

Because you keep asking...

Questions about SEXuality
from America's
College Students

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A raz book Production

Studio City, CA 91604

Layout and design by www.urbanartdesign.com

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing: January 2014

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*Sexuality and
overall health
is a head-to-toe
affair.*

Mouth: Page 41

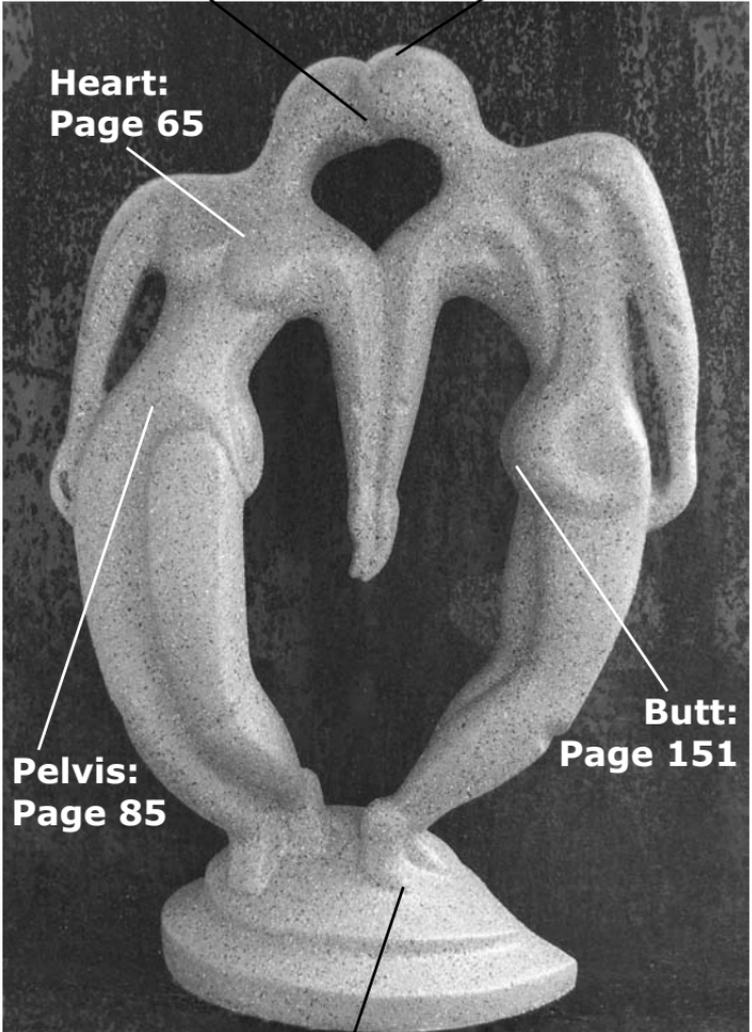
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S
E
X *uality*

Wow... good for you. You have questions about sexuality. We have answers. These answers represent how we have answered live Q&A with student audiences across the country.

Did you notice that we said “questions about sexuality” rather than “questions about sex?”

The reason is that sexuality encompasses a whole lot more than just having sex. It includes:

- Learning about love, desire, intimacy, and commitment
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Improving relationship skills
- Examining gender roles and stereotypes
- Recognizing and appreciating diversity
- Developing skills in life planning
- Building problem-solving skills
- Supporting healthy living habits
- Becoming a critical consumer of media messages
- Exploring spiritual aspects of sexuality
- Achieving personal success and happiness
- And, clarifying one’s values...

Values play an important role when it comes to sexuality.

We hear the word “values” thrown around a lot, but what are values? Values are the messages that we have been given since birth—messages from our families, communities, friends, and the larger culture. They are complex and sometimes we don’t even realize their impact until they are challenged.

Our values are the groundwork for every feeling we experience; they are an essential part of our decision making process.

We believe it’s important to mention values early on, for they will likely express themselves as you read these questions and answers. You may find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with what is written—which is great—it means that you are using your critical thinking skills. That critical review is helpful in better understanding your sexuality.

