

A close-up portrait of an African American woman's face, focusing on her eyes and nose. A large white circle is overlaid on the image, partially covering her face. The background is a solid light blue color.

life. as we **know** it.

what's **worth knowing** about
love, sex and life.

by African American women. for African American women.

**what's worth
knowing about**

life.



You're smart. You're ambitious. You're beautiful.

Being an African American woman today means belonging to our ever-expanding community. Your life is filled with new opportunities and complicated challenges. With opportunity comes choices, and making the right ones isn't always easy. Whether you're dealing with issues of intimacy, sexual relationships, men, love, or self-esteem, a diverse gathering of African American women, including TV personalities, healthy sex advocates, relationship experts, and life coaches, have meaningful words of wisdom, inspiration, and practical information for you within these pages.

**what's worth
knowing** about

our experts.

*Jacque Reid,
Demetria L. Lucas and
Dr. Rachel Ross are not only experts,
they're African American women like you,
who believe that taking control of your health,
is the key to reaching your full potential and
living the life you were meant to live.*

life expert

Jacque Reid

TV Personality

Journalist

Champion Of Women's Empowerment



Jacque Reid is a veteran entertainment and news journalist. In her illustrious career, she has interviewed some of the most influential figures in pop culture, including James Brown, Tom Cruise, Jane Fonda, Will Smith, Sheryl Crow, Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, Aretha Franklin, Dave Chappelle and many more. She appears regularly on the nationally

syndicated, The Tom Joyner Morning Show, the Joy Behar show, and on CNN. She was also a regular guest co-host for The View, and has appeared on ABC's Nightline and CNN's Larry King Live.

Raised in Atlanta, Jacque honed her craft at Clark Atlanta University, where she received her BA in Print Journalism and further sharpened her skills at Northwestern University, receiving her MA in Broadcast Journalism.

sexologist expert

Dr. Rachel Ross

Healthy Sex Advocate
TV Personality
Speaker



As a doctor and a sexologist, Dr. Rachel Ross has been heralded by the *Chicago Tribune* as the next Dr. Ruth for her open discussions about relationships, sex, abstinence for teenagers, and HIV/AIDS prevention. A popular TV and radio personality, Dr. Ross offers medical commentary for the nationally syndicated *Tavis Smiley Show* and appears in Chicago on

“You & Me This Morning” on Chicago’s WCIU - “The U”.

Dr. Ross earned her M.D. from Meharry Medical College, her B.A., from Vanderbilt University and her Ph.D., from the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists. She practices medicine in her hometown of Gary, Indiana, where she is also the medical director of one of Indiana’s largest male prisons.

relationship expert

Demetria Lucas

Relationship Expert
Life Coach
Author



Former *Essence Magazine Relationships Editor* and dating columnist –Demetria L. Lucas is author of “A Belle in Brooklyn: The Go-to Girl for Advice on Living Your Best Single Life; creator of the award-winning blog *ABelleInBrooklyn.com*; and founder of *Coached By Belle*, a life-coaching service, where she helps clients build healthy relationships. She’s appeared on *The Today Show*, *The Anderson Cooper Show*,

The Dr. Drew Show and the *Oprah Radio Show*. She’s also been a guest speaker at Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Howard, NYU, and Spelman College.

Demetria earned a degree in English from the University of Maryland, College Park and a Master’s degree in Journalism from New York University. She currently lives in Brooklyn and is working on her second book, *Don’t Waste Your Pretty*.



what's worth knowing about

living single.

by Demetria Lucas

Living single looks good on you if you do it right, ladies. Here's my advice on how to get out there, meet new people, and really enjoy yourself. Smile & say 'hi.' If you don't let a man know you're interested, more than likely, he'll assume you're not. If you want to meet a man, look like you want to meet a man. Lip gloss and a comb never hurt anyone. Use both liberally. Men don't notice you across a room because of your brain. Give them something to look out for. Flatter your best asset. If it's your smile, um, smile. If it's your legs - wear a skirt. Stop looking for men in bunches like at the club or happy hour. Men are everywhere, on the street, in line, in the elevator, on the train. When I say everywhere, I mean everywhere.

When you see someone that catches your eye no matter where you are, say something. ('Hi' is fine. If he's remotely interested, he'll take it from there. He's been practicing opening lines since he was 13.)

what's worth knowing about

living single.

by Jacque Reid

Many African American women I meet around the country in my travels are under the false impression that there's something wrong with being single. Even worse, many of them believe that since they're single, there must be something wrong with them. Now, these are beautiful, intelligent, successful, amazing women who have so much to offer and so much going for them, that if you saw them out on the street you would never think that they would feel that way. And sadly, they're not alone. This seems to be the way a lot of women, African American and otherwise, feel about being single these days.

If you ask me, the thing that's most concerning about this is that many of these women are more than willing to lower their standards and settle for the first able-bodied man that happens to come strolling along - rather than waiting for Mr. Right.

If you're single, I want you to know that it is certainly nothing to be sad or ashamed about. It's not a condition. It's not a curse. It's something we all go through at one time or another in life.

