

A gift from me to you...

Reclaiming Your Sexuality for Women



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Preface

What is this e-book?

Growing up, I didn't know I had a vulva.

I managed to get through the education system in Singapore without having taken a single biology or anatomy lesson because I was in the 'Arts stream'. Even when I entered a program for the study of sexuality (at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality) for my Doctorate in Human Sexuality, I was too shy or embarrassed to admit that I didn't know the difference between a vagina and vulva. Since then, I have done a lot of catching up!

This e-book contains basic information about female sexuality which I wish I had access to when I was growing up. Tailored for women, it questions the messages about female sexuality we have received; addresses ways we can be more positive sexual beings; as well as covers three simple, practical, yet effective exercises women can do to get in touch with their sexuality.

I chose to share three exercises for:

- Kegels – Physical strengthening and sensitizing of our anatomy
- Heart-vulva connection – Integration of body-mind-emotions
- Yes/ No – Coming into our power and greater assertiveness

Support for sexual expression and help for overcoming sexual concerns is available in your community. I cannot emphasize enough the fact that one does not need to wait and suffer in silence.

I attribute most of the content here to the SARguide produced by the National Sex Forum in 1975. The SARGuide was designed as a workbook, an adjunct to the Forum's Personal Sexual Enrichment/ Education program.

One of my favorite sayings goes like this: 'If you don't ask for what you want, you will most certainly not get it.' But the first thing is to know what it is you want. And how will you know what it is you want or like if you have never tried it?

We are the owners of our bodies, of our sexuality and of our well-being. Sex is good, normal and beautiful.

May this e-book take you one step closer to...
... opening you to all the possibilities of sexuality;
... enhancing your senses;
... giving you joy, pleasure and the freedom to feel.

Much love,
Martha



Sex, Sexuality & Intimacy

Before we go further, I like to make sure we know what we're talking about when we talk about sex. What are sex, sexuality and intimacy? How are they different or interrelated?

Sex – Sexual activity: activities associated with sexual intercourse.

Sexuality – Refers to sex, sexual activity, concern with or interest in sexual activity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender, sexual receptivity.

Intimacy – Feeling or atmosphere of closeness and openness towards someone else, not necessarily involving sexuality.



To me, intimacy is about the ability to share one's fears, dreams and pains. It is about being connected, even from across a room of strangers. Sex without intimacy eventually becomes shallow and unfulfilling. If intimacy is not nurtured, the relationship will wither and die over time.

According to Cory Silverberg, a fellow Sexologist: "Sex highlights the difference between the act of sex and the individual experience of sexuality, which is an intrinsic part of who we are, one that can't be separated out of ourselves any more than our ethnicity or religious/spiritual beliefs."

Would you agree with what Anna Freud said?

"Sex is something you do, sexuality is something you are." - Anna Freud

For more, visit

- What Is Sex? <http://bit.ly/bXanBg>
- Most Young Adults: Oral Sex Is Not Sex <http://bit.ly/bIT484>



Messages on Female Sexuality

How many of the early messages we have received about our sexuality below do you agree with?

EARLY MESSAGES

Don't: Touch "down there."
Talk about sex.
Learn about sex.
Read about sex.
Think about or experiment with sex.
Get turned on.
Get out of control.
Let your partner get out of control.
Give in to sexual desire.
Be available.
Look at your genitals.
Let anyone else look at your genitals.
Kiss on the first date.
Feel sexual.
Get a "bad" reputation.
Be too forward.
Play doctor.

Do: Be attractive, obedient, passive.
Maintain a "good" reputation.
Wait for the male to initiate.
Use sex for non-sexual reasons.
Expect the man to know all about sex.
Refuse a man when he asks you to be sexual.



SOCIETAL MESSAGES

Sex is only for men's pleasure and to produce babies.
You *should* only have sex if you're married.
You *should* only have sex with men.



