

the
SEX
mook
what is our sex?



**SPECIAL
UNSEALED
SECTION!**

INTRODUCTION



Because sex defines, influences and affects everyone; because each of us has a unique sexuality; because we rarely have the opportunity to honestly express and discuss it with others.

This is not the way it should be. We need to be able to openly communicate our experiences of sex for there to be healthy, realistic alternatives to the crap we're spoon-fed by TV and film, the internet, books, magazines and news.

If we don't demonstrate that our sexual desire can't be summed up in a magazine centrefold, or that we are attracted to people who don't conform to a narrow list of specifications defined by mainstream media, governments and marketing companies, then it's going to become harder and harder for ourselves and others to do so. If we don't express—often and loudly—how we see our own sexualities then those avenues we can currently use to communicate to politicians, companies and each other will diminish.

Much of the content of this book relates to the context of sex and sexuality in Australia, but the issues and conflicts expressed in these articles, stories, pictures, poetry and debates apply to just about anywhere else in the world.

Given that the core reason for producing this book was honesty and openness—to

create a space for people to candidly (and, not to forget, entertainingly) discuss their perspectives on gender and sex in all of its messy and confusing plurality—it would be duplicitous to claim this book was any kind of authoritative statement.

Let's be honest: this book is rough. 'As rough as grass undies' (to steal the title of Adrienne Kneebone's 2006 sculpture about domestic sexuality). But, then, so is sex. It's amorphous. It spreads and influences all aspects of our lives, especially those we wished it would stay out of. Sex can never ever be one thing to everyone: it's beautiful and a mess.

Every person is constantly undergoing a process of negotiating and re-defining what sex means to them. This understanding is most powerfully shaped through our short or long-term contact with partners who are equally engaged in the life-long process of defining sex and their sexuality.

Think of this book as 62 potential new partners—let's get out there and mingle.

Julian Fleetwood

GO FUCK YOURSELF: FUCKING FRUIT, FUCKING MACHINES AND FUCKING SOCIETY.

By Christie Thompson

“WHEN I THINK ABOUT YOU, I TOUCH MYSELF...”

The immortal words of Chrissie Amphlett, guaranteed to raise a giggle, smirk or blush from even the most sexually assured teenager. While it seems every other aspect of sex is acceptable for everyday discussion, masturbation—particularly masturbation involving sex aids—is still largely a taboo topic.

Masturbation is generally considered a distinctly private behaviour; it can be extremely difficult for people to even admit they engage in autoeroticism. As with other ‘sensitive’ topics, when it is discussed publicly, it is usually with humour and euphemism. ‘Double-clicking the mouse’, ‘slapping the salami’, or the widely used ‘having a wank’, are just some of the many

phrases used to evoke socially desirable responses to the topic of masturbation.

Many conservatives have denigrated those who have entered into serious open dialogue about masturbation. In 1994, when United States Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders suggested teaching teenagers how to masturbate to reduce riskier forms of sex, the public backlash was so severe that President Clinton asked for her resignation—somewhat hypocritically, one might point out, considering that this is the same president who was caught fucking his intern with a Cuban.

Yet, despite conservative pressure to keep us quiet about what goes on between people’s hands and their genitals, masturbation is slowly entering more and more into public discourse. Consider Gloria Stuart, former screen siren, who played the present-day Rose in *Titanic*. Writing in her 1999

autobiography, *A Touching Memoir*, she admitted, ‘I am devoted to masturbation’.

GOING SOLO

The amount of literature offering masturbation advice and analysis of masturbation has trebled in the last few decades. Teenagers are able to readily access advice columns in popular magazines both assuring and encouraging them to self-explore. But, despite this increase, writing on masturbation still generally focuses on ‘vanilla’ (un-aided) masturbation. The use of sex aids (particularly household objects) in masturbation is still taboo.

Studies have shown that when confronted with a description of their partners’ masturbatory behaviour, most interviewees responded more negatively to the use of sexually explicit material or sex aids, than to un-aided masturbation. These negative responses would have been, at least, partly attributable to feelings of replacement by the sex aid or pornography—but they are also an indication of the degree to which the use of such materials remains socially undesirable.

It seems very strange to me that the majority of our society continues to be so reluctant to seriously discuss—or even acknowledge—the use of inanimate objects in masturbation. We all know that it occurs, regularly. Take the humble sock for example. Yes, the one you wear on your foot. Or, frequently, on the end of your penis when you’re ‘having a wank’. We can look to popular culture: the late-90s teen comedy *American Pie* was ostensibly all about how many household objects the protagonist could find to simulate a vagina before he got a hold of a real one—and it was a box office hit.

