“Chelsea Wakefield is the most luminous new voice in sex therapy. Follow the guidance in this book—your clients will think you’re a genius!”

—Gina Ogden, author of *Expanding the Practice of Sex Therapy and The Heart and Soul of Sex*

“At last, a book about sexuality that is not like all that useless information from the internet and from self-help books that tells you what to do to look sexy. This book tells you how to be a sexual being.”

—Ginette Paris, author of *Pagan Meditations: The world of Aphrodite, Artemis and Hestia*

“This book is unique in taking a comprehensive and complex view of female sexuality, emphasizing a challenging, positive view of the role of sex therapy. It would be of particular value for psychodynamic clinicians.”

—Barry McCarthy, co-author (with Emily McCarthy) of *Rekindling Desire and Sexual Awareness: Your Guide to Healthy Couple Sexuality*

“This book is an homage to the personal and collective archetypes that comprise each woman’s inner ‘cast of characters.’ Wakefield deftly weaves body psychotherapy and archetypal psychology into an experiential model that transforms ordinary sex therapy into soul work. Embodied stories and ‘parts’ work bring Aphrodite to life in case examples of women ravaged by heartbreak, sheltered by Eros-inhibiting ‘gate keepers’ and stunted by one-dimensional sexual scripts. Wakefield writes in
a soothing, female-centered voice that celebrates sensuality and desire. Every woman will see herself and feel affirmed in this beautiful guide to becoming a sexually empowered woman.”

—Maci Daye, creator of The Passion and Presence Couples Retreat

“Engaging, illuminating and empowering! Wakefield will energize therapists to go beyond treating sexual dysfunctions in favour of helping each client to awaken the archetypal woman within!”

—Peggy J. Kleinplatz, author of New Directions in Sex Therapy: Innovations and Alternatives

“This book isn’t just a gem—it’s a whole treasure chest of jewels and golden wisdom—of incalculable value not just to heterosexual women, but to sexual human beings of all genders. The archetypes of the collective unconscious are always ‘evading capture,’ but here in this book, Dr. Wakefield has persuaded a star-studded group of them to show themselves, and engage in intelligent conversation with her, with each other, and with her readers.”

—Jeremy Taylor, author of The Wisdom of Your Dreams and The Living Labyrinth

“What a fascinating, enriching, life-affirming book! In Search of Aphrodite helps women of all ages to discover—or rediscover—the joys, richness, and complexities of their own individual sexuality and sensuality, of their own erotic identity, as it is expressed in their lives and their intimate relationships. Dr. Wakefield combines scholarly research with a broad range of clinical experience and anecdotal material, to bring us a picture of the road forward into sexual individuation.”

—Sidra L. Stone, author of The Shadow King: The Invisible Force that Holds Women Back
What does it mean to be “in search of Aphrodite?” For most women, sex is complex, and more than a juxtaposition of body parts. Women sense the possibility of depth, meaning, even transcendence, but in a somatically disconnected, sexually superficial world, it can be difficult for a woman to discover her inner fire, define who she is sexually, and confidently communicate this to her partner.

Part philosophy, part treatment manual, *In Search of Aphrodite* addresses women’s sexual problems from an inspiring, creative perspective, integrating Jungian psychology and sex therapy. Readers will deepen their understanding of the sexual psyche and how this realm has an impact on women’s lives, as well as what the author calls the “journey of Sexual Individuation™.”

Chelsea Wakefield covers a variety of topics such as healing ancient wounds, resolving inner conflicts, exploring sexual essence, identity, scripts, primal instinct, desire, fantasy, longing, and more. She offers pathways to sexual enrichment and improved communication with a partner. Sexual archetypes are introduced and organized around the author’s Sexual Essence Wheel. Gatekeepers and Eros-inhibiting archetypes are described, along with what to do when treatment stalls.
This book is appropriate for:

- Clinicians who are nervous about venturing into conversations about women’s sexuality
- Clinicians who are comfortable with sexual topics and are curious about new interventions
- Sex therapists who want a treatment model that acknowledges the multidimensional aspects of sexuality
- Jungian analysts and Jungian-oriented practitioners who want helpful tools for addressing sexual issues as an invitation into individuation
- Pastoral counselors and spiritual guidance practitioners who seek to heal souls wounded by sexual trauma and sex-negative teachings
- Women who want to explore their sexual psyche and define their sexual essence, and men who wish to better understand the sexual depths of women

Rich with case histories and an “Inner Cast of Characters” that clients can explore, this resource will help women discover joyful embodiment, innate eroticism, and sexual pleasure!

