

## **Innovative Sex Toys Help Close the Pleasure Gap – Alexandra Fine with Dave Asprey – #809**

Announcer:

Bulletproof Radio, a station of high performance.

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today is one of the new format episodes where members of the Upgrade Collective, my annual membership group, where I'm teaching all of my books and all of my knowledge and structured courses with coaching support and dozens of phone calls with me, and videos with me and things like that. Where they are actually part of our live audience, and at the end of the show we're going to take some questions from them.

Thank you Upgrade Collective members for tuning in. It's one of the benefits you get by being a member and there's a lot of them. If you're interested in this, go to [ourupgradecollective.com](http://ourupgradecollective.com) and sign up. I'd love to see you there. There is a vibrant community of people all learning to be better every single day using bio hacking and all sorts of other stuff, including stuff that we are going to talk about on the show today.

You've heard me talk about sex pretty often on Bulletproof Radio, because there's these four F words that drive everything we do. There's, fear comes first, food comes second, and another F word is the third one. Fertility, that's what you were thinking of, right? And then there's friends, our supportive community. This is the order of operations for all life forms, and if you ignore the energy of sex you actually won't perform the way you want to perform as a human being.

You want to show up for yourself and for the world, this stuff matters and that's why we just did the sex energy series, and we talked about sexual fantasies from a scientific perspective. And today, I'm picking that conversation up again with Alexandra Fine, who's a credentialed sexologist, who has a Master's in clinical psychology with a concentration in sex therapy from Columbia.

Who took that passion... See what I did there? And combined it with engineering to start a company that's really looking at, how do we use tech to get more out of sex and to make it more satisfying.

Alexandra, welcome to the show.

Alexandra Fine:

Thank you. It is a pleasure to be here.

Dave:

I saw what you did there.

Alexandra:

Yeah.

Dave:

This is one of those shows where I'm going to try my best to not let my inner seventh grader come out, but I usually fail, just to be really clear on that.

Alexandra:

Why? Why hold it back? I think that inner child is so rejuvenating and I think tapping into our curiosity, and the silliness, and playfulness of sex can be really, I don't know.

Dave:

I thought holding back was something you wanted to do? [crosstalk 00:02:27].

Alexandra:

This is going to be fun.

Dave:

I guess the question I have is, okay, in addition to very well educated, you talk about something called the pleasure gap, which we're going to get into, but you also said, "All right, I'm going to go out and partner with a woman engineer and we're going to make meticulously designed technology to improve sex pleasure." But I've talked to other people who are like, "Toys, maybe, they're not going to do everything you want to do, because they focus pleasure in the wrong place, or because you become reliant and all that stuff."

Why did you go in the direction of tech with all the things you could have done given the knowledge you have?

Alexandra:

Well, first of all, I think for any issue that you have, tackling it holistically is really important. Sometimes you just need one thing to help you, I don't know, I can't think of a good analogy of a problem right now. But just because a tool isn't going to solve education necessarily, it doesn't mean that it doesn't have value and can't help you on your journey and on your path. In fact, I think tools can in of themselves be educating.

I think for me, especially because I wanted to be a sex therapist for a long time, I have my Master's in clinical psychology. I was excited by working with people one on one, but ultimately I think I was so excited and I tend to be a little... have a natural sense of urgency and I wanted to do more and I want to do it faster. And by creating tools I can just touch more people.

So I was really excited by the idea of what can I do through the marketing and by creating a brand, not just the actual vibrators themselves. Yeah, I think that both being able to impact more people through a brand, through capitalism was really exciting to me. And then I also did feel and we are now doing a lot of education and a lot of the other components that I think bringing them to the masses while therapists can only do things like one-on-one, is really exciting to me.

Dave:

The idea of building content and education as part of a brand is relatively new. We can call it content-driven e-commerce, and certainly that's a big part of what I [inaudible 00:04:54] groups. "Guys, I'll teach you how to eat and I'll make stuff you want to eat, but the teaching has a value in and of itself." And you've done some pretty crazy stuff. You're on the Forbes 30 Under 30, you were the first sex toy allowed on Kickstarter, which is a really hard thing to do because... See what I did there?

Because lots of people have been trying to do it forever, but they could never get away with it for some reason. What did you do to get Kickstarter to say, "Oh, this is actually a high class product"? How did you do that because that's, business-wise a very difficult bar?

Alexandra:

Yeah. We had a brand at the time, so we were already selling products. We had a website, there was like a visual component and understanding of what we were doing in the public space. And we were working... Honestly, our offices were down the block from Kickstarter. So we started having genuine relationships with the people who worked at Kickstarter. And when we would talk to them, nobody had any issue with what we were doing.

It was like, "Oh, this is just our policy," kind of stuff. So we read through their mission statement and we constructed a letter before we were about to launch our next campaign. They are out there trying to help makers create products, content that are going to make other people's lives better, and that's exactly what we were doing. So we really framed our ask and our position in alignment with what they were doing, and they immediately saw it.

We were like, "Look, we are women designing products that predominantly help people just like us have more fulfilling lives. This isn't about prurient behavior. This isn't about being lewd or crude. This is about living a healthy life." That resonated with them, and within like 24 hours, they came back to us and were like, "We love to work with you and we'd love to understand how we can open up this category in a way that still feels safe for people."

I think that's something that's so fascinating about sex, is on the one hand it's about creating safety and there's so much unsafety too, or unsafety. There's so much trauma that really... fear. Going back to your ask, there's so much fear and sex. And some of it's really founded too. I think some of us have our absolute worst experiences in a sexual space, as well as some of our most profound and beautiful experiences in an erotic consciousness.

To me, that is the reason that we should be focusing on it, yet I think that power that it holds is so scary for people.

Dave:

I love that. You're talking about the sex being both a shameful, or fear-driven, or fear-ridden for some people and also being transcendent for other people. And it's that combination of the two states where it's one or the other, or sometimes both. And as a trained sex therapist study this, why is it like that? Do you have any theories? What do they teach you in school about that?

