presents

No Expiration Date: Sexuality and Aging
By Meena Natarajan
2015

Based on human sexuality research conducted by Drs. Sara Mize and Alex Iantaffi from the Program in Human Sexuality at the University of Minnesota
Actors

Acting Ensemble

Fawn Wilderson: Actor 1, Woman 5, Friend 3
Ed Korte: Actor 2, Man 1, Man 3, Man 7, Greg
Beverly Cottman: Actor 3, Woman 6, Friend 1
Lonny McLaughlin: Actor 4, Man 2, Man 4, Man 6, Friend 5, Man 11
Eric Wood: Actor 5, Smarmy Guy, Man 5, Man 8, Man 9, Man 10
Liliana Espondaburu: Actor 6, Woman 4
Tinne Rosenmeier: Actor 7, Woman 2, Woman 3, Woman 8, Woman 10
Patricia Enger: Actor 8, Woman 1, Woman 7, Woman 9, Friend 4, Wife

Creative Team

Playwright Meena Natarajan
Director Dipankar Mukherjee
Sound Design Dan Rein
Lighting Design Mike Wangen
Costume Design Carolann Winther
Research Team Alex Iantaffi and Sara Mize

Production Staff

Stage Manager Suzanne Cross
Asst. Stage Manager Taylor Craney
Front of House Manager Alberto Panelli
Marketing Co-ordinator Amy Danielson
Marketing and Publicity Barbara LaValleur
Social Media Co-ordinator Abril Macias
Box Office Homegrown Productions
Photographer Barbara LaValleur
Postcard Graphic Design Ethan O’Brien
Program Graphic Design Victoria Farbsz

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Pangea World Theater

Founded in 1995 and led by Dipankar Mukherjee and Meena Natarajan, Pangea World Theater creates and presents international, multi-disciplinary theater that illuminates the human condition, celebrates cultural differences and promotes human rights. Pangea produces, commissions and presents uncompromising, innovative works that challenge the expectations of our artists as well as our audiences. Pangea’s innovative theater performances and arts-based community engagement transcends borders and brings our audiences together at the intersection of politics, art and human rights to explore the relevant, often divisive, themes of our times – exile, immigration, human rights, political repression, race relations, freedom and cross-cultural expression. Pangea’s work has earned the theater many awards including an International Gardens of Peace Award (2000), a Twin Cities International Citizen’s Award (2000), a 3M Innovation of the Arts Award (2002) and an Excellence in the Arts Award from the Council of Asian Pacific Minnesotans (2004). In 2005, a Special Recognition Award from The Advocates for Human Rights was awarded to Pangea for its work in using arts to promote human rights. Most recently, the groundbreaking collaboration between Pangea World Theater and Teatro del Pueblo was the recipient of a 2012 Joyce Foundation award. Through nineteen years of creating programming and strategically building alliances across artistic, social and human rights organizations, Pangea has developed a committed and highly diverse audience that is truly representative of the cultures depicted on our stage.

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SCENE 1: MINDFUL BREATHING. (Gentle Sound of Ocean)

Actor 1: Hello everyone. I’m an actor. Once I turned 55, I became an aging actor. Inside, I feel the same as I did when I first started in this business at age 23. My left heel aches a little sometimes. So, most plays, we pretend that the audience isn’t even here. You are behind this invisible wall – this space in which you become voyeurs, observers, presumably watching something that you can relate to so that you can go back home and talk about, something that touches and moves your sense of humanity, something you remember. The actors act, the audience watches. We make up a pretend world and you participate in the pretense.

For this one, we break the fourth wall. You’re here in this huge big black box of a space and here we are. We are all in this play together because we, you and I, are in this staircase called life. Everyone’s moving along – that’s the one thing we cannot reverse. Since I started talking to you, your cells are already two minutes older than they were when you entered the theater. Age and sex are an inevitable part of life. You wouldn’t be here if your mother and father hadn’t had sex or if your parent’s sperm and egg hadn’t come together in this miraculous age of IVF’s and IUI’s and your grandparents on both sides and your great grandparents and great great great grandparents and great great great great grandparents sperm wagging its little tail up to that great great great great grandparent egg back in a long unbroken line back to the beginning of humanity. I feel dizzy just thinking about it.

So in the interest of really participating together, I invite you to practice something with me – something called mindfulness. Mindfulness is about being fully aware and present in this moment without judgement, with curiosity and acceptance. You might ask what this has to do with aging and sexuality. Keep that question or thought in your mind throughout the play.

For this part, turn your cell phones off and any other thing that makes noise or vibrates. Put it in a safe place. Close your eyes. Take in a deep breath and then exhale. Another one. A third. Feel your body beginning to relax. Now, think of the last trip you made to
the seaside. You walk from your hotel to the beach. You feel the sand underneath your feet. You feel the sand coming up in between your toes and it’s a soft, golden. You feel the grains massaging your skin. Now you’re stepping on the wet part of the beach near the ocean. Visualize the waves. The waves come up to the shore – in and out.

Now, with your eyes closed, slowly, softly, come back to present. Just continue to breathe. You are here now in this black box of a space – there are people seated all around you. With your eyes still closed, be aware of that reality. Come back to the sensation of just you, back into your body. Focus on your breath. Feel the gift of your breath moving right down to your toes. Exhale deeply, focusing on the air moving through the body. Think of the body as a vehicle though which air flows. Take two full breaths inhaling down to the tip of your toes and then exhaling all the way out. (Pause. Wait for a moment). Great. Keep your eyes closed. Notice a part of your body where you are still holding tension. It might be your fingers. Maybe it’s your neck or shoulders. Loosen them and breathe into that part of the body. Just focus in, loosen that part and just breathe. Just in and out like the waves of the sea. Breathing in, all you are aware of is breath. Breathing out, you are aware of your breath.

Now open your eyes gently…. What did that feel like…. (When the audience opens their eyes, actors begin to enter quickly. Some actors are sitting among the audience.)

SCENE 2: “ITS ALL SEX”

(Word Harmony begins, Actors 2, 3 and 6 are seated in audience and have participated in the mindfulness exercise with the audience. They speak from there, standing and starting to move toward the stage as they speak.)

Lights on.

Actor 2: I’m eighty-two.

Actor 3: Sixty eight
Actor 4: Sixty.

Actor 8: Seventy

Actor 6: Why do you want to know?

