

## **GODDESSES NOT COUGARS ... WOMEN IN THEIR PRIME**

I was in the kitchen making brownies for our upcoming camping trip – the kids were already on the island with their dad – my ex. Normal enough. What was not normal was the 25 year old beautiful dutch hunk making dinner next to me ... laughing, teasing, flirting, sharing a bottle of wine. As I flirted back with an index finger filled with chocolate batter, I wondered whose life was I now living? Filled with mischief his eyes locked onto mine, and in an instant his luscious lips and tongue were making love to my finger. As the chocolate filled his mouth electric currents shot through my body and I flowed with a crevasse of longing untouched for the last decade of my now dead marriage. I was alive and I was flooding with years of hard earned wisdom, desire and confidence. My whole being on its own private summit screamed ... “I have earned every instant of this decadent moment and I will satiate every hungry cell.” Gone were the apologies and pretense; gone were the ‘shoulds’ of wifehood, motherhood, churchhood, roles. I was 38 and very much alive, and I was ready to taste life like I had never tasted it. Tonight this beautiful naïve hot-blooded boy was going to escort me into my new life. He was my coming out party ... and I, his debutante.

### **More than a Cougar**

We often talk about women reaching their “prime” in mid-life. Of the ‘cougars’ hunting and being hunted in hot nightclubs around the country. In the ‘cougar story’ women in mid-life are tracking young men like prized game. And the buck in her snare is hoping to be ravaged by a *real* cat. But the ‘prime’ women reach in their middle years is so much more than sexual. After years of living from her heart, living for others, living for cultures moniker of success ... women begin to see life on its own terms. Moments like those in my kitchen are a beginning – a step toward crafting a life without compromise. For a goddess in her prime, the 25 year old is not the prize, but a reflection of the divine erotic power awakening within her.

By mid-life the romance of marriage, career and children gives way to the true complexity and challenge finely woven into each aspect of our life. By then we have learned that fulfillment is more than a promotion, partnership is more than love, and children are living *their* life, not ours. We have been to funerals of relatives, friends and sometimes children. We have struggled to survive betrayal; ours, our lovers, and our friends. We have known the paradox of joy as we postpone a dream in order to support those of a loved one, or the loneliness of being married to a man who cannot love. With every revelation of a hard earned wisdom comes a conviction to not waste life, to not waste time, to live out loud, to find the edges of experience, and to stop apologizing for a heart that is wild, rich,

faithful, strong, gentle and powerful. We begin to inhabit not just our bodies, but our life. If you want to come along, plan to bring your own strength and ability to soothe, because we are on a journey and we will show up *in all our glory*...whether you can handle it or not.

Making love to a woman at this crossroad is more than a memorable sexual experience. It is more than the typical mantra we hear - how she sexually knows what she wants and is not afraid to ask or make it happen. It is making love to a woman who is fully alive – sensually, spiritually and relationally. And what she wants is a man who is fully alive as well. She will not be satiated by a boy in his 20's any more than an insecure man in his 50's. She is not interested in dancing around your neediness or identity crisis. She has long given up the story that making *you* feel good, makes *her* valuable. And it is precisely this fact that causes mid-life goddesses to seek out a man of substance ... young or old – it is not age – it is substance. Make him a man who can without reservation, handle every embodied sacred erotic desire (sexual and not) and bring many of his own as well.

### **The Sacred Power in Sexuality**

Ancient sacred texts from our oldest religions – Buddhist, Hindu, Tao, and Hebrew – talk explicitly about how embodied sexual expression is also an act of spiritual worship. It is not the American veneer of bodies, arousal cycles, erections, ejaculations, sensations, orgasms. It is not climbing solely inside yourself pushing, panting and thrusting the cycle along until the 'goal' of orgasm is achieved, only then to open your eyes and realize there was someone with you. And it is not about pretending or hiding. Though the bodies can work famously, we are still often left wanting – men and women. Daily men say to me in my practice –“It's not satisfying for me to make love to her when she seems preoccupied or when she is doing it just for me.” And women say, “I just don't have the desire or energy. It's routine and not that meaningful.” Both men and women want a full body, soul, spirit, heart experience of lovemaking ... whatever flavor of touch that may involve. The purpose in sexual touch is not intercourse, ejaculation or even orgasm. It is connection, erotic ecstasy, and the ability to touch the heart and body of each other while touching the face of God. It is an opportunity to feel the power and love that created our universe coursing through every cell in our body, every feeling in our soul and every thought in our mind. To know all Love that passes understanding. The potential for this kind of ecstasy lies in the minutia of each touch, each person and the miracle of the universe, all in one. It is so much bigger and more inspiring than the sexual scraps off the floor most Americans feast on now.

