

Ron & Nan L. Deal

As For Me and My House Ministries, LLC



Passionate Sexuality: Igniting Spiritual, Emotional, and Physical Oneness in Marriage

Solomon on Sexual Passion

1. The Song of Solomon (Songs) is a book about passion.
 - Genesis 2:24-25—God made us to be sexual!
 - God made us to be intimate (i.e., “naked and not ashamed”)
 - If you can’t embrace your sexuality before God, then there’s something wrong with your theology of sex.

2. What is the Meaning of Sex?
 - Meaning is Symbolic:

 - Sex is a Holy Union

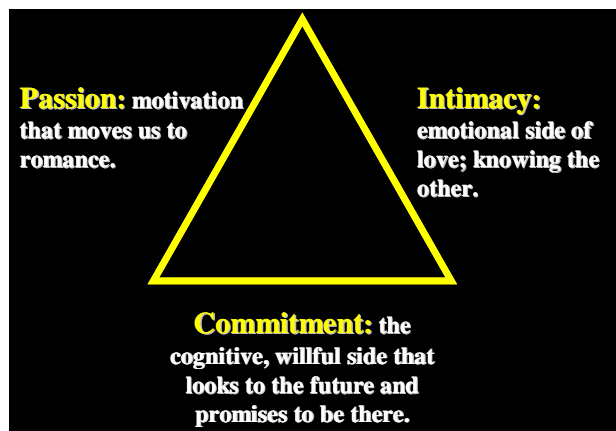
“When you practice sex as a holy act, you’re aware of how God values your connection, and how he is honored in the process. And, you stop thinking of sex as an isolated experience instead of an ongoing sense of unification.”

Tim Gardner,
Sacred Sex, 2002

3. The 3-Sides of Love
 - Robert Sternberg’s model:

The 3-Sides of Love Robert Sternberg, Yale University

- Types of Love



4. The Song of Solomon's Wisdom for Sexual Passion

4:1

4:2-4

4:6

4:7

4:8

4:9—5:1

5. Song of Solomon: A Prescription or Principles?

- The danger in reading this book is coming to believe that this is the way to have sex.

Couple Time

Take time this week to discuss these questions together.

1. To what degree do we feel God's blessing on our sexual pleasure? His permission to enjoy our sexual union?
2. What is one point that you learned from the discussion of Song of Solomon?
3. Whose *sexual pace* does our sexual activity usually follow—his or hers?

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Discovering Your Sexual Potential

“Women need a reason to have sex, men just need a place.”

1. Healthy SEXpectations

- Sex is not everything to a marriage.
 - Healthy sex contributes just _____% to marital vitality and satisfaction; but, dysfunctional or non-existent sex contributes 50-70% of what drains a marriage.
- Sex does not necessarily come “naturally.”
- Extraordinary sex is not _____.
 - 40-50% is good for both partners;
 - 20-25% very good for one (usually the man) and fine for the other;
 - 20-25% are acceptable but not remarkable;
 - 5-15% are mediocre or “failures”
 - 50% of couples have a sexual complaint;
 - Couples who accept this reality without guilt or blame experience less anxiety about their sex life and enjoy it more.

2. Everyone is not doing it more than you.

3. “If you get the relationship right, sex will be okay.”

Keys to Your Sexual Potential

1. Taking Responsibility for Your Own Pleasure

- Defined:

Two Barriers:

- Christian women finding their sexual voice
- Men releasing control



2. Non-Demand Pleasuring

- Non-demand pleasuring welcomes whatever pleasurable touch is shared.

3. Demand Sex:

- Orgasm is the goal
- A warm embrace implies a request for intercourse
- Intercourse or oral sex is “required”
- Each assumes responsibility (and blame) for the other’s arousal
- Focused on the technique

Non-demand Sex:

- Orgasm is optional
- A kiss is enjoyed for the warmth it brings
- Specific sex acts is not mandated
- Each takes self responsibility; releases control/is responsive to the other
- Focused on your partner

4. Finding Balance

The Politics of Sexual Desire

1. The Politics of Desire

- Desire is varied and complex

2. Rarely are couples of equal desire throughout the marriage:

- 70% High Desire Husband Couples
- 30% High Desire Wife Couples
- When levels clash there is tension.

3. Desire Defined

- “Politics” has to do with who asks, how often, and what the responses are.
 - If trust & a generally healthy sexual relationship is present, then a “not now” is a passing disappointment.
 - If trust is lacking, rejection, guilt, & negative interpretations abound.

