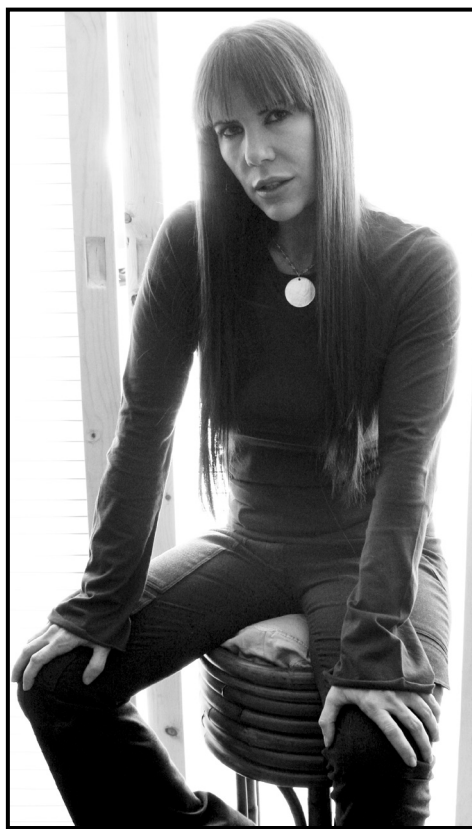


interview



Tantric teacher Pamela Madison helps dyke sex blossom.

IT'S A CHI THING, BABY

Tantric healer Pamela Madison can teach you how to orgasm-- and reach cosmic consciousness.

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When I logged on to the Web site for the Women's Sexuality Center, Tantra teacher and healer Pamela Madison's headquarters in cozy Santa Barbara, California, and looked at the pictures of her clean, posh space, decorated in calming tones, altars, and supersized statues of Eastern deities, I thought a couple of things. I thought, this is the clubhouse of a woman who says yoni instead of snatch, and I thought, yikes, I'm not going to be able to relate to her-me being a person who says snatch instead of yoni and all.

I was half-right. Pamela is one yoni-loving lady, but her message of getting a deeper, more spiritualized freak on was totally accessible and made serious intuitive sense. Anyone who has ever had crazy-ass sex that made you feel like you were crossing over into another dimension can attest to the extreme power of sexual energy. Pamela teaches how to get a handle on that power and use it to enhance all aspects of life, not

only the perverted moments. After talking to her about harnessing sexual energies via meditations, breathing, and chakras, I had a really intense wet dream that I was hugging-hugging!-my boyfriend and our heart chakras opened up and it was like we were having hardcore cosmic intercourse on the astral plane. Whoa.

On Our Backs: You just got out of the first meeting of your six-week Sacred Sexuality course for women. Are you exhausted?

Pamela Madison: I taught a three-hour class. It was a big day; I had a nine-hour day in my private practice before hand. I normally don't work this many hours! But I get in the zone, I don't eat a lot, and tonight I was on fire! I was just pulling it in for these women. It was the first night of class and it was really easy to bring the group together and speak from a place of high wisdom. Because I had been going from one client to the next all day, I was very intuitive and clear. It's a very unique

environment I get to work in.

OOB: So, what happens during one of your workshops?

PM: The Lesbian Tantra Workshop, for instance, has about 50 women in it. We sit on the floor with pillows and candles. The environment feels very sacred. I weave the philosophies, practices, and my own personal stories together and I'm very open about my own sexual journey, so women ask questions freely and soon there is a sense of camaraderie in the room. I really want people to experience tantra, not just talk about it, so the workshop is filled with lots of exercises and practices. Couples partner up to do the exercises and singles are welcome to practice solo, with another single or one of my assistants. There's no nudity or sexually explicit activity in the workshop, however I do assign optional "homework".

OOB: Why do your teachings have such an emphasis on healing?

PM: Because in our society there is so much healing that needs to happen for women in order for them to their full potential. There has to be healing before all the how-to's of "how to have a bigger, better orgasm" can work for a woman. It isn't just about having more pleasure, and how we can use sexual energy to help open up a higher state of consciousness.

OOB: What, in a practical sense, do women get out of their work with you?

