

Ricky Arenson

Okay, Dr. Ricky. Oh, let me ask you for a second. How do you pronounce your last name? Is it Arenson or Arenson? You're a genius.

Nobody gets that right. I don't know how you got that right. Is it Arenson? Okay.

Okay. So I'll say Arenson. And how do you prefer to be addressed? Do you prefer Dr. Arenson? Do you prefer Ricky? What makes the most sense? Ricky's absolutely fine.

Okay. I like to kind of keep things casual too. So, okay.

Okay. Dr. Ricky Arenson, welcome to the show. I'm so happy to have you here. Thanks. It's such a privilege. Thank you so much for having me on the show.

Absolutely. I was just smiling as I read more about you and your bio and preparation for the show. You have so much to offer.

And I'd love to just begin by learning a little bit more about you and how you got into your field. And let's start there. Cause I think it's an interesting story.

Well, wow. Cause I do so many unusual things, I think in many ways. So I was born in South Africa and I grew up actually in apartheid South Africa, which was something of an interesting experience.

And then I finished my medical degree there. I moved to Australia quite a lot later on. So I did endocrinology, which is hormones and diabetes and glands and sex hormones, which is also a big part of that.

Somewhat by serendipity, actually, I was in England and the endocrinology senior registrar went to do an intensive care term to do critical care. And they just asked me, would I be willing to fill in for him? And I felt totally unqualified to do it. It's actually a really scary technical field.

So I did that and I ended up loving it. And then by a very roundabout course, I ended up doing it in Australia. And then while I was doing endocrinology, I ended up doing geriatric medicine as well, which is care of the elderly and quite a different specialty.

So I do both of those specialties separately. Now the weird path, the long path of writing a book about men and women is a much longer and more complicated story, but I'll try and sum it up very, very quickly. I guess one of the things that fascinated me as I ascended in medicine was that everything in life is about managing people and getting on with people.

And it doesn't matter whether you're a doctor or whether you're a lawyer or an accountant, your primary job is to get on with people. And when you get married, your

job is to get on with people. And as I ended up becoming a head of department and a hospital director and learning about, I was doing official leadership courses and management courses.

And what really fascinated me and struck a chord with me was that there is actually a science to managing people. And there's a lot of evidence as to how to get along with people and make them happy and form teams and make relationships work. Yet we don't teach that to kids.

We don't teach that to university students and doctors definitely don't get taught that either. So doctors often are very good at looking after diseases, but they're often pretty bad at looking after people, which is actually what we look after. So when I became very passionate about this and I started to run courses on teaching doctors how to manage people, how to understand people and how to manage teams better. And my wife eventually decided to come along to one of my courses. And she did. So she genuinely said to me, Oh, I'm sure it'll be really boring and I won't learn anything. And then she just wanted, thanks for the vote of confidence. Yeah, yeah.

That's what wives are there for, to build confidence. So she came along to the course and there were about 50 specialists there. And she walked out and she was like, I love that.

It was amazing. I learned so much. You have to write a book.

Oh, I love it. What? So I never thought of that. But when she must be obeyed, told me I have to write a book. I was like, well, okay, if you order me to write one, I'll write one.

So I started writing about relationships and what I was writing about conflict avoidance and love and how to make people your friends and all these kinds of things. And I was sitting on a ward one night and there were a bunch of nurses in the office. And they were all getting really cross.

And the one nurse gets, why do I have to phone my husband every night and tell him to bath the kids? I mean, doesn't he know? He's had kids for 10 years? And the next nurse said, yeah, why do I have to find my husband and tell him to feed the kids? I mean, doesn't he know that you have to feed kids? And I was laughing in the background. And I just said to him, you all have much too high expectations. Women are superior to men.

And they said, wow, that's amazing. You should write a book. So I said, well, I kind of am.

And I went, well, this would be a really nice topic to write about because it kind of brought everything together about relationships and how to make things work. And it's fun because love and sex are a lot of fun to write about. Oh, yeah. So I had a lot of fun writing it basically.

