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Inspiring Woman: Betty Dodson
by Emily Follin

When most of us picture an 82-year-old woman, we see our own grandmother. We would avoid certain topics of conversation, such as sex, in her presence because we would feel that with someone that old, sex is completely taboo. We tend to think of people born in the late 1920s or early 1930s as being offended by the very topic. Of course, this taboo stems from the truth that for many people of this era, especially women, sex is not discussed in polite conversation, and shame on the person who even considers masturbation. However, Betty Dodson has been a strong advocate for sex-positivity and for the normalization of masturbation for decades. She is a woman who does not allow societal taboos to stop her from doing her work and helping women, and to a lesser extent men, to embrace their sexuality and their bodies.

Betty Dodson was born August 24, 1929 in Wichita Kansas (1). She started her career as an artist, and in 1968, she held the first one-woman show of erotic art in New York City. Five years later, she also made the first feminist slide show of vulvas at the National Organization of Women Sexuality Conference in New York. At this show, she introduced the electric vibrator as a pleasure device for clitoral stimulation (1). Dodson eventually left the art world in order to write her first book *Liberating Masturbation: A Meditation on Self Love*. As an artist, she enjoyed drawing nude figures, and after a while, she decided that she wanted to draw people having sex. This led her to the realization that the feminists in the 1970s were not talking about masturbation. It was still a taboo subject, and Dodson felt that the topic needed to be liberated, and so her book was written in 1974 in an attempt to bring the subject of masturbation out into the open (2).

Betty Dodson earned a Ph.D. in clinical sexology from the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in 1994. For 25 years, she ran workshops involving ten or more women (and on occasion men). In these workshops, the men or women would talk about sex and masturbation, explore their bodies, and masturbate together. She chose not to pursue a degree in psychology or a license to work as a therapist because she felt that these would interfere with her ability to conduct these workshops (1). She finally had to stop her workshops because they wore out her hip joint, causing her to need hip replacement surgery. She now runs private sex coaching sessions (2).

Betty Dodson continued writing after her first book and published *Sex for One*, a book on masturbation, in 1987, and more recently *Orgasms for Two*, in 2002, which deals with partner sex. Her most recent work is *My Romantic Love Wars: A Sexual Memoir*, and in this she discusses America's sexual revolution, women, and her feminist sexual activism (1). In 2011, she was awarded a public service award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality, and she is due to receive the Masters and Johnson Award from the Society for Sex Therapy and Research in March of 2012 (1).

Betty Dodson is a courageous and spunky woman. She dislikes labels for sexuality because she believes that sexuality is too individual and nuanced for there to be any accurate label for any person's sexuality. She describes herself as a heterosexual bisexual lesbian (3). She also criticizes the *Vagina Monologues* by Eve Ensler because she thinks that they have too restrictive a view of sexuality and an anti-male bias (1).

Today, it is not as uncommon to be a sex-positive feminist as it was when Betty Dodson was younger. She was truly a pioneer, especially when it came to the subject of masturbation. Today she encourages women and men to get to know themselves through masturbation and being open and honest about their sexuality with one another. Because of her work, there is a much more open attitude towards sexuality in general and women's sexuality in particular.

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Image courtesy of [Sprocket Films.net](http://SprocketFilms.net)

The Feminist Sex Wars

by Alex Nichipor

Consider for a moment two common stereotypes of feminists: the first is that they are all lesbians who hate porn and men, but at the same time they are also hussies who will get it on with anyone (hence why those brazen feminists fight for the right to contraception and safe abortion).

These are, of course, not only inaccurate but entirely contradictory. They stem from a popular misunderstanding known as the "Feminist Sex Wars," debates regarding sexual expression (including pornography), sex work, BDSM, and other sexual issues. The debates took place mainly in the 70s and 80s, but these issues continue to be fodder for discussion among feminists today.

Pornography has been a particularly divisive topic. Andrea Dworkin and Catherine Mackinnon, among others, argue ferociously against porn and prostitution (they consider pornography to be a form of prostitution) (5). They state that women and men have an unequal power relationship, and women are easily forced or coerced (by men or by their own life circumstances) into performing sex acts for strangers or cameras. Prostitution or porn isn't something that anyone freely chooses. To support this claim, they cite the testimony of some porn actresses, such as "Linda Lovelace," who stated that she had been beaten and forced at gunpoint to perform in the pornographic film *Deep Throat* (3). Other porn stars describe how they feel used and cheated, and their past follows them even after they have stopped making films.



