

Contraception, relationships & masturbation

SEX with Sue has been on Toronto's airwaves for the past four years, and host Sue Johanson has gained even more notoriety across Metro than Dr. Ruth. Critics say her show is far more interesting, straight-forward, and best of all informative. Every Sunday night, hundreds of callers swamp the lines of Q107 in order to get advice from Sue on a sexual problem they have. Before the show even started, Sue had gained some prominence from her regular feature in the *Sun* called the Sex Lady. After appearing as a guest on Q107's *Barometer*, Gary Slaight, then station manager, called Sue into her office and offered her the opportunity to do a regular show. She quickly accepted. Last Thursday, *Excalibur*'s James Flagal and Howard Kaman got the opportunity to talk to Sue about her show and her personal beliefs about sexuality. Besides being a grandmother of two, Sue is also a registered nurse and has graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in sex and sexuality.

EXCALIBUR: What's the most typical question which a university male student would ask on your show, and the most typical question that a female student asks?

SUE: My penis is too small or my penis is too big, and I tell them it's just beautiful, absolutely magnificent. Bigger is not better, don't worry about it at all.

For females, it's usually relationship type questions in the beginning, but sexual. So, it would be a question like, my boyfriend and I have been going steady for two months, and he wants me to perform oral sex. And then she'll add in brackets, I barf just thinking about it. So, you have to listen very carefully, and read between the lines, especially on radio. When I'm working one to one, you have body language, eye contact, their body will tell you a whole pile of stuff. But on radio, you don't have that.

EXCALIBUR: What do you think about Dr. Ruth?

SUE: Well, Dr. Ruth doesn't give any information at all, if you really listen to her, she says zip. Her show is pretty well useless. All she ever says is: see a therapist; join a church group; see your family doctor; or talk about it.

EXCALIBUR: Many times you recommend seeing a therapist to the people who call in. How much follow up is there to those people who you do give such advice?

SUE: There's a lot of follow up, it's up to here. I stay until 11 o'clock at night every Sunday at the Q, and I just stay on the phones. Some of them have been on the phones waiting since six.

EXCALIBUR: What about some of the people who do phone in and it is easily apparent that their question is outright fake. For example, one person phoned into your show and said that his girlfriend did not have her period for the past four months and she was growing fat. How do you treat such questions?

SUE: Dead serious, because there's some female out there who is actually going through that. Now I'm not saying she's pregnant, because if she doesn't know by four months that she's pregnant, then in all probability, she's okay. But she's been on the pill, and she's got post-pill amenoria or she psyched herself out of a period. Or she wasn't pregnant in the beginning, but then she decided well I am pregnant, so the hell with birth control, so she started having sex.

EXCALIBUR: Do you think people are overly promiscuous?

SUE: I hate the word promiscuous. Wash out your mouth! What is promiscuous?

EXCALIBUR: Isn't it someone who is overly sexually active, but not in a relationship, but jumping from bed to bed. It means that you do not take the precautions to see if certain partners have a disease for instance.

SUE: That's just plain stupid. Promiscuous, you see, is somebody who uses poor judgement. Let's say that I

went out and I practiced safer sex; like I made sure that every guy I was with double-bagged it. I used foam and I used a diaphragm, and I sleep with seven guys a week. Am I promiscuous?

EXCALIBUR: Do you think that's fine, though?

SUE: That's a judgement, and it's one I won't make. What I think doesn't matter. How does that person feel about herself?

EXCALIBUR: And the same goes for teen-agers?

SUE: Yes.

EXCALIBUR: What about when you were young, when were people losing their virginity?

on, whatever. To prove, to hold on to a boyfriend.

And also, we've got to start giving kids permission to masturbate without guilt. They do it today, but with guilt, and then they figure, I got to get a girl because I got to stop this. And they're doing just fine all by themselves if we'd leave them alone and don't pile the guilt on them. And let them have a girl when it comes naturally.

So, I have a real problem with the word promiscuous, because everybody that has one more sexual partner than I have is promiscuous. And right now, for me, that is the whole world, because I don't have a partner. Therefore, everybody is promiscuous, but me.

EXCALIBUR: What is the weirdest story that you ever got on the air?

SUE: There really have been some funny ones, where Christie and I would have to go off the air, and we would just have to put a tune on, because we'd be rolling on the floor. For instance, Romeo phones in, and he likes to 'whip it out' on Jane and Finch. And Romeo thinks this is really cool, and I'm talking about inappropriate behaviour, etc. And the next call that comes in, very nice call, is Jeff. Jeff is a male, smart guy, and he says I got the answer for Romeo. You tell Romeo to take a one inch square of pink fiberglass insulation. You tape it to the inside

there's a battery operated thing. Well, I'm standing there on television, and I've got my finger stuck in this damn thing and I've got it pumped up and it's on. And then I go to stop, and I let the pressure down and turn the thing off, but the pressure wouldn't go out of it. And I couldn't get it off. So, I took it, and you know the cartoon Alf, well, it looked just like Alf's nose. I held it up while it was vibrating like mad, and moved it up and down. We just had a ball with that thing, it's amazing that I'm never taken off the air.

