

# Breakthroughs in healing

with Dr. Simon Sheh, Ph.D

Fall 2005

Published by  
Simon Sheh & Associates  
Chartered Psychologists

# 154 Meadowlark Health Center 156 St. & 87 Ave., Edmonton, AB. T5R 5W9 Telephone: (780) 429-4761, Ext. 237  
Fax: (780) 425-4274 Email: simon@drsimonsheh.com Website: www.drsimonsheh.com

## HOW TO STOP PROBLEMS WITH SEXUAL INTIMACY FROM DESTROYING YOUR MARRIAGE

Recently I attended a wedding ceremony at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton. In his message to the young couple, the marriage commissioner told the bride and groom that, in order to have a successful and lasting marriage, they should talk to each other often and there should not be anything they cannot talk about. Good communication is crucial to the health of a marriage as many couples seek counsel in my private practice to help them learn to talk to one another. Among the many subjects husband and wife can talk about, such as, household finances, parenting issues, I have found that problems with sexual intimacy is the least communicated between couple and yet sexual love plays such a crucial part in marital health. When comes to sex, most men just want to do it, there is not much they think need to talk about. For women, many are quite shy when it comes to exposing their deepest wishes. For some, it is the fear of being rejected, for others it is the concern of being too kinky for their husband's

tastes. Sex on the marriage bed is a serious health matter because it is specially designed to better our health, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Contemporary studies are showing that sexual arousal and an active sex life may lead to a longer life, better heart health, an improved ability to ward off pain, a more robust immune system and even protection against certain cancers, and lower rates of depression. The release of dopamine, endorphins, and corticosteroids, all feeling good chemicals in our brain, during sexual arousal is the objective evidence that sex is created with good health in mind for married couples.

Every married couple wants a sexually fulfilled relationship. Based on my experience counselling men and women in couple therapy, the followings are the tools to create a sexually satisfied marriage and to stop problems with intimacy from destroying the relationship.

### 1. Before You Take Up Positions, Do Some Talking

When comes to buying a home that has good resell value, experienced realtors would tell us that "location, location, location" is the key. When comes to sexual intimacy on the marriage bed, I believe "talk, talk, and more talk" in and out of the bedroom is the key. As I heard one wife told her husband, "If you want more sex, talk to me more." The ability to talk does post a challenge to some men, especially the strong, silent type, and there are many strong, silent type good husbands around. For men, sex is like a contact sport, they like to go straight to the target areas of the woman's body. On the other hand, women are wired very differently when it comes to sexual stimulation. They like more warm-ups and bonding experiences in and out of the bedroom before they want their erogenous target areas touched. As I often say to my clients, great sex at night begins at the breakfast table. In addition,

men achieve emotional intimacy through sex. The more sex a husband is having with his wife, the more he feels connected with her. As one husband told his wife, sex to a man is as important as talking to a woman. Women, conversely, are sexually inspired when they feel emotionally close to their husbands. When a husband and wife are out of synch emotionally out of the bedroom, frustrations under the sheet will follow. When a man is frustrated with sex and he does not want or know how to discuss the problem with his wife, the boy within him will come out, and the wife will witness a lot of pouting, bargaining, anger, blaming, and silent treatment from the man. It is a myth that men are selfish on the marriage bed. Most men I met in my practice want their wives to enjoy the intimacy, they just don't know how. What a man needs to excel on sexual intimacy is a good, no nonsense coach, and no one

can play a better coaching role than his wife. What a woman needs to achieve fulfillments under the sheet is to permit herself to talk to her husband about what she likes, wants, and expects on sexual matters and to believe without guilt feeling that she is fully entitled to a fulfilling sex life in her marriage. Communicating about sex does take a concerted effort on the woman's part. Men think about sex a lot. Women are not trained or conditioned to think about sex all the time, and it does not come naturally to them. In addition, women tend to focus on the needs of others rather than on their own needs, as they take on more responsibility in life – a job, children, and a home. The followings are few tips on how a woman can coach her man to enhance sexual fulfillment in marriage:

*Tips on backside.*

## COACHING TIPS

**Use both words and guiding to communicate your sexual desires to your husband.**

Start off with I's. For example, fill in the blanks: "I feel so \_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_ me. Step it up with "I want you to touch my \_\_\_\_" and lead the way by letting your husband put his hand on yours while you guide the way. A good coach knows her sport and specialty very well. Conversely, you have to understand your body, as well as its likes and dislikes, and guide your husband in and out of the bedroom.

### **Do Show and Tell.**

There is nothing wrong to make a lot of noise when you have sex with your husband. A moan, a sigh, a gesture, and a simple "yes" will give your husband the sign that he is doing a good job and keep on going. Keep some light on during sex. Let your husband connected with your sound and your three dimensional images. Sexual intimacy in the marriage is a celebration of the physical, emotional, and spiritual oneness, and making noises is part of the celebration. It is a good thing when you kids say, "Mom and dad, we don't mind you guys having great sex, but please keep the noise down because we want to go to sleep."

