Book Recommendations:

One list of life-changing books women should read: [http://www.stumbleupon.com/su/22Hi7h](http://www.stumbleupon.com/su/22Hi7h)

**Ms. Magazine Readers’ 100 Best Non-Fiction Books of All Time**


**Wild Iris – Florida’s Only Feminist Bookstore’s Top 100 Books:**
http://shop.wildirisbooks.com/ms-magazines-top-100-feminist-non-fiction-countdown-1-10

**Men Speak Out: Views on Gender, Sex, and Power, (Second Edition)** by Shira Tarrant
Highlights new essays on pornography, pop culture, queer identity, Muslim masculinity, and the war on women. With personal candor and political insight, this collection of diverse authors explores sex work, digital activism, incarceration, domestic violence, surviving incest, and standing firmly as male allies facing the backlash against women’s reproductive rights.

**Yes Means Yes!: Visions of Female Sexual Power and A World Without Rape**
By [Jaclyn Friedman, Jessica Valenti](http://shop.wildirisbooks.com/ms-magazines-top-100-feminist-non-fiction-countdown-1-10)
Valenti teams up with anti-violence activist Friedman to curate this daring essay collection, which calls for us to end rape altogether by going beyond a culture of “no means no” to one of “enthusiastic consent.”

**Middlesex** by [Jeffrey Eugenides](http://shop.wildirisbooks.com/ms-magazines-top-100-feminist-non-fiction-countdown-1-10)
"I was born twice: first, as a baby girl, on a remarkably smogless Detroit day of January 1960; and then again, as a teenage boy, in an emergency room near Petoskey, Michigan, in August of 1974. . . My birth certificate lists my name as Calliope Helen Stephanides. My most recent driver's license...records my first name simply as Cal."

**The Good Body** by [Eve Ensler](http://shop.wildirisbooks.com/ms-magazines-top-100-feminist-non-fiction-countdown-1-10)
In *The Good Body*, she delves into the wider implications of female body image, reminding us how women change and mutilate themselves to conform to societal expectations. Whether by submitting to Botox or concealing themselves under burkhas, women of all cultures feel compelled to gain acceptance. Drawing on narratives overheard in locker rooms, boardrooms, and cell blocks, Ensler’s monologues expose our most repressed selves.

**The Second Sex** by [Simone de Beauvoir](http://shop.wildirisbooks.com/ms-magazines-top-100-feminist-non-fiction-countdown-1-10)
This is probably one of the most important and inspiring books from feminist literature, and is accessible for all readers. Simone de Beauvoir, a French intellectual, explains why the female gender has always
been seen as “the other” - as the opposite of the male. She analyzes the origin of this patriarchal thinking by deconstructing biology, history, myths, laws, religion etc.

**Rules for Radicals** by Saul Alinsky
First published in 1971, *Rules for Radicals* is Saul Alinsky's impassioned counsel to young radicals on how to effect constructive social change and know “the difference between being a realistic radical and being a rhetorical one.” Written in the midst of radical political developments whose direction Alinsky was one of the first to question, this volume exhibits his style at its best. Like Thomas Paine before him, Alinsky was able to combine, both in his person and his writing, the intensity of political engagement with an absolute insistence on rational political discourse and adherence to the American democratic tradition.

**Moving Beyond Words** by Gloria Steinem
This collection of six essays from Steinem features three never before published and three drawn from the pages of *Ms.*; Steinem reflects on growing older, critiquing Freud and overcoming barriers to feminism.

**Tipping the Velvet** by Sarah Waters
Lavishly crammed with the songs, smells, and costumes of late Victorian England, this delicious, steamy debut novel chronicles the adventures of Nan King, who begins life as an oyster girl in the provincial seaside town of Whitstable and whose fortunes are forever changed when she falls in love with a cross-dressing music-hall singer named Miss Kitt.

**The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton** by Lucille Clifton
Feminism and poetry have a long and storied history together, and Lucille Clifton is one of the most beloved of its flagbearers, her poems ringing with race, sex, and the ever-present body.