Chelsea Wakefield, PhD, LCSW is an international teacher and presenter on sexuality and the journey of individuation. She is a Jungian-oriented psychotherapist, couples therapist, AASECT-certified sex therapist, educator, creator of the Luminous Woman® Weekend, and author of Negotiating the Inner Peace Treaty: Becoming the Person You Were Born to Be. Chelsea draws from a depth of clinical training and experience in archetypal, transpersonal, psychodynamic, parts psychology, developmental, and somatic methods of working. She facilitates people in moving beyond the wounds of the past, learning more about their unique sexual essence, embracing sexuality as a pathway of growth and individuation, learning how to communicate effectively with partners, and deepening sexual connection, meaning, and pleasure. You can learn more about her work at www.chelseawakefield.com.
O FRIEND, UNDERSTAND.
The body is like the ocean, rich with hidden treasures.
Open your innermost chamber
And light its lamp,
Within the body are gardens,
Rare flowers, peacocks; the inner music;
Within the body a lake of bliss,
On it, the white soul-swans take their joy.

MIRABAI
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank the Jungian women, analysts and writers, who have informed my own journey of conscious femininity, and joyful embodiment. Special acknowledgment goes to Polly Young-Eisendrath, whose book, *Women and Desire* opened my eyes. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Marion Woodman, Jean Shinoda Bolen, Ann Ulanov, Diane Landau, Ginette Paris, and Linda Leonard have all enriched my life and my work with their brilliant writing on women’s relational world, embodiment, archetypes, the Goddess Aphrodite, and other aspects of the feminine.

I hold Hal and Sidra Stone in high regard as teachers and encouragers. Hal gave this work a special blessing early on, predicting how many people it would help. Sidra has been a living example of a fully empowered Aphrodite woman, both brilliant and luminous. Thank you for supporting so many other women in their discovery and embodiment of Aphrodite.

I am grateful to Bob Haden and my friends at the Haden Institute, where I began to present this material in its early stages of development, particularly Susan Sims Smith and Jeremy Taylor, who have been enthusiastic encouragers during the gestation and birthing of this book. I thank Jungian analyst, Keith Parker, for his many years of personal soul companionsing.

Over my years of presenting and doing workshops about sexuality, I teach, but I also learn a great deal from participants. I am particularly grateful to all of my Luminous Woman® “graduates,” who have shared their hearts and souls with me as we journeyed into the deep feminine,
grappling with how a woman’s journey of individuation differs from a man’s.

I am grateful to my father, who gave me my first real introduction to Jung. I was disillusioned about love after my first marriage had ended. My father handed me a copy of Toni Grant’s book, Being A Woman, and said, “Maybe this will help.” That book introduced me to Jung, the world of archetypes, and to Antonia “Toni” Wolff, whose influence on Jung’s life and his thinking often goes unacknowledged, and whose model of the feminine inspired my Luminous Woman® Weekends.

My deepest affection and appreciation goes to the brilliant and innovative Gina Ogden, for her pioneering spirit, her generous heart and extraordinary mentoring and friendship. From the first time we met, Gina warmly welcomed me into the field of sexology and supported me in bringing my work to that world. She introduced me to Marta Moldvai, the wonderful editor who grasped the vision for this project, and helped me focus and shape my ideas, with kindness and clarity, so that they could be conveyed to others.

To my husband, Tom, my biggest fan, who has navigated the many requirements for growth and change over our twenty five years together, respecting my Athena mind, and dancing with my Aphrodite soul. You are my dearest friend, and I love you.
When it comes to sex, the old adage goes that we should just “do what comes naturally.” Perhaps for some, sex is that simple, but for most, it is not. For most women, sex is especially complex. Although a woman’s sexuality can bring deep satisfaction and solace, it is far more common for sexuality to be an area of confusion, discomfort, embarrassment, anxiety, relational power struggling, and punishing consequences. A hundred years ago, women finally got the right to vote in the United States. At that time, only a few radical thinkers were acknowledging that women might be interested in sexual pleasure.

Women have made some good progress in the public arena, but we still struggle in our intimate lives. What do we want, apart from what others want and expect from us? Can we express it with confidence and clarity or do we fold at the slightest indication of disappointment or disapproval? Where is the balance in giving and receiving? Can we have both power and pleasure in our lives? Our sexuality is a frontier that we are just beginning to explore in meaningful ways. Women instinctively know that sex is much more than a juxtaposition of body parts. We sense the possibility of depth and meaning, even transcendence, but it often seems like a fairy tale dream. At the same time, we hear the voices of warning in the background, cautioning us, “Being a sexual woman is dangerous, it can lead down the road to ruin.”

