

STRENGTHENING OUR MARRIAGES

**A FOCUS ON:
COMMUNICATION
COMMITMENT
INTIMACY**



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COMMUNICATION

THE BLESSINGS OF EDIFYING COMMUNICATION IN OUR MARRIAGES

Communication

**IF OUR WORDS WERE A GARDEN,
WHAT WOULD BE GROWING?**



OR



Communication

**WE ARE NATURALLY SELFISH AND
SINFUL, BUT RASH WORDS CAN
HURT!**

Communication

OUR WORDS SHOULD STRENGTHEN A MARRIAGE:

- **THANKS FOR DINNER, THAT WAS REALLY GOOD!**
- **I LOVE YOU!!**
- **THAT NEW DRESS LOOKS VERY NICE ON YOU!**

Communication

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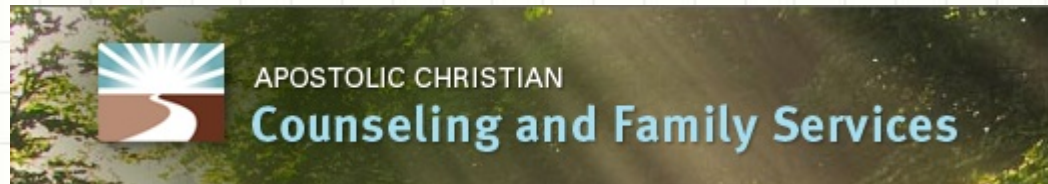
LET YOUR SPEECH BE ALWAYS WITH GRACE, SEASONED WITH SALT, THAT YE MAY KNOW HOW YE OUGHT TO ANSWER EVERY MAN – COLOSSIANS 4:6

Communication

**ACTIVELY PROMOTE OUR SPOUSE –
EVEN WHEN THEY ARE NOT PRESENT**

BE A PEACEMAKER

*LET US THEREFORE FOLLOW AFTER THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE, AND THINGS WHEREWITH
ONE MAY EDIFY ANOTHER – ROMANS 14:19*



Verbal Communication

- **ASK WHEN WOULD BE A GOOD TIME (TO BRING UP A CONCERN)**
- **SAY WHAT YOU MEAN**
- **AVOID AN ACCUSATORY TONE OF VOICE**

You never send me flowers!!

You are always late!!

Non-Verbal Communication

- **TONE OF VOICE**
- **BODY LANGUAGE**
- **FACIAL EXPRESSIONS**

Listening

- **ARE YOU REALLY LISTENING, OR ARE YOU THINKING OF WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO REPLY?**

HE THAT ANSWERETH A MATTER BEFORE HE HEARETH IT, IT IS FOLLY AND SHAME UNTO HIM – PROVERBS 18:13

- **BE AWARE OF NON-VERBALS AND VIBES**
- **ARE YOU FOCUSING?**
- **REPEAT BACK WHAT YOU HEARD**
- **YOU DON'T HAVE TO ALWAYS AGREE**
- **GIVE TIME FOR A RESPONSE**

Communication

- **PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES – ARE YOU A CONDENSER OR AN EXPANDER?**
- **CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY – “SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE”**
- **BE IN TUNE WITH YOUR SPOUSE**
- **PRAY TOGETHER**

Communication

**SHARE YOUR HEART – YOUR SPOUSE MAY
ALSO!**



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YOU CANNOT NOT COMMUNICATE!



Communication

TAKE TIME TO GET AWAY FROM THE DISTRACTIONS THAT HINDER COMMUNICATION

AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, COME YE YOURSELVES APART INTO A DESERT PLACE, AND REST A WHILE: FOR THERE WERE MANY COMING AND GOING, AND THEY HAD NO LEISURE SO MUCH AS TO EAT – MARK 6:31



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Communication

| Good Elements of Communication | | Bad Elements of Communication | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Love | Honesty | Criticizing | Nagging |
| Honor | Sensitivity | Quarreling | Fault Finding |
| Respect | Understanding | Comparison | Defensive |
| Clarity | Self-Control | Lying | Emotionally Withholding |

COMMITMENT

THROUGH A CHRIST-LIKE
SACRIFICIAL LOVE



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Commitment

“Let everyone of you in particular so love his wife even as himself and the wife see that she reverence her husband”

- Ephesians 5:33

What is Commitment?

