

Marriage Communications Class

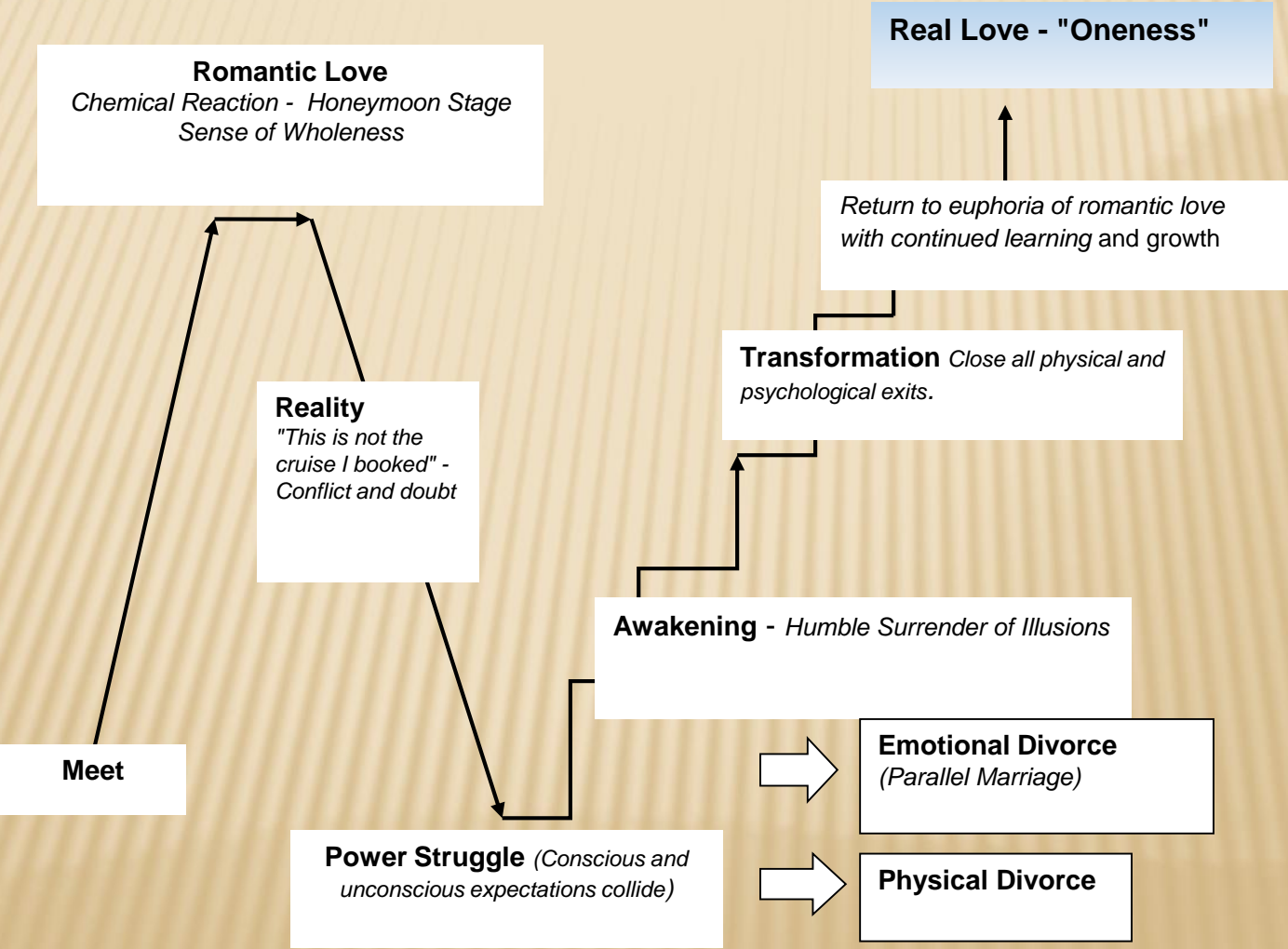
EMOTIONAL INTIMACY



Jean L. Muir

The Psychological Journey of Marriage

Source : Laura Brotherson "And They Were Not Ashamed"