Information about sexuality seems to be everywhere today. There are entire sections in bookstores devoted to sexual positions, sexual talk, and techniques. The Internet is filled with sexual sites and information. These
INTRODUCTION

sources suggest what women ought to do, but they don’t address what is going on inside of her head and her heart. There is not a lot of help with how to relate to another person in bed. Sexuality is not thought of as a life force energy that moves through us and can enrich our lives. How does a woman discover her inner fire and define who she really is sexually? If she ever figures this out, how does she confidently communicate this to her partner? Women are taught to act sexy, but are not encouraged to become sexual beings. How does a woman claim her adult sexuality in a way that feels authentic and life giving? How does a woman learn to be comfortable in her own body when she doesn’t look like a movie star or a fashion model? How does she negotiate “safe sex,” physically, emotionally, and spiritually? How does her sexuality become an expression of who she is at her most essential level?

The romanticized sexual encounters in the movies seem to flow so easily. We rarely see any sexual negotiations beforehand. We don’t see people sticking elbows in each other’s eyes, or fumbling with a condom or struggling to get turned on. We do not see the personhood or vulnerability of the people involved: the hope, anxiety, humor, awkwardness, surprise, disappointment, and delight that make up the spectrum of real-life sexual encounters. Where do people learn how to be present, attuned, patient, compassionate, and playful in bed? These are not skills to be learned; they are personal capacities to be developed! People long for good sexual experiences but don’t know how to get there. In a world where sex is behaviorally scripted, sex can become disappointingly rote and predictable.

Women come to sex therapy for help with sexual dysfunction. In recent years, an increasing number of women have come because they are frustrated and confused by the boredom and dissatisfaction that pervades their sexual relationships. Kleinplatz (2001) quotes a young woman who stated, “He plays my body like a violin, and I hate him for it.” Sex is clearly more than a behavioral skill set. Women want to be related to, and having an orgasm does not guarantee meaningful sex when the person within remains untouched. We also face an age-old, “archetypal” problem of getting the love and the lust in the same bed. Sexologists are interested in this conundrum, and we continue to tackle the problem of how to sustain a passionate connection in a long-term relationship (Leiblum, 2010; Ogden, 2008; Perel, 2007, 2010; Schnarch, 2009). In our sex-saturated culture, there are too many people who “can’t get no satisfaction.”
What This Book Is About

This book is part philosophy and part treatment manual. The case histories included cover a variety of “diagnoses.” This is a book about helping women discover their birthright of joyful embodiment, innate eroticism, and sexual pleasure. It is a book about sexual subjectivity, the profound journey of becoming sexually Self-defined and Self-claiming. In the act of looking within, exploring her sexual psyche and embodied experience, a woman will deepen and mature in ways she could not have imagined. This process will empower her and cause her to mature and blossom. It will also require her to take responsibility for her life and her choices. Sensing this, some women hold back, anxious about the implications of undertaking this journey into conscious womanhood, but if her existence has become predictable and unbearably dull, this “call of the wild,” will pull her forward. The slumbering instinctual Self will begin to stir. When a woman begins to explore her innate sexuality, it becomes a pathway into greater depth, meaning, and wholeness.

For the past twenty-five years, I have been a student of Jungian psychology, with a fascination for the world of archetypes and the journey of individuation. I have worked at the intersection of psyche, soma, and soul for many years as a psychotherapist, sex therapist, and spiritual guidance practitioner. In my experience, sexuality work is soul work. Over the years, I have worked with individuals and couples from all walks of life and a wide range of sexual identities and genders. Many of my clients come because they are suffering from sexual anxiety, shame, confusion, compulsion, frustration, and longing. Some come in search of enriching an already good relationship. I walk with them through their dark and bright experiences, through swamplands of the soul, and celebrations of wholeness and authenticity. I have studied all aspects of sexuality, the history, sociology, religious framing, mythology, and variety of expressions. In all times and in all places, sexuality is of central importance to the human experience.

To live a life of meaning and wholeness, we must ask deep questions of who we are and how we choose to live. One of those important questions is “Who am I as a sexual being?” In my work with women, I help them develop their capacity to look deeply into their experiences, heal what holds them back, understand what lights their fire, develop a capacity for deep encounter, and engage partners in a way that is most likely
to result in a meaningful connection. We set about to establish a “center that can hold,” healing ancient wounds, negotiating intrapsychic splits, developing emotional regulation capacities, exploring the realm of identity, embodied being, love, creativity, primal instinct, relationship commitments, old scripts, new scripts, fantasy, and longing.