So that kind of brought me to this weird point where I'm a doctor who's written a book on love and relationships. I love it. And it's such a beautiful evolution.

And I think something a lot of authors experience through the writing process, it's like you have an idea in mind and before you know it, it's totally morphed into something else. And I think it's a good reminder just to keep an open mind and see where the writing goes, because it's probably going to change. I know that certainly happened to me.

And you left out an important detail, which I think is really interesting. In addition to being an endocrinologist and geriatrician, you are also a stand-up comic. Is that right? Yeah, I actually mainly do that with doctors.

I really want to bring out a show which is called Laughter Isn't the Best Medicine: What your doctor really thinks of you. I'm trying to find a venue to do that because I thought that was a really funny idea to talk about my experience with patients and what I'm really thinking when you don't realize what I'm thinking.

Because medicine is a super unusual career in many ways. I think the fact that people walk into your office and just take off all their clothes and tell you all about their sex lives and tell you all about stuff. You're like, hey, can we get back to diabetes? And they're like, no, I want to tell you about my sex life.

Like, why? Let's talk about your diabetes. Your sugars are too high. But you know, you want someone to manage their diabetes, you talk about the benefit on their sex life. It's, you know, yeah. There you go, you'd make a great doctor, brilliant idea. It's the key.

Yes. I think medicine is quite an unusual career and you get to experience a lot of interesting people at their most raw sort of emotional state because you deal with life and death and you deal with people having horrible diagnoses, but you also deal often with salvation. And I think one of the things that people don't understand about geriatric medicine, which is my other specialties, caring for elderly people, is people go, isn't that really depressing? Because you often can't save old people from old age.

And I always had the opposite attitude. You often get elderly people and no doctors ever really taken the time to work out. They're on 20 medications and they have 50 medical problems.

And so many things are going wrong. And I look at that and you go, not how can, you know, I can't do anything. How can I not help this person? There's so much to be done.

There's so many things you can do to help them and make their lives better that I always feel it's actually very rewarding. And you always find things that you can do to help people. I love that.

And, you know, I love what you said earlier about genuinely caring about the person behind the disease because so many doctors don't. I mean, I, for one choose my medical care based on their bedside manner, really more than their credentials and everything else, because I'm such a firm believer that unless there's a rapport with whoever's treating you, whether that's your physician or of course a mental health care provider you're not going to feel better. And so it's so important to see the whole person and take the context into consideration when managing their medical issues.

And so I think it's amazing work what you're doing. Thank you. Well, I actually think you raised two very interesting profound points there that are quite fascinating.

The one is people often say, Ooh, who's the best doctor? And they give these best doctor surveys. And I always say, well, it's interesting if someone says to me, Oh, you know, everyone says you're the best at this, that I don't know what that really means because you can have this expert sitting in the Mayo Institute, you know, who's an expert on this incredibly obscure diagnosis that you're going to see once in your career, but it doesn't mean they're very good at managing the things you're going to see a lot, which is all often about people. So I think you're quite right about that because usually if I'm managing a diabetic, for example, diabetes is a common illness, but so I don't have to be a world expert on the most intricate knowledge, but what I do need to do is connect with that person.

And the second fascinating thing about medicine is that if people don't like their doctor, they often won't do what they say, which really is a weird psychology because you go, Hey, if you take this medication, you'll get better and live longer. But if you don't take it, you get sicker and live shorter. And you go, well, I don't like my doctor so I'm not going to take it. That is really how it works. If your patients don't like you, they don't buy into what you're telling them and this won't do it.

Yeah. People are weird. I know it's crazy.

It's so true though. How have doctors responded to the message that you're sharing with them? Well, in terms of the lecturing on teaching people about relationships and managing teams, that was actually very positive because I think that it's, it's people lose sight of the fact that we're all human. And there's something called imposter syndrome, which you've probably encountered where everyone thinks that they're not worthy of the accolades that they have.

And you know, about 75, 80% of doctors have imposter syndrome. They just feel, I only became a specialist and became looked up to through luck and serendipity. It wasn't really me.

I'm really not that good. I don't know much. And one of the reasons for that is because medicine is just such a vast challenging field where you can just never know everything

and you can never control everything.

