

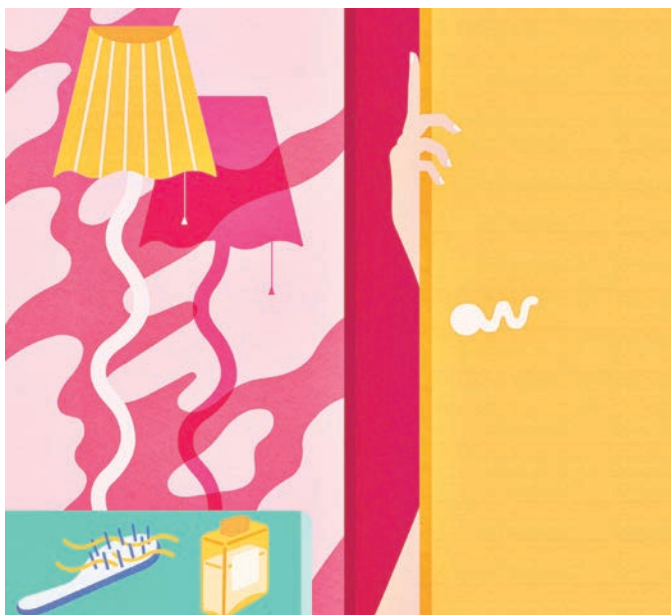
LET US SEX-PLAIN

Your personal wingwoman, *Jillian Anthony*, answers all your questions about dating and doing it in New York.

Dearest readers and advice seekers,

This is my final sex-and-dating column. I'm hanging up my keyboard to focus on other responsibilities as editor. (Don't you worry: Undateables will still be here!) I've been a mostly single New Yorker for six-plus years now, and I have felt the glee, despair and confusion that inevitably accompany dating in Gotham. As it turns out, many of us have the same problems! You've written in about long-distance relationships (LDRs), kinks, why it's so hard to land a second date, erections (or lack thereof), when to define the relationship (DTR), dating apps, if it's even possible to meet someone without dating apps, virginity, oral sex, pubic grooming, sex toys, asking out your coworker and much more.

In various forms, the most common question that comes to my inbox is, Am I normal? What is considered normal, much like what is considered hipster, seems to be nothing and everything. There is no such thing as "normal," and whatever quandary you're in, someone else out there is going through it, too. Heartbreak, like grief, can seem like a solitary endeavor



("How come no one else around me wants to rip out their insides, just so they won't feel this ache anymore?"), but it's actually one of the most universal. The joy and pain of love is part of what makes us who we are, not something to berate ourselves for, as I so often did when I was going through hard times.

Let me leave you with the best sex, dating and life advice I've got:

Date with intent. Whether you

want to get married this year or spend a year sleeping around, let your actions clearly show what you're looking for. Be kind and honest with the people you meet.

You will find a partner who's right for you, but that discovery may not be on your ideal timeline. And try not to place so much pressure on finding "the one": Each relationship serves to teach us, whether it lasts three weeks or 30 years.

Ask for what you need. No one can read your mind, so you have to gather the courage to tell people what's important to you—in and out of the bedroom. Whether you want to know where you stand with someone or you want your partner to be less selfish during sex, don't be afraid or ashamed to ask for what you deserve. And if your partner is unable to give you those things, move on. Don't spend a second of your shine on someone who is intent on dimming it.

Don't want to do something? Don't do it. In turn, never pressure someone else. These are basic tenets of consent, but so many questions I have received involve feeling obligated to agree to something (sexually or not) a partner wants, or feeling resentment toward a partner for not fulfilling a desire. Communication and compromise is essential in a relationship, but you never have to have transactional sex (do this for me, and I'll do this for you) or do something you hate just because a partner likes it.

Finally: **When you know it's not right, listen to yourself. The first time—and every time.**

With love and lust, Jillian

OH, THE HORROR!

"I was sitting on a bench by myself when a cute guy walked up to me and introduced himself.

We chatted a bit, and he asked me for my number. I agreed, and he said, 'Here, let me put my number in your phone.' I handed my phone to him, and he immediately ran away with it. I can't imagine how many girls have fallen for this scheme. Damn you, hot robber!"

—Melanie, Williamsburg

DATING NEWS

Sustain Natural Pop-up

Sustain Natural—a company that makes organic tampons, condoms, lubes and more—hosts a six-day vagina-themed pop-up downtown. Each day will celebrate a different chapter (Periods, Pleasure, Consent) of founder and CEO Meika Hollender's new book, *Get on Top*, a sex-positive guide to sexual health for women. The retail store is open

during the day, and each night brings events like a happy hour with porn star Asa Akira, live podcast recordings and an interactive consent workshop. Plus, there will be a vulva selfie booth. Do you dare? → Sustain Natural, 208 Bowery St (sustainnatural.com). Tue 17–Sun 22 pop-up store noon–6pm, events and panel discussions 6–9pm; free.

SHARE!

Read all of the Let Us Sex-plain columns at timeout.com/newyork/nysexplain.