In the process of working with women, I became intrigued by the array of sexual archetypes that exist, and I began to develop my Sexual Essence Wheels (Chapter 7). In working with women to discover their inner sources of desire, I began to identify what I call “Eros-inhibiting archetypes” and “Gatekeepers,” who block women’s sexual feeling and expression.

As practitioners, we can help women who are in the midst of a somatically disconnected, sexually superficial world. We can help them open up explorations of their embodied experience and create an honored place for mindful sexuality, shared pleasure, and the beauty of being. It is time that women began to define their own sexuality; not based on images or ideals promoted by the media, not as objects of someone else’s script, but as subjects of their own stories, operating out of their unique sexual essence. This is the realm of Aphrodite, the ancient Greek Goddess of love, creativity, beauty, sensuality, and sexuality, and we are in search of Aphrodite.

**Who Is This Book Written For?**

1) Many psychotherapists feel woefully unprepared to assess and address the diversity of sexual issues that clients bring today. Many of our clinical training programs provide only one general human sexuality course. For clinicians who are nervous about venturing into conversations about women’s sexuality, this book provides pathways into those conversations and ways of working once you are there. The bibliography is filled with helpful sex therapy references. For those who already feel comfortable in working with sexual issues, this book will expand your sexual perspective and provide helpful interventions. I encourage those who are interested in specializing in sexuality work to become involved with AASECT, the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists, where you can pursue professional certification! In the process, your knowledge base will expand greatly, in ways you could never foresee.
I also encourage you, the practitioner, to engage in these explorations yourself. When you have done your own inner work, it makes the work you do with clients more profound and transformational. Clients will go only as deep as you can go.


Gina Ogden (2013) and Peggy Kleinplatz (2001, 2012) have been tireless promoters of the need to expand the practice of sex therapy. This book is written in that spirit. Although the methods described here can be used in conjunction with “best practice” modalities of the cognitive-behavioral/medical model (Goodwach, 2005a, 2005b), my approach incorporates narrative, experiential, somatic, “parts” psychology and a Jungian perspective on individuation and the world of archetypes. I also outline an effective method for resolving some of those perplexing treatment impasses that frustrate sex therapists. Applying somatic work, parts psychology, and Voice Dialogue provides a zip line into the core of issues, which will appeal to those who want brief therapy interventions. Feminist sex therapists will find this method client centered and empowering for women as they define their own experience, restory their lives, and become more joyfully embodied.

Although my way of working is deeply intrapsychic, it is also grounded in the body. Working with the somatic experience of archetypal energies opens up many creative possibilities for exploring the sexual psyche and erotic identity. An archetypal perspective acknowledges the range and multidimensionality of human sexual experience. It provides a way of exploring the inner self system, with its many subpersonalities that are in dynamic interaction. This approach to sex therapy can be applied to all aspects of treatment: intake and assessment, history taking, the conceptualization of sexual problems, treatment planning, and creative interventions.
3) This book will be of interest to Jungian analysts and Jungian-oriented practitioners, who are already working with archetypes, dreams, complex theory, shadow, anima and animus, and the journey of individuation. This work shifts the focus more deeply into the embodied experience of women, and I emphasize how archetypes are experienced somatically. I have coined the term “Sexual Individuation™” because I believe that a consciously integrated sexuality is not just an important aspect of individuation, it is a path of individuation. This book introduces the concept of Eros-inhibiting archetypes and broadens our understanding of the many manifestations of Aphrodite and the impact of her archetypal energy on women’s lives.

4) This book will also be of help to pastoral counselors and spiritual guidance practitioners. It will assist in addressing the sexual wounds sourced in religious shaming and provide healing remedies for soul-stealing sexual trauma. It is time that we resolve the split between body and soul, between an instinctual human life and the idealized transcendent sphere. Spiritual bypass is not the answer. We need to engage women in a more meaningful discourse regarding soulful sexuality.

5) This book is also for sexual seekers, who would like to explore their sexual psyche. Although this book is written for clinicians and practitioners, if you are familiar with psychological language, you can act as your own “sex therapist” in engaging the work. In the process, you will deepen your sexual Self-understanding, achieve some sexual healing, open new places of discovery, and enrich your sexual experience. If you find that you begin to feel overwhelmed, I suggest that you stop and find a competent therapist who can support you in working through any material that stands in the way of your journey into a joyful sexual wholeness.