Actor 7: Around fifty-five.

Actor 1: Age is nothing to be ashamed of

All: We are the Sue’s, the John’s, the Ruth’s, the Patties,

Actor 2: the Elvis’s, the Hank’s

All: the Wayne’s and Carol’s…

Actor 6: And the Soledad’s, the Alberto’s and Letizia’s.

Actor 1 and Actor 5: the Aretha’s, the Coretta’s, the Martin’s and Quincy’s

Actor 1: Certainly not the Shauniqua’s, Beyonce’s, Takiya’s

Actor 5: or Tupac or Jamal

All: The ones born in the

Some: 40’s and 50’s

Some: some in the 60’s
Actor 6: My body makes a lotta noise now. My knees creak. Things crack. I will fart in a minute.

Actor 2 (sympathetically): I have a crabby bladder too.

Actor 3: At this age, I know what I want and I know what I don’t want. For example, if someone offers to help me across the road, I’ll hit them with my purse.

Actor 6: You make a move, and [makes "ffttt" sound]. That's out.

Actor 5: My wife has started to call me grandpa.

Actor 7: Where’s the 25 year old I should still see in the mirror?

Actor 3: I used to be a teacher.

Actor 4: I won’t be identified by my job.

Actor 5: Biologist. Taught evolutionary biology all my life.

Actor 1: I teach yoga and movement therapy.

Actor 8: Actor

Actor 2: Is that a viable career?

Actor 8: Is yours?

Actor 2: 4 kids, seven grandkids

Actor 5: Just one kid and hope I have a grandkid in time.
Actor 6: Bisexual female, married once upon a time.

Lonnie: Gay and I hate it when straight women see me as a challenge.

Actor 8: I’m waiting for my kid to leave home.

Actor 7: I’ve been in bed more with my own mother than anyone else.

Actor 2: I had my own business.

All: We are the ones who are invisible.

(Pause. A moment of discomfort.)

Actor 7: Do you feel comfortable talking about sex?

Actor 8: Do you?

Actor 2: I do but my partner does not.

Actor 5: My kid thinks my wife and I are asexual zombies.

Actor 4: I love sex. I used to do it three times a day but right now, I can’t do it at all.

Actor 8: I don’t get as many opportunities as I did 30 years ago.

Actor 3: I was born and raised and went to school in the Catholic Church. When I was growing up, girls didn’t talk about sex. You were either a goody-goody or a slut.

Actor 1: A Madonna or a whore.
(Everyone agrees)

Actor 7: Keep your legs closed, your dress down and your panties up!

Actor 6: My grandmother told me that sex is the root of all evil, not money. All I can say is, dig me some more roots, lots more roots.

Actor 2: Can masturbation be defined as sex?

Actor 5: Hmmm. Scientifically, isn’t sex the actual act? Foreplay leading up to the Intercourse which is equal to the act of sex leading to release which is the orgasm.

Actor 4: Anything that gives you an orgasm is sex.

Actor 1: Sex is about the release that gives you the release

Actor 3: Cuddling

Actor 8: Touching

Actor 7: Flirting

Actor 6: Sometimes even looking.

Actor 4: Sex starts when we say “Good Morning” to each other.

All: It’s all sex.

(Other actors offer dissent or assent as they see it)

SCENE 3 – Big Bang
Actor 5: In the beginning was the Big Bang. A singularity that caused our universe to exist and after a few billion years, the earth came into being. And then suddenly, single celled organisms began to appear. Like the one’s you see in biology text-books. Amoeba’s – blob like entities, little asexual creatures that reproduced themselves so that there were two, four, eight, sixteen, thirty two and so on – and eventually millions, all exact copies of the other. During the course of evolution, these little one-celled creatures evolved into multi-celled organisms, which then gave rise to complex animals such as amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, and, eventually, humans. When pressed to answer questions such as, “What is the evolutionary origin of sex?,”, scientists become silent. How could nature evolve a female member of a species that produces eggs and is internally equipped to nourish a growing embryo, while at the same time evolving a male member that produces sperm cells that expend a huge amount of energy to swim up to the female egg? And, further, how is it that these eggs and sperms conveniently “evolved” so that they each contain half the normal chromosome number of somatic (body) cells. So sex is extremely important in procreation…. Darwin and Mendel…..

(ACTORS get increasingly impatient during this scientific lecture. Challenge this in rising crescendo…. Now they’re ready.)

Actor 2: Then tell us, why do I continue to love sex well into my 80’s.?

Actor 6: Why didn’t my sex drive end the minute I stopped “procreating”? Other than that time I went through menopause.

Actor 1: oohh Had no problem with that, girl. I love sex. Used to do it 3-4 times a day and more. Now, I just do it once or twice a day…… with a few snacks and nibbles, in between. (winks at audience)

Actor 7: I don’t have any sex drive. Is that why?

Actor 3: When our mother was 85, she watched porn in her bedroom.
Actor 4: And why do I love sex with men? No attraction to the “egg-bearing” female. Is there a scientific explanation for that?

Actor 8: I just need my trusty vibrator.

Actor 6: Well, I’m bi and I'm looking around this room going, "You're really attractive, and so are you, and so are you, and so are you. Hey, what's your phone number?"

Actor 7: And….

Actor 1 throws his hands up.

MUSIC OUT

(Man 1 holds his wife. She's just sitting in a chair and breathing heavy. She settles down as she feels his touch. At the same time across the stage, Woman 1 sings softly to her mother in a vertical bed. They look comfortable.)

SCENE 4: Man 1 and Therapist

Man 1: I'm the caregiver for my wife who is in the middle stages of Alzheimer's. We've been married for 61 years and we're basically attached at the hip, and so I do everything for her. And there are times when it gets stressful, but it's brought us, if possible, closer together. And there isn't a night that goes by where I don’t help her – or she goes to bed much earlier than I do. Every night, I hold her, we kiss goodnight and she says, "Honey, I love you." So I know that it’s all been worth it. Sometimes, sitting together and reading the paper or something, I can tell she's experiencing anxiety because she's breathing heavy. And I hold her and I tell her take a deep breath, and she just settles down. And so that kind of a loving relationship is certainly a part of sex. It's not just the physical act, it's a lot of things.
Therapist: That's lovely.

(Long pause)

Therapist: Something’s bothering you, isn’t it?