A BIT FRUITY

Real people (not just the ones in the movies) go to great lengths to simulate partnered sexual experience. In my own conversations I have heard many varied accounts of adolescent experimentation with homemade sex aids. These included: a folded over pillow, a carrot covered with a condom, the neck of a wine bottle and the handle bar of a bicycle. One friend even admitted he had hollowed out a cucumber and warmed it in the microwave in order to simulate vaginal intercourse.

Autoeroticism involving household items still continues into adulthood for some, but many people eventually outgrow the contents of the vegetable crisper and move on to store-bought sex aids. An estimated one in four women in Australia owns a vibrator, and countless men not only buy pornography regularly but also vaginal/anal simulators. One such simulator is the ‘Fleshlight’: an innocuous-looking utility case containing a ‘secret’ patented material that feels and acts like flesh, and comes in the shape of a vagina, mouth and anus. The device is available all over the world and proudly claims to be the ‘#1 Selling Male Sex Toy’.

FROM FUCKING FRUIT TO FUCKING MACHINES

Predictably, capitalism has twigged that there are dollars to be made from the masturbation market. The website fuckingmachines.com lives up to its motto: ‘Doing the humanly impossible’. It features elaborately constructed machines with names such as the ‘Annihilator’, ‘Robo-Spanker’ and ‘Trespasser’.

Customers are able to either view footage of the machines being used in sex acts, or purchase scaled-down versions for home use. Video footage on the site shows girls bending and contorting while a dildo, attached to various devices, jackhammers into their vagina, or a flat disc spansks their buttocks until they are red.

Another extreme item is the Real Doll. Not to be confused with a markedly inferior blow-up doll, Real Dolls are incredibly life-like latex moulds of women and men that can be made to order: hair and eye colour, skin tone and even the styling of pubic hair can be selected by the customer. Real Doll users claim that it is the closest thing to actual intercourse.

Real Dolls and fuckingmachines may not interest the average male or female who just wants an orgasm every now and then without the complications of a relationship, but it does indicate a growing market of people willing to pay large amounts of money to further their autoerotic interests.

OUR DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

So, despite statistical evidence, a thriving market and commonsense, why is masturbation—one of the most common sexual acts—so hard to talk about?

The reasons can vary from inexperience— young people unsure if they are doing it right, or if what they are doing is normal—to, more commonly, embarrassment. To admit that you masturbate is also a confession that you are incapable of getting 'real' sex. Add the use of a sex aid and this indicates an even greater level of sexual and social inadequacy.

In our society, partnered sex is something to be celebrated as a mark of achievement and adequacy, whereas flying solo is something that is (and should be) closeted and secret.

It is worth considering, however, that much of the arousal which comes from self-stimulation with sex aids is due to the taboo: the titillation produced by the knowledge that you are doing something secret and hedonistic. If masturbation was taught in public education and discussed openly in public forums, the act might well lose some of its privileged appeal.

Furthermore, increased (and increasing) exposure to sex and sex acts has desensitised many people to erotica. For those who are aroused by the notion of transgressing the boundaries of mainstream sexuality, extreme measures are often pursued to achieve the ultimate orgasm.

WHEN MASTURBATION KILLS (SERIOUSLY)

A sharp increase in autoerotic deaths has highlighted that there can be potentially fatal consequences to masturbation, particularly when combined with asphyxiation.

Autoerotic asphyxiation is not a new phenomenon in the world of masturbatory practices. There are records of male engagement in 'asphyxiophilia' dating back to Victorian England. Using a noose to limit one's supply of oxygen, while stimulating the genitals, proponents claim they achieve more intensely pleasurable orgasms. Famously, it was speculated that Michael Hutchence of INXS accidentally strangled himself while masturbating.

Autoerotic death is not limited to accidental asphyxiation. According to a pathology report from the Forensic Science Centre in Adelaide, a 46-year-old man was found dead in bushland clothed in a women's dress and seven pairs of stockings that had been cut to expose his genitals. On a day when the mercury reached 39 degrees Celsius, the man's death was attributed to hyperthermia due to the combination of excessive clothing and high ambient temperature, and the side effects of a prescription drug. Another potential cause of autoerotic death is hemorrhage of the anal or vaginal cavity, by insertion of a foreign object.

One would think incidents such as these would be powerful deterrents against harmful sex practices, but numerous forensic and pathology reports show that victims will spend considerable amounts of time researching—by reading books and viewing footage on film or the internet—before they engage in dangerous activities.

