



My Parents Never Had Sex (Golden Age Books)

Doris B. Hammond

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"Love is timeless." "Beauty is only skin deep." "You're not getting older, you're getting better." "Age is just a state of mind." How often we mouth these platitudes only to find them mocked by our behavior toward older persons. American culture is sex conscious, health conscious, age conscious, beauty conscious. As a society we fear growing old - losing our "healthy" and "youthful" appearance, and becoming undesirable to those from whom we seek love and intimate contact. These fears - and the frustration they engender - lead many to believe that older persons are condemned to live "neutered" lives devoid of love, sex, intimacy, or passion.

This myth is rooted in the feeling that our parents could not, would not, and should not choose to engage in activities that are so closely identified with all that is youthful. The very idea that older persons could share the thoughts, feelings, desires, or physical needs and wants of their juniors is the object of much grimacing, if not ridicule. And, heaven forbid that one's elders would attempt to act on these feelings - oh, how disgusting and unseemly; they certainly couldn't be enjoying themselves; and, even if they are, isn't it dangerous at their age?

My Parents Never Had Sex presents the myths and facts of sexual aging in a thoughtful and straightforward manner that celebrates the sexuality of our elders. Dr. Hammond rejects not only the misconception that sexuality is neutralized with age, but also the related view (held by many elders) that sexual expression should be curtailed as one advances in years. She encourages both young and old to appreciate and take pride in their individual sexual being, and that of others, from birth to death. Cultural, religious, and societal influences affecting our views of human sexuality are described and discussed. Diverse forms of sexual expression are explored, with attention given to changes at mid-life and to health-related concerns. Helpful suggestions for family members and counselors are also offered. Specific situations encountered by families, couples, single persons, homosexuals, and nursing home residents are covered.

Many of Dr. Hammond's insightful observations will evoke profound reflection among loved ones, friends, and caregivers, who must first come to understand their own sexual attitudes, and the myths hidden therein, before they can begin to appreciate and eventually encourage the sexuality of their elders.

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