

Take the breaks off!

Play and Intimacy
LOAS II, 2018
Kristin Keefe, LMHC





Self report, too much or too little sex...



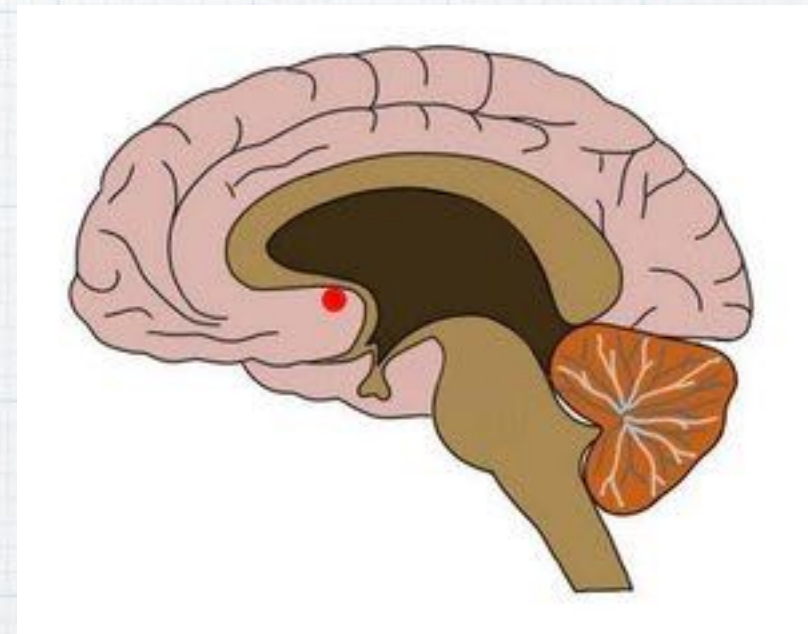
Emily Nagoski, Ph.D.

- * Author of the book, "Come As You Are: the surprising new science that will transform your sex life" 2015.
- * Ted Talks: "The truth about unwanted arousal" May 11, 2018 and "The keys to a happier, healthier sex life" Jan 15, 2016
- * Director of Wellness Education at Smith College 8 years. Now full-time writer and speaker.
- * Her tag line is: Emily brings the science!



Nucleus accumbens

- * The most widely accepted perspective now is that dopamine levels don't rise only during rewarding experiences but instead rise anytime we experience something that can be deemed either positive or negative. Dopamine signaling may be involved with storing information about environmental stimuli associated with these different types of experiences. These memory stores can be called upon in the future to help us remember how to realize the pleasurable experiences again or how to avoid the aversive ones.



<https://www.neuroscientificallychallenged.com/blog/2014/6/11/know-your-brain-nucleus-accumbens>

Dual control model for sexuality

- * Developed in the late 1990's by Erick Janssen and John Bancroft at the Kinsey Institute
- * Helps us understand how and when we respond to sexually relevant sights, sounds, sensations and ideas.
- * Sexual Excitement System (SES) receives info about about sexually relevant stimuli in the environment, things you see, hear, smell, touch, or imagine, and send signals from the brain to the genitals, "Turn on!" We are constantly scanning...
- * Sexual Inhibition System (SIS) is not shyness, it's neurological "off." Notices immediate sensory things, social and emotional factors, potential threats and future consequences and send signals to the genitals, "Park it!" Also, constantly scanning...

Star Island — SES “Yes Factors” & SIS “Nope Factors”



Maximize the sexy contexts

Many people enjoy:

- * Low stress (the bad kind of stress)
- * High affection
- * Explicitly erotic (might include the good kind of stress)

And...

- * Women (people born with a vagina) as a group have more sensitive SIS monitors
- * Men (people born with a penis) as a group have more sensitive SES accelerators
- * **HOWEVER**, there is more variation within group than between groups! They overlap a lot.



Can we change our SES and SIS reflexes?

- * Dr. Jim Pfaus and many hard-working graduate students at Concordia studied the SES and SIS systems, and other aspects of sexuality.
- * He was interested in how much animal strategies around sex are determined by their ecological niches, instead of hard-wired instinct.