### **Ancient Wisdom – True Today**

These ancient texts also reveal the human tendency of men to lead their lives from their passion/purpose/mission in the world. In the eastern mystic literature this part of the body is the 2<sup>nd</sup> chakra or the genitals. I remember the first time I heard this. My early years as a junior high human sexuality and science teacher taught me this all too well! Boys *do* lead with their penis ... and as they grow older we see how this is also their passion and purpose. A man who loses his job is more likely to experience depression than if the same young man loses a love relationship. We see this again when we understand that the types of affirmations that nourish men most are about success, respect, and accomplishment. Conversely, you can crush a man by harping on his failure. Women on the other hand,

naturally lead through their heart – relationships, others, serving. In eastern sacred texts this area of the body is known as the 4<sup>th</sup> chakra – the heart. We see this in the play of young girls, in the intensity of their adolescent friendships and as they begin to date. And if you want to affirm a woman, let her know that she is loved, valued and how she is loved. Opposite to men, even devout career women are more likely to experience depression at the loss of an intimate relationship than the loss of a job. But to spend ones life living out of *either* your passion/purpose or your heart, without the necessary integration of both ... the whole, is to miss some of greatest mystery and magic that is life.

These ancient texts describe the paradox and beauty of how men and women need to learn from each other. The manifestation of this struggle and learning is most evident in the mid-life man and the mid-life woman. Men in mid-life are invited to soften and let in the deep joy and satisfaction given to their lives by their partners, friends and children. I can remember the day my father said to me, “I take more pride in my life from you girls than anything else”. This came from a 53 year old man who had spent his life investing in a career and accomplishing in ways previously unknown in his family history. At 75, while he values his career years and wisdom, his soft heart counts every blessed breath on earth where he can actively love his beloved, his children and grandchildren.

### **The Birth of the Goddess**

What women can learn from men on the other hand, has them traveling south. She, in mid-life, begins to shed light on her *own* desires, passions, missions, hopes. She loosens her grip on relationships and begins to live from *her* thoughts, *her* wider purpose, *her* confidence, and *her* wisdom. She speaks up and is more willing to rock the boat. She claims her life and in so doing, she claims her voice. This is the birth of the goddess.

When women embrace the fullness of their heart *and* their passion, they ‘show up’ and engage the world and relationships with boldness and in no uncertain terms. The edges of life, of experience, of possibility and of love expand, and often break the box that previously contained them. If a woman has compromised her soul and is partnered to a man who will not accompany her on his own journey – or worse attempts to sever her unfolding wings, she will either take flight or die inside.

Love making and life living of this kind, requires men and women who are strong in self, confident in their hard earned wisdom, see the preciousness of life and are willing to show up honestly, completely and fully alive to it – heart and passion. They know fear and they know loss, but they choose life and love – risk and all. Goddesses in midlife know this and they want a partner and partnership that is as alive and committed to the Full-Monty of life. They will make love to you with their eyes searching yours, their bodies and souls fully engaged and awake, and they will be fully present to every thought, sensation, and touch. They may guide and direct, or follow your dance ... they may slow things down, or speed things up, but they will be fully present and they will want to make love with every inch of their skin and every cell of their body. And they will want you to do the same. They will marinate in the sacred portal opened in the sensual space of your love and they will relish God’s participation and expansion. They are willing to study the art of sacred erotic touch and they will want a partner who wants to study the arts with her, and who sees her embodied soul as a masterpiece.

Goddesses at midlife are so much more than cougars. They want more than a boy-toy and more than another night of sex with a man who has never fully inhabited his body, let alone a woman's - no matter how zealous his erection. She no longer leads with her heart only ... she now leads with passion and purpose. Her life mission now involves *her* – not just others. She will expect the man in her life to have learned the art of living and loving through his heart, his body, his passion and his soul. And when that man appears – she will hand him a paintbrush and together breathe through their sacred bodies a holy sunrise.

Excerpts come from ***Caught Between the Sheets*** – in press by the author. *Caught Between The Sheets* guides people in correcting historical, cultural and religious narratives, reauthoring an affirming spiritually integrated sexual story, and introduces exercises, rituals and sacred sexual practices. For more information you may contact the author at [www.tinaschermersellers.com](http://www.tinaschermersellers.com)