Man 1: I hate the way people interact with my wife. When she doesn't respond in ways that are normally expected, they just stop interacting with her. And so there's a stigma associated with things like Alzheimer's. And I'm trying to get people to understand that there's still a real person that needs all the things that everyone else needs.

SCENE 5: Woman 1

Woman 1: I became a widow at 50-ish or something like that with my first husband – and then I went to widow support groups, you know, and I found mostly the one kind of women, "Been there, done that,". Mostly heterosexual. The ones that said, “I took care of my husband, you know, he died in my living room.” Me, I was thinking most of the time after he passed, "Where am I going to go next?" But most of these women married 30 years are going, "Took care of him, now I don't want to do it again." So they'll avoid, I think, intimacy or they'll join women's groups on purpose and so forth. They're just not going to do that again.

SCENE 6: Woman 2

Woman 1: I've been my 90-year-old mother's caregiver for five years. I've been in bed more with my mother than anybody else. I hold her and sing to her when she’s in pain.

She’s one of those people who still walks the track at the Y with her red tennis shoes. She just moved into assisted living, I think it’s in Washington County and one of her wishes when she moved was – “I want red tennis shoes, I don’t want to feel old.” And
her second was, "Will the library there have Nora Roberts?" And I said, "I'm sure. And if they don't, you can ask for it."

And I said, "Why is that so important?" And she said, "Well I'm not dead yet. Your father is gone, but I'm not dead yet. If I can read about it, that's great." And I thought, "Well, power to her." I didn't expect it, and I got embarrassed; she didn't. I thought, "Wow". I didn't realize it when I was picking up books for her from our library for the home. It was just a bag with her name. I didn't know what she was getting.

So, you know, she still has this vital need and I thought, "Gosh, I hope I'm wanting to read steamy romance novels, when I'm, you know, when I'm 90 or in my mid-80s or whatever."

So that, to me, was – from the biological point of view was that she still has this life force and vitality and that is – you know, we had this moment of embarrassment, but then it was like, "Yay, mom." [Beat] It was really a lovely thing once I reflected on it.

It got me thinking, if I get back to having or find someone to have a relationship with, will I need 17 pillows in bed? Sometimes my hip bothers me now because I got hurt moving her, you know. Like what's going to happen? And I don't know where you go for resources, like, no one's offering lectures about sex and pain. I mean not painful sex, but how to manage arthritis and sex.

Scene 7: Man 2

**Man 2:** As a straight guy over 55, the one thing that I’ve noticed is I don’t have the high, high, high sex drive that I had when I was in my 20s. So the 20-year-old women is used to the guy always being ready and saying back off, back off, because she’s the gatekeeper, so to speak. But as I'm in my 50s, there are times where I'm just really not up to this, and I really don’t want to come in or whatever. And women, let’s say, 40 and older, for me barely legal is 38 right now, some of those women will go, “Gosh, is it me?
You don’t find me attractive?” It’s like, no, no, it has nothing to do with that. But women have a difficult time if a guy just says, “Not tonight, it’s just not going to happen, I’m worried about work.” And they’re like, “Well why not, why not?” because they expect that the guy who was always ready at 20 is going to be the same guy that’s always ready at 50, and that doesn’t happen.

**SCENE 8: Woman 3 and Smarmy Guy**

(Woman 3 is at a club. Rest of actors chatting in the background, dancing. She’s clearly ill at ease, her first outing in a long time. She has a glass of wine in her hand. Smarmy guy approaches.)

SG: Hey.

Woman 3: Hi

SG: First time at this place?

**Woman 3 (gaining confidence): Yes.**

SG: Let me buy you a drink.

**Woman 3**: I already have one.

SG: They’ve got a great band going here.

**Woman 3**: Yeah, great music.

SG: Want to dance?

**Woman 3**: Why not?
They dance for a while. The music is fun, nightclubby, funky and a little loud. Woman 3 enjoying herself

Woman 3: I’m a little rusty.

SG (Can’t hear over the music): What?

Woman 3: Haven’t danced like this in a while.

SG: What’s your name?

Woman 3: Karen.

SG: I like your style

Woman 3: What’s your name?

SG: Love Handle.

Woman 3 (raises her eyebrows): Okay.

(SG dances weirdly, thinking he’s hot. She gets more and more uncomfortable. She stops and looks at him.)

Woman 3: Stop. What’s wrong with you? (walks off)

SCENE 9: Word Harmonics – How did you first learn about sex?

Actor 1 (to audience): How did you first learn about sex? We’re going to ask you that in a minute so think about it. (Turning to other actors) How did you first learn about sex?
**Actor 6:** I had sex at 15. Learned by having it. I had yearnings starting at 10. Really enjoyed sex starting at 33.

**Actor 1:** A friend’s older sister asked her mother and then told the two of us.

**Actor 8:** Sex, Belly Button, “The movie” in 6th grade, Mark.

**Actor 2:** From friends, media, books, health Class.

**Actor 5:** In my 5th grade. One of my friends told me that the boy’s penis inserted into the girl’s navel.

**Actor 7:** I was raped when I was a little girl.

*(Beat)*

**Actor 4:** How did I first learn about sex? Playing “Doctor” at age 4. With an older neighbor boy. It was new and exciting, and I didn’t want it to end.

**Actor 3:** I must’ve been just about 14 and my mother was a nurse, so she got her nursing books, and I remember sitting there at the kitchen table, and she’s got the books laid out – its all in Technicolor and she’s there, describing everything anatomically. And I just remember looking at her and going, “Yuck.”

Actor 1 asks the audience: How did you learn about sex? *(gets feedback)*

Wrap up after 3-4. Thanks audience!

