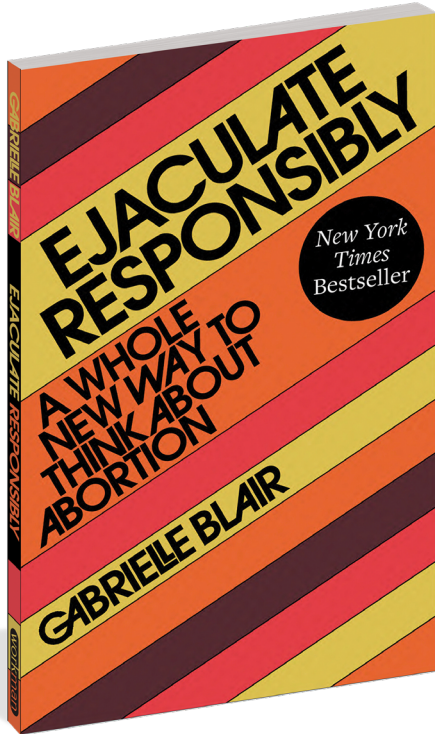


# EJACULATE RESPONSIBLY

## BY GABRIELLE BLAIR



### About the book:

In a series of 28 brief arguments, author Gabrielle Blair deftly makes the case for moving the abortion debate away from controlling and legislating women's bodies and instead directs the focus on men's lack of accountability in preventing unwanted pregnancies.

Highly readable, accessible, funny, and unflinching, Blair builds her argument by walking readers through the basics of fertility (men are 50 times more fertile than women), the unfair burden placed on women when it comes to preventing pregnancy (90 percent of the birth control market is for women), the wrongheaded stigmas around birth control for men (condoms make sex less pleasurable, vasectomies are scary and emasculating), and the counterintuitive reality that men, who are fertile 100 percent of the time, take little to no responsibility for preventing pregnancy.

The result is a compelling and convincing case for placing the responsibility—and burden—of preventing unwanted pregnancies away from women and onto men.



### About the author:

Gabrielle Stanley Blair is the founder of Alt Summit, the blockbuster biannual conference for lifestyle bloggers and creative entrepreneurs, currently in its twelfth year. She is also the founder of DesignMom.com. Started in 2006, it has been named a Website of the Year by *Time* magazine, praised as a top parenting blog by *The Wall Street Journal*, *Parents*, and *Better Homes & Gardens*, and won the Iris Award for Blog of the Year. Her first book, *Design Mom: How to Live with Kids*, a *New York Times* bestseller, was published in 2015 by Artisan.

On her website, Gabrielle covers the intersection of design and parenting, with thoughtful posts on topics like how to talk to your kids about sex, family travel, food kids will really eat, political issues, and family-friendly design.

Gabrielle and her husband, Ben Blair, have six children—Ralph, Maude, Olive, Oscar, Betty, and Flora June. Her family divides their time between the United States and France. Follow her on Instagram and Twitter @designmom.

### Praise for EJACULATE RESPONSIBLY:

"Blair's fresh reframe should be required reading for any person who has sex, wants to have sex or is raising someone who might have sex in the future. This slender book has what it takes to be the foundation for a movement."—*Washington Post*

"Flashes of acerbic humor and eye-opening statistics bolster Blair's common-sense case. This polemic has the power to change minds."—*Publishers Weekly*

"Slim but mighty tome."—*Booklist*

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Thank you for selecting EJACULATE RESPONSIBLY for your Book/Discussion Group!

This resource was created to help your book/discussion group digest the arguments laid out in *Ejaculate Responsibly*. The hope is that you all come away with a solid understanding and new perspective on what causes the unwanted pregnancies that lead to abortion, and actionable steps for improving conversations, practices, and policies around these issues. This guide has been designed to facilitate your book/discussion group to get the most out of your time together with *Ejaculate Responsibly*, so please use this guide in whatever way helps you, and disregard anything about it that you don't find helpful. You know what will work best for your group.