And so doctors are actually deep down, many of them, quite scared of what they're doing. And the public have the image of this sort of like colossus striding the earth so powerful, you know, everything, but in their own minds, they're actually scared little people like everyone else, human beings with insecurities and weaknesses and scared of getting things wrong. And so when you run courses like this, it, it's been quite, it's quite transformative for some people.

When you talk about the real emotions of what people are going through, you say, Hey, you're not alone in this. We're all feeling like this and dealing with people is difficult. And doctors are terrified of fighting with patients actually.

So when you, when I present to them on what, how do you avoid conflict? How do you manage conflict? What happens when patients do get angry? What happens when the families and you can't get along? What strategies can you use? They're actually very excited about those things. So I feel it's kind, it's been a kind of a crusade of mine to try and get medical schools and doctors in general, to embrace more with this kind of philosophy to recognize we don't actually spend enough time in medical school studying people. And that's kind of my general passion.

Cause I also feel it's sad that we don't teach human beings how to be good husbands and wives. We don't teach them how to be good parents. We don't teach them how to be good friends.

We teach people history and maths and science at school and the rest is done by apprenticeship. And I think that's terrible. So I kind of, one of my big focuses in writing books is I want to say to people, well, actually, these are things you can learn and you can sit and think about and become better at.

And they're probably the most important things that you can do. Oh, I totally agree. I mean, I think that in every year of school, students need to take some sort of life skills class because you're right.

This kind of thing isn't taught. I remember one of the most popular courses at UT Austin, where I went to school was like personal and family home finance, because that's not taught to anybody and no one really knows how to manage their money. And so, but people saw that as a valuable course to take.

I wish that we still had classes like on home economics and even, you know, I would love to know how to change a tire, that kind of thing. So unless someone is teaching that to you, you're not going to know. I think it's brilliant.

I will tell you a really, I think amusing story about home economics, and maybe you'll admire me as one of the first true male feminists of my time. So when I was at high

school, I was 14 and I went to school and at the school, boys did woodwork and girls did home economics. That was the way it had always been done.

That was old school. Yeah. Yeah.

That was it. There was not, that was, it was a hundred percent. That was it.

So I went to my first woodwork class and there was this teacher with a cane. He was just like swinging this cane around all South African style, terrifying guy, big mustache. And I looked at this and I was like, no ways, this is a terrible idea.

So I went to my best friend. I said, you know, we could be in a class with girls cooking for us. And there'll be two boys and like 40 girls.

I said like, how is this not the best thing in the world? And he's like, you know, you're right. So I went to the biggest guy in my class. It was like this massive guy.

He was like, you know, you guys speak in feet, feet and inches. He was six foot two when he was 14. And I said to him, David, why don't you join us in home ec class? He was like, why would I do that? I said, because there'll be 40 girls and three of us and they'll cook for us.

Like, this is living the dream. He said like, wow, you're onto something. So he went to the school principal and he said to me, you can't do home ec.

I said, why not? He said, because you're a boy. I said, yeah, but is there a rule against it? I mean, is it in the school constitution? He was like, no. So I said, we want to do it.

So we did home ec. It was the best year of my life. And every time people would come and tease me, I would just call over David, this big six foot two guy.

I was like, hey, you're saying that, you know, we boys doing home ec are like this or that. I said like, David, someone here wants to tell you something about boys that do home ec. So that was a great experience.

I have to say exactly what you're saying. And look how wonderful my cooking skills are now. I was gonna say, I bet your wife is happy.

No, I'm terrible. I'm a terrible cook. I was listening to NPR the other day and they had this whole story on home economics and how it was actually part of the feminist movement, which a lot of people don't realize because like you, we have this picture of the girls do home ec and the boys do woodworking, but that's actually not what it was about.

But I digress. I want to talk about your book because as you said, at the end of this, the name of your book is women are superior to men and it takes a real man to admit that. So let's talk about some of the reasons why you think women are in fact, better than

men.