Anti-porn demonstration.

Image courtesy of www.outhistory.org

Anti-porn feminists also argue that porn harms women who are not even involved in its production. They argue that pornography undermines men's inhibitions against raping or abusing women, because it depicts women enjoying graphic and violent sex – thus supporting the old patriarchal assertion that all women really want to be raped. Pornography turns women into sexual objects, a means that men could use for their own ends. Some anti-pornography feminists argue that porn-viewing actually leads to rape (2).

Anti-pornography feminists are particularly suspicious of bondage and sadomasochistic porn. They argue that such porn trivializes the experiences of women who have actually survived violence, and that it makes very clear the patriarchal hatred of women.

One of the goals of the anti-pornography movement has been to enact legislation against pornography. Perhaps the most famous was the Antipornography Civil Rights Ordinance, which defined pornography as a violation of the civil rights of women. Such legislation was considered or even passed in a wide range of American cities, but most cities ended up repealing it on the grounds that it was unconstitutional.

From the beginning, many feminists disagreed with the views of the anti-porn camp; in some cases, they felt as though the anti-porn feminists were trying to legislate sexuality as rigidly as patriarchy has done (1, 7). The claims of anti-porn feminists did not square with these women's experiences, and they disagreed about the conclusions that the anti-porn feminists had reached.

This camp calls themselves sex-positive feminists (though it should be noted that anti-pornography feminists never considered themselves anti-sex), because their goal is to represent and defend the full range of consenting sexual experiences. Many sex-positive feminists were horrified at the attempts of anti-pornography feminists to make porn illegal, which they saw as infringing upon the right of free speech.

Many sex-positive feminists attempt to convey the complexities of sex work, rather than regarding it as an industry for the degradation of women. Prostitution and pornography are not free of exploitation, but they also provide a good living for some women. While it was and is true

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Self-Love and Masturbation

by Skyla Seamans

Masturbation is a way for women and men to discover their bodies and embrace sexual freedom at the same time. Although it is the most common sexual behavior in the world, masturbation is met with great shame and stigma, especially among women. According to Sue Johanson, sex educator and counselor, 99 percent of men of all ages masturbate regularly, but only 65 percent of women do. Even 70 percent of married individuals say they masturbate regularly. Unfortunately, there are many myths regarding masturbation portrayed in the media, which contribute to the public's negative views and misunderstandings of masturbation. In truth, masturbation is a healthy, normal, and enjoyable practice for all sexes (1).

Women are often met with a double standard regarding masturbation. The common view is that if a woman with a partner masturbates, there must be something wrong with her relationship. If a single woman masturbates, she must be lonely. Not only is there a taboo against women masturbating, but there is a greater taboo against talking about it.

For some men and some women, talking about sex can be awkward and create shyness, but it does not have to be this way. Masturbation is a healthy part of sexuality and allows individuals to learn about their own bodies and genitals as well as to recognize and develop their sexual responses and orgasms. If a person masturbates, he or she is more likely to orgasm during sexual intercourse (2). This also may enhance communication between partners in intimate relationships because partners are able to express what feels good physically and sexually for them. According to the National Health and Social Life Survey, having a regular sex partner does not necessarily affect the frequency of masturbation and four out of ten women say they prefer masturbation to sexual intercourse. According to the Kinsey Institute Survey on Sex, 75 percent of men say they always reach orgasm during sex, but only 29 percent of women report the same. In addition,

most women are unable to climax through vaginal intercourse and prefer clitoral stimulation for pleasure (3).

One reason to explain the lower percentage of women who masturbate compared to men is that some women adhere to their traditional sex role: to be sexually passive and nonsexual. Sexual repression has existed throughout our society and into today because of the Victorian Era. During the 19th century, it was seen as a sin for women to explore their own bodies. They were not supposed to enjoy sex with their partners, nor were they supposed to talk about sex. Sexually experienced and independent women were viewed as a threat to patriarchy and men's power and women who were caught masturbating could be sentenced to death (4). This idea, although more prevalent two hundred years ago, is still present today and may account for why almost all men masturbate and openly converse about sex, but why it is not as accepted and talked about by women.

