



Who's In BED With You?

When you slip between the sheets for a little love, is it actually a threesome in your mind? Is that hunk from Starbucks making an appearance? Does that glint in his eye mean he's seeing his ex-girlfriend's head on your body? CW sorts out who's in bed with you and why...

BY Lora Wintz

"It's much more common than people really want to think about," declares Dr. Pepper Schwartz—you and your partner may indeed be bringing other people to bed with you. "When you're feeling pleasure, your mind rambles in places you didn't give it permission to," the Professor of Sociology at The University of Washington in Seattle, and best-selling author of *The Great Sex Weekend*, explains. While you think you may be totally into giving Johnny the best sex he's ever had, there's a chance something else may be going on in your head—and someone else may be making an appearance in your thoughts.

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Who Invited You?

When a person pops into your head during sex—and it's not the man facing you and calling you "baby" at the moment—he could be there for several reasons. "The mind is a strange thing; thoughts can get triggered," explains Dr. Schwartz. "You have an image in your head of what you're doing in the moment and suddenly, your mind flashes to the last time you did it. It was your old boyfriend and he did it a different way...and boom! You're there. You didn't mean to be there, but you are, and you're thinking about another man. It could happen to anyone."

That extra guy could also make an appearance if you've recently seen him around. "It can be very situation specific," suggests the relationship expert. "If you've just been to a movie and seen a movie star, or you've just had lunch with your old boyfriend, those thoughts of him could still be rattling around in your head—especially in times when the sex may not be particularly passionate or affectionate."

Then there's also the *really big* reason—you have other issues going on. "It's a dirty little secret that a lot of people have—that they're really in bed with more than one person," reveals Dr. Schwartz. "Part of that may be fun, but part of that may be a crutch to not be intimate, and it may also bespeak of issues people should face up to."

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Those Nasty Issues

"If you're always thinking of someone else when you're making love to your partner, yes, it could be a bad thing," declares Dr. Schwartz. "If it happens occasionally and it has nothing to do with anything about the relationship, then I think it's fine. But if you're always using somebody you've cared about as the fantasy to have an orgasm, if you start your lovemaking and you're not really with the person you're physically with, it's telling you something." And what it's telling you may be something you already know, but haven't been willing to express completely.

"If you're angry at your partner for any reason, if you feel like he's not loving you, if you feel he's treating you sexually in a mechanical way, these are things that really have to be said and dealt with," advises the author, who is also a relationship expert for PerfectMatch.com. "You have to know the relationship is in good shape emotionally."

If it's a stranger who regularly slips between the sheets with you and your guy, like the Starbucks cashier or the man you saw on the bus this morning, it could be you yourself are having intimacy issues. "You're safer with a stranger than the person you're supposed to be in love and in bed with," explains Dr. Schwartz, who has also authored the book *Everything You Know About Love And Sex Is Wrong*. "You have to look at your own sexual psyche and see what's going on there. It may have nothing to do with him and be all about you."

Getting Back To Two

"If you're not able to connect with the person you're making love to, there's something wrong, because there should be enough connection to keep you together physically and mentally," shares Dr. Schwartz. If those other fantasy people keep showing up at the most inopportune times, it may be time to try establishing a deeper connection between the two of you.

"Keep your eyes open, look in each other's eyes and force yourself to stay present," suggests the relationship expert. "Try connecting with each other while you're making love as opposed to shutting your eyes. Make sure there's a lot of foreplay—emotional and sexual—before making love so you stay connected. Engage each other instead of retreating to some private world."

How you interact outside the bedroom is just as important, and you and your guy should take advantage of being together to feel

like you're both whole-heartedly into the relationship and into each other. "You need to have a relationship that has conversation and intimacy and bonding," believes Dr. Schwartz. "Go out and do things together, and don't make it mechanical. Make it emotional."

You can also have a conversation outside of the bedroom about where the two of you are at. "In bed, it's just a little too threatening," says Dr. Schwartz. "But outside the bedroom, you can say, 'Okay, let's talk about our relationship and how to make it better. Here's what's worrying me, what's worrying you? How can we connect?'"

Once you're connected, all those other guys and gals who are sharing your orgasms will either disappear, or you'll be able to toss them out of your mind with ease. Party for two? Right this way. **CW**

SHOULD YOU TELL HIM ABOUT HIM?

While it's important to have a connection with your partner and feel you can be intimate with each other, there is such a thing as sharing too much. When it comes to letting him know there's another guy in bed with you, should you tell him?

"I would never do that," advises Dr. Pepper Schwartz, a leading relationship expert who has appeared on *The Today Show*, *Oprah* and *CNN*. "I don't think anybody would be flattered to think somebody else was in your head while they were making love to you."

The only time it's okay? "If you're playing a fantasy game and you give each other permission. If it's a case of 'Let's pretend you're Brad Pitt and I'm Julia Roberts,' and it's a sexual turn-on between the two of you."

Otherwise, mum's the word...