



You Don't Need To Know To Overcome It, But..

What Caused Vaginismus For You?

A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is lying on her back on a thick, white, shaggy rug. She is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. Her eyes are closed, and she has a peaceful expression. A small, fluffy white dog is curled up next to her head. She is wearing a green and yellow bracelet on her left wrist and a brown leather watch on her right wrist. The background is a soft, textured white surface.

Potential Causes Of Vaginismus

Let's take a deep dive into what may have been the reason(s) for vaginismus, for you.

I invite you to make a note of any of the events, circumstances or memories that pop up as relevant for you. This list will come in handy in the practical aspects of what lies ahead - the journey of compassionate emotional processing.

What Really Created Vaginismus For You?

Trigger Warning: mention of rape, molestation, sexual assault

There's no one-size-fits-all answer...

1. Rape, molestation, sexual assault of any kind can contribute to experiencing vaginismus.
2. An early exposure to pornography can be incredibly traumatic - a child seeing two people have aggressive sex can register as incredibly violent and scary!
3. Religious shaming can shut down the sense of the feminine, sensuality and pleasure all being a healthy and positive part of life.
4. Growing up with the notion of the masculine being scary or dangerous, or being uncomfortable of a male body for any reason. This creates an aversion to the masculine and the disbelief that men can be safe and nurturing.
5. A culture of deprivation related to the feminine or body shaming. A mother not nurturing herself, especially combined with subtle messages that men are superior to women, can have a girl believe that she got unlucky to be born one. This creates a rejection of the feminine, one's body and resentment around offering sex to men.





6. Being starved of loving touch and developing the belief that touch is not celebrated, necessary nor okay in general. This creates an absence of nourishing self-touch and a ruptures of the mind to body connection.

7. Physical injury, even if not related to the pelvic floor, can create a feeling of being invaded upon. And therefore anything else that creates this feeling of invasion (like being penetrated) registers as danger.

8. Being told that you must have sex in order to avoid being alone forever, or to be good enough for someone. This ties sex to your sense of self-worth and can create protective mechanisms to avoid 'failing' in it. It also creates the necessity and pressure to perform sexually, taking the play and fun out of the experience.

9. Even something like swallowing pills being uncomfortable can contribute to fearing sexual penetration! For me, the attempt of swallowing pills created a constriction effect similar to vaginismus! Since the act of eating is a penetrative act, as is PIV (penis in vagina) sex, food and sexual issues can be incredibly connected. The same applies to fear of injections!

10. In the body's attempt to prevent pregnancy, a fear of getting pregnant can contribute to the physical tightening of the pelvic floor. Vaginismus IS the best form of contraception after all.

Which example(s) can YOU relate to?

Tickling Terror

EVEN being tickled as a child can be a source of sexual trauma and what may have contributed to your experience of vaginismus.

The act of tickling CAN be a fun and harmless way that a parent can bond with their child. However, for some kids, it can be an incredibly traumatizing and abusive experience! ESPECIALLY if the parents don't honour a child's request to stop.

When it comes to trauma, it's not about the thing that happened, nor the intention behind it. It's about the IMPACT of that event on the body and nervous system.

Just like the touchy grandpa who forces a child to hug him at his request, the act of tickling against the child's will creates the notion that their body is NOT theirs. That their body's purpose is for the satisfaction and enjoyment of OTHERS, rather than something they themselves have authority over.

You might say "But they like being tickled! See, the child is laughing!" But just because someone is laughing does NOT mean that they are consenting. Laughing is simply a biological response to being tickled, just like having an orgasm or becoming sexually aroused can be a biological response to sexual abuse.



My Stories

The events I've identified as possibly having contributed to my experience of vaginismus can be considered subtle or covert, at least when compared to more clear or overt examples of sexual abuse.

Yet the impacts of each event or circumstance layer onto one another to create a traumatic effect nonetheless.

See if you can relate to my experiences.





My Childhood Injury

1. I had an injury when I was 6 or 7 years old that created an association that my pelvic floor was a source of pain.

I really wanted to ride my grandpa's bike, so my dad took me on a little adventure around the parking lot. When we were done and my dad told me to wait a little before he lifts me off the seat, I jumped off a bike seat and onto on the metal pole below.