The many myths in the media regarding masturbation may also contribute to the shame associated with the practice and the disproportionate representation between men and women who masturbate. Common myths

are that masturbation is only for the young, is not real sex, is bad for one's health and may cause blindness and acne, is only practiced by men, is addictive, can lead to sexually transmitted diseases, can stunt growth, can cause infertility, is something people in relationships do not do, and so on. Contrary to these myths, everyone can masturbate and it is even a lifelong sexual activity. One survey of 800 adults found that 46 percent of them masturbated and that 20 percent of seniors masturbated once a week or more. Masturbation is not only for the young, nor is it an immature form of sexual behavior. The myth that masturbation is bad for one's health originated in 1712, with an anti-masturbation tract written to dissuade masturbation and deem it detrimental to one's health. Throughout the past, many other attempts have been made to pathologize masturbation. The idea



Image courtesy of www.holisticcyogini.com

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Kinks, Fetishes, and Turn-Ons, oh my! by Brianna Vear

For some unknown and sad reason, our society views sex as taboo. It generally should not be discussed, and should be reserved for bedroom conversation only. Sex is, however, acceptably used by marketing agencies to sell a product which can be very damaging. So why then is it that we cannot talk freely about what turns us on?

When sex *is* allowed into the conversation, it is most often what is called “waterdowned-vanilla-heteronormative-penis-in-vagina-rose-petalled-love making-sex.” Fetishes, kinks and turn-ons are clearly absent. I am here to bring them out of the closet, dust them off, and present them for discussion.

Turn-ons, fetishes, and kinks are terms that are often used interchangeably, but actually they are very different. Let's start with fetishes. A fetish is a sexual desire that in order to achieve fulfillment requires the presence of an object. The key word here is *requires*. You can not reach fulfillment (an orgasm) any other way, that object must be present. The object can be anything: clothing, body parts, handcuffs- anything (1).

A kink is any sexual preference that is not mainstream. This category differs from a fetish because it includes behavior as well as objects. These behaviors are not *required* to reach an orgasm, but often enhance sexual pleasure. Maybe you love hot-shower sex or sex in a car. Maybe you love bondage or being spanked. The objects from the fetishes may be involved, but they aren't necessary to reach a climax. If your kink is bondage, you may handcuff your partner or be handcuffed to the bed. It is not the handcuffs, per se, that is helping you reach an orgasm, but instead the act of being restrained (1).

Last we have turn-ons. A turn-on refers to anything that brings sexual excitement and pleasure. This can be anything. No really, anything. Maybe you love when your partner kisses your neck or chews on your ear. It makes you tingly. That's a turn-on. Maybe you love talking dirty, or sexting. These are also turn-ons. You know that act that you think about and get all tingly and squirmy inside and just can't wait to be with your partner? Well, that's a turn-on (2).

We have covered fetishes, kinks and turn-ons (Oh my!). One area that fits in our three categories, and that prides itself on communication, is BDSM.

Bondage, Discipline, Dominance, Submission, Sado-Masochism is, at its broadest, a power exchange that is for the sexual benefit of both parties. Activities often involve pain and restraints. By nature, it pushes boundaries. Due to the nature of the activities, good communication is crucial. Before embarking on anything BDSM related, those involved discuss the hard limits and soft limits on both sides. A hard limit is the activity that you do not want to try; it goes beyond pushing limits and becomes scary. A soft limit, is an activity that may be a bit scary, but you are willing to try it if your partner goes slowly. It is also a signal to your partner to be especially aware of how you are reacting. Safe words are also discussed before an activity begins. It is a non-sexualized word that the submissive uses that stops the act. It may be for a break and activity may resume after the submissive has time to collect themselves, or it may stop the scene completely for that day. It is important that the safe word is something obscure that would not be said otherwise in this context. A specific color or animal are two options (3).

Although not everyone is into BDSM, I do believe we can take a lesson from their books. You may know what you like, or you may know what you want to try. Now you just need to tell your partner about them. Communication is key to any relationship, especially one that involves sex. It may be hard, but it definitely will be gratifying. Wouldn't sex be amazing, if your partner knew just how to touch you? So why don't you tell him/her? You know “I like to be touched this way,” “It hurts when you do this, try this” or “Move your fingers in circles, not up and down.” If you don't feel you have the relationship to be talking about what turns you on, how you like to be touched and any kinks or fetishes you have, you may not be ready to embark



Image courtesy of imgfave.com.

