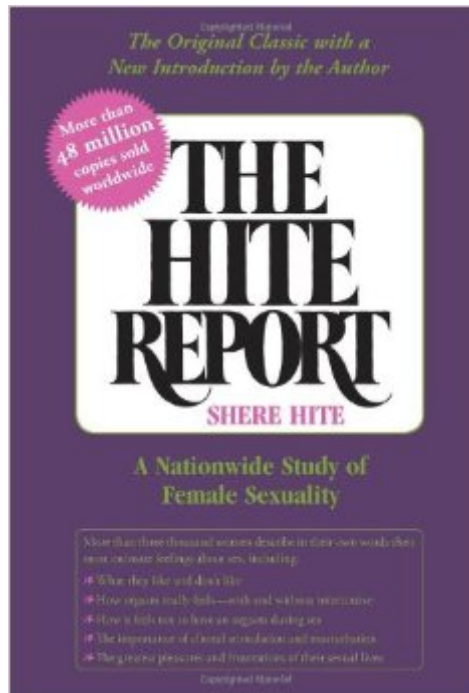


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The Hite Report: A National Study Of Female Sexuality



Synopsis

A reproduction of the classic text, unavailable now for more than a decade, with a new introduction by the author. The Hite Report, first published in 1976, was a sexual revolution in six hundred pages. To answer sensitive questions dealing with the most intimate details of women's sexuality, Hite's innovation was simple: she asked women, a lot of them, everything--and published the results. One hundred thousand women, ages fourteen to seventy-eight, were asked what they do and don't like about sex; how orgasm really feels, with and without intercourse; how it feels not to have an orgasm during sex; the importance of clitoral stimulation and masturbation; and to name the greatest pleasures and frustrations of their sexual lives, among many other questions. The Hite Report declares that orgasm is easy and strong for women, given the right stimulation; that most women have orgasm most easily during masturbation or clitoral stimulation by hand; that sex as we define it is a cultural institution, not a biological one; and that attitudes must change to include the stimulation women desire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Hite Report" (on female sexuality) is a seminal and indispensable text. It is by turn shocking, inspiring, disturbing, titillating, and sometimes boring, but always informative. What you get is practically PURE information, but of a sort rarely found elsewhere -- if sex weren't sex, the report would be a bone-dry academic snoozefest. Along with a bit of methodology and comment, the book's content is simply collected testimonies of American women's subjective experiences of their sexuality. The reader is left to draw his or her own conclusions. As a study it assumes no strong

thesis (unlike some of Hite's later work), therefore as a critic one can't say much more about it. That said, although the good people at insist we reviewers focus on the "product," I have something to add about my experience of the "product" that may be of more interest. Back in the late 70's, my mother, in uncharacteristic daring and playfulness, shelved an early edition of the "The Hite Report" next to her cookbooks on the kitchen bookshelf and left it there. Years later, around the age of 13, her son (me) noticed this book was not like the other ones. Needless to say, after reading just a bit standing there in the kitchen, the son absconded with it to his room and read the whole thing. And reread. Many times. It was years before it got replaced next to "Larouse Gastronomique." To this day, it lives there, and I've never asked Mom if she ever noticed its leave of absence. My primary purpose at the time was titillation, but underneath my arousal was a sense of wonder and curiosity. Feminine sexuality was demystified for me even as my awe grew. Looking back, I see how I formed the basis of a deeply respectful understanding of the power of ALL sexuality. I accepted how taboos, shame, etc.

This was groundbreaking when it first came out, and justifiably so because it spoke the truth about many women's experience of sex. NO, it wasn't bad science -- it simply wasn't a random sample but rather a self-selected sample of respondents who still had something very important to say. More to the point, Hite's conclusions were verified by many later studies. She merely said what is today obvious to sex researchers and to the rest of us: that clitoral orgasm is both natural and normal, that clitoral stimulation is necessary for many women to orgasm, and that women orgasm very easily that way. In comparison, intercourse is unreliable on that point. Indeed, a sizeable percentage of women simply can't and don't orgasm solely from intercourse. They're just built that way by nature, and there are far too many of them to consider this an aberration rather than just a normal physical variation, like the color of one's eyes. There's a very good reason most women love to be on the receiving end of oral sex: when properly done, IT WORKS to produce orgasm, as does self-stimulation, and both of those work much better and more reliably than intercourse. Hite was nearly alone among researchers saying it at the time, however, and some of those other sex researchers felt threatened (they *should* have felt threatened, given that they had unthinkingly dismissed clitoral orgasm as unimportant). To simply write her off because her sample size and selection weren't random and double-blind now seems just silly, considering the accuracy of the point she was making. And what those 3,000 women had to say is still of value: to dismiss them is to dismiss the truth of their individual experience.

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