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The Surprising New Science

AS

That Will Transform Your Sex Life

YOU

EMILY NAGOSKI, Ph.D.

ARE

"A MASTER CLASS IN THE SCIENCE OF SEX."

—IAN KERNER, sex therapist and bestselling author of *She Comes First*



BRAIN BUILDERS
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Discussion Guide

Come As You Are:

The Surprising New Science That Will Transform Your Sex Life

Author: Emily Nagoski

Genre: Non-Fiction, Science, Psychology, and Self-Help

Published March, 2015

1

Mind-Body Integration: How does Nagoski explain the relationship between the brain and the body in sexual response? What surprised you about how much of sex actually happens in the brain?

2

Dual Control Model: The book introduces the “accelerator and brakes” model of sexual response. How does understanding this brain-based system change how you think about arousal and desire?

3

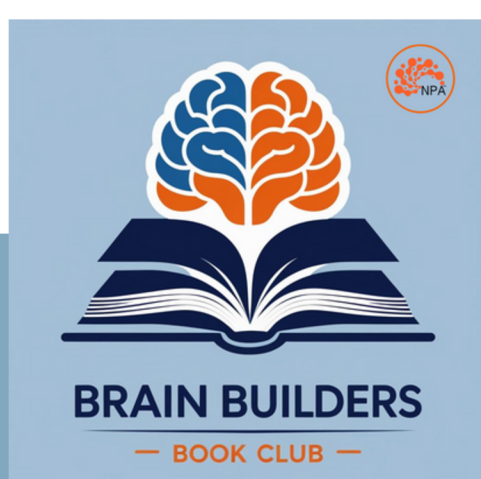
Context and the Brain: Nagoski emphasizes that “context” — what’s happening in and around you — plays a powerful role in sexual wellbeing. What examples from your own experiences or observations illustrate this principle?

4

Stress and Safety Signals: How does the brain’s threat detection system influence sexual desire? How might stress reduction or increased emotional safety enhance intimacy? How does open communication influence the brain’s sense of safety and trust, thereby affecting sexual connection?

5

Individual Differences: Nagoski notes that everyone’s brain responds differently to sexual stimuli. How does this understanding challenge cultural expectations about “normal” sexual desire?



6

Learning and Neuroplasticity: In what ways does the book suggest that our sexual brains can change through experience, communication, or self-compassion? What does this imply about the potential for healing or growth?

7

Responsive vs. Spontaneous Desire: Nagoski distinguishes between spontaneous and responsive desire. How does this understanding help normalize different experiences of arousal, particularly in long-term relationships?

8

The Brain's Role in Pleasure: What does the book reveal about how pleasure is processed neurologically? How can this knowledge empower people to experience more satisfying sex?