Alexandra:

Well, they don't teach you much about it in school. I have my master's in clinical psychology, so I definitely took all the courses that were interpersonal or related to sex, but ultimately a lot of... Still don't talk too much... More about like sexuality and how it comes up in our lives almost outside of the bedroom. One, I think that the power sex holds in all of us can be traumatic or transcendent for anybody.

I don't think it's necessarily these two groups of people. I think that it has that power for all of us and it's just a matter of the experiences we have. There's lots of ancient wisdom around this, but I do think that we're tapping into a different state of consciousness that is incredibly somatic, really tied to our physical bodies, so that those experiences that get hardwired into us in a way that I think can both be really powerful and create a bond or be really traumatic and for the rest of your life.

Every time somebody touches you in a certain way, you just cringe and it just brings you back to this one awful moment. And I think that, yeah. I've definitely had both of those experiences.

Dave:

What's the role of solo play or masturbation when you're looking, okay, transcendent traumatic? What changes when there is a partner or more than one partner in the room with you?

Alexandra:

It's a great question. So much changes of course. I think they're both really important. I think they both have their roles. I think it's very much like dancing alone or dancing with a partner. I think that you of course can really experience this rise of energy within you on your own and find a lot of healing, and understanding, and education about your body. But to be able to pass that energy back and forth between you and somebody else is I think a very cool experience that...

I think that it adds this element of healing for me, simply because somebody else is witnessing my experience of pleasure and joy, and because I'm also bringing somebody else that experienced simultaneously. Not that one is better or worse. I definitely find more time for the solo play as I think many of us do. But I don't know, they both really hold powerful places in our lives. But I do think that there's something about the empathy, the learning how to connect with another person.

This back and forth that you have in non-solo sex or what we call sex, that's really powerful and beautiful. We live in a world where we don't have to have sex in order to procreate. And I love asking a group of people like, "Okay, who wants to live in that world?" Nobody. Everybody wants to be having sex with somebody... Not everybody. That's not true. There's actual people out there who don't, but I think the majority of us do, we want that connection?

Dave:

In sex, there's an act of being selfish and there's an act of being of service to your partner. We know that being of service puts you in a flow state. We also know that just sex puts you in a flow state, so there's all kinds of altered States that people go into. I've seen a study that something like 20% of people report having out of body experiences, meeting God kind of things during sex, but their partner just sees them laying there, twitching around. So people go places.

Alexandra:

I definitely found God during sex, which is all funny because so many people feel like God is what prevented them from finding sex, yet, I'm like, that's where I was positive. We were really connected.

Dave:

I'm pretty sure that if you believe in God, then you believe that things were engineered by God and He made sex or she made sex depending on which God you [crosstalk 00:12:50]-

Alexandra:

Yeah. I would say, yeah. The concept of God, we didn't get in there is probably not the way or my feeling that there's like this power that connects us all [crosstalk 00:12:59], that there's something... Yeah, like that. That we are all god and maybe even. I had that feeling during an orgasm once, and that really is definitely, I think, a big part of why I do what I do. Yeah, and you were talking about that back and forth too. I just feel like that's really what it's all about this push and pull in life.

And then when you realize like, oh, when it comes together, when the masculine and feminine spin together in this beautiful way where it really becomes one, there's just something there that's so powerful, and beautiful, and healing.

Dave:

Sex is definitely cathartic for so many people, and there is an act of being vulnerable. There's an act of surrender at some point. The act of pushing and being selfish and all of those all in order, but then end in a very high, alpha brainwave state. Which just so happens to be very effective at canceling out trauma. That's one of the reasons that it can be really healing.

I'm curious, because you have a lot of data about how people are using toys. And if you go back 20 years, sex toys pretty much, they all smelled like cheap plastic and were not something that most people were that highly motivated to use. Just, there were quality issues all over the place. In fact, I actually told one of the companies that wanted me to partner with them, I'm like, "Your product smells like a cheap sex toy. It's not clean."

We don't want to be putting foul lights and all that stuff in products that are meant for humans. You clearly are using the high-end materials and all that stuff. But what I want to know is, for people who are buying nice toys like the Dame stuff, how many of them are for use with partner versus for solo play? Do you actually get that data?

Alexandra:

Yeah. I can tell you like... Well, we designed some with partners in mind, more so than others, but I don't... Hear the data I do have, 35% of my purchases come from people that Google thinks are men. We definitely have a pretty strong male population. That is a part of our community that's buying products from us to use with their partners. I believe something about 48% of people have used a sex toy with their partner or report using a sex toy with their partner.

So it's definitely fairly common, and I also think it's like, what do we consider a toy or a tool? I think there's so many... Of course, we're talking about vibrators, but a candle, lighting, music, all of these things are things that we use to change our experiences, to put us in the mood and help us connect.

Dave:

And if you've heard the interview about the largest survey ever done of people's sexual fantasies, that was a few episodes ago, people use all kinds of stuff. I had no idea.

Alexandra:

I listened to a few things in that series. I'll have to go listen to that one.

Dave:

That's probably one that was design for new products for you, including one with [crosstalk 00:16:20] and... I'm kidding. I have no idea. But there's definitely... I was blown away. I had no idea that there was such a high variety and it was so common, just all these different fantasies. But just seeing the data is really interesting to me to see what people are actually doing because this isn't something you normally talk about at a dinner party, unless it's really close friends and you're all pretty drunk.

[crosstalk 00:16:41] It's one of the things where it's a common behavior, but it's in the bedroom. So I feel like sharing knowledge about what people actually do is of service because if nothing else, then people are like, "Maybe I'm not weird. Maybe this is just normal, even though we don't talk about it. That seems important.

Alexandra:

And I also think that whatever we do is normal. There's this constant idea that like, oh, am I broken? 70% of women need control stimulation. In fact, a lot of the research shows that it's probably even higher than that in order to have an orgasm. Yes, the data is very normalizing. People feel this feeling of like, oh my God, it's not just me when I tell them that figure.

