

# Being responsive and self-determined when it comes to sex: How and why sexual motivation is associated with satisfaction and desire in romantic relationships

How and why is being sexually motivated associated with satisfaction and desire in romantic relationships?

## **Sexual Communal Strength:**

Wanting to meet a partner's sexual needs; is associated with sexual and relationship benefits.

## **Unmitigated Sexual Communal Strength:**

Wanting to meet a partner's sexual needs at the expense of one's own sexual needs; is associated with sexual and relationship costs.

## What we did

We asked 250 couples to report their sexual communal strength and unmitigated sexual communion, their reasons for having sex, their sexual desire as well as their sexual and relationship satisfaction.

147 of these couples were also asked to report their reasons for having sex and their sexual desire for 21 days. 3 months later they completed a follow up survey. In each survey they reported their satisfaction sexually and with their relationship.



## What we found

On days when people had sex for autonomous reasons (e.g., because they enjoy and value having sex), they reported greater sexual desire and sexual and relationship satisfaction. On days when people had sex for controlled reasons (e.g., because they felt pressured or obligated to have sex), they reported lower desire and satisfaction and their partners also reported feeling less relationally and sexually satisfied.

Overall, choosing to have sex for more autonomous reasons and less controlled reasons explained why sexual communal strength is associated with greater sexual desire and sexual and relationship satisfaction whereas more controlled reasons accounted for why unmitigated sexual communion is associated with lower desire and satisfaction.

## In short

Being motivated to be responsive to your partner's sexual needs is associated with greater sexual and relationship if you enjoy and valuing doing so, but not when you feel pressured and obligated to meet your partner's sexual needs at the expense of your own sexual needs.