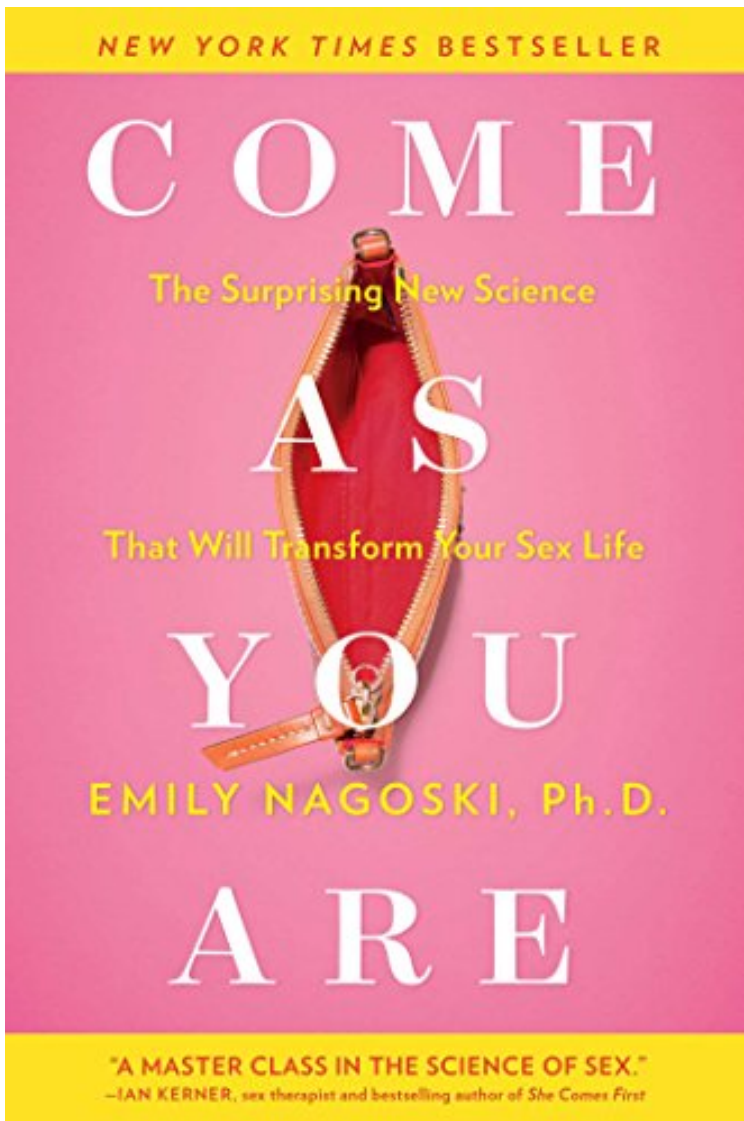


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# Come as You Are: The Surprising New Science that Will Transform Your Sex Life (English Edition)



Par Emily Nagoski  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur\*\*\*A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER\*\*\* An essential exploration of why and how womens sexuality worksbased on groundbreaking research and brain sciencethat will radically transform your sex life into one filled with confidence and joy.Researchers have spent the last decade trying to develop a pink pill for women to function like Viagra does for men. So where is it? Well, for reasons this book makes crystal clear, that pill will never be the answerbut as a result of the research thats gone into it,

scientists in the last few years have learned more about how womens sexuality works than we ever thought possible, and *Come as You Are* explains it all. The first lesson in this essential, transformative book by Dr. Emily Nagoski is that every woman has her own unique sexuality, like a fingerprint, and that women vary more than men in our anatomy, our sexual response mechanisms, and the way our bodies respond to the sexual world. So we never need to judge ourselves based on others experiences. Because women vary, and thats normal. Second lesson: sex happens in a context. And all the complications of everyday life influence the context surrounding a womans arousal, desire, and orgasm. Cutting-edge research across multiple disciplines tells us that the most important factor for women in creating and sustaining a fulfilling sex life, is not what you do in bed or how you do it, but how you feel about it. Which means that stress, mood, trust, and body image are not peripheral factors in a womans sexual wellbeing; they are central to it. Once you understand these factors, and how to influence them, you can create for yourself better sex and more profound pleasure than you ever thought possible. And Emily Nagoski can prove it.

