



DEVOTED . . . Johnnie with sick Tiggy

DJ JOHNNIE PUTS CARERS IN SPOTLIGHT

IMAGINE getting back from honeymoon to be told your husband has cancer. That is what happened to Tiggy Walker, wife of Radio 2 DJ Johnnie. He was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and in the nine months following their wedding in 2002, Tiggy had her hands full caring for her poorly husband. Fortunately, he pulled through. More than a decade later, Tiggy was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer - and this time Johnnie returned the favour.

Now the pair are both in good health and are patrons of Carers UK. They will be handing out gongs at the LloydsPharmacy National Carers Awards, which honours carers from across the UK.

The event is supported by The Sun and Associate Editor Sam Carlisle is on the judging panel. Tiggy says: "For me, caring for Johnnie was the biggest challenge of my life. The world as you know it gradually disappears. You feel ill-equipped to deal with a loved one in pain or so sick and it is possible to feel very lost."

'You have to stay positive'

"The emotional and spiritual side of looking after a loved one is massive. You have to stay positive or you get exhausted."

Tiggy, 55, quit her full-time job producing TV ads to look after her husband, who is now 70.

She says: "Johnnie was very, very sick. Much more so than when I got breast cancer 12 years later. It was possible to feel very, very alone. I didn't reach out for help, which was a huge mistake. I urge people not to do it in isolation like I did."

One in eight of us are carers and by 2037, the UK's army of carers could number nine million.

Johnnie says: "It is more difficult being the carer than the patient. There is a support structure around the patient but not always around the carer."

"It is brilliant that once a year the focus is on the people who are caring for those who are ill."

YOU can nominate a carer for an award at lloydspharmacy.com/en/info/carers-awards-nomination. Each finalist gets £1,000 and a trophy at a ceremony in May. The closing date for submissions online is midnight on March 31, 2016.



WELL . . . pair are Carers UK patrons

TEST INTIMACY INTELLIGENCE TO PERK UP FLAGGING PASSION

By CHRISTINA EARLE

TO get the most out of your love life, experts reckon you need a high sex IQ.

Only those totally at ease with their desires are "sexually intelligent" - meaning the rest of us are falling way short. Just one in ten Brits are very satisfied in the bedroom, a poll of 1,052 adults found. Intimacy teacher Jan Day said: "Too many people jump into bed, pump away and rush to reach orgasm. Getting stuck in a sexual rut doesn't make for a fulfilling sex life."

"But being mindful of your own feelings and savouring each moment will see you get more out of sex and boost your sexual intelligence."

Test your sex IQ with our quiz and learn how to boost it. Plus we meet two couples who did exactly that, right.

What's your sex IQ?

1 You are in a relationship and feel horny. You:

A - Ask your partner for sex.
B - Kiss and cuddle your partner in the hope it will get them in the mood too.

C - Try to think about something else as you feel dirty acknowledging your urges.
D - Roll with it and see what happens.

2 You are having sex. Your eyes are:

A - Closed.
B - Gazing at your partner.
C - Not sure.
D - It depends on the position.

3 When it comes to knowing what you like and dislike in bed, you:

A - Have no dislikes.
B - Are in tune with your own body and know your boundaries which you verbally communicate with your partner.

C - Are unsure. You know you are not supposed to "like" any of it, even if it does feel nice.
D - See things as pretty routine, so likes and dislikes aren't really an issue.

4 You enjoy sex when:

A - Always.
B - You have an emotional and physical connection with somebody.
C - You know you are not supposed to enjoy sex.

D - You get round to having it.

5 When you are in a long-term relationship, the sex:

A - Can be infrequent, so you have been known to cheat to fulfil desires.
B - Gets better the longer you are together due to a deeper connection.

C - Happens when you feel obliged.
D - Occurs when the kids are sleeping and you have enough energy.

6 You would describe your attitude to sex as:

A - Rampant. You think about it, want it and do it all the time.
B - Healthy. When you are in a relationship you have great, long-lasting and meaningful sex with your partner.

C - Embarrassing. You shy away from it as much as possible and mainly do it to please the other person.
D - Longing. You just about recall what it was like to have it regularly.

7 Your sex life is closely linked to:

A - Your innate desires.
B - Your feelings about yourself and bond with your partner.
C - Cultural and moral expectations.

D - How much energy you have.

8 If you have sex and you don't orgasm you:

A - Are frustrated. It is the bit you enjoy the most.
B - Feel great. It is the intimacy that you value the most.

C - Are OK providing your partner is satisfied.
D - Feel fine, enjoying it for what it is.