A VIBRANT MARRIAGE RESTS ON THREE PILLARS

Unity



Emotional
Intimacy



Spiritual
Intimacy

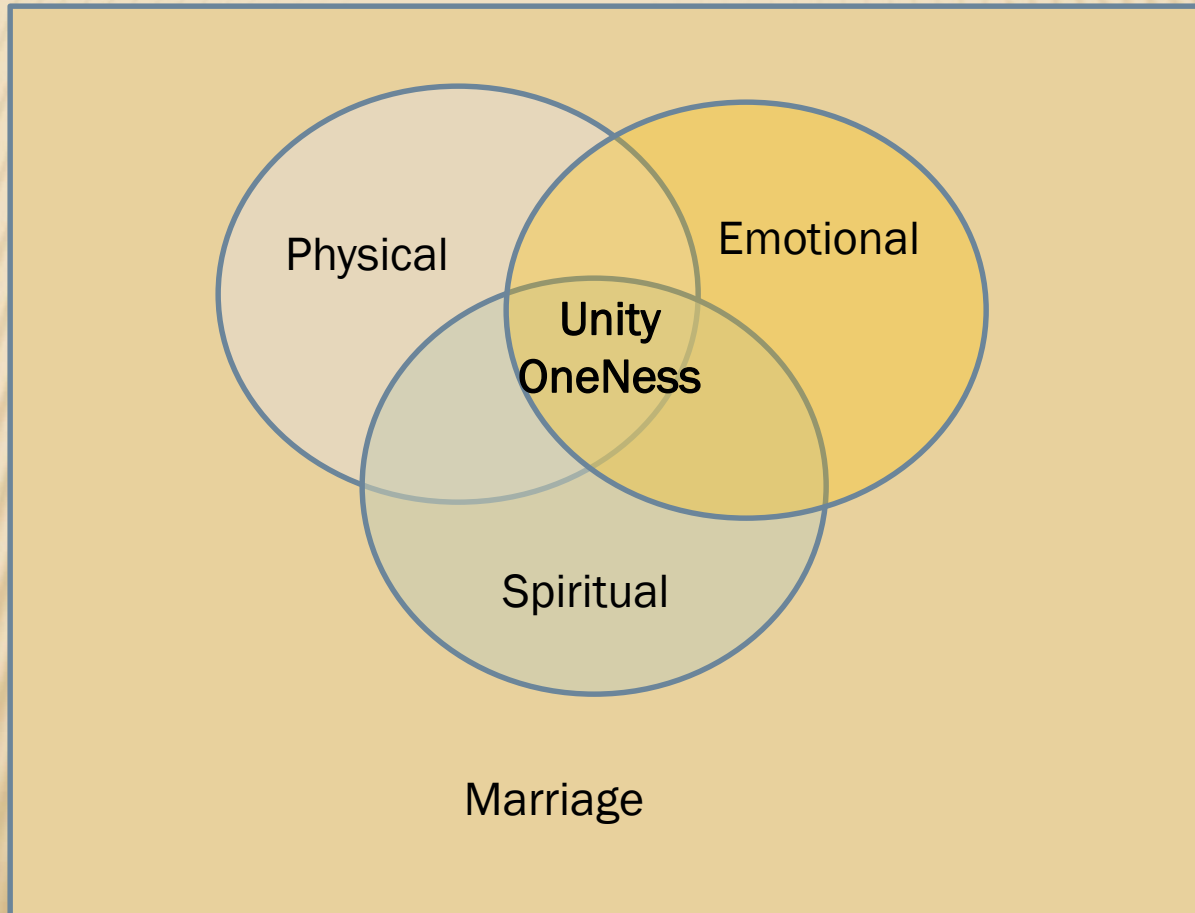


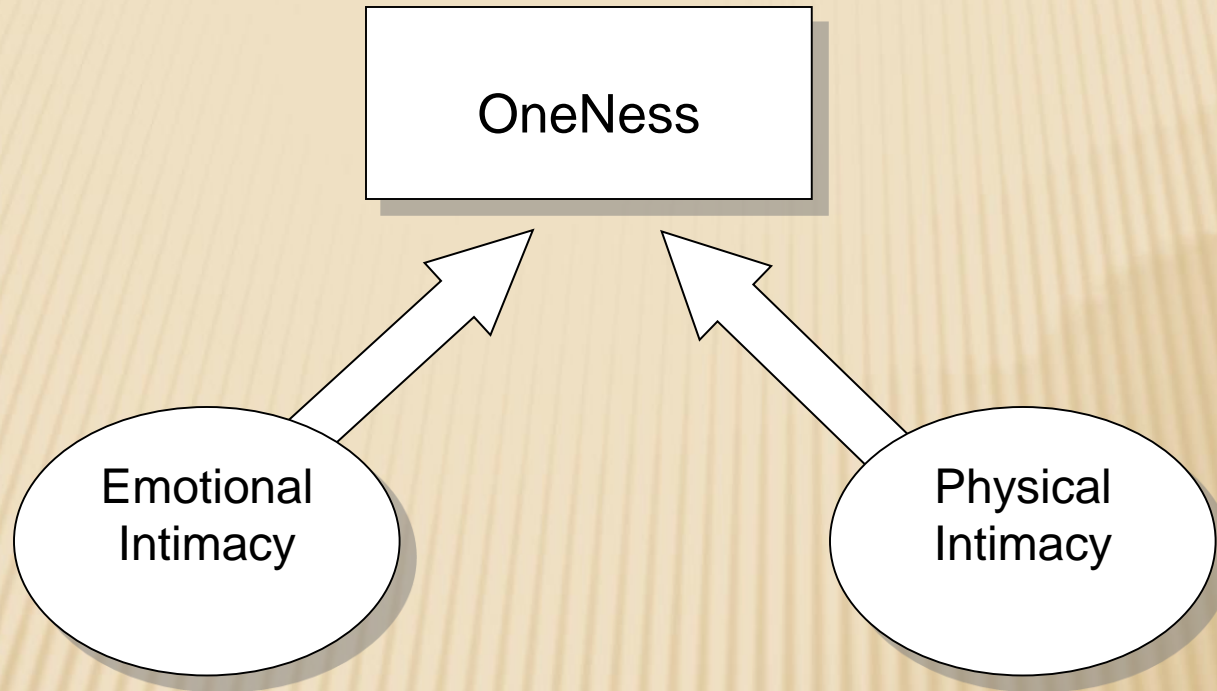
Physical
Intimacy

Human Intimacy

- Ultimate symbol of total union
- Ordained and defined by God
- Completeness
- Eternal promise

UNITY IS THE FUSION OF SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL INTIMACY





- Love Languages
- Listening
- Levels of communication
- Forgiveness
- Understanding fight/flight responses
- Communicating Needs

- Spouse comes first
- Eliminating negatives
- Spectrum of sexual activity
- Setting the stage
- Buffer zone
- Break "all or nothing cycle"

WOMEN ARE INNATELY ADEPT IN COMMUNICATING EMOTIONS

- ❖ *Biology – brain emphasizes internal responses*
- ❖ *Stress – hormones enhance bonding and nurturing*
- ❖ *Personal Awareness – more in touch with how they and others feel*
- ❖ *Culture – encouraged to be emotional; have emotional role models*
- ❖ *Expression - emotionally articulate*

EMOTIONAL DIFFERENCES - BIOLOGICAL

❖ WOMEN

Amygdale - cluster of emotion sensors that communicates with brain regions that tune in to and regulate **inside** women's bodies - hormones, heart rate, blood pressure, digestion and respiration.

“Women become *an intimate part of* the people they know and the things that surround them. **Women enter into a kind of “oneness” with their environment .**

Dr. Cecil Osborne, in his book *The Art of Understanding Your Mate*,

❖ MEN

Amygdale cluster "talks with" brain regions that help men respond to sensors for what's going on **outside** the body, such as the visual cortex and an area that coordinates motor actions.

Men tend to be more task-oriented, less talkative, and more individually isolated.

EMOTIONAL DIFFERENCES - STRESS

