



YourEssence

Chapter 10 - David Confronts His Feelings

"Yeah... um," David was flummoxed by the question. He knew it was coming, but his feelings remained unsettled. "I thought you might ask me about that."

David looked at Diana, who had a bit of a pleading look on her face as if to say don't mess this up. David knew what was at stake, however. He had to be convincing but couldn't convey a sense of finality. He had to say there had been progress on this front, but he hoped to see continued improvements with time. He was prepared to do all of these things, but then he started to remember his night of drunken sex with Diana. The way he had felt in Diana's arms had felt so right at the moment, but it was a confusing experience for David. Guys aren't supposed to feel like that. He was supposed to be the man. He was supposed to take charge and be assertive. Why had he enjoyed being so submissive? Was that how Diana felt when they had sex?

Further, was David actually in the wrong here? Diana had made him feel so special in those moments as they made passionate love. Had he been overly dismissive of Diana's needs, and was he indeed at fault for the tension in his marriage with Diana? Reconciling these feelings on the spot would be difficult, but David thought it best to stay to the planned response.

"So, I'm not sure where to start. We have made some progress since last time. Well, we..." David paused as soon as he started. He felt guilt from trying to carry through with his planned response. On top of his confused feelings about his time with Diana, he also had to consider that he had recently been failing at his job. If that wasn't enough, he also failed at Diana's job. He didn't want to be so bad at teaching, but Diana had such specialized knowledge that she used in her lessons. He had tried to emulate Diana these last few days, resulting in more conflict, failure, and emotional outbursts. David could be truthful about all that or toe the line. He knew he had to show some vulnerability, but if he unloaded his true feelings, then they might never leave the counseling session—at least not as free individuals.

"Go ahead, Diana, we're all adults here, and this is a zero-judgment space. Everything you say here is confidential between us," Dr. Simms reassured the nervous 'woman' sitting on her couch. David took this opportunity to come to a fast realization about his night of lovemaking with Diana. Something he thought might work.

"Well, Dr. Simms, we found a way to be intimate again. It was fairly special, too. It was almost like we were seeing each other for the first time, feeling each other for the first time, and loving each other for the first time. It felt special in a way our lovemaking hasn't felt in a long time. I'm hopeful that this trend will continue, and we will see more improvements in the future, too," David said confidently, saying that he had hit the critical notes. He hoped Diana would hear his sincerity in sharing his true feelings on the subject.

"That sounds wonderful, Diana; why were you so hesitant to share that?"

Diana looked at David with a more serious look of concern, but David just conveyed a sense of calm back as he replied, "Well, I think ***I*** came to a realization when we were having sex. I knew I wanted more intimacy in my life, but I guess I didn't realize another important fact. Something that changed how I was feeling. It opened my eyes to David in a whole new light, and I gained a whole new appreciation," David said, alluding to the peculiar circumstances that had led to their night of sex, hoping it would be enough to appease Dr. Simms.

"Diana, you're avoiding the central question. Why were you so hesitant?"

David's gambit had failed. Dr. Simms would not accept a roundabout explanation with no apparent meaning behind it. Diana's face looked redder by the minute as she could barely contain the nervousness caused by David going off script. "Ok. You're right. I'm avoiding saying what I'm feeling because it makes me feel frustrated with ***myself***. I realized that 'David' wasn't entirely to blame for my frustrations," at this point, David looked deeply into Diana's eyes, and the two connected in a way that only married couples can. From this, Diana understood that David was now speaking ***his*** truth and not playing at being Diana.

"That's good, Diana, go on," Dr. Simms cajoled David.

"My ***husband*** was dismissive of my feelings in saying we were fine because we made love a couple of times a week, which made me mad. I should have considered things from ***his*** perspective like I hoped he would consider things from ***my*** perspective. I could have seen this coming; we were falling into a dull and repetitive routine. I could have stepped back from my work and offered more support. I could have been more present when we did spend time together, like

how 'David' was with me when we made love the other night. I've never felt as vulnerable but also as safe and protected as I did in his arms that night," David said, now holding Diana's hands as they continued to look each other in the eyes. Diana wiped a tear from her face as David concluded his explanation. Dr. Simms sat there taking notes, and the couple noticed how much she was writing.

David didn't want to raise suspicions, so he had one last thing he needed to say, "So, I'm willing to admit that I was a bit harsh when I said 'David' treated me like a piece of meat, but if he keeps up his recent behavior and treats me like he did this last week consistently, then I think we're on the right track."

"Fascinating, Diana. You are using some role reversal here to see things from David's perspective. That can be healthy if we're not using it to dismiss our feelings in favor of an easy peace. David, what do you have to say about your intimacy since our last visit."

"Well, I agree with 'Diana.' I was dismissive of her feelings, and I'm sorry for not being a better listener. 'Diana' is right, though; when we made love, it was like experiencing it for the first time again because I could see her as a ***new woman***. My eyes were opened to the pain I had caused 'Diana,' and that helped me be a better and more attentive lover. I'm sorry. I am such a lug head that it took me so long to realize my mistakes."

David recoiled a bit at the cheap shot Diana had taken at the end there. He had taken some liberties, too, so he would let them slide.

"You said some pretty surprising things in there," Diana said to David as they got into their car. Diana had taken the driver's seat as had become a habit in their new bodies.

"Yeah, a whole flood of emotions and feelings welled up in me right as I was about to say what we had practiced. I realized that even though I'm a guy, and I'm not supposed to have enjoyed being the submissive one, I did enjoy it, and that was because of how you treated me. That opened my eyes to the fact that you were right and I was wrong. I should have treated you with the same love and attention you showed me that night. All that said, I was pretty drunk though, so no getting any ideas about what I like and want in the future when it comes to sex."

"Right... of course, we were both pretty drunk that night. No worries from my side," Diana said, but her thoughts were not as happy to acquiesce to this point. Sex with David had been a pinnacle for her. Yes, she had taken the time to demonstrate her expectations for how David should treat her, but she never expected to have found

so much pleasure from being the one to take the lead. She loved the power, the control, the dominance. She secretly yearned to do it again and wanted to feel that way many more times.

"Thanks for understanding, Diana. You think Dr. Simms bought it, though?" David asked, oblivious to Diana's inner thoughts.

"Yeah, I think so. She saw we were both giving some ground. You almost gave too much but saved it at the end."

David wiped his brow to indicate relief, "That's why I said that. I wanted you to know how I was feeling, in any case. I understand your perspective a lot better after the week I've had. I don't think anything has gone as expected, and it's revealed how hard life can be as a woman."

"Thank you, David. I can see that you understand my perspective better. It's a relief to me. I hope the lessons stick. We will be switching back soon, and I don't want us to lose the progress we're making."

"Yeah, I wish I could progress better with your students. I'm so nervous I'm going to get you fired!"

"Don't be silly, Robert can't fire you. He would never be able to hire a replacement, and the other faculty aren't saints. You'll pick it up. Just give it a few more days."