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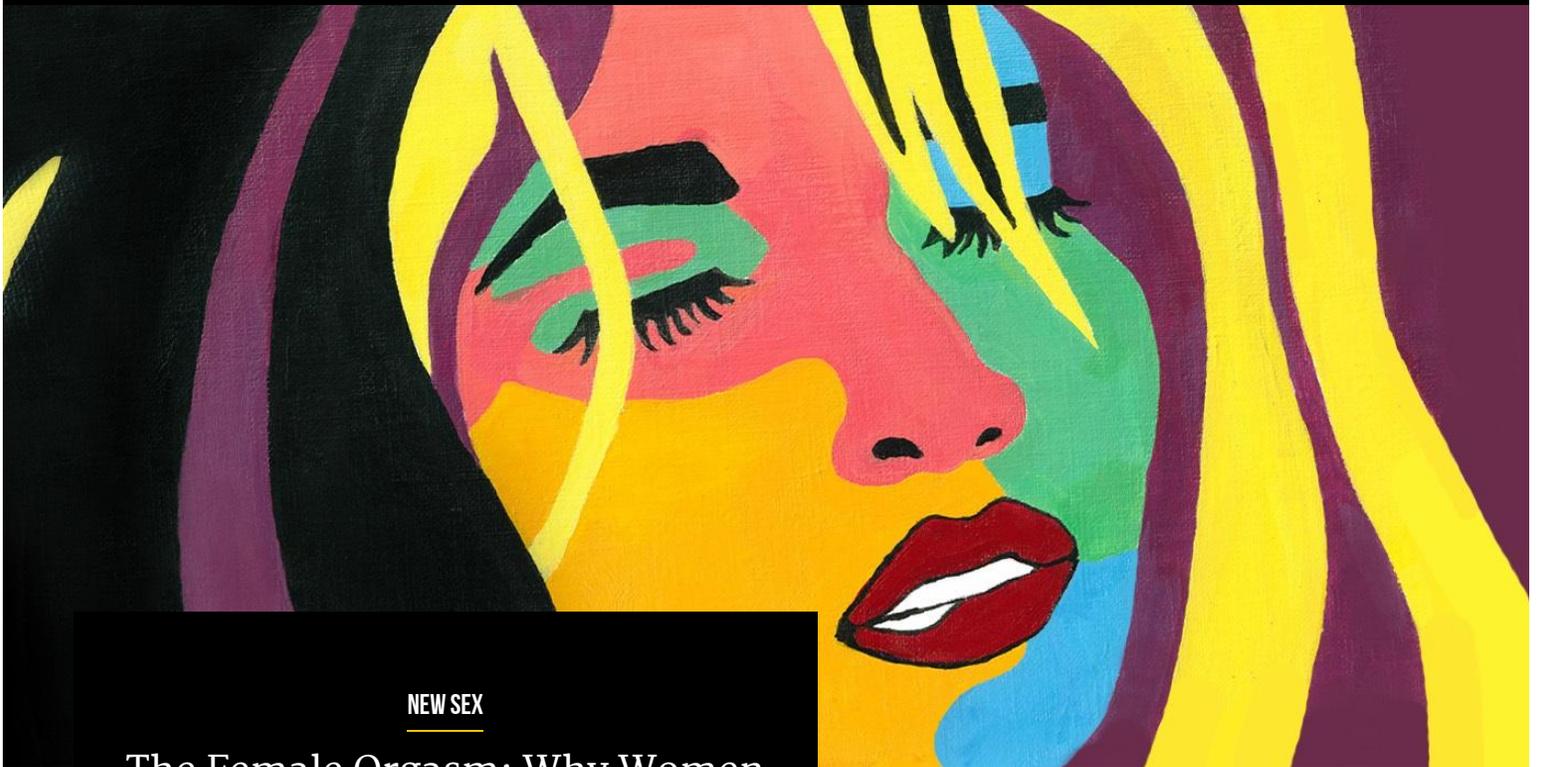
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NEW SEX

The Female Orgasm: Why Women Fake 'The Big O' In The Bedroom

Oct 29, 2015 09:00 AM By Lizette Borrelli

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Here are the evolutionary roots and modern purpose of faking the female orgasm. *Illustration courtesy of*

You've lost all inhibitions and... oops. Clothes come off. Your bodies begin to move rhythmically (and awkwardly) in bed. After a few minutes of some uncomfortable pelvic thrusting with no climax in sight, you decide you have no choice but to put on a

Lecia Bushak

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show, moaning softly at first, working your way up until you've convinced your partner. Sound familiar?

The famous deli scene between actors Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan in the cult classic film When Harry Met Sally gave us the prime example of “faking it.” In Katz's *Delicatessen*, Ryan claims men like Crystal cannot recognize when a woman pretends to orgasm, so she demonstrates, so to speak, to prove her point as other diners watch. This hilarious movie scene brought to light the fact women fake orgasms so well to the extent men cannot tell the difference between what's real and what's fake.

Orgasms should theoretically be a form of mutual ecstasy, so then why do women deny themselves the opportunity to truly reach one?

1. THE EVOLUTION OF 'FAKING IT'

Scientists believe faking orgasms serves the evolutionary purpose of keeping a mate. A 2011 study published in the journal *Archives of Sexual Behavior* found 54 percent of over 450 women in long-term relationships admitted to having faked an orgasm at some point in their relationship. This group was also found to engage in other “mate-retention” behaviors, such as dressing to please men or keeping tabs on their partners while they're away.

The study authors only hypothesize this is an evolutionary adaptation based on the belief that one function of the female orgasm is for selective sperm retention. Based on this theory, the female orgasm functions to retain the sperm of men with “good genes.” These sperm are more likely to fertilize and procreate offspring that share these “good genes.”