**SCENE 10: Man 3**
**Man 3:** I was introduced to sex by a neighbor when I was 4. *(Breath)* I was molested and I was, *(beat)* that’s how I was introduced to it. I notice that a lot of people go through that, but I just, I wish I didn’t know about it that early, you know? ‘Cause I don’t know what – I know what happened, but I didn’t know. Everyone says now, “How come you didn’t tell your mom?” I didn’t know. I just couldn’t walk over and tell my mom that this guy made me do this, and he made me try to do this to him, and maybe this isn’t – I didn’t know. So I thought about it. I went in my room, and I thought about it. I said, “What just happened to me?” and… I didn’t know what it was till I got to like 12, 13 years old and felt, “Well, maybe that was wrong,” and then I told people about it in my 20s. I waited till I was in my 20s, ‘cause I still didn’t know what happened when I was even 12 or 13. I just know that what he did to me, the things he made me do, they were wrong. I didn’t tell anyone – it was just the situation. …

*(Pause)*

I really – I wish my mother would’ve kept her eye on me more. I mean, that’s – I don’t know if it has anything to do with that, but I just wish – people tend to just let their kids run places and go places where they’re – they – it was in the ‘70s, but it keeps happening today…

*(Women nod in agreement)*

**SCENE 11: Man 4 and 5**

**Man 4:** I notice everything about – if I have a potential partner, I notice everything about ‘em – their feet, their hands, their eyes, their hair, and do they brush their teeth? I just – I wonder am I ever gonna get a perfect person for me? ‘Cause I’m too picky. I mean, I’m attracted – I can go somewhere, do a quickie, but I really don’t want to. I just – I’d really rather meet somebody and hang out.

**Man 5:** I used to go to the dances over here, and I could get three phone numbers a night. Now, I can’t get anything. I just don’t. It’s dry as winter.
Man 4: Sorry, man.

Man 5: I notice I use my tongue a little more.

Man 4: Like you mean, talking?

Man 5: If a man can’t get it up, he likes to lick a woman all over her body.

Man 4: Okay!

Man 5: I needed to explain that? Sorry!

Man 4: Hey, thanks.

Man 5: Listen, just want to give back what I was given when I was younger. I can’t have it now, so I want to bring pleasure to her now.

SCENE 12: Woman 3 and 4

Woman 3: I’m over men right now. I just want to know where the decent ones are? All the ones my age seem to want younger women.

Woman 4: They’re all in hibernation. It’s a cold dark winter in Minnesota where men are concerned.

Woman 3: Do you know what my husband said to me, Soledad? To my face, “You’ve gained weight,” he said. I was amazed that he was that blunt – I mean that’s what he verbalized to me, if there was other issues, he never told me. He actually told me to my face, "I cannot maintain an erection in your presence because you've gained
weight. You're not losing it. I can't — he says, "I'm moving on." That is the reason he gave. He's a year older than me. He has a paunch, and he's almost completely bald.

Woman 4: NO!

Woman 3: Yeah. He wasn't getting that he was in that same ballgame. And so –

Woman 4: Well, listen to what my ex-husband used to do. When I met him and we got married, I was small. I weighed 110 pounds. Then after the kids, I weighed 125 pounds. He would offer to give me coupons for $1,000.00 if I would lose a certain amount of weight so I could go buy a new outfit and clothes and be this skinny thing that he wanted me to be.

Woman 3: Not exactly subtle, was he?

Woman 4: And I would say, "But you're not accepting me for who I am." "Oh, yeah, I am. I love you, but just do this." And that is a killer of anything. I mean, do I – I don't want to have sex with someone who feels like that about me.

Woman 3: Who needs him?

Woman 4: My husband said, "I will not accept you as you are." He said, "When we got married, you looked a certain way, and that's like signing a contract." He actually said that to me.

Woman 3: That's insane.

Woman 4: I have a niece who just signed a contract with her husband. “We will keep ourselves in the same physical condition until death do us part.” I told her not to do it but who listens these days.
Woman 3: Good luck with that.

Woman 4: Yeah. It's unfortunate, but there's people like that in the world.

Woman 3: It takes all types. (Beat) What am I going to do now?

(Woman 4 puts her arm around Woman 3, comforting her)

SCENE 13 - Woman 5 and Woman 6 - Sisters

Woman 5: I don’t have a problem with sex. As a matter of fact, I’m a nymphomaniac, okay? I could actually talk myself into an orgasm or something, without even you touching me. I would love to have it breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and a couple snacks in between. But you know, when I was younger and I used to date, you know, my mom was real strict – you can’t have sex until you get over eighteen, and you do all that stuff, but I learned at an early age how to please me. And when momma allowed me to come out of the house, I was like, “Ooh yeah, he look good, I’d like to go home with him.” you know, how men, a long time ago, back in the days, per say – men would pick up women and take them home, and after they’d take them home, they’d say, “You gotta go home, I don’t wanna see you no more.” Well, I was on that kick, you know, especially when I was in college – “Oh, come over for a couple drinks, you know – don’t get your toothbrush out, don’t take your shoes off, get off my bed, ‘cause it’s done.” then I got married – I’ve been married three times, never anything – the divorce was never because of a sexual relationship or anything like that, ‘cause we were always – a matter of fact, they told me that I need to go get help. But now I’ve got a perfect husband, he’s 59 years old, a few years younger than me and he loves it just as much as I do. My first husband was a 60 second man. Start to finish in 60 seconds. So I’m happy with my third, I just – I’m happy, you know. And I went through menopause, and even when I was going through menopause I’d get two orgasms, one comes this way, one comes this way. And I’m all for oral sex, you know, if I cant see it, if you cant do it, brother, let me tell you,
you’ve gotta come up, let’s try something new, this is how you do it, I don’t like it licked, I like it sucked.

**Woman 6:** When I was having sex, I had to take a pill before I could have an orgasm, because I have hives. And I only get them when I have an orgasm, and I have to stop in the middle, and right at that climax, I’ve gotta take the pill before sex. My husband would buy me these 18 pills in a box.

**Woman 5:** Only happens to her with stress and orgasms. Oh, she’s my sister.

**Woman 6:** Yeah. I’ve been separate for three years and menopause has taken away my sexual drive. When I would say “hot flash” my husband would think it was time to get butt naked, so you, know we had to go to the doctor and we had find a compromise. Maybe Monday, Wednesday, Friday – but when Wednesday came, I’m still not wanting to. And I like sex, but these last three years. *(nods her head)*

**Woman 5:** There’s other ways.

**Woman 6:** I’ve got a vibrator, and you know, doing me, you know, in the bathtub and things like that, you know – had an affair with my little duck – Actually, I had like six of them in there – and they’re just floating around, and I was like, “Ooh, Lord” – and then I got a big orgasm and then a bigger one. And there was this one time when I went to that shop downtown where they’ve got this huge penis. Remember those little horses at the fair. Well, they have this golden one, its about seven feet long and all you do is hit the buzzer and I hit it five times. I had my phone in my blouse and I was so hot, it fried up.

