



In conversation:

Sex, Stereotypes and Women's Empowerment

This Women's History Month is slightly different to most. We've all had to become activists and supporters from our beds, our WFH desks or the kitchen table. We've also had to become experts in the fields of self-care and positivity.

By Tom Roberts and Amelia Cropper

With so much written online about the effects of lockdown on our mental health and our home lives, it's important to spend some time reflecting on what matters to us most in these unprecedented times. From taking time out of our busy schedules for some one-on-one in the bedroom, or challenging the stereotypes from the home-office and beyond, it's important to talk about the things that matter most to us as humans.

SO, LET'S TALK ABOUT... SEX

Feeling beautiful starts from within. Sex is an important part of this. We can all use sex as a powerful tool to feel good about ourselves, our home lives and the way we look and feel.



With this in mind, we asked our Brand Manager, Amelia; what are your top tips for feeling good in the bedroom?

I know it's a cliché, but feeling good really does start from within. When I'm fuelling my body with good food, doing a bit of daily exercise and just generally feeling positive in other areas of my life, that's when I feel my most confident and sexy. Feeling good in the bedroom is a state of mind, and one that only you are in control of. If you're struggling though — as we all have done and will continue to do at various times — I've got some tricks up my sleeve that really help make me that bit more confident in the moment. Matching underwear (with lace, always) is a must. Find a style you feel beautiful and sexy in, and you're already on to a winner. Dim the lights...stark lighting doesn't flatter anyone, so light a candle, turn on a lamp and really set the mood. And perhaps my most important (and most difficult, sorry!) is to **never compare yourself to others**. Measuring yourself up against anyone is a recipe for disaster. Sexy comes in all shapes and sizes, and you are no exception. Look in the mirror and pick out some of your favourite features — you'll feel ready to rock 'n' roll in no time, I promise you.

Also, just to digress massively, I've heard a lot over the years about being sexually expressive/ liberated pointing to a sign of low self-esteem — I can't stress how much I think it means the opposite. However you choose to be sexually expressive — be it having multiple partners, trying new things with your boyfriend/girlfriend, or posting a bomb bikini pic on Instagram — I think there's something to be said for a person who feels empowered in their body and is confident in expressing those feelings.

Whilst we love to feel loved— it's also important to have some down-time. Looking after your mental health sometimes includes taking some time out for reflection.

What's your top tip for making time for yourself?

Not to sound like a bore, but time management is key...and it feels weird to say that when the whole point is about making time for yourself that isn't mundane. But hear me out... I feel like everyone wants to do the most on a day-to-day basis, and it's just not feasible nor is it sustainable. We can all appreciate how great it feels to have a productive day, but more often than not having a productive day pretty much means you didn't take any time for yourself amongst the chaos of trying to get things done. And eventually, you're gonna burn out. That's where the age-old 'time management is key' comes in. If you work a 9-5 job, try and wake up an hour earlier than normal and go for a walk before your day starts. If mornings aren't your thing, stop working late! It's everybody's kryptonite and so easily done when there's loads on, but all it's doing is creeping into your personal time. Map out your daily tasks, stick to them as best as possible, and spend the rest of your time doing things that boost your mental well-being. Whether that's a workout, a pamper night, or cooking a delicious meal — these things can only happen if you manage your time accordingly.

A POWER BEYOND BEAUTY

Beauty = Power, right?

According to Forbes, a study found that when women pursued the same status as men in the work place, the time (and money) spent on beauty products and regimes increased. This quickly leads to the idea of appearance-based discrimination and all that entails. So now we're asking: should beauty products be considered a weapon in the fight for equality, or demonised in the face of adversity.

As a Beauty Editor, do you consider your personal beauty regime as an asset to your role?

It is an asset to my role, yes, but not for the reasons expressed above. I didn't get my job because



I spend a solid chunk of time every day applying all my creams and serums, I got it because I'm knowledgeable in my field — which just so happens to be creams, serums and everything else in between that's beauty related.

Do you think Beauty has an effect on your day-to-day life?

My personal beauty regime is something that makes me feel beautiful and confident. Do I think I perform better in my role because of it? Indirectly, I'd probably have to say yes. When I feel good about myself, that transcends into all other aspects of my life.

My career is a huge part of my life, and one that I take very seriously. I'm not saying if I paired back my regime I wouldn't perform as well as I'd like to, but everyone has things that boost their self-esteem and mine just happens to be having a somewhat lengthy beauty routine. I'm also a big believer in positivity attracting positivity, so once you find something that helps you feel more positive in general in your life, it's going to lead to more desirable experiences all round. Whatever that thing is, I don't think it should be viewed in a bad light.

Plus, my job is talking about beauty all day and I'm hugely passionate about finding the next best skincare product for myself and our amazing Beauty Box subscribers — if I didn't have any sort of beauty regime, I wouldn't be in this role!

THE RIGHT TIME IS NOW

Books. TV shows. Podcasts. Blogs. There's a variety of ways to get talking this #InternationalWomensHistoryMonth, so get clued up, get talking, and bring the matter to the forefront of everyone's mind.

How did you spend International Women's Day?

My IWD was actually super exciting because we've recently launched our Beauty Box social channel (@lfbeautybox) and for it we had some really fun content shot by our gorgeous BB models all about what it means to be a woman, and how things are changing for the better. Launching this bespoke content on our channel was something we've never really done before so it was a really great moment and we got a lot of lovely feedback off the back of it which was nice to hear.

I'm also really lucky to spend my days surrounded by a team of women who inspire me, and this IWD was no different. I got to attend a panel run by some of the leading ladies at LOOKFANTASTIC, and it was a great opportunity to hear how they got to where they are in their career despite hardships and setbacks. It's definitely motivated me moving forward...

And my evening was spent with the most inspiring woman of them all: my mum.

Finally: What is the best piece of advice you've been given by another woman? And what is the best piece of advice you could give to another woman?

My mum is by far my go-to person when it comes to advice (and well everything else, really) and the best things she's ever told me is to keep things in perspective. I'm the type of person who can let little things really get me down, but she's helped me learn to compartmentalise all my issues and tackle them one at a time so that I don't feel overwhelmed. I'll always be grateful for her guidance, and I hope one day if I'm lucky enough to have children that I can be as good a mum to them as she is to me.

In terms of giving another woman a piece of advice... I feel like I'm about to be a walking cliché again, but my best piece of advice would be to find love within yourself before you seek it elsewhere. I know how desperately everyone wants to be loved — it's the best feeling ever. But more often than not, when it's not happening for us (whether that be romantically, or in friendships etc) we take it so personally and feel bad about ourselves. And, you know, it is sort of personal... but not in the sense we all think. It's not about not being pretty enough, or skinny enough, or smart enough, or funny enough, it's because deep down you probably don't think yourself worthy of being loved the way you deserve. I touched on it earlier, but as soon as you shift your mindset into a more positive one and start thinking highly of yourself, everything else will fall into place. I promise you that. **BB**

Photos by Evie S. on Unsplash

