



# I Am Not a Slut: Slut-Shaming in the Age of the Internet

*Leora Tanenbaum*

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The author of the groundbreaking work *Slut!* explores the phenomenon of slut-shaming in the age of sexting, tweeting, and “liking.” She shows that the sexual double standard is more dangerous than ever before and offers wisdom and strategies for alleviating its destructive effects on young women’s lives.

Young women are encouraged to express themselves sexually. Yet when they do, they are derided as “sluts.” Caught in a double bind of mixed sexual messages, young women are confused. To fulfill the contradictory roles of being sexy but not slutty, they create an “experienced” identity on social media—even if they are not sexually active—while ironically referring to themselves and their friends as “sluts.”

But this strategy can become a weapon used against young women in the hands of peers who circulate rumors and innuendo—elevating age-old slut-shaming to deadly levels, with suicide among bullied teenage girls becoming increasingly common. Now, Leora Tanenbaum revisits her influential work on sexual stereotyping to offer fresh insight into the digital and face-to-face worlds contemporary young women inhabit. She shares her new research, involving interviews with a wide range of teenage girls and young women from a variety of backgrounds as well as parents, educators, and academics. Tanenbaum analyzes the coping mechanisms young women currently use and points them in a new direction to eradicate slut-shaming for good.

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