

MARRIAGE IN MOTION

Transcript: Module 3, Lesson 3

LAURA

Hello again. You know the drill by now, so let's get right to it. This Module has been about creating daily intimacy. Over the last two lessons we've talked about how to move toward intimacy with your heart and your mind. Today, we want to talk about moving toward intimacy with your body.

ZACH

Yes, that means we'll be talking about sex, but we won't be talking about only sex. Sex is just a part of intimacy, yet somehow we've allowed them to become synonymous. Couples will sometimes come into my office and say, "we're having trouble with intimacy". And I say, does that mean sex? Even if they say, "we want to talk about physical intimacy", I still have to help them differentiate between that and "sexual intercourse".

Sex is messy and complicated, both in theory and in practice, but it doesn't have to be. Our goal is to help you begin a conversation about intimacy that brings clarity and confidence in the areas of physical and sexual intimacy.

LAURA

Can we go ahead and cement that distinction? That there's a difference between physical and sexual intimacy? I think it's also really important that couples establish up front that there is a difference between sexual and nonsexual touching. I have had many wives talk about how frustrating it is to only be touched by their husbands as a precursor to sex. If I'm not in the mood or am not feeling comfortable with resisting your advances...this is an absolute intimacy killer.

One of the most important things we'd want you to take away from Marriage in Motion is an expanding definition of intimacy. This is especially important as we consider the difference between physical and sexual intimacy.

ZACH

Yes. We can make that distinction. That's what this lesson is about. Not simply the distinction, but also the development of intimacy that moves freely through your mind, and your heart, and also your body. In this video you'll learn:

1. At least three ways to cultivate physical intimacy apart from sex.
2. The unique power of eye contact.
3. How to have sexual intimacy without touching.
4. The secret to sexual intimacy.
5. How to have the best sex of your life, for a lifetime.
6. To become clear about your "next step".

LAURA

That's a pretty high bar.

ZACH

Yeah, I bet this will be the most watched video in the series...at least by men.

LAURA

Ok, let's start with today's focus: Your most physically intimate marriage isn't confined to the bedroom.

So, let's talk about physical intimacy. What could that possibly mean? I have at least three ideas. The first is physical proximity . We've talked about this whole notion of roommates, or teammates, or living parallel, but without a strong sense of intimacy. I want to suggest that the fact that you live in the same home...that's the basis for creating physical intimacy. It's about proximity, but not just orbiting one another. Do you make dinner together? Do you sleep in the same bed? Do you shower together? Are you willing to go to the bathroom in front of one another? Physical intimacy can be created by occupying the same space.

The second is actual physical health and fitness. Do you take good care of one another's bodies. Are you aware of how to help her manage her diabetes? Do you work out together? Do you have an agreement about how much alcohol one or both of you should be consuming? I'm happy to say, as a woman, that it's okay to help me manage my health and my body IF I know you're also and more interest in my mind and my heart.

The third is physical (but nonsexual) touch . Gary Chapman famously created the idea of 5 Love Languages . One of the "love languages" is Physical Touch. I think people - men and women both - hear that and they think "sexual touch". But there's an entire universe of non-sexual touch that is both intimate and important. Hold hands. Snuggle. Give foot massages. EVEN and ESPECIALLY when it might NOT lead to sex. I promise it'll go a long way (especially to women) to know that you're able to connect physically but not sexually. And, it'll make sex easier.

ZACH

I'll add a fourth...there is a ton of research about the power of eye contact. As we talk about intimacy being located in your body. Let's note: The eyes are part of your body. So...if you can accept the idea of physical intimacy through eye contact...which is to say not touchingcould you accept that you can also have sexual intimacy without touching?

Obviously my bias is that you can. And here's how....

Talk about it. Talk about sex. Talk about it in the car. Or at over a quiet dinner.. Or talk about it in the parking lot at Starbucks.

I don't necessarily mean, the intricacies of the actual act. Though, that's sort of the AP version of that conversation. But you can create intimacy simply by talking about asking and accepting and rejecting sex.