**I Remember** by Joe Brainard
*I Remember* is a book that manages to be miraculously unpretentious and sophisticated. Using a list of seemingly random memories -- much like a twitter feed (except 1,000,000 x better) -- all of which begin with the words "I remember," Brainard weaves together personal memories and cultural references that are often hilarious and poignant, and are guaranteed to trigger your own memories of the same. Importantly, he includes his gay experiences/outlook (sometimes frank or "graphic" in the sex department, but never overwrought) and binds these experiences to the larger cultural narrative in ways that are (still) ignored or oppressed, and -- to me anyway -- often feel beyond our collective ability to describe in our current post-AIDS era of grief, denial, and extreme anxiety about gay life/sex. A short, perfect book.

**The Soft Revolution** by Neil Postman
I read this book when I was in high school in 1976. It led me to realize that I was responsible for my life and my education. Rather than simply complaining about what a waste highs chool was, I became motivated to do something about it. The book provided not only the vision that something better was possible and the motivation to work toward it, it also gave numerous specific ideas or strategies that got
me moving in the right direction. Together with several other books on alternative education, it contributed to a philosophy of education that was very self-directed and has served me well over the last 27 years.

*The Marketplace* by Laura Antoniou

Laura Antoniou's modern classic of BDSM-themed fiction returns to print. In The Marketplace, the first book of the series, follow the trials and tribulations of four aspiring slaves as they undergo training hoping to be accepted into the secret underground society of masters and slaves known as the Marketplace. Under the firm hand of Grendel, the sharp eye of Alexandra, and the painful leather strap in the hands of Chris, these men and women will find some of their hardest challenges come from within themselves. They embark on a sensual and erotic journey, and yet nothing is quite as they expect in their quest to serve.

*Our Lady of the Flowers* by Jean Genet

Written while he was in prison for burglary and published in 1944. The novel and the author were championed by many contemporary writers, including Jean-Paul Sartre and Jean Cocteau, who helped engineer a pardon for Genet. A wildly imaginative fantasy of the Parisian underworld, the novel tells the story of Divine, a male prostitute who consorts with thieves, pimps, murderers, and other criminals and who has many sexual adventures. Written in lyrical, dreamlike prose, the novel affirms a new moral order, one in which criminals are saints, evil is glorified, and conventional taboos are freely violated.

*Feminism Is For Everybody: Passionate Politics* by bell hooks

If you are looking for a book on feminism that also addresses race and class, you should read this (relatively) new book by bell hooks.

*Dancer From the Dance* by Andrew Holleran

One of the most important works of gay literature, this haunting, brilliant novel is a seriocomic remembrance of things past -- and still poignantly present. It depicts the adventures of Malone, a beautiful young man searching for love amid New York's emerging gay scene. From Manhattan's Everard Baths and after-hours discos to Fire Island's deserted parks and lavish orgies, Malone looks high and low for meaningful companionship. The person he finds is Sutherland, a campy quintessential queen -- and one of the most memorable literary creations of contemporary fiction. Hilarious, witty, and ultimately heartbreaking, *Dancer from the Dance* is truthful, provocative, outrageous fiction told in a voice as close to laughter as to tears.

*We Too Are Drifting* by Gale Wilhelm

*We Too Are Drifting* tells the story of woodcut artist Jan Morale's struggle to extricate herself from a destructive sexual attachment to bisexual Madeline and of her delicately conducted romance with the younger and more innocent Victoria. The tone is bittersweet, for in the end, Jan must watch as Victoria goes away with her family and the young man they have chosen for her.
Grief by Andrew Holleran
This novel by Holleran captures the pain of a generation of gay men who have survived the AIDS epidemic and reached middle age yearning for fidelity, tenderness and intimacy. The unnamed, silver-haired narrator has just relocated from Florida, where he cared for his recently deceased mother for the last 12 years, to Washington, D.C., to "start life over" and teach a college seminar on literature and AIDS. He rents a room in a townhouse near Dupont Circle, his solitude deepened by his awareness that he and his gay, celibate landlord, a "homosexual emeritus," form only a semblance of a household. The narrator spends his days exploring the streets of the capital and his nights engrossed in the letters of Mary Todd Lincoln, who held onto her grief and guilt at her husband's death much like the narrator hordes his guilt for never having come out of the closet to his mother—and for having survived the 1980s and '90s. Holleran makes his coiled reticence speak volumes on attachment, aging, sex and love in small scenes as compelling as they are heartbreaking.

