



The Joy of Sex: The Ultimate Revised Edition

By Alex Comfort

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A revised and updated edition of the book famous for helping couples discover how sex can be playful, erotic, passionate, exhilarating, and most of all, pleasurable.

The Joy of Sex revolutionized how we experience our sexuality. An international bestseller since it was first published in 1972, Dr. Alex Comfort's classic work dared to celebrate the joy of human physical intimacy with such authority and candor that a whole generation felt empowered to enjoy sex. Now fully updated, revised, and reillustrated, *The Joy of Sex* once again sets the standard as the world's most trusted sex manual.

Substantial revisions from sex expert and relationship psychologist Susan Quilliam include new information on:

- Key scientific discoveries in the fields of psychology, physiology, and sexology
- The Internet and couple-friendly pornography
- The importance of sex to our growth as people and partners
- Maintaining a fulfilling sex life as we get older

Above all, *The Joy of Sex* emphasizes the importance of happy and healthy sexuality in our lives.

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The Joy of Sex: The Ultimate Revised Edition By Alex Comfort Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #16653 in Books
- Brand: Three Rivers Press CA
- Published on: 2009-12-29
- Released on: 2009-12-29
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.00" w x 6.70" l, 2.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 288 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

“Answers questions no one had in 1972 . . . this time through the eyes of women, too.”

—*New York Times*

“There’s something to celebrate about the enduring life of so seminal a piece of educational literature.”

—NPR

“[Succeeds] in bringing *The Joy of Sex* up to current standards.”

—*The New Yorker*

“An old book now has a lot of new tricks.”

—*Men’s Health*

“A bellwether of human sexuality for decades . . . the new version is better.”

—*Washington Post*

“Witty, fanciful, and mercifully free of moralizing.”

—*Time*

“An intelligent sex manual that is serious without being solemn.”

—Desmond Morris, author of *People Watching* and *The Human Sexes: The Natural History of a Man and a Woman*

From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author

DR. ALEX COMFORT was one of the world’s leading experts in the field of human sexuality and one of the most versatile authors of the twentieth century. He died in March 2000 at the age of eighty.

SUSAN QUILLIAM is a relationship psychologist and an advice columnist. She writes, broadcasts, and presents internationally on topics surrounding love and sexuality.

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On Gourmet Lovemaking

All of us, barring any physical limitations, are able to dance and sing — after a fashion. This, if you think about it, summarizes the justification for learning to make love. Love, in the same way as singing, is something to be taken spontaneously. On the other hand, the difference between Pavlova and the Palais de Danse, or opera and barbershop singing, is much less than the difference between sex as our recent ancestors came to accept it and sex as it can be.

At least we recognize this now (so that instead of worrying if sex is sinful, most people now worry whether they are “getting satisfaction” — one can worry about anything, given the determination). And there are now enough books about the basics; we are largely past the point of people worrying about the normality, possibility, and variety of sexual experience. This book is slightly different, in that there are now enough people who have those basics and want more depth of understanding, solid ideas, and inspiration.

To draw a parallel, chef-grade cooking doesn't happen naturally: it starts at the point where people know how to prepare and enjoy food, are curious about it and willing to take trouble preparing it, read recipe hints, and find they are helped by one or two techniques. It's hard to make mayonnaise by trial and error, for instance. Gourmet sex, as we define it, is the same — the extra one can get from comparing notes, using some imagination, trying way-out or new experiences, when one already is making satisfying love and wants to go on from there.

This book will likely attract four sorts of readers. First, there are those who don't fancy it, find it disturbing, and would rather stay the way they are — these should put it down, accept our apologies, and stay the way they are. Second, there are those who are with the idea, but don't like our choice of techniques — remember, it's a menu, not a rulebook.