As you read this book, take note of the answers that differ from how you think or feel.

HEAD

Questions dealing with our thoughts

Did you know that Confidence is considered one of the top characteristics to describe someone who is “sexy?” Yep! Confidence is more appealing than “great legs” or “a nice butt.”

If Confidence is so sexy, how come we see so little of it? *Fear of rejection? Low self-worth? A bad past experience?* No matter what the reason, it is time to rise to the occasion and understand that making healthier relationship choices leads to increased confidence.

Increased self-worth and self-respect leads to healthier sexual behavior, which leads to better overall health.

You have heard it before—respect really begins with how you feel about yourself. Do you see your strengths, as well as your weaknesses? Our ability to “see” our full selves helps us to see the complexity of others.

Q1

Can having sex make someone emotionally unstable?

Having planned, consensual sex is not likely to make someone emotionally unstable. However, the uncertainty *or assumed status* of the relationship after having sex can be stressful.

The hope is that we engage in sexual activity once we communicate about whether this is a one-time occurrence, the next step in the relationship, or an experience two people want to share without relationship expectations.

The reality is that there are emotional, physical, and for some, spiritual issues that arise when having sex. If there is uncertainty about the situation or the relationship, this can easily lead to feeling anxious, sad, guilty, or distracted. Left unchecked, these feelings could potentially lead to a sense of emotional instability.

Taking it a little further...

We as a culture must get better at realizing the seriousness of sex, and we must improve our education and communication about how and when and with whom we want to share the experience.

Q8

What exactly is date rape?

Date rape can happen on the first date, in long-term relationships, when sober or intoxicated. At this time, alcohol is the #1 date rape drug. A person can get pretty messed up by simply hanging out and drinking, or playing too many games of beer pong. As a result, decision-making skills are weakened.

Date rape is defined on RAINN.org as:

Rape is forced sexual intercourse, including vaginal, anal, or oral penetration. Penetration may be by a body part or an object. Rape can occur when the offender and the victim have a pre-existing relationship (sometimes called “date rape” or “acquaintance rape”), or even when the offender is the victim’s spouse. It does not matter whether the other person is an ex-boyfriend or a complete stranger, and it does not matter if you’ve had sex in the past. If it is nonconsensual this time, it is rape. (Be aware that a few states still have limitations on when spousal rape is a crime.)

FACT:

You cannot give sexual consent while you are intoxicated because your judgment is impaired.

Sex and alcohol don't mix. This will be hard for some people to accept, because in the movies and in the media, we often see alcohol depicted as something that is part of a typical romantic evening.

Alcohol decreases your sexual functioning. Bodily responses are blocked. Though we may feel less inhibited, there is less turn-on, less responsiveness to being touched, and more difficulty achieving orgasm. Let us remind you that sex has no expiration date; you can always do it another day.

Here are recommendations to avoid date rape:

1. Decide earlier in the night if you want to be available to drink or available to potentially hookup, because you really shouldn't do both.
2. Do not take an open drink from someone you don't know well. Yes, it is quite easy for someone to obtain a date-rape drug, slip it into your drink, and take advantage of you.
3. Never leave your drink unattended. If you get up to dance or go to the restroom, have a friend watch your drink, or if you have to, take it with you.

If you feel like you have been sexually assaulted, get support as soon as possible. (Review Q7.)

Here are recommendations to avoid being accused of date rape:

1. Make sure you get consent from your date. Actually ask her (or him) if she (or he) wants to participate in the behavior you are intending.
2. If your date is intoxicated, don't bother asking for consent, because they can't give it; so don't do it.
3. Make sure your date gets home safely no matter what time of day or night.

**Remember, if someone is asking for your consent, communicate clearly in response. Either a yes or no. They are taking the step in asking, it is your responsibility to provide a clear and distinct response.*

Taking it a little further...

The last word, according to the law:

Everyone is responsible for what they freely and willingly do while under the influence of drugs knowingly taken.