**Woman 5:** Yeah, it had a menopausal moment. She has a sex drive, though she does not like to admit it.

**Woman 6:** No, but you see, these are not with other people – this is objects and objects don’t have any judgement.
SCENE 14 - Word harmonies - “What is something you wished you knew about sex?”

**Actor 1:** *(to audience)* What is something you wished you knew about sex when you were younger?

**Actor 3:** You don’t have to manipulate anyone to have sex.

**Actor 8:** I do. If I have to get any.

**Actor 6:** What is something I wish I knew? Hmm. That you have to compromise.

**Lonnie:** I don’t.

**Actor 3:** That menopause would kill my drive

**Actor 7:** It hasn’t, for me.

**Actor 5:** That sex has to do with what’s down there.

**Actor 1:** Sex has as much to do with what’s in here. *(pointing to the head)*

Scene 15: Man 6

**Man 6:** In November of 2011 I was diagnosed with advanced stage IV anal cancer. The tumor had metastasized and I had tumors in my liver.

As I began to recover from the extensive chemotherapy and radiation regimen, I discovered I had nerve damage and problems throughout my pelvis. The most troubling was that I couldn’t get my dick to work at all.

I sought out the 3 best urologists in Minnesota. With each one I heard the same words, "You're a very lucky man. You're lucky to be alive. But given the radiation scarring you
cannot expect to have a normal sex life." At my final appointment those words rang in my ears. Is he going to say it, too? Above the din in my head I could hear some of he was saying but none of it mattered. He went on to explain why it wasn't going to be possible. Damage to the pudendal nerve blah blah blah.

As I left his office I began to argue with the Dr. in my head. By the time I reached my car I was in a full on argument out loud as though he were there. “You cannot expect to have a normal sex life?”. What the fuck does that even mean? Just what exactly is a "normal" sex life? I'm a gay man. I've never had a "normal sex life"! “How can you say that? What the fuck do you know? I can certainly still get naked. The rest of my body works just fine. I have really talented hands and I've been told my mouth is magical. You don’t get to decide whether I can have a normal sex life!”

After the anger passed, I got really sad. I began to wonder, how many other men he had told such nonsense to. I started to wonder how other men felt hearing that. Was I just to go along with “you can't expect have a normal sex life?”

Over the next several months, I tried everything, Cialis, Viagra, Levitra and the like. Tantra, acupuncture none of it helped. Masturbating didn’t work, porn didn’t help. I did enough kegal exercises that I can pull my asshole up to my navel.

At some point I realized, I still wasn’t having sex with anyone. None of what I was doing would fix the real problem. My deep longing to lie naked with another man in my arms having great sex and connecting.

I realized it was time to try something different. Since no other stimulation seemed to work I figured I’d go all the way and mustered the courage to go to a sex party. As I watched the other men playing in various stages of undress, some naked, some fully clothed my nervousness turned into excitement. I watched. In the middle of the group was the sexiest, muscly man I’d seen in the flesh in years. [Beat] His only clothes, a jockstrap, high top sneakers and athletic socks. I was in a gay man’s locker room fantasy. I was mesmerized. He was so present, aware and connected to each person he played with. I was so taken by his complete freedom to give pleasure to others. With all the worrying I’d been doing about getting my dick to work, I’d forgotten that the real magic of sex for me was being present to my partner’s pleasure. I was sure present to his. Our eyes locked and then it happened. For the first time in years my dick began to get hard. I
could feel it pressing against my jeans. Focused on him, I stepped into the circle and he and I connected. I was so filled with joy I wanted to cry. He and I became great friends and occasional fuck buddies. He’s taught me a lot about sex. I’ve learned so much from him. (pause) I call him, “Zen Sex Master”. This year, [Beat] I’ve fallen in love with an incredible man. I’m having the best sex of my life. He’s 26. I’m 60. Ha, the Dr. was right… I can’t expect to have a normal sex life. What I have is a miracle.

SCENE 16: Woman 7

Woman 7: A few years ago, my 17 year old said to me, "I don't know if I'm bi or not. I don't know if I need to know. I just know that it's not about gender, it's about the quality of the person – who they are and how I feel about them. Can I trust them; do they trust me; and do we love each other?" And I said, "Well that's wonderful. And what's making you think about that?" And he said, "Well this girl said her parents were gone and I could come over and we could have sex, and I realized I didn't want to because she's my friend. It would be interesting, but it would sort of be like science class for me." And I just thought, "Whoa, like I don't know what I did for him to get there."

And then his father remarried and my son said to me, "I know what your problem is, you're not having sex. Pop is so much calmer now that he's married. I'm sure they're having sex every night and he's really calm and happy. You need to have sex. And I have to tell you, don't worry about it being a man or a woman, just find someone." And it's really wonderful, but it also made me think. I consider myself straight, whatever that means! But like you said, there aren't as many men as we age. I don't have an answer, but he planted the seed. And so I have no idea if the seed is just going to stay, I mean I just don't know.

SCENE 17: Woman 4 and women friends (Sex Toys)
**Woman 4:** When I told friends I was getting divorced, some of my women friends said,

**Friend 1:** Oh, well, we're going to go out and just have a girl’s night out.

**Friend 2:** I know where; somewhere we can get some toys for you.

**Woman 4:** No, never done that and I’m not going to start.

**Friend 3:** Oh yes, you are. Don’t be so old fashioned.

**Woman 4:** And they took me to a sex toy store before dinner.

*(Pause)*

**Woman 4:** Those are expensive.

**Friend 4:** Yes, like car payments.

**Friend 1:** The batteries wear out too damn fast.

**Friend 2:** But you don’t argue with it!

**Friend 3:** No argument there…

**Friend 4:** You can turn them off.

**Friend 1:** Back in your drawer.

**Friend 2:** Would love to do that to my husband!

**Woman 4:** And I didn't want to go in and they dragged me in. They were all very comfortable, in the store. Some were married, some single. I just couldn't handle it, so I went back out to the car. They each bought something and gave me this bag, and when I got home, I didn't know what everything was for. I thought, "Oh, my gosh, I'm just like this suburban married woman who's getting divorced and doesn't know anything about the world."

And luckily for email, I didn't have to call anybody. I just sent out this group email, "Okay, there's this thing, it says this. Who bought this and what do you do with it?" And I told my mother about it and she said, "Oh, well when your father moved to the VA, the women in the wing of my condo had a cocktail party and they all brought their catalogs
for sex toys to give me, because they were widowed or whatever, and they didn't want me
to not have any more fun.” And I was shocked. I was like, Mom….

