

Episode 34 - Shit We Don't Talk About Podcast

Guest: Leslie Gustafson

Topic: Sex & Intimacy for All!

Narrator 00:01

Hey, welcome to *Shit We Don't Talk About* powered by Helix Interactive. On this episode we talk about sex baby. Who doesn't love a good Salt-N-Pepa lyric right? And what better guests to chat with than master coach sex therapist and licensed therapist Leslie Gustafson. We will be discussing sex and intimacy and how to take charge of your experience. This episode is for all no matter how you present, we'll be serving up some great insider tips. Just the tip, you know, tune in, it gets good. Here we go.

Speaker: Mia Voss 00:40

Hi Leslie.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 00:42

Hi. How are you, girl?

Speaker: Mia Voss 00:46

Oh, it's good to see you. Yes, because we were in the same town, and it's been COVID, so this is actually the first time I'm like, *I can see see you*.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 00:55

Which is hard to even believe isn't it?

Speaker: Mia Voss 01:00

I know right. Everything seems a million miles away. Although things are starting to break up, which brings a whole new anxiety for everybody. So, if you're listening to this, this is in June of 2021, and we're now just crawling out into the new world. So today, as I mentioned, before I hit

record, today's sex day here at the house, Charlie's probably going to listen and go “hey I wasn't told, nobody told me”

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 01:26

He's either going to fare well at the end of the day or not, depending upon how the content goes.

Speaker: Mia Voss 01:32

The jury is out. And speaking to you, and then another friend today about the topic of sex. And we don't really have an agenda on this. As you heard from listeners, as you heard from the intro, Leslie is an expert. You have been involved in all the things, you have a podcast, you and your husband are involved in this. You've been on shows I saw you were in HuffPost.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 01:58

I think for a very long time, my life work for 30 years, I've been in the field of psychology for 34 years, and started specializing in intimacy and sexuality in 2004. But it is my life, it is my mission, it is what lights my fire every single day. And I'm a bit of a geek around it. All right, like over the years, all this stuff just is in your head, and then you get to my age, and you're just like, you just want to give it away and you just want to pour into others, and you just want to make use of it all. And it's so fun at this point.

Speaker: Mia Voss 02:33

I bet because you have all the knowledge, you have all this experience, not only your own, but talking with other people. So why not share that out? And I would say, I feel like in the last five years, we've had so many huge changes in the world. Of course, we've had #MeToo, we've had women speaking out more, we've had Black Lives Matter, we've had all these different changes of shaking up the old patriarchy, which formed a lot of the ideas around sex. So have at it, just free one on me for a little bit.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 03:02

That's a great launching point. When I think about when women and I think about sexuality, I think about what women have had to traverse, and are still trying to traverse to move into not only a place of permission for themselves, but a place of empowerment. I mean, once upon a time, we only had a male model of sexuality, which says, you know, *I feel horny, I want sex, I act on sex*. And we have lived by that forever, that's masters and Johnson years and years ago, and women weren't even considered in the research with regards to their individuality and how women work.

Then we have this Western culture that doesn't like to talk about sex, and sex education historically has been really clunky, or taboo. And then women, of course, really traditionally aren't even supposed to like sex like it's right. Right? Lots of permission to men, men are sexual. But women, what do we say about women if they dig it, or if they like it? they don't even get to really talk about it because of how that is seen. So, it's so layered for women, the obstacles that they have been up against.

Then there's the objectification of women, right? And it's just like. It's just so complicated for them, because it is so layered. And their histories have been difficult or there hasn't been enough information for them. And then one in four has been traumatized. So, by the time women start hopefully coming into the idea that sex is for them. First and foremost, It's for them. This is probably the number one message I want to get out today is sex is for you, women, first and foremost, and it's a part of your whole personality and your wholeness. So, we can't compartmentalize it. We can't have it cordoned off into the recesses of our experience psychically and expect to enjoy sex, like sex be freed up in the sexual experience for ourselves, right? But then women just need so much permission to go after what they want. And to know that you are sexual and it is good and what do you want it to be? What is it for you? What's it been? How can you break free from what things might have held you back? personally? Societally? relationally? the family origin? Religiously. That's a whole other show and I have a lane that I've worked with a faith-based community within my work. And you know that, honestly, they have got the worst.

