

The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities Study Guide

The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities by Dossie Easton

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Plot Summary

The Ethical Slut is a contemporary examination of sexuality and relationships in the light of the American culture of the 1990s. It organizes a body of theory and makes some effort at practice. It is written by two women who are both business partners and lovers in an open and committed relationship with one another. They lived in San Francisco at the time of this book's publication. Intentionally opinionated and complete, this book makes an effort to be a part of the relational cultural form of sexual education for adults. In this regard, it could be used in tandem with Our Whole Lives sexual education curriculum for adults, and in some cases even the teen versions. In many cases, it would supply plenty of fuel for debate and ultimately, possibly some new agreements and some new understandings which retain significant differences. The Ethical Slut does not provide education into the most biological or clinical aspects of lesbian sexuality. However, it is a meaningful introduction to this social element from a more intimate perspective.

The authors strive to create a theory of human sexuality. There are four parts, each of which deals with a different aspect of this issue. Part 1: Within Ourselves, contains eight chapters, Part 2: Between One Another, includes six chapters, In The World has three chapters, and Part 4: Having Fun, has two chapters plus a conclusion. The women co-authors provide a rather in-depth account of what it is like to be a slut and how to function as one in the world. They include discourse on a number of women's issues. As the authors are women, these topics have automatically come up rather than being anything they might have gone out of their way to find or to get involved with. For women, this is advantageous; for men it is harmless and valuable information but not necessarily directly pertinent to their lives. It is however, at least indirectly important as the men are living along with women in our shared society. The book provides a survey of material for people who have selected to be sexually active. The framework from which the book is written is a rarity in that it comes from a poly-lesbian perspective. Having chosen to not lead monogamous lives, the authors are doing their best to share insight and knowledge with others while also performing the impressive feat of writing, publishing and marketing a book. To that extent, this book is a groundbreaking work for lesbians. At the same time, it is also part of American pop-culture at the tail end of the twentieth century.



Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 1, Part 1 - Within Ourselves - Part 1

Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 1, Part 1 - Within Ourselves - Part 1 Summary and Analysis

There are four parts to this book: Part 1: Within Ourselves; Part 2: Between One Another; Part 3: In The World and Part 4: Having Fun. The first several chapters of part one posit an essential theory. The book is intentionally in favor of healthy sexuality for both women and men. Mutual consent is of the greatest importance, according to these women. The book is not limited to heterosexual practices, although those are certainly integrated into the writings. The book views itself as advocating sexual behavior as an activity that is healthy and meant very much to be enjoyed by both women and by men. Sex for pleasure is the real and professed focus, more so than sexual intercourse for the sake of reproduction. One of the authors introduces herself and her woman partner who wrote and published the book together with her. They have a lesbian relationship rather than a friendship and business partnership that is any less physically intimate. One of the two, Dossie, has two major commitments: one is a man, the other is the woman Catherine. They include other people and navigate how to do this without it forcing them to leave one another out. At times this is easy and natural, but other times it requires a concerted effort to control a situation or situations. The first few chapters in this are: Who Is an Ethical Slut? Here, the women authors introduce the idea of 'slut', what a slut is and how to be an ethical one. The first chapter has a number of headings within it. The first of these is Why We Chose This Title. "What kind of person would revel in calling himself a slut?" They claim and counter a hypothesis that the morals of a woman are often gauged by her sexual activities, whereas they feel a man is often judged through the totality of his actions. The authors feel it is wrong to judge a woman on this basis. Sexual Adventurousness is the next heading. They open by confronting the negative moralistic attitude they feel they are often judged with: as being indiscriminate, wanton, and destructive through their sexual behaviors. They counter that, in reality, they are mainly motivated by curiosity and interest in individuals. A Slut's Eye View is next, with the emphasis on the uniqueness of the slut. They recognize that there is great diversity within "the Slut Kingdom" or "Queendom". They realize that the difficulty comes from the attitude of 'growing up and settling down' and that this means that they must be monogamous. The chapter concludes with Sexual Diversity and the final section Your Authors. Here, the writers introduce the reality that they are practicing lesbians. One of them began as a heterosexual, then spent a number of years identifying herself as a bisexual and at the time of writing the book, sexually identified herself as homosexual. The other indicated that she saw herself as more of a lesbian the whole time.



Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 2 - Part 1 Within Ourselves - 2

Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 2 - Part 1 Within Ourselves - 2 Summary and Analysis

Now that readers have been introduced to the book, *Withing Ourselves* continues. Chapter two is *Values & Ethics*. *Values: Denial versus Fulfillment* is the first heading. Here, part of being "sex positive" which means advocating healthy sexual lives, focuses on the conflict between denial of gratification or delay of gratification and the fulfillment of desires. Masturbation often falls into a mitigating activity, since it allows one to at least take some action on one's desires without imposing one's desires on another. The women who wrote the book observe, "We have never met anyone who had low self-esteem at the moment of orgasm," (p. 19). *Does Sex Need A "Reason"?* is the next question. Essentially, they claim that there are a number of reasons. They acknowledge that sex can be abused and misused and manipulated but that it is not inherently intended for this. *Ethics* is the title of the next heading. The women: Dossie and Catherine, then go on to express that it is important to find one's own ethical center in a world that can be against healthy pleasures and fulfillment. There is another major break called *Sex & Relationships*.

Chapter three is *Paradigms, Old and New*. "Promiscuous" is the first section of this chapter. They explore the meaning of this. They say that it is typically an accusation that they have too many partners and perhaps too much sex. They make a healthy assumption, which is supposed to be a safe one, that people will not suffer from being over-sexed. In healthy relationships this is typically true, but the authors make a limited assumption that is not based on the wider context within which this takes place. "Sinful" and "Pathological" are the next headings. The authors address shame, albeit off-handedly, and jump to conclusions that contain elements of accuracy and inaccuracy regarding Freud. The summary writer just read Freud, and therefore knows that the authors are not exactly right about what he believed. Nevertheless, they are correct that the nineteenth century psychologist's might have viewed sexual promiscuity as 'indicative of a problem' rather than as a simple legitimate state-of-being or attitude. "Addicted", "Easy" both follow here. The rest of the chapter is called "Myths About Sluts". The myths cover sets of types of relationships available to both slut and non-slut alike. The chapter concludes with *What We Believe*. They face and counter the idea that decades of fidelity constitutes the only 'real' relationship that lovers can have. Their main point is that a relationship that is not a lifelong partnership is not necessarily a failure simply by virtue of being something else. This is a first step towards embracing the slut lifestyle. Being a slut means that they tend towards being sexually active and it may or not indicate that they are not serial monogamists.



Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 2, Within Ourselves - 3

Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 2, Within Ourselves - 3 Summary and Analysis

Chapter four is The Language of this Book. One of the procedures that they use here is to set about putting together their own definitions for things so that people can understand them better during the rest of the book. One of the terms that they redefine is sex itself. Traditionally, there are two definitions of this. One of these is biological gender. The other definition for the same term is sexual intercourse. The ladies who have put together this book have extended these terms to include a wider variety of behaviors related to the expression of their sexuality. Another important term here is 'outercourse'. Outercourse includes a vast array of behaviors including what heterosexuals have traditionally called foreplay. Outercourse can range from extremely sexual behavior that takes place with a great deal of physical contact all the way out to being so very subtle - a glance, a gesture. Outercourse, when it is most subtle, can easily be misinterpreted, especially for people who have learned to involve their body language in their deceptions: do they want to be intentionally misinterpreted? Sometimes, someone does. Nevertheless, Outercourse is very important and not to be underrated: if it was dancing together at a school dance, or sitting together in public these are two forms of outercourse.

Chapter five is Ancestors and Antecedents. This chapter addresses the need to conquer perceived isolation. Special clubs and other places can also help to alleviate this form of suffering from separation. A real-life anecdote about how one of the authors enjoyed a club called the Omni. She writes of having felt specifically relieved by the fact that, at this particular club, the men were not very aggressive about their sexual interest or hopes. This chapter concludes with 'swinging'. Chapter , six, Slut Skills. Self-knowledge is one of the most important attributes for healthy sluts. This book is written to counteract the opposite trend, of individuals being forced out of having the rich and rewarding sexual and romantic lives that they do want whether monogamous or not. It is also true that 'reprogramming' may be to some extent necessary. This book does not focus on the intentional transition from sexual activity into monogamy or celibacy, which are equally valid options, but rather focuses on people who may well have felt forced into serial fidelity or celibacy into greater sexual freedom.

Chapters seven and eight include meaningful topics such as how to handle sleep-overs and the significance of being able to ask for and receive and how to also give real reassurance and support. She asserts that helping to ensure that loved ones know they are loved is immensely important to healthy intimate connections. Limit-setting is also included: it is important to be able to say 'no' : they cite the dictum that 'In order to really be able to say 'yes' it must be genuinely possible to say 'no' and have it go through.



Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Part 2 - Between One Another

Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Part 2 - Between One Another Summary and Analysis

The first three chapters are Boundaries, Slut Economies, and Jealousy. Boundaries are an integral part of every relationship. The lesbian slut author writes that she is outraged when she and other sluts are accused of being indiscriminate. Another great way of describing this is 'wanton'. She asserts that this is simply false. She writes that, "We actually have more boundaries than most folks because we have more points of contact," (p.117). What are boundaries? is the next main heading. Owing Your Choices: Here, they point out that people need to take responsibility for their own emotions. However, this does not mean that interaction does not influence emotions or that it is wrong for people to need people who care. It does mean that blaming the other person for everything won't necessarily 'fly'. Boundaries vary from one relationship to another and are likely to be influenced in some cases by other coexisting boundaries. This is often affected, legitimately so, by the context and the purpose of the interaction and relationship. Problems with Boundaries is the next heading. Dumping and Projection are both covered under this category. Here, the example used is that one woman wanted to role-play 'little girl and Daddy' even though she wanted this in the context of a safe, and decidedly sexual involvement. She had a partner who could not deal with this herself- which is also a respectable limitation. Due to this, she found someone different with whom she could fulfill this wish without imposing it on someone who was not comfortable with doing so. Here is where heightened discrimination, in the best sense, is explicitly stated by the author. Sluts can become champions of the boundaries, often by gentle and cautious exploration. The next topic is ownership. The authors advocate that each individual can only own his or her own self. Ownership also covers one's own emotional states. There is a section devoted to role boundaries in chapter one of part two. One of the authors writes of how individuals may not have all of the same role boundaries with one another. She writes of how she wanted to role-play 'little girl and Daddy' but had a partner who was not comfortable with this. She found another who was, and everyone involved was accepting about her need to act this out within safe bounds. This is exciting, since these can be opportunities to exercise one's fantasies. At times, they are naturally designed to be intensely therapeutic for a person as he or she works to integrate or to reintegrate normal sexually mature feelings, attitudes, and perceptions with his or her own 'inner child'. Sometimes, people want to act out what they are not - in another cases, they want to enact who or what they most are.



Chapter 5, Part 2 - Between One Another - 2

Chapter 5, Part 2 - Between One Another - 2 Summary and Analysis

Chapter three is devoted entirely to jealousy. The first subheading under this category is What is Jealousy? They put forth the idea that there are times when grief and loss are also involved in the situation. The second section is Unlearning Jealousy: Disempower Your Jealousy is next. "When I'm not taking care of getting what I want, it's easy to get jealous," (p. 137). "Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding," (p. 141). Weathering the Storm comes next, then It Might Be Easier Than You Thought. Here, the authors point out that there may be some circumstances in which you had predicted that you would be jealous but discover when it happens that you're not. The example used is if a man lover goes out on a date with someone else and you find that you are 'ok'. This is more apt to occur when your needs are being met whereas when they are not, this might aggravate the 'wound'.

Feel Your Feelings is the next topic. "Feelings, once uncovered, can be better understood by reflecting on them," (p. 143). The next section is Poor Baby. The emphasis here is on accepting that it is perfectly acceptable to care enough for oneself to be sad or dissatisfied when this accurately reflects the conditions in which you are living, and to give yourself compassion and comfort. They also suggest doing this with friends. Who's to Blame? comes next. Owning one's own feelings is the main point at this stage. In One Tiny Step in the Direction Of...they recommend taking any step, even the smallest one, when faced with overwhelming emotions. Anything that justifiably helps make you safer and more comfortable is in order. Baby Yourself is about being kind to oneself, whether it is indulging in something pleasurable or getting a workout, or shopping. Bite the Bullet is next. There is an incident of how one of the women, shortly after she had become clear on not being monogamous herself, found herself in the same room as her lover making out with one of her best same gender friends. She writes that she survived, and through doing so discovered that 'jealousy needn't kill'. Go for the Ick is the name given to another heading. "This is why your authors are biased in favor of full disclosure in free love," (p. 150).

There are four further subtopics in this chapter alone. To review the entire chapter: Jealousy can be such a teacher and quite a threat to relationships. Jealousy often informs people of what they need and want for themselves that they need to put more work into being able to have, or shows how they have misplaced something. The book's authors write that jealousy can tell people where many of their own limits are, and much more. They point out that monogamy does not automatically eliminate jealousy. Sexual territoriality is often a part of jealousy. The authors assert that working through jealousy

and being able to overcome this buggaboo is important. The author suggests that there may be times when one person may go so far as to set up a date for another partner.



