



Samaritan Counseling Center

## **Love and Intimacy: Finding Balance in Relationships**

Many look forward to February, specifically Valentine's Day. It is one day out of the year we remind ourselves how blessed we are to have the ones we love. This year a projected 2 billion dollars will be spent on flowers and another 2 billion on candy to show our love. While this day is warm and full of love how are we showing that love the rest of the year?

After all the candy is gone and the flowers have wilted, how are you feeling about your relationship? It is not uncommon for couples to feel disconnected at times. With demands of work, kids and life it is easy to lose that connection.

Even the most loving couples can forget the importance of intimacy. There are four types of intimacy that are important in a relationship: social, emotional, physical, and spiritual. Some couples lose intimacy over time while others have struggled to get to have a strong level of intimacy from the start. If you have lost some level of intimacy or did not have it at all, it is not too late to start working on it. You can get that spark back.

Social intimacy is doing things together - important quality time together. While it seems simple, many couples struggle to find quality time together. This doesn't exclude the importance of personal time and individual interests. However it is important to have shared activities. Social intimacy could be achieved with a walk, a movie, or a dinner out. While you are out together doing social activities you can also work on the emotional intimacy of which some struggle.

Emotional intimacy is about sharing both thoughts and feelings. It is also about feeling safe with your partner. This is very important in any relationship. How comfortable are you talking about the tough issues? Couples who avoid these talks often find themselves feeling alone and troubled. Set aside time to talk about the tough issues like finances, children, health, hurt feelings, sex, and fears to name a few. Setting aside specific time to talk helps. Positive communication and active listening are very important to emotional intimacy.

Often when talking about the emotional intimacy a couple brings in the spiritual intimacy. Our faith and how we deal with it as a couple is a big part of the growth and stability of a couple. Spiritual intimacy involves sharing a sense of meaning through prayer, meditation, and involvement in religious services. Even if you and your partner are not attending

regular services it is important to talk about matters of faith. Some of our deepest fears and greatest joys come from our place of faith. However some couples consider their faith private from even those closest to them. Taking time to talk, celebrate, embrace and even challenge your faith with your partner can result in both individual and relational growth.

Lastly there is the sexual/physical intimacy aspect of a relationship. This is an area of our lives many struggle to talk about. However it remains an important part of a relationship for many people. Couples often put issues of sexual/physical intimacy on the back burner. Recent studies from the Kinsey Institute share that married individuals are five times more likely to have sex 2 to 3 times a week more than single individuals are.<sup>1</sup> It is a myth that married individuals cannot make time for physical intimacy. Making time for it is very important to feeling connected with your partner. Try setting aside time to do more intimate activities like taking a walk and talking about your feelings or spending a few extra minutes cuddling on Saturday morning. Such activities are important in a relationship.

Here are some questions for self-evaluating the intimacy in your relationship: How would you describe your relationship? Do you feel you are connected in all areas of intimacy? Do you and your partner talk with one another about your level of intimacy in the relationship? Do you struggle to communicate on a deeper level? Have the challenges of parenting, work, and social life interfered with your sexual activity? Perhaps it is time to set aside time for you and your partner to discuss what is important in your relationship. If these issues are more than you are able to address or if you feel you and your partner are struggling to establish a more intimate relationship, a counselor can help.

Below are a few ways to help bring intimacy back into your relationship:

1. Pillow Talk: At the end of the day make sure you and your partner talk. Do a check in of the day. Work, kids and yourself. This will mean to turn off the T.V, Laptop and phone.
2. Hug it out: It is proven that a hug can release oxytocin, which makes us feel better and more loved. Try and give at least one hug a day.
3. Wednesday Night Dates: Surprise the one you love with a Midweek date night. Even if this means the kids are at a sitters and you cook something special.
4. Pray: Praying together about your concerns and blessing can bring you closer to God and each-other.
5. Truth time: Talk with the one you love. If the issues you feel together are too much, be brave enough to talk with a counselor. There are many ways to bring back the intimacy in your relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org>