Speaker: Mia Voss 06:18

they really did. I've been diving a lot into purity culture, because of Rachel Hollis, I keep bringing her up because I'm just so aggravated by her entire existence of shaming, and toxic positivity,

She's part of the purity culture piece. And I know it from my own experience of growing up in a religious cult, no joke on how skewed your mind is. And then too, there's a control thing as well. And then you see the numbers of abuse that comes out, condoned abuse that comes out of so many situations. So that is a whole for another time, so we'll put a pin in that as well. But what's interesting, in talking, when listening to what you're just saying also, in some ways, though, we've gone so far, and then come back. I mean, we literally just had in the news yesterday, a young woman who changed her speech up at her commencement and totally launched into this whole thing about abortion rights and having rights over her body. And I mean, it's going all over the news right now I'll post a link in the show notes. So, it's so interesting to see in some ways how much backwards we've gone about having the I can't remember what the word is, is having this sovereignty over your body. And I think that literally does stem from that base knowledge and that base part of knowing, like you said, it's for you. I love that phrase because yes, for shame, lack of knowledge, not talking and fears.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 08:03

Yeah, there's a fear about being a sexual woman, that Layers of Fear about sexuality in general. That and the anxiety for many women that shows up around wanting to be sexual. So often, it is about him, taking care of him, making sure his needs are getting met. And that message is historical for women. And so, this idea that it is for you can be not only unnerving, it can be exciting but it can also be scary, It's daunting. And a lot of times with the women I've worked with, you know, they're going through the motions or they're taking care of him and you get to this speaking of midlife, you get to this midlife stage, and they're fine with discarding it. Yes, as it was never really good for them, and they never really liked it, it was never really about them. And now it's going to get a little bit more challenging to keep sex alive in midlife and on. And they're just like they're good, they're good to be done, because it was never about them and for them, and it was never highly pleasurable. They never walked away from a sexual experience enough times where it was a win for them, regardless of their partner. They didn't walk away and it was mutually pleasurable, so much so that they want to repeat that.

Speaker: Mia Voss 09:37

Let's do that. Again. I think to that, it's that what for women, what they like is filtered through the lens of what the men likes. And I literally think that you can get super confused *well, but you like this*, you know, it's like you liked it. in the interest of funny little tidbit, a couple years ago, actually, this is probably about 10 years ago, I got involved a sex toy company. But you know, you do the party, you have the parties and the jams and jellies, toys, bells and whistles, whatnot. And it was such an interesting observation to sit back, and yes, it was the "teehee" kind of thing. And right, he did have these parties and I bring in these trunks of all this stuff and it was so interesting and refreshing and saddening to see the conversations that I would have in the sales room, you know, because then you would go through the show, and only women were allowed and I realized at the time, I was kind of doing sex education. For a lot of women, I remember specifically, an older woman coming into the room and who'd never had an orgasm. I kid you friggin not and I just was so saddened but I felt like it was at least having a conversation to say like, "*need to find out what's working for you and know you don't need this giant scary dildo that I would run away from*". Right? Like, *don't bring that thing near me that that looks painful*. So, and then a young woman had come in as well and she was probably in her early 20s and was literally talking about anal sex and I was just saying "Do you like it? And you really need to and that kind of traumatized me that conversation I was like, oh my gosh, are you being forced to say that you actually like this when that's not something you have approached?"

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 11:45

Look at listen to that question, the simple distinction. *But do you like it? Is this something you want to be doing?* And you feel you have to do or you're supposed to do? Or somebody with more sexual experience, oftentimes the guy is driving the experience. Acting and you're people pleasing and you're just going along to sort of just completely like, discard if you will, in our minds, the partner piece, and have it be just about our own individuation in this arena. And taking up and honoring ourselves and saying, *I want this for me. And I want it to look like what I want it to look like*. And a lot of times that's like, how do I work? How does sex work? The education, and the freedom to discover and decide and learn, you know, what we like and then to be responsible for our own experience. And honoring I think that issue of responsibility in the bedroom goes both ways. I know a lot of men who feel responsible for the response of their

partner, and making sure she gets somewhere, whereas everybody's responsible for themselves,

Speaker: Mia Voss 13:05

right, find your map first. And then let's all get on Google Maps to go on this journey. And yeah, my this is my pit stop.