But whatever gets you off is wonderful. There's boundaries on that, but for the most part, it's okay if it is a little weird and it's not what the data says. It's okay if you don't want to have sex once a week. That's the data says if that's like generally is average. I will say the data also says that there's correlations between having sex once a week or more and being satisfied in your relationship and in your life. So that doesn't mean that's true for you.

Dave:

Do you think cancel culture has negatively affected people's sex lives?

Alexandra:

Cancel culture is just... I got into such an argument the other day with a close friend about cancel culture. I think cancel culture, not canceling people, sometimes that's totally called for, but the culture of wanting to call people out versus wanting to call people in I think has negatively affected everything or a lot of things. So yeah, I can see that relationship. As we're going through this big societal shift that I think is really beautiful and cool, and I'm excited to see, there's also some confusion around how...

I think Me Too has made a lot of men really afraid to initiate sexual experiences. And women also were like, "Do I want this? Do I not want this? Do I consent? Do I not consent?" And I think that these are really important questions that we should be asking ourselves. I do also think that it is so important that we're asking ourselves this question. It also is definitely creating a barrier.

It's okay to have to hit a boundary. It's okay to have an experience that you don't love at the end. It's okay to do something and then say, "Oh, you know what? Take your finger out of my butt. It turns out I don't like that." I learned that now. It doesn't mean that something bad happened or that it's inherently traumatizing. It's okay to have experiences that we don't like until [crosstalk 00:19:54] them.

Dave:

The way I grew up, it's like one of the two partners would generally say, "Let's go have sex, or do whatever, and the other one says yes or no. And it was always okay to ask. But I wouldn't want to be dating if I was 20 right now. I have no idea how I would be able to deal with that because that seems like normal behavior.

Alexandra:

Yeah. That is normal behavior. I do think that it's really just about learning how to read each other's body languages and there's a lot more... There's so much information around it that the information can almost stop you from just listening to your body and listening to this other person's body, and connecting in a really authentic way. That being said, these are great conversations.

So many women, including myself were sexually assaulted, and maybe if... It is so much easier for me even just to say that sentence now than it was in 2010.

Dave:

Because we removed a lot of the shame from it just by acknowledging that it happens. And just sexual assault is a bad thing-

Alexandra:

It's also [crosstalk 00:21:06]-

Dave:

... and we guys who don't participate in it, honestly, there's no way that we'd know about it unless a woman told us it was happening. Because if it's a secret-

Alexandra:

Exactly.

Dave:

... it's a secret. I'm intrigued though, because when we move past that and we're talking about just normal relationship initiation and things like that. You documented something called a Pleasure Gap. Can you talk about what that is?

Alexandra:

Women are four times more likely than men to say sex has been not at all pleasurable in the past year. I think the reason why we really focus on pleasure over orgasm is because I think that orgasm isn't the only way of understanding pleasure.

Dave:

Fair point.

Alexandra:

I would argue it's a fairly male-centric way of understanding pleasure, but that was an argument.

Dave:

No, I've seen a few women orgasm in my day. They seem to like it.

Alexandra:

No, they orgasm, and in fact, they can orgasm a lot more too. So just because they have an orgasm-

Dave:

It's not fair.

Alexandra:

... doesn't even mean that it was good sex for them. Their subjective experience of pleasure is different. And to just measure it, whether or not you had an orgasm can be a little binary or reductive of our experience-

Dave:

Absolutely.

Alexandra:

... of pleasure. That being said, men are twice as likely to orgasm during a sexual experience than a woman. And I'm also using being very binary in my male-women language here, but for... Honestly, the research-

Dave:

We can talk to the majority if it's okay, just if we were looking at statistics work.

Alexandra:

It's also what the research has been done, and the research just hasn't been done with like sex versus gender in mind. They were just lumping it together for so long. I am probably just talking about cis women and cis men.

Dave:

Now, you talked about, or you had this idea for a wearable vibrator. How does that actually work?

Alexandra:

And I happen to have it. This is our flagship product. It's called Eva. It's a hands-free control vibrator that you can wear during sex. It has bendable wings that tuck underneath the labia majora. Like my mouth was a vagina and you could see me, and it pushes against the labia, the outer labia. And that little bit of tension keeps it in place, so it provides control stimulation, which we were just talking about is so important to women. And you can it while you're having penetrative sex with your partner.

We launched it on Indiegogo in 2014, we raised \$575,000 in 45 days.

Dave:

Wow.

Alexandra:

I went from my parents being like, "What are you doing?" To so proud. This is the second iteration of it now that we sell, so it's called Eva. And there's really nothing else on the market. It's a fantastic product. It control stimulation, is something that you need in order to really experience the full potential of your pleasure. And I'm really, really proud of it.

Dave:

All right. Now, I'm going to get my engineering side all happy. You partnered with a mechanical engineer from MIT in order to do this. Did you guys actually like measure the frequency of vibrations against a set of clitorises to figure out like how intense and how many cycles per second? How do you go about designing a science-based vibrator? Because that's fascinating to me.

Alexandra:

Motor technology is fairly set. We definitely spent a lot of time trying to understand... There's the frequency and amplitude when you spin the motor, so a motor or what creates vibration, it's like a motor for anything, but then you put a weight on the motor and it spins the weight around, which is the opposite of what you would want from any other motor. You'd want it to be balanced. Ours is not balanced very intentionally.

It's a matter of cycles, which is how often it goes and how fast it goes. So we will measure that, and then I believe it's called like a G and you end up measuring like the G, which is a combination of them, which is like the experience of how much-

Dave:

The G force not the G sport, right?

Alexandra:

Yes, the G force and to figure out exactly how strong that motor is. But for us, I would say a lot of the engineering went into the wings and getting this product to stay in place. It was a little bit more of a mechanical engineering fit than it was necessarily the motor. The motor technologies, we have continued to explore them as we've expanded our line to figure out what motors should people like the most.

I can tell you that, in my experience, whatever products you have after you use it for a little bit, they're going to wish that it was a little bit stronger.

Dave:

Because the people wanted more strength there?