*Extrait*  
*Come as You Are*  
introduction  
YES, YOU ARE NORMAL  
To be a sex educator is to be asked questions. Ive stood in college dining halls with a plate of food in my hands answering questions about orgasm. Ive been stopped in hotel lobbies at professional conferences to answer questions about vibrators. Ive sat on a park bench, checking social media on my phone, only to find questions from a stranger about her asymmetrical genitals. Ive gotten emails from students, from friends, from their friends, from total strangers about sexual desire, sexual arousal, sexual pleasure, sexual pain, orgasm, fetishes, fantasies, bodily fluids, and more. Questions like...  
Once my partner initiates, Im into it, but it seems like it never even occurs to me to be the one to start things. Why is that? My boyfriend was like, Youre not ready, youre still dry. But I was so ready. So why wasnt I wet? I saw this thing about women who cant enjoy sex because they worry about their bodies the whole time. Thats me. How do I stop doing that? I read something about women who stop wanting sex after a while in a relationship, even if they still love their partner. Thats me. How do I start wanting sex with my partner again? I think maybe I peed when I had an orgasm...? I think maybe Ive never had an orgasm...?  
Under all these questions, theres really just one question: Am I normal? (The answer is nearly always: Yes.) This book is a collection of answers. Theyre answers that Ive seen change womens lives, answers informed by the most current science and by the personal stories of women whose growing understanding of sex has transformed their relationships with their own bodies. These women are my heroines, and I hope that by telling their stories, Ill empower you to follow your own path, to reach for and achieve your own profound and unique sexual potential.

the true story of sex  
After all the books that have been written about sex, all the blogs and TV shows and radio QAs, how can it be that we all still have so many questions? Well. The frustrating reality is weve been lied to not deliberately, its no ones fault, but still. We were told the wrong story. For a long, long time in Western science and medicine, womens sexuality was viewed as Mens Sexuality Lite basically the same but not quite as good. For instance, it was just sort of assumed that since men have orgasms during penis-in-vagina sex (intercourse), women should have orgasms with intercourse too, and if they dont, its because theyre broken. In reality, about 30 percent of women orgasm reliably with intercourse. The other 70 percent sometimes, rarely, or never orgasm with intercourse, and theyre all healthy and normal. A woman might orgasm lots of other ways manual sex, oral sex, vibrators, breast stimulation, toe sucking, pretty much any way you can imagine and still not orgasm during intercourse. Thats normal. It was just assumed, too, that because a mans genitals typically behave the way his mind is behaving if his penis is erect, hes feeling turned on a womans genitals should also match her emotional experience. And again, some womens do, many dont. A woman can be perfectly normal and healthy and experience arousal nonconcordance, where the behavior of her genitals (being wet or dry) may not match her mental experience (feeling turned on or not). And it was also assumed that because men experience spontaneous, out-of-the-blue desire for sex, women should also want sex spontaneously. Again it turns out thats true sometimes, but not necessarily. A woman can be perfectly normal and healthy and never experience spontaneous sexual desire. Instead, she may experience responsive desire, in which her desire emerges only in a highly erotic context. In reality, women and men are different. But wait. Women and men both experience orgasm, desire, and arousal, and men, too, can experience responsive desire, arousal nonconcordance, and lack of orgasm with penetration. Women and men both can fall in love, fantasize, masturbate, feel puzzled about sex, and experience ecstatic pleasure. They both can ooze fluids, travel forbidden paths of sexual imagination, encounter the unexpected and startling ways that sex shows up in every domain of life and confront the unexpected and startling ways that sex sometimes declines, politely or otherwise, to show up. So... are women and men really that different? The problem here is that weve been taught to think about sex in terms