Speaker: Mia Voss 13:13

Yeah. Interesting. You're right, I can imagine that that is something that occurs is that men are like, *and I'm over here trying to Jenga this puzzle.*

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 13:25

But she doesn't necessarily know, because she hasn't gotten enough permission and education to really say, *I'm going to go for it. And I'm going to make this mine and I'm going to learn how I work. And pleasure is for me. Pleasure is for me; this whole thing is for me. And I want it to rock.* And when women have really alive, freed up sexual lives, that affects their whole life, they start to free up everywhere, they start to have more voice, they start to be able to have control and mastery over the whole of their relationship. Because there isn't this shame-based thing in her psyche that's just sort of tucked away and not realized.

Speaker: Mia Voss 14:10

Yes, I just had a huge picture revelation when you said that. I love the idea of all of this being connected together. Community, women doing better in their homes, their personal life, their business, everything.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 14:23

Yes, an empowered woman in the bedroom is an empowered woman everywhere. It's the truth because it allows you have to able to have expression and a most sacred vulnerable space. And a lot easier in the less sacred, less vulnerable spaces.

Speaker: Mia Voss 14:44

It does because it equates out. *my God so excited*. Don't you think that being so empowered, because boundaries are also a piece of this as well, like not only knowing what your likes are, but then where you don't want to go. Right? So that's an ecosystem that goes together. And I think once you have that, too, you can also sidestep and not worry about the people that find the idea of empowered women being frightening because they can't even get out of their small mindedness to see this is what's good for the world.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 15:16

Yes, it can provoke fear, because now we're reorganizing right roles. And we are we organizing the social structure. Can it be frightening? It can provoke and people can kind of like, *oh, I don't know, aren't they supposed to be in a certain place?* But, you know, how I feel about that!

Speaker: Mia Voss 15:41

It's interesting, I just watched a documentary the other day that was a filmmaker than in the 50s and he was talking about sort of where a lot of this psyche came from of people that were like my grandparents age that grew up in the depression, that great depression, and they were going through it of just these 10 years of absolute everybody being dirt poor and just in such a mindset, and then those people were raising this next generation, who then it kind of came into that beaver cleaver, like we want everything to be perfect now that the economy's good. And I mean, just talk about these generations of pain that had been just repeated over and over and over again. Based on what you thought society thought was supposed to be good. This is what you're supposed to life the beaver cleaver they had the whole thing with the...

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 16:38

Well, I'm a beaver cleaver girl, like that was history. Very moral, you know, we didn't talk about sex in my house. Like, I literally had a little book that my mom, that was birds and beads at, I think I was 10, that she sat down birds and bees. That was it, that was sex education. So, there was no freedom, there was no permission, there was no education. And my experience is not at all uncommon. We didn't have this beautiful sex education or understanding that sex education is from birth on, and we can have open conversations and seeing our children all along the way. And yeah, we have to wrestle with our own sexual story in that, we need to know, as women

and people and men, *what our sexual history and story is. what shaped us in this arena? How did we get where we are?* Because if we didn't get to a place that sex is good, and I love it, then something went awry.

Speaker: Mia Voss 17:43

And it's more often than not that things go awry, just based on our history. And I know for myself coming of age in the 80s, she burst like or I graduated high school in 83. And I look back now at some of the films like I love John Hughes films, right? I look at something now and I'm horrified. 16 candles? what the fuck? I just said, but that's what we thought. That's what we thought sexuality was. On a quick side note, I just had to tell you how much porn annoys me sometimes because porn, like talks about big boobs all the time or shows big boobs, but then they never show important, them paying attention to the actual boobs, which is a huge thing out there for me it's like, *oh my god, I mean, that's like, you know, another clitoris. Right?* I said it, folks. And I just get annoyed that like *you see, that's not how it happens.* So, I get a little rant about that too.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 18:46

But that's our lane of education is porn, right? Which is, again, completely masculine model. Now there is ethical porn now and there is feminist porn now and there is a lot more, you know, broad range, real life kind of porn, but traditionally, it's not a good educator.

