Beyond Orgasm: Dare to be honest about the sex you really want

By Marty Klein, Ph.D.

Celestial Arts. Berkeley, CA 2002
207 pages, $14.95

Reviewed by David Hall, Ph.D.

This latest book (by a member of our editorial board) is another example of why my friend and colleague Marty Klein is one of the most respected sex educators in our country today. Marty takes on the sex negativity of our American culture and names it properly as "The Secrecy Imperative". In nine chapters he outlines how our fear of sexuality, our obsession about Orgasm, and our inability to be honest about what we really want from our sexual encounters has poisoned our ability to truly experience all that a sexual relationship has to offer.

"We live in a world that encourages sexual secrets. These secrets don't protect us or make our lives better the way they are supposed to. On the contrary, these secrets only cripple our true sexual self, which is hidden, ignored, denied, and distorted."

Using examples from his 22 years of clinical practice, he shows how these secrets stop us from being fully ourselves. He describes the very high cost of these secrets, and how they keep us from accepting ourselves as sexually healthy beings, fool us into believing we are not "normal" and trap us in lives that are less than sexually fulfilling. There are a number of wonderful lists of suggestions in each chapter, guidelines for moving toward a more honest view of self, and a more honest communication with our partners. He also admits that honesty is sometimes used to hurt and punish, and give help in understanding how to avoid that trap.

Finally, in Chapter 9, entitled "(Finally) Getting Beyond Orgasm" he describes what is possible in a life lived as honestly as possible. This book is valuable to every person who wants to live a sexually authentic life, reach for what is truly possible in relationships, and understand why we do some of the strange things we do in the name of sex. It is also very valuable for those older adults who worry that the process of aging makes us less worthy as partners, and points out the advantages of maturity over boundless energy. Coupled with his earlier book, "Let Me Count The Ways: Discovering Great Sex Without Intercourse", a world of possibilities opens for every person who takes the time to read them.

A special bonus are the wonderful photos by David Steinberg that grace the pages between chapters. While not particularly explicit (you can show, and give, this book to your kids and your parents) they are very sensual and contribute to the power of the book as a whole.

Buy this book for yourself, and give it as a gift to any one you know that would like an even more fulfilling sexual life.

Return to Front Page
a very clear and supportive book, addressing directly the many difficulties people experience in being honest about their innermost sexual feelings and desires. Dr. Klein goes a step further in helping give readers a practical means for talking about sex in the larger context of a loving relationship. As a clinical psychologist who knows quite well what harm barriers to effective communication can do in any Read Full Review.