

# Intellectual Intimacy In Marriage

Are you and your spouse intellectually intimate? First of all what is intimacy? Intimacy in marriage is often misunderstood and most times limited to what couples do in the privacy of their bedrooms. Intimacy is both intensely private and public. If intimacy in your marriage is limited to the four walls of your bedroom, then as a couple you are not totally intimate. I have observed that many Bahamians are not totally intimate. They might be sexually active, but an intense level of intimacy is seriously lacking.

## DEFINITION

Intimacy is closeness in a relationship gained by revealing one's true self to another. It is sharing completely the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, or sexual facets of your life that you should share only with your spouse. As stated earlier, couples are not only married in the privacy of their homes. Their marriage extends far beyond the walls of their marital domain. It is a public affair, where the intellectual, spiritual, and emotional treatment of each other causes others to say: "They are really close;" "What a loving couple!" "They are truly partners," and other similar phrases. When intimacy is limited to sexual contact, then the couple is extremely vulnerable to affairs and discontentment.

Haven't you noticed in your church married couples that never sit together? They do not look angry or publicly disrespect each other with unkind words, but they are never seen together for any length of time. Their closeness is limited to seating in the front seat of the car. Haven't you heard spouses calling their partners by their titles and full names and never by their first names alone? One day I was talking to a lady outside a church. In the midst of the conversation, she said: "Pastor Roberts and I." At first, I did not know she was referring to her husband. Then I realized from the rest of the conversation that she was Mrs. Roberts, the pastor's spouse. She could have said "my husband and I," or used his first name. This is a sign of a lack of spiritual intimacy—oneness in marriage.

## INTELLECTUAL INTIMACY

In marriage, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical intimacy should work harmoniously. In a previous article, I shared about spiritual intimacy. In this one, I focus on intellectual intimacy. How do you know when you are intellectually intimate? Psychologist Laura Dawn Lewis in the book, *"Eight Stages of Intimacy,"* shares some ways of knowing whether you are intellectually intimate. You and your partner have solid intellectual intimacy if you can answer "Yes" to all of these situations:

1. Both you and your partner know what each of you fear and both make an effort to keep each other from those situations and stimuli.
2. Opinions, even those you don't agree on, can be stated, argued and acknowledged without fear of ridicule, abandonment, or abuse. This is especially true for such heated issues as abortion, politics, and sexuality about which you may strongly disagree.
3. Without realizing it, you and your partner often mirror each other's actions, gestures and speaking style.
4. You know what your partner's life goals, hopes, and dreams are.

## EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

Many couples never make it to emotional intimacy because it is in emotional intimacy you must accept the person for who he or she is without reservation, with flaws, irrationality, and all. At this level, you feel comfortable sharing yourself without fear of repercussions.

Dear husband and wife, are you truly an intimate couple? Are you one with your spouse? Do family members and friends see you as an intimate couple? If your answer is no to any or all of these questions, then you need to find ways of getting truly intimate. If your intimacy is limited to just having sex, then your marriage is sick. Some may need to get professional counseling to find out what personal issues prevent total intimacy. Others may find help by reading a self-help book or attending a seminar. **Barrington H. Brennen is a marriage and family therapist. Send your questions or comments to P.O. Box N-896, Nassau, Bahamas. Or call 323 8772, or email [info@soencouragement.org](mailto:info@soencouragement.org) or visit web site [www.soencouragement.org](http://www.soencouragement.org)**