Speaker: Mia Voss 19:10

awful. So, talking about that with you how you grew up. So, share with me some of your experiences of the shame, if there was shame or the excitement or how that was for you being a sex educator for this long and still in this world share your experience.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 19:30

Wow, that's a big question. As far as I can think back, If I want to be really personal, I remember being in dance class as a little girl with tap dancing, and we were all in our leotards and I remember looking at the crotch of my dance teacher and feeling shame. Like I'd done a bad

thing. How did I think that was a bad thing? Or it was just that there was already guilt and shame around sexuality already built into my psyche as a young girl, just because there wasn't openness because I was in an overly moral home. And because it was all about being for me, perfect and good and happy so that was a bad thing I'd done right there. I felt guilt and shame. I mean, that is kind of broad. So, what it did my lack of sex education and my sexual naivety and went on for a very long time and then I became a faith-based person and my education then was really about restriction and waiting till you're married and I had another layer then about how it's not good and it's not okay. And I got sick honestly, I just wasn't well, I wasn't emotionally and mentally well, being perfect and being good. And I was not a sexual person. And my naivety probably set me up for my first marriage to a sexually compulsive, traumatized man who was a porn addict, unbeknownst to me. And so that marriage ended up ending quickly. But I was never enough for my sex addict husband, which was traumatizing, right? because I wasn't enough. Not only did I not even get this whole thing, which I did enjoy the experience of sex, and I did work and that was exciting with him. But he was never satisfied enough and it was always my fault. And then he acted out and then he was unfaithful and then at the seven-year mark, that marriage ended.

That's about the time that I got very interested in my own healing, and in sexuality, and began studying and specializing in sexuality. And so not only did I see the need for the couples I was working with to be able to deal with that arena. And there is an adequate education at the graduate level, around sexuality. So, you really have to do more education. It's not happening in my personal life. And then also, I felt ill-equipped to really help couples in this topic, right? So, there was my own journey and my own empowerment alongside educating and experience of seeing lots of people over time and all of their histories. And to say that my empowerment and my overcoming has greatly affected the work I do would be an understatement. I feel strongly about sexual empowerment because of how critical it has been in my own history. And I am not unlike so many women, so many women who have been harmed in this arena, and didn't even know that there was something awry. You know it kind of happened to me. And then I went *what?* I was blindsided, traumatized, and being able to sort out what was me and what was him has been really, really critical. And it still shapes the work I do. Because ultimately being in

control and command and empowered in our own individuality is the work. So really kind of an impoverished sex education set me up. I think it's me up.

Speaker: Mia Voss 24:00

I love how you are phrasing things such as that of impoverished of that's exactly how it was, as well. So, thank God, you were able to do the work. And not only do the work, but then take that because, you know, they're always talking about and, you know, *necessity is the mother of invention*. This was it too, because you're like, *I don't know what this is about*, but just the fact of being able to sort that huge ball of eekie out because that's how I'm going to describe it, you know, because all the training and indoctrination that you had got of like, well, this is exactly how it works out. But then to take that even further, I absolutely agree with you that there are so much for people, I will say, that go through it and go, *oh*, that and I think for women, my age, your age, are in the same age range, it's really like even talking about the movies where you're like, *oh my god that was messed up* like I thought that was a normal sexualization, or you know, just trying to get the girl drunk, convince her to have sex. *Oh my god*, you know, that's encouraged.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 25:11

We learn wherever we can, because we are sexual, and we are curious, and we want to know, and we will find it but if it's not accessible to us, we find the education wherever it comes our way. It's not always good education, and it's mythical and or even really sensationalized or not accurate. But we need to know and we want to know. And being able to have permission around, do know, discover, go after it, learn, grow, become sexual, fully, wildly, whatever it is for you.

Speaker: Mia Voss 25:52

However, that works for you. And I think, *however that works for you* is the best phrase I'm applying to everything in my life. Because I think that first of all takes a lot of time off this time consuming of worrying about what other people are doing. And again, if you are just grounded in whatever works for you, to get will for a second, I do feel like you're also going to attract a lot of that you're just emitting this excellent vibration. See what I did there? putting out the attractor for people. And here's what I'm used to with the work that you're doing, especially with couples, how cool is that the byproduct of that is going to be people that can actually then teach their

children, one like, by example, like showing if you like this is what love looks like with mom and dad, and then also have healthy conversations with them around sex and break this cycle.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 26:48

Yes, and I've moved out of private practice in the last two, two and a half years. And we work in a coaching model and a transformational programme. And I'm working exclusively with women now because here's my thinking, when we empower the woman, she can actually influence and affect all of the systems. which means yes, she can be a wonderful sex educator, yes, she can have incredible influence around those in her world, including her partner. one woman can change her whole system and affect the couple. Doug and I, of course, have helped couples forever in a day. And we you know, he's still in private practice doing a little bit of that work. But now, I have found in this chapter in my life that I want to be completely niched out and completely focused on women only because that's my deep heart and that's my greatest passion. And I just can't do it all. I want to be really focused on the women I work with, which so fun. And the work I'm doing right now is so fun, and so alive.