EXCALIBUR: What do you do about those callers who really need immediate attention? It's like that call for help which you want to deal with then and there.

SUE: I'm really lucky, because I have a guy who works for Rogers Cable and he had volunteered to help me out answering the phones. . . . So, if I get the kind of a call which is really desperate, sexual abuse or assault, then I can just signal Joel. I will then tell the caller that I am putting them on hold and then Joel will get their phone number, and I'll phone them after the show.

EXCALIBUR: How often do you get that type of phone call?

SUE: I'll get one once a week. And then I'll get a letter, I have one now from Stephanie, a mother whose

EXCALIBUR: Is the sexual revolution over?

SUE: There never was a revolution really, it just was a speeded up evolution. It didn't really do a thing for women. It put us on the pill, but then we lost control of sex. I can't say no anymore, I'm now on the birth control pill and that controls my cycle completely. So now, if my partner wants to have sex, I don't have an excuse. I've got to have a headache, because I can't have my period anymore, I can't be ovulating. There's no excuse. We lost control and gave all the power to men. Now guys say, 'What do you mean you're not on the pill?'

Relationships have not changed a bit. 'We do it now or that's it. You want me to use a condom, you're kidding, I've never used a condom in my life.' How many women would resist that kind of pressure? They'd say, okay well maybe we'll do it just this once without a condom. And they take a chance on getting AIDS or Chlamydia. And she takes a chance, because the revolution did not give her permission to say 'Look big boy, either you use a condom or that's it. Forget it!' And mean it. . . .

The condom is the safest and the best, so why aren't we just saying use it.

EXCALIBUR: Is a condom good enough for effective birth control?

SUE: I'm now recommending that people use condoms and foam for the best protection, even against sexually transmitted diseases. But if you use those lubricated condoms, like Ramses Extra, they're good.

At random, Sue starts reading questions which York students have submitted to the CYSF for her consideration.

1) Can a woman achieve multiple orgasm?

Of course, we're much luckier than guys. We can come 28 times in a row and you're still panting after the first one.

2) How can I help my girlfriend have an orgasm. So far during intercourse, she hasn't been able to have one?

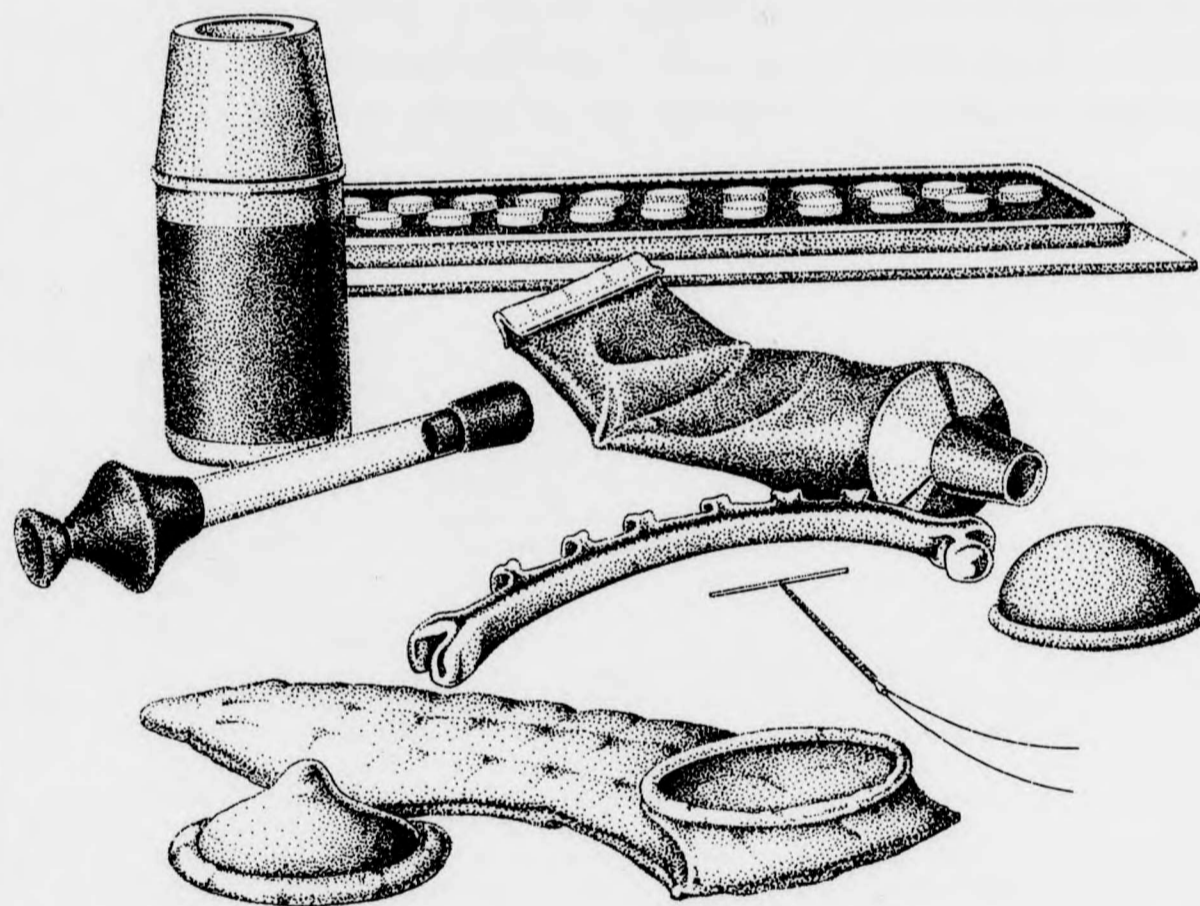
Well, forget it she won't have one during intercourse. Oral sex, manual, clitoral stimulation. Foreplay is very important for girls, very few have orgasms during intercourse.