Commit means to “put to charge”

In a marriage, it means “a decision/choice that one person makes to sacrificially love another”

Other aspects of Commitment:

Action taken from a promise or vow

Remaining steadfast and true to the principles and goals no matter what

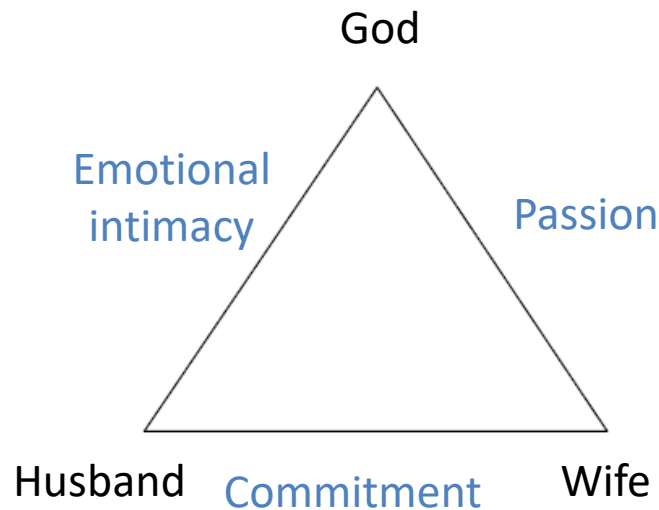
To be willing to do whatever it takes to make the marriage work

“I’m willing to sacrifice for us” will go a long way in making a marriage successful

Commitment

“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16)

The spiritual dimension of marriage is the most intimate and core component of marriage, because all other aspects of the relationship are developed from it

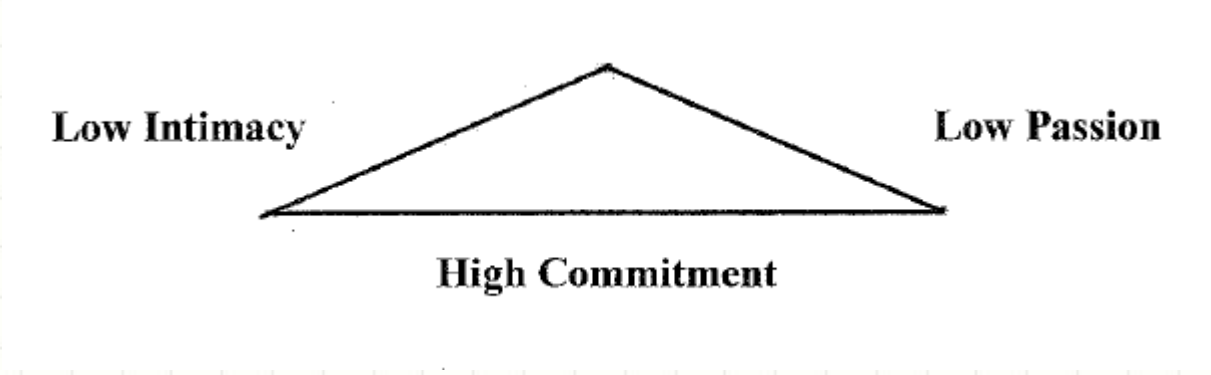
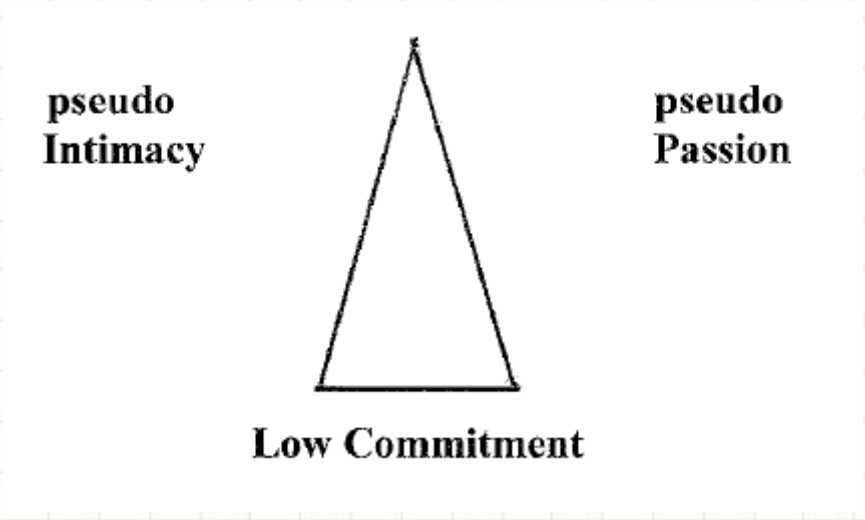


