

# Crash course to love

Jacqueline Hellyer is one of Australia's leading sex and relationships experts. *TL!* sent three couples to test drive her Luscious Lovers workshop



SCHOOL'S IN!

## Couches and cuddles

*Crystelle, 24, and Adrian, 24*

When *TL!* asked me to take part in Jacqueline's Luscious Lovers workshop, I thought, *Sure, why not?* The flyer said it would be a day full of heightening love, lust and lusciousness. And really, who doesn't want that?

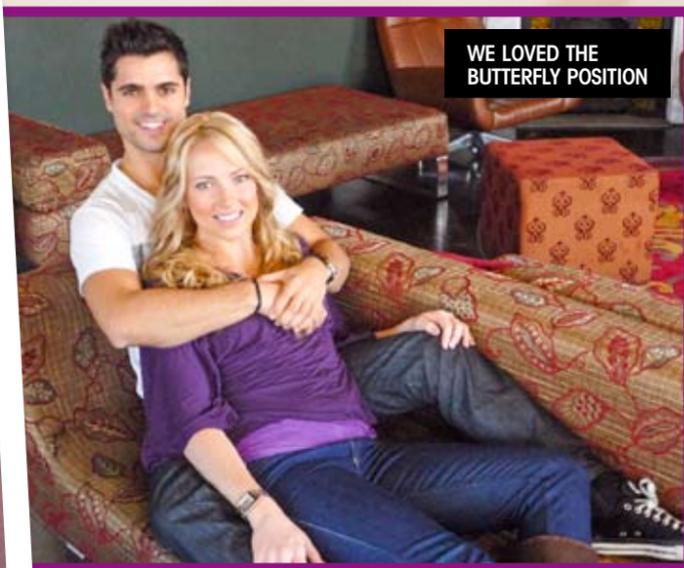
The course promised to combine modern science in relationships, love and sex, with ancient Tantric wisdom.

After a quick Google search I learnt Tantra was an ancient doctrine which could potentially transform your sexual and spiritual lives by uniting them.

Having been with my boyfriend Adrian for four years, I knew that at the very least, we'd find the course a laugh and hopefully, if our spiritual side was willing, we might learn a bit along the way.

Arriving at the course, we scoped out the other couples. There were a few in their 20s, a handful in their 30s and the remainder in their 40s, 50s and 60s. Jacqueline seemed to have attracted a wide spectrum.

"There'll be four parts to



WE LOVED THE BUTTERFLY POSITION

today's course,' Jacqueline explained as we settled on the comfy couches.

Part one was all about connection and energy.

*Too easy*, I thought, smiling at Adrian. People always told us we had a great connection.

'Couples often complain they can't find the time or

energy to connect with their partner like they used to,' Jacqueline told the class.

'But there are so many little things we can do that make a big difference.

'For example, how many of you sit on opposite ends of the

hands in the room, it seemed we weren't the only offenders.

'I'm going to show you a few different positions you and your partner can use to connect with each other, whether you're watching TV, wanting a special hug or looking to strengthen your connection with one another.'

The first position we were shown, the butterfly, was ideal for all the separate couch offenders. Relaxing on the lounge, Adrian was told to sit with his legs up.

'Ladies, you can lie in between your partner's legs, in a safe, warm and comfortable embrace,' Jacqueline instructed.

Climbing into position, I found myself surprisingly relaxed. After two minutes of silently connecting with each other, I wondered why this position

wasn't mentioned in couch-care and maintenance manuals.

A few more moves later and we were onto part two of the day – the body and its senses.

After blindfolding me, Adrian

There are so many little things we can do that make a difference

couch when watching TV?' she asked. 'Or sit on separate couches entirely?'

Adrian and I immediately looked at each other. Guilty as charged. And from the raised

and half the other partners left the room. Within minutes they were back – with treats!

As Adrian brushed a soft, fragrant bunch of mint across my face, my senses tingled with excitement.

Strawberries, marshmallows, chocolate and rockmelon followed. And while I've eaten all of these foods before, never had they been so mouth-watering or exciting.

'Your sensory arousal is heightened,' Jacqueline said, 'because you can't see what you're eating and because your partner is lovingly providing it.'

'Get me more chocolate,' I whispered to Adrian, not wanting the experience to end.

After swapping roles and feeding our partners different sweet and savoury treats, the class was in agreement – this was a fun exercise we all wanted to try again at home.

We began part three, creativity and eroticism, by splitting into groups. Jacqueline and her assistant then handed a big box to each group.

Sitting in a circle, we took turns to pull items out of the box and make suggestions about to how we could use the item with our partner.

Aside from a few naughty toys with obvious uses, the box contained an assortment of candles, massage oil, feathers and ropes. Not only was this a fun way to explore new and different ideas, it was also a great way to learn.

'Are these jumper leads?' one of the girls in our group asked, holding up a chain with black clamps on either end.

'I think they're actually for your nipples,' her husband said, to much laughter.

Soul and surrender was the final section of the day. It was led by Jacqueline's assistant, a trained masseur.

Using the techniques he

demonstrated, we were asked to concentrate on being with our partners and feeling the connection as we touched.

Exploring my partner's body through massage – think fingers, ears, behind the knees – was eye-opening. 'Who knew I liked my arms being stroked so much,' I giggled.

