

*Asexuality is a sexual orientation characterized by a persistent lack of sexual attraction toward any gender.*

*At least 1% of people are believed to be asexual.*

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<http://www.whatisasexuality.com/intro/>

# What is Asexuality?

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**AsexualityArchive.com**

## Who Is Asexual?

An asexual person ("ace", for short) is simply someone who does not experience sexual attraction. That's all there is to it. Aces can be any sex or gender or ethnic background or body type, can be rich or poor, can wear any clothing style, and can be any religion or political affiliation.

## A Misunderstood Orientation

Many people hear the word "asexual" and make assumptions about what it means. They think of single-celled organisms in a petri dish. They think of a celibate monk on far off mountaintop. They think of a genderless robot from outer space. Asexuality isn't any of those things.

In particular:

- Asexuality is not an abstinence pledge.
- Asexuality is not a gender identity.
- Asexuality is not a disorder.
- Asexuality is not a choice.

## Attraction, Not Action

Asexuality is a sexual orientation, like homosexuality or heterosexuality. And like being straight or being gay, it's about what someone feels, not what someone does. Dating, having sex, or masturbating do not conflict with asexuality in any way. There are many reasons why an asexual person might do these things that do not require sexual attraction to be present.

## Some Do, Some Don't

Many questions people have about asexuality can be answered with the same phrase: "Some Do, Some Don't." Do asexuals date? Some do, some don't. Do asexuals fall in love? Some do, some don't. Do asexuals have sex? Some do, some don't.

Do asexuals masturbate? Some do, some don't. Do asexuals like pepperoni pizza? Some do, some don't. We are all individuals, with our own individual preferences and personalities, and it is generally impossible to make blanket statements about us.

## The Gray Areas

Some people feel that they are "almost asexual" or "asexual with an exception". That is, they strongly identify with being asexual, except for a few limited or infrequent experiences of sexual attraction. Gray-asexual people fall in between asexuality and non-asexuality. Often, they feel that they don't quite fit the definition of asexual, sometimes because they've felt sexual attraction in rare cases or they are unsure if they have. Demisexual people are only capable of feeling sexual attraction after developing a strong emotional bond with someone. Demisexuality and gray-asexuality fall within what's called the "asexual spectrum".

## The Concept of Love

Along with a sexual orientation, people have what's called a romantic or affectional orientation that describes who that person might be romantically attracted to. It is not uncommon for asexuals to experience romantic attraction.

Romantic orientations are given names that parallel sexual orientations. For instance, a heteroromantic person is someone who experiences romantic attraction toward a different gender, homoromantic toward the same gender, and so on. A significant number of asexuals also identify as aromantic, which means that they do not experience romantic attraction.

Romantic and sexual orientations are not

necessarily aligned. For instance, it is possible for someone to be a homoromantic asexual, an aromantic heterosexual, or any other combination.

## How Can I Tell?

If you want to know if you're asexual, ask yourself the following question: "Do I feel sexual attraction?" If the answer is "No", you're asexual. The problem with that question is that "sexual attraction" is a vague phrase. It's difficult to say that you've never felt something, if you don't know what that something feels like.

If you're still unsure, here is a list of questions to help guide your thoughts. They're not meant as a checklist to "diagnose" asexuality, rather, they describe feelings that many asexual people have had.

- Are you generally disinterested in sex?
- Is your interest in sex more scientific than emotional?
- Do you feel left out or confused when others discuss sex?
- Have you ever had to pretend to be interested in someone in order to fit in?
- Have you ever felt "broken" because you don't experience sexual feelings like those around you?
- Have you ever felt that you were straight "by default" or that you were bi or pan because you were equally (dis)interested in all genders?
- Have you ever gone out with someone or had sex because you felt "that's what you're supposed to do"?

If you want to know if someone else is asexual, you have to talk to them about it. There are no outward signs of asexuality, and you shouldn't attempt to label someone else against their will.