Third, most people will use our notes as a personal one-couple notebook from which they might get ideas. In this respect we have tried to stay wide open. One of the original aims of this book was to cure the notion, born of non-discussion, that common sex needs are odd or weird; the whole joy of sex-with-love is that there are no rules, so long as you enjoy, and the choice is practically unlimited. We have, however, left out long discussion of very specialized sexual preferences; people who like these know already what they want to try. The final group of readers are the hardy experimentalists, bent on trying absolutely everything. They too will do best to read this exactly like a cookbook — except that sex is safer in this respect, between lovers, in that you can't get obese or atherosclerotic on it, or give yourself ulcers. The worst you can get, given sensible safety precautions, is sore, anxious, or disappointed. However, one needs a steady basic diet of quiet, loving, night-and-morning intercourse to stand this experimentation on, simply because, contrary to popular ideas, the more regular sex a couple has, the higher the deliberately contrived peaks — just as the more you cook routinely, the better and the more reliable banquets you can stage.

One specific group of readers deserves special note. If you are disabled in any way, don't stop reading. A physical disability is not an obstacle to fulfilling sex. In counseling disabled people, one repeatedly finds that the real disability isn't a mechanical problem but a mistaken idea that there is only one "right" — or enjoyable — way to have sex. The best approach is probably to go through the book with your partner, marking off the things you can do. Then pick something appealing that you think you can't quite do, and see if there is a strategy you can develop together. Talking to other couples where one partner has a problem similar to yours is another resource.

In sum, the people we are addressing are the adventurous and uninhibited lovers who want to find the limits of their ability to enjoy sex. That means we take some things for granted — having intercourse naked and spending time over it; being able and willing to make it last, up to a whole afternoon on occasion; having privacy; not being scared of things like genital kisses; not being obsessed with one sexual trick to the exclusion of all others; and, of course, loving each other.

As the title implies, this book is about love as well as sex: you don't get high-quality sex on any other basis — either you love each other before you come to want it, or, if you happen to get it, you love each other because of it, or both. Just as you can't cook without heat, you can't make love without feedback. By feedback, we mean the right mixture of stop and go, tough and tender, exertion and affection. This comes by empathy and long mutual knowledge. Anyone who expects to get this in a first attempt with a stranger is an optimist, or a neurotic — if they do, it's what used to be called love at first sight, and isn't expendable: "skill," or variety, is no substitute. Also, one can't teach tenderness.

The starting point of all lovemaking is close bodily contact; love has been defined as the harmony of two souls, and the contact of two epiderms. At the same time, we might as well plan our menu so that we learn to use the rest of our equipment. That includes our feelings of identity, forcefulness, and so on, and all of our fantasy needs. Luckily, sex behavior in humans is enormously elastic (it has had to be, or we wouldn't be here), and also nicely geared to help us express most of the needs that society or our upbringing have corked up.

Elaboration in sex is something we need rather specially and it has the advantage that if we really make it work, it makes us more, not less, receptive to each other as people. This is the answer to anyone who thinks

that conscious effort to increase our sex range is “mechanical” or a substitute for real human relationship — we may start that way, but it’s an excellent entry to learning that we are people and relating to each other as such. There may be other places we can learn to express all of ourselves, and do it mutually, but there aren’t many.

Those are the assumptions on which this book is based. Granted this, there are two modes of sex — the duet and the solo — and a good concert alternates between the two. The duet is a cooperative effort aiming at simultaneous orgasm, or at least one orgasm each, and complete, untechnically planned release. This, in fact, needs skill, and can be built up from more calculated “loveplay” until doing the right thing for both of you becomes fully automatic. This is the basic sexual meal.

The solo, by contrast, is when one partner is the player and the other the instrument. The aim of the player is to produce results on the other’s pleasure experience as extensive, unexpected, and generally wild as his or her skill allows — to blow them out of themselves. The player doesn’t lose control, though he or she can get wildly excited by what is happening to the other. The instrument does lose control — in fact, with a responsive instrument and a skillful performer, this is the concerto situation — and if it ends in an uncontrollable ensemble, so much the better. All the elements of music and dance are involved — rhythm, mounting tension, tantalization, even forcefulness: “I’m like the executioner,” said the lady in the Persian poem, “but where he inflicts intolerable pain I will only make you die of pleasure.” There is indeed an element of infliction in the solo mode, which is why some lovers dislike it and others overdo it, but no major lovemaking is complete without some solo passages.

