

The Process of Becoming One (Part 6)

Sexual Intimacy

Key Thought: Problems with sexual intimacy will hinder a couple from becoming one.

Hindrances to Sexual Intimacy

1. **A failure to communicate.** Communication requires a listening love as well as a willingness to be vulnerable—to put into words what one is thinking and feeling and to trust those words to the partner’s understanding.
2. **Unresolved conflict.** Anger and hostility, no matter how veiled or suppressed, will kill any growth of loving intimacy. Clamming up about an issue or problem will divide a couple both emotionally and sexually.
3. **Personal insecurity and fear.** Some shrink from sexual intimacy because they have been deeply wounded (i.e. abuse, neglect, affair(s), etc.) by their mate. That pain lingers from these experiences which causes them to hide (i.e. emotional and physical “distance”).
 - a. **Traumatic past.** Some shrink from sexual intimacy because they have been deeply wounded (i.e. incest, molestation, verbal/physical abuse, neglect, etc.) by significant others.
 - b. **Self-consciousness about physical appearance.** A negative perception of one’s body inhibits sexual intimacy. Concentrating on one’s physical imperfections rather than focusing on the sexual act will cause them to hide their body.
 - c. **Performance Anxiety.** Being anxious about performing “well” during lovemaking will inhibit intimacy.
4. **The habit of criticism.** Continually criticizing a mate in the hope that it will motivate them to change will stifle sexual intimacy.
5. **A lack of affection.** Nonsexual touching (i.e. cuddling, snuggling, sitting with one another, holding hands, kissing, etc.) must be part of a couple’s daily life if sexually intimacy is to grow.
6. **A lack of romance.** A failure to pursue our mate with vigor and creativity in order to capture their heart will diminish sexual intimacy.
7. **A lack of sensitivity/selfishness.** Insensitivity to our partner’s needs and desires can be detrimental to the development of sexual intimacy.
8. **A lack of knowledge.**
 - a. An unbiblical or improper view of sex will inhibit intimacy
 - b. Ignorance concerning lovemaking techniques will hinder intimacy

- c. A lack of understanding of the sexual differences between men and women
9. **Fatigue**. Physical/emotional exhaustion will interfere with sexual intimacy.
 10. **Too busy**. Sexual intimacy becomes devalued because other activities (i.e. television, hobbies, sports, clubs, etc.) take precedence.
 11. **Different work schedules**. A lack of time together precludes the opportunity of being sexually intimate with one another.
 12. **Lack of privacy**. A fear of being heard or seen during lovemaking will inhibit the frequency and intensity of intimacy.
 13. **Fear of pregnancy**. The fear of an unwanted pregnancy can create an avoidance of sexual intimacy.
 14. **Physiological/medical problems**. Hormonal imbalance, impotence, physical defect, vaginismus, premature ejaculation, chronic pain etc.
 15. **Psychiatric disorders**. Thought, mood, and anxiety disorders can affect libido.
 16. **Pornography addiction**. Fantasy and masturbation become a replacement/substitute for normal sexual relations with spouse.
 17. **Latent homosexual tendencies**. A secret sexual desire for the same sex will diminish sexual drive and satisfaction.
 18. **Medication problems**. Certain medications (i.e. beta blockers, blood pressure meds, various antidepressants, etc.) will diminish libido which will inhibit sexual intimacy.
 19. **Drug/alcohol abuse or dependency**. Substance abuse can cause a diminished physiological capacity to perform sexually; substance abuse affects the other spouse psychologically and emotionally.

Application Project:

If you are experiencing problems in your sexual relationship take time together to carefully review the list above. Be open and honest with one another as to what might be a hindrance(s) to experiencing sexual fulfillment.