Speaker: Mia Voss 27:57

I love it. Well, listen, half the population is women so we've got that going. And then I do think getting that niche down and what you're just saying is actually part of my brand, where I talk about female buying power. With the work that I do as I call it, *my opinionated lifestyle blogger*, super opinionated. But because women are making all the buying decisions, this makes absolute sense of what you're saying in your business as well. They are showing their sphere around them. Again, don't get scared about these men this benefits you I'm just saying. But that actually goes with that same mindset too of the buying decisions, personal decisions, like decisions, family decisions, why not empower them?

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 28:49

Yes, I was just thinking back to television where I first met you, I think when we were on the fox set, right. And I guess the audience that we were always speaking to is women. It's women who are watching, and it's the woman audience who is the buyer and I loved that because you know that's my people. But I think that's where we first met, wasn't it?

Speaker: Mia Voss 29:09

Yes, you were on the Kathie Jay and Chris Parente show. That's right, I forgot about that. I know, we know each other through so many circles, but that is you're totally right, that is the audience. And again, no fear around that I just really wish kind of the world would wake up more to the equitable piece of how many decisions we're making, and then not have fear around it. But that's what we're both working on.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 29:40

We can't not accept that this is where it's going. The empowerment of women and women getting broader and having more influence has been going on for some time and has it affected, you know, that traditional kind of model of men and women? absolutely it has. And I think it's a whole other episode to talk about men trying to like, grapple with all these shifts and changes in the kind of displacement that they are experiencing, because now What now? What does that mean for men? they need to evolve too. Because women are going on, you know, getting on fire, which they need to and must, but it doesn't need to be scary and it doesn't need to be fearful, but it is going to change the system. And men need to be aware that this is occurring, and they're evolving, is going to be necessary as things unfold, and a man who takes up his own growth around that. I mean, that's a win.

Speaker: Mia Voss 30:40

That was a moment. That was a mic drop moment and you're absolutely right. so instead of like fighting against that system, and you know, trying to spawn upstream, so to speak,

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 30:51

yes. Or turn it into this big power struggle, it is going in its direction, and what does that mean for men's own progress and their own evolving? Because it is opportunity for evolving in both directions? Right? everybody needs to evolve. But he gets around their own work, their own personal growth, their own looking at themselves, their own figuring out what they're about, a lot of people try to get around it, it's problematic, but ultimately, we can't not do our own work. We can't not transform.

Speaker: Mia Voss 31:31

I think people try life hacks or try to get around it. But when you do spend and we were talking about before we hit the record button that I'm going through this journey of being sober curious, I haven't been drinking for a bit. And it is interesting part of that doing the work like that I'm sitting in that as well of like, okay, let's take a look at some of the things, and I'm not saying that's for everybody, but this is my version of it. How are you doing that work? Because nobody else is going to be able to do it for you. And it will keep following you around by the way, whatever is going on.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 32:10

It does, we can't escape it. We can grab hold of it, and honor ourselves and take care of ourselves and go after a really meaningful individual and relational lives. Or we can ignore it. But you're right. You can't. It goes with you. It does.

Speaker: Mia Voss 32:30

So, we we've been at about a half an hour here I want to just divert for a bit before we close up and this again could be a whole new show. But let's talk about perimenopause and menopause, post menopause. I mean, that's a huge part of the journey as well for women and you and I are both post-menopausal and talk about shame and don't want to talk about it. I've literally gotten into the powerful Crone stage. I'm reworking that word, Crone because I don't think it means what everybody thought it used to mean. So, I think there's so much power in that of embracing how you change sexually with this time of life.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 33:12