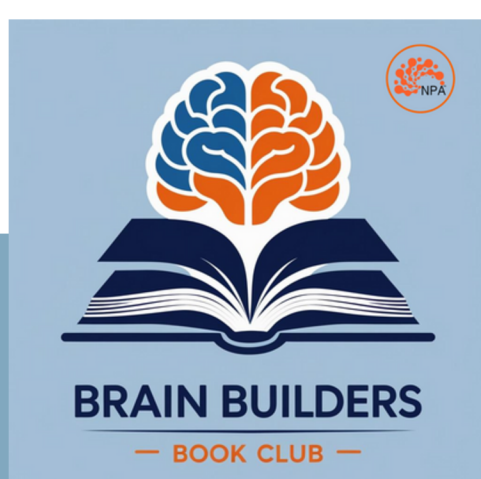
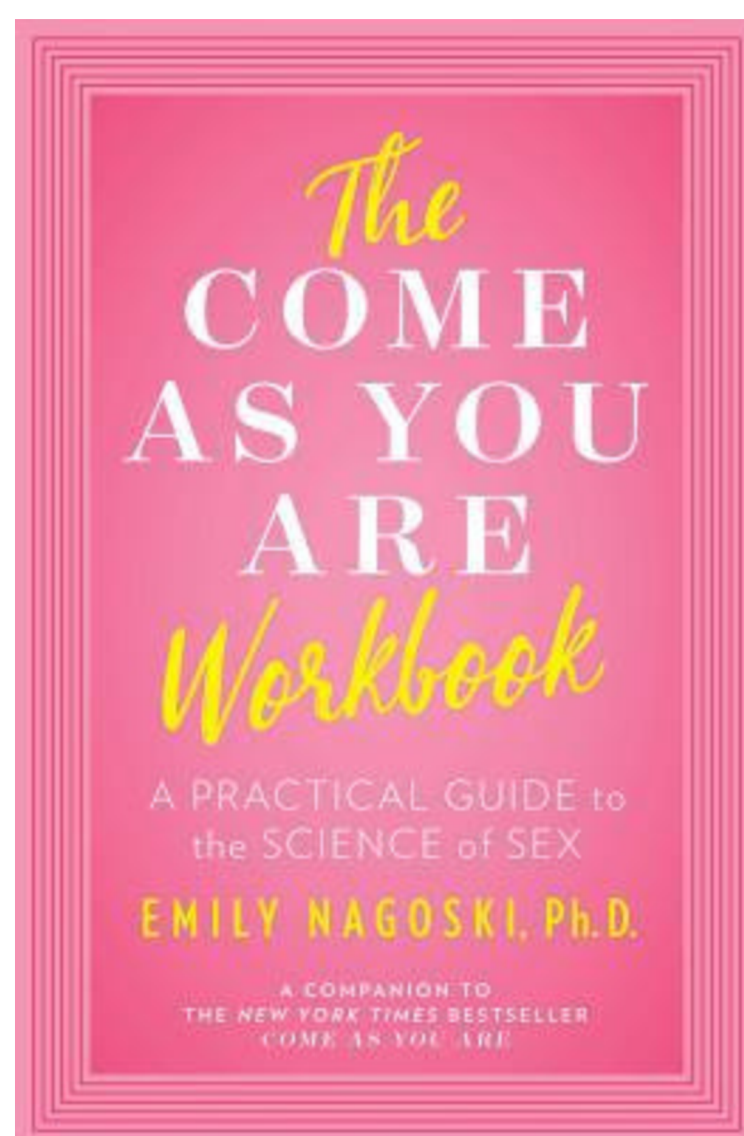
9

Gender Myths and the Brain: How does Nagoski challenge misconceptions about men's and women's sexual brains? What insights did you find most liberating or thought-provoking?

10

Integration and Takeaways: After reading *Come as You Are*, how do you see the connection between emotional health, brain function, and sexual fulfillment? What practices or perspectives will you carry forward?

Supporting Worksheets <https://www.emilynagoski.com/come-as-you-are-worksheets>



About the Author



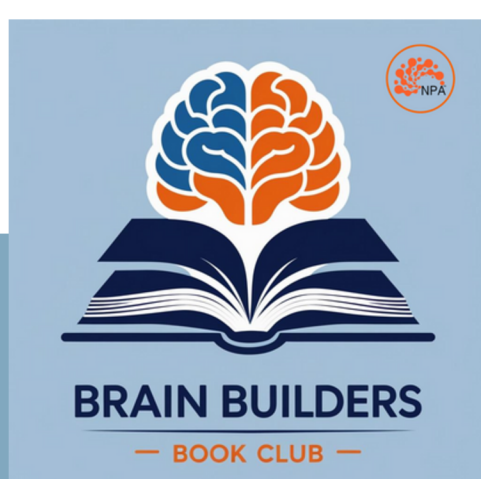
Dr. Emily Nagoski, Ph.D.