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Sex Positivity and the War With Words by Corinne Blake

Whore, slut. Prude, tease. If you are open about your sexuality there is a word for you. If you hide it there is a word for that as well. It sometimes seems as if you are either one thing or another and there is no in between. How can we be sex positive with all these negative stereotypes holding us down? Along with this battle for sex positivity comes a war with words.

An important part of understanding the derogatory words associated with sex requires looking at their origins. Slut is defined as "a dirty, slovenly woman" (1). To clarify what is meant by dirty, it does not mean in a derogatory sexual way. It

means dirty as in there may be actual dirt involved. The dictionary has another definition: "a sexually promiscuous woman: a derogatory term" (1). In other words, even Webster's New World Dictionary identifies slut as a derogatory word as part of the definition. The question is, if that particular definition is derogatory, why include it in a dictionary at all? And then there is whore. The definition for whore simply says "a prostitute" (1). So it is just another word for *someone* who has sex for money (I stress someone because I want to make sure everyone is aware that *anyone* can have sex for money, man or woman). It is a technical term. Somewhere along the way it became a derogatory word for any female that has sex before marriage, whether or not she gets paid for it. Sometimes these words do not even have to do with whether or not you have sex. If you simply dress in a way that *looks* like you *want* sex, then you may get tagged with one or more of these lovely names.

Maybe you decide that even if you enjoy some sexual activity, you are going to hide your sexuality. Then my friend, you will probably be called a prude. Prude comes from the French word *prudefemme* which translates to excellent woman.

The definition is "one who is overly modest or proper in behavior, dress, etc." (1). Basically, it comes from the old fashioned idea that women need to be moral role models. Years back it may have been a good thing to be referred to as a prude, but today it seems to be a bad thing, funny how words change like that isn't it? Prude as a derogatory word is at least comprehensible. But what about the word tease. Not just tease, but a tease meaning "one who teases". There are four definitions of tease and the only one that may relate to the derogatory use is the fourth one "to tantalize" (1). Tantalize means "to promise or show something desirable and then withhold it" (1). So do a little digging around the word tease and you may be able to see a connection between the



Slut Walk. London, June 2011. Image courtesy of <http://www.glamourunderground.com>

word and some sexual connotation. However, whoever said that dressing a certain way was a promise to our bodies?

So far we have the dictionary definition of a couple of words from both ends of the sexuality spectrum. Perhaps society should take a step back and see if we can find where these innocent words went wrong. Slut, according the Oxford English Dictionary, was first used around the year 1402 and was sometimes even used in an affectionate or playful manner. It did not start to have negative connotations regarding loose morals until a century later (2). However, this meaning of the word as an insult regarding sexuality did not begin to develop until the 19th century. A commissioning editor at Collins Language said that "There was a big spike in its use in the early 1920s. This was just after the end of World War I. Women had gained independence; this might have frightened men because women were encroaching on areas they used to dominate. Women were going out, they were drinking and they were being referred to in a derogatory way" (3). This is an example of how an initially innocent word can evolve into something sinister.

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Not All Sex is Heterosexual

by KP

The definition of heteronormative is a perspective that, "expresses heterosexuality as a given instead of being one of many possibilities (1)." It is an extremely common attitude often expressed in both print and electronic media and held by a variety of educators, law makers, and the general public. If either you or your sexual partner don't identify as heterosexual, congratulations - you've experienced the pleasures of non-heterosexual sex! The point of this article is to give you some cool and useful tips that you may never have known before.

Let's start with lubricant, an important item for couples regardless of sexual orientation. A lot of people tend to shy away from lube, since it's often a taboo topic during sex, but I suggest that everyone should use it! It's fantastic, and it may well improve your sex life! There are, however, several important things you need to know about lube.

There are three main different types of lubricant out there: oil based, water based, and silicone based. Each type of lube can be used with different types of materials and it's important to know the differences.

Oil based lubes include mineral oil and baby oil; they should only be used with polyurethane condoms, as they are NOT safe for latex (2). They can be used with any toy except for those made out of latex, and they wash off with soap and water (2).

Water based lubes include brands like Astroglide and Wet; they are safe with polyurethane or latex condoms and can be used with any type of toy (2). They also rinse off easily with water (2). Water based lube is the cheapest of all the lubes, it's easy to find, and it can be used safely with all different types of toys and condoms (2).

Silicone based lubes include brands like Eros and ID Millennium which are safe with polyurethane or latex condoms; but you should never use them with a toy made out of silicone because they break down the material (2). They also wash off with soap and water (2).