4. Sexual Desire is Complex

5. What is “normal sexual interest”?

- Usually defined as “sexual initiative” or Assertive Desire
- In women, desire often manifests itself in _____ or **willingness** to be sexually engaged rather than initiative, or Receptive Desire.
- The “demand for desire” is often misguided and unnecessary.

6. Sexual Desire in Women

Accelerators:

Brakes:

7. Women: Embracing Your Sexuality

- Give yourself permission to seek pleasure
- Accept your body
- Read a good book
- Say “Not now, “ instead of “No”
- Pursue self-discovery
- Be deliberate about sex

(Taken from Penner & Penner, AACC Workshop, 2001)

8. Sexual Desire in Men

Accelerators:

Brakes:

9. Managing Differences in Desire

- Pray and ask God to help rekindle your desire.
- Conquer fatigue - get your sleep!
- Recognize and deal with relational distress and distance.
- Address depression.
- Understand side effects of medications.
- Exercise.
- Prime the Pump (think sex).
- Seize the moment.
- Say “not now”
- Occasionally be receptive to other’s initiation.
- 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 *Don’t deprive...*

COUPLE TIME

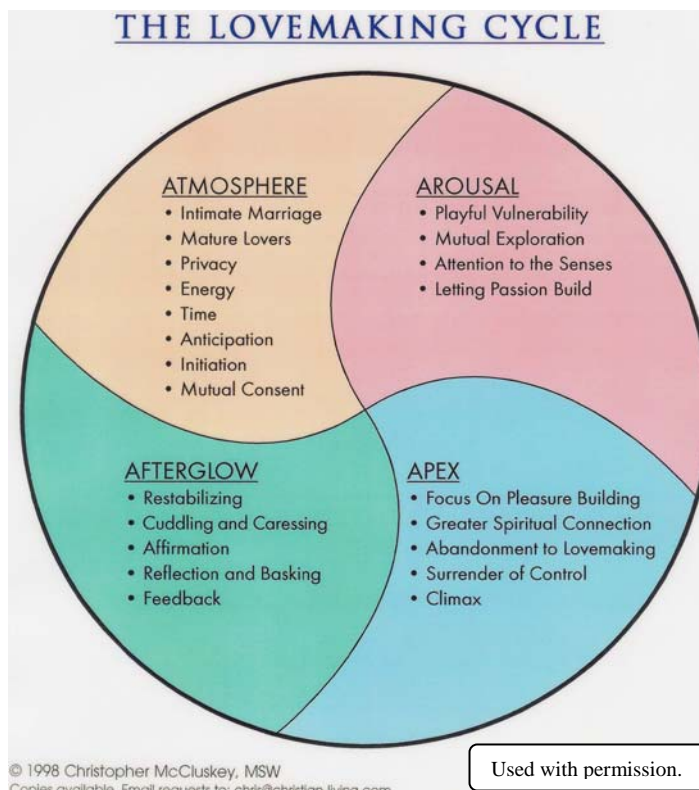
Begin with Prayer. Before working through the following questions, be sure to hold hands and pray out-loud together. Each of you should take a turn thanking God for your mate and asking for the courage to share openly with each other.

Discuss the Following

- Review the expectations provided. Which are you guilty of? Is your relationship healthy outside the bedroom?
- Discuss whether each of you takes responsibility for your own pleasure. If not, who is working too hard? Not hard enough?
- Have you as the wife found your sexual voice? Do you lead?
- Have you as the husband released control to her? Do you listen?
- What demands have you placed on your sexual performance together? How high is the bar?
- Do you fall more into “Demand Sex” or “Non-demand Sex”?

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The Lovemaking Cycle



ATMOSPHERE:

AROUSAL:

5 Gears of Touching

- 1st. Clothes-on _____ touching
- 2nd. _____, sensual touch
- 3rd. Playful touch involving _____ and non-genital
- 4th. _____ to arousal and orgasm for one or both
- 5th. Pleasurable touch, _____.

Discover Your Sexual Style

- Teasing or direct stimulation?
- Predictable or spontaneous?
- Single stimulation or multiple?
- Soft touches or firm?
- Favorite gears?

APEX:

AFTERGLOW:

COUPLE TIME

Begin with Prayer. Before working through the following questions, be sure to hold hands and pray together. Each of you should take a turn thanking God for your mate and asking for the courage to share openly with each other.

