

How Staying at a Nude Swingers Resort Changed My View Of Sex and Relationships



Who knew spending a week naked, surrounded by strangers and sex, could feel so normal?



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I wasn't even 20 minutes into my trip, but already I was starting to wonder exactly what I'd gotten myself into. As I looked out my hotel room window, I saw a fully naked man and an equally naked woman enjoying themselves right on the resort's white plastic beach loungers. Stunned and a little embarrassed, I flung the curtain closed and darted out of sight toward the center of the room.

To be fair, I'd known that witnessing open displays of sex was a possibility at this resort — nay, it was practically a guarantee. Hedonism II is famous for its naked bodies and in-your-face sex shenanigans. A quick Google search reveals a gaggle of tales from inside Jamaica's scandalous clothing-optional, swingers-friendly resort. So, as I sat on the bed kinda freaking out, I reminded myself that this was exactly why I'd agreed to come on this press trip in the first place. Well, not to watch a middle-aged couple pleasuring each other, but because I'd wanted a window into this notorious world

where naked was the norm, curiosity was catered to, and sex was free from taboo. I just didn't expect the window to be so...literal.

After both mentally and physically ping-ponging myself to and from the window, my curiosity won, coaxing me back into frame. As I looked out, I tried to act casual, like I was just checking out the beach view, like I didn't even notice the couple going at it in broad daylight, close enough that I could see the dimples in the woman's thighs. This time, I spun away from the glass, simultaneously scolding my curiosity and chastising my embarrassment.

It took a few more casual sweeps for me to realize that no one else seemed to notice what was going on. Where were all the sex-hungry swingers my friends and family had warned me about? From where I stood, all I saw were a bunch of naked people minding their own business.

And that's when it hit me. I was the only one nonplussed by the situation. I was the one who hadn't yet normalized the idea of two consenting adults having a romp outside at a resort notorious for public sex. Come to think of it, I was probably the only person on this side of the resort, the nude side, who still had their clothes on. By this point, I was willing to bet that I was probably also the only person who may have unpacked their luggage but hadn't realized they'd brought so much extra baggage.

For the last 10 minutes I'd also been putting on and taking off my bathing suit. Hedonism is divided into a clothing-optional "prude" side and a naked-mandatory "nude" side. *To be nude or to be prude, that was the question.* Now that I'd realized no one else gave a damn, the answer seemed easier, even obvious. My suit hit the floor and I found myself slipping out of the room completely naked under my beach towel.

Fast-forward 90 minutes and I was waist-deep in the nude pool, where being 100-percent buck naked is mandatory. I nursed my cocktail in the corner as I watched four other guests getting to know each other very, very well.

We live in a culture that frowns on these types of casual sexual encounters, especially any that are out in the open. Even in monogamous relationships there's still a stigma of secrecy. We're taught that sex is a private thing. It's something we should hide and keep behind closed doors. The same goes with nudity. We're often taught that nudity breeds sex. Sex breeds more sex.

But what if I told you that being in a sex-saturated space actually helped to normalize these concepts and shed some of the attached shame and stigmas?

Considering my reaction to the couple outside my window, I was amazed at how quickly I was able to become accustomed to nudity and sex. If we're being honest here, the shock of being naked and seeing other people naked wore off for me (and several others) within our first 24 hours. After that, naked felt totally normal.

You know what else felt totally normal after about a day? People having sex all around me.

Yes, believe it or not, even public sex starts blending into the background with the palm trees. (Which is why, I'm guessing, I was the only one paying attention to the two older people having sex outside of my window when I arrived.) I'm not saying you become totally oblivious, but it's not as incredibly distracting. You can hold conversations, without missing a beat, while someone is being fingered just a foot away. NBD.

I also found that seeing real people have sex in real ways did a lot to normalize sex. Why? Spoiler alert: It doesn't take long to realize that real people rarely have sex like

porn stars, and they definitely don't look as good. While some of the more active guests may disagree, not all sex is sexy. In fact, it can get downright awkward, or even boring.

It's no secret that America is often seen as a sexually uptight country. On the whole, we have a pretty sex-negative culture, and, as I was learning, old habits die hard. This is probably why, compared to most of our Western world counterparts, we have some of the strictest sex censorships. We are protective of what we expose ourselves to and how much of ourselves we expose. We also ban women's nipples, berate mothers who breastfeed in public, and do an all-around good job of shaming and stigmatizing sex.

Swingers are often stigmatized, stereotyped, and generally misunderstood. For those who think it's all lecherous retirees on the edge of divorce, adjust your mirror.

Millennials and Xennials are also attracted to The Lifestyle, though it's hardly surprising when you consider that many of them have a more fluid idea of sex and relationships. The sexual revolution may have started in the '60s and '70s, but only recently have non-monogamous relationships and casual hookups (slowly) started to gain acceptance.

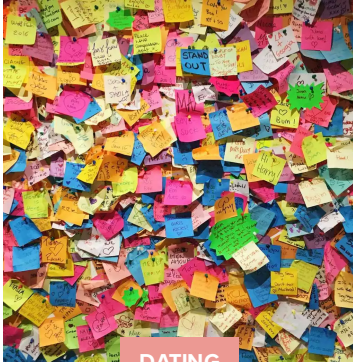
Communication is key in any relationship, and its presence is even more paramount in non-monogamous ones. The couples at Hedonism appeared to be healthier and happier than almost any I'd ever met. One such couple, a Vixen and Stag (meaning the man gets pleasure from watching his partner with other men, though he rarely engages in sex with other women), said the relationship works so well because they have to be so open and honest with each other.

Generally, our sex culture doesn't encourage us to talk about sex (which is a big mistake). In fact, we slut-shame young women who do it and call out young men who do the same as braggarts. When I was young, I was afraid to talk about my experiences, which were not always pleasant, for fear of being labeled a slut or kiss-and-tell; a term that first showed up in a play way back in 1695. We are taught that sex is a private act that should be kept behind closed doors. For decades, we've been telling people who show public affection to "get a room."

At Hedo, though, the doors are wide open. And, if this week has taught me anything, it's that even if you've got a room, it doesn't mean you have to use it.

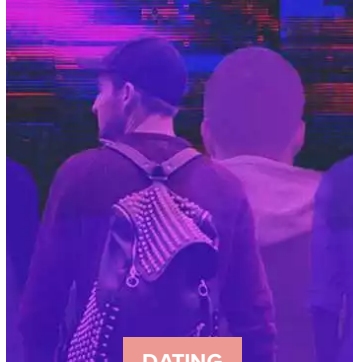
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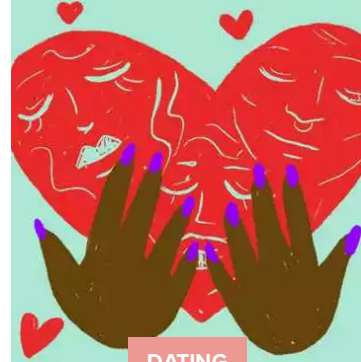
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