of behavior, rather than in terms of the biological, psychological, and social processes underlying the behavior. We think about our physiological behavior—blood flow and genital secretions and heart rate. We think about our social behavior—what we do in bed, whom we do it with, and how often. A lot of books about sex focus on those things; they tell you how many times per week the average couple has sex or they offer instructions on how to have an orgasm, and they can be helpful. But if you really want to understand human sexuality, behavior alone won't get you there. Trying to understand sex by looking at behavior is like trying to understand love by looking at a couple's wedding portrait... and their divorce papers. Being able to describe what happened—two people got married and then got divorced—doesn't get us very far. What we want to know is why and how it came to be. Did our couple fall out of love after they got married, and that's why they divorced? Or were they never in love but were forced to marry, and finally became free when they divorced? Without better evidence, we're mostly guessing. Until very recently, that's how it's been for sex—mostly guessing. But we're at a pivotal moment in sex science because, after decades of research describing what happens in human sexual response, we're finally figuring out the why and how—the process underlying the behavior. In the last decade of the twentieth century, researchers Erick Janssen and John Bancroft at the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction developed a model of human sexual response that provides an organizing principle for understanding the true story of sex. According to their dual control model, the sexual response mechanism in our brains consists of a pair of universal components—a sexual accelerator and sexual brakes—and those components respond to broad categories of sexual stimuli—including genital sensations, visual stimulation, and emotional context. And the sensitivity of each component varies from person to person. The result is that sexual arousal, desire, and orgasm are nearly universal experiences, but when and how we experience them depends largely on the sensitivities of our brakes and accelerator and on the kind of stimulation they're given. This is the mechanism underlying the behavior—the why and the how. And it's the rule that governs the story I'll be telling in this book: We're all made of the same parts, but in each of us, those parts are organized in a unique way that changes over our life span. No organization is better or worse than any other, and no phase in our life span is better or worse than any other; they're just different. An apple tree can be healthy no matter what variety of apple it is—though one variety may need constant direct sunlight and another might enjoy some shade. And an apple tree can be healthy when it's a seed, when it's a seedling, as it's growing, and as it fades at the end of the season, as well as when, in late summer, it is laden with fruit. But it has different needs at each of those phases in its life. You, too, are healthy and normal at the start of your sexual development, as you grow, and as you bear the fruits of living with confidence and joy inside your body. You are healthy when you need lots of sun, and you're healthy when you enjoy some shade. That's the true story. We are all the same. We are all different. We are all normal.

The organization of this book: The book is divided into four parts: (1) The (Not-So-Basic) Basics; (2) Sex in Context; (3) Sex in Action; and (4) Ecstasy for Everybody. The three chapters in the first part describe the basic hardware you were born with—a body, a brain, and a world. In chapter 1, I talk about genitals—their parts, the meaning we impose on those parts, and the science that proves definitively that yes, your genitals are perfectly healthy and beautiful just as they are. Chapter 2 details the sexual response mechanism in the brain—the dual control model of inhibition and excitation, or brakes and accelerator. Then in chapter 3, I introduce the ways that your sexual brakes and accelerator interact with the many other systems in your brain and environment, to shape whether a particular sensation or person turns you on, right now, in this moment. In the second part of the book, Sex in Context, we think about how all the basic hardware functions within the context of your actual life—your emotions, your relationship, your feelings about your body, and your attitudes toward sex. Chapter 4 focuses on two primary emotional systems, love and stress, and the surprising and contradictory ways they can influence your sexual responsiveness. Then chapter 5 describes the cultural forces that shape and constrain sexual functioning, and how you can maximize the good things about this process and overcome the destructive things. What we'll learn is that context—your external circumstances and your present mental state—is as crucial to your sexual wellbeing as your body and brain. Master the content in these chapters and your sexual life will transform along with, quite possibly, the rest of your life. The third part of the book, Sex in Action, is about sexual response itself, and I bust two long-standing and dangerous myths. Chapter 6 lays out the evidence that sexual arousal may or may not have anything to do with what's happening in your genitals. This is where we learn why arousal nonconcordance, which I mentioned earlier, is normal and healthy. And after you read chapter 7, you will never again hear someone say sex drive without thinking to yourself, Ah, but sex is not a drive. In this chapter I explain how responsive desire works. If you (or your partner) have ever experienced a change in

your interest in sex increase or decrease this is an important chapter for you. And the fourth part of the book, *Ecstasy for Everybody*, explains how to make sex entirely yours, which is how you create peak sexual ecstasy in your life. Chapter 8 is about orgasms what they are, what they're not, how to have them, and how to make them like the ones you read about, the ones that turn the stars into rainbows. And finally, in Chapter 9,