Discuss the Following

- Which of the Lovemaking Cycle phases (Atmosphere, Arousal, Apex, Afterglow) are you satisfied with and why? Be sure to give compliments for what you appreciate and enjoy.
- What one aspect of your Lovemaking Cycle would you like to improve? Listen to one another without defensiveness or trying to resolve (“fix”) the matter now. Just express it clearly for now.
- How many gears of touching do you currently utilize?
- Which gears would you like to experience more of?
- Discuss your sexual style and share your preferences (even if you think they are already clear).
- Describe in what ways you enjoy non-genital touch, focused erotic touch, single-stimulation, multiple-stimulation, oral, manual, or rubbing stimulation.
- Which intercourse positions do you enjoy most? Why?
- Attention to the Senses: “5 Sensual-Senses Awareness” Exercise:
 1. Below is a list of your five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing.
 2. Beside each list the things that invite your sexual arousal.
 3. Then list the things that turn you off (e.g, bad breath, sexual slang)

Him On

Him Off

Her On

Her Off

Sight

Smell

Taste

Touch

Hearing

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Emotional Maturity & Sexuality Intimacy

1. What a Hug Communicates...

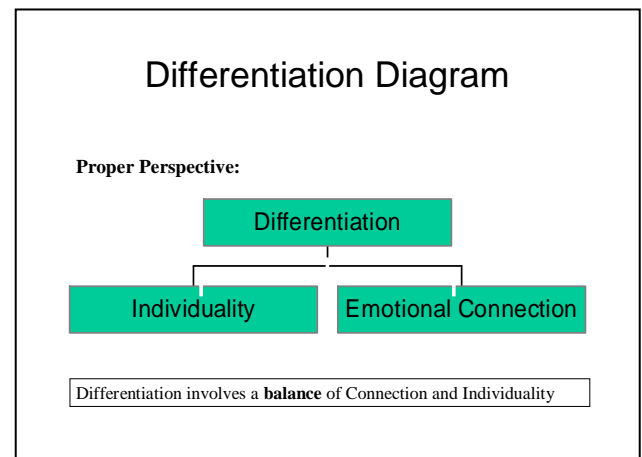
2. Emotional Fusion --

– Siamese Twins

– Other-Validated Intimacy: my worth is reflected in how you love me and in how well I am able to love & please you.

3. Going Deep: Differentiation & Sexual Intimacy

Differentiation: When two people come together out of choice and can maintain their sense of self while emotionally connected to another (especially someone who is increasingly important to you).



3. Self-Soothing (and God-Soothing)

- A process by which you catch yourself, find your balance, and hold on to yourself.
- Involves comforting yourself in relation to another, “licking your own wounds”, and finding your validation in God.

4. The Connection with Sex

- Sex is a microcosm of your level of differentiation.
- Your sexual self is an emotional mirror of you.
- “Eyes Open Sex” (David Schnarch)

5. How do I increase my level of Differentiation?

- It’s a lifelong _____ of learning.
- Be more like _____.
- Practice Self-soothing in sex. “Hug 'til _____”
- Practice God/Self Soothing _____ the bedroom in every relationship.
- Open yourself to _____.
- Sexuality is a journey.

COUPLE TIME

Begin with Prayer. Before working through the following questions, begin with prayer. Ask for openness to what God would show you about yourself.

Discuss the Following

- What insights did you receive during this session about your own personal emotional maturity?
- How relaxed are you during lovemaking? What anxious thoughts do you have that sometimes pull you away from your partner? When you look into one another’s eyes, how comfortable do you feel (versus feeling exposed, embarrassed, or vulnerable)?
- If sex is a metaphor for your emotional maturity as a couple, what message is it sending?
- What is one anxiety/fear/concern that you’d like to try and overcome as a result of this session?

Enhancing Your Sexual Intimacy

Ron L. Deal and David H. Olson

Taken from *The Remarriage Couple Checkup* by Ron L. Deal and David H. Olson,
Thomas Nelson (2009 in press).

Just because sex is a natural function of your body, don't assume you know all you need to know to be sexually proficient. We encourage you to reference one of the many quality books available on sexuality and read it together as a couple. (We recommend *A Celebration of Sex* by Dr. Doug Rosenau, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002 or *The Way to Love Your Wife* by Clifford and Joyce Penner, Tyndale House Publishers, 2007.)

In the meantime, here are a few suggestions for enhancing your sexual intimacy.

