

HUMAN TOUCH

In a world where many people are dealing with negative baggage around sex, tantric massage can be a way of working towards healthier emotions and sensations. **Declan Marr** meets Tom Colton from Dublin's Bindu Tantra centre to find out what it's all about.

Although the majority of us feel positively about our sexuality, sex itself is often regarded with an equal measure of fear and fascination. We may crave sexual intimacy, yet also take great pains to avoid it. We may wish to fall in love, yet fear our own vulnerability. And for those of us who have been lucky enough to be in long-term relationships, we may long to rekindle the passion, but have forgotten how to light the fire.

There is also a certain embarrassment or even shame that is connected with sexual dysfunction. No one would be ashamed to have, for example, a liver or heart dysfunction. Instead they would immediately ask a professional for help.

Tom Colton from Bindu Tantra Ireland is one such professional. "The purpose of tantra is to get you in touch with your own body, your own emotions and your own sensations and feelings," he says. "Through working with tantra we can remove blockages and create sexual confidence. People can get in touch with who they really are and feel sensations within their own body they've never felt before."

There are several stages of a tantra consultation, the first of which is an informal chat with you practitioner about why you are there, what your background is and an explanation of what you might expect. "This is done in a very relaxing environment," says Tom. "There is tantric music playing gently in the background, lit candles and the tantric energy is very much present from the beginning, which leads to a feeling of mutual trust."

This is followed by what Tom calls "the ritual", during which he begins to work with you energy, to open it up. "I've been doing energy healing work in various forms for the past ten years," he says. "With

healing and mediumship you are channelling external energies, but with tantra you are using your own energy to work with another person's energy. That really appealed to me when I found it first."

From the ritual, the tantra session moves into the full body massage. "It's not like a normal massage," says Tom. "While there is some work with muscle and tissue, it is more about working with energy. It begins with a very soft, gentle touch. People start feeling the energy flow very soon with sensations like tingling in the feet and hands, and heat generation throughout the body. As part of that for men we move into the lingam (penis) massage and the sacred zone (prostate) massage. Men will experience a huge number of sensations from the sacred zone massage. Most men would only understand one form of sex energy release, which is ejaculation, but there are up to seven types of sensation he can feel. With tantra you are bringing those sensations in to the body instead of releasing them and they can stay with the body for a couple of days afterwards."

Tantra professionals say there are many benefits from tantra massage. "It can change the way you view sexual

relationships," says Tom. "It can help remove blockages that have been there for many years. The cellular body remembers deeply, even things like being told you were stupid as a child can have a negative effect on the sexual self. People might not know why they feel the way they do and with tantra we can release this feeling and work with the energy around it.

"Some just come to feel the sensations, to feel their own sex energy, but we would see people who have sexual problems too. I have a lot of clients who suffered sexual abuse and have a lot of blockages connected to that."

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Because tantric workers work with sexual energy, they are sometimes mistaken for sex workers. Tom is keen to explain the professional background of all the workers in Bindu Tantra Ireland to distance it from other massage services. "We are the only company working in Ireland certified by the European Association of Tantric Professionals," he says. "Because of the sexual difficulties or histories people may have, it's very important that we approach people from a professionally trained point of view. If someone decides to do something about their sexual problems, they deserve to get the best treatment possible. Tantra is all about removing emotional blockages and helping people move on in their lives. It's a very powerful thing and should be respected as such."

Not only does Bindu Tantra Ireland offer five levels of one-on-one and couple consultations, it also has a whole roster of other activities on the go, including an weekly Tantra Kirya Yoga, naked yoga class once a week with a free first session, tantra workshops (the next one takes place June 18 to 20), and retreats. "Our next retreat takes place in Spain from August 2nd to 9th," says Tom. "There will be up to fifty guys there enjoying a week of tantric activities, sun, relaxation and good food."

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