Yes. I, midlife, for me has been remarkable in so many ways, but what can happen and, you know, let's think about what midlife is right? When we're in midlife, we are out of that invincibility of youth, we can actually see that perhaps life will end at some point, we can see that we have a history behind us. And for many women, myself included, there becomes this opportunity to go *and now what?* Right? *And here I am, and what do I want?* And I think what happens hormonally, which is fascinating is you know, estrogen drops, and progesterone drops, and all

of those were necessary child-bearing care-giving hormones, and when those fall out, women have an opportunity. And they often feel less like they want to care, give and nurture and take care of others. Partly because the hormones are doing that for us, right. And so, they start thinking about what do I want for me beyond nurturing, caregiving and taking care of others? It can be an incredible time of empowerment. But yes, there are major changes going on. And like *whoa, she's not even the same person she was before.*

Speaker: Mia Voss 34:35

Right. And the hormone piece, which I'm learning about because as we know, I'm two weeks into a new system, bioidentical hormone replacement therapy, easy for me to say. And this company that has made some pellets is called *Pella Calmers* and so I've really dove into the hormonal piece of it. But what's interesting Leslie even as I feel like I'm you know, all that in a bag of chips and knowledge, I just didn't even realize until I got the bloodwork done, how flatlined those were. And I think the piece that's really hard for people is when you don't realize that there's a chemical, there's an imbalance going on, you also make that your responsibility even though you have absolutely no control over it.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 35:20

Yeah, and it's not just a sexual issue, it really is an experience of well-being at that point because hormones function for our overall sense of wellness and vitality. And yes, they affect sexual desire and sexual function as well. But when they drop out, most women have all sorts of symptoms. I know that I did, I had increased anxiety, I didn't sleep as well, I had hot flashes. I even had a period of migraines that happened there for a while. What's interesting as the hormones are dropping out, and I would encourage every woman to definitely check into her hormones if she cares about feeling great again, and feeling vital, and maintaining her sexuality, and her physiology around that, to do something about hormones. I have and I use a bioidentical cream in order to kind of keep estrogen elevated, anxiety down, and the changing of the inner lining of the vaginal wall is changing in midlife as well, which means it's starting to thin and atrophy. Yes, and sex can become more uncomfortable, painful or "chaffy". And then you don't want to have sex at all, because it doesn't feel good anymore. So, I mean, the reason to take care of the physiology in midlife is profound. What's interesting is while women tend to, if they've

done their work, I know for me, psychologically, and in a more alive, empowered, freed up place, and I want my body to go along with that.

Speaker Mia Voss 36:55

Right? Pack your bags ,, we are going on a trip, and you say *come along with me*.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 37:00

The health and wellness piece needs to be addressed and the symptomology can be really disruptive, right and affects partnerships & and everything you don't feel good. You cannot feel good. Brain fog, lack of clarity, feeling more anxious and wondering *why am I so anxious? What's wrong with me? what's wrong with me?* I'm capable, competent, empowered, psychologically minded, who's done her work, and I have this anxiety that's so uncomfortable all the time. It's jarring and things can be done.

Speaker: Mia Voss 37:34

Yes. And as we were saying before, today's actually the anniversary of one of my first times that I realized what had been going through the What is wrong with me, and it was in 2016, and I'd done an interview with someone who has ADHD and Peter Shankman had this group called *faster than normal*. And so, then I was like, *oh, my God, do I have ADHD* and I had realized that I was in perimenopause, because I was having these bizarre night sweats. That was odd. And so, then you're not sleeping well, which can compound a lot of things. But for me, my initial ones were the night sweats and then the brain fog, and then with the blue and the hot flashes. And let me just tell people, and I know, you've probably said this before to this, that *everything is different for everyone*. So that's where you're getting to know what your weird is, is also pretty key. It's not, you know, keeping track of these, of these symptoms is really crucial.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 38:34

Yeah. And I think the need to normalize it all and ultimately, the way we as women attribute and how we think about this life stage is the most important. are we seeing this as an opportunity, a time to, like really come into our own and really take care of ourselves? Or are we seeing it as *Oh, yeah, I don't have to do any of that anymore*. So, the attribution around mid-life, for some

women, it's a time of loss and grief, because their role as mothers as caregivers was so significant, and so they really feel sort of stuck with *now what?* but what we do with midlife and what we make it and how we perceive it is everything, because we can have great effect on it, if we want to. Yes, and how we're seeing it, right. Is this a buzzkill? Is this a bummer? Is this a great thing? Is this my time? What is it? What are we saying to ourselves about it? And what do we want to do with it? Do we want to feel great? Do we want to have, you know, passionate lives? Do we want to be empowered women? Do we want to let go have the grief and the loss and step into the new and start discovering what our futures might have for us? This is a big exciting time and it is but laden with lots of discomfort,

Speaker: Mia Voss 40:02

as shame, discomfort, non-normalization, stuff that that we just allowed us

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 40:09

what worked before doesn't really work now, needing to change positions, needed to get really good lube in place.