Alexandra:

Yeah, [crosstalk 00:26:24]-

Dave:

You mentioned definitely, you're going to use your own company's products just like I drink Bulletproof coffee all the time. But you mentioned your parents were like, "what are you doing here?" But you actually hired your mom as a product tester. What was that like?

Alexandra:

Yeah. I actually did also hire and fire my mom, but my mom was a product tester. The quote I like to tell people is, she said, "Well, if your daughter makes apple pie, you try the apple pie." Shout out to my mom. There's other products on the market and she wasn't really sure. She doesn't love... Gosh, sorry, mom. She is one of the 30%, not the 70%, so she really likes internal stimulation.

And I got to have this really amazing conversation with her about what she likes. And for me, it's totally fine as long as I don't really imagine her and my dad together, which is also silly because I was getting really intense about my parents' life, but they're never going to listen to this, so it's fine, but they're no longer together. And I think that you want your parents to be having sex. It is really beautiful.

Or you want them to be, whether it's having sex with each other or having sex and feeling good in the world. That's something that you want. You might not want to think about it in too much detail, and I think that's fine. But yeah, it was great to have my mom's experience documented. And she came back to me after trying the prototype and was very much like, "I really see what you're trying to do and why this is going to be a successful product."

Dave:

I'm pretty sure that we have a biological drive once you hit about 13 or 14. Suddenly your parents become really stupid and anyone else's parents are pretty smart. And we're wired to leave the tribe. You have to be so fed up with your parents that you're willing to face lions, tigers, and bears to go to another tribe to spread your genes around.

Alexandra:

That makes sense.

Dave:

And it's a biological imperative, and once you're about 23, 24, suddenly your parents are smart again. We do that so we don't get inbred in small tribes back when we were in tribes. I'm pretty sure that same wiring is at play, where the idea of a teenager thinking about their parents sounds just like, "Eew." That probably prevents all sorts of bad things from happening the way our sheep would let them happen because sheep don't have that. So it's probably a good thing.

Alexandra:

Yeah, but [crosstalk 00:29:08] is real big, so there's also that.

Dave:

Yeah, it's a fair point.

Alexandra:

But I agree, I hear what you're saying. It's good that's hardwired into us. I also wonder if that's how we pass on our traumas. I'm pregnant, I'm very excited to learn about all my flaws through my child. I think they'll be the best therapist I ever had.

Dave:

You said you were pregnant? Congratulations.

Alexandra:

Yeah. Thank you.

Dave:

That's so cool. My first book was on fertility and it's such a big way to learn. One thing that's really interesting is that a lot of, especially women experience, if something rough happened to you when you were a year old, when your child's a year old, it will reactivate your traumas from when you were one. And when you were five, if something bad happened, when your kid's five, it'll just pop up in your life.

It's the weirdest thing, but I've heard that from so many parents, we've experienced that as well. It doesn't have to be sexual trauma, it's any kind of trauma, pain [crosstalk 00:30:07]-

Alexandra:

Any trauma, yeah.

Dave:

... whatever. All of a sudden you're like, "Why did I just lose it today?" "Go back." So there's all kinds of intergenerational stuff there that probably is tied up with sexual trauma as well as any other trauma.

Alexandra:

Totally.

Dave:

So pregnancy is an incredibly amazing time. Well, then I have to ask, sex toys while you're pregnant? Pros, cons?

Alexandra:

Yes. Pros. Pros, pros, pros.

Dave:

Sex toys, while you're pregnant? Pros, cons?

Alexandra:

Yes. Pros. Pros. Pros, pros, pros, I think. I think that sex can be a little bit... But one, everybody experiences their own changes in their sexuality, in their libido, in their physical experience of sex while they're pregnant. I do think that it can be a little bit more uncomfortable. It can be harder to do certain positions, and a lot of women do report having just a harder time orgasming, especially in their later like in the third trimester. So having some extra oomph can be really effective.

I've been finding them really helpful too, even from earlier, just because I was actually really uncomfortable in first trimester, just more so than I am now. Not wanting to do certain positions and being able to rely on something extra was really helpful for me and my partner to stay connected and still feel good.

Dave:

That's fantastic. It's usually the second trimester is pretty comfortable. The third trimester, not so much. So [crosstalk 00:31:46]-

Alexandra:

No, I'm not there yet.

Dave:

... as a first time, it's how it usually works, depending on all sorts of variables. The stuff you learn writing a fertility book is a lot. But I wrote the book because my wife was infertile when we met, and so that was hackable. Those are the things that oftentimes you don't talk about because also people like, "Eew." Oh, I'm getting a comment from Mona says your hair is back on the mic. There you go. Thank you, Mona. I love having a live audience. Helpful guys.

Alexandra:

Thank you, Mona.

Dave:

Now, share with me some things about sex, and pleasure, and longevity, because there's some studies about that. Have you read those?

Alexandra:

Yeah, a little bit. I know that there's some research that says that having sex will to increase the longevity of your life. Right? That's what we're referring to.

Dave:

Yeah.

Alexandra:

In Taoist, the idea that your qi is your life force, your sexual energy is where you continue to create. It is, it's literally how we create other human beings. I think that there's not just scientific, but there's also ancient wisdom that points to this. I definitely feel like it keeps me young. Sex isn't something we need to do to stay alive, but it is something we certainly do to feel alive. And the way we feel alive when we're having sex, to me, it just makes so much sense that that would then also lead to having a fuller longer life. Dave, do you know more about the research? Tell me more?

Dave:

I've looked at it a lot and the Taoists, and I love that you bring this up, they say, for men, there's an equation and its aging years minus seven divided by four. Don't ejaculate more often than that number of days if you want to maintain your health. And if you want to live a long time, just ejaculate once a month or less, and keep your male orgasm to less than an hour. And so I'm like, "I have to disprove this, of course." So I spent a year following those rules and testing my daily happiness and discovered yes, there is an orgasm hangover for men.

But the Taoists would ride for women that they walk away on diminished. It actually builds qi for women to have pleasure and orgasms. And for guys it is depleting of qi. It doesn't mean you shouldn't have sex a lot, you can build qi with sex.