If you get drunk and choose to drive, you're legally responsible for the outcome.

If you get belligerent and swing at someone, or if you rape someone, you are still responsible.

The National Collegiate Date and Acquaintance Rape Statistics reports that 90% of all acquaintance rapes involve alcohol.

Q12

I'm 21 years old and I think I'm coming out of the closet. I've experimented before, but I'm afraid to tell my fraternity brothers. What should I do?

We are glad to hear that you want to share this important information with your brothers. Your caution is certainly understandable, and thinking strategically about how to approach the matter is a good plan.

You have probably already considered this... it would be wise to start with those whom you know are more comfortable with various lifestyles and sexual orientations. Having a friend outside of the house that can support you through your coming out process with your brothers would be helpful. We also recommend you choose someone in the fraternity you trust—an ally—and begin sharing with him, see how it goes and take it one step at a time.

When you come out to even one person, there is no way to ensure confidentiality, so be prepared that others may find out.

There are many ways to come out: personal conversations, an email, out loud at a meeting, or less personally, by having friends tell other friends or via social media. We believe there is no right or wrong way to come out; there is only the right way for you.

Throughout this process, it's always a good idea to have someone with whom you can talk. You may want to consider having more formal support, such as a campus resource professional or counselor.

Taking it a little further...

Check out the
Lambda 10 Project online resource:
<http://www.campuspride.org/lambda10>

MOUTH

Questions dealing with our lips & the words that come from them

Many of you will wonder why some of the following questions have been placed in the Mouth section. The reason is because questions that deal with courage actually have more to do with your mouth than any other body part.

Courage doesn't mean not being afraid; it means feeling uneasy about a situation and communicating verbally regardless of that feeling.

It takes guts to speak up in situations that make us nervous, BUT in the end, it is worth it. Each time we speak up, it gets a little easier the next time around.

Q22

I have the problem where I go out with guys (good looking ones); they keep in touch, but I never know where it's going. How do I ask them?

When guys want to see you, they'll see you. When guys want you to be their girlfriend and not see other guys, they will ask. If there has been no conversation regarding the relationship status, then bring it up.

Isn't it better to know whether or not you're on the same page rather than wonder what is going on?

*It is very important to know the status of your relationship if you are sexually active. YOU are responsible for YOUR health, so do not get conversation shy when you need to know with whom a guy is also partnering with in a sexually intimate way.

Q30

I think my roommate is gay or possibly trans; what should I do?

Be kind, considerate, and communicative—just as you should be with any roommate. If you feel you want to talk specifically about sexual orientation or identity, we encourage you to be honest. Be sure to let him or her know you are unfamiliar—and maybe a little uncomfortable—with the difference in lifestyles.

One of the beauties of college is learning new things and growing personally. Discuss how you can be considerate towards one another. No doubt, there will likely be things about you that your roommate finds unfamiliar and uncomfortable.

Taking it a little further...

For information on understanding
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:

www.apa.org/topics/sexuality

HEART

Questions dealing with love & relationships

Everything you do in life will be dependent on one thing: self-worth. Your self-worth will influence your personal relationship choices and behaviors.

Who you allow to be part of your life and how much energy you put into *someone else's success* versus *your own success* will be largely impacted by what you think you're worth.

We cannot build your self-worth, but we can share with you this fact: Relationships, with toxic people who do not have your well-being in mind, will beat you up on the inside and decrease your self-worth.

Choosing to be in a healthy relationship, where you feel your time and energy are worth it, will boost your sense of well-being and increase your self-worth.

Q45

**I have the perfect boyfriend,
but how do you know if you are
ready to really be in love?**

**And how do you tell him that you
love him more than anything, but
need a little space and time to be 20
without giving up something great?**

We can't help with whom we fall in love, but we can direct what we do with those feelings. Being in love is exhilarating—especially the dizzying, exciting effects of first love.

Here's the hard truth:

The area of our brain used for decision making isn't fully formed until our mid-twenties.