You *should* save that valuable “thing” for your husband (a certain part of your anatomy).
You *must* marry... a man.
You *should* pleasure your man.
You *should* deodorize your genitals.
You *should* only share love with one person.
Only a man can touch your genitals.
Sex is dirty; sexual urges are bad.
Anything other than the “missionary position” is dirty.
You *should* not have sex during your period.
Don’t seem too experienced (even if you are).
If your orgasm doesn’t happen, fake it.
Your naked body is shameful.
Your body will never measure up to the perfect commercial norm.
Women shouldn’t be too successful, even sexually.
You won’t get a man if you are “tarnished.”
Sex is for male pleasure; fill your needs, not your own... it’s your obligation (duty).
You *must* have a “vaginal” orgasm. (Freud said that there are two kinds of women’s orgasm: clitoral orgasm from clitoral stimulation, which is immature; and vaginal orgasm from penile thrusting, the “right”, correct, mature kind.)
You *must* have an orgasm.
Women don’t ever have orgasms. If you want clitoral stimulation you are: too demanding, immature, selfish.
You *must* have orgasms in the missionary position.
It takes too long to turn women on.
Foreplay is a questionable practice because intercourse is the goal of sex.
You *shouldn’t* touch yourself during sex.
You *should* have sex on your back.
All your pleasure *should* come from the movements of the man’s penis.
You *must* have a perfect figure.
Birth control is a woman’s job.
You *must* have sex on demand.
You *must* have sex every night.
You *must* come when the man does.
Sex is better left a mystery.
You need a man to be complete.
You *must* be free and groovy while figuring all this out.
Only doctors and men know how a woman’s body works.

All these messages only make us experience:

GUILT CONFUSION DEPENDENCY FEAR ALONENESS

CAN ALL OF THIS BE TRUE?



Of our genitals are so valuable, why does everyone talk about them as if they were dirty?

If sex is so beautiful, why does everyone talk as if it was so dirty?

If sex is prohibited before marriage, how can you be expected to perform perfectly after you get married?

Etc, etc, etc.?

HOW TO GET OUT OF IT

It's no wonder that we as women are often
Confused and men are confused
Objectified, guilty, alone, and worried.
Uncomfortable with our own bodies.
Expecting men to know everything.
Faking orgasm.
Turning off.
Waiting for it to happen to us.
Masturbating in secret, if at all.
Embarrassed about our genitals.
Worried about how our genitals smell and taste.
And
So many of us haven't had orgasms yet.



We can overcome this through

- Self-Knowledge
- Facts
- Options
- Techniques
- Honesty
- Sharing



Becoming a Positive Sexual Person

Women are becoming more interested in learning about their own sexuality. Up to this time, our lack of information about ourselves and our bodies, and the implied secrecy surrounding female sexuality have kept us from talking frankly to one another and to our partners.

WE *NEED* SELF KNOWLEDGE, FACTS, OPTIONS, TECHNIQUES, HONESTY.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Self knowledge is attainable through work and the sharing of information.

1. Learn as much about your own body as possible. Learn how to keep it healthy (this includes genital hygiene, relaxation, body awareness and exercises, food).
2. Read, explore, examine your feelings.
3. Begin talking with other women about what being sexual and being a woman really is for you (not how you think society *expects* you to act and feel, but how you honestly feel). Find out how they feel.
4. Examine your genitals with a mirror. Get to know them; they are yours and they are beautiful.
5. Learn about your own sexual responses, fantasies, turn-ons, preferences.
6. Have a frank discussion with your partner about who initiates sex.
7. State your pleasures positively. (For example, saying "I'm turned on by clitoral stimulation" is much better than saying "I need clitoral stimulation.")
8. Devote time alone to taking care of yourself.
9. Try new things.
10. Remember, you can control your sexual definition of yourself. You can choose any option, change your mind, and do whatever you like.
11. Determine your sexual needs and how you can best meet them.
12. Read about sex; find the words to express yourself.

