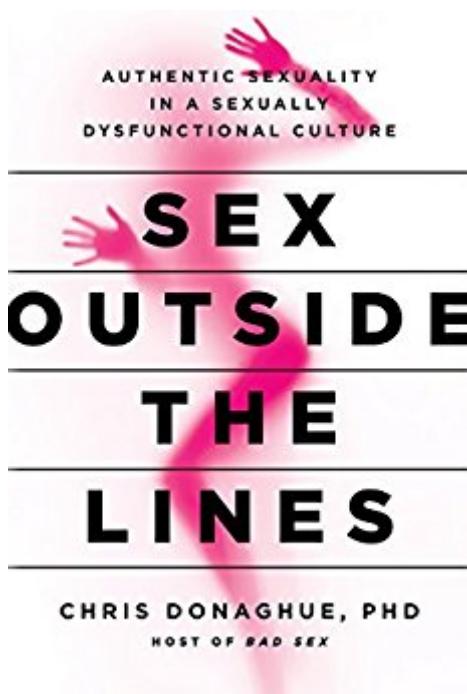


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Sex Outside The Lines: Authentic Sexuality In A Sexually Dysfunctional Culture



Synopsis

It's socially acceptable to spend a day watching sports or sitcoms, but it's shameful and embarrassing to admit to the same about erotic media. Why is it that sex is so often deemed inappropriate and considered something we must keep private or even ignore? Our culture is afraid of sex. We feel the need to label what is normal and what isn't, and as a result, we live in a relational and sexually unhealthy culture. In reality, far more harm is caused by labeling sexual expression as obscene than by celebrating it. In *Sex Outside the Lines: Authentic Sexuality in a Sexually Dysfunctional Culture*, Chris Donaghue, PhD, explores and challenges the negative ideals that have warped society's view of sex. *Sex Outside the Lines* is not a dogmatic rule book, but a valuable guide to help you on your journey to sexual self-discovery and, most important, self-acceptance. Donaghue encourages you to not only explore your capacity for pleasure, but to be proud of it and to take a look at how you could be living. In his years of training in sex and couples therapy, Donaghue has developed highly successful methods for freeing clients from sexual hang-ups, enabling them to let go of shame and embarrassment. The goal isn't to be "normal"; there is no such thing. Donaghue pulls apart cultural phobias with a sex-positive therapy practice, as well as a kind of sexual deprogramming that helps people see and accept that the desires they have—even if they don't align with society's expectations—are actually natural, healthy, and part of having a great sex life. *Sex Outside the Lines* addresses our diversity, challenges conventional psychiatric wisdom as classifying perfectly normal behavior as disorders, and disregards conventional advice from leading experts. It isn't advocating a "liberal" approach to modern concepts; it is seeking to redefine them altogether.

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Customer Reviews

I sought this book out after hearing Chris Donaghue on the Art of Charm podcast. He had some interesting insights about fidelity and gender roles, among other topics, and I was enthusiastic to see the fuller picture of his work. That picture, as represented by this book, is dismally disappointing. Donaghue is eager to tear apart traditional sexual mores, and I applaud that. Unfortunately, in his zeal, he makes no effort to understand the history of sex and relationships. He repeatedly refers to monogamy and traditional marriage agreements, for example, as “arbitrary.” He seems to imagine some kind of reverse Garden of Eden, in which humans lived in complete sexual freedom before the dark agents of society came in and ruined all the fun. He demonstrates no understanding of the biological, physical and economic realities that shaped the relationship traditions of the past and present. Some of these traditions are damaging and outdated now that those realities have changed, for sure, but they’re not arbitrary. And I don’t see how we can create a new, functional, sex-positive culture if we don’t understand where the old one came from. Donaghue has no patience for this. Scattered between Donaghue’s interesting insights are some alarmingly stupid assertions, such as one that monogamy is no longer a realistic goal because we’re living longer today than ever before. Really? So monogamy was fine when we were only living into our 60s, but once we get into our 70s and 80s we really need some sexual variety? Nonsense like this doesn’t reflect more than a moment’s thought, let alone scientific rigor. I would expect better than this from a “certified sex therapist.” That brings me to a disheartening point. Donaghue brings up his professional credentials frequently, but I can’t even find what school he went to. I resorted to a Google search and all I could turn up was a Reddit conversation with a

producer for Dr. Drew, who listed Donaghue as one of his least favorite guests and added, “Found out he’s not actually psychologist at all; he has a PhD in sexuality from a diploma mill.” I don’t know if that’s true or not, but given that Donaghue doesn’t think his school is worth listing • and given his casual disregard for empirically-based information, I find myself less than assured about Dr. Donaghue’s credentials. To be fair, Donaghue is pretty open about his disregard for science. He writes: “If psychology as a science were instead seen as theory and not truth or fact, psychology could return to its philosophical roots.” He essentially argues that, because there is bad science out there, science should be scrapped altogether and replaced with his shoot-from-the-hip style of sexual propaganda. And propaganda, sadly, it is. Donaghue pretends to advocate for a judgment-free sexual society. But his prescription is filled with judgment. For example, he doesn’t just argue that we should be open to relationships that don’t fit the traditional model of lifelong monogamy • a noble goal. He takes the extra step of pathologizing any emotions that might constrain a partner • sexual behavior. Instead of offering practical advice on how someone might handle jealousy when venturing into non-monogamy, he just moralizes that we’re not allowed to project our anxiety onto our relationships • and shame on anyone who does. As an unmarried heterosexual, cisgendered male • I couldn’t help but recognize in Donaghue writing the kind of noble-sounding rhetoric we who fit that description might use to convince women to sleep with us. Sure, I’m totally concerned about sexual freedom for everybody, not just myself. Sex is no big deal, and we shouldn’t judge. So let’s get out of here and go to my place • oh, and I don’t mind that you have a boyfriend either. Donaghue leaves out anything that might conflict with his worldview. He argues that there is no such thing as a sexual disorder, and actually makes interesting points about how one can have a satisfying sex life in spite of what is typically labeled erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation or sex addiction. But he conveniently ignores the question of bestiality or pedophilia (again, alarming for a “certified sex therapist” •). He derides feminists who are quick to label male courting behaviors as “harassment,” but can’t even spare one sentence to acknowledge that sexual harassment (and assault) is a real problem, and probably a more pervasive one than feminism run amok. I add a

second star because Donaghue does stumble into some fairly decent advice (date people who challenge you rather than going for the “safe” option; relationships can be renegotiated over time; prioritize building friendships; don’t confine yourself to relationship models that don’t work for you; etc.), and because we need more alternative, sex-positive voices out there. It would be helpful, however, if those voices were at least passingly interested in social science and professional rigor. Donaghue clearly isn’t.

This book was so informative and educational on issues of sexuality and the progressive movement on how sex is perceived in our culture. Great read!!

Excellent book.

Excellent discussion of a much healthier, more accepting view of sexuality. Great read for those who find the heteronormative, strictly monogamous view of sex way too restrictive.

Thought provoking and fun.

In the author’s opinion, everything goes and nearly nothing is perverse among consenting adults. That will come as a comfort to the open minded, while the more sexually conservative will shake their collective heads back and forth.

Interesting viewpoints regarding sex and our sexphobic culture. There was some stuff that I didn’t agree with, but I appreciated the viewpoints and the research Dr. Donaghue discussed in the book. Great read!

An amazing book for the times. A must read.

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