As a side note, lube also comes in a variety of flavors. Flavored lube is fun because it can be used for oral sex, but ONLY for oral sex. It's not intended to be used inside of a vagina because the sugars in it can cause a yeast infection (3).

Now let's move on to sex toys! There are many different things you should know about sex toy materials before you go out there and buy them. One of my favorite LGBT+ friendly sex toy websites, Ba-



Image courtesy of
www.golocalprov.com

beland, has a page dedicated to safe sex toy materials and the different ways to clean them. Safe sex toy materials include toys made out of silicone, elastomer, hard plastics (acrylics, glass, metal, ceramic), thermo plastic rubber, and leather (4). Unsafe sex toy materials include jelly rubber because it is known to contain phthalates which are harmful to your body (4).

Sex toys are not approved, tested, or regulated by the FDA (5). Jelly rubber toys are the cheapest to make, and they are the cheapest toys to buy. If you have a toy that smells strongly of rubber or plastic, then that means it has more harmful phthalates in it (5). Manufacturers also often add artificial scents to mask the smell of the phthalates, along with different dyes they use, which cause allergic reactions in many people (5). A great tip if you do have one of these sex toys is to use a condom on it. It might reduce the risk of an allergic reaction and it also helps with the cleanliness of the toy, but it doesn't eliminate all the risks (5). This tip on condom use applies to all sex toys as well! It's an easier clean up, and depending on where you are, you may be able to get condoms for free.

Now we can talk about safe sex! There are many ways that we can have safe sex. Condoms can be used for more than just penis/vagina sex. If you're going to perform cunnilingus on someone, you can snip off the top of the condom and cut it lengthwise so you can create a dental dam when you don't have one available! You can also use plastic wrap for these as well (but remember to use your lube). Another wonderful tip is using a latex glove (or non-latex glove if anyone is allergic) as a dental dam! Cut off all the fingers except the thumb, and then you cut the glove long ways up the side opposite the thumb (so you can penetrate inside while being protected)!

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The Feminist Sex Wars, continued

that women are trafficked into the sex industry, other women choose it freely. Rather than condemning prostitution generally, many sex-positive feminists started organizations to help support prostitutes. Some porn actresses, such as Sasha Grey, Nina Hartley, and Annie Sprinkle are outspoken sex-positive feminists. Nina Hartley, in particular, while not afraid of criticizing the porn industry, says that she has witnessed very few instances of financial or physical coercion during her three decades in porn (7).

Some sex-positive feminists argue that the idea that pornography “degrades” women – that sex with a woman equals disrespect towards her – points to a much larger societal problem than pornography, and indicates a worldview still steeped in 19th century ideals of female chastity and women-as-property. Women, to the same extent as men, are sexual beings – why should it be considered disrespectful to show them as such?

Sex-positive feminists object to the thesis that porn leads to rape and spousal abuse. They point out that many men view porn, but only a very small percentage of them are rapists or batterers. Moreover, the fact is that it is not only men who make and view porn – women watch porn as well (1).

Sex-positive feminists argue that Sado/Masochism (S/M) is part of the range of human desire, and is not misogynist – there are women who do enjoy it, and not just because they are puppets of patriarchy. They highlight the importance of consent in S/M relationships; nothing is done without the consent of the submissive partner. Because of this, S/M relationships are actually the opposite of truly abusive relationships.

The debates over sex among feminists continue, and have been lent new life by the proliferation of internet pornography. However, despite their differences, both sides can agree on a few points including: the wrongness of violence, the importance of personal freedom, and the power of sexuality despite the sexual hang-ups of society. In her book *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, Ariel Levy writes, "Sex is one of the most interesting things that we human beings have to play with, and we've reduced it to polyester underpants and implants. We are selling ourselves unbelievably short."



International Sex Workers' Rights Day, March 3.

Image Courtesy of imaginedmag.com

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Self-Love and Masturbation, continued

that masturbation may cause blindness, acne, and hair growth on palms is false. Today, virtually all physicians and scholars agree that masturbation is harmless. There have even been studies that have said masturbation is positive for one's health. Studies suggest the practice may reduce the risk of prostate cancer in men and cervical infections in women (5).

While statistics show that men do masturbate more than women, there is no evidence to suggest that this is due to a biological need. Social attitudes towards female masturbation are much more negative, which explains women's reluctance to report physical self-love on a survey or to take part in the practice altogether. With rare exceptions, frequent masturbation is not harmful. Masturbation, whether it is once a month or three times a day, is a part of a balanced sexual and social life and poses no specific risks.

