

A photograph of a man with a beard and a necklace, wearing a vibrant, multi-colored patterned shirt, sitting on a large, moss-covered rock. He is looking upwards with his mouth open, as if enjoying the water of a waterfall cascading over him. The background is a lush, green forest.

Ancient Luxuries

Trans Capacities

Shame Elixirs

Love Letters

Consent

Magic

Rest

CRUSH LIFE MANIFESTO

by Danielle Coates-Connor

with sól gonzalez-jatar, Erin Coates-Connor, Kalia Lydgate, Luana Morales, Elder Lula Mae Christopher, Nayahra Resende, MawuLisa Thomas-Adeyemo, Terna Tilley-Gyado, sister sadada jackson, Ámate Perez, Zuhair Nash, Dago Driggs, Kay Zeiss, Andrea Atkinson, Ariel Szabo, Kendra Lara, Gibrán Rivera, Anna-Maria D'Cruz, Linnea Reyes-LaMon, Rahi Chun, and Catherine Please

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Publisher's Note

This edition of *Crush Life Manifesto* is about community. It is an acknowledgement to many of the people who I love, what we are doing together, and how we are orienting to now. Thank you to each contributor. All of you are my teachers.

Crush Life Manifesto is published by Infinite Growth so that it can wildly adapt to what is relevant, develop voice, and launch new ideas. Your thoughts and questions are shaping the offering.

Living in extreme political conditions, I have expressly chosen not to pivot this work into an intellectual case for how the country is devolving into fascism and what's at stake for our lives. This does not mean we are not paying attention. Quite the opposite. Everything here is political.

I take moral opposition to the human rights violations, wars, and exploitations of the United States government. On individual levels as discrimination is encouraged; on community levels as people are deported and harassed; on societal levels as the masses are coerced into compliance; and on existential levels as we see what has been described by history books as evil taking the wheel.

Vision in times of crisis is how change happens. It is our birthright to empathize, connect, and tend to one another. How can we encourage the proliferation of care? Create nurturance spaces that duck below the radar of the Empire's probe? Become our most authentic selves?

It is seen as taboo by some to have a collection including sexual practices alongside creative and spiritual growth. We believe these topics belong together, and that intimate relationships are a key intervention to unlock human potential. That's why books like this get banned, because they help people see beyond the dominant story. Those disturbed by the alchemical force of this body of work, I hope you will pay extra because this is my debut as an illustrator and the content is hot.

In addition to the authors I want to thank: layout designer Catherine Please, cover model Dago Driggs, cover photographer Rayne Dunbar, Betsy Kane on art production, Kalia Lydgate and Mia Davis on line edits, Julie Carpineto and Andrea Atkinson on copy proofs and everyone who has held me with care through this creation, especially my brilliant wife/conspirator, Erin Coates-Connor. *Crush Life Manifesto* is our love project. Thank you for being here.

- Danielle Coates-Connor

Building Consent Muscles: *How and Why*

By Ariel Szabo and Rahi Chun

Consent is a radical act of resistance in a culture that conditions us to treat our bodies like machines - in a country that was built upon non-consensual acts. The majority of us never received any pleasure-oriented sexual education or consent education at home or in school. As a result, all of us have had experiences of having our boundaries crossed - from being hugged as a child when we were not in the mood to a violent emotional or physical violation. No wonder non-consensual acts are often seen as normal.

Compounding this lack of bodily autonomy, it's rare to have the skills of:

identifying & attuning to our own limits

setting & negotiating boundaries

respecting & honoring the limits and boundaries of others

These are the skills necessary for coming into agency, self-autonomy, and a sense of safe, embodied presence with one's self. And a prerequisite for sharing, expressing and receiving true intimacy and pleasure with beloveds from an empowered place of choice.

We want to support you in coming into "divine union" with your beloveds for an ecstatic connection; a union rooted in interdependence that satiates our primal need and urge for connection and aliveness. A union that occurs when two souls intertwine, each in their wholeness, with transparency and vulnerability in service to love. A union only possible when there is a felt-sense of safety and trust in the body, and a strong holding container for the relationship.

This safety and trust starts with ourselves. It requires that each of us are listening to the wisdom of our own heart and body - acting in consent with ourselves so we may be in consent with each other. From this place - our touch has the transformative potential to expand our consciousness and heal past relational wounds of violation, abandonment, and neglect.

Being In Consent:

Consent is the practice of listening to your body and honoring its needs, requests and directives. It involves the moment-by-moment attunement and self-responsibility by all partners. It's knowing your capacity and limits and sharing these generously with your lovers.

This involves: the ability to be present and listen for what your body truly desires and does not want moment-by-moment, which in turn, requires the skills of

*slowing down,
pausing,
noticing,
and attuning*

to what is true for you - for an inner clarity and alignment.