Well, I think one of the things that we've lost in, in all the negativity in the world today, everyone's, you know, so upset about gender and we're all fighting is that men and women are very good at falling in love with each other. And we've been doing it for a long time and it's something magical and beautiful and actually a huge amount of fun. So I think most of us are lucky enough to have mothers and there's nothing more special in the world than a mother.

It's, it's the mothers determine the happiness and wellbeing of humans more than just about anyone else in the world. And then some of us are lucky enough to have wives. And that's why I say in my book, you know, there's two real big reasons why I feel very lucky in life.

One, because I have a wife and two, cause I don't have a husband. So for me, I think women are absolutely amazing. And we're so lucky.

And I, in my book, I mean, I had a few people sort of get upset because people are so sensitive and brittle now and go like, are you looking to emasculate men? And are you, you know, running down men? And the answer is no, not at all. I actually love being a man. I love, you know, I think women are beautiful.

I love sex. I love women. I love being male and, you know, picking up weights in the gym, but I also appreciate the fact that we are just so lucky and so blessed that women were created because they're just the best thing in the world.

So if you want technical reasons why I think women are so amazing, I think one of them is that women are actually designed to nurture and take care of babies and infants. And it's not that men can't do it, but human survival fundamentally depends on that incredible patience and nurturing that women give to a baby, which I really doubt that many men could do. I mean, it's so exhausting to give 24 seven to something that just cries all the time and then poops and it's nappy.

And then women are like, oh, the baby's so cute. And I'm like, no, it's, it's horrible. It's a parasite.

So I think that's something, I think the other thing that I mentioned in my book, as you know, is men can't find things in cupboards. So that's a big problem for all of us. And women definitely can.

And that they find that very irritating about us. But most of all, I think that one of the things I tried to do with the book was to take out all the negativity about gender and, and differences between men and women and say, actually, we're designed to actually love each other. That's what human survival depends on men and women finding each other sexually attractive, falling in love and reproducing.

Otherwise we would die off as a species. And that is not a toxic, horrible thing. It's a beautiful thing.

And there are a few sociopaths in the world that do horrible things. Sure. But for the most part, I walk around and I'm just like, women are amazing.

And so I wanted to write a book and celebrate that and make people laugh and also make people feel normal. Cause I think one of the saddest things in modern day is that a lot of couples fight about the same issues. And I just wanted people to read a book and go, Hey, that's what my marriage is really like.

Yes. I had a younger colleague at work who's not yet married and she read my book and she said, you know, I'm so excited because this is exactly what, this is exactly what dating men is like. They're very frustrating and irritating, but of course she wants to fall in love and get married.

So that's what I really wanted with this book, entertain people, make them feel normal again and happy. Sure. And I think, you know, with what you're writing about, it's also a lesson to men about what they can learn from women and implement, you know, as part of their own masculinity masculinity.

We know from the research that, you know, for heterosexual couples, when a new baby is born, men's testosterone actually goes down for a period of time. And that's so that they're around to help protect the mother and baby and care for the child. And we know that men are perfectly capable of loving and nurturing a child just as women are.

But I think that in large part due to gender socialization, there's sort of this split, like that's the women's job and my job is to go off and bring home the bacon, but that's not necessarily true. I think that, you know, you look at gay couples, for example, who adopt babies, they do a wonderful job loving and nurturing those children. In fact, I think a lot of them like double down because they're working extra hard to do so.

So I think that everything you're saying is not just a shout out to how great women are. It's like, what can men learn from women? Do I have that right? Yeah. And that's, and that's a big part of my book is to talk about the fact that women, in the modern day, I think one of our challenges is that we live very hectic lives. And it's sort of a feature of modern life that women are often working as well. So my wife, for example, is a doctor and a medical inventor and has like 10 jobs. The 10th is the hardest, which is trying to deal with me.

But and that's a full time job on its own. So marriage just can't work anymore with that kind of construct. For most marriages, women just need a partner to take care of them.

