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Here is the transcript for:

Unlock the Secrets to Sacred Intimacy with AVAIYA.com
Teacher, Leah Piper



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Ande Anderson [00:00:00]:

Hello, Avaiya family. I'm Ande Anderson, and this is my cohost, Brielle Starr. My partner, Ike Allen, and I are teachers, mentors, and the co owners of Avaiya University. Avaiya is the creator of over a 1000 books, films, courses, teachings, and other supportive resources. Thank you so much for joining us today. Our fellow teacher, Leah Piper, is with us today to talk about Sacred Sex, Spiritualizing Intimacy 1 Orgasm at a Time, and Savoring Everyday Magic Moments. Welcome to Avaya, Leah.

Leah Piper [00:00:29]:

Thank you so much for having me.

Ande Anderson [00:00:31]:

Yeah. Great to have you. So could you get us started with a little background on you? What what brought you to the work you do today?

Leah Piper [00:00:37]:

Oh my gosh. That is quite a story. I'll try to keep it brief. You know, I I grew up in a pretty, interesting religious background. We started off as born again Christian, Pentecostal, you know, worshipers, speaking in tongues and the whole 9 yards and it was, it was kind of a wild trip until I was about 10 years old. And then we confer converted into Catholicism and I went to Catholic school and that whole shebang.

And, what that basically left me was this conditioned idea that sex was dirty, but you gotta save it for the one you love. So lots of mixed messages and, like, virginity was this high virtue.

Leah Piper [00:01:17]:

And as I became more aware of both my spiritual beliefs and my awakened sexuality, these two things just didn't converge. And there was an incongruence regarding what I was experiencing in my body that felt transcendent and felt like this prayer, but through the name of orgasm, which I just really felt like I knew I was missing this thing. There was something more to sex than what I was being taught. And therefore, my journey of looking for role models and for looking for this other path to a spiritual awakening that didn't shame sex, that didn't give one a sense of guilt, but actually gave one a sense of beauty and awe because these were the things that orgasms were really giving me. However, there was still the shadow of shame always looming over, this idea of sexual love. And as I began to look at tantra specifically, which felt like a real answer to some of my questions, I had to come face to face with my own sexual wounding. Having been molested as a kid and and really realizing I had some pretty dark secrets that I feared if anyone found out, they would discover that I was broken, that I was unlovable, that I was unworthy, and that deep down there was an ugliness there. And that really had to come to the light and therefore started my journey of sexual healing in combination to sexual awakening.

Leah Piper [00:02:58]:

And through that powerful work, the shame started to dissolve. And my ability to become truly naked, not just in sex, but like with my soul,

and be able to share that as a gift to others, you know, ended up being my life's work to be able to show other people what was possible, that we didn't have to live with this conditioned, scared, dangerous, fearful response, of shame as it related to sex. Wow.

Ande Anderson [00:03:27]:

Thank you for sharing your story. That is quite the the, yes, diverse mix of of spirituality growing up. Yeah. Very interesting. Can I ask you you don't have to answer, but did you have any, like, backlash from family when you went down this path?

Leah Piper [00:03:42]:

You know, it took me a lot like, I one of the things that's been so interesting when when tantra becomes your career, first of all, nobody really knows what tantra is. Right? They kind of hear about it. You know, it's like you got some of Hollywood buzzing about it and people think it's like hours and hours of sex. And so there's a little bit of a lure like, oh, what's that all about? But then there's also like, is that a religion? Is that a cult? You know, there's a lot of sort of mixed messaging. And so I had to be mindful when people say, you know, well, what do you do for a living? You know, how do I answer that question when there's so much misinformation clouding it? And I'll never forget, like, I probably was already in the work for about 8, 9 years. And my grandma one day was just like, so honey, what do you do? And I was like, well, grandma, I help people love better. And my job is to help people, you know, heal when they have felt sexually wounded and to show them that sex can be a prayer, however that fits their belief system. And so I got better and better at answering that question, but I really had to sit with what can the other person hear.

