

Improving Lovemaking, Regardless of the Age of Your Relationship – Nov. 2024

LWCC Marriage Ministries Email for November 2024

Greetings to you all once again, and might I say that I am more than a little pleased to hear that I was not the only one a little irked by the comment in last month's email from the Word For Today article **"Long after physical attraction and the intensity of sexual chemistry have faded,....."** One couple's comment was priceless: "It might have changed, but it sure ain't faded." I think it might be worth adding - she's 86 and he's 85.

I remember some years ago, hearing Vonette Bright (the wife of Bill Bright, the great Evangelist and founder of Campus Crusade for Christ) speaking on Intimacy in Marriage, and making the statement, "if there's a better way to 'bake a cake' then I want to know". Now, before most of my male readers begin to speed-read to get to the juicy bits, let me just say right at the outset, I don't know that this article will necessarily give you new ways to 'bake the cake', and No, this article definitely didn't need to go to Pastor Wes for approval before publication!!!! But, I do feel after that Word For Today comment, that it's worth taking a few moments to look at ways to **Improve Lovemaking, Regardless of What Stage our Relationship is at!!!**

So, let's look at some things we might do to turn the heat up, not in the kitchen, but in the bedroom.

1. Talk about your 'sexpectations':

Talking is essential regarding intimacy. How does the saying go: "If we don't communicate then we make assumptions", and let's face it, we all know where they lead us. So often they are more incorrect than correct. Maybe it's time to have an honest conversation and ask each other if you are currently fulfilled in this area of your lives. The message version of the scripture 1 Corinthians 7:3-4 puts it so very well:

"The marriage bed must be a place of mutuality – the husband seeking to satisfy his wife, the wife seeking to satisfy her husband. Marriage is not a place to 'stand up for your rights.' Marriage is a decision to serve the other, whether in bed or out."

Due to a myriad of reasons, every marriage goes through seasons of 'restrictions' or unavailability – the important thing is to ensure that it stays a short season, not a never-ending drought. Sometimes these kind of seasons can be more than for physical challenges, but regardless;

- one, it's important for BOTH of you to be understanding and empathetic;
- two, it's important to communicate together - to have what can be rather difficult conversations about where things are at (some helpful tips for that coming);
- three, discuss and be open to looking at ways to fulfil one-another through this season;
- and four, look for ways to keep romance alive in your relationship.

2. Be curious about your partner's sex drive and desires:

You probably already see areas in your marriage where you and your partner are totally different, and intimacy is just another of those differences. You may be an introvert married to an extrovert, or a saver married to a spender, or a fast-paced person married to a slower-paced one, a quick thinker

verses someone who takes time to process things. Intimacy is just another difference needing to be understood, appreciated and embraced. A while ago we talked to a couple who had been married 30 plus years, who had never got to grips with this issue; never been prepared to have the much needed conversation, in part because they had never seen their 'problem' being as simple as 'we are different'; and as a result their sex life had been a huge disappointment to both of them. I'll come back to them shortly.

If we lean into these differences, seeking to understand one another by being curious, open-minded and accepting, conversations will flow much easier. Sometimes it can be difficult to bring up topics of discussion, especially on this topic. Recently we came across a resource of question cards in a little plastic holder called, "[Small Talk for the bedroom](#)". It's far easier asking a question when it's coming from a card, and it will open up conversations that you're probably eager to have, but haven't known how to. You'll find access to these on the Family Life NZ website. Just go to Resource at the top right of the Home page. Click on that, then click on Store. When the store comes up, scroll to the bottom of the first page, and click on the number 4. This will take you to page 4 of the resources they have available. Just scroll down, and you'll find the set of questions listed there for just \$15 - well worth the investment.

3. Get comfortable with your own body:

People often assume (there's that word again) that this is just an issue for women. While it's true that approximately 80% of women suffer from negative body image, men also suffer. In a recent study of 2000 males in the UK, almost half of them said their poor body image had impacted their mental health. It seems that our mind plays a key role here. If our eyes only recognize the 'problem' areas of our body then ***we'll take those thoughts with us into the bedroom***, and we will find it difficult to be "naked and unashamed" (Genesis 2:25) with one another, and our sex life will suffer.