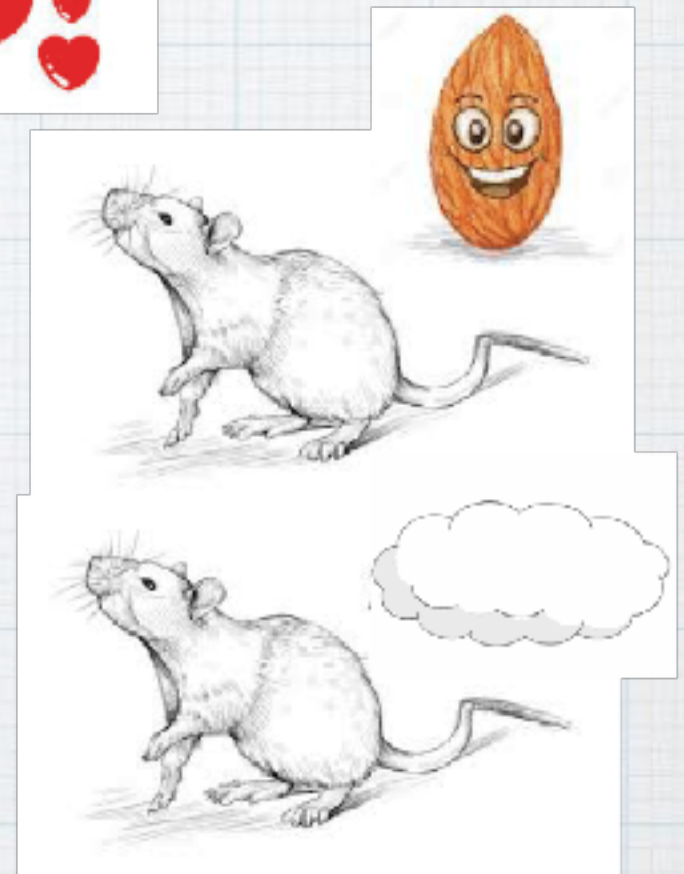
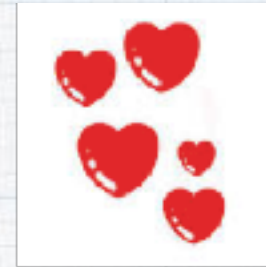
<https://www.the-scientist.com/profile/lets-talk-about-sex-37257>



Dr. Pfaus and his new pet rat

SES and SIS can be modified

- * SES Example: Trained male rats to associate female rats in estrus with smelling like almonds. After that when presented with almond-scented rats and rat-scented rats, he mated with the almond lady rats 80% of the time.
- * Female rats who have their first “really rewarding” sexual experiences with only one rat will afterwards only choose that rat in a field of males, and will mate-guard that rat from other females.



“Not without my jacket!”

- * SIS Example: Rats trained to have sex only when wearing comfortable jackets will self-inhibit and not have sex unless wearing their proper attire.

