

Where's the Line with Kissing?

(Excerpt taken from *What Are You Waiting For?* by Dannah Gresh)

To understand the full power of a kiss, let's explore your body's autonomic nervous system (ANS). This is the system that controls fear (like the time you crunched your dad's car and your body went into instant hot-flash mode), Pavlovian responses (like when your mouth waters because you smell the Auntie Anne's Pretzels stand), and sexual stimulation (like that pleasant flutter in your tummy when your guy brushes his lips across your cheek and you take in his scent).

These responses are not controlled by your mind. You don't say to yourself, "Huh. I just ripped off the front fender of my car. I think I will choose to sweat now." Instead, the autonomic nervous system instantaneously reads the situation and sends signals to your other body systems, which trigger you to sweat, salivate or swell. This is where kissing can get dangerous and why it's vital to categorize kisses – much as seismologists categorize earthquakes.

A pleasant closed-mouth kiss can create a mini-autonomic nervous system tremor. Lets say a 1 on the Richter scale. Barely perceptible. You may feel a pleasant rush of connection, but nothing gets too out of control. While I've encouraged my kids to save that first kiss as long as they can and share it with someone special (like maybe their fiancé), I'm not going to argue that you absolutely *can't* kiss. The Quick and Innocent Kiss probably won't get you into trouble.

But then there's the kind of kiss that sets off a sizable 6 on the Richter scale. You know the kind. The Make-Out Madness Kiss may or may not be survivable. I don't have to describe it, but your mouth is now a little more engaged, along with, ahem, your tasting sensations. Remember that autonomic nervous system? You just sent his into overdrive (and maybe yours too). For us women, the ANS response is a little slower, but the guy's is immediate and powerful (they say, sexually speaking, that women are like Crockpots and men are like microwaves). Very specific body responses begin to occur with this kiss, and they can create an intoxication that blinds you. Proverbs 5:18-19 says "Rejoice in the wife of your youth...may you ever be captivated by her love."

The word captivated would be better translated "intoxicated." That's what ANS does. It intoxicates. You remember that great chemical dopamine, which God created to cause a wife to be addicted to her husband? Well, it's potent, like liquor. And it actually does intoxicate you. Once you get it flowing, it is really difficult to even remember why you'd want to stop.

Finally, there's the Perfect-Ten Horizontal Hookup Kiss. Once you're lying down, those tremors are so powerful that they're bound to knock over some of the values you've built up. Stay vertical.

Basically, keep the seismic world quiet by putting boundaries on kissing until you *are* the wife of his youth.