Alexandra:

Sucking your life force.

Dave:

Yeah. Just don't quite finish.

Alexandra:

Don't quite finish. They also talk about being able to orgasm within, so you hold in your ejaculation. I don't know if you've been able to accomplish that.

Dave:

Yeah, absolutely.

Alexandra:

But that is in the readings.

Dave:

It's in the readings and I thought I was all BS. I was like, "I'm going to disprove this with biohacking and technology." And I believe they're totally right. But I can also say that whole part about having an orgasm as a man for less than hour, I'm like, "What kind of garbage is that?" And having had ones that last for at least 20 minutes, it's actually not even pleasant. I'm like, "Could it just stop already?" My abs hurt, I'm done. [crosstalk 00:35:09] you're not done. And I'm afraid of that at this point.

There's all kinds of stuff going on that's longevity related, but there's a study that says, "The size of difference in wellbeing for people who have sex once a week versus once a month is greater than the difference in wellbeing between making 75,000 a year and making 25,000 a year." In other words, if you don't have sex once a week and you make \$25,000 a year, you're likely to have better wellbeing than someone who makes three times as much and doesn't get laid."

And that's why I'm a fan of toys or whatever else you need in order to bring pleasure in your life, because I think it's incredibly important because people who don't have wellbeing act like jerks all the time. And we're building a world of people who are wired to be nice to each other.

Alexandra:

It just extends beyond the bedroom too. If you can get better and better at finding pleasure with your partner, I'm telling you, the sky will actually be bluer to you and the world will smell better. I just think that you're cultivating, you're practicing your ability to tap into a pleasurable state, and that leaves the bedroom. It's wild that we don't talk about it as part of a wellness practice.

Dave:

At least we can talk about getting a good night's sleep now, which for a long time wasn't even part of it. In fact, I interviewed-

Alexandra:

That's right.

Dave:

... Mantak Chia a while back, we talked about this as well, which was really fun. Something else that goes hand in hand with that, so if you're a guy listening to this and you're saying, "All right, how can I possibly have sex and not have an orgasm or not ejaculate?" You guys make a vibrator that you actually put on your fingers. So if you're saying, "Okay, this time, I'm not going to ejaculate," it comes down to more like, okay, now I have, I'm going to say a toy to play with.

You have a woman who clearly, or maybe a man, whatever your relationship was like. But now since you're like, "I've had enough pleasure right now. Now what do I do?" And then it becomes a little bit more playful and a little bit more partner-focused and it's more of an act of service. And you're like, "Oh, you can play that like a violin." You end up practicing on that because you're not practicing the selfish part of it because you're like, "I've had enough, and if I go any further, I'm going to ruin the experiment."

Yes, when I publish my data, I'm like, "Yeah, I was going to go 38, so I only did 24 days." How you put that and explain like, oops. That's what it says in my little graph that I published.

Alexandra:

I think that it's so accurate. I know so many people who tell me about, and I've had this experience too, where you can't have sex or intercourse, you can't have penetration after some surgery or something. And that opens up a whole world of creativity for you and your partner. And you can actually have the best sex when you're not doing that. I want to double click on what you said too about, I think so many men have such a script for sex, and just to break that script and to focus on being in service, I think will just, not only change the game for your partner, but really changed the game for you and your ability to then go back and really enjoy all these other aspects of sex that your script might be passing over and you're not even noticing

Dave:

The other side benefit for guys is that if you don't ejaculate all the time, you generally want to have a lot more sex and you probably do have a lot more sex, which is actually qi building for both partners, because you're more interested and you don't get the and ejaculation hangovers. And like, "Hey, can we go again this afternoon?" And things like that happen, which probably they wouldn't happen.

Alexandra:

I talk about that with my partner. I've definitely been upset when I found out sometimes if he masturbates or something. I know there's some people who were like, "Oh yeah. I don't feel like he's cheating on me or anything. I just want to make sure he's going to have energy for me later." Because it does impact his energy.

Dave:

Is Dame going to make like a male chastity belt or something like that?

Alexandra:

Probably not. Probably not.

Dave:

It says right in your blog, you make stuff for people with vulvas, but wouldn't that be something for people with vulvas?

Alexandra:

It would be. In fact, we are looking at things that are for penises because ultimately, 90% of vulva havers are having sex with somebody with a penis. If we can change the... It's partner, so it does matter... Either way, it's for both people.

Dave:

If you do come out with those, I'm going to laugh my ass off. I just have to say, because it came up in this survey that [crosstalk 00:40:01]-

Alexandra:

They exist. I'll send you one. They certainly exist. To be honest, we're really focused on this. Not necessarily because of the health or scientific backing. We're focused on creating sexual wellness products that squarely fit into this idea of what sexual health is. Because so much of what I'm doing is

trying to change a narrative. While I personally believe that a lot of BDSM kink fantasy products... I'm positive they're healing. It's amazing what kink can do and fantasy can do.

But like I'm currently in a lawsuit with the MTA, which is in New York city subway system, and I'm happy to tell you more about-

Dave:

Why? What's going on there?

Alexandra:

Okay. We worked with them for like six months. They said they would run advertisements for us. And then when we sent in our advertisements, which they had approved, we made them, we sent them like rough drafts of what it would look like. They said, "This was fine." We sent them the actual assets at the end and they said, "Oh, we would not and would never work with any sexually-oriented business." Meanwhile, they're running advertisements for Hims, Roman, erectile dysfunction medication.

They're running advertisements for breast enhancement, products that use sex to sell other things.

Dave:

Wow. That doesn't seem right.

Alexandra:

It doesn't seem right. So we made a FOSS, the FOSS didn't really go anywhere. Since the New York city subway system is a government agency, they actually have to be fair with their guidelines. A lot of private agencies, they can decide like, oh, I'm going to work with you and not you for no reason, except for the fact that they like you. Like Facebook could essentially do that, but the MTA can't.

