



Ethical Porn for Dicks: A Man's Guide to Responsible Viewing Pleasure

David J. Ley

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Ethical Porn is bound to be controversial, but it includes great information given from a forceful perspective.

“Dude, if you want your girlfriend to watch porn with you, you gotta be cool,” advises David J. Ley in his punchy new book, *Ethical Porn for Dicks*. Ley aims to dispel myths and misconceptions about porn use and the function of porn in a healthy sex life, and to reclaim a man’s right to gaze at whatever excites him. “It is possible to be a gentleman and watch porn,” he asserts, though crude generalizations undermine the valuable points he makes.

With endorsements from Dan Savage and Pornhub.com, *Ethical Porn for Dicks* is intended to reorient the argument about whether porn is destructive, immoral, or unethical. “I might mention highbrow concepts,” Ley says, “but I’m not going to bog you down with references, citations, or footnotes.” That’s too bad, since many of Ley’s claims come off as stereotypes.

Women force men to limit their sexuality; women “make their men suffer through romance movies galore”; women’s fear of pornography is the root of censorship. These are serious statements, sprinkled liberally throughout the book. Who’s really the problem?

Although *Ethical Porn* is intended to be supportive of the male perspective, it sounds defensive instead of progressive. Ley spends less time defining “ethical porn” than he does offering helpful rejoinders for winning arguments with your girlfriend about porn. There’s great information here, but it’s buried in pages of jocular comments about jerking off.

Ethical Porn for Dicks founders under its own ambitions. There’s a lot of territory to cover: porn at work, religious morality, feminism, questions about infidelity, and more. Ley writes confidently, always returning to the same assertion: “It’s possible to be an ethical, responsible person and treat oneself and others with dignity and integrity, AND to watch hot, no-holds-barred sex on screen.”

Ley repeatedly affirms that porn isn’t harmful in itself—but if that’s the case, why write *Ethical Porn* at all? At its best, the book speaks to a deeper male fear that sexual fantasies or preferences might compromise success in the wider world. At worst, it devolves into finger-pointing and misinformation. By the nature of its subject, *Ethical Porn for Dicks* is bound to be controversial. This defense of “ethical, erotic, and honest pornography” succeeds in some areas but fails to deliver the money shot.

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