



*Redeeming Sex: Naked  
Conversations About Sexuality  
and Spirituality*  
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## Let's Get Naked

Boldly going where other church leaders fear to tread, Debra Hirsch offers a number of shifts in *Redeeming Sex* that could, if embraced, go a long way toward rehabilitating the church's terrible track record with sexuality, especially when it comes to interactions with the LGBT community. Hirsch knows whereof she speaks; not only did she once self-identify as a lesbian, but also she has spent the last twenty-five years in ministry wrestling with questions of what biblical sexuality might look like in the lives of very real and broken people. The quotes below offer a sampling of Hirsch's transformative vision.

"Our experience taught us that most people needed to feel a sense of *belonging* before they believed. And they needed *acceptance* before they could even begin to understand what repentance or transformation might look like."

"It turns out that sexuality and spirituality are in fact two sides of the same coin. Both express a deep longing to know and be known—by God and by others. Both involve a call to learn the true meaning and practice of love. . . . Both of these yearnings are essential to what it means to be human."

"A proper sexual ethic doesn't deny the fact that we are sexual beings; it develops a framework for the good expression of our good sexuality. . . . Suppressing sexuality doesn't help anyone; transformation starts with acceptance and integration."

"Looking to Jesus as our sexual model forces us to move beyond our fixation with genital sexuality to a much broader view of human sexuality, one that includes non-genital intimacy."

"For God as the true man teaches us what it is to be a true human."

"Let's face it, singles in the church today get the raw end of the deal. Not only do they have to navigate isolation and loneliness, but they have to do it in a context which by and large idolizes marriage and family."

"[Jesus] not only calls blood ties into question but reframes and enlarges the primary definitions of family in some very surprising ways."

"For many in the younger generation it's not necessarily as much about correct *doctrine* as it is about correct *loving*. . . . Our younger people are being forced to choose between what appears to be a bad-tempered church (which their parents represent) and their LGBT friends."



# TALKING POINTS



Debra Hirsch has led churches and ministries among the poor and the LGBT community in Australia and America for over twenty years. Deb is coauthor of *Untamed: Reactivating a Missional Form of Discipleship* with Alan Hirsch. She formerly served on the leadership team of the Forge Missions Training Network and Christian Associates International and on the steering team for the Missio Alliance.

You can find Debra Hirsch on Twitter: @debrahirsch

“We must lead with our embrace, not our theology.”

“Radical engagement and loving of the other earns us the right to speak.”

“There are many variances and things to consider when trying to define and understand homosexuality. In fact it might be more accurate to say *homosexualities*.”

“No one is born whole or even achieves complete wholeness in this life.”

“There is no room for self-righteousness and exclusion based on disputed interpretations of nonessential issues of the Bible.”

“All of us have little fears and anxieties that lurk beneath the surface; fears of people who are different from us, those we deem the *other*. And these fears, if not dealt with, begin to foster negative thoughts and prejudices. . . . And unless we take steps to make the unknown *known*, we risk letting fear, not love, dictate the terms of the relationship.”

“Homosexual people are in the end just people: their story and their struggles are essentially no different from yours and mine. They, like all bearers of God’s image, are worthy of dignity and respect.”

“When Jesus asks us to love our neighbor he is asking us to put our preformed attitudes to the side, to suspend judgment so that we might simply encounter them as they present themselves to us.”

“I am less inclined to be fearful and less inclined to judge when I approach the other as a being reflecting God.”