote about drug legalization policy a couple of years ago.

Dave: Okay.

Geoffrey: That was kind of a signal to the conference organizers. "Oh, he's into evolution and he's also not too close minded about psychoactive drugs."

Dave: Got it.

Geoffrey: Bring him on the shamanism panel. Let's see what happens.

Dave: That makes a lot of sense. There are arguments that sex is a gateway to altered states. In fact, one of the books I read about that talks about how, women more than men, but both sexes can have full out of body, very spiritual experiences some of the time, or with some lovers versus other lovers.

Is there an evolutionary reason for that, or any other comments on that?

Geoffrey: Well, just like I mentioned, it's important for a woman to discriminate between different lovers. Also, different contexts, different sets and settings, and degrees of propitiousness. Is it springtime, and the wet season, and everything is in bloom and if I got pregnant I could feed my baby for sure?

That's romantic and exciting and leads to better sex, than dead of winter and everything's dark and depressing and nothing is growing and if I got pregnant I'd miscarry.

Women will discriminate between no orgasm versus having an orgasm with a guy, but then once you have a pretty good orgasm, you might as well continue that discriminating ability all the way upwards so that, if there's a guy that's just absolutely awesome, you find a genetic gold mine, or just an amazing partner, then you also need some way that your mind signals to yourself, as a woman, this is an extraordinary

experience. If I can get this guy to commit to me, I'll have genetic immortality. We'll have eight amazing kids and I will have thirty grand kids and we will populate this whole continent.

I think that sense of sexual transcendence that you get with a really amazing lover is a kind of marker for, in a way, the possible genetic future that you and he might have together.

Dave: Very interesting theory. I love it. It makes sense. Someone who does more than a good orgasm, but puts you in another realm, I'm saying that for both partners, but maybe there's more to that relationship than just sex.

Geoffrey: Yeah, yeah. Evolution is happy to use any incentive system it can find to get us to do things that are good for long term reproduction. If the human brain is capable of transcendent, or out of body, or freaky psychedelic states, and if evolution can use that somehow to motivate us to do stuff that's good for reproductive success, it'll do that.

In fact, it might be one way that it kind of hacks that system.

Dave: Is there an evolutionary explanation for BDSM, and things like that that you've come across? That never seemed to make sense from an evolutionary perspective to me, but I'm not trained in that.

Geoffrey: There's certainly a big overlap between sex and dominance and power that's not been very well explored yet. It's a tricky subject because even my female colleagues, who work on things like doing a Darwinian analysis of romance novels. They get flak for pointing out "Oh my God. There are kind of a lot of rape fantasies in romance novels."

Dave: Statistically speaking, right.

Geoffrey: There's a lot of kind of "Oh, naughty pirate captain abducted me and took me away from my home and family and yet then it was the hottest sex ever." That fits very well with what the anthropologists say. There's a lot of tribal warfare. There's a lot of capture of women in tribal warfare.

A lot of our female ancestors did not choose all of their male partners voluntarily. They were kind of plucked out of their tribe while their dads and brothers were killed. They were taken off somewhere else. Once they get to the new tribe they might still have the scope for either choosing which captor they mate with, or seducing the leader into actually kind of committing to them or loving them.

There's a lot of very politically difficult dynamics of power and status and abduction and all of that that play out in fiction. We see them in movies and TV. But, honestly, most academics don't have the guts to touch them.

Dave: Not a lot of research there. Plus it's probably hard to get a double blind study like that. How would you possibly go about that? I can't even imagine. I'm sure whatever academic does it is probably going to have an interesting path in front of them.

Geoffrey: Yes.

Dave: Well, Geoffrey, this has been a very fascinating interview and there's a question that every guest has answered on the show. One I'd like to pose with you.

Geoffrey: Oh, yes. The question.

Dave: The question.

Geoffrey: Go ahead.

Dave: Given all of the things you know, not just about evolution, but about your entire life's journey, the three most important pieces of advice that you would offer for people who want to perform better at whatever it is they're here to do. If you want to kick ass, do these three things.

Geoffrey: If you want to kick ass, pay a lot of attention to understanding the other sex and how they're different and how they're similar. Most people make only a cursory effort to do that. It really handicaps them in their mating lives, but also in their professional lives, in their education, in relating to their own siblings and parents.

That's a major bit of advice that Tucker Max and I are doing in *Mate*. Really most of the book is about trying to convince young guys to make a little effort to get inside the heads of young women, which, honestly, most of them have never done.

Dave: That's fantastic advice. I wish someone had given it to me. Yes, write that.

Geoffrey: Second thing is most of the real productivity I've had in my professional life has been choosing great collaborators and having the willingness to dump collaborators who proved to be disappointing and really stick with the ones who work well with me and do multiple projects with them over time.

It's about building your social network. Doing it selectively and doing it in a way that pays equal attention to somebody's raw capability, but also how well you, personally, get along with them. I can get along with some really difficult personalities in science that most people can't get along with. Then other people just rub me the wrong way.

You just have to kind of go with your gut about that. If you're an Internet Marketer, choose your joint venture partners really carefully. If you're looking for a mate and somebody looks good on paper, but you're just not feeling the chemistry, just trust that.

Third thing. Just keep cultivating new skills on a life long basis. This is something I didn't bother to do, particularly in my marriage very well. I wouldn't set myself goals of learn a specific new thing this weekend. I think if you get in the habit of doing that, it makes you a hugely more interesting person at age forty than you were at age twenty.

You learn how to learn more effectively and you've got something much cooler to talk about than what you watched on Netflix last night, or some cool post you saw on Facebook, or some great porno you watched, or whatever.

I'm trying to implement that in my life. I finally learned how to ride a motorcycle like a month ago. I'd never done that before.

Dave: Cool.

Geoffrey: I probably won't ride because it's ludicrously dangerous, and I don't want to die young, but just knowing how to do it and being able to say "Yeah, that's how I spent my weekend."

If people get in the habit of doing that, just identify something you haven't learned how to do before and then just go learn how to do it. If you keep that habit up, then in ten years you'll be an amazingly more capable person than you are now.

Dave: Fantastic advice. Geoffrey Miller, thanks for being on the show. What are your coordinates? Where can people find you? We'll put all these links in the show notes, but a lot of people are driving right now so website, Twitter handle, where should they go to learn more, especially about your new book?

Geoffrey: I'm trying to stay off Twitter at the moment for reasons I don't want to talk about, but if they Google search my name, Geoffrey with a G Miller, you'll find my University New Mexico web page. It's got all my papers on it. My books are all on Amazon.

Dave: They're called Spent, and The Mating Game.

Geoffrey: Spent and The Mating Mind.

Dave: Mating Mind, sorry.

Geoffrey: I also co-edited a book called Mating Intelligence. Then Tucker Max and I have our new website. The Mating Grounds. Look for thematinggrounds.com. It's got our blogs. We're going to have a lot of video and interviews with experts and podcasts and great advice, especially to young men about how to understand women and how to cultivate the traits that women want.

Dave: Fantastic work. I think you are doing good things for the world. Thanks again.

Geoffrey: Thanks Dave. Great to be with you.



Dave: You've probably heard me talking about whole body vibration on one podcast or another, but if you haven't check out the Bulletproof Whole Body Vibration platform, called the Bulletproof Vibe on upgradedself.com.

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