Commitment is the basis or foundation of a marriage

Marriage by itself does not hold two together, but commitment does

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Matthew 7:25)

Commitment



Attributes of a Solid Marriage Commitment

1. Sacrificial love
2. Communication
3. Passion
4. Patience
5. Forgiving
6. Honesty
7. Respectful
8. Trusting
9. Loyalty
10. Courteous
11. Dedication
12. Forbearance

INTIMACY

DISCUSSING
'EMOTIONAL INTIMACY' & PASSION
IN A MARRIAGE

REFERENCING THE
TRIANGULAR MODEL OF LOVE



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Emotional Intimacy

- Affection
- Friendship

Rom 12:10 - *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another*

Affection:

- I. This aspect refers to nurturing or natural love.

- II. In a marital relationship, this is lived out when one spouse intentionally focuses on expressions of love that are helpful and meaningful to the other spouse

Affection:

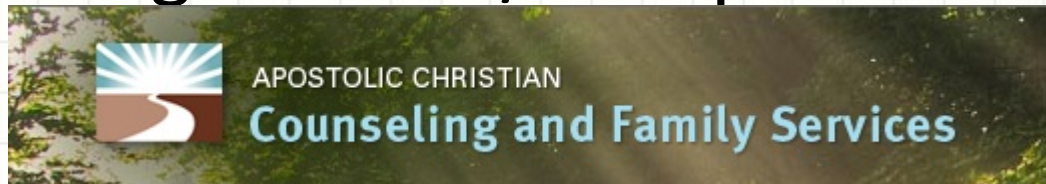
- III. It is essential to remember that we each tend to express love the way that *we like to receive it*, rather than what makes our spouse feel loved.
- IV. Affection, as part of *emotional intimacy*, is not about '*Physical Intimacy*'

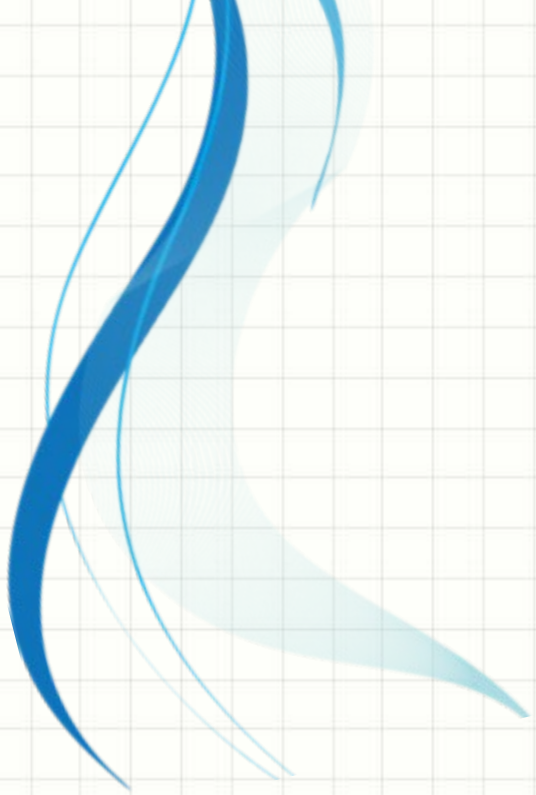
Affection:

