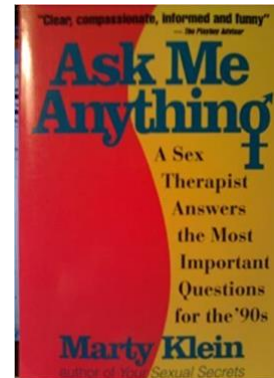


**"Ask Me Anything:
A Sex Therapist Answers
the Most Important
Questions for the '90s."**

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Question #137 from "Ask Me Anything," page 83

137. Why are sexually active men called "studs" (positive), while women who act the same are called "sluts" (negative)?

Paternalistic, Western societies like ours have very different sexual standards for men and women. Our culture still finds it difficult to imagine women with the kind of independent sexual desire men are expected to have.

In the absence of any wholesome model of female sexual interest, we condemn sexually active women. The insult translates as, "This female will have sex with many people whom she doesn't romantically love."

When a man wants to do this we understand (and even applaud), because he is expressing a basic part of his masculinity. A sexually free woman, on the other hand, contradicts the classical definitions of femininity. It is this threat that propels the hostile judgments by both men and women.