I describe the single most important thing you can do to improve your sex life. But I'll give it away right now: It turns out what matters most is not the parts you are made of or how they are organized, but how you feel about those parts. When you embrace your sexuality precisely as it is right now, that's the context that creates the greatest potential for ecstatic pleasure. Several chapters include worksheets or other interactive activities and exercises. A lot of these are fun like in chapter 3, I ask you to think about times when you've had great sex and identify what aspects of the context helped to make that sex great. All of them turn the science into something practical that can genuinely transform your sex life. Throughout the book, you'll follow the stories of four women: Olivia, Merritt, Camilla, and Laurie. These women don't exist as individuals; they're composites, integrating the real stories of the many women I've taught, talked with, emailed, and supported in my two decades as a sex educator. You can imagine each woman as a collage of snapshots: the face from one photograph, the arms from another, the feet from a third... each part represents someone real, and the collection hangs together meaningfully, but I've invented the relationships that the parts have to each other. I've chosen to construct these composites rather than tell the stories of specific women for two reasons. First, people tell me their stories in confidence, and I want to protect their identities, so I've changed details in order to keep their story their story. And second, I believe I can describe the widest possible variety of women's sexual experiences by focusing not on specific stories of one individual woman but on the larger narratives that contain the common themes I've seen in all these hundreds of women's lives.

And finally, at the end of each chapter you'll find a tl;dr list too long; didn't read, the blunt Internet abbreviation that means, Just get to the point. Each tl;dr list briefly summarizes the four most important messages in the chapter. If you find yourself thinking, My friend Alice should totally read this chapter! or I really wish my partner knew this, you might start by showing them the tl;dr list. I Or, if you're like me and get too excited about these ideas to keep them to yourself, you can follow your partner around the house, reading the tl;dr list out loud and saying, See, honey, arousal nonconcordance is a thing! or It turns out I have responsive desire! or You give me great context, sweetie! a couple of caveats First, most of the time when I say women in this book, I mean people who were born in female bodies, were raised as girls, and now have the social role and psychological identity of woman. There are plenty of women who don't fit one or more of those characteristics, but there's too little research on trans\* and genderqueer sexual functioning for me to say with certainty whether what's true about cisgender women's sexual wellbeing is also true for trans\* folks. I think it probably is, and as more research emerges over the coming decade we'll find out, but in the meantime I want to acknowledge that this is basically a book about cisgender women. And if you don't know what any of that means, don't worry about it. Second, I am passionate about the role of science in promoting women's sexual wellbeing, and I have worked hard in this book to encapsulate the research in the service of teaching women to live with confidence and joy inside their bodies. But I've been very intentional about the empirical details I've included or excluded. I asked myself, Does this fact help women have better sex lives, or is it just a totally fascinating and important empirical puzzle? And I cut the puzzles. I kept only the science that has the most immediate relevance in women's everyday lives. So what you'll find in these pages isn't the whole story of women's sexuality. I'm not sure the whole story would actually fit in one book.

Instead, I've included the parts of the story that I've found most powerful in my work as a sex educator, promoting women's sexual wellbeing, autonomy, and pleasure. The purpose of this book is to offer a new, science-based way of thinking about women's sexual wellbeing. Like all new ways of thinking, it opens up a lot of questions and challenges much preexisting knowledge. If you want to dive deeper, you'll find references in the notes, along with details about my process for boiling down a complex and multifaceted body of research into something practical. If you feel broken, or know someone who does. One more thing before we get into chapter 1. Remember how I said we've all been lied to, but it's no one's fault? I want to take a moment to recognize the damage done by that lie. So many women come to my blog or to my class or to my public talks convinced that they are sexually broken. They feel dysfunctional. Abnormal. And on top of that, they feel anxious, frustrated, and hopeless about the lack of information and support they've received from medical professionals, therapists, partners, family, and friends. Just relax, they've been told. Have a glass of wine. Or, Women just don't want sex that much. Get over it. Or, Sometimes sex hurts can't you just ignore it? I understand the frustration these women experience, and the despair and in the second half of the

