

This is the sum total of what most people know about Tantric sex: that you can go for hours, and that Sting does it.

Here's a simple fact: one of the keys to being a legendary lover is the PC (pubococcygeal) muscle. It's the one that stops you peeing when you feel the dodgy dude in the corner looking at you. Because it's a muscle, you develop it by flexing it, just like you're doing now.

Michelle, the woman in the room with the whale music, is testing my PC muscle.

Now this sounds like the fantasy of going to a doctor and having a pouting blonde nurse cradle your clockweights and whisper "cough" into your ear. But actually it's just like a real visit to the doctor, and all I feel is uncomfortable.

Let's rewind. I'm on a course run by Kerry Riley, and his aim is to make you a better lover. There are three parts to it: ejaculation control and maintaining virility; making love as well as having sex; and getting into a higher state of ecstasy.

None of which mean a damn thing unless you can do it. This is where Michelle, a Tantric-sex goddess, comes in with practical assistance.

"We developed the work with the goddess about two years ago," says Kerry. "The idea is that besides just getting the theory of it, you have a physical experience with a Tantric goddess – a woman who's skilled in these practices."

The first obstacle to being a legendary Tantric pantsman is a phone conversation with Kerry. He wants to know if you're just interested in getting your rocks off, or having a massage. If so, you're in the wrong place. But Kerry knows how to sell it to you. "If you meet the right person, and she's got what you want, there are a lot of other guys who will want it, too. So you'd better have a few things up your sleeve. If you haven't got a Porsche, at least you're a good lover."

A session with the goddess is next. After that, you can sign up for three further sessions of ever-increasing, er, naughtiness.

I meet Michelle in a small, clean, anonymous flat in North Sydney. She's 32, with intense eyes and great breasts. That's not all she has going but, afterwards, that's what I remember most.

Michelle used to manage a dental practice. Then she did a six-month training course at the Australian School of Tantra, before Kerry approached her three years ago.

"I was comfortable with – and enjoying – my own sexuality, but I felt there was something missing," she says. "With Tantra, I feel like I'm making love instead of just performing and having sex."

Michelle asks me whether I've got any ejaculation or erection problems. Someone laughs weakly, but I realise it's me. I stop it and say no.

Ten minutes later, I stand in the bedroom with her, wearing nothing but my underpants and a sarong. She wears a G-string and bra.

We have a hug, like we're at an emotional AA meeting, or like I've just been rescued at sea.

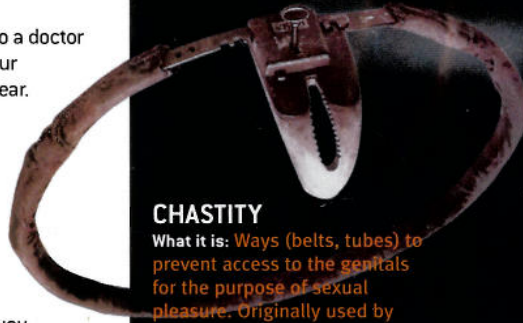
After the hug and some breathing exercises, we sit in chairs facing each other, put our hands on each other's chests and say, "I honour the shakti and shiva within you."

She rings a small bell, while I quietly freak out.

Tantric sex is all about energy flows, which isn't as out-there as you might think. Martial artists know all about this already, only they use their energy to destroy bricks or big blokes in pubs.

When Michelle starts testing the flex of my PC muscle, she asks me to visualise energy moving like

OTHER GOOD WAYS TO GET OFF



CHASTITY

What it is: Ways (belts, tubes) to prevent access to the genitals for the purpose of sexual pleasure. Originally used by knights to prevent the wife playing away while they fought the 20 years war or something. God help them if they lost the key.

Why do it? Wouldn't it be fun to be told when you can have an orgasm? Wouldn't it? No.

SEX MAGICK

What it is: A badly spelt form of witchcraft, used as a "tool to raise the energies to perform a ritual". There are three kinds: Monofocal (masturbation); Duofocal (sex); and Polyfocal (an orgy). For some rituals it may be useful for the man to shape shift into an animal.

Why do it? Er, you want to do a ritual. Or you feel uncomfortable with the term "masturbation".

GLOBOPHILIA

What it is: A sexual interest involving balloons or other inflatables.

Why do it? Ask yourself these questions: Were you afraid of balloons when you were young? Do you like to collect balloons and keep them safe so no-one will pop them? Do you experience sexual arousal when you see, handle, inflate or pop balloons? If you answered yes, you may be a globophile. And that's nothing to be ashamed of.

SEXUAL SHAMANISM

What it is: Shamans use sexual energy to enhance healing and potency. Apparently.

Why do it? Only do it if you regularly use beautiful American phrases like "self-destructive"; "vibrational synchronisation"; and "dysfunctional". And enjoy never being given a straight answer to a straight question.



SHE STRADDLES ME AND TAKES

blue toffee from my groin to my heart, because the heart is the site of the emotions. The middle of the chest is the site of the heart chakra, and that's all I ever want to say about chakras. Anyway, Michelle can't feel my energy movement well enough, so she asks me to remove my underwear.

Yes, yes, it's all very *Penthouse*, but it's not how it sounds – even when she asks me to monitor her own energy movement. I place one hand between her breasts and the other, er, below the equator. She breathes deeply and I feel a strange flexing, sucking sensation.

"Did you feel that?" she asks, intensely.

"Yes," I say hoarsely.

None of this is as taxing as our heart-opening session. Kerry has told me that these practices help you get more connected with your partner. "Michelle will try to get some warmth into your heart and [get you] feeling more in touch with your emotions and intimacy."

Americans love this stuff. They do it on national television. Personally, I would rather leap off a cliff onto a spike, but I can't escape.