I used to have a career in fundraising, and one of the first things I'd do with donors was learn "how" they'd like to be asked for money. Did they want a phone call? Or a letter? Should I take them out to dinner or just ask them to come to an event? Fundraising is an intimate thing. And learning to ask is a part that intimacy process.

Sex is kind of the same. Do you know how your partner likes to be asked? Do you know how your partner likes to be rejected? Rejecting sex is also part of sexual intimacy. John likes to say - John Gottman - that the healthiest sexual relationships are ones where there are no consequences for rejection.

Think about that for a minute. No consequences for rejection. None. That means, if I ask you for sex and you don't want to have sex, then you say, "No, I don't really want to have sex." Then I say, "Ok cool, Thanks for telling me." (because I don't really want to have sex with someone who doesn't want to have sex with me). Then I might say, "Well, I'm feeling really drawn to you. What else could we do to cultivate some intimacy?"

Now...let me say with absolute confidence: No one says, 'What could we do to cultivate some intimacy.' That's absurd. But it's also not the point.

The point is intimate connection, which means avoiding the consequences of rejection... not just for the partner who has been "rejected" but also for the one doing the "rejection".

Imagine a marriage without consequence for rejection. Where you could say, with integrity, "no" and know that didn't mean anything about you or your partner, about your body or his...or hers. It was just a word, protected by your commitment to one another.

LAURA

Sure...but also, imagine a world where sex and your sexuality naturally flowed out of your everyday life. Wouldn't that be amazing? Of course it would.

There's actually a pretty simple way to bridge the gap between daily "meh" and daily "whoah". Wanna know what it is?

It's kissing.

My guess is that you kiss in one of two kinds of ways. You might peck often as you go through the comings and goings of your day. Or you kiss on the way to sex.

What if there was a middle ground. Well, let's take "if" out of it. There is a middle ground. It's kissing as a way to remember, "Oh yeah, this is fun...and relaxing...and good...and I can rest here."

That's intimacy.

Here's a simple thing you can do: Try a 6 second kiss.

Ready {SILENT} 1...2...3...4...5...6.

Dr. Gottman says, "That's a kiss with possibility."

ZACH

You know what's harder than a 6 second kiss? A 3 second kiss. Rebecca and I tried the 6 second kiss for a while. We found it super awkward...particularly around the third second. But 4-5-6 ... that was where we started working.

Anyway, that's not my job for now. My job is to teach you how to have the best sex of your life for a

lifetime. Did you think we'd really do that? In an 8 minute internet video? Sorry about that. One of my graduate professors used to say "unmarried sex is ALWAYS better than married sex." He was being provocative...and basically challenging the notion of "better".

Unmarried sex is better...if by "better" you mean easier, less complicated, fewer strings. But that's not really best. The best sex is intimately connected, it's bolstered by a commitment to daily intimacy...over the long haul.

Believe it or not, it's bolstered by nonsexual touch. And intentional conversation. It's bolstered through cherishing. The best sex is highly personal - as opposed to impersonal sex like pornography and prostitution. Those things can certainly be thrilling but they "mean" much. Personal sex means something to both of you. The road to great sex is through conversation about that meaning. When you think about sex...what it does or should mean, what does or should feel like...what it does or should accomplish...do you have an answer?

It's okay if you don't. Most of us don't. But let me tell you for sure...couples who have the "best" sex lives, they make their sex lives a priority. That's the first step in having the best sex of your life, for a lifetime..

LAURA

Look....I'm really sorry if think that we didn't give you super specific advice about how to create in sparks in the bedroom. The actual mechanics of sex are pretty simple.

But remember, we're not talking about sex. We're talking about intimacy. Intimacy grows when couples are intellectually and emotionally vulnerable. When they can ask for what they want and be confident that the answer will be yes.

"Yes" is trust building. Please hear me: I'm not talking about "yes" to sex. I'm talking about "yes" to intimacy. And here's a secret, "no" can also be trust building ... if you let it... because it implies that if that door to intimacy is, another door might very well open.

But that's a bigger thing altogether, isn't it?

We cannot wait to share a deeper or bigger vision with you. That's the focus of your next lesson. Looking forward to seeing you there.