FACTS

1. The clitoris is our primary sex organ.
2. There are as many nerve endings in the clitoris (glans, shaft, hood) as there are in the penis.
3. There are far fewer nerve endings in the vagina. Most sensitivity is in the outer third of the vagina, although there are pressure receptors in the back two-thirds.
4. Over half of women DO NOT have orgasms with penile-vaginal thrusting alone.
5. Most women reach orgasm during intercourse through clitoral stimulation (by themselves, by their partners, or with a vibrator).



6. Kinsey said: Women can and do enjoy sex as much as men. Women are not frigid; both men and women lack information about female sexuality. Women are orgasm-seeking creatures (just as men are).
7. Masters and Johnson said: There is no difference between a “vaginal” or a “clitoral” orgasm. The orgasm happens the same way no matter what kind of stimulation is used (manual, oral, coital, fantasy, breast stimulation, or vibrator). Women are capable of multiple orgasms (from two to over 50), but some prefer to have only one or a few. Women’s orgasms vary in intensity. (Vibrators produce the most intense orgasms; oral and manual stimulation are rated second; and coital stimulation produces the least intense orgasms, according to statistics).
8. Multiple orgasms may be spaced by a few seconds or a few minutes.
9. Many women find that they feel completely satisfied with one orgasm.
10. There is no “right way” to have an orgasm. That means you don’t have to have an orgasm during intercourse, and that orgasm achieved through oral or manual stimulation or with a vibrator is valid. Women have the right to decide how they prefer to have their orgasms.
11. A woman can, and may, initiate sex. She’ll enjoy it more if she feels confident she can give her partner pleasure, that she has some skills, and knows what her partner likes.
12. The sex act doesn’t have to end after a male partner has ejaculated. If a woman still wants to continue she can stimulate herself or invite her partner to participate in any way that feels good.
13. A woman must feel that she can take time during sex for her own pleasure.
14. Having sex during a menstrual period is perfectly normal and okay. Many women feel more turned on around the time of their period. There is more pelvic congestion during this time. Having sex and/ or orgasms can make a woman feel particularly good at this time. Orgasms may also relieve cramping.
15. *Lubrication* during sexual excitement varies greatly among women depending on many factors (state of health, birth control method, mood, partner, setting, turn-on level, etc). There is no standard “right amount” of lubrication. Many women lubricate during the excitement phase and find lubrication diminishing if intercourse goes on for very long. Your own saliva or a bland lubricant, applied to the genitals, can greatly reduce friction and increase sexual pleasure.
16. Women don’t need to be married to enjoy sex.
17. Making sounds can greatly enhance one’s sexual experience.
18. Friction along the ceiling of the vagina can be enjoyable.
19. A feeling of fullness (deep penetration) can add to sexual pleasure.
20. Some women have cervixes which are sensitive, and like to be stimulated there by penis, finger or dildo.



About faking orgasms

We've done it in the past because: marriage manuals told us to in order to keep our men and to seem like mature women. We didn't want our partners to know we didn't reach orgasm, for the sake of protecting his/ her and our own ego. We were not sure what an orgasm was.

The effect of faking it that: orgasm remains a mystery if we aren't willing to look at it honestly, if we can't be honest we can't discuss our needs with our partners, so the situation doesn't improve. Our partners are confused about what a real response is. Our partners may not have any idea that things could be changed or improved.

The facts are that the energy expended and wasted in faking could be channelled into experiencing the moment-by-moment pleasure we are receiving. Focusing on what's going on instead of on what *should* be going on is more likely to bring about orgasm. Once we share our wishes with our partner then both people can learn together how to improve the situation. Women are capable of having orgasms in about four minutes (according to Kinsey). Arousal rate depends on the effectiveness of stimulation and the desire to prolong the pleasurable sensations. Women no longer have to hope the man will do it for them.