6) In the course of writing this book, many men asked me if they might read this work, so that they can better understand the sexual depths of the women they seek to love well. Yes. This book is for you, too.

I have made an effort to be sensitive to the many dimensions and expressions of sexuality. Many of the case histories involve women in heterosexual relationships, but I have tried to include some examples of women who love women. I use the word “partner” often, in an attempt to be
neutral about the sexual and gender identities and relationship status of those involved.

**A Quick Book Tour**

Part I

Part I provides some background and context for the way in which I have blended sex therapy with a Jungian perspective. Throughout the book, I will always capitalize names that could be considered archetypes. In Chapter 1, I describe the changing perspectives on women’s sexuality over the course of history, and I introduce a few key figures in the birth of the field of sexology. In Chapter 2, I offer research on how “the sexual woman” has been defined and the many motivations for why women have sex. In Chapter 3, I outline the Masters and Johnson era, more recent developments in the field of sex therapy, and describe why women come to sex therapy. In Chapter 4, I begin to tie in Jungian psychology by introducing some key concepts originated by Carl Jung, particularly individuation, shadow, anima/animus, and the realm of archetypes. I touch on the relationship and differences between Jung’s and Freud’s perspectives. I then introduce Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess, whom I have chosen to represent the spectrum of sexual expressions that are possible within a woman’s psyche.

Part II

Part II of the book is dedicated to a description of my archetypal approach to working with sexual issues and sexual enrichment in sex therapy. Chapter 5 covers what a sexual practitioner might listen for when taking a client’s sexual history, particularly how to listen with “archetypal ears.” In Chapter 6, I introduce my model of the “inner cast of characters,” a concept detailed in my first book, *Negotiating the Inner Peace Treaty* (Wakefield, 2012). Our “inner cast” carries a variety of archetypal energies and plays out the scripts of a woman’s life. In Chapter 7, I introduce my Sexual Essence Wheels, tools I developed to introduce a woman to the many possible expressions of her Aphrodite energy. The two wheels also show ways in which a woman can become stuck in the “sexual shadow lands,” and the chapter describes how she can break free. This chapter
also covers other ways of understanding one’s sexual essence, through “sexual path preferences” and “core erotic themes.” Chapter 8 returns to the inner cast of characters and the introduction of Voice Dialogue, a method of getting to know these inner characters and working with them to open new possibilities. I provide a case history that illustrates how dreams can bring the energies that are needed to move a woman forward on her sexual journey. In Chapter 9, I discuss ways that women can learn to “shift states” and develop “archetypal fluency.”

Chapter 10 addresses a common problem that practitioners face, those places where treatment stalls or comes to a grinding halt. I offer a reframe for what clinicians often call the “resistant” or “unmotivated” client and introduce the concept of Sexual Gatekeepers. I outline a way of working with these pseudoprotectors, so that clients can move past them into the treasure land of sexual pleasure. In Chapter 11, I discuss how fairy tales shape a woman’s world and describe various Fairy Tale Syndromes. In Chapter 12, we look at what it means to move from being a girl into a fully enfranchised woman.

“Women and desire” has become a hot topic in sex therapy today and, in Chapter 13, we will begin to reconceptualize “desire” and understand more deeply what separates women from their innate sense of desire. Chapter 14 covers the meaning, importance, and difficulties related to orgasm. Chapter 15 introduces my concept of Eros-inhibiting archetypes and how they interfere with women’s eroticism. In Chapter 16, we look at the impact of trauma on a woman’s sexual formation and how the Inner Children who carry this trauma continue to have an impact on a woman’s ability to express her Aphrodite Self.

Chapter 17 explores some of the more infamous archetypes of sexuality and what happens when Aphrodite becomes wounded. Chapter 18 looks at women’s relationship to their bodies and provides a case history that illustrates that it is the archetypal energy a woman carries that creates her allure. Chapter 19 talks about women’s sexuality at midlife and beyond. Chapter 20 looks at the contrast between the icon of the Porn Star and the archetype of the Sexual Priestess.

Chapter 21 defines what a Sexually Empowered Woman really is and offers important foundations for becoming one. It also offers an archetypal perspective on effective sexual communication. Chapter 22 looks at relationships, with each partner housing an inner cast of characters, and many possible bonding patterns. In that chapter, we also look at what
long-term partners say about “optimal” sexuality. Chapter 23, the final chapter, describes the woman who has entered the realm of Aphrodite, is on the journey of Sexual Individuation™, and is experiencing the life-giving energy of Aphrodite, enriching and infusing all areas of her life.

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