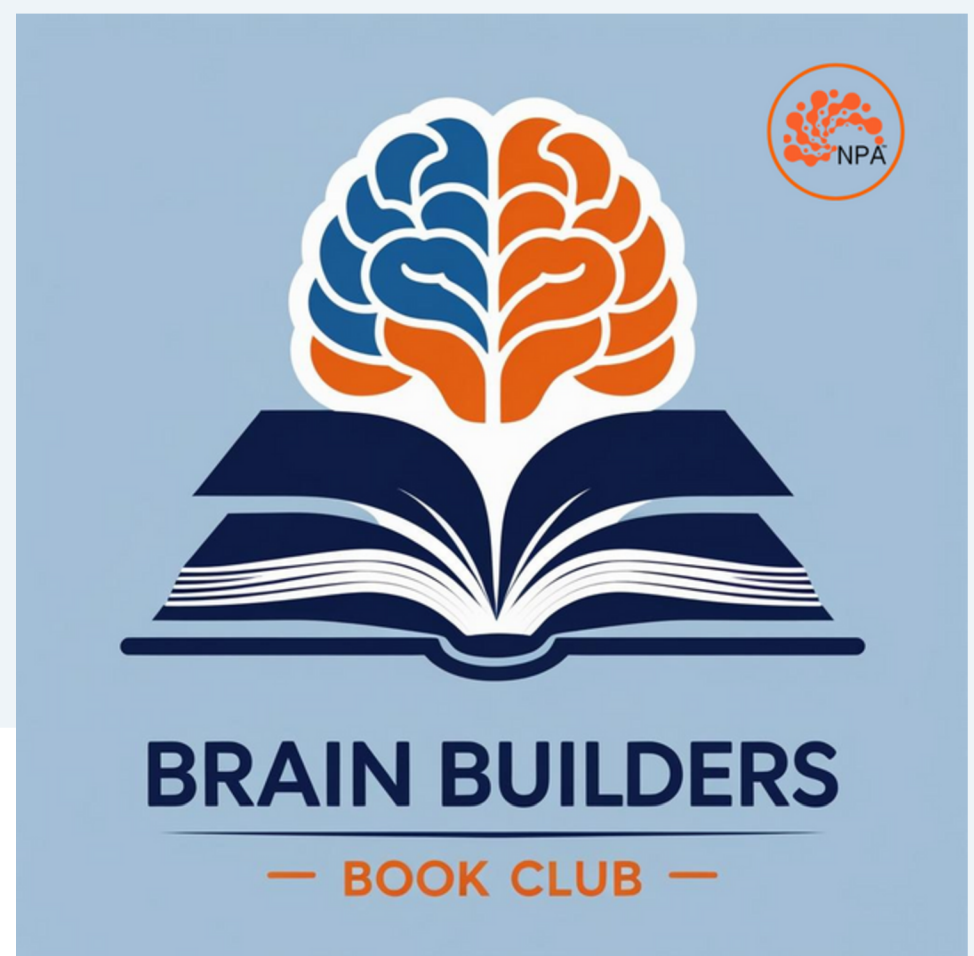
Emily Nagoski, Ph.D. - writer, educator, researcher, activist, and self-proclaimed nerd. She began her career as a sex educator in 1995 when she became a peer health educator at the University of Delaware. She was trained to teach her fellow undergraduates about stress, nutrition, physical activity, and, above all, sex. Soon, she added sexual violence prevention and response to that work, and suddenly she was a sex educator. The plan was to use her degree in Psychology (with minors in cognitive science and philosophy) to become a clinical neuropsychologist, working with people with traumatic brain injury and stroke. But even though she loved brain science, her work in sex education and violence prevention made her like who she was as a person, in a way the academic stuff couldn't. So that's the path she chose. Emily went to Indiana University for a M.S. in Counseling Psychology, completing

clinical internships at the Kinsey Institute Sexual Health Clinic and the IU GLBT Student Support Services Office. She continued on to earn a Ph.D. in Health Behavior with a concentration in human sexuality. She taught graduate and undergraduate classes in human sexuality, relationships and communication, stress management, and sex education. Her time at IU was characterized by stumbling with unwarranted luck into opportunities to work with some of the greatest minds in the world of sex science, and she will spend the rest of her career trying to earn those opportunities.

For eight years, she worked as a lecturer and Director of Wellness Education at Smith College, before transitioning to full-time writing and speaking. She now travels all over, training professionals, teaching college students and other lay people, and learning more every day about the science and art of sexual wellbeing. She is a trained Gottman Seven Principles educator, with extensive specialized training in bystander intervention, motivational interviewing, and cultural inclusivity, including race, gender, and class.

Emily's mission in life is to teach women to live with confidence and joy inside their bodies.





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