



The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity Is Hurting Young Women

Jessica Valenti

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The United States is obsessed with virginity — from the media to schools to government agencies. In *The Purity Myth* Jessica Valenti argues that the country's intense focus on chastity is damaging to young women. Through in-depth cultural and social analysis, Valenti reveals that powerful messaging on both extremes — ranging from abstinence curriculum to “Girls Gone Wild” infomercials — place a young woman's worth entirely on her sexuality. Morals are therefore linked purely to sexual behavior, rather than values like honesty, kindness, and altruism. Valenti sheds light on the value — and hypocrisy — around the notion that girls remain virgin until they're married by putting into context the historical question of purity, modern abstinence-only education, pornography, and public punishments for those who dare to have sex. *The Purity Myth* presents a revolutionary argument that girls and women are overly valued for their sexuality, as well as solutions for a future without a damaging emphasis on virginity.

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