FUCKING SOCIETY

Sexual liberation has given people a huge amount of freedom in regard to their sexual orientation, methods of experimentation and the partners they engage with. It has also increased public discourse about taboo topics. This is important, as it educates people about commonplace activities historically regarded as vile, but it also desensitises society.

We might tout that, in this day and age, we should all be so sexually liberated that wanking with an inanimate object would be something that we could casually discuss with friends over coffee—'How are you today, Nick?' 'Fabulous. I just had it off with a watermelon. And you?' 'Couldn't

"We live in an age where the definition of the sexually 'normal' or 'mainstream' is becoming increasingly fragmented."

be better. I just stimulated myself with the end of a hairbrush.'—however, increased breakdown of boundaries between ourselves and society lead to a diminishing of the values and security associated with privacy. This causes people to become sexualised from younger and younger ages, introducing them to potentially harmful and pathological behaviours.

As sex becomes more visible, the boundaries of what is considered appropriate for public and private discourse are constantly being pushed. We live in an age where the definition of the sexually 'normal' or 'mainstream' is becoming increasingly fragmented. Pornography and explicit representations of sex cease to be mere representations; they become an immediate visibility, as real as private autoerotic or partnered sexual experience.

Whether or not our values deem this extroversion of sexuality to be positive, it would seem inevitable that, as time goes by, masturbation will be less commonly hidden behind closed doors and, like other aspects of our sexuality, more often part of society's ongoing social sexual discourse. ■

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SEX IN THE GREY

By Brianna Roberts

She was 12 years old, and had just lost her virginity. 'It almost felt like I was raped.' I remember my friend, Katie, confiding in me. 'but it couldn't be rape—since I didn't actually say no.'

At the time I agreed with her. It wasn't rape because she didn't say no: simple. But she was only 12. The guy, TJ, was 18 and a friend of her older brother. One night, when her parents were out, her brother threw a party and invited all his friends, who plied her with alcohol. Katie went to bed, feeling sick, and TJ came into her bedroom and had sex with her.

Now, looking back, it is pretty clear that it was in fact rape (both morally and in the eyes of the law—statutory rape). At the time, she felt like she had no control over what was happening. She was scared TJ would tell her brother, and people would blame her. She told herself it was her own fault. She was drunk and they had been 'flirting'. But when it came down to it, the truth was she didn't really know what to do. She was scared, and froze.

Now in her twenties, Katie reflected that the whole thing was 'pretty fucking wrong'. I have no doubt that it impacted on her emotionally, and shaped her sexual experiences later on.

The concept of 'grey rape' has recently come to be used to describe situations where it is not clear whether consent has been given. For a person to genuinely consent to sex, they have to feel that they have the option to say no. Any kind of pressure—or factors such as drugs and alcohol—may hinder that freedom, and blur the boundaries between consensual sex and rape.

As a presenter on a women's issues radio show called *lip*, I came across a number of girls who said they'd had sex, even though they didn't really want to. For various reasons they hadn't verbally said no. Why not? Apparently, for some girls, the thought of speaking up was just too embarrassing. Many said it seemed easier to 'just go through with it'.

This is a strange predicament: when it's easier to have sex than to actually talk to a person. Maybe, in a way, sex is less intimate and revealing than the talking about it. This could also be symptomatic of a society which lacks comprehensive sex education programs yet constantly confronts us with images of people having sex. Sex may be as casual as a handshake, but talking seriously to the person you're about to have sex with can still be a taboo.

'A lot of one night stands happen, and girls don't really want them to happen,' said Mel (20).

'They have a few drinks and think, "oh yeah I'd really like to go back and sleep at this guy's house". And as soon as they get there and sober up a bit, they think: "I don't really want to do this." And we feel we have to.'

Mel and I said the last few words at exactly the same time.

It's that old story: maybe he bought her a drink or two, they spent time together, she is at his house and suddenly she feels obliged to have sex. After all—it is the polite thing to do. But this 'just go through with it' mentality is no good for anyone, and doesn't make for great sex. Sex is something you should enjoy, not endure.

It is easy to think you have passed the point where you should have said no. Maybe this is partly due to the misconception that guys just can't stop once they are into it. Actually, excuses like 'I wasn't in control' are totally baseless. There are numerous situations where it may be necessary to call everything to a halt. In the event that something catches fire or your parents walk in on you, you'll find stopping is not too difficult at all.

"The concept of 'grey rape' has recently come to be used to describe situations where it is not clear whether consent has been given."