Never forget that the beautiful, strong, independent black woman looking back at you every time you peer into the mirror has all the qualities the man you deserve in your life prizes and demands.

So, keep the faith. I believe with all my heart that if it's truly meant to happen, in time, you two will meet. And when you do, you'll be ready to build the life you've always known you were meant to live.



what's worth knowing about

men.



What kind of man is *the right man*?

He lets you be you. A man that lets you be who you are is attracted to you for the right reasons. A man that doesn't? Delete his number from your cell phone and your memory.

You can trust him. If you can trust him and I mean, really trust him, he just may have what it takes to be worthy of you. If you can't trust him, trust me - he's not the one.

He respects you and you respect him. Long-lasting, loving relationships are built upon mutual respect. No secret there, ladies.

He's physically attracted to you & vice versa. Sexual attraction is an essential part of any long-term romantic relationship. So, if you can't keep your hands off each other now, your sex life could be red hot years from now.

He practices safe sex. A man that cares about his own health is more likely to care about your health, too. If this describes your guy, there's a good chance he's a keeper.

He's not perfect, but he's perfect for you. Does he like doing the same things you do? Do you share the same sense of humor? Does he make you smile even when you feel like crying? Hint: If he knows you're not perfect, but he also knows that you're perfect for him, he just may be the one.

A s a dating and relationship coach, I'm often asked how to tell if a man is the right man to pursue a long-term relationship with. How do you know if he's "The One?" The following tips will help you determine if the man you're with really is the man of your dreams.



what's worth knowing about

relationships.

You know him

When was he born?

Where was he born?

What's his mother's name?

What's his father's name?

What's his favorite color?

What's his favorite sport?

What's his favorite team?

What's his favorite food?

What's his dream in life?

What are his religious beliefs?

You know him well

What was the name of his last girlfriend?

When did he lose his virginity?

How many sexual partners before you?

What's the longest relationship he's had?

What is the thing he wants most in life?

What qualities does he look for in a woman?

What does he like most about you?

You really know him

What is his biggest insecurity?

What was his childhood like?

Has he ever had an STD?

Does he trust you?

What was the reason for his last break up?

How does he feel about commitment?

You know your man better than he knows himself, right? Wrong. No matter how long you've known him, no matter how many things you've shared together, no matter how many layers you have managed to peel back of the onion that is him, if you're like most women, you only think you know everything there is to know about your man. The truth is, you really never know everything there is to know about your partner. Sure, you can learn a lot about him, the longer you're together and the more you get to know him over time, but everyone has secrets and things in their past that they don't even want to share with the people in life they love the most. Yes, that includes you. So, just how well do you know the man in your life? Knowing the answers to the questions may not give you the answer to that question, but it may give you a good idea of how much more you really do need to know about him.

what's worth knowing about

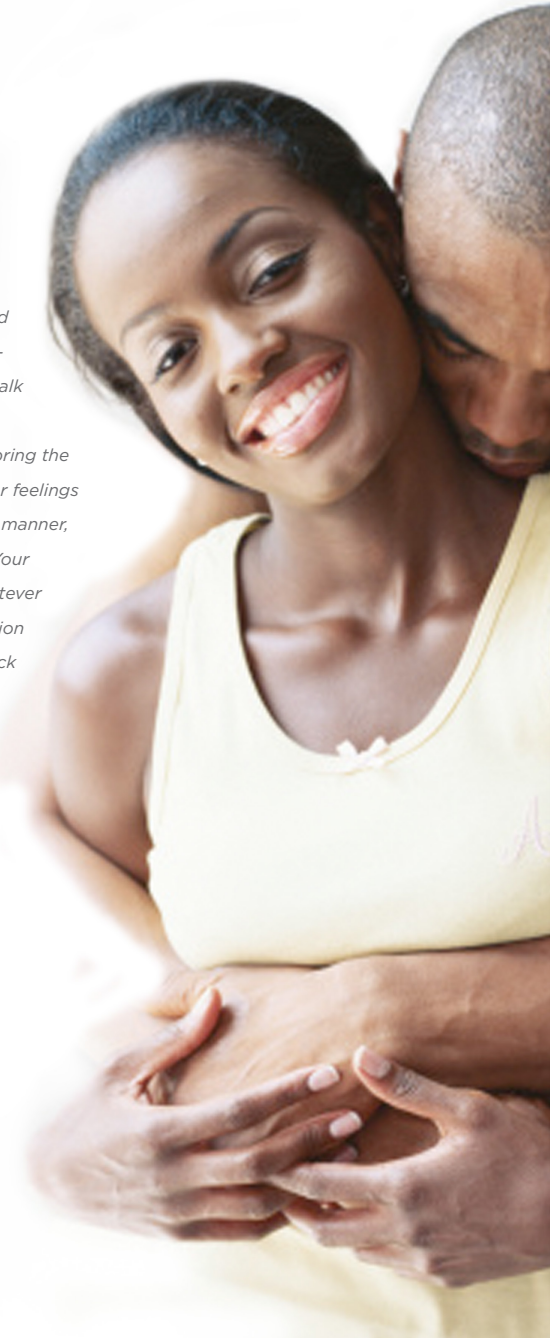
the moment.