Despite the persistence of these myths, women still masturbate and they do it for different reasons. In addition to it feeling good, some women choose to masturbate in order to ease abdominal cramps during their periods and other women only masturbate if they feel frustrated. Masturbation is also a way to explore bodies, to release sexual tension, to teach bodies how to orgasm, to promote sleep, and for many other personal and individual reasons. Masturbation is a safe sexual alternative for avoiding sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. No matter the reason, masturbation is normal (6).

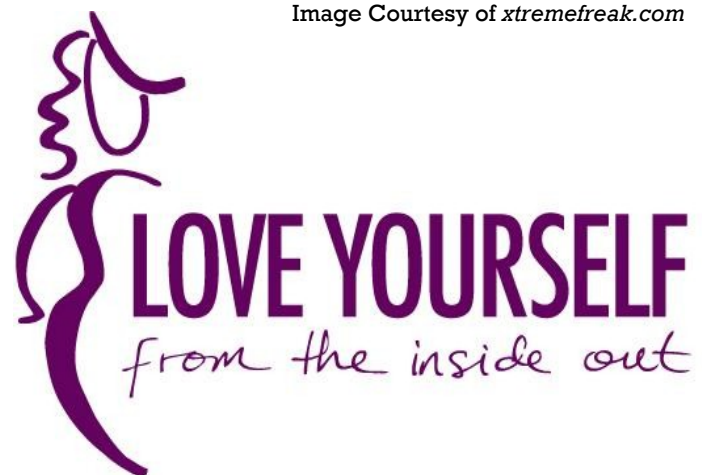
There is no right or wrong way to masturbate. Although there are many how-to guides on the internet, masturbation is a personal form of expression and what is pleasurable for one person may not be for another. The use of sex toys during masturbation is one way to enhance pleasure and encourage experimentation. Sex toys can range from objects that tickle and vibrate to various products that are inserted into the vagina or anus. The most common type of sex toy used during masturbation is the vibrator. Over 50 percent of women report using vibrators during masturbation (7). Using personal lubrication is also a good way to help enhance the pleasure and safety of sex toys. Asking a salesperson about the right lubrication to use for a specific toy and following instructions that come with the toy are crucial for safety and pleasure.

No matter what sex toy a person chooses to satisfy his or her needs, it is important to clean each toy thoroughly to protect oneself from bacterial and sexually transmitted infections. Each sex toy should come with cleaning instructions. For basic toy care, the batteries must be removed first. Electrical components should never be submerged in water. Using a damp, soapy washcloth to clean electric toys with anti-bacterial soap is a simple and effective way to kill bacteria. Toys should also be kept in a container or pouch to keep them clean and stored in a cool, dry place (7).

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Image Courtesy of xtremefreak.com



Sex Positivity and the War With Words, continued

Today, as we are all aware, these words, along with a lot of others, have become tainted. This fact is made evident in pop culture and in everyday language. You can see how far these words have fallen by logging onto UrbanDictionary.com. On this website, anyone can just go on and provide what they think the definition of a word is. Slut has 49 pages of definitions, whore has 34, prude 10, and tease 6. I bet you anything that the majority of those definitions have nothing to do with the definition Webster's dictionary gives. Sit in a junior high cafeteria and you will probably hear slut, whore, and other words multiple times throughout the lunch period. The funny thing is people aren't always saying it to someone they do not like. Some girls say it to their *friends* almost as a form of greeting. Is this the so-called empowering idea of "taking back" the word? Or is it simply giving in and using a word like slut as if it is interchangeable with woman? What is there to take back?

Some might wonder "what is the big deal; words are words so if you don't like them just ignore them." Consider this. In January 2011, a Toronto police officer was giving a talk about crime prevention at a safety forum at York University. He commented that "woman should avoid dressing like sluts to avoid being raped or victimized" (4). This is what is called victim blaming. According to one study about one third of people surveyed believe that girls who flirt with men are at least partially (if not totally) responsible for being attacked and a quarter of the people think that if a woman is wearing revealing clothing then she is also partly to blame, and this is especially true if she has been drinking (5). Basically, people like to label women who have been victimized with words like slut. It is a way to turn a blind eye to the real problem and a way for many young women to believe it could not happen to them because they do not act like a slut or a whore.