With this in mind, how could—or *why would*—anyone want to make a decision too early about who they are going to love for the rest of their life?

That space and time you talk about needing? We agree with it! Take all of your 20's to discover who you are, what makes you happy, and who would make a “perfect man” for you.

Make a commitment to yourself before making a commitment to someone else.

Q48

What are questions you should bring up or discuss with your partner before you get married (or decide to get married/engaged)?

There are many topics to discuss in order to increase your chances of happily ever after. Here is a partial list to get you started.

1. What does marriage mean to you?
2. How will the finances be handled?
 - How much can you spend individually, as a couple, and how much money will be saved, if any?
 - Does someone make significantly more money than the other? If so, how will that affect the questions above?
3. Where do you want to live and in what type of housing?
4. Who will be responsible for cooking, cleaning, laundry, yard work, etc?
5. Will we have pets?
6. Do we spend time with each other's families? How much and how often?
7. Will we both keep friendships with people of the opposite gender?

8. Do you want to start a family? If so, when?
 - How many children do you want?
 - Where do you want to raise this family?
 - Will one parent stay home with the children?
 - How do you believe a child should be disciplined?
 - Will there be spiritual teachings for the children?
 - Will a male child be circumcised?
 - What happens if we are unable to conceive children? Do you believe in adoption?

9. If an unintended pregnancy occurs, what will we do?

10. Who will initiate sex? Are we free to say no to sex?

11. How often will we engage in sexual behaviors with each other?

12. What will be included/excluded in the boundaries of our sexual activities?
Anal sex, oral sex, masturbation (self or mutual), pornography, sex on the Internet, bondage, S&M, sex toys, sex clubs, fetishes...

PELVIS

Questions dealing with genitals, orgasm, STDs pregnancy & condoms

You will find that this is the largest section of the book. That's probably not a big surprise given our culture's focus on anatomy when it comes to talking about sexuality. As you have read by now, sexuality is about much more than what is between the legs! Still, what is between the legs—and how it affects the rest of our body—is very important. This section will take us through orgasm, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and much more.

Q56

Is actual intercourse the only way to get an STD?

Nope.

Sexually transmitted infections and diseases can be transferred various ways. Many are transferred via male ejaculate, vaginal secretions, and blood. Others can be transmitted via skin-to-skin contact. HIV can be transmitted to babies via breast milk from an HIV positive mother.

Avoid becoming one of the millions of students each year who transmits or becomes infected with a sexually transmitted infection. Information on transmission, prevention, symptoms, and treatment is widely available on the Internet or a course textbook on human sexuality.

Taking it a little further...

5 myths about STDs
www.TeensHealth.org

Sexually Transmitted Diseases
www.cdc.gov/std

Q61

I didn't understand the correlation between undiscovered STDs and cancer later on. Can you please repeat the information?

STDs/STIs that are undiagnosed and untreated can cause serious medical conditions including prostate cancer in men and cervical cancer in women. Many doctors and scientists feel that there is a link between STDs and prostate cancer, most likely due to inflammation resulting from an untreated STI.

HPV (Human Papillomavirus) is commonly associated with cervical cancer in women, but has also been linked to anal, oral, and penile cancers.

While you probably aren't interested in having kids right now, you may want them later and scarring from untreated STIs can result in infertility.

STIs can be transferred more easily between partners, because:

1. Symptoms are often short-term and can go unnoticed. If symptoms are noticed, many do not address the concern with a doctor.
2. Most sexually-active people do not get tested regularly.
3. Condom or other barrier protection is not always used.

4. There is no discussion about sexual history—the good, the bad, and the ugly experiences. We may not be proud of some of those experiences, but 80% of those infected will have no symptoms and 1 out of 5 teen girls contract an STI within one year of becoming sexually active!

Taking it a little further...

Early sexual activity and smoking can double your risk of developing cancer from a sexually transmitted infection/disease.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) can more easily infect a young woman's cervix, because the cells in the cervix are still immature.

Smoking weakens the immune system. Cigarette smoke contains chemicals that can damage the body's cells and cause them to become cancerous.