Chapter 6, Part 2 - Between One Another - 2

Chapter 6, Part 2 - Between One Another - 2 Summary and Analysis

Chapter four, titled Sluts in Love, says "...there is no question that being called a slut within a committed relationship has some special challenges," (p. 153). The chapter begins with the first subheading, The Accidental Couple. Here, the authors discuss various ways that two people may unexpectedly or accidentally become a couple. The mistake is simply that what one person saw coming, maybe someone else didn't, as in the case of a woman who planned on being housemates with an opposite sex friend and ended up spending fifteen years with him. This was probably an error based on gender difference. She may not have realized the only reason he said yes to this was because he was sexually interested in her. Either it was that, or she was just 'in luck' that in this case, their friendship did indicate that they were also compatible as a couple. Chapter five is titled Conflict. "Intimacy is based on shared vulnerability," (p.173). This chapter addresses the reality of insecurities and confidences. Conflict is part of every relationship that includes intimacy. The work most likely contains an innate female bias, but there is little doubt that concepts such as 'fighting fair' are common to both the main genders. The authors even include notions of the transgendered. 'Fair fighting' it is recommended that people communicate using "I messages" about their feelings rather than "You messages". With respect to blame, the results were not as expected. The authors even suggest blamelessness and also shamelessness. The chapter then offers an extensive account of how to really mess things up; the center is deceit and manipulation - both of which can be keys to success for masturbation or real relationships with others when getting one's way in the short term is viewed as more important than the long-range blessings bestowed by honesty.

Chapter six is called Agreements. The women authors of this book have offered readers some excellent 'food for thought' about forming agreements with partners. They advocate honesty and truthfulness among lovers. For them, it has been possible to develop and sustain meaningful long-term networks of people throughout much their adults lives while practicing intentional sluthood. Consent is, not surprisingly, the first listed requisite for intimacy. However, they recognize that even something like this may not quite be like how they had originally thought. As such, they encourage gentle exploration of the possibilities. The also encourage people to acknowledge their anxieties about such an important and meaningful feature of relationships.



Chapter 7, Part 3 - 1 - The Slut's Eye View

Chapter 7, Part 3 - 1 - The Slut's Eye View Summary and Analysis

There are three chapters to this Part. Chapter one is called A Slut's Eye-View. Like many of the other chapters, there are multiple headings to this one. The first of these is "Promiscuous". The first thing the authors do is take a look at the ways promiscuous people are oppressed. They assert that while the victim really is not to blame, that there are unfortunately a number of people who will or who may take that attitude towards people who are attacked purely because they are sluts. Judging Ourselves comes next. This simply asks us whether or not an individual has internalized negative messages about themselves or not. If so, how might these be counteracted. Sanctions Against Sluts comes next. While no one gets the official painted red letter for Adultery these days, individuals can still feel 'marked' in some public manner by their behavior. Lastly comes, Government is Not Our Friend. This includes a rant against the reality of government policies connected with marriage. While the authors make some legitimate objections, it is also true that the author admits that there are at least two pages of text that are more like a rant. The readers are advised it would not serve the personal or public interest to have no legal regulations involving marriage. This is true within the nation and is especially the case regarding international agreements. Within the context of the discussion in the book it is relatively easy to see how the authors might have overlooked this. This is a case where the summary writer has information- and therefore this is on the level of an editorial note to readers. Legal Agreements are the next section. Here, the same women advocate the use of the law to protect their families, including matters of inheritance. There are alternative legal methods for covering what is normally handled by marriage laws. These are different ways that people practicing alternative methods of having families can still protect their loved ones through the law.

Meanwhile, people have the choice about whether or not to be civil rights activists for marital rights. There are alternatives. For some, the choice would be traditional marriage. For others, the best option will be something else. Of course, it matters a great deal whether or not partners need to include another specific individual or group of people in ownership of property, in retirement savings, or in other plans. There may be custodial arrangements made for any offspring that have to be covered by the law - if you don't proactively get this legally covered, pre-existing laws will cover it for you.



Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Part 3 - 2 - Health

Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Part 3 - 2 - Health Summary and Analysis

One of the most important next questions the authors suggest that readers ask themselves is: "Who do I have to lie to?" The answer to this and other questions will tell you a lot about yourself and about what your life is really like. If you are very fortunate, your answer will be 'No one and I'm safe and happy anyways'. If you are quite unfortunate, you will have to include intimate acquaintances among those you lie to, and perhaps you yourself are included. Now, if you don't mind the ways you lie to yourself and you can tell when you are lying, then the deceit might not trouble you. Huge numbers of people lie to themselves every time they masturbate - typically the lies in this case take the form of fantasies about themselves and some involvement with another or others. Most people don't believe these lies any more or less than viewers believe a movie or readers a novel. The authors are themselves frustrated by government interference and do not agree with all of the public policies. Self-awareness about when it is okay to be honest is helpful. This is also socially relevant in that it is true that the same behavior can meet with enthusiasm, neutrality, or even antagonism depending upon those involved.

Chapter two focuses on health. The authors immediately introduce the HIV virus. While there are now antivirals which enable people to literally live, and to lead better lives despite the virus; HIV continues to haunt the world as humanity's worst contemporary plague. They move on through the main perils of sex for women, perils which are all the more dramatic whenever a woman isn't in a very happy marriage. These consist of unexpected pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, with the other drama - as long as it is not an immediate threat to survival. Fluid Bonding: this is negotiable monogamy with commitment. People who are committed to each other as life partners may periodically renegotiate their sexual expression in relation to one another. This may include years or decades of monogamy and also years, weeks, months or decades of nonmonogamy depending upon the individuals and conditions involved. Eliminating High-Risk Behaviors follows. They refer to various forms of sexual activity and observe that people have the right and probably the duty to limit and to select carefully only those which are the least likely to cause harm. Barrier Usage is a title that makes it seem that this is some kind of sexual education handbook, although it is more of a guidebook. Physicians, clinical sexual education materials, Planned Parenthood, and other organizations such as those who put out Our Whole Lives as part of a comprehensive sexual education program can all assist any readers who need more information about accessing and using the various barriers for sexual practices.



Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 9, Part 2 - Health Cont.

Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 9, Part 2 - Health Cont. Summary and Analysis

The information is culturally relevant but inexact or detailed with respect to what professional sex education experts know. The recognized need for sexual health includes a history. Antibiotics have made millions safer from sexually transmitted diseases than ever before. Of course, it's still better to not get sick in the first place. The authors also recommend that you get tested to make sure that you are in full knowledge about your own sexual health. This can, of course, include staving off sexual intercourse until or unless any partners have not only been tested for diseases but are aware and take care to make sure they don't infect anyone else if they do have one, and to be able to be certain that they are sexually healthy when they are. They also advocate the use of barriers. There are barriers for birth control and others to prevent the spread of disease. Some of it may seem overly clinical or comical to readers, whereas others will see how much the proper precautions can help to prevent trouble. They also include barriers with certain forms of foreplay, mostly ones that involve penetration. They then focus on child rearing. Again, this is simply emphasizing the importance of actual consent. There are those who have been raised gently and strongly prefer this, whereas others like it when they are 'made to do things'. Most of us know this instinctively and intuitively. The authors assert that generations should not share lovers, period. They also recognize that acknowledging someone's budding sexuality or flirtatiousness while still protecting them against unwarranted or inappropriate sexual behavior is very valuable.