So it's not about whether you care about washing dishes, or whether you care about, you know, you don't maybe you don't want to, you know, get up at night and feed a baby,

but it's about caring about your partner. Yeah. And I think one of the profound things about that is, you can't really say I love someone with all my heart and soul, so when so I'm gonna, you know, they can go and vacuum the floor and wash the dishes, and I'm not going to help them, even though they're exhausted. Well, you can't really, those two are just not really compatible statements. So I think one of the things that men are having to adjust to, and I think it is an adjustment.

So I'd say it maybe a little bit sympathetically as well, I think we have evolved for certain roles in, you know, before there was no contraception, there was no, you know, formula feeding wasn't available, we didn't have bottles, and women had to breastfeed babies, because men couldn't, and women fall pregnant, because men can't. And men, you know, protect women, because they're bigger and stronger and there were a lot of threats out there.

But I don't know how many men you know, who's still going out hunting and protecting these days. I don't know many. You forget I live in Texas.

Oh, well, that's fair. That's very funny. You're a stand up comedian.

So times have changed. And loving someone is about caring about what they need, and what makes them happy. It's not caring about what you need, and what makes you happy.

That's selfishness. So I think men need to adapt. And it's hard in some ways, because I think it's been a very rapid change in society.

You know, my parents generation, my mom, you know, served my dad dinner at the table, and he sat there. And he'd be like, he'd like, be quite grumpy. Like, hey, what happened to my second helping? Yeah, unappreciative.

And my mother might scuttle and get it. Yeah. So things have changed very rapidly.

And we as a generation have to adapt to that. But our partners need that. So I think there is challenge in this.

But it's all about working together and finding happiness together. Totally. And I think what I talk a lot about is the mental load that women still tend to carry, you know.

So in addition to living in a house where both people are working full time jobs, a lot of times it still falls on the wife's shoulders to manage the household, manage the children. I love to like give my husband pop quizzes, like, do you know when the kids next dental appointment is? Have you even thought about what they're going to do this summer? That's so cruel. But it keeps him very much appreciating everything that I do. And you're right, I think to your point, our physiologically, our bodies probably have not evolved to catch up with the way we live our lives these days, not just in terms of the change in

gender roles, but also just due to the chronic stress that we're under all of the time.

And I'm sure you see that a lot, especially as an endocrinologist, just the effect of stress hormones. So yes, I think that... And by the way, on that note, it's fascinating, but our modern generation is so anxious and so stressed. It's become such a huge drain on the medical system in the sense that a huge amount of the medical budget is not spent on sick people.

It's spent on the anxious walking well. And people are consulting their doctors all the time for anxiety symptoms. And it actually makes them quite resentful often towards doctors, because they're looking for answers about why they have all these symptoms.

And the answers are actually within. It's because we're also stressed and we're not able to cope with our lives at all. So you're quite right.

It's a modern epidemic that everyone is tired, everyone is stressed. And it's usually not medical problems that cause that. It's the way we live.

Oh, mental health. I mean, yeah, mental health has a direct impact on the body. It can cause all kinds of health problems, as you know.

And so certainly it is not something that we should ignore. But back to your book. So I'd love to hear you identify the number one thing that couples fight about and what they can do about it.

So what is that thing? So I said in my book, the number one thing couples fight about is sex, because I think it's almost... I wonder if there's a couple in the world that's never had a fight about sex. Yeah, so I mean, I think it's... I also laughed at my book when I... I'm laughing at this now, because men are always complaining that women nag them all the time. And at one stage of my book, I just asked whether if you count all the times that men often nag their wives about sex, I wonder whether women really do nag their husbands more.

But I think one of the problems about sexuality is that it is a very, very challenging area for humanity, because you're very unlikely to have a couple with completely matched sex drives. And so there always has to be compromise. It's a very, very personal area of people's lives so it makes it more difficult for a lot of people to talk about it, depending on how they've been brought up and what their attitudes are. But nevertheless, it is a human need. And human survival depends on us having libidos.

And there's only three things a living organism needs to survive, it needs to be able to acquire energy, it needs to be able to excrete waste products, and it needs to reproduce. So this is one of the sort of big three of survival is reproduction. And so sexuality is a major fundamental part of our being.