Leah Piper [00:04:52]:

And so as the years went on, I felt like it became safer and safer to share with my family the the intricate layers of my work. And now, I mean, I've got a podcast, everything's wide open. When I had to first tell them about the sexual abuse, that was probably the scariest moment because I didn't want them to feel shame or blame And I was afraid of the fallout of how they would feel about themselves knowing that this happened. And so that was an interesting journey, but what was such a gift was how much compassion, love, support that was really available to me. And I know not everyone is as fortunate. So I've got an amazing family, and I've got a mom who superpowers forgiveness. So the thing that I think I've been blessed with from her is a way to see that forgiveness is a gift you give yourself, and it's a way to love yourself, and it's a way to be, freed from conflict and hatred in your heart and all these other things that forgiveness is an obstacle for so many. So I feel really lucky that she was my mom.

Leah Piper [00:05:58]:

You know, she's got great relationships with all of her exes, is still you know, she works on those friendships. She's just an incredible woman.

Ande Anderson [00:06:07]:

Awesome. Thank you. I appreciate you sharing about that. I think it's always helpful for if anyone else is in a similar, scenario or interested in this work or whatever, just, like like, the language you use to describe what you do, I think that that's beautiful. And and, yeah,

thinking about what what the other person can hear, what what makes sense. So thank you for going into that briefly. And, Brielle, do you wanna take the next question?

Brielle Starr [00:06:26]:

Yeah. What's the number one mistake people make when it comes to orgasms?

Leah Piper [00:06:32]:

It's that they treat orgasm as a goal. I think the number one thing that we, use that robs us of pleasure and joy and truly being in our body is we take sex too seriously, and we use it to grade our relationship. Are we successful? Are we failures? Is my partner a success? Is my partner a failure? And we see it as a sign of whether we're broken or we're whole. And so my advice to people is when they look at a goal to sex, it should be love. And if you can make love, even if it's the dirtiest, nastiest, raunchiest, hottest sex, kinkiest sex you can have, which I totally applaud and I'm a big, believer in, This still the undercurrent, the foundation so that that could be love. Because when you make sex about love, trust me, baby, all those orgasms will follow. It's a place where we get to play, and we forget about playing as adults. We just get really serious about raising our kids right and having enough money and our jobs and our careers and making sure the house is not falling apart, and all those things can become so serious.

Leah Piper [00:07:46]:

And being a good role model, we become so serious that we forget that it's time to, like, be playful and joyful. And our sexuality should be a place where we renew our soul when life gets hard because life is hard. But this is like there's this gift called our body that's capable of ecstasy, and that is how we can really destress and, you know, be connected to our erotic innocence.

Brielle Starr [00:08:11]:

That is very beautiful. A very good way to look at it. I definitely hadn't thought of that. And also what you said, about people feeling, like, broken if they don't have an orgasm every time or whatever like that. I know that's very common, so it's nice hearing, like, it you don't have to think that way about yourself.

Leah Piper [00:08:27]:

Yeah. And then I think also, like, in more long term relationships, sex can sometimes feel like a routine. It can feel obligatory. We can feel pressured, and we can also feel really judged by our performance. And, I think that really trips up, like, the beauty of what we get to co create together as partners. And and so that can be tricky and it's not something we're born knowing how to do. I mean, frankly, our first gurus of sex to begin with are our parents and that can screw anybody up. So those are like our role models.

Leah Piper [00:09:00]:

And then like our second role model when it comes to sex is we're either looking at porn or we're looking to our friends who know just as

little as we do. And, and so we just have a really piss poor education in our culture when it comes to sexuality in terms of what our options are and what it takes in order to authentically express ourselves and what it takes to actually tune into desire. And I think especially for Volvo owners, we've been sort of conditioned to, look at making everyone else happy before we truly allow ourselves to pursue our own happiness when it's and most meaningfully when it comes to desire. I can't tell you how many women I talk to who they don't even know how to answer that question when it comes to their desire and when it comes to what really sexually turns them on. And that's like an adventure that we should all feel invited to discover and go on.

Ande Anderson [00:09:51]:

Yeah. And and speaking of desire or lack thereof, so if someone watching right now is feeling, oh, I don't wanna have sex. Like, how can people actually transition from that? I don't wanna have sex or I'm not interested anymore. I'm too old or I'm whatever it is to authentically wanting sex.

Leah Piper [00:10:08]:

That's a great question, and it's, it's a loaded emotional question. And I still I think the first impulse for a lot of people who aren't having sex and aren't fulfilling that part of of what it that part of being human is that that first response tends to be a sense of defensiveness. I don't need sex. I don't want sense. I don't even feel desire. It's a I don't you know, it's kind of this a wall comes up and that's really natural and normal and so I just wanna invite anyone who's like feeling that and and and it may be totally true for you like you're just not interested. And there are times in our life where we have to take a pause on

sexuality and not be like trying to fight our way towards it, but to honor the fact that I'm just not sexual right now. I'm not feeling it and I can't find it and I go through stages of that myself even as a sex educator when I feel numbed out and I'm not in the mood and I'd rather read a book.