❖ Women

- During times of stress women take care of themselves and their children, and form strong group bonds. The hormone *oxytocin* is released during stress in everyone. However, estrogen tends to enhance oxytocin resulting in calming and nurturing feelings.
- In females oxytocin can translate into touch = talk, cuddle/huddle.

❖ Men

- Testosterone, which men produce in high levels during stress, reduces the effects of oxytocin.
- Men maintain a flight/fight response while under stress.
- Fight/flight chemicals can translate into fight= aggression, flight= avoidance.

EMOTIONAL DIFFERENCES-PERSONAL AWARENESS

❖ Women

Have a **larger deep limbic system**, which allows them to be more in touch with their feelings and better able to express them: promotes bonding with others.

Two sections of the brain responsible for language were found to be larger in women, indicating one reason that women typically excel in language-associated thinking.

Women are better at integrating and assimilating information.

❖ Men

Even after adjusting for physical size, men have larger brains than women, on average about 4 %. Men are overall more aware of physical environment.

For men, language is most often produced just in the dominant hemisphere, usually the left.

Men tend to do better with tasks requiring more localized processing, such as mathematics.

EMOTIONAL DIFFERENCES - CULTURE

× Women

- × Parents tend to talk more about emotions using more detail with girls than boys.
- × Mothers use more emotional terms than fathers.
- × Because girls develop language earlier than boys they have more verbal resources to deal with emotion earlier than boys.
- × Situations of intimacy illicit **more** emotion in girls.
- × Girls become more and more emotionally expressive throughout childhood.