Guys should also be careful about what they interpret as consent. The absence of a no is not a yes. And it isn't enough to rely on guesswork and body language. This can be easily misunderstood. A girl may want to kiss you, but not have sex with you. A relationship (or even marriage) is not implicit consent, and does not entitle you to sex on tap. Consent should never ever be simply assumed.

Fortunately, most guys recognise how important consent is, and not only because of legal implications. No decent guy would want to force a girl to do something she won't enjoy and might later regret. For guys, there can be a different set of anxieties around consent.

'You have no idea how shit scary it can be as a guy,' a male friend told me recently. 'I mean everyone knows it's shit scary for girls. But as a guy, sometimes it can be fearful.'

Guys have a responsibility to continuously ensure they have consent. Most guys don't think they would intentionally perpetrate an assault. But they may find themselves unwittingly in a situation where boundaries are blurred, particularly where drugs and alcohol are involved. Imagine a guy who wakes up next to a girl and can't remember what happened. Was there consent? There is always that possibility you could get drunk, or just caught up in the moment, and

miss the signs.

Of course, rape doesn't just occur between people of different sexes. Tom told me he'd been on 'both sides of the grey rape line'. One incident occurred when he was 16 and experimenting sexually.

'... Something happened in that time where I got E'd off my eyeballs and ended up in bed with two men—at the same time. While I didn't explicitly say no ... in retrospect I was talked into it, pressured a little. I accepted it as an inevitability when I should have stood my ground and said no.'

He says he now fears putting someone else in that situation, and is always 'hyper-attentive' to make sure he has affirmative consent.

By now you might be thinking it's all too confusing and risky and you should probably just avoid sex altogether. So how can we avoid these 'grey' situations?

Recently there have even been calls for sex contracts to be signed prior to sexual activity. While this may be well intentioned, it doesn't do a lot to clarify consent and takes away the ability to revoke consent later on. There are many reasons why it might be necessary to 'opt out' of a situation you may have initially consented to.

While a legal document may be excessive (and flawed) there is a good case for sitting down and discussing boundaries before having sex. Granted, the idea of writing a list of 'pros' and 'cons' might seem unrealistic, but where there is trust and expectations are clear, you are much less likely to find yourself in grey situations.

"Imagine a guy who wakes up next to a girl and can't remember what happened. Was there consent? There is always that possibility you could get drunk, or just caught up in the moment, and miss the signs."

Of course, another way to avoid greyness is by continuously making sure there is active and enthusiastic consent at all times ('Is this ok?' 'Yes, Yes, Yes!'). After all, who wouldn't prefer mind-blowing, mutually-consensual sex to unwanted, eyes-averted, just-go-through-with-it sex? It's a lot safer emotionally, and there's a good chance it will be memorable for the right reasons. ■

N.B. Names changed to protect privacy.

DOES SEXUAL INTERCOURSE SIZE MATTER?

Size seems to concern me most before I've even had any sort of intimate contact. I love the game of wondering how big/small my potential paramour's member is, and fantasising about what sex would be like in both situations. And even though, when musing on the subject, I may think to myself how awful it would be to become emotionally attached to someone with a small penis, in practise it's never really been a problem.

—Amy

No. How much you're willing to belittle yourself does, though.

—Dominik

It's not about size, it's about fit. A monster caught in a tight crevice might do some damage. Alternatively, a humble snake doesn't want to be slithering about in the echoey dark of a dripping cave. Bodies match as personalities do.

—Ange

If size matters it is because we make it so. I mean, what does a penis need to do? Touch the sides? Cast a shadow over the sun? No, it simply needs to be attached to a human.

—Richard

...let me ask a question that seems to get more effectively to the root of the issue: do either self-esteem or skill matter? Let's face it, if you're down on yourself about yourself, or you're just plain shit in bed, it's not gonna matter whether it's there or not. —Leticia

Most men and women seem to believe it's not the size that counts, it's how you use it. But that really pisses me off. As a guy with a penis as big as a broom handle with a lemon stuck on the end of it, I find their sentiment offensive rather than consoling.

—Jack

Size matters because if her vajayjay is too big I will need sherpas.

—Hadley

...in a brief fling with a woman I had, I realised what made me come was not, obviously, that a huge clit was pushing inside me... but that I was dying to get closer and closer to this amazing thing that felt so good against me. The yearning to get closer and the idea of being close and nearly not enough was indeed the sexiness of it and was the tip that pushes into a climax... Though it wasn't about a climax... as female stuff often isn't... it was an incredible touch and longing for more.

—Carlotta

The size of your passion. The size of your love. The size of your wonder at the world with your lover. The size of your dreams. The size of your arms wrapping out the cold. The size she feels in her tummy, when you tell her she is loved. Yes. It matters.

