

'Shall we masturbate together?'

An unexpected question.

We'd put up our tent and were sitting in the evening light. Neither of us had said anything for a while, and Andrea asked this question without any kind of preamble.

It was also unexpected because a day or two before, Andy (as I, and others, called her, except when something serious was under discussion!) had indicated, after an overture from me, that she didn't want us to have sex and just wanted to remain good friends.

We were on holiday together. I'd asked her because we got on well. And I did fancy her. And she'd been enthusiastic at the proposal, or so it seemed to me. And isn't sex sort of on the cards when you go camping with someone?

It was unexpected for me in another way. This was a little while ago, well, a few decades perhaps, and masturbation was still a somewhat taboo subject. Perhaps it still is today. But definitely more so then. Even though Dr Kinsey had by then shown how just about every man and pretty much most women masturbate quite frequently.

Actually I didn't feel guilty about having sex with myself. But masturbating in the company of someone else doing the same as a way of having sex was not something that often came into my head, perhaps never, certainly very rarely, and certainly it hadn't with Andy.

I was speechless. I mean I didn't know what to say. I was, yes, slightly embarrassed, and certainly very surprised, and I didn't have a reply. What I wanted was to have sex with her, not masturbate in her company. I said nothing. And she didn't say anything either. After a while, we carried on as normal, eating an evening snack, chatting, and bedding down in our own, unconnected sleeping bags in our one tent.

Well, we carried on with our holiday, driving to the next beautiful spot along the coast. But something had changed. We touched each other more, we looked into each others' eyes more, we chattered less, we spoke more of significant things like childhood memories, relatives, relationships, future hopes...

And a couple of days later, in the evening, when I returned from a little walk on my own, she snuggled up to me and asked 'Are you sad?' Well, somehow I was, and she'd picked it up, and I nodded. And she kissed me, on the mouth, deeply. And we started to feel each other's bodies and soon we had stripped each other's clothes off, and I was inside her.

And we had beautiful sex, lasting a long time, many minutes, twenty, perhaps more, time no longer mattered. And neither of us came to climax.

For me, this was unusual. It wasn't that I didn't want to. It was that our journey was so pleasurable that I didn't want it to end. And I sensed that would be its end. Eventually we just gradually slowed down and stopped. And I still hadn't come.

We were near the end of our holiday. We had sex often, and I did climax, but she never did. And I didn't seem to be able to help her.

When we got back from our holiday, this continued for a while but eventually petered out. Her not coming wasn't spoken about. But I'm sure it bothered us both and was what led to us splitting up, if that is the right term for it. We both sort of gave up.

This all happened, as I've already said, some decades ago. I am now much wiser. And in my wisdom, I remember so clearly her proposition to me outside that tent all those years ago: 'Shall we masturbate together?' And I know, as surely as I know anything, that, had I suggested we masturbate together during the weeks we were having sex but she couldn't climax, for her it would have been good. It might even have led to her overcoming whatever difficulty she was having.

These days it wouldn't be such a new idea: a woman takes her hand down and stimulates herself during sex, that seems to be acceptable, nothing unusual.

But back then, I was too concerned with my own pleasure. I was not relating enough to her pleasure. I was not yet wise. I had not yet learned, what I know now, that I get great pleasure from giving pleasure, perhaps even more than from getting it.

And there lies the moral to this story. Giving pleasure is the best way to get pleasure.

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