V. To truly be affectionate, one must purposefully and regularly apply the combination of:

- a. quality time**
- b. words of affirmation**
- c. gifts**
- d. acts of service**
- e. physical touch**

That is meaningful to his/her spouse





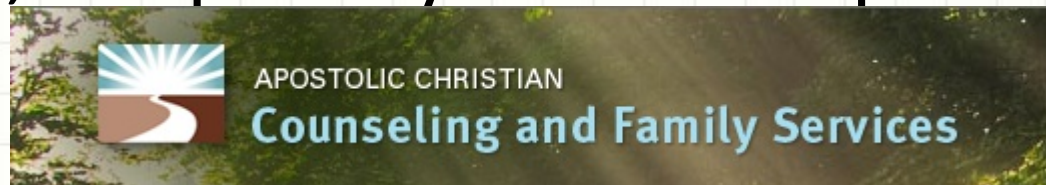
Friendship

Joh. 15:15 - Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Friendship:

- I. This aspect refers to regular communication of thoughts, feelings, hopes and disappointments between spouses.

- II. Friendship should naturally grow and deepen as you spend time together and develop a collection of your own memories and experiences, unique to you as a couple



Friendship:

III. In the emotional/relational sense, this is the experience of:

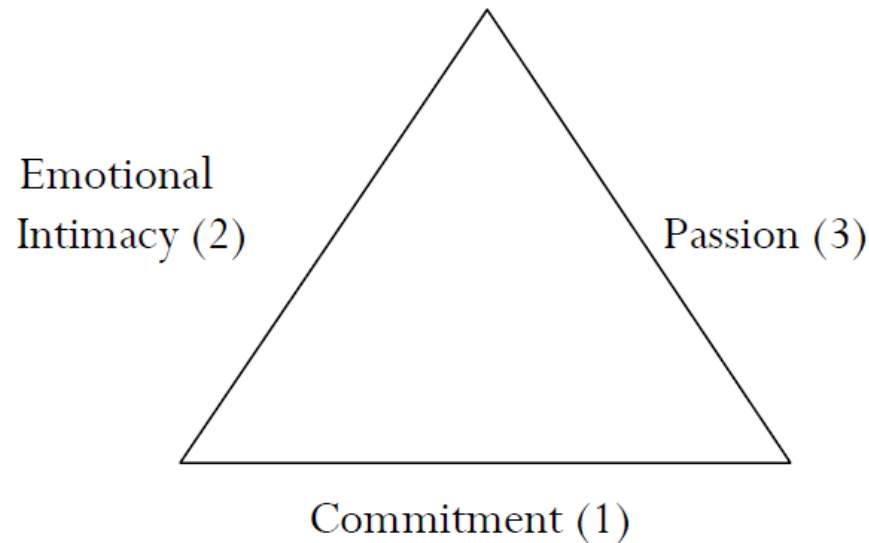
“Knowing & Being Known”

Summarizing Emotional Intimacy



Emotional Intimacy allows couples to share their hearts, and acquire the sense of being 'Best Friends'

Summarizing Emotional Intimacy



The safety and trust experienced through commitment, coupled with the emotional connection and shared expressions of emotional intimacy, couples have an opportunity, and hopefully a desire, to a shared passionate experience.

Summarizing Emotional Intimacy

- During the engagement, a couple begins to build a Level of '*Emotional Intimacy*' which not only functions as a strong foundation on which to build the future of their marriage, but also acts as a point to return to if there are struggles down the road. These key points of 'Intimacy and Friendship', when nurtured, will allow a couple to regain strength in their marriage, through Faith and Grace, following difficulties or strife.



Summarizing Emotional Intimacy

- Just because the engagement is history, the 'Romance' shouldn't be.