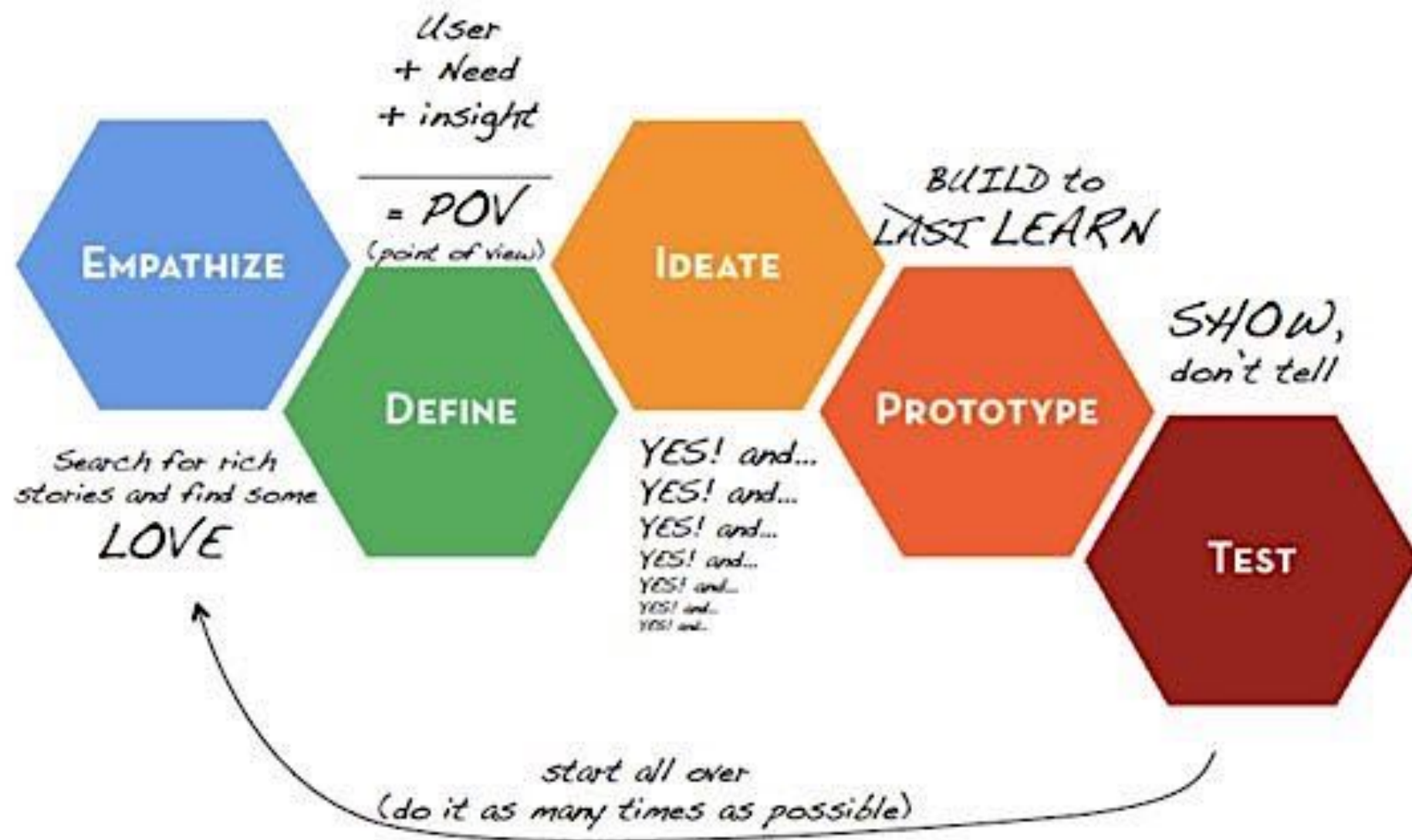


Stop/Start!

- * SES and SIS operate at the same time, in ways that are particular to the individual and the circumstances.
- * How to take the breaks off?