PM: It's not a matter of just thinking about a sexuality-spirituality connection-it's about being able to experience it. Giving women the tools to be able to connect with who they are as sexual beings. I help women let go of the performance [anxiety], the goal of orgasm-whether or not they have a partner-and experience who they are sexually. I also do teach women to have orgasms and remove the blocks that prevent them from letting go. One of the keys is surrender. Orgasm is a deep state of letting go for women. I'm helping them get to that place where they can feel safe enough to go there.

OOB: You're a survivor of the Mormon church, which is awful about women and about sexuality, generally. But did such an intensely spiritual upbringing prime you for the work you do now?

PM: I was aware that the way I was raised created a wound that could be healed. But if I had grown up without being so spiritually focused I wouldn't have the depth to do the work I'm doing now. I'm extremely grateful for the spiritual training I got in the church.

OOB: The Mormon church is also famously homophobic.

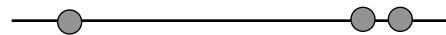
PM: There is no place for homosexuality in the Mormon church. There's repression and a sense of shame and guilt in being sexual. But we can heal the cellular programming around the shame of homosexuality. We suffer a tremendous amount of lesbian bed death; for example, that comes from a deep-seated shame and lack of acceptance. The Tantric approach to sexuality could heal that.

OOB: Isn't Tantra designed for hetero-sex?

PM: Tantra has definitely been a very heterosexual thing. In the past years I've developed it to make sense for lesbian coupling. The whole idea is playing with the male and female energy within ourselves. For couples, this play serves tremendously to help counter lesbian bed death. To create a sexual dynamic there needs to be a polarity of male and female. I don't necessarily mean butch-femme-though that's great, and I happen to like it



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very much myself! It's about energy. We have to balance energy that is very yang and male with the more passive elements of who we are sexually.

OOB: What's the difference between the way most people have sex and the focused, spiritual way you teach?

PM: Sex isn't something you do. It is a way of Being. Meaning, it's about energy, not activity. The reason we come together is to build energy and have connection with another human being. Being a lover is great, but it's a little sliver of the whole sexual being. [Tantric] energy infuses all aspects of our lives. It's where we need to live our lives from. It isn't about throwing our sexual energy around at a bar, hooking people in with it, and going home with a lover. That's a very small use of our energy.

OOB: Can your work help women who find their libidos dulled from anti-depressants?

PM: As women learn to be more sexually fulfilled, the depression ceases. [Because Tantric] energy gives us such a wonderful flow of positive brain chemistry and hormones, I see women getting off Prozac or any SSRI drug all the time. It's a wonderful resource that we have as

women, to be able to open this energy up and experience a deeper state of joy. It's a totally inexpensive and reliable way to go, in terms of managing emotional well-being.

OOB: So accessing all this spiritual-sexual energy can relieve depression. Are there other health benefits?

PM: We're calmer. We have a greater sense of peace. There are endorphins that aren't produced through any other activity.

OOB: I saw that one of your workshops had aphrodisiacs on the curriculum. Are there really certain foods that get you hot?

PM: Aphrodisiacs do exist; however, there is nothing that works as a last-minute love-and-lust pill. Aphrodisiacs are more about foods and herbs that help support your chi. There are foods you can eat that will strengthen female sexual function, but it's more about creating health and vitality through daily practice and nutrition. Damiana is a classic aphrodisiac that you can take within an hour of lovemaking and it will help stimulate the chi and blood flow, but again, it's not necessarily going to get you in the mood. It's going to enhance the energy you already have.

OOB: What's it like doing such radical work in Santa Barbara, a place I always thought of as super conservative?

PM: Yes, it is a very conservative place, but my work has been well received here. That's not to say that there aren't those who criticize it and would like to see it stop. I've been through death threats and been ostracized because my work is very controversial. But Santa Barbara is grateful to have a women's sexuality center. I'm so blessed to be so well received by the community I'm trying to serve. The conservative nature has definitely made me develop my work slowly; I'm very aware of public image and how I present myself to the community. If I were in New York or San Francisco I might be able to do things more openly. I don't think I would have had some of the fears I've had doing my work here, which is not just a conservative community but also a small community. I've been cautious and respectful of what the community can bear.

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For more information, call (805) 563-1071 or visit www.womensexualitycenter.com