

7 Tips to Building a Culture of Consent in Your Community ➡➡➡

Yana Tallon-Hicks, sex educator & therapist // y.tallonhicks@gmail.com

♡ Give yourself permission.

You are entitled to feel good about yourself and your relationships. You don't need to earn it. Exploring your enthusiastic Yeses whether it's trying something new or abstaining from sexual contact altogether is the first step to being prepared to give or not give your consent.

♡ Ask for what you want.

Your desires are not a bother. If consent is thriving in your relationship, your partner can and will say NO to what they do not want to do with you. So, ask as many questions as it takes to co-create an enjoyable experience for all involved.

♡ Stop trying to be sexy.

The best and most pleasurable experiences are not actually sexy -- or at least, not textbook sexy. This is your real life, not a movie. It's okay to make mistakes and not look our best while doing it.

♡ Build your boundaries.

When we hear the word "boundaries" it's easy to hear "restriction", "uptightness", "limitations". Giving someone a hardline NO isn't just telling them what they cannot have, but is showing them the space they DO have to explore and play in. Remember that our YESes and NOs are bricks used to build a path to a mutually consensual experience.

♡ **Accept a no gracefully.**

Often when we hear the word “No” we don’t hear what our partners are actually trying to tell us. We might hear “You’re ugly” when they mean “This is my preference”. We might hear “You’re not worth my time” when they really mean “This is my limit”.

When you hear a “No”, thank your partners for having the bravery to share their limits with you. Know that you are valuable whether a partner says Yes or No to your requests and that you are even more valuable when you respond to their boundaries with respect.

♡ **Ask questions. Then ask some more.**

The assumption that we’re only good at relationships if we know exactly what our partners want via mind-reading is totally absurd. You want to “give her what she wants?” Ask her what she wants. You want to know how to “blow his mind”? Ask them: “What blows your mind, babe?”. And then have a conversation about it where you can each clarify your desires & limits.

♡ **Track consent continuously.**

Your consent is yours to give or revoke at any time. Any. Time.

♡ **Take sex & intimacy out of an intimate context.**

Talk about your relationships over coffee, over text, over dinner. Create experiences of relationship intimacy that are intentional rather than accidental or assumptive.