1. Sex is a gift, not a right. A couple cannot have a great sex life if either demands sex or if either believes sex is an obligation. A great sex life grows when both persons give the best of themselves to the other.ⁱ
2. Maintain a sense of awe and wonder about sex. The greatest sex organ is your brain. How you think about sex gives it meaning and vitality or makes it ordinary. Remember that every sexual encounter is an opportunity to drink deeply of the one you love. Consider this mystery with every touch and taste.
3. Take responsibility for your own pleasure. Don't assume the other will know when or how to stimulate you. Use assertive communication skills to share what you enjoy. Trust one another to speak up for their preferences without demanding.
4. Be flexible during lovemaking. While the typical sexual dance you follow as a couple can be familiar and comfortable, do try new things as your bodies and moods change (See Song of Solomon 7:13). Take care not to follow a rigid "recipe" for excitement or sexual play. Men, for example, who believe they know their wife's "combination" will find that it frequently changes. Pursue the pleasure of the moment, not some predetermined path to orgasm.
5. Most women need clitoral stimulation to reach orgasm. More than 60% of women need direct clitoral stimulation for 15 minutes or longer to achieve orgasm. Assuming that intercourse alone "should be enough" ignores female physiology. The clitoris is similar to the head of the man's penis and often isn't stimulated during intercourse. It can be helpful (and fun) for a woman to show her husband how she wants her clitoris to be stimulated (lightly or firmly, quickly or slowly, at different times).ⁱⁱ
6. Be playful. Don't manage yourself like a "critical parent." Let yourself go like a playful child.ⁱⁱⁱ

7. Manage what reduces your sexual desire. When fatigued, for example, women need to get rest and sleep. When stressed, men need to get exercise. Find ways of activating your sexual interests.
8. Eat a variety of “sexual meals”. Over time a healthy sexual relationship is like the variety of meals we eat to care for our bodies. Have a healthy diet of each:
 - Appetizers with engaging aroma—be affectionate to awaken sexual desires. Small behaviors like complimenting one another, smiling when your spouse enters the room, calling from work with a sensuous message, and having an extended kiss before leaving for work help you smell what’s cookin’.
 - Snacks—every couple needs quick sexual encounters from time to time (“quickies”). It’s not a balanced meal and you can’t live for long on them, but they sure fill you up when you need it.
 - Well-balanced Meals—most meals involve the four food groups. Be sure to balance your lovemaking with a variety of types of “food” (engage all five senses). Don’t just eat chicken every night.
 - Smorgasbord—take turns asking for what you want. Each partner chooses from a list of sexual favorites; take turns being the pleasurer or receiver^{iv}.
 - Celebration Events—most households spend hours planning and cooking Thanksgiving dinner; it’s not just a meal, it’s an event! On occasion, spend extra time planning a special sexual feast that involves time, money, surprises, and lots of fun^v.
9. Avoid pornography. It can appear benign, but over time it distorts expectations and makes “normal sex” seem uneventful. Inviting a third party into your marriage is a slow growing cancer; don’t give pornography any place in your marriage.
10. Face sexual problems and get help. Most couples experience some kind of sexual problem at some point in their marriage. One national study showed estimated that over 80% of marriages in the US had experienced a sexual problem^{vi}. Talking with a therapist might seem awkward, but many effective treatments exist for a variety of issues. When help is needed, seek it out (find a listing of Certified Christian Sex Therapists at www.abcst.org).

Ron L. Deal is President of Successful Stepfamilies, author of The Smart Stepfamily: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family, and a licensed marriage and family therapist. He and David Olson have conducted the largest study on remarital relationships ever conducted and have coauthored The Remarriage Couple Checkup, due out in January, 2009. David H. Olson is President of Life Innovations and developer of the internationally recognized Couple Checkup relationship profile.

ⁱ Taylor, D. & Sytsma, M. *7 things you need to know about sex*. In Marriage Partnership magazine (summer, 2007).

ⁱⁱ Taylor & Sytsma, *ibid*.

ⁱⁱⁱ McCluskey, C., & McCluskey, R. (2004). *When Two Become One: Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell.

^{iv} This suggestion comes from Penner, C. L. & Penner, J. J. (2007). *The Way to love your wife: Creating greater love and passion in the bedroom*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House.

^v McCluskey, C., & McCluskey, R. (2004). *When Two Become One: Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell.

^{vi} Moreira, E. D., Brock, G., Glasser, D. B., Nicolosi, A., Laumann, E. O., Paik, A., et al. (2005). Help-seeking behavior for sexual problems: the global study of sexual attitudes and behaviors. *International Journal of Clinical Practice*, 59 (1), 6-16.