9 Your partner suggests using sex toys, something you have never done before. You:

A - Think it's great. You like variety.
B - Talk about why and how and let them know your thoughts and feelings.

C - Are mortified but go along with it anyway.
D - Are surprised and wonder where their energy for sex has come from.

10 You are feeling sad when your partner initiates sex. You:

A - Reckon it will take your mind off your problems.
B - Talk to your partner about your problems, then have slow, gentle sex.
C - Push your partner away. You can't think about sex when emotional.

D - Think your partner is not picking up on cues that you are sad.

11 The idea of giving pleasure and not receiving it makes you feel:

A - Frustrated. You prefer the act of receiving.
B - Happy. It makes your sexual, physical and emotional connection with your partner stronger.

C - Used. You rarely/never get it back.
D - Fine. Your partner has a higher sex drive than you anyway.

12 When it comes to initiating sex you:

a) Are super-confident and just ask for sex outright.
b) Are gentle. You prefer to kiss and cuddle your partner to initiate sex.

c) Never initiate sex. You don't think it's your place and you rarely enjoy it that much anyway.
d) Do it 50 per cent of the time.

YOUR SCORES

Mostly As: Sex IQ is below average. You are a selfish lover and have not connected emotions to the physical act.

The chances are you rush through sex to achieve orgasm and care little about why your partner enjoys it. You would have a more satisfied sex life if you focused on quality sex rather than quantity. You need to connect with and learn to please your partner.

Mostly Bs: Sex IQ is high. Congrats! You have connected your sexual desires to your emotional and physical self. You understand your own body.

You communicate your desires effectively and enjoy developing sexual connections. The chances are you are sexually confident and make the most out of every opportunity. Keep it up... quite literally.

Mostly Cs: Sex IQ just below average. You have yet to work out ways to effectively communicate your desires. You think negatively about sex and the chances are you feel dirty or ashamed thinking about or having sex when there is really no need.

Improve your sex IQ by following the tips in Jan Day's column, right. It is possible for you to have a healthy sex life and a good attitude to sex. But try taking things in baby steps. You can't change everything all at once.

Mostly Ds: Sex IQ is average. You enjoy sex and have the confidence to initiate it. But the problem is you get bogged down in daily life and don't make time for it. The chances are you prioritise your children, housework and work, which leaves little time or energy for sex.

You know what you like and can communicate your thoughts and desires effectively. So boost your sex IQ by making sex more of a priority. Regular sex improves emotional, physical and mental connections. It can also give your immune system a boost.

Just fantasy energy libido



'Slowing down means sex is like it was in early days'

HANNAH DONOVAN, 30, lives with partner Daniel Tiley, 35, in Swindon, Wilts. Hannah is a fashion student at the University of the West of England and Daniel is an energy surveyor. Between them, they have three children. Hannah says:

"We had an instant connection and enjoyed a fantastic sex life right from the start."

But with three children between us - my two Sophie, nine, and James, seven, and his daughter Harriet, seven - we hardly ever get time for ourselves. It did become difficult to fit sex in, so we decided we would rather skip it completely than rush it. Dan and I now enjoy sex two or three times a week and we allocate proper time to it, with plenty of eye contact. Dan won't let me turn the light off for sex as he enjoys looking at me.

DAN says: "Slowing down has maintained the same enjoyment as we had in the early days, by connecting on a more emotional level."



'Being held and cuddled has brought us closer'

CARER Lisa Harrison, 39, lives with her unemployed cleaner partner Danny Brailsby in Heanor, Derbs. Lisa says:

"We've lived together for three-and-a-half years now. We used to have a fantastic sex life but a year in, I started to lose interest."

We sat down to discuss it and decided to focus more on each other, rather than just having an orgasm.

We started experimenting with toys, which was fun. But sometimes we just lie in each other's arms.

I feel closer to Danny, he is more confident and we're more open. We feel more emotionally attached now and satisfied.

Being held and cuddled, feeling wanted and loved, has brought us closer.

DANNY says: "When our sex life went downhill, I was convinced Lisa was cheating so when we discussed things, it was a huge relief. I realised it wasn't my fault - she hadn't gone off me."

HOW YOU CAN BE BETTER IN BED

HERE, intimacy and relationship teacher JAN DAY shares tips on how to improve your score.

1 GET TO KNOW YOURSELF. Knowing your own body and how to pleasure yourself is essential. If you do not know what you like, how do you expect someone else to please you?

Finding your G-spot, touching erogenous zones or experimenting with different stroking techniques will all help. There is no shame in masturbation, and you shouldn't just masturbate to achieve orgasm - it can be incredibly empowering.

You could even explore masturbation with your partner and enjoy the build-up together.