by Dr. Rachel Ross

*T*alking to your partner about safe sex in the heat of the moment can be awkward, frustrating and embarrassing. So, it's a good idea to have that conversation long before things get that far. It's not easy, but talking about it is the only way to be sure you and your partner are on the same page about safe sex when you decide to become intimate together. How do you begin that conversation? That depends on you, your relationship with the person you're talking to and how well you know them. If you don't want to be too direct, you could say that you just read a magazine article on safe sex and you want their opinion on the subject.

how to create a safe & trusting *moment before sex.*

Or you could say something like 'What brand of condoms do you use?'. Perhaps you could bring the subject up spur of the moment - like when you're watching TV, out on a walk together, over dinner, or during a phone conversation. However you choose to bring the subject up, make sure you discuss your feelings about safe sex in a clear and positive manner, so there are no misunderstandings. Your health and well-being are worth whatever feelings of awkwardness a conversation about safe sex might bring up, so stick it out, even if it makes you and your partner uncomfortable. The best part is, once you've had this conversation with your partner, when you do decide to have sex, you've already prepared for the moment when it comes. Which means you can concentrate on more pleasurable things - like enjoying the moment.



A close-up photograph of a Black couple kissing. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right, wearing a yellow and blue patterned bikini top. The background is white.

what's worth knowing about

safe sex.

H

aving safe sex doesn't have to cramp your style or ruin the moment. As a matter of fact, imagine this:

practicing safe sex can actually be fun.

All it takes is a little preparation, planning and an active imagination. Here are a few suggestions that can make sex safer without taking the fun and excitement out of it.

Use Condoms: Condoms can greatly reduce the risk of STDs and pregnancy. They're available in a wide range of varieties, colors, sizes and are even available in different flavors. Allergi to latex? Don't let that stop you from getting your groove on. There are plenty of non-latex condoms out there for you, too. For a nice change of pace, female condoms are a nice alternative to consider. Just like male condoms, they're made out of latex, but are inserted inside the vagina. How good are they? When used properly, they're every bit as safe and reliable as male condoms. Build Anticipation: Having safe sex is exciting and fun, and even more so when you take the time to really enjoy all the things that lead up to it. And we don't just mean foreplay in the traditional sense. Seducing your partner psychologically can really heat things up, too. Texting him with details about what you have in store for him, or leaving a sexy voicemail is always a nice way to get the fire started. We're sure you can think of others. Get Tested For STDs: OK, admittedly, getting testing for STDs is

neither fun nor sexy, but just knowing your status when it comes to STDs will definitely ease your mind, so you can relax and focus on making sure you and your partner have fun. Location Is Everything: To really spice things up, move things out of the bedroom for a change. Whether it's in the kitchen, outdoors, far away from prying eyes (and law enforcement) – safe sex can be that much more fun when you change your routine and spice things up. Indulge Your Fantasies: Don't be shy. Let your partner know you're open to trying new things. Things you really want to do with him. Who knows? Maybe he'll surprise you with some fantasies of his own. Intimacy Rules: Instead of fixating on worrying about contracting an STD or getting pregnant, practicing safe sex helps you focus on building trust and intimacy with your partner. It's the best way we can think of to reduce your anxiety level when you have sex and will most definitely makes your sex life much more fulfilling.

So you see? Having safe sex doesn't have to ruin the moment or your fun. Safe sex can be fun sex –as long as you keep a positive attitude about it and find what works best for you and your partner.

A message from **ORAQUICK.**

OraQuick is declaring a “State of Intimacy!”

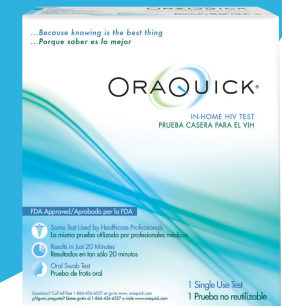
We will support and empower African American women in conversations about relationships, sex and their personal well-being. We are dedicated to opportunities for African American women to have a space to feel free to share matters that are on their minds and hearts. We are dedicated to providing insights, conversations and most importantly real people, that are relevant to her and whom she can trust. We are here in the community, at the table and looking to contribute. Overall, OraQuick will provide a platform for African American women to support one another, share stories of lessons learned and personal discoveries, and motivating one another to be their best selves.

life. as we **know** it.

*Brought to you
by **OraQuick.***

The affordable, in-Home HIV test from a name you can trust.

OraQuick is from OraSure Technologies, a company with a long and trusted history of leadership and innovation in HIV testing. Based on the same HIV test healthcare professionals have been using since 2004, OraQuick is the first FDA-approved oral swab in -hometest for HIV-1 and HIV-2. It's an oral swab test that doesn't require blood, so it's painless. And since you can take it in the comfort and privacy of your own home, your results are completely confidential. OraQuick is available for purchase from OraQuick.com or at fine retailers near you.



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