I don't remember how we got back up to the apartment, but I do remember the piercing pain on my vulva for the subsequent days and weeks. Peeing was incredibly and I would sit on the toilet for what felt like hours resisting the urge to pee and holding back my urine. (Does this bracing response sound familiar?)

Since the incident also happened on my grandma's birthday, I was told to hide my pain to not cause her stress. This inevitably created a belief that pain in my "PRIVATE parts", as I called my vulva and vagina as a kid, was not an appropriate topic for PUBLIC conversation.

[I've written all about my bike injury in the Love Diary.](#)

Don't Touch That

2. There was a hidden memory that transitioned from my subconscious mind into my conscious awareness during a Tibetan meditative practice that I now guide you in too.

At a similar age as the bike incident, I remembered a day at my grandparents' house when I was playing with my toys on the floor, cross-legged. From the toys, my hand migrated to my vulva - I touched it in an exploratory way. And of course when I discovered this pleasure button on my body that I had never known of before, I continued to spend time there. Playing with my toys AND my clitoris.

When my grandpa walked into the room and noticed me, he told me not to touch between my legs. His words "Don't touch that" in combination with his hand gestures, registered as a strict command, unlike his typically light and joyful demeanour.. And coming from someone I love and look up to very much, his 'rule' stuck. His reaction made a strong impression on me! My vulva was not to be touched.

This is part of what led to my limited exploration of my body later in life. Self-pleasure was something I understood as bad and shameful and in the rare occasions that I did it, it was quick, doused in shame and a source of stress-relief above all. Indulging in slow exploration of my body was not something I did.





Intimacy? What's That?

3. I didn't have a healthy example of what a loving relationship looks like, at least on the outside.

I didn't see much affection being shared between my parents. Touching, kissing and romance as a whole seemed to be a low priority for them. Seeing them holding hands was extremely rare! Rather, running a business as an efficient team was how I saw them in the world. This relationship model is the one on which I based my understanding of intimacy - that it was practically unnecessary and unproductive!

The most affection I witnessed in a couple while I was young was that shared between one set of grandparents, on my mom's side. And what this looked like was my grandpa gently touching, or hugging my grandma, and her often pushing him away, in a "not now" kind of way. I saw a woman rejecting a man's affection, as though that's how it should be.

My other set of grandparents, on my dad's side, were likely the most happy couple of all. Their expression of love for largely in the form of jokes and laughs shared between each other though, as opposed to touch.

Self-Care Or High Performance?

4. My way of being in the world was further shaped by the expectations placed on me by my parents to achieve excellence as a student. This created the notion that efficiency and high performance are more important than self-care and pleasures in life!

I was educated at a high level of mental math when I was young, by my dad. Although he did his best to make this education also entertaining and fun, the process of learning math, reading and logic at a very early age replaced play time very often. I remember crying when tasked to re-write my messy handwriting over and over again, an expectation my dad developed in his own childhood. I recall wanting to play instead.

At the same time, I saw my parents happy when I was doing well with my studies. Especially my dad. So I chose the goal of achievement above enjoying the process nine times out of ten. I prioritized being a good student to satisfy my parents and prove to my own self that I'm 'good enough'. That I'm worthy of love.

Meanwhile, my practice of showing love and affection to myself was NOT being developed and only later did it prove to have a detrimental impact on my life and in my romantic relationships.





Nervous System On High Alert

5. My parents also fought a lot and I experienced an immense amount of stress while they were fighting. Sometimes, I was abruptly woken up during the night from a raised voice, or my mom coming into my room and even turning on the light while I was trying to sleep. This may have created a sense that my bed is not a safe place where I could relax. My nervous system was wired to be on alert, even in times that were supposed to be dedicated to rest. I also used to get startled really easily, as my nervous system was highly sensitive in seemingly 'normal' situations. (This has changed, thankfully!)