The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan
The Feminine Mystique is a great classic by Betty Friedan that criticizes gender roles and the treatment of women as second class citizens. Friedan believes that men need to be actively part of women’s emancipation, and does not believe in positive or negative discrimination: “A girl should not expect special privileges because of her sex, but neither should she 'adjust' to prejudice and discrimination.” Betty Friedan, a great mind and a lover of truth. Highly recommended.

The Line of Beauty: A Novel by Alan Hollinghurst
An almost perfectly written novel, recently longlisted for the Man Booker. To shade in the nuances of class, Hollingsworth uses plot the way it was meant to be used—not as a line of utility, but as a thematically connected sequence of events that creates its own mini-value system and symbols. The book is divided into three sections, dated 1983, 1986 and 1987. The protagonist, Nick Guest, is a James scholar in the making and a tripper in the fast gay culture of the time.

When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present by Gail Collins
With her signature wry storytelling, New York Times columnist Collins spins a comprehensive and celebratory account of the last 50 years of American women’s history.

Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A. by Jonathan Katz
This unique and pioneering work is a comprehensive collection of documents on American gay life from the early days of European settlement to the emergence of modern American gay culture. Hailed by reviewers, it offers a new historical perspective on this once invisible minority and its 400-year battle.

Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution by Adrienne Rich
Adrienne Rich shares her perspective as a woman, feminist, and mother about motherhood in the 20th century. The book begins with excerpts from Adrienne Rich’s journal, and continues with a historical review of motherhood and the modern division of labour. This book makes one think about the
motherhood today and the question "children: now, later, or never?" and the how one's life changes by becoming a parent.

*Becoming a Man: Half a Life Story* by Paul Monette
An unrivaled memoir about life in and out of the closet.

*The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity Is Hurting Young Women* by Jessica Valenti
Jessica Valenti combats a nation’s virginity complex, arguing that myths about “purity” are damaging to both girls and women. She points the way forward toward a world where women are perceived as more than vessels of chastity.

*Giovanni’s Room* by James Baldwin
Set in Paris’ gay subculture in the middle of the 20th century – It’s a searing, perfect novel, with few if any rivals for the way it brings us into the mind of a closeted young man fighting both to love and not to love his one great love, and the cost of this battle within him.

*The Beauty Myth* by Naomi Wolf
Alongside the evident progress of the women’s movement, however, writer and journalist Naomi Wolf is troubled by a different kind of social control, which, she argues, may prove just as restrictive as the traditional image of homemaker and wife. It’s the beauty myth, an obsession with physical perfection that traps the modern woman in an endless spiral of hope, self-consciousness, and self-hatred as she tries to fulfill society’s impossible definition of "the flawless beauty."

*Good Times, Bad Times* by James Kirkwood
This story is about being different and about surviving. Like the title suggests, the main character will go through both the good times and the bad times and survive (maybe, just barely) and both types of times were, in the end, okay because it was all a part of life.

*A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf
Written in 1929, Woolf says "Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind." So Woolf challenges the patriarchal system that allows a man to choose any livelihood he desires, but often requires a woman to live her life in full support of his enterprise instead of deciding upon her own path.

*Nocturnes for the King of Naples* by Edmund White
Edmund White writes novels that tell of the world he lives in in New York and in Paris, and he has been heralded world wide for his talent. He advocates unbridled sexuality. Despite all his free love manifestos, he wrote a book that details that passion he felt for his past, for his past lovers and for his father. This is it and you will never find a more engaging, moving tale of the search for love and affection.
**Sisterhood is Powerful** by Robin Morgan
When first published in 1970, this book was a manifesto for a generation of women. It demonstrates how far we’ve come and what is the next step for women. This book has unquestionable realness not often found in more contemporary feminist anthologies. To read this book is to spiral back in time to a place where information on birth control was hard to obtain, abortion was a back alley reality, equal pay for equal work was never enforced, sexual harassment (which is not mentioned) rape and assault were life’s little dirty secrets, and title IX was not yet reality.