PASSION

Romantic & Sexual Love that
encompasses heart, soul, body and
mind.

Son. 8:7 - Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.



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Passion

The passionate side of love is the exciting and exhilarating part, creating the feeling of “Being in Love”

Romance often occurs as an expression of focused ‘Emotional Intimacy’.

Romance is the bridge between Emotional Intimacy & Passion

True Passion connects deeply with the heart, mind, body and soul of your spouse



Passion

Romance allows couples to experience times of being very close, emotionally and relationally, in a way that rekindles their Passionate Love



Sexual Desire, and Passionate Feelings, are closely tied to the level of emotional intimacy a couple has

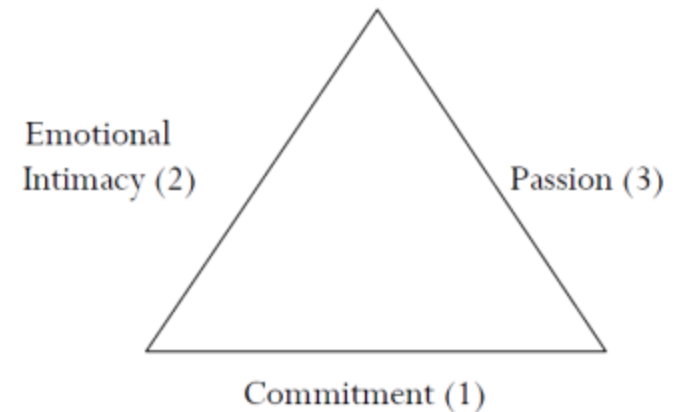
The foundation of commitment and emotional intimacy allows a couple's passionate feelings and sexual relationship the opportunity to draw closer together

Passion

It is important to remember that while Passion is an intense and exciting expression of love, it is only experienced periodically

.....and is heavily dependent on the balance of

‘Commitment’ &
‘Emotional Intimacy’



Passion

Emotional
Intimacy (2)

Passion (3)

Commitment (1)



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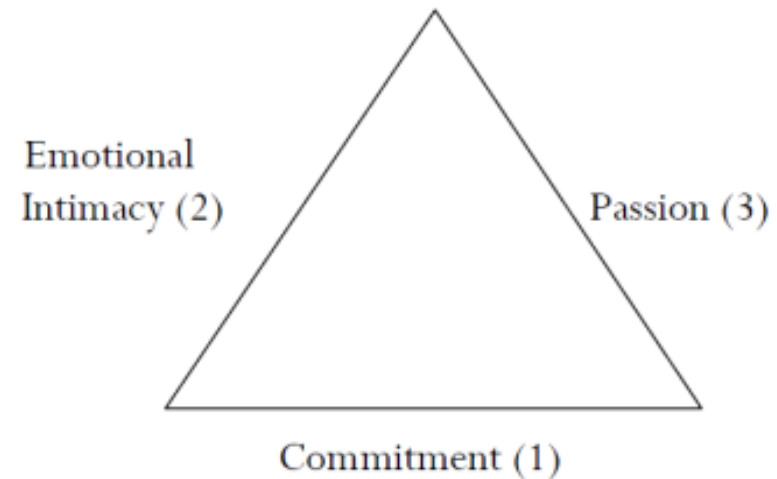
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How these types of love work together

Commitment = Self Sacrifice

Emotional Intimacy = Friendship

Passion = Excitement

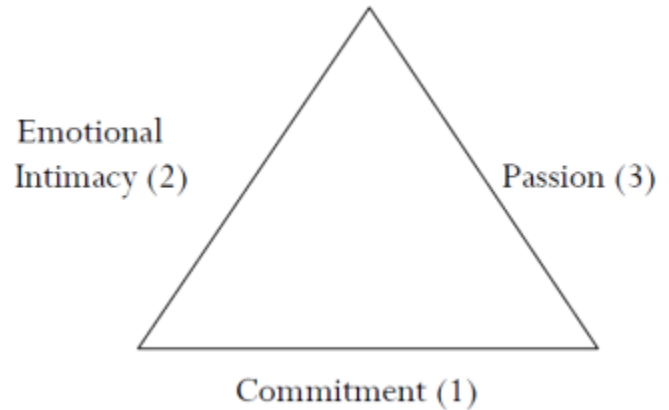


While certainly an oversimplification, we can view each of the 'sides of love' in this way

