

**SEX,
MEN
&
GOD**

Every Mans Guide to Sexual
Success

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DEDICATION

**Dedicated to the strong, the broken, the pure and not so pure.
To all who are blessed to be men.**

SEX, MEN & GOD

Introduction

I believe that God wants every Christian man to be sexually successful. He desires all of us to enter into the holy of holies where spirit, soul, and body intimacy occurs with your wife on a regular basis. He desires each one of us to have the skills to be spiritually and emotionally intimate outside of the bedroom so that we can be sexually successful inside of the bedroom.

Are you wondering what a sexually successful man is and how you can become one? I am asked this question and many more when I tell others that I am writing a book on men having successful sexuality.

Let me be perfectly clear, of all Gods great ideas, I think sex is by far one of the best. Don't you agree? I imagine the creator could have made procreation a behavior that brought little pleasure and only engaged our bodies completely detached from the wealth of a soul and spirit experience. What a bummer sex could have been.

Thankfully our maker decided to be very creative during this process. Not only is sex a time when your body goes through the most physiological changes, but also when engaging successfully in sex you can get the highest chemical reward for your body.

As a therapist, I have counseled with thousands of men regarding sexuality issues. During this time, I have learned that many, many, men are not sexually successful. I have clocked in probably years of my life listening to men as they share varied stories of lack of sexual success. These men and their wives want to be sexually successful but even after several decades of marriage, they have not achieved sexual success.

Why haven't many men reached sexual success? Although it's different for every man, there are some broad sexual deficits that many men have. Firstly, from the start many have never been given reliable information about true sexuality from their fathers. While traveling the country speaking at men's conferences, I often ask men how long was their sex talk with their fathers. Well over 95% of the men questioned stated that it was under 3 minutes. So you can see how this lack of information from a sexual expert, your dad, can lead you on your own quest for what successful sexuality really is.

The second largest deficit perpetuating the lack of sexual success is the source by which young men acquire their sexual information. Their resources for sexual information at ages 14 through 16 are usually other 14 to 16 year old boys who never had sex but lie about it as well. Pornographic literature, the mainstream media, prime-time sitcoms, movies, magazines and now the Internet are the primary teachers of sexuality for man young men today.

Regardless of this deficit of information in your past, you can have a phenomenal three-dimensional sex life that will reach a plane of sexual satisfaction that you never thought was possible. Like others, early on I had been misinformed and had experiences that

could have kept me from sexual success but I kept searching until I found the information it took to get and stay sexually successful!

On the following pages you will be exposed to principles and information to bring you and other Christian men to sexual success. Once you taste sexual success, you will never be able to settle for less again—I guarantee it!

This journey, which I call Sex, Men, and God, is a process. Ahead of you is a journey where the equipping, informing and for many, healing will take place. The result is a sexually successful man who can be fearless in prayer, a threat to the enemy, and a blessing to his wife, family, church and community.

CHAPTER 1

Internal and External Sexuality

In the pages ahead we will travel through many facets of male sexuality. I think God's gift to men is our sexuality. We have it from birth to death. Men are many times misunderstood because of our God given desire to consummate our marriage regularly.

I believe that if men appropriately understood their sexuality they would have great and productive three-dimensional sexuality. Realizing the value of their sexuality is a key in avoiding the pitfalls of misusing it and damaging oneself, one's relationship with God and future generations.

The enemy of our soul has concentrated his attacks heavily in this area of sexuality. He is fully aware that this gift, if misunderstood or misused, can lead to consequences that extend through family lines.

I have studied the Scriptures for almost 20 years now, and have clearly seen that God's Word addresses what I call both sides of sexuality. What I mean by this is that He clearly communicates about our external sexuality as well as our internal sexuality.

External Sexuality

What I mean by external sexuality is the actual sexual acts that you participate in with your physical body. These sex acts fall basically into two categories. The first category comprises sex acts approved by God in the context of a monogamous relationship with your wife. The second category includes sex acts that are disapproved and discouraged by God. This includes sexual acts with anyone prior to marriage and outside of marriage.

God was very clear about this in the Old Testament when he wrote the Ten Commandments to His people. In Exodus 20:14 we read, "You shall not commit adultery." Proverbs 5 doesn't mince words in describing how adultery leads to death. Look at Leviticus 18 for the expanded version of what God does not want us to do with our external sexuality.

Leviticus 18

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: "I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord.

No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the Lord. Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her.

Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father. Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere. Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonor you.

Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she your father's sister; she is your father's close relative. Do not have sexual relations with your mother's sister, because she is your mother's close relative. Do not dishonor your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt.

Do not have sexual relations with your daughter in law. She is your son's wife; do not have relations with her. Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonor your brother.

Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness.

Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period.

Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her.

Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.

Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable. Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.

Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, for all these things

were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you. Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people.

Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the Lord your God.

Wow! What an exhaustive list of the shall-nots. You might say, “That’s the Old Testament,” but I believe it expressed God’s heart for us, which is for us to be sexually pure. God is really clear here that external sexuality is only for your wife. I personally think He has received a bad rap for being so concerned about our sexual behavior.

As a sex therapist, I don’t think there is one of those sexual exploits I haven’t heard of being committed by men who call themselves Christians. I have been privy to their tremendous guilt and shame, often carried for decades by the men (and women) who have participated in such acts.

God isn’t against sexual fun, but He is against us hurting ourselves with the gift of sexuality. I have never heard from anyone who has not felt some pain as a result of breaking God’s perfect design for sexuality. God is a God of love, giving us the motive to have the absolute best sex of our lives.

I know many reading this may be feeling some regret over their past sexual behavior. Jesus came to set us free from all of our sin, including sexual sin. In our journey together I will walk you through how to heal in this area. I know He can heal, restore and give you sexual success all the days of your life. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul reveals to us more of God’s heart so that we can avoid all sexual immorality.

In Gal. 5:19-21, Paul is very clear. He states, “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; . . .orgies and the like.” He continues in verse 21 to warn us, “. . . those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” This is strong language in the New Testament about external sexuality.

We see similar exhortations throughout the New Testament, from Romans 1 all the way to Revelation 2 where the false prophetess Jezebel is leading church members into sexual immorality.

Sexual practices outside of marriage are wrong from God’s prospective in both the Old and New Testament. We know this; it’s been preached for at least two centuries, especially within evangelical or non-denominational Bible churches, and particularly in this last generation.

I won't belabor this part because it may be so familiar that you actually tune it out. Much like a song you have heard over and over again, it can seem like background music you don't pay any attention to.

Tuning out is especially true of Christian men who grew up in church youth groups. They heard the message of "don't touch the girls" so often. They got the message and now they don't need to hear it again. Something that I find peculiar among these young men is that they only hear or understand God's Word as it applies to **external** sexuality. While they knew they couldn't touch the girls, they believed that they certainly could look and not get into trouble. This created a duality in among Christian men. As long as the outside appearance was okay, they could do whatever they wanted on the inside. That is clearly why we have to discuss both sides of sexuality.

Internal Sexuality

Internal sexuality is also a gift from God. It involves your sexual feelings, thoughts, fantasies and impulses. Internal sexuality is what you do with your eyes, your heart and your creative mind.

This part of your sexuality can go undetected by those around you. You can lust after another woman's body without anyone knowing. At least that's what many of the Christian men I have talked to believed in adolescence. They rationalized that as long as they only looked and didn't touch, they were good boys.

As adults this now may sound immature, but when you're a 14- or 16-year-old, what do you expect? The problem is that some men remain stuck at that level of thinking because they and their church have not adequately addressed their internal sexuality.

I want to go back to the backbone of our faith, the Ten Commandments. Earlier we discussed Exodus 20:14, "You shall not commit adultery." Now scroll down to the last commandment: "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife."

This mandate deals with our **internal** sexuality. God does not want us to lust, covet or sexually desire our neighbor's wife. I can imagine that some of you are already thinking, "Well, I have six neighbors on my street and I don't lust after or covet them, so I'm okay." That's not the point.

Jesus did a great job defining who our neighbors really are in the story of the Good Samaritan. Read the account in Luke 10:25-37 and you will quickly conclude that from God's perspective, a neighbor includes everybody.

Now you may be thinking, "Okay, if someone is married, then I should be a good boy and not lust after her." However, you may still think it's acceptable to lust after single and divorced women. Not exactly—almost every woman you meet will be some man's wife at some point. So, the bottom line: Don't lust after **any** woman. Other Scriptures

back up this point, making it obvious that lust is indeed sin (See Col. 3:5-6, 1 Pet. 4:3-5 and 1 John 2:16).

Furthermore, Paul wrote to Timothy about a Christian man's relationship with all women. He states in 1 Timothy 5:1-2, "Treat older women as mothers and younger women as sisters with absolute purity." Can you imagine lusting after your mom or sister? Since all women are included in this relational context, lusting after any woman as a sex object is undesirable and sinful since they are sisters, mothers and children of God our Father.

To repeat: Lusting after any female is wrong and constitutes sin in God's eyes. Yes, you may notice an attractive woman, but to make an object out of her and continue to check her out is wrong. Lust is the enemy of your sexual success and can lead you into all the wrong places.

James 1:15 provides a great long-term view of lust: "Then after desire (lust) has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

I have seen this progression in thousands of lives. The lust often starts in one's teen years and spawns into other behaviors, such as viewing porn, fantasizing and masturbating. These practices continue into marriage. While they can go unnoticed by others, they leave the man spiritually impotent (dead). What started simply as lust becomes a full-blown lifestyle of secret sin. Secret or not, sin does have consequences.

More often than not, those consequences include the husband losing his relationship with his wife and family. I have seen this lived out over and over again. Lust, sin and death are a straight continuum unless the man turns his heart to God.

I like to compare lust to an apple seed. Inside that little seed is the map to create an entire apple tree. It's not instant and conditions must be favorable, but when the map is followed, it's inevitable that an apple tree will result. Lust works the same way. Your soul (mind, will and emotions) is the fertile soil in which this seed grows. You plant the lust, continue to "nourish" it and water it. Then whammo! Over time you reap sin and death. Remember that lust is an **internal** sexuality issue that must be managed in order to achieve long-term sexual success.

If you truly understand how powerful this little seed of lust is you will see why so often the Bible encourages us to run from it and not try to fight with it. God knows the power that seed holds. This is why we are cautioned in Proverbs 6:25, "Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes."

Although others may not be able to see you lust, God does, and you will have to answer before Him for using your mind and time in this manner.

You will also need to understand that lust has the DNA code for destruction, sin, and death to those who plant her seed into their soul. Don't be childish in your masculine sexuality and think in any manner that it's okay to lust after any woman.

Women are not on the planet for you to access their beauty by your standards. They are not to be scanned into your mind or heart in order to fantasize. These women are people, but more important, they are God's people. He does not permit lust and we shouldn't either.

Tips on Overcoming Lust

In a book I wrote several years ago called *101 Freedom Exercises: A Christian Guide for Sexual Addiction Recovery*, I outline several exercises to help men get and stay free from lust. The following is a summarization of some of these exercises, as well as a few more I have learned along the way.

- 1. Pray for Them** – I personally have used this one successfully for years. When a person becomes an **object** of lust for you, you can turn them back into a **person** by giving them a relational context to God and others. Here is a sample prayer:

God I know You love and died for this woman and that You desire a relationship with her. I pray that if she doesn't know You, that You will reveal Yourself to her so she can know You for eternity. I pray for her husband (or future husband) that he will be a man of God, full of Your Spirit and wisdom. I pray for her children (or future children) that they will know and serve You all their days. I pray for her parents, that You would encourage them and bless their daughter.

Now how many women do you think the Enemy is going to present to you to lust after if all you do is pray them into the kingdom? The self-defense arts teach one early on how to block a punch. If the Enemy throws you a temptation, or your flesh just happens to kick up, pray and you will walk away feeling successful instead of guilty.

- 2. Look Them in the Eyes** – If you start to lust after women when you gaze into their eyes, avoid their eyes! If you lust below the neck or waist, then keep your eyes above the neck so they don't travel over her body scanning her.
- 3. The One- to Three-Second Rule** – In sex addiction recovery, there is a three-second policy: Don't look at a woman longer than three seconds. Living in the television and computer age, men can learn to scan a woman in less time than that. Regardless, keep your gaze very short. And remember, you aren't under any obligation to check out each woman that walks by.
- 4. Accountability** – I find that if a man walks in the light in the area of lust he is less likely to struggle. James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to each other, pray for each other so that you may be healed." It's great to confess your sin of lust to Jesus (1 John 1:9) but that will only get you forgiveness. Most of us who struggle with lust need **healing**. You'll only attain healing if you humble yourself to another man.

Something powerful happens when you humble yourself to another man. I purposely say “man.” Don’t wimp out and try to do this only with your wife. Man to man, be honest with a brother in the Lord and you will see lust decrease tremendously. If you have an accountability partner like this, it can scourge the seed of lust that would otherwise bring a future harvest of sin and death. Accountability works! (See Eccl. 4:10.)

1. **Lust Log** – Some men in an accountability relationship keep a “lust log.” This is simply a piece of paper you keep in your pocket. Each time you lust or objectify a woman, put a mark on the paper. Check in daily for 100 days with your accountability partner as to how you are doing.

Some competitive friends even make the man with the highest score pay for the lunch of the low scoring man each week. You’ll be amazed at how quickly you can stop lusting when there is free food on the line!

Lust is a learned intentional behavior. You can unlearn lust. You can follow several admonitions of the Word of God to battle this lust. You can walk in the Spirit (Gal: 5:16) and not gratify the desire of sinful nature. You can use Romans 12:2 and transform your mind with Scripture. God’s Word is a great tool to have at your disposal in this battle.

Moreover, we **can** fill ourselves with God’s divine power, given to us in salvation, so that we don’t follow evil desires according to 1 Peter 1: 3-4. I also like the verse in Colossians 3:5: “Put to death (or mortify) therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immortality, impurity, lust, evil desires.”

Well how do you put to death your earthly nature? Ted Haggard, my pastor at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, has a great way of explaining how every morning he kills himself. He gets in the prayer closet and asks God to strangle anything of his flesh, to destroy any sin patterns today. He asks God to fill him with the fruits of the Spirit, the fear of the Lord, and the power and might listed in Isaiah Chapter 11. I think it’s a great idea and I use it regularly too.

I think you get the picture that God is concerned about both sides of our sexuality, which includes our outside sexual behavior and our inside sexual beliefs. I desire for every Christian man to have sexual success.

We are going to examine several facets of this precious jewel called male sexuality. I enjoy being made in His image, which includes my sexuality. I want to honor God with all of myself and I know you do too. In the pages ahead, the terrain will change with every chapter. By the end however, I think you will be able to connect with the integration of sex, men and God. All three can live together in unity, giving us the ability to be powerful men of God for our generation.

CHAPTER 2

The Sexual Brain

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” Psalm 139:14

The human creation was a marvelous idea. God took so much time and creativity in making our bodies that it would take volumes to begin to explain the beauty, complexity and all of the miracles contained in the physical body. This is no truer than in the aspect of male sexuality.

Changes occur in the male body during the sexual act, which make the male physical body look very different. It actually is physiologically different in many ways during a sexual experience. In this chapter, I will walk you through a very important aspect of some of these physiological changes that occur in your brain during a sexual release. This information will be very helpful to you in becoming more sexually successful in your marriage and will also help if there is any healing process that needs to take place from the past.

To be a sexually successful man, you must have a sexually successful brain. Typically what a man thinks about and focuses on is what he ends up doing. For example, how many men have spent money and time studying books about financial success, health or spiritual growth and after practicing the principles and techniques involved, eventually obtained it?

And yet with all the case studies that confirm that men think about sex many times throughout the day, why then are most men not having sexual success? I believe part of the reason is the manner in which men are thinking about sex, which is something we will discuss in future chapters.

Another reason is how one's brain has actually been trained about sex. This is by far one of the greatest gaps in a man's sexual education, and therefore I feel it is necessary to make it a priority in our discussion on sexual success.

To understand the role the brain plays in this area, you have to go back to a classic experiment. In college you may have learned about a man named Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, whose experimentation led to a groundbreaking theory called Classical Conditioning.

In Pavlov's experiment, he rang a bell and then fed his dog some food. The dog began to associate food with the sound of the bell, and salivated whenever it heard the bell ring. The dog's reaction was a conditioned, or learned, response to the stimulus. This Classical Conditioning basically means when you ring the bell, the dog expects to be fed.

This principle is very important to our subject of the sexually successful brain. When Pavlov's dog heard the bell and anticipated the reward, a neurological response was triggered and the dog prepared for food. Your brain goes through a similar process when you desire sex.

During sex, chemicals called endorphins and enkephalins rush to the excitement center (preopticneuron) of your brain, filling it to the highest possible level. The result is a “reward” of sorts. Not even a “runner’s high” compares to this feeling!

The preopticneuron is the section of your brain where excitement and risk are experienced. Men who take risks such as skydiving, bungee jumping or deep sea diving utilize the same part of the brain as sex does. However, sex, by far, produces the greatest chemical release, making your brain and body feel their absolute best. That’s why men love sex, and why it’s so appealing. Sex provides the big enchilada for your brain!

The following information will help you further understand the importance of your brain’s role in achieving sexual success as a Christian man.

Sex Glue

As mentioned earlier, when you ejaculate, your brain receives its maximum chemical reward. This next step is critical to your success: Whatever you **look** at while having an ejaculation is what you will sexually connect to or “glue” to. Whatever your eyes are focused on when you sexually release—a person, image or object—will become etched in your brain as a photographic attachment toward that person, image or object. I call it “sex glue.” After a period of having sex with the same person, when you see her, you are going to feel attached to her.

Isn’t it just like God to design something that would make you totally happy with the wife he designed for you? This is the original thought God had in mind with this process — That as a man you would obey his word and you would not have sex until marriage. After marriage you would then start having sexual releases, just with her. Now when you look at her during a sexual experience, wham! You are glued to her. Over a short period of time she becomes your only chemical reinforcement for your sexual experience and you are totally happy with her regardless of her height, weight or proportions.

Now unfortunately most men reading this book may not have experienced sex totally the way that God intended. I want to share with you what can happen when you try things your own way sexually.

The following are two true stories of clients I had the privilege of counseling. The first client is Stan, a 48-year-old self-employed man. The second is Tom, who was a 38-year-old corporate professional making \$300,000 a year.

* * *

When Stan was a teenager he lived on a farm with his family. He reached adolescence with the normal sexual desires. Then, when he was in his teens, he began to be sexual with himself. The bed he slept on in his parent’s house had uneven legs, so as Stan was masturbating, his bed would go bump, bump, bump, and it was heard throughout the house. The next morning everyone would laugh and joke about his behavior the night before.

Well you heard it said that necessity is the mother of invention. Stan, being a smart farm boy, found a solution to his problem relatively quickly. He would wait until everyone in the house was asleep. Then he would put his boots on and quietly walk out past the barn so nobody could see him. While being sexual with himself, he had the choice of looking up or down. Stan chose to look down. The boots he was wearing were in his field of vision. Now remember Pavlov's theory of ringing the bell and feeding the dog? You guessed it: Stan began to connect his sexual release to his boots. When Stan finally called for help, he was 48 years old. He had never masturbated or had sex with a woman without his boots on. He had a full wall for his boot collection. This is a true story of a man who attached his sex glue to the wrong thing.

* * *

Tom is a corporate climber who trained his brain for sex while viewing pornography. Tom had a particular habit with pornography that is different from most. He used to cut off one of the woman's legs in the picture or take a black marker and scribble over one of the legs. Throughout his teenage years and adulthood he kept up this behavior of masturbating to one-legged woman.

Tom, being an attractive guy, married an extremely attractive woman. His wife could easily have been a model. Tom, however, didn't want to have sex with her. Why not? Because she had two legs! Tom connected his sex glue to one-legged women. He had no desire for his beautiful two-legged wife. Remember, ring the bell, feed the dog. Even though one's habits don't seem to make sense, the sex glue they produce is real. The sexual conditioning of your brain is probably one of the greatest determining factors to your ultimate sexual success as a Christian man.

After counseling, Tom is back on track and applying the principles of this book. He, and his brain, now want and desire to have sex with his beautiful wife. I could go on and on about the many things men have sexually attached themselves to.

* * *

I have said all this to illustrate that the "ring the bell, feed the dog theory" applies to many people, even Christians. Consistent viewing of anything or anyone during a sexual experience creates a sexual desire for that object or person. Now that you're aware of this principle, let's look at how you may have trained your brain. Sadly, many men have trained their brain hundreds or thousands of times by being sexual with themselves before their first sexual encounter.

Sexual Conditioning

If you were sexual as a teenager, you created a pathway in your brain for a sexual attachment. You probably chose one of several options that fall into four major categories: images, fantasy, people and objects. Let's walk through these four categories thoroughly so that you can conclude what your sexual conditioning was as a teen.

Option 1: Images – Many teenagers have clocked in hundreds of hours reinforcing their sexuality with images from pornography. Teens who don't have access to pornography

often view lingerie catalogues. Adult men spend countless hours viewing pornography in magazines or on the Internet. Thus they have created a neuro-pathway that craves such images for its satisfaction.

Option 2: Fantasies – Some men, not having access to pornography, did what they thought was the next best thing—they made up their own images, fantasies that can become endless for their sexual stimulation. They may have imagined people they knew or people they wish they knew and placed them in their fantasy world. Some have created infinite encounters that include a myriad of sexual behaviors. This type of sexual conditioning can be combined with images or it can solely involve fantasy.

Option 3: People – Some men experienced sex for the first time and thereafter in a healthy monogamous relationship. In their conditioning process they connected to a person who cared for them, and sex was a part of their relationship. Sex for them was more about “connecting” and not just the act of sex.

Option 4: Objects – Some men connect to specific clothing or other objects. Others condition themselves sexually to a woman’s body but have no connection to her as a person. These men engage in one-night-stands or solicit prostitutes. They condition their sexuality in an object-type manner. They believe sex is not about relationships, but about objects.

* * *

You can see how each man’s sexual conditioning experience can be very different from someone else’s. Some men began their sexual conditioning before becoming a Christian and some after. Sexual conditioning explains why some men have sexual fetishes, preferences and desires. Any sexual behavior combined with repetitive conditioning can become a sexual choice for you.

Now that you understand better the principle of “ring the bell, feed the dog,” you can also understand the principle that anything can be the “bell,” such as pornography, fantasy, people, and objects. Any teenager can knowingly or unknowingly establish either a sexually successful brain or a sexually distracted brain.

Brain Pathways

Now let’s examine the three different brain pathways you may have developed for sex. I have been studying the brain pathways of men for many years. I will explain each and give you the formula for discovering your own. Before I begin, I do want to encourage you that it doesn’t matter how you have developed your brain. With this book you can still learn how to retrain your brain to be as successful sexually as you desire. Christ meets you where you are — even sexually. He then gives you His spirit and wisdom to retrain your brain to give Him glory.

* * *

Brain 1: The Uni-focused Brain – During adolescence, a teenager’s brain is typically quite undistracted. If the teen began to masturbate during adolescence and continued in

young adulthood, without ever creating a fantasy world, without using pornography or other stimuli for attachment or nurturing, then he basically masturbated with no feelings of guilt or shame involved.

This person may have had sexual encounters prior to marriage, but the encounters were characterized by a more or less loving relationship. The stimulus of the brain was usually monogamous in this relationship.

When this man married, most likely he intuitively had sex in a connected manner (we will discuss more about this later). Sex for this man is relational, sensual, and intense. He stays monogamous and if he does masturbate, it is occasional, never compulsive, and it is not really connected to anything. Here is what this brain looks like during pre-marriage and post-marriage:

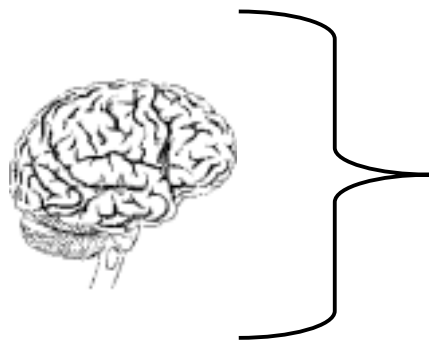


Diagram 1

Notice that the thickness of the pathway for this neurological reinforcement is huge. Such a brain has been reinforced by one “bell”: that of his wife. When this man’s brain thinks about “sex,” it thinks of the woman he has had a long-term monogamous relationship with. His brain is very satisfied with his sex life because he is satisfied with his wife relationally and physically. This man may notice other women, but he is totally satisfied sexually by his monogamous relationship. She may or may not be attractive to others, but to him, she is the most attractive woman alive.

This man’s brain has little to no sexual distractions. It allows the owner the time to focus on the rest of his life, as he deems necessary. This man is most likely to stay monogamous. Just as some men intuitively understand wealth, health and other important issues in life, the owner of this brain is, in all probability, intuitively sexually successful.

Brain 2: Dual Focused Brain – The dual focused brain often develops during adolescence due to sexual reinforcement behavior. It begins when a teen masturbates and at the same time views pornography, engages in fantasy or attaches to an object. The person with a dually focused brain typically has a habit of masturbation, the frequency of which is quite regular during adolescence and early adulthood and coincides with connecting to

something other than a person. During adolescence, sexual experimentation overall is usually non-relational. In order for this man's brain to initiate an orgasm, he has to move into a disconnected state with an object, fantasy or pornography. He may have had periods of recreational sex during adolescence, but his brain will primarily be sexually conditioning him to prefer fantasy, pornography, objects or the use of people as objects.

During marriage the person with such a brain is usually not content. Sex with his wife becomes less than exciting due to his inability to be intimate or solely conditioned toward his wife. He often will complain about sex or her "imperfect body." This man's brain will usually maintain dual sexuality, which his wife may or may not be aware of. He may be having a secret life of masturbation with the involvement of pornography, fantasy or objects. This man may technically not be having sex with others, but his sexuality is definitely split. If, however, his brain has the opportunity to fulfill its fantasy, the urge to give in to that behavior in the future will be overwhelming.



Diagram 2

Brain 3: Multi-Focused Brain – This man's brain is by far is the most sexually fractured. In my professional experience, it really never experiences sexual contentment. During adolescence, his brain has no guidelines whatsoever. He masturbates regularly and compulsively. His brain may have chemical imbalances or psychological deficits. Sexual release is achieved by compensating and balancing.

During adolescence, his brain often attaches to three of the four sexual conditioning behaviors: fantasy, pornography, objects or the use of people as objects. He rotates any of these to have his sexual "fix." For this man's brain it's all about sex. If he experiences intimacy during sex, it will be sporadic or rare.

The man with the multi-focused brain often has difficulty in relationships and marriage. He believes the world is all about getting his needs met. This man can function at work, but is often working or earning far beneath his potential. As he develops a monogamous relationship, intimacy is often difficult throughout the entire span of the relationship.

This man may engage in sexual behavior outside of his marriage relationship, but he doesn't see much wrong with this because he believes everyone else is doing it and that it

was “only sex.” More than likely, this man struggled within his family of origin and has experienced sexual abuse, sexual addictions or sexual anorexia (which I’ll discuss later).

Such a man is very defensive when talking about his objects of sexual pleasure because his brain has become dependent on the chemical high combined with the altered state he has created during his sexual release. Discussing the negative effects of his behavior with him would have results similar to saying something negative about someone’s wife.

* * *

As you can see, not all men have the same sexual brain. Your brain pathway and the sexual conditioning it has received will predetermine the position of sexuality that you believe.

For example, the sexually uni-focused brain will bend toward monogamy and will receive the best sex within a monogamous relationship for life. The dual-focused brain is often torn between conservative sexuality and whatever his pornographic consumption dictates to him. He often feels that if he could have this type of sexuality, then he would really be happy.

The multi-focused brain is not really concerned with long-term happiness. This is irrelevant and a concern only for others. Happiness is only for the moment. The adventure is an experiment with a new object. He is by far the most liberal, and any attempt at compromise would be seen as a personal attack of his individual rights.

So you can see how your brain and its sexual conditioning not only dictate your neurological preference and your current sexual appetite, but also your psychological and philosophical paradigm about sexuality. It is very important to realize that previous sexual conditioning lays the foundation for your current sexual paradigms.

This discussion comes early in this book because as you travel the road to sexual success, some of the neurologically reinforced paradigms are going to jump right out at you. Be prepared for this to happen as you continue reading.

I’ve encountered similar issues in the past when I have counseled with couples on their finances. People have different family and cultural beliefs about money, and different spending habits that can stem from adolescence or adulthood. One person may strive to conserve money while the other may easily squander it. One path leads to financial success, while another leads to great debt.



Diagram 3

What Kind of Brain Do You Have?

Great question! I get asked this question all the time in my Colorado office. When you understand your brain, you truly can understand yourself sexually to a much greater degree. An evaluation will follow to help you determine what kind of sexual brain you have. Remember that the good news is you can always retrain your brain for sexual success. Just like the man who struggled with finances: If he can learn the principles of wealth, he can have wealth for himself and his family.

For some of you, we are about to journey to a place so private that you may want to write your thoughts on a separate piece of paper known only to you. First you'll need to compile a sexual reinforcement history. This neurological road map will give you necessary details regarding the present status of your sexual brain.