Can I encourage you instead to "take every thought captive" (2 Corinthians 10:5), and appreciate your body for what it has done for you. Maybe it's brought children into the world; maybe it's overcome an illness or is currently working hard to build wellness into your system; maybe it's transported you through significant health challenges or it's been the backbone of your productivity – whatever it's been to you, appreciate it. Appreciating our body allows us to be comfortable in our own skin, which then means we can be more comfortable to allow another to appreciate it too.

Ladies you may need to hear this: when your husband sees your naked body, he delights in you. He doesn't see those stretch marks from child-birth as a flaw, he doesn't see that operation scar, or the few extra pounds child-birth and age has left you with, and get turned off – he sees the woman he loves, the mother of his children, a warrior Princess. And remember you are the only legitimate female body he can look at – so can I encourage you to let him look, and let him enjoy you.

Just as the "*marriage bed must be a place of mutuality*" something that will enhance that mutuality, is the way that throughout each day our ***Words and Actions*** towards one another are uplifting, encouraging, empowering, and supportive, and not just like that when we are heading to the bedroom with 'something' in mind!!!

Again, folks, if these last couple of paragraphs relate to you, don't ignore the issue. Yes, for many, those kind of conversations - about sexual issues - are almost the hardest of conversations to have. But I encourage you to put yourself out there and have those tough conversations.

4. Give yourself permission:

Some of us need to be told this – to give ourselves permission to be a sensuous partner. God gave sex to us as a gift. Yes, the act of sex is for procreation, but it's also for our pleasure. It can be an oasis, refreshment for our souls, and bring us deep comfort and enjoyment. Climax also releases oxytocin, dopamine and serotonin – all the wonderful hormones of feeling good, connected, pleasurable and fulfilled. Lovemaking not only increases our emotional health, but it's also beneficial for our physical health and mental well-being. So give yourself permission. Ask yourself, if I were to get sensuous and creative, what could I do to add some variety/spice to our love making????

5. Commit to growing in this area:

We up-skill in so many areas of our life, why not commit to up-skilling in lovemaking. If we want to build our communication skills or our budgeting skills, we'll seek out the information we need. What would happen to your lovemaking if you applied the same priority? We don't know what we don't know, so being open to learning about your partner's body, desires and pleasures is all part of the process. Maybe consider reading a relevant book together and practising what you learn. Three that we would recommend are Dr. Kevin Leman's 'Sheet Music'; another would be 'Intended for Pleasure - Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfilment in Christian Marriage' by Ed and Gaye Wheat; and thirdly 'A Celebration of Sex - A Guide to Enjoying God's Gift of Sexual Intimacy', by Dr. Douglas Rosenan. The couple I mentioned earlier, took Dr. Leman's book and spent 6 months having some very deep and meaningful conversations - not without some challenges and tears - but came out the other side in a VERY different space. (LWCC has copies of all three available for \$25.00 each).

Part of growing in this area is setting time aside. Planning intimate times together. Planning isn't unromantic. I'm not talking about every Friday evening playing scrabble and then having sex. I'm not meaning being that structured. However, planning can create anticipation and allow us to get our minds and body aligned.

Many couples we talk to admit to being too tired and too busy. I would say that if you're too tired to have sex, then you're just too busy, and something definitely needs to be cut from the schedule. Maybe it's time to have a conversation around your calendars, and talk about how intimacy can be made more of a priority in your lives.

To wrap it up:

Life is full of ups and downs, it's got challenges, pressures, and responsibilities. Married life can become an endless list of projects, child-rearing, work engagements, eating, sleeping – much of what we do is humdrum. In the midst of our daily lives, God gives us a gift to refresh our souls, to release our tension, to connect on a truly deep level, and in the process to be comfortable, connected, comforted and delighted.

It's the gift of sex.

Can I encourage you to slow down, ***unpack your gift tenderly*** and delight in the pleasure of lovemaking.

Blessings from the Marriage Ministries Team: Stan & Ronnie, John & Karen