**Oranges are Not the Only Fruit** by Jeanette Winterson
Jeanette Winterson’s semi-autobiographical novel is one of the most beautifully written story of a middle-class girl struggling to come to terms with her own sexuality, creativity, passion vs. her family/society’s inflexible “formed opinions”. The story of the persecution of a girl because of her sexual preference (in this case, lesbianism) is not new. It's how Ms. Winterson presents her story. Fresh. Alive. Witty. Funny. Heartbreaking at times. Imaginative.

**Sister Outsider** by Audre Lorde
Lorde takes on sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, and class, and propounds social difference as a vehicle for action and change. Her prose is incisive, unflinching, and lyrical, reflecting struggle but ultimately offering messages of hope.

**City of Night** by John Rechy
John Rechy, recipient of the Publishing Triangle’s William Whitehead Lifetime Achievement Award, wrote City of Night in 1963. This radical and daring work, which launched Rechy’s reputation as one of America’s most courageous novelists, remains the classic document of the garish neon-lit world of hustlers, drag queens, and men on the make who inhabited the homosexual underground of the early sixties.

**“Tell Me a Riddle”** by Tillie Olsen
“Tell Me a Riddle” is not just a story about lost independence, but the fact that the independence was oppressed. It is also a story about a mother wanted her children, her daughters to have a better life. She sees them doing as she did, giving up her independence for the children, but she also knows that it is what is expected and she just hopes they will not follow her by allowing oppression to rule their lives.

**Stone Butch Blues** by Leslie Feinberg
Published in 1993, this brave, original novel is considered to be the finest account ever written of the complexities of a transgendered existence. Woman or man? That’s the question that rages like a storm around Jess Goldberg, clouding her life and her identity. Growing up differently gendered in a blue–collar town in the 1950’s, coming out as a butch in the bars and factories of the prefeminist ‘60s, deciding to pass as a man in order to survive when she is left without work or a community in the early ’70s.
**Sexual Politics** by Kate Millett
*Sexual Politics* discusses Freudian thought and critiques the sexism of other significant authors, including D. H. Lawrence and Norman Mailer. *Sexual Politics* was widely praised and widely criticized. It has been called the first scholarly work of Women’s Liberation and a feminist classic.

**Maurice** by E.M. Forster
Set in the elegant Edwardian world of Cambridge undergraduate life, this story by a master novelist introduces us to Maurice Hall when he is fourteen. We follow him through public school and Cambridge, and on into his father's firm, Hill and Hall, Stock Brokers. In a highly structured society, Maurice is a conventional young man in almost every way, "stepping into the niche that England had prepared for him": except that his is homosexual. Written during 1913 and 1914, *Maurice* was ahead of its time in its theme and in its affirmation that love between men can be happy.

**“The Long Distance Runner”** by Grace Paley
The Long-Distance Runner” by Grace Paley is the last story in the collection *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute*, which appeared in 1974. The story features Paley’s lead protagonist, Faith Darwin Asbury, who at forty-two has taken up longdistance running. This semi-autobiographical character shares Paley’s concern for social justice and her awareness of the cultural and economic divisions between the races, recurrent themes in Paley’s fiction.

**Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration** by David Wojnarowicz
In *Close to the Knives*, David Wojnarowicz gives us an important and timely document: a collection of creative essays -- a scathing, sexy, sublimely humorous and honest personal testimony to the "Fear of Diversity in America." From the author's violent childhood in suburbia to eventual homelessness on the streets and piers of New York City, to recognition as one of the most provocative artists of his generation -- Close to the Knives is his powerful and iconoclastic memoir. Street life, drugs, art and nature, family, AIDS, politics, friendship and acceptance: Wojnarowicz challenges us to examine our lives -- politically, socially, emotionally, and aesthetically.

**Fat Is a Feminist Issue** by Susie Orbach
Going beyond self-help to consciousness-raising, *Fat is a Feminist Issue* shows women how they use food to fill emotional needs. According to Naomi Wolf, “Virtually all feminist debate on body image and beauty imagery owes its existence to Susie Orbach’s enduring formulation.”