So we filed a lawsuit against them there is an element of just public perception of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. And I think making things like a chastity belt or handcuffs, and spreader bars, and all of these fun things that I think people should own really does change how much we want to see it in the public sphere and how accessible it is to have the conversations. That's why I will not make a chastity belt for you, Dave.

Dave:

I wasn't asking it for me. I was just thinking it'd a good product line given what we're talking about.

Alexandra:

No, I think I could tell you really wanted it. No, I'm joking. IVN for-

Dave:

Only if it's [inaudible 00:42:51] as long as [crosstalk 00:42:54].

Alexandra:

Yeah.

Dave:

There's a line there that's getting blurred. If you go back a long time ago, you'd go to the adult bookstore and no one would really talk about it and there'd be all sorts of weird pervy people floating around, and there was a wall of toys that were all crap, to be perfectly honest.

Alexandra:

A kids show in the back, potentially.

Dave:

Yeah. There may still be places like that, but I don't think there's that many of them, because there were people like, "This can actually be clean and normal." So the line of acceptability over the last few decades really has shifted dramatically from where it was in the '60s and always how I would imagine it was to the point it is now. Where do you see it going though? 10 years from now, are we going to be all teledildonics and remote control everything. Is it going to slow down? Is it going to just reach a comfortable thing? Or is it going to be spreader bars and all the other stuff you mentioned?

Alexandra:

I think D, all of the above. I do think that the category is changing. You can find our products in Urban Outfitters, Free People. We sell on Goop, Revolve. So we are in a lot of mainstream locations and are continuing to have conversations with mainstream retailers. And I do think that that will continue... Beauty pharmacy space will continue to accept us more and more and bring us in. I very much focus on making wellness tools, so for me, I don't want to bring the screen in, I don't want to do too much tech.

We use technology to make simple toys that are intuitive, easy to use. They aren't necessarily the experience. There are toys out there that become the experience, which is super fun. And I think that those also really have a place, but we're really trying to focus on creating tools that help people connect better with themselves or with a partner. So that's what we're doing. I do think that-

Dave:

I like that.

Alexandra:

... teledildonics are just going to change the sex worker game too.

Dave:

That's true. And that's been going on for about 15, 20 years. Wired wrote about it when the very first generation came out. It's an evolving space, but it's still pretty fringe. All right. I got to ask this now that-

Alexandra:

[crosstalk 00:45:24], all of that is new-

Dave:

Yeah, that's true, that's all new.

Alexandra:

... and tech has really changed. It's really cool.

Dave:

Now, I'm just thinking about the Eva II, the one that you wear. Is there anything stopping you from just wearing that when you're just out and about?

Alexandra:

No. It's very fun to wear out and about. Between us, it doesn't currently have a remote, but that's definitely something that we really want to do.

Dave:

That's would be on high demand.

Alexandra:

Yes, it's definitely on the docket of things that's in development, but... So you'd have to just touch it to turn it on and turn it off, which would be like the one thing that could potentially hold you back. But I think turning it on and doing the dishes is a great idea. I highly recommend it. I think it's a really fun way to just incorporate to teasing and play throughout the day. So yes, it's a good idea. Nothing stopping me.

Dave:

I hadn't thought of that. You're like, "It's to be worn during sex." I'm like, "You can probably just wear it whenever you wanted to." All right. That's pretty cool. I hadn't thought about that.

How do you get feedback from customers? I know you keep iterating and I'm always working on that for my companies as well. It seems like a lot of people kind of awkward be like, "Oh, it was too whatever." Are people just super open about their experiences with it? Or do you do surveys? How does that work and an experience where people have a lot of concern about talking about it?

Alexandra:

We do surveys. One, we prototype in-house predominantly. We have a bunch of 3D printers and we will create products in-house. And we usually start off by team members trying things out in the bathroom, coming back being like, "Oh, can we just tweak this?" One thing and being able to change it really quickly because of technology, we can rapidly prototype hardware products. And then we will send them out to, we have a community of Dame labs members. These are people who love talking about by readers and have explicitly signed up for this program to get testers.

We usually also survey them too before we even get started like, "What should we be making? What are your consumer pain points?" And then we'll send out the prototypes, we'll get feedback. We'll iterate until we feel good about it, put it into production. And then we rely on reviews and we'll even call people up. We've done everything from like getting on the phone with consumers to learn what they're liking, what they're not liking, to doing surveys.

There's so many challenges. There's challenges of people not really understanding what they like and what they don't like. There's challenges of just language about how to explain what you like and what you don't like and how to describe a buzzy sensation versus a rumbly sensation. So helping people with the language and with words, asking specific questions, as well as open-ended questions has been really important for us.

I think it's just part of the cycle, being able to open up the conversation and listen to our customers not only helps remove the shame and stigma, but it also helps me make better products that they like more. So it's really just like a win-win.

Dave:

That's awesome. I love it. That it's out of the dark and people are just saying, I want more of this, less of this and that you're going out to make it.

Alexandra:

Sorry. It's just amazing when you just ask a question and you're not shameful about it. How people are like, "Oh yeah, I guess I can also say clitoris." And then we're both just saying clitoris and it's fine. It's easy to remove the shame by leading without shame.

Dave:

I want to know if you would name your cat clitoris.

Alexandra:

Yeah. And I call it like clity for like short or something. Clity kitty. I like that. That works.

Dave:

You seem like someone who would have something funny in your house named after a body part. I don't know. True?

Alexandra:

Maybe my kid, first one. No, definitely, I would. I do think it's fun to say those words though. There's other people out there in the education space who are anti euphemism. I love a good euphemism. I think it's really fun to play with language. I think it's important that we can say the correct word and not feel like we're saying hoo-ha, because we literally can't save vagina. But if you can say vagina and you also like saying hoo-ha that's fantastic.

Dave:

Tell me about Kegel exercises. You've studied a lot of stuff. Good, bad?

Alexandra:

There's differing opinions on it. I think it really depends on the education you have for your kegel exercises. There's definitely some instances where if you're continuously doing kegel exercises, you can just be working on tightening your pelvic floor muscles. And it's really important to learn how to loosen your pelvic floor muscles as well. So you want to be practicing, not just strengthening, but also like a long gating and stretching them. I'm definitely doing them a little bit while we talk.