Passion

Example #1:

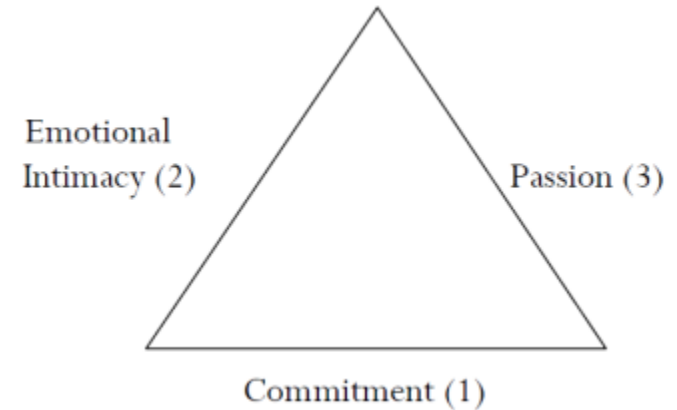
Imagine your spouse is sick with the stomach flu!



The commitment side of love must be the strongest. During times like this, the emotional intimacy may be gently nurtured, but the passionate side is put on 'Hold'. Under the circumstances, this 'imbalance' is necessary, but should change once the spouse's health returns. It is important to note that when the passionate side is waning, the commitment and emotional intimacy side should make up the balance, at least keeping the triangle connected.

Passion

Seems obvious, right?



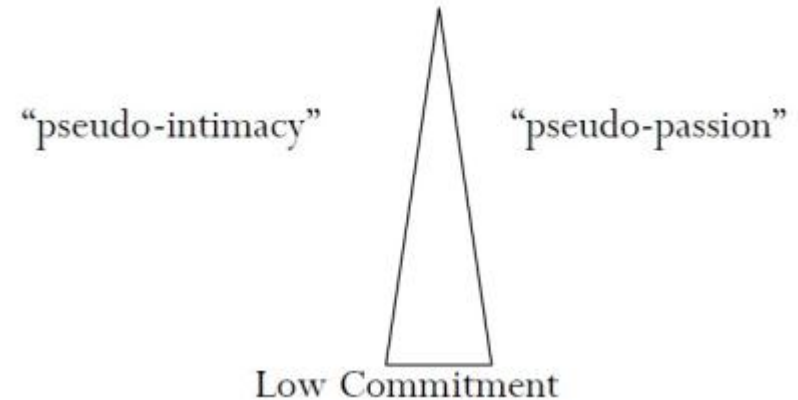
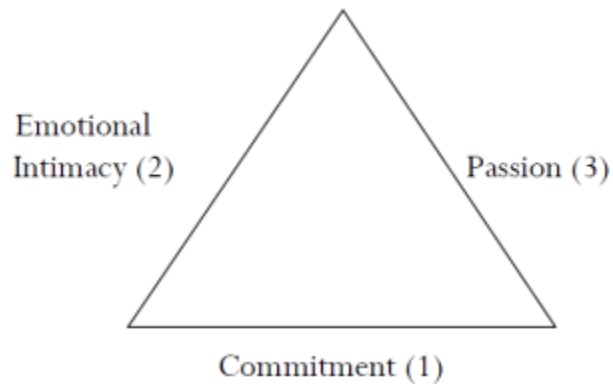
What seems obvious now, may not be quite as simple when faced with the reality of the circumstances. Finding ourselves 'Acting Out' these measures, and 'actively balancing' the love equation can prove much more difficult.

Love doesn't just always happen.....

Passion

Example #2:

High levels of 'pseudo-intimacy' and 'pseudo-passion' with a low level of commitment.....