### A few points about EJACULATE RESPONSIBLY:

- Most people can read the book in 2–3 hours, often in one sitting.
- The book is composed of 28 short, standalone arguments. People will be able to meaningfully participate in your group's conversation even if they have only read or reviewed a few of the arguments.
- The arguments can be divided into two groups: arguments that articulate biological facts (e.g., Men are 50 times more fertile than women; Sperm live for up to 5 days, etc.); and arguments that draw out the implications of those biological facts (e.g., We need to shift our focus to men; Pregnancy should not be a punishment, etc.)

### A few approaches to discussing EJACULATE RESPONSIBLY with your book or discussion group:

**Assign a handful of members to come prepared to share a passage or argument (or several passages or arguments) and present or lead a discussion about their selection(s).**

If you like this option, you may want to coordinate to make sure the presenters or discussion leaders are prepared and that they have selected a good variety of topics/arguments.

**Ask each member to come prepared to share with the group a passage or a few passages that they found meaningful or compelling.**

If you like this option, you can use the meeting time to discuss these passages.

**Have each member pick one argument or a handful of arguments that they found especially meaningful or compelling, and to share their thoughts.**

If you like this option, you can use the meeting time to focus on the arguments the most members found meaningful or compelling.

**Try to discuss as many of the arguments as you can in the time you have for your group. (You may need to be strategic to ensure you cover the arguments you find most valuable.)**

If you like this option, one way to go about it is to divide your group into chapters for the book—so three participants would cover the first 5–10 arguments; three others would cover the next 5–10 (or however it makes sense to divide up the arguments), and so on until every argument you want to address is addressed.

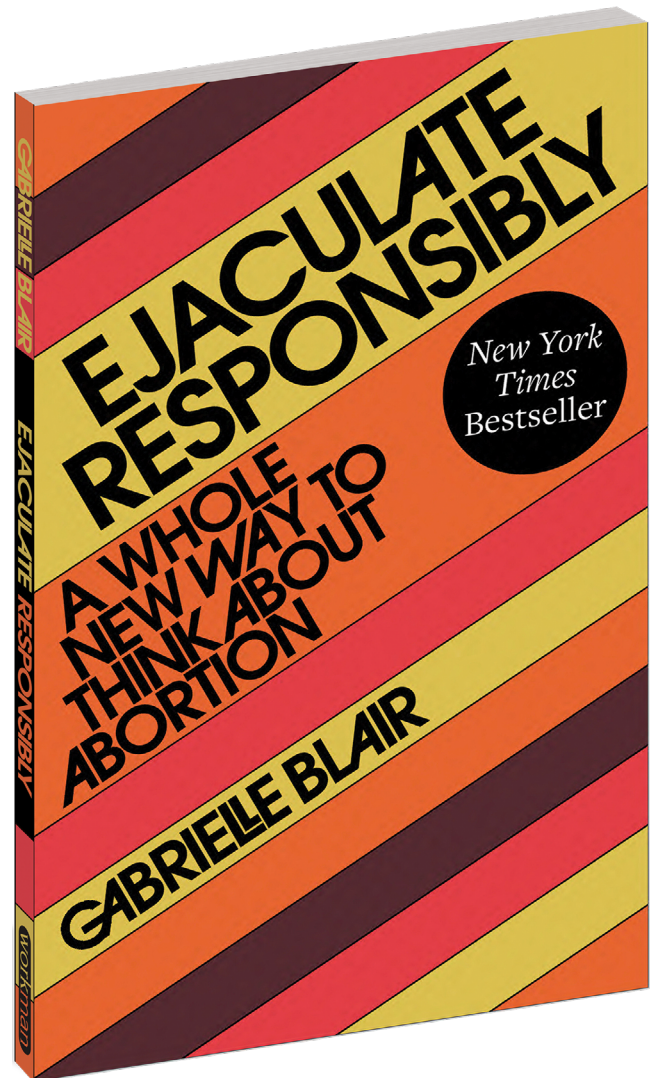
If you have a larger group, you may want to have smaller subgroups discuss parts of the book together first, then have each group present highlights of their discussion for the whole group. Then the whole group can spend any remaining time discussing favorite ideas, passages, arguments, etc.

