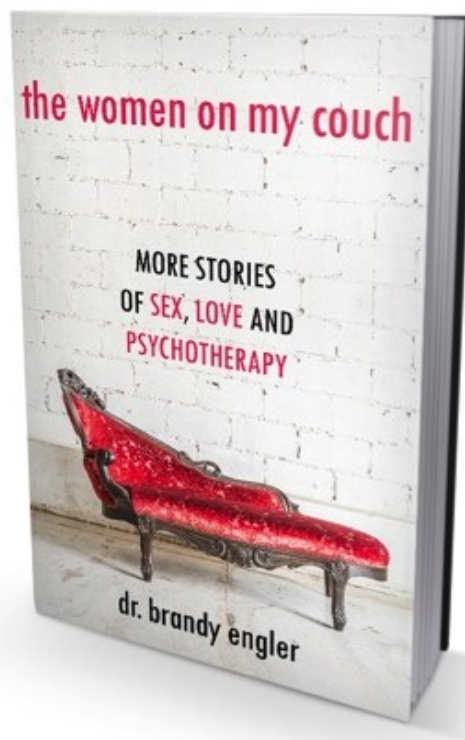


# Relationship Author Dr. Brandy Engler Breaks Down 'The Women on My Couch'



By [Whitney Johnson](#)

We met sex therapist and [relationship author](#) Dr. Brandy Engler after she released her first book *The Men on My Couch: True Stories of Sex, Love and Psychotherapy*. Now, she's back with a new self-help relationship book that focuses on tales from her female clients. In *The Women on My Couch: More Stories of Sex, Love and Psychotherapy*, Engler examines common issues that women deal with in the bedroom and beyond and hopes to help her readers tackle their own sexual insecurities. In our exclusive interview, the relationship author opens up about her marriage, life in Los Angeles, and what women really want.

**Since we last spoke, you moved to L.A. and got married – congratulations! Do you feel like becoming a wife has changed your view on marriage and work as a therapist?**

Yes, absolutely! It really tests all of the grand ideas I have about relationships and love. It forces me to put them into action and shows me how difficult it is. The guy who officiated our wedding told us that marriage is one of the greatest spiritual disciplines, and I totally get it now.

**Related Link:** [Dr. Brandy Engler Says, “‘The Men on My Couch’ Taught Me that Love is Hard and Complicated”](#)

## **Self-Help Relationship Book Focuses on Female Sexuality**

**Now, let’s discuss your book! Did you always plan to write *The Women on My Couch* as a follow-up to *The Men on My Couch*?**

It actually came first. I originally wanted to work with women and wrote my college dissertation on their libido, particularly for married women – I was trying to understand this unsolvable problem in the world of sex therapy. So I had some ideas and started writing a book, but I was still a student and didn’t really know what I was talking about.

Later, I decided to take that material and turn it into *The Women on My Couch*. The book isn’t only about libido though – that’s just one of the chapters. What I wanted to do was address the most common things women were bringing to sex therapy rather than choose cases that were deviant. I wanted readers to see their own struggles or issues reflected in the book.

**What is the theme of *The Women on My Couch*?**

The theme of *The Men on My Couch* was more about love, while the theme of this book is about women’s sexual choices. We

have a sense that we're free sexually, which presents to us an existential crisis, this vast gray area with no clear right or wrong answer. The book doesn't really tell women what to do, but it shows them how to walk through the process of making a decision when it comes to things like having a threesome or cheating on their spouse.

**Is there a particular story that you think readers will most relate to?**

There's two of them. One of them is about a woman who was so in love with her fiancé and so excited to marry him, but she then dealt with major disappointment after they got married. In therapy, we call that the "post-marriage adjustment period." Soon after you get married, all of these differences show up, and you have to deal with them right away. How you deal with it sort of makes or breaks your relationship and sets the tone for the rest of your marriage. I have to walk the character in the book through developing realistic expectations and explain to her that she has a chance to be better at loving once she faces this challenge. I also share with her some of the lessons that I learned as a newlywed.

The other chapter deals with a woman who is married to a really hot guy but has low libido. I wanted to show that that problem doesn't just happen to older, unattractive people; young, attractive couples who still love each other deal with it too. There's nothing crazy in her background; it's just sexual shyness and a lack of erotic development. That's really one of the most pervasive things that I see. She gets challenged to push the edges of her comfort zone and try new things. I expose some of the reasons why women get shy in the bedroom and what to do.

**On the flipside, is there a story that you think will surprise readers the most?**

There's a chapter about a woman who uses sex to pay off her

college loans, and I think it'll be shocking to learn how many women actually do that. I've had a few female clients who have done it, and I've had a few young, male clients who have used a service like that. I had to read up on it – I didn't even know it was going on! It's a trend now that's popular on college campuses, especially in L.A. Super educated girls are doing it. They're taking a feminist empowerment approach, like, "College is expensive, and I'm taking it into my own hands." That whole chapter is a debate between me and my client about equating feminism and sexuality and the different ways to look at it.