SCENE 18: Man 7

Man 7: I’m a lot more apprehensive and shy because I don’t want to expose my body
like I did before. I’ve started feeling overweight, out of shape. And meeting someone
new and standing naked in front of them is hard to do. It is, for me. So I have to find a
way to work past that. And I know that aging is natural, but as I get older, it’s hard for
me to get back into the shape I'm used to. And because of that, I don't look at myself as
attractive. I don't want to be standing in front of women, especially if it’s a new
relationship. It's just something I’m trying to work through.

SCENE 19 - Woman 4

Woman 4: I had a partner who kept telling me, "Just don't be rejecting." I wasn’t about to
reject him, he was the kindest guy I had seen in a long time. He was the only thing I had
seen in a long while. The first time we were in his house together, we cuddled for ages.
Boy, was I ready for it? So the cuddling continues and we talk and talk and talk, and
finally something starts to happen. Just when I'm thinking, "When are we gonna get to
the bedroom?", he had me against the wall and then he had me on a table. I’m getting all
hot and excited. We were leaping off the furniture. It got to the point where the neighbors
were knocking — like, "Y'all been jumping around for four hours," and I was thinking
and I got suspicious, like, "Have you got a camera somewhere?", like, "What is going
on?" And he's jumping and leaping. And I realized what was going on – he wasn't
getting it up, and he was masking it with all this other activity. For about two hours
straight. I fell off the back of the couch and I thought, "Not the couch?" I am not a small
girl, so you can't edge me on the couch and expect I'm gonna be balanced on the couch,
especially with my faulty hip. And then I just came out with, "Okay, what is the real deal
here?” So once the real conversation started, "Okay, then we'll work out something else.
Let me do the work."
SCENE 20: Man 8 and Woman 8

Man 8: My son is 32 now and I think once we had a child, it was downhill then. And also I must admit that I think that things like anger and frustration on my part put a damper on sexuality. But because I think that we believed in each other and we had a child to raise, we pretty much stayed together except for a brief separation about 15 years ago, but we stayed together. And like I said, I think we believe in each other. No, I know. I mean, I definitely believe in her and unless she’s an incredible liar, she believes in me. But, yeah, the question was satisfied. No, I think that she has … you know the phrase “character armor”? 

Woman 8: What’s that?

Man 8: It’s a notion that comes from a psychotic psychiatrist named Wilhelm Reich, but the deal is that you develop behaviors and ways of holding your body and tensions and things like that to defend yourself from the rest of us. And I think because I was such an asshole, she developed things where a lot of intimate touch just gives her the heebie-jeebies so, I mean, she will play this game sometimes where she invites me to kiss her here and it’s to see if she can handle it. And usually it makes her – without even touching, she will have really profound tickle responses and so things like – there’s a real restriction on the ways that I can comfortably touch her. So things like going down on her or touching her nipples are, you know, that would be inconsiderate. So it puts a limit on our intimacy and the way that it … it works is that our lovemaking sessions pretty much are her working to get me off which is that ain’t the groove. That’s something else so it’s frustrating. But I don’t think that that’s from age. I think that that’s from circumstance. I think – I could be wrong, but I think it’s because of my behavior and certainly because we put sex on hold to really be attentive to our son.

Woman 8: Have you tried talking to her?

SCENE 21: Woman 9 and Greg (her ex-husband)

(Love song from the 50’s or 60’s)
Woman 9: I put all the clothes in the washer.

Greg: Hmm

Woman 9: I’ve vacuumed the carpet.

Greg: Hmm

Woman 9: I scrubbed the bathtub. It was full of the grime you’d left behind

Greg: Hmm

Woman 9: I’ve baked the bread

Greg: Hmm

Woman 9: The beer is in the frig on the first shelf.

Greg: Hmm. Good

Woman 9: The apple pie is ready. Can you smell it?

Greg: Mmm

Woman 9: I’m leaving and never coming back.

Greg: Hmm. (lowers his newspaper) What! You can't. Not after 25 years together. We have 2 kids. Dammit, we live the AmActor San Dream everyday. Actor….

(She crosses over to other side of stage)
**Woman 9:** That’s what happened. Or that’s what I think happened. My version, anyway. Everytime I remember that moment, it comes out slightly differently. But that’s it, more or less.

You can never put a broken plate together again. It will never look the same. I came out first with a woman in 1958 before many of you were born, *[laughs]* and I was in New York City, and you could do anything in New York City. And we were together for five years, it was heaven; but my mother was so upset when she found out. Seems absurd now but she created such a fuss. Anyway, I left Lisa; I wish I hadn't. And got married, like, within a year. Greg was determined to marry me – he was starting a new job, he was a radio announcer and going to a small town in Wisconsin – I think he just wanted a woman to come along so he'd have sex and stuff. And like I was saying, we were married for 26 years. I did not enjoy sex with him at all. When I left him, I came to the Cities and found my love.

*(Dancing with Woman)*

Singing the same song again as when it started.

*(Looks at audience as she dances)* The truth is in the fragments. I had to pick all the fragments up, retrieve my truth. And here she is. The sex was so good. We sizzled together. I loved her till the day she died.

*(Woman collapses)*

I will never find another love like this again.

**SCENE 22: Woman 3 - ONLINE DATING**

*(3 a.m. in the morning –Facebooking a male gay friend.)*
**Woman 3**: Would you consider me good looking?

**Friend 5**: What the…..

**Woman 3**: Would I be above average, below average or good looking?

**Friend 5**: What are you upto?

**Woman 3**: Trying to fill this form to place a singles ad.

**Friend 5**: Why? It’s 3 a.m. Go to sleep…

**Woman 3**: You’re up!

**Friend 5**: I have insomnia.

**Woman 3**: I have a condition too. Its called, “lack of sex.”

**Friend 5**: I thought you went on a date yesterday.

**Woman 3**: I did. The guy kept telling me, “Can’t believe that I’m going out with someone who’s twenty five years older than me.” I couldn’t stand it anymore.

*(The phone rings. Friend’s voice is heard.)*

**Friend 5**: Good-looking. Extremely, lusciously good-looking.

**Woman 3**: Thanks. It’s a pity you’re gay.
Friend 5: Can’t help it. Been there, tried that. If I were a straight man, I would be extremely attracted to you.