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Passion

Danger Ahead

“pseudo-intimacy”

“pseudo-passion”

Low Commitment

When the commitment side of love is weak, a couple may be in serious crisis, because the foundation of the marriage is threatened.

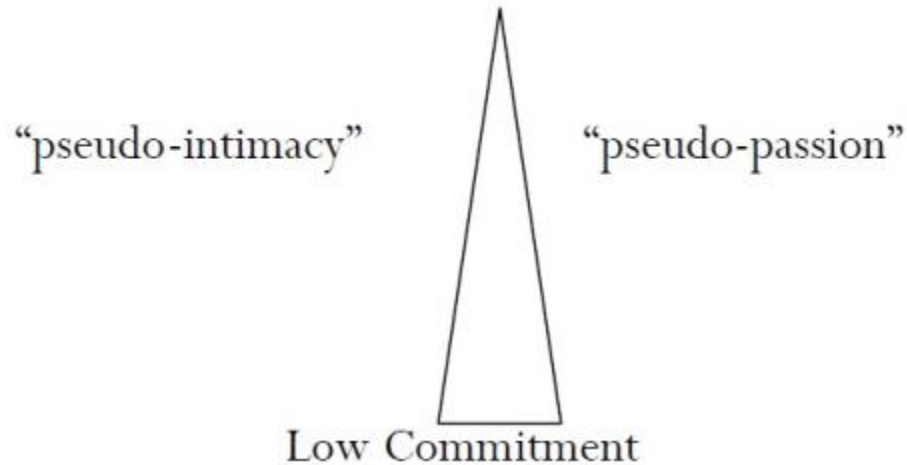
When a spouse tries to get his/her needs met in unhealthy and unbiblical ways, he/she may “seek fulfillment” outside of the marriage through fantasy or affair



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Passion

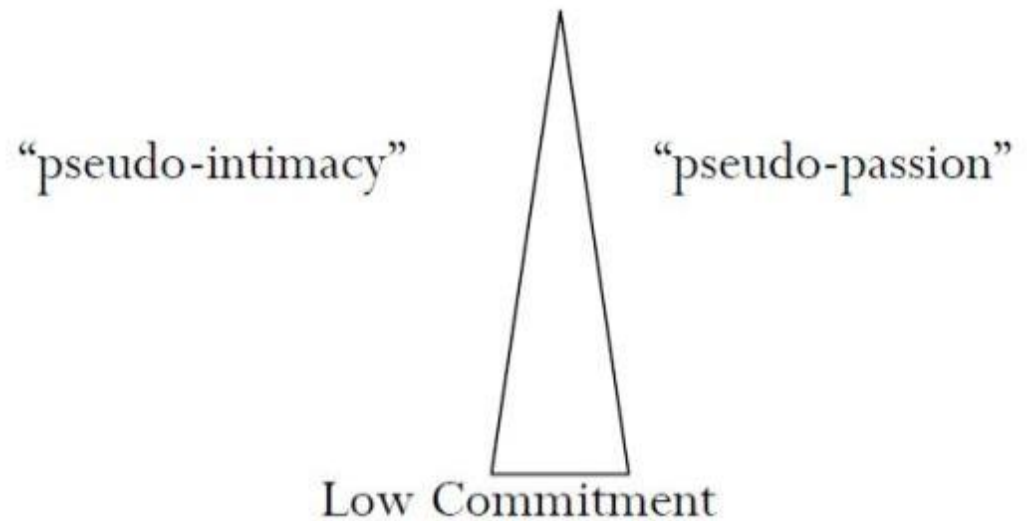
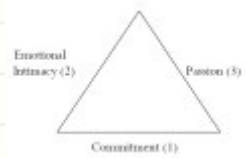


This triangle shows the unbalanced shape of 'Counterfeit Love' which occurs in an affair. High levels of 'pseudo-intimacy' coupled with a high level of 'pseudo-passion' over little or no commitment

Prov 5: 20-23 - And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Passion

Looking out in society, and the overall approach to marriage and relationships, it's not hard to see which model we would easier find.