From that place, comes the capacity for advocating & voicing your body's choices -

*accepting,
trusting &
valuing*

your experience enough to allow it to take up space. From there, choosing what you want & don't want and making any necessary adjustments before

communicating
your choices with your lover.

There are a wide variety of reasons why you may struggle with any one of these skills - from a lack of good role-modeling and society's rewarding of bad behavior, to the effects of trauma on the nervous system.

All of us have the ability to learn these skills and in so doing, unwind societal conditioning and re-condition outdated reflexive protective mechanisms preventing us from attuning to what is true for us now, truly valuing ourselves and our precious needs, and voicing and communicating our authentic truth.

Creating A Safe Container:

One of the key ingredients in creating a safe container is inviting your **NO** - in addition to your **YES** - as well as safe words and gestures for expressing your desire for stopping, slowing down and pausing.

The more practiced you and your muscle memory are in voicing your body's authentic desires and applying safe words and gestures, the easier it will be when they are called for in real-life intimate situations.

When your body can trust that you can and will advocate for its "No's" - it will also open more and more into your "Yes's" - feeling safer to receive knowing all of its choices are being honored.

Your authentic **NO**, in addition to your authentic **YES**, are your keys to feeling safe to opening, softening, and receiving.

Practices for Building Consent Muscles

Practice 1: Safe Words & Gestures

This practice strengthens muscle memory around using “No,” “Slow down,” and “Yes” in touch and intimacy. The goal is to ensure safe words and gestures are fluid and accessible when needed.

1 *Set the stage:*

Engage in clothed, one-way touch on a low-stakes part of the body (e.g., arm or back).

2 *Choose your safe words and gestures:*

✳ Words: “Yes,” “Pause,” “No” or colors like “Green,” “Yellow,” “Red.”

✳ Gestures: Thumbs up, thumbs down, a raised hand, or tapping.

3 *Practice:*

The receiver of touch uses their safe words and gestures for 3-5 minutes while the giver responds accordingly.

4 *Debrief:*

Discuss your experience, then switch roles.



Reflection questions:

For the giver:

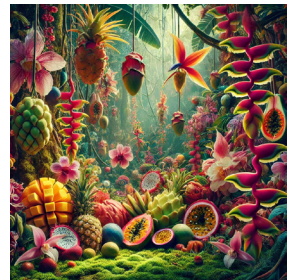
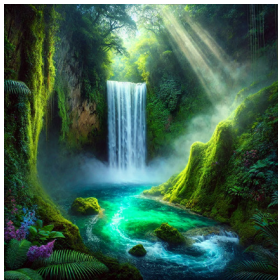
How did it feel to let your beloved guide your touch? Did you experience relief, frustration, or a sense of service?

For the receiver:

Did you notice any moments of enduring something unwanted? Was it easier to use words or gestures? How did it feel when your partner responded to your prompts?

A note on true safety: Safe words and gestures are only meaningful if they are fully respected—without fear of retaliation or emotional consequences. If hesitation arises, ask: What would make this container feel even safer?

Once this becomes familiar, integrate it into real-life intimacy so it becomes a natural part of your shared experience.



Practice 2: Yes, No, Pause, Slow

This voice-based practice strengthens the ability to communicate needs and desires during intimacy. It rewires the nervous system for deeper presence and pleasure.

1 *Set a 15-minute timer*

and create a container for love-making (e.g., mutual touch, oral stimulation, penetration).

2 *Use these one-word directives to guide the experience:*

Yes – Your body is fully open to what is happening.

No – Your body is a clear no to what is happening.

Pause – You need a moment to check in with yourself.

Slow – You want to slow down to feel more.

Okay – A signal to resume after a pause, stop, or no.

This practice rewires old patterns and builds confidence in advocating for your body's needs. It can be particularly powerful for those who have experienced boundary violations, struggle with self-expression, or default to performative intimacy.

If this feels challenging, make the container smaller.

Start by focusing on one part of the body.

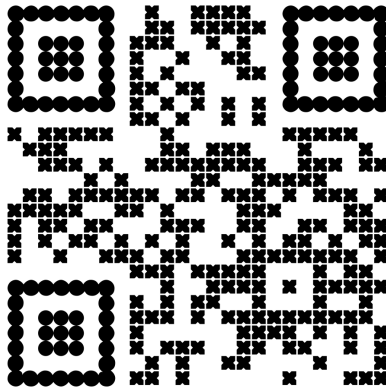
Practice one partner at a time before moving to mutual touch.

Consent is a Pathway to Divine Union

When practiced regularly, consent work strengthens trust, deepens intimacy, and creates space for authentic pleasure. It allows us to shed outdated conditioning and step into relationships with a renewed sense of choice and agency.

For more guidance on cultivating relational skills for divine union—including video demos, trauma-informed touch practices, and exercises for deepening somatic attunement, check out Ariel and Rahi's online course, Divine Union for Lovers. Link to authors at the end of the book!





Check out the authors!



**CRUSH LIFE
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LUXURIES**