This experience also created the the notion that my mom didn't care much about my sleep (and me). I now recognize that she was only acting in accordance with the way she perceived the world at the time - from a state of distress. She was practically in survival mode and may not have had the capacity to love and care for another. Another aspect of this is that I didn't observe my mom as a woman who engaged in her own self-care. The stress she was experiencing didn't allow for much self-love and that way of being may have translated to me through observation of her.

I also felt that it was my duty to save my parents' marriage by being a mediator. I was often asked to take sides, or blamed by my father if I took my mom's side. This inevitably created a sense of fear and distrust of the masculine that negatively impacted my relationships.

The Sex Talk

6. My dad was the one that gave me the sex talk. I think he did a good job, in the sense that he introduced sex as something normal and beautiful. He also called it making love and even explained how penetration and pregnancy work, using mostly accurate terminology of the body parts (which is very important so as to create a language that honours their existence at the least!).

However, I also remember him telling me that men NEED sex to be happy in a relationship. That to keep a man happy (as the Russian saying goes), you need to keep his stomach full and his ball empty. Ugh. This created the belief that intimacy is mostly for the benefit and pleasure of men and it was a woman's duty to provide sex to hold a relationship together.. AND it created a sense of heaviness and obligation of being a woman, as well as for me, an air of inferiority.

Furthermore, since my mom wasn't involved in the sex talk, I wasn't communicated the positivity of the act from a woman's perspective. I didn't have an example from a female mentor that pleasure really is something to be celebrated. So I may have taken that to mean that a woman's pleasure was just not a significant part of the equation. That the act of intimacy is JUST for the man.





Embarrassment and Shame

7. The timing of the sex talk was also potentially part of the problem. My dad explained how things work definitely before I turned 8 years old. Looking back now, I believe that I was quite young to interpret and fully understand the lesson, given how elaborate it was.

As a result of this early exposure to sex, I remember that at an after school class activity, I drew a couple having sex - this concept that was so new and exciting in my awareness. I drew the man with his penis coming out of him and reaching to his female partner and maybe I also drew a baby in her belly.

My English teacher, Ms. Maggie, was appalled at this. When my parents arrived to pick me up, she took me by the wrist (something that has never happened before as a 'good student') and explained the situation. She showed them the drawing and I knew in my bones that I had done something really wrong. I don't remember how my parents responded, but I remember feeling deep embarrassment and shame because of Ms. Maggie's reaction (which was a result of her own inner discomfort with the topic). This may have shaped sex and penetrative sex in particular as something that should be hidden at all costs.

Playing Pretend In Private

8. My female cousin and I played pretend games when I was around 8 or 9 years old. When we were at my grandma's house and had her bedroom to play in while the rest of the family was in the living room, we would sometimes play the pretend game of being a husband and wife.

We created scenes when she was the husband and I was the wife, or vice versa. The husband would come home to the wife, she would bring him to the bed and then we would both crawl under the blankets, hug and roll around, make ooh, ahh and kissing sounds, all while giggling.

There wasn't any genital touch, and although it was a relatively positive and fun memory of intimate exploration in a relationship scenario, I already had the sense that it was something to hide from the rest of the family.





Perception Of Violence

9. I was at my best friend's place at the age of 10 or 11. We were playing and I believe her parents were out of the house briefly, perhaps visiting my parents just a few floors down in the same building.

We were playing and the movie that was left running in the background suddenly showed a really elaborate sex scene. I recall shifting my attention to the TV and noticing a man on top of a woman, with the man making rough movements against her body. The female actress was screaming and moaning, as though she was in pain and the movement was rough and aggressive-looking. I recall that this looked incredibly violent and I wondered why a woman would take such aggressive behaviour. Or perhaps she was pinned down and couldn't get out of it, at the man's weight on top of her.

I understood that this scenario was depicting sex rather than straight up assault. However, this event may have very well imprinted on me the belief that sex is scary, even if only subconsciously. And that the woman is at the mercy of the man in such an act.

Repression Of The Feminine

10. At some point in my early teens or earlier, my parents shared with me that I was supposed to be a boy - that's what the doctor had told them this and that they were happy to be expecting a boy after already having a girl (I have an older sister). Although they paired that story with telling me they're happy with how things turned out, this created a sense that I disappointed them at the onset of my existence - with my gender.

