What does it mean to be ‘Sex Positive?’

Simply put, being sex positive means that someone is open-minded about sex, sexuality, and sexual expressions. Of course that doesn’t mean someone has to be into everything there is out there, but that you respect individuals’ decisions about their lives.

Sexologist Carol Queen offers the following definitions:

*Sex-positive, a term that's coming into cultural awareness, isn't a dippy love-child celebration of orgone – it's a simple yet radical affirmation that we each grow our own passions on a different medium, that instead of having two or three or even half a dozen sexual orientations, we should be thinking in terms of millions. "Sex-positive" respects each of our unique sexual profiles, even as we acknowledge that some of us have been damaged by a culture that tries to eradicate sexual difference and possibility.*

*It’s the cultural philosophy that understands sexuality as a potentially positive force in one’s life, and it can, of course, be contrasted with sex-negativity, which sees sex as problematic, disruptive, dangerous. Sex-positivity allows for and in fact celebrates sexual diversity, differing desires and relationships structures, and individual choices based on consent.*

The sex-positive movement includes a wide variety of expression, from heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual sex, or masturbation, as well as asexuality, transsexuality, transgenderism, and other forms of gender transgression. Sex-positive positions can also include acceptance of BDSM and polyamory. Most elements of the sex-positive movement advocate comprehensive and accurate sex education as part of its campaign.

The term ‘sex positive’ can encompass a lot, but importantly, there is no hierarchy or moral distinctions that dictate what is right and ‘wrong.’ Again, it all comes back to personal preference.

Ways to be Sex Positive:

- Communicate. Talking openly between partners should be
- Consent. Sexual activity should always be consensual no matter who is involved.
- Personal growth. Part of being a sex-positive requires a healthy body image and a positive sense of self.
- Realistic sex education. Comprehensive sex education is important for people to make informed and safe decisions.
- No shaming. Sex should never be a negative or shameful action, and should not be treated as such.

Resources:

**Websites:**
- Scarlateen: Sex Ed for the Real World
- Tristin Taormino’s Pucker Up
- Violet Blue: Open Source Sex
- “Savage Love” (Weekly Column by Dan Savage)
- Sex is Fun
  [http://www.sexisfun.net/](http://www.sexisfun.net/)

**Books:**

- The Ethical Slut by Dossie Easton and Janet W. Hardy
- Bad Girls and Dirty Pictures by Avedon Carol
- Sex for One by Betty Dodson
- Real Live Nude Girl: Chronicles of Sex-Positive Culture by Carol Queen
- Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex and Speaking Sex to Power: The Politics of Queer Sex by Patrick Califia
- Jane Sexes It Up: True Confessions of Feminist Desire edited by Merri Lisa Johnson
- Harmful To Minors: The Perils Of Protecting Children From Sex by Judith Levine and Joycelyn M. Elders
- What Wild Ecstasy: The Rise and Fall of the Sexual Revolution by John Heidenry

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