book I talk about the neurological process that traps people in frustration and despair, shutting them off from hope and joy, and I describe science-based ways to get out of the trap. Here's what I need you to know right now: The information in this book will show you that whatever you're experiencing in your sexuality—whether its challenges with arousal, desire, orgasm, pain, no sexual sensations—is the result of your sexual response mechanism functioning appropriately... in an inappropriate world. You are normal; it is the world around you that's broken. That's actually the bad news. The good news is that when you understand how your sexual response mechanism works, you can begin to take control of your environment and your brain in order to maximize your sexual potential, even in a broken world. And when you change your environment and your brain, you can change and heal your sexual functioning. This book contains information that I have seen transform women's sexual wellbeing. I've seen it transform men's understanding of their women partners. I've seen same-sex couples look at each other and say, Oh. So that's what was going on. Students, friends, blog readers, and even fellow sex educators have read a blog post or heard me give a talk and said, Why didn't anyone tell me this before? It explains everything! I know for sure that what I've written in this book can help you. It may not be enough to heal all the wounds inflicted on your sexuality by a culture in which it sometimes feels nearly impossible for a woman to do sexuality right, but it will provide powerful tools in support of your healing. How do I know? Evidence, of course! At the end of one semester, I asked my 187 students to write down one really important thing they learned in my class. Here's a small sample of what they wrote: I am normal! I AM NORMAL I learned that everything is NORMAL, making it possible to go through the rest of my life with confidence and joy. I learned that I am normal! And I learned that some people have spontaneous desire and others have responsive desire and this fact helped me really understand my personal life. Women vary! And just because I do not experience my sexuality in the same way as many other women, that does not make me abnormal. Women's sexual desire, arousal, response, etc., is incredibly varied. The one thing I can count on regarding sexuality is that people vary, a lot. That everyone is different and everything is normal; no two alike. No two alike! And many more. More than half of them wrote some version of I am normal. I sat in my office and read those responses with tears in my eyes. There was something urgently important to my students about feeling normal, and somehow my class had cleared a path to that feeling. The science of women's sexual wellbeing is young, and there is much still to be learned. But this young science has already discovered truths about women's sexuality that have transformed my students' relationships with their bodies and it has certainly transformed mine. I wrote this book to share the science, stories, and sex-positive insights that prove to us that, despite our cultures' vested interest in making us feel broken, dysfunctional, unlovely, and unlovable, we are in fact fully capable of confident, joyful sex. The promise of *Come as You Are* is this: No matter where you are in your sexual journey right now, whether you have an awesome sex life and want to expand the awesomeness, or you're struggling and want to find solutions, you will learn something that will improve your sex life and transform the way you understand what it means to be a sexual being. And you'll discover that, even if you don't yet feel that way, you are already sexually whole and healthy. The science says so. I can prove it. I'll use they as a singular pronoun, rather than he or she throughout the book. It's simpler, as well as more inclusive of folks outside the gender binary.

*Revue de presse* This is the best book I have ever read about sexual desire and why some couples just stop having sex, and what they can do about it. *Come As You Are* is an absolutely necessary guide for all couples who want to understand the ups and downs in their own sex life. It is a must read! John Gottman, Ph.D., author of *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* Emily Nagoski has written one of the most important books about sex any woman (or anybody else) could ever pick up, full of insights that are both fascinating and deeply useful. Synthesizing new research and theory about sexuality with old-school sex-positive information of the sort you didn't learn in sex ed (unless, perhaps, you are a Unitarian, or Scandinavian, or lucky enough to be in Dr. Nagoski's class), I guarantee *Come As You Are* will open minds and change lives. Carol Queen, Ph.D., Founding director, Center for Sex Culture Emily Nagoski is worth her weight in TED Talks, and *Come as You Are* is a master-class in the science of sex. Ian Kerner, sex therapist and bestselling author of *She Comes First* It's the science of sex, decoded and demystified. Want to be educated on the latest findings about female genitalia? Of course you do. Empowering and sex-positive at best, this informative read makes for an enticing bedfellow. *Refinery29* Lots of books and articles and experts claim to have the keys to transform your sex life. This one actually has it. It isn't as fast as taking a pill, but it will last a whole lot longer. You will find no hot new bedroom moves—it's that deeper-level soul stuff. You know, the stuff that actually works. *Salon.com* Wonderful new language to help us articulate to women (and their lovers) what is going on. *Huffington Post* Like a punch to the gut. When I read the passage

that made me realize after all these years that I was not actually broken, I began to cry. . . . I wished [Nagoski] was someone who was actively in my life, someone I could reach out to for grounding every time I momentarily forgot the lessons in her book. Book Riot Nagoski's book deserves plaudits for the rare achievement of merging pop science and the sexual self-help genre in prose that's not insufferably twee. . . . [Come As You Are] offers up hard facts on the science of arousal and desire in a friendly and accessible way. The Guardian (UK)