× Men

- × Parents talk to boys more about problem solving strategies.
- × Boys use fewer words to deal with emotions. Tend to be more physical in their reactions.
- × Situations of intimacy illicit **less** emotion.
- × Boys become less and less emotionally expressive throughout childhood.

EMOTIONAL DIFFERENCES - EXPRESSION

× Women

- × Become more adept at reading both verbal and nonverbal emotional signals of others, at expressing and communicating their own feelings, and at minimizing anger.
- × Glee, elation, empathy, wonder, embarrassment, thrill, zeal, defeat, insecurity, pity, compassion, panic, doubt, timidity, indecision
- × Crying in a female is seen as a sign of trust.
- × Study: Women underestimated their emotional intelligence

× Men

- × To be “manly” leaves men a limited emotional repertoire.
 - + Autonomy
 - + Achievement
 - + Aggression – pride, anger, jealousy
 - + Stoicism
 - × Lack emotional involvement
 - × Lack emotional expression
 - × Exercise emotional control and endurance
- × Crying in a male is seen as a sign of weakness.
- × Study: Men overestimated their emotional intelligence

EMOTIONAL TENDENCIES

POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES

× Women Positive:

- × Deeply in tune with people and surroundings, intuitive
- × Skill in expressing feelings, perceive other's needs
- × Good at deep relationships

× Negative:

- × Difficulty turning off brain, rumination
- × May take things too personally
- × Assume complex intent when not there
- × Experience much higher rate of depression

× Men Positive:

- × Can be dispassionate when needed
- × Readily compartmentalize
- × Focus on external problems, achievement
- × Form wide network of shallow relationships

× Negative:

- × Tend to withdraw under stress
- × Difficulty expressing intense feelings
- × Think of emotions as weakness

WAYS TO BECOME EMOTIONALLY MORE ACCESSIBLE

- **Take cues from spouse-** *look for and identify emotions, ask*
- **Practice deep conversation-** *relate doubts, fears, hopes, joys, wonder*
- **Know yourself-** *understand your motivations and feelings, express them often*
- **Question assumptions-** *be aware of cultural and familial expectancies, test their validity, break their constraints*

STANFORD STUDY ON EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

- ❖ Men need women in order to fully express themselves emotionally. Men, who do not have an intimate relationship with a woman, live shorter lives with more mental and physical illness.
- ❖ The same study found that for women, their physical and mental health did not depend on a relationship with a man.

QUOTE FROM MAN ON LDS WEBSITE

“My wife and I have been married for close to 20 years. She enjoys many friendships and is very independent . On the other hand, I am more dependent and have few close friendships. I have always looked primarily to our relationship for validation and emotional closeness, but have not been satisfied. I got to the point where I just gave up. I no longer have any hope that the close, reciprocal, interdependent relationship that I desire will ever happen I just can't do it anymore. We don't argue or fight, but nor do we ever discuss emotions or our relationship. We are essentially roommates, and, I can't help to still feel disappointed, cheated, and resentful. It is hard to look forward to another 30 years of the same.”

SOCIALLY SANCTIONED WAYS TO GET EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

Sources

- Children
- Friends
- Relatives
- Civic groups
- Clubs
- Work relationships
- Church callings
- Sports leagues
- Parent associations

Outcomes

- Entertainment
- Fulfillment
- Sense of accomplishment
- Creativity
- Acclaim
- Appreciation
- Status
- Belonging
- Group support

SEX IS MEN'S LANGUAGE OF INTIMACY

Women's desire is more contextual, more subjective, more layered on a lattice of emotion. Men, by contrast, don't need to have nearly as much imagination, since sex is simpler and more straightforward for them.

That does not mean that men do not seek intimacy, love, and connection in a relationship, just as women do. They just view the role of sex differently. *Women* want to talk first, connect first, then have sex. For men, sex is the connection. Sex is the language men use to express their tender loving vulnerable side,

It is their language of intimacy.

Esther Perel, a New York City psychotherapist and author

SUMMARY

- ❖ Emotional intimacy is critical for the success of a marriage.
- ❖ Women tend to be more articulate in expressing their emotions.
- ❖ Men are under pressure to dissociate themselves from their feelings.
- ❖ Depending on the situation either stance is positive or negative.
- ❖ Within a marriage women need to use their emotional skills to engage their husband.
- ❖ Men's most expressive form of emotional connection is through physical intimacy.
- ❖ If a woman frequently rejects her husband physically, she curtails his ability to express himself emotionally.