Leah Piper [00:11:06]:

And that is can and is authentically true. And sometimes it's also a defense around something else that's hidden that feels tender and vulnerable. And so I think the first step to navigating that is to step back from however you would judge that and instead get curious. And go, isn't that interesting? Like, I'm just not interested in sex. Isn't that interesting? I don't even I don't think I have a libido. Isn't that interesting? And then it's like, okay, so then what's the question after that? How do I feel about that? What who would I be if that wasn't true? If I did feel connected to my desire? If I did feel connected to, you know, wanting to get naked and maybe get dirty or maybe get holy? Whatever outlook perspective you wanna have on it. And and then that might lead you someplace really interesting. It could take you down a path of real self discovery if you were coming from a place of curiosity versus judgment.

Leah Piper [00:12:05]:

Because and I'll just say this final thing about curiosity versus judgment. What I've come to learn especially through positive psychology is that it's curiosity that suffocates judgment. If we can have just a brief moment at considering when a judgment arises, What if we could turn that into curiosity? You'll notice that you'll go from closed to somewhat more open.

Ande Anderson [00:12:27]:

Mhmm. Yeah. Very good point. And and I'm glad that you mentioned it as, there are sometimes when authentically, yes, we're not in the mood and that's just not happening or different phases of life or what have you. And then there are times where, yes, we could be using that, right, as a defense for something, like you mentioned, like tender, vulnerable, things that we don't want to be vulnerable to, all of that. So great way of of looking at it in in both directions. Brielle, you wanna take the next one?

Brielle Starr [00:12:52]:

Yeah. What habits can couples take on to restore trust and intimacy?

Leah Piper [00:12:58]:

Well, there's a couple things, and one is magic moments. It's like these little drops in the day where you become intentional of, like, really feeding a sense of nourishment to your partnership. And so what that looks like is, like, making a habit and a practice of kissing each other before one leaves. You know, whether that's on errand or going to work, but you just take, like, 3 seconds to look into their eyes, to kiss them with presence, and to say I love you. And then when they come home, do the same thing. Even if it's just 5 minutes, go to the pharmacy. Welcome home, babe. I'm so glad you're back.

Leah Piper [00:13:39]:

And to just have, like, a little moment of stillness, a little moment of, like, conscious presence to to be in your heart and just beam that to your partner. And little things like this, you know, also, like, when you are having sex before a partner just, like, pulls out no matter what they've penetrated somebody with, is that they go slow to not be in a rush, to look into each other's eyes. And you don't even have to say anything, but you're just being purposeful. And the same thing with when you put something in. It's like you go slow. You you give it, like, this pregnant, like, moment of intention, and you actually think for a second, like, what would I put inside my partner? Or what would I surround my partner with? You use, like, a thought form. You know, there's there's all sorts of beautiful emotion in our heart. We can send that through our skin.

Leah Piper [00:14:36]:

So maybe you wanna send to your partner that they feel like they belong or that they know how loved they are or that they feel sexy or that they feel alive or that they are healed through this communion that you share together. And so it's like little things that you can drop even a text or, you know, squeezing their tushy when you're walking past each other in the hallway or chasing each other. You know? It's like these little cute things that take no time at all that send a message. I love you. I want you, and you belong with me. And and these things are like drops in a bucket that end up filling up a bucket, and they help our partner feel full. And and that leads to really great sex. And sometimes we find ourselves in relationships where the sex has just kinda gotten broken.

Leah Piper [00:15:27]:

It's gotten dysfunctional and it's gotten heavy and it's gotten awkward and and there's some suffering. And and when we talk about trust, oftentimes there's broken trust as a result of that, and that's how we find ourselves in a place where we haven't had sex for 5 years. Or maybe we only have sex once a year, you know, and it's like it's so fraught with hurt. And so the path back to trust is learning how to trust yourself. Because oftentimes when someone breaks your trust, there's also a feeling if you can't trust yourself. You can't trust the fact that you trusted someone, and then they hurt you. And what does that say about you? And how in your judgment you can't even figure out how to find the right person who you can trust. Right? So there's all these little inner attacks that go on.