In the chart below or on a separate piece of paper, fill out the information that's requested. We will walk together through the interpretation of this data in a moment.

Sexual Conditioning Chart A

Age		Total Masturbation Per week or month (i.e., 2x/wk, 1x/mo.)	Total Relational Sexual encounter Per week or month
10-15			
15-20			
21-25			
26-30			
31-35			
36-40			
41-45			
46-50			
51-55			
56-60			
61-65			
66+			

After you choose a frequency (for example two times per week) of how often you have masturbated, then follow this formula to get your total for a five year period. If you masturbated two times per week, multiply 2×260 (52 weeks \times 5 years) which gives you a grand total of 2,600 times that you have masturbated for the period of five years. If you are using months, (i.e., 2x per month) then use the monthly formula for your total. Multiply $2 \times$ month by 12 months, then multiply by 5 years. This will give you a grand total of 120. Be honest. Only you are looking at these numbers

Here we are going to look further at one's masturbating and sex behaviors in order to hone in on your particular range of sexual conditioning. Using the numbers from the Chart A, write down your estimate.

Sexual Conditioning Chart B

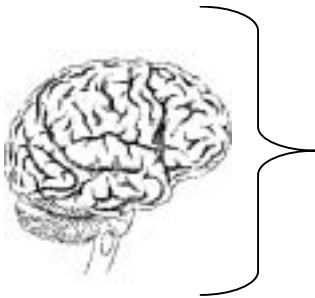
Sexual Conditions History

Age	Masturbation per week total or month (i.e., 2-3x week 1x month)	Masturbation to Fantasy (i.e., 50%)	Masturbation to Porn (i.e., 35%)	Masturbation with People as Objects (i.e., 10%)	Relational Sex (i.e., 5%)
10-15					
15-20					
21-25					
26-30					
31-35					
36-40					
41-45					
46-50					
51-55					
56-60					
61-65					
66+					

In Chart B, put a number “1” by your highest sexually conditioned zone. Place a number “2” by your second highest zone, a “3” by the third and a “4” by the fourth, if any.

At this point it should be obvious to you what kind of sexual brain you have. Look at the chart and think about whether your pattern has changed much over the years. One of my clients said, "Doc, I'm singularly focused on the wrong thing." He realized that he had focused on pornography throughout his whole life, thereby forming an unhealthy sexual pattern. For some, you'll be able to see that an unhealthy pattern began early on, but because you stayed sexually faithful with your wife rather than pursuing that pattern, you feel sexually successful and not distracted.

In addition to the sexual conditioning zones, I know that each of my male clients really appreciate seeing how his brain functions. Below are some images of what various brains look like.



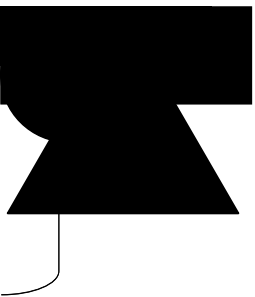
UNI-FOCUSED



DUAL-FOCUSED

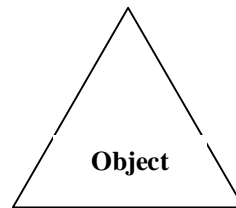
OR

Object



MULTI-FOCUSED

Fantasy



OTHER

Diagram 4

Remember that where you started is not necessarily your finish line. This is true in any area of life. Like a couple that is in debt and squandering money, it is possible to become wealthy eventually if principles required for financial success are followed. I am confident that a victorious journey is possible for everyone. Regardless of your sexual conditioning up to now, you **can** achieve sexual success.

I know that presently you may be hitting some paradigm turbulence. That's okay! Just keep climbing; as they say here in Colorado, the view is always worth it.

The following three stories will help you better comprehend the brain types we've discussed. These accounts may also help you identify your own sexual brain type.

Charlie has a uni-focused brain. He is 46 and has been married for 23 years. He dated a few girlfriends during high school and college. He also has a Christian background and parents who emphasized sexual purity. They instilled the fear of pregnancy in Charlie after his cousin impregnated a girl and married her at age 19.

Charlie experimented some with masturbation, but since he had no access to porn, he never attached to it. Right after college, he married Suzanne, his girlfriend of 18 months. They first had intercourse on their honeymoon. He has had sex with his wife about two to four times a week over the course of his entire marriage. Charlie looks at his wife with adoration. She's gained a few pounds over the years—and so has he—but he's accepting and loving of her body and brags all the time about how he picked the “right one.” To hang around Charlie is, at some point, to be introduced to his wife along the way of conversation. Sure, Charlie sees other pretty women regularly at the office where he works, but they are simply coworkers to him. “Suzie,” as he calls her, is really what gets his brain thinking about sex. I know Charlie personally, and he will never be a client in need of sexual help.

* * *

The second story is about Martin, who just turned 50. He has led a moderately successful career in a large corporation. He has three children: two boys and a girl who just went off to college a few months ago.

Martin first came into my office for marriage counseling. He states that he is “just not happy with his marriage” and sex is routine and boring. His wife Linda is 47, walks two to four miles a day, is tan, is athletically built and has a smile that could light up Texas. She says they get along okay, but sex has always been an issue.

Early in the marriage, Linda continues, Martin wanted her to watch pornographic videos with him. She tried it a few times but didn't really like it, and asked Martin not to do it. Martin regularly asks Linda to participate in something he read about in a pornographic magazine or that he has seen on a pornographic video. She always says no; he then pouts and sulks for weeks. This is how the marriage goes. Martin says he really loves Linda

and the life they've built together. Both want to live the rest of their lives happily ever after, enjoying their beautiful vacation home overlooking a lake.

When Martin came in for a private therapy session, I asked about his sexual history. He had had access to pornography since he was 14 years old, when he and a neighborhood kid would steal from the huge porn collection of the boy's dad. He masturbated three to five times a week until he was about 30 years old, and kept this pattern going a minimum of two times a week for the rest of his marriage. His particular choice in the pornographic magazines was young women with blonde hair and large chests. Linda is an attractive brunette with pretty brown eyes and did not meet any of his preferences.

Martin's sexual past prior to marriage revealed some short-term relationships and one long-term relationship with the girl of his dreams, but she couldn't be faithful to Martin for anything. He had several one-night stands and three prostitutes that were all blondes.

Martin realized early in our session that he had acutely created dual-brain sexuality. When we added it up, almost two-thirds of his sexual releases over the span of his life were with the fantasy blonde and not his athletically built, brunette wife, who has a normal appetite for sex. Martin used many of the principles in this book, and he continues to call me periodically when he thinks about the major difference in his life now. He is experiencing a very healthy sex life with Linda and not experiencing a duality anymore. He calls more often from the lake house, usually after fishing. * * *

Now let me tell you about a third couple. Roberto and Mary were clients of mine from quite awhile back. They had been married only eight years when they came to see me. This was Roberto's second marriage and Mary's first. Roberto has two grown children from his first marriage who were raised mostly by his ex-wife. Roberto and Mary have no children of their own.

Roberto is 47 and a moderately successful local musician. He plays mostly at bars, some churches and an occasional wedding. He has written a few songs and hopes to get them published. Mary is a 36-year-old attractive, successful business manager with a good and steady income.

Roberto has had many one-night stands and two short-term affairs just for the sex. Roberto and Mary were close to divorcing before they came in for counseling. Roberto repeatedly reported that he loved Mary and would do anything to keep the marriage.

In a private session with me, Roberto said he had had at least 25 encounters with different women since being married to Mary. He stated, "I've had sex with anyone, fat women, women 20 years older than me, and younger women of any race or handicap." He adds, "If I think I can have sex with a woman at a bar, I do."

Roberto easily identified with the multi-focused man. He said he had lots of involvement with pornography early in his life and currently had a room full of it at his home. Starting from early on, he has been sexual with over 300 women during his life. He was repeatedly unfaithful to his first wife and can't remember a woman with whom he was ever monogamous. He stated that he was always on the hunt for more, different, and better sex. Roberto watched a show about sex addiction on television and identified

himself as a sexual addict. When having sex with Mary, over ninety percent of the time he fantasized about other women or pornography he had viewed earlier.

He really wanted to save his marriage, and he did. Roberto has been successfully monogamous for quite awhile now. How do I know? Mary has him regularly take a polygraph examination regarding his sexuality with other women and pornography, and she faxes me his results along with a thank you.

This couple has not only stayed married, but Roberto has also learned how to have intimacy and three-dimensional sex. He told me he is experiencing the best sex of his life and is blown away by how close he feels to Mary during sex.

* * *

I hope that you are encouraged by these accounts. Take heart—just reading this book has started you on the road to sexual success. By applying the principles laid out here, you will have victory in ways you never thought possible before.

CHAPTER 3

Three Major Battlefronts

While counseling men in the area of their sexuality, I have discovered they are often confronted by battlefronts. Battlefronts are common areas that can keep men from inheriting their land sexually. If one of these areas apply to you, I would encourage you to attack it so that you can have sexual success in your life.

As a therapist, years of my life have been given to hearing the stories of men who have been affected by one or more of these battlefronts.

Some of the information on the next few pages may not concern you, but those who are affected by the sexual issues that follow are probably affected in a major way. I have experienced two of the three battles myself. I not only am aware of the validity of these distractions, but I also know the way back to becoming sexually focused and successful.

For those of you who are not currently affected by these three battlefronts, I suggest reading through this chapter anyway. You will be amazed at the understanding you'll gain regarding the behaviors of men you know, and you could possibly offer them some insight so that they can inherit their land.

Battle 1: Abuse – When I originally contemplated writing about this battle, I was primarily thinking about sexual abuse. After reflecting over my past clinical experience, though, I realized the need to address two other forms of abuse as well, since physical and emotional abuse can definitely affect a man's sexuality.

To be whole your soul must be healed from past pain as much as possible. I was one of those very wounded souls. I have never met my biological father. My legal father was an alcoholic and my mother probably suffered from her own sexual issues, and she placed her children in foster homes. I also experienced abuse as a teenager.

I know what it is to be abused, but I am in no way a whiner. I fervently believe in accepting personal responsibility for the healing of any wounding one has received. This is the way I explain it to my clients: If someone shot me with a bullet, I would know it was not my fault that I was shot. However, now that I have a bullet inside of me, I have the responsibility to get the bullet out and to do any physical therapy necessary to regain full physical health. Although I definitely did not create the wound, it is still my job to heal from it.

I know people who whine and commiserate about their past, and that's not me! My idea of healing from the past is to identify your wounds and start cleaning them up so you can become the most fulfilled life-giving Christian man you can be.

As I talk about abuse, you will be able to identify whether you experienced any abuse. If you don't have a vague memory of it happening, then it didn't happen. Now if you did

experience sexual, emotional or physical abuse, you probably followed the male code of never telling anyone that it happened.

I don't think I talked about any of my trauma until I was in my twenties. For those of you that have experienced this trauma, don't worry. I'm not going to suggest therapy at this point. I will, however, give you the guidelines so that you can experience healing.

A child can suffer abuse or neglect at the hands of Dad, Mom, strangers, relatives or neighbors. Verbal abuse and shaming can be an ongoing event comprising of a parent or guardian repeatedly attacking the child's soul with verbal assaults.

As these assaults occur, they insert bullets inside this soul. As means of self-protection, the child may choose not to trust others anymore, and may pull away and isolate emotionally and spiritually from others. Most likely he won't develop skills for interpersonal relationships. He will become walled off from others because he believes that the truth of the matter is, "All relationships behold pain." Think of all of his future relationships that will become strained because of this abuse: parent-child, employer-employee, teacher-student, husband-wife, and so on. He may conclude, "Why should I fall in love? Why should I fully give myself to any relationship?"

The second choice that victims sometimes pick is to become perfectly wonderful. Become so smart, handsome, strong or financially successful that nobody would ever suspect that your soul is wounded. After all, when they see how wonderful you are, they can't imagine that you were ever injured or taken advantage of. These types look great on the outside; they often have picture-perfect-looking relationships. However, they often can't connect spiritually or emotionally in an intimate relationship.

With these men, everything looks great on the outside—the car, the house and a beautiful wife. But their wives tell another story about the lack of intimacy. These individuals will stay mostly in object-type relationships with all people. Such men generally can talk football and work, but they are incapable of delving into the deep issues of relationships.

As this person continues to protect his soul from anticipated pain, over time he becomes less and less able to be intimate. The wounds become the beams that hold his wall up, and less and less of his soul is engaged sexually. The less soul that is available in your sex life, the less sexual satisfaction you can experience with your wife. The more soul available during sex, the more sexual satisfaction will result. In a future chapter I will give you clear guidelines and exercises to heal your soul of its past wounds so that you can include all of your soul in the bedroom. Then you can have the absolute best sex of your life! Regardless of your past, your future **can** be sexually satisfying and fulfilling. For those of you who have past wounds, the process will involve a little more work, but a better sex life is worth it!

Battle 2: Addictions – Addictions can affect many men and they often pose another major battlefield for men to fight in order to inherit their land sexually. Even Christian men can have addictions. I personally have counseled with pastors, elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers and even Bible school professors all with a variety of addictions. Addictions can

be active in a man's life for many reasons. The addict can be a soul in pain, as we talked about earlier, and he may find some relief or escape in the "medicine" of his choice, whether it is sex, work, alcohol, drugs or food. He can be spiritually absent and use his addiction to fill his void of God. Lastly, a man can be addicted because of a neurological imbalance or for the purpose of a neurological reward.

The man whose brain is chemically depressed or struggles with a disorder such as bipolar disorder may find that sex, work, alcohol, drugs or food increases certain chemicals in his brain and actually makes him feel better. Someone who is chemically depressed as a teenager may find that alcohol or masturbation stabilizes him. Using these as his "fix" could eventually create an addiction, and yet at the same time chemically balance the depression.

Another type of addict is the man whose life revolves around his single neuropathic reward of choice. He may allow himself to get his high through risk or excitement and could get addicted to this particular activity to the point where it excludes real connecting with others.

Addictions usually include three of the following characteristics:

1. Doing more of something for a longer period of time than the person expected.
2. Attempts that are unsuccessful to reduce or stop the behavior.
3. There is a great deal of time acquiring or recovering from the behavior.
4. Behavior affects social or work plans.
5. Reducing or not participating in normal social, occupational or recreational activity to pursue the behavior.
6. Continuing to do the behavior knowing it has caused problems.
7. A marked tolerance for the behavior (meaning it takes more to get the same affect.
8. Withdrawals symptoms if not doing the behavior.
9. Doing the behavior to avoid withdrawal symptoms.

Addictions not only affect your life; often they have a dramatic effect on your spouse. While conducting a study for a book I wrote called *Partners: Healing from His Addiction*, I discovered that women who are in a relationship with a sex addict are much more likely to suffer from depression, lower self-esteem and eating disorders. Observe your wife for a moment. Does she resemble this picture? If she does, as an addict you may hold some of the responsibility. On the flip side, it's not your spouse who can make you better: It's you.

If you're struggling with an addiction of any kind, it's necessary first of all to find out why you're addicted. I suggest that you attend a support group listed in the appendix of

this book. If the addiction is sexual in nature, I strongly recommend my book *The Final Freedom: Pioneering Sexual Addiction Recovery*. This book was discussed on “Oprah,” “Good Morning America,” and on many other national television programs and radio shows, and in the print media.

When one has addictions, for whatever reason, he is limiting his ability to achieve sexual success. For the man who strives to recover from his addictions, sex becomes incredibly better than it was when the addictions ruled his life. The more soul that you have to give your wife during intimacy, the better sex you will experience.

Battle 3: Sexual Anorexia – Most people are not familiar with this term; however it can be a huge player in sexual dissatisfaction. When people think of anorexia, they often think of skinny women who won’t eat due to anorexia nervosa. But there are other forms of anorexia, including sexual anorexia, which is basically a lack of intimacy.

The sexual anorexic won’t connect emotionally, spiritually, relationally or sexually. This form of anorexia only shows up in the primary relationship, like between a husband and wife. In this scenario, everyone else may think you’re a terrific guy and wonder why your wife isn’t happy with you.

Those outside your primary relationship don’t know that when you go home, you barely communicate with your wife and you practically avoid her. Almost anything can and does take time and attention away from her. They don’t know that you don’t initiate sex with her or that you don’t even want sex with your wife. They don’t know about your secret fantasies or pornography habit and masturbating patterns that replace the time you could be giving to your wife.

You may look great to the outside world, but your wife is starving to connect with you. She can’t get you to share yourself or your feelings with her, no matter what she does. Her conversations with you are more like communication between roommates than between a husband and wife.

Sexual anorexia is both an active and almost compulsive withholding of emotional, spiritual and sexual intimacy from a primary wife. It is a constant sabotaging of any connectedness that may happen. The sexual anorexic intentionally will not initiate sharing his heart or his world with his wife. This lack of intimacy isn’t rampant, but for those who do struggle with this issue, sexual success is impossible until it is dealt with.

Included in this chapter is a short quiz to help you identify sexual anorexia in yourself or your spouse. Anorexia does have a female form that can also keep a couple stalemated intimately or sexually.

Sexual Anorexia Self-Test

Answer yes or no to the following questions relating to the course of your relationship.

1. Would your spouse feel you keep yourself so busy that you have little time for him/her (not family time, but just time for him/her alone)? Y___ N___
2. Would your spouse feel that if problems arise in the relationship, you are more likely to focus on the problem itself before owning your side of the problem? Y___ N___
3. Would your spouse feel that you withhold love from her (not sex)? Y___ N___
4. Would your spouse feel that you withhold praise from her? Y___ N___
5. Would your spouse feel that you withhold sex from him/her or that you withhold yourself spiritually and emotionally during sex with her? Y___ N___
6. Would your spouse feel that you are unwilling or unable to discuss your feelings with him/her? Y___ N___
7. Would your spouse feel that you have ungrounded or ongoing criticism of her? Y___ N___
8. Would your spouse feel that you use silence or anger as a means of control in the relationship? Y___ N___
9. Would your spouse feel that you control or shame her around financial issues? Y___ N___

If you answered “yes” to five or more questions, sexual anorexia is most likely present. There is hope—sexual anorexia can go into full remission. I have had numerous clients throughout the years who were so sexually anorexic that they didn’t have sex for over ten years. Often within six to eight weeks of developing their intimacy skills, these clients not only began having the best sex of their lives, they and their wife actually started liking each other again.

* * *

Regardless of your battlefield (sexual trauma, sexual addiction or sexual anorexia) you can become sexually successful. I have counseled men from all walks of life with each of these issues—some with all three—and have seen their sex lives make an incredible turn-about. What follows is an outline of a very practical non-touchy-feely approach to overcoming each one these battlefronts. In my counseling practice I have assisted my clients in winning these battles thousands of times. The following outline I will be sharing works if you pick up your sword and charge toward the work needing to be done.

Those of you reading up to this point may not have any of these battles to work through. If you don’t, be thankful! You might just want to glance though this section for general information, though, because these issues are so very prevalent in our culture today, and

you may be able to pass on some help to someone I will never get the opportunity to meet.

Resolving Trauma

Sexual trauma affects approximately fifteen percent of the male population in America. Most occurs at the hands of older men, older boys or male peers. A smaller percentage of victims are sexually traumatized by older women, baby-sitters or relatives. Regardless of the gender of your perpetrator or the age difference, the following exercise will help tremendously in overcoming sexual trauma and will help give you closure to past painful events. In case you need more help than afforded by these two exercises, seek the assistance of a professional counselor who specializes in sexual trauma. The process I will outline is found in the scripture where Jesus cleanses the temple by identifying the sin, expressing His anger, and once again the temple is cleansed and restored (Luke 19:45-48).

1. Symbolic Confrontation

Realize that when you experienced trauma, you were affected. Even if you didn't want to be, you were. Moreover, when someone is sexual, they are absolutely the most vulnerable they can be. So if a sexual perpetrator used you as a sex object, you were affected in all three parts of your being (spirit, soul and body).

Not all, but many traditional therapists are ineffective in handling sexual trauma because they try to deal with this three-dimensional problem using a one-dimensional method. The process I am about to outline engages all three parts of your woundedness.

Note: As a word of caution, before you start the symbolic confrontations, if you have heart trouble or other health issues, consult your physician first.

Sexual trauma is not the only trauma a Christian man can experience growing up. There can be emotional, physical or even spiritual trauma experienced. The exercise I will outline here will work for all forms of trauma.

Prepare Your Offenders List – Take a separate piece of paper and make a list of the offender(s) in your life. List the offenses they committed, your age at the time of the offense and a brief description of the offense.

Example:

- When I was seven years old, a neighbor boy had me ...
- Dad left me when I was nine.
- A female baby-sitter forced me, at age twelve, to...
- A stranger in an adult bookstore did...

Rank these offenses in order of intensity, with the number "1" marking the highest level of trauma experienced. Next, you will need to confront each perpetrator symbolically,

one at a time. (An explanation of how to do this follows.) Just confront one person per day, starting with the worse offender. I usually recommend that you give yourself about three days between confronting each perpetrator.

Symbolic confrontations have four components that are all very important:

1. Write your anger letter.
2. Warm up for your symbolic confrontation.
3. Read your letter out loud.
4. Carry out your symbolic confrontation (hit the target).

I will detail each step below. Before starting, turn the phones off and make sure you have complete privacy for your confrontation.

1. Anger Letter – Write down the name of your offender, if you know it, and then write him or her a letter expressing all your feelings. Do not mail the letter—it is strictly therapeutic for your own recovery. If you could put this person in a chair, strap them down and gag them, what you would like to say to them regarding they have done to you? Include in your letter the affects his or her actions have had on your life, your relationships and your sexuality. Don't hold back any thoughts or feelings, and don't worry about your language either. More than likely, sexual abuse has dramatically affected your life and kept you from being completely sexually successful. Your perpetrators deserve the rage you feel about them.

2. Warm Up – Get a racquet or bat (most stores carry sport bats that are padded) along with a mattress, pillow or punching bag. Using your bat, strike the mattress with small, medium, large and extra large hits. Practice doing this a time or two. Also, warm up your voice by saying “no” louder with each hit. Although this may seem awkward at first, it is essential to your symbolic confrontation, which will enable you to release your rage.

3. Read the Letter Out Loud – Now read your letter out loud, as if you were reading it to your offender. This is an important part of the exercise as well. As you read the letter, feelings will swell up inside of you. That is normal. The next step will help discharge that trauma.

4. Hit the Target – Now go at it with your bat and mattress. Really let that mattress, which symbolizes your perpetrator, have it. You can hit, yell, kick, or whatever you need to do to get the rage, shame and hate out of you and put it back on your perpetrator where it belongs. It's their shame you have been carrying all these years and not yours. This last step can take anywhere from ten minutes to an hour depending on the ordeal you experienced and how deeply the pain is lodged inside of you. The more emotion you let out, the better you will feel afterward.

You are now taking the bullet out of your being—spirit, soul and body—and giving it back to the person responsible for inflicting you with it.

This is how a symbolic confrontation takes place. I have personally done this exercise with each of the offenders in my life. Now I have a concrete place and time as to when I pulled the bullets out of my soul and began to heal.

I have noticed that everyone's experience with symbolic confrontation is quite unique. Some feel different immediately afterwards. For others it takes a few days before they realize that they are free of the bondage that once strangled them.

2. Symbolic Releasing

In this second step you will not be addressing your anger; instead you will be releasing yourself from the perpetrator. You may have heard it said that forgiveness is more for you than for anyone else. My personal and professional experience concurs that forgiveness offered after cleansing your temple of trauma, is very therapeutic.

In this exercise you will need two chairs and privacy. Again, turn off the phones and make sure everyone is out of the house. Have the chairs face each other. There are three phases to this exercise. I will walk you through each.

Phase 1 – Sit in one of the chairs. We will call this Chair for our discussion. From here you will role-play the perpetrator. You can use your perpetrator's name if you know it. If he/she was a stranger, you can give them a name or simply say, "I am the one who abused you."

Acting as the perpetrator in Chair A—let's use "Fred" as an example—face Chair B and imagine yourself sitting in Chair B. As Fred, you can own the abuse, apologize and ask for forgiveness. Be sure to acknowledge the costs to yourself, the victim. Be specific and don't just say, "I'm sorry." Instead, if Fred was an adult who forced you into oral sex as a child, you may say something like, "I am the one who made you perform oral sex. I used you like other boys I had victimized. You were just an object to me when I did this to you. I know I must have damaged your life. I hope you can heal and I now ask you to forgive me."

Phase 2 - After the perpetrator has appropriately apologized to you, then physically get up and move to Chair B. In Chair B, role-play yourself as receiving this information from your perpetrator. You have just heard him apologize and ask forgiveness for the acts he did toward you and the effect they have had on you.

In Chair B, you can respond any way that you like. You may not be ready to release them or forgive them at this time. Whatever your thoughts or feelings are, verbalize them out loud to the perpetrator. The purpose of this exercise is for you to be honest. Releasing them at some point is a gift you can give to yourself. Their life moved on whether you "let them off the hook" or not. By forgiving and releasing them, you are **not** approving of

what they did to you. You are simply releasing that behavior from having an influence in your life any longer.

If you are unable to forgive or release them at this time, try this exercise again in a month or so. However, if you were able to let go, move onto Phase 3.

Phase 3 – Physically move back to Chair A and resume the role of the perpetrator again. Now you need to respond to the forgiveness or the releasing that has been extended toward you. This concludes your symbolic confrontation.

This is a powerful exercise for most men. As you complete it you can fully say good-bye to this chapter of your life. From this point on the majority of men can view the trauma as part of their history without allowing ongoing affects to continue. This is similar to bearing a scar from an accident but no longer suffering from the pain.

I hope that all who need to heal from the issue of sexual trauma will complete these exercises. They have changed thousands of men and women's lives. You can apply them, as well, to traumatic events from your past that aren't sexual in nature.

3. Overcoming Sexual Addiction

In this section, I want to offer you the basics of sexual addiction recovery. For a complete understanding of sexual addiction and recovery, I recommend reading and working through the following books:

1. *The Final Freedom: Pioneering Sexual Addiction Recovery*
2. *101 Freedom Exercises: A Christian Guide for Sexual Addiction Recovery*
3. *Steps to Freedom: A 12-step Christian Guide for Sexual Addiction Recovery*

These three books will help you gain a better understanding of sexual addiction and give you a great amount of practical tools. To recover from your addiction the first step is to acknowledge that you are a sex addict. Nobody can help a sex addict who is in denial of his problem and who thinks that all guys do this or that. To recover, you will have to stop lying to yourself.

Remember our Father in heaven sees all and knows all. He knows your every thought. He knows if you struggle in this area. He also has heard every prayer you have prayed to stop your secret behavior. He wants you to be free more than you do. You will have Him with you as you fight this battle.

It may now be time to begin to heal from your addiction if you find yourself:

Convinced your sexual behavior has to be secret

Continually needing more and more of this behavior to be satisfied sexually.

Having tried to stop a certain sexual behavior and have failed.

Knowing your wife doesn't agree, but you keep doing this behavior, even though it is affecting your relationship with her.

Addictions by definition are not something you are going to recover from on your own. I'm sure you believe that you can handle this yourself; however, that is the surest way to fail. Again, stop lying to yourself. You are going to need some help to get better. Another man is going to need to be in your life for support.

I see so many Christian men trapped by sexual addiction try to fix it themselves. They often have I John 1:9 memorized.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The problem is that this verse is for forgiveness, not healing. If you want to heal from sexual addiction you are going to have to turn your Bible back a few pages to James 5:16.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

If you want healing from sexual addiction you will have to humble yourself to another man and begin to confess the truth of your sin so that you can be healed. Remember that

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. James 4:6

I don't like this much either but until I was willing to humble myself to another man I was trapped. When I started getting accountability I started getting freedom.

Support groups are available to assist men in overcoming sexual addictions. Maybe your excuse for not attending a support group is that you are rich, famous, or hold a prominent position in your community, and you're concerned that you will be recognized. I have counseled with men all over the country and in all these years, I have never found one case where anonymity was broken.

These men know what you're struggling with and have heard it all. To find a local support group in your area, you can visit our Website at www.sexaddict.com or call my office for the closest Freedom Group in your area. A Freedom Group is a Christ-based Twelve-Step support group. If your church doesn't have one in place, volunteer to lead it yourself. Our experience is that once a church offers help for the sexually addicted these groups multiply quickly.

You can get free from sexual addiction and become sexually successful. Just don't try to do it all by yourself; it just won't work.

3. Overcoming Sexual Anorexia

Sexual anorexia sometimes can be present at the same time as sexual addiction. If this is the case with you, you will need to work through recovery for sexual addiction and the intimacy exercises for sexual anorexia.

Without daily intimacy with your wife, anorexia can't heal. Later in this book I will discuss the three Daily Exercises needed to develop and maintain intimacy within your relationship. For the anorexic these exercises are essential to his healing. Also, if you rely on your wife to initiate sex, or you are withholding sex from her, you need to establish and adhere to some guidelines, which will be covered when we talk about a sexual agreement later on.

Anorexics often purposely sabotage their sex life with their spouse to avoid intimacy. If you are anorexic, I encourage you to visit our Website and get the 90-minute video "Sexual Anorexia." After viewing this video, you and your wife will be able to understand this issue and apply the practical solutions offered.