Testing and prevention of disease and control of pregnancies comes next. Committing to healthy sex is the final step in this chapter. Much as the authors may hate it: it is true that old fashioned monogamy does effectively prevent illness - or at least the spread of any contagion, and alters risks associated with pregnancies. People of all sexual orientations need to be active about protecting the sexual health of themselves and of their partner or partners. The greater the degree of promiscuity, the more important it is to take precautions for the same reason that one is less apt to give someone the flu if one has it and stays away from others, but is apt to pass it on if he or she goes out in public a lot and gives plenty of opportunity to spread the contagion. Contagion is best kept to a minimum. For some, one method is to reduce their level of promiscuity or of intimacy with others. For others, the use of barriers is the best choice.



Chapter 10 - Part 4 - Having Fun &

Chapter 10 - Part 4 - Having Fun & Summary and Analysis

This final part of the book works to put together the accumulated information in a new way. The authors use anecdotes and exposition combined in order to come up with some well ordered chapters. The tone continues to be informative and opinionated at the same time. The authors are not hesitant about this. They are doing it intentionally. The work is plural in its intentions. One reason for it is to educate the public on facets of society they may be unfamiliar with - the lesbian and the open relationship lifestyle/s. Another reason for the work is to provide support.

One good safety feature of the book is that they state what for the majority is the obvious - that it is not acceptable for children to be involved with adult sexual behavior. They also broach proper sex education. For those contemplating such a move, it is often better to err on the side of not telling children enough, or gently asking them what kinds of information they would actually like. Telling them too much or too soon can be quite frightening.

The first story is about how one lesbian slut found another through having what the authors but no physicians define as sex, at a lesbian orgy. During subsequent days, one of the women discovered that she continued to think of the other a lot, so much so that she wrote her a letter. The authors explain that this didn't stop, so after they had spent thousands of dollars chatting over the telephone, they both moved, so that they were with each other in person with much greater frequency and ease.

The next section is about finding partners. There is a point made about honesty. The authors admit that it is very helpful to know what one wants up front, and then to be truthful about what that is. This is to help minimize the extent to which people get hurt through emotional consequences of their sexual behavior. The next section is about 'yes' and 'no' once again. This time it is about cultural stereotypes about how forward or coy either a man or a woman actually is, or ought to be. The authors recognize but do not feel that everyone needs to abide by one of the old stereotypes that holds men as pursuers and women as being in a purely passive role. In reality, large numbers of men have experienced it quite differently, so if you are a woman who has taken the lead or strongly encouraged a man's advances or lured a shy fellow out into the open, you are not alone.



Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 11, Part 4

Book 1, The Ethical Slut : Chapter 11, Part 4 Summary and Analysis

Finding Partners is the first chapter in part four. This section of the book is again for adults only. The content is sexually explicit. While it may not be strange that babies and young children are often aware of their parents having sex, it is a whole different matter when they approach the new delicacies of puberty and adolescence. For those whose tastes are more delicate, this chapter, like the one before it, may come as a bit of a shock. Here, we have sluts in groups and how to be a slut at parties- especially sex parties. One of the rather natural features that this creates as a side-effect is that people may have an opportunity to watch live sex for the first time since they were just babies. This is not even the televised form: movie and TV sex when either nonpornographic or 'soft porn' which can teach people about how easily they are aroused while at the same time buffering both the viewers and the thespians from the full reality of the situation. The sluts have introduced us to lesbian orgies. In this chapter, they delve more deeply into what can transpire from having the freedom to watch other people's sexual activity. They also remind readers that part of consent and recognition of people's limits is that they shouldn't have to be observed, nor attend orgies or watch pornography or anything else, when they really don't want to.

The chapter consists primarily of anecdotes. People will find these to be rather interesting. However, some may feel that when they have traversed the gap between being relational into being sexually graphic, that the behavior has gone from acceptable all the way into unacceptable. Others will be thrilled to finally read a work that is truly lesbian-centric in its view. As has often been the case, bi-curious and heterosexual men may well also find some of this to be enthralling even though others will be horrified, will blush and struggle in their upset as their sensitivities has been truly offended. Wild sex stories are only suited to some environments. Even people who really like them can be caught off-guard and feel embarrassed or offended by material they would love to take in at a better time. For many, orgy stories are a matter of trepidation or something they would like to keep to the level of fantasy rather than the realm of fact. Others will read them as wistful wishful voyeurs. A few will find them as a prelude to real events that unfold in their lives. These last may be the most grateful of all readers for the information presented. The rest, those who want no physical part in it, may be the next most thankful.



Chapter 12, Part 4 - Having Fun - 2

Chapter 12, Part 4 - Having Fun - 2 Summary and Analysis

Part four has two chapters and a Conclusion. In the preceding summary chapter the first of these, Finding Partners was discussed. There was also reference to orgies, which are covered more thoroughly during chapter two - Group Sex, Public Sex, Orgies. Group Sex is something that can be found in triads, dyads and with trisexuals. In this context, a trisexual is someone who is involved with another two people who functioned as a couple for years prior to including the trisexual. A triad may well be a threesome that formed itself without two of them having already been a couple. An individual who becomes partner to a pair of friends might be a variant on the trisexual, if say a pair of men or a pair of women close friends only experience bisexuality during episodes of sharing this new found lover with one another. If two of the people have been friends for many years during which they spent a great deal of time together, it would create part of the synergy more closely associated with the trisexual rather than a threesome that formed as its own thing from its very inception. When three or more people share sexual activity with each other during the same event, or as part of one unified shared experience, then this is group sex.

Public Sex is a different matter. In the American culture this is not the same as it is in some others. Americans are not much in for public sex. The most common variant of public sex is televised sex. Most sex found on television isn't actually taking place, but includes enough aspects of the activity for people to rather naturally draw the conclusion that it is. This is a stage-trick making it so that people get the meaning without having to do it. There are a few venues where there is contextualized public sex. There are other countries where public sex was more socially normal. Historically, in recent centuries it was not abnormal in parts of Germany for the bride and groom to consummate their marriage literally in front of everyone. People were not expected to 'ignore it'; it was okay to spectate. It isn't voyeurism when there is no regulation against watching.