Woman 3: I think I need botox. I studied my face in the mirror. I went from good looking to below average in 20 seconds.

Friend 5: That’s because you’re looking at your face at 3 in the morning in your P.J.’s. Fill the form up in the morning! How about the guy you went out with last week?

Woman 3: He wanted to go out and get married the next morning.

Friend 5: Maybe you’re being too picky.

Woman 3: Okay, this site says, “Be honest.” How about, “Widow with a slightly achy hip, around 65, enjoying the quiet comforts of age and the wisdom it brings, seeking a sex slave for as long as she wants. Oh and don’t forget to provide information about HIV, STD’s including herpes, syphilis, gonorrhea, genital warts and so on.”


Woman 3: Oh if you want something for the marketplace, how about this one: Youthful, good looking widow, around 65, intelligent, well travelled, wanting companionship, would like to meet similar man.

Friend 5: Much better! Why don’t you try all three and see who bites?

Woman 3: Oh my goodness! What a loser!

Friend 5: What?
**Woman 3:** The men in these ads are such losers. Listen to this, “Beatles or Stones? I still like to rock, still like to cruise in my Camaro on Saturday nights and still like to play the guitar. If you were a groovy chick, or are now a groovy hen, let's get together and listen to my eight-track.” I think I’m just going to watch re-runs of Golden Girls and be depressed. See you tomorrow.

**Friend 5:** Come on, don’t give up, woman! Go out there and look for them. They’re there.

**Woman 3:** Thanks. Good night. Go to sleep.

**Friend 5:** Talk to you tomorrow, sweetheart.

**SCENE 23: Man 9**

**Man 9:** I know I made a lot of mistakes and I probably did some really bad things when I was younger and growing up. And I listened to everything tonight, right? I look at you guys here and out there and what I see are some great women, right. And I said, "How can somebody do that to them?" But then I think about, "Did I do stuff like that?" ‘cause I know right now my whole attitude and mind frame is different than when I was younger. And I would never go out do that stuff now. But I wonder, did I do that, too? And I'm listening and I said, "Man, these were some jerks, right?" And I’m looking at the mirror, going, "Man, you probably were a jerk, too."

I have a lot of regrets about some of the decisions I made and some of the things I did. But it's all part of life. And I didn't have nobody to teach me anything. In my neighborhood or in my family, I was just raised by my mother. I didn’t know my dad. And then the area I grew up, men just did what they wanted to do, and we watched 'em, and that's what we thought was okay. And I have a fifteen-year-old boy who needs to learn this now.

**SCENE 24: Woman 5 and 6**
**Woman 6:** Remember momma, god rest her soul, had a stroke, and after the stroke, you know, she came to stay with us. So, she didn’t have any man. Her old man was down in Virginia. And so when my uncle died, she got this big old suitcase of - I ain’t never seen that many porn in my life, but he was a freak.

**Woman 5:** When I found that suitcase, and I told her I was gonna burn all the CDs – I’d burn all the movies, and stuff – and she’s like, “No, you don’t – give me them.” And it was like, 200 some porno movies in there, and each of them was like 10, 12 hours. You shut the door and all you could hear was the music.

**Woman 6:** And the Vaseline

**Woman 5:** And the Vaseline. I mean, she’d shut herself in her bedroom for like, ten hours, and all you could hear was [*makes panting sounds.*]

**Woman 6:** Yeah, I still have that. I have mom’s toys.

**Woman 6:** I should have burnt them… Remember when I was younger, I had this job at a call center where people would just call in and you’d have to do this acting and stuff and they really was paying me a lot. You call this one number and they’d hook me in. Older gentlemen whose wives were not sexually inclined would call. - I couldn't believe how many of them wanted me to be a teenager, and I’d have to say, “Oh, baby can I do it like this? Oh, baby, stick it right here,”. I’d never even seen these people but just to say – “Oh, you know you got it like that –“ so I do know that that’s half of the sexual act is talking. And my husband and I, we’ve got kids and family, so we pick out one day a week we go stay at a hotel so we can really do what we want, so nobody in the building hears us, ‘cause I’m very vocal when it comes to being pleased, and I do think that it’s half of the sexual act, is being able to hear – and plus I think that’s a turn-on for the man to hear, “Oh, baby, oh”
Woman 5: It’s got to be genetic.

Woman 6: Yes, I’ve got what I call a total package, with a nice bow on top.

(Lights out as laughter keeps going)

SCENE 25: Word Harmony “Mindfulness and sex”

Actor 4: I don’t separate mind from body.

Actor 5: I spend too many years being mindless instead of mindful.

Actor 7: I meant to Google “mindfulness.” I never heard that word before so I’m like, I meant to Google it but I didn’t. I got confused. I don’t know what that has to do with sex. Maybe it’s a word I should know.

Actor 1: Mindful meditation is where you’re just sitting there and paying attention to the air going in and out of your nose and the idea of being sort of, I think, alert to the sensation of being alive.

Actor 2: I took up running in the last year and for me, there’s nothing more defines mindfulness than running in the woods. And I hate – I do not use headphones, but just stopping in the middle and just feeling the sun, hearing the leaves and just the tiniest little sounds – birds chirping, totally in the moment,

Actor 3: The presence of being means feeling the entire self, being in your body emotionally, physically, sexually to allow all of the experiences of communication with another person or yourself. Just … it’s … I’ve been in both situations where, you know, I don’t want to be here versus ahhh.
**Actor 6:** I was in a relationship in my early 20s where it was not good, and I wanted to get out of it, but I was in it. And we lived on a little houseboat that had skylights, and we were in the bedroom making love, and all of a sudden, I opened my eyes, and I looked through the skylight out to see the clouds. And at that moment, I realized I'm bigger than this relationship. And I'm gonna get out of this. I didn't even go that far. It was just like I expanded out into the clouds. But it was through sex that I had that awareness.

**Actor 8:** I love to dream. 'cause I have questions for God. I talk to God a lot, and then you go to sleep, and wake up and I go, “Oh, now I know what to do,” after a good nap. I meditate on it.

**Actor 5:** I think that there’s probably some kind of measurable neurochemical whatchamadoodle happening when we make love that is pleasurable that I want to have more of. And I don’t think that it’s necessarily … I’m not sure what making love is. It’s … but there are … there’s something there that is beyond and is measurable, the crescendo, building crescendo into orgasm. There’s a groove that’s possible and that’s what I’m interested in.