* * *

Regardless of the distractions from your past that have plagued you and your spouse, you can now heal and move forward to sexual success. If this process involves a lot of work, start on it immediately. Make your action plan. Mark it in your daily planner or Palm Pilot to make your road to healing a top priority. This way, sexual success will be much easier to attain. Remember, the more soul you bring into the bedroom, the better it will be for you. Stay focused and give yourself the gift of sexual success.

CHAPTER 4

Shame on Me

...And they felt no shame. Genesis 3:25

Sexual shame poses an enormous obstacle to your sexual success. Harboring shame of any kind can limit your ability to be fully available in the bedroom. This is true even more so when it comes to sexual shame. Since most men keep such shame a secret, the shame often becomes so deeply imbedded that it's almost a part of the man himself.

It's quite obvious when a man has issues with sexual shame. He walks with his head down, doesn't achieve his potential, and rarely looks anyone in the eye. Some men may have the appearance of being confident and successful, yet no one really knows them. Why? Because they live out the core belief, "If you really knew me, you wouldn't love or accept me."

Men are sexual beings, and when a man is sexually violated, this vulnerable component of his very existence is abused. Thus, many men carrying shame in this area believe not only that someone has done something bad to them, or they themselves have done something bad, but rather that they **are** bad. Their core belief says they are truly different from other men. In their minds, the difference is that they **are** bad, wrong and lesser than others. They feel like they don't measure up to others. These feelings of worthlessness keep them isolated, walled off and trapped in underachievement.

Since a man is sexual daily to some degree, he will feel this shame daily. It plagues his quiet moments and frightens him in the face of real intimacy. It talks to him when he is alone. He may hear "voices" of:

- ? "You're no good. If they knew what happened to you sexually, they wouldn't even want to be in the same room with you."
- ? "You're different."
- ? "You're weak."
- ? "You're inadequate."

You can see how a man with these types of thoughts repeating in his head is probably not going to be sexually unashamed, free or confident.

Such sexual disgrace connects to the very core of the masculine soul. In this chapter we will discuss three types of sexual shame, and I will outline a plan for you to move beyond the shame and into sexual acceptance and sexual health.

Sexual Performance Shame

This shame tries to manifest itself in men of all ages. Often a man with this issue feels as if he is not a good lover for such performance reasons as not being able to get or maintain

an erection. Overwhelming feelings of disappointment, hurt or rage often follow this experience.

This form of sexual shame is very difficult. The isolation this man feels is incredible. He often feels as if he can't talk to his friends, pastor or doctor. He is so ashamed sexually that he barely feels like a man.

A second issue common among men is that of premature ejaculation, meaning a man may ejaculate so quickly that the sex act is over in a couple of minutes. This may happen for several reasons; however, the feeling afterwards is still the same—that of inadequacy.

A third area is that of not bringing your spouse to orgasm. Some men have much of their sexual identity attached to bringing her to orgasm. They often don't realize that not all women are orgasmic in the same manner, and some are only orgasmic by a specific form of manipulation. Some men take this personally and feel sexually inadequate when they themselves have an orgasm and then their wife needs a different form of stimulation. Over a period of time this can transform a sexually confident man into a sexually shamed man.

The last issue of sexual performance shame does not have as much to do with the performance as it does with men's anatomy. Some men feel sexual shame solely related to the size of their sex organ. Perhaps he was teased in gym classes as a teenager or when he was viewing pornography he compared himself to others.

He rarely shares this shame with others, but instead allows the shame to get embedded deep in his heart. Some have tried enlargement gadgets and even surgery because they have not accepted their bodies the way they are. Often this shame keeps a man from the sexual inheritance he desires.

What's more, the man experiences this shame even though his wife is sexually fulfilled and has verbally and behaviorally demonstrated that she is satisfied. He continues to feel like lesser of a man than others and rarely internalizes genuine sexual affirmation or praise from his wife; instead he remains muddled in sexual shame.

Sexual History Shame

Every man has a sexual history. The history of some men only involves their wife. Others have had multiple sexual experiences prior to marriage. As we have discussed earlier, some of these men have also experienced sexual trauma during their sexual history.

Whatever the history, many have sexual memories that bring tremendous shame when recalled. One man told me that when he was younger he worked in a convenience store where a woman continuously called him and talked sexually inappropriately to him. This went on for weeks. One day she invited him to her house. She kept her house totally dark and they had sex. It was then that he realized she was incredibly obese and significantly older than he was. This continued on for several occasions. This man had tremendous shame regarding these encounters.

Everyone is different when it comes to sexual shame. What may cause sexual shame for one person to the point that it hinders his future sexual success may not cause another man shame at all. We are all unique when it comes to sexuality, so we experience sexual shame very differently as well.

Countless hours of my practice has been spent helping men get and stay free from such disgrace. For some men this shame is tied to an early event in their childhood. For others it stems from a behavior displayed in their adolescence, where they may have cheated on a girlfriend or she cheated on him and he was ashamed about it. During adolescence numerous men try to experiment sexually, and sometimes these experiments backfire.

A rather common experiment is the solicitation of a prostitute. I've heard repeatedly how cold, empty and cheap the experience felt. Some prostitutes mocked the young men, and the women's words have stuck with the men even 30 years later.

Some are ashamed of homosexual behavior from their past. A common event that is hard to let go of occurs when a teenager first goes to an adult bookstore to view a porn flick and, not being aware that leaving the door unlocked is basically a homosexual invitation, the teen is accosted by a man. I have heard hundreds of stories of this happening. The boy definitely wasn't ready for the encounter, but since all sex feels good at the time, he participated. Now, 20 years later, he still wonders whether he is a homosexual. Additionally, as the teen matures, he may easily fall into using women as objects and totally disregarding them as people. Several men with this type of background have all but raped the women they dated. Others have committed date rape or got involved in gang rapes.

Another cause of shame from your past could include sexual behavior with yourself during adolescence or young adulthood. Many feel guilty about their masturbation habits. This guilt can arise from the behavior itself, the frequency of the masturbation or from the type of porn that was viewed while masturbating. Also, incredible shame can be linked to objects used or clothing worn during self-sex.

A sexual secret in some men's sexual history involves abortions, where a pregnant girlfriend is forced to abort their baby. In other cases, the man contracted or spread sexually transmitted diseases. Some men have visible marks left on their bodies from these diseases. While the treatment can be quick, the memories are life-long. Contracting an STD is excruciatingly shameful and is an unforgettable part of one's sexual history.

* * *

Scores of men went through a relatively positive and sexually healthy adolescence. But the issue of sexual shame doesn't always stem from one's youth; adult men can get involved in things that bring on shame as well. Take adultery for example. I have heard at least a thousand men tell me of not only their regret and guilt over their affairs, but also of the deep, almost unbearable shame they still feel. Remember that such shame grows from two roots: the immoral behavior and the belief that they themselves are bad.

I have heard men from the ages of 20 to 70 tell their stories of adultery. Men with any number of spiritual backgrounds—pastors, missionaries, deacons, youth workers in the

church—have shared with me the great shame they carry because of their sex acts outside of their marriages. These men have come from varied financial backgrounds, from those that are poor college students to some that are among the wealthiest men in our nation. This shame appears to run deeper and affect men's sexual success more than any other behavior in their sexual history. The shame is rarely disclosed unless the man gets caught or decides to come clean about it.

This is where men need to get honest with themselves, which can be very difficult. I have seen many strong men weep to the point where they were on the floor instead of in the chair when their secret came out. Their pain and anguish have totally convinced me that adultery may look good at the time, but its end is sheer bitterness.

* * *

As you can see, the shame from one's sexual history can appear at any part of your sexual development. Sexual shame is unique to your sexual personality and beliefs, and only you know if you have it in your life. If you are concealing sexual shame—and most men do—later in this chapter I will walk you through some ways to close the door for good to that episode of your life. I am aware of the limitations that sexual shame can bring into the bedroom. I also know what it is like to have no sexual shame at all and what *that* can bring to the bedroom. You may have heard the old saying, "I've been poor, and I've been rich. Rich is better." The same applies here: "I have had sexual shame, and I have been without sexual shame. Being without sexual shame is much better."

Sexual Deviancy Shame

Sexual deviancy is rarely addressed in male sexuality books. Sexual deviancy and the shame that is attached to it can be described in two ways: a sex act that you believe is deviant or acts that actually are deviant.

When I refer to acts of sexual deviancy in this book, they will fall under the second description, illegal behaviors. This includes voyeurism, exposing yourself in public, rape, encouraging a woman to drink so that she makes a sexual choice in your favor, sexually touching or viewing others without their consent, or any sex acts with a minor or a child.

These sexually deviant behaviors are not prevalent among the majority of the male population. For some men it may have comprised a one-time event, maybe as a young person. For others it's been more frequent behavior. The shame caused by these behaviors keeps many men from the possibility of being sexually successful. The man acting out with these behaviors can't be honest about his sexuality for fear of imprisonment. The shame is usually attached both to the actual sex act as well as to the man's thoughts that he must be a horrible person to even think such deviant behaviors are enjoyable.

Often behaviors that a man once thought of as sexually deviant become acceptable to him over time because he begins to desensitize himself through exposure to pornography, masturbation or fantasies. Now he attaches sexual pleasure to what he once called abnormal. Still, some men may not enjoy the behavior, but because of their experimentation, they now consider themselves sexually deviant.

The last area of sexual deviant shame can come to some men just by the sheer exposure to deviancy. Some men may cruise porn sites on the Web and a screen may pop up about something they would normally consider deviant, but it sexually arouses them. They now may believe they are bad because what they once considered bad has sexually aroused them.

I have spent many hours with men who have never engaged in a sexually deviant behavior and yet they have sexually deviant shame because they viewed this type of pornography or read stories of this behavior and got aroused. Remember shame is different for everyone.

* * *

As you can see, sexual shame can come from all kinds of avenues and all men handle shame differently. One man may experience this shame and become an isolated, insecure underachiever. On the other extreme is a man with this shame who becomes the highly successful overachiever, and yet he, too, remains isolated. There are also various outcomes in between.

There are practical solutions to resolving this shame. You can read the specific solution that I will provide for your specific behavior or you can read them all. The areas of sexual shame that we have discussed so far are:

1. Sexual performance shame
2. Sexual history shame
3. Sexual deviancy shame

Solutions to the areas of shame will follow in the same order listed above. Over the years I have counseled many men through each of the types of shame listed. Regardless of your past, you can move forward and achieve your sexual inheritance.

Solutions to Sexual Performance Shame

The very first part of dealing with any form of shame is acknowledging that it is a part of your life. On a separate piece of paper, write the specific sexual shame you have struggled with. Your statements might look something like:

1. I feel sexual shame about not being able to get or maintain an erection with my wife for ____% of the time. This has been going on for _____ number of years.
2. I feel sexual shame about not being able to bring my wife to an orgasm. This happens _____ % of the time and has been going on for _____ years.
3. I feel sexual shame about the size of my sexual organ. I first remember feeling such shame when I was ____ years old. I feel this shame mostly when _____.

For some men, just reading the above statements can bring up many shameful feelings. But the first stage of the solution is to write down the types of shame you're facing.

Next write out your feelings about these issues. In the Appendix, there is a Feelings List you can utilize to get you started. Here's an example:

I have sexual shame about ejaculating so quickly while having sex with my wife. This behavior occurs 20% of the time we are sexual together. This has been going on for the past three years. I have about this issue is **self-doubt** that I am ever going to ever get over this. I also feel **embarrassed, unmanly, ashamed** and **degraded** whenever it happens. I feel **weak** and **less than** other men shortly afterward. I feel **stuck** when I try to talk to my wife about this. I feel **out of control** and **doubtful** of my wife's love toward me. I feel **alone** because I haven't talked to a doctor about this. I feel **afraid** because I don't know if something is really physically wrong. I also feel **secretive** because I do have some sexual secrets and masturbate more than I let my wife know.

Writing down your feelings is vital to freeing yourself from the heavy weight of guilt that has beleaguered you. Without completing this step, you may stay emotionally stuck on this issue, which in turn will keep you from making an action plan for your own sexual success.

Processing the shame is the next step. Write down your fears or concerns about this issue. Let's continue with an example.

My fears are:

1. It's only going to get worse.
2. My wife will love me less.
3. I will think more about it and make it worse.
4. If I go to the doctor, I am afraid he will tell me something is wrong with me.
5. I am afraid I will hate myself.

Fears don't have to be logical or even realistic. Fear is a feeling and it doesn't need reality to exist. Admitting to the fear is the first and most essential part of ridding yourself of it. Only then can you use rational thoughts and factually dismiss these fears. Only then can you objectively concede that the fears aren't true, your wife really does love you, etc.

The next step in dealing with this issue of sexual shame is asking forgiveness from yourself. This might sound peculiarly trite, but I have found that if men can own their behavior and forgive themselves for it, they are much more likely to move into the next few steps that will rid themselves of the sexual shame. Here is a very practical and successful way of doing this:

Face two chairs toward each other. Sit in one chair (Chair A) and symbolically imagine yourself in the other chair (Chair B). Talk to the self in Chair B and ask forgiveness for whatever the performance issue is. Then move to Chair B and respond to yourself

(hopefully forgiving yourself). Go back to Chair A and respond to being forgiven. Let me give you an example.

In our example, Bob is sitting in Chair A. The symbolic “Bob” in Chair B will be “Bob 2.” Bob’s issue is premature ejaculation. An example of Bob’s discussion might go something like this:

Bob: Bob 2, I want to ask you to forgive me for carrying the shame all this time about ejaculating so quickly. I know it’s affecting you, and the fear I have caused in your life becomes incredible at times. It has put a wedge in your life between you and your wife. I’m sorry and I ask you to forgive me for making you ashamed of yourself, even to the point where you won’t talk about it to anyone.

(Bob moves to Chair B and now role-plays himself as Bob 2.)

Bob 2: Bob, thank you for finally talking about this. It’s not the end of the world. Hey, you have been a great lover to your wife for 23 years. You’re getting older and you haven’t even gotten a doctor’s opinion yet. I forgive you for dragging your feet about this and isolating this topic from your wife, Jan. I really want to move forward on this. This shame is worse than the actual problem. I forgive you. Now let’s get to the bottom of this. You’re a great guy, a great husband and a great dad. Let’s move on!

(Bob moves to Chair A again and responds to what Bob 2 told him.)

Bob: Thanks, Bob 2, for forgiving me. That was probably the hardest thing I have done in a long time. Thanks for encouraging me and being on my side. I think you’re right, I can now move forward. I’m glad we are on the same team.

This is the kind of experience I have seen often in my office. I strongly encourage anyone with sexual shame to set up two chairs and just do the exercise. Don’t spend time evaluating the idea and whether it will work; don’t try to process it through until after you have done it. This exercise can really help start flushing out the sexual performance shame issues so that you can be much more sexually successful.

* * *

Forgiveness is a big step, but it’s not the only step necessary to getting rid of sexual shame. The next step has to do with acceptance. When big emotional issues go on in your life, you often enter one of six stages of grief. Brief descriptions of each stage are as follows:

Shock: A numb feeling when you don’t know what to do or feel with the information you have received.

Denial: You feel like what you’re dealing with can happen to anybody. It’s not really a problem. You are denying the reality of that with which you are faced.

Anger: You are feeling mad that this is happening. You may be angry because of the way you are built, or that you ejaculate quickly, or that you can’t bring your spouse to orgasm.

Bargaining: You may begin to feel that if you do this or that, then all will be better. If your first line of reasoning doesn't work, you will often try something else. Or you may believe the solution rests with someone other than yourself. ("The problem will get better if only my wife would lose weight.") Basically, you are emphasizing one variable, trying to change it, so as to avoid the painful reality and ignore its existence.

Sadness: You recognize that the painful reality does exist and you are sad about it.

Acceptance: The painful reality exists and it is now a part of your life. You can reasonably expect a certain outcome. You finally accept this and can begin productively living your life with this issue. You now believe that you consist of much more than just this issue and you can make the best of it.

Acceptance can be a difficult part of the grief process for some men as they grieve over a particular sexual issue. Accepting reality is a tremendous accomplishment. Let's take Bob for example. After his plan of action was in place, he realized that his issue might continue to occur 20% of the time. Bob's doctor told him that since he is 87 years old and is still able to be sexually successful 80% of the time, he's doing great!

When Bob accepts that he's normal for an 87-year-old, he accepts reality and will be much better at accepting himself. Bob also realizes if he brings his 84-year-old wife to orgasm in a way other than what he is accustomed to, he will still feel like a sexual success.

Action Points For Sexual Performance Shame

1. Talk – Secrecy is the strength of shame. This is true regardless of the reason or the type of shame involved. Research has consistently supported that something beneficial happens when you talk about your secrets. While you may be "as sick as your secrets," as the adage goes, "confession is good for the soul."

For many men, this is the most difficult part. You always want to look good, feel smart and be successful and strong. Unfortunately God doesn't make perfect people, so at times we are not so good, not so smart, not so successful and not so strong. When it comes to sexuality these feelings of wanting always to be perfect can be felt even greater.

Sharing your secrets is essential to moving past your shame and into claiming your sexual inheritance. The first question that comes mind is, "Whom would I talk to?" Here is a list of suggestions: Your wife, a friend who loves you and that you can trust.

- A male friend you know who has had similar issues.
- A doctor to rule out any physiological problem.
- A pastor that you trust.
- A trained professional counselor/psychologist or sex therapist.

In order to muster up the courage to discuss your problems, it may be helpful to practice by symbolically placing the person you want to talk to in a chair and talking to him or her. Whether or not you conduct a practice rehearsal, start talking! This alone can help separate the shameful feelings you have from the real issue at hand.

2. Be Proactive – If you're having a problem with a performance issue, you can make several action plans to help:

- Go to a doctor.
- Read a book that addresses your particular performance issue. Practice the recommended techniques that are acceptable to you.
- Take medication if it's recommended.
- Visit a sex therapist.
- See a professional counselor, psychologist or addiction counselor.
- If you are experiencing depression and you think this is part of the issue, make an appointment with a psychiatrist.
- Regularly practice with your wife the techniques your counselor recommends.
- If your wife is not orgasmic, go to the doctor with her.

As you go through this process, accept reasonable outcomes based on your factual information, such as your age, your health, etc. Part of life is accepting what is handed to you. If you have done the best you can on your action points, it will be easier for you to accept your situation.

4. Honor Yourself – One of the best things you can do for yourself in regards to eliminating shame is simply not do things that you know you'll become ashamed of. If you make a lifestyle of doing the right things, you're more likely to build a positive self-esteem. Moreover, if you do good for others without letting them know about it, you will feel even better about yourself. Imagine if all the secrets you had inside of you consisted only of how you had helped others! Life without shame is much more satisfying, incredibly so. If you do commit a less-than-wonderful act, talk about it as soon as possible so shame can't grow. I hope you will honestly evaluate your performance so you can be freed and claim sexual success.

Solutions to Sexual History Shame

For those of you who have shame attached to your sexual history, I will provide an outline of proactive things you can do to move toward sexual success. I warn you that some of the exercises may be uncomfortable for you, but sexual success is right ahead of you.

1. Be specific – Sexual history shame is attached to a specific event. You may have had sex with a prostitute or a woman you didn't like, you may have date-raped, gotten a

woman drunk so that you could take advantage of her, or had an unwanted homosexual encounter. Whatever your situation, you need to be as specific as possible during this exercise.

Write down your entire sexual history. Write how old you were when the event happened, how old the perpetrator was, the type of sexual encounter and whether the event caused you shame. This will enable you to see any reoccurring types of shame.

Next, tell someone what happened. I want you to tell your deepest, darkest, most ugly secrets to another person. I realize this may be outright frightening, but if you don't confide in someone, your soul will remain sick. You must deal with your problem head on.

Here are some points to note when choosing someone in whom to confide:

- A professional psychologist or marriage counselor is my first recommendation. You can trust them to not tell a soul about what you have done since it is illegal for them to do so, except in the case of illegal behavior. (For more on this topic, see Solutions for Sexual Deviancy Shame below.) While female therapists are great, I strongly suggest seeing a male therapist because your shame is connected to your male sexuality.
- Others you can trust to keep a confidence are a professional member of a spiritual community, such as a pastor or other spiritual mentor.
- If you choose to confide in a friend, you do run the risk of being exposed in the future. Remember, those that love you today may feel differently tomorrow.

2. Apologize – Some men have gone back to the women to whom they cause pain and apologized. However, if you're married or in a committed relationship, such action should be a joint decision. I don't recommend doing this with an ex-lover. I do recommend this step if the person you have hurt is your present wife. You can then own—take responsibility for—the past pain you have caused her and move forward together.

In the case of ex-lovers, **symbolic** amends with two chairs works amazingly well. Here's an example of how David handled this with a situation involving his old girlfriend named Sue.

David in Chair A: “Sue I really need to apologize and ask for your forgiveness. When we dated I lied to you countless times. I slept with other women, including your best friend Connie. I not only hurt you, but I ruined a life-long friendship that you had. I need you to forgive me for these behaviors.”

David physically gets up and sits in Chair B. He now assumes the role of Sue.

David as Sue in Chair B: “Well, David, you really were a liar and I spent many a night confused, crying or hating you. I didn't understand your problems, but that was ten years ago. Now I have a great husband and two kids, and I live where I have always dreamed of

living. I feel sorry for you and your choices. I can forgive you and accept your apology. I hope you have moved on with your life and have become a decent human being.”

David moves back to Chair A and responds to Sue’s extension of forgiveness.

David in Chair A: “Thank you Sue. You always were a good person. Thank you for forgiving me. I am glad life has turned out well for you.”

Continue to go through your sexual history and check off the names of those that you know you have hurt as you apologize to each. This symbolic apology really works to rid yourself of the shame you have accumulated over the years because of wronging others.

I have found that men with painful sexual shame do best when they also ask themselves for forgiveness. You have let yourself down and now need to forgive yourself. They can also alleviate shame by doing a forgiveness exercise symbolically with Jesus.

Solutions to Sexual Deviancy Shame

Men suffering from sexual deviancy shame should follow the same steps as those outlined under sexual history shame with one caution. You need to know that if your behavior was illegal and you confide in a clergyman or a paid psychologist, therapist or psychiatrist, they are bound by the law to report your information to the legal authorities. Statutes of limitations do apply, so you may want to familiarize yourself with the law beforehand.

Regardless of how you have acquired sexual shame, that shame has caused a roadblock to the sexual success you are capable of. I urge you to take the directions in this chapter seriously. I have assisted many men working through their sexual shame and have seen them reclaim their freedom and sexuality.

Sexuality without shame is probably one of the greatest feelings in the world. Each man reading this book deserves to work toward that feeling. I hope you do what’s necessary for your sexual inheritance.

CHAPTER 5

The M Word

By far, one of the most controversial subjects in the church today regarding male sexuality is masturbation. As the church gets older, men are discussing this subject more and more. In our Western culture this can actually be a divisive issue.

To make matters worse, few, if any, church denominations have a written doctrinal stance on masturbation. Combine this lack of attention in the church with the fact that men get little to no information from their fathers about sexuality and you can see why this issue can be so misunderstood and emotionally based. Needless to say, in our journey toward sexual success the climb is going to be rocky. But I guarantee that you will learn more about masturbation and its differences, and by the end of this chapter you will be able to conclude intelligently for yourself and for your son(s) where you indeed stand on this issue.

Three Types of Masturbation

Men that masturbate generally fall into three categories. As you read through this section, you probably will quickly identify yourself. That's the easy part. The hard part is in trusting the other two camps that other men identify with even exist.

The reason men often believe that their category is the only category for masturbation is because most men base their thought processes on their own experiential template. Our own experiences often limit our thinking process. For example, I have had bad experiences trying to fix things around the house. I was never taught how by any of my fathers. Because of this, my experience tells me that generally all men, except the professionals, are bad at handyman work. Conversations with many of my peers validate this because they also call professionals to fix things around the house. Now I would have to think outside of my experience to believe that an average guy can fix most things in his house with no problem. Well of course there are guys like that. I see them at Home Depot all the time. But if I limit my thinking to only my experience, I will also limit my perspective.

I've said all that as a preface to our discussion. As I walk through the three masturbation types, please be patient. I know for a fact that there are men in all three categories.

Masturbation Type A

Of the three types of masturbation, this is by far the smallest camp in the Western world and the hardest for some to believe actually exists. This is the man who has never masturbated in his entire life. Although some of you are thinking, "No way!" I want you to remember that just because it's not your experience it doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

During my travels as I present at men's conferences across the country, I often ask the men about their type of masturbation. I have met only eleven men over the years that fit in this category, and three of them go to my church!

In their reasoning they just didn't think to do it or it didn't make sense to them. I'll not forget when one minister from another nation, whom I know and trust, told me that most men in his country don't masturbate. When I asked why, he told me that in his country it was thought to be a sign of weakness. Can you imagine a whole country of men not masturbating? I believe most of my readers would find that difficult to comprehend. Such men may be in the minority in our country, but they are out there.

Masturbation Type B

With the second pattern of masturbation, the behavior is a decision made usually between the ages of 12 and 16 years old, and not typically as an adult Christian man. When this teenager begins to masturbate, he stays fully "connected" to himself during the act, i.e. he does not lust or create sexual fantasies with the girls he knows. He would never use pornography during masturbation. For this boy, he's simply engaging in a bodily function.

This teenager generally doesn't struggle with lust. Since he doesn't fantasize he doesn't feel the guilt or shame often involved with masturbation. He feels no separation from God and goes on with the rest of his day as if nothing happened. He does not make up a fantasy world and he doesn't use masturbation to meet the emotional needs in his life. He just stays connected, releases and moves on.

Again, some of you are scratching your head saying, "No way! How could someone even do that without visual stimulus?" Remember that just because this is not your experience doesn't negate the fact that it still is possible for others.

Remember our earlier conversation about the brain and sex? The man in this category does not connect to anything. Often when this man gets married, his masturbation behavior disappears or becomes very infrequent.

Masturbation Type C

This is the disconnected camp where objects are used during masturbation, whether it be a fantasy or an actual physical item. Teenage boys in this camp use fantasy, pornography or some form of objectifying women not only to arouse them during masturbation, but also to bring them to a point of ejaculation. When such a teen enters this other world of fantasy, pornography and objectification, he has to spiritually and emotionally disconnect so he can fully engage in the fantasy state that he is creating. (Remember from our previous conversation that internal sexuality and lust is always sin.)

For some men in this camp, the same fantasy of a particular sex act (for example: oral sex) is used over and over again with a woman who really wants to be sexual with him. Often he chooses the same type of fantasy woman (a particular race, a specific shape or a certain age woman). Any woman outside of his particular focus is less than interesting to him.

Others in this camp can be completely the opposite. They are more interested in variety. They believe there shouldn't be any boundaries to their sexual fantasies and hence, they will objectify almost anyone in their fantasy state and any sex act (legal or not) is acceptable and stimulating to them.

Although the fantasy isn't real, the object of the fantasy does whatever you want, whenever you want, always wants more, never asks for money, doesn't have children, never gets tired of you, and above all really likes having sex with you. This fantasy is a sham and the woman in it isn't real.

However, if a man engages in an object-type of self sex and develops a neuropathic chemical reinforcement in his brain, it will affirm to him that object-type sex is chemically awesome. The desire to repeat this disconnected sex increases with the frequently in which he participates in this behavior.

Not only is this man disconnected during his sexual acts with himself, he is also reinforcing some pretty powerful yet unrealistic belief systems about sex. Here is a list of some of the things men have placed in their fantasies.

- Sex is only with beautiful women.
- Sex is only with women who are in shape and have no fat.
- Women want sex all the time.
- Women think about sex all the time.
- The woman does all the work.
- Nothing is demanded of me but to receive sex (not give).
- Sex is all about me and what I want.
- I never hear "no" when it comes to sex.
- There is no good reason not to have sex.
- I am the center of the world and the world revolves around me. Women are here to do as I ask.
- Women want to be degraded and talk dirty.

The list can go on and on with many attitudes brought into his disconnected fantasy state. Now remember that most of these sexual beliefs and attitudes are formed when you are the most self-centered creature in the world—an adolescent male. Adolescents don't think about much more than themselves, their bodies, their friends and their life. It is easy to see why an adolescent male would create such a fantasy world.

This disconnected fantasy state gets reinforced neurologically each time he goes into the fantasy world. Some men can keep this type of sexuality strictly in fantasy, but others may try to turn these fantasies into reality.

The purpose of the fantasy world is another issue. If the fantasy to which a man is disconnecting to becomes illegal, degrading or deviant, it is more than likely that he will experience sexual self-shame. He may know masturbating to this fantasy is wrong or unhealthy, but he will eventually get stuck in the chemical rush he is rewarded with afterward. It feels good, but it's wrong, and so he often feels confused.

So you can see even in this disconnected camp that there are differences. When disconnecting during masturbation, the only point of similarity between men is the point of ejaculation. Otherwise the differences vary so widely that they are not within the same internal experience at all.

The issue with this form of masturbation is that lust is a big part of the act. For this reason the man with the Type C masturbation often feels guilt and shame and disconnected from God.

This is the kind of masturbation that most have experienced and have possibly repeatedly repented of.