2 YOURSELF. Sexual intelligence is all about bringing your heart, sex and head together. Most people don't do that.

It is common for people to be very comfortable with their sexual energy but they don't bring their heart into it, in that they have good, enjoyable sex with their lover but don't get attached. Others don't have good sex with the partner they have been with for 20 years and feel close to.

Understanding yourself and why this is will help you boost your sexual intelligence.

3 CONNECT WITH YOUR PARTNER. Many couples have an unspoken agreement that defines their physical relationship. But without talking about it, how do you know you have the same terms?

Communicating sensitively about what is acceptable and pleasurable is essential. Just talking about and exploring new sexual concepts - or even practising closeness - will help your relationship and boost your sex life.

4 TAKE IT SLOW. We live in a fast-paced society but that does not have to be the case in the bedroom. Having slow sex will help align your sexual desires, physical self and emotional self.

5 SEE YOUR PARTNER FOR WHO THEY ARE. Making prolonged eye contact during love-making will help you see how much pleasure he or she is having.

6 LEARN TO ENTICE YOUR PARTNER. It is normal for one person to have a higher sex drive. If you ask someone for sex and they are not in the mood, the answer will be no.

So it is best not to ask. But physical contact is a good start. Try cuddling or stroking them. Offer to run them a bath or ask them to stroke you. It might take a little while but the closeness could lead to sex.

5 REASONS TO HAVE LOTS OF NOOKIE

- BOOSTS IMMUNITY** - students who do it at least once a week have bodies better at beating bugs than those who have less sex
- REDUCES BLOOD PRESSURE** - the more sex you have, the less your blood pressure spikes - which could cut long-term risk of a stroke
- PREVENTS CANCER** - men who ejaculate frequently have a lower risk of developing prostate cancer
- HELPS YOU SLEEP** - the hormone prolactin is released during orgasm, helping you nod off
- IMPROVES MOOD** - having sex more often makes you happier



DOCS TOOK MY OVARIES AND I'M SO THANKFUL

By Kris Hallenga COPPAFEEL! FOUNDER

YOU would think in the days following my half-marathon I would be basking in endless glory, and crowing from the rooftops about my brilliant achievement. Believe me, I did that for a bit.

But, alas, just days after the run I had to go to hospital for an operation to remove my ovaries.

My cancer has decided to spring back into action and while my hormone therapy has done an incredible job of controlling my disease for seven years, it made sense to make the final, and most drastic, step of removing these little buggers as doctors reckon the hormones are feeding my cancer and helping it to grow.

When I have told people about this procedure, they wondered how I was feeling emotionally about it. How, at the age of 30, I was having yet another, arguably important, thing taken away.

From day one I have had to face the fact that I would never have children. In fact, I had never envisaged having kids even before cancer and, I suppose, in that respect I am pretty lucky as this would have been so much more awful if I had always dreamt of being a mum.

Time to cherish our NHS

But, given my rather huge list of priorities and that little thing called "survival" sitting at No1, I couldn't give a hoot that I had to say goodbye to my ovaries last week. The op went well and I am now recuperating at home with my sister making me endless cups of tea (see, it ain't so bad).

I was again reminded how bloody awesome our NHS is and as it is under threat right now, I want to make sure you all appreciate it as much as I do.

Yes, it could be better (don't get me started on the food) but I was treated SO well by the nurses and the incredibly huge-brained consultants, who have to carry out that same operation day in, day out so we can get FREE treatment and stay well.

The nurse with me as I came round from my anaesthetic was so kind and even told me it was a "pleasure" looking after me. He probably spends most of his life in that hospital, sacrifices a lot to be there and is having his pay scrutinised. But he made time to ensure I got the best possible care.

I felt so SO lucky to be there - and to walk out on the same day. If we don't start appreciating and cherishing our NHS, we won't have one to moan about. And it won't be just me affected - it will be you and your loved ones too.

8 EMBRACE YOUR SEXUALITY. You do not have to be sexually active to boost sexual intelligence. Take in every experience - even when you are grocery shopping.

Light up your senses. Look, feel and smell fruits, for example, as you are perusing the supermarket aisles.

It is these daily experiences that boost your sexual intelligence by helping you appreciate every day and life for what it is - and it is more than just a functional, animalistic act.

LOOK for changes in skin texture eg. pinkening/drying

LOOK for swelling in your armpit or around outer breast

LOOK for nipple discharge

LOOK for a change in size and shape

LOOK for a rash or crusting of the nipple or surrounding area

Text REMIND to 70500

For monthly reminders to check your boobs, text REMIND to 70500. Your initial message will cost your standard network rate