

# The Elusive Orgasm

Q & A with author Vivienne Cass

**FFLO:** So Vivienne the first question would be, what exactly is an orgasm?

**VC:** On a physiological level an orgasm is usually a rhythmic build up of contractions or pressure in the pelvic area followed by the explosive feeling of pleasure that comes at the peak of sexual arousal. Some have likened it closely to a sneeze that we can feel building and building (aach...aaach...) until eventually there is a release of pleasure (aach...chew). An orgasm doesn't have to happen to enjoy sex. We can experience high levels of sexual arousal without continuing to orgasm. However, of course many people do enjoy the sensations of orgasm and find afterwards they feel very relaxed and peaceful.

**FFLO:** Why are so many women who want to orgasm, unable to? Or what are the "orgasm difficulties" that you write about in your book?

**VC:** Well about a third of women have some form of difficulty in reaching orgasm. Some have never, or only occasionally, been able to feel orgasm. Some used to be able to, but now find they can't, or that their orgasm is much less pleasurable than it once was. Others can orgasm in some situations, but not others, or with some partners and not others. There are many different causes (25 in total) for each of these types of orgasm difficulties, relating to relationships issues, personal character, health, sexual activities and habits, and lifestyle. Often the causes of orgasm problems involve more than one of these areas.

**FFLO:** Why is it so much more of an issue for women than men?

**VC:** Women's sexuality is strongly influenced by psychological, social and cultural factors, usually more so than men. For example, a baby crying in the next room may result in a woman completely switching off her arousal, whereas the same situation might not affect a man's arousal at all. This means that women's arousal is easily disturbed by negative thoughts, by things going on around her, by feeling pressured and so on. Since orgasm requires high levels of arousal, the result is that women may find themselves feeling somewhat turned on, but not enough to orgasm. Orgasm is a real surrender to the moment.



**FFLO:** So then what can men do to help?

**VC:** If a woman has a male partner, he can help her by encouraging her and staying positive about the fun they are having, regardless of whether orgasm is happening or not. Not to be outcome driven! He can encourage her to try and find out why she has orgasm difficulties, without putting pressure on her to do so. When we put all our attention on achieving an orgasm, as if it were some goal to reach, then this sets up a negative atmosphere and actually prevents orgasm happening. Some men think they have failed as a lover if she doesn't orgasm, however the truth is that of all the causes of orgasm difficulties, poor technique is related to only one or two of these. The same advice also applies to a female partner, although here the problem is less likely to be about pressure to orgasm and more likely to be one of avoiding sex altogether. In saying that, lots of men have erectile problems which are just as debilitating.

**FFLO:** What changes can a woman make to help achieve orgasm more frequently, if not every time?

**VC:** The first step to making changes for any woman is always to take the time to find out what is causing their problem. Each woman is different and so there's no one solution that will make all women orgasm. Some common themes, however, are:

1: Stop pressuring yourself to achieve an orgasm – focus on the pleasure rather than the end-point.

2: Focus on building your arousal if at all possible, again if it's hard to do because life gets in the way, then focus on just enjoying the physical feelings of being pleased.

3: As best as you can try and only allow positive feelings to enter your head, since negative ones will become a turn-off. If you feel yourself slipping into negative thoughts, stop and just hold each other until you can be in the moment again.

4: Learn to switch off from your everyday duties and tasks – sex is adult PLAY, so unless you can get into a PLAY mood nothing much will happen.

I wrote *The Elusive Orgasm* to help woman identify the causes of their orgasm difficulties and also offers suggestions and programs to help her make changes so that orgasm can be more easily experienced.

**FFLO:** In your book you describe the clitoris as “more than a little button” – please explain?

**VC:** We now know that the clitoris is not just “the little button” located on the outside of the vulva. Actually, most of the clitoris lies inside the body. When we are aroused, it swells in size and becomes very sensitive, although the “button” or tip of the clitoris is probably the most sensitive part, it's important to pleasure the entire clitoris and the rest of the body for that matter. Get creative!

**FFLO:** What lifestyle changes do you find helps your clients?

**VC:** Changes can be made by a woman to overcome just about all the causes of orgasm difficulties. If her problem is related to lifestyle issues, for example, she could try and reduce her work pressure so that she can relax at home and switch off from her work day. She could also arrange for children to be looked after by grandparents or other family so that she and her partner have some couple time - this time allows her a chance to focus on being a lover and passionate woman rather than being a mother and housewife. The most important thing is to not pressure yourself to achieve orgasm. Orgasm comes when all the obstacles to letting go and being in the moment are removed.

Dr Vivienne Cass PhD is a sexologist, psychologist & author.

For more information on the *Elusive Orgasm* go to [www.brightfire.com.au](http://www.brightfire.com.au)