For many adult men who grew up in the sexual revolution, this is probably your experience. Sadly, Christian men and heathen men were both educated sexually by *Playboy*, not their fathers or godly men in the church. It's just recently that men are reclaiming this area for their sons. Our video *Shepherding Your Son's Sexually* sells everywhere because of the desire men have to give more to their sons than their fathers gave them.

Let's get back to our original trail. We now can see that men do masturbate differently. Because the single word "masturbation" can differ so radically, this word "masturbation" no longer explains enough to know what we are really referring to. This is why I like to ask my clients they are engaging in type A, B or C masturbation. It's a way to talk in much more clear terms regarding masturbation.

The Plot Thickens

Now that we have a language for the different types of masturbation we can proceed further. What happens when a Type B masturbator grows up and becomes a pastor, Christian counselor or Bible professor? Because he is coming from a purity perspective, he will not project lust, objectification or things like this into masturbation because he never did this himself. Therefore his message about masturbation will be basically be that it's okay to masturbate.

Likewise, he will rarely offer others any guidelines about avoiding fantasy. The men that are Type C masturbators think that this Christian leader is giving them permission not to

feel bad about the way they masturbate. So a Type C masturbator comes home from a Type B masturbator's conference thinking it is okay for him to keep masturbating the way he has been. The C masturbator doesn't masturbate without lust, and therefore sins, but now believes this is okay.

The reverse is also true when it comes to Type C masturbators as they grow up. Some of them become pastors, Christian counselors and Bible professors. Their past experience dictates that all masturbation is lustful, therefore all masturbation is sin. They proclaim a message that states masturbation is always sin regardless of whether you're 12 or 70 years old. The problem with this message is that it rarely includes practical solutions on how to overcome such habits.

So you can see how the lack of awareness regarding the differences of masturbation can bring a message that leads men to being very unclear about the whole issue. I want to walk a little further on this issue and explain that not only do men masturbate differently but they also have different patterns of masturbation.

Patterns of Masturbation

In this section, I want to help you pinpoint your pattern of masturbation. Before you can move to a place that you define as sexually successful, you must identify where you currently are.

Connected Patterns (Type B)

Connected Masturbation with Occasional Pattern – This is a man who stays connected but occasionally will masturbate. The masturbation usually occurs during his wife's pregnancy or illness, long business trips or some other circumstance that makes relational sex not possible with his wife.

Connected Masturbation with Regular Pattern – This man may masturbate with a more than occasional frequency, such as monthly; however, he will stay connected throughout the masturbation experience.

Disconnected Patterns (Type C)

Disconnected Masturbation with Binge Pattern – This man masturbates quite often to fantasy, pornography or the objectification of others. Sometimes it may be every other week. It may be several times over a period of a few days.

Disconnected Masturbation with Regular Pattern – This man masturbates with a regular pattern, doing so during the times when he travels or his wife leaves the house for a night. This pattern may occur weekly more or less, but definitely has a regular frequency. The pattern may include slightly more or less sex than he typically has with his wife.

Disconnected Masturbation with Addictive Pattern – This adult man masturbates regularly, several times a week. His frequency of masturbation is equal to or greater than the sex with his wife. He has tried to stop without long-term success. He feels driven to masturbate regularly even when it doesn't make sense to him or to his internal moral code.

Whichever pattern you have developed earlier in your life or that you currently practice, you probably have done so without actually having a name for it or the adequate information surrounding the behavior. Remember, most of your masturbation thoughts, values and beliefs probably began during high school or earlier. As you aged, you made adjustments to reality.

Now, as an adult you will need to decide if you're going to masturbate and if so, are you going to masturbate in a connected manner or disconnected manner? In my professional experience, type C masturbators don't typically become type B masturbators. Be careful not to deceive yourself. You will also have to look at your frequency and the proportion of your masturbation behavior verses connected sex with your wife. Before we delve further into this, we will need to have one more last important discussion.

Masturbation and Marriage

This is a significant issue for the man who wants to be successful and wants to address masturbation in an intelligent and adult-like manner. Think through what you have read so far. You now have more information to make better choices for your future.

When you marry, you make a huge commitment of yourself. This is especially true in marriage. Often you don't even begin to understand the depth of your commitment until after a decade or so of being married.

You may run into the issue of "ours" versus "mine." For instance, in the area of finances, do you have a joint account and all money is "ours" or do you have separate accounts? Sex is also a growth issue similar to finances. Prior to marriage it is "my" sexuality. In marriage do you grow to the point where all sex is "our" sex or are you entitled to your own sex without her knowledge?

Read 1 Corinthians 7 where you give your body over to your wife. Literally she has more authority over your sexuality and masturbation than you do. Remember there are three owners of your sexual organ. As a Christian, the first owner is God. Read Romans Chapter 12:1:

Therefore I urge you brothers in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship.

Since your penis is part of your body, God has ultimate authority over it. Secondly, as we mentioned, your wife is the second authority of your penis.

The husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife (1 Corinthians. 7:4).

Lastly, you are the third owner of your penis. Does your wife have the right to know fully what you are doing sexually? When you walked down the aisle, was that the end of the “me sex” and the beginning of the “we sex”? Typically this is not even considered nor thought about by men, but it certainly is by women.

Women generally think that when they marry a man their body belongs 100% to that man. They can't even conceive the “me sex” attitude, especially if the woman is typically available for sex. I believe that men who have disconnected masturbation (Type C) habits often view their sex as “me sex.” They think that even though they are married it's still okay to have a secret sexual life, so to speak.

For some of you reading this, it's the first time you've been challenged about your sexuality not being just “yours.” Is it solely yours to do with as you please? Is your sexual organ just for you or was it really designed for your wife? Did the Creator of sex have in mind “me sex” for your whole life? You will have to decide for yourself whether your sexuality is “yours” or “ours” in marriage. “Personally, I believe that for a healthy marriage and sexual success, *all* of your sexuality must belong to you and your wife. Moreover, I do not condone Type C masturbation or masturbation that takes the place of sex with your spouse.”)

Once you decide, how much belongs to whom? Is your body 50 percent yours and 50 percent your wife's? Do you get 90 percent and she gets 10 percent? Do you get 30 percent and she gets 70 percent? One way or the other, you will have to decide and then let your wife know your final position.

Can you imagine sitting down with your wife at a nice meal and saying, “I've decided that 70 percent of our savings belongs just to me, so I'm going to move it into my name next week. Okay, honey?” Even better, at the same restaurant, can you imagine telling your wife that 30 percent of your sexual expression is going to be with yourself from this time forward?

Unfortunately, up to this point in the marriage, many men are not honest about their sexuality with themselves or their wives. Men involved in masturbation, porn, fantasy, and objectification of others rarely tell their wife that they are sharing their sexuality with others. If you truly want to know what you currently believe, take a minute and look at the percentage of masturbation, pornography usage, and fantasy life that you involve yourself in that you don't tell your wife about. Take that number and ratio it over the times you have connected sex with her. How did you do? Are you a 100 percent type of guy where all sexuality is with her and she knows about anything else? Are you a 90 percent guy with 10 percent to yourself, or is it 50 percent for each of you? Did your wife show up in the minority of your sexual activity?

Knowing where you are sexually is important in determining your future sexual success. It is in my professional experience that secrecy and dishonesty in any area of your life does not lend itself to success in that area.

Honesty Is the Issue

Most of the wives I have counseled with really don't understand the whole masturbation thing at all. The issue that stands out for them is lying. Women cannot get it; to them lying is the number one sin you can commit. They already realize that their spouse will fall into doing some sin at some point in life—we all do; we're human. So why lie about it? That just may start a war. When you lie to a woman, you might as well have called her the ugliest name that you can think of. Women take lying as a personal affront. Honestly, I can't say that I understand it perfectly myself, but I can tell you from the many years of experience as a therapist that this is true.

You may say that she has never asked you about your masturbation habits; thus you have never lied. Unfortunately, only men think this way. If you never told her, why didn't you? If you're really okay with what you're doing in private, why not tell her? If both of you sit down and agree that it's okay for you to have a sexual behavior without her, then she should be fine with knowing the truth. At least she knows, and she has a vote in the process. It is her money and her sexuality you're spending, not just yours. Now, if you are coming home from a trip, you can be as open and honest about your self-sex experience as you are about the rest of the experiences you had on the trip.

If this sounds too strange for you to do, then you might have made a sexual decision for yourself that is not mutually agreed upon and is secretive. This can lead to marital and personal problems down the road. If you can't be honest with your wife about your total sexual expression, then you probably need to evaluate the reason for the ongoing lies to your wife.

How would you like to find out that your wife has a secret financial, sexual or other area of life? If you're lying to your spouse, it isn't going to be good for your future sexual success. It may be what is keeping you from having full three-dimensional sex with your wife, and will keep you from your best sexual experience ever.

Some women don't want to know if you masturbate, but giving them the choice to know is an honest position. Ask your wife, "Do you want to know if I masturbate? Do you want to know if I view pornography or fantasize about others when I masturbate?" Then, instead of you making these choices for her and having an ongoing secret in your relationship, she can voice her opinions and make a joint decision with you. Secrets kill intimacy and affect sexuality.

Some of you may believe you already know your wife's position on these topics and you're unwilling to expose this area, wanting to keep it to yourself. If she doesn't get a choice and you stay in an active state of withholding complete information, it will

probably blow up in your face in a big way down the road. Remember, her father is God and just because you won't tell doesn't mean He won't tell her for you.

I encourage you at least to give her the choice regarding how much of your sexuality is hers and how much of your sexuality is just for you. Honesty is the best policy when it comes to being sexually successful.

Some men will tell me that they "only fantasize" about her! I have heard this many times in my office. Typically I will ask such a man what his fantasy wife wants to do in his fantasy. Is she more sexual in fantasy than reality? Does she say things you have never heard her say in reality? Is she willing to do more or different types of sex in fantasy than in reality? If the answer is yes to these questions, then you have "Wife A," who is the real one with kids, a house to manage, maybe a job, who occasionally gets sick, has cycles and doesn't always like you. And then you have "Wife B."

The problem with this is if "Wife B" is giving your brain regular chemical reinforcement, then your brain will get really frustrated with your real wife (Wife "A") because she is not as much fun. So be careful not to set up dual brain reinforcement with the same face and body; you might get really confused.

When you have this conversation with your wife about masturbation, make sure you go over connected versus disconnected masturbation, along with the frequency of it in your life, so that she really understands what you are talking about. Many wives will not have an experiential template for what you are talking about.

If you masturbate and have a willing wife upstairs, you need to think about this. Sexually healthy men who have the choice between their spouse who loves them and a fantasy, choose the real woman.

Questions to Ask Before Masturbating

1. Am I trying to medicate a feeling?
2. Am I confused about what I am feeling?
3. Do I feel I can't wait 48 to 72 hours to masturbate?
4. Am I responding to a picture, movie or fantasy?
5. Am I violating a boundary that I originally set for myself?
6. Do I have a spouse?
7. Do I plan to fantasize during masturbation?
8. Will I feel badly about myself afterwards?
9. The last time I did this, did it send me on a binge of acting out?
10. Will I want to keep this a secret?
11. Am I using this as a stress release?
12. Did I choose to masturbate on another day other than today?
13. Am I a "B" or "C" masturbator?

These questions can help you decide whether to masturbate. If you have more "yes" than "no" answers, when you do choose to masturbate you might want to think through your

motives or even talk to someone else about it. I am in no way recommending masturbation behavior. Some men will decide to masturbate and these questions will help them clarify this for themselves.

You can be sexually successful regardless of your past or your past choices. You may need to do some work in the area of masturbation issues. Some of you reading this book will do this. Others of you believe that this is an area that's okay with you at this point. So what's it going to be like for you in the future? Decided yet? Let's look at the questions.

- Are you having connected masturbation?
- Are you having disconnected masturbation?
- Are you masturbating?
- Are you occasionally masturbating?
- Are you binge-masturbating?
- Are you having regular masturbating patterns?
- Are you being honest with your wife about the frequency and type of fantasy?
- Are you being dishonest with your wife about the frequency and type of fantasy?
- What percentage of your sexuality is "ours"? _____%
- What percentage is solely "yours"? _____%

These are some of the choices you face as you desire to be sexually successful. You are an adult and can't blame anyone else for your choices. They are important, as is the saving of money or spending it, having children or not having children, and choosing what you will do for a career.

You can make great choices for your sexual success. I hope this in-depth discussion on the issue of masturbation makes you a more informed decision-maker. If you struggle in this area occasionally, get some male accountability. If you feel addicted to masturbation, follow the guidelines in the section of the book where we address this.

CHAPTER 6

The Seductress

I find it very important in a conversation about male sexuality to discuss the issue of seduction. Seduction can lead a good man down a wrong path where he can lose everything for which he was created.

I find it interesting that the wisest man in the world, King Solomon, who wrote the book of Proverbs, felt it a priority to discuss seduction. After the first four chapters of Proverbs, he exalts wisdom and encourages everyone to seek wisdom above all. Then he moves right into a chapter on adultery. In Proverbs 5 he goes into detail on how an adulterous woman can cost you everything.

I think it is very apropos that after a discussion on wisdom he addresses the number one threat to having wisdom, an adulterous woman. This is also congruent with God's own writing of the Ten Commandments. In the first section of the Ten Commandments God talks about our relationship with Him being primary, then He talks about honoring our parents and not murdering. In the seventh commandment he discusses not committing adultery and in the last commandment he reiterates this point by asking us not to lust after or covet another man's wife.

So I feel in good company in addressing this issue of seduction. Especially in our western culture where we are taught as little boys that girls are made of "sugar and spice and everything nice." This compounded with a feminist culture, which portrays men on prime time television as dumb and needing women to straighten us out continually. You could easily assume by most of what we hear and see about women that they are essentially good, and in reality most women are good. Many are selfless in parenting, patient, kind and loyal in marriage. I personally have a great wife who is an incredibly good woman. Women are great, but not all are good or have good intentions.

Women are people and all people have the potential for good and evil. The Scriptures show a balance of this good and evil throughout the Old and New Testament. We see in the Old Testament beauty, submission and wisdom in Sarah in her relationship with Abraham. Such character traits are also illustrated in the story of Ruth with her loyalty to Naomi. Who could forget the queen of good, Esther! The Old Testament also presents to us some women who were not so good, like Delilah, who sacrificed a man who loved her for money. Jezebel is another great example of a woman filled with evil intentions for selfish gain.

The New Testament presents Mary the mother of Jesus as a wonderful example of a good woman. Mary Magdalene, Jesus' friend, was also an excellent example, as was Lydia the seller of purple and Dorcas, who gave sacrificially of herself to love and help others. However, we also have the wife of Herod, Herodias, who plotted to kill John the Baptist. In Revelation 2:18-29 we are presented with another Jezebel, a false prophetess leading God's people into sexual immorality in the church of Thyatira.

I say all this to demonstrate that God's Word presents both men and women as good and not so good. Proverbs 7 outlines the seduction in which I am about to discuss in detail. Proverbs also gives us the greatest writings of the virtuous woman in chapter 31.

I must insert here that I have no ax to grind with women, even seductresses. I have authored several books and tape series for women who have been affected by men's sexual addiction issues. I have also written two books for women who need to heal from their own female sexual addictions. I have a great desire in my heart to see all people heal from sexual sins.

Additionally, I want to be biblically balanced, so I feel the need to caution men on this specific type of woman in the world and in the church. She is to be identified and avoided so that you can live happily ever after with God and your precious wife.

The Seductress

In the following pages I will introduce you to the mind and heart of the seductress. I have met this woman many times as a young man. As a therapist I have seen the seductress heal and recover. I have also heard hundreds of stories of men who were ravaged by her.

We will be doing a verse-by-verse commentary on the "seductress" from Proverbs 7 in the New International Version (NIV). If you have your Bible handy, I would encourage you to read your translation as well.

Proverbs 7: 1-15

- 1 My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you.
- 2 *Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.*
- 3 *Bind them on your fingers; write them in the tablet of your heart.*
- 4 *Say to wisdom, "You are my sister;" and call understanding your kinsman;*
- 5 *they will keep you from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words.*

Here Solomon tells us to seek wisdom, to love wisdom enough to be practical about it. He encourages us to write things down. This is good advice. The older I get the more I have to write things down. He tells us if we keep the commands of wisdom, we will be safe from the adulterous wayward wife and her seductive words.

In recovery literature they have a concept called "principles above personalities." This concept is very helpful because you can get caught up in, or attached to, a personality (especially a woman's) and throw away all the good wisdom, common sense and even what the Word of God has to say about it: "Thou shall not commit adultery."

We need to love God, love His Word and base our lives on principles instead of following a hippy-based culture that says, "If it feels good, do it" or "Love the one you're

with!” (I personally think it should have been, “Lust the one you’re with!”) Having a life that is principle-based makes the seductress powerless over you. Having a heart open to lust or curiosity will always direct you down a path of heartbreak and hardship.

Proverbs 7:6-9

6 At the window of my house I looked out through the lattice.

7 *I say among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who lacked judgment.*

8 *He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house*

9 *at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in.*

I love the way the writer sets us up in these verses. He is the proverbial bystander looking at another man’s life. He sees a young man he describes as simple and lacking in judgment. Now remember, in the day of this writing there were no streetlights or such, so at night people stayed inside and kept both warm and safe.

I love this statement “walking along in the direction of her house” because this gives us an indication that this young man had some responsibility for where he was. I believe at best he was naive. He might not have been expecting to seek out sex that night. Maybe he was just curious, maybe he heard some other guys talking about their experiences down the corner after dark. We don’t know, but what I can tell you is I have heard countless stories of men who, similarly, took that first curious step down the wrong path.

Take Jerry for example. He would surf the Internet after his wife was in bed. Jerry soon met someone online in a chat room and grew very fond of her, even to the point of wanting to leave his wife and family. The woman wouldn’t meet with him until he officially left his wife. When Jerry told his wife he wanted a divorce, his wife asked if she could go with him to meet this other woman. For whatever reason, Jerry agreed. When they knocked on the door, a homosexual man was waiting to greet them. Needless to say Jerry sought professional help and quickly returned to his wife.

I can go on about the numerous Christian men who were traveling on business trips and visited a hotel bar with no intention of having sex, but met women there who were looking for a naïve and simple man. One thing led to another and adultery was consummated. The same has happened with Christian men who have gone to a strip club or massage parlor. In all of these cases the men were “walking in the direction of her house.” Most of these stories happen after hours in the wrong section of town or in a place where a man of principle wouldn’t go.

Proverbs 7:10

10 *Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.*

The author of this proverb now brings forth the major player in this drama. She is the seductress. Here he tells us a little about her outsides and her insides. She is dressed like a

prostitute. In our culture that could of course mean a woman who dresses seductively—tight pants, cleavage showing, lots of attention paid to perfecting her hair and makeup. Unfortunately, since men in America worship women’s bodies, she could be found anywhere—the gym, grocery store, work or even church.

This is her “outside.” The seductress sends out obvious sexual energy by the way she dresses and looks. Female sex addicts admit they would consciously choose specific outfits in order to hook their prey. One female therapist who counsels a group of female sex addicts had the ladies come to one meeting wearing just such an outfit. Some wore sophisticated suits, one wore an exercise outfit, another tight jeans and a revealing top. Clothes are one of the seductress’s main weapons.

The second part of Proverbs 7:10 mentions the issue of “crafty intent.” Some women really do embrace evil and an inappropriate sexual intent. Part of my own healing at the age of 16-19 involved avoiding the many women I met before Jesus became my Lord. These women were much older, some married, and they definitely had intent. They wanted to use me sexually and then throw me away. It was a game to them, which meant I was the target. Many guys have a similar experience where they felt they “got lucky.” What they got was used, and in some cases it qualified as sexual abuse.

Being forewarned about the crafty intentions of the seductress, whether she’s married or single, Christian or non-Christian, is a good preparation for winning the battle. I can’t tell you how many young men have confided to me they had to break up with a Christian woman because she was pressuring them into sex. Know this: Men are not considered in any way special to a seductress. To them, you are just a sex partner.

Verse 11-12

*11 (She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home;
12 now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.)*

Here we are given insight into the seductress’s behavior and attitudes. This woman does whatever she pleases; she is not submissive but “loud and defiant.” This may not be obvious to you when you first meet her. She may appear demure and maybe even quiet and spiritual. Her rebellion will reveal itself as you grow into a relationship with her. She likes to be about town so to speak. She’d rather be out and about than tied down to a house or to children’s demands.

I like the way the writer describes her locale: “at every corner she lurks.” I think this was put here so men can be aware that this type of woman does exist in your community. Don’t be fooled thinking you live in Mayberry. She is real and needs to be guarded against. Men in ministry, this is crucial! The best of people could be lulled into believing in her, including other women!

Verse 13

13 She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said:

Here in this verse is where the text goes to the next level. The woman is not afraid to initiate the next step. Put yourself in this guy's shoes. You're flirting with a coworker and you find yourself alone and she grabs and kisses you. This is the edge of the hook that goes into a man's spirit, soul and body. All of a sudden your brain turns off and your body ignites.

Sexually she is confident, and without rationality about "fleeing temptation" this hook can grab even the strongest of Christian men. It is here that the seduction begins. She intuitively understands what prostitutes know: All men want to be wanted. She knows that as a man your deepest longing is to feel desired by a woman sexually. That's why she talks with a "brazen" or shameless face.

She knows what she's doing. She has studied victims like you before. It's even harder for you if your marriage is less than wonderful. When your wife sincerely says she desires you, that hole in your heart is filled so completely that no other woman's voice can be anything but distasteful.

If you are not feeling wanted in your marriage, I would recommend my book *Intimacy: A 100 Day Guide* and the videos *The Best Sex of Your Life for Men Only* and *The Best Sex of Your Life for Women Only*. These materials will strengthen your marriage so that if you meet a seductress, you will be all the stronger in standing up against her schemes.

Now we are going to delve deeper into the seductress's mindset. What she says to the man whom she is victimizing is priceless because it informs you of her true heart.

Verse 14

14 "I have fellowship offerings at home; today I fulfilled my vows."

She is spiritual! She makes reference to fulfilling a religious vow. According to Leviticus 7:12-16, such fellowship offerings were to be eaten by family members. Now what man would turn down a free meal with a sexy lady who is attracted to him?

The meal may seem innocent or religious, but it's not. She is luring and seducing him to her place. This would be comparable to a woman saying, "Come over the day after Thanksgiving, my husband and kids are gone." Better yet, "We had a prayer meeting last night and I've got some leftover food. Wouldn't you like a tasty snack?" If you think this sounds ridiculous, I personally know of men falling for lines weaker than this.

Verse 15

15 "So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you!"

She makes you feel so special. She uses the word “you” three times in one sentence. I feel a little uncomfortable any time someone thinks I’m special. Imagine being on a business trip and a woman takes a “special interest” in you and what you do. My advice is to run for the hills!

None of us are that “special.” You have a life. You may be married, have kids and you don’t need a strange woman telling you how special you are. She will make you “feel” like you’re special, smart, handsome and don’t forget appreciated. Remember if a woman who is not your wife (or fiancé) is trying to convince you that you’re special, then you are being warmed up to be fried, no matter who she is.

Verse 16-18

16 “I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt.

17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

18 Come, let’s drink deep of love till morning; let’s enjoy ourselves with love!”

Oh Baby! Now you are not only “special,” she is also going to provide you with a special sexual encounter. She will tell you that you have never had sex like this before. She definitely is playing on your fantasy of “the special interlude.” Just look at the sell: special sheets and special incense or aromas.

She is going to sell you the illusion that forbidden fruit is better. Different maybe, but is it better? No way! The cost will be the rest of your life becoming a living hell. But I’m getting ahead of myself.

The last verse of this Scripture is so important to understand. This seductress believes that sex is love. She’s not offering you love, though, just a one-night stand. Love is commitment, monogamy, working lifelong on differences and serving each other for a lifetime, till death do you part. Not a quick jump in the sack.

Anyone who tries to sell you on sex outside of marriage, no matter who she is or how much of a “Christian” she may be, you better run. She is a seductress and there is nothing good that can happen here.

I know it’s hard to believe that there are women in the church like this, but there are. So stay alert! To stay sexually successful for your entire life you must stay on guard against the seductress.

Verse 19-20

19 “My husband is not home; he has gone on a long journey.

20 He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon.”

Here she throws you the line that there are no consequences because her husband is gone. There is no immediate threat. “Come on buddy, nobody will know. It will be great.”

Doesn't that sound like the Devil himself? Of course she never mentions God's judgment or the consequences that are sure to follow. She focuses on immediate pleasure. She reassures you that nothing is going to happen.

Verse 21-22

21 With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk.

22 All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose.

Her greatest tool is her words. That's why it's not good to even talk to her. Many men have found the longer you talk to her, the weaker you become and the easier she can perpetrate you. Her words are smooth, kind, enticing and full of promises for immediate pleasure. These are earmarks of a seductress.

The fact that the man in this Scripture fell for her lies says it all. He didn't follow God's principles or wisdom. He followed *her*. Our naive man has now made himself a victim of the seductress. This will cost him his life. Oh so many men have wept in my office after awakening from the fog of their lustful encounter with a willing seductress.

Proverbs 5: 8-14

8 Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house,

9 Lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel,

10 lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another man's house.

11 At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent.

12 You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction!

13 I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors.

14 I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly."

The men I've counseled who have committed adultery all testify to the truth of this passage. Inevitably they paraphrase verses 10 and 11 as they describe the devastating outcome of their decisions.

This can easily happen in a divorce where your assets go into child support and alimony—and your ex-wife's new husband's boats and cars—all paid for with your hard-earned money.

The Enemy's plan is to use the seductress to strip you of your destiny, your wife and your role as the father of your children. Christian men have somehow been lulled into a stupor sexually. The sense of men's sexual entitlement as they engage in pornography, the Internet and masturbation leaves them easy prey for the seductress.

Guard your heart and your life from her; she is death. She will kill what you love and move on to another victim. Remember that many are the victims she has brought down, which means you're not so special and she is bent on massive spiritual, social and financial destruction.

You can totally escape her by loving God, pursuing wisdom and living a life based upon principles rather than emotions. When you see any female displaying the signs we discussed, run from her.

In a culture that promotes female sexuality in every form of media, temptation can be lurking anywhere. But our God is everywhere as well, and if we walk with Him, He will deliver us. Be wise, be careful and be blessed!

CHAPTER 7

Creating a Sexually Successful Brain

Having a sexually successful brain is crucial to having sexual success. If your brain remains dual or multi-focused as we discussed in Chapter 2, sexual success will continue to elude you. But regardless of the level of success you are at right now, if you stick to the principles in the following chapters, you will be more sexually successful than ever before in your life.

Let's just review again the principle of "ring the bell, feed the dog" as discussed in Chapter 2. When you have an orgasm, the highest level of endorphins and enkephalins that you can receive are sent to the excitement center of your brain. Whatever you are looking at when you ejaculate is what you will sexually glue to or attach your sexuality to. Whatever the image, object or person that you view regularly when you ejaculate, is what you will begin to have a strong sexual desire for.

The dual-focused or multi-focused sexual brain needs some reconditioning. Many men with such brain types get distracted throughout the day trying to get better looks at women they are ogling. Recently, I was talking to an old client who made a lot of money in the porn industry. He definitely had a multi-focused brain. Over the years his brain has seen and reinforced hundreds of thoughts and images. He said, "I can't believe how truly free I feel. I don't have to lust after every woman that's in my vision. I don't have to lust after her in my mind, or think about what sex with her would be like. I don't disconnect from reality when I am at restaurants anymore with my fiance." He was so happy that he had been able to recondition his brain.

Before I explain the value of the techniques I will soon share with you, I want to give you the results of a study we completed. One of the areas we specialize in at Heart to Heart Counseling Center is sexual addiction. We conducted a survey for sex addicts who subscribed to our newsletter through our Website. The site is related to sexual addiction recovery and is the largest of its kind in the world. We have offered free weekly newsletters through the Website since 1994. Currently tens of thousands of addicts and their wives are subscribers. The survey I am referring to was completed in 1997 when we had a little over 2,000 subscribers.

As you may know there are hard-core sex addicts that utilize porn, sex, prostitutes and toys as practically a part time job. They see every woman as an object or just a body. They are preoccupied with sex in any way possible throughout the day. This is the person who makes sexual comments about every woman that he knows or he talks about his latest e-mails or the new porn site that he found, and of course every joke he tells is

sexually tainted. I say all this to illustrate a point. We asked over 2,000 sex addicts to report to us what has been some of the most helpful things during their recovery process. We did not provide any options to check off or lead the question in any way to get a specific response. They were simply to write down what has helped them the most significantly.

The number one response was the fact that their wife stayed with them through the healing process. The next technique that I am about to share was their number two response, which was voted even more helpful than support groups, recovery books or other tools that are also of great benefit in recovery.

Most of the sex addicts that I have counseled with over the years state that 80% of their double take (looking back at women), rubbernecking (stretching to catch a better view) or the objectifying of women shut down when utilizing this recovery tool. When many of these sex addicts curtail this behavior they often gain about 10 to 15 hours a week of available time for other activities.