### **Talk openly about the frequency of sex.**

There is a complex relationship between life circumstances, health factors, and sexual intimacy. As our bodies undergo physical changes, and many of those changes can have a direct impact on our sex lives. Having sex two to three times a week may be normal and desirable before children come along. With three young kids and also working full time, it is perfectly alright to discuss with your husband about your expectation on the frequency of sex. Remember, your husband, like most men, thinks about sex a lot. You don't, and you are not his sex and stress management machine. Therefore, it is important that you communicate about your expectations. If you are going through perimenopause and you are lacking lubrication, once a week may be all you can handle. Sharing with your husband about your sexual expectations is inviting him to respect your body. Love and respect are hand in hand under the sheet. I firmly believe there is no better place than the marriage bed for a man to learn to grow up, mature, respect boundary, and to consider the needs of others, and his marriage partner is the most suitable coach. When you talk to your husband about sexual frequency, say: "I love you, hon, once a week is all I can handle now, my body needs a break. If you want to do it tonight, please come to bed before 11 o'clock. My body shuts down after 11." Do not say, "You like it or not, once a week is all I can give you right now."

---

## SIMON SHEH & ASSOCIATES

Specializing in Counselling and Therapy with Adults, Couples, Teenagers, and Families

Professionally and Creatively Promoting Clients Return to Maximum Function and Wellness

For Appointments Call 429-4761, Ext. 237  
www.drsimonshoh.com

*Quoted*  
Your lips are like a thread of scarlet, and your mouth is lovely.  
Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil ...  
Your breasts are like two fawns, like twins of a gazelle that feed among the lilies ...  
O my love, how beautiful you are! There is no flaw in you!  
Song of Solomon 4:3-7

---

## 2. If You Want to be on Top of the World, You Need to Start at the Bottom

Sexual intimacy is the ultimate product of the fusion of other kinds of intimacy shared by husband and wife in a marriage. If you can visually picture a three dimensional pyramid, sexual love is placed on the very top of the triangularly shaped pyramid. Sexual intimacy is supported by many pillars of intimacy to form a firm foundation for the pyramid of love, respect, and intimacy. Therefore, if a couple wants to rise to the top and enjoy the view and the ecstasy, they have to work hard on the bottom building the foundational pillars. What are the intimacy pillars? They are conversational intimacy, emotional intimacy, recreational intimacy, creative intimacy, crisis intimacy, intellectual intimacy, and spiritual intimacy. Building intimacy pillars takes time, effort, and a mindset of building a couple-centered home. Kids-centered and activity-centered households are not healthy homes. Husband and wife of a couple-centered home believe their relationship is the foundation of the home and they make every effort and

discipline to spend time together and get connected again in spite of their busy schedule demanded by work and parenting. It is not easy, but they know if they just act as parents and not as a couple, they will slowly drift away from each other and invite frustration and disappointment into the bedroom. Couple-centered marriage partners believe kids are a big part of their life, but they are not their life. They find time to be away from the kids and work, and to rekindle their bonding and attachment. May that be a walk in the neighborhood, coffee time at Second Cup, a night out at the movie, a quick getaway in the mountains, talking after the kids are in bed while the wife folding laundry, go shopping together, praying together, doing house chores together, words of appreciation on the birthday card, a love letter for the wedding anniversary, these are the building blocks and stepping stones leading to the top of the pyramid of sexual intimacy.

---

## 3. A Sexually Fulfilled Marriage Begins with You, Not Your Spouse

Sexual intimacy matters to our own health and well being. It makes every bit of sense that we take personal ownership and responsibility to take good care of this very important part of our overall health. It is not uncommon for men wanting more sex from their wives when they are under stress or not feeling secure about their life circumstances, and in turn treating their wives' body like a sex and stress management machine. A healthy sex life goes hand in hand with a healthy emotional life. If the man does not find other healthy ways to relieve stress and strengthen his inner security, and his wife does not learn to speak up about her needs and expectations on sexual matters, unspoken disappointment and resentment will sneak into the bedroom. When a husband is willing to share his fear and insecurity, and his wife is supportive and willing to listen, this type of emotional bonding actually leads to sexual intimacy. When a woman is going through perimenopause, there is a drop of

estrogen produced in her ovaries. When this happens, the tissues of the vagina and vulva become thin and dry. It is the production of estrogen that keeps a woman lubricated. The loss of estrogen causes a decrease in vaginal secretions as well as irritation and inflammation, and in turn causing pain and discomfort in sexual intercourse. Research has shown that lubrication is a key factor that correlates with women's sexual satisfaction. It is very important for a woman who is going through perimenopause to understand the changes in her physical body and their impact on her sexual health. She should take the courage to discuss with her husband what she can do to compensate for the physical changes, e.g., using vaginal lubricants. Husband and wife can work together to creatively sail through the sexual and emotional ups and downs of this particular stage of a woman's life journey.

---

## 4. Couples need a safe place to talk about sensitive sexual matters within marriage

I have found many couples are willing to discuss sensitive issues regarding intimacy under the guidance of a trained counsellor. Sexual intimacy is a highly personal, private, and vulnerable subject matter. If you see an ongoing pattern of decreasing sexual

fulfillment in your marriage, you should consider discussing this with your physician or a competent psychologist/counsellor, as there may be physical or emotional factors that need to be addressed and attended to.