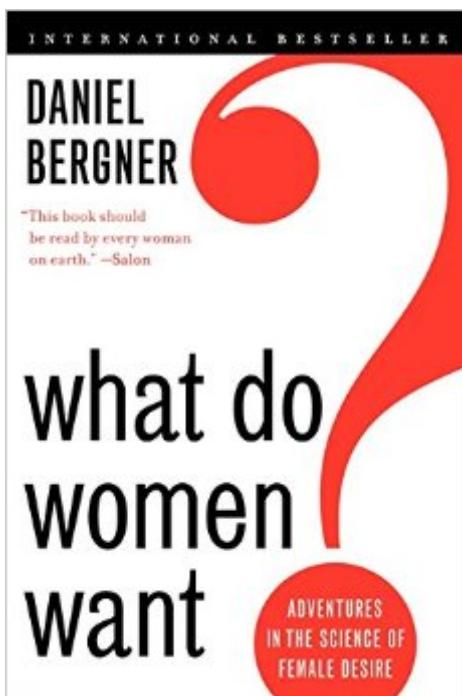


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# What Do Women Want?: Adventures In The Science Of Female Desire



## Synopsis

In *What Do Women Want? Adventures in the Science of Female Desire*, critically acclaimed journalist Daniel Bergner disseminates the latest scientific research and paints an unprecedented portrait of female lust: the triggers, the fantasies, the mind-body connection (and disconnection), the reasons behind the loss of libido, and, most revelatory, that this loss is not inevitable. Bergner asks: Are women actually the less monogamous gender? Do women really crave intimacy and emotional connection? Are women more disposed to sex with strangers and multiple pairings than either science or society have ever let on? And is the fairer sex • actually more sexually aggressive and anarchic than men? While debunking the myths popularized by evolutionary psychology, Bergner also looks at the future of female sexuality. Pharmaceutical companies are pouring billions of dollars to develop a Viagra • for women. But will it ever be released? Or are we not yet ready for a world in which women can become aroused at the simple popping of a pill? Insightful and illuminating, *What Do Women Want?* is a deeper exploration of Daniel Bergner's provocative *New York Times Magazine* cover story; it will spark dynamic debates and discussions for years to come.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I borrowed this book from the library hoping to learn something useful about women's sexual desires, and I believe I have. Society teaches men two contradictory ideas about what women want in men. One side says women want gentlemen who treat them with respect, listen empathetically to her thoughts and feelings, are good friends with them, etc. The other side says that's all lies; what

women really want is a man who is controlling, emotionally distant, and only really interested in her physically. Then the first side counters that women who want what the second side says they want are psychologically flawed or emotionally wounded, and best avoided. Young men listen to both sides, wonder which side is right, then pick a side and wonder if they chose right. After reading this book, now I understand that both sides are right. If the scientists whose work is described in this book are correct, normal women have a fascinating sexual duality that can be baffling not only for men but for women too. Normal women desire both types of men, at different times. For me it was an eye-opener. When a woman who has a wonderful husband who treats her with respect etc. etc loses interest in him sexually though she still loves him dearly, while longing for the sexual attention of a distant, controlling man who is only really interested in her body -- going way beyond just periodical boredom with relationship routine -- it doesn't mean something is wrong with her. It means she's a sexually NORMAL woman. The task for men, then, is to somehow help her with both sides of her sexual duality. Of course no one man can really be both; it doesn't make sense, even if he's a great actor. But the "bad boy" side can be addressed in sexual fantasy.

As a clergy I have seen my share of bored, if not sexless, marriages and counseled more than a few who had affairs to find desire again and rejuvenate their sex lives. But regardless of the book's title it fails to provide sufficient guidelines for bored spouses or hope for monogamous couples whose sizzle inevitably has turned to fizzle. But while the answer to Bergner's question is far too complicated to be answered easily or completely by science, it is a fascinating summary of what the experts know (or not) about women's desire. In summary, women's sexual response is incredibly (and marvelously) complex. Bergner interviews sex researchers studying the sexual functioning in the animal kingdom, such as monkeys, mice, rats, and spiders, as well as women. Focusing on arousal they study a variety of social factors, such as the ways initiation impacts desire, and the physical, such as the brain's neurotransmitters and how dopamine increases desire but yet interacts with serotonin and testosterone in a complicated way. They find the body responds even when the mind is unaware of it and study to whom we are aroused and when. And, while most people are aware of the clitoris and the g spot, (even if they can't find the latter,) few are aware of the nerve-dense clitoral extensions and wings or the four nerve pathways that carry signals to a woman's brain via the spine. The complexity of arousal is apparent when women are orgasmic even though spinal injuries dictate they should be physically unable to be so. Surely these various research studies are enough reason to read this book in order to fully appreciate the female's sexual complexity as a miracle.

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