Now back to the “ring the bell, feed the dog.” You can’t change the “bell.” God knows there are women everywhere. If you condition your brain to see them as objects you will see them all day long. Although you can’t change the situation (the bell), you can change the response.

Retraining Your Brain

Step 1: The Rubber Band Theory

The following example may appear very simplistic but its results are incomparable. Simply place a rubber band around your wrist for 60 to 90 days. Each time you have an inappropriate (non-relational) sexual thought, including a fantasy image or the objectifying of a woman, snap the rubber band on the inside of your wrist. Each time you do this, neurologically your brain sees its stimulus (a woman), but instead of your brain getting a positive chemical reinforcement from enkephalins and endorphins, it gets pain from the snapping of the rubber band. Over a period of a month or so, your brain no longer wants to objectify women. It has been reconditioned. You have now gained a lot of free time, especially if you have a dual-focused or multi-focused brain, since you’re no longer preoccupied

This is basic behavior modification. Let’s use another dog story. Suppose you had a puppy and every time it had an accident on the floor you gave it a great big T-bone steak. The puppy would associate going on the floor with eating a steak. This is much like your brain associating the looking at a woman as an object with getting a chemical buzz. If you kept feeding the puppy T-bone steaks in this manner, you would have a very fat dog and a very messy house.

Most of you who have had dogs know that when a dog goes on the floor, you get the newspaper out and swat the pup. If your dog connects going on the floor with a swat, the

dog, if it has any sense, stops going on the floor. Hence, you have a dog of healthy weight and a clean home.

Many of you have been doing something similar for sexual gratification for 20, 30, 40 years or more. In reality you have been setting yourself up to have a dual-focused or a multi-focused brain.

After thirty days of “swatting your dog” (snapping the rubber band) you will stop objectifying women and will be able to once again shut down the neuropathic reward system you have conditioned over time.

Let’s take a look at the multi-focused brain. This brain—depending on the frequency of reinforcement behaviors—may value object-type relationships more than relational ones. Consequently, you make your wife feel unimportant and unloved. (I’ve heard more than a thousand women complain about their dual-focused or multi-focused sexually brained husbands.)

Even the most multi-focused brain can feel his neuropathic conditioning process change when practicing the rubber band technique. This is especially true for the man who is changing his primary sexual behavior from fantasy to relational, which will give him the highest chemical reward his body can produce. Now all his sexual rewards are being poured into a relational neuropathic outlet, which is continually growing stronger. Thus, your level of satisfaction increases each time you are intimate with your wife and your sexual desire for her, and her alone, grows stronger.

Retraining Your Brain

Step Two: The Three Principles

This step will bring you to the point of totally connecting to your spouse. If you’re in a marriage and you use the principles in this book, your brain will want this special woman in your life more and more.

From a “brain” perspective, the more people you have sex with and try to attach to, the less you will feel attached to anyone. Hence you will continue to chase your tail and never catch it. A sexually successful brain attaches repeatedly to the same person, creating a chemical connection to that person. This is why couples having sex for 30 to 40 years together say it’s the best sex of their lives.

Before we discuss the three principles, I want again to reiterate what we already know: 1) Remember the “ring the bell, feed the dog” theory, 2) your sexual release or ejaculation gives your brain the highest chemical rewards—endorphins and enkephalins, 3) your brain attaches to whatever it is that you look at during a sexual release, 4) the more variety of objects, fantasy or people you connect to, the more fractured your sexual focus and the less your sexual satisfaction. The more a consistent relationship is reinforced, the more sexual pleasure will be associated with that person.

You can use the following principles in your life as my clients have over the years and they absolutely will make you sexually successful. You can chase your tail sexually, going into a myriad of directions or you can willfully have one person in your life.

One monogamous relationship cannot only be more satisfying but will also become more desirable over time as well. Having relational sex with these three principles cannot only give you the best neurological sex of your life, it can also make you more attracted to your wife. When your brain thinks of sex, it will think of this person in your life, her eyes, her body and her voice. You can etch such a strong, relationally connected neuro-pathway to this person that your brain will be totally satiated with just her. Begin implementing the following principles today with your wife you will begin to increase your sexual attraction and fulfillment to the person you love.

Principle # 1: Eyes Open – During sexual intercourse, keep your eyes open and looking at your spouse. When you get to the point of ejaculation, look into your spouse’s eyes. It’ll blow you away.

This may seem awkward to you or your spouse, especially if you have been experiencing a disconnection during sex in the past. If you typically close your eyes during release, you are not maximizing the opportunity. If you fantasize during your sexual release you are attaching to the fantasy, not to your spouse.

If your spouse is disconnected as well during sex, which is a common occurrence because she probably feels alone during sex, it may be why she is not as interested in sex as you wish she were.

Principle #1 will attach you to your wife. Your wife will become more satisfying to you the more you are sexual together over the years.

Principle #2: Lights On – While making love, keep some light on. It doesn’t have to be a lot; it can even be candlelight. The point is, if it’s so dark that you can’t see your wife’s eyes and body then it doesn’t matter if you are looking at her or not. If you are always making love to her in the dark then you’re not neurologically or visually attaching to her. She will not become as sexually attractive to you because you’re not attaching to her.

Most women don’t understand that a man attaches to his wife by looking at her. If she understood this then she would know that her weight or size doesn’t matter. Once you consistently relationally attach to her person, then her body will be desirable regardless of its proportions.

Some women deem themselves as less attractive because they don’t have “the perfect body” (who does?). Great three-dimensional sex with your wife is possible for those who follow these three principles of sexual success regardless of his or her proportions. The most beautiful couple in the world who is having multi-focused or disconnected sex will be much less satisfied sexually than a less attractive couple following the principles of sexual success.

I have counseled many couples in my office who were physically and financially well to do and yet not sexually satisfied. Many of these young and beautiful couples were not even having sex for months at a time.

So keep the lights on so that you can see each other's eyes. Then you will attach to each other and lead a much more sexually successful life.

Principle #3: Nurturing Connection – Being sexual engages your body, soul and spirit. When you are making love to your spouse and you are disconnected (in fantasy), you are engaging only your **body** in your sexual experience. Because of this, you and your spouse will be less than satisfied with your sexual experience. Although it may be a somewhat physically satisfying experience for you, it will become harder and harder to talk your wife into being sexual again since you are both missing the spiritual and emotional components.

If you accept the fact that sex is three-dimensional (spirit, soul and body), and you decide to experience this, you will have a sexual experience that is satisfying and much more rewarding for the both of you.

Imagine if there was a behavior where your wife knew she was going to be praised, nurtured and accepted every time. During this behavior she wasn't critiqued, compared or criticized. Don't you think she would want to do this again and again?

Make sex a three-dimensional place where you nurture her spirit, soul and body. Every woman differs on her likes and dislikes; however, most want to be touched in non-sexual areas before being sexual. Learn how to nurture your spouse spiritually and emotionally. Take responsibility for the other two-thirds (soul and spirit) of this special person in your life who is willing to be sexual with you. Learn to honor and connect to her. What you do with her soul and spirit during sex is more important to most women than what you do with her body. She is turned on by closeness.

When you're making love to your wife, make an intentional effort to praise and nurture her. Go deeper than just complimenting her body. Speak to her spirit and soul during sex. I will go into this more specifically in a later chapter on intimacy. You can become a great nurturer during your sexual experience by telling her how much you appreciate her in ways that aren't sexual. Tell her that you love her honesty, her strength and her intelligence. Tell her what her beauty does for you. Tell her she makes you feel masculine and that you love being with her.

What you say or don't say during your sexual experience goes deeper into her soul and spirit than any other words at any other time. When she is open to you sexually, she opens her entire being to you. If you use these vulnerable moments to complain about sex or to try to talk her into trying something new, it will be unsuccessful. The results of such lack of genuine nurturing have long-term effects with a pattern of ongoing sexual

frustration for both of you. If you are silent with her during this time of openness and ignore her spirit and soul during sex, the pattern of emptiness will leave her unfulfilled.

Sex is a time for a verbal celebration of your wife. She needs that love, praise and connection. If you honor all three parts of her sexually, more than likely you will have less difficulty with her desire for sex.

Imagine if you and your spouse both learned how to do this. Not only are you being touched physically, but now you are also receiving the nurturing and connecting that your spirit and soul desires. Imagine if you felt wanted sexually by her regularly.

Most guys try to get their spouses to do this or that to have a multi-sensual experience. Imagine your soul being washed with praise and acceptance and your spirit being connected to. Imagine your brain on overload, receiving pleasure in all three dimensions at the same time. The resulting orgasm is satisfying all the way to the inside of your being. Your brain sends a triple hit attaching you to the woman you are committed to.

This experience is normal for the man with a sexually successful brain. Hence, his brain receives the highest reward sexually and craves and aches to connect to his woman.

Use these three principles for 100 days. In all the years of my counseling practice, I have never had a client say they wanted sex the old way again after doing so. Once you taste sexual success you can never be talked into anything less again.

CHAPTER 8

What About Her?

Women are distinctly different than men and for that I say, “Thank you God.” Women don’t think, feel or experience life the same way you or I do, and to date, no man has been able to fully grasp what that really means.

I think women are a wonder with so much to offer in every area of life. Occasionally I have heard men in my office complain that their spouse was keeping them as a couple from being sexually successful. Some of the issues about their wife that they are referring to come from not having the inside information on what women are about. They wonder why their spouse doesn’t think and feel as they do. Some men get frustrated over the differences rather than trying to understand their wives and work with them the way they are. Instead they try to change their wife. In the long run end up hurting themselves. Be forewarned: This particular issue may get a bit sketchy if you try to move from point to point without first connecting the dots.

Her Motivation

Generally speaking your spouse is not primarily motivated by sight. This is a really good thing because your physical attributes between the ages of 20 to 60 can change dramatically. Sometimes your waist enlarges and the hair on your head falls out, while other hair grows in strange places. Sometimes your flair for clothes diminishes too. If women were motivated by sight, older men wouldn’t be having much sex.

When the subject comes up during counseling sessions about what inclines a woman to want to be sexual with her husband, most women affirm that it **is when they feel close to him**.

The key word in this sentence is **feel**. I know you may not want to hear about how moods or feelings control her sexual desire, but these are the facts. Her general feelings about you will dynamically affect her sense of closeness toward you. She is not so much keeping score of your activities together or apart, but rather how close your heart is to hers. In the following chapter we’ll discuss how to keep this feeling of “closeness” on consistent basis. At this point though, I just want to address how she processes her feelings about you on a general scale.

Women think about how things are going globally within the relationship. She contemplates the time you have shared together recently, and how open the lines of communication have been. She reflects on how supportive you have been, if you have you kept your word and have treated her with respect. These and many other thought processes go on in her mind.

Please don't try to manipulate her with this information. This is not a check-off list where if you complete eight out of ten you will obtain sexual success. It isn't that easy. This information is simply to show you how she may process her thoughts. These thoughts may be different for each woman and, to make it even more complicated, the thoughts may vary from day to day.

While this may sound strange and be hard for men to understand, to make this fair, men do similar things that may sound odd to women. When men walk into a room full of people, they automatically surmise how they measure up to the other guys in the room, and where they stand in comparison. In doing so, men get a feel for what is expected and can assure themselves and their spouse of safety and that they are in control. Guys really do this! These episodes are somewhat similar to what a woman does. She globally checks you out to assure herself of where she fits in your life. And if everything appears okay between her and you, then she feels as if she can let down her guard and be intimate with you.

She is motivated by her emotional proximity to you much like you are motivated by physical proximity. When you see her, you may get a surge of sexual energy that sweeps over you. You know that the feeling. It is called "sexual opportunity." So why not optimize the situation?

It can also work this way for her. If she has a sense of real connection to your heart, then she feels close to you. Again, I am not selling a quick way to get sex. This doesn't exist. But generally speaking, if you can master the three skills that increase intimacy, you can warm up the emotional climate in your relationship so that your wife can experience more of these moments with you.

Some of you may be unwilling or unmotivated to change simply so she will feel close to you. Let's get practical here and use a language that you may be able to relate to more. Almost every man reading this book has an automobile. When you purchased your automobile, you realized there were certain principles or guidelines that you had to follow for optimum performance. One such principle states you should change your oil every 3,000 miles. Now that's not fair! Why in the world should I have to change my lifestyle and get under the hood and get all dirty changing the oil, or take it to a station where they do it for three times the cost of the oil and filter!

Every guy knows what would happen if you whined about life not being fair and decided not to change the oil in your nice, shiny new car. Your beauty of a vehicle would run fine in the beginning, but slowly—almost inconspicuously—the engine would start reacting. That expensive engine of yours would begin to make funny noises and grinding sounds. There would come a day when the engine would get sluggish and weak because you chose not to accept the reality that your car needs regular oil changes. The engine would eventually cough its final cough and freeze up.

Mechanics, lawyers and therapists prosper on guys that behave like this toward their cars and wives. Common sense and following instructions could have easily prevented what

has now become a catastrophe. While the situation may be salvageable, the solution is now going to be quite expensive!

The better approach would have been to accept the way your automobile is made, and then change your lifestyle so that you can regularly and preventively take care of it. Likewise, if your wife has normal needs and desires, she will need regular “oiling,” or connecting, and she will also need to be nurtured by you. If you choose not to do these things, it will be very difficult to have sexual success with the locked up “engine” sleeping next to you.

Men, I have to shoot straight. You are basically responsible to maintain the connectedness with your wife. Remember it was Christ who pursued the church throughout time and not the other way around. When you follow these guidelines, life with your wife can go positively in your favor from now on. Otherwise in the future you can support the counseling industry in your local area. I want you to be sexually successful and inherit all the land God has for you, and that means doing what it takes to get there.

I know most men are not born to meet their wife’s emotional needs intuitively but there are skills you can learn to do so. I will assist you in learning how to put the oil in her engine every day. The purpose of this chapter is to help you understand your wife better. The more you understand her, the more likely you are to experience sexual success.

Where Are the Buttons?

I have heard this question in my office so many times from frustrated husbands. Men are looking for the elusive “magical button” on their wife. Especially the button that says, “I want to have sex with you right now!”

You can spend years of your life trying to discover that one hot button. Some start with rubbing your wife’s feet while others do the “back massage routine.” Still others think that rubbing her head or combing her hair will prove to be the magic trick. Regardless of where you try to look for this button on the woman you are married and committed to, you may not be able to find one.

You might be thinking that there used to be one in the beginning of your relationship. There was a formula that worked where I touched her and said something and then we were sexual. Where did that button go?

Let me tell you about the rest of Pavlov’s story (remember “ring the bell, feed the dog”?) Pavlov wanted to see if this same experiment also applied to humans, so while he was putting his young preschool-aged daughter to bed, he decided to touch her back. As he did this she curled up her one leg. He repeated this several times and every time he did, her leg went up. He thought he was onto something big until his daughter said, “Daddy, why is it when I put my leg up that one minute later you touch my back?” She thought she was training him to touch her back. He laughed and realized that the apple doesn’t

fall far from the tree. Why did I tell you this story? It's simple. Early in your marriage relationship you probably thought you found the "button." You may have thought, "If I touch here and say, 'I really love you,' wham! I'm going to have sex." So you think to yourself, "I'm a smart guy. I know how to manipulate this engine to give me what I want."

However, years later, you are wondering why that same touch and three gushes of "I really love you" don't get you sex anymore. I have a theory you might not agree with right away, but I encourage you to think about it awhile.

When you were dating your wife or very early in your marriage, you were overall doing many of the right things: spending time with her, listening to her, praising her and responding to her feedback in your life and keeping your word. She already felt close to you. You were already doing all the global connective things that got her into a place of desiring you. This may be the place to focus if you are looking for sexual success.

For those of you still putting forth effort looking for the elusive button, you can continue searching in vain or you can do the things that made the relational environment warm enough to develop in the first place.

My personal belief is that women don't have external buttons. I believe that the button does not exist in a physical place. So, if you have tried at all to find it, you may be looking in the wrong places. If there is a button, it may be the one inside of her. She wants security, a close relationship with you and the pretty picture.

There are some women who don't desire sex because of depression or past sexual abuse and they refuse to get help for these issues. Some are sexually anorexic and do not want intimacy. Others have lost their desire for sex because of the one-dimensional type of selfish sex that they have received over the years, which has left them feeling empty and lonely.

For the woman that doesn't respond after 60 days of putting the "oil" in her regularly, it may be time for professional help. She may need medical, sexual or psychological help. For someone who has no desire for sex, you can't make her want sex. I have met men like this also, and the reality is that there are people with issues so great that even the most helpful principles in this book won't work without some additional assistance. If you are in a situation like this, get professional help because your chances of sexual success are limited if the issues are not dealt with.

Bait and Switch

The following is a common complaint that I have heard many times from my male clients. Their spouse was great in the beginning of their relationship. They couldn't ask for more. She was exciting, adventurous and even initiated sex. They thought that they were the absolute luckiest man in the world. Then something started to happen.

First she didn't want to perform certain sexual behaviors anymore or wear particular clothes. She may not be comfortable when you do particular things now. At first the husband acquiesced, but then the situation repeated itself regarding yet another sexual behavior in which they had regularly engaged.

This path continues throughout the marriage, leaving the husband pretty limited and not as adventurous as he once was with her. He no longer complains (because any sex is better than no sex), but he is now beginning to feel anger and contempt about it. She's no longer inviting him to be intimate and rarely talks about sex anymore. His sexual life has changed and he didn't even get to vote on it.

She has made unilateral sexual decisions that affect his sexual expression. He certainly can't say anything about it because she has now learned a few lines that paralyze him, such as, "All you want is sex!" or "Aren't you ever satisfied?" He has begun to close up because he knows his sexual supply may be cut off otherwise.

So what happened? It is the very common bait and switch that women and men get into over the course of their relationship.

She believes in your initial promise to love her, to be intimate, to make her your first priority, to help with the kids and to talk to her more rather than watch television. But now she feels ignored, unimportant and somewhat used within the relationship. Consequently, she changes her responses to you; hence, the bait and switch.

Bait and switch can happen both ways within a marriage. Early on in the relationship you can both oversell your true interest and sincerity in any area. You may have initially convinced her of your financially stable, only to start spending impulsively once you got married. Some men initially keep their pornography habit a secret prior to marriage, but their wife eventually finds out about it.

The best way to address this problem is to focus on your own areas of bait and switch. After you fix these areas of concern—and only after!—you can examine your spouse's because then you will have done more than just talk about your weaknesses; you will have changed.

In a future chapter we will discuss how couples can walk in sexual agreement. When you combine the chapter on intimacy with your sexual agreement, your feelings of resentment may disappear. If you still feel angry about having to do all of this work, you may want to look into the anger exercise that we talked about earlier where we were dealing with past trauma issues in Chapter three.

Sexual Personalities

The following information I'm going to share with you I have discussed with many of my male clients that are trying to develop realistic sexually successful goals. I find that without this concept men try to recreate their wife into their past lovers.

Here is the concept of sexual personalities. We all have sexual personalities that are part of who we are. Some personalities take risks, explore and are creative, and yet other personalities are more cautious, enjoy the familiar and find security in what is comfortable for them.

A man who is generally a high achiever, creative and physically active will be the same way in his sexual expression. He will probably want to try a variety of things, positions or places to engage in sex. This is an extension of his personality.

Then there is his beautiful wife who likes to drive the speed limit, dresses conservatively and always obeys the rules. More than likely she will exhibit conservatism in her sexual personality as well. She is a great person, but she is not going to behave like her husband in the bedroom because this is not her personality in general.

Most men know enough to marry a stable woman and her personality is usually a great balance with his. Some men marry a woman whose personality is aggressive, creative and demanding. Such a personality can actually weaken the overall relationship.

Many men have dated women with various personalities, some of which are not the type of personality you married. Take a minute to think about your wife's personality outside of the bedroom. Is she a gal who takes uncalculated risks? Does she have lots of ambition for accomplishment? Does she try new things just for fun? Does she like to follow the rules? Does she drive the speed limit?

Understanding that her sexual personality is similar to her non-sexual personality can help you to accept your wife. If you can objectively accept her for who she is instead of who you wish she were, then you can at least begin to deal with issues in the light of some reality.

If you constantly have a feeling of entitlement that she should be like someone else, you could damage your wife sexually and prevent her from feeling like she can be herself sexually. Remember, it's not her fault that you have had experiences in your past with other women, pornography or fantasies, so why should your wife suffer these consequences? This is a result again of your sin and not your wife's.

Working toward a mutual agreement is a process of negotiation that we will get into deeper later. You will both need to be realistic about each other's sexual personality. Neither personality needs to dominate or control the mutual sexual expression of the marriage.

As you grow in acceptance of each other's sexual persona and begin to negotiate, you can find a place of sexual peace with each other. I don't know when it was that I first realized I needed to accept my wife's sexual personality, but when I did it sure helped me significantly. I didn't feel the need to strive to change her. What a relief! That didn't

mean we didn't discuss our preferences with each other. It just took the entire attitude-type issues out of the process.

Her Sexual Esteem

Women have had their own sexual journey before they met you. Some saved themselves for the man they married and may feel insecure about their sexuality. Some have had a variety of sexual experiences giving them a variety of positive or negative feelings about their sexuality. About one-third of women have experienced sexual abuse as a child or rape as a young adult. Regardless of your wife's background, her sexual self-esteem issues are now in your hands.

Feelings about oneself run very deep and can overcome reason. I've counseled with many men who were bright, handsome and wealthy and led what appeared to be a great life, but inside they were not happy. They felt as if they've never measured up. They never heard a reassuring "good job" from anyone. What they heard was "You're stupid." "You won't amount to anything." "Why can't you do things right?" As these messages are repeated over and over, they begin to sink deep within the man's heart and play a huge role in how he sees himself.

The same is true of sexual self-esteem. Imagine the affects on a woman who has heard such negativity from her husband related to her sexuality as "You're not like you used to be." "Why can't we engage in that behavior more?" "Why have you gained so much weight?" After years of hearing these messages that her husband wants more, better and different sex, the wife's heart changes and she concludes she is not good enough because he is never satisfied with her. None of her efforts ever seem good enough, so why even try? Her desire for sex slowly diminishes because she doesn't feel accepted. Who wants to do something that they're inadequate at?

Reading this, perhaps you see some things that you've done unknowingly to your wife. You may have inadvertently set up a situation that did not build her up sexually but actually tore her down. Whether she believes she has lost her sexual self-esteem either by your words or through her past experiences, it affects the way she feels about sex altogether.

I once heard someone say success is making others feel or become successful. I can't think of a better place to apply this success principle than in the bedroom. If you consistently build up your wife in this area, reassuring her that she's a competent and great lover, you can assist her in feeling sexually confident. This sexual confidence may lead her into taking risks and actually enjoying sex.

* * *

I want to tell you stories about two very different men. The first man I'll call Tony. Tony had a few sexual encounters before marriage and then had a spiritual awakening. He went

to a singles group where he met his wife. His wife however grew up in the church and waited till she was married to have sex. She was attractive, healthy, and yet felt insecure next to her husband. On their wedding night shortly after they were intimate she asked him how he felt. He thought he would be honest and he said, “It was okay, but I’ve had better.”

Needless to say, those words devastated his wife so deeply that from then on, her sexual self esteem plummeted. They had difficulties with sex and sexual frequency during their entire marriage. Because of how she felt about sex caused her not to want sex for their entire marriage. Tony has regretted those words he said to her on his wedding night his entire life.

Now Dennis has had sex with many women during his young adult life. He settled down eventually and decided to marry a nice girl. Like Tony he dated a church girl who never had sex prior to marriage. On his wedding night he told her that their sexual experience was the best sex of his entire life. He regularly praised his wife during their sexual experiences. He did this in the bedroom and outside of the bedroom. He intentionally and consistently built up her self-esteem.

Over the course of Dennis’s marriage sex wasn’t a big issue. His wife enjoys sex and feels rather good about herself and their sexual life together. She believes she is a great lover and that she pleases Dennis. She has a quiet sexual confidence.

Obviously we can all learn from each other’s mistakes and successes. The point is to be aware of your wife’s sexual self-esteem and strive to encourage her in that area. This is vital for your ultimate sexual success. If you pour good into her, over time good will flow back to you. Remember what you sow you will reap. This principle also applies in the holy of holies—your bedroom.

The Three Words

In all the years I’ve counseled adults about numerous sexual issues, I never heard anyone articulate the importance of *words* during sex. Words are crucial! As we discussed earlier, while having sex you and your spouse both are absolutely the most vulnerable that you can be. What you say or don’t say to your wife sends the deepest of communication to her. For the man who can only talk in object-type terms, his wife will definitely get the message that body (one-dimensional) sex is all you want.

The man who ignores the mind and emotions of his spouse during sex also sends a message that her body is important but her person is not. The more aware you are that sex is a three-dimensional act, the more you will realize how important your words are to her.

There are three words that most women never hear during sex and yet they yearn to hear them. My clients who use these three words have found out just how powerful they are. I can’t tell you about the countless women who responded in tears because they thought

they would never hear this from their husbands. The three words are not “I love you” but rather “You satisfy me.”

This simple expression can do wonders for your wife. She longs to know that she satisfies you. The fact that you can even admit that you are “totally pleased” with her and her form of sexual expression, and that you don’t have to have more, different or better sex can take a whole load off of her soul.

It’s much like the ache many men have in their hearts to hear their dad say “I love you” or “I’m proud of you, son.” Hearing the words that you long for can change your whole life. For many women, it’s quite dramatic.

Look her right in the eye when you say, “You satisfy me.” Tell her she’s a great lover. When you acknowledge that you actually can be satisfied, it brings a real sense of peace to your wife. I really encourage you to try this as a regular part of your lovemaking. Over a period of time she will come to believe these words are right from your heart.

These three words not only have tremendous power in the bedroom when you can plant them deep into her spirit and soul, but they also have power outside bedroom. During a casual conversation with your wife remind her of how she satisfies you sexually. A day or two after a sexual encounter look her in the eye and tell her that she really satisfied you sexually the other day. Tell her something like, “You know, I am still so satisfied from our lovemaking the other day.” You can even take it a step further: While sitting on a sofa or chair, say something to the affect, “You know, I was thinking about making love to you today, but I am still so satisfied from the last time I think I’m going to wait.”

I’m warning you this will really stir your wife. Conveying that you thought about sex and concluded you were satisfied, instead of groping and hassling her for more, will really get her thinking. She won’t even know how to respond to this totally new encounter.

Do this a few more times and you will begin to see her sexual self-esteem grow, and she will gradually relax sexually. Most women feel like they are the bone and you are the hungry dog, and at any minute you are going to lunge at them. When she clearly gets these three words into her spirit and soul that her husband is satisfied, new frontiers can open for her and for you.

Being sexually successful means, in part, building up your wife to the point where she can be confident and complemented rather than criticized, and you can feel good about adding to her sexual self-esteem. When she feels good about sex, you can both begin to enjoy better, more intimate sex.

CHAPTER 9

Emotion-based Relationships

As we continue to discuss sexual success, we must address one of the major roadblocks—the lack of intimacy. There is a dynamic that I have repeatedly seen sabotage a couple's intimacy and I call it the “emotion-based relationships.” These marriages are characterized by chaos, lack of follow through and multiple inconsistencies in several areas of the marriage including the disciplines in raising children.

There are two types of emotion-based relationships. The first is what I call the “benign” form. The second form is “malignant” yet treatable. I would encourage you to walk through this section even if it doesn't apply to you because most will know marriages or relationships that function this way and it can help to better understand why.

There is a couple I've known for several years that live in another state. They have two children and are very active. Their house is always in total chaos and there are clothes in piles everywhere. They are constantly kept so busy that getting together with them is difficult. They have no time to date and their systems of intimacy, dating and finances are always in a state of flux. They never really seem to get momentum in their relationship but always are going around the same cycle of chaos.

This is a benign form of an emotional-based system. In this system no one is really intentionally trying to be difficult nor does one mean the other any harm. They simply can't seem to “get it together”.

A couple like this will try therapy but only continues doing their homework for a short period of time. When asked about why they didn't follow through with it they rarely can come up with any tangible reason.

The whole notion of practiced consistency or principle-based thinking totally eludes them. Their decisions are made emotionally as their schedule changes constantly simply because of a desire to change and do something else. At that point they are unable to remember previous commitments and totally miss events they had planned.

They mean no one harm and often couples like this are pleasant and fun to be with at least when things are going well with them. There is no structure to their lives.

Progress is slow in a marriage or relationship with the benign form of emotional-base system. Trying to get them to commit to a discipline of connecting is difficult. When they get into a system for a few weeks, they feel closer than ever but they eventually stop and then their relationship deteriorates again.

The reason for the deterioration is that this couple's emotions dominate the decision making process. If they feel like doing something they do it and if they don't (even if it is the right thing to do) then they just don't do it, period.

The 60's culture has raised a generation that has bought into a lifestyle that practices, "if it feels good do it". The concept of restraint, principles and accountability are not in any of the decision making process.

This type of an emotional-based system reeks havoc on intimacy and sex since intimacy building is much more than just make up times after a big fight. Intimacy for a lifetime is much more than just fleeting moments of discipline. It's much more like a result of a lifestyle of discipline. Intimacy is relational wealth that accumulates over a lifetime of invested consistent behavior. Intimacy like wealth doesn't just happen. It is painstakingly planned and worked for and achieved along the way while two hearts are consistently being open and available to each other.

