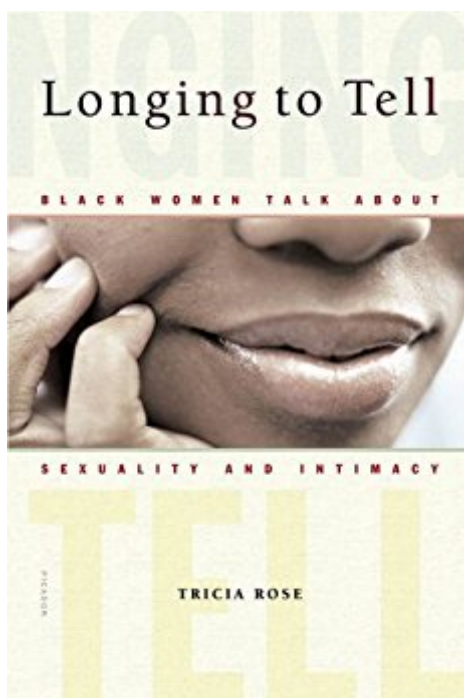


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# Longing To Tell: Black Women Talk About Sexuality And Intimacy



## Synopsis

The Sexual Lives of Black Women, In Their Own Words In a culture driven by sexual and racial imagery, very few honest conversations about race, gender, and sexuality actually take place. In their absence, commonly held perceptions of black women as teenage mothers, welfare recipients, mummies, or exotic sexual playthings remain unchanged. For fear that telling their stories will fulfill society's implicit expectations about their sexuality, most black women have retreated into silence. Tricia Rose seeks to break this silence and jump-start a dialogue by presenting, for the first time, the sexual testimonies of black women. Spanning a broad range of ages, levels of education, and socioeconomic backgrounds, twenty women, in their own words, talk with startling honesty about sex, love, family, relationships, and intimacy. Their stories dispel prevailing myths and provide revealing insights into how black women navigate the complex terrain of sexuality. Nuanced, rich, and powerful, *Longing to Tell* will be required reading for anyone interested in issues of race and gender.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It had a very negative focus. It had about 15 + perspectives and most of them were about child abuse and rape, break-ups, divorce and unhappy families. After awhile it began to get repetitive. Not too many inspiring tales or even sexy, erotic ones. Also, think it could have been edited better. It's just someone sitting there telling you their story like you're having a conversation so it's a bit rambling at times and you have read between the lines as to what they are saying. Still- valuable I guess in having an open and honest discussion on the topic..

I really enjoyed reading this book. It provided an important framework for understanding Black women's struggles for identities. This has encouraged me to be more open about my own sexual identity. Thank you

Take a literary journey with Tricia Rose, author of *LONGING TO TELL*, and read some revealing, heartbreaking, and inspiring narratives from a host of women of color who talk about sexuality, race, and their coming of age as a woman. Tricia Rose begins by sharing with readers the purpose and reason for this unusual project which opened up doors to allow these unknown and unspoken women of color to tell their stories. The women outlined in the book is of various ages, economic, and educational backgrounds. The extensive research and countless interviews propel this author's thought-provoking narratives from women breaking through a sexuality barrier that has always been unspoken of through generations of people of color. *LONGING TO TELL* rises to the occasion, orchestrating a context that speaks from the voices of women on their sexual relationships, and intimate clichés that thrust many into a naive state of ignorance and misinterpreting the art of intimacy. The women's names were changed along with other details to protect their identity due to some very graphic details in which they outlined their exposure to sexuality. It was a hard lesson for many and a rude awakening for others. They speak on growing up in dysfunctional surroundings, exposure to drugs, and going from one relationship to another. Several grew up with the pretense that if you had sex it meant love. They explain how their families and children had to endure their unorthodox and self-destructive behaviors that sometimes lead to tragic consequences. One woman speaks of how her young son was beaten to death by her boyfriend, and never realized the warning signs because she stayed in a haze of drugs. They speak candidly about their first sexual encounters with men and women. They speak on where they were and where they are today. They explain their process of healing along the path to finally taking control of their lives. All the women's narratives speak volumes on the depth and courage that made them survivors. In the end, the

author sums up very eloquently the overall dynamics of the sexual ramifications that women of color encounter today. LONGING TO TELL by Tricia Rose is a well written book. Tears came to my eyes several times reading some of the stories, and I wanted to jump into the book and hug and congratulate each woman on revealing their personal journey. I applaud Ms. Rose for her insight and courage to develop, research, and talk with so many women who are sisters, mothers, aunts, wives, and friends offering them an outlet in which to speak. A must read for everyone because knowledge is the key to understanding and awareness. (...)

This book stumbled upon me, due to my desire to read more books by African-American female writers. Once I saw the subject matter, and saw it was in the voices of everyday sisters, my interest rose even more. The best way for me to sum up this book is courage. Simply courage to be able to tell a variety of stories, from a variety of African-American women, from all walks of life. They shared their experiences, struggles, highs, lows, insecurities, dreams, and many more. For me, being a Black man, it provided me an opportunity to view my sisters in an even more focused light, and to pay attention to what they have to say, and cherish it fully. This is a should-read, a must-read, a have-to-read.

Longing to Tell consists of 20 Black women telling their stories about sex and intimacy. The women range from 19 to 48 and all have powerful stories to tell about their experiences. All women discussed what it meant to be intimate or have intimacy with a person. Intimacy was broadly defined and included more than just a sexual relationship and included relationships with family and friends. Most women defined intimacy in similar terms: a reciprocal relationship with someone where you can let down your guard and express yourself without out fear of being judged or criticized. Other themes that arose in the course of the book were Black women's relationships with Black men. Some of the women had horrific experiences attempting to love and sustain a relationship with Black men, and while some women had sworn off of Black men and were dating outside the race or were lesbians, most women were committed to finding love with a Black man. The negative stereotypes of Black women in the media and particularly those perpetuated by Black artists were discussed. Sexism within the Black community was also explored including the stress experienced by Black women of having to navigate racism and sexism on the outside and then having to come home to a situation where a woman's contribution and independence are not valued and where a woman was sometimes viewed as little more than property. The most disturbing subject in the book was sexual violence against women. Many (if not most) of the women interviewed told stories of

incest, molestation, rape, sexual harassment or sexual degradation. The book forcefully brought home the point of how vulnerable Black girls and women are to sexual abuse and also helped me see that sexual abuse against Black women unfortunately really is not all that surprising when one considers that Black women have been and continue to be the objects of sexual degradation in the media and little more than property in relationships. Until Black women are valued for the contributions they bring to the society as a whole and to relationships in particular, it will continue to be "OK" to continue the sexual violence against our girls and women. Despite all the negativity directed at Black women, the book highlighted the fact that Black women are an exceptional group who live in a world where racism and sexism (within and without the Black community) affect our daily lives. Nonetheless, we are the keepers of the family and the maintainers of our men. The abuse we are subject to is unparalleled, but we still strive. The book captured this uniqueness of Black women and away that I have never seen expressed before. I would highly recommend this book to all Black women as it represents a celebration of all that we are. Additionally, in reading this book I was also struck by how much Black men could benefit from the stories, and I also highly and enthusiastically recommend this book to Black men. 5 stars(...)

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