

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE “JOURNEY TO DISCONNECTEDNESS”?

The following stages illustrate the progression from connection and intimacy (“into-me-see”) to total disconnection and *lack* of intimacy.

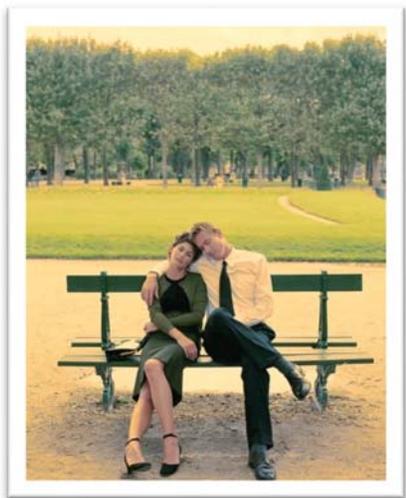
<p>Fatigue</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overtime, financial pressure, health problems, work issues, busyness, babies, kids, extended family stress • Things coming <i>between</i> us
<p>Irritability/Insensitivity</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snap, yell, fly off the handle, emotional shutdown, criticism, sarcasm, cynicism • No longer working together or on same team • Moving <i>against</i> each other
<p>Aloneness</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No physical or emotional closeness, no honest thoughts or feelings shared, fear of rejection or negative response from partner, no one seems to know or understand • Moving <i>away</i> from each other
<p>Arrogance and Alienation</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling sorry for self, self-pity, “No one cares or understands”, “I deserve to be happy” • Our own misery is someone else’s fault • Mindset is <i>blaming</i> each other
<p>Adulteries of the heart</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pornography, flirting, workaholic, kidaholic, fantasizing • An emotional/mental <i>filling</i> of the void
<p>Addiction</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex, drugs, shopping, food, work, excessive exercise, relationship with another • A compulsion to have what I want, no matter what the circumstances • A total <i>replacing</i> of the original relationship and intimacy

The road back to intimacy and connection . . .

- **Awareness** – realizing what is actually happening without defending or justifying
- **Safety** – seeking to understand without sarcasm, negative comments, unbridled anger
- **Honesty** – taking personal responsibility for own contributions and hindrances
- **Forgiveness** – receiving it for our own faults, extending it for our partner’s faults

Source: Tim and Linda Buttrey (as adapted from a model by Tim Clinton), True Intimacy Marriage Conference, www.truerelationships.org. Used with permission.

Do we have a safe, transparent and “high definition” relationship?



When a partner believes it is safe to disclose uncomfortable content or embarrassing confessions, honesty is encouraged.

Questions for self-reflection ^{2 3}

- Do you have undisclosed lunches/dinners with individuals of the opposite gender? – may be work or non/work related.
- Have you been involved in online chat rooms that you've kept hidden from your partner?
- Have you secretly viewed or downloaded pornographic materials?
- Do you make purchases or financial decisions your partner knows nothing about?
- Do you have any accounts – checking, saving, credit cards – your partner is unaware of?
- Do you lie to your partner about what an item cost or will cost?
- Do you avoid discussions about money to avoid conflict?
- Have you avoided sharing your dreams/aspirations with your partner?
- Do you 'pretend' to like something just to appease your partner?
- Do you avoid telling your partner when you are physically or emotionally attracted to someone of the opposite sex?
- Are you closed about your needs, and quiet with your partner on the healthiest way to meet them?
- Do you hide your shortcomings and past failures for fear of not being accepted by your partner?
- Do you feel 'unsafe' telling your partner when you've made a mistake?
- Are there things from your past you “hope and pray” your partner won't find out about?
- Have you been reluctant to share with your partner your schedule or resented them wanting to know where you are?

0-5 You have a transparent and healthy relationship. See the “yes” responses as an opportunity to fine tune your relationship.

6-10 This is a wake-up call for you. Commit to selecting 1-2 areas to begin work on. A professional counselor or mentor couple might be helpful.

11+ Don't “unload” all at once. Commit to new patterns and practices moving forward while seeking professional help for past issues.

² Bethany and Scott Palmer, *First Comes Love, Then Comes Money* (New York NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009).

³ Lynne M. Thompson, “Living a High Definition, Transparent Marriage”, *Focus on the Family*, 9/27/10, <http://www.focusonthefamily.com>.