Chapter 13, Part 4 - Having Fun - 3

Chapter 13, Part 4 - Having Fun - 3 Summary and Analysis

For the lesbian authors, the cultural view is limited to late twentieth century America. Here, public sex is not the norm. It exists in the form of people doing this at parties - usually couples, where many of the guests will feel that they should ignore the behavior the same way that underground passengers ignore one another while cramped together during rush hour. There are exceptions to this general rule and they are the next topic.

Pornography specializes in producing sex that is okay for others to watch. There are also special sex clubs that sometimes include live sexual activity as a staged, or intentionally public spectacle. The other aspect of public sex that is covered, is the matter of private sexual activity in rather public atmospheres. The authors describe this mainly in the context of the orgies already mentioned. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to the orgy. It is graphic, and can be perceived as anything ranging from exhilarating and exciting or pleasurable to really disgusting and dubious. The authors, without it being clear which one it is, shares insider information about the sex club and orgy scene, especially for lesbians of San Francisco. She writes that public acts of sex, or sex in public locations, is one of a number of features about human sexuality of which there is some legitimate anxiety but also especial joy when those anxieties are surmounted in ways that will work. They also write that it is not abnormal for people who have decided to go for an exploratory visit to a sex club or an orgy to not get far with it at all. She then surveys a number of different ways that people can approach such circumstances: if a couple goes to such a place or event together, will they seek another partner together, or separately? What if they don't agree with one another about that? One example given is of a couple who wanted to attend a party together as a couple and wanted to be exhibitionistic about their being a couple, whereas the other one wanted to go to the party to find another or other partner/s.



Chapter 14, Slut Utopia & Concluding Remarks

Chapter 14, Slut Utopia & Concluding Remarks Summary and Analysis

The final chapter in this book is Slut Utopia. Here, the authors simply create and share a vision of their Utopia. In such a place, the relationships are as stable and secure or as variable as their participants want them to be. In Utopia, no one gets let down or left out when they don't want to be; they also get to include who they want - when in truth this negotiation often makes it so that no one gets to include everyone we would like, or whenever we want, but only some of those we wish to include and only some of the time. While a serious compromise, it is still a good one. The first heading is Paradigms and Pluralism. Slut Utopia is second. The authors assert that these new formulas are designed to apply to the reality of life today, allowing freedom while protecting family and belonging, for example. They also respect the monogamous path while also arguing that it isn't a real choice when forced by a society or individuals and they believe that it needs to be able to an actual option. The third heading is Our Favorite Sexual Fantasy: Sexual Abundance. The authors strongly encourage people to be free, generous and expressive with their love for others and for healthy rather than narcissistic self-love. Obviously part of loving is respecting other people's limits. This can be easy or difficult; the authors encourage the development of a sense of connection within a given community. The idea is that instead of starvation, severity, loss and competition for resources that there is the reality and the possibility of experiencing abundance. In such a reality, there is plenty for everyone and if anyone is going without enough of anything, there need only be some adjustments made and then all will be well.

The authors conclude with "And may we all look forward to a lifetime of dreams come true," (p. 269).

At the back of the book there are bibliographical notes and a couple of pages of resources "Resources for Sluts". These include all the contact information for a number of organizations catering to people who are trying some form of intentional nonmonogamous living. There are some listed to help solve problems and others that are designed to help a subgroup get connected, such as the bisexual community.

With that, this book is over. It is the result of effective teamwork. The two women put together the book. During the reading, it grows clear that a great many others have been involved. If they had not been, then many of the events described including private parties and clubs could not have taken place. These two women want American culture to be a safe space for women and men to express their unique sexual identities. They want people to enjoy love and sex, and sexuality. They want people to be genuinely

sexually free so that whether or not there is no partner, one partner or multiple partners everyone is enabled to live their truth in a safe and reasonable manner.



Characters

Dossie Easton

This is one of the authors of the book. She is a practicing lesbian in an open yet committed relationship. She calls it fluid-bonding when people are committed to each other to such an extreme degree while maintaining negotiable sexual boundaries with others. This woman lives in San Francisco. Very early in the book there is a quote from some important work she did as an undergraduate: "Sex is Nice and Pleasure is Good Is Good For You." The author reports that this is a radical American idea that was first publicized in the 1970s. This is done to help counteract the oppression of women, especially, but also of some men regarding sex and pleasure. It is also done as part of the advocacy for people to have healthy fulfilling sexual lives. In this sense, she is either a pioneer, or at the least, a venturing advocate.

Catherine Liszt

This is the other author. She is also a lesbian bravely venturing through the modern terrain of society and culture. She has taken the other author as both a lover and a business partner. She has been able to enjoy her relationship with Dossie and has suffered through tumultuous experiences with it. It is not immediately visible on the 'outside' of the book what makes this woman's contribution to the book so crucial. That is because the writing is not clearly one of them but is actually both, having blended their energies. They have made their combination 'seamless' the way the front and the back of the living hand go together.

Kai Harper

Kai is the individual responsible for having come up with the book's cover art. The cover is decorated with images of people. The appearances of everyone are discrete, with people being well covered. Faces and heads and general body types are drawn with a predominantly implicit urban feeling. This picture of images of people reminds one of walking along a busy downtown urban street.

Nothing else about her is known except that she was able to have her work involved in a book writing project that came out of San Francisco in the late 1990s.

James Ramey

This man is mentioned during the chapter on Slutstyles. The authors are writing about multiple partner arrangements when he comes up. He is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. They refer to his writing *Intimate Friendships*, which is part of a greater



effort on his part to deal with the reality of his emotional inclusiveness along with sexual inclusiveness. Networks of people are created through such sexual activities.

Ruth

This is one of two friends who happen to also be a couple. The woman is listed in the chapter Sluts in Love. She is mentioned because she was in a monogamous marriage for sixteen years before she and her husband/partner decided to open things up a bit. The term used here is 'interaction': they began to test and to find what they might do together with other people and what activities seemed 'out of bounds' or inappropriate.

Edward

Edward also comes up in the chapter Sluts in Love. He is written of in intimate association with a woman named Ruth. He spent sixteen years being Ruth's partner in a monogamous arrangement and then began to consider how they might relationally ventilate their marriage. They each had needs, wants, and boundaries. They are written of during a phase of figuring out what types of interactions they could have with other people and what they could or would not do with others. This is actually very important since doing things together and separately are both major for most couples. Are all the friends the same people, for example? Is it important for either spouse to have friends who don't know the other spouse, as well as having friends in common?

