

Vagina Revolution: A Candid and Informative Conversation About Vaginas

Laura Lewin

Barbara Green, Contributor

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Laura Lewin, a North Carolina school counselor, wrote *Vagina Revolution* with the help of Barbara Green, a physical therapist with expertise in women's health, sexuality, and pelvic floor dysfunction. This well-written, attractively packaged, and uncompromising examination of all things vaginal would be an appropriate addition to a high school or college library and to the sexuality or women's-issues section of a bookstore. Though a sophisticated feminist audience might find much of Lewin's overly impassioned verbiage a tad irritating, even the most worldly Eve Ensler type would admit there is always room for another book celebrating "down there."

Few, if any, stones are left unturned in this 293-page book, from discharge to masturbation, rape, and female genital mutilation. Written as a conversation between the very outspoken Lewin and CG, a less radical "composite expert" mostly based on Lewin's friend Barbara Green, the friendly back-and-forth style works well. The average reader will appreciate Green's more mainstream personality that serves to temper some of Lewin's almost shockingly progressive opinions. Lewin's sentiment that the world would be a better place if the vagina and everything about it was talked about openly in all venues, from the schoolroom to the coffee shop, is actually quite refreshing, albeit naively utopian.

On this note, *Vagina Revolution* does tend to get off subject at times and devolve into a lamentation about all that's wrong in the patriarchal world, and if everyone would just read the book and get over their hangups, all would be well. This weakness, coupled with the excess of repetition and redundancies, is off-putting in such an otherwise stellar and necessary book.

Vagina Revolution is organized into three parts that correspond to the vagina's physical, mental, and spiritual manifestations. Part one opens with an informative overview of the vagina's neighboring orifices, the anus and urethra, and segues into a fascinating montage of close-up photographs of the labia. Besides the abundance of tastefully explicit photos, there are many charts, drawings, and diagrams throughout the book. For example, the second chapter sports a chart that extrapolates on the differences between yeast infections, bacterial vaginosis, and urinary tract infections, while another chart in the thirteenth chapter breaks down the frequency of masturbation for various age groups.

Also covered in part one are chapters on hormones, the clitoris, smell, and how the vagina ages. Part two includes chapters on sexuality, masturbation, fantasy, orgasm, and sex. This section also has an abundance of useful and compassionate information on and exercises for overcoming inhibitions about one's body image and sexual persona.

Part three covers childbirth and motherhood, sexual orientation, and gender identity, and it finishes up with a look at how the vagina is faring worldwide. There are several excellent appendices that include up-to-date information on sexually transmitted diseases and birth control methods.

Vagina Revolution, a book worth reading and sharing, can be lauded for helping the world get one step closer to being a more vagina-friendly place to live.

PATTY SUTHERLAND (July 1, 2013)

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