In the case of the Toronto police officer, the word slut - coupled with the ideology that it is a woman's fault if she gets raped - sparked an international movement known as SlutWalks. Fashioned in a similar way to Take Back the Night, this movement receives a lot of criticism and some of it is about the idea of taking back the word. SlutWalk is a march to protest sexual violence. Women who come to participate in the marches are encouraged to wear whatever they feel comfortable in, whether

they think it is slutty or not. Criticism for Slutwalk comes from people who believe it is just about women fighting for the right to be called a slut and that it gives women an excuse to dress provocatively at these marches. Women shouldn't need an excuse to dress how they want, and there is no rule that says they must come to these marches dressed in a way some might consider provocative. Movements like SlutWalk are about so much more than embracing the word. It is about feeling safe despite how you dress and despite the power of a word.

Sources:

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Slut Walk. New York City, 2011.

Image courtesy of CBS New York.com

Kinks, Fetishes, and Turn-Ons, continued

This brings me to another important point—"safe" does not just mean wearing a condom. It is so much more than that. Use other forms of birth control as well. Not instead of a condom, but in addition to one. Birth control does not protect you from STDS, which may lie dormant, but can still be transferable. Get tested for STDS, have safe words, make sure your hands are clean (4). If you are using sex toys (with, or without your partner) be sure they are clean. Buy them from a reputable source to ensure they do not have any harmful chemicals in them like they do at the shop Adam and Eve (5). Communicate. In order to have safe sex, you **MUST** communicate.

It is also very important that no matter what you try, you must have your partner's consent and you must give consent in return. If one or both partners are intoxicated, consent is no longer able to be given. If one partner changes their mind half way through, consent has been retracted and the act must stop. As the saying goes "No means No". "I'm not sure", "I really like you but", "Let's just go to sleep", "Don't touch me", "I'd rather be alone right now" "Not now", and silence also all mean no (6).

Sex is an important part of life. It should not be taboo, so talk about it-with your friends, and with your partner(s). Talk about your fetishes, kinks, and turn-ons. Talk about what you enjoy most, and what you want to try.

Sources:

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- (2) "Dirty In Public." <http://dirtyinpublic.com/index.php/281/>.
- (3) "BDSM: A feminist perspective." <http://www.uncharted-worlds.org/bdsm/bdsmfnsn.htm>.
- (4) "Only YES Means YES." www.wawg.ca/pages/only-yes-means-yes.
- (5) "Unsafe Sex Products and Toys – Consumer Beware." <http://www.tinybubbles.com/unsafe>.
- (6) "No Means No," BGLAD Handout.

Not All Sex is Heterosexual, continued

Sometimes, people complain about using condoms because it doesn't feel as good as unprotected sex, but lube once again is here to save the day! If you put a drop of lube on the inside of the condom before it's put on a penis, and a drop on the outside of the condom (yes, even if it's already pre-lubed), it will greatly improve your feelings about sex with condoms (2)!

There are many ways to experience the pleasures of sex, regardless of whether or not it is heterosexual. An important thing to remember is to always talk with your partner. Whether they're just your sex partner, or your significant other, communication is always important! Make sure you ask them what they want and what they need. Don't be afraid of expressing your own needs, you could be pleasantly surprised at the response you get! If you're not sure that something is okay with your partner, then always ask, and always respect the answer. Always remember **CONSENT IS SEXY!**

Sources:

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- (4) "Sex Toy Materials - Babeland." *Sex Toys for a Passionate World - Vibrators, Dildos and Other Adult Toys at Babeland - Babeland*. Babeland. <http://www.babeland.com/shoppingadvice/sextoymaterials>.
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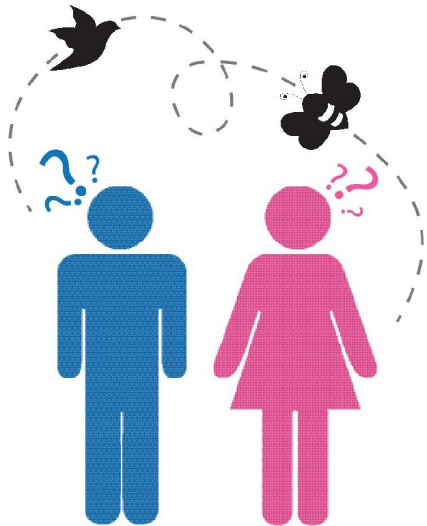
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