

Sexual Brakes & Accelerators Worksheet

Understanding What Shuts Desire Down and What Helps Desire Open Up



Desire is not just about attraction. Sexual desire can be influenced by stress, emotional safety, body image, relationship dynamics, mental load, hormones, past experiences, and how connected you feel to yourself and your partner. This worksheet can help you identify your sexual brakes—the things that shut desire down—and your sexual accelerators—the things that help you feel more open, connected, safe, and present.

1. What Are Sexual Brakes?

Sexual brakes are anything that makes desire, arousal, connection, or openness feel harder. These may include emotional, physical, relational, mental, or environmental factors.

Check any that apply:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Stress or feeling overwhelmed | ☐ Exhaustion or lack of sleep | ☐ Lack of privacy |
| ☐ Feeling pressured to have sex | ☐ Anxiety or racing thoughts | ☐ Mental load or caregiving responsibilities |
| ☐ Fear of disappointing my partner | ☐ Depression or low mood | ☐ Feeling like sex is another task |
| ☐ Feeling emotionally disconnected | ☐ Hormonal changes | ☐ Not enough emotional intimacy |
| ☐ Resentment or unresolved conflict | ☐ Pain or discomfort with sex | ☐ Worrying about performance |
| ☐ Body image concerns | ☐ Past negative sexual experiences | ☐ Not knowing what I want or like |
| ☐ Feeling touched out | ☐ Feeling criticized or rejected | ☐ Other: _____ |

2. My Biggest Desire Brakes

The things that most often shut down my desire are:

- _____
- _____
- _____

When these brakes show up, I usually feel:

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ Tense | ☐ Numb | ☐ Irritated | ☐ Guilty | ☐ Anxious |
| ☐ Disconnected | ☐ Pressured | ☐ Sad | ☐ Shut down | ☐ Avoidant |
| ☐ Other: _____ | | | | |

Sexual Brakes & Accelerators Worksheet

Page 2: Identifying What Helps Desire Open Up

3. What Are Sexual Accelerators?

Sexual accelerators are anything that helps you feel more relaxed, open, connected, safe, playful, or interested in intimacy. These do not have to be sexual. Sometimes desire grows from emotional closeness, rest, safety, affection, or feeling seen.

Check any that apply:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ☐ Feeling emotionally connected | ☐ Being able to say no safely | ☐ Privacy and uninterrupted time |
| ☐ Having meaningful conversation | ☐ Flirting or playful teasing | ☐ Feeling emotionally safe |
| ☐ Feeling appreciated | ☐ Kissing without expectation | ☐ Having control over the pace |
| ☐ Receiving affection without pressure | ☐ Slow touch | ☐ Feeling understood by my partner |
| ☐ Having time to relax first | ☐ Feeling rested | ☐ Romantic gestures |
| ☐ Feeling desired, not demanded from | ☐ Help with chores or mental load | ☐ Novelty or trying something new |
| ☐ Feeling confident in my body | ☐ Quality time together | ☐ Other: _____ |

4. My Desire Accelerators

The things that help me feel more open to intimacy are:

- _____
- _____
- _____

When these accelerators are present, I usually feel:

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| ☐ Relaxed | ☐ Connected | ☐ Safe | ☐ Curious | ☐ Playful |
| ☐ Desired | ☐ Present | ☐ Emotionally close | ☐ More confident | ☐ More affectionate |
| ☐ Other: _____ | | | | |

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Page 3: Reflection and Gentle Next Steps

5. Pressure vs. Invitation

Intimacy feels like pressure when:

Intimacy feels more like an invitation when:

6. What I Need More Of

To feel more open to intimacy, I may need more:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Emotional connection | ☐ Help with responsibilities | ☐ Body acceptance | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Patience | ☐ Reassurance | ☐ Communication | |
| ☐ Nonsexual affection | ☐ Privacy | ☐ Choice and control | |
| ☐ Time to transition from stress | ☐ Playfulness | ☐ Rest | |

One thing I wish my partner understood about my desire is:

7. One Small Shift I Can Try

This week, one small way I can reduce a sexual brake is:

One small way I can support a sexual accelerator is:

One gentle step I can take toward connection is:

Reflection: Desire often responds best to safety, curiosity, and compassion—not pressure or shame. My desire is not broken. It may be trying to tell me something about what I need, what feels safe, and what helps me feel connected to myself and others.