A couple within an emotional-based system will honestly find it difficult to change. Even the benign structure meets disciplined changes with great resistance. The chaos within this system gives the couple a great distraction from the lack of structure in the relationship. Crisis's appear from out of nowhere such as where one or both of your needs are not being met and stress appears in the relationship, plans for the future are avoided, a flat tire just happens...and the cycle of the emotion-based marriage starts over once again.

The malignant form of the emotional-based system is willful. In this marriage, not only are the husband and/or wife making their decisions based upon their emotions but they also refuse instruction, information, or connection from anyone. They are bent on doing what they want regardless of the results. If they want to neglect their spouse for days or weeks in order to punish them, they will. If they want to make a financial decision regardless of the consequences, they will.

This type of selfishness at the cost of others becomes toxic. The intimacy within the relationship is inconsistent and even volatile. Anger or silence is used to control the spouse and other family members as well. You know you're in a relationship like this when the major goal of the family is to keep this spouse happy.

The malignant form of an emotional-based marriage can sometimes be a result of several undiagnosed forms of emotional disorders. Sometimes addictions are present such as an addiction to work, alcohol, drugs, or sex. If an addiction is causing this system, medical literature supports that there is a lack of emotional maturity in an addict of any kind. For these issues to be resolved professional help may need to be involved.

Other times a spouse may have a mood disorder called Bipolar. This disorder seems to show up where the husband or wife has days of happy, motivated, clear thinking, and is actually fun to be around. Suddenly out of the blue comes one to three days of down, moody, and irritable behavior where nobody in the family can do anything right and a "why bother" attitude creeps into the atmosphere of the home. After a couple of days they again go back to the cycle of emotions changing again. This can keep a marriage or relationship in a toxic form of an emotional-based system.

If it is the malignant form and there are no addictions present nor mood disorders it may be simply a heart attitude that suggests, “I do what I want and if you don’t like it leave”. Often if the husband or wife state their needs for intimacy this person states that you are needy or weak. It feels as if they can’t or won’t let you in.

If you’re reading this section and it feel like you are in a malignant or toxic emotional-based system, you probably will need further professional help to get you to the other side of intimacy with your spouse so you can be more sexually successful. Real problems need to be addressed. Do as many of the structured exercises in the next few chapters as you can.

The emotional-based system can become a major roadblock to sex and intimacy! If you are unsure if your marriage is an emotional-based system look over the questions below. If you answer yes to several of the following questions, it may be that your marriage is an emotional-based system, which can make it more difficult to be sexually successful.

1. Does your marriage and family life feel chaotic most of the time? ;% Yes ;% No
2. Does it feel as if there is no consistent spiritual and emotional connection with your spouser? ;% Yes ;% No
3. Does money get spent regularly without anyone really knowing where it all went? ;% Yes ;% No
4. Does it appear that you don’t have long term retirement plans you’re working toward? ;% Yes ;% No
5. Does it seem that some things never get done? ;% Yes ;% No
6. Does it seem unclear how decisions get made within the relationship or marriage? ;% Yes ;% No

The opposite of an emotional-based system is a principle-based relationship. In this type of marriage, intimacy can flourish over time and sex becomes easier to negotiate. Principles guide the decision making process. A personality doesn’t dominate nor do the desires of one person in the relationship.

A couple that lives within a principle-based relationship has the highest chance of getting and maintaining a lifelong intimate relationship that benefits both spouses and makes you both feel sexually successful. That means your probably going to have a happy sexual wife for a very long time.

This couple works together to solve problems and doesn’t just serve their emotions. If they don’t feel like doing something they committed to, their commitment pushes them through the immediate self-discomfort and on into doing what they had already agreed to do.

Couples in an emotional-based system can move into a more principle-based system. Marriages or relationships based on principles create strong structures and move couples to connect intimately and stay that way for the rest of their lives.

It is work to get life long results. Intimacy is not acquired by the lazy, fainthearted or undisciplined. Intimacy is a fruit that is born by staying consistent in the behaviors we will talk more about in the next section of this book. As you do these exercises we will talk about it in the next chapter you will see progress, you will notice the affects in the quality of your relationship in a relatively short period of time. If she feels more intimate, she may feel more sexual.

Like a broken bone a cast doesn't do the healing alone but it does allow the bone to heal. I encourage all couples within an emotional-based system to apply the "cast" (of principles) around your brokenness so that you both can go through the healing process. If you struggle within an emotional-based marriage, the exercises and structures will at first take a determined effort. I strongly encourage you to move beyond the "if it feels good, do it" attitude.

Emotional systems also evolve from one or both spouses who are behaving as a child or adolescent in an area of life as opposed to an adult. Someone can be an adult in one area of life but an adolescent or a child in another. This creates various imbalances within the relationship that set up an emotional-based system, and can make sexual success difficult.

Jerry and Paula were such a case. Here one person's immaturity in an area of their relationship added a strain in their marriage and limited their intimacy. Jerry was salesman in a local business. He was a great salesman and had personal integrity.

Socially, anyone who knew Jerry would say he was a social adult. Jerry was also an adult at fun as he planned time with friends and business contacts to fish, hunt and go to games together.

Jerry, in the area of finances behaved as a child. He didn't know what came in or really went out of the checkbook and he would only engage in the financial process when he needed more than his allowance provided, or to sign his tax returns. Paula handled all the finances. Even though Jerry was an adult concerning social activities and fun, he lacked skills and development when it came to money.

The areas that Jerry handled emotionally instead of in an adult manner caused Paula stress. She didn't like handling all of the finances and was overwhelmed with trying to meet Jerry's relational needs all by herself. These were some of the issues that brought pressure on their marriage but it wasn't Jerry's fault alone.

Paula, as sweet as she was, had some emotional areas of her life as well. She was an adult when it came to the social, financial and spiritual areas of her life but when it came to sexuality she was a child. She took no sexual responsibility in the relationship. Neither Jerry nor Paula could remember one time that Paula initiated sex. Although Paula was as sweet as she could be, a perfect wife and mother she also couldn't express her feelings. She had difficulty practicing the feelings exercise and really fought someone from knowing her emotionally. This also added strain to the marriage and their

sexual intimacy. Jerry and Paula created emotional systems. On the outside they looked okay but inside the house there was a quiet but steady resentment building.

Many couples are like Jerry and Paula. The areas that were not comfortable for them as they grew up they kept hoping that the person they marry would carry. Often the problem is that you really never talk it over with your spouse, it just evolves and then the emotional systems evolve and create roadblocks intimacy, making sexual success difficult.

If both spouses are not functioning as adults within their relationship, they will have intimacy robbed from them. This is an important variable for how sexually successful you can become in your marriage.

You CANNOT change your spouse anyway. So unless you use this information for individual development, in a therapeutic manner or in an agreed upon conversation with your spouse it can become less than productive. Please don't use this information to attack, shame or otherwise injure the soul of your spouse but instead for self-development.

This information is to be used so that you can identify where your own areas of personal growth are needed. The more of an adult you are in all areas of your life the safer your wife will feel and the more respect and honor she will have for you. Remember if you are acting like a child or an adolescent, she will feel like your mother and not your lover. She knows when you are not taking responsibility for an area in your life. As one person said, "If you don't want your wife to act like your mother, stop acting like a child." I hope this list of development offers you insight on growth areas to identify for yourself.

AREA	CHILD	ADOLESCENT	ADULT
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -refuses to feed themselves by reading the bible -wants others to feed them only by attending church -prayer is not really initiated on a regular basis -likes it if “you” pray -states that the Bible is too difficult to understand. -doesn’t feel convicted of sin on any regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -feeds themselves -their interpretations of scripture is “The” interpretation -prays but is inconsistent -will pray together “if you make them” -struggles with balancing biblical truths -convicted of sin but has struggles with authority issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -feeds themselves regularly -feeds others in their life by character and word -prayer is consistent and desired -desires to pray with you anytime -convicted of even smaller type sins behaviors regularly
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -does not initiate in relationships -only responds to those who want to initiate toward them -can’t seem to find a person or group to connect to -most their friends do all the work in their relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -will initiate in relationship if it serves a purpose -relationship based on activities -tends to have a rotating best friend -does some initiating in the relationship to set up activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -can initiate a relationship with those just because, with no need to serve a purpose -can create time just for relating not requiring an activity -can have long term friendships -accepts the seasons of friendships -tends to initiate equally in a relationship
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -refuses to have anything to do with money issues -money things are just overwhelming -has a naïve status toward taxes and retirement. -as long as their needs are met there is no real need to talk about it -doesn’t write checks or know the bills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -financially selfish -thinks in short term, materialistic tendencies -toys are more important than future planning -what they are, the family looks like (house, cars, clothes) is really important -credit card debt is very common -will tithe when convenient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -money has spiritual meaning -long term planning is part of their thought process -short term sacrifice is honorable for long term gain -tithing is consistent
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -does not accept or see themselves as sexual -will not initiate sex -talking about sex is always inappropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -sex is for them mostly -unaware of spouses sexual needs -angry when their needs don’t get met -sex conversations seem to feel cheap and not about intimacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -accepts themselves sexually -accepts the sexuality of their spouse -has intimacy during sexuality -maintains sexual integrity
Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -doesn’t know what you’re talking about -becomes confused when emotions addressed -feels you’re asking too much of them to do feeling work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -has feelings but limited ability to communicate them -has periods of emotional constipation then blows up or gets silent -really more concerned about their feelings and not yours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -has learned how to identify & communicate feelings -can be emotionally safe and keep confidences -values and hears the feelings of their spouses

In the columns below you can indicate where you believe you may fit in the various areas. If you feel more comfortable doing this portion on a separate sheet of paper that is appropriate as well. Score yourself individually. I know you can't help but score your spouse so if you do, don't tell them, as they may disagree.

Individual Emotional Development

Area	Child	Adolescent	Adult
Spiritual			
Social			
Financial			
Sexual			
Feelings			
Fun			

These issues are emotionally based and often are the hot buttons within a marriage. To resolve these issues will be individual work not couple work. The couple work comes in to place when you move beyond these issues and you can discuss them and see the impact that the development in an area is making on the relationship.

I thought we were talking about sex. We are talking about sex. The less stress and chaos in a relationship due to these issues, the more likely she will feel close to you and you to her. If you feel close to each other regularly whammo you're having more sex. If you're constantly chaotic and mad at each other, whammo you're too mad to have sex, or you're on the proverbial sofa. It's hard to have sexual success when you're in a different room of the house. The better the quality of your relationship generally the more likely you are to have sexual success.

CHAPTER 10

Daily Exercises

Throughout my years of counseling Christian Couples, I have found that many marriages have no structure in place that encourages intimacy. This lack of structure and skills can limit future sexual success. We grow up believing that we get married and live happily ever after. Yet we are often not equipped for intimacy and can be disappointed when our spouse doesn't possess the secret code to intimacy either.

The early part of marriage can often be fun as you begin to learn about your spouse, go to work or school, get your first apartment, pick out furniture, go to church and are physically intimate together without guilt being involved. The sheer new complexities of life along with the multitude of new decisions can keep couples talking and sharing regularly.

Slowly and subtly it happens. No one really knows when or where it happened but something has changed within the relationship. You don't seem to talk as much.

Decisions are not met with the same glee as when you were first married but instead they are delegated then discussed. Purchases become fewer, sex and life begin to take on a certain level of routine. You don't seem as close but seem to be just living together. What happened? How did the passion for each other leave?

Roger and Constance are the classic example of a couple losing the passion for each other. They are both intelligent and successful. Constance owns a small business and Roger manages a large organization. They individually love God and go to a large healthy church. To meet either of them is to love them. They have one little secret that nobody knows about — not even their pastor who they consider their good friend. Roger and Constance don't have sex. They haven't had sex in six years.

"What happened to us?" was their question for me. They told their story to me, which included the history of their relationship. Constance stated that they dated for two years. Throughout those two years Roger called Constance frequently and wrote notes with scriptures inside. They prayed together and were thought to be inseparable by their friends. When they first married their sex life was good, fun and frequent. They traveled and did lots of fun things before their children came along.

Soon things changed. Schedules changed. Roger traveled some and the praying together became infrequent. Talking together was soon at a minimum and sex just happened. The fun that was within their sex life stopped. The children started school and Constance started a business and they seemed to drift further apart. Their interests seem to differ and conversations were about household management issues only.

They went to church every Sunday but spiritually their life mostly revolved around religion and not connecting. Communication came to a standstill. Roger read his financial and sports magazines and Constance was so busy she didn't have the energy to

keep the marriage going too. Occasionally they reassured each other of their love for each other and would sometimes talk about sex but nobody really followed through anymore. I asked Roger if Constance's recollection of the relationship history was accurate and he agreed her perspective was accurate.

What happened to this couple has happened to many others also, they lost their priorities. Passion is a result of priorities. American Christians think passion either is a part of them or isn't. Rather, passion is a dividend of consistent investments placed into a relationship.

Let's go back a minute to when you were dating and you were selling the idea that being married to you would kind of be a good idea. Remember the passion in life that you had for your wife? Of course, you remember the passion but what you may have forgotten is the foundation of that passion, the priority of the relationship.

Do you remember how you "made" time to be with her? You planned your days and weeks around each other's work schedule including your days off. Those of you that were like me and moved away from a future spouse to go to school have the phone bills to prove it. Those phone bills took a good portion of the little income I made just to tell her about my day.

Do you remember how spiritual you were? You prayed individually and together as often as you could. Some even read the Bible together. The desire was in you to know God's will and you needed God to help you stay pure and yet express your love to one another.

Do you remember the gratitude you had for the smallest things your spouse did for you? This was especially true for me if my future spouse cooked for me. I was so grateful! There was a constant stream of praise that you offer toward your future spouse. Do you remember when you thought she was so smart and attractive and that she had so much potential? You believed in her and regularly encouraged her.

Understand that passion is a result of the setting of priorities. So many people try to get the passion back instead of getting their priorities back. Once you get the priorities back, the passion naturally follows and grows. "What priorities?" is what most couples ask.

I will discuss these priorities shortly but before I do, I want to share an analogy I often share within counseling sessions. Many couples who come in for help in their marriage have sprains or fractures in their relationship. I liken the repair of this marital relationship to a fracture or broken bone. When this happens, you can still function but you look and act funny. Then you go to the doctor or emergency room.

The first thing they are going to do is x-ray the bone in question. Sure enough they look at the structure. Regardless of how it happened the x-ray shows a damaged structure (your bone). The doctor and nurse apply a structural treatment to your structural problem that would most likely be a cast.

The cast is a structural treatment so that the bone can heal. The cast itself is just plastic or plaster and in and of itself has no healing properties. But when it is applied to a broken bone to hold the bone in place, surprise! Healing can and does happen.

That is what placing the priorities back into a marriage can do. No matter how sprained or broken, healing can and does take place. I have seen literal miracles in restored marriages when priorities were put back into the relationship. One of the structures I apply is what I call “the three dailies”.

The couple we were talking about earlier Roger and Constance are doing much better now that they incorporated the three dailies into their life and are not only still in love but are more in love with each other than before. Roger even cracked a joke about how he likes her a whole lot more. Constance states, “I know his heart now and feel really special and close to him.” So what about the sex? I ask. They both laugh and affirmed that not only is it very consistent, it’s more fun and fulfilling than when they were younger. What can I say – I love my job!

Roger and Constance restored their priorities and practiced the three dailies in their relationship. It was difficult work at first but it became easier over time and now it is just part of their routine.

I want to add a personal note of testimony. I would never ask you to do something that Lisa and I have not done or are not doing presently in our relationship. Two of the three dailies Lisa and I have done every day (with only a few exceptions) for well over ten years. When I developed the third exercise, we actively applied this also to our routine in our marriage.

Lisa and I maintain our relational priorities by practicing these three exercises. They are part of our bedtime routine. Neither of us expects to go to sleep without our relational ritual of the three dailies.

I can tell you this is a major highlight of my day. I get to hear about my wife’s day, hear her heart and she gets to hear about my day and heart as well. This relational structure has richly developed our skill for intimacy to such a level that it can weather the day to day challenges of children, writing, and media demands along with all of the other commitments life demands of us. When incorporating the three dailies in your marriage priorities are restored and consequently passion is then restored. There is not one person who knows me on any level that is not aware of my passion for Lisa. I love her, love her, and really like her as well. This passion is the fruit of discipline that is born out of a heart of love. Keeping the emotional and spiritual intimacy warm makes sexual success much more possible.

The Three Dailies

Daily #1-Prayer—Prayer is an absolute necessity to have active in your marriage. I am constantly amazed when Christian couples tell me that the last time they really prayed together (not including praying over food or a good night prayer with children) was years

ago. Usually their rationale goes something like this, “we both pray, just not together.” That’s fine, but I really don’t see how that can in anyway be optimal. **Psalm 127:1** *Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.* This verse discusses the importance of the Lord being part of building the house. Prayer is an active way to have the Lord be a part of the building of your marriage. **Matthew 18:19** *(Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.)* discusses the importance of two or more agreeing in His name. It doesn’t say when one agree but when two agree.

Look at the role of Christ since His resurrection. He intercedes with and for His bride. The Lord sees prayer as a very important thing. Any of us who have actively interceded know God’s pleasure is for us to commune with Him not just individually but as a couple as well.

James 4:17 discusses the biblical principle of *Anyone, then, who knows the good ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.* I can tell you without a doubt in my mind, that any man who has heard the word of God and doesn’t lead his wife in prayer is sinning.

Men, it is your job to lead your wife spiritually and to pray with her. When you go to work, your boss communicates to you what your job is. I have rarely met someone who didn’t want to do some part of his job, however they get over it and do it anyway. They may complain but the bottom line is that they get the job done.

Men, prayer is your job. You can like it or not, you can even gripe about it, but get it done. You serve a holy God and I believe He will hold you accountable to the return on His investment: the precious talent of His daughter to you.

Remember the story of the talents in **Matthew 25:14-30**?

Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. “Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.”

His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

The man with the two talents also came. “Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.”

His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

Then the man who had received the one talent came. "Master," he said, "I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you."

His master replied, "You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest."

"Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The minimal was expected of the man with one talent regardless of his fears, insecurities or his really poor view of his master. The master was not happy about this at all. Remember that this story is about money. Now as a man, you can appreciate the value of money. But let me ask you about the value of your little girl. You were there when she was born, you played with her, changed her diapers, saw her take her first steps. Remember her very first word? "Da, Da". You gave her all you could, clothes, money for hundreds of things for her and you invested your time, love and most of all you invested yourself into her. She is by far one of the most valuable persons in your life.

As a Father, which man would you be angrier with? Would you be most angry with the man who you gave a thousand dollars to for an investment and in three months doesn't make any money? How angry would you be at the man who marries your daughter under the guise of being a Christian man but later you find out he is so selfish that he doesn't even pray with her? Think about it. Who would you be angrier at?

I can tell you as a dad, I would be a lot angrier with the man who lied to me about being a Christian and is defrauding my little girl as opposed to an investment of money. God is also a Father. He not only created your wife but He took special time and creativity to make her for you. He, Himself, lives actively in her. He and her are one. Remember **Matthew 25:40, 45**?

The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." He will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me."

I cannot communicate strongly enough the wrath I would have on the man who defrauded my little girl and me. I believe God would have such a wrath as a loving father regarding your wife, if you were spiritually lazy and irresponsible on the job of spiritually leading your wife.

You are the man, the priest of your home. There will be no excuses when you meet her heavenly Father one day. I want that day to be a blessing to you. I want you to say Lord, I received your daughter, she was young, insecure about herself but I built her up, prayed

her up and now look at her, she is so much better than when I received her. I want God's smile on my responsibilities toward my wife.

Prayer is one of the priorities that must be set in place by a man wanting to be sexually successful. Remember intimacy is tri-dimensional, spirit, soul and body. As we grow spiritually together, our intimacy in the other two areas will grow as well.

Remember that prayer is just talking out loud to God with your wife similar to talking with a friend. Prayer doesn't have to be hours long or in any particular position. The principle of connecting with God together is essential.

I love walking in the garden of my life with Lisa and bringing her into the presence of our loving Father. I really believe this has been instrumental in developing the strength and intimacy of our marriage.

Daily #2 - Feelings—Emotional intimacy is a second very important skill that you need to develop and maintain throughout your marriage to be sexually successful. Often early in the dating relationship and then eventually marriage we readily share our feelings about life situations, people, God, and our dreams to each other. Many don't know what happened to their feelings when they got married but for many couples they appear to go into hiding. Life gets more complicated and your conversations seem to get more managerial such as who does this or how is that going to get done, did this or that need to get paid and all those great conversations about children.

Marriages can be managed and function well and yet still not have the connectedness that you once had. Eventually in your marriage you can begin to feel alone, unsupported, and not understood, wondering why you are even going through the motions. These feelings are often common with you and your wife if you both don't have an emotional system in place.

Emotions are an important part of who both of you are. Emotions are very much a part of your spouses' personality and how they process their life events all day long. Remember that many couples don't see each other for eight to ten hours of the day. Your spouse has been in the big bad world. People or situations all day long have positively or negatively affected their heart.

We seem to be intuitive about talking to the children when we ask them about their day. We just don't want the facts but want to know what their heart has been through that day.

When I talk with men about expressing feelings, it is often apparent that he has limited skills or points of reference. I can totally empathize. Even though I had hundreds of feelings, I only had three major doors of communication. This gets real fun if you marry someone with the same three doors. If you felt unimportant then you may express it by feeling mad, really mad or other. If you chose to just be mad but your wife feels frustrated because of her day she may chose to pick "other." In this scenario "mad" is talking to "other" instead of "unimportant" talking to "frustrated." I'm sure you all have

been there where the feelings that were being expressed didn't line up with the real feelings the person was having. We all come with many feelings as standard operating equipment from our maker. The problem isn't that we don't have feelings. The problem is the limitations that we have in the skills to express them. I know I was emotionally illiterate when I was married. I had lots of feelings but no skills to identify or communicate them to my beautiful bride, Lisa.

Even while getting my Masters Degree in Marriage and Family Counseling I still wasn't receiving skill development in the areas of identifying feelings or communicating them and so I took it upon myself to learn this skill. What I realized is that most of life is about learning skills.

Let me give you an example. As a youth, I learned nothing about fixing cars. So even as an adult, lifting the hood of a car became shaming for me. No matter how many degrees or licenses I have, I still had no mechanical training or skills. If I were to take a course in basic mechanics and learn these skills, I could become skilled at fixing a car.

That's what identifying and communicating feelings is - a skill. Skills can be learned by anyone, including men! I can testify to that personally as well as anyone. I have witnessed many couples who have grown in the skill of identifying and communicating their feelings.

I have seen husbands and wives move from emotional illiteracy to emotional communicative competence over the years I have been counseling couples. I have countless memories of couples taking their first stab at practicing the feelings exercise that we will be discussing momentarily. They slowly do their first one or two feelings and as they practice this daily and within one hundred days these couples are talking about their feelings to each other and myself readily. Their ability to do this is critical for intimacy and ultimately sexual success.

If you can't share your feelings in your heart because of a lack of training and practice how can you expect heart to heart intimacy to occur? If you have been able to skillfully tell your spouse what you feel and what is in your heart then likewise, your spouse must also be able to clearly communicate her heart to you. Women generally love this stuff. The fact that you care enough to listen to her heart means volumes to her.

This lack of skill is one of the largest hindrances for a man to start or maintain intimacy. That is why the feelings exercise is critical. I do want to warn you that this is an exercise and therefore it does require some effort to get a degree of mastery.

Many adults have had to start to learn the computer. I liken the feeling exercise to learning a new computer program. At first, it feels unfamiliar and awkward. Over time the learning curve feels a little less slow. Then before you know it you have it figured out and you begin to feel a little more confident. Finally you ask yourself how did you ever live without this?

Life is funny that way; some of the best things in life take some kind of effort to achieve. As Christians we are familiar with the principle of sowing and reaping. If you plant corn you get corn later in the harvest season. Likewise, as you sow emotional intimacy in time you will reap emotional intimacy. Imagine what that can do for your chances of really becoming sexually successful.

Wouldn't it be a great day indeed when you deep down in your heart of hearts knew that you were completely heard by your spouse and that you're accepted? This kind of warm fuzzy only comes after time and practice.

Some people may think you can get a mountain view without the climb up the mountains. I personally know living in Colorado that the climb is part of the fun of the view. The following exercise is designed to increase your ability to share your feelings with the wonderful woman you married.

The Feelings Exercise

The feelings exercise is relatively simple. Pick a feeling from the feeling's list in the appendix of this book. Place the feeling word within the following two sentences.

1. I feel _____ (feeling word) when _____.
2. I first remember feeling _____ (same feeling word) when _____.

Example 1:

1. I feel **adventurous** when **I take my two children hiking up the mountains in Colorado Springs.**
2. I first remember feeling **adventurous** when **I was about thirteen years old and my mom bought me a ten speed bike which I rode all over town.**

Example 2:

1. I feel **Calm** when **I can get alone in nature and sit really still for a short while.**
2. I first remember feeling **calm** when **I was first taken out of foster homes and my mom gave me a stuffed animal that I could sleep with.**

I think you can get the idea. In the first sentence you pick whatever feeling you want and give a present tense example of the feeling. In the second sentence you use the same feeling word but choose an early experience usually from childhood or adolescence.

It is the earlier feeling that can be difficult. Do not cop out and try to give an example from a year or so ago. Really think hard and do the exercise correctly. Some men and women who have had difficulty in trying to remember a feeling from the past have found it easier if they start with a past memory during childhood and attach a present feeling to that experience. For example, someone having difficulty might go to a childhood experience where their mother or father forgot to pick them up from school one day. One of the feelings they might feel was alone because everyone else left on a bus or was

already picked up. Then come up with an example of feeling alone in the present such as I feel alone when I am on hold on the phone for a long period of time.

I also want to warn you against two things not to do with this exercise and then talk about boundaries for your feeling exercise. The first thing you don't want to do with this exercise is use the same feeling word over and over again. This really serves no purpose and will not give you or your spouse the desired affect for developing intimacy over the next one hundred days. The second thing you don't do in this feeling exercise is use one childhood example for twenty different feeling words. Such as for the above example of the person being left at the school. Don't give this same example day after day with different feeling words such as abandoned, helpless, and confused. Although these feelings may be legitimate for one example it would not serve you or your spouse well to just keep pumping one experience over and over again when your life is full of experiences to identify your feelings with. As I have said before, it may be slow going at first but even childhood experiences become easier to remember when you practice the feeling exercise.

I have developed some guidelines to be used while completing this exercise. The following guidelines will limit or remove some obstacles that couples have experienced within this exercise. Please follow these and it will make your experiences much more positive.

Feeling Exercise Guidelines

Guideline #1 - No examples about each other—You can talk about your feelings that include one another at any other time of day but not during the feeling exercise. It is very important not to violate this guideline.

The feeling exercise is designed to be a safe place for both the husband and the wife to open their hearts to one another. If you start using the exercise to say “I feel frustrated when **you** don't pick up your clothes” the exercise will become unsafe and will dissolve. You can feel frustrated about traffic, your children, the dog or anyone other than your spouse during this exercise.

This guideline applies to positive feelings about your spouse and not only negatives. Suppose you use the word cuddly. Again, you can feel cuddly with the children, or the dog, just don't use your spouse in the example during the feeling exercise.

This guideline is very important in order to keep the exercise alive and provide you both with a way to learn and maintain emotional intimacy. If your spouse inadvertently starts giving an example that involves you, kindly remind her that it doesn't count and to give you another example. If your spouse continues to violate this principle, I would question the intent. My experience is that those who sabotage this exercise don't want intimacy. They might say they want intimacy, similar to the fact that they would like to be a millionaire but if they don't work for it they truly don't desire it.

“How should we choose our feeling word?” is a frequent question I hear from couples working on their feeling exercise. I warn couples about just going down the “A” list because it can be very difficult to start with words such as abandoned, aching and so on. The truth is that it really doesn’t matter how you or your spouse picks your individual feeling words.

Some couples just close their eyes and pick one from the list. Some pick one feeling word that starts with “A” and the next day they pick a feeling word that begins with “B” and so on. Others just pick a number, such as nine and just do every 9th feeling word. Some just choose a feeling from that particular day. Again, the method each person chooses in order to pick his or her feeling word is not relevant to developing and maintaining intimacy over the next one hundred days.

Another commonly asked question from couples is how many feeling words should we do a day? I recommend two feeling words a day per person. So the wife does a feeling, then the husband does his. Then the wife does her second feeling and the husband does his second feeling as well. Then you’re finished with the feeling exercise. Remember to follow the next two guidelines to insure you get the optimal benefit from the exercise.

Guideline #2 - Maintain Eye Contact—The second guideline to complete your feeling exercise is to look each other in the eyes while sharing your feelings. Looking each other in the eye is important as intimacy is beginning to take place. There is so much truth in the old saying that “eyes are the window of the soul”. When we look into another person’s eyes, we can see them.