**The Wild Boys** by William Burroughs
His imagery of a violent world of homosexual renegade boys, one should not judge his work as merely pornographic or solely for those of prurient interests.
Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture by Ariel Levy
What do phenomena such as Girls Gone Wild say about feminism? This book looks at the ways women today make sex objects of themselves, and she’s not impressed. She chews out false “empowerment” based on self-objectification and offers feminist alternatives.

The New York Diary by Ned Rorem
The New York Diary pictured the period between 1956 and 1960, when Rorem had returned to America. The diaries marked the beginnings of Gay Liberation, not because Rorem made a special issue of his sexuality, but because he did not; rather, he wrote of his affairs frankly and unashamedly. A casualness informs each sensual entry, and the overall tone is at once bratty and brilliant, insecure and vain, loving and cultured, but, above all, honest and entertaining.

Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity by Julia Serano
The author uses her background as lesbian transgender activist and professional biologist to start a much-needed conversation about the sometimes-uneasy relationship between feminism and trans activism. Serano unmasks cultural beliefs about femininity and debunk misconceptions about transsexuality.

Conundrum by Jan Morris
Conundrum, one of the earliest books to discuss transsexuality with honesty and without prurience, tells the story of James Morris’s hidden life and how he decided to bring it into the open, as he resolved first on a hormone treatment and, second, on risky experimental surgery that would turn him into the woman that he truly was.

Our Bodies, Ourselves by Judy Norsigian
For 40 years, this indispensable tome has made women their own health experts. The newest 2011 edition adds up-to-date information on how health-care reform affects women, how to minimize exposure to pollutants that endanger reproductive health, and more.

The Gifts of the Body by Rebecca Brown
An unnamed female healthcare worker relates her experiences as she cares for homebound patients with AIDS in this fictional memoir. Using different "gifts" for scenario shifts, the narration flows through many of the changes that happen to the body and its functions as the disease progresses. Everyday challenges are simply depicted as she tends to the housekeeping duties of her clients. Her actions embody the insightfulness, commitment, rapport, and humanity needed to sustain oneself at this job.

Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman’s Guide to Why Feminism Matters by Jessica Valenti
Valenti, founder of Feministing, appeals to young feminists with a sassy and shrewd look at pop culture, health, reproductive rights, violence, education and relationships. Feminism, she dares to assert, can even be cool.
Aquamarine by Carol Anshaw
When she was 17, Jesse Austin lost an Olympic gold medal in the 1968 100-meter women's freestyle swimming event by a hair to contender Marty Finch. Twenty-two years later, Jesse is still haunted by this loss and by her love affair with Marty. Her present life is shown in three possible versions: as a small-town wife; a New York City cosmopolitan woman involved in a lesbian relationship; and as a divorcee with two children. Anshaw's interesting format works well, providing excellent characterizations and three gripping plot lines.

Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future by Jennifer Baumgardner, Amy Richards
Seeking to define the “third wave,” two young Ms. writers examine how feminism permeates every facet of young women's lives. Warning that the fight isn't over, they rally their generation to press on.

My Tender Matador by Pedro Lemebel
Centered around the 1986 attempt on the life of Augusto Pinochet, an event that changed Chile forever, My Tender Matador is one of the most explosive, controversial, and popular novels to have been published in that country in decades. It is spring 1986 in the city of Santiago, and Augusto Pinochet is losing his grip on power. In one of the city's many poor neighborhoods works the Queen of the Corner, a hopeless and lonely romantic who embroiders linens for the wealthy and listens to boleros to drown out the gunshots and rioting in the streets. Along comes Carlos, a young, handsome man who befriends the aging homosexual and uses his house to store mysterious boxes and hold clandestine meetings. My Tender Matador is an extraordinary novel of revolution and forbidden love, and a stirring portrait of Chile at an historical crossroads.

Confessions of a Mask by Yukio Mishima
Confessions of a Mask is the story of an adolescent who must learn to live with the painful fact that he is unlike other young men. Mishima's protagonist discovers that he is becoming a homosexual in polite, post-war Japan. To survive, he must live behind a mask of propriety.