**Related Link:** [The Independent Woman: Do We Need a Do-Over?](#)

## Relationship Author Shares Love Advice

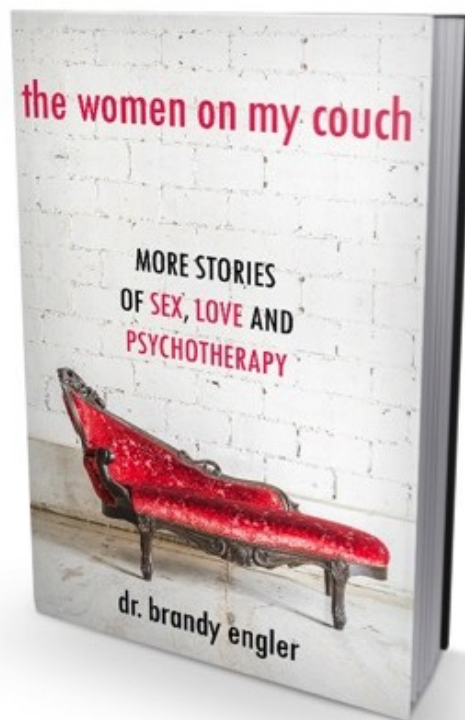
**Lastly, do you have any love advice for someone who's afraid to open up about her struggles in the bedroom?**

I'm really hoping the book will help with that by giving a voice to what a lot of women go through. I hope it starts to normalize it and take away some of the fear or embarrassment. One of the underlying themes in the book is that women are often in a more passive, reactive sexual role. We let the men be in the charge. So it's about finding our voice in a world where everyone wants to tell us what to do.

*You can purchase The Women on My Couch on Amazon. To keep up with Brandy, follow her on her website and Twitter @TheMenOnMyCouch.*

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# Dr. Brandy Engler Says, “‘The Men on My Couch’ Taught Me That Love Is Hard and Complicated”



By Whitney Baker

When Dr. Brandy Engler opened her sex therapy practice for women in New York City, she was shocked that it was mostly men reaching out for her help. As she began working through their heartache, she discovered that she had her own issues to face as well. In *The Men on My Couch: True Stories of Sex, Love and Psychotherapy*, Dr. Engler, along with David Rensin, weave together her personal story and her patients' journeys, sharing the lessons both learned and taught throughout her

first year as a psychologist. We chatted with the first-time author about her new book and what she has coming up next.

**Why were you surprised that more men than women came to you after you opened your practice?**

Traditionally, men tend to seek psychotherapy less than women for issues like depression or anxiety. Similarly, I hadn't seen any statistics that showed that men were more interested than women in sex therapy.

**What question about love and relationships do you find your clients asking most often?**

The question that they tend to come to therapy with is: Should I break up with my significant other? They feel confused about a decision, which drives them to therapy. The second thing that most often brings people to me is feeling broken-hearted and wanting to know how to stop hurting.

Once in a while, couples that are about to get married or are newly married come in as well. They want to know how to communicate or understand each other better. They're usually in pretty healthy relationships but are just looking for guidance.

**What motivated you to write a book about your experiences during that first year?**

Because of my time spent with these men, I gained a lot of new insights that really excited me. The more I sat with them and explored their true motivations for being there, I felt like I was uncovering answers that went far beyond the simple and conventional conclusions that we draw about men – things like men just want to have sex, men want sex more than women or men are less emotional about sex. The more I listened to them, the more I saw how vulnerable they were.

The first chapter of *The Men on My Couch* talks about a guy

named David, who was a relatively happy guy. He recognized that he was cheating a lot, which led him to the question, "Am I even capable of love?" I thought that was such an interesting question. It ended up becoming a theme in the book, which is why I put it in chapter one.

**Can you tell our readers a bit of your personal story, as discussed in *The Men on My Couch*?**

Originally, I wasn't going to include my personal story; I just wanted to focus on what was happening during my sessions with the men. But I realized that I was learning a great deal, which I thought would be important, particularly for female readers.

Initially, I felt taken aback by some of the men's behavior. Like the guys who were total womanizers. They made me nervous, and I started to become super jealous and unsure of myself. I had to start working through my own anxiety. I started looking at my relationship and asking myself, "Is this really love?" I had to assess my own notions about love.

**Related Link:** [Top 10 Dating Dos and Don'ts](#)

**What lessons learned during your therapy sessions most impacted your own life?**

Psychologists are necessarily trained on "what is love" – that's more of a social or philosophical question than it is psychological. So I had to really examine that idea, and throughout the book, that's really what I'm learning. I learned that love is much more of a skill and that it's actually kind of hard and complicated.

I had to learn to be patient and understanding with each of my male clients even when it was hard for me. It felt amazing when I was actually able to be very loving towards my clients. My ability to do so became very healing for them; instead of me just reaching them in a cognitive way, I was now fully

present and invested in helping them.

**If you had one piece of advice to share with our readers, what would it be?**

This is another theme of the book: to truly understand your own motivation. You need to become more conscious about the way that you love. Instead of really loving each other, a lot of people bring fear and deficit to a relationship. They're trying to get a need met instead of bringing fullness to the relationship. People don't realize that though; they feel some sort of want, and they go after gratifying it, so they're basically using the other person. When people become more aware of what's driving them, they become very full and happy and satisfied in their relationships.

**We understand that ABC recently optioned your book for a TV series – anything else you can share with us about this deal?**

Yes! We have an amazing writer – she worked on 'Will and Grace' and 'Ugly Betty' – who wrote the pilot. In January, the networks will decide what shows to pick up, and ABC is interested this year. It was a contender this past January as well, and it made it to the final round.

**And finally, you're already working on another book called *Libido*. We'd love to know more about this project!**

*Libido* will be all about women and how they get in touch with their desire, which was the original focus of my work. It'll be conversational in tone (as was *The Men on My Couch*) and include some history as well. In the past, women were viewed as very sexual – even more sexual than men. So this narrative that we have that men are more sexual than women is only a couple of hundred years old. It's a totally manufactured story that a lot of people buy into, but it's not true.

*To purchase 'The Men on My Couch,' click here. You can also learn more about the book by visiting her site or following*



*her Twitter.*