Speaker: Mia Voss 40:18

All the empowerment tools, the jams and jellies. And I think, you know, also finding and asking the questions that is situated, I had a whole episode on medical gas lighting. So, you know, really getting to know, finding people that are going to listen to you as well, because I have to say...

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 40:36

That is such an important term. I have never even heard that term. That's brilliant, gas lighting. It's not you don't have anything, it's just you. You have got something real going on here.

Speaker: Mia Voss 40:48

That piece, *this is normal*, is I will let you know that I think my journey to this point now could have happened a lot quicker If the person I went to in 2016 didn't just say *this is perimenopause, here's a prescription for an antidepressant* I kid you not know, that's what I got.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 41:09

I got similar, which was in you know, in my medical system was just kind of like, *this is the way it goes. And here's a couple options.* You really have to advocate for yourself. And you know that there, I just want to say there are options and things can be done. And it isn't just *let's just deal with it*, and or you know, *that's just the way it goes.*

Speaker: Mia Voss 41:32

Oh it's Yeah, right. That'll that that gets me fired up. It's just that one that don't even drop kicks and mofos. And even if you're in a paper gown, just grab them go dress in the bathroom and get out is what I say. We're going to put some links in the show notes too, four ways for you to find the right doctor about menopause Leslie, I know you have a ton of stuff that we can drop on people as well. So, I have two more questions. One more question. What's your favorite swear word or expletive phrase when that you just love to bust out once in a while?

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 42:21

Lately, *fuckers* with like, emphasis on the *Fu, fuckers.* I was raised in a home but *oh my goodness*, the only time I ever heard my mom cuss was when she would say *shit* when the dryer or the washer would stick you know this break down, and *oh shit* under your breath. And then it was just like, *oh my gosh, my mom said shit.* for many years that's the only thing I let into my vocabulary until I had a child. He is perfecting the art of cutting language. The Psychology of it too. Because he will tell me about the psychology and the importance of cussing and what it does for us and I'm like, *I think he's like, taught me some things.*

Speaker: Mia Voss 43:14

I love that. You're learning it learning the what good feeling things are released when a good expletive gets out there but everyone right now. Mine is *cocksucker.* It's edge. And it's usually when I'm frustrated about driving and the reason why it's showing up more now is because we are getting out and driving more often and so are other people. And so now it's back to the bullshit of traffic and dumb driver. So that's..

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 43:55

Mine also shows up when I get toxic social media coming my way. When I get trolls and that kind of stuff, which has been it's been a year of that.

Speaker: Mia Voss 44:13

Yes, Ma'am. You're like, *look at this shit here*. Yes, get started with and then it just rolls on. So well, I'll have everything in the show notes of how to reach out to you. And thank you for sharing though this conversation so important. And you gave us so many golden nuggets getting started.

Speaker: Leslie Gustafson 44:26

There are so many layers and so much more that needs to be said. But if I could end with one thing to say to women, which is *yes, one, you are more than enough. And two, this sex is for you*. More than enough

Speaker: Mia Voss 44:47

And that's all we need. Thank you. Take care. That's perfection by the way. I love that.

Speaker: Mia Voss 44:56

I hope you found this conversation refreshing and eye opening. Leslie will definitely be returning as a guest. Make sure to subscribe to the smart sex podcast if you'd like to hear more of Leslie's amazing wisdom, we'll have all of her links in the show notes. If you liked this episode, please do all the things like share with your friends, subscribe, and leave a review especially if it's a good one. If you really liked the podcast and you want to show it, head on over to www.shitwedonttalkaboutpodcast.com, click on the patron's button and become a full-time supporter of the podcast. And if you want your very own podcast, but you don't know where to start, go to www.helix-interactive.com and get yourself some they'll help you out. Thanks for tuning in. See you next time.

Bye