

Building Intimacy in Relationships

From Intimacy Between Men by John Driggs & Stephen Finn

Intimacy is a process in relationships enabling individuals to meet personal needs while accepting differences in each other.

1. How do you and your partner nurture each other and make each other feel safe?

Feelings of trust and safety are essential to intimacy. Do you turn to each other for comfort and support when upset? Do you deal with each other honestly, without fear of rejection or disapproval? Do you feel that your relationship is strong and that you are both committed to each other? Is there an overall balance of give and take?

2. How do you express conflict and tension?

Friction is inevitable in close relationships. If you are dealing with each other honestly, while attempting to meet your individual needs, there will always be times of disagreement. By openly dealing with the tension that results from conflict, you will learn and grow. Do you let your partner know when you disagree, or do you keep quiet to avoid conflict? Do you encourage your partner to let you know his or her true feelings? When you are angry, do you try to control or intimidate your partner?

3. How do you resolve conflict and tension?

Although openness about differences is essential to intimacy, both partners must develop methods for settling disagreements. What helps you and your partner settle conflicts? Are you equally committed to resolving tension between you? Do you forgive past misunderstandings and accept differences for which you find no compromises?

4. To what degree do you and your partner show mutual respect?

Mutual respect means you are concerned with your best interests and the best interests of the other person. Mutual respect means that you act with an awareness of the possible effects your actions will have on the other person.

5. Do you openly express warmth, affection, and tenderness?

Do you and your partner discuss how you like to be touched, hugged, or complimented? Do you receive affection freely, or feel unworthy and wonder what hidden strings are attached?

6. Are you and your partner comfortable with asking and offering?

Asking and offering are essential if both partners are to meet their needs. These acts show that each partner has a separate identity. By asking for what you need, and offering things to your partner, you communicate respect for yourself and your partner.

7. Do you welcome change and growth in yourself and your partner?

Truly close relationships promote emotional growth and teach you new things about yourself. If you are intimate, you will constantly face changes in yourself, your partner, and your relationship. Do you encourage change and growth in your partner, or do you dread the challenges it will bring? Have you postponed or abandoned your own growth to stay in your relationship? How is your relationship growing and changing?