Now, a (fake) orgasm outside ovulation (when conception is highest for women), may function to encourage his investment and commitment in the relationship, according to Randy Thornhill and Steven W. Gangestad's book, *The Evolution Biology of Human Female Sexuality*. This is a woman's way to secure her mate's “good genes” for when she's in her fertile phase of the cycle, so she can boost her rate of conception.

Some women are also under the impression if they pretend to orgasm, their man's ego will be satisfied — even if it's at the expense of their own pleasure. A primary reason why people stray from relationships is because of bad, little, or no sex. Faking an orgasm may therefore allow for bonding and the perception of heightened “physical chemistry.”

Eboni Harris, a relationship therapist, educator, and podcaster, believes the theory of mate retention stems from the competition that exists in the bedroom.

“[W]omen tend to think if they are the best at taking care of their man (including sexually), he will not need to seek other mates. This is how women get caught up in trying to be a porn star for their partners and stop focusing on what pleases them,”

she told *Medical Daily*.

This evolutionary perspective has reinforced the gender role stereotype that men's sexual needs are superior to women's. Gender norms such as those shift the focus from mutual pleasure to solely the man's.

"Women often expect their male partners to be dominant in the bedroom as much as men pride themselves as being Alpha males in the bedroom," Bobbie Morgan, sex blogger of [*A Good Woman's Dirty Mind*](#) told *Medical Daily*. "It's part of the wish fulfillment and fantasy aspects of sex."

This subconsciously establishes the assigned gender roles both men and women assume in the bedroom.

Woman screaming out loud.

Dan Zen, CC BY 2.0

2. TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES DURING SEX

In many ways, faking an orgasm perpetuates the belief that the needs of a man are all that matter in bed. A 2014 [study](#) published in the journal *Culture, Health & Sexuality* found in a group of 20 women — a dozen of whom identified as straight and eight bisexual or lesbian, between the ages of 18 to 59 — they admitted to often faking orgasms to reinforce their partner's sexual skills so the other doesn't feel inadequate.

The problem is, when sex becomes more of a chore in falsely validating the man, it loses its essence of pleasure, says Dr. Judi Cineas, a clinical social worker, a therapist and founder of Living The Dream in Palm Beach, Fla.

“Instead of focusing on letting loose and enjoying the experience, the goal becomes making sure that the man's sense of machismo is reinforced,” Cineas told *Medical Daily*.

These prescribed gender roles continue to be reinforced by the culture we live in, where men are still the more powerful breadwinners because they earn more than women, said [Dr. Fran Walfish](#), Beverly Hills psychotherapist, author of *The Self-Aware Parent*, and expert panelist on WE TV's *Sex Box*.

“Sex, sexual prowess, and pleasure equates with power in some levels as well as money. I believe they all go together,” she said.

3. ALL IN YOUR HEAD

The theory of why women pretend to orgasm is largely male-centric, but what if faking it actually enhances the sexual experience?

Women may be faking orgasms as a way to pursue a positive sexual outcome, rather than to simply avoid a negative one. A 2014 [study](#) published in the *Journal of Sexual Archives* found a make-believe orgasm can serve as "relationship promoting and sexual pleasure-enhancing," instead of the common belief that it's performance to get sex over with or feed a man's ego. This study is one of the first to suggest women may be faking it for selfish reasons, such as increasing their own arousal.

Therefore, the more positive energy you channel during sex, the more likely you'll have a better sexual experience. Scientists have found the more focused women are on their bodily sensations during sex, the more easily they can reach orgasm. Women who have difficulty reaching orgasm are believed to be distracted by thoughts during intercourse that are not related to sex, according to a 2014 [study](#) published in the journal *Sexologies*.

However, not every woman climaxes during vaginal intercourse. “There are women who are not comfortable having orgasms, or don't have them easily or at all, and faking it gets them out of what they feel is the pressure of having one naturally,”

April Masini, relationship expert and author, told *Medical Daily*.

Only a third of women experience orgasm regularly during intercourse, while the rest need additional clitoral stimulation to climax, according to [The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada](#). In a 2014 [study](#) published in the journal *Clinic Anatomy*, researchers concluded the “vaginal” orgasm some women report is always caused by the surrounding erectile organs, such as the clitoris, hinting the elusive “G-Spot orgasm” doesn’t exist.

Although whether the G-Spot exists or not is still up for debate, it’s known that some women don’t and can’t have orgasms through penetrative sex alone. However, Walfish believes women can reach orgasm through vaginal intercourse when it co-exists with clitoral stimulation, “whether it’s the friction of your partner’s pubic bone area rubbing against the clitoris or you and your partner’s hand on the clitoris for additional stimulation.”

Woman smiling in bed.

PROJames Theophane, CC BY 2.0

4. Should YOU 'FAKE IT?'

The list of reasons why women fake orgasms are long and exhaustive, but does this mean you should continue to fake it?

Not necessarily. You should use it as an opportunity to learn about your body.

Faking an orgasm can convince men and women that they've crossed the checkered flag at the end of the race that is sex, according to Masini. "They fake it to create a sense of completion, when it doesn't happen naturally," she said.

However, if this isn't a one-night stand and you're regularly having sex with your partner, faking it detracts from intimacy and trust. Despite people performing all types of sex acts, they often get squeamish about using their words to say, "This isn't working for me, but I'd really like it if you'd try this." Although this is easier said than done, a simple "Could you do this," or showing him what you like if you can, is an effective way to enhance intimacy among couples, according to Masini.

The bottom line is there are various ways to talk to your partner about what feels good and what doesn't in the bedroom, and it's easier to accomplish that once you know your body.

Remember ladies, you're entitled to pleasure during sex, too.

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