Passion

Example #3:

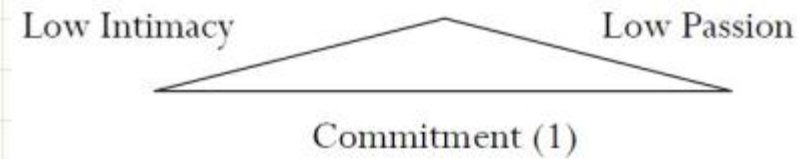
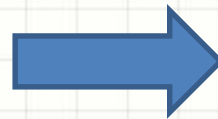
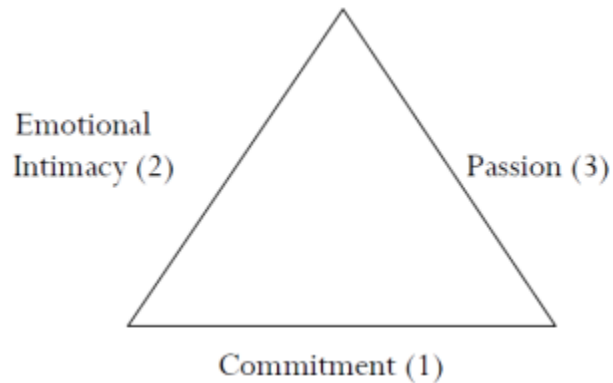
If the 'Commitment' and trust, between spouses has been damaged by either hurtful choices or actions. Both Emotional Intimacy and Passion will suffer greatly.

It is crucially important for trust, safety, affection and friendship to be stabilized as a strong foundation, before entering the Passionate Sexual side of the marital relationship, experienced as God intended it.

Passion

Example #4:

Low levels of intimacy and passion with an extremely high level of commitment.....



Burned Out Marriage



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Passion



Normally a high level of 'Commitment' is good, but this triangle is unbalanced!

This arrangement is all too common, unfortunately. Here we see a very high level of commitment, but the balancing levels of intimacy and passion are low, or non-existent.

Passion

Low Intimacy

Low Passion



Commitment (1)

These couples have been together for years, but may barely know how to have a conversation together, especially when it comes to discussing their own marriage

This marriage survives out of 'duty'. These couples remain married strictly based on their undying level of commitment

This marriage can be saved. By taking the same level of commitment, applying prayer, scriptural dedication and the right counseling options, the levels of intimacy and passion can be brought up to balance out a healthy marriage, but it won't come easy

Even though this husband and wife are committed to staying married, they are missing much of what God designed their marriage to be.

Prov. 5:18,19 - Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. *Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.*



Overall Summary



Emotional Intimacy is critical for the success of a marriage, and unfortunately, is the easiest part to neglect

Overall Summary

Neglect can occur due to over busy schedules from work, family obligations, or when children come along



During an engagement, couples spend a significant amount of time developing emotional intimacy. After the wedding, it requires the same dedication to time and effort in addition to commitment, to mature the relationship and sustain passion

The passionate side of love is deeply connected to emotional intimacy.



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Overall Summary

In order to maintain a healthy sexual marital relationship, a couple must take time to focus on the 'Emotional Intimacy'



Do not mistake 'Emotional Intimacy' for 'Physical Passion'. Your marriage needs both times of emotional intimacy that do not lead to physical passion, and some times of emotional intimacy that can do lead to physical passion.

If you feel the physically passionate side of your marriage is suffering, you may need to focus more energy on the emotional intimacy.

Overall Summary

It is crucial for couples to monitor the shape of their marriage triangle at any given time



Perfectly balanced triangles are a goal, but not constantly possible. Life circumstances and transitions occur which pull and stretch the triangle into unique variations.

Noting a weak side of the triangle creates an opportunity for both spouses to bolster up that side, by building up that portion of the marriage



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Overall Summary

Both husbands and wives are responsible for building up a weak side of the triangle....equally yoked in marriage



Above all, maintaining one's individual relationship with Christ is the most powerful way to make sure love in the marriage stays strong.



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