So many Christian couples grow apart and have a difficult time even remembering the last time that they looked each other in the eye for more than a few seconds. I have seen both husbands and wives have difficulty looking each other in the eyes while doing the feelings exercises. They have become so used to talking at each other instead of to each other. They look down at the floor, the ceiling or past their spouse. Jokingly, I say that was great to share that feeling with your shoe now let’s try it again and share it with your spouse. We all laugh but the spouse had to do this feeling over again.

In my office, when a couple does their feeling exercise I watch so that I can observe the eye contact of the couple and to see if the couple is maintaining the eye contact throughout the exercise. After a few attempts, most couples can maintain eye contact during the time they share their feelings. Once again, this is an important part of the feeling exercise so if your spouse is looking at his or her shoe, or the ceiling, gently touch them and ask them to look into the eyes that love them.

As a couple practices this exercise eye contact does become more natural for them. Many couples state that this was a significant shift for them in their overall communication. My wife Lisa has the biggest green eyes I have ever seen and to look into them is to see her soul. For me to see her soul is what drives me crazy for her. As you practice this guideline to the feeling exercises, I pray that you experience this aspect of intimacy that transcends words.

Guideline #3 - No Feedback— The last of the guidelines for the feeling exercise is just as important as the first two guidelines. As your wife is sharing her feelings there are to be no comments from you about the feelings they are sharing.

This is critical to keep the exercise safe for each spouse. When your spouse shares a feeling and you pump them for more information, they are not going to feel safe and they will be less likely to want to continue this very important exercise. Pumping them for more information would be similar to asking them to tell you more and go into greater detail or further clarify their feelings.

Another violation of the “no feedback” guideline would be suggesting that they “shouldn’t feel that way”. Just accept what they are saying. Don’t verbally interpret or comment on what they shared. Just say thank you and go ahead with your feeling word next.

The second aspect of the “no feedback” guideline is what I call the “seventy-two hour” rule. What ever is shared during the exercise can not be discussed for seventy-two hours. In other words, suppose your wife shares a feeling of being “betrayed”. Her first remembrance example was when she was six and her nine-year-old sister took her favorite Barbie doll and gave it to the dog. At this point you are not to give feedback for at least seventy-two hours.

The reason why is so that you both have emotional safety during this time. Intimacy especially emotional intimacy demands safety. If I am going to share my heart of hearts, I have to know it is above all things safe to do. You see the feelings exercise isn’t just about identifying and communicate feelings it’s one hundred days of experiencing each other as emotionally safe people.

Over time in your marriage if the feelings that your spouse shares get shoved back in his or her face when you are mad your spouse will generalize that you are not safe and therefore will not want to share feelings with you. When you get defensive as your spouse shares with you, he or she will generalize that you are not an emotionally safe person to share with. If this is the routine way in which you both respond to emotional intimacy both will feel unsafe sharing in their most primary relationship, their marriage. Guess what that does to your sexual success? If she feels emotionally unsafe, sex is not going to be a priority for her.

As time goes by in a marriage that is emotionally unsafe, the spouse will choose not to be emotionally intimate with their husband or wife. The need for emotional intimacy doesn’t just go away for the spouse who doesn’t share emotionally. They will just seek another emotional outlet. It may be golf with the guys, lunch with the girls or Bible studies for either but it won’t be with each other. I feel truly sad for a couple whose primary emotional intimacy is outside of their marriage. Over a long period of time this can encourage the vulnerable spouse for emotional and sexual affairs.

Remember to follow the seventy-two hour rule. If you do this, the emotional safety will increase tremendously and you will want to share your feelings with your spouse and enjoy the emotional intimacy that God really desires for you to have. I call it the abundant marriage, where you can be spirit, soul and body intimate for a lifetime. This emotional environment can be yours in weeks. I'm a guy and I did it and now reap that harvest. You definitely want these skills in place if they can make you sexually successful for a lifetime.

Lisa and I have done this exercise for over ten years. After the one hundred-day period, you can adjust the feeling structure but I would recommend for the next one hundred days you stick to the structure and obtain the skill of the feelings exercise. I have experienced such safety with my wife, Lisa, in this area. Her acceptance of my feelings and heart without feedback during the exercise has given me the opportunity to generalize that she is the safest person on the planet for my heart. My soul is saturated with my wife. This protects me from temptation and really makes my life fun.

It's normal for Lisa and I even throughout the day to stop each other and share what we are feeling at the moment or what we feel about a life event that day. I know I can call Lisa anytime and share positive or not so comfortable feelings with her and she can do the same with me as well. For me that is what emotional intimacy is about. It's the feeling of not being alone in this world but connected in the garden, spiritually and emotionally with your wife.

Daily #3 - Praise and Nurturing

This is the last of the three daily exercises you have the opportunity to practice with your wife over the next one hundred days. This exercise addresses the God given need for nurturing and praise that every one of us has.

As parents we intuitively know our children need to hear I love you, I'm proud of you, you're smart, great choice, and so on. I don't know where we get the notion that, as we become adults that we don't need nurturing. Yes, we need to be mature but we never are without the need of nurturing.

My Bible clearly tells me to come to God like a child.

And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3-4

The fact that we are the sons and daughters of God is an ongoing theme of God's word. He is infinite and we are so terribly finite. I hope I never think I'm an adult. Actually, the older I become the more childlike before God I am. I am a child of God and I still need (not just want) praise and affirmation. When we see God talking to Jesus, He always affirmed His Love for Him and nurtures Him.

You are the primary voice in your wife's life. A silent voice is the cruelest thing you can do to your wife. The spouse who hears neither bad nor good from the husband or wife that they committed their life to, grows hollow inside.

If we are to be like our Father in heaven (which needs to be the goal of us all) then nurturing and praising others will be part of His nature through us. Now again, I realize this better than most. Praise and nurturing is not something that all of us grew up with.

Praise and nurturing one another is an essential ingredient for a vibrant ongoing intimate relationship which breeds sexual success. In the next one hundred days of practicing praise and nurturing you will get skilled and comfortable with the exercise of giving and receiving. For some husbands and wives the giving of praise is difficult. For others it is the receiving or acknowledging praise that is more difficult. Still for others both aspects of giving and receiving praise is difficult.

Both the giving and receiving of praise is a skill. Again, skills can be learned by anyone. Anyone can praise and nurture a soul. As you practice the praise exercise (that you will be learning) daily you and your spouse will experience the oil of intimacy drip into your soul and heal areas of dryness that you didn't even know existed.

When I counsel couples I ask them when the last time you received a real praise, eye to eye, heart to heart and not just the obligatory, "thanks honey." They look at each other, then shrug their shoulders. This is sad because this is the icing on the cake for me. When Lisa tells me something positive about myself almost every day, my soul leaps. I feel affirmed and I can take on another day of life events. This is because I know in the deepest of my heart that at the end of even the worst day of my life, those big green eyes of hers are going to look right into my heart and she's going to say something nice.

Now I ask you, how hard do you think it is to be around someone who affirms you at least daily? Not hard at all, is my answer. We all love being around people who think that we're special or praise worthy. It is even greater when that person is your spouse.

Imagine if you were going to take a very long journey and you could choose between three spouses to travel with you. Spouse number one that you could choose is critical the majority of the time. Most of the time you don't know enough, you don't do things right and you can't make them happy no matter what you do. (I call this hell on earth). The second spouse you could pick for your journey is silent most of the time. They don't praise or compliment you or really give you much of an opinion at all. Their gifts are all locked up in fear and they think themselves too inferior to be a helpmate so you get to do it all spiritually, emotionally, sexually, and financially. This is what I call purgatory on earth, it isn't hell because at least you are in control but it sure is lonely.

The last spouse you could choose for your long journey knows how to compliment your qualities. She can stop on even the busiest day to offer a kind word and has learned the discipline of seeing the good in you. I call this heaven on earth to have a spouse who thinks and acts like the God who created and saved you.

So which spouse would you pick, spouse #1, spouse #2, or spouse #3? I am sure most of us would like to be stuck with spouse #3 for the journey of forty or fifty years together if we had a chance to start all over again.

The great news is you do get to start all over again. The other news is you get to choose to be spouse #3 to your wife. Isn't it great that in a free society you can choose to be spouse #3 by bringing praise and nurturing to one of God's most special children, your wife.

I can tell you however that I have before God chosen to be spouse #3 to my wife, Lisa. Do you remember the principle of sowing and reaping we talked about earlier? If you sow praise in time the harvest of nurturing and praise will come back to you.

The specifics of this exercise are very similar to the feelings exercise. First you both individually think of two things that you love, appreciate or value about the other person.

The praises can apply to something they did during the day or simply a general appreciation for your spouse. When you both have two praises for your husband or wife you can begin this exercise.

Let's suppose the husband goes first. Remember that the guideline of maintaining eye contact applies here as well. The husband looks into his wife's eyes and states, "I really appreciate that you are such a thrifty person, like the way you saved us money on checking into the mortgage insurance today."

Then the wife would continue to look at her husband until she accepted or let it into her heart. Now I purposely said heart and not head. This is not a cognitive exercise but a heart exercise. After the wife has let the praise into her heart she says, "Thank you".

The "thank you" is an important part of the exercise. This is when the recipient has received the praise in his or her heart. I used the word received because at first you may not agree with your spouse's praise due to the lack of skill or feelings of inferiority yet you acknowledge that you let the praise into your heart.

At this time the wife would give her husband his praise. When he lets it into his heart he then says, "thank you." Then he gives his wife a second praise and she gives him a second praise with the follow up words, "thank you."

For example I will use the following praises and appreciations that Trent and Natalie offer to each other. In our example Trent will go first.

Trent: I really appreciate the extra effort you made today in completing the decorating project.

Natalie: Thank you.

Natalie: What I really love about you is that you are sincere about working on our marriage.

Trent: Thank you.

Trent: I love the way you laugh, it brings me such happiness to hear your laughter.

Natalie: Thank you.

Natalie: I appreciate you making time for me at lunch today.

Trent: Thank you.

This is how the nurturing or praise exercise sounds. It may look simple but for some, it is difficult work. This exercise is sweet. When it is combined with the other two daily exercises, it can make a profound shift in your intimacy.

Okay, we are now finished discussing the three daily exercises for intimacy. This was a lot of information so I want to review them briefly and follow up with an illustration of the whole process.

1. Pray daily with your spouse
2. Do two feelings exercises – following the guidelines
 - a. no example about each other
 - b. maintain eye contact
 - c. no feedback
3. Do two praises daily with eye contact and follow up with a thank you

An example of a couple actually doing all three exercises is helpful for some couples to sense exactly what to expect. In our example I will write out what David and Ellen would say during the exercises.

Exercise #1 Pray

David: Jesus, I thank you for a great day and for being with Ellen the children and me. Thanks for the commission you gave me today in the job and for helping Ellen during her day. I love you Jesus, thanks for everything.

Ellen: I, too, want to praise you Jesus. You have been so good to David and I. Thank you so much for providing all that we need and so much more. You are an awesome God. Thanks for little Tony's progress in school and for Darla's new friend Jennifer, we love you Lord.

Exercise #2 Feelings

David: I feel enthusiastic when I close a deal like I did today at the office.

I first remember feeling enthusiastic when dad would wake me up early on Saturday's when I was about six years old just to say we were going fishing.

Ellen: I feel drained after being stuck in traffic twice today.

I first remember feeling drained when I was nine after being out in the snow until we were wet and cold from making snow angels.

David: I feel safe when I come home from work and I know the phone finally isn't for me. I first remember feeling safe when I was ten years old in a football league and I got to wear a real helmet and pads.

Ellen: I feel appreciated when Tony hugged me today and said you're the greatest mom. I first remember feeling appreciated when my mom made such a big deal to my dad that I cleaned my room without being told. I think I was about seven.

Exercise #3 Praise and Nurturing

David: I really appreciate you being so patient with Darla's piano lessons every night.

Ellen: Thank you.

Ellen: I really appreciate you coming home thirty minutes early today and taking time to clean up the kitchen with me.

David: Thank you.

David: I love that you stay so attractive. Even in jeans and a T-shirt you are still so beautiful.

Ellen: Thank you.

Ellen: I love the fact that you just trust my judgment in different areas of our relationship.

David: Thank you.

And that's it - the three dailies! I pray that the next one hundred days, you allow this structure to offer the many skills it will give back to your marriage. May God truly bless all the sowing that you have invested into your marriage and may your harvest be something all of your generations share in.

This is something that you and another man can get accountable with each other so that you stay on tract. Sexual success is a lifestyle of intimacy. Remember the oil in the engine? That is your job to put the intimacy into the relationship. If you don't put the oil in daily, expect funny noises and expect to spend your money on professionals later. My advice and my experience is—do the basics and better is always ahead of you!

CHAPTER 11

Sexual Agreement

As a married couple you will probably experience sex anywhere from two to five thousand times more or less. As we discussed earlier God made sex for us to enjoy and celebrate each other. If you combined sex with spiritual and emotional consistency and follow the three guidelines mentioned earlier, which were to keep your eyes open, the lights on with nurturing conversation you can enjoy what I call God's best sex.

With all this potential to please each other and the absolute joy of sex, it is still one of the top reasons people come in for marital counseling. It has been a consistent point of amazement to me how often couples regardless of how long they have been married can't even agree on how often they are having sex.

The differences in perception are almost as universal as couples have about sex. I will usually ask the couple coming in for counseling in our first session how often they are being sexually active together? Inevitably one spouse will say a low number such as once every ten to fourteen days. The other spouse will say two times a week.

I have to chuckle when this happens and affirm the couple that they are perfectly normal that they don't agree on their frequency of sex. Another interesting issue that arises while working with couples and sexual frequency is their desired amount. When assisting couples toward reaching sexual agreement and harmony I will ask how often they would you like to have sex. The answers are most of the time very similar.

Often they look at each other and look at me with amazement that they really didn't know that they agreed more than they disagreed about their desired frequency of sexuality. "Then why aren't we doing it that often?" is usually the next question. The answer is because they haven't agreed to the frequency in any formal manner of discussion.

An example of this is Amy and Fred who were married several years when they began to consider divorce. Fred was just finishing his degree to become a chiropractor. Amy has been supporting the family financially and was feeling very neglected. They were having sex once every six to eight weeks. Amy and Fred were in their thirties and an average couple their age would typically be sexual about two to three times a week. They were way off the scale as far as average sexual experiences for a couple their age. Amy and Fred loved each other and were active church members.

Amy and Fred said they would argue about their sex life all the time. They wanted to stop and the only solution they could think of was divorce. They had two children and didn't want to divorce. They stated that other than the sexual issue they got along

fine. I asked Amy and Fred to write down separately on a piece of paper how often each of them would like to be sexual. When Amy flipped her piece of paper over it read that she wanted to be sexual two or three times a week. Fred flipped his paper over and as you may have guessed it said two to three times a week. We were all amused and realized we could easily save this marriage.

I asked them how is it that you both want sex the same amount of times a week and yet you're only having it once every six weeks? Amy and Fred answered very similarly. They said that when they have sex, it's great but then a few days go by and he or she doesn't initiate. One of them ends up believing that other spouse doesn't want sex or they think they would have asked. Then a week goes by and they begin to feel unwanted and rejected. Soon they both don't talk about it and start to distance themselves from each other. Eventually they both get irritable with the following week increasing to anger outburst over almost anything. By the next week they get so mad at each other that they eventually apologize, make up and are sexual again and it soon the pattern starts all over again!

As we dialoged about this together, Amy and Fred realized a couple of things. The first thing they realized is they never really calmly talked through their desire for sexual frequency. Also they never realized both of them were 100 % responsible for initiation of sex. Neither one was self-responsible for their sexuality yet regarded their spouse as 100% responsible to initiate sex. Thirdly, they realized that they could walk in agreement sexually and probably be really happy the rest of their life together.

Sexual chaos versus sexual order

How do situations like this happen? How can a couple remain married, in love and still struggle so much in the area of sexuality? These are questions I want to address because there are so many couples just like Amy and Fred.

Here is what I believe happens as young couples evolve sexually in a normal situation. A couple gets married and in the first six months to a year sex is usually not an issue. Both spouses are having plenty of sex and feel relatively good about the quantity of sex. As a couple takes on more responsibilities such as school, work, children, two cars, and a mortgage, life becomes more stressful and complicated.

During the next few years the couple doesn't normally talk about it, but a system of chaos and manipulation evolves. As the husband smartens up sexually, he realizes that sex is beginning to slow down so he concludes, "if I ask for more, then I will get more because if I ask twice and I am refused once, that leaves me only having sex once. If I ask four times, then I can at least get sex twice and if I am lucky maybe three times." So this brave young male goes about his pursuits and hence the dance of manipulation begins.

The wife begins to feel more pressure from her husband to be sexual, so she begins to make some generalizations about sex and her husband. She believes he starts with kissing and hugging in the kitchen and if she lets him do that then he thinks she wants to be sexual. So what she thinks she needs to do is not let him kiss and hug her then he won't ask for sex. She begins to manipulate how much affection she will participate in, in hopes of somehow managing the sexuality in her young marriage.

Manipulation can go into multiple directions as the couple tries to deal with sexuality without talking about it. You may have heard the jokes about "if the pillow is on the right side, you can ask. If it's on the left side you better not" jokes.

When I was a teenage I remember seeing a plaque in a store that had two dials one for him and one for her. The sayings around the dial were "not tonight", "no way", "I'm tired", "if you hold me first", "maybe", "ask and take your chance", "okay, if I have to", "tonight's your night". Back then I thought how confusing this sex thing must be. As an adult, I don't think it has to be all that difficult, as we will discuss further.

Hopefully, what you can begin to see is that over time, every couple develops a sexual system. This system is a way in which they figure out how to ask without asking and how to reject without communicating. How unclear these systems are even to the couples that are participating in the sexual system they have created.

Having a clear sexual system or sexual agreement is very important. Even the best of Christian marriages can stagger and injure each other throughout the years of marriage with a non-discussed and non-agreed upon system of sex that they co-created yet no one is responsible for.

Responsibility is a big issue when it comes to sexuality. As we discussed in an earlier chapter, just because someone is physically an adult it does not mean that they are sexual adults. Sexual adults are responsible for their own sexuality and can create an agreement together for sexual expression.

Sexual Acceptance

The gift from God to men is a strong sex drive that doesn't quit until near death. This drive forces him to get through his insecurities and self doubts to start dating and is a large motivation for men to marry regardless of their spiritual maturity. This drive compels men to consistently work through the marital issues during his lifetime with his wife. This sexual gift from God is what glues a man to a woman spiritually, emotionally and neurologically. This sexual drive is a great gift from God. This God given gift has many virtues.

The gift of sex is different for each woman. The woman's drive seems to come mostly from the communion or an emotional and spiritual realm. Generally speaking when she feels close she wants to express herself physically. She is not looking for a sex act; she is looking for a love event during sexuality. I believe women intuitively

desire spiritual, soul and body sex as the majority of their sexual experiences. This gift of sexuality and communion from her soul is as important to acknowledge as the husband's physiological sex drive.

Firstly, if you can accept, and not try to manipulate how your husband or wife is created, you will move much faster through creating the best sex of your life. I vividly remember a conversation I was having with a client one day about his sexuality with his wife. He was a thirty-year-old professional man with three children and a stay-at-home wife. They were having sex very infrequently. He and I started talking about the emotional needs of women. He said to me, "You're right!" Apparently about a year ago he read a book about women and what they need. He said the book told him to listen without trying to solve the problem. He went on to tell me that it said to ask questions about her feelings and to also share things about his life with her without being prompted. He told me, "I did everything the book told me to do for three months. That's when we were having the most and best sex of our marriage!" I asked him what happened? He said something that has still stuck with me all these years: "I stopped doing my part."

In this situation, for a three-month period of time the husband accepted the fact that men are different from women. Women have needs that men don't necessarily have at the same level. Some men are pretty simple in their thought process about sex. For the wife a major part of their sexuality is wrapped up in her getting her spiritual and emotional needs met on a daily basis. When this happens, men will see the transformation of their wife's spiritual, emotional and sexual demeanor change. If you give your wife the oil of intimacy, in return you will see that sexuality is more comfortable for her to participate in and initiate.

There are no magic buttons on your wife that can get you more sex. Some women have not matured into sexual adults and still behave as sexual children. If your wife continues in these and other unhealthy sexual issues, you can be a prince of a guy for a year and still have no increase of sexual expression from her. In cases like this, definitely pursue professional help.

Moving on toward the husband's side of the relationship, some men are sexual and most are very sexual. This will not change! Men love to be touched and touch. Men think about sex almost as much as they think about food. Men are generally creatures of appetite and most women were aware of that way before marriage.

Imagine your wife taking you to the mall early the day after Thanksgiving to go Christmas shopping. You know the sales are great and you can get more done in that one day because stores in large cities are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. You're running a little behind so you forget to eat breakfast.

Ten o'clock approaches and you start hinting about what you are going to do about lunch. You continue to shop as 11:00 a.m. comes and goes and you indicate a little bit more firmly that it's now getting close to lunchtime. Again she pacifies you and

assures you that you will eat soon. Twelve o'clock now goes by and you are now getting rude, and you can tell food is getting more and more on your mind. By 1:00 p.m. you are a monster. You won't say anything and you are mad! You are totally fixated on food and if you don't eat soon, not only is shopping over; it's going to be a bad day for everyone.

Men, you know what I am talking about. We call it male "food anxiety". We wake up wanting to know what's for breakfast. At 10:30 a.m. we want to know what's for lunch. When we come home from work you know what the classic male greeting is "Hi, honey, what's for dinner?" You would think we have little else on our minds. If men don't know when they are eating, they get food anxiety.

I think we clearly illustrated that most men that are not depressed or sexually anorexic are appetite driven. This will not change and is the gift of God. Appetites for life in general make men work harder, create more and keep them working because if you don't work, you don't have money for food!

What does all this food talk have to do with sex? Food is a classic way to illustrate that like food, men think a lot about sex. Most have heard the urban myths about how often men think about sex. Although I have never personally read these studies, I think the point is, we think about sex a lot.

Now, if a man is in a manipulation based sexual system, then he has to rely on his fine-tuned skills to manipulate his wife into sex. This keeps most men in a constant state of "sexual anxiety". They don't know when they are having sex or if they are having sex again. This kind of system gives men more sexual anxiety and hence they think about it more than if they knew when sex was happening.

When men know about when sex will occur and who is initiating it, they think about sex a lot less and have almost no sexual anxiety.

Once a couple comes to a place of sexual agreement where both are sexual adults and keep their sexual word to each other, peace comes into the sexual system like a flood gate. Remember that male sexuality is a gift from God. It is to be celebrated by the couple not tolerated. A man who is sexually tolerated by his wife will over time generate many negative feelings toward his wife. On the other hand, a man who generally feels sexual acceptance and is sexually celebrated will have an ongoing positive feeling and expression of love for his wife.

Men are creatures of appetite. When I dated before marriage, it was very common for those I dated to cook for me and find out my favorite meal. I remember during my very financially poor college years, my Lisa would ask me over to her and her parents home and almost always offer me great food. I felt loved and special.

A common urban myth about men is when a woman has something bad or negative to tell her husband, wait until after he has eaten a good dinner. Although humorous, we

commonly agree that men are more approachable after their appetites are satiated. This is just as true when we talk about their sexual appetites.

On the other hand, a husband ignores the spiritual and emotional aspects of his wife he will damage their sexuality over time. The man is spiritually and emotionally lazy has a huge surprise down the road. The surprise is that she won't be interested and it will be because you did not accept her sexuality and emotional connection. I tell men all the time if you want to train your wife not to like sex don't pray with her, listen to her feelings or keep your word outside the bedroom. They laugh but those who have refused to sexually accept their wife's intimacy needs, know I am telling the truth.

Sexual Agreement

A sexual agreement is when a couple intelligently and calmly discusses their sexual preferences for frequency and then distributes the responsibility between them for initiating fairly. In a sense, the husband and wife decides verbally and then writes down the way they want to structure their sexuality so that both are reasonably sexually happy.

I need to put a word of caution here. Don't bring this agreement up with your wife until you have been consistent on the three daily exercises for sixty to ninety days. You may only get one shot at bringing this concept up. If she is spiritually and emotionally distant because of your lack of skills or neglect, it may backfire. She will quickly see through your plot to get more sex without meeting her needs first. She will see you as manipulative, lazy and weak. So first things first. Do the intimacy exercises and then talk about this.

Life is about negotiation. This is especially true in a marriage. If a man is pestering his wife to have sex daily or if the wife wants sex only one time a month they are both being sexually selfish and unreasonable.

In sexual agreement, we are applying the principle from Amos 3:3, where it speaks of how can two walk together unless they be agreed? If you don't agree on a sexual system, the chances are you will create one without really agreeing on it. Although unusual, some couples are fortunate that the system they created between them works because both people in the marriage are happy with their naturally evolved sexual system.

Creating a sexual agreement

Sexual systems are an issue that many couples fight about for decades. As you walk through the process of creating a sexual agreement together I will ask you to do three things.

1. Be open minded to each other's needs sexually.
2. Be honest about your sexuality.
3. If you can't do this together, get professional help.

Agreements and management structures are used in almost every other area of your life. In money, you organize, manage and oversee the system of your finances. You also manage the raising of your children and their countless classes and scheduled activities. Your spiritual and emotional lives require many agreements and systems. Much of life is really about effective management for optimal results. This truth is also self evident as you walk toward creating a sexual agreement.

The first step toward creating a sexual agreement is the issue regarding the frequency of sex. Firstly, both of you will need to write on a piece of paper your own personal preferences for frequency. On an average this may be one, two or three or more times a week for couples up to the age of about fifty and then usually will lessen to about once a week. I say this as a reference point only because I am asked this question so often. This is now where the negotiating starts. This is your marital sexual system so you can be as creative as you wish. If he prefers two sexual experience each week and she wants to be sexual three times a week then on his week he can have his frequency and on her week she can choose hers.

Remember that this is your sexual agreement. I usually ask couples to stick to their agreements for a minimum of ninety days to see if the system is working for everybody. If the system needs changing at that point, discuss this in a public place (not your bedroom or in your house) so that it is in no way a manipulation or one trying to pressure their spouse into more or less sexuality than they agreed to that night.

The following are several basic sexual systems for you to choose from. You may come up with your own version of a system, which is fine. I realize that as a couple has children and raises those children and then goes through the stage of children leaving the home, the sexual systems will change but only when both agree with the changes. Lisa and I have had our sexual agreement for about a decade. Every year we review this and make changes as needed. I say this is so you don't think that this is simply a good idea. Many have practiced putting these systems into place and it has brought great peace to their relationships. Others have written and called me with their successful testimonies of walking in sexual agreement.

System One

After you have checked the previous box as to agreeing on your frequency, you will now simply pick the days that you want to be sexual. If you want to be sexual twice a week, then you can pick any two days of the week that work within you schedule. For example, Tuesday and Saturday or Wednesday and Sunday. You are most familiar with your schedule so agree on the days that you want to be sexual. In this system, you can divide sexual responsibility by the day or by the week.

For example, let's suppose Jason and Dana chooses to be sexual two days a week on Tuesday and Saturday. Jason could be responsible to initiate on Tuesdays and Dana could be responsible for initiating on Saturdays. Jason and Dana could also make it so on

the 1st and 3rd week of the month, Jason would initiate and on the 2nd and 4th week Dana would initiate the sexual encounters.

Busy couples love this system because they don't have to concern themselves about it. This can easily be fit into a busy schedule because on their busier days they both can have stress free days concerning sexuality. Other couples find this system too rigid and not spontaneous enough for their style.

System 2

In this system of choosing when to be sexual, you would split the week up between the two of you. If you agreed on twice a week to be sexual then John would get Sunday, Monday and Tuesday to choose which day he wants to initiate sex. He would initiate sex one time during this three-day period. Wednesday would be off for both of you in a two times a week system. (Some couples make Wednesday a day that either can ask. If you chose to have sex two to three times a week or simply three times a week some have scheduled on the 1st and 3rd week either can ask.) Dana would get Thursday, Friday and Saturday and she would initiate one time during her three-day period. So Jason has his part of the week to initiate and Dana has her part of the week. They are both clear on what days to initiate and who is responsible to initiate. This system allows more flexibility for a person to choose when they want to be sexual. Again, some couples love this system and for others this system would not work.

System 3

This system is a rotating system. In this system, if you decided on a twice a week agreement each person has up to three days to initiate sex with their spouse (day 1, 2, or 3). They can initiate within any of their days. The day following the initiated day it begins the other spouse's turn and they also have up to three days (day 1, 2, or 3 to initiate). In this system, Jason has three days to initiate. If he decides to wait until day two then fine, after the day they have sex it's Dana's turn. The next day is Dana's turn; she can initiate the very 1st day of her turn or wait until day three. Dana decides to initiate the very next day. Then Dana's turn is over and the next day it is Jason's turn. He just had sex two days in a row so he may wait to initiate as it is his turn.

This system provides both the utmost of flexibility for those couples wanting spontaneity, as well as, accommodating higher frequency of sexuality with their relationship. In this system, you can have sex as little as twice a week (both spouses waiting for the 3rd day to initiate) or daily or anywhere in between. Again, for some couples this system is ideal but for others it's too fluid.