If you don't already do this, we recommend that participants have a paper and pencil nearby to help keep track of different points and arguments that come up in conversation.

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## QUESTIONS/PROMPTS TO DISCUSS GENERAL THEMES AND ARGUMENTS OF THE BOOK:

1. Think for one minute: How would your life be different if you didn't have to worry about pregnancy, regardless of your sexual activity? Are there any specific, practical changes you would make to your daily, weekly, or monthly routines? Would it free up any mental/emotional stress or bandwidth? *Note how responses might differ depending on the gender makeup of your group.*
2. What would the consequences be for women if the burden of preventing pregnancy was simply taken off the table? Would this change if you were a man? Or if you are a man, would this change if you were a woman?
3. If your group is composed of men and women, do they respond differently to the arguments made in the book? If your group is all women, how do you think men would respond to this book? If your group is all men, how do you think women would respond to this book?
4. What is your response to the book in general? What arguments, anecdotes, or passages stick out?
5. Think for one minute: Is it fair to say that men cause all unwanted pregnancies? Doesn't it "take two to Tango?" (Note: This is a default initial criticism leveled by someone unfamiliar with the arguments in *Ejaculate Responsibly*.)
6. Our legal framework is focused on abortion, but Blair makes a case that if we focus much more on responsible ejaculation, abortion will take care of itself. Do you agree? Is responsible ejaculation a better focus than abortion? Why or why not?
7. The last chapter is titled "This is how to take action." In light of the arguments in this book, what are meaningful actions we could take now or in the near future? What would it look like if our educational, legal, and political systems embraced the ideas of this book? What would it take to make this a reality? How do we take a meaningful step in that direction?
8. How does the book leave you feeling? Hopeful? Angry? Excited? Fearful? Some combination or something else entirely? What would you say are the key reasons for your emotional response(s) to this book?
9. How (if at all) would your life have been different if the arguments of *Ejaculate Responsibly* were commonly accepted years ago?
10. What statistics or figures were new to you or surprised you?
11. What (if any) preconceptions or biases did you learn you had over the course of reading *Ejaculate Responsibly*?



# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## DISCUSSION PROMPTS FOR EACH ARGUMENT:

Argument	Related Prompt(s)
<b>1. Men are 50 times more fertile than women.</b>	Before reading this book, had you ever been presented with this comparison? If so, what was the context? Blair makes this comparison the first argument of the book---do you agree that it deserves such prominence? If not, what argument does deserve that prominence?
<b>2. Sperm live for up to 5 days.</b>	Many of the arguments in this book state basic biological facts. Is this important? Are these facts not commonly known or understood? Do they have implications that aren't commonly understood?
<b>3. Women's fertility is unpredictable.</b>	There appears to be some basic misunderstanding about women's menstruation and fertility. Ask around. Do those close to you believe that women's fertility is predictable?
<b>4. Ovulation is involuntary, ejaculation is not.</b>	How does the fact that ejaculation is voluntary (in the context of a couple having sex) contribute to the conclusion that men are responsible for causing unwanted pregnancies?
<b>5. Birth control for women is hard to access and hard to use.</b>	Share your experiences with women's birth control. Do these experiences align with the thesis of this argument? What is it like for women to procure birth control?
<b>6. Birth control for men is easy to access and easy to use.</b>	Share your experiences with men's birth control, with a focus on condoms or vasectomies. Do these experiences align with the thesis of this argument? What is it actually like for men to procure birth control?
<b>7. Society clings to the idea that men hate condoms.</b>	Do you agree that American society teaches that men hate condoms? Have you noticed subtle or not-so-subtle suggestions that this is the case in your experience (personal or through media?)
<b>8. Vasectomies are less risky than tubal ligations.</b>	Have you considered vasectomies and tubal ligations as comparably risky procedures? Or have you heard others consider them comparable? Have you heard them presented as quite different (in terms of risk)? Share what that experience was like.
<b>9. We expect women to do the work of pregnancy prevention.</b>	Share your experiences about women currently doing the work of pregnancy prevention. Or share. Talk about what the burden of pregnancy prevention amounts to (psychological, emotional, a couple's relationship, etc.). In the dedication, Blair writes: "To the people of the future who get to live their lives with no anxiety about unwanted pregnancies, and to the responsible ejaculators who I'm confident can and will make that possible." Speculate on what that would look/feel like to have the burden of or anxiety about unwanted pregnancies removed, or in large part lifted, from women.
<b>10. We don't mind if women suffer, as long as it makes things easier for men.</b>	Do you agree with this statement? Share experiences that confirm or counter this claim.
<b>11. Society teaches that the man's pleasure is the purpose and priority of sex.</b>	Share examples of how men's pleasure is the priority of sex. Or counterexamples.