The antique idea of the woman as passive and the man as performer used to ensure that he would show off playing solos on her, and early marriage manuals perpetuated this idea. Today, she is herself the soloist par excellence, whether in getting him excited to start with, or in controlling him and showing off all her skills. Solo recitals are not, of course, necessarily separate from intercourse. Apart from leading into it, there are many coital solos — for the woman astride, for example — while mutual masturbation or genital kisses can be fully fledged duets. Solo response can be electrifyingly extreme in the quietest people. Skillfully handled by someone who doesn’t stop for yells of murder but does know when to stop, a woman can get orgasm after orgasm, and a man can be kept hanging just short of climax to the limit of human endurance. The solo-given orgasm, whether from her or from him, is unique — neither bigger nor smaller in either sex than a full duet but different; sharper but not so round. And most people who have experienced both like to alternate them. Trying to say how they differ is a little like describing wine. Differ they do, however, and much depends on cultivating and alternating them.

Top-level enjoyment doesn’t have to be varied, it just often is. In fact, being stuck rigidly with one sex technique usually means anxiety. In this book we have not, for example, focused on coital postures to the exclusion of all else. The common positions are now familiar to most people from writing and pictures if not from trial — the more extreme ones, as a rule, should be spontaneous, but few of them have marked advantages. This explains the apparent emphasis in this book on extras — the “sauces and pickles.” That said, individuals who, through a knot in their psyche, are obliged to live on sauce and pickle only are unfortunate in missing the most sustaining part of the meal — exclusive obsessions in sex are very like living exclusively on horseradish sauce through allergy to beef; fear of horseradish sauce, however, as indigestible, unnecessary, and immature is another hang-up, namely puritanism.

One of the things still missing from the essence of sexual freedom is the unashamed ability to use sex as play. In the past, ideas of maturity were nearly as much to blame as old-style moralisms about what is normal or perverse. We are all immature, and have anxieties and aggressions. Coital play, like dreaming, may be a programmed way of dealing acceptably with these, just as children express their fears and aggressions in games. Adults are unfortunately afraid of playing games, dressing up, and acting scenes. It makes them self-conscious: something horrid might get out. In this regard, bed is the place to play all the games you have ever wanted to play — if adults could become less self-conscious about such “immature” needs, we should have fewer deeply anxious people. If we were able to transmit the sense of play that is essential to a full, enterprising, and healthily immature view of sex between committed people, we would be performing a

mitzvah: playfulness is a part of love that could be a major contribution to human happiness. But still the main dish is loving, un-self-conscious sexual pleasure of all kinds — long, frequent, varied, ending with both parties satisfied, but not so full they can't face another light course, and another meal in a few hours. The pièce de résistance is good old face-to-face matrimonial, the finishing-off position, with mutual orgasm, and starting with a full day or night of ordinary tenderness. Other ways of making love are special in various ways, and the changes of timbre are infinitely varied — complicated ones are for special occasions, or special uses like holding off an over-quick male orgasm, or are things that, like pepper steak, are stunning once a year but not staples.

There are, after all, only two “rules” in good sex, apart from the obvious one of not doing things that are silly, antisocial, or dangerous. One is: “Don’t do anything you don’t really enjoy,” and the other is: “Find out your partner’s needs and don’t balk at them if you can help it.” In other words, a good giving and taking relationship depends on a compromise (so does going to a show — if you both want the same thing, fine; if not, take turns and don’t let one partner always dictate). This can be easier than it sounds, because unless their partner wants something they find actively off-putting, real lovers get a reward not only from their own satisfaction but also from seeing the other respond and become satisfied. Most wives who don’t like Chinese food will eat it occasionally for the pleasure of seeing a Sinophile husband enjoy it, and vice versa.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Mendoza:

This The Joy of Sex: The Ultimate Revised Edition book is just not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book is actually information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This kind of The Joy of Sex: The Ultimate Revised Edition without we recognize teach the one who reading it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't become worry The Joy of Sex: The Ultimate Revised Edition can bring if you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it in your lovely laptop even telephone. This The Joy of Sex: The Ultimate Revised Edition having great arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

Joan Marcial:

People live in this new moment of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the extra time or they will get large amount of stress from both way of life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely yes. People is human not just a robot. Then we question again, what kind of activity do you have when the spare time coming to an individual of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, the book you have read is usually The Joy of Sex: The Ultimate Revised Edition.

Joshua Yoshida:

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Diana Keller:

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