

# Communication and Intimacy

## PURPOSE

To give an overview of what intimacy means to people. How to accept others for who and where they are. Explain the five levels of communications for us to use to increase intimacy. The four ways we can use to build intimacy in our marriage and in our relationship. Keys to opening the door way to intimacy.

Anytime during your presentation, please feel free to add any personal life experiences to your talk, we want it to be as personal as possible.

## OUTLINE

The word intimacy means different things to each one of us. It is the same as the word "Love." If you were to ask 10 people what love means to them, they would probably give you 10 different answers.

By coming to a healthy understanding of just what intimacy means to you, will develop good relationship and communication skills with everyone you encounter.

What does intimacy involve?

- 1) It involves loving and accepting others as they are, both good and bad.
- 2) It involves letting another person love and accept you, as you are, warts and all.
- 3) It always respects each one's own uniqueness and separateness while it brings two people together in a committed relationship.

The less time we give to a relationship, the less chance we will have to build a good relationship. Our busy lives are a way for us to run away from intimacy.

The achievement of intimacy depends on good communication. When two people are open to sharing their feelings, thoughts and ideas without the fears of being misunderstood, the chances are they will be able to achieve intimacy in their relationship.

Communication is the single most effective way that you can deepen intimacy in any relationship...whether it's with your spouse, family, friends, or on the job. Every aspect of your life improves when you become a better communicator! There are five levels of communication, but surprisingly, most relationships only exist only on the first three levels. It's the latter two that bring about the greatest intimacy in a healthy relationship.

What are the five levels of communications?

- 1) **Cliche** - an expression or an idea. "How's it going?" or "What's up?"  
Nothing that can get you in trouble, your just expressing an idea or thought.
- 2) **Facts** - a statement of something that is true. "Look's like rain today." or "Sure is hot out." Again, you are only expressing an fact.
- 3) **Opinions** - safe to share, it's just your personal opinion. "I think that the Colts are going to win the Superbowl." or "Your mother is too interfering."
- 4) **Feelings** - more difficult - "How do you feel about..." or "I love you."
- 5) **Needs** - most difficult. "What do you need to be happy?" or "I really need a hug from you."

For most of us, our communication is based on what we consider to be within our safety zone. It is safe to exist on cliches or by simply stating the facts. Most conflicts begin to enter into the picture when we share our opinions, feelings, or needs.

Most successful relationships are those in which each person feels SAFE sharing their feelings and needs.

For most of us we use cliches, facts, and when we begin to use opinions this is where we start exposing ourselves to hurt. Many of us when we feel unsafe, we will stop and go back to cliches and facts. Never moving on to feelings and needs. We feel safe operating in the first two or three levels.

This is where our personalities and parenting histories begin to affect us, because many of us are fearful or uncomfortable about sharing intimacies.

The more stubborn we are, the more obstacles there are to overcome in forming good relationships. It is important to be flexible if you want to be in a close relationship. Working through any conflict is an aspect of intimacy. If we cannot admit when we are angry and work through the problem, we are going to have problems in our relationship.

There are four ways in which we can build intimacy with our partner and future spouse:

- 1) Many people equate intimacy and what it means with sex, but no way are they the same. There are many who have sexual experiences and are not intimately involved with the person. There are also many who are very intimate without the sexual experience. Sexual intimacy in a marriage is a way for a husband and wife to share in a deeper love that God intended for a couple who have committed themselves to each other.  
In a marriage we have to give each other the time to work out a comfortable sexual relationship in order to build intimacy in a marriage.
- 2) We need to be committed to our relationship for the long haul and to show the one we are in the relationship with that we are serious about always being there. Being a trustworthy person creates a safe place for the persons we are in the relationship with. It helps them to take risk and it gives them the knowledge that someone is beside them no matter what.
- 3) We need to give each other the gift of our time. Every marriage and every relationship needs time to grow - time for talking - time for playing and laughing - time for resolving conflicts - time for building memories. For most of us, we are too busy to take the time we need to work on our relationship, we think that they will take care of themselves. Sometimes we say, "I love and really care for the person I am in relationship with, and if they know that, should be enough."  
It's not.
- 4) Work on expressing feelings in ways that does not hurt your partner. We need to express positive as well as negative feelings. We all make mistakes, say we are sorry, and try again. We are the construction crew who is building this relationship. We want it to be as strong and true as possible.

CLOSING:

There are many different styles in a relationship and in a marriage. Does being close in a relationship or a marriage mean lots of hugging and kissing? Maybe. Does it mean spending all your time together? Probably not. Does it mean never fighting? Not likely.

Not any one style of relationship will last any longer than any other style, but it is the desire of the people in the relationship that will make it last.

At this time I would like for you to pull out the handout “Keys to Opening the Intimacy Door.”

(Take turns and go over the 12 items - some may need to be just read, some may need to be explained, that is up to the two of you.)

## KEYS TO OPENING THE INTIMACY DOOR

1. Clarify what the actual conflict is first. Then, see if there is any other reason this conflict is here: tired, low estrogen, low sugar level, whatever.
2. Stick to the issue at hand. Don't dredge up past hurts or problems, whether real or perceived.
3. Maintain as much physical contact as possible.
4. Avoid sarcasm.
5. Avoid “you” statements. Use the words “I feel” or “I think” No past or future predictions. For example: Wife says, “ You could have called, you know. You always try my patience. You're inconsiderate and you always will be.” A better example: “It's not like you to be late without calling. I was worried, what happened to you?”
6. Don't use “hysterical” statements or exaggerations at the time of conflict.
7. Don't resort to name calling or losing your temper. If this happens, agree to continue the discussion later.
8. Avoid power statements and actions. For example: “I quit!” “Sleep on the couch tonight.” “You are killing me.”
9. Don't use the silent treatment.
10. Use the “Quick-listening Method” of communication when arguing. Repeating back each other's words for clarification.
11. Resolve your conflicts with “Win-Win” solutions. Both agree with the solution or outcome of the argument.
12. Above all, strive to reflect HONOR in ALL of your words or actions during a conflict.

*Reflection Questions for Couple Sharing  
Intimacy*

1. Which of the four (4) ways to build intimacy do I need to work on the most?  
(Please circle one)
- a. Equate intimacy with sex
  - b. Commit to the relationship for the long haul
  - c. Give the gift of time.
  - d. Express my feelings with hurting my partner

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Which "ONE" of the twelve items on the "keys to Opening the Door to Intimacy" do I need to improve in? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. "I feel I have an intimate relationship where we both can share deeply and feel loved." What is my reaction to this statement? \_\_\_\_\_  
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