Fred

This man comes up as a groom. He appears during Sluts in Love. He is described as shy and quiet. He began to know Catherine through light dating and a little bit of sex. When they were apart for some time, he kept in communication with her. She may not have realized that he may well have done this hoping that they might be able to have sex with one another again. When she sought a room she sought to include Fred as a housemate - the idea being that they wouldn't be sexually involved with each other, or at least not necessarily a couple, but they would share space. This made it so that she could rent the room she wanted. He agreed to the plan.

Fred was also flexible about this. He let Catherine sleep with him when it turned out that she had not scrounged up a mattress for herself. Catherine reveals that this turned into a fifteen-year-long relationship with a large portion of it devoted to being married to each other and having a couple of children together, which they then raised. The authors call this 'an accidental couple' but one could suspect that this actually involved at least some gender miscommunication.



Carol

Carol is referred to strictly on a first name basis, as are many of the other real life people mentioned here. In her case, she brings up the commonly found unity of intimacy with sexual interactions. Carol shares at least some of her personal story in this, which is very helpful to the book and its purpose.

George Bach

Dr. George Bach is mentioned in the chapter on Conflict. Here the reason is thanks to his book, *The Intimate Enemy: How to Fight Fair in Love and Marriage*. The authors support reading this book as a way of learning more about ways to handle conflict within an intimate relationship.

Laurie

This woman met a man at a Renaissance Fair. They tried dating and romance, and it worked so well that after five months of being a couple, they handfasted. Their hand fasting included a year and a day set up, which meant that they had what in other terms is an engagement, but others would call it a 'trial marriage'. This worked, so they hand fasted again, and the wedding took place. Once they were married, Laurie found out that her husband wanted to have an open marriage. This frightened her, so they put it off. Later, they tried it. When it worked out in her favor, it seemed to her like a better idea than when it was only that he wanted to sexually include other women. During the relationship they had to renegotiate their limits with each other.

Chris

This man met his wife at a Renaissance Fair. He met a woman he loved in a way that he wanted to or, at least he went along with hand fasting her and then later marrying her. He wanted to have an open marriage with limits. This frightened her, so he adjusted how he went about it. It didn't bother her as much, and even became something that she liked when it allowed her to have other lovers at times as well, without losing him or their marriage. They had to renegotiate limits to protect their own marriage based on what was happening at the time. This did limit the extent to which anyone else could be involved with either of them without supplanting their relationship to one another.

June

This woman ended up being invited to be the guest of honor at a lesbian orgy in California during the 1980s or 1990s. She was able to accept this invitation. She was rather embarrassed and shy about it at first, but became increasingly open to the ideas of it as time went on. She was encouraged by her friend to go ahead and give it a try.



Flash

This woman is another practicing lesbian, or bisexual using the lesbian side. This is in the chapter called Finding Partners. Flash had the opportunity to use a house for a weekend and decided to throw a party. Rather than having a 'normal' party for adults of her age group, she went 'whole hog' and hosted a lesbian orgy. It worked. She invited her friend June as the guest of honor.



Objects/Places

San Francisco, California USA

This city is renowned for its fabulous hills and for its attitude towards sexuality. There are fewer places where those practicing bisexuality and homosexuality within safe mutually consensual constraints are purported to be so safe and liberated. This American city of mild weather and beautiful terrain is the setting within which the women authors lived and wrote the book.

Barriers

In this case, this is a general term used to describe any and all forms of latex or other protective barriers used between people for the purposes of preventing the spread of disease despite intense types of contact. Some of these will seem perfectly normal to people while some may seem out-of-context. Dental dams and gloves are two that may well strike readers as out-of-context. However, the lesbian authors recommend using either or both for those engaging in highly promiscuous activity. Many readers may prefer to forego contact over using these devices, which are known from the dental and medical examination room experiences. For other readers, including such barriers in other contexts which are highly sexual will find a sense of relief in that this allows them to proceed safely.

The other main type of barrier referred to in the book is the condom. This is the one barrier mentioned that, like a cervical diaphragm, is more closely associated with traditional heterosexual intercourse. These double as a birth control method along with being a protection against contagion and against the spread of any disease.

Lover/s

These are referred to repeatedly throughout most of the book. One important feature of how the authors of this book handle this category is that they write about both 'outercourse' and 'intercourse'. The former does not involve any penetration of one person by another; the latter does. This means that people can be celibate, or can use only physical 'foreplay' - sexually related outercourse - with a partner and still view that person as a lover. In extreme cases, someone may view another as a lover even when there is a minimal or no physical sexual contact. Developmentally, this is the norm for the young. It has also been used among the very sexually restricted, for whom merely being around or conversing with another can be viewed as a 'sexual activity'. As such, the understanding between any two or more people is the most important factor here. A given individual may be another's lover without being sexually involved with him or her at all. In other cases, a lover will be defined as such because he or she is sexually active with another. In one instance, it may mean sharing money. For another, it may be buying a house together - which is also sharing money. For one person it means



prolonged commitment, whereas for someone else it might not mean anything of the kind. There are also atmospheres where 'lovers' is a term used to indicate lesbian or homosexual male romantic and/or sexual intimacy. For these people, heterosexuals are never lovers, at least, not the way they mean it.

Slut

The word 'sluts' is important in this book. It is meant to indicate an intentionally non-monogamous individual. The term is not intended to designate only a woman or a man. It is associated with promiscuity, but in this book, the sluts mean to overturn the word from the derogatory into one that is, or is relatively 'wholesome'. Sluts are proud to be sexually active people; sluts, according to the authors, as intended herein, are people who feel good about their own sexuality.

Utopia

Utopia is an abstract concept. However, the significance of any given Utopia is that it can actually exist. Utopia is a place where an individual is particularly happy: in Utopia, one's chosen way of life prevails. In Utopia, one's values are practiced through action and are completely supported by the social and physical environment. The challenge for Utopian thinkers is that not everyone agrees; therefore, in order to create Utopia, there has to be multiple spaces so that different ways can be formed and still be able to function well on the Earth. This comes up near the end of the book where the Conclusion is titled 'A Slut Utopia'.

Omni

Within the context of this book, the Omni is the name of a club devoted to adults seeking group sex, or sex beyond an already existing sexually inclusive relationship. At the Omni, you won't necessarily be attacked for being married and interested in having sex with someone other than your spouse without even lying.

Sex club

This is a location where finding sexual partners is one of the main activities for the people there. It is meant to help people to avoid mingling with people who are not seeking sexual partners with people who are. At a sex club, those attending either want to observe others within such an atmosphere or simply want the freedom to feel shameless and uninhibited about wanting sexual activity and partnership. These exist for heterosexuals, bisexuals, and homosexuals. These come up near the end of the book.