This may have been part of the reason that I was very much a tomboy as I grew up. I refused to wear dresses and skirts or have my hair up in ponytails, as my mom wanted me to dress. I believe I lived with a disgust towards the feminine and repression of anything that would be considered as 'girly' from an early age.

Later, I lived into the identity of the 'alpha woman'. I had trouble stepping out of my own masculine energy and surrendering to the masculine outside of myself. For example, I was uncomfortable when a man would try to pay for my dinner - both due to my inability to rest into my soft, sensual feminine energy, as well as my struggle to let myself be taken care of. I needed to be independent and if I wasn't, I was weak! As I had been conditioned so far, to be good enough I was to be a strong, high achiever who could take care of herself.





The Sex Ban

11. At 18 years old, my first boyfriend and I wanted to go to Cuba together. After his presentation to my parents in which he listed all the reasons they can be at ease about letting me go, they agreed to the trip. However, just before we left, my older sister told me that "I better not have sex on this trip". I was open to the idea of having penetrative sex for the first time and was prepared with protection in case it were to happen, but she was mad at me for even considering it. She said that I was too young, that we been dating for too short of an amount of time (4 months) and made me promise not to 'lose my virginity'.

This sex ban created a huge amount of internal turmoil. My sister is someone I look up to and consider to be reasonable and loving, and though I had the strong desire to enjoy this milestone with my partner, I felt an incredible amount of guilt around not listening to her. I was really confused why sex was such a big deal all of a sudden, especially because she typically trusted me to be responsible. Perhaps she deeply didn't trust HIM and I'm sure she just wanted to protect her little sister...

On that trip, we didn't have penetrative sex, because I didn't want to go back on my promise and felt guilty at the thought of it. This meant I was disappointing my boyfriend, as he was excited about trying, just as he thought I was. This strengthened the emotional turmoil I associated with penetrative sex and I may have adopted the belief that maybe I SHOULD be scared of penetrative sex. I decided that my sister knew something more than I did about the dangers of sexual intimacy.

How About You?

Do you have new insights about what caused vaginismus for you? Could you relate to any of the examples I shared from my life? Any light-bulb moments and interesting insights?

Whatever pain came up for you, I want you to remember that you are whole and complete despite the damage it caused. And though there may be that sense that no one would believe you if you shared your story (or that your story is not legitimate), know that it is! Your experiences are valid, no matter how 'odd' or 'irrelevant' they may sound to someone else. So please don't doubt whether the events you went through happened or not, whether they were emotionally impactful, and whether they had something to do with your experience of vaginismus. Stand by your truth, with confidence.

I also want you to know that you didn't deserve to feel the pain of it all and you did NOT bring any abuse onto yourself. Please know that you didn't deserve for anything bad to happen to you... There's nothing to fix about who you are today. There's only pain of the past to process using a compassionate approach! And if you'd like to release the impact of your past experiences, it's critical that you take some intentional steps to do so. That you arm yourself with the resources, community and most importantly self-love as a tool to support you on your journey to your erotic freedom.



Your Sexual Liberation Awaits

And there you have it - a snippet of what awaits you inside Sexually Liberated! I trust that this small initiation has supported you with some insights about the potential causes of vaginismus for you. That it has given you a glimpse into what you may be working with for the first Compassionate Emotional Processing pillar in my 3 Pillars of Putting Vaginismus In The Past.

With this beautiful foundation, you are ready to get the most out of the main hub for vaginismus sisters everywhere. The only experience that supports you in overcoming vaginismus and creating a love life that you adore in such a HOLISTIC, EMPOWERING and DETAILED way! You no longer have to do this alone and that's why I'm so glad that you're considering joining us inside Your Sexually Liberated Love Story: The Holistic Manuscript To Your Vaginismus-Free Life! Keep an eye out on your email for when enrolment opens!

I look forward to walking by your side through this, in sisterhood. Here's to claiming the sexual freedom that you've deserved all along!

