

# Bringing Sexy Back

by **Cari De La Cruz**, OH Member

*"Sexy Is as Sexy Does!"* Okay, so that's not exactly what Forest Gump said, but I think it sounds way better and I might even bedazzle a T-shirt with it.

Actually, "sexy" is a funny word for me because prior to a couple of years ago, I wasn't. As a matter of fact, I spent my life running from the very idea of it. I was cute. C-U-T-E. Cute as a button. Cute as a bug's ear. Cute as can be. Cute as pie. Yeah, that last one there—I really was cute as pie.

I had freckles and a little button nose. I had big, round brown eyes, chubby cheeks and exactly one dimple (right cheek...face, not the other place.) In my mind, I was not built to be sexy, especially considering the first part of the word: S-E-X.

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My Sexy Fail

To me sex was something to feel guilty about. I'd been taught that sexy women were forward, overbearing, insecure, loose, and tawdry -- you know, easy. Of course, we learn what we "know" from our families, and what we "know" is a result of what we choose to accept, reject, or adapt as we go. Unfortunately, we're not equipped to interpret what we're seeing and hearing, so what we believe to be "truth" is usually distorted by other's experiences -- experiences we haven't lived and are not even aware of.

My being the "accepting" soul that I am, I took everything my parents told me as gospel, but I forgot to account for their "filters." I would "hear" my daddy say that wearing my hair pulled back on one side or wearing shoes that laced up around my ankles would make me look like a streetwalker. I "heard" my mom tell me to "put a little piece of material" into the neckline of my shirt so my cleavage wouldn't show. I "heard" my grandpa tell me my "shirt pockets" were growing, while asking if I'd "taken any boys into the bushes" lately. Sex was dirty.

I internalized the damning, shameful, and judgmental words of a self-proclaimed "dirty old man" as truth, and accepted my parents beliefs without understanding the emotions or experiences behind them. I "successfully" rejected any appearance of "sexiness" so I wouldn't be considered bad. After all, my family equated "sexiness" with "cheapness" -- and who would want to be associated with a quality like that?

Perhaps then, it was my semi-puritanical upbringing that led to my mischaracterization of "sexy": "If there's a button on that blouse, it better be buttoned, and that skirt better hit you at the knees." I ran from the slightest hint of sexiness and smothered myself in clothing to hide my "evil sexy" from the world. But, something strange happened about three years ago -- no, I didn't just turn 40, although that was strange. I found my "inner sexy" -- something I never knew existed, let alone was willing to show!

I shed 160 pounds and gained sex appeal. I guess you could say I "appealed" away the layers of that ugly onion to reveal my beautiful -- sexy self.

So, just what is this "inner sexy"? To me, it is confident, assertive, gracious, fun, inviting, playful, liberating, contagious, flirty, and beautiful. Most importantly, it's not about sex at all! It's a feeling that bubbles up inside and escapes through your smile, your eyes, your walk, and your demeanor. It can manifest through your clothing, shoes, hair,

make-up, etc., but none of those things is really necessary to be sexy. Think about it, is there anything sexier than someone who is comfortable in his or her own skin (whether there's something covering it or not)?

In my book, sexiness is something you must believe with every fiber of your being. You've heard the expression "sex sells," right? Well, I think a fully clothed woman who does embrace her inner sexiness can sell 100 times more widgets than a completely naked woman who doesn't.



**Epic Sexy Fail**

Sexiness happens in many different ways, but it always originates from the inside. Sexiness done right is intoxicating, infectious and beckoning. It is a quality that makes others sit up and take notice. It makes people wonder what “it” is about you that makes you so intriguing. It makes people want what you’ve got.

But...NEWS FLASH: Sexiness is not skinniness.

“Sexiness” has nothing to do with your size, but everything to do with how you use it. After all, I’ve seen plenty of skinny people who are not sexy and plenty of big people who are. Of course, it’s easy to get confused, but since I’ve been on both sides of the sexy-fence, I can tell you (with great certitude) that I AM sexy. Yes, I am 44 years old; not exactly an age when “most” people find their sexiness, but thanks to people like Jamie Lee Curtis, George Clooney, Sean Connery and Helen Mirren, the world has begun to embrace sexiness after 40, 50, 60, 70, and even 80!

I think you can be sexy at any age – if you believe it. But, sexiness doesn’t just “happen” – it takes work; you have to put your heart and soul into it. If you don’t believe it, no one else will!

Don’t think you can do it? Well, here’s my sexiness recipe:

First off, I ignore whatever I can’t fix. You know, my imperfections: saggy skin, shrinkles, wrinkles, or whatever. Next, I fix whatever I can’t ignore. Then, whatever I can’t fix, and can’t ignore, I sell. That’s right. If I’m having a really bad hair day, have a pimple, hate what I’m wearing, or have wrinkles or shrinkles that are misbehaving, I sell them. Big.

But, how do I sell something I obviously don’t like? I believe I am worth it. That’s right. I believe that I am sexy – even on my off days. Hey, I want everyone who meets me to think that I actually believe my bad hair and shrinkles are the epitome of sexiness.

How can I be so convincing, despite the flaws? That’s easy, because I know tomorrow will be a better hair day, my pimples will disappear, and I won’t ever have to wear the yucky outfit again. And my shrinkles? Well, they are just a part of the package (and they are way better than the alternative).

So, that’s my secret for sexiness: Ignore the stuff you don’t like. Fix the stuff you can. Sell whatever you’ve got. Believe that you have it.

And, if you don’t know where to begin, find someone you think is sexy and ask them how they do it! Or, have a professional help you. Make an appointment with a psychologist (for the inside), and a makeup, hair stylist, or clothing expert (for the outside). Remember, sexiness is the total package—inside and out.

Have you found your inner-sexy? Do you believe you have it? Are you waiting for “someday” or “something” to happen before you show it off? Stop waiting. Dig deep, find it, and then let it out.

Remember, sexy is different to different people, but as long as you believe you’ve got it, that’s all that matters. Put your sexy on. I never leave home without it.



Just Right!