And I think as a society, we've never really known how to deal with that. Even now we we don't know where the lines are drawn, we we can't work out what constitutes normal sexuality, what's healthy, what's crossing the line. And we have this incredibly overtly sexual society.

And yet couples are actually having less sex than they were 20 years ago, it's a very difficult area. So I think couples invariably fight about sex, because there's going to be times when one person's in the mood when one person's not in the mood, when people get grouchy about it. And I'm sorry to say, this is an area that women are superior to men, because I would I would hazard a guess that although many women don't enjoy being celibate, they seem to tolerate it with much less complaining and grumpiness than men on average, they just seem able to sort of deal with it in a more mature fashion.

So it is a big issue of conflict in relationships for any number of reasons. And whenever I was fascinated, when I got married, I used to go to functions with friends, and all the men were sitting around complaining that they don't get enough sex, and why won't their wives just have sex with them all the time. And the wives were all complaining about similar things as well, which is like, why don't men spontaneously clean up mess? Why? How is it possible to, you know, walk through a pile of dirty laundry and not even notice? And all these sort of same complaints were coming through.

So it is a common issue. And it's just such a profound part of being human. But it's also something wonderful.

I mean, gee, it's, you know, the cheapest form of entertainment on a Saturday night. So if you get it right, you know, exactly, even cheaper than going to a movie. What is your solution about how couples can stop fighting about sex? I think you have to connect the heads and the hearts to connect the bodies.

So I think the first thing is that being incredibly close emotionally and building friendship is such a wonderful thing. I think, you know, for me, personally, my wife would always be the first person I would talk to about anything. And so if you're together all the time, talking, being friends, you are constantly bonding, and you're going to want to have sex more often, because you're so close mentally that you're probably going to be closer physically.

And I think the biggest problem in relationships is when people don't give each other enough attention and don't spend enough quality time together, which is, by the way, the number one 70% of divorces in Australia, according to statistics, the reason that people cite is lack of attention from their partner. So I think that if you are constantly on each other's minds, then you're constantly thinking about each other, that's going to stimulate sexual desire, that's going to stimulate closeness. I think when you love someone, also, you care about what they want.

And so if you know that your partner wants to have sex, you're going to want to take care of them. And if people have the stigma about sex is like, oh, it's so selfish, someone wants to have sex with someone else. Well, it's actually not necessarily selfish, they have a need, and they have a physical need, they want to have sex.

And you as a partner who loves them, even if you're not so much in the mood, want to take care of them. And as long as that's completely reciprocated on all levels that they're always taking care of whatever you want. So I think that's a big thing as well is about caring about the other.

But another big part about maintaining a healthy, happy togetherness and sex life is also to maintain physical affection, because sex is about physical affection, to maintain communication. Because if you never talk about your sex, your sexuality and being together, then you're, you know, it's out of sight and out of mind. But I think the number one thing is that too many couples just don't protect enough time together, they just don't make time.

Even if you've got kids, even if you're tired, you've just got to keep investing in that relationship. Otherwise, it's going to dwindle. It's all about giving up yourself all the time to your partner.

100% I agree with everything you're saying. And it just goes to show how complex human sexuality is. Because, you know, you start off talking about sex for reproduction and to keep the species alive.

And yes, there's the element of that. But then you also talk about how important friendship is and prioritization and physical touch and affection. And I think it serves as a reminder that humans have sex for all kinds of reasons, not just reproduction.

And so it's not just this drive that a lot of people think about. It's also something we are motivated to do because it makes us feel close, bonded, connected. And then there's the physical pleasure as well.

And I love another thing you said was about the reciprocity that happens between men and women in the bedroom. Because I think a lot of people get stuck in, well, I would, you know, the female partner stereotypically, maybe I would want to have sex with you more if you took out the trash on a regular basis, or if I didn't have to ask you to unload the dishwasher, the kinds of things that we were talking about before, but equal pleasure in the bedroom is really more important than that. And I think a lot of, you know, again, we're talking primarily about heterosexual couples today. You know, men ask, well, what can I do to get my partner to want to have sex with me more? And my answer to them is like, have better sex, like make sure that you are doing everything that you can do to make the sex a worthwhile experience for her. And a lot of times men are more than happy to learn what feels good to a woman.

