



Sex therapist's advice to enhance relationships

Just do it!

By **MARK BODE**

LET'S talk about sex. Sydney-based sex therapist Bettina Arndt has spent a large part of her working life doing just that.

And through her new book, *The Sex Diaries*, Ms Arndt is encouraging more people to do the same.

However, it is one small section of her book – based on the sex diaries of 98 couples kept over six to nine months – that has proved to be the lightning rod for discussion.

Just Do It!

That slogan propelled the Nike brand to new heights, and Ms Arndt is hoping it will have the same effect on couples between the sheets.

In her book, she has challenged the basic assumption about how sex operates – that women have to want sex in order to enjoy it.

To experience regular, pleasurable sex and sustain loving relationships, she maintains women have to get over that “ideological roadblock” and just do it.

Speaking over the phone from her Sydney home yesterday, Ms Arndt said

new research showed women could enjoy sex without desire.

“And I’m suggesting women should just try it and see,” she said.

The result, she insisted,

“It is a bit sad realising how uncomfortable many people still are (when discussing sex).”

would be that both men and women enjoyed regular, enhanced sex.

Her conclusion that relying on the “fragile female libido” simply hasn’t worked out for couples has, needless to say, caused quite a stir.

Feminists, in particular, are outraged at her call for women to be more liberal with their sexuality for the sake of their relationship.

Ms Arndt, a guest speaker at the Reality Bites literary festival at Noosa on July 5, isn’t surprised.

“It’s a predictable reaction from some people, but I’ve also received an enormous positive reaction – I’m getting inundated with emails and letters from people in support,” she said.

Ms Arndt, billed as the country’s pre-eminent sex therapist, started her career as a clinical psychologist and sex therapist 35 years ago.

But before penning *The Sex Diaries*, she had stopped writing about sex for 20 years, preferring instead to write about broader relationship issues through her newspaper columns.

“Having just come back to the whole sex area, it is a bit sad realising how uncomfortable many people still are (when discussing sex) and how easily people get into situations where they can’t talk about it,” she said.