—Mandy

The size of his, her, us—in our own minds—should be just right. If we think we are too big or too small or too... something else, we will be thinking about things that are not strictly necessary to enjoying.

—Darren

THE ART OF ONE NIGHT STANDS

By Justin Heazlewood

One Night Stands—the methadone clinics for intimacy junkies. For many, this grope on a rope mentality is too depraved to consider. It conjures up conjugal imagery of a greasy footballer and a Midori soaked netball specialist in a soft porn yawn. For us fragile art-folk, it's either long term relationships or thoughtful glances followed by conversations about bands, a kiss on the cheek and a cryptic Myspace message if you're lucky. Right?

That was my assumption as I found myself dumped in the bacteria filled wading pool of singledom, at the end of a seven year waterslide of serial monogamy. Ah, the twists and turns of arousingly routine mixtapes, movies and massages. I had somehow managed to slide from one relationship to the next, always knowing where my next emotional meal was coming from, but now my heart was homeless. I was standing in speedos on the icy deck of the singles scene—haunted by Catholic guilt, exposed, neurotic, broke, depressed and desperately horny. I was going to fit right in.

I had a faint idea how to survive in the single world. Piecing together my memories of movies and books, I realised that at some point I would most likely have to talk to a girl. Finding this too far-fetched, I discovered a communication loophole when I began to frequent an open-mic poetry night. Little did I realise but like most art scenes, the gig was just a shopfront for an in-house debauch-fest of idiosyncratic mess-ups. As a performer, material became 'ice-breaker spam' for the introflirted audience. These nights provided an anaesthetised entry into the neon cauldron of the uncommitted, as I honed the use of my 'Greydar' to find girls as lonely as me.

What initially perplexed me about the 'Twelve Hour Delve' was the way I'd turn into Disclaimer Boy. The lovechild of Hugh Grant and Woody Allen, Disclaimer Boy's trademark move was rescuing the situation through a devastating combination of apologies and explanations. 'I don't normally do this kind of thing.' (CRASH!). 'I don't want to give you the wrong

impression.' (KAPOW!). 'I can't handle a relationship at the moment.' (WHAP!). Disclaimer boy would often find that by saying he wasn't serious about the situation, he gave the situation a graven gravity. It was also revealed to him by his arch-nemeses 'Clarity Girl' that he probably would have a relationship if he found the right person, and that he was really saying 'It's you I don't want a relationship with, you indie slapper.' (OUCH!)

As a One Night Stand, the sex bit itself was always characteristically wayward, amateur and blurry—something like the storyboards to an adult film made at TAFE. The amount of alcohol consumed pickles the diorama of semi-conscious fantasy into some bizarre primal screensaver mode. As the mouse of morning stirs, the gummy window of your mind maximises, followed by the familiar catchcry of 'Nude, where's my clothes?' You are then faced with the anti-romance of the post-apocalyptic Achilles heel—the One Morning Sit.

Many people successfully avoid their breakfast of regret flakes by nicking off in the early hours. I could never do this, due to my other superhero Ex-Christian Sense Of Guilt Nice-Guy Man. This often led to some truly awkward half-hugs in the kitchen, followed by the mutual appearance of urgent things to do. I am utterly fascinated by the paradox that sharing your entire body with a stranger is okay, while in the morning the concept of holding hands is far too intimate and fingertips turn to snails.

They say sex is never devoid of emotion, I would agree, but add that most bars offer a great range of heart tranquilisers. For years I decided that I was too sensitive and romantic to do the One Night Stand thing, but if necessity is the mother of invention then I could take out the grand final on The New Inventors with the complex justification program I've come up with. The truth is, it's not for everyone but, as the comic says: Is it a laugh? Is it a cry? No... yes... maybe? It's Captain Experiment! Figures sold desperately. ■

Dry humping my leg
Want to do this properly?
Well? Oh. Was that it?

Michelle Lovi

Vowed not in a car
Warm dark night in a forest
Feet on the dashboard

Bronwen Hyde

WHAT IS OUR SEX?

Bringing together the voices of over 60 young people, this collection of articles, pictures, and how-to guides presents an unusual take on the topic of sex.

It would be duplicitous to claim this book was any kind of authoritative guide. But what it does have are hugely diverse –and much more entertaining– views on sex than is usually found in mainstream media. There's no airbrushing, no censorship and no one telling you what's right or wrong.

**IT'S REAL SEX: IN ALL ITS LEAKY,
FUNNY, NOISY, CONFUSING GLORY.**

This collection is rough and more than a little bit messy. But then, so is sex.