Leah Piper [00:16:13]:

And the best thing someone can do is go on a journey of self discovery when it comes to do I trust myself. And when you truly trust yourself, you know that you can trust the boundaries you put forward. You know that you'll have consequences to those boundaries that you will follow through on. You trust your picker. You trust that you can make the hard decisions. You trust that you can have the hard conversations. You trust that you won't abandon yourself again, And you also trust that you'll probably make more mistakes, but you know how to get back up to become resilient as someone who makes root mistakes, and that you'll learn and you'll grow and you won't beat yourself up. So learning how to trust yourself is the first path forward to learning how to trust others.

Leah Piper [00:17:01]:

And when you can trust yourself, you know that you can trust yourself to be vulnerable. You can trust yourself in intimacy. You can trust yourself to take risks, and that's a lifelong practice.

Brielle Starr [00:17:12]:

That's very beautiful. Thank you. I, it's definitely, like, interesting how everything tends to start with yourself. You have to trust yourself first, like yourself first in order to, like, experience that towards other people as well, and it's really important to remember that. And I also love what you said about, just all the cute little things, and, I definitely see how that's very important in the long term for a relationship.

Ande Anderson [00:17:35]:

Grab grab the tushy on the on the in the hallway.

Leah Piper [00:17:40]:

Pat that tushy and remind your partner if you haven't had one in a while. I just told my husband yesterday, I need a butt rub. Would you just come over here? I'm doing dishes, and you just rub my butt for a while while I clean off these dishes. And then I made the dishes so much more fun.

Ande Anderson [00:17:53]:

I bet. Yeah. So absolutely. Okay. So what if there is a, one partner is wanting to do something different? Maybe they wanna be touched

differently. They wanna do a different position. They they wanna mix something up. What advice would you give to them who feels like they're getting shut down when they ask for something different?

Leah Piper [00:18:14]:

Such a great question. Well, try to remember that not that your partner's first response may be defensiveness. Because even though you're saying, hey. Let's go on an adventure. They're thinking I do something wrong. I'm not enough. I'm not doing it right. And so that can kind of poke at an insecurity, and we have to navigate that together.

Leah Piper [00:18:35]:

And so you can also preface it by saying, like, if your partner has a tendency to react that way, just look this isn't, about that we're doing anything wrong. It's about what can we add that will just make this part of our life even fuller. And I wanna I wanna go through a journey with you where we start to see what other desires may be sleeping inside of us. And, you know, I've been reading this erotica and something's really gotten me hot, and I'd love for us to read it together or, you know, I'd like to like to watch porn with you, and I kinda wanna know if that would trigger you. And and what do you think about having a date where we just sort of explore that? Or, you know, my my girlfriend told me about sex toys, and her and her partner really enjoy them. And I'm wondering if we could go to a sex store together, or maybe we could just shop online. How would you feel about that? And you just sort of you you begin to invite the process. That's not always easy, and so you may wanna reach out and get support from someone who can

help with that type of communication where you have somebody who can translate for you.

Leah Piper [00:19:42]:

Because if you're like me, it's not uncommon to have difficult conversations where all comes out wrong. And you don't mean it to come out wrong but none of us are perfect at at communication and yet it's the most important thing we need to do in order to have a healthy relationship. So never be afraid to hire a coach or to hire an expert, and you could do so much of it online now. You don't even have to leave your house to have someone help hold the space for you because chances are there are things that your partner feels that when they communicate it you might take wrong. And I just know from being, proactive when it comes to therapy is that we need a translator sometimes, and sometimes, therapists can take what we're feeling and saying and help our parent our our lover really get it. And, yeah.

Ande Anderson [00:20:28]:

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Definitely. There's there's always that benefit of, yeah, the middle man, the someone in the someone else to see things in a different way and maybe communicate that in a different way and help us communicate things in a more effective way for our partners. So I love that.

Leah Piper [00:20:44]:

Yeah. One thing I would suggest is, like, think about the relationship that you wanna have. Like, what do you really wanna experience with

this person? That you just you want this this type of relationship with this person who would be so meaningful for you. And you can lead with that. It's like, you know, what I really wanna experience with you is a, b, c, d. And what I feel like is in the way is x y z. And I wanna know if you and I can sit down and explore that and come up with a way to go forward. And I wanna know how you feel about that and what you feel like is in our way of this future version of what we could really have together.