Orgy

This term is used in many places during the book, but mainly during the second half. An orgy is an event where not only is there sexual activity, but there are multiple participants. There is a chapter in which lesbian orgies are discussed at some length. Here, people have the impression that there will be sexual activity in front of the other people. It will be live, voluntary, not entirely controlled and it will not be stopped. There may be unusual arrangements that go far beyond coupling at an orgy. People may behave in ways that they normally don't. For example, there may be 'group sex', open voyeurism, an increase in bisexual behavior, or activity that includes something other than the normal orientation of one or more of the people involved. Such events can be very freeing for people. There are people who make this a lifestyle, and others who shy away from such events. In between are types who might experience something like this on rare occasions and keep good memories from 'that one time they attended an orgy'. The type of orgy that serves as the real life example in this case is a lesbian orgy.



Themes

Sex Positive Literature

There is a generalized history regarding sexual behavior. There is 'sex negative' and 'sex positive'. People typically favor positive, unless there is a disease test results or whether or not there is abuse - in which case a negative is more positively judged in most cases. Sex negative literature at its most positive would view sexual intercourse oriented towards fecundity and familial happiness to be acceptable within a marriage. Sex negative literature would frown upon ideas such as 'sex for pleasure'. It is okay to enjoy sexual behavior within strict guidelines, but nothing outside the lines is seen as even remotely okay. The closest to anything like what the authors consider normal in the history of psychology is when Sigmund Freud admitted in one of his papers as shown in their English translation in *The Freud Reader* that there are people for whom it is more prudent to find a way for them - male or female - to engage in sexual activity despite not being married. While he views this in a nominal light, it is still considerate in recognizing actual human needs. This is worth noting because it corrects an error made by the authors, probably due to lack of information and 'rant mode'.

Sex positive literature remains negative about diseases, which is fortunate. The use of coercion is meant to be restricted to voluntary exploration of sadomasochism and bondage aspects of sexuality. Typically, even those are viewed as requiring consent. Sex positive literature has been part of a human endeavor that has included strides in female liberation. Sexual education is part of it. Being able to compile and to distribute genuinely accurate information about human sexuality from both a scientific and relational perspective is very important work.

Sex education information matters; hundreds of millions are effected. Globally, every human is affected sooner or later, one way or another. There is no escaping it.

Another aspect of sex positive literature entails the idea and reality of female pleasure. Females can derive tremendous pleasure from sexual intercourse, but it has to be done in certain ways, ways that men are not always limited to in order to experience great pleasure themselves. A given woman can grow and change about the level of pleasure that she experiences and is accustomed to. The main concern presented by the authors, along with the assumption of needed consent, is that they want the women and the men to enjoy sex. This grows out of anxieties relating to ways that women's sexual pleasure may have been severely inhibited by financial dependence upon a husband who was not being a good lover, or in other sad extreme cases, prostitutes whose clients are tending to radically overdo or underdo something sexual in relation to her. Prostitution is not heavily discussed in this book, but this is something most people are ignorant about - it seems most prostitutes have at least one story of a paying client who really just wanted to talk and have a bit of TLC without even trying to have sexual intercourse. That being noted, there is some kind of problem there as it relates to the prostitute's need for love, respect, and the right amount of gratification in her or his own



right. Sex positive literature tries to encourage people to simply learn and know how to have safe, responsible, healthy sex lives.

Relationships

Human relationships are a main theme in this book. Here, they recognize and acknowledge the importance of nonsexual relations, especially with respect to and for children. They then go ahead and focus on sexually related involvements. One of the authors has two primary relationships over and above intimacies of a nonsexual kind. One is with a grown man and the other is with a grown woman. In her case, rather than having one heterosexual long-term romantic involvement along with a nonsexual same gender best friend ongoing intimacy, she manifests her bisexuality by having one of each. Her same gender partner - who is the book's other author, does not live in the same home.

Healthy intimacy is important for everyone, regardless of the person's age or gender. The natural degree of extroversion or introversion will influence how much alone time and how much togetherness is 'too much' for a given individual. This varies within a natural range. Of course, infants require the most togetherness of all of the stages of human life, for their survival, but there is still variation. Some babies will become disturbed if left to play on their own for more than five minutes whereas other babies will become engrossed in play that suits them with a level of concentration rivaled only by adults engaged in some passionate pursuit. Likewise, adults will have their own thresholds. This influences the type of romance that best suits them.

One person may need another who is content to include them for hours each day and be with them as much as a parent and infant often are. Meanwhile, another needs a mate with a high tolerance for separateness. For those pursuing multiple partnerships the same issues apply but with the addendum of physical and sexual activities and the intense feelings that sometimes accompany these.

Multiple relationships include limit setting and honest communication. The authors assert that people who want open relationships can actually do this without the use of deceit. Many fear this, and others can get caught up in the game of not wanting to have to take 'no' for an answer. For instance: someone married may want to have an affair with a single person, but the single person tells him or her 'no'. In some instances, the married person may divorce and abandon another in order to pursue this, or accept a more limited relationship in order to still have some kind of relationship, or may choose to try deception in the event that it comes up again - in order to work around the single person's disagreement that a relationship with a married person is okay or not - okay. The authors strongly urge people to grow past that type of behavior and to learn to accept and dish out real 'yes' and truthful 'no' based upon an accurate assessment of the situation. Negotiation is a skill that is highly touted by both of the authors as being a key factor in the success of many a relationship including those of a sexual nature. By the end of the book, readers have received substantial advice about how to go about this.



Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is one of the issues covered in this book. Sexual orientation is generally viewed as the direction that individuals place their sexual desires towards as they pass through the fulcrum of the sexual maturation process. Many believe that sexual orientation is fixed and innate. Others believe that it is more malleable than that and can change during a lifetime. There are also those who support the idea that the motives that drive the sexual behavior are also relevant. People are taught to select out mates, which is one source of rivalries and competitiveness for sexual involvements. Psychologists have found that there are multiple factors over and above the innate drives of subjective sexual feeling and attraction and the orientation of any given adult. There are cases in which the feeling or behaviors do not change regardless of events. However, there are people for whom there was some developmental trouble that interfered with the customary development and sexual attitude and orientation. Freud himself argued that there were three types of homosexuals, not just one. Two of the three were not homosexual in orientation all of the time, but there is one kind that is.