OPTIONS

1. Women can have orgasms any way they prefer.
2. A woman can decide if she wants her orgasm(s) before intercourse, during intercourse, and/ or afterwards.
3. A woman can define her own sexual lifestyle. Many women today find that there is a wide variety of lifestyles, one or more of which fit their individual needs. Some women are choosing long-term marriage contracts; some are choosing "open marriages" which include relationships. Some relationships last a short time and some last a long time. Some women are choosing to live together with their partners; some prefer to live alone or in groups. Some relationships are monogamous. Some women don't want a primary partner at all. Some women are choosing to relate to partners of the same sex, and some women prefer to have sex with themselves exclusively. There are times when women don't want sex at all.
4. A woman can experience pleasure in sex without necessarily having an orgasm.

TECHNIQUES

The surest way to discover what turns you on and produces an orgasm is to masturbate.

1. Some women masturbate the same way every time.
2. Some women have a variety of techniques to choose from.
3. Most women use some combination of strokes on the clitoris and/ or inner lips, in a variety of rhythms, with a variety of pressures, and different fingers or parts of the hands.
4. Some women stroke up and down, some sideways, back and forth, some in circles. Most concentrate on the moist, sensitive parts of their genitals.
5. Some women use a lubricant.
6. Some women stroke other parts of the body besides the genitals: breasts, chest, thighs, arms, face, or hips.
7. Some women press their thighs together in such a way as to create a pressure on their genitals; some women stimulate their clitoris by pressing the legs together.
8. Some women lie on a pillow or rub their genitals on the bed.
9. Some women have orgasms in the bathtub or shower by running water over the vulva.
10. Some women use vibrators.
11. Some women use dildos.





Kegel Exercises

One of the first things I always recommend to ladies who are on their journey of sexual awakening and discovery is Kegel exercises. It is a must-do.

These exercises are designed to strengthen and give you voluntary control over a muscle called the Pubococcygeus muscle – (pew-bo-kak-se-gee-us), or P.C. for short. This muscle is the support muscle for the genitals in both men and women.

There is a definite correlation between good tone in the P.C. muscle and orgasmic intensity.

These exercises can help you to:

1. Increase your awareness of feelings in your genital area.
2. Increase blood circulation in the genital area.
3. Add to your sexual responsiveness.
4. Aid in restoring vaginal muscle tone following childbirth.
5. Increase your control over your orgasm.

To find your P.C. muscle, when you need to urinate, see if you can start and stop the flow of urine with your legs apart (without moving your legs together). The P.C. muscle is the one that stops the flow.

If you don't find it the first time, don't give up; try again the next time you need to urinate. Men can stand.

Slow Kegels – 4a

Tighten the P.C. muscle and hold it as you did when you stopped the flow of urine for a slow count of three. Then relax the muscle.

Quick Kegels – 4b

Tighten and relax the P.C. muscle as rapidly as you can. At first it will feel like a flutter. You will gradually gain more control.

Pull In/ Push Out – 4c

Pull up the entire pelvic area as though trying to suck up water into the genitals. Then push out or bear down as if trying to push the imaginary water out. (This exercise will use a number of "stomach" or "abdominal" muscles as well as the P.C. muscle.)

Repetitions

At first do ten of these exercises (one set), 3 times a day (3 exercises x 10 times x 3 times a day = 90 total exercises to start).



Each week add 5 more times to each exercise. Example: Week 2 – 3 sets x 15 times x 3 times a day; Week 3 – 3 sets x 20 times x 3 times a day; Week 4 – 3 sets x 25 times x 3 times a day. Keep doing 3 sets a day.

You can help yourself remember to do the exercises by associating them with some activity you do every day: talking on the phone, watching television, waiting in line, or lying in bed. Think of activities which don't require much moving around.

Don't worry if your muscles seem to get tired easily at first; that's normal for exercising any new muscle group. Rest between sets for a few seconds and start again. Remember to keep breathing naturally.