We wrapped up the day by making cards for our partners and writing a special message inside that we'd share at home.

Still on a sugar high from the blindfold game, I was tempted to write something silly like *sexy time*, but I went with a heartfelt message instead. *You and me*, I wrote, knowing Adrian would understand the love hidden in the simplicity.

Leaving the course, none of the couples could wipe the smiles from their faces.

Although Adrian and I already had a secure relationship, we'd discovered the possibilities of strengthening it and having more fun were endless. 



CONNECTING THROUGH CUDDLES

## We're lovers again

*Jenny, 39, and Paul, 42*

With a six-year-old daughter, 13-year-old son and two full-time jobs,

my husband Paul and I have our hands full. And before attending the Luscious Lovers course, I was beginning to feel we were more flatmates than husband and wife.

'It'll be a good way for us to spend some quality time together,' I reasoned, trying to coax Paul into attending.

'I'm not into that hippie mung bean and incense stuff,' he frowned.

'I don't think it's like that,' I said, reading the description on Jacqueline's website. 'It says here she has a masters

degree in sexual health.'

Paul finally agreed but by the morning of the course, we were both a bunch of nerves. Thankfully, Jacqueline relaxed us within minutes of arriving, explaining we only had to take out of the course what we wanted.

'And everything we talk about and learn today will be very PG,' she promised. 'The R-rated stuff is your homework.'

Facing each other with our bodies pressed together, Paul and I embraced in what Jacqueline called the left-handed hug.

'Most people hug with their right arm up,' she explained. 'But if you hug with your left arm around your partner's neck, you're able to get a lot closer and your hearts can actually touch.'

Closing my eyes and melting into Paul, this simple exercise brought us closer than we'd been in years.

The embrace was meaningful, sensual and emotional, something I'd never experienced when hugging before.

Letting go of Paul and standing back, I could feel a tangible connection between the two of us as we smiled at each other.

'That was nice,' I whispered to him. 'I know,' he smiled.

Towards the end of the day we were told the next hour would be spent on massage, and I inwardly cringed. I'd lost count of the number of times Paul and I had made half-hearted attempts at massaging each

other. We'd always been too busy worrying about cooking the dinner or missing the car race on telly.

'You have to switch off the chatter in your head,' explained the masseur. 'Your partner will be able to feel when you're giving them 100 per cent of your attention and love.'

Closing my eyes, I surrendered to Paul's touch. As he massaged my neck and back I could've sworn I felt his love for me running through his hands. By the end I was so moved I was almost in tears.

At home that night, we lay on our bed and shared the special cards we'd made for each other. It was amazing that such a small gesture could mean so much.

Since the Luscious Lovers course, we've realised how important it is to make time for ourselves as a couple. We now start each day with a left-handed hug and make time to talk every night.

We've also overhauled our bedroom to create a more romantic atmosphere. The TV has been replaced by candles and massage oil.

Paul and I have gone from flatmates to lovers - and we couldn't be happier with the change. ♥



WE LEARNT SO MUCH FROM JACQUELINE

## Homework is fun!

*Gina, 36, and Fuji, 39*

Having only been with my partner Fuji for two months, I thought the Luscious Lovers course sounded like a fun way for us to get to know each other better.

We'd met studying shiatsu, a type of hands-on massage therapy, and had immediately shared a bond. As we were both interested in exploring our sexuality, Fuji and I arrived at the course with open minds.

'This position is a wonderful way to connect with your partner and get in tune with each other's bodies,' said Jacqueline, demonstrating

a Tantric pose.

Sitting cross-legged with our hands on each other's hearts, Fuji and I focused on channelling our love as we breathed in sync.

We had done some

surprises was a great way to discuss our likes and dislikes without being embarrassed.

Afterwards, Fuji was really glad I'd suggested the course. 'Me too,' I smiled.

In the weeks since, Fuji and I have continued to connect as lovers and friends. The course gave us a great anchor and because of it, we've continued to explore our sexuality.

We're hoping to learn more about Tantric sex in the future. In the meantime, we'll keep practising everything we learnt at the course.

Jacqueline said we'd have homework, but we didn't realise it would be so much fun! ♥

This position is a wonderful way to connect with your partner

meditation together before, but Jacqueline gave me a better understanding.

I loved how playful Fuji and I were able to be during the course, and Jacqueline's box of

## Be a luscious lover at home

**Sacred space** Your bedroom should be a beautiful environment for love and romance. Make it a special sanctuary for just the two of you and try to keep the kids out as much as possible.

**Sensory arousal** Add elements to your love life that heighten all of the senses - music, sexy foods, feathers and silk. And try keeping your eyes open.

**Touch** In Tantra, the focus is on breathing deeply and the whole body, so explore each other from top to toe and resist the urge to direct your energy to just one body part.

**Receiving** Complete focus and surrender makes for better loving. Let go of the need to do things 'right' and just go with the flow.

**Presence** To focus on the now, do a quick sensory check - close your eyes and tune into what you can hear, taste, smell and touch. Then open your eyes again.

**Breathing** Breathe deep into your diaphragm and down into your abdomen before, during and after making love. You'll be amazed at how it improves the sensations.