# DISCUSSION GUIDE

<b>12. Women can be impregnated without experiencing pleasure.</b>	This is another argument that centers around a biological fact. What are the important implications that pleasure is inextricably tied to men's ability to impregnate and totally unrelated to a woman's ability to be impregnated?
<b>13. Men cause all unwanted pregnancies.</b>	This argument is a singular bold claim. But it is fairly uncontroversial if we accept that an unwanted pregnancy is only caused when a man ejaculates inside a vagina when both partners are not trying to conceive. Is this a fair claim to make? Do you agree that men cause all unwanted pregnancies?
<b>14. We expect women to be responsible for their own bodies AND for men's bodies.</b>	Share experiences of women being responsible for their own bodies and for men's bodies (especially as concerns avoiding pregnancy). Have you yourself experienced this or witnessed close family members or friends demonstrating this expectation (in words or deeds)? What did that look/feel like?
<b>15. We need to shift our focus to men.</b>	This book is obviously written in an effort to shift the focus to men in the unwanted pregnancy and abortion discussion. What would it take to meaningfully make that shift? Who are the important parties that would need to make the shift? Politicians? Media? Educators? Men? Women?
<b>16. Holding men accountable for their actions does not make women victims.</b>	<p>Blair notes that a typical criticism of her argument that men cause all unwanted pregnancies is that this (theoretically) takes away all accountability from women. But no one seems to be troubled by the fact that women currently (actually) do all the work of pregnancy prevention, which takes away all accountability from me.</p> <p>In both cases, one party is not held accountable. How do you account for people being bothered by a theoretical suggestion while being unbothered by an actual reality?</p> <p>Blair argues that holding men accountable for their actions is not a statement on women and does not in any way make women victims. Do you agree?</p>
<b>17. The uneven power dynamic between men and women is real and can turn violent quickly.</b>	This argument presents many subtle statements with big implications for power dynamics. Have you experienced these types of power dynamics or something similar? Share your experiences or experiences you've witnessed in the media or elsewhere. How do power dynamics affect the impact of and response to seemingly simple statements or requests?
<b>18. A woman can't walk out on a pregnancy.</b>	Women are inextricably and physically bound to a pregnancy in a way that men aren't. Share your experiences where this is (or isn't) the case.
<b>19. We're not honest about pregnancy and childbirth.</b>	Do you agree that our culture and our politicians aren't realistic about the burden and risks of pregnancy and childbirth? What would it look like if they were?
<b>20. The realities and burdens of parenting are unfathomable.</b>	Share your experiences about the challenges of parenting—either from direct personal experience or stories of those around you.
<b>21. Pregnancy should not be a punishment.</b>	Have you encountered arguments or claims or suggestions that pregnancy is an appropriate punishment for someone's behavior? Share examples you've personally encountered.
<b>22. Adoption is not an alternative to abortion.</b>	Adoption is often presented as a preferable alternative to abortion. Have you encountered this claim? Did this chapter challenge or confirm your views on adoption or its utility as a welcome alternative to abortion? Whether it challenged or confirmed your views, how did it do so?