Women can place one or two fingers into the vagina and men one finger on each side of the base of the penis in order to feel the movement and strength of the muscle. You may also watch the movement by looking at your genitals in a hand mirror. Doing these things with your Kegels will help you learn them more rapidly.

For more, visit

- Kegel exercises: How to strengthen pelvic floor muscles <http://bit.ly/11T4PH>





Exercise: Heart-Vulva Connection

I have assigned this exercise to female clients who have Vaginismus – a condition where the vaginal muscle tightens involuntary making vaginal penetration very difficult or impossible – and witnessed tremendous healing and positive results. This exercise is so simple, yet extremely powerful in its healing ability, and best of all, it can work for anyone.

You need both your hands for this exercise.

What you do is:

- Lay upon a flat surface such as your bed. If you prefer to be seated, it is also possible.
- Lay one palm over your vulva (Yes, the WHOLE area).
- Lay the other palm over your heart. This can be your physical heart which is slightly above your left breast, or your spiritual heart (this chakra is in the center of your chest).
- Take deep breaths. Expand your stomach.

By connecting your heart which represents your emotions, and your vulva which symbolises your sexual identity and sexuality, you are in effect synchronizing the two power centers.

What is your relationship with your vulva? Have you treated her with integrity, care and love? Or have you found her to be ugly, shameful and dirty?

Talk to your vulva. You may be surprised by what she has to say. Does she expect an apology for the times you have faked an orgasm? Or does she now demand that you accord her with the respect she has always deserved? Ask her what her name is.

What would you like to say to her in response? Would you need to make a new promise? Should you alter any of your sexual attitudes or behavior involving her? Or does it involve a renewal of your love for her?





Yes & No Exercise

Often in the course of our daily lives we forget to meet our own needs because we are busy making sure everyone else or everything else is taken care of. Often, when it comes to what we want, we are hesitant to say a definite YES or a definite NO to things we want to do or are asked to do. Try this exercise and see if it helps to change this, if it makes it easier for you to get what you want out of life.

NOs

Say "no" to at least three things that you would normally do grudgingly. This may be something you feel you "should" do but really don't want to. It is important that you say "no" to somebody other than yourself for one of your NOs.

Select things you would not normally allow yourself to refuse, for example, a social "obligation", letting the dog in, jigging the toilet, etc.

YESes

Say "yes" to three things you really want but would not ordinarily allow yourself to have or allow yourself to ask others for. For example, a raise, a room of your own, a ride somewhere, a gift for yourself, a vacation, a new position.

Try to start with little things and do *three YESes and three NOs a week*. Do them at work, at home, at school, wherever you are. As you get more comfortable with non-sexual requests and refusals, begin to incorporate one NO and one YES that is sexual each week.

You are cheating if (1) you say "no" to something you want but still think you "shouldn't" have (2) you say "no" or "yes" to things you ordinarily or always say "no" or "yes" to.

Experience the feeling after saying your YES's or NO's. Try not to worry about the other person's needs and don't let them influence what *you* want. The goal of the exercise is to be more self-assertive.

Many opportunities will present themselves for this YES or No exercise. If you let an opportunity go by and don't say anything, don't become discouraged. Make a mental note of how often you deny yourself to others or don't allow yourself to do things you want to do. If it's harder for you to say YES, practice the YES exercise. If it's harder for you to say NO practice the NOs.

YESes for this week:

NOs for this week:



Thank You!



I hope you enjoy this e-book and found it useful.
Do drop me an email with your feedback.
In the meantime, keep shining and celebrating your sexuality.

Based in Singapore, Dr. Martha Tara Lee is Founder and Clinical Sexologist of Eros Coaching. She is a certified sexologist with a Doctorate in Human Sexuality. She provides sexuality and intimacy coaching for individuals and couples, conducts sexual education workshops and speaks at public events.

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