But again, I think because of gender socialization, a lot of women have a hard time understanding, let alone communicating what feels good to them, or they are brought up thinking that sex is for a man. And so there's a lot of undoing that we have to work on, I think, to create equal pleasure in the bedroom. Well, I think it's interesting.

I made a video recently for the internet when I was talking about the things that really are important to make a sex life better. And what you've said is exactly what I said, which is that I think one of the focuses in sex should be pleasure. People are so serious about everything nowadays, you know, it's everything serious and sex is so serious.

But sex is actually fundamentally supposed to be pleasurable and fun. I mean, that's what it's about. And if only one person is having fun, then you're scoring your mark out of 50%, aren't you? Because you can only get a maximum of 50% then.

So if both partners are having fun, I mean, I think that's amazing. And I think men, I read something really fascinating. I'm sorry to talk about something slightly crass, but I read something really fascinating a while ago, written by prostitutes.

Is there a polite way to call what? I don't know. Sex workers is what you're supposed to say. Sex workers.

There you go. Okay. Sex workers.

See, I live in Australia. We're very backward. So sex workers were talking about the kinds of men that frequent sex workers.

And what they actually said, which was so fascinating, was that most people think that it's all about perversion and weird stuff. And they said that the majority of men that come there actually want the sex worker to have a good time. They actually care about both partners actually having, because we're all human.

We want affirmation. We want to please other people. And a lot of pleasure in life is derived from giving to people, not just taking from them.

So I found that really fascinating and odd, but it was a wonderful insight, I guess. And I read something else about how so many sex workers report that men will hire them just to hold them and talk to them and listen to them. And a lot of times they don't even end up having sex, which just goes to show that men have a softer, vulnerable side as well.

And I think a lot of people think it's just about sex for men. And what I always tell my couples that I'm working with is I have yet to have a guy come into my office and say, well, I want my wife to have more sex with me because I just need to get off more. I'm like, no, they can take care of that themselves.

Sex is a gateway to connection and feeling close and intimacy. And I think a lot of times

when male partners feel like their female partner is disconnected or absent or just having sex out of a feeling of obligation, they don't get that sense of connection that they're longing for. Absolutely.

I mean, that story was really sad, what you're saying about men just wanting to be held. I know. But I mean, it is very, we all are human and whether we're male or female, we need affection and love, and it's a huge human need. And I think that's something as well that so many couples do lose over time.

I read an article recently, which I really related to saying about the things that tell you that your relationship is healthy. And one of them was making sure you hug and kiss your partner, have hello and goodbye every day, and that you hold hands sometimes. And that you talk about things that are not just about functional, the kids are, you know, what you, the cruelty that you were showing to your husband, whether they're going to the dentist.

So, but actually talking about things that are more emotionally connecting as well. I'm sure you do as well. I'm only teasing you.

I do, I do, I do. So let me ask you one more question before we sign off. You talk about how to have great sex, even when you have kids at home.

You've got four kids, I've got a two and a half year old and a five year old. And I think I've figured a few things out, and it sounds like you have too. So I'd love to hear your two cents on that piece, because I know that's something so many people struggle with.

Yeah, I mean, I feel quite upset when I hear about couples who stop having sex because they've got kids, because it's so important for your relationship to survive having young kids, because if your relationship falls apart, it's so bad for the kids. The kids are relying on their parents to stay together and be a family. And part of that is remaining close to each other, remaining intimate and having sex.

So I think one of the really important things about that is, as you said earlier, one of the ways to have sex is to have more sex, to have great sex, and then people want to have sex. But another thing I'll add to that is if you never have sex, you're not going to ever have great sex either. So I think it's incredibly important to protect time, and to make sure that you don't get so distracted by the kids and everything going on, that you don't make time to have date nights, to get a babysitter to go out, and to have protected sex time and say, hey, we can't afford to go weeks and weeks without connecting.