So I do think that overall, good, but the education and understanding around them is a little bit weak and it is important to learn how to do them correctly and to know that you can be doing them wrong and cause pain or cause more harm.

Dave:

Got it. Definitely pelvic floor strength is an issue for men and women. When you have a strong pelvic floor, that's your first [crosstalk 00:51:36], that's the foundation of your posture. Right?

Alexandra:

Yeah. It's like your whole basis set on it, and I do always think, I forgot to talk about men too. I always think just about the pelvic floor for women, but really it's incredibly important for men as well.

Dave:

I have a very weird device, no, it's not an insertable. That is for building pelvic floor strength in men and women that a friend of mine who's into qi gong told me I had to buy. I'm thinking about sending it out in the next Dave Asprey box because it's such a powerful thing. I did this thing, it's one minute a day of the certain kind of squeeze exercise and my posture straight. It was ridiculous. Your head moves back because you just got the bottom of your pelvis there or your pelvic floor there.

Of course it's a bigger issue for women, especially post-pregnancy with knees, peeing and all that. So there's all sorts of things that we're willing to talk about that no one would talk about 10 years ago, which is really cool. But it seems like there's value for kegels. It's just, like I said, with any exercise, you might want to do it right.

Alexandra:

Yeah, you seem to learn, but it's very... I think there's a lot of value there and like you've already said, it's not just sexual value. I think for so many of the things that we talk about when we're talking about sexual pleasure and sexual health, it goes beyond the bedroom. You literally have better alignment when you have a stronger foundation. So I just think that that makes so much sense. And to me, it also really translates to this idea that we understand ourselves sexually, we have like a stronger alignment throughout our whole being and our whole body as well.

But I just might be heady right now. I feel like I'm being heady with the right person.

Dave:

There you go. No euphemisms there.

Alexandra:

No.

Dave:

Now, I always ask-

Alexandra:

I don't even know as I'm doing them. You're very good at catching the Ponzi. They're not even intentional.

Dave:

My inner seventh grader is strong and I don't think that's ever going to change.

Alexandra:

Wonderful.

Dave:

Now, I always ask guests who come on the show, shoot out a discount for listeners, and you were kind enough to give that Dame products, D-A-M-Eproducts.com/dave and get 15% off. You did send me a pack of all your goodies, so thank you. Very high quality useful, good stuff. I'm not going to do a full review here because I think a lot of Lana probably punch me, but we'll just say that they're good. So thank you.

Alexandra:

No problem. You mentioned this earlier, but there are medical grade silicone, almost all of them, they're rechargeable. And yeah, this is a category that's not regulated, so be careful what you buy. The vulva is porous, it will suck that stuff right up.

Dave:

It will indeed. You're up for a couple of questions from our Upgrade Collective members.

Alexandra:

I'm up for it.

Dave:

Okay. Diane, you want to come on and ask your upgrade question?

Diane:

Sure. Okay. My question is, with the device that you guys were talking about that you had originally started on Indiegogo, which I think is a fabulous site, by the way, I've done a lot of backing on that, but not back then because they didn't know about it. Are you going to do an upgrade? And if so will it be through that format or on your own particular website?

Alexandra:

Yeah, we are on Eva II now, so we've already upgraded the product and we're going to continue to upgrade it. We have not really been using crowdfunding sites anymore to launch our products for no real good reason. It's just simpler, it's just really like logistics, it's easier for us to just do everything for our own website, it's probably is better for SEO. But as you bring it up, I am like, "Man, that platform did so much for us and we reached so many people. I wonder if we should tap back into like where we started. I bet we could reach new people."

I really did, but we don't need it for cashflow reasons anymore. I think one of the reasons why that site is so powerful is because you can get money before you make the product, before you do tooling, before you pay your manufacturers. We're mature enough with our cashflow where we don't need that. I don't need to ask customers to pay so far in advance, but the community is so powerful that I would consider it again.

Dave:

It's a good way for very young companies to get funded. It's harder for companies that are established. You've built a real brand and also if you go out there, it has a lot of complexity. So I probably wouldn't launch a new Bulletproof product there, but for one of my smaller companies, I might just as an entrepreneur. You always kind of balance it out.

Alexandra:

It really is an amazing marketing tool in and of itself though, in a way where I'm like, "Oh, maybe they were willing to also really promote my launch." Maybe that is a reason why I would do it. Of course, they take a percentage that I don't need that community anymore. And I think the other thing that's really challenging is when you get all this press, I want those links to go to my website. I don't want the links to go to Indiegogo because then all of those links live there forever, and those links are really valuable for my SEO.

Those would be all the things I'd think through, but I love Indiegogo. I also think crowdfunding for equity is a really fascinating and an exciting for the future, especially a way of democratizing, like who I get to make money for. But now I'm off the question and into La La Land.

Dave:

Into entrepreneur land.

Alexandra:

Yeah.

Dave:

Let's do another question from Brandon. And we'll just be quiet while he asks his question so we don't get an echo. Brandon was asking about various types of orgasms. You want to ask that one, Brandon?

Brandon:

Yeah. I know that your device, it was about clitoral stimulation and if I am correct, there are different types of orgasms and there's the coveted... I know that a variety is probably good, but there's like the coveted whole body orgasm, which I got close to, that Nirvana... I got close to it, but then I didn't quite get it. But anyway, what do you think about those different types? And also I wanted to know your thoughts on foreskin as well. A bit of a controversial thing to just throw in there. Okay.

Alexandra:

Oh my God. I'm so excited about these questions. Okay. One, yes, there is the blended orgasm or a full body orgasm. There are lots of different classifications that people have put on different types of orgasms. Ultimately, there's not so much science around this, but in women, you have the clitoral organ, which goes mostly external... not most externally, externally is really just the iceberg, but it's this highly sensitive part. And then it has an internal structure that does touch the vaginal canal.