BUTT

Questions dealing with our anal opening, anus, rectum...

Anal sex is another form of sex. Some people feel anal sex is an alternative to penile/vaginal intercourse if they want to remain a virgin. Others challenge the concept that you can have anal sex and still call yourself a virgin. It depends on how you define virginity. You may believe any form of sex (anal, vaginal, oral) qualifies as losing one's virginity. Remember, sexuality is as varied and complicated as the human mind.

It is estimated less than 10% of heterosexual couples regularly engage in anal sex. We felt it was important to include these questions to ensure students have the correct information, before making a decision that affects their sexual health.

Q96

Can you get a girl pregnant through anal sex?

It's a long shot, but not totally impossible. There is no internal function connecting the rectum to the vagina, fallopian tubes, or uterus; therefore, if you were to ejaculate into a woman's anal canal, the sperm could not travel internally for conception to take place.

However, what could happen is that ejaculate could come out of her anus and seep into her vaginal canal and potentially result in pregnancy. While this is unlikely to happen, it is not impossible due to the closeness of the anus and the vaginal canal.

An important note: With unprotected anal sex, there is a high risk of contracting/transferring a sexually transmitted infection, because the bacteria in the anus can enter the urethral opening. There is also an increased rate of bladder infections in women. It is good to get in the habit of cleaning the urethra and the vulva after sexual activity.

TOES

Questions dealing with self-worth & self respect

No, this section is not about foot fetishes; it is about standing up for yourself, standing up for others, and standing on your own two feet. It's about having the courage to be the one to say or do something when no one else will.

Self-worth and self-respect play a part in every aspect of your life. Think about those words...

Self-worth
Self-respect

What do you think you are "worth?"
What do you deserve in life?

Only YOU can answer those questions for yourself, but we'll tell you this:

- * Everyone has worth.
- * Have faith in yourself.
- * You deserve whatever you give to others.
- * And, at some point, you will need to find 30 seconds of courage when no one else can.

Q100

How do I help my friend who is in an abusive relationship? She downplays the negative aspects when things aren't that bad.

It is typical for a person in an abusive relationship to forget about the abuse when everything is going well. Offer continual support to your friend, so she knows you will be there for her when things get bad again (and they will).

Suggest that meeting with a therapist/counselor may help strengthen their relationship. Most abused women do not have the strength or desire to give up on the relationship right away.

Look for physical signs such as bruising. You can anonymously report the abusive boyfriend if she refuses to get help. It is important to alert administrators in order to protect you, your friend, and all students on campus. Though you may be saving her life, she may see you as the enemy because “you just don't understand their kind of love.”

There is no abusive behavior in a healthy, loving relationship. Thank you for being a good friend and caring about her well-being and safety.

Final thoughts...

As you've read, sexuality is complex. We did our best to answer your questions succinctly and hope you never stop asking questions about what you don't know.

Check out the wellness or health center on campus or visit SmartSexRocks.com for resources.

Love Well, Live Well,
Ranee & Kim

Healthy Attitude towards Sexuality = Healthy You

About the Authors



Raneë Alison Spina

is a speaker and author of the two-time Award-Winning *I AM before "I DO"* - *Unsolicited Advice on LOVE*.

She strives to be a catalyst for her audiences with humorous, uncompromising honesty about sexuality and relationship issues.

Raneë's passionate, interactive campus lecture *Understanding SEX & LOVE* is life-changing and truly entertaining. At heart, when she steps on stage, Raneë is still that rockstar who performed on the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles years ago.

She now resides by the beach in Orange County, California.

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Due to the success of her campus and community wellness programs, she is often asked to present at industry trainings and conferences.

Kimberly warmly welcomes students into her office who have endless questions about sexual health, and her ultimate goal is to share the beautiful complexity of sexuality around the world.

Kimberly currently resides in Pennsylvania and loves participating in triathlons, supporting wildlife preservation, and sharing time with her husband, Jason, and their yellow lab, Jackson.