3) I'm a 19 year-old woman who is very much in love with my boyfriend, in fact we plan to be married in a year or so. The problem is that I enjoy going out with other men. I really don't want to hurt my boyfriend, but it seems that I can't be faithful to one man. If he found out about my affairs, our relationship would be over with, yet I just can't seem to stop.

We've got to really stop and look at her readiness for a steady relationship. She's just not ready for it yet. You can be in love, but not ready to settle down.

4) I'm a healthy 22-year-old male who is able to reach orgasm. My problem is that I find it difficult to reach orgasm during sex, and haven't the last three times when I've had sex for 45 minutes to an hour, and then my body just gets too tired to keep going. I don't have sex very often.

It's probably anxiety, pressure. I'd want to ask him, 'hey do you masturbate?' You see it's important to masturbate, because that's the way you learn what pleases you, what's feels good. It's normal, it's natural. It's too bad that religion has done such a snow job on masturbation, because religion didn't want us to enjoy sex.



SUE: In our day, of course, you hung on to it until death practically. Your mother wanted you to hang on to it until death, but you were going to get married so you were going to have to give it up then. But I don't think that's a great idea.

EXCALIBUR: But what do you think about today's age of losing one's virginity at 14 or 15?

SUE: I really much prefer it if today we had really good sex education. I'd like really good sex education in the school from grades four and five up. And we're not talking about anatomy and physiology. We're talking about relationships, we're talking about love. We're giving kids the skills to make decisions, the skills to say; do I want to have sex right now, how do I feel about sex right now. If I have sex right now, how am I going to feel about it tomorrow? Am I going to feel good about it. And also, why am I doing this? Besides the fact that I'm horny, why do I want to have sex? To prove you're a male, to prove you can do it, get it up get it

on Jane and Finch again. And by this time Christie and I were on the floor, because I could see him doing it. Going to the hospital to pick out all this fiberglass from out of his penis.

EXCALIBUR: How would you handle yourself on the air under such a situation?

SUE: I laugh, there are times when things happen when you just have to laugh. The other night I was doing a television show, and I was showing how men would use an artificial vagina. It is a sex implement that men can use instead of masturbation. I would recommend it primarily for somebody who is physically handicapped, and let's say they have a severe case of cerebral palsy and they've got no coordination whatsoever. They can't masturbate, they can't do it. So how do they masturbate? What do they do, ask their nurses to do it for you. So there's this appliance, and guys put their penis' in, and then there's a pump, pump it up so that there's pressure, fits snugly around the penis. And then

husband is sexually abusing their daughter. And she knows it, but she feels powerless. I can't even get a hold of her. It's just Stephanie period, no address. And if I could I would get her to help. There are groups in Toronto that we can get her for help. A lot of time the support groups are there, yet people don't know about these groups. And I cannot give the name of a therapist out, because that's advertising. And therapists are booked to the hilt, so if I gave the name of a therapist out, it would be just like instant swamp. So, what I can do is that if she phones me and says then I can tell her, I have this therapist and I want you to phone for an appointment tomorrow morning at ten. Then at nine in the morning I phone the therapist's office. I speak to the receptionist, and I say Hi this is Sue, I'm sorry but this is desperate. You've got to see this lady, somewhere or other in the next week, get this lady in. And then when Stephanie phones in, they say hey, Stephanie we were expecting you call, we've got an appointment for you, how about Thursday at four.