

Types of Intimacy

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Intimacy is an instrument of many strings. Writing in their insightful book, *The Intimate Marriage*, Howard & Charlotte Clinebell maintain that intimacy is a multi-faceted experience. “There are more areas in which creative closeness can grow than most couples even suspect. The music which couples make together comes from playing a variety of combinations of strings. Each couple should aim at discovering the particular harmony and melody of intimacy which they find most satisfying. Their musical pattern will vary at different periods in their marriage.”

Intellectual Intimacy – Results from sharing ideas. Sharing mind-stretching experiences – reading a great book, studying an issue of joint concern, discussing a good lecture – can bring a special quality of intimacy.

Aesthetic Intimacy – Is the deep sharing of experiences of beauty. One couple finds a special closeness in relaxing very near to each other as the stereo plays a soul-moving symphony. Another experiences together the raptures of natural beauty. Others find it in great art.

Creative Intimacy – Is the intimacy of shared creativity. Conceiving and parenting children is an example. Creative intimacy is often linked to aesthetic intimacy in that which is created together is something of beauty – a garden, a house, a musical expression, a painting. Creative marital intimacy, at its heart, is the experience of helping each other grow – to be co-creators with each other.

Recreational Intimacy – Is essential to the mental health of partners. It reflects the wells of energy and allows one’s “child” side, in Eric Berne’s terms, to refresh the personality through stress-relieving play.

Work Intimacy – Results in sharing common tasks in things like maintaining a house, raising a family, earning a living, and community projects. Married partners face many common problems in which they join their efforts and support each other in bearing responsibilities and loads.

Crisis Intimacy – Results from standing together against the buffeting of fate, through major and minor tragedies in life. Included are times of internal testing, when crisis occurs in the marriage itself as the shifting tides of circumstance and pressure of aging throw the relationship off balance for a while. This particular form of crisis intimacy might be called “conflict intimacy”.

Commitment Intimacy – Is the core feeling of ongoing mutuality which develops in marriage in which there is shared dedication to something or cause that is bigger than the family, something both partners regard as worthy of self-improvement.

Spiritual Intimacy – Develops from the sharing of ultimate concerns, the meaning of life, their relationship to the universe and to God. For many, it is the sense of transcendent relatedness which provides a firm foundation or supportive ground for transient human relatedness.

Emotional Intimacy – The depth of awareness and sharing of significant meanings and feelings – the touching of the inmost selves. It is the foundation of all other forms of intimacy. It is the overlapping of the couple’s inner worlds of meaning. This is a deep abiding friendship.

Sexual Intimacy – Is more than bringing together sexual organs, more than reciprocal sensual arousal of both partners, more than even mutual fulfillment in orgasm. It is the experience of sharing and self-abandon in the merging of two persons. This should be the culminating experience that brings all facets of intimacy together.

RATING OUR INTIMACY

Rate the level of intimacy we have in all areas “5” being the highest (a strength) and “1” the lowest. (a weaker area) Do this individually and then come together to share the results with each other.

Intellectual Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5
Aesthetic Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5
Creative Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5
Work Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5
Crisis Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5
Commitment Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5
Spiritual Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5
Sexual Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5

- 2) Where there are areas of needed growth discuss with each other how you can deepen intimacy in that area. Be specific and write down your plan. S.M.A.R.T. goals.

Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Time sensitive

- 3) Review your progress at least every few weeks initially. Every three months establish new goals for growth maybe in a different area of intimacy.