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Boyfriend watches TV when we have sex ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I've caught my boyfriend watching TV a few times when I was giving him oral sex. I find this strange. What could this mean?

Answer

Dear Reader,

During a time when you're being intimate with someone you care about, it can be nice to know that you're both invested in that moment. While what this might mean to your boyfriend is one question to answer, it's also worth exploring how his behavior affects you. A helpful place to start may be to reflect on how this makes you feel, and then have a conversation with him — because the only way to understand what this means for him is to ask.

To get started, how are you feeling about your boyfriend peeking at the TV during oral sex? You said you find it strange, but do you have any additional feelings on it? Is it that you're simply curious about it or has it hurt your feelings? Do you find that your needs are still being met when he participates in this way? Intimate moments with someone you really care about may feel less intimate if they don't seem to be as engaged as you are. As a result, you might feel more vulnerable in the relationship, which is an uncomfortable feeling for many.

Once you've reflected on how his actions make you feel, you may want to open up a conversation with him about it. Have you brought up your concerns in the past? If so, how did he react? Did he acknowledge his behavior and take any effort to make changes? If you haven't brought this up, it might be worth thinking about what's been holding you back. Do you think he would be open to this conversation? If he isn't, this may be good information for you. Whether a sexual partner is brand new or longstanding, communication is the key to improving the relationship, including the goings-on in the sack.

Now, to examine your other question. It's difficult to say what it might mean to your boyfriend. There could be any number of factors influencing his actions. One possibility is that the TV was on when you two started to get it on. Perhaps he was really invested in what he was watching or he got distracted by something on the screen. You could consider turning the TV off before

getting intimate to see if that changes the dynamic. It's also possible that he likes to leave the television or radio on during sex because the sound can buffer any noise that results from the intensity of sexual activity. Does he put the radio or TV on during any other bedroom activities? Or does this seem to be a fellatio-specific phenomenon? If so, could it be that your partner isn't sure what to do during oral sex or feels uncomfortable? Is he less interested in fellatio as a sexual activity? It may be helpful to speak about both of your needs and how you can meet them, especially if your conversation demonstrates that this act doesn't do it for you both. It might also be good to reflect on how he acts when you two are spending quality, non-sexual time together. Noticing whether or not his attention is often divided or whether it's situation-specific may give you some clues as to the meaning behind the TV ogling. While these scenarios provide some possibilities, there could be many other reasons he's paying attention to the television. Ultimately, there's no way to really know without asking.

Before you engage in sexual activity again, you may want to express your concern. It may be helpful to set aside a time to speak, outside of the bedroom, to ensure that you're able to communicate clearly and have time to focus on the conversation. Sharing your feelings and working together on ways to enjoy your time with each other may do the trick. Letting him know that you'd like him to tune into you when you're together could open the door to many other conversations.

Alice!

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