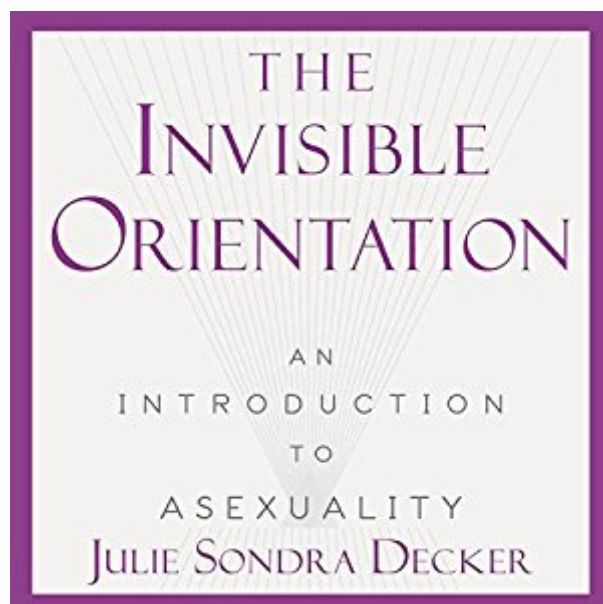


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The Invisible Orientation: An Introduction To Asexuality



Synopsis

What if you weren't sexually attracted to anyone? A growing number of people are identifying as asexual. They aren't sexually attracted to anyone, and they consider it a sexual orientation - like gay, straight, or bisexual. Asexuality is the invisible orientation. Most people believe that "everyone" wants sex, that "everyone" understands what it means to be attracted to other people, and that "everyone" wants to date and mate. But that's where asexual people are left out - they don't find other people sexually attractive, and if and when they say so, they are very rarely treated as though that's okay. When an asexual person comes out, alarming reactions regularly follow; loved ones fear that an asexual person is sick, or psychologically warped, or suffering from abuse. Critics confront asexual people with accusations of following a fad, hiding homosexuality, or making excuses for romantic failures. And all of this contributes to a discouraging master narrative: there is no such thing as "asexual". Being an asexual person is a lie or an illness, and it needs to be fixed. In *The Invisible Orientation*, Julie Sondra Decker outlines what asexuality is, counters misconceptions, provides resources, and puts asexual people's experiences in context as they move through a very sexualized world. It includes information for asexual people to help understand their orientation and what it means for their relationships, as well as tips and facts for those who want to understand their asexual friends and loved ones.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've talked in various places before about being asexual, and what that means for me. It's something I've understood for a while now, and have grown pretty comfortable with, even if

sometimes it's a bit frustrating since it's one of those things that isn't very well understood and is often mocked or belittled by people who don't know that much about it. And for every person that's ever asked me a stupid question about it, I wish I could just press a copy of *The Invisible Orientation* into their hands and say, "Here. All the answers are in here." I want to clarify. When I say stupid question, I don't mean questions like, "So, what's asexuality?" or "You mean you're not sexually attracted to anyone?" These are smart questions. These are the questions that get asked by people who have understanding and compassion and the ability to realise that there's more to the world than just what they've seen so far. Though really, most of the ignorance comes in the form of commentary rather than questions. "You can't be asexual because you're not an amoeba/bacterium/etc." "You must have been abused as a child." "My daughter went through a phase like that too." "You're too ugly to want to have sex with anyway." And yes, I've gotten those comments, and others, over the years. *The Invisible Orientation* addresses this, from both sides. It's not just a book for people who think they might be asexual. It's also a book for people who've found out someone they know is asexual and they don't know what to do or say, or just for those who want to understand asexuality better. Asexuality, for those who want it in a nutshell, is a lack of sexual attraction to people.

As an asexual person who has followed Julie's website and blog for quite a few years, I found that very little of this was new to me. Some of the content was a bit repetitive, probably because a curious person who picks up this book is more likely to skim through the chapters relevant to their situation than read it all the way through. But neither of these observations at all diminishes my excitement, relief, or gratitude at FINALLY having a mainstream text that both addresses an outsider's questions and concerns and provides an insider's perspective. I will absolutely be sending this to my parents and recommending it for my school's Queer Resource Center library. *The Invisible Orientation* makes affirmative statements about an identity defined partially by absence. Yes, we exist. Yes, we have built a diverse community. Yes, we have developed our own cultural shorthands, and yes, we engage in profound and subversive conversations about all sorts of human experiences. I've seen some reviews refer to this book as "Asexuality 101", and while it's definitely in there, I was pleasantly surprised at the level of detail and nuance the author has woven in while still keeping the language accessible. Some readers may be put off by just how "complicated" the asexual experience really is, or just how many shades of grey exist for every supposed firm line; but these people can easily navigate to a section better suited to their own level of understanding and

absorb the rest when they feel ready.

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