These are the three basic sexual agreement systems. Your coupleship is unique so you can choose any of these three systems or come up with a sexual system of your own. The sexual system you choose 1, 2, 3 or your own isn't as important as the fact that you walk in agreement sexually.

Sexual agreement is such a blessing, you will be married a long, long time and it is better to agree about sexuality and negotiate and change systems over time than to have an unknown sexual system that no one agreed to. This chapter is designed to give you a sincere taste of sexual harmony and peace.

I know that as a Christian marriage and family counselor, that where the spirit of the Lord is, there can be peace. In Christian marriages, all too often the bedroom does not reflect this spirit of peace. It's not because of a lack of love, or even a lack of sexual desire, it is often because of a lack of agreement.

Benefits of Agreement

The benefits of walking in sexual agreement are tremendous. I can tell you from my own life this has brought us much clarity and peace in our marriage since we have implemented it. I have also seen the tremendous amount of peace sexual agreement has brought to many of the Christian couples I have worked with over the last ten years or so, since we have been using sexual agreement systems.

Sexual anxiety is totally reduced for husbands that have a sexual agreement in their marriage. The husband now knows he is going to be sexual on a regular basis. So his fear of being rejected is gone, as well as, his desire to sexually manipulate are no longer necessary.

He not only knows that he is going to be sexual regularly, he knows approximately how often and more importantly when. For most men, this is very satisfactory to know when sexual intimacy will occur. Now their need to be sexually fed has been heard, understood and agreed upon with the person that they love most-their wife.

Another benefit of this new sexual system is that in the past he has been the primary or only sexual initiator and now he gets the opportunity to receive sexual initiation from his spouse. I can tell you for some men, this is so important to be asked to be sexual by their wife. So many men have experienced years of being totally responsible for the sexuality in their marriage. They felt tolerated by their wife, like they had a disease that needed medicine and sex unfortunately was the medicine.

The wife may or may not have felt that way but the husband might have projected that onto her because she didn't initiate sex. Depending on the age of the wife, may explain also why she may not have initiated since it wasn't thought to be "proper" many years ago for the wife to mutually initiate.

In a sexual system husbands have a much greater respect and appreciation for their wife. She becomes more precious and desirable in his heart. He feels, "she's in this with me". He doesn't feel alone sexually but together. I can't tell you how many men pulled me aside just because of having a sex system and have said things like, "I've never been this in love with my wife" and they were not just talking about the sexual frequency. They

were talking about the sense of unity and love they felt toward their wife because they were together on their sexuality, finally.

The benefit of being in sexual agreement greatly affects the wife as well. I can remember in counseling sessions where wives were so relieved to finally get this sexuality issue agreed upon. Many of them felt hopeless and frustrated trying to manage both their own and their husbands' sexuality.

The wives I have counseled over the years that now have sexual agreement systems in place within their marriage report several benefits to me. They are happy with having their own sexuality returned to them. God made each woman sexual, but many feel that they were always reacting to his sexuality so much that they didn't get the opportunity to express their own sexuality. She didn't get to have fun, combined with the ambivalence of not knowing how far things were going to go sexually.

The new sense that "this is my sexuality and this is how I want to express it" is a great benefit for a woman who has a sexual agreement. She can choose her time (within limits) to decide when she will be sexual.

This sense of sexual choice is important for women. Too often wives feel that they have no sexual choices. She is to just submit sexually. She inevitably feels like her choice to be sexual was taken away or stifled. Sexual agreement is a real benefit to her because her husband also now agrees that she should have sexual choices and be a sexual adult equal to but not suppressed by him.

Another benefit for women who have a sexual agreement in place is that they now have experienced the freedom to relax not only sexually but also with physical affection. The wife now is free to experience her husband's spontaneous hugs and kisses. When it's her turn, it will become sexual only when she wants it to because she decides that. She can let his affection into her heart instead of feeling like she has to defend herself.

She, like her husband, in a sexual agreement system, knows when and how much sexuality is going to take place in her marriage. Her sexual desires were also heard and negotiated with the love of her life – her husband. She is an equal in the system and is respected and can respect herself. She is a sexual adult and doesn't need to be manipulated or coerced to be sexual.

She not only knows when sexuality will happen in her marriage, she knows when it will not. She knows there are days she doesn't have to think about sex at all. She can relax because if she doesn't feel like it and it's her turn to choose the day, she doesn't have to be sexual. The freedom not to be sexually for some women is just as valuable a benefit as anything else we discussed.

The couple also benefits from walking in sexual agreement. I have seen numerous couple's intimacy increase significantly after they have been consistent with a sexual system. This sexual issue in the past has been a drain on both the husband and the wife.

They no longer have to manipulate, argue, fuss or pout about sex anymore. This can give couples a lot more energy to just enjoy each other and their lives together.

Another benefit I have seen with couples having a sexual system in place is heightened sexual esteem. The husband and wife have a new sense of sexual confidence and awareness that they are not only satisfied sexually but they are now also sexually satisfying their mate. It is intricate to your self-esteem to feel good about your sexuality and it's expression.

A last benefit I have seen in couples who walk in sexual agreement, is a removal of sexual authority from any one person in the agreement. In a sense the agreement becomes the authority not the husband or wife who in the past controlled or dominated the sexuality. Now no one person is to blame and this is what we have agreed to becomes more a part of the conversation. Most of you are much more likely to give authority to an agreement that you participated in creating.

In the next one hundred-days, I am sure your experience will be positive as you and your spouse walk in sexual agreement. Although a sexual agreement may be challenging for those who have been living irresponsibly as sexual children or sexual adolescents the journey now is worth it. In our 100-day log, you will be able to note your progress together as you walk through sexual agreement.

Guidelines for a Successful Agreement

Below are some guidelines for a successful sexual agreement. Couples can come up with questions about their sexual agreement and may want to run them by a source of authority.

The first guideline is the issue of responding to the sexual advances of your spouse. Since we are sexual adults and not behaving as children or adolescents, what I tell couples is this: ALWAYS say YES! unless you have a doctor excuse! That may sound extreme until you understanding this agreement.

When it's the other persons turn, comply with their advances and when it's your turn, they should comply as well. We all know when our spouse is truly too sick to be sexual and as Christians, we need to be considerate of that. But I want to be clear, NO EXCUSES! The "I'm tired", "I have a headache" and so on do not work in a sexual agreement.

Do not manipulate or withhold from each other sexually. This kind of reaction is an ENEMY of intimacy. It will destroy the momentum and closeness in the relationship.

Realize not everyone who says they want intimacy really does. There is no more effective way to create chaos and anger than for a spouse to not keep their sexual word.

The second guideline is about consequences. I have worked with enough couples to know change is difficult and can be intentionally resisted. Especially in couples that have had a life long struggle with sexual addiction, sexual anorexia or just simple sexual maturity issues.

Once you set up a sexual agreement, and your spouse doesn't keep his or her word what do you do? Before you begin with your sexual agreement or after a spouse fails two times to either initiate sexually or respond appropriately to the sexual advances, consequences must be implemented for change. I have found it works better for couples to set their consequences BEFORE they start a sexual system.

A consequence is something that a person would much rather not do than have sex. In other words, it's not just simply saying I'll do the dishes. It's much more painful than that. Let me give you some examples that have been effective for other couples. Remember that each spouse picks his or her own consequence.

- Hand wash and detail the spouses' automobile
- 2-4 hours of volunteering at a nursing home
- Sending \$100 to the Democratic Party in their town
- Volunteering at the Democratic Party in their town
- Spending time with a relative they don't like
- Sending money to a relative or organization they don't like
- A two mile run
- Having to give their spouse a 60 – 90 minute massage
- Having to watch the children for 4 hours while your spouse goes somewhere
- Not able to watch sports for 2 weeks
- Not going hunting or fishing
- Having to make a counseling appointment

Each person comes up with what their consequence would be for not fully participating in their sexual agreement. For example, if John withholds sex from Mary when it was his turn to initiate by Tuesday bedtime. He didn't do it. Regardless of the reason, since he wasn't dead and he definitely didn't have a doctor's excuse he would complete his consequence. Likewise if John initiated during his time and Mary refused to participate, then Mary would do her agreed upon consequence.

If a person refuses to do their consequence or if one person is regularly not keeping their sexual word, then I would strongly suggest a counseling session.

Guideline number three is when it's NOT your turn YOU CAN NOT ASK! This is a simple guideline but when someone consistently doesn't respect the sexual space of the other person, it can erode the sexual system.

Guideline number four has to do with the menstrual cycles. It is important for a couple to make a clear communication about what is expected or accepted during this time of the

month. The couple also needs to communicate about when the wife needs to tell the spouse the news about the starting of the cycle.

Couples vary so much about sex and the cycle. For some couples, they just keep having intercourse and for others, they wouldn't even think about having sexual relations during this time. Options for couples seem to be one of the following:

1. Continue sexually as normal
2. To sustain sexual activity for a defined period
(i.e., so many days or so many turns at initiating)
3. Be sexual but no intercourse

Any option is fine for a couple in a sexual agreement but it is imperative that you both agree with the choices so that there is less likely any relational fall out due to misunderstandings.

Secondly, discuss and agree when to communicate about when a cycle begins. It is often a loss for both the wife and the husband when it's his turn, he has been thinking about being sexual with his wife all day. He gets home, they eat, do the homework with children, take baths, put everyone to bed. He jumps into bed with his beloved and she says she can't she started her period that morning.

If he responds with anything less than "I hope you are feeling okay" he will be cast as insensitive and selfish. She can't do anything about getting her period and in no way should be made to feel "less than" during this time; it only makes matters worse.

What helps tremendously here is clear communication. A couple decides when she is to communicate the change in their normal sexual expression. Some couples have designed an agreement that the wife will communicate:

- As soon as she finds out, to let her husband know
- Send an e-mail with a catch phrase
- When he comes home, before dinner
- After dinner but before homework

A clear communication here can save both spouses some ill feelings due to a change in routine. It's often not the menstrual situation at all that is being responded to but the CHANGE in the sexual agreement. So for both of your sake, a preventative measure here can save you some deterioration on your relationship as you go through the next one hundred-days.

Guideline number five is agreeing on what sexual behaviors are MUTUALLY satisfying and acceptable to BOTH spouses. As we stated earlier, people vary in their sexual personalities, preferences, histories and the amount of sexual sin they have consumed or participated in.

Therefore, since this is going to be the only garden of sexuality you will both be eating from, it is helpful for you both to define what is acceptable. Some fruit may be acceptable all the time, others you can have sometimes (decide who can initiate that particular fruit) and some fruit is definitely forbidden.

Again, this is your sexual garden, it is not necessarily a right or wrong but what you BOTH want in your garden. On a separate sheet of paper, you can write out the various fruits of your sexual expression that each of you desires. Below you can indicate what is acceptable for each spouse or both.

Example	He	She
Position 1	Yes No Only if I initiate	Yes No Only if I initiate
Position 2	Yes No Only if I initiate	Yes No Only if I initiate
Act A	Yes No Only if I initiate	Yes No Only if I initiate
Act B	Yes No Only if I initiate	Yes No Only if I initiate
Place 1	Yes No Only if I initiate	Yes No Only if I initiate
Place 2	Yes No Only if I initiate	Yes No Only if I initiate

After you write all this out, both of you circle the appropriate response; Yes, No or only if I initiate. Everything you both circle yes to is a fruit that you both agree on and can participate in with a clear conscious before God and each other. The things you both circle “no” to would be things that would be defiling to your particular garden and would not even be asked for by either spouse. The ones where there is one “yes” and another “no” are areas of sexual disagreement. These are areas you would not participate in nor ask for during sex because you BOTH do not agree.

If you feel these areas need further discussion you can seek out a counselor or see a pastor in your area. The purpose of the counseling would be to hear the rationales, and histories, to see if this is a negotiable behavior. The goal of counseling is not to manipulate your spouse to do what you want sexually.

The column that states “only if I initiate”, can be used by a spouse who knows their mate likes a particular behavior but still don’t want to feel like they have to participate in other than when they want to occasionally for their spouse.

Charles and Cindy were a middle-aged couple with two teenagers. Overall, Charles and Cindy had a good Christian marriage and had successfully worked on most areas of their relationship but one issue kept rising up again and again. They came to counseling to resolve the one issue of a particular sexual behavior that Charles liked however Cindy was not comfortable with.

Charles liked Cindy to wear fancy, sexy lingerie. Charles enjoyed his wife’s body and like the way she looked in them. Cindy, however, was more conservative in her sexual personality and stated she felt like a prostitute not a Christian wife wearing them. You can see how Charles and Cindy disagreed in this area of their sexuality. If the only options Charles and Cindy had were “yes” or “no” they would have disagreed. The issue wasn’t the act itself; it was the feelings and perception of the acts. Cindy felt she was

being coerced to do this behavior. She felt that Charles didn't think she wasn't sexy enough on her own and that she was being something other than herself. As we talked, she realized that she could do this once in a while but only if she picked out the clothes and only "when she initiated" that she wanted to express her sexuality that way. When Cindy felt free to choose and express herself and understood that she was loved whether she wore this clothes or not, then she felt more comfortable wearing them occasionally.

The column, which states "only if I initiate" is, designed for the type of a situation that Cindy and Charles found themselves in. Agreement on what fruits are acceptable to both partners can add a greater sense of safety and trust in the area of sexuality. When you both agree there can be freedom and fun in the areas of sexuality.

Guideline number six is the fact that the system stays in place for at least sixty to ninety days before changing any aspect of it. One person does not make changes in the sexual agreement but both spouses must agree for a change is to be made. If you feel you need a professional to navigate you through these changes, please do this. Some couples agree only to make changes in their sexual agreement if their pastor or counselor agree also. This minimizes any manipulations that may be trying to take place.

We have taken a lot of time on this area of sexual agreeing. This is an area where I find Christian couples need the most help. Walking through the complexities of the sexual issues is a real mountain for every couple to climb. The view on the climb is always changing and growing.

You now have outlined how to create a sexual system. On a separate sheet of paper, both of you need to write down your sexual system. Below I have a checklist created for you to include the various ingredients to a successful sexual agreement.

1. Our sexual agreement is written down in a clear format which outlines how often sex is to occur.
2. Our sexual agreement is written down and is clear as to whom is responsible to initiate sexuality.
3. Our agreement states that we will say "YES" unless we have a doctor's excuse.
4. Our sexual agreement has identified self-imposed consequences for both spouses if either does not keep their sexual agreements.
5. We have included the "not asking" when it's not your turn policy.
6. We have an agreed plan about menstrual cycles and the communication of the cycle.
7. We have a written agreement as to what is acceptable / not acceptable / only if I initiate behavior.
8. We have a clause as to when our agreement can be changed.

If you completed all eight steps you only have one more step to go. When do you want to start your sexual agreement? You can write the date in the space below or put it on your agreement.

Date Started: _____

I know living in Colorado that any hike is work but it seems the higher you climb, the cleaner the air, the cooler the temperature and the more spectacular the view. I pray God's richest blessing on your marriage as you partake of all the fruits you have agreed upon. The garden is a great place for a couple to be, naked, unashamed and in the presence of the Lord.

The man and his wife were both naked, "and they felt no shame."

Genesis 2:25

As a man you will not only be feeling sexually successful but also masculine. You can definitely master the skills of intimacy and grow in areas where you have been deficient. You can hold your head high because you are being responsible with the woman God gave you. I know this may be more work than you bargained for. As a man, you're not afraid of work if everybody wins from your focus and efforts. Your climb may be work but as a fellow traveler, I can tell you it is worth it all. May God Bless your diligence!

CHAPTER 12

Leaving a Legacy

A large part of being a Christian man who is sexually successful is leaving a positive and healthy legacy for your sons. Your sons look to you for modeling in every area of their life. Rarely do we take a moment and think what kind of sexual role model I am being for my son. You have the responsibility of having the sex talk with your sons. What do you say? When? Let's not forget the big issue of masturbation as well. So I thought we would take a journey through this part together. I want every man to feel confident in passing sexual health down to your family. This may get challenging for some, but stay persistent as it can change the life of your son, his son and so on.

Role Modeling

How we role model male sexuality is imperative to our sons' interpretation of what comprises acceptable and unacceptable behavior. I have spent countless hours counseling men whose father's sexual role modeling was absent or even worse destructive.

The absent role model is one who never discusses sexuality. It's as if he is not having sex at all. He doesn't know what to say about it so he says nothing and hopes for the best.

The destructive role model is one who has pornography in his home. Remember, many men start pornography with their dad's own stash. You think you are hiding it, but you forget young men can sniff that stuff out. This type of father gives information about his affairs on his wife (your son's mother). This is hugely destructive to a young man's heart. He doesn't know whom to protect: Dad's secrets or the mother he loves. The destructive role model takes long lingering looks at other women and the son picks up that lust is okay. This role model also makes comments on women's body parts and teaches his son that women are objects. The form of entertainment he watches regularly contains sexual innuendoes on it regularly. This sends a clear message that voyeurism through television and movies is acceptable and listening to or watching this type of sexuality is normal for Christian men. Any such role modeling can influence and mold your son's sexuality. Often the destructive role model has little to say during a sex talk with his son. His son is on his own regarding figuring out his sexuality.

The positive role model is one who is intentional about communicating healthy sexuality to his son. He gets informed and looks for opportunities to talk about girls with his son in a positive way. He is behaviorally pure himself from pornography and adultery. He is able to be honest with other adult men about any lust issues in his life. He responsibly blocks the Internet, monitors television and media intake for himself and his family. He is emotionally connected to his son enough so that they can talk about sex.

The latter type of father is a good, general role model for male sexuality. Regardless of how our fathers were with us, we can become good role models for our sons. They will

catch more of our sexuality from our lives than from any book or video we discuss. The areas of importance are:

- Your personal purity – If you struggle sexually, your shame can cripple you from effective, positive sexual role modeling.
- Your behavior and attitudes toward women in general – You can only teach respect for women if you have respect for women.
- Your media intake – If you are silent about sexual innuendoes, sexual immorality, adultery and inappropriate dress while with your son, in his eyes you are condoning this behavior.
- Have intentional sexual conversations with your sons.

If you are doing well as a role model then this is a great start. If you're not, then begin now. Your personal sexuality is a large player in raising sexually healthy sons.

What Do I Say and When?

I want to alleviate some pressure here for you as a dad. Many men think in terms of having “the talk” with their sons. Such thinking is very limited and puts a lot of pressure on you to get it all right because you only have one shot at it. I think this paradigm is archaic. As a modern man, talking to your son is much different than a generation or two ago when kids married right out of high school.

Let's face it: Our sons will be single until probably his mid- to late twenties. Our grandfathers hit puberty at 18 and were married shortly thereafter. Our sons, because of health advantages, now hit puberty at 14. They are by far the longest sexually single generation in the history of mankind. This is a major reason some new thinking is necessary to raise them healthy.

Our sons have also inherited a much more sexually stimulating culture than we have or our fathers have. Because of the sexual idolatry in North America our sons will see and hear more about it in much more varied forms of media than we did. I'm not even including the Internet, a demon like no other that can trash a young boy's sexuality in seconds.

Having said all this, we are now going to cover a variety of issues. The first of which is to change the paradigm of “the talk” to “shepherding your sons sexually.” You will be guiding him along the path of sexuality from 12 years old until marriage. You will be having hundreds of sexual conversations between his youth and marriage.

Before I go any farther I want to clearly communicate that you are not 100% responsible for your son's sexual choices, or your daughter's for that matter. We all have a will and humans are capable of making bad choices despite having the best information. Adam and Eve had God as a father and they still erred. You are, however, 100% responsible for your role modeling and for disciplining your son regarding sex.

What to say exactly in these talks is another book in itself. I do have videos available that cover these topics in more depth, including as *Shepherding Your Sons Sexually* and the teen video you and your sons or daughters can view together called *Good Enough To Wait*. This chapter will give you a list of things to cover over time with your sons. You will have to decide “when” based on his maturity, current exposure to sexual information and age. Most of this information should be covered by age 14. Here are some topics for conversation:

- The Mechanics of Sex – The concepts of the penis inside the vagina, ejaculation, sperm and pregnancy. Most sex education books cover all these issues.
- Sex and the Brain – How the brain is conditioned and connects to what the eyes look at. (The video *Good Enough to Wait* covers this.)
- Internal and External Sexuality – Go over Exodus 20 with your son and the tenth commandment. Do a word study on lust in the Bible. Explain the rubber-band technique.
- Sex only in the context of marriage – Refer to the Bible for this one.
- Bad Women – Explain the dangers of women who want to steal his purity. Refer to the story of Samson, Proverbs 5, Revelation 2 and many others. Some teenage girls, as the ones in these Scriptures, can scar your son.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- Guidelines for courting or dating – Paul’s admonition to treat all women as sisters and what that means.
- Dangers of pornography and the Internet – Block home open access and know the service providers of your son’s friends if he frequents their homes.
- Condoms – The lie of safe sex.
- Masturbation

Additionally, here are some sources for current and reliable information regarding sex. Here is a list of options for you:

- A local high school health teacher
- The local health clinic
- Your wife’s OB/GYN doctor
- Local Bible/Christian Book Stores
- Focus on the Family (719) 531-3400
- The SHARE Program (425) 644-3312

If your church doesn’t have anything on this subject, you may want to share this list with them. When you find a good resource, purchase a second copy for the church to loan out to others. You can even attend our father/son retreats, where topics are sometimes covered more thoroughly.

Masturbation

Well, here we are again talking about masturbation. You need to address this subject with your son. Even if you believe your son is pure, or you have issues with sexuality yourself and feel that you can't talk about it, you're still the one who is 100 percent responsible to talk to your son. Your personality or preferences don't negate the fact that it's *your* job.

You might want to review this chapter on masturbation again before your talk. Make it a point to discuss the three types of masturbators. Remember, your young son doesn't have *your* history sexually, he has his own. Also cover the point that lust is sin. Having reviewed this I must state clearly, I am not recommending masturbation for anyone. If you are reading this book, stop and say out loud, "Dr. Doug is not recommending masturbation." I don't want anyone calling me, emailing me or asking me if I condone masturbation.

I know as Christian men we all would like to believe our sons will never masturbate. But since the percentage of those in North America who don't is so incredibly small, we have to look at our options. Option number one is to tell him nothing about masturbation. This leaves it up to him, his peers and the culture to inform him about masturbation. This can also leave him isolated and thinking he is the only one struggling. The second option is to give some guidelines, define when it's sin so he is clear, and hope and pray he will make wise choices.

For those who desire option one, nothing needs to be written. I would, however, be sure of your reasons for this choice and would encourage you to read further. For the second option, I would suggest including a discussion about the following four guidelines on masturbation. (Again, repeat out loud, "Dr. Doug is not encouraging masturbation.") The fourth guideline is the most important.

Guideline 1: Frequency – The first guideline deals with the frequency of masturbation and how many times a week or month is acceptable. You're the dad and you can come up with a number. When I am coaching dads, I suggest no more than once or twice a week. This is not to suggest that they do it that often, but to keep it to no more than this.

Why? When I talk to a teenager, I often have to break the news to him that the culture and the media are lying to him. Women don't want sex every day. For most women, one to two times a week is plenty. I explain if you train your body (with masturbation) to have sex four to seven times a week and you do this for years, then you will be frustrated in your marriage when your wife doesn't meet your current experience. Mostly likely the teen's future wife didn't masturbate at all. She will be clueless about your frustration, so don't set yourself up for this inevitable conflict.

Guideline 2: No Porn or Fantasy – At this point you will review the brain pathway information (*Good Enough to Wait Video* helpful here). This will help your son understand that what he views while masturbating will set up a strong neuropathic desire for that specific object or person. Using pornography or fantasies can also establish beliefs that can become a detriment to how his wife thinks about sex.

Why? If you masturbate to pictures of models (pictures that are airbrushed to make them look perfect and models who often have had numerous plastic surgeries) who are six-foot tall redheads, that is what you will chase. When God gives you a perfectly wonderful godly woman who is 5'2" with an average build, you will be unhappy with His gift to you. Don't fantasize about women because the fantasies will be different sexually than the one you marry. This will aggravate you and your wife will feel your unacceptance of her. She will be hurt and feel like her sex is not good enough for you.

Guideline 3: Stay Connected – If a young man stays with his body during masturbation and doesn't disconnect to a fantasy world, he can avoid lust.

Why? If you practice connected sexuality now, you will be able to enjoy connected sex with your future wife. Women want you present—mentally and emotionally, not just physically—when having sex. Disconnected sex is not only distasteful to women; it is undesirable. If you're planning to have sex for a lifetime, plan to have connected sex. If you practice disconnected masturbation, connected sex with a future wife will prove incredibly more difficult.

Guideline 4: Monthly Check-ins – Talk to your son every month about how he's doing on the last three guidelines. This is by far the most important guideline. The 100% responsibility falls squarely on you, Dad. Each month have a conversation about frequency, fantasy and staying connected. This routine will feel normal to your son—maybe uncomfortable the first couple of times, but normal.

Your consistency about the regular check-ins will open the door to conversations about sexual issues. This should be a normal part of the father/son relationship, which should continue even if he goes away to college.

Why? He needs to learn that male sexuality can be discussed openly and honestly with another man. He will know that he is normal sexually, and when he has sexual challenges, that sexual honesty and accountability are the solutions. This guideline alone will save your son so much potential harm. He won't feel alone in his sexuality. If he makes mistakes, you can pray together and minister to him during his sexual development. The bonding you develop can make your relationship with your son so much stronger and he will feel that he can trust you with anything in his life.

You can do this! You're a mighty man of God who wants to bless his lineage. I figure if every Christian man would do this check-in with his sons, we could break the curse of silence and raise the sexually healthiest sons the church and the world has seen to date.

I am excited for you as you leave a healthy sexual legacy for your family. You are the man of the house and you will determine much of your son's sexual inheritance.

CHAPTER 13

Finally, The View!

When I climb the various mountainous areas in Colorado where I live, I am always grateful when I arrive at the view. Before we get to the view we often have driven an hour or more and climbed another two hours to get to the beautiful mountainous trail that our friends have introduced us to and have now been to countless times.

When we finally arrive at the top, the view is absolutely spectacular. You can see for miles and you feel as if you can touch the clouds and yet there is the feeling that nature is surrounding even the souls of your feet. Even the men at the top of the mountain are oohing and aahing at how beautiful the view is at the top. It's during these moments you totally forget about the climb, the bruises, sweating, and being hungry and thirsty. You're just in awe of the view.

Being sexually successful is something like enjoying this view. The intensity of your sexual life is so heightened, the intimacy so close, and the afterglow so satisfying that you feel as if you have touched something extraordinary. You may have begun to experience the view of becoming sexually successful. Just as others who have climbed before you, now you have experienced it and you can ooh and aah too! You now can look at your wife with gratefulness and warmth.

Let's not forget that this was a climb. After reading through these pages you may have already partially climbed up the mountain of being sexually successful. We may have simply opened up a few paths to increase your intimacy or brought an increased agreement to your sexuality.

Others of you had to climb through the entire process. You may have had to retrain your dual or multi-focused brain. Possibly you took the healing path to deal with some of the sexual distraction from past abuse, addictions or anorexia. Oh, and don't forget the valley through the issues of masturbation. Some may have needed to camp for a while through that area. Soon after came the climb to learn more about your wife, playing and learning the game of intimacy so that you can both can win.

The jaunt through the emotionally based relationship and the rocky portion through the areas of childhood, adolescence or adulthood may have been a difficult terrain. But you persisted through it. You used your will, mind and emotions, and you overcame the particular hills you needed to climb.

Now you know why I wrote this book. It's when you see this view that absolutely takes your breath away, that you want to share it with other people at your first opportunity. As I too have shared the journey through this book, I began at the bottom of this climb.

The issues I presented through the leaves of these pages were often pages I have experienced and had to climb myself.

I also had a multi-focused brain, sexual trauma, and addiction in my past to handicap my climb. But like you, as a man I didn't make excuses. Instead I made a plan. Many other men that I have counseled with over the years also have experienced this same path toward our climb.

Following this similar path makes it easier but you will still have to work like the others who have enjoyed the view. You too can have every bit of the sexual success that you are willing to climb for.

I wish you the absolute best upon your journey toward sexual success. The day that you feel fulfilled in your sexuality with the woman you love, you'll know what the old timers meant when they said, "There's gold in them there hills."

Go For The Gold!

APPENDIX

FEELINGS EXERCISE

1. I feel (put feeling word here) when (put a present situation when you feel this).
2. I first remember feeling (put the same feeling word here) when (explain earliest occurrence of this feeling).

Abandoned
Abused
Aching
Accepted
Accused
Accepting
Admired
Adored
Adventurous
Affectionate
Agony
Alienated
Aloof
Aggravated
Agreeable
Aggressive
Alive
Alone
Alluring
Amazed
Amused
Angry
Anguished
Annoyed
Anxious
Apart
Apathetic

Tormented
Torn
Tortured
Touched
Trapped
Tremendous
Tricked
Trusted
Trustful
Trusting
Ugly
Unacceptable
Unapproachable
Unaware
Uncertain
Uncomfortable
Under control
Understanding
Understood
Undesirable
Unfriendly
Ungrateful
Unified
Unhappy
Unimpressed
Unsafe
Unstable
Upset