

SOME DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTIMACY THAT CAN EXIST IN PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS

There are a variety of ways that couples can be close in the context of an intimate relationship. No relationship has all of them. Look through the list below and pinpoint the types that already exist in your relationship with your partner at the present time. Then, if you wish, you can use this list as a guide to help you look at other areas where you may wish to develop more intimacy and connection as a couple in the future.

EMOTIONAL INTIMACY:

Being aware of, experiencing, and sharing significant feelings with one another and accepting that this emotional sharing is important for both of you

COMMUNICATION INTIMACY:

Being honest, open, and caring in your communication process and being direct in offering both affirmation/support and constructive feedback and criticism

CONFLICT INTIMACY:

Being assertive with one another about your anger and directly confronting and struggling with your different perspectives together in a respectful and growth-producing manner
...e.g. practicing “fair fighting” with a partner

CRISIS INTIMACY:

Being with and supporting one another in the times of pain and difficulty in your lives
...e.g. death of a loved one, loss of a job, a child becoming ill, your children moving out

CELEBRATORY INTIMACY:

Being truly excited about and celebrating one another’s accomplishments, successes, and times of triumph in life
...e.g. graduation from educational settings, promotion on the job, getting an award

DECISION-MAKING INTIMACY:

Truly regarding one another as equals, valuing each other’s opinions, and sharing in the process of deciding together about the important issues in your life with one another

PLAYFUL INTIMACY:

Allowing the spontaneous “inner child” within each of you to connect with the other through child-like fun and involvement
...e.g. pet names, “baby talk,” playful banter and “goofiness,” gentle and affectionate teasing

AFFECTIONAL INTIMACY:

Sharing non-sexual physical affection with one another as a means of staying connected
...e.g. hugs, holding hands, snuggling in bed, putting your arm around one another

SENSUAL/SEXUAL INTIMACY:

Connecting through non-coercive and mutually-satisfying sensual and sexual involvement and experiences with one another

GROWTH INTIMACY:

Sharing your partner's vision for themselves and attempting to assist them in creating who they truly want to be (i.e. their "true self")

SPIRITUAL INTIMACY:

Identifying and sharing broader concerns like the purpose and meaning of life and death, your own personal philosophy of life, and religious and/or spiritual beliefs

PROCREATIVE INTIMACY:

Working together to decide to have and raise children, sharing the joys and hardships of parenting, and working together as a "team" in this important endeavor

INTELLECTUAL INTIMACY:

Sharing the world of ideas with your partner based on mutual respect for each another's intellectual capabilities and interests

WORK INTIMACY:

Supporting and encouraging your partner in their chosen life work

SOCIAL INTIMACY:

Sharing interaction and fun with friends both as a couple and as individuals

RECREATIONAL INTIMACY:

Sharing interests and experiences of leisure-time activities
...e.g. exercising, sports, hobbies, travel, theater

RITUAL INTIMACY:

Developing and using special times to celebrate and honor your relationship with one another
...e.g. anniversaries, birthdays, Valentine's Day and other holidays, baking holiday cookies together, cooking meals together; taking walks with one another

TASK INTIMACY:

Supporting each other in taking care of day-to-day responsibilities
...e.g. making decisions about and actually doing household and yard projects and parenting tasks in a way that makes sense to both of you

AESTHETIC INTIMACY:

Sharing and appreciating together the beauty in the world
...e.g. nature, art, music, dance, theater

GENERATIVE INTIMACY:

Sharing which springs from a belief in common values or from dedication to a common cause that allows for reaching beyond yourselves to contribute to the community-at-large and the wider world
...e.g. political activism, volunteerism, involvement with your place of worship or neighborhood organizations