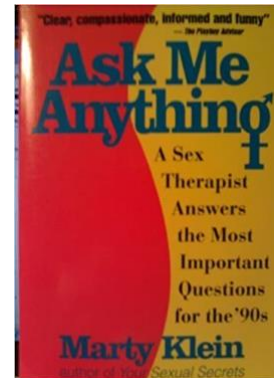


**"Ask Me Anything:
A Sex Therapist Answers
the Most Important
Questions for the '90s."**

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Question #141 from "Ask Me Anything," page 85

141. Sometimes what I really want is some touching or hugging. Is this the same as wanting sex? How do I know which one I really want? What if my partner wants sex for a different reason?

Desiring the nurturance of touch is not the same thing as wanting sex. We take it for granted that babies need plenty of cuddling; in a more perfect world, adults would also get plenty of hugs, back rubs, arms around the shoulder, and massages.

For many people, unfortunately, sex is the only way to get touching. This is sad. It leads to people having sex when they don't want it and to both partners feeling cheated.

Once you believe that wanting to be touched is totally legitimate, you can tell when that's what you want. For one thing, you won't think of touching as a preliminary—it will be satisfying in itself.

We should all learn to ask our partners for touching when we need it, and we should be able to get it without having to pay for it with sex. If your partner isn't interested in more touching, at least suggest lovemaking positions that will give you the body contact you desire.