

what women (and men) don't get about MALE SEXUALITY

new book blows the lid off of our assumptions about
what really makes men tick

“The stereotype of men ‘thinking with their little heads rather than their big heads’ is not only wrong, but harmful,” says psychologist Michael Bader, author of the groundbreaking new book **Male Sexuality: Why Women Don't Understand It—And Men Don't Either** (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009, \$29.95, hardcover). Why? Because when it comes to sex men's motivations are complex, highly emotional, and rarely understood—by either gender. “At their deepest level, most men don't see women as things or conquests; they actually worry about them too much. They aren't too selfish but too guilty. They aren't predatory but lonely. They may seem to have more power than women but usually feel as if they have less,” he says. As a psychologist and psychoanalyst with nearly three decades of clinical experience Bader has seen how misconceptions about and caricatures of male sexuality undermine relationships and leave women feeling unfulfilled and unappreciated. It's why he wrote **Male Sexuality** and why he decodes the complicated logic behind male sexuality for any reader who wants better relationships and more insight into life behind the bedroom door.

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“Dr. Bader...reminds us that understanding erotic life is the best cure for what ails it.”

~Kim Cattrall, star of *Sex and the City*

Bader is available for interview. Here's just some of what he can discuss:

SEXUAL RUTHLESSNESS: WHAT MEN (AND WOMEN) WANT

“Sexual ruthlessness means that we momentarily become selfish and turn away from concerns about the other's pleasure to surrender to our own, that we momentarily stop worrying about hurting or disappointing the other person. ‘Ruthlessness’ refers to the capacity to ‘use’ another person without concern that the other will feel used. It is a normal and necessary part of healthy sexual desire,” says Bader. According to him many of our sexual fantasies, desires, and practices are rooted in our search for sexual ruthlessness, and many of our inhibitions in its denial.

INTERNET SEX: MORE ABOUT DOWNLOADING LONELINESS THAN UPLOADING PLEASURE

For many women, discovering that a partner has been having virtual sex can seem like a betrayal as great as a “real” affair. In his practice Bader has seen countless men who turn to online porn to act out fantasies and find sexual release. He explains why the Internet is the outlet of choice for so many men. “Loneliness and rejection often drive and shape sexual desire, especially in men. Many of the most common male sexual fantasies, practices, and preferences can be understood as attempts to counteract these feelings and their accompanying beliefs. Internet pornography and sex is one such attempt,” says Bader. He also takes on the thorny issue of whether the Internet fuels sex addiction and discusses how Internet sex can become a barrier to getting help.

SEXUAL AGGRESSION & PORNOGRAPHY: MYTH VS. REALITY

The battle is a loud and contentious one and both sides are convinced of their answer to the question: Does pornography, especially the extreme or “gonzo” variety, lead men to objectify women or create norms of sexual behavior that are degrading or oppressive? Bader reviews the research and draws on his decades of clinical experience working with men who use pornography to provocatively answer: No. Most men don't and can't get aroused by the suffering of real women. Instead, the appeal to men of most pornography lies in its almost universal depictions of women's sexual pleasure, even in situations that would hurt women in real life. Such depictions of pleasure enable male viewers to momentarily overcome guilty feelings toward women just enough to permit arousal to occur. For Bader, the real dangers of pornography, especially violent pornography, lies in the conditions in which much of it is filmed, conditions that are especially abusive to the women involved.

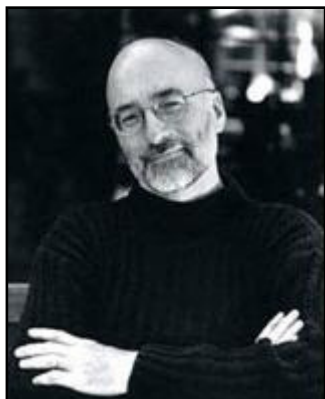
PROSTITUTION: PAYING FOR FEAR-FREE SEX

Prostitutes have always provided men with something they feel they can't get at home. That "something" depends on history and culture. Hardly a month goes by where it doesn't seem that someone, a man, in politics, entertainment, or business gets exposed for his involvement with a prostitute. Thousands of men are paying for sexual services, often "high-class" ones all the time. Bader offers a unique explanation: Men are burdened with especially onerous feelings of guilt and responsibility toward women. They fear both disappointment and judgment in their wives and girlfriends. Hookers counteract these feelings completely. After money is exchanged, the man is freed of all responsibility and effort; his pleasure becomes the focus of the hooker's attention. Bader argues that such an explanation doesn't excuse bad behavior but instead humanizes it.

