



Sex Work: Writings by Women in the Sex Industry

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The first and possibly only book to be reviewed favorably in both *The Women's Review of Books* and *Hustler*, *Sex Work* popularized the term "sex work" to describe the occupations of street prostitutes, exotic dancers, nude models, escorts, porn actresses, and workers in massage parlors, and so changed the way we talk about sex and money. Features the original stories of women in the life, including writings by Sapphire, Nina Hartley, and Joan Nestle.

Updated for the Second Edition:

- * Sex Workers' response to AIDS
- * Latest information on the legal status of sex work in the United States, Europe, and Asia
- * Growth of the international prostitutes' rights movement
- * Bibliography, revised to reflect a decades' worth of writing and publishing on sex work
- * Resources, including activist organizations and publications—many just a Web click away

Sex Work: Writings by Women in the Sex Industry Details

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Andrea says

I thought the first half of the book, the first-person narratives, was great. I gave up reading the second half--it was dry and uninteresting to me as I was already familiar with the subject matter.

Steven Allen says

This book was a really slog to get through. Do not read this book if you are looking for erotica, or something exciting. An interesting read though showing the wide variety of sexual workers - many do not fit the usual "mold" of a sex worker. Every time that I read true details of women (I've yet to read anything from men engaged in sex work) I am usually dismayed, disgusted, and repulsed all at once. The damage to the soul that sex work causes to the women is terrible. I am no Captain-save-a-ho, but I wish there were other venues for the ladies to get work. In other countries where most sex work is now legal, they have found that human trafficking has not decreased, but in some cases actually increased. I am all for legalizing most forms of sex work, as I believe that having the people engaged in sex work able to go to the police without fear is a good thing. In Australia, where most sex work is legal, the workers have the ability to call the police without fear of arrest. However, some people in the law enforcement arena, feel that sex workers are less than human, often joking "no humans were harmed" or otherwise ignoring violent crime perpetrated against sex workers. A depressing read in many aspects so do not read if you are not prepared for the dirt you will slog through.

Kate says

Good read and a good quick look at women in different aspects of the sex industry, some were negative, some positive but the sharp cynicism was evident in everyone. Left me with more questions than answers.

Monica says

So, often, depictions about sex work are from a male perspective. Here, women who work in the sex industry have the opportunity to speak about their lives and their work and it reveals that women get into sex work for any number of reasons. This is a book about power, privilege, and the way men and women view sexual fantasy.

Leilani says

good collection overall, though scarlet harlot's writing is obnoxiously vain.

Angela says

This book was extremely informative and had a wide variety of perspectives. Although the book came out a while ago, I found it to be very relevant.

Rachel Hernandez says

This is a rough subject- hard to grasp the morality of working in the sex industry, especially as a prostitute. What's great about this book is that you get all sorts of individual perspectives and experiences- both positive and negative- and now I am not so quick to judge.

M.V. Clark says

Really interesting - sex work is like a weird four-dimensional thing but this looks at it from a wide range of angles, albeit all sex workers themselves . You get a clear idea of what makes the lives of sex workers difficult/hellish and how their lives could be made easier. Of its time, when the women organizing were just getting started and very idealistic, before the digital era accelerated and changed the industry.

J.E. Raley says

I think this is a good book to whet the mind for more discussion and research on sex workers, feminist perspectives, and social policy. Since this was written in the late 1990s I wonder what changes have come about. It was broken up into 3 sections: section 1-stories from sex workers, section 2-a bit of history and policy regarding sex workers/nonsex workers, and section 3-sex workers organizations and policies out there.

Brenda says

I loved referring to this as my Sex Workbook.

michelle says

one of three great books i read for my Deviance class. this is half creative writing, half theory, which i think is a great idea. the book presents a wide spectrum of feelings on the sex industry. the creative writing (short stories and poems) are written by sex industry workers, from street-corner hookers to more "legitimate" escorts to no-contact strippers. there are sound arguments for and against sex as an industry, and "the oldest profession" as a... well, profession. makes you think.

Lisa says

like new

Susan says

It's been awhile since I read this book so I may be fuzzy on the details. I do remember finding it refreshing that women, in their own words, told their stories about working in the sex industry whether by circumstance or by choice. Mostly it was the idea that there were (are) women who not only have chosen to work in the sex industry but who are satisfied and enjoy the work they do.

Yes, I'm sure feminists would dispute the idea that women of their own choice would prefer to do this type of work. I don't believe the various perspectives in this book demean the experiences of those who have been victimized by predators or forced into the business by social forces. I found it to be sensitive and quite balanced.

If you've formed opinions about the sex industry and want the story first hand - read this book and hear what these women have to say.

Jenni says

Poems, memoirs, stories, vignettes, essays on sex work written by present and former sex workers. Many different perspectives.

Samantha Puc says

Yes. This book showed up in my recommended readings when I was shopping for the required texts for my TransFeminism class and I fell in love after the first few essays. It offers personal experiences, fictional accounts, and academic analysis of the sex industry and the women who work in it, from their feelings on the work to the way that they're treated to the overall public perception of sex workers. There are feminist accounts, lesbian accounts, poetic accounts, fictionalized accounts, research accounts, and more. I thought this book was absolutely fascinating and I had a very difficult time putting it down, something that isn't always true of collections like this one.
