The Intimacy Interview

An intimacy interview is when one spouse interviews the other about their wants. After you interview each other, you and your spouse will have a comprehensive list of each other’s wants—a list of things to give to each other.

Here are some logistical suggestions for a successful interview. If the interview is done properly, it could take a couple of hours. Therefore, I suggest only one interview per evening. Try to schedule the second interview within ten days of the first.

Whoever conducts the interview should have a laptop computer or a pen and pad so that there will be a list you can refer to and edit over the years. Make sure the kids are asleep and the TV is off. Agree with your spouse that you will not answer the phone during the interview or accept any interruptions other than emergencies. Put some refreshments on the table, light a candle, and dim the lights.

Begin each interview by discussing its purpose.

The interviewer should encourage the interviewee to be as open and detailed as possible. Remind each other that this is your chance to ask for everything you ever wanted.

The interviewer should only ask questions and seek to clarify their spouse’s desires. The interviewer should not make statements, comments, or remarks of any kind. In terms of facial expressions and body language, the interviewer should react only in a neutral or positive way, and be careful not to discourage the interviewee from exposing themselves. The interviewee, on the other hand, should not ask questions. The interviewee should remain focused on exploring their desires.

Sex is often a difficult topic to discuss openly. Help each other with this topic. Extend a special effort to be sensitive to each other and work hard to create a safe environment. The interviewer can help by asking specific questions. It’s much easier to respond to an inquiry than it is to volunteer information.

When you get to the topic of sex, you might try turning off the lights and lighting a candle. It feels much safer to share in the dark.

The interviewer can begin the interview by simply asking what the other wants. The interviewee should download everything they want in life. The questions and answers should be as detailed as possible. For example, if one of you says you want a back rub after
love-making, you should discuss how hard or soft, with or without moisturizer, and what part of the back is the most favorite. If one of you wants the house to be a certain temperature, discuss exactly how to set the thermostat.

Love is in the details. Ask about details. Get intimate. You and your spouse should know each other better than anyone else in the world. You should share with each other things you wouldn’t dream of sharing with anyone else. Let it all out. Let your spouse in. Knowledge is love. Give each other knowledge. Give each other love. Give each other the opportunity to give.

The main purpose of asking for what you want is not so you get what you want; it’s so your spouse can give you what you want. Giving creates love. That’s what’s important. Getting is just a bonus. When you interview your spouse, don’t worry about not being able to meet some or even many of your spouse’s desires. The purpose of the interview is not that your spouse gets what your spouse wants; it’s that you have as many opportunities as possible to give what your spouse wants. The fact that your spouse will get some needs met will not affect your marriage much. You giving your spouse what your spouse wants, on the other hand, will transform it.

The idea of the intimacy interview is to get to know your spouse so well that you have an endless list of opportunities to give.

Use the following categories to help you during your interviews. Probe each other about each category.

1. Vacation and Travel
2. Conversation
3. Children & Parenting
4. Family Time
5. Holidays & Special Occasions
6. Entertainment
7. Clothes & Jewelry
8. Food & Cooking
9. Dining Out
10. Exercise
11. Personal Growth
12. Education
13. Food Shopping
14. House Repairs & Maintenance
15. House Organization
16. Money & Investing
17. Sex
18. Religion & Spirituality
19. House Furniture
20. House Temperature
21. Extended Family
Within each of the categories, use these sub categories to probe deeper:

1. Frequency
2. Destination
3. Style
4. Class
5. Length
6. Types
7. Topics

When you’re finished interviewing your spouse, summarize your notes and review them carefully. Mark your spouse’s desires that you can accommodate immediately. Don’t worry about what you can’t give—focus on what you can give. Next, make a special note next to the desires that offer you a daily opportunity to give. For example, if your spouse wants you to make coffee in the morning, make that a priority to accommodate.

If you’re not used to being attentive to your spouse’s needs, giving regularly may be a big lifestyle change. Feel free to implement changes slowly. As you begin to give more, you will experience the impact that giving has on your marriage and you’ll be motivated to find more ways to give. Therefore, I suggest you review your notes from the interview each week for at least two months. Continue to look for new ways to give to your spouse. You and your spouse will want to make sure your lists remain private. Needless to say, any breach of confidentiality or carelessness with the list could destroy the very bond the lists are intended to help you create.

Conduct an intimacy interview once each year. Depending on how much you and your spouse’s needs change in the years following your first interview, subsequent interviews could be brief reviews or another lengthy process. In either case, the two most important things to probe and listen for after the initial interview are new needs and needs that your spouse shared in previous years that you weren’t able to fulfill. New needs are a great opportunity to give in a fresh way. All giving cultivates a core connection; however, there is something special about giving in new ways.