We need to connect emotionally, but we also need to connect sexually. Because if you get out of practice, that sounds like a really bad idea. I don't know what happens to people.

Less is not more when it comes to good sex. More is more. You need to be doing it in

order to make it better.

And yes, I think at the end of the day, and what the research reflects as well, is that it is about choosing to make it a priority. That's it. It's not that complicated.

But a lot of couples just let it drop to the bottom of the totem pole and don't really think about it or acknowledge how important it is for the maintenance of a healthy relationship. And so, yeah, I mean, my kids will always have an hour of rest time in the afternoons, especially on the weekends, because sometimes that's the only time my husband and I can connect and you know, we have to get that. My wife got a bit worried about that.

She said at some stage, they know what the door closed means. And I'm like, who cares? Who cares? Exactly. Exactly.

Yeah. They may be squeamish about it. I want to tell you a very funny story.

I want to tell you a very funny story about that. This is actually my book. But I was seeing a guy came to see me with his wife, and he was 42.

She was about 40. And he came to see me because he thought his testosterone level was low. And I was doing an assessment on him.

There's nothing wrong with his testosterone level, by the way. And I said to him, well, do you and your wife ever have sex? Like, how often do you have sex? So he goes, never. So I said, what do you mean, never? He goes, we never have sex.

So I said to him, why not? So his wife got quite aggressive with me. She goes like, well, we've got four kids. What do you expect? How are we supposed to have sex? I was like, well, you know, most people still have sex, even when they have kids.

It's healthy. It's normal. And they looked at me like I was mad, they went, do you think our friends are still doing it? I went, probably, yes.

And their eyes like lit up. And they were like, really? So then they said to me, but you wouldn't understand because you don't have four kids like us. And I was like, I do have four kids. Anyhow, so I said to them and they go, well, what if the kids, you know, walked in on you? So I said, you know, this is the thing, you know, I went to medical school, so they teach me these brilliant ideas that you would never get if you didn't go to medical school.

I said, well, why don't you put a lock on the door? They're like, wow, that's amazing. You're the best doctor ever. So they put a lock on their door and they came back to me, see me for follow up.

And the guys testosterone levels were really healthy. And they were so excited. And they

wanted to tell me all about it.

And of course, as a doctor, I do love my patients, but the details I don't need. So I was like, that's very nice. And I wouldn't know all the details.

Anyway, so excited. So of all the weird things, you know, you say like, aw you doctors, you save lives, it must be so exciting. Like, no, no, no, I prescribed a lock on their door. It saved their lives.

Sometimes it's the simple things. I mean, you can get creative, you come up with games. I mean, you can use Easter egg, you can have Easter egg hunts all year round, if you want, you know, keep them busy for half an hour, and they can only keep the Easter eggs if they do not bother you until you come back out again.

So there's lots of ways to keep the kids entertained Yeah, of course, I would never do a thing like that. I've never done that before, Emily. But now, of course, there's also zoom meetings.

I'm always like, there's a zoom meeting, no one can disturb us for a while. Right, exactly. I wanna work on the the zoom meeting. Everybody shut up.

It's fine. Right. So yes, and I promise you, your kids will not be traumatized for life if they do accidentally walk in on you.

I mean, I think most people walked in on their parents, at least once having sex. And yeah, I mean, everyone's a little bit embarrassed, but it's not that big of a deal. Well, Dr. Aaron, I'm so relieved to say that I'm not one of those people. There you go.

Well, I wish I could say the same, but that's okay. You know, it happens. Dr. Arenson, thank you so much for chatting with me today.

Where can people learn more about you and find your book? So my book, women are superior to men's on Amazon. And I've got a website, which is drrickyarensen.com. And I'll also be getting up some podcasts soon called happy, healthy ever after which are podcasts about finding positivity in relationships. Awesome.

Thanks so much for having me. You are so lovely. It's been such a pleasure.

Thank you. No, it's the pleasure has been all mine. And I want to thank you for calling in from Perth because I know the time difference is difficult, but appreciate you making the time.

Wonderful conversation. And I look forward to staying in touch. Thanks so much.

You have a great evening.