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

<b>23. There are zero consequences for men who ejaculate irresponsibly.</b>	This argument claims that there are no consequences for men who ejaculate irresponsibly—do you agree? Share experiences that confirm or counter this claim.
<b>24. Sperm are dangerous.</b>	Blair suggests that American sex ed and cultural practices have underplayed how dangerous sperm are. Do you agree that sperm are dangerous? Do you agree that this has been underemphasized? In your experience, how has sperm been treated in media references and sex ed? Is this treatment appropriate? Why or why not?
<b>25. Men have more control of their bodies and sexual urges than we like to admit.</b>	One of the arguments against men being responsible for causing unwanted pregnancies is that men can't control their sexual urges. Have you encountered such claims? Do you believe that men have more control than we like to admit? Share experiences that confirm or counter this claim.
<b>26. Men can easily prevent abortions but choose not to.</b>	Blair makes the claim that men could easily prevent abortions, but they choose not to. Do you believe this is true? What actions could be taken—both on the individual and systemic level—to encourage and support men to take a more central role in preventing abortions?
<b>27. We know what works.</b>	Blair makes claims about how we can prevent unwanted pregnancies. Would you add or take away anything? What would this look like in practice at a local and state level?
<b>28. This is how to take action.</b>	What would it look like for men to take responsibility for their actions related to causing unwanted pregnancies? What would it look like for American society and culture to embrace the ideas of this book? What would change in our educational, political, or legal systems?

## A word of reassurance for any participants who may feel uneasy about the topic:

If you or any participants in your group are uneasy about discussions surrounding abortion, or if you know or suspect that members of the group fall on different sides of the abortion debate and worry that the discussion may become combative or emotional, we want to ease your concerns.

*Ejaculate Responsibly* is not explicitly about abortion or any of the familiar arguments or imagery surrounding the current abortion debate, such as when life begins, “the unborn,” graphic descriptions of violence, women’s bodily autonomy, rape, incest, or how many weeks into a pregnancy is too many for an abortion. *Ejaculate Responsibly*’s sole focus is on the circumstance that leads to 99 percent of abortions—an unwanted pregnancy—and the reality that every unwanted pregnancy is caused by an irresponsible ejaculation by a man.

In other words, no matter where members of your group fall on the abortion debate, if you focus your discussion on the arguments laid out in *Ejaculate Responsibly*, you will sidestep the talking points and arguments that have stymied conversation for decades and, we hope, come away with a fresh perspective on the topic.

## Thank You and Request for Feedback

Thank you for reading *Ejaculate Responsibly* with your book/discussion group. We hope the discussion was lively and that all participants left with a robust understanding of and appreciation for the role that men and their irresponsible ejaculations play in causing unwanted pregnancies. We hope that participants in the discussion are now more likely to discuss and share ideas and arguments from *Ejaculate Responsibly* with others and to recommend the book to friends, family, coworkers, and others. We firmly believe that the ideas in this book can change the discourse around abortion and move toward practical frameworks and productive conversations.

If you would like to help more, we are interested in hearing from your group. We are especially interested in hearing first-person stories from readers that can give additional context and color to these arguments. We are also interested in your experience reading the book as a whole or discussing the book with your book/discussion group. If you are interested in sharing one or more relevant experiences, please send (or recommend to members of your group to send) examples to [this form](#). The form gives you an option to remain anonymous. Your responses may be used by Gabrielle Blair (and her agents) to add context as she shares or explains the arguments in *Ejaculate Responsibly* in podcasts, media interviews, etc. Responses will not be shared with any other group, or for any other purpose.

**Thank you!!**