



The Invisible Orientation: An Introduction to Asexuality

By Julie Sondra Decker

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The Invisible Orientation: An Introduction to Asexuality By Julie Sondra Decker

A finalist for the 2015 LAMBDA Literary Award.

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.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is the first substantial book for the nonprofessional to emerge from the small but growing community of individuals who identify themselves as "asexual"—i.e., not sexually attracted to anyone; a portion of the population quoted as being approximately one in 100 people. Decker (contributor, Huffington Post; Salon), who writes in the introduction about her own asexuality, emphasizes that this is an orientation that has to do with feelings, not actions. The author stresses fluidity and inclusiveness: asexuality may change over time; some asexual people enjoy romantic relationships while others have no interest; libido may be high or low; and some are happy in partnered relationships while others enjoy the single life. The language and concepts are clearly modeled on those of the LGBTQ community, with an emphasis on asexuality being a healthy orientation, rather than the result of a mental or physical illness. The final chapter addresses friends and family members of asexual people. —**VERDICT** This title is an important resource for readers of any age who are struggling to understand their sexual orientation, or those who would like to better understand asexuality." —*Library Journal*, starred review

"This fascinating book will make more space for thoughtful understanding of sexual diversity and desire and help us understand just how variable human sexuality really is. For sex educators, therapists and scholars, it's a must-read. For asexual people (or the 'A-questioning'), who are so frequently invisibilized and disrespected, it may well offer the kind of succor, support, and information that every person—across the sex, gender, and partnering spectra—deserves." —Carol Queen, PhD, Founding Director, Center for Sex & Culture and author of *Real Live Nude Girl: Chronicles of Sex-Positive Culture*

"I'll admit it: I used to think asexuality was not real. I couldn't wrap my head around the concept—sex is a huge part of my life, so how could it be insignificant to someone else? Boy, was I ignorant! This book is a comprehensive learning tool for those who are asexual, as well as those who are asexual curious. Advocating respect, this rare and precious resource will open your eyes and set the record straight in a clear and straightforward manner. Prepare to have your mind blown!" —Kendra Holliday, creator of The Beautiful Kind blog

"*The Invisible Orientation* demystifies the common misconceptions that asexual people are broken, or that their orientation is the result of sexual abuse or trauma. Warm and thorough, it shines a light on asexuality throughout all stages of life, and acts as a positive guide for navigating successful relationships of all kinds, and with all genders and orientations." — Violet Blue, author of *The Smart Girl's Guide to Privacy* and editor of the award-winning series *Best Women's Erotica*

"This book shines a much-needed light on an experience that's far more common than most people realize. Julie Decker brings together the many different voices and stories of asexual people, presents lots of valuable information, and offers helpful insight about how non-asexual people can be supportive. If you or someone you know is or might be asexual, read this book. And if you're a sexuality or relationship professional, read this book. Asexuality is part of the sexuality spectrum and you need *The Invisible Orientation* on your shelves." —Charlie Glickman, PhD, certified sexological bodyworker

"This is a long overdue book, offering the general purpose introduction to the subject which has heretofore been lacking. It is an essential addition to any academic reading list that encompasses asexuality and should

be required reading for any therapists with an interest in sexuality. It provides a sense of what it is like to be asexual that can sometimes be missing from academic work and engages with the literature while nonetheless refusing to be constrained by it. It is also immensely readable, providing an authoritative overview that sign posts the reader who is keen to explore further. I can't recommend *The Invisible Orientation* highly enough and hope it has a wide readership. Given how effectively it critiques the myths surrounding asexuality, helping those who are not asexual themselves better understand something that can at first be deeply confusing, it is a book with the potential to make a positive difference to many people's lives and help combat what the author describes as the 'insidious form of exclusion' which asexual people continue to experience." —Mark Carrigan, Department of Sociology, University of Warwick

About the Author

Julie Sondra Decker has been a prominent voice for the asexual community since 1998, spreading asexuality awareness through her popular videos and blog essays. She has been interviewed in many mainstream publications, including *Marie Claire*, *Salon*, and the *Daily Beast*, and she was a prominent interviewee in the documentary *(A)sexual* by Arts Engine. She is a regular contributor to *Good Vibrations*. Julie is also an SF/fantasy novelist, a webcomic artist, a singer, and an avid reader. As an aromantic asexual woman, She is happily single and resides in Tampa, Florida.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gracie Davis:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important take action, like looking for your favorite book and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your trouble; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled *The Invisible Orientation: An Introduction to Asexuality*. Try to stumble through book *The Invisible Orientation: An Introduction to Asexuality* as your good friend. It means that it can to get your friend when you experience alone and beside those of course make you smarter than ever before. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you personally. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know every little thing by the book. So , let me make new experience along with knowledge with this book.

Joaquin Hogan:

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Mary Tiller:

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