THE LOLITA FANTASY: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

Many women feel hurt when they learn about a male partner's desire for a young, nubile woman—the archetypal Lolita figure. They see it as not just a desire for someone else, but a direct rejection of them. In a sense it is, but it has far less to do with their older bodies and a few laugh lines than it does with men's fear of real intimacy. "The Lolita figure symbolically speaks to men's fear of getting too close to real women, in other words women their own age. It's as if she says to them 'Don't worry about me. You don't have to give anything up to be close to me, don't have to take care of me. I won't bring you down. Instead, I'll lift you up with my energy, my optimism, my happiness,'" says Bader. He also discusses what drives other common male fantasies.

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About Michael Bader, D.M.H.

Michael Bader, D.M.H., is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst who has been in practice for more than twenty-five years. He is the author of *Arousal: The Secret Logic of Sexual Fantasies* and is widely published in both professional and popular media. A respected teacher, public speaker, and therapist, he lives in San Francisco and Grass Valley, CA.

Bader has been interviewed on national and local media, including "Kim Cattrall's Sexual Intelligence" on HBO, the Discover Channel, BBC, CNBC, NPR, and other national and local radio outlets. Visit him at: <http://www.michaelbader.com>.

Video

http://www.michaelbader.com/michael_bader.html

Articles

- **"The Great Porn Misunderstanding: Pornography Is Mostly About Fantasy, Not Reality"**
http://www.alternet.org/story/104863/the_great_porn_misunderstanding%3A_pornography_is_mostly_about_fantasy%2C_not_reality/
- **"Why We Should Stop Demonizing John Edwards"**
http://www.alternet.org/sex/94718/why_we_should_stop_demonizing_john_edwards/
- **"Why Men Do Stupid Things"**
http://www.alternet.org/sex/79635/why_men_do_stupid_things%3A_the_psychological_appeal_of_prostitutes/
- **"Is Pornography Really Harmful?"**
http://www.alternet.org/sex/67144/is_pornography_really_harmful/

Raves for Male Sexuality: Why Women Don't Understand It— And Men Don't Either

“Dr. Bader calls us back from our current temptation to censor and judge sexuality and reminds us that understanding erotic life is the best cure for what ails it.”

~**Kim Cattrall**, star of *Sex and the City*

“Michael Bader knows men. He probes the multiple layers of male sexuality with a kindness and compassion that is rare. This book is such a good read—I kept thinking, ‘Yes, he gets it.’”

~**Esther Perel**, Columbia University, author of *Mating in Captivity: Unlocking Erotic Intelligence*

“With the publication of *Male Sexuality*, Michael Bader firmly establishes himself in the forefront of therapists writing about sexuality. Dr. Bader seeks to understand something that is not generally understood and is off-limits to many, guarded by cultural dragons and censors. His discoveries are wise, thoughtful, and controversial.”

~**Phillip Kaufman**, director of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

“Michael Bader’s *Male Sexuality* is a fascinating and brilliant book that will appeal to men and women who wish to understand and improve their sexual relationships. Clearly and beautifully written, enlivened by vignettes from Dr. Bader’s extensive clinical practice, this book is a must-read for everyone interested in what makes both male and female sexuality what it is.”

~**Louis Breger, Ph.D.**, The Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis, author of *Freud: Darkness in the Midst of Vision*

“Michael Bader’s ideas are original and provocative, grounded in scholarship, and illustrated by ample case studies. He argues persuasively that sexual pursuits that look perverse and have been fodder for fear mongering and censorship might be better understood as fantasy play that reassures one against hidden fears. The he arrives at a place of optimism and compassion for our relationships and ourselves should give hope to all of us.”

~**Phillip Freeman, M.D.**, Harvard Medical School, Boston University

Suggested Interview Questions for Michael Bader, DMH:
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