One author has lived from one sexual orientation, the other has shifted successively. Some would claim that this means that she was a repressed lesbian the whole time. Others would argue that her experiences directly altered her sexual orientation. The authors take a flexible attitude towards sexual orientation. In addition to the prevailing three: homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual, they include 'pansexuality' or 'omnisexuality' and 'trisexuality'. In the former cases, the subjective state of sexuality, or of feeling and being sexual seems to just extend into the world without necessarily being rooted in any determinable 'sexual object or external cause'. It can also indicate that someone may have a sexual response to a wide variety of things, whether it be a man or a woman, or homoerotic desires triggered by a new car or a better employment situation, or finding air fare to make a meaningful journey. These things being objects, they are clearly part of 'pansexuality' with respect to orientation. 'Trisexuality' as used in *The Ethical Slut* is specifically an orientation in which an individual wants to be one of a triad. The 'partner' is often a couple. This can be a transference from the infantile sexuality where a child is oriented to both parents with whom there is an intimate relationship. 'Trisexuality' can also work perfectly for a bisexual or for someone whose intimate desires are not quite what is expected. This can also work for a couple who share a best friend in common, rather than it being a couple and one member of the couple's best friend. This can work for three people who adore one another rather evenly and can find the right level of involvement, comfort, intimacy, and sexual expression to create a happy unity. There are couples who want a third party. For those worried about 'the third wheel', while on a bicycle this can only be a spare, for the adult-sized tricycle this is a mandatory part of the group. This is different from 'try-sexuality' which simply indicates that a given individual is willing to try sexual involvements of some kind, whether they fit into previously held beliefs about orientation or not.

Style

Perspective

This book was written in the 1990s in America. It comes out of San Francisco, California. While the majority of Californians are heterosexual, San Francisco is famous for its protective attitude towards the minority of practicing homosexuals and bisexuals. The authors are both women. This is a collaboration, which is not unheard of but is relatively unusual within the world of writing. Normally, editors are the only other person involved with the author's writing of a book.

The women authors are actually also quite mature. These aren't young ladies in their twenties. They are much older. Whatever has been taken from their outer appearance has been given back as life experience. They are able to share their life experience from this different perspective. Their generation shows in cultural markings signified largely by attitudes and ways of handling certain things.

The women are American lesbians. They don't tell which race they are. As such they are part of a ten percent minority population of one kind. There are a number of ways to be a minority or a majority. It can be better or worse, or a combination of the two taken together. Within even this limited sphere, they are a minority in yet another way by working with nonmonogamy, of which serial monogamy is the culturally most recognized form. Serial monogamy can be an accident, or it can happen quite intentionally. The women authors refer to 'cheating' as the most popular form of nonconsensual nonmonogamy.

Tone

The tone of this book varies. It is in part a 'rant'. It is in part purely conversational and in that respect, intimate. The work is upbeat, yet it aims to be realistic. This means that challenges are recognized rather than ignored or denied. In fact, one way of looking at the book would be to describe it as an introduction to modern lesbianism and to open relationships at the same time. In this case, that would be rather accurate.

The authors have made a kind of cultural breakthrough in that they have produced and published a minority work of literature. This does have applications across different sexual orientations. In fact, for those who have tried, one possibly disturbing or reassuring observation has been that oftentimes individuals are drawn to the same type of person whether they are practicing heterosexuality, bisexuality, or homosexuality. This has been learned from some cases where a person tries a different orientation to run from certain troubles. Now, they say, that a problem conquered allows for relationships to change a lot. This can happen within a relationship, or it can cause relationships to actually change so that perhaps many qualities remain the same in preferred partner choice, but some difficult quality is no longer sought.



Structure

Here, the book works not chronologically but more from the general into the specific. At the same time, the approach is process-oriented. They begin with the individual orientation towards the world, to our culture, and to our present lives. These they order with the first part: Within Ourselves. Here, they introduce the definition of terms. One of the two authors is a professional therapist. Their starting point will strike readers differently depending upon their own prior experience. For some who have viewed themselves as sluts for years, this exploration of what that term means will be prone to feel right; perhaps they have grown comfortable with it. For others, who still identify as having a sexuality that evades or overcomes the 'slut' label, this part may be a bit difficult to take. Either way, a great deal can be learned from these chapters. The end point for this chapter is straightforward advocacy of healthy pleasure. That sex is meant to be healthy, consensual, pleasurable. For women, this has been a matter of progress and advancement, at least in some cases. What this is really like for men - the female bias that is writing this does not actually know.

Part one has eight chapters. Part two is called Between One Another. Here, incredibly important interpersonal developments are discussed very clearly. The chapter titles accurately present the main topic. There are boundaries for particular people and their relationships. Working with these is of great importance. Manipulation, persuasion, coercion: these traits are often closely related to and can each be a part of healthy relating. However, each can also be or lead to quite a bad experience, and the ways in which these interface with success and the importance of consent are quite relevant. This part has six chapters.

Part three has only three chapters. This will take some of the younger readers places that they might still be terrified to go - into parenting. In truth, there are young people who harbor no unnatural fear against parenting and there are older people who do fear it, often for some other reasons. These mature sluts also bring into the matter how to coordinate their sexual freedom with their child rearing: obviously any male partner is greatly affected by something of this kind.

Part four consists of two chapters with a conclusion and some additional material. This is the section of the book that delves most deeply into the wilder side of sexual behavior, including group sex and clubs that cater especially to those more interested in some kind of multiple partner strategies. Multiple partners can come in a wide spectrum of life circumstances, but in this particular context, the meaning actually is sexual.



Quotes

"Jealousy is, without a doubt, a very common experience in our culture- so much so that a person who doesn't experience jealousy is looked at as a bit odd, or as in denial." p. 32

"Or it may simply be a natural extension of an emotional and physical attraction to someone besides the primary partner." p. 33

"Knowing, loving and respecting yourself is an absolute prerequisite to knowing, loving and respecting someone else. Cut yourself some slack." p. 67

"Throughout your experience - as you feel pain, ambivalence, joy- you must speak your own truth, first to yourself, then to those around you." p. 67

"Talking to a few friends let her know she was in the majority." p. 98

"When sport-fucking means treating your partners as objects rather than as human beings, this does not meet our requirements for mutual respect." p. 85

"We do not believe love is a game which you can win by scoring high on a hierarchy of shallow values." p. 85

"You and your partners need to practice talking about jealousy." p. 151

"The Resource Guide in the back of this book will tell you how to get in touch with groups in your area that help both battered and battering partners." p. 166

"Our friends Laurie and Chris have become extraordinarily flexible agreement-makers through practicing a lot." p. 190

"So we renegotiated. We decided that either of us could sleep over with another partner twice a month." p. 191

"If you feel that planning takes too much of the spontaneity out of your life, then think about declaring one weekend a month to be open season." p. 198



Topics for Discussion

How did this book make you feel about lesbianism? Give reasons why you feel the way you do.

Do you think this book only worked because the authors were in San Francisco?

Describe how 'fluid-bonding' differs from monogamy/monogyny.

What are sex-positive and sex-negative in relation to culture and information?

Has this book affected your views on open relationships or not?

Do you feel that women's issues were well-integrated into this book?

How much or little do you think that the book is effected in its ability to serve a wide readership by this lesbian slant? Ergo: is it truly applicable across gender boundaries and sexual orientations or is it actually not, due to the female bias given that many men's works have limitations of male bias? Explain your answer.