POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE DIRECTIONS IN THE MALTZ HIERARCHY OF SEXUAL INTERACTION

Sexual energy is a benign, natural force which can be channeled in either positive or negative directions. Below are two different sets of qualities each corresponding with a different direction. The negative qualities increase and intensify as one travels downward, and positive qualities increase and intensify as one travels upward.

GROUND ZERO:
Influx of drives, hormones, and sexual energy

- emotional isolation
- risk and danger
- dishonesty and shame
- impulsive, compulsive
- betrayal of trust
- imbalance of power
- coercion and fear
- dislike of partner
- silencing of inner reality
- pain and injury
- limited options
- disintegration of relationship
- destruction of body and soul

POSITIVE DIRECTION
- life-affirming celebration
- healthy bonding
- connectedness
- creative expression
- emotional intimacy
- enhanced self-esteem
- open communication
- mutual respect
- trust
- sense of equality
- consent
- safety
- caring

FIGURE 1
THE MALTZ HIERARCHY OF SEXUAL INTERACTION

Level +3
AUTHENTIC SEXUAL INTIMACY
- spiritual connection
- honors the inner experience
- goal of heart connection, emotional intimacy
- sense of ecstasy and communion
- consensual, being in the moment
- reverence towards the body

Level +2
MAKING LOVE
- performance/pleasure focus
- skills and experimentation
- behavioral goal-oriented
- mutuality, equality
- goal of orgasm
- consensual with expectations

Level +1
ROLE FULFILLMENT
- social customs, religious or cultural duty
- goal of procreation, physical release
- fixed role behaviors
- limited sexual repertoire
- sex for drive reduction
- willing acceptance of inequality

SEXUAL ENERGY
GROUND ZERO

Level -1
IMPERSONAL INTERACTION
- other as sex object
- self-denying or self-centered
- generates shame
- sex as uncontrollable, impulsive
- sex under the influence and/or without protection
- disregard for possible effects and consequences

Level -2
ABUSIVE INTERACTION
- sense of entitlement
- sex as a humiliation, exploitation
- manipulation and non-violent coercion
- dominance/submission roles
- sex on demand
- sex for power and control

Level -3
VIOLENT INTERACTION
- overt physical coercion
- sadistic, ritualized behaviors
- torture, pain, physical harm
- other as object of sexualized hostility and rage
- goal is absolute dominance, destruction, annihilation

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For more information, please refer to this page on Wendy Maltz' website: www.healthysex.com/selfhelp.php#a1

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