My design thinking CHEAT SHEET

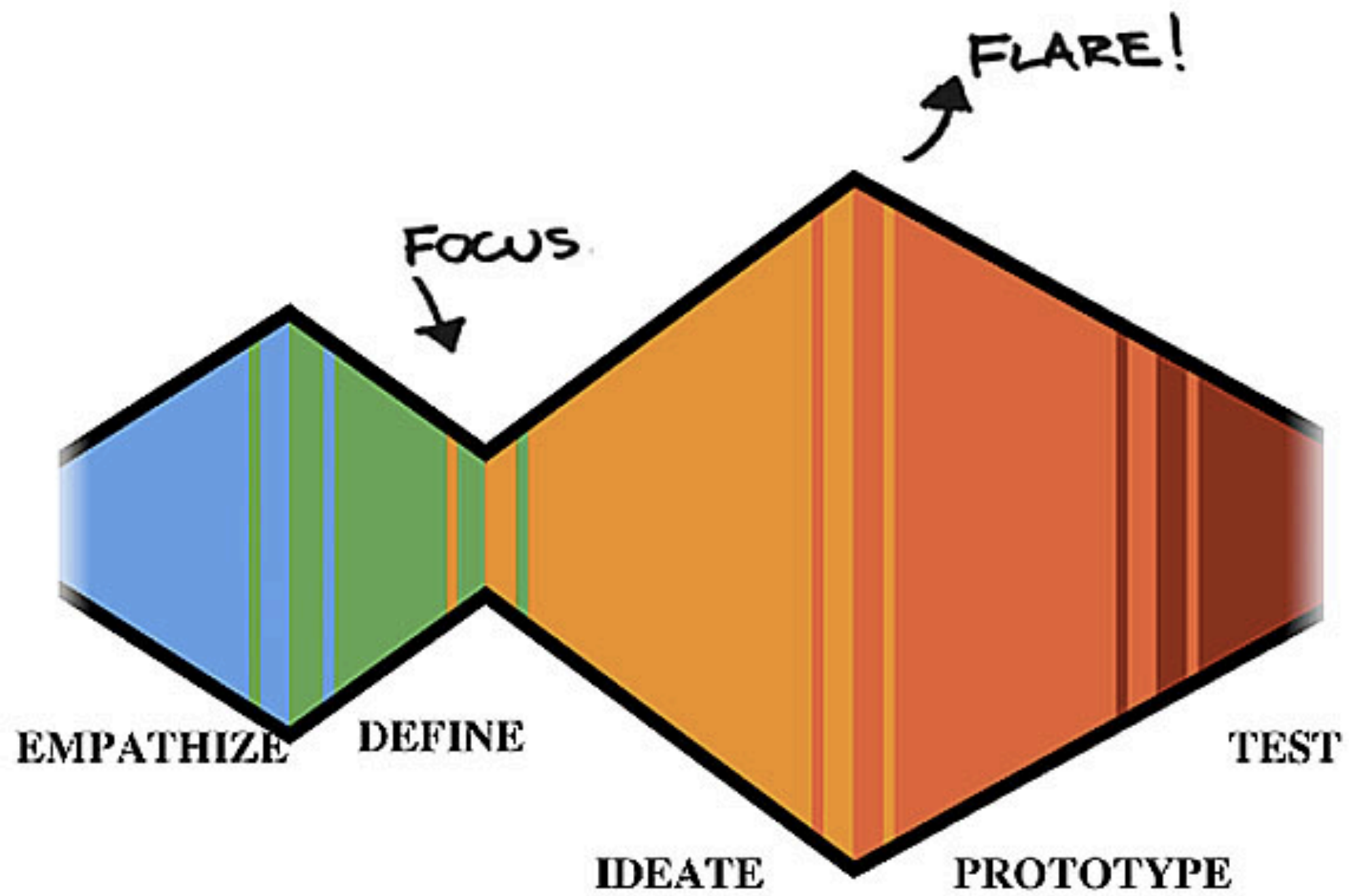


By Guido Kovalskys



Out of tune?

Put down your instruments, breathe, and remember that design thinking empathize and point of view thing.



We're not that different

- * We often share the same concerns, to different degrees.
- * We may have chronic stress. Chronic stress limits our ability to discharge adrenaline and lower our guard, and engage our senses. It impacts sexual interest in 80%-90% of people.
- * Daily grind wears down our sense of intimacy if there are no breaks or creativity.
- * Brainstorm during non-sexy times so that you are better able to innovate in sexy times.
- * Are you sleepy?

Woo-Woo Idea

- * Aion: Also eon in English, the unchanging eternity, the forever, associated with spiritual experience
- * Chronos: Measured time, inexorable sequence of uniform units, seconds, days, years, allows for agreements and deadlines
- * Kairos: special, significant, right, "opportune" moment, one in which deep immersion in the present can have a powerful and positive impact both now and on the future. Subjective experience.



Fraendel, P., 2011, "Sync Your Relationship, Save Your Marriage," p. 31

Myths of Time

- * Spontaneity: All sexual fun must occur unplanned and spontaneously to be worthwhile
- * Perfection: through careful time management we can do everything we want to for as long as we want
- * Total Control: We are master of our time. If we fail to achieve everything we want or need to do it's completely our fault, because we have been weak and not stood up for ourselves.
- * Quality Time: As long as you are focused and attentive, it doesn't matter how small the segments of time you have for one another

Use structure to get into "flow"

- * Spontaneity: No one wants to "schedule" sex, because Chronos is not sexy. Still, we can use Chronos to get more Kairos. Use that calendar to get a rhythm to your couple time, in large enough blocks to let playful things happens.
- * Rhythms are sexy.



Keep up with the French!

- * Odille Fillod, a French researcher, has made the 3-d model of the whole structure of the clitoris available to download for free. She hopes it will be used to enlighten the public's ideas about female sexuality.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/03/3d-clitoris/518991/>



the rational choice

the most likely to

delight

the darling

the long shot

Play regularly!

- * Research supports this point. ...One longitudinal study found that an increase from an average 1.7 hours per week to 4.9 hours per week of shared leisure time resulted in a 50 percent reduction of the probability of marriages ending.
- * And it will keep your own vitality flowing, too!



keefe.cc/play-star