Leah Piper [00:21:25]:

And and and in this way and you just wanna be mindful of, like, avoiding blame language.

Ande Anderson [00:21:34]:

Yes. Absolutely. Especially if if some one one of us is defensive, I I can, you know, raise my hand for that because that that tends to be me sometimes. I'm like, oh, okay. Got it. Yeah.

Leah Piper [00:21:44]:

Yeah. Yeah. I statements go a long way.

Ande Anderson [00:21:47]:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, wonderful. Thank you for sharing the tips around, better communication. And, Brielle, you wanna take the next one?

Brielle Starr [00:21:52]:

Yeah. What are the health benefits of pleasure?

Leah Piper [00:21:57]:

Oh my gosh. Well, for one, science has proven that people who experience pleasure, in particular sexual pleasure, live longer and their immune system is actually stronger. And so when you have connections with other and their pleasure forward, that builds your resilience to when things get challenging in life. There's something about pleasure that allows us to remember to hold steadfast when we're dealing with a crisis, that gives us the strength to deal with crises. The other thing is people who have pleasure in their life are less lonely, and loneliness is actually, something that has been shown is so detrimental to our health. And so when we can be the type of people that foster belonging for to others by inviting them to have pleasurable experiences, like getting together in community and being as a community working on a project together. Even if that's just like a potluck or a cooking class or you go clean up the beach. Having a sense where you are inclusive of other people that brings people together and actually fosters a sense of pleasure.

Leah Piper [00:23:08]:

I always tell people write out a pleasure list and and both inside the bedroom outside the bedroom. You know? Like, what really gives you joy? I'll I'll give you an example. Things that I have on my pleasure list is like there's this pie. Okay? In in the Santa Cruz mountains, Boulder

Creek, California has a restaurant called Scopazis, and they have a pie called StrataPie. And, honey, let me tell you, that pie I just think about it. And I remember how delicious it is. Like, I this pie is special pie. Drinking a glass of Sauvignon Blanc outside a restaurant and people watching.

Leah Piper [00:23:43]:

Talking to my aunt Mary about deep shit. Making love on the lunch hour. Like, these are some of the things that truly give me pleasure. Drinking a hot beverage on a cold day. Like, when we can start to list out things that give us pleasure, we are noticing that we become more committed that pleasure is actually a vital ingredient to a happy and joyful life. And it actually increases our life satisfaction scores when you look at studies. And so when you start to say pleasure matters then you start to fulfill those pleasures. And I dare you put this list on your refrigerator, and then check it off when a pleasure has been granted to you.

Leah Piper [00:24:25]:

And write thank you and the name of that friend, lover, or person who granted you such a pleasure even if it's yourself. And you'll notice that that list on your refrigerator takes courage, vulnerability, but it gives other people permission to make pleasure a vital part of their daily life too.

Ande Anderson [00:24:44]:

I was gonna ask you about what what the what the pie was.

Leah Piper [00:24:48]:

Well, the pie okay. So it's like this buttery, flaky, kind of crusty crust. It's like the I really I think the magic is in the pie crust. And then there's like a thin layer of chocolate ganache within like a a almost like a a a chocolate pudding and then whipped cream, but it's the perfect balance of like fat, salt, and sugar. And, oh, I am also a woman who loves to cook and who's, like, obsessed with the senses. And so, like, that is such a beautiful example of layered flavoring that just, it's a thing that opens.

Ande Anderson [00:25:25]:

A great description. I love it. Well, thank you. I I was like, okay. I've gotta ask

Leah Piper [00:25:29]:

you about the pie because

Ande Anderson [00:25:31]:

what is what is this pie? And do you have any last insight you would like to leave us with before we wrap up?

Leah Piper [00:25:41]:

Yeah. Just be gentle with yourselves. You know? And this this little thing called life can be really challenging. And, you know, just remember to love yourself up, be gentle, be gentle gentle with yourself and with others, and also be generous with your assumptions.

Ande Anderson [00:25:59]:

That's a good one. Thank you so much for doing this with us. We so appreciate you, Leah.

Leah Piper [00:26:04]:

Thank you for having me. It's been such a joy to, discuss love with you.

Ande Anderson [00:26:09]:

Yes. And thank you, Avaya students also watching or listening for showing up for yourself today on your own journey, and we will

Leah Piper [00:26:15]:

see

Ande Anderson [00:26:15]:

you again soon. Take care.



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