**SCENE 26– Man 10 lying on bed**

**Man 10:** Come to bed, honey.

**Wife:** Hmm (She’s on the internet, playing a videogame)

**Man 10:** Honey, think we had way more sex before the internet.

**Wife:** Hmm

**Man 10:** A world in which was no email, no World Wide Web, you know, no Wikipedia, facebook, texts or even e-mails. Just you and me…. What I wouldn’t give to go back? Sweetcakes…. Would you like that?
Man (wearing his clothes talking to audience): It's almost like it's the how or the where you're getting it from has shifted in, I guess the last 10 or 15 years, so people aren't able to get whatever they are looking to get in another place as opposed to from you or from another human being. It's kind of like I'm feeling or thinking about my wife who plays constantly videogames on the computer, and I miss her being or spending time with me. But there's this thing that she gets from sitting there playing this machine. And I've heard stories about how they design the game so that you get a certain amount of ecstasy or pleasure each time you hit the button. [Making sound effect] like they’re getting a rush from it.

SCENE 27: What advice would you give someone about sex?

Actor 8: What advice would you give someone about sex?
Actor 7: Don’t jump into bed when you first meet someone
Actor 6: Don’t go straight to the good part. Wait!
Actor 5: I've met some women and right away, they talk about marriage the first date.
Actor 4: Or even in a month.
Actor 2: Talk to your daughter. I taught my sons everything they needed to know, but I couldn’t bring myself to talk to my daughter.
Actor 1: I was sexually abused by my father and brother until high school. My family should have protected me, and they didn't. So because of that, I can’t trust my gut feeling.
Actor 3: Its okay to say No when you don’t feel like it.
Actor 5: At 25, you could probably still be a circus act. 35, you start moving some of the hardware out. 45, you want a stiff mattress and with a whole bunch of pillows. 55, it's a done deal. Everything gets old. I got a '77 Cutlass at home. I can put two motors in it to keep it young. Can't do that with the human body. You gotta keep moving. Don’t let it rust.
**Actor 3:** I feel like I don’t now what the sexual rules are anymore.

**Actor 4:** When I first came out and got divorced, I spent an awful lot of time in the bars just trying to get laid. Sometimes I’ve hooked up with people online, you drive 20 miles to get there. You spend half an hour or an hour, even two hours in the car, then on the way back you say, what the fuck did I go do that for? It was just a waste of time. You go home and it feels empty.

**Actor 7:** Your body is sacred… some one told me that once and I didn’t listen. All I wanted was the rush and I didn’t listen.

**SCENE 28: Man 11 and Woman 10 (Aural)**

(This entire dialogue in darkness. We hear fumbling, loud breathing and so on It’s a voice over.)

Woman 10: Wait a minute

Man 11: Hold it, me shift a little. Why don’t you come over to my right side?

Woman 10: Sorry!

Man 11: It’s the left side that’s painful.

Woman 10: Okay let me get to your right then.

(Noises)

Man 11: Thank you.

Woman 10: No problem. Gotta go with the flow.

Man 11: I know it’s the surgery. It’s made me slow down. I’ll be fine.

Woman 10: Don’t worry, sweetie. I’m okay with it. We’ll make it happen.

Man 11: Let me make you happy, baby…

Woman 10: Yes, touch me right there.

Man 11: Ooh, love it when you talk like that.

Woman 10: Yes, that’s right, that’s right…. 
(More fumbling)

Woman 10: Now…

(Grunts and Moans)

Woman 10: You’ve got to find it, honey!

Man 11: I’m trying…

Woman 10: Where are you, in another region now.. That’s not it.

Man 11: Here I am…

Woman 10: Baby, you’re fumbling around. I can’t believe it. After 40 years? You can’t find it?

(Woman 10 starts laughing)

Man 11: Baby, wait. Don’t get up.

Woman 10: Baby, after 40 years, if you can’t find the hole, I’m going to have to dig you one…

(Both laughing)

Scene 29: Its all Sex Part 2 word harmony

The usher brings the results of the study of the day in. The statistics have been entered and the results of the study are read by Actor 1.

Actor 1: Ah, here’s that survey that you were generous enough to fill before the show. Our little sample pool says 90% of you will go home and have sex tonight.

Actor 8: Wow, that’s amazing.

Actor 7: Shut up! That wasn’t in the questionnaire

(Actors laugh)

Actor 1: No! Just testing. Okay here goes:

This is a scientific (winks) study that you filled before you came in here so these are your numbers:

Our age range is _____.

___% are single.

About ___% of us are uncomfortable talking about sex
__% feel our pool of sexual partners is diminishing
__% feel that love and sex are intimately related.
__% report that they had never heard of mindfulness and sex. (Actor 1’s response will vary based on the answer. If a percentage reports that they have not heard of mindfulness and sex, then she says: Well, you can think about it now.)

Here’s the most interesting definition of mindfulness and sex: _____ (from the survey – otherwise one of the actors can provide it)

Actor 2: Sex is like the rain – it can overflow or there can be a serious drought
Actor 3: It’s a catalyst that can cause distress, great sadness and unbelievable pleasure.
Actor 8: Its primeval
Actor 1: Sophisticated
Actor 5: Game changing
Actor 3: Chemical
Actor 7: Symbiotic
Actor 4: Charged
Actor 8: It’s a playground for young adolescents
Actor 5: A solace in our mid-life crises
Actor 6: An easy escape at any age, just a few moments of heaven
Actor 2: As we age, we can define it. Sometimes it’s not all about the orgasm.
Actor 7: It’s a possibility for the most mindful act that we can ever experience as humans
Actor 4: It’s the one thing that makes me whole and allows me to be egoless for a second.
Actor 1: Sex is a crucible for love
Actor 3: Hate
Actor 7: Loss
Actor 6: Cleansing
Actor 4: Discovery
Actor 2: And whether you resist
Actor 5: Persist
Actor 8: Desist,
Actor 3: This world and an almost overwhelming number of species including us
Actor 6: Are flirting
Actor 7: Looking
Actor 5: Touching
Actor 2: Cuddling
Actor 4: Playing
Actor 3: And indulging in the act of
All: SEX
Actor 1: Is it getting hot in here?

THE END