



My life changed for the better after divorce

**Susan Jarvis, 56, Brisbane, Qld.**  
As I blew out the candles on my 38th birthday cake, I closed my eyes to make a wish. *I want to meet someone new.* I hoped.

It was 2004, and I'd recently divorced. After 14 years of sacrificing my own happiness for someone else, I was ready to start living again.

During my marriage, there wasn't a great deal of sex. And at the end, I'd chosen to be celibate. I'd also given up doing other things I loved because it all felt too hard.

After separating, I created a bucket list of new things I wanted to experience. Some were to explore new music and learn Italian,

while others revolved around intimacy - including having more adventurous sex and being with women as well as men.

But first, I needed to take better care of myself. At 165kg, I was extremely unhealthy. I started eating better and exercising more and before long I'd dropped 45kg. I felt fantastic.

"Divorce looks great on you!" one friend marvelled.

But I still struggled with my confidence. Just speaking with strangers in public made me feel shy, so the idea of going on a date was crippling.

*I have to get past this,* I told myself. So I began by simply giving checkout workers a compliment at the supermarket.

**I refused to let menopause bring my sex life to a grinding halt!**

"Thank you for smiling," I'd tell them. "You're very fast at putting through my shopping. I appreciate that."

Each time, it got easier and soon, in my better body and with my renewed confidence, I vowed to meet new people.

The day after my birthday, I met a man I'd connected with on the dating site RSVP. He was seven years younger than me and as we kissed, I felt so excited.

It had been four years since I'd had sex and it was nerve-racking to think about conquering my fear of being naked in front of someone new. But I needn't have worried because the experience was pure ecstasy.

I'd expected the relationship to run its course within weeks but after eight months of almost daily sex, we declared our love for one another.

After several years together, we decided to have an open relationship. I'd always wondered about polyamory, having more than one partner. Plus, I had a higher sex drive than my man, so I wanted different experiences. I started having sex with women, other couples and even doing it outdoors. It was thrilling!

My friends were supportive, if not a little envious of my sexual awakening.

"You're having so much fun!" they'd say. Once, I met a date at a motel so I could perform a specific sex act on him. "Blindfold yourself," I told him. "If you so much as peek, the man outside will come for you."

There was no-one outside, but the dominating experience felt electric. I was still buzzing with power afterwards. "It was amazing," I told my partner later. "That's awesome," he encouraged.

That relationship ultimately ended, but it wasn't long before I met another guy, who was again a few years younger than

# This can't be THE END



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me. At 45, I felt in my prime.

He had a conventional sex life but was open-minded.

"Would you come to a fetish party with me?" I asked, hopping to tick an item off my bucket list. "I'll try anything once," he beamed.

Arriving at the front door of a regular home, I was unsure what to expect. Inside, people were dressed in leather and harnesses, engaging in bondage.

We watched like deer in headlights and decided we preferred less violent ways to show affection.

"Now we know," I laughed afterwards. With my sex life thriving, I was happier than ever. But shortly after, I felt overly emotional. Even a TV ad could send me to tears.

make me lose a part of myself I'd been having a blast rediscovering.

Instead of wallowing in self-pity, I was committed to getting my groove back. I researched sexuality in middle age and learned a lot about responsive arousal. When we're younger, our hormones are driving our ovaries, arousal is spontaneous and comes easily. The slightest touch or simply watching an intimate movie can arouse a woman.

But, later in life, arousal is more responsive. The body needs specific touch and stimulation and it can take a bit of time.

Luckily, my loving partner was willing to help and we've welcomed lubrication products, sex toys and lingerie into the bedroom.

**Now my orgasms are better than ever!**

At 50, it seemed as if my libido had shut up shop and I'd never enjoy sex again. *Is it just me? Do I not like my partner?* I worried. It was heart-breaking to think menopause could

Now, my orgasms are better than ever!

In 2019, I created a blog called the Spicy Boulevard to help women over 50 and those with disabilities discover their sexuality.

I was blown away by how popular it was, and began offering services like workshops, coaching and an online sex shop too.

One day, a client came up to me. "I'm 77," she explained. "I'd like to buy a vibrator. Will you help me?" "Of course!" I beamed, delighted another woman was rediscovering her libido later in life.

Personally, I'm committed to remaining sexual until the day I die. I believe that if you can ask for what you want in the bedroom, you can ask for anything you want in life. And that can happen at any time, no matter your age.



Now, help other women discover their sexuality



He with a friend, before I prioritised my health and happiness

I'm happier than ever