I have definitely experienced and hear people talk all the time about when you're stimulated both internally and externally, you can have a fuller, richer orgasm, which people call a blended orgasm. Using a toy like mine while you're having sex is more likely to help you achieve that. I do think though that a lot of this stuff is based on conversations and subjective experiences versus really fully understanding what is happening in our bodies.

And I've also mostly heard this language talked about for women. I know that a lot of men do talk about prostate orgasms in a way that feels subjectively different for them and oftentimes more powerful, but that is the information I have to bring to the table. Maybe Dave has some too. And then foreskin. I am a New York Jew and this is a hot topic in my community, especially as I am pregnant. I think that we would need a lot of good evidence to show why we should cut something off of our bodies, and I don't really personally believe that the evidence is there.

I have read a study that also reported that women reported better sex with uncircumcised men. And I also really do kind of feel like it's a protective sheath, that it almost creates like a womb for men, which I think is really beautiful. There is science that also shows that having forest skin can increase your risk of STDs and STIs, so I don't want to just ignore that, that research is out there. A lot of that research has been done in Africa where I think like the context is different.

My personal belief is you should do what you think is right. I do think that there is a big change happening and what's happening to newborns. And I do think it's one of those things that like if aliens came down to like meet this new society, and then we had to explain that we were cutting off a piece of our... like it was a tag that we've just decided we didn't need, they'd be like, "That is so weird. Why do you do that?"

I guess overall, I don't intend on doing that to my son if I have a son, and those are my thoughts.

Dave:

At the risk of offending anyone or another, male genital mutilation is wrong. And if a guy wants to cut his foreskin off, he should be able to do when he's 18. And it's okay to just say that. And yes, I am circumcised by the way. But that's what we used to do. There's good evidence that is traumatic for little boys, putting baby through trauma is a bad idea because trauma sticks and then you have to deal with it later.

So the nicer we are to little babies, even if they don't really have the musculature or the ability to really fight back, they don't like it. So I would say that it doesn't matter here.

Alexandra:

There's even some research that they feel pain more intensely. Of course, I think that ultimately it's really hard to know their pain as they cannot speak. But yeah, Dave way to say it.

Dave:

One of the guys in the Upgrade Collective, I'm not going to name him because he doesn't want to talk about it, is actually regrowing his foreskin in a lab with a company called Forigin. And there are some guys who are doing that saying, "This is a part of my anatomy that's useful." In terms of reducing risk of, they said penis cancer and other things like that, if you cut off your arms, you have less risk of arm cancer too, but that doesn't mean that you should cut them off. That seems like bad science to me.

Alexandra:

And they also say that there's like more UTI in newborns, but it's also like, "Well, learn how to clean a little bit. I think, especially if we were cutting a piece of our bodies off, there might just be some knowledge that we've lost too about how to just take care of this part of our body. I think how can we go around saying it's so awful to cut off parts of vulvas and then not consider what we're doing tonight.

Dave:

That is fair. I'm with you there. I didn't think we're going to get into that, but I think it's an important conversation, especially for parents. And if you decide to do it, there's pretty clear evidence that guys turn out okay if they don't have their foreskin. It's not the end of the world [crosstalk 01:04:24]. But in terms of just taking the best path for a baby, I think the science is pretty clear on it, and a lot of the studies saying there's a benefit there. Benefits are very small and they aren't looking at the downside.

Alexandra:

I agree.

Dave:

Cool. That was cool.

Alexandra:

I hear men say all the time that they're worried about too like, oh, it's going to look different. The reasons I hear for pro-circumcision are so socially constructed.

Dave:

Yeah. I guess to make it look a certain way, there's all sorts of plastic surgeries and weird stuff like that. But when it comes down to pleasure, from what I've read, there's definitely some nerves that you're losing there that are probably good for a male's pleasure. So if that's the consideration. But I really do appreciate the curiosity plus engineering aspect that you're bringing, just so the whole conversations.

Like how do we make something that people want to use that increases pleasure? Because when you can increase pleasure, you're actually increasing people's happiness and satisfaction in life in general. Whether or not you've got a foreskin or anything else, hey, what's the sum total of things that you can do alone or with a partner that's actually going to work? Not just for orgasm, but just for pleasure. I think there's value there and just doing it in a way you could sell at Urban Outfitters is actually really cool.

It's normalizing a normal behavior that should have always been something that was okay that we just didn't talk about.

Alexandra:

Oh my God, people are talking about like how I'm mainstreaming the industry. It's like, first of all, over 50% of people already use vibrators, so that is mainstream and it's sex. It's literally how we all exist. So it's mainstream. It's wild that something so foundational to our is considered so taboo to even discuss.

Dave:

Well, thank you for making good stuff. Thank you for studying it in university and getting good with it. And thank you for telling the MTA to stuff it with their stuffiness because that's stupid and I hope you win.

Alexandra:

Thanks, Dave. I hope I win too. It's looking pretty good.

Dave:

Awesome.

Alexandra:

Thank you. I loved learning too here, so it was really fun for me as well.

Dave:

Cool. You guys got the code earlier, [dameproducts.com/dave](https://dameproducts.com/dave), get 15% off. The wearable one can be a lot of fun. That's the Eva II, right? That's its name?

Alexandra:

Yes, is Eva.

Dave:

Okay. Eva II. of it too. Full recommendation there. And thanks again. I hope you enjoyed the live questions. I'm really enjoying the Upgrade Collective. They're here on video and I'm doing a little side chats with them during this and they're asking some good questions. So thanks guys from the Upgrade Collective. And if you're listening to this, you'd love to be part of the live audience and learn all this stuff that I know, including some of the words that we just talked about, [ourupgradecollectors.com](https://ourupgradecollectors.com). I'll see you guys there and also probably see you on [dameproducts.com](https://dameproducts.com) because I might be ordering something else.

Alexandra:

Yeah. Cool. Thank you.

Dave:

All right. Much appreciated. Guys in Upgrade Collective, hang on for a second here. I'll take a couple of questions with you guys over video, but we'll end our official podcast first. All right. Thanks, that was fun.